

**THE PREACHING OF THE $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ OF ISAIAH 5:1-7
IN THE CONTEXT OF INJUSTICE IN THE
MIDDLE BELT REGION OF NIGERIA**

by
Nicodemus Pele Daniel

*Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
of
Master of Theology (Practical Theology)
in the
Faculty of Theology at
Stellenbosch University*



Supervisor: Prof. Johan Cilliers

April 2014

DEDICATION

With gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to God Almighty who created me in his image, gave me salvation, and the wisdom to put this thesis together and my mother Ladi Daniel whose effort, prayers and tears became the seed of my success.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a practical theological endeavor that evaluates church preaching as a means of promoting interdependent and harmonious relationship between God, human being and the natural environment. The study critically examines the causes of injustice to show the magnitude of its impact in Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The impact is evident in the high rate of communal and religious violence, poverty, and corruption. The data used in this study was collected from secondary sources. These include books, journals, articles, commentaries, Newspapers, the Bible and other documents relevant to the research.

The research argues that the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7 preached $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in a context that is similar to the context of Middle Belt region. That is there was injustice cause by abuse of power, unjust relationships, and inequality. This phenomenon resulted to corruption and poverty. Therefore the research proposes the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ of Isaiah 5:1-7 which is basically establishing God righteousness for one another and the commitment to enhance the well-being of one another. These can be convey by using preaching techniques like prophetic proclamation preaching, preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as pastoral activity, prophetic hope preaching, and preaching as a language of reconciliation.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis is 'n praktiese teologiese poging wat kerklike prediking as 'n middel tot die bevordering van interafhanklike en harmonieuse verhoudings tussen God, mens en die natuurlike omgewing evalueer. Die studie stel 'n kritiese ondersoek in na die oorsake van onreg, deur na die grootte van die impak daarvan in die Middel-Belt streek van Nigerië te wys. Die impak is duidelik in die hoë voorkoms van kommunale en godsdienstige geweld, armoede en korrupsie. Die empiriese data in hierdie studie is ingesamel deur die gebruik van sekondêre bronne. Ander literatuur sluit in boeke, tydskrifte, artikels, kommentare, koerante, die Bybel en ander dokumente wat relevant tot die navorsing is.

Die navorsing beweer dat die profeet Jesaja in Jesaja 5:1-7 in 'n konteks wat soortgelyk is aan die konteks van die Middel- Belt streek, $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma$ verkondig het. Dit is waar onreg veroorsaak word deur die misbruik van mag, onregverdiges verhoudings, en ongelykheid. Hierdie verskynsel het gelei tot korrupsie en armoede. Daarom ondersoek die navorsing die prediking van $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma$ in Jesaja 5:1-7, wat basies die vestiging van God se geregtigheid vir mekaar en die verbintenis om die goeie vir mekaar te verbeter, impliseer. Dit kan bereik word deur die gebruik van tegnieke soos profetiese proklamasie, die preek van $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma$ as pastorale aktiwiteit, profetiese hoop en die verkondiging van $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma$ as 'n taal van versoening.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I appreciate God Almighty, who made me in His image and likeness, and who unconditionally saved me and called me into pastoral ministry. I thank Him for guiding me through my studies and for giving me wisdom of putting this work together.

Special thanks go to my Promoter, Prof. J. H. Cilliers, for his humane and Christ-like attitude and relentless effort to see that this work is completed. Sir, I appreciate your motivation and mentorship.

I am very grateful to Prof N. Koopman (Faculty Dean) for his gentle and fatherly advice. I want to say big thank you to Prof J.M. Claassens for helping with the aspect of Old Testament of the study. My gratitude also goes to Dr. L. Hansen and Dr. N. Chiroma for guiding me through the research development and throughout the writing of this thesis.

To my dear wife, Mrs. Rahilah Nicodemus Daniel – indeed, I appreciate your love, patience, prayers, encouragement and sacrifice. I say thank you, my love. To our children Mercy, Jesse and Jerry, I appreciate your sacrifice during my absence.

I acknowledge with profound gratitude the contribution of my sister Hajara, older brothers Yakubu and Yusuf Daniel, uncle –Didam Gankon and Mr. Luka Achi. Your great sacrifice, prayers, encouragement and support can never be forgotten.

Special thanks also go to Pts. Gideon Titus for his effort, contribution, and taking care of my family in my absent, you are a friend indeed and a friend in need. My appreciation also goes to pastors and members of ECWA I Katsit, ECWA II Katsit, ECWA Church Crossing, ECWA Church Chenchuk, ECWA Church Kurminbi and the leadership of ECWA Zonkwa DCC for allowing me to go for further studies.

I also wish to express profound appreciation to Stellenbosch University and in particular the Faculty of Theology, which not only groomed me for effective service but also provided me with bursaries from the faculty account and DRC in South Africa to enable me carry out my research successfully. Lecturers from various departments also helped to build me up academically and spiritually. I also appreciate the effort and help of Bonita, the secretary of Practical Theology toward my studies in Stellenbosch University.

To my friends Mr. Bitrus Bature, Mr. Yakubu Buba, Mrs. Mercy I. Aya, Rev. Friday Kassah, Mr. Zakkah Bassahuwa, Mr. Mark Ayuba, Dr. Matthew Michael, Pst Zacs Takore, Yoms Ephraim, Kurginam Samaila, Tuduks, Solomon Dikko, and Hassan Musa. I say thank you for helping me in one way or another. May God bless you all.

I cannot forget to thank Manitza, who edited this thesis. Special thanks to Philip Hayab for doing the initial editing of some chapters. May God bless you for all that you have done to make this work a success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
OPSOMMING	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR STUDY.....	1
1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT.....	2
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
1.5 RESEARCH AIMS.....	3
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	4
1.7 STRUCTURE OF STUDY	5
1.9 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS.....	6
CHAPTER TWO	8
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION OF NIGERIA	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.2 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MIDDLE BELT REGION OF NIGERIA.....	10
2.3 CAUSES OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION	13
2.3.1 INEQUALITY	13
2.3.2 THE ABUSE OF POWER.....	19
2.3.2.1 THE ABUSE OF POWER BY THE ELITES	19
2.3.2.2 BUREAUCRATIC ABUSE OF POWER	23
2.3.3 UNJUST RELATIONSHIP	26
2.3.3.1 SUPERIOR – INFERIOR COMPLEXES RELATIONSHIP.....	27
2.3.3.2 ETHNOCENTRIC RELATIONSHIPS	30
2.4 THE EFFECTS OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION.....	31
2.4.1 VIOLENCE.....	32
2.4.2 POVERTY	36
2.4.3 CORRUPTION.....	39
2.5. CONCLUSION.....	43

CHAPTER THREE	46
LITERARY ANALYSIS OF <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> AND ITS RETHORICAL STRATEGIES IN ISAIAH 5:1-7	46
3.1. INTRODUCTION	46
3.2. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT OF <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN ISAIAH 5:1-7.....	46
3.2.1. ABUSE OF POWER	48
3.2.2. UNJUST RELATIONSHIPS	50
3.2.3. INEQUALITY	52
3.2.4. CORRUPTION	53
3.2.5. POVERTY	54
3.3. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN THE THEOLOGICAL IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA OF ISAIAH.....	55
3.3.1. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN THE PROPHET ISAIAH’S AGENDA	56
3.3.2. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> AS INTERDEPENDENT AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS ..	59
3.3.3. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN RESPECT TO GOD	59
3.3.4. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN RESPECT TO POWER	61
3.3.5. <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN RESPECT TO COMMUNITY	63
3.4. RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF ISAIAH 5:1-7	65
3.4.1. THE IMAGE OF THE VINEYARD	66
3.4.2. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS LAWSUIT	67
3.4.3. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS AN ALLEGORY	69
3.4.4. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS A PARABLE	70
3.5. CONCLUSION	73
This implies that the injustices that necessitated the preaching of <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> by the prophet Isaiah during the eighth century BCE is also found in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The next chapter will discuss preaching <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> as portrayed by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7 in the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria	74
CHAPTER FOUR.....	75
THE PREACHING OF <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN A CONTEXT OF INJUSTICE.....	75
4.1. INTRODUCTION	75
4.2. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION	75
4.3. INTERPRETING <i>μισ]πα4τ≅</i> IN THE CONTEXT OF MIDDLE BELT REGION	78
4.3.1. PREACHING AS HERMENEUTICS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT	79
4.3.2. PREACHING AS INTERPRETATION OF LISTENER’S CONTEXT.....	80

4.4. IMAGES AS TECHNIQUES FOR PREACHING $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION.....	82
4.4.1 GOD AS WAILING MOTHER	83
4.4.2. THE IMAGE OF EXILE	85
4.5. HOMILETICAL APPROACH TO PREACHING $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION	86
4.5.1. THE PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ AS PROPHETIC PROCLAMATION	87
4.5.2. PROPHETIC PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ AS PASTORAL ACTIVITY	92
4.5.2.1. Preaching as pastoral activity must gear toward peace	94
4.5.2.2. Preaching as pastoral activity should serve as stimulant.....	95
4.5.3. THE PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ AS A PROPHETIC HOPE.....	96
4.5.4. PREACHING $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ AS A LANGUAGE OF RECONCILIATION.....	100
4.6. CONCLUSION.....	103
CHAPTER FIVE	106
5.1 INTRODUCTION	106
5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	106
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	112
5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The central focus of this research study is to investigate how power is being used to control, dominate, marginalize, and as some would say, enslave people in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The research investigates how the capacities of human beings are being used to advance and serve the self and also as power to dominate others (Green 1999:111). This means that in the Middle Belt region, people use their positions, wealth, authority, and even knowledge to oppress, dominate, enslave, and take advantage of one another. Furthermore, the research investigates how the quest for access to power and resources control is resulting in demeaning, and treating other people as if they have less worth. This means that in the Middle Belt region, some people use degrading terms like ‘non-indigene’, ‘strangers’ and ‘foreigners’ to deny other people access to power and resources control. Even more, the research investigates how ethnicity and religion is used to perceive others as inferior and less human. This means that in the Middle Belt region there are those who use ethnicity and religion to marginalize and exclude others.

The study accomplishes this by adopting Wolterstorff’s theory of justice and examining one part of the Bible’s story of justice, namely the preaching by the prophet Isaiah on justice, specifically in Isaiah 5:1-7. This means the research will investigate how the Wolterstorff theory of justice and *μισθίαται* of Isaiah 5:1-7 may be a central component of justice and a theological framework for pursuance of what Dempsey (2000:151) calls “justice and righteousness that facilitate harmonious and interdependent relationships among God, humankind, and the natural world” in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR STUDY

The motivation of this study is based on my experience as a pastor in some local congregations of the ECWA Zonkwa District Church Council of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

In my ministry, I constantly witnessed how people from the grass root to the upper reaches of society at one hand used their positions, wealth, authority, and even knowledge to oppress, dominate, enslave, and take advantage of others. On the other hand, there are some people who deny other people access to power and resources control by calling them ‘non-indigene’, ‘strangers’ and ‘foreigners’. In addition, there are some who consider other people inferior and even less than human, on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. Such an attitude has caused the Middle Belt region to become a fertile ground for poverty, corruption, communal and religious violence, and various forms of insecurity.

My constant challenge and concern is how to address this problem; however, my sense of responsibility arose from three key fundamental convictions regarding the characteristics of the church. In the first instance, the Church can play a role in addressing the problem of social injustice. Wall (1987:122) posits that: “The church must take on its distinctive power and role in reversing injustice and bring human liberation into history”. In addition, Samuel and Sugden (1987:262) point out that “Churches must also address issues of evil and social injustice in the local community and wider society. The methodology should involve study, earnest prayer, and action within the normative, guidelines for Christian conduct set out in scripture.” This means the church in the Middle Belt of Nigeria has a role to play in addressing the problem of social injustice in the region.

Secondly, according to Turaki (2012) “The bulk of the work of Christian Missions in Northern Nigeria was in this area until the early 1930s.” This means that, since that time, Christianity has been the dominant religion in the Middle Belt region. During worship services on Sundays, virtually all streets in urban areas and houses in rural areas are deserted, as church attendance is very high in these areas.

Thirdly, according to Pieterse:

In every South African city and village, in every township and suburb, and right across the countryside one finds churches. If one visits the buildings where Christians congregate on any day of the week, but particularly on Sundays, one soon discovers that there are fixed times for service of worship. And usually, at these services, there is a sermon! Every week there is preaching in all communities all over the country. The church’s proclamation greatly influences our Christian communities (2001:16).

There are seemingly certain similar contextual patterns in South Africa and the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. This is because in every village, city, and suburb in the region one finds churches, and in these churches there is preaching every Sunday. In every part of the region, people gathered during the week for service of worship, and usually at these services there is a sermon. In addition, in Christian gatherings such as weekly activities, fellowships, marriages and burials, there is always time allotted for preaching. This means preaching greatly influences the people of the Middle Belt region. These facts led me to develop interest in doing research on how preaching can serve as a means of promoting justice in the region.

1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT

Christianity has been a dominant religion in the Middle Belt region for over eight decades. Although one cannot deny the fact that there has been a lot of impact over the years, especially with regards to the growth in the number of churches, the situation still looks bleak if one considers how people in the

region used their positions, wealth, authority, and knowledge to oppress, dominate, enslave, and take advantage of others and how people use ethnicity and religion to demean and exclude others. This has resulted into the region becoming a fertile ground for poverty, corruption, and ethnic and religious violence. These, and other factors, bring the impact of Christianity in the Middle Belt into consideration and pose questions on what kind of preaching Christians in the region need. Therefore, this research investigates a homiletical approach to the context of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study makes an investigation of the potential role of preaching as a means to further justice – understood as instituting God goodness and commitment to improving the good of one another – in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, specifically on the preaching of Isaiah 5:1-7. In this research, justice is defined as establishing God righteousness for the other and commitment toward enhancing the well-being of the other. In order to achieve the aims of the study, the following secondary research questions have been used as a guide to the research.

- What are the major causes and effects of injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria?
- What is the Biblical meaning, specifically in Isaiah 5:1-7, of the word “*μισ]πα4τ≅*” as related to justice?
- What are the preaching techniques used in the Bible, especially in Isaiah 5:1-7 to preach *μισ]πα4τ≅*?
- What is the task of the church in light of the existence of such injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria?
- How may *μισ]πα4τ≅* in Isaiah 5:1-7 be preached in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria and what might the potential there of be to promote justice in the region?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS

Wogaman understands preaching in a context of social injustice as speaking on the cutting edge of what is just and what is unjust in the local communities in which we find ourselves. He further argues that it means to bring the word of God to bear on key events and at crisis moments in the life of church, nation, and the world (cited in Tisdale 2010:6). Based on this, the research pursues the following aims:

- To seek out understanding of the causes and effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

- To explore the theology of justice in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah, specifically in Isaiah 5:1-7.
- To discuss biblical preaching as a key to the church's engagement with injustice. Van Seters (1989:16) maintains that: "Preaching is shape by, but also give shape to, its societal reality."
- To investigate the possibility of, and to suggest a fitting type of preaching that the context of injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria may demand. This is very important because context determines the focus and purpose of preaching. Cilliers (2004:144) indicates that: "The congregation brings the wider context within which preaching takes place (socio-economic, political, ecological, ethical, etc.) into the process sermon preparation."

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Broadly speaking, the research design that had been followed in this study is a literature study, which is a form of "unobtrusive research." According to Babbie and Mouton (2009:375): "Unobtrusive refer to data gather by means that do not involve the direct acquisition of information from research subject." Based on this, the research methodology is "content analysis", which according to Babbie (2008:320), is the study of human recorded human communication. He argues further that among the forms suitable for the study are books, magazines, webpages, poems, newspapers, songs, painting, speeches, letters, e-mail messages, bulletin board posting on the internet, laws, and constitutions, as well as any components or collections thereof. This will then be the method followed with regard to issues of the philosophical and theological nature of justice, the analysis of the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria and the nature of preaching. At the same time fulfilling the descriptive task of practical theology by Osmer that is, attending to what is going on in the Middle Belt region.

With regard to the specific texts in the Book of Isaiah, different approaches to biblical interpretation are employed as methodological means to understand the text. This study employs a multidimensional approach to biblical hermeneutics. This approach is based on the conviction that no single approach is the ultimate or only legitimate one, and it thus include reflections on the passage from the perspective of preaching. As the goal of the thesis is not on biblical hermeneutics and textual exegesis as such, existing interpretations of the text by biblical scholars are being scrutinized, which help in bringing an understanding of how the text may be employed and how the theme of justice may be dealt with in the context of the preaching of the prophet as applied to the Nigerian context.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

The research uses Osmer's (2008:4) fourfold understanding of the task of practical theology as a means to structure the study, namely:

1.7.1 *Descriptive-empirical task:* This means "attending to what is going on" in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria (Osmer 2008:34). To achieve this purpose, the study uses academic materials available at the Stellenbosch University Library, other libraries within and outside South Africa, the Bible, Bible commentaries, the internet, magazines, journals and newspapers, as well as any component that is suitable for the research.

1.7.2 *Interpretive task:* Talking about the interpretive task, Osmer (2008:82) asserts that the interpretive task seeks reasons for the occurrences that were observed in the descriptive task. Here, the interpretive guide must identify the issues rooted within the episodes, situations, and contexts he or she has observed that requires the interplay of three key characteristics; thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment. The key question now becomes, "why is this going on?" This research uses Wolterstorff theory of justice to bring about conceptual understanding of injustice and causes of injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria.

1.7.3 *Nominative task:* Concerning the normative task, Osmer maintains that the normative task asks; "what ought to be going on?" It seeks to discern God's will for present realities and it uses three methods, namely theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and good practice. This research uses the aspect of theological concept, which according to Osmer, is to draw on theological concepts, to interpret present events and realities (2008:139). Hendricks (2004:19) understands it as "hermeneutical concern that does exegesis of both the Word and the world and discerns how the Word should be proclaimed in word and deed in the world." This part then asks what the Bible, specifically Isaiah 5:1-7, says concerning the role of the church and preaching from a theological perspective; therefore, the study examines the theology of justice in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 5:1-7 will be examined to understand how the prophet Isaiah preached on justice.

1.7.4 *Pragmatic task:* The pragmatic task means that the research gives practical suggestions of the methods of preaching that can help to alleviate the challenge of injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Justice in the Bible is conveyed by different words and meanings, therefore the study is limited to examine the word *μῖσ]πα4τ≅* for justice in the Book of Isaiah 5:1-7. Sometimes, Hebrew words are used in pairs, in this case *μῖσ]πα4τ≅* and *s≅≅e5da4qa=* for justice and righteousness will also be considered in the research. As this research is specifically within the discipline of homiletics, biblical exegesis of the Isaiah text is being referred to in detail, but exegesis is not the central undertaking of the research. For exegetical insights secondary data, namely work of biblical scholars, will be employed. Finally, the study is situated within and limited to a specific context, namely the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

1.9 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One provides a general introduction and background of the study. This fits into the descriptive task of practical theology by Osmer that is attending to what is going on in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Chapter Two answers the research question of the major causes and the effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. It also fulfills one of the aims of the study of seeking out the cause and effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region. The chapter also fits into the interpretive task of the practical theology outline by Osmer that is identifying the issues rooted within the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Chapter Three answers the research questions of the Biblical meaning specifically in Isaiah 5:1-7 of the word “*μῖσ]πα4τ≅*” as it relates to justice and the preaching techniques used in the preaching of *μῖσ]πα4τ≅* in Isaiah 5:1-7. The chapter also fulfills one of the aims of the research in exploring the theology of justice in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah, specifically in Isaiah 5:1-7. It also fits the nominative task of practical theology by Osmer, which is seeking to discern God’s will for the reality of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

Chapter Four answers the research questions of what is the task of the church in light of the existence of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. In addition, it is examined how the theological insights will be preached in the Middle Belt region. It also fulfills one of the aims of the research by investigating the possibility of, and suggests a fitting type of preaching that the context of

injustice in the Middle Belt region demands. It also fit into the pragmatic task of practical theology by Osmer, practical suggestions of the preaching techniques that will help alleviate the challenge of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Chapter Five, the final chapter, comprises the summary and conclusion, as well as suggestions on areas for further research and recommendation for possible action.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION OF NIGERIA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines justice under the conceptual framework of a relationship founded on the belief of human being are created in the image of God. This implies that in the realm of relationships, human beings have responsibilities to treat one another on the basis of being created in the likeness of God. Understanding justice from the concept of relationship will, in my opinion, help to promote what Dempsey (2000:151) describes as “justice and righteousness that facilitate harmonious and interdependent relationships between God, humankind, and the natural world” in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

To achieve this goal, the study adopts the theory that justice is ultimately grounded on inherent rights (Wolterstorff 2008:4). This ‘inherent right’ is rooted in the creation of human beings in God’s image. This is in line with Myers (1999:26), belief that as bearers of the image of God, human beings are intentionally placed in a system of relationships. He further states that the relationship is first with God, then with the self, with the community, with those perceived as “other,” (somebody that is different to oneself) and with the environment. Wolterstorff (2008:4) reasons that the image of God in human beings connotes that one has a responsibility to treat the other justly, because the other is also created in the image of God.¹ This means God created human beings in his image so that they could relate with one another socially. It is worthy of note that among God’s creation, it is only human beings that have the inherent ability to relate with God, their fellow human beings, and the environment. This inherent ability originates from the creation of human beings in the image of God. Thus, justice and injustice emanates from the relationship that God placed human beings into. This relates to why Wolterstorff (2008:4) stressed that: “Right(s) are normative social relationships.” It means a right is a right with regards to someone that is somebody else than oneself. By implication, rights are toward the other and with regards to the other; that is, rights have to do with the way one treats the other who is created in the image of God. As a result, Wolterstoff considers that the normative bonds between oneself and the other are not generated by any exercise of will on one’s

¹ This study consider the “other” as everyone one come in contact with, this means through the image of God in human being all humanity are accountable to and for each other. This implies that the other whether far from or near to us, whether similar or strange to us, confronts us with the very presence of God (Root & Dean 2011:108-109).

part. The bond exists as inherent, antecedent to one's will, binding one and the other together. The other therefore comes into one's presence already standing in a normative bond.

Writing on normative bond, Wolterstorff contends that the normative bond is the form of the other bearing a legitimate claim to one doing certain things to him/her and refraining from doing others. This means that if one fails to meet certain obligations in a relationship, this violates the bond. One also breaches the bond if one does not refrain from doing things that could disrupt the association. However, violating the bond on one's part does not mean (destroying?) breaking the bond because even if one violates the bond, the other person still continues to have that legitimate claim on one as to how one treats him/her. Concerning the legitimate claim of the other against one, Wolterstorff underscores that the legitimate claim against one by the other is a claim to one enhancing the well-being of the other in a certain way. This means the action or inaction on one part to which the other has a right against is an action or inaction that would be "a good"² in his or her life.

This establishes that the study thinks about injustice based on Wolterstorff's theory that is basically grounded on what he understands as constituting (a) *wrong*. The theory posits that it is on the account of his or her worth that the other comes into one's presence bearing legitimate claims against one as to how one treats him or her. It is further argued that the right of the other against one could refer to actions and restraints from actions that are required of one because of respect for the other. To fail to treat the other as she or he has the right to, one's treatment of others may demean them, as if they were of less worth than they are (2008:5).

More notably, Wolterstorff (2008:5) contends that to demean the other is to wrong him or her. If I fail to treat him/her in the way that he/she has right to be treated, I am guilty and the other is wronged. My moral condition is that of being guilty; the other's moral condition is that of having been wronged. By this token, Wolterstorff considers injustice to be the wrong done to someone. This implies to wrong someone is an act of injustice to that person. Accordingly, Wolterstorff holds that rights are boundary makers for our pursuit of the good life. This means that one is never to enhance the good in someone's life, one's own, another person's or that of many others, at the cost of wronging someone or other, depriving him/her of that which she/he has a right to. I am never to pursue life-goods at the cost of demeaning someone. Doing so, according to Wolterstorff, constitutes an act of injustice. This suggests that if by pursuing a course of action one deprives someone of some good to which they have a right, thereby wronging them, such an action is not worth doing.

² According to Wolterstorff (2008:4): "The goods to which one has a right are all states of affairs within one's life or history that contribute positively to the worth of that life or history, making for its being as good a life or history as it is." The idea is state of "shalom" which according to Wolterstorff is the state of flourishing in all dimensions of one's existence: in one's relationship to God, in one's relation to oneself. Therefore justice has something to do with the fact that God's love for each and everyone of God's human creatures takes the form of God desiring the shalom of each and everyone (Wolterstorff 2008:87).

It is also inferred that rights have been described, and correctly so, in [my] judgment, as “trumps” (Wolterstorff 2008:5). The assumption is that a wide range of life-goods can be achieved by pursuing some course of action; but such a pursuit should not amount to depriving others some good to which they have a right, thereby wronging them and it is this that is referred to as the good which undermines the other. Akin to Wolterstorff’s theory of injustice is Hughes’ (2009:16) understanding of injustice, according to which injustice is “[f]ailing to treat people in a way they expect to be treated. Thus injustice is an affront done to one as a human being.” Hughes’ central concern is that it is an affront to have one’s needs ignored, an achievement belittled, or an ability not respected. He concludes that injustice is not so much the absence of justice, but the failure to be just.

In summary, Wolterstorff’s idea of justice is to be a constitution of rights where a society is just in so far as its members enjoy the goods to which they have a right; that is, a society is just when its members take the responsibility of enhancing the well-being of one another. It is also believed that rights should ultimately be grounded in the respect for the worth of every person. To Wolterstorff, the worth of every person is constituted by his/her being created in the image God. Injustice to Wolterstorff therefore shows a constitution is wrong where it fails to treat the other as she or he has a right to. Apparently, one’s failure of treating the other in such a manner is to demean him or her, to treat him or her as if they are of less worth and to demean the other is to wrong him or her.

This point is significant to this study because understanding justice in terms of having the responsibility of enhancing the well-being of one another and injustice in terms of failure to enhance the well-being of one another could promote harmonious and interdependent relationships with God (who is the source of every human being), with fellow human beings, and with the natural environment (in this case, the Middle Belt region of Nigeria).

2.2 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MIDDLE BELT REGION OF NIGERIA

It is essential to offer a brief history of the Middle Belt region in order to give background to the part of Nigeria in which the study focuses. In addition, it is basic because the phenomenon of injustice in the Middle Belt region in one way or another has some roots in the history of Nigeria as whole (see Wolterstorff’s view on injustice in 2.1). In reference to the history of the Middle Belt region, the socio-political setting of Nigeria can be geographically and culturally divided into two broad major areas; the northern and the southern parts of the region. From 1 January 1900, these two major areas

operated as separate protectorates until 1 January 1914, when the two protectorates were amalgamated by Lord Lugard.³

After the amalgamation however, the two protectorates were administered politically separate from each other. In 1954, a Federal Constitution created Nigerian federalism with autonomous Regional Governments; North, West and East. The Western societies had large ethnic groups, such as the Yoruba, Edo, Ijaw, and so forth, while the Eastern societies had large ethnic groups such as the Igbo, Efik, Ibibio, Anang, etc. Consequently, Northern Nigeria was taken as two large regions consisting of two broad ethnic groups: There is, in the far North, the Hausa land and Bornu, which constituted predominantly Muslim groups; and the Southern part, designated as the Middle Belt, which was predominantly traditional and made up largely of non-Muslim groups.

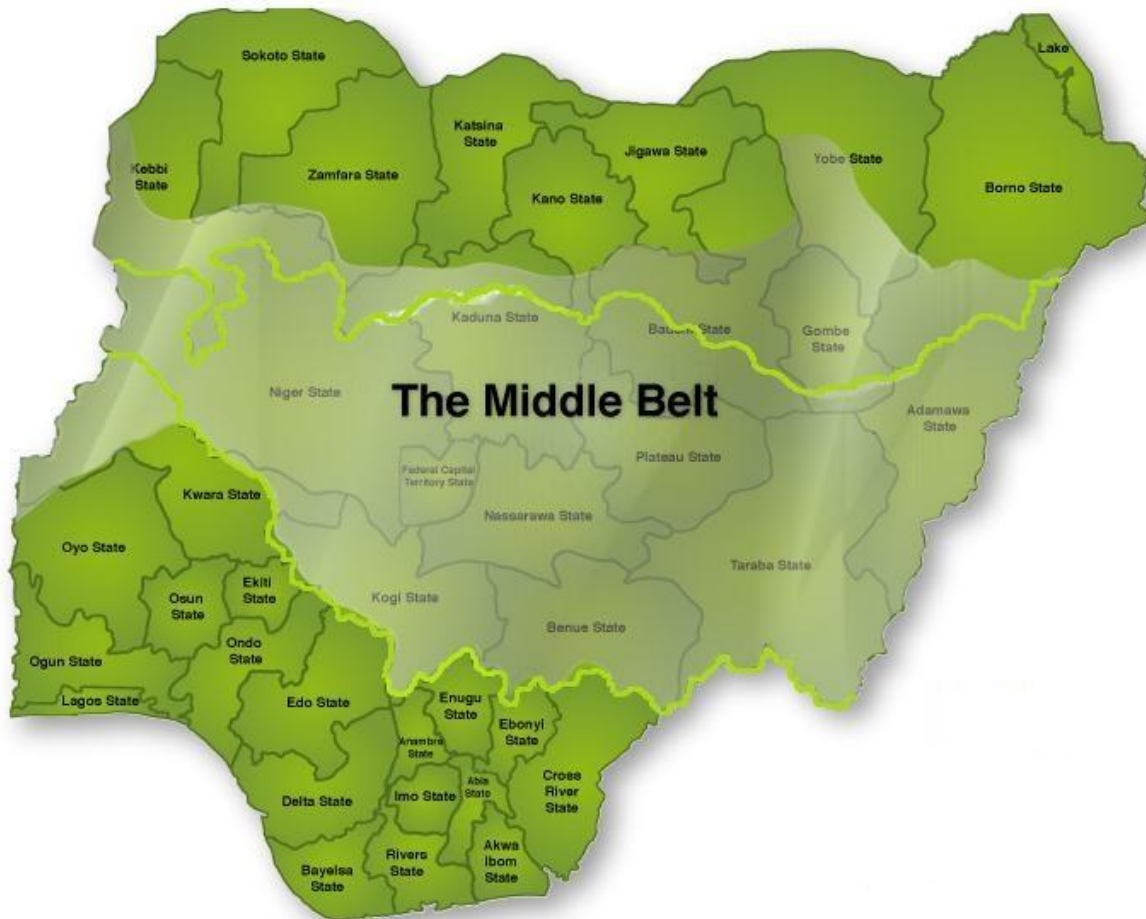
The communities in the Middle Belt region form a belt of minority ethnic groups that lie between the larger Hausa/Fulani belt of the North and Igbo, Yoruba and minority ethnic groups of the South. Ewuga (2006:199) understands the Middle Belt to be constituted by a collection of ethnic nationalities that inhabit central Nigeria. As a matter of fact, these communities are called the *Middle Belt* because they form a geographical cultural buffer region in the middle, between Northern Nigeria, which is predominantly Muslim and Southern Nigeria, which is predominantly Christian.

According to Turaki (2012), the traditional peoples of the Middle Belt were classified as Benue-Congo or Semi-Bantu. Many also were classified as belonging to the Chadic group. Turaki further claims that generally, all the non-Muslim groups exhibit similar characteristics in culture, language, religion, customs, physical features, social values and organization. This probably indicates that, in the distant past, they might have had the same origin. He continues to state that their socio-political organization lacked centralized authority, administrative machinery and constituted judicial institutions, but had its own variant forms, based upon democratic and consensual and communal principles of kinship or blood-group. Equally important, Gwamna (2010:20) describes the Middle Belt as a region that “[c]omprises several ethnic communities that share so many cultural, economic and political characteristics apart from their geographical location”.

³Sir (later Lord) Frederick Lugard played a key role in Nigeria’s colonial history. He was originally being brought to Northern Nigeria in 1895 from Uganda for military campaigns by George Goldie of the chartered Royal Niger Company and was the man who was responsible for the military conquest of northern Nigeria. It was as a result of Lugard’s successful military campaign in the north that on January 1, 1900, he was appointed the first British High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, and then in 1914 he became the Governor-General of colonial Nigeria, a position he held until 1919 (The Nation Archives September, 2031)

Against this background, this study considers the Middle Belt region of modern Nigerian federal states to be Plateau, Southern Bauchi, Southern Gombe, Southern Kaduna, Adamawa, Nassarawa, Kogi, Niger, Taraba, and Benue. The map that follows shows the location of the Middle Belt region in

Nigeria:



THE MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING
THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

Sources: News Rescue (2012) and Logams (2004)

The region consists of well over 250 ethnic groups concentrated in these States (Turaki, 2012). Accordingly, an Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Actionaid⁴ (2008:2) reports that “[t]he Middle-Belt ... [may be] described as consisting of the areas with the highest concentration of

⁴ ActionAid is an International Non-Governmental organization registered in the Netherlands and headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa. Action Aid International works in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Of these country programs, affiliates or associates, 25 are in Africa and are led by Africans. All country programs have since 2003 been operating as equal partners with equal say on how they operate.

minority ethnic groups in the North in particular and Nigeria as a whole in terms of the culture, population, religious beliefs, language, territorial claims and land ownership.”

The fact that the Middle belt region is judged as having the highest concentration of minority ethnic groups, especially with regards to multiple religious beliefs, cultures, territorial claims, and land ownership in the North, and Nigeria as a whole, form the background to this study because these elements, it could be argued, make the region a breeding ground for injustice. Meanwhile, the next section of the study takes a closer look at the causes of injustice, which in one way or the other are grounded in the aforementioned phenomenon.

2.3 CAUSES OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

Based on Wolterstorff’s theory and Hughes’ understanding of injustice, the study contemplates the following factors; inequality, abuse of power, unjust relationship, superior – inferior complex, and ethnocentric tendencies, among others, to be the dominant causes of injustice in the Middle Belt region. An element that is synonymous to injustice, as several studies have shown, is the occurrence of inequality. The ensuing section will reflect more closely on inequality.

2.3.1 INEQUALITY

This study identifies inequality as one of the causes of injustice in the Middle Belt region because it portrays and encourages the attitude of demeaning and treating the other as if they were less worthy. Arguably, inequality accounts for injustice because it does not only mean the absence of justice, but also connotes the failure to act justly. Studies have shown that inequality in the Middle Belt region is often expressed through exclusion, like using demeaning words to describe certain people as ‘non-indigenes’, ‘strangers’, or ‘settlers’⁵. This situation promotes injustice because the aim is to alienate

⁵Most states and local governments do not issue guidelines for defining who is an “indigene”. In some cases, this leaves families who have lived in an area for generations unable to prove their sense of belonging or that they are among the acclaimed inhabitants. Elsewhere, the original or acclaimed inhabitants of a place are untraceable. Individuals, especially in rural areas, lack birth certificates. Government and private archives shed no light. Complex histories of migration, land use, and intermarriage only confuse things even more. Troubles start with the award of so-called indigeneity certificates. These pieces of paper, which each of Nigeria’s 776 LGAs issue, identify a person as an indigene of a particular locality. Accessing land, schools, civil service jobs, or public office without one can be almost impossible. At best, governments use fuzzy paper trails and dubious myths when awarding them. At worst, they fall back on animus, fraud, and abuse of power. Without written guidelines, local officials can have almost unfettered discretion. Bona fide applicants are turned away because of their religion and appearance, or handed papers solely on those grounds. Often, the process becomes a toll-keeping exercise, in which corrupt officials christen anyone who pays a bribe ‘an indigene’. The well-heeled buy up certificates from multiple LGAs and then pick and choose among them like passports to wealth (Sayne

the normative bonds between the self and the other, by acting in a provocative manner despite the option of refraining from those actions that could demean and result in the other being treated as disadvantaged.

Writing about the meaning of inequality, Nancy Birdsall (2005) asserts that “[i]nequality is a relative concept.” It means the term has different meanings and interpretations, depending on the context in which it is used. In this vein, this study cogitates inequality in the Middle Belt region is related to what Abdu (2010:117-118) calls “horizontal inequality”. Accordingly, Abdu posits that a horizontal inequality is a situation between culturally-defined groups. This inequality is different from normal inequality based on individuals or households and thus much broader. He argues that horizontal inequality could take on an economic, social, political or cultural dimension and has a strong propensity to generate resentment and conflict. With reference to horizontal inequality in the Middle Belt region and Northern Nigeria, Abdu posits that horizontal inequalities, real or perceived, have been part of the injustice that result in conflicts in the Middle Belt region and northern Nigeria. It is often expressed among ethnic groups, especially between perceived ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ ethnic groups.

Equally central, Abdu (2010:118) posits: “Since politics in Nigeria is organized around resource distribution and allocation, there is a tendency for ethno-religious contestation to remain very high, especially in multi-ethnic communities or in areas where ethnic and religious boundaries tend to coincide.” This is why the study views inequality in the Middle Belt region as a failure to act justly in terms denying the other access to power, public work opportunities, access to material things like electricity, water, schools, health care services, freedom to vote and be voted for.

Alubo (2011:41) shares a similar view with Abdu when he alleges that in central Nigeria, the Middle Belt region, there has been a long standing struggle between minority ethnic groups and the Hausa-Fulani domination. He further argues that it is often immediately more crucial and materially beneficial to have autonomous access to land, political appointments and a voice. He laments however, that these ambitions sometimes bring conflict between people who were comrades in the struggle against the dominant ethnic groups. This suggests the struggle for inequality in the Middle Belt is in most cases a struggle for equal distribution of opportunities, and access to material things, as mentioned previously.

Inequality in Nigeria and the Middle Belt region in particular, can be traced back to the British Colonial Administration. Turaki (2012) advances that “[t]he colonial federal structure of Nigeria

faced serious socio-political problems, such as, the structural imbalance of regions and inequality of ethnic groups, revenue allocation, franchise and citizenship.” He further argues that smaller groups were always at a disadvantageous position, at best in a clientele position (subordinate position); and political rewards or services tended to be dominated by the powerful and dominant groups, while the weaker and smaller groups did not get a fair share or participation.

Elsewhere, Turaki (1993:144) contends that “[r]egional and national politics between the years 1946 to 1966 were dominated by the major ethnic groups—the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West, and the Igbo in the East.” This was how the British colonial administration in each region created dominant and privileged groups, which was to become the root cause of the inequality that gave birth to injustice in Nigeria. The reason is because these dominant and privileged groups controlled the regional government and did not wish to allow the other groups fair representation or access to government positions. Alubo shares a similar view when he says:

The ethnic tripod to which the colonial powers granted independence is central to persistent questions of ethnicity, sense of belonging and crises of citizenship. This is precisely why the most of the discourse on ethnicity and citizenship has been dominated by considerations of majority and minority and relative power differences between the two groups (2011:31).

In the same manner, Ayua (2006:64) identifies: “Conflict in Nigeria are based on the grievances of ethnic minorities or majorities depending on the extent to which the government whether at the national, state or local government level unfairly distributes resources among groups.” This entails that the major aspect of inequality in Nigeria is based on the distribution of resources. This also explains why, after independence, many of these ethnic groups, hitherto subsumed under others, began to agitate for their own identity. These agitations include issues of political representation, as well as access to and control of resources (Alubo 2011:37).

With reference to how colonial administration brought about inequality in the Middle Belt region, Alubo (2011:37) accounts that the situation is glaringly apparent because it is the region that harbors the largest number of ethnic nationalities and language groups often put at more than 250. These ethnic groups, whose identities and culture are completely different from the dominant Hausa-Fulani, were subjugated to the emirates system and other forms of political structures of the Islamic/Hausa North by the colonial administration.

Turaki (1993:63) also comments on what happened, noting that the feeling of superiority of the Fulani ruling class and Muslims over the non-Muslims was an established administrative principle. He further states that the fact that this cultural or class prejudice was incorporated into the administrative

practice of the Colonial Administration made matters worse administratively, politically and socially for the non-Muslims. This supports why Ewuga (2006:199-200) writes: “The dominant power within and around the Middle Belt is the Hausa-Fulani. They have accumulated so much momentum over time and have used it to penetrate the kernel of the Middle Belt in many ways, by gradually neutralizing the Belt to a point of worry.”

It is indicative that it is injustice caused by inequality that had resulted in ethnic groups in northern Nigeria begin agitating for a region called the Middle Belt. Originally, the quest for the region started as movement under the name the Non-Muslim League of Northern Nigeria.⁶ The name was later changed to the Middle Zone League (MZL), for fear of being seen as religiously biased. The motive behind the establishment of the movement was the formation of a political organ that could speak on behalf of the non-Muslim groups in the North of Nigeria. Another purpose was to serve as a political instrument that could bargain and solicit the political interests of the non-Muslim groups in the Northern system (Turaki 1993:160).

The central concern, in my opinion, is predicated on the disparity that was more or less the problem of injustice. Actionaid (2008:2) also understands the situation this way when they report that the minority political identity in the Middle Belt developed as a response to the dominance of Islamic groups in politics and society in the North. Actionaid notes that the Middle Belt was described in the pre-independence period as a region that constituted opposition to the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) government; an opposition that was reinforced by anti-Islamic sentiments, developed from their identity as Christians.

With the creation of some states⁷ in the Middle Belt region, the issue of Hausa-Fulani domination over other ethnic groups was reduced to only a few parts of the region. The issue of intra-regional inequality became another major source of unfairness however, that resulted in incessant conflicts in the region. Alubo observes the situation and explains it thus:

The same central region which attempted to forge a common consciousness and identity for the purpose of collective emancipation from Hausa-Fulani domination has also experienced the most violent forms of intra-regional ethnic cleansing. Rather than the smaller ethnic

⁶The term “Non-Muslim group” refers to the use in colonial times to describe those ethnic groups who were non-Muslim. It conveys the colonial emphasis on social differentiation and stratification of Muslim and non-Muslim groups (Akpar 2012:39).

⁷ The Nigerian state is first and foremost an institution for maintaining order, but it constitutes a form of relationship between different contending groups. In this way, it walks a tight rope and simultaneously refracts and attracts conflicts and contestations by perceived justice and injustice (Alubo 2011:54).

groups uniting against the perceived Hausa-Fulani enemies, these groups have engaged each other in wars (2011:39).

For example, with reference to Wukari Taraba State, Alubo again makes the following observations:

For the Tiv, it is about the right not only to vote but also to be voted for as well as participation in the decision making. They also demand representation in Wukari Traditional Council. But for the Jukun who feels the state belongs to them the issue is about self-determination, even when outnumbered. As a respondent put it ‘would we become slaves in our homes because they outnumber us?’ (2011:35).

Other findings also reveal that most of the conflicts and violence in Plateau State are in one way or the other connected to injustice caused by inequality.⁸ Actionaid studies the situation explains thus:

The outbreak of the September 7, 2001 violent conflict was a response by the contending groups in Jos to the appointment of a Hausa-Fulani, Alhaji Muktar Mohammed as Coordinator and Chairman of the Monitoring Committee of the National Poverty Eradication Programme for the Jos North Local Government Area. In 1998, the same Alhaji Muktar had won elections to preside over the affairs of the Jos North Local Government Council as its Chairman, but was forced to step down, as he could not defend the accusation of falsifying his credentials. The appointment was resisted by the 'indigenes' because they believed that Alhaji Muktar was a 'non-indigene' Hausa-Fulani from Gombe State. (2008:13).

In general, cases of unfairness caused by inequality find expression through words such as “non-indigene”, “settlers”, and “strangers”, which are often derogatory and meant to exclude and relegate some people or ethnic groups from having access to power or distribution of resources.⁹ In this regard, Alubo identifies the problem by saying:

⁸The risks of violence may be especially high in places where those who have little are also politically marginalized, and where groups are roughly equal in size. Some of Middle Belt’s worst indigene-settler violence hotspots are Jos, and Wukari LGA Taraba State (Sayne 2012:3).

⁹According to Akpar (2012:40-41), ‘indigene’ is merely an ingeniously invented word used in Nigeria to define natives of a particular place as distinct from other citizens of Nigeria found in that locality. He further argues that it is an identity platform used to target and discriminate against fellow Nigerian citizens. In most cases, it rests squarely on an ethnic definition of the parties in the conflict and on land. The conflict involves a competition for access to resources between those that consider themselves indigenes and those that are regarded as more recent settlers.

The nature of violence in Plateau is defined by the fallout of the contestations between the indigenes on the one hand, and the settlers on the other. The issues relate to perceived advantages about who is favoured and/or marginalized and how each group attempts to attain what it considers as its entitlement. Central here are political appointments with all the potent for creating opportunities; who should or should not run for political offices and government's perceived relations with the groups. These issues have led to several waves of violence (2011:71).

It is not only in Plateau state that discrimination based on inequality causes violence however, but virtually in every area of the Middle Belt region. According to Actionaid:

Where communities lack representation, the fear of domination and associated feelings of marginalization normally generate conflict. The unrepresented communities therefore find it easy to mobilize support and propagate their grievances. But those who are represented would also find such moves threatening to their hegemony. The responses devised by Communities to deal with the situation include the legitimization of control of political power by those who have it using the factor of 'indigeneship' status and the exclusion of those labeled 'settlers' (2008:viii-ix).

Gwamna (2010:32) also notes how injustice as a result of inequality is one of the root causes of unrest in the Middle Belt region when he writes that conflicts are fundamentally linked to the question of rights of ethnic nationalities, particularly in the context of oppression. He emphasizes that attempts at construction and deconstruction of both ethnic and religious identities aggravates tension, which further strains cohesion as various groups seek to assert, and free themselves from perceived oppression, marginalization, neglect and underdevelopment. He continues his argument that this has particularly been the case in Jos and other Plateau areas, Southern Kaduna, Igbirra-Bassa, Tafawa Balewa, Tiv-Kuteb and Jukuns, among others.¹⁰ In relation to this, Gaya summarizes the whole scenario of injustice based on inequality in the Middle Belt as follows:

The Tiv people are perceived and treated as settlers, immigrants and incomers in Taraba, Nassarawa, and Plateau states, etc., by those who contend these areas as their sphere of influence and jurisdiction is, and should, be restricted to Benue state. This result in lands being seized from the Tiv rural farmers, fanning the embers of conflict in return. The Egbura (sic) maintain that Toto Local Government Area (LGA) is their land, and all others, namely

¹⁰Igbirra-Bassa is Kogi state, Tafawa Balewa is in Southern Bauchi, while Tiv-Kuteb and Jukun are in Taraba state.

the Bassa and Gbagyi are settlers, with deep implications for land ownership and possession (2006:138).

The situation is recurrent in other states of the Middle Belt region. For instance, in Plateau state, the Gamai have maintained that the Hausa / Fulani and Jarawa in Yelwa-Shendam are settlers. In Wase, the Hausa / Fulani have referred to other ethnic groups as settlers who should not be granted recognition in politics. The Fulani, who need extensive land for the grazing of their livestock, are also perceived to be settlers throughout most of the Middle Belt region. In addition, as can be seen from the foregoing views, one prominent ground responsible for continuous conflict because of perceived injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria centers around the use, abuse and lack of access to power, which deserves critical reflection and will be the focus of the next section of the study.

2.3.2 THE ABUSE OF POWER

Campbell and Cilliers (2012:63-64) suggest that power is a vague and complex concept, which makes it virtually impossible to find two thinkers who completely agree on its nature. Therefore, some definitions of power relevant to the study will first be considered. First, Green (1999:108) defined power as: “Capacity, ability, capability, and efficacy,” noting that “power is the capability of acting or producing an effect.” Similarly, Agang (2011:187) posits that “power includes terms like, authority, control, influence, rule, dominance, force, capacity, nation, or sovereign states.” Power could also be designated from political, social, military, ideological, cultural, theological, and numerous other perspectives (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:63). Based on these definitions, this study interprets power to be position, wealth, knowledge, authority, and any privilege that gives one an advantage over the other.

Furthermore, in this study, power is viewed from two perspectives; that is, power in terms of influence, authority and control. The idea is how power can be used or is being used as a capacity or ability to influence the behavior of others or the course of events. The other aspect that applies to power in this study is power in terms of the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way. The following section takes a closer look on the aspects of power highlighted above.

2.3.2.1 THE ABUSE OF POWER BY THE ELITES

The abuse of power by the elite in this study focuses on power in terms of the capacity or ability to influence the behavior of others or the course of events. With reference to the abuse of power by the elite in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, the end of colonial activity with Hausa-Fulani hegemony

heralded the emergence of the indigenous elite bourgeoisie in the region. This refers to the rise to prominence of certain people within the ethnic groups that make up the Middle Belt region, who have the capacity or ability to influence the behavior of others or course of events in the region. These emergent elites, it seems, are always in stiff competition with one another for control of power. Some of them exploit ethnic divisions, while others capitalize on religious divides as a tool for advancing their political, economic, and selfish ambitions. This is one of the reasons the study contemplates injustice in the Middle Belt to be mostly rooted in the abuse of power by a few individuals called ‘elites’, who are privileged to be in positions of authority, control, and influence in the region.¹¹

This is not a reference to excuse the abuse of power and injustice among those at the lower echelon – as has been showed in 2.3.2.2 and as Garba (1995:83) believes: “Nigerians at the grassroots level can hardly be held accountable for the political crisis in which we now find ourselves.” The view is that the contribution of Nigerians at the grassroots toward inequality is very minimal however, compared to that of the elite. Related to this position, is Hunter’s (2010:41) interpretation that the works of world-making and world-changing positive or negative influences on the world are, by and large, the work of elites; as gatekeepers who provide creative direction and management within the spheres of social life. He argues that even where the impetus for change draws from popular agitation, it does not gain traction until it is embraced and propagated by the elite. Garba shares a similar view when he suggests that:

The failure and successes of any nation reflect the aspirations and political astuteness of the elite in that country. If the elite are dishonest, selfish, myopic and preoccupied with political gamesmanship, their example will affect the standards of the national character of its citizens. If, conversely, the elite are not swayed by nepotism, are progressive, nationalistic and enterprising, their qualities can constitute the very hallmark of leadership, and constructively guide the nation’s policy. It is said that a nation’s elite, be they despicable or eminently honourable, are the mirror image of its citizen (1995:47).

The implication of this submission is that in every society, it is the elite that to a large extent determines what happens, be it positive or negative, because they have the capacity or ability to influence the behavior of others or the course of events. In a precise manner, Garba considers the Nigerian elite to be:

¹¹When power is abused and misused, justice, peace, human right and trust are replaced by fear and human power no longer serves or works for the dignity of all (Kajom 2012:86).

Those in the corridors of power are representative of the people, in every sense. They are people who belong to the national elite, and in most case, are professionals in different fields of human endeavors. These people are the embodiment of Nigerian society. It is they who give out our contracts, take the census, run the elections, conduct the common entrance examination, run military, police, and customs posts and process foreign exchange papers at the Central Bank and other banks. They, too, are responsible for scholarships, import licenses, expatriate quotas and gamut of bureaucracy that spans the network of federal, state, and local governments across the nation (1995:100).

In performing the aforementioned tasks, the elite inevitably determines how effective any government can function. In the same breath, they can define the success or failure of a government, because they are the decision-makers; those who influence everyday lives by their decisions, recommendations and policy changes. This is the class of people in the Nigerian Middle Belt that this study considers as elite. They are those who have shown themselves to have the aptitude or ability to influence the behavior of others or events of societies in the region. They are the ones who in one way or another represent society in its decision making. Thus, every change, whether positive or negative, is mostly associated with them. Consequently, the abuse of credibility and authority by this category of people could bring about feelings of inequality, which leads to injustice in the region. This means injustice in Middle Belt region is dependent on how the elite utilize their influence to demean and treat others as if they have less worth.¹² Garba, a former military officer from this region and considered to be a member of the elite, laments over how the elite, although few in number, are the root cause of injustice:

The argument is that Nigeria is what it is today because the national elite, which constitute less than five percent of the estimated one hundred and fifty million people (1991 census figures), have made various critical decisions that have not served the greater national interest. They have striven to establish a national consensus on values that serve only their own marginal interest (1995:101).¹³

From the Christian faith perspective, Agang highlights some principles that the elites of the Middle Belt region need in order to appropriately advocate for equality:

¹²The emphasis on the abuse of power by the elite is basically on how power as influence, authority and control is being manipulated to satisfy the desires of a few individuals in the Nigerian Middle Belt region.

¹³According to Abdu, the elite, although few in number, cut across ethnic groups and social classes and play critical roles in the mobilization of ethnic identity in achieving their selfish interests. The elite are mostly found in the critical sectors of the society; the military, the economy, the bureaucracy, and a host of others. They often manipulate this identity in competition for political power and privileges. This group capitalizes on existing inequality and differences and claim to address them. In addressing the issues collectively, the benefits are hardly distributed evenly (2010:24).

I believe that righteousness, justice, and the fear of the Lord are high principles that sustain and maintain any government. It is these principles that prompt and inspire the rich, the elite, and the representative of the masses to make decisions on behalf of their needy citizen. It is only when the elite strictly observe these high moral values that the poorest of the poor will find pastures, and the needy will lie down in safety (2010:13).

The assumption is that the elite in the Middle Belt region lack some of the principles Agang mentions, which is why justice, especially in term of expending power to enhance the well-being of others, is absent. This leads to Tenuche's¹⁴ position that:

The elite who are usually at the root of identity mobilization also benefit maximally when success is achieved. Whatever concession is given to minority groups is largely appropriated by the elite group for example contract awards among other benefit. Contradictions, restiveness and social conflict are rife even within the minority groups, as benefits of their struggle do not get to the grass root. This tends to explain the tenacity with which the elite groups engage in negative mobilization of identities first to divert attention of its restive less privileged group from itself and second as an avenue for capital accumulation in a state (2006:230).

Gwamna (2010:76) shares the concern previously expressed when he notes that it is the elite who manipulate religion and ethnicity to serve their personal interests. He further states that these elites or bourgeoisies exploit the vulnerability of the poverty stricken and illiterate masses, whipping up the religious and ethnic sentiments that they so cherish, in order to unleash violence against their fellow masses.

The foregoing accounts for why some political parties in the Middle Belt are formed along ethnic and religious lines. Through this, the elites easily convince the masses to believe that they are fighting for their share of the national cake, whereas they are to help the masses to 'bake the cake'. Thus, Azgaku

¹⁴But the most protracted conflicts in some places in the Middle Belt region like Jos, Kaduna, and Benue, all have elite political malfeasance at their roots, whether it be election rigging, divisive use of identity politics, graft, land grabs, or high-level organized crime. Some elected officials and traditional rulers have long histories of stoking tensions, mobilizing civilian violence to secure political footing, or to extort favours from the state is also a recognized part of the political playbook in Nigeria, within certain negotiated boundaries. Some communities have seen well-organized attacks last for days, which suggest high levels of planning, mobilization, and finance (Sayne 2012:7-8).

submits, like other writers have also cited, that the abuse of power by the elites in Middle Belt is the bane of injustice that resulted in conflicts and violence in the region. He notes:

There is nothing inherently conflicting about ethnic and religious differences. They lead to strife only when they are politicized and it is the elite who politicize in their quest for power and political support. Ethnicity and religion has been and is still used by the elite to cause disaffection and to win political power and have access to natural resources (2006:89).

Although through abuse of power the elite constitute the highest contribution of injustice in the Middle Belt region, people at the lower echelon of the society in one way or another also seem to contribute toward inequality through the manipulation of power. The next section examines the abuse of power at the grass root level of the society in the Middle Belt region.

2.3.2.2 BUREAUCRATIC ABUSE OF POWER

Bureaucratic misuse of power in this study views power in terms of capacity to act in an oppressive manner. It is basically an abuse of power or abuse of power at the grass root level or lower. This is the kind of misapplication of authority that people encounter daily at places like hospitals, schools, bus stops, markets, police stations, offices and in every aspect of life in the society. For example, being a medical practitioner, lawyer, business personnel, pastor, engineer, teacher, president, military personnel and the like, is considered in this study as having a position of power. Hughes (2009:14) asserts that power is the ability to produce intended or desired effects in our relationships to nature or other people. This signifies that power in terms of the capacity or ability to do or act in a certain way is important in the realm of relationships, because it produces the desired effect, which could enhance the well-being of another.

Campbell and Cilliers (2012:64) warned however, that: “Power itself is neutral and formal, almost indifferent. But seldom remains indifferent. It becomes good and necessary, but also bad, excessive, or abusive, through the objects to which it is applied.” This suggests power could be used to enhance the well-being of one another and can also be used to demean and treat others as if they were less than human. Consequently, justice or its absence depends on how power is being used. When power is used to enhance the well-being of another, the result is justice. A society becomes just when people at the lower echelon utilize their authority to render to people the right they deserve and possess.

Writing about human rights, Wolterstorff (2008: 23) declares that: “One’s rights consist of those entities to which one stands in the relation of having a right to them.” He argues that the only status one needs in order to possess human rights, the only credential required, is that of being a human being. Thus, justice is obtained when people exercise their power to serve human beings, irrespective of who they are. For example, it is justice when politicians expend their power through politics to

ensure equal distribution of the wealth of the state. So too, justice occurs when doctors, lawyers, pastors, and the like use their power to promote the well-being of humanity.

Injustice, on the other hand, comes about when power is exercised deliberately to deny a person or group of persons the rights they are entitled to. Campbell and Cilliers (2012:64) identify that “[w]hen power is employed to dominate or control-for instance in the realm of politics,-the result can be total destruction or eradication of the object to which it is directed.” The study submits that when the objects of injustice are human beings (almost always the case), the outcome is truly evil, as people may be dominated, controlled or in fact dehumanized. Human dignity is thus sacrificed where justice, unity, and understanding are inverted through the operation of power. Also, Hunter (2010:4) posits that: “The abuse of power and corruption through self-aggrandizement result in the exploitation of other human beings and destruction of the resources of the social and natural environment.”

This connotes that, in the realm of relationships, it is injustice when the capacities of human beings are exploited to advance and serve the self and as a means to dominate others. More specifically, it is injustice when politicians exert the power gained through people’s votes to accumulate wealth, rather than render service to the human beings they supposedly represent. It is considered injustice when medical practitioners, lawyers, teachers, pastors, or anyone in a position of authority, explores the option to make use of their vantage positions for selfish reasons, instead of enhancing the well-being of their fellow human beings. In my observation, this is how people in the Middle Belt continue to wrong one another in the region. As far as studies suggest, bureaucratic misuse of authority is one of the ways in which some people demean and treat others as if they were not worthy and equal members of the region. Power, in one sense of the word, is being exerted to deny, exploit, take advantage of, or even enslave others.

For example, one of the common bureaucratic exploitations of the weak is “*bada kaka*” and “*adashe*”, which is nothing far from enslavement as it takes advantage of others in the Middle Belt region. According to Yoms (2013:38-39), *bada kaka* (gift after harvest) is a Hausa term for the borrowing of a certain amount of money or goods by farmers from creditors before or during the planting season, which would be paid with farm produce worth about a 100 percent or more after the harvest. With reference to *adashe*, a Hausa term for mutual contribution, it is the borrowing of money, goods or services by individuals to meet a certain need, which would be repaid within a stipulated time. Sometimes one pays with 20 and sometimes even 30 percent interest.

The superficial aim of ‘ba da kaka’, according to Yoms, is to aid poor farmers, especially those who do not have enough resources to start the farming season.¹⁵ Oruonye and Musa (2012:66) argue that the method is very exploitative however, because farmers are made to dispose of their farm produce at a very low prize, not commensurable to their effort or labor. It is maintained that the amount of money advanced to the farmers depends on the number of bags he/she pledges to deliver at the end of the farming season. This trend often places the farmer at a disadvantaged position, whereas the traders reap the fruits of the farmer’s labor. Worst of it all, the farmer is made to pay the last amount, even when there is a bad harvest occasioned by such factors as excessive rains or drought, outbreak of pest and diseases that may result in a low yield or crop failure. Likewise, Yoms (2013:39) also posits that the method has plunged many rural dwellers into debt crises, which eventually results in loss of resources, leading to poverty and hunger. Undoubtedly, such a system has reduced many rural farmers in the Middle Belt region to a point of land tenancy farming where the entire farm produce literally goes to the firm or person who the farmer is indebted to.

In the same way, as a result of bureaucratic exploitation, the Transparency International survey reveals that the Nigerian education system has a 54 percent, while the military has a 45 percent corruption rating. Medical and health services are tied with businesses, with a 41 per cent corruption perception, while the media and non-governmental organizations have a perception rate of 33 and 32 per cent respectively (9 July 2013). This survey reveals the extent to which some public officers exercise their position and take advantage or even enslave their subordinates. Some would even delay payment of salaries or even contracts, in order to divert the money for investment. One main concern should be the education sector, where both the administrators and classroom teachers often give top priority to money, more than building up the region through the provision of quality education. This, in part, explains why private schools have become the best alternative in terms of education in the Middle Belt region and Nigeria as a whole.

¹⁵*Bada kaka* is a form of a traditional micro credit scheme between small scale farmers and agricultural farm produce traders (middlemen) in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The traders usually approach the farmers whom they trust with the understanding that the farmers need credit for their farming activities in the season. They negotiate the amount the farmers will require, based on cost per bag of maize, beans or other crops, whatever the case may be. This negotiation is usually done in the presence of the village/ward head and some elderly members of the community. This group of people serves as witness to the agreement in the event of default. Sometimes, it is the farmer that goes about looking for traders that will advance some credit to him/her, in which case the agreement is also done in the presence of witnesses. After the harvest, the farmer pays back his debt in kind (based on the amount and number of bags agreed upon). This is done without prejudice to the current market price of the agricultural commodity (Oruonye & Musa 2012:66).

In a sense all the aforementioned instances of unfairness are forms of unjust relationships and these, from a faith perspective, have important implications for this study, thereby leading to the examination in the next section.

2.3.3 UNJUST RELATIONSHIP

With regards to justice in term of relationships, German ethicist Wolfgang Huber postulates that in the Old Testament, justice is, in the first place, connected to God as the giver of justice. He further argues that justice is not, however, understood as a “characteristic” of God, but that God’s actions are understood as being the embodiment of justice (Huber cited in Fourie 2009:174). This study considers one of God’s actions to be the relationship with human beings. This means that Israel’s knowledge of God’s justice through having a relationship with Him therefore had an existential character.

As it relates to God and the experience of his loving faithfulness that forms the foundation for justice, Huber posits that by means of the Torah, God gave Israel the possibility to participate in God’s just actions. This shows Huber regards the connection between God’s justice, the Torah and human justice as one of the enduring themes of the Old Testament. For Huber, the purpose of God is a community where justice prevails, so as to have *shalom* restored. Consequently, Huber describes *shalom* in relational terms, namely as the restored relationships between the diversity of groups and individuals who live in a given society, as well as the restoration of their relationship with God (Huber cited in Fourie 2009:175). On the other hand, injustice finds expression in the context of relationships, and on this ground, Myers’ concept of poverty captures my interest of injustice rooted in relationships. To my mind:

The poor are largely underprivileged because they are in a network of relationships that does not work for their well-being. Their connections with others are often oppressive and disempowering, as a result of the non-poor playing god in the lives of the poor. More so, interactions amongst themselves is diminished and incapacitated as a result of the routine of poverty and the feeling of powerlessness. Their association with those they call “others” is experienced as exclusion (Myers 1999:13).

This suggests injustice is deeply rooted in a network of associations that are characterized by selfishness, domination and self-centeredness, and inadequate knowledge of God and his purpose for human beings. Injustice prevails when a particular group of people’s relationship with their communities is characterized by oppression, domination, enslavement, and playing ‘god’ over others (by taking advantage of others).

It is act of injustice when people interact with others with self-centeredness because of the desire to dominate and control everything to the detriment of the majority. It is injustice when people associate with the environment in an exploitative manner, leading to vandalization because of the greed of quest for power, authority over creation and the ambition to accrue wealth; it is unfair when people's relationship with God, who created and sustains their lives, is distorted by an inadequate understanding of who God is and what he wishes for all humanity. The following are some of the factors that characterize unjust relationships that cause injustice in the Middle Belt region.

2.3.3.1 SUPERIOR – INFERIOR COMPLEXES RELATIONSHIP

One of unjust relationships that is the source of injustice in the Middle Belt region is superior – inferior complexes association. In this situation, some groups of people, ethnic groups, and religious groups relate with others with a feeling of being superior, while the others are viewed as inferior. This kind of interaction in the region could be traced to have begun long before the arrival of colonialism and still continues. For example, the relationship between Hausa-Fulani and other ethnic groups has been characterized by superior – inferior complexes. This has led to the assumed 'superior' Hausa-Fulani to treat those they consider to be 'inferior' to them as slaves.¹⁶ Turaki speaks more about this, as could be adduced from the following:

The relationship between the Muslim groups, in the Hausa land and Bornu, on the one hand, and the traditional groups, in the Middle Belt, on the other, was characterized by trade, migrations, slave-raiding, slave-trading and wars of territorial expansion and later in early 1800s, the Islamic jihad before the British occupation of Northern Nigeria in 1900s. The Middle Belt region was plundered for both European and Arab commerce and trade, and slave traders. Europeans who brought Christianity and Arabs who brought Islam, both engaged in the obnoxious slave trade (2012).

This translates to the interaction often characterized by domination, enslavement and the act of playing 'god' of one ethnic group over the others, particularly the Muslims in the far North over the non-Muslims in the Middle Belt region. Findings further revealed that the strain in social cohesion started when emirates of the far North depended on the exports of slaves gathered from the Middle Belt ethnic groups before colonial administration. The emirs in the far North depended on slave trade,

¹⁶ The Muslims Groups were considered to be superior to the NMG (Non-Muslims Groups). The Fulani as a Caste sat atop of a pyramidal structure, which had at its base such structures as pagan primitive tribes' native rulers. The prominent groups that enjoyed colonial advantage and privilege and played pivotal roles in the administration were the Hausa-Fulani, the Kanuri, the Nupe, the Muslim, and Jukun within the middle-belt region of Nigeria (Akpar 2012:40).

the sub Saharan slave introduced by the Arabs, for economic gains; slaves were the sphere of exchange where people were taken as a 'commodity' for export.

Longams further reveals that the emirs from the far North depended on people captured from the Middle Belt region as slaves for the purchase of horses:

Slaves were used to buy large number of horses from the Berber merchants from the North of Africa. The horse in that period was the equivalent of a tank in modern war today and politics, economy and security of political control for ruling classes depended on the size of the cavalry rather than the number in the infantry in that instance, about between 15 to 20 slaves were exchanged for a horse (2004:36).

This study concurs with Longams' assertion on how the domains of the far North exploited people from the Middle Belt, because historical evidences suggests that the rulers of the far North subjected other ethnic as slaves to be used as currency as they resented paying for goods from the North of Africa in gold and preferred to pay in the number of slaves. This explains why the interaction was premised on intensive raids, where those captured from the ethnic groups and the societies found in the Middle Belt region ended up as slaves transported to the Middle East and Arabian nations.

Among some ethnic groups in the Middle Belt there are often stories told in oral tradition about the relationship of enslavement and the feeling of superiority of one ethnic group over the other, especially the larger and stronger ones over the weaker ones. Logams also observed this type of contacts among the ethnic groups in the Middle Belt region and reports:

In the Middle Belt areas where there was no "Fulani – Jemaas" there was no conquest, although such group were raided directly from pressures on the conquered Middle Belt group which in turn raided other unconquered groups in order to catch slaves to pay tributes. This was so for Middle Belt groups in areas of Adamawa, Jukun land, Southern Bauchi, Plateau, Southern Zaria, and Northern part of Benue (2004:61).

The unfortunate situation is that some people who have refused to let go of parochial sentiments in the Middle Belt region still relate with other ethnic groups, religious groups and cultures on the bases of superior-inferior complexes being portrayed in attitudes of masters *versus* slaves. Turaki studied the state of affairs and explains thus:

Many Memoranda submitted to the Kaduna State Peace and Reconciliation Committee made references to the fact that these social patterns of relationship still exist between the two

groups. These social patterns of relationship have been the source of crises and conflicts, among many. The use of derogatory and demeaning terms such as, *arne*, *kabila*, *gambari*, *nyamiri* reflects ethnic stereotyping. The subordination of one ethnic group to the rule of another generates ill-feelings, resentment and bitterness. Politics of inequality and domination have aroused discrimination, bias and resentment (2012).

The use of derogatory and demeaning terms, especially ‘*arne*’ (an infidel or pagan in Arabic), reveal how some people in the Middle Belt region consider others to be inferior to them, particularly in terms of religion. Gwamna (2010:30) observes this scenario and expounds that in northern Nigeria, the policy of indirect rule superimposed Hausa-Fulani rule on others, where they emerged as a superior class, a tendency which has graduated into superior-inferior complexes, prejudice and hate. He argues that this accounts for the incessant resistance of non-Hausa-Fulani to hegemonic tendencies in Northern Nigeria, particularly the Middle Belt area. This sort of relationship is not limited to Hausa-Fulani however, and people of different ethnicity but is found even among people of the same ethnic group in the Middle Belt region. Gwamna again observes the situation and gives the following insight:

The superior – inferior complexes are inbuilt in some indigenous ethnic groups in the Middle Belt area who see others as inferior to them. This explains part of problem of Igbirra-Bassa conflict. The Igbirra and Gade believe that the Bassa and Gbagyi are both culturally inferior to them (2010:30).

The Middle Belt region could be argued to indeed be a fertile ground for superior – inferior kind of relationships, considering the multiple compositions of ethnic groups in the area. This also explains why religious and communal conflicts are very high in the region. Recently, as a result of past experiences of inter-personal and communal relations, especially in terms of religion, the situation has degenerated. Apart from the sense of superior/inferior complexes, fear, suspicion, mistrust, bitterness, anger, and mutual antagonism are the order of the day. According to Gwamna (2010:30-31), this has led to relocation syndrome, which has been witnessed in some flashpoints like Kaduna and Jos. He furthers that in Kaduna, there have been demographic shifts from the so-called perceived ‘unsafe areas’ to ‘safe areas’. The Muslim areas became *Mecca*, while Christian areas are tagged as *Jerusalem* and *Tel-Aviv*. Similarly, in Jos, Muslims areas are considered to be *Zamfara* and *Bin Ladin* zones and Christian areas are called *New Jerusalem*. Another kind of negative relationship, following the trend of religious divide, is based on ethnicity and will be considered in depth in the next section.

2.3.3.2 ETHNOCENTRIC RELATIONSHIPS

Akin to the challenge of superior–inferior complexes as a cause of injustice in terms of unjust relationships is ethnocentrism. Like the former, ethnocentrism is one of the major causes of injustices in the Middle Belt region and Nigeria at large. Discussing the meaning of ethnocentrism, Yecho (2006:114) posits that: “It is the practice of evaluating other groups and their cultures and practices from the perspective of one’s own.” In the same way, Kukah (1999:93) argues that: “Members of a group are ethnocentric when they are proud and consequently inward looking. Their attachment to and pride in the group reflect their ethnocentrism.” Akpar (2012:57) shares this view with Kukah and accounts that: “Ethnocentrism includes such attributes as group identity, beliefs, parochial orientation, and group pride.” Likewise, Turaki has the following observation on ethnocentrism in Nigeria:

Ethnocentrism in our national political life is the greatest enemy to the emergence of true national politics and also to nation building and integration, and nationhood and citizenship. Ethnocentrism is the vicious and cancerous virus that eats up and destroys national moral character and virtues. Ethnocentrism is the excessive love of one’s own ethnic, cultural, regional or religious group to sometimes hatred or exclusion of others. It breeds exclusivity, parochialism, proclivity, tribalism, or regionalism/sectionalism. It dominates, subordinates, or excludes others (2012).

The idea one gets from the foregoing is that injustice is highly rooted in a situation where a relationship is characterized by ethnocentrism. It is very difficult to realize justice as an inherent right where there is the challenge of ethnocentrism, which is the case with the Middle Belt region today. Where ethnocentrism gains ground, the possibilities for injustice instead of justice abounds.

Turaki (2012) is of the opinion that ethnocentrism in Africa is rooted in an ancestral blood group of kinship and communal values. He argues that the common denominator for all members of a clan or an ethnic group is the ancestor, the progenitor. This means that the ethnic boundary is defined by ancestry and blood and difficult to be broken, although it is not impossible. By implication, the issue of humanity is defined in terms of the in-group or insiders and the out-group, the outsiders or strangers. Furthermore, the understanding of life and the world, both philosophical and ethical, is particularistic and not universalistic. One belongs to an ancestral blood-group or communal kinship and the ancestral land. A non-blood-group member is considered to be a stranger, non-indigene, second class citizen, and sometimes less than human. Sayne studies the situation and explains it in the following manner:

The indigene-settler distinction is also explosive because it reinforces, and is reinforced by, other identity-based divides in Nigeria. In many cases, differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and culture also separate indigenes from settlers. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the majority of Nigeria's worst episodes of violence have straddled religious or ethnic lines, or both. The country's Middle Belt is probably the most ethnically diverse part of Nigeria, and historically the most violent. Troubled Plateau State alone has at least forty ethnic groups. Parties to indigene-settler conflicts often use racist, separatist, clash-of-culture rhetoric to justify their actions. One bloody communal clash in Kaduna, for instance, was called a war against political Islam and a clean-up campaign against ignorant monkeys and second-class citizens (2012:5).

This may account for the reason Abdu (2010:20) believes exclusiveness is a major attribute of ethnocentrism. This is because in-group-out-group boundaries emerge with it. Consequently, the relationship is characterized by inequality and unfairness, which breeds contempt between groups. Some people in the Middle Belt still hold on to this primordial worldview, which make it difficult to relate justly with others. The effects of this are the persistent problem of indigenes versus strangers/settlers in the region, which is deeply rooted in this primeval worldview (Turaki 2012).

For example, Alubo observed how the problem of ethnocentrism affects every part of Nassarawa State, noting:

In general, Nassarawa State has its share of ethnic and communal violence. As documented in study of conflicts in central Nigeria, Ethnic conflicts have become pervasive in Nassarawa State to the extent that almost every local government area has unresolved ethnic conflict at various stages of escalation (2011:156).

It is not only Nassarawa State that has lingering conflicts rooted in ethnocentrism, but all the States in the Middle Belt region. Through the discussion thus far, from theories of justice to injustice to examples and causes of injustice, specifically in the Middle Belt region, the question to ask is what the effects of these injustices, unjust relationships, abuse of power, and inequality is in the Middle Belt region? The next section will take a close consideration on the effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region

2.4 THE EFFECT OF INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

Studies by different scholars reveal that injustice and its effects have become a global issue. For

example, Huber points out that “500 richest persons in the world earn more than the income of the world’s 460 million poorest people. The world’s richest, who constitute only 10%, earn 54% of world’s income” (Huer cited in Fourie 2009:166). Expressly linking this situation to injustice, Jeune (1987:218) laments that: “One quarter of the world’s population is in unprecedented affluence, while the rest is condemned to absolute penury. Thus, eight hundred million people are destitute, their lives at the mercy of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, low income, inadequate shelter, and high birth rates.” In particular, studies from the Nigerian context revealed that as part of the global society, Nigeria is also facing the challenge of injustice. Therefore, this study takes a look at three effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region.¹⁷

2.4.1 VIOLENCE

On the meaning of violence, Agang (2010:28) defined violence as: “Outburst of anger against something or someone’s values. This means something that a person protects from being devalued or demeaned.” Besides physical violence, there is also structural violence, defined by Huber (2010:52) as: “All structural conditions that prevent people from developing and using their capabilities.” Despite the various positions advanced by the writers on the idea of violence, Huber and Agang unanimously concur that violence can best be defined by its characteristics, forms, or defenders. This holds that violence should be considered or defined from the perspective of the victim, the effect and the consequences (Huber 2010:52; Agang 2010:30).

As stated earlier, the problem of violence is global. There is hardly any country, region, or place that has not faced one or the other form of violence. With the advancement of technology, instead of our

¹⁷The study considers these three impacts of injustice in Middle Belt because of their huge negative effect on the region. For example, nothing succeeds, nothing grows, and nothing progresses in an environment where there is crisis and violence. Many people have lost their beloved ones who were the source of their livelihood as a result religious violence. Some lost their houses, properties and businesses that they spent years building or acquiring. Above all, Middle Belt region is losing human potential, business potential, factory potential and growth potential in all aspects of development through communal and religious violence. This is increasing the rate of poverty in the region. Poverty in Middle Belt region is caused by lack of proper distribution of wealth or corruption and poor governance. The resources that are supposed to be used for development or to create an environment for people to pursue certain activities that would enable them meet their basic needs, goes into the pockets of few individuals. Basic human needs like public transport, electricity, safe drinking water, good health care services and education, is supposed to be provided by the government. But because of corruption and poor governance, these are seriously not sufficient. As a matter of fact, in some places, they are totally lacking. This is discouraging the establishment of industries, factories, business, farming and many opportunities for employment and development, thereby multiplying the rate of poverty, whereas the region has bountiful raw material to operate factories and even industries.

world becoming secure, we are being threatened or faced with the increase of one form of violence or the other. Huber bemoaned the situation thus:

Nothing is more dangerous for a spirit of freedom and independence than an atmosphere of hatred and violence. Our time is characterized by an open conflict between two tendencies. On the one hand, freedom and human rights, peace and justice are highly esteemed in our time. But, on the other hand, we observe not only a resurgence of the spirit of hatred and violence, but, even worse, its justification and promotion with seemingly religious reasons. That leads to a situation in which violent religious extremism is seen as one of the mega-problems of the twenty-first century. It figures together with global warming, population growth, water shortages, and pandemics as one of the big challenges facing our global societies (24 June 2010:51).

The word ‘violence’ is a broad term, but there are different forms; from criminal violence, accident violence, political violence, religious violence, to ethnic violence. What is of relevance for the focus of this study are religious and ethnic violence, with the impact it has as a result of injustice in the Middle Belt region. The central concern of the study is thus how injustice has contributed to or still contributes toward making the Middle Belt region volatile for ethnic and religious violence.¹⁸ This indicates that there is consistent violence in the Middle Belt because of the failure to act justly. Furthermore, the violence in the region could be accounted for because some people act or refuse to refrain from certain actions that could demean or treat others as if they have less worth. More specifically, the violence in the Middle Belt could be attributed to inequality. The violence in the region is partly a result of the abuse of power and violence exists because there is unjust relationship among certain ethnic groups and religions in the region.

Identifiably, the biggest challenge of insecurity facing Nigeria today is religious and ethnic violence. *Nigeria Watch* report on the situation in the following manner:

According to Human Rights Watch, for instance, more than 15,700 people have been killed in inter-communal, political and sectarian violence between 1999 and 2011, especially in Plateau State, with a total of 3,800 deaths since 2001, at least 1,000 of them in 2010 alone. However, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom claims that “12,000 Nigerians have been killed in sectarian and communal attacks and reprisals between Muslims and Christians” from 1999 up to 2009. That’s an average of 1,090 deaths per year (June 2011:20).

¹⁸All aggression and violence can be seen as attempts to correct a perceived injustice. There is so much violence in the world today because serious injustices do exist (Kajom 2012:11).

In their report on violence in Nigeria, ACLED¹⁹ also observe that the country is among the top violent countries of their dataset, when they said:

Nigeria is the fourth most violent country in the ACLED dataset when measured by the number of violent events; and the seventh most fatal over the course of the dataset's coverage (1997 – March 2013). This violence has distinct temporal and spatial patterns: between 1997 and 2009, levels of both violence and reported fatalities were relatively stable. Since 2010, both have climbed sharply (April 2013:1).

On his part, Sayne provides some insights as to why violence and fatalities in Nigeria has risen since 2010:

Sticks and machetes were once the weapons of choice; now the worst conflict zone seen attacks with AK-47s, rocket launchers, and timed car bombs. Use of mercenaries and ethnic militias is on the rise. In some places, the resulting chaos is opening up space for organized crime, such as kidnapping, smuggling, and banditry. The local terrorist group Boko Haram increasingly plots attacks in indigene-settler violence hotspots, including a recent series of church bombings around Jos and Kaduna (July 2012:2).

Besides using dangerous weapons in most cases, roadblocks are also mounted and perceived enemies travelling are often pulled from passing vehicles and summarily executed. For example, Reuters News reports that on Tuesday, 17 September 2013, Boko Haram guerrillas wearing army uniforms stopped traffic on a highway between the cities of Maiduguri and Damaturu, dragged people out of their vehicles and killed them. About 143 bodies were recovered after the attack (20 September 2013).

The spade of violence results in the burning of houses and loss of properties, whereby a crisis lasting a few hours can leave thousands of people homeless, with a great loss of lives. A case in point is the Tribune Newspaper report in Nigeria of Fulani mercenaries on Thursday, 30 May 2013, who invaded Akough village in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. Based on the report, on reaching the village the mercenaries started shooting sporadically and burnt down houses, after which they went to the market and opened fire on defenseless individuals at the market, killing and maiming their victims (1 June 2013).

¹⁹ ACLED stands for "Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset". It is a public available database of political violence, which focuses on conflict in Africa states. The data is geo-referenced and disaggregated by the type of violence and a wide variety of actors.

The question of violence in the Middle Belt region has led ACLED to make the following observation:

Plateau has the country's highest rate of communal violence: the state witnesses 18% of all communal violence in Nigeria. Plateau also has one of the highest rates of fatalities per event of any Nigerian state, at 6.8 reported fatalities per conflict event. This is almost double the national average of 3.7 (ACLED April, 2013:3).

Nigeria Watch (June 2011:22) also records the high rate of violence in the Middle Belt region, particularly the Plateau State, saying: "In terms of risk, i.e. rates, we found that Plateau was the most dangerous State and because of ethnic conflicts and inter-communal riots in Plateau, there were 540 in November 2008, 557 deaths in January 2010, and 520 in March 2010."

Although the Plateau State has recently been reported to have the highest recorded percentage of communal violence in the Middle Belt region, other states or places also have cases of incessant violence. In this regard, Nigeria Watch (June 2011:20) infers that: "It should be remembered that the media likes to focus on the hostility between Christians and Muslims in Jos Plateau state, so it is very likely that intra-ethnic and intra-religious conflicts are much less reported in other regions."

This situation is especially true of states and locations in the Middle Belt region. For example, conflict over land ownership in Tarabain June-August 2008 resulted in 200 deaths, while renewed clashes over land between the Tiv and Fulani ethnic groups in the central state of Benue also displaced up to 15,000 people in March 2012 (Nigeria Watch, 8 June 2012:3). In addition, between April and June 2013 the following cases of violence were reported in the Middle Belt. No fewer than nineteen people died, while over four thousand were internally displaced in Kaura of Southern Kaduna, following an attack by Fulani herdsmen (Vanguard, 10 April 2013). In Wukari Taraba state, hundreds of people were feared dead, several others injured, and hundreds of houses were set ablaze in a violent clash between two tribes; the Hausa and the Jukun (Thisday, 5 May 2013).

About seventy three people, mostly police officers, died in Nassarawa State in a clash between the police and *Ombatse*²⁰ cultists (Vanguard, 10 May 2013). In Benue state, seven persons were killed

²⁰The *Ombatse* (meaning "Time has Come") Cult is based on traditional forms of worship and is practiced by the *Eggon* ethnic group Of Nassarawa State. The adherents of the cult believe that it was allegedly formed as the result of a revelation received in a dream that called for male *Eggons* to purify society and rid it of social evils, such as promiscuity, adultery, crime, alcohol consumption and smoking. The cult is also seen as an alternative to the failed social justice and security in Nigeria by those who are part of it. The *Ombatse* cult

and several houses, including a market, were burnt down in the violence between Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen (Tribune, 1 June 2013). In the hostility between Tiv farmers and Agatu in Nassarawa State, over 60 persons were reported to have been killed (Tribune, 6 June 2013).

Most of the cases of violence mentioned previously in one way or another are connected to injustice caused by inequality, the abuse of power or unjust relationships. For example, Gwamna (2010:30) argues that the situation of superior-inferior complexes, which is a form of unjust relationships replicated in some parts of the Middle Belt area, has contributed to fuelling conflicts. Sometimes religion might also be the overt factor of justification for such unfavorable relationships and of superior race tendencies.

Furthermore, injustice caused by the abuse of power is also one of the root causes of violence in the Middle Belt region. In a similar manner, Azgaku (2006:89) argues that elite manipulation has resulted in the killing and maiming of many Nigerians and the destruction of millions of naira worth of properties. He further states that bringing ethnicity and religion into play has also continued to impede genuine national integration. As long as the elite continue to manipulate ethnicity and religion, the different ethnic and religious groups will continue to see themselves as strange bed fellows.

In line with the foregoing, Actionaid (2008:viii) maintains that: “The elite competes for political positions by selfishly manipulating ethnic differences, which in most cases leads to heavy casualties among the non-elite, poor masses.” This means that violence in one way or the other may be connected to injustice through the abuse of power by the elite in the region. In particular, communal and religious violence in the Middle Belt are what this study calls *artificial creations* to deceive or to divert the attention of the masses from the exploitation they suffer at the hands of the elite. Seeing as the violence involves the destruction of lives and property, this situation has resulted in a high rate of poverty in the region. The next section takes a close examination of poverty as impact of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

2.4.2 POVERTY

According to Ndiyo (2008:12), “a concise and universally accepted definition of poverty is elusive, largely because it affects many aspects (including physical, material, spiritual, moral and psychological) of the human life. ”Given that this research is focused on injustice, this section on

came into the national limelight when their followers murdered over 100 personnel of the Nigerian police and the Secret Security Service (McGregor, 16 May 2013; Akukwe, 7 September 2013).

poverty as effect of injustice in the Middle Belt looks at how injustice has contributed and still contributes towards the rate of poverty in the region. Therefore, Myers' definition of poverty is considered suitable for this facet, as well as giving a faith and relational interpretation to the issue:

The poor are largely poor because they are in a network of relationships that do not work for their well-being. Their relationships with others are often oppressive and disempowering as a result of the non-poor playing god in the lives of the poor. Their relationship within themselves is diminished and incapacitated as a result of the routine of poverty and the feeling of powerlessness. Their relationship with those they call "others" is experienced as exclusion (Myers, 1999:13).

Jeune (1987:219) also asserts that when we speak of poverty we are not primarily dealing with conditions of scarcity, but rather with fundamental questions of power, control and distribution. She contends that thus, certain relationships in the society – those that has to do with ownership and power, whether social, racial, economic, cultural, or political – are responsible for perpetuating poverty. All these designations of poverty in one way or the other relate poverty to injustice. Elsewhere, Myers used Chambers theory of poverty to argue that: "The household is poor, physically weak, isolated, vulnerable, and powerless" (Myers 1999:66) because of three clusters of exploitation.

The local non-poor stand as a net between the poor and the outside world by trapping resources and benefits that were intended for the poor. The second exploiters are the local non-poor-police, politicians and landowners, who use deception, blackmail, and violence to rob the poor, who lack the resources to obtain justice. Finally, the assets of the poor are also bought below market value (Myers 1999:68). This, in my opinion, suggests that poverty in most cases is as a result of injustice that leads to poverty because there is a failure to act justly. This means that poverty increases because people act or refuse to refrain from certain actions that demean or mistreat others. For example, the poverty in the Middle Belt region relates to inequality. Thus, poverty in the region is heightened through the abuse of power. Further, poverty exists because of unjust relationships between ethnic groups and religions.

With regards to poverty globally, Sine (1987:13) posits that about 800 million people, or one fifth of the human race, are destitute, lacking the basic necessities for survival, and thousands die every day. It is further noted that many millions more are without clean water and health care, without opportunities for education and employment, and are condemned to suffer without the possibility of improving their lives or their families'.

Inamani's (2005) analysis of poverty in Nigeria revealed that there is a continued increase of the poverty rate in the country. According to this report, in 1964 less than 26 per cent of Nigerians operated under the poverty zone, leaving over 84 per cent of the population living above poverty line. The level jumped from 28.1 per cent in 1980 to 46.3 per cent in 1995. But in 1996, the indices of measurement were rattled with a jump from the already alarming level to 65.5 per cent of the population or 67.1 million people. In this regard, Fayemi (12 Feb 2012) also comments:

In the last twelve years, the poverty level in Nigeria doubled between 1999 and 2007. Previously, the UNDP and World Bank report estimated that 35 million people were living on less than one dollar a day. By 2007, that number has risen to 70 million. And it affected the whole nation over a period of time.

In addition, in a report on the rate of poverty in Nigeria on 13 February 2012, BBC News Africa revealed that poverty has risen in Nigeria, with almost 100 million people living on less than a \$1 (£0.63) a day, despite economic growth. Some historical analyses of Nigeria's population living in poverty look like this:

- 1980: 17.1 million
- 1985: 34.7 million
- 1992: 39.2 million
- 1996: 67.1 million
- 2004: 68.7 million
- 2010: 112.47 million (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics).

As a result, research conducted by BBC News Africa in 2010 about Nigerians' feeling about poverty shows that 93.9% of respondents felt themselves to be poor, compared to 75.5% six years earlier. I hold the view that more than 93.9% of the population consider themselves poor at present.

With reference to the rate of poverty in Nigeria, the *National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)* shows that relative poverty is most apparent in the north of the country and this is the area where the Middle belt is located. For example, the north-west has 77.7%, the north-east 76.3%, and the central north 67.5% poverty rates respectively (BBC News Africa, 13 February 2012; Kawu, 23 February 2012; Kale, 14 February 2012). Incidentally, the Middle Belt region is spread across all these three geo-political zones in Northern Nigeria. By implication, whatever affects each zone in Northern Nigeria affects the Middle Belt.

The table that follows shows the 2010 poverty rates for food poverty, absolute poverty, relative poverty, and the dollar per day measure (%), according to each state within the Middle Belt region. The percentage is calculated based on the available food per household, absolute poverty, relative poverty, and the World Bank standard of a dollar per day.

State	Food Poverty		Absolute Poverty		Relative poverty		Dollar per day	
	Food Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor	Poor	Non Poor
Gombe	71.5	28.5	74.2	25.8	79.8	20.2	74.2	25.8
Adamawa	55.4	44.6	74.2	25.8	80.7	19.3	74.3	25.7
Bauchi	54.1	45.9	73.0	27.0	83.7	16.3	73.1	26.9
Benue	48.5	51.5	67.1	32.9	74.1	25.9	67.2	32.8
Kaduna	41.7	58.3	61.5	38.5	73.0	27.0	61.8	38.2
Kogi	50.1	49.9	67.1	32.9	73.5	26.5	67.3	32.7
Nassarawa	26.8	73.2	60.4	39.6	71.7	28.3	60.4	39.6
Niger	20.4	79.6	33.8	66.2	43.6	56.4	33.9	66.1
Plateau	44.0	56.0	74.1	25.9	79.7	20.3	74.7	25.3
Taraba	45.2	54.8	68.9	31.1	76.3	23.7	68.9	31.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistic (13 February, 2012)

Relative poverty is defined by reference to the living standards of the majority in a given society, while absolute poverty is defined in terms of the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter. The dollar-per-day measure refers to the proportion of those living on less than the US\$1 per day poverty line.

Based on the table, Gombe and Adamawa had the highest (74.2%) and Niger the lowest (33.9%) rate of poverty in the region.

2.4.3 CORRUPTION

Regarding the meaning of corruption, Dike (2008) supposes that corruption has broadly been defined as a perversion or a change from good to bad. He added, specifically, that corruption or corrupt behavior involves the violation of established rules for personal gain or profit. In other words, corruption is an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gain against public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit. According to Transparency International, corruption has become a global phenomenon, noting that the Global Corruption Barometer 2013

found that in many countries, the institutions people rely on to fight corruption and other crime can themselves not be trusted.

For example, 36 countries view police as the most corrupt because an average of 53 per cent of people has been asked to pay a bribe to the police. Transparency International further affirms that an opinion poll in 20 countries views the judiciary as the most corrupt, and in those countries, an average of 30 percent of the people who had come in contact with the judicial systems has been asked to pay a bribe (9 July 2013).

As part of a global society, Nigeria is also faced with the challenge of corruption. Dike (2008) observes the situation and explains that there are many unresolved problems in Nigeria, but the issue of the upsurge of corruption is the most troubling. He further suggests that the damage that corruption has done to the polity is astronomical. For example, the menace of corruption leads to the slow movement of files in offices (undue bureaucratic procedures), police extortion, tollgates and slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, and election irregularities, among others.

Furthermore, Dike laments that even mad people on the street recognize the havoc caused by corruption, as the funds allocated for their welfare disappear into the thin air. The reference to even mad people on the street acknowledging corruption is Dike's way of saying that corruption is pandemic in Nigeria, where both leaders and followers are corrupt.²¹ Available records by Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer 2013 of a public opinion survey on corruption, shows that 94 per cent of Nigerians think corruption is a problem, with 78 per cent saying it is a serious problem (9 July 2013).

In my opinion, the endemic nature of corruption in the country is in one way or another connected to injustice. This is because in a situation where people fail to act justly in their relationships with one another, corruption definitely sets in. One of the common types of corruption in the Middle Belt region is what Dike called political corruption:

It occurs when the politicians and political decision-makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. It also

²¹Aluko also observed the pandemic situation of corruption in Nigeria and explain it thus: There is illegal and greedy acquisition of public funds into private pockets, which otherwise would have been invested for the public good. As a result, infrastructural facilities have faltered. The few rich have grown richer but become more corrupt. The poor continues to get poorer and corrupt, because life has increasingly become more difficult for them to sustain with their legitimate earnings. The middle class, which has always been a harbinger of growth and integrity and societal cleansing, is confused and diminishing daily and is not sure whether to join the thieving rich or the suffering and corrupt poor. In either case, the economy is the loser (2008:6).

takes place when policy formulation and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators. Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to corruption of greed as it affects the manner in which decisions are made, as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure, and distorts the institutions of government (2008).

In addition, Transparency International reports that about 94 percent of Nigerians believe political parties are affected by corruption, while 77 per cent considers the Nigerian legislature as corrupt (9 July 9 2013). To a large extent, the result of the survey is not far from correct, because an increase in poverty is now related to politics given that it has become a means of accumulating wealth rather than the opportunity to serve people. Kukah bemoans the situation of political corruption, highlighting that:

Poor governance, corruption and greed have all combined to reduce the majority of our people to a life of despicable poverty, leading to a feeling of loss of integrity and personal worth. This has spread a blanket of self-doubt over the lives of the people who have been turned to the status of glorified beggars for government patronage. Professionals are now reduced to doing something on the side to keep body and soul together. Highly qualified doctors, lawyers, architects, etc are now either running barbing salons or are into other forms of petty business to make ends meet (1999:232).

Besides corruption as a result of greed, another common form of political corruption is nepotism. According to Dike (2008), nepotism is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his/her kinfolk and family members. He further points that nepotism, (which is common in the Middle Belt region), occurs when someone gives undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources to people they know or are related to. Corruption through nepotism is strong in the Middle Belt region because of inequality and unjust relationships. Thus, preference in the allocation of resources and other opportunities is given in terms of religion, ethnicity and group sentiments. In some occasions, people are considered for certain responsibilities, not because they are qualified but based on their religion, ethnicity, or other primordial interests. This explains why bankers are heads of medical service, engineers heading banks, and lawyers in charge of construction or engineering departments.

Akin to political corruption in the Middle Belt region is what Dike (2008) calls bureaucratic corruption; low level or street level corruption. It is a kind of corruption citizens encounter daily at places like hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police, tax offices, and so on. For example, about 69 percent of Nigerians hold that the civil service is corrupt (Transparency International, 9 July 2013). While Kukah (1999:231) also observes that because of corruption, government officials who

earn a small salary own between five and ten cars and also have sophisticated houses built and locked up in remote villages.

As a result of bureaucratic corruption, the institutions that are meant to form the vanguard of justice are so ineffective that one can hardly differentiate between their existence or otherwise. For example, the police is one of the institutions that is shouldered with the responsibility to insure justice in the society, but the Transparency International survey indicates that 92 per cent Nigerians say the police force is tainted with corruption (9 July 2013). This explains why Dike (2003) maintains that “some unscrupulous police (public) officers would allow criminal activities to occur when they are settled. This culture has tarnished the image of the Police in the society”. It is not only the police that are involved in the practice of being “settled”, but even the judiciary. This is why some surveys indicate that 66 per cent Nigerians bear witness that the judiciary is corrupt (9 July 2013). In the same way, Adejumo maintains:

It is sad and unfortunate that the Nigerian Judiciary, which a few decades ago, was one of the most respected, erudite and upright in the world is aiding and abetting crimes, by handing little or no sentences/jail terms. Take a look at the insecurity situation which is a failure of the government and partly the people; no one is safe anymore. Emirs, chiefs, ministers, commissioners, judges, lawyers, ex this, ex that, etc., can be attacked or kidnapped. High crime rates are partly the fault of our judiciary also (2013).

The high rate of corruption in the Middle Belt region manifests through the self-centered perception of politics, giving topmost priority to money rather than rendering services to humanity through public service. Kukah (1999:231) calls it “Chop-chop syndrome or politics of the belly.” Similarly, Agang laments that:

In Northern Nigeria, especially in the Middle Belt region, violence is driven by economic power, which institutionalizes corruption. Corruption mixed with ethnic, political and religious arrogance. Politicians squander public wealth in wild living without accountability. They prefer luxury to the detriment of serving the interests of the poor. Ethnic groups kill weaker groups. Religious people justify killing those they claim do not belong and are thus out of favor with God (2010:35).

CONCLUSION

In chapter one, the research questions and background to the study was given. In this chapter, one first had to come to grips with what justice and injustice is in order to understand their importance to this study. Thus, the chapter began with Wolterstorff's view of justice, which looks at justice as ultimately grounded in inherent rights. The inherent right is embedded in the creation of human beings in the image of God. Therefore, rights are normative social relationships. This entails that a right is a right with regards to someone or a right toward the other. In other words, rights are normative bonds between oneself and the other. More importantly, the normative bond is the form of the other bearing a legitimate claim to one doing certain actions that could enhance the well-being of the other or refraining from performing certain actions that could harm the other.

With reference to injustice, Wolterstorff postulates that injustice deals with the constitution of what is wrong. This means that to fail to treat the other person as she or he has a right to be treated is to demean them, making them feel to be of less worth. This signifies that to demean the other is to wrong him or her. Based on Wolterstorff's views of justice and injustice, this study interprets justice to be actions that could enhance the well-being of the other or refraining from actions that diminish it, while injustice refers to actions that undermine or refusing to refrain from those actions that demean.

The understanding of Wolterstorff's views of justice and injustice stimulated the study question of what causes injustice in the Middle Belt region. In this regard, the chapter highlighted some causes of injustice in the region with a view to understand how they work. One such cause is inequality in terms of access to power and resource control. This suggests that in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, some ethnic groups, or people of other faiths, demean and treat others in an unfair manner by describing them as non-indigene, settlers, and even foreigners or strangers. The aim is to deny such people access to power and resource control.

Seeing as injustice breeds inequality and revolves around access to power, another identifiable source of injustice in the Middle Belt region discussed in this chapter is the abuse of power. To this end, the study considered two aspects of the abuse of power. One of the aspects is how power, in terms of capacity or ability to influence the behaviour of others and the course of events, is manipulated by the elite of the region. It refers to how certain individuals exercise their capacity or ability to influence the behaviour of others and course of events to serve selfish aims and interests.

The other aspect is the abuse of power in terms of capacity or ability to do something or act in a certain way. The study calls this kind of abuse of power, bureaucratic, lower level or abuse of power at grass root level. This is because it is the misapplication of power that people in the region encounter

daily in public places such as hospitals, police stations, markets, motor parks, schools, and every other aspect of public life.

From the foregoing, one can deduce that injustice caused by inequality and injustice caused by the abuse of power in one way or another are based on some forms of unjust relationships. Consequently, injustice in the Middle Belt region may be attributed to unjust relationships. These relationships are characterized by marginalization and exclusivity. Some people are marginalized because of their religion, or ethnicity and this relates with the other in the form of superiority and inferiority complexes. Others see themselves as superior because of religion or ethnicity, while the other is considered to be inferior. Another kind of unjust relationship is ethnocentrism. This refers to relationships of exclusivity and marginalization based on ethnic affiliations.

Looking at the causes of injustice, one may ask the question what the effect of injustice in the Middle Belt region then is. This chapter has attempted to proffer answers by discussing three effects of injustice in the region. For example, one of these effects is violence. It is notable that injustice caused by inequality, abuse of power, and unjust relationships result in religious and communal violence. Given that violence leads to the destruction of lives and property, it is indicative that the consequence is a high rate of poverty in the region, as violence disrupts commerce, farming and the pursuit of every human endeavor.

Another effect of injustice in the region is corruption. These are the effects of injustice, but in themselves they are also causes of further injustice; people in poverty struggle to survive and may thus revert to violence; people at the receiving end of corruption may themselves revert to corruption, as everyone does it sometimes this is the only way to achieve a materially good life. The effects of injustice thus create an evil cycle of recurring injustice.

This chapter uses Wolterstorff theory of justice to bring about conceptual understanding of the causes of injustice in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. As such the chapter accomplishes the interpretive task of practical theology by Osmer which is seeking reasons for the phenomenon of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

Given that the study has elucidated how the phenomenon of injustice may be understood regarding its forms, causes and impact in the Middle Belt region, the following chapter will look at the text from Isaiah, specifically at the concept of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$, and how it may be explicated within this context before the two are brought into conversation in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ AND ITS RETHORICAL STRATEGIES IN ISAIAH 5:1-7

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discusses the phenomena of the forms, causes and effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. This chapter will focus on the literary analysis of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ and its use in the rhetorical strategies of Isaiah 5:1-7. In other words, the chapter specifically looks at the concept of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ and techniques that are used in preaching it in Isaiah 5:1-7. The goal is to examine the historical context of Isaiah's preaching of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in Isaiah 5 and to use it as a point of departure for the necessity of the preaching of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in the context of the contemporary Middle Belt region of Nigeria, which will be done in Chapter Four of this thesis.

There are different words in the Hebrew Bible that are translated as "Justice" in the English Bible. Each of the words in Hebrew has a different meaning. This chapter investigates the word "*μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅" which is translated as justice. The Hebrew notion of justice is fundamentally concerned with relationship, putting relationships in their right order in the light of the covenant (Allen 1988:175). This notion of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ is used as the point of departure for its application, as prescript in the Bible and specifically in Isaiah 5, in the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The chapter will also consider *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in the theological ideological agenda of Isaiah; that is, the meaning of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5. At the same time, this chapter considers some of the preaching technique or the homiletical approach that the prophet Isaiah used in his preaching of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ and how such a technique or approach can also help in preaching *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in the Middle Belt region.

3.2. Historical and Literary Context of *μισ]*π*α*4*τ*≅ in Isaiah 5:1-7

God placed the prophet Isaiah in a particular period, the third part of the eighth century BCE, years which were decisive for the whole of Israel. Politically, the weakening of the Aramean kingdom and the temporary decline of the Assyrian kingdom permitted the northern kingdom of Israel, under king Jeroboam II (787-747), and the southern kingdom of Judah, under king Uzziah, to flourish. King Jotham (758-743) of Judah, who succeeded his father Uzziah, used the period of freedom from disturbance from outside enemies to expand the economy of the whole country and carried on his father's policy of increasing the fortifications of the capital of the country and campaign against the Ammonites (II Chron. 27).

However, the situation changed during the reign of Ahaz (743-726), who succeeded Jotham, because Assyria was approaching the period of its greatest power. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) conquered Israel; the northern kingdom and the whole of the Near Eastern world up to the Egyptian border. This made Israel, Gaza, and Damascus form an alliance against the king of Assyria. In order to increase their forces Judah was sought to join the alliance, but king Ahaz opposed the scheme, a situation that led to the threat of invasion by the coalition kings in Isaiah 7:1-2 (Kaiser 1963:2-4).

The religious context or circumstances of Israel in the eighth century BCE can be seen and understood from the prophets' constant summoning of the people to turn away from idolatry to the worship of God (Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:16-17). In their preaching, they call the people of God away from idolatry and back to the true worship of God. They tried to convince the people of Israel and Judah of how, in practicing idolatry, they have moved from justice and righteousness to oppression, which have change the very nature of God they wanted to worship; they described Israel's failure to take responsibility for the poor as part of the core reason they will be exiled. This is why the prophets urged the people of God to practice the justice he created them for; (Henning 2013).

The main frame of reference for understanding justice is not only in the religious or theological quality or divine attribute, but also weaved into the fabric of life of both individuals and society. This entails that both the injustices that demand correction through punishment and justice that brings redemption to Zion and glory to God are found in the social life of the people (Isaiah 5:16). Leclerc (2001:89) maintains that to say that God is a God of justice is an affirmation that God the compassionate redeemer of Israel demands that justice be expressed in the lives of the people and in the structures of society. This means justice is as important as the Holiness code: "You shall be a people of justice for I, God, am God of justice."

However, socially and morally, the situation in the eighth century BCE was quite perplexing. Weinfeld (1995:17) maintains that: "In ancient Israel and in the ancient near east Justice and righteousness in the individual realm incorporates the duties between man and his neighbor, over which the monarch and the state generally have no control." But the situation during the eight century BCE, the time of the prophet Isaiah's ministry, was different. The society was experiencing great injustice, such as the breakdown of traditional systems of property ownership. Economic and social conditions that favored individual ownership emerged. Farmers and artisans were effectively disempowered and become targets of abuse by the wealthy. This means the elite used their power as the ruling class to exploits the poor of their lands, which was the major source of livelihood (Leclerc 2001:59; Stanley 2010:94).

Constable (2013:13) posits that: "In the first section of the book (chs. 1—39), Isaiah insists that judgment is necessary." One of the reasons why there is impending judgment is injustice. Claassens

(2012: 212) states that the theme of facing a reality of injustice and other societal infractions that is contradictory to a covenantal relationship with God forms a unifying theme throughout Isaiah. She further argues that the prophet critiques a world where people's greed and self-centeredness reigns supreme, where injustice and corruption mar God's ideal for a just society.

As a matter of fact, Isaiah 5 is the starting point of the pre-Uzziah-period proclamation in the presentation of chapters 1–12, the prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It specifically focuses on the Northern Kingdom, whose fate was meant to be a warning to Judah/Jerusalem (Keung 2007:39). The warning was as a result of the injustice that was among the people of Judah and Jerusalem. According to Claassens (2012:212), the failure of the people to live up to the ideal of justice is summarized in the clever wordplay in 5:7: God expected justice ($\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$), but saw bloodshed ($\mu\sigma 8\pi\alpha 4\eta\cong$); God expected righteousness ($s\cong e 5da4qa\Rightarrow$), but heard a cry ($s\cong e 5(a4qa)$). This entails that the prophetic sermon (ch. 5) was a clever presentation of the present condition of Israel in Isaiah's day and its consequences. It deceptively starts out as a casual song, transforms into a courtroom drama, and ends with pure condemnation. Isaiah lured his listeners into listening to him with a sweet song and then proceeded to burn them with fiery preaching (Constable 2013:32).

From the foregoing, one can deduce that Isaiah 5:1-7 is about preaching on relationships among the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The remaining part of the chapter, Isaiah 5:8-24, points out how the people treated one another. Bratcher (2012) also considered the situation when he says that the woe oracles which follow immediately in the remainder of chapter five (vv. 8-24) unfold the details of the injustice and unrighteousness of the people.

Therefore, the following are some of the injustice that necessitated the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ by prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5.

3.2.1. ABUSE OF POWER

From the analysis of the historical context in the previous, one of the acts of injustice that the prophet preached against was the exploitation of the poor by the elite, which I consider as abuse of power. For example, "Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field" (Isaiah 5:8), reveals that greedy landowners were taking advantage of the misery of small farmers and craftsmen, which may have been caused by sickness, crop-failure, inflation or excessive taxation (Chrisholm 1986:51; see 3.3). Leclerc (2001:60) maintains that: "The greed of the wealthy and the vulnerability of the poor make for a volatile situation, one that apparently erupted in the eight century and occasioned the condemnation of Amos, Isaiah, and Micah."

This signifies that the society was experiencing great injustice. The lack of conscience of the rich, the wealthier or smarter members of the community, took advantage of their less fortunate brethren and so deprived them of their opportunity to live on the land that God had given them. The abuse of power and exploitation of the poor by the ruling classes in the land became a common phenomenon. In other words, there were men that were taking advantage of the poor by buying their inheritance. Every acre in the land of Israel had been given by God to the various tribes and divided up by the clans and families, but there were greedy men in Isaiah's time who were playing Monopoly; trying to buy up every piece of real estate until they'd taken over the entire board. They were so covetous that God said they wouldn't stop until they were alone in the midst of the land, Isaiah 5:8 (Mamahit 2009:1; Constable 2013:35). This entails that the greedy upper classes, with governmental and judicial connivance, were systematically seizing the land of commoners so that they could heap up wealth and display it flamboyantly in an extravagant conspicuous consumption (Isaiah 5:11-12). The elite were very greedy, to the extent that they controlled larger swaths of land which was too big for them to work themselves; they hired others to work the land for them (Gravett et al. 2008:249; Gottwald 1985:356).

Gravett et al. (2008:250) maintain that “Establishing the monarchy as a political system in biblical Israel impacted the economy, not least by creating, but also by intensifying the emergence of-an elite class.” This is because the institution of the monarchy in Israel was a complete change from the one which had existed previously. For instance, in premonarchic Israel, family members had access to a plot of land, which was probably used for the purposes of cultivation as well as residence. It has also been suggested that some of these fields were held by the village as a whole and all the plots periodically redistributed (Premnath 1988:53). Such periodic redistribution would prevent any one particular family from having a monopoly over a particular strip of land. Under the monarchy, however, lands once freely held by peasants began to fall into the hands of the rich elite.

The elite were a handful of families who controlled a disproportionate share of the resources and dominated the affairs of the community, whether as formal representatives of the ruling authorities or through the informal influence that wealth invariably commands (Stanley 2010:94). This signifies that the elite in Israel in one way or another had great influence on the ruling affairs of the monarch. It was the influence they had that they used to exploit the poor of their major source of livelihood; their land. Gravett (2008:250) highlights three means of acquiring land that the elite might have possibly used to exploit the peasants and obtain their lands. For example, land was acquired by receiving it as a gift, most often from the king. Land was also acquired by seizing it from the owner, also most often by kings, and land was acquired by taking it over when a borrower uses it as collateral and then defaults on the loan. The last two fits the context of the prophet Isaiah's preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ in Isaiah 5 (see Isaiah 5:7). For example, in bad crops years, struggling farmers who signed over their land as

collateral would be offered food items or seed as a loan by the wealthy landowners from the towns and cities. If they were unable to pay it back at a later date, their movable possessions would be pawned, their children would be taken in payment and thus be made slaves, and finally, their house and land would be seized. If the problem persisted, the landowner would seize the land in payment of debt and combine it with other parcels to form large estates to produce goods for trade (Stanley 2010:95; Chrisholm 1986:51). That is how the elite in Israel and Judah abused the power they held during time of the prophet Isaiah. However, the problem of the abuse of power led to unjust relationships among the people of Israel and Judah. The next section takes a look at this phenomenon.

3.2.2. UNJUST RELATIONSHIPS

Another thing that necessitated the preaching of *μισθίατρον* by the prophet Isaiah was unjust relationships; relationships that were characterized by the enslaving and maltreatment of one category of people over the other. “Then he look for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit” (Isaiah 5:2, 20). For instance, the ruling class during the time of the prophet Isaiah used their positions to maltreat and enslave the common people or the less privileged. Stanley (2010:92) states that in a society that depended so heavily on agriculture, families that lost their land as a result of poor crops, ill health, or bad management were left in a precarious state. He further argues that some would have found work as day laborers on the farms of wealthy landowners, who paid them poorly and often mistreated them.

Furthermore, the economic success of Israel and Judah during the time of the monarchs favored only the elite and reduced the peasants to positions of slavery. For example, during the reign of King Solomon, commercial activities brought wealth into the state (1 Kings 5.10; 9.26-28; 10.15-28), but the expenditure of the state far outweighed the income. The building of the temple, maintenance of a huge army (1 Kings 4.26), other mammoth building projects (1 Kings 9.15-20), maintenance of a large harem (1 Kings 11.1-3) and the ever-increasing royal court establishments took their toll on the agrarian economy. These dynamics were operative again during the reigns of Uzziah in the south and Jeroboam II in the north of the eighth century BCE. The worst form of latifundialization²² is witnessed in this later period (Premnath 1988:54).

In addition, eighth-century BCE Israel and Judah saw an increase in international trade, in which the leaders imported luxury goods, military materiel, and the resources of monumental architecture. To pay for these imports, food-stuffs - particularly the triad of wheat, olive oil, and wine - were exported. Imports mostly benefited an elite minority, while the exports necessary to procure them cut deeply

²² According to Premnath (1988:49) “Latifundialization is generally defined as the process of land accumulation (large estates, hence latifundia) in the hands of a few wealthy landowners to the deprivation of the peasantry.”

into the sustenance of the peasant majority (Keung 2007:24). Rent capitalism also becomes an important component of the eighth-century BCE in Israel and Judah; that is, payment of rent becomes necessary not only for the use of land, but also for several other means of production such as water, seed, work, animals and others. In order to produce, the peasant will have to pay rent for these. Unable to pay for these means, the peasant resorts to borrowing, probably at a high rate of interest. If the crops fail in a bad season, the peasant goes deeper into debt. Besides interest on loans, there are also other ways the landlords and money-lenders squeezed the peasants out of their income. The peasants were forced to sell their crops at harvest time, when prices are the lowest. They were also shortchanged through false weights and measures when the crop is divided. The outcome of all this is heavy indebtedness on the part of the peasant that finally leads to foreclosures, which in turn, afford a further means of land accumulation in the process of enslavement (Premnath 1988:52).²³

Leclerc (2001:59) added that growing urbanization created new ties of interdependence between the peasant farmers and the propertied merchant class, which usually resided in towns and influenced public affairs. Leclerc further argue that when an individual peasant farmer suffered economic setbacks, for example illness, marriage payment, crop failure because of droughts or locusts, and so forth, he would turn to an urban moneylender or merchant. He would either be charged interest for a loan or be force to cultivate the soil of others on a share-cropping or tenant basis. It is this type of relationship that led to the enslavement and maltreatment of the peasantry by the elite and this was mostly done through the practice of usury. Davies (1963:65) gives us a picture of how the practice of usury enslaved the peasants or common people, when he writes that:

The demand of the small land-owners were supplied by loans secured in kind or money from the wealthy, and it is generally assumed that it was the exorbitant interest rates which were being charged by the lenders that endangers the situation of the borrower and led eventually to his enslavement. In a small, agricultural community, credit facilities were of utmost importance, and it was inevitable that the poor land-owners should occasionally have borrowed grain or money from their wealthy neighbors. The custom may have been to borrow such items as were necessary in the autumn with the undertaking to repay them when the harvest had been completed. However, the farmers were often reduced to poverty by crop-failure, and consequently they must have found it almost impossible to return the goods which

²³Chaney (1993:252) argues that the efficiency of the cash crops came at a brutal cost to the sufficiency of the livelihood they afforded the peasants who actually produced them. The old system of freehold had provided this peasant majority secure access to a modest, but adequate and integrated living. The new system saw them labor in the same fields, but only according to the cyclical demands of viticulture and orcharding and at wages for day-labor depressed by a sustained buyer's market. During lulls in the agricultural calendar, they were as unemployed as landless. Jobless or not, they were forced into the marketplace, of which they had little or no experience, to buy wheat and barley, the staples of their diet.

they had borrowed. In such circumstances, it is possible to discharge an unpaid debt by self-enslavement.

This happened as a result of the success of Uzziah's foreign policy, the tributes of neighboring countries and the latifundia economy practiced by the king that brought ready money into the country. This means the economic development of the southern kingdom was associated with social upheaval and destabilization because the ties binding peasants to their land and the ancient clans to their territories were damaged.

3.2.3.INEQUALITY

Beside the abuse of power and unjust relationships, the prophet Isaiah also preached *μισ]πα4τ≡* because of inequality in terms of the distribution of resources (Isaiah 5:11-12). Stanley (2010:95) maintains that: "While the bulk of the population struggled to stay alive, the elite grew increasingly wealthy and enjoyed lives filled with luxury and ease." During the reigns of Jeroboam II, Uzziah, and Jotham, Israel and Judah were blessed with material wealth (see 3.3). Utley (2010:72) argues that: "It must be remembered that In Judah, during most of Isaiah's prophetic ministry, was an extremely successful and prosperous nation." In my opinion, the prosperity remains in the hands of a few individuals, who were busy building houses here and there and organizing parties, while the majority lived in poverty, Isaiah 5:8, 11-12. Coote (1981:25-26) adds more understanding to the problem of inequality when he writes that the elite comprised 1 to 3 percent of the population, but that they owned 50 to 70 percent of the land, while the peasantry make up 60 to 80 percent or more of an agrarian society. He further argues that on the basis of these disproportionate land holdings, the elite by far control the greater amount of power and wealth in the society. Gravett et al. (2008:249) also studied the situation when they says because of inequality, the types of connections forged between the elites and the land differed markedly from those of the small landholding class, especially in terms of exactly who controlled the land and how, what benefits ensued from it, and who profited from those benefits. As such, a very different system of production and distribution came into play. This entails that there was a conspicuous difference between the elite and the peasantry in term of resource control, most especially considering the fact that the major resources in Israel and Judah at that time was land; that is, their economy centered on land control and distribution.

Besides the inequality in terms of wealth and the control of resources, the unfairness degenerated into two distinct subcultures within the society. Coote (1981:25) studied the situation and explains it thus: Members of the elite subculture have been known to fail to recognize the peasant or urban poor as fellow human beings. He further argues that in Israel, the blessings God bestowed on the righteous

consist of material prosperity. It therefore seems sensible to the elite to regard themselves as the righteous; their wealth proves it. Stanley (2010:94) also argues that: “The spirit of cooperation that was vital to village life was replaced by social divisions rooted in wealth. The gap between rich and poor widened.” This means the elite treated their fellow Jews that were less privileged as if they were not human beings and worst of all, they considered their situation of poverty as God’s doing. This, in my judgment, explained the reason why the prophet Isaiah in his preaching laments that “they have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, nor respect for the work of his hands” (Isaiah 5:12).

This denotes that the rising monetary economic was obviously leading to an attitude of superiority and inferiority complex among small house owners and landowners. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah saw how the new rich set up house after house on the land they obtained, and bought up one farm after another (Isaiah 5:8). Inevitably, in so far as the latter are unable to find a new living as traders, they become totally dependent upon large capitalists (Kaiser 1963:65).

After considering the societal ills that necessitated the preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7, it is also important to look at the effect of such injustice; that is, some of the negative effects of the abuse of power, unjust relationships and inequality during the time of the prophet Isaiah. The following are some of the effects of injustice in Israel and Judah during the period of Isaiah’s ministry.

3.2.4.CORRUPTION

One of the effects of injustice during the time of the prophet Isaiah was corruption; that is, the abuse of power by the elite, the unjust relationships and inequality brought about corruption, especially the legal system. For instance, the prophet Isaiah preached that “Woe to those who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent” (Isaiah 5:23). This means the justice system became under the controlled of the urban rich and the high officials in Jerusalem, who engineered a change in land use and did not allow fairness at the gate on behalf of the commoners. Laws that governed the passing on of land through the male line were ignored, and thus families were losing their land, becoming tenant farmers charged with excessive rents by wealthy landlords. This resulted in the exploitation of the peasant majority by the urban elite (Keung 2007:25; Dempsey 2000:8). The courts were promulgating laws and rendering decisions that favored the rich at the expense of the poor. Isaiah 5:9b portrayed the situation graphically; large estates amassed by adding field to field, on which sit large and beautiful homes (Leclerc 2001:60).²⁴

²⁴The details of the oppressive conditions are evident as chapter 5 unfolds -- joining "house to house" and adding "field to field" (verse 8), thus displacing poor farmers from their land (and only source of livelihood),

Besides corruption, there was also poverty in Israel and Judah during the time of Isaiah's prophetic ministry. The next section takes a closer look at this occurrence.

3.2.5. POVERTY

Another effect of injustice during the time of the prophet Isaiah was poverty. For example, those who could not earn enough to live were forced to beg, rely on other family members, or sell their children or themselves into slavery. This is because agriculture farms became the property of a single owner, perhaps an absentee city dweller; the peasants became virtual slaves and their goods and services were received as payments on loans. The gap between the rich and the poor widened. Land ownership translates into economic and civic power, issues of taxes, property rights, foreclosures, and related matters increasingly fell into the hands of the rich, thereby further widening the power gap (Leclerc2001:59; Stanley 2010:92). This means the confiscation of lands, self-seeking, cruel practice, and legal corruption reduced a large segment of the population to a level of inescapable poverty which represented a blatant practical denial of the covenantal principle that the Lord alone owns the land (cf. Lev. 25:23). Isaiah 5:23 described the means whereby these wealthy individuals accomplished their purpose is (Chrisholm 1986:51).

Coote also has the same understanding of the situation when writes that:

The elite often own not only the land but also the peasant, in very degrees of serfdom and slavery. Even when peasants own the land they work, they often find it difficult to maintain their independence or survive. There is too little margin for the difficulties that the single cultivator faces in the course of few years of harvests. If there is a crop failure, for example, the peasant may be forced to borrow money, often at excessively high interest rates. The chances are that such a peasant may never again get out of debt (1981:25).

The assertion from Coote that a peasant may never have gotten out of debt denotes that the elite set up the whole system of land use in a manner that resulted in the reality that poverty was more or less like a circle; that is, the peasant would remain in poverty for generations. The situation can be well described as hopeless or endless for the peasant. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah's preaching aimed at bridging the gap that was setup in the society. This signifies that the prophet Isaiah aimed at promoting interdependent and harmonious relationships.

and resulting in both homelessness and hunger (verse 13). Excess, greed, and conspicuous consumption (verses 11-12, 22) are apparently supported by corruption and manipulation of the legal system (McCann, 2012).

From the foregoing, the study has established the fact that the prophet Isaiah's preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ was necessitated by the ills of the society which he lives. The question is what the prophet preached to his people? In other words, what was the prophet Isaiah's understanding of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$? The next section will consider $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the preaching of Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7.

3.3 $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ IN THE THEOLOGICAL IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA OF ISAIAH

$\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the theological ideological agenda of Isaiah 5:1-7 in this study refers to the prophet Isaiah's understanding of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$; that is, the meaning of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as portrayed by the prophet in his preaching in the text under consideration. Basically, the term $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ originates from $\sigma\]\alpha\ 4\pi\alpha\ \tau\cong$, the Hebrew word that dominates scriptural use of justice.²⁵ It means to judge, to rule or to exercise processes of government (Leclerc 2001:13; Henning 2013). Hodgens (2000:80) describes $\sigma\]\alpha\ 4\pi\alpha\ \tau\cong$ as the most significant Hebrew word for describing all forms of government and process, both human and divine. $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$, from its original Hebrew word $\sigma\]\alpha\ 4\pi\alpha\ \tau\cong$, connotes two ideas; the idea of punishing or pronouncing sentence against someone and the idea of governing for or establishing righteousness for the other or enhancing the well-being of the other.

The second idea of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice) that is, to rule for or to establish God's righteousness or enhance the well-being of the other is the focus of most Old Testament passages describing justice (Henning 2012).²⁶ This entails that the predominant usage of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the Old Testament underscores governing for or establishing righteousness for the other that is commitment toward enhancing the well-being of the other.²⁷ It is this concept that captures the prophet Isaiah's understanding of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah chapter 5.

²⁵The word $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ occurs 425 times in the Hebrew Bible and is found in 31 of its 39 books. For example, it is used 65 times in Psalms, 40 in Isaiah, 37 each in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, and 31 times in Jeremiah (Leclerc 2001:8; Lasor 1982:390). As a matter of fact, the concern for justice is found almost everywhere in the Old Testament in narrative materials, laws, psalms, wisdom, and the prophets. Leclerc (2001:6) notes that concern for justice in the Bible and the Old Testament in particular, is not the isolated concern of a few authors at a particular time, but it is rather presented as a matter about which God is urgently and personally concerned.

²⁶Henning (2012) maintains that the use of the word $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the sense of governing for or establishing righteousness for others has been translated as justice just about one hundred and fifty-one (151) times in the New International Version of the Old Testament, not including the negative forms of 'injustice' or 'unjust'.

²⁷Henning (2012) argues that there are scattered uses of the term $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice) in special circumstance; for example, it is used four (4) times in reference to God's discipline of his children (Jeremiah 10:24, 30:11,

Bratcher (2012) argues that the overall agenda of Isaiah was to convey the fact that the expectation of God from these people whom he had created and "planted" in the land was that they should be righteous and practice justice. This means that God expected the people to institute God's goodness for one another and be devoted to improving the good of one another. This is demonstrated by the prophet Isaiah in two sets of paired words; justice – bloodshed and righteousness – a cry (for help). This entails that God expected $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$, but saw $\mu\iota\sigma\delta\pi\alpha\ 4\eta\cong$, He expected $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$, but heard $s\cong\cong e\ 5(a\ 4qa=$. The use of the pair words justice and righteousness by the prophet Isaiah suggests that what was lacking among the people of Israel and Judah was social justice. The next section makes a critical reflection on Isaiah's understanding of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$.

3.3.1 $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ IN THE PROPHET ISAIAH'S AGENDA

The historical analysis in this study indicates that the context in which the prophet Isaiah preached $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 was social justice (see 3.2). This is why he used $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$, which are mostly used in occasions of social justice. For example, the entire chapter and particularly 5:8-24 focus primarily on violations of social justice (Leclerc 2001:61). More importantly, the primary connotations of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ are those public practices of integrity within Israel that Yahweh looks for in his people (v 7) (Moberly 2001:63). This means that when the two words, $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ and $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$, are tied together, as they are over three dozen times, the English expression that best conveys the meaning is social justice (Psalms 33:5; Jeremiah 9:23-24) (Keller 2010:14). Dietrich and Reumann (2005:693) added that $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$, when paired with $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$, embraces the wider ethic social sphere of wholesome and salutary relationships. $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ entails a state of beneficently ordered relationships between people or between people and God. The meaning also includes conduct that corresponds to or promotes healthy relationships.

As a matter of fact, the way justice is being used by the eighth century BCE prophets indicates that its meaning involves the treatment of other people. At the same time, justice is right behavior in relation to others, whereby they taste or experience what is good and pleasant (Motyer 1973:132). This signifies that justice ($\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$) is taking certain actions or refraining from certain actions that will enhance the well-being of the other. The person who is just seeks to improve the welfare of his or her

46:28), once (1) in 2 Chronicles 12:6, thirteen (13) times in the book of Job, and twenty-four (24) times as a legal term, either concerning court procedures or bribery (Ex 23:2, Lev 19:15), but the vast majority of the time, in one hundred and eight (108) references, the Scriptures describe $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice) as governing for, or establishing righteousness for others. Even some of the occasions that $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ is used in connection with discipline, the emphasis is discipline with justice. "Correct me, Lord, but only with justice-not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing" (Jer. 10:24).

neighbor. This is the reason why Bratcher (2012) argues that justice ($\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$) in the context of Isaiah chapter five, is not a legal category, but a way to talk about equality and fairness arising from a concern for others; that is, willingness to place human need and relationship as the highest priority of life flowing from the relationship with God. In the fullest sense, to do justice is the same thing with loving one's neighbor as oneself, because the proper divine-human relationship is based upon a correct human relationship (Paul 1991:192). In my opinion, $\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ is normative social relationships, given that in pairing justice ($\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$) with bloodshed ($\mu\sigma 8\pi\alpha 4\eta\cong$) as its opposite, the prophet stresses the importance of relationship with other people and responsibility to them as a crucial aspect of being God's people in his preaching (Bratcher 2012).

With reference to righteousness and why it is being paired with justice, Motyer (1973:133) maintains that righteousness is the cultivation of correct moral principles, both for the self and for society. Even more righteousness ($s\cong e 5da 4qa\Rightarrow$) is what is owed to God, because he is God, because he has revealed himself as God, because he has called the people of Israel and Judah into existence as his people. Righteousness ($s\cong e 5da 4qa\Rightarrow$) is not a moral category of perfection, but living a life that acknowledges that God is indeed God. It is a response of faithfulness that is willing to accept the responsibility of being God's people. It is a relationship in which the people love the Lord totally and completely. The result of living a righteous ($s\cong e 5da 4qa\Rightarrow$) life is justice ($\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$) (Bratcher 2012). Williamson (2007:135) posits that: "Throughout the ancient Near East justice and righteousness refers to social justice throughout society, often entailing notions of equality and freedom." Henning (2012) also argues that righteousness describes the moral goodness of God's character, which he intends for men to reflect as created in his image; while justice reflects the implementation of that righteousness goodness on behalf of someone who needs help in receiving this righteousness in their life. The emphasis of the paired words is on relationships; that is, how people treat one another in the realm of relationships. Hodgins (2000:81) asserts that justice is also translated from $s\cong e 5da 4qa\Rightarrow$, a word more commonly rendered in English translations as righteousness. It is often used to describe relationships, where the parties are, or are expected to be faithful to one another. This implies that in a relationship, $\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ (justice) in my opinion means a commitment to ensuring that people are being treated with God's goodness, as they ought to be; of making sure God's goodness and righteousness are brought into their lives.²⁸

²⁸This is the predominant usage of $\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ in the Old Testament. From the meaning of the root to the pairing with $s\cong e 5da 4qa\Rightarrow$, the concept of $\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ in the Old Testament to a large extent connotes governing for, or establishing righteousness for the other; that is, commitment toward enhancing the well-being of the other. This suggests that the concept of $\mu\sigma\] \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ in the Old Testament underscores the idea of caring or showing concern for the other.

This is the type of relationship that God expected during the time of the prophet Isaiah; that is, He expected $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice) but found $\mu\sigma\ 8\pi\alpha\ 4\eta\cong$ (bloodshed), He expected $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa\ =$ (righteousness) but found $s\cong\cong e\ 5(a\ 4qa)$ (an outcry). God expected the people to establish righteousness for one another and be committed toward enhancing the well-being of one another, but instead found oppression among them. Wildberger (2009:187) points out that the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ gives clear insight into Yahweh's relationship with his people, as well as what God is really like. At the same time, it points out the completely outrageous nature of Israel's relationship with God: They were unthankful toward their Lord and this most clearly resulted in the deep, deep disappointment of the God who had loved them and give himself so completely in his care for them (see Isaiah 5:2).

This signifies that the prophet Isaiah preached $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in a situation where social relationships among his people were not according to God's desire for them (Isaiah 5:8-24). That is, his preaching focused on God's feeling about how the people of Israel and Judah were treating one another (see 3.2). Leclerc studies the context when he writes that:

The parable finds its climax in verse 7b, which is perhaps the single most graphic and severe indictment against the perversion of social justice in the Hebrew Bible, and employs striking word plays: “[YHWH] expected justice ($\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$), but found bloodshed ($\mu\sigma\ 8\pi\alpha\ 4\eta\cong$); righteousness ($s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa\ =$), but found an outcry ($s\cong\cong e\ 5(a\ 4qa)$)” (2001:56).

This means that the relationship among the people of Israel and Judah during the eighth century BCE was characterized by marginalization, exclusion, and enslavement (see 3.2). The people failed to realize that $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa\ =$ was the true worship that God desired from them. As such the prophet Isaiah in his preaching aims at helping the people realize that the absence of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa\ =$ among them is a great disappointment and even tantamount to God's judgment (Isaiah 5:4-6). This denotes that God was more interested in the way the people were treating one another; that is, in right relationships. This explains the reoccurrence in the prophet Isaiah's preaching: “And He looks for justice, and He looks for righteousness” (Isaiah 5:7). Isaiah also preached in the same manner of other eighth century BCE prophets like Amos and Micah, who preached that “let justice ($\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$) roll down like waters, and righteousness ($s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa\ =$) like an ever flowing stream. He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8, Amos 5:24). This entails that the concept of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the prophet Isaiah's agenda underscores the fact God is much concerned about how people treat one another.

Given that $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ emphasizes the notion of right relationships among the people of Israel and Judah, this means $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ invariably refers to interdependent and harmonious relationships. The next section examines this notion more closely.

3.3.1. $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ AS INTERDEPENDENT AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

In my opinion, the summary of the prophet's Isaiah theological ideology of $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 is nurturing an interdependent and harmonious relationship among God, fellow human beings and the natural environment. Kaiser (1963:61-62) asserts that "Isaiah emphasizes in this parable the direct and intimate relationship between God and his chosen people, which ought to be expressed in communal love and loyalty. But the people have broken this covenant of love." Mamahit (2009:177) also emphasizes that the idea of social justice must be understood in the light of relationship, especially the covenant relationship between God and his people. More importantly, throughout the Old Testament, social justice is overwhelmingly related to the idea of relationship and the life of the community, to God and to the neighbor. Child (1978:46-55) insists that the Old Testament, strictly speaking, does not speak about YHWH, but it rather speaks about the relationship between him and the reality of human life. Brueggemann (1997:735) also infers that "Yahweh burst into world history as a theological *novum* with the purpose to establish justice as the core focus of Yahweh life in the world and Israel's life with Yahweh." This signifies that social justice is an interdependent and harmonious relationship among God, fellow human beings and the natural environment. This is the perspective from which prophet Isaiah preached $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7. This is because it is in this sense that Isaiah and the other prophets used the metaphor of 'hands stained with blood' to symbolize the lack of concern for widows, orphans and the oppressed, as well as the lack of justice (1:15; cf. 59:3, 7, Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3, Micah 3:9-10, 7:2-3) (Bratcher 2012). This means that the summary of $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ in the theological ideological agenda of the prophet Isaiah is an interdependent and harmonious relationship among God, the people of Israel and Judah, and the natural environment.

3.3.2. $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ IN RESPECT TO GOD

The background of the prophet Isaiah's preaching of $\mu\sigma\text{]}πα4τ\cong$ is rooted in the fact that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, tells the story of Israel, in which YHWH, the God of Israel, is the main character. This means that whether the Bible portrayed YHWH as actor, Lawgiver, judge, plaintiff, aggrieved lover, celebrated hero, or worshipped sovereign, or whether he is in the wings, far from being obvious to the story-teller and the audience, it implies that YHWH stands behind and above the entire history of Israel. This includes concern for justice because whenever the concern for justice moves to the center of the stage, YHWH, 'the God of justice' (Isaiah 30:18), is rarely far behind. The irresistible and compelling drama of the entire Bible is the combination of these two elements; God and the concern for justice (Leclerc2001:6). Based on this fact, justice is objectively real because God is real. This means that justice is not simply a product of social consensus, but it is a divine attribute

and as far as the biblical writers are concerned, justice *does* have an objective existence. This indicates that justice is derived from God (Deuteronomy 32:3-4; Psalm 89:14; 145:17), and God exists apart from human assumption (Marshall 2012:12).

This is the picture that is being portrayed in the prophet Isaiah's preaching through the song of the vineyard; that is, YHWH the God of Israel is a God of justice. For example, in Isaiah 5:2 the prophet Isaiah's preaching described the *μίσ/παράτ* (justice) of God toward his covenant people; God is committed towards enhancing the well-being of Israel and Judah. He is faithful in seeking that which is good and desirable to the people of Israel. Young (1965:197) posits that: "In choosing of Israel God did a gracious thing. Upon this people He showered abundant blessing, such as the law and the prophets." The song of the vineyard poignantly described how God cared, provided for, and protected the people of Israel and Judah. The song of the vineyard also pointed towards another aspect of God justice; that is, God is concerned about the victim of injustice, because the preaching of the prophet Isaiah through the song of the vineyard can be heard as God's response to the cry of the oppressed. This entails that God's justice has to do with His compassion and concern for the poor, the marginalized, the weak and the less privileged. Henning (2012) posits that righteousness, justice and concern for the poor and needy are in fact at the center of God's character because it constitutes part of his glory. He is not a God who is uncaring or marginally interested in the plight of the oppressed. But unlike the false gods of the nations who justify oppression (Psalm 82:1-4), he manifested himself as a true God, who in his goodness, love and justice, pays special attention to all the oppressed of the earth. Keller (2010:6) points to the difference between YHWH, the God of Israel, and the gods of the nations:

In virtually all the ancient cultures of the world, the power of the gods was channeled through and identified with the elites of society, the kings, priests, and military captains, not the outcasts. To oppose the leaders of society, then, was to oppose the gods. But here, in Israel's rival vision, it is not high-ranking males but the orphan, the widow, and the stranger with whom Yahweh takes his stand. His power is exercised in history for their empowerment. So, from ancient times, the God of the Bible stood out from the gods of all other religions as a God on the side of the powerless, and of justice for the poor.

According to Brueggemann (1997:736), Yahweh is known from the outset as a God committed to the establishment of concrete, sociopolitical justice in a world of massive power organized against justice. For instance, God's commitment to social justice can be seen in the episode of Israel in Egypt, which means behind God's resolution to do justice is the voiced suffering of the slaves (Exod. 2:23) that becomes the driving power of Yahweh's alternative history (Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7-10). This indicates that it is the voices of suffering that sets in motion Yahweh's uncompromising resolve for the transformation of earthly power arrangement. This means that in bringing the Israelites into their land,

YHWH championed Israel when they were weak and needy against the powerful inhabitants (for example, the Amorites), just as he had against the powerful Egyptian oppressors at the time of the Exodus. He is a God who had delivered the poor and afflicted from Egypt (Mamahit 2009:187).

From the foregoing, God's justice demands that the well-being of every human-being is being enhanced, irrespective of class, gender, religion and status. This is why he championed the plight of the weak, poor, and the vulnerable; those who are powerless to act for themselves. Keller (2010:6) argues that: "How significant it is that the Biblical writers introduce God as a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows (Psalm 68:4-5). This is one of the main things he does in the world. He identifies with the powerless, he takes up their cause." Dietrich and Reumann (2005:693) emphasize that God's justice and righteousness has less to do with a diffuse, neutral world order than with the concrete rectification of unjust relationships. In righteousness and justice, God helps the oppressed people to liberation and victory (Ps. 129:4; Judges 5:11; Isaiah 42:6).

As a matter of fact, the prophet Isaiah's preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* signified that God continues to champion the plight of the weak and needy (Isaiah 5:9-10, 23-24). This means that God is a God who acts on behalf of the less privileged. His justice is exercised on behalf of the poor, and his representatives, such as the king, are also expected to exercise justice on behalf of those who are oppressed (Hodgens 2000:84). The people of Israel administer justice based on their religious convictions, the firm understanding of the will of God as implying an even handed justice, and the determined attempt to introduce this understanding into the nation's law. For example, in the prophetic books, the realization of divine social justice much depends on the efforts in maintaining access for every member of the nation to the natural source of all production, which is the land, without at the same time reducing the individual to the status of a tenant or taking from him the liberty to manage his own affairs and enjoy the fruits of his own labors, depended on the governing authority of moment. This was more or less absent in the eighth century BCE, so it is very significant that in precisely these periods there was prophetic oracles that speak against economic injustice in society, either generally or specifically (Isaiah 5:8-24) (Premnath 1988:54).

3.3.3. *μισ]πα4τ* IN RESPECT TO POWER

During the time of the eighth century BCE prophets, there was an emergence of the ruling elite, the powerful in the society of Israel. They were those who were in positions of power as influence (see the definition of power as influence or authority in chapter two). They were the governing class, consisting of the kings, judges, the official prophets, the rich, and the merchants. They were the ruling class, comprising about 1 to 3 percent of the population and they typically owned 50 to 70 percent or more of the land. God expected the elite to use their power to render justice and righteousness. Young (1965:196) posits that: "God planted the elite of the vine." This means that their positions gave them the privilege to possess the power of making decisions on behalf of others; however, God gave

them power to administer justice. This means that those in the leadership positions, for example the monarchy, are given power to administer fairness; that is, they were expected to use their power to enhance the well-being of others in the society. The most common and widespread $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da4qa$ (justice and righteousness) in the Bible is based on the idea that God imparts to rulers, and, indeed, to all human beings, a sense of evenhandedness, and this helps the ruler to judge the people and the poor fairly (Michael & Tzvi 2008:118). This signifies that God impacted to all human beings a sense of justice for the purpose of ruling for, governance for or improving the good of the other. Mamahit (2009:191) posits that through the power given to them, the leaders of Israel were responsible for making right decisions, as well as maintaining the right prescriptions or orders. He further argues that the ruling class in Israel and Judah had an obligation under God to use their power to establish justice in the society, specifically defending the rights of the helpless as demanded in the covenant (Exodus 22:20-23). This means $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in respect of power means that power should be used to improve the good fortune of one another in the society; to rescue the poor who cries for help and the fatherless who has no one to assist them; to offer help to the person who is dying; to make the widow's heart sing; to put on righteousness [$s\cong\cong e\ 5da4qa$] as clothing, justice [$\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$] as robe and turban; to be the eyes to the blind and feet to the lame; to be a father to the needy; to take up the case of the immigrant; to break the fangs of the wicked and snatch the victims from their teeth (Keller 2010:11).

This is what was lacking during the time of the prophet Isaiah. Kaiser (1972:65) points out that: "The prophet sees how the rich set up house after house on the land they have obtained, and buy up one farmer after another. Inevitably, in so far as the latter are unable to find a new living as traders, they become totally dependent upon capitalist." This means that those in control of power use it to enslave one another instead of using it to establish God's righteousness for one another. Young laments how the elite of Israel and Judah produced the opposite of God's expectation, when he writes that:

Those who have been taught of God and have received His righteousness should be expected in their lives to exhibit judgment and justice. It was not judgment, however, that Israel brought forth, but bloodshed, nor $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ but $\mu\sigma\ 8\pi\alpha\ 4\eta\cong$. There should have been external manifest on the people's part; they should have exhibit practical justice. There was an external manifestation; they exhibited bloodshed. There should have been an internal condition, namely, righteousness. And an internal condition there was indeed, namely, a cry (1963:204).

As a matter of fact, leadership determines the health and wealth of the community. This is why there is a significant reference connecting the term $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice) to an active care for the powerless and marginalized, the poor, the widows, the fatherless, the immigrant and the generally less privileged throughout the Old Testament. It is on this basis that the prophet Isaiah preached $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in a context of injustice. Leclerc (2001:57) also maintains that:

The interpretive significance of this crucial connection between the agricultural image of the parable and the summary indictment of v. 7b is that while the outward forms of justice and righteousness (social justice) are there for the eyes to see, closer inspection reveals the most rank forms of injustice.

This signifies that acts of justice ($\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$) are to flow out of a people who have graciously received God's justice and righteousness as a gift themselves, and their justice ($\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$) should in one way or another be defined by the need of the person they are helping.

3.3.4. $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ IN RESPECT TO COMMUNITY

According to Keller (2010:3), "the word $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in its various forms occurs more than two hundred times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Its most basic meaning is to treat people equitably". Bacote (2005:415) posits that: "The pursuit of the way of justice and righteousness is not limited to kings, but it is generally expected of all of God's covenant people." This implies that $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ is basically about how people are committed to enhancing the well-being of one another in the community. This is the basis on which the community of Israel as a covenant people was chosen by God to relate with God; to experience God's justice so that they can serve as a model for other nations. They were supposed to be distinct from other peoples and nations through administering justice in their community. Their treatment of one another was supposed to show the world that they are a chosen people who are called to administer justice in the world full of injustice. Keller (2010:9) argues that Israel was charged to create a culture of social justice for the poor and vulnerable because it was the way the nation could reveal God's glory and character to the world. He added that Deuteronomy 4:6–8 is a key text where Israel is told that they should keep God's commands so that all the nations of the world will look at the justice and peace of their society, based on God's laws, and be attracted to God's wisdom and glory. The preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ by the prophets, especially the eighth century BCE prophets, aimed at reminding the people about the basis of their calling, which was stipulated in the Torah. According to Stanley (2010:321), the Torah contains many laws that seek to encourage positive attitudes and relationships with people, both inside and outside of the group. He further argues that the audience is told to respect the elderly, fulfill their promises, help those who are in need, protect others from harm, watch over other people's property, and love their neighbor as themselves. These laws regarding justice in the community was either manipulated or abandoned during the monarchy, because of greed and selfishness of the elite. This is why the prophet Isaiah used the image of the vineyard to show how they have failed to live according to God's expectation. Keller (2010:9) posits that the graphic point is that, just like the vineyard, Israel has not lived up to God's expectations, even after he has given them every opportunity to produce fruit. God called them to be righteous and to do justice as God's people, but they had failed and the harvest was

bitter. Matthew and Moyer (1997:147) also assert that: “The vineyard owner (Yahweh) proclaims a lawsuit against his vine. Testimony is given to prove that he has done that was needed to ensure a good crop. Yahweh’s disappointment in the results of his labor is evident (Isaiah 5:3-4).” Keller (2010:10-11) adds further understanding to God’s expectation in terms of justice and righteousness that was lacking in the community of Israel and Judah, when he writes that in the Bible *s≡e5da4qa* refers to day-to-day living in which a person conducts *all* relationships, whether in family or in society with fairness, generosity, and equity. He further argues that therefore, *s≡e5da4qa* is primarily about being in a right relationship with God; the righteous life that results is profoundly social. Marshall also infers that:

The biblical notion of righteousness refers broadly to doing, being, declaring, or bringing about what is right. Righteousness is a comprehensively relational reality. It is not a private moral attribute one has on one’s own. It is something that inheres in our relationships as social beings. To be righteous is to be true to the demands of a relationship, whether that relationship is with God or with other persons (2012:15).

In Job 31:13-23 the Bible gives us a picture of what *μισ]πα4τ≡* with respect to the community look like, when he said:

If I have denied justice [*μισ]πα4τ≡*] to my menservants and maidservants when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary, if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless—but from my youth I reared him as would a father, and from my birth I guided the widow—if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or a needy man without a garment, and his heart did not bless me for warming him with the fleece from my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, knowing that I had influence in court, then let my arm fall from the shoulder, let it be broken off at the joint these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

Keller (2010:11-12) points out that this is one of the most important texts in Scripture for the study of Israelite *μισ]πα4τ≡* in respect of community. He further argues that it is a complete picture of how a righteous Israelite was supposed to live, and to [Job], right conduct is almost entirely social. This means in Job’s conscience to omit to do good to any fellow human being, of whatever rank or class, would be injustice which is a grievous offence to God. In the inventory of Job’s life we see all the elements of what it means to live justly and do justice which is basically rooted in how people in community should treat one another. We see justice in respect of the community when Job says, “I took up the case of the immigrant; I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth”. This means that Job confronted people who exploited the vulnerable. Marshall (2012:14)

summarized this study understanding of $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha\text{4}\tau\cong$ in respect of the community, when he writes that: “Justice in ancient Israel involved doing all that was needed to create, sustain, and restore healthy relationships within the covenant community.” This implies that $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha\text{4}\tau\cong$ with respect to the community means the commitment of every individual in the community toward an interdependent and harmonious relationship with God, one another and the natural environment.

The ideal described here is a rendering of $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha\text{4}\tau\cong$ and $s\cong e\text{5}da\text{4}qa$. This means that focusing on the common good that benefit all inhabitants was supposed to be the central goal of the activities of an individual in the community. This is the explicit Biblical reference to justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel, particularly the prophet Isaiah. In addition, the idea of justice in the Bible is closely connected with the idea of equality before the law. For example, it is stated in Leviticus 24:22: “You shall have one standard (*mishpat ehad*) for stranger and citizen alike for I, The Holy One, am your God. These qualities of society make up a clear definition of the ideal of social justice and the prophets conception of the community of Israel” (Graetz & Tzvi 2008:118).

Williamson (2006:329) asserts that the aim or purpose of the passage within Isaiah’s overall agenda is best understood against the background of the rhetoric he used. That is, Isaiah is clearly trying to persuade his audience of something; to bring them to acknowledge some point of view that they evidently would not have done had he addressed them directly about the matter. This means that the prophet Isaiah used the song of the vineyard as a preaching technique to make his people know that they are guilty of social injustice. Therefore, the next section takes a closer reflection on the preaching techniques employed by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7.

3.3. RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF ISAIAH 5:1-7

Rhetorical strategies in this study mean the preaching techniques or homiletical principles that the prophet Isaiah used to convey the message of $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha\text{4}\tau\cong$ in the context of Isaiah chapter 5. In my opinion, in Isaiah 5:1-7 the prophet Isaiah developed a homiletical approach to the problem of injustice, which his context demanded; that is, he uses preaching techniques to convey the message of $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha\text{4}\tau\cong$ in a context of injustice. Gowan (1998: 63) also has the same understanding, indicating: “The technique is thus to attract the interest of listeners by a story that arouses their sympathy or sense of justice, then show that it is a story about them.” This implies that the aim of the homiletical approach developed by the prophet Isaiah was to attract the attention of his listeners, without which his preaching would have been futile.

With reference to the exact nature of the preaching technique employed by the prophet Isaiah, I concur with Oswalt (1986:151) when he argues that there is little agreement concerning the poetic structure or the exact nature of the genre. This means that it is very difficult to situate the prophet Isaiah’s preaching technique to one category. The reason is because a careful observation of the text will reveal that there is a combination of different homiletical approaches used by the prophet to

convey the message of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ to his audience. This is very important to this study, because it has given the understanding that preaching $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the context of injustice demands a variety of preaching techniques, in other to make the message meaningful to the audience. Therefore, this study will consider the following techniques in relation to the prophet Isaiah's preaching technique.

3.4.1. THE IMAGE OF THE VINEYARD

Gitay (1991:91) argues that an example is designed not as an end in itself, but as a vehicle. This means that the task of defining the preaching technique is less important. The important thing is the relationship between the story and the audience; in other words, what is the impact of the story on the audience? In my opinion, the image of the vineyard employed by the prophet Isaiah fits the context of his people and the message. For example, the image of the vineyard speaks volumes from an agricultural perspective to the context of injustice that revolved around land grabbing and control. During the time of the prophet Isaiah, the elite craftily confiscated land belonging to the peasantry, which led to the situation of enslaving the peasants. The image of agriculture also fits the context of the message, because Isaiah's audiences were mostly farmers and their major crop was grapes. Baker (2009:25) added that: "Vineyards were common in the agricultural life of Israel, with evidence of them from the ancient Near East." I believe the prophet Isaiah's listeners understood the message because he used a picture that was familiar to them. Oswalt (1986:151) maintains that the choice of the material for comparison and the presence of the inhabitants of Jerusalem assumed in verse 3 suggest that the universally observed harvest and vintage festival was uttered (Lev. 23:34-43; Deut. 16:13-15). He further argues that this was the same festival at which the election of the people, the temple and the dynasty was remembered.

Williamson (2006:330) also studied the purpose of the prophet Isaiah's preaching technique when he writes that: "The need to gain his audience's agreement in general terms in this striking manner also accounts for the passage's present literary position, for only then are their ears open to hear the more specific charges in the woe saying which follow." This entails that the prophet used the image of the vineyard as a technique to draw the attention of his listeners to the injustice that was going on among them. Oswalt (1986:151-152) also notices that the aim of the prophet Isaiah's preaching technique when he argues that the general sense of the vineyard is very clear, as it must have been to its first hearers: Israel is compared to a vineyard whose owner has lavished a great deal of care upon it, only to discover that the vineyard does not produce good grapes. This means that the fruit of the vine is the extraction of goods and services from the vulnerable individual or social subgroup by the powerful elite or the ruling class (Bennett 2008:477). Therefore, the prophet Isaiah uses the image of the vineyard in a way similar to Nathan's, when he used a story to get David to condemn his own actions (II Sam. 12:1-7). Similarly, Isaiah sets his hearers up to judge themselves; God has cared for them like

a vineyard, yet the fruits of their lives are bitter and sour. I believe that after listening to the song of the vineyard, the prophet Isaiah's audience understood the message without further explanation.

3.4.2. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS LAWSUIT

Lawsuit is a type of preaching technique among many of the preaching techniques used by the prophets in the Bible to challenge, indict, and judge various entities. Those who hold on to the notion that the homiletical approach is lawsuit, believe that the prophet Isaiah used lawsuit as a polemical homily in a situation or context of injustice. Kaiser (1972:59) maintains that the preaching technique or homiletical approach employed by the prophet Isaiah in the text under consideration is lawsuit, because the structure of the text follows that of a speech of accusation, the themes of which include the affirmation of a relationship in society imposing an obligation on the accuser and the accused, the account by the accuser of the way in which he has fulfilled his duty, a complaint at failure of the accused to fulfill his duty, and an appeal to the court for a decision. Wildberger (2009:178) also argues that the preaching technique is a lawsuit, because an accusation speech includes establishing the fact that there is a mutual relation that binds the accuser and the accused. He further argues that there is a demonstration on the part of the accuser that his own obligation has been fulfilled, the accusation of the shortcomings of the one who is accused, who has failed to fulfill his obligation and the summons to those in the community responsible for justice to come together to pass judgment.

Petersen (2002:64) is also among those who understand the nature of the preaching technique as lawsuit, when he posits that "Isaiah 5:1-7 though often termed a 'love song' really involves a legal process of judgment. Unlike some of the other texts termed lawsuits, Isaiah 5:1-7 proceeds to the pronouncement of a sentence which is uttered by the deity." For example, in Isaiah 5:3-6 the listeners are called not only as witnesses in the case, but they are also directly asked to be judges in the matter between the owner of the vineyard, who now speaks himself, and his vineyard. The motive behind the preaching technique is that the prophet Isaiah wishes to involve his listeners in a trial in which judgment must be reached here and now (Nielsen 1989:92-93).

As a matter of fact, the study have found the work of Yee very relevant, most especially because of the fact that her approach aims at drawing out similarities between the lawsuit homily found in Deuteronomy 32:1-29 and the lawsuit in Isaiah 5:1-7. The following is a homiletical structure of the lawsuit preaching technique of Deuteronomy 32:1-29.

1. Deut. 32:1—Call to witnesses to give ear to the proceedings. These are "the heavens" and "the earth", addressed in verse 1.
2. Deut. 32:4-6—Introductory statement of the case at issue by the divine judge and prosecutor, or by his earthly official.

3. Deut. 32:7-14—Recital of the benevolent acts of the suzerain Recounted here are major moments in Israelite history; their election by Yahweh, the wilderness experience, the conquest of the Promised Land, and Yahweh's enduring covenantal love for his people in providing for their needs
4. Deut. 32:15-18—Indictment. Yahweh's loving kindness towards his people is compared with their infidelity in turning towards idols the formal complaint of the poet.
5. Deut. 32:19-29—Sentence. In the first person, God now declares what he will do to his people as a result of their unfaithfulness (Yee 1977:32).

Isaiah 5:1-7 contains features that are analogous to the homiletical structure of Deuteronomy 32:1-29 in the previous (see 3.3.3 for the homiletical structure of Isaiah 5:1-7). For example, units are designated as a song. In addition, both deal thematically with the contrast between the covenantal love of God for his people and their infidelity. Likewise, Isaiah 5:4b corresponds to Deut. 32:15-18 as the indictment in the form of a question. Isaiah 5:5-6 corresponds even more to Deut. 32:19-29 as the sentence in which the vineyard-owner reveals what he will do to his vineyard as a result of its unproductiveness (Yee 1977:32).

Using the lawsuit as a technique of preaching, the prophet acts as prosecutor, who rightfully determines that the owner of the vineyard fulfilled his duty in every way and cherished a reasonable expectation for his vineyard (Olivier 1996:299). According to Nielsen (1989:93), "It is not the plaintiff himself, but the friend who describes his kindness, so testifying that the plaintiff has met his obligation in Isaiah 5:2. The importance of this motif is also shown by its resumption in Isaiah 5:4." This means that the prophet Isaiah, especially the rhetorical question he uses in verse 4, portrays the fact that God did everything possible to make Israel and Judah produce the fruit of justice and righteousness, but they fail to do so. Young (1965:200) posits that: "The language of the question which Isaiah asks is intended simply to manifest the abundant and overwhelming grace of God. No fault or blame can attach to what He has done for Israel. He has been faithful to His promises."

The lawsuit as a preaching technique also pictures the prophet Isaiah as a judge; that is, after he has actively engaged his audience, he moves on to take on the role of judge, thus passing judgment on the vineyard (Olivier 1996:299). For example, in Isaiah 5:7 Yahweh's judgment must overtake the people because instead of satisfying his expectation concerning justice and righteousness, which is loyalty and care to all people, giving food to hungry orphans, water to weary strangers, clothing to the poor, and comfort to the destitute, they answer with injustice and a cry (Niesel 1989:88; Olivier 1996:300-301). Therefore, in his preaching, the prophet Isaiah enumerated some of the sins of Israel and Judah that bring about judgment. For example, grasping greediness will be punished by barren fields (Isaiah 5:8-10) and drunkenness will be punished with captivity (Isaiah 5:11-14) (Martin & John 1983:43). This means that the prophet Isaiah tells the people that everything that is built up through the transgression of the sacred ordinances of the people of God will be destroyed; that is, the numerous

magnificent new houses will one day become abandoned and ruined. The same is true of the seed that was sown; it will give an ephah, which is one-tenth as much as it should have brought forth (Kaiser 1972:67; Young 1965:208). The condemnation is also against the corrupt judges who pervade justice for bribes. Kaiser (1972:70) points out that driven by the pursuit of pleasure, the judges of Israel had become venal tools of those who exercise power and authority.

There are also those who understand the preaching technique or homiletical approach of the prophet Isaiah as an allegory. The next section will examine this preaching technique.

3.4.3. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS AN ALLEGORY

Allegory is a preaching technique in which a story is intended by the author to convey a hidden meaning that has to be perceived. Collins (2004:317) added that the song of the vineyard is an extended allegory. The choice of the image of the vineyard may be determined by the kind of offenses that Israel was committing. For example, those who joined house to house and field to field. More typically however, the small landowners were forced to mortgage their property to pay their debts, and so the land came to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands.

Redditt (2008:62) posits that: “An allegory may be described as a narrative that has a series of metaphors. Prophet Isaiah allegorizes the song, equating the owner with God, the vineyard with Israel, and the vines with the people of Israel.” Redditt’s understanding of how the prophet Isaiah allegorizes the song underscores this study understanding of how the prophet uses allegory as a preaching technique. For example, equating God with the owner means that he wanted his listeners to know how God was committed toward enhancing the well-being of the people of Israel and Judah. This is clearly stated by the prophet when he said: “He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a watchtower in it” (Isaiah 5:2). In the same way, the prophet Isaiah pictures the people of Israel and Judah as the vineyard; that is, they are the chosen people of God among the nations of the earth. Besides choosing them, God also provides them with all they need (Isaiah 5:2, 4). The fruit of the vineyard is the people’s acts of justice and righteousness (Isaiah 5:2). This means that the bad fruits signify the acts of injustice that was prevalent during the time of the prophet Isaiah. God was disappointed because instead of the people producing the fruit of justice and righteousness, they were producing the fruit of injustice.

This implies that the prophet Isaiah used the song of the vineyard in order to prepare his listeners for the message of judgment that followed afterward; that is, he wanted to draw their attention to the fact that they have fallen short of God expectation (see v. 7), therefore punishment will definitely come their way (v 8-24). Hayes and Irvine (1987:102) infers that the goal of the prophet Isaiah is to demonstrate his contention that Israel and Judah, as the vineyard of Yahweh, have yielded bad fruit and as a result Yahweh has already begun and would continue to tear apart the defenses of the vineyard, opening it to be devoured and trampled and leaving it uncared for and neglected to return to

a wild state. Collins (2004:317) also comments on the motive behind the allegorical usage of the vineyard by saying that Israel or Judah is indicted for failing to do justice and condemned to punishment. He further argues that unlike Amos and Hosea, however, Isaiah does not use the exodus story as his frame of reference. He operates within the traditions of the Davidic monarchy and Zion, but these also presupposed the practice of justice and righteousness (Psalm 45:4, 7; 72:1-4).

Some Old Testament scholars suggest that the preaching technique found in Isaiah 5:17 is a parable. The next section will be a critical reflection on this possibility.

3.4.4. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD AS A PARABLE

Another preaching technique or homiletical approach that Old Testament scholars believe the prophet Isaiah uses in his preaching is parable which is often described as short story that centre on moral lessons. Parable constitutes a realistic story about a violation of the law, related to someone who has committed a similar offense, with the purpose of leading the unsuspecting hearer to pass judgment on him or herself. The offender will be caught in the trap set for him or her if he or she truly believes that the story told to him or her actually happened and only if he or she does not prematurely detect the similarity between the offence in the story and the one he or she has committed (Yee 1977:32). This is basically what we find in Isaiah 5:1-7. For example, Young (1965:192) states that chapter five of Isaiah presents a striking example of the variety that might be employed by the prophets in presentation of their messages. He further argues that there is also the parable that Nathan told of the ewe lamb and Amos upon occasion came forth with a dirge. Our Lord's parables concerning the vineyard (Matt. 20:1; 21:28; Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9-16) are based on this passage. Gitay (1991:88) asserts that: "the Prophet Isaiah employs specific literary-stylistic devices in order to attract his audience's attention and to touch them emotionally." This denotes that the prophet Isaiah uses the parable in order to help his audience identify the message of his preaching. Like the prophet Nathan did to King David, Isaiah aims at leading his audience to a point where they will be able to be convicted of their shortcomings before God. Hubbard and Barker (1985:56-57) have the same understanding when they posit that, like Nathan before David (2Sam. 12:1-7), the prophet Isaiah asks his listeners to first render judgment and then to accept the judgment as applicable to themselves.

As a matter of fact, virtually all the Old Testament scholars who consider the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7 a parable link it with the episode of the prophet Nathan and King David (II Samuel 12:1-7). The study found the similarity between the parables very significant, because the parables are homilies on injustice. For example, the prophet Nathan address David's act of injustice toward Uriah, while the prophet Isaiah addresses the attitude of the elites toward the peasants. This is the reason why this study brings the structures of the two parables together. For example, the homiletical structure of the Prophet Nathan's parable is as follows.

- A. Parable—2 Sam 12:1b-4: Nathan presents to David the "case" concerning the robbery of the poor man's ewe-lamb by the rich man for a legal decision.
- B. Judgment—2 Sam 12:5-6: David responds angrily to the case and utters an oath, pronouncing a judgment of death upon the rich man and sentencing him to a fourfold retribution for the ewe-lamb.
- C. Interpretation—2Sam 12:7a: Nathan, after David thus condemns himself by his judgment, announces: "You are the man."
- D. Recital of the benevolent actions of God—2Sam 12:7b-8: Yahweh himself recapitulates his generosity towards David in the first person.
- E. Indictment—2Sam 12:9: The accusation of ingratitude is expressed in a rhetorical question, beginning with "Why have you despised the Lord to do what is evil in his sight?" An application of the parable to David's heinous crimes follows.
- F. Sentence—2Sam 12:10-12: The consequences of David's ingratitude are introduced rhetorically by Yahweh through his spokesman Nathan, and he announces the sentence in the first person. Then the dramatic conclusion of the oracle, marked by the particle where, David's past deeds are compared with Yahweh's future deeds that result from them (Yee 1977:33-34).

This is analogue to Isaiah's technique of preaching $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ in Isaiah 5:1-7.

Below is the homiletical structure of the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7:

- A. Parable—Isa 5:1b-2: Within the framework of a "song", Isaiah presents the "case" about his friend and the unproductiveness of the choice vines that he planted in his vineyard.
- B. Judgment—Isa 5:3: After the "case" is laid out, the speaker changes to the owner of the vineyard himself, who requests the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah to judge the proceedings accordingly.
- C. Recital of benevolent actions of God—Isa 5:4a: The vineyard-owner recounts his positive activity for the vineyard as a rhetorical question in the first person.
- D. Indictment—Isa 5:4b: The accusation is also formulated in a rhetorical question, beginning with the fact that although choice vines were planted, rotten grapes were produced.
- E. Sentence—Isa 5:5-6: In the first person, emphasized rhetorically, the vineyard-owner reveals what he will do to the vineyard as a result of its unfruitfulness.
- F. Interpretation—Isa 5:7: Interpretation unveils the real identities involved in the case (Yee 1977:36).

Here, as in other parables in the Old Testament, particularly the episode of Nathan and King David (II Samuel 12:1-7) above, the hearers are forced to compromise themselves and pass judgment on the produce of the vineyard and care given to it by the beloved. The primary purpose is a hidden motive, intended to manipulate the Judeans into condemning a corrupt condition of which they too are guilty (Prevost 1995:61; Yee 1977:39). This means that the prophet Isaiah uses the parables to preach about the relationship of God with his people, which is the basis of the indictment and the sentence. He tried to reveal to the people that the indictment and the sentence are rooted in the justice of God vis-à-vis the injustice of the people (Yee 1977:39). For example, God treated them justly by taking care of them; he elected them out of many nations, gave them laws, the kings, the prophets, and blessed them with all kinds of blessings. Young (1965:203-204) posits that there were nations other than Israel, but on Israel alone did God set His affection. They were his vineyard, and in them he found delight. In them, however, he might show his glory, and for the sake of his glory, he chose them. They were a vineyard that needed to be tended and cultivated, so that they might bring forth the fruit that the owner desired. This means that Israel, through their relationship with God, experience his justice, so that they too may act justly toward their fellow human beings, but they acted on the contrary. This signifies that those who have been taught of God and have received his righteousness are expected to exhibit justice in their lives (Young 1965:204). Here, the prophet uses the parable to show Israel and Judah God's disappointment of their conduct of injustice and the imminent judgment. This indicates that the prophet has a single lesson in mind in this periscope, which is demonstrated forcefully by the recurrence of "He looked for ... but ..." (vv 2, 4, 7). The point is that, in spite of Yahweh's untiring efforts on behalf of Israel and Judah, they did not produce the quality of grapes (justice and righteousness) that his effort warrants, but grapes of an inferior quality (bloodshed and a cry). The result is that God is greatly disappointed and resolves to expose the vineyard to man and beast to be reduced to waste (Willis 1977:360). Gitay (1991:88) points out that the song, which functions as a parable, is followed by a series of hoy announcements, which further demonstrates the social corruption. This means Yahweh's judgment must overtake the people, because they do not satisfy his expectation concerning justice and righteousness (Nielsen 1989:88). In summary, the metaphor describing Israel as a vineyard of God is employed by Isaiah to expose Israel's reluctance to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord; that is, to yield fruit in terms of righteousness and justice. This means that not to maintain justice is equivalent to the yielding of rotten fruit. Isaiah 5:8-24 aptly describes the meaning of a rotten fruit, selfishness and greed, wicked desires for pleasure and pride, the manipulation of the truth, law and justice, and the fostering of lies and slander (Olivier 1996:300-301).

CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the chapter we saw that prophet Isaiah minister in a context of economic prosperity but social and religious decay. For instance there was abuse of power through exploitation of the poor, unjust relationships through enslavement and maltreatment of the less privilege, and inequality in terms of resources control and distributions. These injustices resulted to corruption of the legal system and poverty that is, a huge gap between the rich and the poor. As a matter of fact the poor keeps getting poorer.

This chapter also brought the prophet Isaiah's understanding of *μισ]πα4τ≡* in Isaiah 5:1-7 to the fore as willingness to place human need and relationships as the highest priority of life, flowing from relationship with God; that is, the ability to take certain action or refrain from certain actions that will enhance the well-being of the other. The summary of the prophet Isaiah's understanding of *μισ]πα4τ≡* in Isaiah 5:1-7 is nurturing an interdependent and harmonious relationship with God and their fellow humankind. Furthermore, in Isaiah 5:1-7, the prophet portrays how God is committed to *μισ]πα4τ≡* (justice); that is, he is committed to enhancing the well-being of Israel, his covenant people (see Isaiah 5:2). The prophet also lamented how those who received God justice fails to act justly toward their fellow human beings. This means justice is God's expectation of his people, from the leaders down to the followers (see Isaiah 5:7).

In his preaching, the prophet Isaiah employs a homiletical principle that enables his listeners understands his message. Therefore, this chapter discussed some of the preaching techniques the prophet Isaiah used in Isaiah 5:1-7. For instance, the song of the vineyard speaks volumes from an agricultural perspective to the context of injustice that revolves around land grabbing and control. During the time of the prophet Isaiah, the elite confiscated land belonging to the peasantry, a situation that led to enslavement. The image of the vineyard also fit the context in which the prophet Isaiah preached because his audience was mostly farmers and grapes was one of the major crops. Some Old Testament scholars suggest however, that the prophet used a lawsuit as a preaching technique. Others consider the homiletical approach an allegory. Still others believe that the prophet Isaiah uses a parable. But this study is of the opinion that the text portrays different elements of preaching techniques, like a lawsuit, allegory, parable which the prophet, as a skillful preacher, employs in his preaching of *μισ]πα4τ≡*.

The chapter bring about the normative task of practical theology by Osmer in bringing to fore how people should treat one another that is, establishing God's goodness for one another and commitment toward improving the well-being of one another in the Middle Belt region.

There are however seemingly certain similar contextual paradigms of the prophet Isaiah and that of the Middle Belt region today. Claassens' (2012:212) observation on the situation of the world gives a clearer understanding of the similarity between the prophet Isaiah's context and that of the Middle Belt region:

In our world today, issues of justice and righteousness are more relevant than ever. We live in a world where the powerless are exploited; where the rich enrich themselves at the cost of the poor; where greed, corruption, outsourcing, and unjust legal systems have become the norm. Our world is a world where racism, poverty, and HIV / AIDS are realities that need to be faced by all who believe in a world where 'justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

This implies that the injustices that necessitated the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ by the prophet Isaiah during the eighth century BCE is also found in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The next chapter will discuss preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as portrayed by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7 in the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PREACHING OF *μισ]πα4τ* IN A CONTEXT OF INJUSTICE OF THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the literary analysis and rhetorical strategies of *μισ]πα4τ* in Isaiah 5:1-7; that is, the prophet Isaiah's preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* in Isaiah 5:1-7 in a context of injustice. This chapter will consider the preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* of Isaiah 5:1-7 in a context of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. That is, how the prophet Isaiah's understanding of *μισ]πα4τ* in Isaiah 5:1-7 and Wolterstorff's theory of justice could possibly be applied through preaching in the context of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. For example, the chapter will consider the role of the church in the Middle Belt region. In addition, this chapter brings the understanding of biblical hermeneutics and preaching according to the context of the listener to the fore. Furthermore, the chapter also uses images to describe the situation of injustice in the Middle Belt region. The chapter will also discuss ways in which the preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* can be done in the region. For example, there is the prophetic proclamation of *μισ]πα4τ*, the preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* as pastoral activity, prophetic hope preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* and *μισ]πα4τ* as a language of reconciliation.

4.2 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

The prophet Isaiah's preaching of *μισ]πα4τ* in Israel and Judah in Isaiah 5:8-30, in my opinion, is what the church of Jesus Christ is called to do. Hendriks (2004:19) posits that: "The church can play a major role in addressing the numerous problems that confront us in Africa." This signifies that the church in the Middle Belt region can play a key part in confronting the challenge of prejudice that faces the region. The reason is because the church of God must be found on the side of those who are treated unjustly; that is, the church of God must be the voice of the voiceless. By implication, the church of God must be with the poor, the homeless, the naked and hungry (Tutu 1994:158). In his emphasis on the role of the church toward injustice, Oscar Romero of Salvador maintains that the church, the defender of the rights of God, the law of God, and dignity of each human being, cannot remain silent in the presence of injustice (Oscar Romero cited in Boesak 1986:5-6). In the same way, Kukah summarizes Catholic Church's social teaching thus:

We believe each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status. The test

therefore for every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human dignity and indeed human life itself. The focal point of the church's teaching is the dignity of the human person. This dignity is based on the fact that the human person is special creature of God (1999:235).

This is what the church of Jesus Christ in the Middle Belt region is called to do; to oppose any teaching, policy, and attitudes that is contrary to the human dignity bestowed upon humankind by God—namely unfairness, taking advantage of the other, and undue relationships in the region. “Justice means all people have equal opportunity, equal protection, equal services and equal access to public benefits” (Nigerian Covenant 1999:7). This is what the Church in Nigeria (including the Middle Belt region), have to stand and fight for. According to Nolan (2009:130), “the concept of justice that we find in the Bible *μίσπλατ* in particular is somewhat different from the concept of justice in Greek philosophy or in scholastic theology or in modern ideas about human rights”. He continues by saying that biblical justice is much broader and more comprehensive, given that it covers the whole of morality—personal and social concepts. This means all moral laws, principles, virtues, and actions are understood to be a matter of justice. Justice deals with the rights due to every individual in a community and upholding of those rights (Birch 1991:155). Evenhandedness determines how people act and relate with one another in a community. Uprightness controls human passion for greediness, self-interest, self-centeredness, human exploitation, unfair associations and covetousness. Fedler (2006:45) maintains that unbiased persons are generally characterized by the ability to see beyond the narrow confines of self-interest. They are willing and able to weigh the interest of others in their moral deliberation. He further argues that evenhanded persons have developed moral skills of seeing the effects of an action or policy on all persons involved and then acting in a way that is fair.

From historical analysis, the church in Middle Belt region played a most important part in addressing the problem of inequality during colonial administration in Nigeria. For instance, Christian Missionary teaching was seen to breed rebellion and revolution in northern Nigeria because Christian Missionary insists on the equality of Christian religion to Islam. They also insisted on better social opportunities of the status of individual in the society (Logams 2004:135). It is the teaching of the Christian Missionary and church emphasis on the equality of individuals, irrespective of religious status and ethnicity that sparks up agitation for the Middle Belt Movement in northern Nigeria. This is because the teaching creates consciousness of discrimination cause by unfairness, exploitation, and unjust associations in the hearts of the people (see 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3).

The Middle Belt Movement started in 1949 and its struggle for creation of a region went on into the 1950s and 1960s. Its social and political consciousness took the form of mobilizing Christians and the

Christian religious identity in support of its political objectives. For this reason, there were more Christians who rallied in support of the movement among groups and societies on the Plateau, Adamawa, Southern Bauchi and Southern Kaduna (Logams 2004:161). This explains the reason why the Middle Belt started with the name ‘Non-Muslim-Group’, although the name was changed to the Middle Belt Movement and subsequently, the Middle Belt region for fear of being religiously biased. ‘Non-Muslim-Group’ reveals the role of the church in the creation of the region, however, which is rooted in addressing the problem of prejudice. Turaki poignantly points out that:

The people of Middle Belt region were enslaved, plundered, subjugated, dehumanized and denied their basic human rights by colonial masters and the Hausa – Fulani rulers. Christian Missions came as our liberators. By virtue of Mission education and Christianity we now have a basis and foundation for fighting for all our human rights and freedoms and also asserting our human dignity (1999:2).

From the foregoing, it is revealed that in the history of the Middle Belt region, the Church played a most important part in confronting the problem of unfairness in the region. This implies that the church has a key role to perform today in combating the situation of discrimination in the region. One of the means of doing that in my opinion is preaching. This is what the prophet Isaiah did in Isaiah 5:1-7; that is, he developed a homiletical procedure based on the context in which he lived. This means the task of Homileticians in the Middle Belt region is to develop a homiletical approach to the concrete realities of the region. This has been the practice in the Christian tradition; for example, Church fathers like John Chrysostom “the golden-mouthed” used preaching as a tool for addressing the problem of inequality during their time of ministry. For instance, the Golden-Mouthed preached that:

The golden bit on your horse, the gold circlet on the wrist of your slave, the gilding on your shoes, means that you are robbing the orphan and starving the widow. When you have passed away, each passer-by who looks upon your great mansion will say, ‘How many tears did it take to build that mansion; how many orphans were stripped; how many widows wrong; how many laborers deprived of their honest wages? Even death itself will not deliver you from your accusers (Gonzalez 1985:197).

In the same way, Pieterse proposed the type of preaching that aimed at combating the challenge of poverty in South Africa. In a book entitled *Preaching in a context of poverty*, he maintains that:

The aim is to develop a homiletic theory for praxis which will help preachers to proclaim the gospel message meaningfully in their situation. This implies that preaching should be

meaningful to people in their situation. To achieve this preaching has to be liberating. Liberating preaching means that preachers should help the people to acquire a vision; through their faith in God, of liberating way out of their wretched situation (Pieterse 2001:3).

In a related development, Cilliers proposed how the church in South Africa can engage the challenge of HIV and AIDS through preaching. In an article entitled *Preaching as a language of hope*, he posits that:

I believe it is the task of the church, and therefore also of preachers, to supply language that gives form to the primal, human outcry. The significance of this language lies in the fact it gives voice to the suffering; in it suffering is given dignity of language. But more: with this language we protest against the absurdity of suffering, and, theologically speaking, we confirm that we have all been created in the image of God, and that suffering is not what God willed for his created image (2007:158-159).

Therefore, there is need to develop a homiletic approach that will help preachers in the Middle Belt region to proclaim the message of $\mu\sigma]πα4τ\cong$ meaningfully in the situation of disproportion, mishandling of power, and partial interactions. The ensuing section considers the interpretation of $\mu\sigma]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region more closely.

4.3 INTERPRETING $\mu\sigma]πα4τ\cong$ IN THE CONTEXT OF MIDDLE BELT REGION

Interpretation is bringing the biblical text to the real life situation of a particular place at a particular time. According to Van Seters (1989:16), preaching is an act through which theology and the concrete realities of society may be linked. This means that interpretation as act of preaching is bringing together the word of God and the concrete realities of the listener. For example, the message of redemption, like in other cultures, was often cast in story. Narratives were used to communicate values and commitments essential to the identity and well-being of the community to the successive generations. But as societies developed and the Torah began to take on a written form, those who told the stories developed a homiletical approach. The Torah then became elaborate and contextualized to meet the needs and experiences of a contemporary group of listeners. The process of contextualizing the Torah to meet the needs of present-day hearers is the origin of current understanding of preaching

(Turner 2009:590).²⁹ This implies that in preaching (preaching of *μισ]πα4τ*≡ included), two things have to be considered; namely the life situation of the listener (context) and the biblical text. The following is a closer reflection on these notions.

4.3.1 PREACHING AS HERMENEUTICS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

According to Boraas (2001:531), the original meaning of hermeneutics is translation. That is, it is the authoritative communication of a message (e.g., from God) that needs a mediator. He added that hermeneutics is the rendering of a text from a language into another, and the exposition of something said or written with a view to bringing out its meaning. Stressing the important of hermeneutics in preaching, Sauter and Phillips (2001:537) maintain that Christian preaching always faces the problem of conveying the meaning of a text written in another place and time in the context of what is now being experienced in the life of local congregation. They argued further that what is said may sound strange, even if the words themselves are familiar. What is meant in the Bible can often be communicated only by giving the words a new twist. This is where hermeneutics plays a vital role. Buhler (2005: 525) added that “the abiding concern of hermeneutical theology is always with men and woman as they are addressed and challenged by God to discover themselves and be themselves”. The prophet Isaiah’s preaching technique in Isaiah 5:7 and the episode of prophet Nathan and King David in II Samuel 12:7, where both prophets said to their audience that “you are the one” after telling them a parable as a mirror for understanding themselves before God, underscores the meaning of preaching as hermeneutics. This entails that preaching as hermeneutics is the interpretations of a biblical text to enable the listener to hear a word from God or have an encounter with God. Moreover, preaching is an event through which human spiritual “numbness” is broken open and the view-point of God comes into human “consciousness”, so that an alternative world of meaning takes shape in human thoughts, and actions (Park 2012:15-16). This means that preaching as hermeneutics or interpretation helps the listener to know what God had done or what he can do and even what He expects from the listener. Lategan (1992:150) maintains that “interpretation, that is hermeneutics, is essential to discerning the will of God”. This can be seen in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7, where he uses the song of the vineyard to let his listeners understand what God expects from them. People like Moses, the prophet, the scribe, Jesus Christ, the Apostles, church fathers, the reformers, etc., acted the same way; that is, they interpreted God’s will to their hearers. According to Gowan (1998:63), Isaiah’s supposed love song (v.1) is used the same way Nathan used his parable of the poor man with one ewe lamp in II Sam. 12:1-7 and the way the wise woman of Tekoa used her fabricated story of her two sons in II Sam 14:1-20. Jesus also appeals to the lawyer whose question brought forth the parable of the Good Samaritan to make a judgment about it which ought to apply to himself: ‘Which of these

²⁹Cilliers (2004:25) posits that “preaching is a variety of activities that pass through the funnel of proclamation”. He argues that in preaching, a mixing of at least four types of languages or grammar takes place. The four languages, in his opinion, are the voices of the preacher, the biblical text, the congregation (context) and that of God.

three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ (Luke 10:36). Jesus also told his own parable of the vineyard, which let the hearers to recognize themselves in it (Mark 12:1-12). The method is thus to attract the interest of listeners by a story that arouses their sympathy or sense of justice, and then show that it is a story about them. This implies that the prophet Isaiah, Nathan, the woman of Tekoa, and Jesus Christ, all take part in interpretation and the aim is to help their listeners understand God’s will in their life.

Therefore, the main concern of this research is the fact that God expects the people of the Middle Belt region to act in a certain manner and one of this is instituting God’s righteousness for one another and also obligation to improve the well-being of one another. This is what the prophet Isaiah means when he says: “God looks for $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\equiv$ (justice), He expects $s\equiv\equiv e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ (righteousness)” in Isaiah 5:7 (Park 2012:416). The task of preachers in the region is to help the people understand this fact. To achieve that, Pieterse (2001:81) suggests that preachers should read the text in terms of the situation of the people with a view to composing a sermon. This means preachers in the Middle Belt region should approach the biblical text with their hearts occupied with the situation of their people, believing that God’s Word, which is the same yesterday, today and forever, will bring about the enablement of enhancing the well-being of the other in the area. For instance, in Acts 2:37, the apostle Peter interpreted the biblical text that is God’s will for the people according to their situation on the day of Pentecost and they responded by saying, “What shall we do?” In the same way, through preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\equiv$ of Isaiah 5:1-7, in my opinion, the people of Middle Belt region in their situation will be asking themselves: “How shall we treat one another?”

The aforementioned question brings us to the necessity of preaching as interpreting the text according to the situation of the hearer. The next section makes close examination of preaching according to the context of the listener.

4.3.2 PREACHING AS INTERPRETATION OF LISTENER’S CONTEXT.

According to Justo and Catherine (1988:29): “Each act of preaching takes place within a unique constellation of context and that the more that constellation changes the more will the meaning of the sermon itself change, even if it is repeated verbatim.” This implies that in preaching, the context is very important because it determines the focus and purpose of preaching. Cilliers (2004:144) maintains that targeting of the congregation and its own context implies that preaching attains a unique, relevant character. This entails that the congregation brings the wider context, for example, the socio-economic, political, ecological and ethical, within which preaching takes place.

The biblical text has always been preached according to the context of the audience in which it is presented. For instance, the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-7 preaches $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\equiv$ in a particular context (see 3.3). At the same time, the sage and the prophets addressed the context of their time. Jesus Christ

and the apostles preached according to their context. The church fathers, the reformers, the puritans and friars preached based on the context of their time. Pieterse and Cilliers also suggest preaching in a particular context; that is, preaching in particular situations – namely poverty and HIV and AIDS (see 4.2). In the same way, great theologians like Saint Augustine and Gregory the Great emphasized that if preaching is to be credible it must do justice to the different needs, disposition and situation of the hearer (Otto 2005:332).

As such, context in preaching in this study is concerned with making the biblical text, namely *μῆναι* in Isaiah 5:1-7 relevant to the necessities, and conditions of the Middle Belt area, which are inequality, abuse of power and unjust relationships. The preaching of *μῆναι* in the circumstance of discrimination means interpretation of the biblical text, specifically the *μῆναι* of Isaiah 5:1-7 in the situation where people demean and treat others as if they have less worth in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The task of preaching in the region is to bring about dialogue between the theological content of the text - that is God's words or deeds - as they emerge from the text, and the listeners to the homily in their life situation (Pieterse 2001:72). This implies that the preaching of *μῆναι* in a setting of inequality should underscore the creation of dialogue between the prophet Isaiah's understanding of *μῆναι* in Isaiah 5:1-7 and the situation of prejudice in the Middle Belt region.

For this to become a reality that is to enable dialogue between the prophet Isaiah's understanding of *μῆναι* and the situation of injustice in the Middle Belt region, Cilliers (2004:26) suggests that while preparing for the sermon, the preacher must hear the voice of the congregation. This is very glaring in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah, where in his preaching the voice of the victims of injustice is conspicuous in his sermon: "And He look for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress", Isaiah 5:7.

In the case of the Middle Belt region, preachers should hear the voice of discrimination, taking advantage of the other and unfair relationships. This will give the preachers the presumption or faith that God Himself in some or other way will be there or His voice will be audible in the life situation of the hearer. It implies that the preacher goes to the Scripture, but not alone; that is, the preacher goes on behalf of the faithful community and, in a sense, on behalf of the world. By implication, their questions and needs are in the preacher's mind and heart. With such a burden, the preacher explores the Scripture, faithfully expecting to discover the truth of God's claim there. Those who have sent the preacher has questions and concerns, and sometimes the text will speak directly to those questions (Long 2005:49). This is very important because people go church to hear God speak to them in their state of affairs. In recent years, scholars of preaching have established empirically that people go to church to hear a word from God in the sermon. People go to church to have an encounter with God (Pieterse 2001:72; Cilliers 2004:40).

This means that preaching has to meet the needs of a congregation; sermon topics and themes should arise out of the local context. As a matter of fact, every passionate preacher should know that people sitting in the pew bring much to their worship on Sundays. For example, among them are families who lost their jobs, people who are trying to make ends meet, and others who are desperately seeking a way out of their troubled lives. For that reason, preachers need to ponder the texts and listen to what God wants to communicate to the people in their situation. This is what Karl Barth means when he advised to “take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both but interpret newspapers from your Bible.” This shows that through the hermeneutical process, the preachers can bring into being what God wants them to see and then show it to their listeners (Park 2012:419).

Therefore, preaching *μῆναι* that is establishing God’s righteousness for or commitment to enhancing the well-being of the other according to the situation will enable the people of the Middle Belt region to hear the voice of God or encounter Him. This will also enable them to treat one another on the basis of all human beings are created in the image of God.

This leads to the question of what preaching techniques will be employed in the preaching of *μῆναι* in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The next section examines images as preaching technique more closely.

4.4 IMAGES AS TECHNIQUES FOR PREACHING *μῆναι* IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION.

In Isaiah 5:1-7 the prophet Isaiah uses the image of the vineyard as a technique of preaching *μῆναι* where people fail to act justly in Israel and Judah. In the same way, the study uses some images as preaching techniques to give a graphic picture of the situation of injustice and hence the necessity of preaching *μῆναι* in the Middle Belt region. Troeger (2007:60) maintains that: “Imagination is the ability to create and hold before the mind’s eye an image of something that is actually present.” In preaching, imagery is one of the compelling ways to structure a sermon. The image can be drawn from the biblical text or from contemporary life, and it often serves as a bridge between the two. One of the values of images is that they appeal to the senses and engage the hearer through sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell (Tisdale 2010:71). In addition, images are of great importance to us on multiple levels, both on the individual and corporate, as well as the spiritual and political. It carries with it the capacity to heal and to illuminate, to purify and to instruct, to unite and to empower (Wallace 1995:9). As a matter of fact, in Isaiah 5:1-7 the prophet Isaiah uses the image of vineyard to describe the situation of inequality and also the necessity of *μῆναι* in Israel and Judah. Therefore, the following images give more understanding of the situation of injustice and why there is need for the preaching of *μῆναι* in the Middle Belt region.

4.4.1 GOD AS WAILING MOTHER

The image of God as a wailing mother is used in the study to picture the situation of injustice and the urgent need of preaching $\mu\sigma/\pi\alpha\lambda\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ (justice) in the Middle Belt area. The image guides us in reimagining God's liberating presence, especially in a world characterized by brutal and often hidden forms of power (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:57). The image is being used as a preaching technique in the same way the prophet Isaiah uses the image of vineyard to depict God concern for justice in Israel and Judah in Isaiah 5:1-7. God is concerned because the victims of social injustice are part of humankind created in His image, so the wounds inflicted on them afflict God in a very personal way. As Nicholas Wolterstorff, drawing on John Calvin, argues: "To afflict injury on a fellow human being is to wound God himself; it is to cause God himself to suffer" (Wolterstorff cited in Claassens 2012:25). This entails that discrimination perpetrated against fellow human beings created in the image God grieves God. This is why the prophet Isaiah laments that God looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; He looked for righteousness, but heard cries of distress in Isaiah 5:7. The pain inflicted on people as a result of denying them access to power, access to resource in the Middle Belt region, in my opinion, grieves God. In addition, using power to marginalize, oppresses, enslaves and take advantage of one another is a matter of concern to God. Even more, demeaning other people on the basis of religion and ethnic background is the same thing, inflicting pain to God. Claassens (2012:25) posits that: "It is people's wounds that cause God's spirit to grow leaden and that cause horror to take hold of God (literally, God is 'seized' with horror)."

God as a wailing mother in this study also depicts the deplorable condition, suffering, and the anguish of the victims of injustice, especially women and children in the Middle Belt region. For example, women and children are the most vulnerable group during any crisis. Research findings reveal that in most of the crises in the Middle region, the most traumatized group is women and children because with one stroke everything they have, including husbands, male children, and houses are destroyed (Angya & Doki 2006:195). This means that the image reveals the effect of the heartless barbarity of the faithful from religious and ethnic zealots' divide, the reckless spilling of the blood of thousands of people, including innocent children, the burning intolerance of those that caused the carnage in Nigeria and the Middle Belt region in particular (Michael, cited in Kajom 2012:36).

Besides the loss of love ones and properties, the victims of injustice are subjected to untold hardships, especially during violence. Nnoli laments over the situation:

During the course of leaving the theatres of violence internally displaced face various difficulties. Many of their problems stem from the spontaneous, hurried and unorganized nature of their departures. Consequently, their flight out of the conflict zone is quite often chaotic. Wives are separated from husbands, children got missing and the emigrant are force to trek very long distances to their destinations. In some cases they do not even know what these destinations are before they leave their homes (cited in Gwamna 2010:90).

This signifies that injustice had and is still causing a lot of pain to some people in the Middle Belt area, particular women and children. Therefore, the image of the wailing mother and possibly the wailing child is used to picture the experience of victims of injustice psychologically, physically, mentally and even spiritually in an imaginative way. This means that the wailing mother aims at challenging the complacency that ignores the reality of social injustice threatening the well-being of the Middle Belt region. The wailing women in Jeremiah fulfill a similar function when their tears give a powerful, visible expression to the fact that everything is not as it should be. As the prophet challenged the community by saying, you say “peace, peace, when there is no peace” (Jer.6:14; 8:11), the wailing women challenge complacency that ignores the many social injustice threatening the well-being of their society as a whole (Claassens 2012:30). For this reason, the image of the wailing mother invites an urgent response to the situation of the abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relationships in the Middle Belt region. One of such response is the preaching of *μισ]πα4τ≅* in Isaiah 5:1-7.

This suggests that the preaching of justice in the Middle Belt region should or ought to be out of concern for the victims of prejudice, namely women and children. For example, in his preaching, the prophet Amos said let justice and righteousness roll like a river (Amos 5:24). In the same way, Micah preaches that: “He had told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ preaches that: “You shall love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31; Matt. 22:37-39) (see 3.5.1). All these preachers in the Bible focus their sermons on the concern for the other.

In the same way, preaching *μισ]πα4τ≅* (justice) in this research means emphasizing equality in the aspect of having access to power, public work opportunities, access to material things like electricity, water, schools, health care services, and freedom to vote and be voted for (see 2.3.1); that is, equality should be on the basis that humankind is created in the image of God (see 2.1). Justice also means using power to establish God’s goodness or improving one another’s well-being, which is basically treating one neighbor as oneself (see 3.2 and 3.4). It is lack of a sense of justice that make people divert what belongs to the public into private use. It is because there is no fairness that few individuals (perhaps those who are privileged to be in political position) live in luxury, while the majority who voted them into power, suffers in poverty. Nolan (2009:134) states that the outstanding characteristic of the nation of the twelve tribes was justice. What he considered to be justice here is equality, because he argues that Israel was an egalitarian society. It had no king, no princes, no nobles or aristocracy. On the other hand, there were no slaves, no poor and oppressed classes of people. These

happened because there was equality, especially in the aspect of land division, which was their major resource. Nolan maintains that the book of Numbers tells us in great detail how all the land was carefully and meticulously divided so that each family would have an equal portion (Numbers 33:54; Joshua 13:21). This is important to preaching *μῆτις* in the Middle Belt region because some communities are suffering, not because resources are lacking, but they are not properly distributed and they go into the pockets of few individuals.

4.4.2 THE IMAGE OF EXILE

The image of exile is used in this study to reveal the destruction and harm that injustice had and is still causing in the Middle Belt region. The image is used in the same way that the prophet Isaiah uses the image of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7 to make his listeners understand the effect of injustice among them: “And he look for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress”. In this study, exile is not limited to geographical relocation only. As a matter of fact, exile was a cultural, political and religious upheaval to the people of Israel. In addition, exile was a calling into question of Israel’s way of life, its institutions of leadership and its faith (Birch 1991:281). In the same way, Brueggemann (1997:ix) explained exile as being “homeless”. He argues that to be homeless the way people are apt to be homeless is to have homes all over the place, but not to be really at home in any of them. To be really at home is to really be at peace, and life is so intricately interwoven that there can be no real peace for one until there is peace for all. This is how the situation of northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt region in particular can be pictured; that is, a time of cultural, political, social, and religious turmoil. It is a time where people have homes all over them but yet they are homeless. For example, the constant burning and bombing of homes and places of worship, and sometimes, especially nowadays where worship services for both Christians and Muslims are conducted under tight security, is a picture of exile. A situation where AK-47s, rocket launchers, and time car bombs are constantly being used during communal and religious violence shows that the region is in exile. The threat of being attacked anywhere and anytime, whereby there is no sense of security, whether one is at home or anywhere, means one is actually in exile. This is a pathetic situation for those staying in rural areas, where guerrilla attackers killed hundreds of people and thousands are being internally displaced (see 2.4.1). If there is no home in the rural areas, it means the people are in exile because no matter how long one stays in the urban area, he or she considers the rural area where he or she originally came from as the real home. The task of the preachers in the Middle Belt region is therefore to help the people through the preaching of *μῆτις* to be able to do what Israel did when they were in exile.

When Israel was in exile or faced calamity, they did what Cilliers (2007:4) calls public outcry. All people who suffer cry out because it is a creaturely and instinctive reaction. Although Cilliers suggests the use of the image in the context of suffering from HIV in South Africa, the principle is

also relevant to the misery, anguish, and deplorable effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region. Public outcry is necessary for the Middle Belt region because prejudice had and is leading the region to sinking at a very high speed, especially through religious and communal violence (see 2.4.1 and 4.3.2). For example, it is very difficult for people to think of improving their standard of living when their hearts are full of fear and anxiety. Furthermore, it is very difficult for people to think of investment in an environment where there is no peace and security. These and many other things call for public outcry. Public outcry, according to Cilliers (2007:159), means: “Voicing of suffering of individual or a community within the community of believers, in the presence of God.” This is not something strange to the Christian faith, because the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is full of examples of individuals or faith communities crying out to God in a context of injustice. Presser (2002:144) maintains that: “Outcry is a motif that runs through both testaments of the Bible. From Abel’s blood crying out from the ground (Gen. 4:10), to Jesus crying out from the cross (Matt. 27:46), those suffering violence or oppression cry out to Yahweh, and Yahweh responds.” For example, when the Israelites suffered injustice as a result of the abuse of power and unjust relationships in Egypt, they cried out. “The Lord said I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering” (Exodus 4:3). The book of Judges has several examples of Israelite communities crying out to God in their suffering from injustice caused by unjust relationships (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6). Presser (2002:144) comments on the situation during the time of Judges: “God does not forget the cry of the afflicted. Even here, where affliction is the result of God own judgment, God hears the people’s cries and rises up a deliverer. Judgment and mercy battle in the heart of God, but mercy has the final word.” This entails that there is every assurance that God will hear the outcry of the people of the Middle Belt region in their situation of abuse of power, unjust relationships, and inequality. This denotes that the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ is necessary in the Middle Belt region because doing so will bring peace through refocusing the people’s attention toward justice, which is invariably a relationship of establishing God’s righteousness and commitment to enhancing the well-being of one another.

Now that the situation of injustice and the necessity of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt region is better understood, the question one may ask is how the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ can meet the need of the Middle Belt region? The next section discusses methods of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt region.

4.5 HOMILETICAL APPROACH TO PREACHING $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\tau\cong$ IN THE MIDDLE BELT REGION

The prophet Isaiah developed a homiletical approach to the problem of injustice in Israel and Judah as a skillful preacher. The prophet develops the technique to attract the interest of the listener in order to

arouse their sense of justice (Gowan 1998:63). The following are homiletical approaches to preaching $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region.

4.5.1 THE PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ AS PROPHETIC PROCLAMATION

In Chapter Two, the analysis of the context of Middle Belt region revealed that there is injustice because of inequality, abuse of power and unjust relationships. The study in Chapter Three also unveiled that prophet Isaiah preached $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ because the people of Israel and Judah failed to act justly toward one another. As such, the prophet Isaiah's preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ was prophetic proclamation that is, his preaching was countercultural, and challenges the *status quo*, the one that focuses on corporate and public issues (Isaiah 5:8-24). In the Middle Belt region where the context is similar to the one of the prophet Isaiah, there is need for prophetic proclamation, the type of preaching that stimulates courage and empowers the listener to work for change in the society. Most importantly prophetic proclamation requires a passion for justice and the courage to preach it (Tisdale 2010:10). This can be seen in the preaching of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:8-24.

Therefore, the task of preachers in the Middle Belt region is to bring the biblical text to the present situation in imaginative ways, because it is from the biblical text that we learn what displeases God in the present and also the new future that God intends for the world. For example, the prophet Isaiah views the injustice of the people of Israel and Judah through the lens of God's acts of justice toward them, Isaiah 5:2. This means preachers are to view their context through the lens of the text to discern and name what in the world is of God or not (see 4.3.1 and 4.3.2). Doing so requires not only courage and wisdom, but also creativity and love (McClure cited in Tisdale 2012:8). This denotes that the prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$, therefore entails a creative hermeneutic link with the present-day context of injustice; that is, taking advantage of other, unfairness, and unjust relationships and the context of the text, namely Isaiah 5:1-7 in such a way that the translation of the message in the prophetic preaching holds new liberating promises from God to the people in the region. This new liberating promises of God in the study is establishing God's righteousness for one another and the commitment to enhance one another's well-being (Isaiah 5:7). To achieve this, all the ideologies that water down the power of God's word in the text for forming God goodness for one another and the obligation of improving the welfare of one another have to be exposed. This means that all ideologies that weaken and jeopardizes the understanding of justice have to be identified in prophetic preaching. Abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relationships, no matter by who must be pointed out, Isaiah 5:8-24 (Pieterse 2001:90).

From the foregoing, it can be seen that prophetic preaching includes rebuking the unjust structures that stand against the proper distribution of wealth on one hand and on the other hand, serving as a voice for the voiceless. This is what the prophets in the Old Testament did in their preaching.

According to Birch (1991:265): “Amos, Isaiah, and Micah all have harsh words for the excesses of a wealthy class that seeks its own luxury when social ills are obvious and widespread” (Amos 4:1-3; Isaiah 3:16-17; 5:1-13; Micah 3:1-12). He argues further that there was a kind and degree of wealth that the prophets held to be incompatible with justice and the nature of the incompatibility can be understood from the way in which they describe it. He added that if the acquisition and possession cost the economic freedom and welfare of others, they called it violence and oppression. If it fostered conspicuous consumption at the level of luxury that was enjoyed in heedless unconcern for the needs of others, it was wrong. If it was gained by violation of the rules of righteousness that set the value of personal relations above profit, it was iniquitous. If wealth became the dominant motivation of those responsible for social well-being because they held power, that was sin. This is how the prophets rebuked the structures that militated against the distribution of wealth in their community. The study therefore suggests that, prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ should be done in the same manner in the Middle Belt region

As a matter of fact, the type of prophetic preaching the study is advocating for in the Middle Belt region can be seen in the preaching of Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who in my judgment, is a prototype of the prophet Isaiah’s preaching of justice in a context of injustice. The reason is because his preaching was motivated by the ills of his society.³⁰ “I cannot help it when I see injustice I cannot keep quiet, for, as Jeremiah says, when I try to keep quiet God’s word burns like a fire in my breast” (Tutu1994:76). For example, Tutu’s reoccurring message that underscores the meaning of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ is: “If only we could begin to treat people as persons created by God in his image, redeemed by Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, what a wonderful land it will be” (Tutu1994S:77). Tutu starts off his prophetic preaching by writing an open letter to Prime Minister B. Vorster in 1976. In the letter, Tutu tried to justify the fact that he is speaking for the voiceless, who are the victims of injustice and are in need of justice (Kukah 1999:190)³¹.

³⁰ Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born in the Transvaal province of South Africa on 7th October, 1931. His heart called him to St. Peter’s Theological College. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1961, and became a chaplain and lectured in theology before being named the Anglican Dean of St. Mary’s Cathedral in Johannesburg, the first Black cleric in that position. A year later, he became the Bishop of Lesotho, an independent Black nation within the borders of South Africa. Then in 1978 he became head of the South African Council of Churches. In 1984, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In that position, he became known globally for his challenge to the evils of apartheid’s racism. He became Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town in April, 1986. He later became the president of the All-Africa Council of Churches and Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape (Gish 2004; Stinson 2012).

³¹ We think about letter writing as one of the means of prophetic preaching because the early letters of apostles to the first Christian churches were one of the most common forms of preaching in the early days of Christianity (Tisdale 2010:73).

What follows, is the summary of the letter, especially the aspect that captures the idea of prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria:

I am writing to you as one who has come to be accepted by some Blacks (i.e. Africans, Indians and Colored) as one of their spokesmen articulating their deepest aspirations, as one who shares them with equal steadfastness.

I am writing to you as one human person to another human person, gloriously created in the image of the self-same God, redeemed by the self-same son of God who for all our sakes died on the cross and rose triumphant from the dead, and reigns in glory now at the right hand of the father.

I write to you, sir, because, like you, I am deeply committed to real reconciliation with justice for all, and to peaceful change to more just and open South Africa Society in which the wonderful riches and wealth of our country will be share more equitably (Tutu 1986:28-35).

The letter reveals how the prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ should or ought to be like; using the teaching of the Scriptures to point out the mishandling of power, dissimilarity, and unjust associations, no matter who is responsible. There are many speeches by Tutu that exemplify the prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$, which cannot be examined in this study for lack of space. But one significant thing that is worth mentioning is Tutu's reference to himself and his fellow country people as the "Rainbow people of South Africa" (Tutu 1994:188). In my judgment, this suggests equality of all people and just relationships among the people of South Africa. In addition, the idea underscores the main objective of prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria; that is, humankind should be treated on the basis of being created in the image of God (see 2.1).

Another open letter that is a replica of prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region is the letter written to the then South African minister of justice by Allan Boesak.³² Boesak, in his prophetic approach to preaching, literally put his life in the line of justice. This shows that prophetic preaching often requires actions that are bold, dangerous, and costly (Tisdale 2010:92). The summary of the letter, most importantly the aspect that is relevant to the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region, follows:

³² Allan Aubrey Boesak was born in Kakamas, Northern Cape, South Africa, in 1946. Boesak first became known as a liberation theologian with the publication of his doctoral dissertation, "Farewell to Innocence." He was an influential activist against racial apartheid in the 1980s in South Africa, where he worked closely with Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa. He has served South African churches and worldwide ecumenical movement in various senior capacities since 1978, including as president of World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Your policy is unjust, it denies people their basic human right, and it undermines their humanity. Too many of the laws which you make are in conflict with the word of God.

Your policy and its execution are a tremendous obstacle for reconciliation between the people of South Africa. Some of the laws are more hurtful than others and have been condemned especially by churches. Now the churches have reached a point where we say: if we condemn laws on the grounds of God's word, how can we then obey those very same laws? (Boesak 1986:58-65)

In the letter, Boesak draws the attention of the South Africa Minister of Justice to the fact that in the Bible, people disobeyed commands from kings on the basis of their being contrary God to commandment. For example, Daniel's three friends refused to obey the king's law when they refused to bow down before the graven image of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:17-18). They regarded the king's laws as being in conflict with the instructions of their God. In the same way, Peter's refusal to obey the Sanhedrin's command not to witness about Jesus any more is a classic example of disobedience to a worldly authority. To this day, his answer resounds in the church of Christ, particularly in the Middle Belt region: 'We must obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29).

Therefore, it is my opinion that Boesak is a prototype of the prophet Isaiah, because in his prophetic preaching he aims at expressing God's feeling toward the structures of the injustice, Isaiah 5:1-7. The reason is that Boesak's prophetic preaching is based on Scripture and reference that all human beings deserves equal treatment because they are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26; Psalm 139:14). Boesak's letter underscores this study's understanding of and strive towards *μίσθρα*, which is normative social relationship where humankind are bound together on the basis of being created in the image of God (see 2.1). This means one cannot be a human being in isolation. God created human beings for fellowship. God created human beings so that we should form the human family existing together because we were made for one another. We are not made for exclusive self-sufficiency but for interdependence (Tutu 1991:93).

Tutu and Boesak preach justice in terms of harmonious and interdependent relationships among the people of South Africa in a context where there was inequality, abuse of power and unjust relationships. They advocated for equality because human beings have been created in the likeness of God and are of infinite value. Therefore, it is injustice to treat someone as if they are less than this (Tutu 1991:93-94). This is very significant to the context of the Middle Belt region where people use religion and ethnicity to discriminate against one another. Therefore, preachers in the region should help the people to understand the fact that human value, worth, and dignity does not depend on religion or ethnic affiliation, but simply on being created in the image of God. Human beings have to be recognized for what they are; human beings created in the image of God (Tutu 1991:101). This is

what prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\cong$ should or ought to accomplish; helping people to treat one another as human beings created in the image God and also establishing God's righteousness or commitment toward enhancing the well-being of one another.

Another example of prophetic preachers is Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X of America. The focus of this study is basically on these preacher's attitudes or convictions toward injustice, which reveals the fact that prophetic proclamation requires of the preacher a heart that breaks with the things that breaks God's heart; a passion for justice in the world and the courage to speak against injustice, Isaiah 5:8-24 (Tisdale 2010:10). For example, Malcolm X's conviction was: "I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefit humanity as a whole" (De Young 2007:80). This is very important in prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\cong$ because having the conviction, especially on the issues of injustice that break God's heart, will enable the preacher to speak the truth without favoritism based on religion or ethnic affiliation. For example, some preachers consider injustice inflicted on people of other religions or ethnic groups not as injustice, because such people did not belong to their religion or ethnic group. Prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\cong$ therefore demands calling for God's goodness to be instituted and commitment toward enhancing the well-being of all humankind on the basis of being created in the image of God (Isaiah 5:7). This means that all humankind should be treated as such because they are created in the image of God, not based on their religion or ethnic affiliation. This is what Malcolm X and Martin Luther King stood for because they discovered that for over three hundred years there was discrimination in America where Black people were oppressed, marginalized, and dehumanized. Therefore, they started agitating for justice; that is they called for every human being to be recognized as a human being, White, Black, Brown, or Red. This means humankind should be seen as one family without the question of discrimination (De Young 2007:63-64). On this basis, they confronted the structures of segregation. For example, Martin Luther King said: "We're through with, we've done more for your people than anyone else. We can't wait any longer. Now is the time." For Malcolm X, the message was: "Give it (civil rights) to us now. Don't wait for next year. Give it to us yesterday, and that's not fast enough" (Boesak 24).

Martin Luther King makes the call because he wanted justice and equality for all who were disadvantaged; Black as well as White. He believes this can be achieved by changing the then American structure. Therefore, he offered a social program to combat racism and poverty (Boesak 25). For Malcolm X, human rights are something people are born with. Human rights are people's God-given rights and this is why every human being should be recognized as a human being, neither White, Black, Brown or Red (De Young 2007:63). The irony is that these two preachers were from different faith perspectives; that is, Martin Luther King was a Christian preacher, while Malcolm X was a Muslim preacher. But according to De Young (2007:84), Malcolm X and Martin Luther King

spoke by phone and there was a sort of an agreement that they would meet in the future and work out a common strategy. Unfortunately, their plan did not materialize because two days before the scheduled meeting, Malcolm X was assassinated. However, the agreement of these great preachers from Islam and Christianity is very important to this study because it signifies that Christians and Muslims may disagree in terms of ideology but that there is a need for agreement to a certain extent in terms of agenda, more importantly, an agenda for justice. This is a reality that needs to be conceptualized in the Middle Belt region where religion has become the major source of injustice caused by inequality, abuse of power, and unjust relationships.

As a matter of fact, the attitudes of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X underscore the concept of interculturality, which could in turn be refined from the perspective of *Interpathy*. The term denotes more than just sympathy. It is an inclusive compassion that is not only directed towards individuals, but also cultures and values. It operates on the basis of an unbiased, unconditional love, taking the ethics of love into systemic paradigms. Interpathy, as a mode of interculturality, operates on the basis of mutual respect, openness to the other, reciprocal understanding, compassion and enrichment (Cilliers 2008:14-15).

The preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ is not all about confronting or exposing the structures of injustice only, but it also comprises addressing all people, including the preachers themselves. The next section reflects on this aspect critically.

4.5.2 PROPHETIC PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ AS PASTORAL ACTIVITY

Although caring about the oppressed, marginalized, enslaved, the thirsty, and the naked is an important element of prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$, this does not necessarily mean preachers should only point fingers at the wealthy and powerful. Rather, as prophetic preachers, they must raise their prophetic voices against the self-centeredness, abuse of power, and unjust relationships of all people, including the preacher himself or herself, because no one is immune to the divine mandate. This is important because in Chapter Two it was revealed that injustice creates an evil circle and that people at all levels in one way or another participate in acts of injustice. This can also be seen in Chapter Three; the prophet Isaiah address all the people of Israel and Judah without distinction in his preaching, Isaiah 5:3. This signifies that the purpose of prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ is to help all God's people to see the bigger picture of God's vision so that everyone can lay aside their personal agendas and work for the common goal of God's Kingdom in this world, which is harmonious and interdependent relationships with God, fellow mankind, and natural environment (Park 2012:423). This implies that prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ as pastoral activity underscores the fact that preaching deliberately set out to touch and involve people's personal concern; that is, preaching should intentionally seek a beneficial change in the hearers, help people make sense of their lives, and

should strive to be a catalyst for more responsible and ethical living on the part of those who hear (Long 2005:28-29). Although the preaching of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah has the tone of judgment, in my opinion the main objective was to facilitate a change among his people, Isaiah 5:4. This is important for the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt region, considering the fact that the events of the past and the present together has so poisoned the people that it is difficult for them to look at one another independently of religion and ethnicity and all what had happened between them (De Young 2007:82). This is especially true of the youth where some of their hearts have been poisoned by elite manipulation of religion and ethnicity that they think of the perceived other as less human and worse of all, as “something to exterminate.”³³ For example, in order to maintain the *status quo* of systemic injustice and structural inequality, the political elite of Nigeria and the Middle Belt in particular, pit the poor, especially the youth from both faith and ethnic communities, against each other. They do so by creating an environment of political, social, economic, and ethnic dissatisfaction. This has resulted in violence that affects the way religion and ethnic groups relate to one another (Agang 2012:49). Actionaid (2008:ix) adds that the high level of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, especially among the youth in the Middle Belt region, make them susceptible to political manipulation. The youth have become veritable grounds for the recruitment of political thugs ready for deployment in politically motivated violent conflicts.

Therefore, the task of the prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ is to serve as a voice that shatters settled reality and evokes new possibility in the life of the listeners (Campbell 2002:120). This denotes that the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should change the ill vision of religious and ethnic bigotry or prejudice among the listeners by naming the causes of prejudice and unveil their reality (see 4.3). At the same time, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should also give the hearers a new vision, particularly of the fact that all human beings are equal because they are created in the image of God. Lim (2002:14) maintains that: “Preaching is the human proclamation of the living word based on the written through the spoken word, to effect changes in the listeners by the power of the Holy Spirit”. Therefore, for the

³³The findings of a recent study in Plateau and Kaduna states point to the fact that the major single reason for youth involvement in violent conflicts is the high level of unemployment. For example, 40 percent of the sample respondents say the combined effect of unemployment; ignorance and elite manipulation have propelled youth to be active participants in violent conflicts in the state. One respondent, for instance, described the conditions of the youth in Plateau State this way:

“...the youths are poor, not well educated, not well exposed and they indulge in all sorts of vices like drug consumption, rape and theft...they are easily influenced by their peers and can easily be mobilized to undertake any action particularly when they are promised remuneration ...they are a vanguard of religious manipulation and many of them are fundamentalists...they are involved in conflict for survival and also to settle scores....they are unemployed or underemployed...some are poorly brought up by their parents...they are incited through the teachings of doctrines by religious leaders who are interested in achieving their personal ambition (Actionaid 2008:21-22).

change that Lim suggests to become a reality in the Middle Belt region, preaching as pastoral activity should accomplish the following.

4.5.2.1 Preaching as pastoral activity must gear toward peace

The analysis of Chapter Two and the image of exile in section 2.4.1 showed that there is no peace in the Middle Belt region as a result of injustice. In the same way, when the prophet mention that there was cries of distress instead of righteousness in Isaiah 5:7 reveals that there was no peace during time of the prophet Isaiah. This is one of the reasons that necessitated the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ by Isaiah. The notion of peace in my judgment is the same with the concept of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$. As a matter of fact, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ should lead people to know that peace and justice are bedfellows because there can be no real peace and security until there is first justice ($\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$), enjoyed by all the inhabitants of a particular place. When there is injustice, invariably peace becomes a casualty (Tutu 1986:92-93) (see 2.4.1 where it is proved how injustice causes violence and insecurity) Dwyer (1998:753) states that: “Peace means a right relationship with God or being reconciled to God through forgiveness of sin.” Here, one may add that peace is the right relationships with God and fellow human beings, which is more or less the same as the concept of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$. At the same time, Burkholder (2005:104) maintains that: “Peace might be a no warring state, absent of violence, a relational relation between humanity and nature or a nonviolent relation between groups, organization or religion”. Based on these definitions, peace in this study means a calm and harmonious interdependent relationships among God, fellow human beings and the natural environment that is absent of trouble or threat related to loss of lives and properties. Peace has to do with an atmosphere where there is freedom of movement and relationships. This is important in the context of the Middle Belt region because the displacement of persons through violence has and is still resulting in the separation of families and communities, so that the social fabric of society is constantly being torn apart. In addition, some are poor because the businesses they invested their resources in were destroyed as a result of violence. Agriculture, which is the major source of livelihood of the people, is seriously affected because people are afraid of guerilla attackers from one religious or ethnic group or another. With the coming of Islamic fundamentalists popularly known as *Boko Haram*, people from other parts of the country and international organizations are afraid to transact business in some parts of the region for fear of being destroyed. Within the economic context of the Middle Belt region, the atmosphere of insecurity created by violence is disrupting productive activities and discouraged local and international investment. The destruction of lives, properties and infrastructure as a result of violence deprived the region of the use of its human and material resources, as well as services. Many countries in the world have banned their citizens from travelling to some states in the region. This affects a lot of activities that would enhance the economy of the region.

4.5.2.2 Preaching as pastoral activity should serve as stimulant

In addition to peace, preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ in the Middle Belt region should stimulate people in the region, particularly the youth, toward positive attitudes about themselves and the other. The stimulation should be based on the fact all humankind have worth because they are created in the image of God. Moreover, the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2008:1418) define ‘stimulant’ as “something that promotes activity, interest, or enthusiasm”. Preaching as a stimulant in this study means human proclamation of the living word based on the written word through the spoken word to promote interest or enthusiasm of changes in the listeners by the power of the Holy Spirit. Preaching $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$ as a stimulant in a context of injustice can well be defined in the words of Bevans and Schroeder (2004:373), namely faith using the word to assist people toward self-awareness of their own power, subjectivity, strengths and capabilities to develop the well-being of the other. Preaching in the context of injustice is using the written Word of God to help people to become aware of their power; that is, their ability or capacity to do something or act in a certain way and to use it to institute God’s righteousness for the other or to improve the good of the other. This is very important because in Chapter Two the examination of the setting of the Middle Belt area indicates that power is used to take advantage of the other. Similarly, people during the time of prophet Isaiah people used power to enslave one another this shows that injustice revolved around power. Therefore, through the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]πα4τ\cong$, people will come to know that power is to be used to establish God’s goodness or to enhance the welfare of the other, Isaiah 5:7. For example, the Bible talks about how God endows Bezalel and Oholiab with skills and knowledge in all kinds of crafts to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship (Exodus 35:30-35). Hiram, the Bible tells us, was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of bronze work (I Kings 7:14). These are examples of power as the ability or capacity to do something or to act in a certain way. Again, we are told that these people used their power to construct the ark of covenant and the Temple of King Solomon. This means that they used their power to enhance the good fortune of others. Stories like this can stimulate people to think positively in terms of how to use their power to enrich the well-being of the other. The encouraging thing about the Middle Belt region is that in many of the remote places that the government and other NGOs find it difficult to penetrate, churches are already established. Through preaching, people in those remote places will become aware of their power; that is, their ability or capacity to do something or act in certain way. Through preaching, they can also be stimulated to use the power within their disposal to enhance the well-being of the other. For example, the issue of *bada kaka* or *adashe* (see 2.2.2.1) can be encouraged to focus on empowering people instead of enslaving them. This can be done through minimizing the percentage of payment. The focus of the practice should or ought to be helping the poor and the less privileged, particularly the youth, to get out of poverty and not to remain perpetually poor. Through preaching, churches can acquire a new vision of planning how to help their struggling

members using the practice of *bada kaka* or *adashe* instead of allowing some people outside the church to come and enslave their members. Harmonious relationships can create awareness in the life of people about what they have, namely human and natural resources in the community or the region. It will help them to look for the solution of their poverty within and around their environment.

In the Middle Belt region, for example, through preaching, farmers will realize the available resources they have to improve soil fertility, instead of over depending on chemical fertilizers that affect the ecosystem. To me, this is a way of improving the good of the other through stimulation. In addition, preaching can also help the people to discover the importance of processing some of the resources that are found in the region. For instance, the region is well known in the whole of Nigeria for the farming of ginger. Besides ginger, there are mango fruits that are found in every part of the region. The unfortunate thing is that there are no factories in the Middle Belt region that process these resources. For example, grapes are farmed in Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa (where I am doing my studies), and there are many factories within the town that process the grapes into wine. Farming of grapes is therefore encouraged and at the same time, the factories create employment opportunities. Imagine if there are ten factories that process ginger and mangoes in the Middle Belt region - many people will be encouraged to farm ginger and mangoes. It will create employment opportunities for many. The product will also improve the living standards of the people in the region where mangoes, which are always available for a season, would be available throughout the year. In this way the good fortune of the other will be enhanced.

The issue of giving the people of the Middle Belt region a new vision brings us to another aspect of preaching, which is preaching hope in a hopeless situation. Therefore, the next section takes a critical look at this notion.

4.5.3 THE PREACHING OF $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ AS A PROPHETIC HOPE

In the midst of the bleak realities of violence, discrimination, poverty, corruption, and unjust relationships, the prophets invites people to envision and live into what will be; the future as God intends it (Tisdale 2010:105). In the Old Testament, prophetic hope is a combination of Israel's glorious past, the miserable failure and disobedience of the present. This connotes that the hope imagery of the prophets is forged in the historical arena; that is, reflecting upon the mighty acts of God in the past. Through the acts of God in the past, the prophets project an eschatological new day when God will give His people a fresh start; a new beginning in the context of Israel's disobedience, covenant-breaking and failure. The eschatological day, the day in which God will make all things new (cf. Isa 42:9; 43:18, 19; 48:6), is the object of the prophetic hope. Those "new" things of the past become prototypes of the truly new thing in the future (Dennison 5). This reveals that Israel's history shaped both her prophetic hope and the language that framed it (Hubbard 1983:37). This can be seen also in the preaching of prophet Isaiah.

Prophetic hope preaching can be well pictured in the vision of the dried bones, for the reason that the dried bones are one of the strongest biblical symbols of lost hope (Hubbard 1983:44). To the exiles, the dry bones means Judah's future looked bleak because the nation, its institution, and its political power were dead. There was nothing to suggest that circumstances would change (Vawter & Hoppe 1991:167). Clements (1996:147) added that: "It was the zero of Israel's existence, a catastrophe that was made all the more fearful because there now appeared to be no reasonable avenue of hope left." In the same way, Brueggemann (1997: 22) asserts that: "The most extreme imagery available is that exile equals death. From death, there is no hope, for the power of death is strong and decisive." The vision depicts the condition of Israel's need of hope because they were at the point of despair and a situation of hopelessness. As a matter of fact, the vision in general portrays the struggles, inner feelings and unspoken language of the victims of injustice and those in a condition of despair. The imagery of the vision appeals to one of the deepest and most widespread of human desires, the desire for individual immortality (Fox 12).

Equally important, the vision of the dry bones reveals the situations in which the prophets of Israel and Judah preach prophetic hope. For example, in the vision of the dry bones the prophet Ezekiel preaches hope to people who were angry with God because they believed he had abandoned them or that he does not love them; that is, he preaches hope to people who thought their situation was hopeless and endless. In my opinion, the prophet Ezekiel might have looked foolish to them when he preached to them that God will change their situation. The picture here portrays the act of preaching as foolishness, which in the real sense is what preaching seems to be; for example, a man or woman stands before a group of people with different background, needs, personalities and expectations, with hope that his or her words will, in some way, be transformed into God's words (Cilliers 2004:4). The scenario portrays an act of foolishness, this is the reason why to preach is to have hope, this means preaching in its entirety is a concentrated form of Christian hope because out of it comes the positive results of healing and salvation, comfort and direction, hope in hopeless situations, and meaning to human existence. This can be seen in the preaching of the prophet Ezekiel when he said:

O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and have done it, declares the Lord" (Ezekiel 37:11-14).

Here, the prophet seeks to create hope in the exiled people, whose despair threatens their existence, because the picture of the resurrection in the vision gives hope of a new creation. No human initiative can accomplish resurrection; God does it in and of himself. The God who, for his own glory, breathed

life into dust at the beginning (Gn. 2:7) will again sparks into life a new humanity (Hubbard 1983:44; Fox 1)). This means that the purpose of the vision was to give Israel hope in their hopeless situation. God used the vision to stimulate their faith, which was at the point of dying. This is why in a radical, rhetorical break, the prophet asserts that by the power of God's spirit, He will open your graves; that is, 'I will place you on your own soil'. Therefore, Israel's situation was not hopeless, because God's transformative wind (Spirit) blows even in the dismay of exile, in order to work newness toward life (Brueggemann 1997:22). However, the vision is not for Israel alone, but to all those who face hopeless situations. Vawter and Hoppes (1991:165) maintain that: "This vision has stimulated not only the speculations of theologians but also the imagination of artists and composers. It has inspired diverse cultural expressions from an American black spiritual to a political cartoon strip in modern Israeli newspaper." The vision of the valley of the bones is a message of encouragement because hope is essential for keeping people together, particularly in difficult situation (Fox 8).

In the same way the prophet Isaiah preached hope in a situation of hopelessness, Isaiah 5:8-30. Although the emphasis seem to be a judgment, that is, a verdict for the perpetrators of discrimination, for the victims of inequality it was a message of hope because the destruction of the structures of injustice would mean end of prejudice. Birch (1991:269) maintains that: "The prophets clearly announced God's judgment on Israel as an already accomplished reality. But in the prophets there is a further Word from the Lord. Judgment is not the only or final word." This means his sermon gives hope to those suffering from injustice that one day their situation will be different. This is very important to the Middle Belt region, because preaching *μίσση* in a situation of inequality, abuse of power, and unjust relationships requires believing in the fact that God, who have turned around hopeless situations in the past, will transform the situation of injustice and its negative effect in the Middle Belt region. This will help the people to look beyond their present challenges of abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relation. Through hope, people will be stimulated to believe and even work toward the realization of establishing God's righteousness and commitment toward enhancing each other's well-being. Through preaching prophetic hope they would take solace in the fact that God, who restored life to dry bones, will change the situation of inequality, abuse of power, and unjust relationships. Through hope, the people of the Middle Belt region will anticipate a region where people relate with one another without question of religion or ethnicity because with God nothing is impossible.³⁴ Clements (1996:148) maintain that: "Only hope counter depression. Only

³⁴Klerk (2007:177) maintains that injustice, hunger and feeling of hopelessness are companions of desperate conditions: "To be hungry, cold and without shelter, cannot contribute to feeling of hope and well-being". He argued further that under hopeless circumstances, there is no motivational speech or effort that can stir a spark of hope. But in my opinion, preaching stirs hope because it is the proclamation of what God had, can, or will do. Prophetic hope preaching is proclaiming the fact that the future depend on sovereign power and ability of God.

hope can revitalize shattered and exhausted bodies. Only hope can penetrate the darkness and uncertainty of the future to provide a beacon of light.” There are many examples of how God inspired preachers to preach prophetically about the future, which today has become a reality. For example, Desmond Tutu of South Africa, in his commitment for the course of justice made the following prophetic assertion:

I have predicted that we will have a Black Prime Minister within the next five to ten years because my vision is of a South Africa that is totally non-racial. It will be a society that is more just. People in the new South Africa will matter and be seen to be of infinite value because they are human beings created in the image of God (Tutu 1983:84-85).

What seemed impossible to the people of South Africa at that time has become a reality. Another prophetic preaching of hope that seem impossible to the people then is the preaching of Martin Luther King. The reason is because his preaching is rooted in the fact that even though people must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, there is still hope. It is a hope deeply rooted in God’s mighty deeds of the past and that God will act in the situation of injustice because all men are created equal. Therefore, he projected hope for the future of his context thus:

I have a dream that one day, even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression; will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers (Martin Luther King cited in Paris 2008:22).

In the United States of America, the dream of Martin Luther King is a reality at present. This is a great encouragement to the prophetic preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ in the Middle Belt region because the God who makes the prophetic hope preaching of Tutu and Martin Luther King a reality will also make it a reality in the situation of the Middle Belt region. This means that preachers should or ought to preach $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$, hoping that God will use their message to bring about a positive impact; that is,

the interdependent and harmonious relationship with God and fellow human beings

Based on the fulfillment of prophetic hope preaching in the past, this study is making the assertion that through the preaching of *μῆναι*, the people of Middle Belt region will acquire imaginative hope to see with prophet Isaiah (2:4) and Micah (4:3) a region where every AK-47 turn into a tractor for farming, every bomb factory turn into a factory for processing mango fruits, maize, yams, ginger, and cashews; every guerrilla or militia attackers turn into community workers rendering voluntary service to humankind, irrespective of religion or ethnic group and particularly in the rural areas; every bomb target turn into fertilizer for improving soil fertility.

In addition, through the preaching of *μῆναι*, the Middle Belt region will acquire imaginative hope to see with Saint Luke (13:29) a region where people from the North and the South and the East and the West live together in every state, local government, district, and village as human beings created in the image of God without question of religion or ethnicity. As a matter of fact, through the preaching of *μῆναι*, religious differences and ethnic diversity should be integrated into social relationships and a blessing, which should be turned into a fruitful and rewarding resource that can be used to enrich the concept of nationhood (Mwaura 2009:26). At the same time, through the preaching of *μῆναι*, the people of the Middle Belt region will acquire imaginative hope to see with Saint John (Revelation 21:4) a region where killing shall be no more, where the burning of houses and places of worship shall be no more, and where conflict over land shall be no more.

One of the things that makes hope a reality in the situation of injustice is reconciliation with God and fellow human beings. As such the next section examines the preaching of *μῆναι* as a process of reconciliation.

4.5.4 PREACHING *μῆναι* AS A LANGUAGE OF RECONCILIATION

The commitment to reconciliation should be the heart of Christian preachers in my opinion, particularly in the Middle Belt region. The reason is because Christian believers, motivated by preaching, can imagine what some would dismiss as unrealistic. For instance, preaching can help Christian believers to believe that even the most intense hatreds can be overcome by love and deeply divided peoples can learn to live together in peace (Gaudet & Neill 2011:50). This is the reason why this study is advocating that preaching, especially the preaching of *μῆναι*, should or ought to be a language of reconciliation in the Middle Belt region.

From the study of the context of the Middle region in Chapter Two, there is injustice because of unjust relationships. In Chapter Three, the prophet Isaiah's situation of preaching revealed that the people of Israel and Judah failed to act justly, because their relationships were characterized by maltreatment of one category of people over the other. Therefore, the preaching of *μῆναι* includes the message of reconciliation; that is reconciliation with God and fellow human beings. In

my opinion, the overall purpose of the prophet Isaiah's preaching was repentance. This means he announced judgment with the aim of helping the people to understand their shortcomings and possibly repent. What we have in Isaiah 5:8-24 is what McKenzie (2005:67) called a "turn or burn" message. That is: "This is what will happen to you if you did not change your ways". This can also be seen practically in Isaiah 1:18-20, where the prophet gave invitation for repentance. This is very important in the context of the Middle Belt region.

For example, the problem of inequality where some people are denied access to power, and access to control of material resources on the basis of religion and ethnicity needs reconciliation. More so, a situation where some people are relating with others on the basis of superior and inferior complex demands reconciliation. Even more the fact that some people use power to enslave, marginalize, and treat others as if they have less worth, something that degenerates into killing, maiming, and hurting one another, also demands reconciliation. More importantly, there is a need for reconciliation because religion and ethnicity have created a relationship of suspicion and mistrust among the people of the Middle Belt region. Gwamna (2010:30) noted that: "Conflict have given rise to fear, suspicion, mistrust, bitterness, anger and mutual antagonism. This explains the relocation syndrome that we have witnessed in some flashpoints like Kaduna and Jos (see 2.3.3).

Therefore, reconciliation in this study means a process that causes people to overcome alienation through identification and in solidarity with God and the other, thus making peace and restoring relationships (Boesak & De Young 2012:12). The driving force behind reconciliation that underscores the preaching of $\mu\sigma\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\zeta$ in this study is that reconciliation is rooted in recognizing the glory of God in one another. This implies that one's true icon is one's neighbor, the human being who has been created in the image and the likeness of God (Amos 2006:23). This further means it is not how one sees himself or herself that is important, but how one sees others in relation to the way he or she see himself or herself. The capacity to see and recognize the *imago dei* in others helps one to situate the self as a partner in the creation of *imago dei* in others. It implies that in the very process of the formation of identity, the other is already a necessary ally, an indispensable dialogical partner. In recognizing the otherness of the other, the vision of the self in relation to the other is formed (Pachau 2009:57). This is what Jesus aims at communicating to his listeners when he referred to the Samaritan as a good neighbor. According to Pachau (2009:61):

Using the parable of a 'good neighbor' (popularly called the 'good Samaritan'), the proximate other who showed love (the Samaritan), is pointed out as the neighbor to be loved. For Jews, the Samaritans were "the proximate other," the most difficult other to deal with. In the NT, they are usually presented as "object of scorn" The "good Samaritan" in the parable crossed the ethnocentric boundary to help the victim of robbery despite ethnic difference and became a good neighbor. The young lawyer was asked to do likewise. The challenge is to

cross the ethnic boundary in showing mercy to the other.

This is in line with Desmond Tutu's *Ubuntu* theology, which says:

My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours. We belong in a bundle of life. I am a human because I belong. A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are (Desmond Tutu cited in Battle 2009).

From the foregoing, it is serious when one demeans or treats his or her neighbor as if he or she has less worth, whoever the person may be, whether from another religion or ethnic group, because it means hating the image of God. It is even more serious when one cannot go and say: "am sorry about the icon of God who was hurt by my behavior" (Amos 2006:23). For this reason, reconciliation can be understood as exchanging places with the other: Overcoming alienation through identification, solidarity, restoring relationships, positive change, new frameworks, and a rich togetherness that is both spiritual and political (Boesak & DeYoung 2012:12).

This is where the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ is important because it will enable people to realize that it is wrong and invariably unjust to demean and treat the other as if he or she has less worth. To achieve this, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ needs to counter the sin of domination; discrimination, divisiveness, and religious and ethnic bigotry or prejudice with the Gospel that all human being are created in the image of God. This is because a just society cannot be achieved without the components of justice ($\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$) and peace. The preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should also empower people to have the ability to confess their wrong or injustice toward one another where necessary. The reason is because reconciliation demands speaking the unspeakable; that is, naming atrocity in form of testimony and confession (Gaudet & Neill 2011:48). Such a confession can be seen in the life of Professor Willie Jonker of South Africa during apartheid, when he said:

Confess before you and before the Lord, not only my own sin and guilt, and personal responsibility for political, social, economic and structural wrongs that have been done to many of you and the result [from] which you and our whole country are still suffering, but vicariously I dare also to do that in the name of the NGK [the white DRC], of which I am a member, and for the Afrikaans people as a whole (Willie Jonker cited in Tutu 1994:222).

The image of this confession shows setting something aside or putting down an attitude, a grievance, a position, a deed, or a distance in order to induce or bring about a change for the better. This results in a new disposition that is exhibited, a new stance assumed, and a new framework established, granting a rich togetherness where enmity and distance were previously the order of the day (Boesak & DeYoung 2012:12).

The preaching of *μισῆρατῆ* in the Middle Belt region should or ought to help people to put down attitude, accusation, resentment, and detachment for a better relationship with God and fellow human beings. To achieve this, the preaching of *μισῆρατῆ* should stimulate the people to lament over the sin of injustice and all its intricacies. According to Cilliers (2001:26), ‘lament’ means, “wailing of the human soul, a barrage of tears, reproaches, petitions, praise and hope which beat against the heart of God.” Lament is a time of heart searching and deep reflection of individuals, households or communities’ relationship with God and one another. It is the time of questioning the integrity and faithfulness of one’s or people’s relationship with God and fellow human beings. In the case of the Middle Belt region, lament should or it ought to be a time when individuals, households or communities turn to God in humility, repentance and undivided commitment toward enhancing each other’s well-being. Lament should be a time of reconciliation with God as the creator of human beings, and reconciliation with fellow human beings and the ecosystem. The Bible says: “If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (II Chronicle 7:14). The prophets in the Old Testament used calamities, suffering and exile to challenge their people to evaluate their faithfulness in relating with God.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the chapter, it was stressed that the church has a major role to play in addressing the numerous problems that confront the world today. This entails that the church in the Middle Belt region can play a major role in addressing the problem of injustice that is confronting the region. One of the manner in which the church can do this is through preaching. As a matter of fact, from the time of early church to the present, homileticians have always developed preaching techniques to the concrete realities of their time and place. It is from such a perspective that the study considers the preaching of *μισῆρατῆ* in Isaiah 5:1-7 as a homiletical approach for addressing the problem of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

As such the chapter discusses interpretation of the biblical text and the context of the listener as the process of helping the listener understand how God want them to relate with one another; that is, a relationship of establishing God’s righteousness and commitment toward the well-being of one another. In addition, interpretation is the ability to make the word of God relevant to the listener in his

or her situation. In the case of the Middle Belt region, interpretation entails making the word of God relevant in the situation of abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relationships.

Furthermore, the chapter discussed images as technique of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt region. For example, God as a wailing mother is used as an image to portray God's concern for the victim of injustice. This means treating humankind unjustly is like inflicting pains on God. The image of a wailing mother also depicts the suffering, pain, anguish, and deplorable condition of the victims of injustice in the Middle Belt region, especially women and children. The reason is that during crisis situation women and children suffer the most. In the same way, the image of exile is used to show how injustice had resulted in violence and insecurity in the Middle Belt region. This means that there is violence and insecurity because there can never be peace where there is injustice. More importantly, the imageries are being used in the study to show that there is urgent need to rise up to the challenge of injustice in the Middle Belt region and one of the steps that need to be taken is the preaching of the $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7.

Now you understand the situation of the Middle Belt region, the question you may ask is how the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 can promote justice and invariably peace in the region. Therefore, the chapter considers prophetic proclamation as a means of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt region. This entails that all the ideologies that water down the power of God's word for establishing God's righteousness and commitment toward enhancing the well-being of one another have to be exposed through preaching. The abuse of power, inequality and unjust relationships must be pointed out. Typical examples of prophetic proclamation preachers are Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak of South Africa and Martin Luther King and Malcolm X of United States.

The chapter also considers the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as a prophetic activity; that is, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as a way of helping people to make sense of their lives and live responsibly. This is particularly important to the youth in the Middle Belt region, who are being poisoned by elite manipulation of religion and ethnicity. The task of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as a pastoral activity is to serve as a voice that shatter ill vision like religious and ethnic bigotry or prejudice in the life of the listener, particularly the youth. At the same time, preaching should give new vision especially, of the fact that all humankind is equal because they are created in the image of God.

The idea of giving a new vision to the youth brings us to another type of preaching the chapter discusses which is the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as a prophetic hope. This underscores the idea that God, who have changed situations of injustice in the past, will bring about positive outcome in the present situation of abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relationships. This means the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should help the people of the Middle Belt region to anticipate or envisioned a time where people will relate with one another on the basis that all human beings are created in the image of God.

The chapter concludes with considering preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as language of reconciliation in the Middle Belt region. This means the situation of abuse of power, inequality, and unjust relationships demands reconciliation. The task of preachers is to enable the people of the Middle Belt region through the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ to understand that to demean and treat others as if they have less worth on the basis of religion and ethnicity is wrong and invariably unjust. The preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should also lead people to the point of public outcry and lamentation; that is, a point of confession to God and one another.

From the foregoing this chapter fulfilled the pragmatic task of practical theology by Osmer through providing practical suggestions of the methods of preaching that can help to alleviate the challenge of injustice in the Middle Belt region.

The next chapter will bring together all the arguments in this study by way of a summary and also give considerations for further research on the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 in a context of injustice.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the preaching of $\mu\sigma\text{]} \pi\alpha 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 in the context of the Middle Belt region. This final chapter by way of summary review all the findings made in the research. The chapter also offers recommendations based on discoveries through the study and proffers suggestions for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter One served as an overview, which gave the background of the study, research questions, and aims of the research, research methodology and statement of problem.

Chapter Two used Wolterstorff theory to explain what justice and injustice is; that is, justice is performing or abstaining from some actions that would improve the well-being of the other. On the other hand, injustice is acting or refusing to abstain from certain actions that debase or treat other people as if they have less worth. Wolterstorff's theory of justice is imbedded in inborn rights. The inherent right stems from the fact that human beings are made in the image of God. This implies that rights are standard to social relationship. Even more, a right is a right with respect to someone order than oneself. This suggests there is normative connection between one and the other. The normative bond is the form of the other bearing a legitimate claim to one doing certain things in order to enhance the well-being of the other.

Wolterstorff's theory of justice and injustice led to investigating the causes of injustice in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. As such, the study considers inequality as a reason for unfairness in the region. The concept of inequality here connotes denying the other access to power and resources control on the bases of religion, tribe, and ethnic group. This symbolizes that there are some people in the Middle Belt region who repudiate the other access to the control of assets. This is done through using polarizing terms like 'non-indigene', 'immigrants', 'outsiders' or 'strangers'. This is done with the aim of excluding and marginalizing the other from having access to power and wealth control.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that injustice caused by inequality revolves around power. Therefore, the abuse of power is regarded in this research as a source of prejudice in the Middle Belt region. There are two aspects of misuse of power and one of such is manipulation of power by the elite. This has to do with having the capacity and ability to influence the behavior of others and course of events. There are certain people who manipulate religion and ethnicity to accomplish their selfish

aims. This results in dominating, degrading and considering the other as if he or she has less value. Akin to the mishandling of power by the elite is bureaucratic or lower level maltreatment of power. Some people in the Middle Belt region use their ability or capacity to do something or act in a certain way to cheat, enslave and take advantage of the other. This is commonly found in places like rest homes, law enforcement agency stations or check points, Motor Park, institutes of learning, homes etc.

From the analysis so far in the study one can deduce that prejudice and taking advantage of the other in one way or another is a system of undue relationship. This signifies that unfair association is also a basis for unfairness in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. That is, some people in the Middle Belt region consider themselves superior over other people based on ethnicity or religion. As such, the rapport is that of longing to dominate, control, and play god over the other.

The study also brings to the fore the effect of discrimination in the Middle belt region and one of these notions is violence. The common type of such violence is communal and religious. Given that violence in the Middle involves destruction of lives, properties, and insecurity, this results in poverty in the region. Therefore, the study considers poverty as one of the effects of injustice in the Middle Belt region. This means injustice caused by unjust relationships, abuse of power and inequality has and is still resulting to poverty in the region.

Another effect of injustice in the Middle Belt region is corruption. The research discovered two types of corruption in the Middle Belt region. For example, there is political and bureaucratic corruption. Political dishonesty involves using public positions for personal gain. This means some officials in the region use their position to accumulate wealth instead of improving the welfare of others. Another aspect of political exploitation is nepotism, which is giving special favor to family or people from one's own tribe, ethnic group, and religion by office holders. This is especially in the area of having access to power and control of resources. There is also civil service corruption that is low level or street level bribery. It is the type of dishonesty people come across daily in hospitals, police stations, schools, and the likes, where they are asked to give a bribe before a service may perhaps be rendered to them.

Chapter Three argued that the prophet Isaiah ministered during the eighth century BC. It was a period of economic success and expansion for the northern and southern kingdom of Israel and Judah. However the situation was quite perplexing socially, morally, and religiously, because the society was experiencing great exploitation of the poor by the elites, which is more or less misapplication of power (Isaiah 5:8). The ruling class grab hold of the land of commoners to the extent that they accumulate large swaths of land too big for them that they had to hire others to work it for them (Isaiah 5:11-12). This led to unfair association; that is, a relationship of maltreatment of one category of people by another (Isaiah 5:2, 20). For example, the wealthy landowners paid the laborers working

under them poorly and often mistreated them. In addition, there was introduction of rent payment, which makes life difficult for commoners; payment was required for water, seed, work animals and others. This hard-pressed the peasant into money lending and as a result being squeezed by money-lenders to the position of being slaves (Isaiah 5:11-12).

The manipulation of power, undue relationship, and discrimination in the eighth century led to the corruption of legal system (Isaiah 5:23). This means the justice system come to be controlled by the ruling class and the elite who influence a change in land use system. As such, fairness was denied to peasants and commoners at the gate. The result turns out to be widespread of poverty because those who could not earn enough to live were forced to beg, or sell their children or themselves into slavery. This implies a large segment of the population was pushed to a level of inescapable poverty.

From the foregoing, one can argue that the aforementioned ills were what called for the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ by the prophet Isaiah. $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in Isaiah 5:1-7 originates from the Hebrew word $\sigma\]\alpha\ 4\pi\alpha\ \tau$, which connotes two ideas that is punishing or pronouncing sentence against someone and the idea of governing for or establishing God's righteousness for the other. However, the context which it is used in Isaiah 5:1-7 underscores governing for or instituting God's goodness for the other. This means the situation suggests social justice because the entire chapter, particularly 5:8-24, centers principally on the violation of societal evenhandedness. Even more, the primary emphasis of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$, which is pair in the text, is those communal practices of uprightness within Israel that Yahweh looks for in his people. Isaiah 5:7 talks about the fact that $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ and $s\cong\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ is about relationships; that is, how people treat one another. The emphasis is on equality and fairness arising from concern for others; the inclination to place human necessity and relationship as the main concern of life that flows from relationship with God.

In his preaching, the prophet Isaiah point out that $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ is a divine attribute. This means justice derives from God (Isaiah 5:2). The prophet as a spokesperson of God point to the fact that God's equality includes concern for the poor, the marginalized, and the less privileged. As such, God gave power to the ruling class so that they may represent Him in administering fairness to the weak and less privilege. On the other hand, it is not only people in authority that are expected to administer impartiality, but all the covenant people of God. This means Israel was chosen to relate with God to understand his evenhandedness so that they may come to be a model to other nations through administering justice to one another. This is the reason why Isaiah employs preaching techniques or homiletical principles to convey the meaning of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the context of chapter 5. The aim was to draw the attention of his hearers, without which his preaching would have been ineffective. For example, he uses the image of the vineyard as a preaching method to attract the attention of his listeners of the prejudice that was going among them. As such, he equated Israel with a vineyard whose owner has unrestrained care, only to realize that the vineyard does not produce good grapes.

This means God lavished Israel with great attention, but He discovered they relate with their fellows with prejudice.

The study also considers another preaching technique used by prophet Isaiah to be a lawsuit. This is because the structure of the text follows that of a speech of accusation. That is the account by accuser in which he has fulfills his duty, and an appeal to the court for a decision. In using the lawsuit technique of preaching, the prophet Isaiah acts as prosecutor who rightfully determines that the owner of the vineyard fulfill his obligation. At the same time, the preaching technique also picture the prophet as a judge advocate who after he has engaged his audience, moves to pass sentence on the vineyard (Isaiah 5:8-24).

The text also put forward that the prophet Isaiah uses the preaching technique of allegory; that is a preaching technique in which a story is projected by the author to convey a hidden meaning that has to be perceived. For example, the prophet Isaiah allegorizes the song of the vineyard by comparing the owner of the vineyard with God (Isaiah 5:2). In the same way, he depicts the people of Israel and Judah as the vineyard (Isaiah 5:2, 4). The anticipated fruit of the vineyard is equated with the people's acts of justice and righteousness (Isaiah 5:2). The purpose is to draw the listener's attention to the fact that they have fallen short of God's expectation (Isaiah 5:7) and that they produce bad fruit, which is unfairness. Therefore, punishment will definitely come their way (Isaiah 5:8-24). Another technique of preaching that prophet Isaiah use is parable, which is often consider as short story that pinpoint a moral lesson. In using the parable as a preaching technique, the prophet intents on leading his audience to a point where they will be able to be convicted of their shortcomings before God. For example, through listening to the song of the vineyard, the listeners are forced to pass judgment on the produce of the vine and the care given to it by the beloved. In this way, the hearers are unconsciously taken to a point where they condemn a corrupt condition that they too are guilty of; that is, the situation of prejudice among them.

Chapter Four advanced that the prophet Isaiah's preaching of *μισπαρατ* describes what the church of Jesus Christ is called to do. This means that the body of Christ in the Middle Belt region has a key role to perform in confronting the problem of injustice that challenges the region. The reason is because the church is called to oppose any teaching, policy, and attitudes that are contrary to the human self-worth bestowed on humankind by God-namely discrimination, exploitation of power, and unfair association in the Middle Belt region. One of the ways in which the church can tackle the problem of unfairness in the region is preaching. This has been the practice; that is, Homileticians always develop a homiletical method to existing realities of their time. It is out of such practice this study is developed, to develop a homiletical tactic to the problem of mishandling of power, undue relationship and disparity in the Middle Belt region.

This denotes that there is need for the elucidation of the biblical text to real life situation of Middle Belt region-namely taking advantage of the other, undeserved rapport, and unfairness. This means preachers in the region should help the people through preaching to understand God's will for their lives, instituting God's goodness and commitment toward improving the wellbeing of one another. This is the meaning of "God look for $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice), He expects $s\cong e.5da4qa=$ (righteousness)" in Isaiah 5:7. To achieve this purpose, the preacher should go to the Scripture on the behalf of the listeners. He or she should search the Scripture with the problems and necessities of the hearers in his mind and heart, expecting to find out the truth of God's claim there. This is important because people go to church to hear God speak to them in their situation.

In the Middle Belt region, the condition of injustice can be well explained using the image of "God as a wailing mother." This depicts God's concern for the victims of societal unfairness because they are part of humankind created in His image. This means the wounds inflicted on such people in the Middle Belt region bothers God in a very special way. Furthermore "God as a wailing mother" in this study gives a picture of the deplorable condition, suffering, and anguish of the sufferers of inequality, especially women and children in the Middle Belt region. This means that women and children are the most vulnerable group during crises in the region, because with one stroke everything they have, including husbands, male children, houses and properties, can be destroyed.

Another image that explicates the situation of unfairness in the Middle Belt region is exile. In this study, exile means social, political, societal and religious upheaval and homelessness in relation to absence of peace. This signifies that the state of Middle Belt is comparable to exile because of perpetual burning and bombing of residences and places of worship. In circumstances where AK-47 rifles, rocket launchers and time car bombs are regularly used during communal and religious violence, it shows that the region is in exile. The threat of being attacked anywhere and anytime, whereby there is no sense of security whether one is at home or anywhere means one is actually in exile.

Now the question is what preaching procedure will help in confronting the problem of discrimination in the Middle Belt region. As such, this study considers prophetic proclamation as a technique of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the region. This means preaching should be counter cultural and challenge the *status quo*, it should focus on communal and public issues. The task of prophetic proclamation is to view the world through the lens of the text to determine and name what in the world is of God or not. In the case of the Middle Belt region, the preacher should view the region through the lens of Isaiah 5:1-7 and name what in the region is of God or not. This means all principles that water down the power of God's word for establishing God's righteousness for one another and the commitment toward improving the welfare of one another have to be uncovered. Cruelty, disproportion, and unjust associations, no matter by whom, must be pointed out (Isaiah 5:8-24). The study thinks of preachers

like Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak of South Africa and Martin Luther King and Malcolm X of United States as example of prophetic proclamation preachers. This is because their preaching is motivated by how people mistreats one another in their society. As such, the focus of their preaching was that all human being are to be treated equally because all are created in the image God, which is similar to what Isaiah preached about, “God looks for $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ (justice), He expects $s\cong e\ 5da\ 4qa=$ (righteousness)” (Isaiah 5:7).

Preaching of *mishpat* is not limited to prophetic proclamation, but it includes preaching as pastoral activity. This means that the preacher must speak against taking advantage of the other, unfair relationship, and variation of all people, including the preacher himself or herself (Isaiah 5:3). Furthermore, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should intentionally seek beneficial change in the hearers, help people make sense of their lives and be more responsible in ethical living. This is important in the Middle Belt region, especially with regard to the youth, because some of them have been so poisoned by elite manipulation of religion and ethnicity that they often perceive the other as less human and worse of all, as “something to annihilate.” The task of preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ as pastoral activity is to change the ill vision of religious and ethnic intolerance or prejudice among the people of Middle Belt region, especially the youth. At the same time, to give them a new vision, particularly on the fact that all human beings are one and the same because they are created in the likeness of God.

Another homiletical style to preaching $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ in the Middle Belt is prophetic hope. This connotes using the acts of God in the past to project an eschatological new day when God will give His people a new start, a fresh beginning in the context of suffering, difficulty and chaos. This is important because through the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$, the people will have the assurance that God, who has turned around miserable situations in the past, will renew the situation of unfairness and its negative effect in the Middle Belt region. This can be seen in the preaching of Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King, who preached hope prophetically that one day the situation of their countries will change and today God had make what was hope for a reality.

In addition, the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ is to be a language of reconciliation. This means the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should facilitate the process that causes people to overcome alienation through empathy and be in harmony with the other. Preaching should help people to be aware of the glory of God in one another by recognizing the fact that one’s true icon is one’s neighbor, the human being created in the image of God. This means it is serious when one degrades or treats his or her neighbor as if he or she has less value, whoever the person may be, because it means hating the likeness of God. Even more, it is serious when one cannot apologize to the icon of God that was hurt by one behavior. This means the preaching of $\mu\sigma\]\pi\alpha\ 4\tau\cong$ should counter the sin of domination, unfairness, religious and ethnic bigotry or prejudice and help people to put down attitude of grievance, revenge and hatred, for better relationships with God and their fellow human beings.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on the concrete reality of injustice in the Middle Belt region there is a need for the church in the region to re-evaluate her preaching techniques.
2. There is a need for the church in the Middle Belt region to constantly or periodically organize seminars and workshops for preachers in the region.
3. There should be a forum where preachers from different denominations meet constantly and interact on the types of preaching that the context of Middle Belt demands. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) at all levels should facilitate such a forum.
4. Preaching on justice, especially the concept of *μισ/πα4τ*≡ that emphasize establishing God righteousness and commitment toward enhancing the well-being of one another, should be prioritized, as this is the urgent need of the region.
5. I strongly recommend that preachers should use images that capture the effects of injustice in order to help people understand the danger and damage of injustice on humankind.
6. Preaching in the Middle Belt region should focus on reconciliation because the past and the present experiences have created the desire of revenge in the heart of many people.
7. There is a need for preachers in the Middle Belt region to use preaching as a tool for molding and the building up of people, especially the youth, into responsible human beings that have sense of respect and value for human dignity of all humankind, irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliations.
8. Preaching should help people understand and accept unity in diversity as a blessing and tool for nation building and harmonious relationships
9. Preaching should help people to have hope, because some have reached a point where they feel the situation will remain like that forever.

5.4 SUGGETIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Given that the Middle Belt region is the region with the highest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the study suggests that major research be undertaken on how the church can serve as means of breaking the barriers and frontiers of ethnicity and tribalism in Middle Belt region. In addition, as Islam is the only rival religion in the Middle Belt region, there is need for further research, possibly on how preachers of the two religions will work together in terms of preaching justice. The reason is because preachers of two religions to a large extent on daily bases have great influence on the life of the people, even in the remote areas of the Middle Belt. My belief is if preachers of the two religions can work together for justice, very soon the region will celebrate total eradication of injustice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdu, H. 2010. *Clash of Identities State, Society and Ethno – Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria*. Kaduna, Nigeria: DevReach Publishers Ltd.
- Action Aid Nigeria. 2008. Middle Belt not Killing Belt: The History, Dynamics and Political Dimensions of Ethno-Religious Conflict in the Middle Belt. Abuja: Actionaid.
- Agang, S. 2012. “Breaking Nigeria’s Fatal Deadlock: Christians and Muslims Will Find Peace if they Work Together for Justice”. *Christianity Today*, April, 48-50.
- Agang, B.S. 2011. *The Impact of Ethnic, Political, and Religious Violence on Northern Nigeria, and a Theological Reflection on its Healing*. Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Monographs.
- Akpar, T.M. 2012. The Politics of Settler / Indigene Conflicts in Benue and Taraba States. Ph.D Dessertation. Amadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Allen, J.Ronald. 1988. “The social Function of Language in Preaching” In Van Seters, Arthur (Ed.), *Preaching as a Social act Theology & Preaching* (pp. 167-203). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Alubo, O. 2011. *Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in Central Nigeria*. (2ed). Ibadan: Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Amos, C. 2006. “The Genesis of Reconciliation: The Reconciliation of Genesis”. *Mission Studies*, 23(1), 9-23.
- Angya, A.C. &Doki, A.G. 2006. “Women Participation/ Involvement in Conflict Management in Benue State: A Review”. In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 189-198). Markudi: Benue State University Press.
- Ayua, I.A. 2006. “The Historic and Legal Roots of Conflict in the Benue Valley”, in Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflict in the Benue Valley* (pp. 61-80). Makurdi: Benue State University Press.
- Azgaku, B.C. 2006. “The Kwalla – Tiv Ethnic Conflict in Qua’an-Pan Local Government Area of Plateau State”. In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 81-92). Makurdi: Benue State University Press.
- Babbie, Earl and Mouton, Johann. 2009. *The Practice of Social Research*. South Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Babbie, Earl. 2007. *The Practice of Social Research* (Eleventh Edition). Belmont, USA: Thomson Wardsworth
- Bacote, E.V. 2005. “Justice”. In Vanhoozer J. Kevin (Ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (pp. 415-416). Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Academic.
- Bennett, V.H. 2008. “Justice, OT”. In Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Ed), *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible I – Ma vol. 3* (pp. 476-477). Nashville: Abindon Press.
- Bevans, Stephen & Schroeder, Roger P. 2004. *Constant in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books.
- Birch, C. Bruce. 1991. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics and Christian Life*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox.

- Birdsall, N. 2006. *The World is not Flat: Inequality and Justice in our Global Economy*. Helsinki, Finland: UNU – Wider.
- Boesak, A. *Coming Out of the Wilderness*. Hollan: Kamper Cahiers
- Boesak, A. 1984. *Walking on Thorns: The Call to Christian Obedience*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Boesak, A.A. & DeYoung, P.C. 2012. *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Boraas, S. Roger. 2001. “Hermeneutics” In Geoffrey W. Bromiley & David B. Barrett (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity* Volume 2 E-L (pp. 531-535). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Brill.
- Brueggemann, W. 1997. *Cadence of Home Preaching Among Exile*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox.
- Brueggemann, W. 1997. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Buhler, Pierre. 2005. “Hermeneutical Theology” In Bowden John (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (pp. 524-525). Oxford: University Press.
- Burkholder, J.R. 2005. “Peace Movement”. In Geoffrey W. Bromiley & David B. Barrett (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity* Volume 4 P-Sh (pp. 104-115). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Brill.
- Campbell, L.C. and Cilliers, H.J. 2012. *Preaching Fools: The Gospel as a Rhetoric of Folly*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Campbell, L.C. 2002. *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. Louisville. London: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Chaney, L.M. 1993. “Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Economy Critiqued by the Eighth-Century Prophets”. In Norman K. Gottwald & Richard A. Horsley (Eds.), *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics* (Revised Edition). Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Chisholm, B.R. 1986. “Structure, Style, and the Prophetic Message: An Analysis of Isaiah 5:5-30”. *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March), 46-60.
- Cilliers, H. Johan. 2007. “Preaching as Language of Hope in a Context of HIV and AIDS”. In Cas J.A. Vos, Lucy L. Hogan & Johan H Cilliers (Eds.), *Preaching as a language of hope* (155-176). Pretoria: Protea Book House.
- Cilliers, J. 2004. *The Living Voice of the Gospel: Revisiting the Basic Principles of Preaching*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- Claassens, L.J.M. 2012. *Mourner Mother Midwife: Reimagining God’s Delivering Presence in the Old Testament*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Claassens, M.J. 2008. “Isaiah”. In Grail R. O’Day & David L. Petersen (Eds.), *Theological Bible Commentary* (209-222). Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Clement, E.R. 1996. *Westminster Bible Companion “Ezekiel”*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox.
- Collins, J.J. 2004. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

- Conchrane, R.J. 2007. "To Dream the Impossible Dream: On the Contemporary Calling of the Beloved Community in Africa". *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 129 (November), 23-34
- Coote, B.R. 1981. *Amos Among the Prophets: Composition and Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Davies, W.E. 1981. *Prophecy and Ethics: Isaiah and the Ethical Tradition of Isaiah*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- De Klerk, J. Ben. 2007. "Preaching Hope within a Societal Context of Hunger and of Affluence". In Cas J.A. Vos, Lucy L. Hogan & Johan H. Cilliers (Eds.), *Preaching as a Language of Hope* (pp. 177-202). Pretoria: Protea Book House.
- Dempsey, J. Carol. 2000. *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Dennison, T.J. "The Exodus: Historical Narrative Prophetic Hope, Gospel Fulfillment", In *Covenant Seminary Review*, 1-12
- De Young, P.C. 2007. *Living Faith: How Faith Inspires Social Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Dwyer, A.J. 1988. "Peace". In Sinclair B. Ferguson & David F. Wright (Eds.), *Dictionary of Theology* (pp. 747-753). Delaware: Michael Glazier.
- Ewuga, S. 2006. "Middle Belt in Nigeria's Politics: Political and Power Dimensions in the Conflicts in the Benue Valley". In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 199-212). Makurdi: Benue State University Press.
- Fedler, K. D. 2006. *Exploring Christians Ethics: Biblical Foundation for Morality*. Louisville: WJK.
- Fourie, Willem. 2009. *Communicative Freedom? Wolfgang Huber's Critical Engagement of Modernity*. Ph.D Dissertation. Stellenbosch University.
- Fox, V.M. "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones". *The University of Wisconsin-Madison*, 1-16
- Garba, N.J. 1995. *Fracture History: Elite Shift and Policy Changes in Nigeria*. Princeton: Sungai Book.
- Gaya, B.S. 2006. "The Political Dimensions of Conflicts in the Benue Valley". In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 131-155). Makurdi: Benue State University.
- Gaude, J.M. and O'Neill, R.W. 2011. "Restoring peace: Toward a Conversation between the Just War and Reconciliation Traditions", In *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 31(1), 37-55.
- Gish, D.S. 2004. *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Gitay, Y. 1991. *Isaiah and his Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1-12*. Netherlands: Van Gorcum, Assen/Maastrich.
- Graetz, M. & Tzvi, G. 2008. "Social Justice and Israel Society," in Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson & Deborah Silver (Eds.), *Walking with Justice* (pp. 118-128). Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies.
- Gravett, L. S. et al. 2008. *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach*. Louisville: John Knox Press.

- Gonzalez, L.J. and Gonzalez, G.C. 1988. "The Larger Context", in Arthur van Seters, (Ed.), *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology & Practice* (pp. 29-54). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Gonzalez, L.J. 1985. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*. Massachusetts: Prince Press
- Gottwald, K.N. 1985. *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Gowan, E. D. 1998. *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Dead and Resurrection of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Gwamna, J.D. 2010. *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*. Bukuru, Plateau: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS).
- Hayes, H.J. and Irvine, A.S. 1987. *His Time & His Preaching Isaiah: The Eight-Century Prophet*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Hendriks, H. J. 2004. *Studying Congregation in Africa*. South Africa: Shumani Printers.
- Hermelink, J. 2007. "The Theological Understanding of Preaching Hope". In Cas J.A Vos, Lucy L. Hogan & Johan H. Cilliers (Eds.), *Preaching as a Language of Hope* (pp. 29-53). Pretoria: Protea Book House.
- Hodgens, D. 2000. "Biblical Justice and Mission Theology." *Melanesian Journal of Theology*, 16 (2), 80-100.
- Hubbard, A.D. 1983. "Hope in the Old Testament." *Tyndale Bulletin*, 34, 34-59.
- Hughes, A.R. 2009. *Pro-Justice Ethics: From Lament to Nonviolence*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Hunter, D.J. 2010. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jeune, C. 1987. "Justice, Freedom, and Social Transformation," in Viney Samuel and Christopher Sugden (Eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need* (pp. 218-225). Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Kaiser, O. 1972. *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary*. Bloomsbury, London: SCM Press.
- Kajom, H.D. 2012. "The 'Decade to Overcome Violence' Programme of the World Council of Churches and Peace in Nigeria: A Theological Ethical Assessment". *PhD Dissertation*. University of Stellenbosch.
- Keung, C.K. 2007. "An Analysis of the 2 Vineyard Songs in Isaiah". *Thesis*: Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute.
- Koopman, N. 2010. "Human Dignity in the Context of Globalisation", in Boesak, Allan & Hansen, Len (eds) *Global Crisis, Global Challenge, Global Faith: An Ongoing Response to the Accra Confession*. Globalisation Volume II. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, pp. 231-242.
- Kukah, M.H. 1999. *Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- The Nigeria Covenant: Study Guide Teachers' Manual*. 1999. Jos: Covenant Keepers.
- Lasor, S.W. et al. 1982. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapid Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- Lategan, B.C. 1992. 'Hermeneutics' in Freedman D.N. (ed) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 3, New York: Doubleday, pp. 149-154.
- Leclerc, L. Thomas. 2001. *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Lim, T.K.J. 2002. *Power in Preaching*. New York: University Press.
- Logams, C.P. 2004. *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967*. Abuja: Centre for Middle Studies.
- Long, G.T. 2005. *The Witness of Preaching* (2ed). Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Mamahit, Yefta Ferry. 2009. *Establish Justice in the Land: Rhetorical and Theology of Social Justice in the Book of Amos*. Ph.D Dissertation. University of Pretoria.
- Marshall, C. 2012. "Divine Justice as Restorative Justice." *Center for Christian Ethics*, 11-19.
- Martin, A. & Martin, J. 1983. *Isaiah the Glory of the Messiah*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Mckenzie, L. S. 2005. *How to Read the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moberly, R.W. L. 2001. Whose Justice? Which Righteousness? The Interpretation of Isaiah V. 16. *Koninklyke Brill NV, Leiden*, 56-68.
- Motyer, J.A. 1974. *The Day of the Lion: The Message of Amos*. Bedford Square, London: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Mwaura, N.P. 2009. "Presidential Address Human Identity and the Gospel of Reconciliation: Agenda for Mission Studies and Praxis in the 21st Century: An Africa Reflection". *Mission Studies*, 26, 17-30.
- Myers, L.B. 1999. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Ndiyo, A.N. 2008. *Poverty to sustainable Development: A Community-Based Approach*. Calabar: University of Calabar Printing Press.
- Nielsen, K. 1989. *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*: Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Nolan, Albert. 2009. *Hope in an Age of Despair*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Olivier, H. 1996. "God as Friendly Patron: Reflections on Isaiah 5:1-7". In *In die Skriflig*, 30 (3), 293-303.
- Oruonye, E.D & Musa, Y.N. 2012. "The Challenges of Small Scale Farmers Access to Micro Credit (Bada Kaka) in Gassol LGA, Taraba State, Nigeria" *Journal of Agriculture Economic and Development*, Vol 1(3), September, 62-68.
- Osmer, R.R. 2008: *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapid, Michigan / Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Oswalt, N.J. 1986. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Otto, G. 2005. "Preaching". In Geoffrey W. Bromiley & David B. Barrett (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity* Volume 4 P-Sh (pp. 331-338). Grand Rapid: Eerdmans & Brill.

- Paul, M.S. 1991. *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Pachauu, L. 2009. "Ethnic Identity and the Gospel of Reconciliation". *Mission Studies*, 26, 49-63.
- Paris, J.P. 2008. "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Vision of America an Ethical Assessment", in *Theology Today*, Volume 65, 17-25.
- Park, S.S. 2012. "Speaking of Hope: Prophetic Preaching", in *R & E A Baptist Theological Journal*, 413-428
- Petersen, L.D. 2002. *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Pieterse, H.J.C. 2001. *Preaching in a Context of Poverty*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Pressler, C. 2002. *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*. Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox.
- Premnath, D.N. 1988. "Latifundialization and Isaiah 5:8-10". *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40, 49-60.
- Prevost, P.J. 1995. *How to Read the Prophets*. London: SCM Press LTD.
- Redditt, P. 2008. *Introduction to the Prophets*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publication Company.
- Root, A. & Dean, K.C. 2011. *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press.
- Samuel, V. & Sugden C. 1987. "Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need". In Viney Samuel & Christopher Sugden (Eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need* (pp. 254-265). Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company.
- Sauter, G. & Phillips, A.C. 2001. "Hermeneutics". In Bromiley, W. Geoffrey & Barrett, B. David (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Volume 2 E-L (pp. 537-539). Grand Rapid: Eerdmans and Brill.
- Stanley, C. 2010. *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Soanes, C. & Stevenson, A. 2008. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Eleventh Edition, Revised. Oxford: University Press.
- Tenuche, M. 2006. "Managing the Minority Question Under Democratic Rule in Nigeria – The Kogi State Experience". In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 225-233). Makurdi: Bnue State University Press.
- Thomas, A.H. 2011. "Building House to House (Isaiah 5:8): Theological Reflection on land Development and Creation Care". *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 21 (2),189-212.
- Troeger, H.T. 2007. "Seeing Visions and Dreaming Dreams: The Imaginative Power of Preaching Hope". In Cas J.A. Vos, Lucy L. Hogan & Johan H. Cilliers (Eds.), *Preaching as a Language of Hope* (pp. 59-72). Pretoria: Protea Book House. Pp. 59-72
- Tutu, D. 1994. *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*. New York: Doubleday.
- Tutu, M.D. 1983. *Hope and Suffering: Sermon and Speeches*. Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers.

- Turaki, Y. 1999. *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa: A Century of SIM / ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria 1893 – 1993* (Volume One). Nairobi, Kenya: International Bible Society Africa.
- Turaki, Y. 1993. *The British Colonial Legacy in Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria*. Jos: Challenge Press.
- Turner, D.M. 2009. "Preaching". In Katharine D. Sakenfeld (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Volume 4 Me-R* (pp. 589-591). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Utley, B. 2010. *Isaiah: The Prophet and His Day Chapters 1-39*. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.
- Van Seters, Arthur. 1988. *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology and Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Vawter, B. & Hoppe, S.L. 1991. *A New Heart: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Wall, W. R. 1987. "Social Justice and Human Liberation," in Viney Samuel & Christopher Sugden (eds), *The Church in Response to Human Need* (pp109-127). Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Wallace, A.J. 1995. *Imaginal Preaching: An Archetypal Perspective*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. 1995. *Social Justice in the Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University.
- Wildberger, H. 2009. *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Williamson, H.G.M. 2006. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1 – 27*. Vol. 1. London: T & T Clark.
- Willis, T.J. 1977. "The Genre of Isaiah 5:1-7". *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 93 (3), 337-362.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. 2008. *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Yee, A.G. 1981. "A Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1-7 as a Song and a Juridical Parable". *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43, 30-40.
- Yecho, I.J. 2006. "An Overview of the Tiv-Jukun Crises". In Timothy T. Gyuse & Oga Ajene (Eds.), *Conflicts in the Benue Valley* (pp. 113-129). Makurdi: Benue State University Press.
- Yoms, E. 2013. "Toward a People-Centred Approach in Theology for Socio-Economic Rural Community Development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria". *Master Degree of Theology Thesis*. University of Stellenbosch.
- Young, J.E. 1965. *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1 to 18. Vol.1*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

ONLINE REFERENCES

- Akukwe, Obinna Nigeria Masterweb Citizen News July 09, 2013. Ombatse Series 2: Baba Alakyo, Nasarawa People's Fetish Alternative to Injustice and Insecurity – Another Okija Shrine.

- <http://nigeriamasterweb.com/blog/index.php/2013/07/09/ombatse-series-2-baba-alakyo>
[Accessed 2 October 2013].
- Aluko, A. S. 2008. Corruption and National Development.
http://www.ceddert.com/Corruption_and_National_Development.pdf [Accessed 7 August 2012]
- Adegbite, A. 2013. 20 Killed TivAlago Communal Clash. Nigeria Tribune,
<http://tribune.com.ng/news2013/en/business-package/2012-10-29-11-35-35/energy/item/13503-oil-sector-reform-challenges-of-curbing-gas-flaring.html> [Accessed 5 June 2013].
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED). April 2013. Country Report: Nigeria
http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ACLED-CountryReport_Nigeria_April-2013.pdf [Access 8 July, 2013]
- Ayodele, W. 2013. Wukari Mayhem: Death Toll Hits 100. This day Live.
<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/wukari-mayhem-death-toll-hits-100/146788/> [Accessed 5 May 2013].
- Babajide, Johnson. 17 Killed in Fresh Fulani / Tiv attack. Tribune June.
<http://tribune.com.ng/news2013/en/news/item/13311-17-killed-in-fresh-fulani-tiv-attack.html> [Accessed on 1 June 2013].
- Battle, M. 2009. Books by Desmond Tutu and his Teaching.
<http://www.diohuron.org/what/mthatha/documents/BooksbyDesmondTutu.pdf> [Access 15 October 2013]
- BBC News, 27 January 2010, Nigeria text messages 'fuelled Jos riots'
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8482666.stm> [Access 24 August 2013].
- Bratcher, D. 2012. *The Voice: Biblical and Theological Resources for Growing Christians Isaiah 5:1-7* <http://www.crivoice.org/lectionary/YearC/Cproper15ot.html> [Accessed 2 September 2013].
- Cilliers, H.J. 2008. In Search of Meaning Between Ubuntu and Into: Perspective on Preaching in Post – Apartheid South Africa.
http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/Profiles/Profile_documents/Johan_Cilliers_IN_SEARCH_OF_MEANING_BETWEEN_UBUNTU_AND_INT0.pdf
- Constable, L. Thomas. 2013. *Notes on Isaiah*.
<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf> [Accessed 10 September, 2013]
- Dike, E.V. 2003. Corruption in Nigeria: A New Paradigm for Effective Control.
<http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/victor-dike/corruption-in-nigeria-a-new-paradigm-for-effective-control.html> [Accessed 9 August 2012]
- Fayemi, K. 2012. Needs, Poverty and Democracy in Nigeria: An Assessment Document Transcript.
<http://www.slideshare.net/kayodefayemi/needs-poverty-and-democracy-in-nigeria-an-assessment> [Accessed 10 September 2013]
- Henning, B. 2012. The Biblical Call for Justice. <http://pcamna.org/urban/BiblicalCallForJustice.pdf>
- Hope. Dictionary.Com, LLC 2012. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hope>.

- Hope. Holman Bible Dictionary. <http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T2841>. [Accessed 8 August 2012].
- Huber, Wolfgang. June 24, 2010. Religion and Violence in a Globalized World: Eleventh Gerd Bucerius Lecture, Delivered in Washington on June 24, 2010 http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/publications/bulletin/bu047/bu47_051.pdf
- Ibekwe, Nicholas. Premium Aims: Nigerian Score Jonathan Low on Anti-Corruption-Transparency International July 09, 2013. <http://premiumtimesng.com/news/140567-nigerians-score-jonathan-low-on-anti-corruption-transparency-international.html#/jobs> [Accessed 2 October 2013].
- Kawu, M. 2013. Poverty Statistic and Crises in Northern Nigeria. Blueprint Newspaper <http://bluepringtng.com.new/2012/02/23/poverty-statistics-and-crises-in-northern-nigeria> [Accessed 28 August 2013].
- Kale, Y. 2012. Nigerian Poverty Profile Report 2010 – NBS Category: Nigerian Economy. National Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.proshareng.com/news/16302.html> [Accessed 26 August 2013]
- Keller, Tim. 2010. *What is Doing Justice?* http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/files/2010/10/ChapterOne_Generous_Justice1.pdf [Accessed 17 September 2013].
- Leavell, Q.R. 1963. *Prophetic Preaching: Then and Now*. <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=au3dlyhziCQ%3D&tabid=294&mid=75> [Accessed 20 October 2013]
- Mamoh, E. 2013. Tension in Nasarawa: 100 Police, DSS Officers Missing in Lafia. Vanguard. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/tension-in-nasarawa-100-police-dss-officers-missing-in-lafia/> [Accessed on 10 May 2013].
- McCann, J.C. 2010. *Commentary on Isaiah 5:1* http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=646 [Accessed 4 September 2013].
- Mcgregor, Andrew. Ombatse: Nigeria Religious Cult Joins War on the state in Central Nigeria. Aberfoyle International Security, May 16, 2013. <http://www.aberfoylesecurity.com/?p=268>. [Accessed 2 October 2013].
- Nigeria Living in Poverty Rise to Nearly 61% BBC News Africa 13 February 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17>
- Nigeria Watch. June, 2011. Third Report on Violence in Nigeria (2006-2011) <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/NGA-Watch-Report11%281%29.pdf>
- News Rescue. 2012. The Middle Belt Holds Nigeria Together. January 29, 2012. <http://newsrescue.com/the-middle-belt-holds-nigeria-together/#axzz2lvgihht0> [Accessed 19 November 2013]
- Nnamani, C. 2005. Nigeria Central the Middle Belt, Glue of the Nation. <http://www.segundawodu.com/nnamani21.htm> [Accessed 24 August 2013]
- Ponet, I. 2012. *Debt cancellation in the land of Canaan in the first millennium BC* <http://cadtm.org/Debt-cancellation-in-the-land-of> [Accessed 7 September 2013].

Sayne, Aaron. July, 2012 (Special Report 311). Rethinking Nigeria's Indigene-Settler Conflict. By The United States Institute of Peace.

<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR311.pdf>

Shiklam, J. 2013. Gunmen Kill 19 in Kaduna, 4,000 Others Displace. Thisday Live.

<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/article-from-blackberry/143823/> [Accessed 2 April 2013].

Vanguard, 10 May, 2013, Tension in Nasarawa: 100 Police, DSS Officers Missing in Lafia.

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/tension-in-nasarawa-100-police-dss-officers-missing-inlafia/>

Turaki, Yusufu. 2012. Historical Roots of Crises and Conflicts in Nigeria with Reference to Northern Nigeria and Kaduna State.

<https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups=#!topic/yorubaaffairs/Jc1LF1F1tOU> [Accessed 10 June 2013]