

**THE BIBLE IN THE MODERN WORLD**

*Series Editors*

J. Cheryl Exum  
Jorunn Økland  
Stephen D. Moore

# DECOLONIZING GOD

The Bible in the Tides of Empire

Mark G. Brett

For centuries, the Bible has been used by colonial powers to undergird their imperial designs—an ironic situation when so much of the Bible was conceived by way of resistance to empires. In this thoughtful book, Mark Brett draws upon his experience of the colonial heritage in Australia to identify a remarkable range of areas where God needs to be decolonized—freed from the bonds of the colonial. Writing in a context where landmark legal cases have ruled that Indigenous (Aboriginal) rights have been ‘washed away by the tide of history’, Brett re-examines land rights in the biblical traditions, Deuteronomy’s genocidal imagination, and other key topics in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament where the effects of colonialism can be traced. Drawing out the implications for theology and ethics, this book provides a comprehensive new proposal for addressing the legacies of colonialism.

In medieval times, crusaders were licensed by the Christian kings, princes and potentates to reclaim lands in the name of Christianity. Pope Alexander VI extended this licence to the ‘new world’ in the *Inter caetera divinae* of 1493. Native peoples, dispossessed in the name of Christianity and God, were meant to be thankful and fully compensated by receiving the scriptures and civilization. Brett offers a different biblical perspective that might have been and what can now be. He affords us an opportunity to revisit biblical tradition and view it in a way that is more respectful to native traditions, even a way we might see the biblical traditions as demanding recognition and acknowledgment of native lands, space and spirituality. A new licence if you like.

Mick Dodson

*Director, National Centre for Indigenous Studies, ANU,  
Canberra.*

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Mark G. Brett



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FOR ANUSHA, MATTHEUS AND LIAM



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