Decolonizing literary strategies, while on the one hand seeking to raise the awareness of the colonized, on the other hand try to counteract the colonizer’s claims and to subvert the colonizer’s imperializing methods. “Just like the strategy of subverting the master’s genre and language, the critical twinning of biblical and indigenous religious stories is an anti-imperial decolonizing method. Imperialism took the form of destroying people’s languages, history, dances, education, religions, naming systems, and other social institutions that were the basis of their self conception.” As a postcolonial African feminist biblical scholar, Musa W. Dube identifies biblical texts as propounding “values that are compatible with imperialistic tendencies. Historical evidence of modern imperialism thus categorizes the biblical texts as imperializing texts: texts that authorize the imposition of foreign institutions on one nation by another.” It is appropriate to ask two questions to the Ephesian passage, 5:21–33, in light of the methodology suggested by Dube: Does the Ephesian passage have a clear stance against the political imperialism of its time? and Does the Ephesian passage employ gender and divine representations to construct relationships of subordination and domination?

History has revealed that imperialism comes as a package of political, economic, and cultural impositions of social institutions of the dominant nation onto another. In general, colonial discourses were prominent during any colonial period as a means of propagating knowledge—producing texts that were invariably “colonialist” in their endorsement—and thus demanding conformity to the existing dominant imperial ideologies. These texts represented the social existence
of colonial relations, which were shaped by dominant imperial notions of hierarchy, competency, and absolute power and had the supreme target of consolidating the unity of the empire/imperialism.

The wife-husband relationship in Eph. 5:21–33 is closely linked with the overall *sitz im leben* of the letter to the Ephesians. In this connection, the Ephesian passages that offer insight into the *ekkle-sia*’s political response to the *Pax Romana* (imperial propaganda for Roman Rule) shed light on the kind of marital relations and gender norms that prevailed in the social context of the church at Ephesus. Furthermore, the growing awareness of the sociopolitical impact of marriage ideals among ancient historians working on the Roman family strengthens the case for viewing the marriage teaching of Ephesians as an important sociopolitical statement. This further attests to the political dynamics involved in Roman Empire imposing sociocultural norms upon its subjugates.

**The Letter to the Ephesians: A Colonial Literature**

As far as the origin and progress of Christianity is considered, Ephesus under Roman captivation played such a significant role that scholars such as Von Harnack call it “the third capital of Christianity.” Emperor worship and Roman-imposed rules in Ephesus tremendously influenced the life of Christians as well to the extent of incorporating Roman imperial social and moral codes into Christian ethics. The Roman government tried to bring about external political and economic unity; however, it was difficult to achieve social integration of all the cosmopolitan people living under Roman imperialism.

The Jews in Ephesus had been forced to absorb and affirm the sociopolitical hierarchical system that the Roman government had designed for the civil society in general. Against their religious and moral codes of living, the Jews had to negotiate constantly with the demands of Roman administration, in order to foster a peaceful living. Now, as far as the Jewish Christians were concerned, there were clear indications of heresies creeping into the Ephesian church (Eph. 4:17–32; 5:10–20) due to the overarching impact of Roman religions, imperial cult, and their social codes of living.

The emperor worship in Rome and the imperial social codes tremendously influenced the writing of the letter to the Ephesians as well. The epistle to the Ephesians reflects overtones of imperial ideology, as it struggles to keep the pressures from the colonial environment in check. As far as the author is concerned, God’s empire