



AN ALTERNATIVE RENDERING OF GENESIS 1:28 IN THE ASANTE-TWI BIBLE

UNA INTERPRETACIÓN ALTERNATIVA DE GÉNESIS 1:28 EN LA BIBLIA ASANTE-TWI

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Abstract

The goal of textual criticism is not to recover “the text” but to step into the context of the original author and audience, in order to ascertain what might have been the author’s intent and the understanding of the first audience in order to present a better text consequently. This is achieved through scientific analysis and exegetical endeavours. This paper presents a report on an exegetical study of the rendering of Genesis 1:28 in the Asante-Twi Bibles. The findings indicate that Hebrew keywords such as *bārāk*, *pārāh*, *kābaš* and *rāḏāh*, which have not been suitably translated, can be better rendered. As a result, having undertaken contextual, textual, semantic and morphosyntactical analysis of the source text and compared with the target text, an alternative rendering of the text has been proposed for Asante-Twi translators and readers. This significant contribution of the paper hopes to enhance mother-tongue theologizing among the Asante-Twi speakers and also to serve as a sort of precursor for other mother-tongue Bible translations in Ghana.

Keyword: *Genesis, blessing, be fruitful, subdue, Asante-Twi Bible.*

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Resumen

El objetivo de la crítica textual no es recuperar "el texto", sino adentrarse en el contexto del autor y la audiencia originales, para determinar cuál pudo haber sido la intención del autor y la comprensión de la primera audiencia, con el fin de presentar un mejor texto en consecuencia. Esto se logra a través de un análisis científico y esfuerzos exegéticos. Este artículo presenta un informe sobre un estudio exegético de la interpretación de Génesis 1:28 en las Biblias Asante-Twi. Los hallazgos indican que palabras clave hebreas como *bārāk*, *pārāh*, *kāḇaš* y *rādāh*, que no han sido traducidas adecuadamente, pueden ser mejor interpretadas. Como resultado, habiendo realizado un análisis contextual, textual, semántico y morfosintáctico del texto fuente y comparándolo con el texto objetivo, se ha propuesto una interpretación alternativa del texto para los traductores y lectores Asante-Twi. Esta significativa contribución del artículo espera mejorar la teología en lengua materna entre los hablantes de Asante-Twi y también servir como un tipo de precursor para otras traducciones de la Biblia en lengua materna en Ghana.

Palabra clave: Génesis, bendición, ser fructífero, someter, Biblia Asante-Twi

1. Introduction

In recent past, the efforts made in the pursuit of biblical scholarship by indigenous Africans, has made mother-tongue Bibles more and more a useful part of Bible engagements in Africa. No doubt, Mother-tongue Bibles contribute significantly to the interpretation of the sacred scriptures among African communities. In Ghana, the production of mother-tongue Bibles was pioneered by the Western missionaries in collaboration with some indigenous Ghanaians in the 17th century⁴ and has been continued, developed and extended by the indigenous people.⁵ The first Asante-Twi Bible (AsTB) was published in 1964 by the Bible Society of Ghana.⁶ So far, that translation has received two official revisions, occurring in 2012 and 2018 respectively. However, all the three versions are still in circulation and used by the Asante-Twi-speaking communities and in many instances, some readers are oblivious of the existence of the revised editions.

Bible translators face several challenges in their work.⁷ These problems, sometimes do not only result in vagueness in the text that has been newly translated but also the resultant doctrine. Of interest to the present study, is the translation of Genesis 1:28 into the Asante-Twi Mother-tongue Bible. It identifies some existing translational difficulties in the AsTB, emanating from Akan/Twi dialects, regarding Genesis 1:28 that may possibly obstruct the explanation of the ancient text in the Akan context. The paper critically analyses both the source and the target texts, and proposes alternative reading to be adopted in the translations of the text in the AsTB. As an exegetical study, the source text is textually, semantically and morphosyntactically analysed and its rendering in the existing AsTBs is evaluated.

2. Components and Sources of the Texts in Genesis

The Book of Genesis is complex. The historicity or otherwise of its setting and content, unique genre, and structure have caused scholars and readers to interrogate its sources and components. It has been a challenge to have a definitive answer to the question of the origin of the book of Genesis –a book that describes the origins of the world and humankind. It is a book of the origin of origins, but its origin is somewhat indefinite. It is still an unresolved question regarding the exact time the book of Genesis assumed its present shape, though many convincing conjectures

⁴ J D.K. EKEM, "Early Translators and Interpreters of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures on the Gold Coast (Ghana)," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 13/2 (2010): 34.

⁵ E. TWUMASI-ANKRAH, et al., "An Analytical Study of the Translations of Genesis 1:26-27 in the Akuapem-Twi Bible," *Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology (MOTBIT)*, 4/3 (2022): 45.

⁶ J.D.K. EKEM, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast: The Historical, Linguistic, and Theological Settings of the Ga, Twi, Mfantse, and Ewe Bibles*, (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura; Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing, 2011), 49-78.

⁷ TWUMASI-ANKRAH, et al., "An Analytical Study of the Translations of Genesis 1:26-27," 45.

have been made.⁸ Scholars largely agree that this question of the origin of Genesis is in process. Westermann, in an attempt to trace the beginning of the Book of Genesis, concluded:

At the beginning of its development, stand individual stories that were told and passed down orally for a long time –in many cases for centuries –before being written down. One cannot trace the path of these oral traditions; here, scholarly investigation meets its limits. One can only draw certain inferences from the written form in hand, nothing more.⁹

The book of Genesis is one of the most difficult books in the Old Testament (OT) corpus to deal with. Graf-Wellhausen, like many other scholars in an attempt to handle the complexities, duplications, lack of uniformities and inconsistencies in the Pentateuch, came up with a theory –Documentary Hypothesis.¹⁰ The stories, as narrated in the book, were independent of one another for centuries before they were collected and knit together by a genius narrator. Long before this operose attempt of collecting stories that ancient community of faith had preserved regarding their theological ideas on the origin of the universe, the stories themselves had experienced a catastrophe of being difficult to understand, due to the numerous unregulated human agencies. Since the individual stories at hand at the time of the collection, had been handed down from generation to generation orally, they could risk being corrupted at the literary level, making it difficult to handle by later generations. That is to say, there is a high possibility of these independent oral narratives to be influenced by the worldview of the various narrators at various points in history.

The book's (Genesis) written form did not also come in one whole. Instead, it gradually developed over a period in a sequence of discrete steps. Many scholars who agree with the Documentary Hypothesis are of the view that the whole Pentateuch corpus can be traced from four sources –Yahwistic (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D) and the Priestly (P) origins.¹¹ It has been observed that out of the J.E.D.P sources for the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomist source did not contribute to the production of the book of Genesis but it featured prominently in the book of Deuteronomy.¹² Thus, the proposed sources of Genesis are J, E and P.¹³ However, in its current state, "there is one thing that Genesis does reveal: the components that one can see in it were once independent, once existed separately."¹⁴ One clearly sees this in the Primeval History (1 -11) and Patriarchal History (12 -50). According to Westermann, "the Primeval History grew out of the union of the earlier (tenth –ninth century) Yahwistic source and the later (sixth –fifth century) Priestly source."¹⁵

Two complementary accounts of creation can be found in Genesis 1 and 2. The first (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) belongs to the late Priestly (P) source, while the second (Gen. 2:4b-25) to the Yahwist/Jahwist (J) tradition.¹⁶ This is affirmed by Levy that "the first two chapters of the Torah have long been the subject of elaborate Jewish and non-Jewish exegetical attention, with extensive attention devoted to the differences between the two creation accounts of *Bereshit* (Genesis) I and II."¹⁷ The view taken here is that the material comes from the Mosaic period and reflects two perspectives on creation (perhaps coming from two older traditions) that complement each other.¹⁸ The two

⁸ JOHN J. SCULLION, "The Narrative of Genesis," *ABD* 2: 942.

⁹ C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, tr. David E. Green, (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 12.

¹⁰ E.K.E. ANTWI, "Sources, Formation and Socio-Historical Context of the Joseph Narrative: Re-Examined under the Documentary Hypothesis," *OTE* 29/2(2016): 260.

¹¹ W. R. TATE, *The Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms and Concepts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 126.

¹² B. W. ANDERSON, *The Living World of the Old Testament* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), 21.

¹³ ANTWI, "Sources," 261.

¹⁴ WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 2.

¹⁵ WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, xiii.

¹⁶ W. DYRNESS, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, (Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 66.

¹⁷ YAMIN LEVY, "Fiat and Forming: Genesis 1 & 2 Revisited," *A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* 27/1(1992): 20.

¹⁸ DYRNESS, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, 66.

accounts present significant differences at the literary, stylistic and syntactic levels.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the J source joins together several old stories and myths, and rewrites them to convey its religious message about Yahweh.

The story reflects Israel's thought in the 10th Century BC when it had become a nation that could contend with other nations and their beliefs.²⁰ Theologically, Israel needed to locate her nation in the wider context of the origin of the universe which included the then nations of the world (Gen. 1:1, 26-28; 2:7). It could be an attempt to re-orient her people as well as the neighbouring and hostile nations about the fact that Israel, was sovereign a nation like all other nations and was not meant to be a vassal of any nation. Hence, in the J source, creation begins with humanity; other creatures are made for human benefit. In contrast to J, the P source deals with only a few crucial events, chiefly among them is the creation of the world. It works out a wider theology around the goodness of God's creation and focuses more on moments of blessing²¹ of which Israel was a beneficiary.

All of this is to say that the authors²² of the Book of Genesis, took various ancient stories which were in oral tradition and used them to relate how God gave "dominion" and responsibility for the world to humanity, the freedom to act on one's own and the gifts to achieve happiness. Here, only what is essential is recorded: nothing is accidental or included merely because it stood in the received tradition.²³ It was more or less a captivating speech, meant to inspire contingents to come to terms with who they are, take up their roles and do the needful.

2.1 Context of the Texts (Gen. 1:26-28)

A thorough understanding and meaning of a literary work such as the Old Testament (OT) hinges almost always on the context. The true meaning is lost when one attempts to take statements out of context.²⁴ This study is essentially set in the context of primeval history. Genesis 1-11 is among the most important texts as well as among the best known in the OT canon.²⁵ Primeval history seeks to give a universal setting for what is to be the early sacred history of one particular people (Ancient Israel).²⁶ It is within this corpus that Ancient Israel saw herself as a sovereign nation and significant part of the entire world.

2.1.1 Remote Context of Genesis 1:26-28

The importance of creation in biblical thought and for that matter, Old Testament readers, cannot be overemphasized. Genesis commences with the creation of the world described by the P source.²⁷ Genesis 1:26-28 falls within the creation narratives in the Old Testament. That section of Genesis is seen as belonging to the priestly (P) account. The narrator relates the creation events to readers in the form of prose –giving somewhat detailed descriptions of the order and times of creation. The writer of the book of Genesis teaches a completely different creation doctrine which

¹⁹ LEVY, "Fiat and Forming: Genesis 1 & 2 Revisited," 20.

²⁰ DYRNESS, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, 66.

²¹ DYRNESS, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, 66.

²² Authorship of Genesis has been in dispute among scholars. To Waltke, WALTKE, K. BRUCE, *Genesis: A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 21-22, although a good case can be made that Moses authored the essential shape of Genesis and of the Pentateuch, he clearly did not author the extant text in our hands. However, traditionally, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the Old Testament.

²³ S. T. BABAWALE and N. O. SHOGUNLE, "Man and Environment: Exegesis of Genesis 1:26-28 in Nigerian Context," *SMCC Higher Education Research Journal*, 7(January, 2020): 197.

²⁴ R. L. GIESE JNR. "Literary Forms of the Old Testament," in *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Literary Forms*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 5.

²⁵ W. BRUEGGEMANN, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 11.

²⁶ E. A. SPEISER, "Genesis," in *The Anchor Bible*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1964)

²⁷ R. J. CLIFFORD, "Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible," *The Catholic Quarterly Monograph Series*, 26. (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), xiii.

is unlike the myths among the people in the Ancient Near East (ANE).²⁸ He does this through a narration of God's creative activities. God, who is one and true spoke creation into being and did not do anything to overcome the chaos existing in the cosmic atmosphere.²⁹ The creation narrative is consequential to the Exodus event. According to Westermann, the Exodus event gave both parts of the book of Genesis, the primeval and patriarchal narratives, the character of an introduction.³⁰ To him, the primeval events give the Exodus event a much wider horizon. The primeval events extend the Exodus event to a world event in the broadest sense of the word. It links the Exodus event to an event that defines the origins of the world and of humanity.³¹

All of this is to say that the remote context of Genesis 1:26-28 which is also found in the creation context is the prehistory of the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai who were leaving Egypt for Canaan. What follows after the text immediately, seems to be the details of the gifts that human receives from God –that is, the extent of human's stewardship, leadership, privileges and responsibilities in the created milieu.

2.1.2 Immediate Context of Genesis 1:26-28

As already noted, Genesis 1:26-28 falls within the Priestly (P) narratives. Brueggemann describes it as "a poetic narrative that was likely formed for liturgical usage,"³² implying that it was addressed to a community of exiles. A close examination of Genesis 1:26-28 points out that the pericope forms a complete unit with the preceding section which deals with the creation narrative of plants and animals and the subsequent section which records an occasion whereby the creator hands over the plants and animals he has created to human. This makes the pericope closely related to both the section before (vv. 1-25) and after it (vv. 29-31).

However, scholars are divided on the epilogue of the narrative. Some, such as Westermann, and Dyrness, suggest that the P's conclusion technically falls in Genesis 2:1-4a and that the section (2:1-4a) should have been included in Chapter 1 instead of Chapter 2. The first two chapters of Genesis contain two complementary accounts of creation. The first (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) belongs to the P source, while the second (Gen. 2:4b-25) to the J tradition.³³ Westermann agrees with Dyrness in his outline of the text of the creation account. In his outline of Genesis, he includes Genesis 2:1-4a as part of the first chapter.³⁴ Clearly, these scholars' position is primarily based on the fact that in Genesis 1, the narrator communicates nothing about what God did on the 7th day and for that matter, the silence could imply a rest. One cannot agree more with this view since their approach seems synchronic. Westermann adds that in the creation narratives of many people of the ANE, the creator-God rests from his work at the end, after the completion of the creation, he can no longer intervene. He suspects that "P modifies this motif and points out that it is because of God's rest on the Seventh day³⁵ that this day is holy."³⁶

The conservative scholars on the other hand, think that the supposed silence after the sixth day in the narratives found in Genesis chapter one is enough an indication that nothing happened with regards to the creation of the world, yet that does not mean that God rested as if He were a man to

²⁸ The ideas of creation from the myths among the people of the ANE which are usually compared to the creation stories of Genesis are those found in the *Enuma Elish*. There seem to be similarities and differences, of which scholars have endeavoured to unearth. In actual sense, the existence of the so-called similarities are superficial and could well be incidental. The differences, on the other hand, are significant. For further details on the differences of the ideas of creation in the Bible and the *Enuma Elish*, see the work of Robert Ouro, "Similarities and Differences between the OT and the ANE Texts," Vol. 49, No. 1, (Andrews University Seminary Studies, 2011).

²⁹ *Study Notes from the NIV Study Bible*, (Michigan, USA: Zondervan, 2002), 5.

³⁰ WESTERMANN, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, transl. Scullin, (London: SPCK, 1984).

³¹ E. K. ASANTE, *Topics in Old Testament Studies*, (Accra: SonLife Printing Press and Services, 2005), 117.

³² BRUEGGEMANN, *Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 22.

³³ DYRNESS, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, 66.

³⁴ WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 6.

³⁵ The holiness of the Seventh day is related to the whole of the now completed work. It establishes an order for humanity that organizes time into the everyday and the holy. This explains why the Seventh day became the Sabbath (rest) Day in the Jewish tradition.

³⁶ WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 12.

get wearied after working. Besides, nothing shows that creating of the world was the only activity that God was and is preoccupied with; therefore, it became imperative for Him to rest.³⁷

In addition to this, one could argue that the section in Genesis 2:1-4a fits well as an introduction to that in chapter 2:1ff since the narrator (Yahwist/J) does not intend to give comparatively a systematic account but rather a summary of the various creation stories with the intention of attributing the whole saga to Yahweh. Furthermore, the whole creative force of God is depicted by the perfect verb, *bārā*, “to create” or “he created.” The word, *bārā*, is a *qal* perfect verb which denotes a simple active sense. This could posit theologically that the entire creation venture was less-burdensome for Yahweh (God).³⁸ It is more of a redactors’ commentary added to the text than a real rest from God.

It is instructive to note that creation is entirely good and it reaches its uttermost in the blessing Yahweh bestows on humankind in Genesis: “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen. 1:28). This is like a liturgical prayer, a feature, common only to the priests. “The main theme of the text is this: God and God’s creation are bound together in a distinctive and delicate way.”³⁹ Thus, God, the transcendent, uniquely manifests himself in his creation but he is in no way part of creation.

2.2 Structure of Genesis 1:26-28

The plot consists of a suggestion (v. 26) labelled as ‘A’ and moves to an actualization (v. 27), labelled as ‘B’ and ends with a benediction or command (v. 28), designated as ‘C.’ Below is a proposed structure of the pericope:

- A. (i) A proposal for the making of humankind (v. 26)
 - (ii) The intended specifics (image) of humankind to be made (v. 26)
 - (iii) The responsibilities of humankind to be made (v. 26)
- B. (i) Actualization –Humankind is made as intended –in the image and likeness of God (v. 27)
 - (ii) Humankind made, was of two sexes –male and female (v. 27). Together, they show that human essence is defined by two dialogical dimensions, his relation to his partner and his relation to God. The parallelism of v. 27 (“So God created human in his own image, / in the image of God created he him, / male and female created he them”) suggests that humankind is only in its two-foldness, the image of God, which in turn, incorporates the fundamental equality of man and woman.⁴⁰ Significantly, “the overt identification of male and female, during the creation of human beings, indicates the equality of both sexes (v. 27).”⁴¹
- C. (i) God blessed humankind (v. 28)
 - (ii) The content of the blessing is human responsibilities (v. 28):
 - (iia) fruitfulness and multiplication
 - (iib) filling and subduing
 - (iic) ruling or having dominion

³⁷ This refers to scholars whose interpretation of texts results from a deliberate attempt at upholding and defending traditional, communal and religious beliefs.

³⁸ A simple undertaking such as this (creation), for God, would not call for a rest for a Mighty God such as Yahweh. Hence, considering God to be the advocate for this Seventh Day rest could only be an after-thought worked out by the priests.

³⁹ BRUEGGEMANN, *Genesis Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 22.

⁴⁰ J. P. FOKKELMAN, “Genesis,” in *Literary Guide to the Bible*, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1978), 44-45.

⁴¹ K. OKYERE, “Bible, Ecology and Sustainable Development,” *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies, (IJOURS)* 1/2(2011): 84.

2.3. Genesis 1:28 in Ancient Texts

Text:	Masoretic Text (MT)	Vulgate	Septuagint (LXX)
	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם פְּרוּ רַב מְלֵא אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹהִים וְרָד בְּדָגַת הַיָּם בְּעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּכְבָּשָׁה בְּכָל הַיָּהּ הַרְמִשָּׁה עַל-הָאָרֶץ:	Benedixitque illis Deus, et ait: Crescite et multiplicamini et re- plete terram, et subjicite eam, et dominamini pis- cibus maris et volatilibus caeli, et universis animantibus, quae moventur super terram.	καὶ ηὐλόγησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς λέγων Αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς καὶ ἄρχετε τῶν ἰχθύων τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ πάντων τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἑρπετῶν τῶν ἐρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
Transliteration:	vayəḇāreḵ ‘ōtām ’ēlōhim vayyōmer lāhem ’ēlōhim pārū ūrəḇū ūmil’ū ’et-hā’āreṣ vəkīḇšuhā ūrəḏū bidḡaṭ hayyām ūḇə’owp haššāmayim, ūḇəḵāl- hayyāh		kai eulogēsen autous ho theos legōn auxanes- the kai plethynesthe kai plērōsate ho gēn kai katakyrieusate autēs kai archete ho ichthyōn ho thalassēs kai ho pe- teinōn ho kai pantōn ho ktēnōn kai pantōn ho gēn kai pantōn ho herpetōn ho herpetōn epi ho gēn.
Translation:	And God blessed them abundantly. And God declared to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and satisfy the earth; and organize it well, in order to bring great potentials out of it; and have responsibility over all the fish of the sea and over all the birds of the skies and over all living creatures that creep upon the earth.	And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth.	God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

2.3 God Blessed the Human Beings (v. 28)

יְבָרֵךְ *yəḇāreḵ*, comes from the root verb, בָּרַךְ *bārak*, denoting, “to kneel;” and by implication in reference to the reverence of God as an act of adoration and to receive blessings from him.⁴² The word, *bārak*, “to bless,” has several nuances. God blesses human (Gen. 12:2; 22:17; Ex. 20:24) and things such as the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11), field (Gen. 27:27), bread (Ex. 23:25) and work (Deut. 28:12).⁴³ Humans (priests, kings, fathers, etc.) also bless men (Deut. 21:5; 2 Sam. 6:18; Gen. 14:19; Lev. 9:22; Gen. 28:1, 6).⁴⁴ The imperfect prefix (י) *yə*, and the lengthening of the vowel of the second radical *resh* (ר), indicate that the verb has been rendered in *pi’el*.⁴⁵ A critical look at the structure of the word shows that it occurs in imperfect third masculine singular in *pi’el* (Intensive Active) form of בָּרַךְ *bārak*. In Hebrew grammar, *pi’el* “expresses intensive type of action with an active voice.”⁴⁶ One notices a similar phrase and an intensive nuance expressed in the “Abrahamic Blessing,” where God declares to Abraham that “in blessing, I will bless you ...” (Gen. 22:17). Here in the text (Gen. 1:28), God puts human in the state of blessings. By putting them into a blessed state, God is not simply issuing them with power and potency of life⁴⁷ but is also planting them into a state where the kind of life he desires of them is possible. “It is a state, designed by God that gives, nourishes, and enables thriving.”⁴⁸ The clause יְבָרֵךְ *yəḇāreḵ*, can therefore be translated as “he blessed abundantly.” It is instructive to note that, this intensity inherent in the verb due to its *pi’el* form, is not clearly displayed in available translations. For example, in the various English versions, one comes across “God blessed” (English Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version and New International Version). One could only speculate that probably, translators have recognized the *vav* (ו) and *yod* (י) prefix, as *waw* conjunction; and have ended up treating the verb in the *qal* perfect (simple active). The Masoretic Text (MT) however, shows intensity.

Whatever might be the indigenous philosophy behind the source of blessings in ANE, the Old Testament attributes blessings to God as the only source. Therefore, blessings and curses emanate from God (Num. 22). God’s glorious appearance automatically presents blessings (2 Sam. 6:11-20), and much the same way, one could pronounce blessings only in God’s name (Deut. 10:8). “Indeed, God’s name, the manifestation of his personal redemptive, covenant-keeping nature, is at the heart of all blessing.”⁴⁹ In Genesis 1:28, God as the source of blessing is intimated in the fact that the subject of the sentence is “God,” and the main verb (action) is “blessed.” The remaining predicate reveals the content of the action (blessing) of God towards humankind. This blessing of God is relevant in the creation narrative because it is that theological fiat that establishes life (as coming from God) and protects it (as given to human).⁵⁰

⁴² J. STRONG, *Abingdon’s Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 1288.

⁴³ BROWN, DRIVER and BRIGGS, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Unabridged, 1905), 138.

⁴⁴ BROWN, DRIVER and BRIGGS, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon*, 138.

⁴⁵ C.J. BANGSUND, *You Can Read Biblical Hebrew: Simple Lessons and a Basic Dictionary* (Tanzania: Research Institute of Makumira University College, 2015), 209. The *Piel* normally puts a *dagesh* in the second radical. The *Ayin* Guttural verb –and also verbs with ר in the second radical –will reject this *dagesh*. If the second radical is א or ר, then the preceding vowel may lengthen in compensation. For example, the Perfect of בָּרַךְ is not בָּרַךְ but rather is בָּרַךְ. This is found twice in the Bible as בָּרַךְ.

⁴⁶ G. PRATICO and M. VAN PELT, *Basics of BIBLICAL Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 309; W. GESENIUS, *Hebrew Grammar*, E. KAUTIZSCH ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 141.

⁴⁷ S. GALLAGHER, “Genesis: Declaration of God’s Blessing - Chapter 2 from ‘Abrahamic Blessing: A Missiological Narrative of Revival in Papua New Guinea’” *Vetus Testamentum*, 9/2(1959): 177; T. POTTER, “Blessed to Build God’s Kingdom: The Blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) in Light of the Primeval History.” (M. A Thesis: Canada, Concordia University, 2014), 134.

⁴⁸ M. KIPCHUMBA, “The Meaning of בָּרַךְ in Genesis 1:28 in Light of Primaevial History,” *Master of Arts (Theological Studies) Thesis* (Canada: Concordia University, 2020), 25.

⁴⁹ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 0285.

⁵⁰ L. MAZZINGHI, “The Word, Prophecy, Time, Blessing: A Thematic Itinerary through Genesis 1,” *Ghana Journal of Religion and Theology*, 12/1-2(2022): 16.

2.4.1 The Content of God's Blessings for Humankind (Gen. 1:28)

God, having made humans, pronounced great blessings upon them (Gen. 1:28). The tone of God's pronouncement appears imperative. However, the content of God's blessings or command in addition to the couplet, "till and keep" (2:15), together constitute humans' responsibilities in their natural environment, created by God. The text relates:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
 וְכַבְשֶׁה רֶדֶד בְּדִגְתַּי הַיָּם בְּעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 אֱלֹהִים פָּר רֶב מְלֵא אֶת הָאָרֶץ
 בְּכָל הַיָּהּ הַרְמִשֶׁת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

"And God blessed them "abundantly" and said: Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the skies and over all that creep upon the earth." The content of God's blessings presented in pairs, which is also seen as constituting the responsibilities of humankind in the garden is analysed below in detail:

2.4.1.1 Be Fruitful and Multiply (Gen. 1:28)

פָּר *pārū*, comes from the root, פָּרָה *pārāh*, a *qal* perfect, denoting, "to be fruitful."⁵¹ From its primary root פָּר *pārāh*, means to "be fruitful," "bring forth fruit," "grow," and "increase."⁵² The verb *pārāh*, is used twenty-nine (29) times in the OT, appearing fifteen (15) times in Genesis alone.⁵³ In each case, it appears twenty-two (22) times in *qal* and seven times in *hiphil* with the meaning, "make fruitful."⁵⁴ The root *pārāh*, is at the heart of the names of the tribes of Israel. Joseph, for instance, named his second son, "Ephraim," because, according to him, it was God, who made him fruitful *hiprani*, in the land of his afflictions (Gen. 41:52).⁵⁵ This word, *pārāh*, also features in the Abrahamic promise, הִפְרֵתִי *hiphreti*, "I will make you fruitful and make you into nations" (Gen. 17:6).⁵⁶ There are three primary meanings in Hebrew for *pārī*, "fruit." There is the fruit of a tree (Gen. 1:12; Zec. 8:12; Prov. 27:18), the fruit of the womb (Gen. 30:2; Deut. 28:4; Ps. 21:10) and fruit as consequences resulting from an action (Ps. 58:11; Prov. 11:30).⁵⁷ It appears that of all the three usages, the use of the word *pārī*, as the reward of one's action appears more frequently than the rest. Its form, *pārāh*, is homophonic to פָּרָא *pārā*,⁵⁸ to "thrive," "bear fruit" or "to be fruitful." וּ, is Imperfect second masculine plural suffix translated as "you."⁵⁹ This is connected to *pārāh*, to indicate the recipients of this benediction, that is, human –both male and female. This is corroborated by the LXX which uses the verb, Αὐξάνεσθε *auxanesthe*, (a present middle imperative 2nd plural), denoting, "you grow!" Obviously, this imperative statement cannot be taken literally, so as to limit it to the fruit of the womb or of the tree but may encompass something broader. That is to say, one's childlessness cannot be considered as fruitlessness or failure. The word may encapsulate being successful, industrious, and impactful and prosperous in one's endeavour. In the text under study, the word *pārāh*, "fruit," which is rendered in *qal* imperative masculine plural, is related to both God who pronounces the blessing of fruitfulness in the form of a command and humankind, who receives the blessing of fruitfulness that comes to him in the form of a command.

⁵¹ BROWN II and SMITH, *A Reader's Hebrew*, 38.

⁵² STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 6509.

⁵³ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 734.

⁵⁴ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook*, 734.

⁵⁵ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook*, 734.

⁵⁶ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook*, 734.

⁵⁷ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook*, 734.

⁵⁸ The Niv translates it as *thrive*, a word play on Ephraim (Hos. 13:15) but uses the word, *pārāh* and translates it as *be fruitful* in the creation narratives and the other benedictions in the Book of Genesis (1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 17:6, 20; 28:3; 35:11; 49:22 etc.).

⁵⁹ BANGSUND, *You Can Read Biblical Hebrew*, 63.

God was going to cause humans to become fruitful. Humankind's work (action) was likely to become fruitful as a result of God's action (blessing). This implies that humankind, who carries the blessing of fruitfulness from God is under the command of God to make the earth fruitful.

רָב *rāḇ*, the actual word is רָבָה *rāḇāḥ*, which puts forth an idea of "projection," to shoot an arrow."⁶⁰ Its contracted form is רָב *rāḇ*, meaning, "abundant," "much," "many," "plenteous."⁶¹ The primary root רָבָה *rāḇāḥ*, denotes "to be many or great,"⁶² "increase in number," "multiply," "be more," "ten thousand."⁶³ This forms the second of God's blessings upon humankind which constitutes their responsibilities as God's representatives on earth. The word "increase" or "multiply" is directly connected to "fruitful," preceding it to indicate that they are to be treated together. The blessings pronounced by God upon humankind reaches a crescendo with the introduction of the word, "multiply" ("be fruitful and multiply"). Humankind's fruitfulness was not meant to be a one-time stop action but ought to be ongoing and spreading across the earth.

2.4.1.2 Fill the Earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28)

מָלֵא *mālē*, comes from the root מָלֵא *mālā*, meaning, "to fill" or "to be full," that which fills,⁶⁴ accomplish, replenish, satisfy."⁶⁵ Human responsibilities that were given to them in the form of a blessing included the filling of the earth. The word, *mālē*, has been rendered in *qal* imperative masculine plural.⁶⁶ This constitutes a third of the command, given to humankind concerning their responsibilities on earth. This command, "fill the earth," appears as a pair and together with the subsequent one, forms a couplet. The narrator makes it possible by the introduction of a conjunction. What this actually meant to the first humankind and what the implication is for OT readers such as Akan Christians remains debateable among scholars. However, it may imply that humans were expected to make their divinely-empowered fruitful life affect all of life on earth.

כִּבְשָׁה *kibšuhā*, from the root כָּבַשׁ *kāḇaš*, a *qal* imperative masculine plural verb denoting, "subdue,"⁶⁷ "subjugate," "dominate,"⁶⁸ "to tread down."⁶⁹ The word, *kāḇaš*, and its derivatives occur fifteen (15) times in the OT⁷⁰ and it is the fourth of the sequence of five direct imperatives⁷¹ which directly form a unit with the word, "fill," preceding it. *kāḇaš*, seems to be a military word hence, presents both positive and negative connotations. Positively,⁷² it denotes, to "conquer," "subjugate,"⁷³ "bring into bondage,"⁷⁴ "force," "keep under," "subdue," "bring into subjection" and in a negative sense,⁷⁵ it means to "disregard."⁷⁶ The word "subdue," makes clear that the evaluation "good," does not mean that creation is perfect, in the sense of needing no further development or attention, for that matter, of being unable to fail.

Despite recent interpretations of Genesis 1:28 which have tried to make "subdue" mean responsibility for building up, it is obvious from an overall study of the word's usage that this may not be

⁶⁰ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 7232.

⁶¹ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 7227.

⁶² *BibleWorks*, 9.

⁶³ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 7231.

⁶⁴ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 505.

⁶⁵ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 4390.

⁶⁶ *BibleWorks*, 9.

⁶⁷ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 430.

⁶⁸ BROWN II and SMITH, *Reader's Hebrew*, 49.

⁶⁹ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 3533.

⁷⁰ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 430.

⁷¹ J. PAUL and M. TAMITSU, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Gregorian Biblical BookShop, 2006)

⁷² Gen. 1:28; Zec. 9:15; "Devour and subdue with sling stones"; 1 Ch. 22:18, "...and the land is subdued before the Lord."

⁷³ HOLLADAY, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 245.

⁷⁴ BROWN, DRIVER and BRIGGS, *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, 4349.

⁷⁵ (See, Mic. 7:19) "He will subdue our iniquities". Meaning, their iniquities would be disregarded.

⁷⁶ STRONG, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 3533.

so. *kāḇaš*, assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer, necessitating some sort of coercion if the subduing is to take place. “Thus the word connotes “rape” as in Esther 7:8, or the conquest of the Canaanites in Numbers 32:22, 29; Joshua 18:1; 1 Chronicles 22:18. In 2 Chronicles 28:10; Nehemiah 5:5; Jeremiah 34:11, 16 it refers to forced servitude.”⁷⁷ However, “while the verb may involve coercive activities in interhuman relationships (Num. 32:22, 29), no enemies are in view here –and this is the only context in which the verb applies to nonhuman creatures.”⁷⁸ “More generally, subduing involves intra-creational development, bringing order out of continuing disorder, and drawing the world along to its fullest creational potential.”⁷⁹ Human subdues negatively, by disregarding this God-given responsibility for the development of the created order. הָ *hā*, functions as a suffix, rendered in third person feminine singular.⁸⁰ Its relationship with the verb preceding it and the entire sentence is that it functions as a direct object of the verb or verbs in the clause. In direct link with the preceding verb, “subdue,” הָ can be translated as “it,” which becomes a pronoun for the phrase, “the earth.” This implies that humans’ action of subjugation was to be in relation to the earth (ground).

Looking at the textual, morphological and syntactical analysis done, this study asserts that the words are better understood in the sense of caregiving, nurturing, responsible leadership; governing the earth.⁸¹ Humans have been commissioned by God to nurture his creation and not to exploit it.⁸² The framework for this kind of relationship between humans and earth is alluded to in the wider context of the OT. For instance, in Leviticus 25:43-46, where God ordered his people who happened to become leaders or masters of others not to oppress them, it relates: “You shall not rule over them with harshness.” In verse 46, God distinguished how leaders or masters should “rule *rāḏāh*, over foreigners from how to rule over kinsmen. The text relates, “But as for your fellow Israelites, no one shall “rule” *rāḏāh*, over the other with harshness.” The Hebrew word, *kāḇaš*, “subdue,” as used in the MT, does not encourage brutalities and negative subjugation.

Throughout the OT, it is only in this text that *kāḇaš*, “subdue” has been related to non-human creatures. On many occasions, in the OT, kings were encouraged to “subdue” the subjects in their kingdom. Yet, such subjugation was expected to be positive, implying care, coordination and proper management of all the human resources in the kingdom for prosperity.⁸³ This is in keeping with the idea inherent in the common phrase, “the king and his subjects,” not the king and his enemies. In the creation context of Genesis, humans were directed to endeavour to bring the best out of the earth in a responsible manner.

2.4.1.3 Rule or Have Dominion

וַיְיָרֶדוּ *veyirdū*, is from the Hebrew root יָרָד *rāḏāh*, a *qal* perfect simple active verb denoting, to “rule,”⁸⁴ “have dominion,”⁸⁵ “tread down,” “prevail against,” “reign.”⁸⁶ This verb introduces the whole role of humankind. It opens clearly the job description of humankind to be executed on behalf of God. It appears both in the proposal (1:26) and benediction (1:28). The verb brings to the notice of the reader that the object, humankind, of the previous sentence has now become the subject of the second sentence. That is, when one attempts to split the complex sentence (Gen.

⁷⁷ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 430.

⁷⁸ T. E. FRETHEIM, “Introduction, Commentary and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible I –Ma*. Vol. 3, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 21.

⁷⁹ FRETHEIM, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*,

⁸⁰ *BibleWorks*, 9.

⁸¹ FRETHEIM, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 21.

⁸² R. OSEI-BONSU, “Rule and Subdue’ in the Context of Gen. 1:26-28,” *Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering*, B 1, (2012): 646.

⁸³ FRETHEIM, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 21.

⁸⁴ *BibleWorks*, 9.

⁸⁵ BROWN II and SMITH, *A Reader’s Hebrew Bible*, 44.

⁸⁶ STRONG, *Abingdon’s Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 7286.

1:26) into two simple sentences, one would have the subject of the first sentence to be God, and or his heavenly court who are to make humankind. That of the second simple sentence would be humankind who are to rule or have dominion of the universe, just as can be found in v. 28. It is the verb, *rādāh*, “to rule,” that helps one to identify the second simple sentence by exposing the subject as humankind. “The language of dominion was apparently drawn from the sphere of ideal conceptions of royal responsibility (Ezk. 34:1-5), where “force” and “harshness” are not needed to qualify the verb; (Lev. 25:43, 46).”⁸⁷ The verb should thus be understood in terms of caregiving, governing, even nurturing, not exploitation.⁸⁸ The suffix ַ ִּ, is a *qal* imperfect third masculine plural ending translated as “them,”⁸⁹ referring to both the male and the female.

The making of human and the subsequent benediction they received from God as related by the narrator (Gen. 1:26-28), appears to be the first time one comes across the verb, *rādāh*, as used in the Old Testament in “and let them rule/have dominion over the fish of the sea.” The verbal root is found in later Semitic dialects; not in Ugaritic.⁹⁰ Largely, it appears in two senses: one is equivalent to Akkadian *rādū*, although the Hebrew developed a specialized meaning “to tread” and is used in the *qal* stem in this sense only once (Joel 3:13), “Come! Tread for the winepress is full, the vats are overflowing.”⁹¹ The second meaning is “to rule” and is used about 22 times in the Old Testament, occurring in every section and type of context.⁹² *rādāh*, does not occur as a synonym in proximity to the more frequent verb, *māshal*, but is generally limited to human rather than divine dominion (Ps. 110:2).⁹³ The root is used for the rule of Israel over its enemies (Isa 14:2) and of the Gentile nations’ rule over subject people (Isa. 14:6).⁹⁴ *rādāh*, “have dominion” or “rule,” not strange but describes the very cultural elements in a kinship relationship.

2.5 Genesis 1:28 in the Asante-Twi Bible

AsTB(2012/2018 Version)	Literal Translation	Resemblance to MT and LXX
<i>Na Onyankopɔn hyiraa wɔn, na ɔka kyerɛ wɔn sɛ: Monwo, na monnɔre, na monye asase so ma, na monya so tumi; na monni ɛpo mu mpataa ne ewiem nnomaa ne mmoa a wɔwɔ asase so nyinaa so.</i>	And God blessed them and said, “produce offspring and become many and fill the earth and have power over it, and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over all the animals that are upon the earth.”	A combination of both the MT and LXX but the intensity in <i>bārak</i> , and the nuances in <i>pārāh</i> , <i>kāḇaš</i> , and <i>rādāh</i> , are not adequately expressed in the AsTB.

The challenge with the Akan/Twi versions of this verse is the unanimous refusal to translate the Hebrew verb, בָּרַךְ *bārāk*, “to bless” or “he blessed” with the suitable nuance, reflected in the immediate context as well as the wider context in the source text. The verb, *bārāk*, in context, is rendered in an intensive active sense. The clause can therefore be translated as “he blessed abundantly.” This implies that the rendering in the Asante-Twi Bible (AsTB), was expected to have been done to portray an adverb of degree. However, each of the AsTB versions simply rendered the verb

⁸⁷ FRETHERM, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 21.

⁸⁸ FRETHERM, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 21.

⁸⁹ BANGSUND, *You Can Read Biblical Hebrew: Simple Lessons and a Basic Dictionary*, 24.

⁹⁰ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 833.

⁹¹ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 833.

⁹² HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 833.

⁹³ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 833.

⁹⁴ HARRIS et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 833.

in simple active form, *hyiraa*, “blessed.” Meanwhile, it has been observed that in Genesis 22:17 which describes the LORD’s intended massive blessings for Abraham for his obedience, the intensive nuance has been observed in many translations⁹⁵ especially, the AsTB which renders it (Gen. 22:17) as, *hyira na mehyira woɔ*, “in blessing, I will bless you.” The verb expressed this way, shows emphasis or intensity. It is therefore recommended that the verb, *bārāk*, in v. 28 should be rendered with the same intensity inherent in that of Genesis 22:17. This paper, therefore, proposes that the text (Gen. 1:28) be rendered in the AsTB as, *Na Onyankopɔn hyiraa wɔn yie* or *Na Onyankopɔn hyiraa wɔn pa ara*, “God blessed them abundantly.”

Another difficulty has to do with how the Hebrew verbs, פָּרָה *pārāh*, “to be fruitful,” רָבַב *rāḇab*, “multiply,” or “increase” and מָלָא *mālā*, “to fill” or “to be full” are rendered in the AsTB. פָּרַו *pārū*, in the imperative statement, is translated in the AsTB as *monwo*, “give birth,” “reproduce” or “bring forth offspring.” This interpretation appears to be one-dimensional, since the Hebrew root, *pārāh*, “fruit,” is not restricted to the fruit of the womb only but also, it could imply the fruit of one’s actions. Among the Akan, procreation in marital unions is considered as a very significant event and a blessing from the Supreme Being and the ancestors whereas childlessness is regarded a major flop in one’s life’s journey. So, the clause *monwo*, “give birth” or “reproduce,” as employed in the AsTB, may create an erroneous impression that childlessness implies fruitlessness or failure. The LXX’s usage of Αὐξάνεσθε *auxanesthe*, brings to fore the idea of growth, success and impact; not necessarily, child-bearing. The study opines that the narrator might have intended to convey the idea regarding the results of human actions more than human reproduction. This study therefore proposes the clause, *monso aba*, “be fruitful,” a figurative expression which is broader in scope and not limited to child-bearing nor edible fruits that come out of trees but it encapsulates being successful, industrious, and impactful and prosperous in one’s endeavour. The purpose of this injunction is focused on the multiple of humans’ fruitful actions toward the environment, entrusted to them by the creator. Hence, the command “be fruitful,” is directly accompanied by the command, “multiply.” Thus, humankind’s fruitful actions are not intended to be a sudden occurrence and restricted to a particular geographical area but ought to be continual, extending and influencing the entire earth.

A critical examination of the Akan/Twi Bibles’ translations indicates that קָבַשׁ *kāḇaš*, “subdue” and רָדָה *rādāh*, “to have dominion” or “to rule,” do not suitably represent what the creation narrator presents in the MT. The previous edition of the AsTB (1964), for instance, renders the clause וְקָבַשׁ וְרָדָה *vekiḇšuhā, urāḏu*, as *monhye so;... na monni ...so*, “coerce ... and rule ...” The subsequent editions of the AsTB (2012 and 2018), in an attempt to revise it, present it as, *monya so tumi; na monni ... so ...*, “exercise authority/power over ... and rule over ...” The idea of coercion, force, power or authority, expressed in the Twi translations of the clause could be misinterpreted by some readers as possessing exploitative and abusive tendencies. One notices from a careful study of the Akan translations of the text that translators employed the formal equivalence or literal approach (word-for-word) in rendering the verbs, *kāḇaš*, and *rādāh*, in the Twi Bibles.

Among the Akan, the royal responsibility of a king or chief is to seek the welfare of his subjects. Among other things, community leaders are to endeavour to do everything possible to improve the lives of their people as well as protect every community member. Such is the kind of image both the OT text (Gen. 1:28) and the Akan worldview portray. In a situation where an Akan king or chief has shown gross disregard towards the welfare of the people and has demonstrated acts of abuse towards the subjects, the community members have rebelled and in some cases, have succeeded to overthrow such irresponsible leaders. This means that Akan readers would not struggle to understand this section of the text if properly translated and interpreted to portray an idea of leadership, governance, management and caregiving. However, the current translation in the

⁹⁵ English Standard Version and the New International Version translate the text (Gen. 22:27) as, “I will surely bless you”.

Akan/Twi Bibles leaves a slight lacuna which could be explored by a modern-day “economic man” to be a license for exploitation.⁹⁶

Following from the analysis, this study suggests for the AsTB: *Na montoto asase no so nnoɔma nyinaa yie: epo mu mpataa ne ewiem nnomaa ne mmoo a wɔwɔ asase soɔ nyinaa, na monhwɛ ma nnepa mfiri mu mmra*, “organize the earth very well, and all the things in it: the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth; and ensure that great and fruitful potentials come out of it.” It is hoped that this translation would go a long way to evolve new meaning and a suitable translation of “subdue and have dominion,” in the context of Akan/Twi readers of the creation narrative (Gen. 1:28). Of course when a better understanding of these terms is ascertained, it could help to determine the type of mandate that God gave to humans.⁹⁷

2.5.1 Alternative Rendering of Genesis 1:28 in Asante-Twi Bible

	Current Translation (1964/2012/2018)	Proposed/Alternative Ren- dering
AsTB:	<i>Na Onyankopɔn hyiraa wɔn, na ɔka kyerɛ wɔn sɛ: Monwo, na monnɔre, na monye asase so ma, na monya so tumi; na monni epo mu mpataa ne ewiem nnomaa ne mmoo a wɔwɔ asase soɔ nyinaa so.</i>	<i>Na Onyankopɔn hyiraa wɔn yie. Na Onyankopɔn see wɔn sɛ, “Monso aba na monnɔre nye ma wɔ asase no so. Na montoto asase no so nnoɔma nyinaa yie: epo mu mpataa ne ewiem nnomaa ne mmoo a wɔwɔ asase soɔ nyinaa, na monhwɛ ma nnepa mfiri mu mmra.</i>
English Translation:	And God blessed them and said, “produce offspring and become many and fill the earth and have power over it, and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over all the animals that are upon the earth.”	And God blessed them abundantly. And God declared to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and satisfy the earth and organize the earth very well, and all the things in it: the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth; and ensure that great and fruitful potentials come out of it.”

3. Conclusion

This study has drawn attention to inaccuracies in the rendition of selected Hebrew terminologies into the Asante-Twi Mother-tongue Bibles of Genesis 1:28. The alternative translations provided in the study are meant to provide the Asante-Twi Bible reading community with an accurate, faithful, and better translation that will enhance mother-tongue theologizing. The paper has noted that the Hebrew verbs, *bārāk*, (Gen. 1:28) translated as *hyiraa*, “blessed,” *pārāh*, as *monwo*, “give birth,” *kāḇaš*, as *monhyɛ so/monya so tumi*, “coerce” and *rādāh*, as *monni so*, “rule,” have not been adequately rendered in the AsTB. Therefore an alternative rendering has been suggested, taking into consideration the verbal stem and tense form of the word. God’s command to humans to be fruitful and multiply, implied that humans were to let their fruitful presence be felt on the whole earth. This work will therefore prompt a holistic analysis of other Ghanaian mother-tongue translations and probably lead to the revision of existing versions.

⁹⁶ M. MELLOR, “Women, Nature and the Social Construction of “Economic Man,” in *Ecological Economics*, 20, (1997): 137.

⁹⁷ OSEI-BONSU, “Rule and Subdue” in the Context of Gen. 1:26-28,” 645.

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