# THE ROLE OF MICAH'S RHETORICAL LANGUAGE AND MWAGHAVUL SAYINGS ON CONGREGANTS' RESPONSE TO SERMONS IN CENTRAL NIGERIA

**By**

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# Declaration

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in Theology, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. I, Hezekiah Hakuri Goholshak, declare that:

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# Certification

We the undersigned declare that we have abided by the College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy on language editing. We also declare that earlier forms of the dissertation have been retained should they be required.

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# Abstract

This study focuses on an examination of the role that the biblical rhetoric of the book of Micah and Mwaghavul cultural sayings (*sumpoo*) play in enabling Mwaghavul congregants in central Nigeria to better understand, respond to and recall sermons preached. In view of the above, this research argues that a preacher's appropriate synergistic use of the biblical rhetoric and African indigenous wisdom, makes it possible for congregants to more readily respond to and recall sermons.

The Mwaghavul people of the Plateau State in central Nigeria, use many wise sayings from the sacred text and cultural memory, as a means to authenticate their traditional mode of communication. Similarly, the researcher noted that the prophet Micah's skillful articulation of the indigenous rhetorical devices of the eighth-century BC context equally accorded the prophecy a great response by his immediate audience; and, as a collective memory, was recalled a century later (cf. Jer. 26:18-19). The researcher was motivated to undertake a contextual hermeneutical study of this book, with the view to craft better ways of engaging both the rhetorical elements of the book of Micah and comparable Mwaghavul sayings, ultimately to increase the gospel's impact on the people.

In order to achieve the above, the research uses three lenses: contextual hermeneutics, using the tripolar model; inculturation; and reception theories. A socio-rhetorical interpretation of the Bible and the African proverbial hermeneutics are used to craft African contextual hermeneutics in the postcolonial period, that values the African knowledge system's contribution to understanding and owning the Christian message. A rhetorical and literary analysis of the Book of Micah is done. Attention is also given to African uses of wise sayings as rhetorical devices in secular and religious settings. These circles of rhetoric make contributions to sermon rhetoric in Africa – the rhetoric of the text and that of African wisdom constitute the sermon rhetoric. Undertaking a comparative study of the responses of twenty-four congregants, from two geographic clusters, "A" and "B", to the sermons through qualitative interviews, it was discovered that the congregants from cluster "B", the experimental cluster where the preachers used wise sayings, recalled and responded better to the message preached, showing evidence of transformation.

This shows that sermons anchored in familiar language forms and the congregants' cultural roots brings about better understanding, recall and response to the sermons preached. This

calls for a change in the curriculum of pastor training institutions like Gindiri Theological Seminary to award privilege to the pedagogy of context and to not neglect the pedagogy of formation for obtaining far reaching significance.

**Key Words:** Contextual hermeneutics, Rhetorical language, Micah, Mwaghavul wise sayings, sermon data, response and retention.

# Gììlpan

Pàn ki bilip dis ni dar a kaa dak di man poo di dighin Bebul mu garvib mu Mekah ki sumpoo mu Mwaghavul mu mak cin ni peeku nyem killing poo Naan nyil Mwaghavul di ni a naar ki yil Nijeriya mu mmak manshii, ki mu kyer poo ni ko mu pan poo Naan di mu ki killing ni di. Dang pan mini be bilip nii sat a ne kat dang ngu sat poo naan mak moghos ar sat poo mu Bebul ki sumpoo funu Afrika retret be nle ku nyem killing poonaan mu manshii ni har mun npan poo ni hakeng.

Nyem Mwaghavul di mu a Plato, naar ki yil Nijeria mu loghot cindak ki sumppoo a kaa mee poo ki naan si kin i a mbii loghot nnar firu di ni ki cin bal mpoo di gurum nsat. Mbut nbilip fina zak be ni kam ne gyet ngu sat poo Naan, Mekah wuri man cin dak ki sumpoo di mu a mbii loghot nzamani (mbut shartong) firi mu, di ni le ku nyem killing ri ni mu killing ri, dang mu wa pan di ki ki poo firi ni a bwoon bit mu ngik minding (Jer. 26:18-19). Mbii di ni gang kwak wan mpe bilip ar mu man shii ki poo Naan mbut ngarvip diisi ni a ar di ni so ntiit ki mise ki tong ki nyem killing a mpee ku wan kam ar di mu mak moghos sumpoo mu Bebul ki munu Mwaghavul  mpeku poo Naan ni twaas gurm ni mu di hakyeng.

Mpeku wan gam pan di a kyen fina ni di be waan cin dak ki ar man shii ki poo Naan ki pan ki pee put, ki naa pee put ki Bebul ashak ki ar di nin twaas tong funu di cicin, ki ar tong funu, ki ar di gurum mu ki kaat mbii di mu ki killing di. Sat manshii ki poo Naa a ar di ni twaas tongshak ki gurum mu ki cin dak ki sumpoo zak ni ki le ku mu mak satshii ki poo Naan shi mbii peeput funu mu a bwoon ki mulki ki ngu naat, di nii naa koghop kini mu man funu nAfrica, dang nii le mu naa so dang Jesu ni dee a munu. Mbu ndak disi be wan kin bilip jwat poo ki man ran di ni dighin ngarvip mu Mekah. Dang be an kin le pan nkaa ar di mumun nAfrika muu cin dak di ki sumpoo mu mpee dul pan ki nyem killing ni mo ko a mu ar son ndang Naan ko a mu tong ki yil ni. Ar manpoo di si mu jir be mun ki moghos mu dighin sat poo Naan Afrika –jwat poo dii dighin Bebul ki sumpoo munu nAfrika zak be mu ki balsar dighin jwatpoo mu poo Naan. Mbut kam mbii di gurum mu larvul baa feer di wan tong direm ki mu abwoon di mu ki killing pooNaan, be ni kam ne zuk di mu killing poo Naan di mu bal ni ki sumpoo mu Mwaghavul mu (zuk "A") mu mak pan poo ni ki mu kyer ni met nyem di mu kiling poo Naan di ba mu cin dak ki sumpoo kas.

Disi kam ne, kadang mu cin poo Naan ni ki lupoo di ni a mbii loghot ki di nit was mbii putkat ki nyem killing ni mu, be ni ki le ku mu man shi ki poo ni, dang mu mak pan ku mu kyer ni

met. Diisi kam ne, ni ret ku pee kam-kam nyem sat poo Naan mo, kaa di Gindiri Theological Seminary si, be mu she ear kam sat poo Naa ni di ku ni le pan di des nkaa tong ki peput ki nyem killing poo Naan ni mu a bwoon ki di mu ki cin kam nkaa tong di ni ret ki ngu sat poo Naan.

**Poo Dii Nan Mo:** Man shi ki poo Naan ki pan ki pee put, jwat poo, Mekah, Sumpoo mu Mwaghavul mo, sat poo Naan a riran, kyer poo ki pan.

# Dedication

I would like to dedicate the dissertation to my dear wife Mrs Margaret Hezekiah Goholshak, my children Miss Bilipnaan, Masters Kwatpan, Kwoopnaan and mBiiplang; and the entire Goholshak family.

I would also like to dedicate the work to the Mwaghavul nation and all who desire to share God's message in such a way that it speaks to people in their contexts.

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# List of Codes for Research Participants

**Participating Preachers**

| Code | Meaning of Code |
|------|-----------------|
| Pr.1A | First Preacher from Cluster A |
| Pr.2A | Second Preacher from Cluster A |
| Pr.3A | Third Preacher from Cluster A |
| Pr.1B | First Preacher from Cluster B |
| Pr.2B | Second Preacher from Cluster B |
| Pr.3B | Third Preacher from Cluster B |

**Interviewees on the Place of Wise Sayings in Mwaghaavul Culture**

| Code | Meaning of Code |
|------|-----------------|
| PWS.1 | First Interviewee on the Place of Wise Sayings |
| PWS.2 | Second Interviewee on the Place of Wise Sayings |
| PWS.3 | Third Interviewee on the Place of Wise Sayings |
| PWS.4 | Fourth Interviewee on the Place of Wise Sayings |
| PWS.5 | Fifth Interviewee on the Place of Wise Sayings |

**Interviewed Congregants from Clusters A and B**

| Code | Meaning of Code |
|------|-----------------|
| Int.1Awpk | First Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Wanpyak |
| Int.2Awpk | Second Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Wanpyak |
| Int.3Awpk | Third Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Wanpyak |
| Int.4Awpk | Fourth Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Wanpyak |
| Int.1Amlt | First Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Millet |
| Int.2Amlt | Second Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Millet |
| Int.3Amlt | Third Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Millet |
| Int.4Bmlt | Fourth Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Millet |
| Int.1Alhr | First Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Lahir |
| Int.2Alhr | Second Interviewed Congregant in Cluster A at Lahir |

## Abbreviations and Tables

ACTS            African Christian Textbooks

AD              Anno Domini (from the birth of Christ)

AIDS            Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

 BC             Bofore Christ

BCE             Before the Christian Era

BDB             *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB)*

COBATI          COCIN Bible and Agricultural Training Institute

COCIN           Church of Christ in Nations

HIV             Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LCC             Local Church Council

ND              No date

NIV:            New International Version

NRSV            New Revised Standard Version

*OTE*           *Old Testament Essays*

PCC:            Provincial Church Council

RCC:            Regional Church Council

SRI             Sociorhetorical Interpretation

TWOT:           Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

YHWH            Yahweh

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# Chapter One - Introduction to the Study

*"Gwóm mùsháng dée a nJòs, mú ryèep mái kɨ́ nnìn"*

The above Mwaghavul saying literally means, "The sweetest pap (food) is in Jos, where they blend butter and local spice." Jos is the closest big city to the Mwaghavul people of Plateau State in central Nigeria. It is the capital city of Plateau State, Nigeria. It is therefore regarded as a model of civilisation where life is lived to the fullest and where the good things of life are found. However, what characterises the important place of Jos, is its being a symbolic synergy between the modern and the local spices, that is, the blending of local and international cultures. Like the mixture of spices, this mixture of cultures allows the best of life to emerge; something desired by all and suitable for all.

To extend the metaphor further, the biblical languages with their various rhetorical devices are foreign to the Mwaghavul culture. In this research, it is argued that where Mwaghavul ministers blend the foreign spice of biblical rhetoric with relevant indigenous rhetoric like African wise sayings, the Bible will find greater acceptance on the African soil. The effect of the synergy would empower congregants better to understand, respond to and recall the messages preached.

This synergy is necessary because biblical rhetorical elements, like metaphors and similes, are easily misunderstood, especially when communicated in a language form that is foreign to the listener. As Beekman and Callow (1974:137-150) state, the image portrayed in a figure of speech may be unknown, the topic and point of comparison may be implicit, or the metaphorical meaning may not be related to anything in the receptors' language. In such cases, if biblical metaphors and other figures of speech are to be understood, preachers would need to combine them with the relevant cultural equivalents (Nel 2014:23; Jakobson [1959] 2004:141) for effective communication to occur.

## 1.1 Background and Motivation for the Study

Several factors motivated the researcher to undertake this study: First, Boice's (1986:14) description of the prophet Micah attracted him to the biblical book of Micah. Over ten years ago, while preparing to teach an Old Testament (OT) Book Study in the Gindiri Theological Seminary, Plateau State of Nigeria, the researcher came across Boice's description which

referred to Micah as, "A prophet who was remembered" (1986:14). Boice argued that Micah was remembered because his prophecy changed the course of history. Micah's prophecy was so persuasive that the listeners repented and disaster was delayed for a century (cf. Jer. 26:18-19). This is a unique outcome of prophecy among the biblical prophets for, as Boice correctly states, "Hosea and Amos were ignored. Jeremiah was imprisoned. However, here was one prophet [Micah] who was listened to… [and] therefore changed history" (1986:14).

The preceding quotation forms a part of the discussion on Micah's uniqueness (Boice 1986:14-15), which is seen in the small introduction to him in 1:1, revealing his deep concern for the poor, and the fact that he was both affectionate and confrontational. Apart from this, he was a prophet that was remembered, versus Amos who was not welcomed in the Northern Kingdom (Amos 7:10-13). Moreover, "there is no record that the nation changed its ways as a result of Amos' message" (Lockyer 1986) because 40 years later, Amos saw the Northern Kingdom crumble. Similarly, Hosea, who was not listened to, saw the clear failure of the priests in instructing the people (4:4-9; 5:1; 6:9) as a total departure from faithfulness to Yahweh (Ball 1979). Jeremiah was imprisoned twice (Jer. 37:16-17; 38:6) and is often called "the weeping prophet" because he wept openly for his nation's sins (Jer. 9:1). Lockyer (1986) concludes that Jeremiah was unhappy because his warnings proved to be ineffective in persuading his audience to repentance. Through the passing years, the words of judgment were ignored so that "he lamented his unfortunate state".

By contrast, Micah was listened to; and a century later, he was still remembered during the time of Jeremiah's ministry (Jer. 26:17-18). The researcher became curious regarding the secret behind his success and how to convey it to pastors. With Boice (1986:14), he noted that Micah possibly attained such a feat, partly because his prophecy that was conveyed in language, aligned to the culture and common rhetoric of his audience and that it was this, that led them to repentance, thus changing the course of history. It is noteworthy that there was nothing really new in what he said in condemning the leaders of Israel as compared to other prophets, but "the manner in which he spoke caused his name to be remembered and honoured among the prophets and teachers of later generations" ("Summary and Analysis of Micah" nd). Micah's skillful articulation of the art of rhetoric is remarkable. He uses rhetorical devices that found a home in the context of which his audience was familiar. These devices appealed to their common farming tradition (3:12; 4:1-5), the senses/emotions (1:8), animal husbandry (5:4ff),

sound effects (1:10-15)[1], and history (6:6-8) among others. For the researcher, Micah's use of such devices demonstrates that preachers' sermons should take note of biblical rhetoric while simultaneously being couched in the diction and language of their congregants for effective communication and enhancing their congregants' comprehension and response, to the sermon data.

The second motivation comes from the researcher's Nigerian background, that is very fond of using wise sayings and other local rhetorical devices in daily life and from the writings of Nigerian novelists/poets. The researcher is a Mwaghavul man, now in his late 40s, who has been predisposed to study and teach biblical languages and literature, which has resulted in him having a deep interest in this area of study. This is so, because the researcher grew up in the village of Aper in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State in Nigeria, where wise sayings and other rhetorical devices are used in daily life. In addition, as a high school student, the researcher had studied the writings of great Nigerian novelists/poets. These factors, in some ways, have impacted on him having an appreciation for the technical use of language. Furthermore, the researcher has used Mwaghavul sayings in his sermons over the last twenty years of ministry and has witnessed the impact that they have sometimes had, on the congregants' ability to respond to and recall his sermons even after a long period of time. As Galadima (2012:12-13) writes, stories[2] are effective implements for teaching and entertaining audiences. Such stories are equally valuable for the "Christian worker". Therefore, Galadima admonishes Christian workers to pay particular attention to culturally based stories familiar to the audience because "they are laden with information which a perceptive listener will find supremely valuable" (2012:13). Kwashi (2012:47) further states that stories can be very helpful in building Christians up in their faith because they are very easy to remember. No wonder Jesus tirelessly used such stories in teaching his Ancient Near East (ANE) audiences. These techniques act as an example for the Christian worker today.

Personally sensing the gap which West (1993:8) opines theologians experience between themselves and ordinary readers of the Bible, the researcher was motivated to conduct a contextual study of the Bible in an attempt to assist theologians to build the required bridge that will enable them to consciously, effectively, and deliberately study scripture with the lay people under their pastorate. In this research, it was noted that writers have applied contextual

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[1] Fausset (2006) acknowledges that "Plays upon words abound" in the book of Micah (cf. 1:10-15).
[2] Stories are part of wise sayings as they form part of the wisdom of a people. Wisdom, which is basically the discipline of applying truth to one's life in the light of experience, is sometimes evoked through stories in the African context.

principles of appropriating the biblical texts to different contexts. For instance, West (2005, 2010[3] and 2012) deals extensively with the South African context as it affects different aspects of life. He is supported by Nolan (1988) who examines some basic principles for contextualising scriptures. Similarly, Adedun and Mekiliuwa locate their studies within the context of Lagos, a multi-cultural city in Nigeria which, in their words, "is a potpourri of all peoples, tribes, and cultures in the country" (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:6). Other studies on the contextual use of rhetoric even focus on the advertisement (Mzoughi & Abdelhak 2011) and secular and traditional rhetoric in eastern Nigeria (Okodo 2012). None of these studies focuses on the Mwaghavul ethnic group of central Nigeria. The researcher believes that an examination of the synergistic use of biblical rhetoric and wise sayings by preachers in Mwaghavul land of central Nigeria will be beneficial to both pastors and congregants alike, assisting them to understand and appropriate the rhetorical language of the Bible in general and the book of Micah in particular.

Finally, none of the books written about the Mwaghavul language discusses the use of figurative expressions in sermons or the rhetorical effects of such sayings. These books include: *Mwaghavul Dictionary* 2012, by N. F. Daapiyaa, R. Blench, and J. Bess; Roger Blench's other write-ups including *Mwaghavul Expressives* (forthcoming), *Mwaghavul Pronouns*, 2010, *Mwaghavul Pluractional Verbs,* 2011; *Towards A Mwaghavul History: An Exploration* edited by Joseph Dahip (2011); and *Understanding Nyam: Studies in the History and Culture of the Ngas, Mupun and Mwaghavul in Nigeria* by Prof. Umar H. D. Danfulani (2003). Though the use of wise sayings is a hallmark of the peoples' characteristic speech-form, none of these books discusses how they can be used today, especially by Christian preachers. It is hoped that when preachers use wise sayings common to the people along with biblical rhetoric, congregants will better understand and respond to the messages preached.

## 1.2 Context of the Study and Personal Situation of Researcher

The general context of the study is Central Nigeria[4]., which may be described as "a very heterogeneous part of Nigeria" (Ostien 2012:2) that includes ten states and Abuja (the

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[3] Three of West's works published in 2010 are used as noted in the bibliography.
[4] Central Nigeria is also called "Middle Belt" by the inhabitants as against the Geo-political Zone, referring to an identical region, known as North Central Zone. Possibly, this is because the word "North" is often associated with "Muslim North" (Higazi, 2011:4, 13, 21). This region is however, predominantly Christian.

Federal Capital Territory).[5] The immediate context is Plateau State, Nigeria and, more specifically the Mangu Local Government Area. The application of the study is to Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN)[6] pastors and their sermons in the church congregations within Mangu Local Government Area[7] as a paradigm for other pastors in the same area. The COCIN is a regional evangelical church denomination found mainly within Nigeria with a few branches in other African countries and the United Kingdom (2017 COCIN Diary 2017:13).

The Mwaghavul ethnic group, which is believed to have migrated from the Lake Chad region, is the dominant group in Mangu Local Government Area as well as in the COCIN congregations in the area. Gowon (2011:21) states that the Mwaghavul people are of a Chadic branch of the Afro-Asiatic linguistic division, who predominantly live in their homeland in the districts of Mangu Local Government. However, according to Barnabas (2011:33), they are also found in Bauchi, Kaduna, Nassarawa, and at the borders of the Taraba and Benue states, that form part of central Nigeria. He (Barnabas 2011:29) also estimates that there are some 700,000 Mwaghavul speakers.

The researcher's own personal situation is also worth stating at this early stage. The researcher is a Mwaghavul man in his late 40s who lives in Mangu Local Government Area and has been teaching Old Testament courses and Hermeneutics in the Gindiri Theological Seminary, located in Mangu Local Government, since 2000. The researcher equally participates in the translation of the Bible (the Old Testament) into the Mwaghavul language. Therefore, the researcher is familiar with both the Mwaghavul culture and the training that most COCIN pastors go through, especially since he is a former student of the same seminary. This places him in a position, that can impact positively on both the questions that are asked and the information he seeks as he interprets the sermons.

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[5] The states include Kwara, Kogi, Plateau, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Niger, Benue, Bauchi, Taraba, Adamawa and the Federal Capital Territory (Idrees & Ochefu 2002).
[6] COCIN is a regional church founded in 1904 by a set of students from the Cambridge University, who arrived at the foot of the popular Wase Rock in Plateau state Nigeria in October, 1904. The Church now has a membership of over 2.3 million people found predominantly in Nigeria and others in countries like South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, and the United Kingdom (*2017 COCIN Diary*, 2017:13).
[7] The research was conducted in two COCIN Provincial Church Councils (PCCs) - Panyam and Gindiri. Both PCCs have seven Regional Church Councils (RCCs) each. Of these RCCs, ten of them are in the Mwaghavul land (COCIN Diary 2017:12).

### 1.3    Parameters of the Research

### 1.3.1    The Research Problem

The Bible writers, especially the prophets, amply used rhetorical language familiar to the culture of their original audiences. Our own contexts as Africans are far removed from the Ancient Near East and so we are unfamiliar with most of the picture language used in the Christian Scriptures. However, pastors who are preachers of the Gospel are expected to preach the whole counsel of God to the whole human being. The challenge here is, how would the preacher in 21st century central Nigeria use the biblical prophets' words to speak to their audience here and now? An examination of how well the biblical picture language and stories are misappropriated among the preachers in the contexts of central Nigeria today, will be noted in analysing their sermon rhetoric in chapter four. Likewise, the preachers' use of indigenous rhetorical devices (local wise sayings) in Nigeria and why they use them, will also be analysed.

### 1.3.2    Hypothesis

When biblical rhetoric is understood and used by African preachers, they will be able to relate their sermons to the African context more appropriately using biblical rhetoric alongside African sayings. This blend of biblical and African rhetoric will produce a sermon rhetoric that will enable congregants better to understand and respond to the sermon data presented. The aim of this work, is not so much on the result of a response to sermons, but on the complex synergistic workings of the various circles of rhetoric and the dynamics that are involved, leading to the persuasion of the audience.

### 1.3.3    Research Questions

### i.    The Key Research Question

How can the use of the rhetorical language of Micah and Mwaghavul sayings, assist congregants in Central Nigeria to better understand, respond to, and recall sermons preached?

### ii.    Research Sub-Questions

1. How does Micah use rhetorical language to convey his message and to persuade his audience?

2. Do preachers in the Mwaghavul land of Central Nigeria use biblical rhetorical language, particularly that of Micah, and cultural sayings in their sermons? If so, how do they use these elements?

3. How well is sermon data understood, responded to, and recalled amongst the Mwaghavul congregants of Central Nigeria?

4. How can Mwaghavul preachers use biblical rhetorical language and cultural sayings to assist congregants in retaining sermon and responding to sermon data?

### 1.3.4    Research Objectives

1. To determine how Micah uses rhetorical language to convey his message and persuade his audience.

2. To determine whether and how preachers in Mwaghavul land of Central Nigeria use biblical rhetorical language, particularly that of Micah, and cultural sayings in their sermons.

3. To examine how well sermon data is understood, responded to, and recalled amongst the Mwaghavul congregants of Central Nigeria.

4. To determine how Mwaghavul preachers can use biblical rhetorical language and cultural sayings in their sermons to assist their congregants better to retain and respond to sermon data.

## 1.4  Literature Review

### 1.4.1 Rhetoric and the Bible

Rhetoric involves the talent, study, and ability to effectively use spoken or written language in persuading one's hearers (Jeong 2010:134-136). In this case, language is used in a way that the hearers are influenced either to agree or reject a proposal, in line with the speaker's intention (Aristotle 1926:vii). For effective communication, rhetorical elements like

exemplification, narration, metaphor, and simile are used. There are three key appeals of rhetoric; namely, *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* (Jeong 2010:135-148).[8]

Various scholars discuss rhetorical aspects pertinent to the Bible. For instance, Howard (1994:87-88) examines the history of rhetorical criticism in Old Testament studies. In his discussion concerning the emergence of studies on speechmaking and rhetoric in the Old Testament, he opines that it started as late as 1968. Similarly, Soskice (1984) and Aaron (2002) discuss the different aspects of metaphoric language used in scripture to paint appropriate pictures in the minds of listeners for easy comprehension and recall. Walker (1998) distinguishes texts that are really metaphorical from those categories that are often mistakenly treated as such. However, these authors deal with only two aspects of Draper's (2001) tripolar model of biblical hermeneutics[9], so that the background of the text itself is examined to the exclusion of appropriation. By contrast, other scholars like Morris (2014), Van Heerden (2006),[10] Adamo (2015a),[11] and Arinola (2009), who also discuss various biblical rhetorical devices, propose a dialogue between biblical rhetorical elements and cultural parallels for appropriate contextualisation and effective persuasion.

### 1.4.2 Biblical Rhetoric, African Sayings, and Preaching in Nigeria

In discussing the relationship between biblical rhetoric, African sayings, and preaching, Koptak (1996:23) argues that well contextualised, rhetoric can greatly enhance preaching. This gainful effect is made possible because rhetoric will improve the persuasive element of preaching. Similarly, in her research on preaching and culture, Cathcart (2011:1) shows how the Bible and culture can be brought together to speak genuinely to people in their cultural contexts without compromising the authority and truths of the Scripture. She argues that where the language of a sermon is "vivid" and "concrete", it will "increase the perceptibility of the sermon" and the preacher will most likely "be understood and remembered by the audience in a way that matches what the preacher intends" (Cathcart 2011:15-59). Thus, the achievement of the preacher's purpose depends on her/his effective contextualisation of the biblical language within the context and culture of her/his audience.

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[8] This agrees with the argument of Sung Wook Shin (2004:20-23).

[9] Draper's tri-polar model is discussed under the theoretical framework of this work.

[10] Willie van Heerden extensively discusses the dialogue between African proverbs and the biblical text in several of his articles. Among these valuable works are: "Proverbial Wisdom, Metaphor and Inculturation" (1997), "'The Proverb is the Drum of God': On the use of African Proverbs in the Interaction between African Culture and the Christian Faith" (2002).

[11] While Ademo deals with Proverbs from the Yoruba context, Ikechukwu Okodo (2012) does so in the context of the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria.

Owolabi (2012) and Adedun & Mekiliuwa (2010) discuss the use of rhetoric in sermons in Nigeria itself. They observe that conventional rhetorical devices are used by preachers, particularly among the Yorubas of Western Nigeria, for the purpose of making "the congregation attracted and committed". These devices are also used to serve "as a means of emphasis and easy remembrance and recall" (Owolabi 2012:8). In addition, they are used in sermons to gain acceptance and for ulterior motives motivated by man's anxiety (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:77).

### 1.4.3 Language Use and Retention

Various neurologists, such as Pogue (2015), Rampura (2015), "Memory: A Primer" (2013), Gibbs (2001), Colston and Katz (2004), and a psycholinguist, Biava (1991), have unveiled ways by which rhetoric helps improve memory. They reveal that figures of speech play a great role in consolidating the information that comes into the brain from short-term memory to become long-term memory. Olyott (2015:109-111) similarly opines that a sermon in which figurative speech and illustrations are used enables audiences to remember the truth taught long after. Similarly, Pogue (2015) argues that a strong memory is formed when messages come to the brain through visualised metaphors that involve the various parts of the brain. In "Memory: A Primer" (2013), it is also asserted that when a figure of speech is from an already familiar socio-cultural context, the message sticks more.

### 1.4.4 The Use of Rhetoric in the Book of Micah

Given the above, it may be argued that Micah, who ministered to the Southern Kingdom in the 8th-century BCE during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1), made a lasting impact on his audience through his profuse use of various contextually based rhetorical devices.

Several scholars have analysed Micah's rhetoric. Unlike Wolff (1990) and Mays (1976:13), who analyse only the first three chapters of the book as the only part accorded to Micah's authorship, Shaw (1993) has systematically analysed the rhetoric of the whole book as Mican. He identifies five persuasive (rhetorical) discourses in the book (1:2-16; 2:1-13; 3:1-4:8; 4:9-5:14; 6:1-7:7; and 7:8-20). In each discourse, Shaw identifies the date and "the rhetorical situation" that prompted such a discourse by Micah in order to achieve his goal.

Wolff (1990:9-14) notes that Micah uses numerous rhetorical devices to persuade his audience, including alliteration (1:16; 2:4), assonance and wordplay (1:10-15), metaphor (2:3b; 3:2f., 10; 1:16), simile (1:8b; 3:6f), metaphor and simile (3:12), quotations (2:4;

3:11b), direct address (2:3b-4a, 8-10; 3:12), and rhetorical questions (3:1 cf. 6:5-7). According to Regt, Waard and Fokkelman (1996), Micah uses a question to answer questions raised in 1:5. In the section which Wolff (1990:13-14) calls "later materials" (chaps 4-7), there are instances of the use of "didactic sermons" (6:2-8) which is another rhetorical technique employed in the book.

Andersen and Freeman (2000:26) summarise Micah's use of rhetoric by stating that he influenced his audience by using generous and relevant rhetoric which not only added to their understanding of his words (3:9-12 cf. Jer. 26:16-19) but also increased their ability to recall them. As Constable (2015:25) states, "Micah's words, remembered for their shocking severity a hundred years later, deserve to be taken to heart by each generation of God's people"

The brief review in this section demonstrates that, though the human brain can retain learned facts at different levels, the involvement of figurative language helps an audience to understand and better respond to and retain sermon data. However, the scholars do not discuss the role of the synergy between biblical rhetoric and African sayings in enabling audiences better to respond to and recall sermons preached.

### 1.4.5 Biblical Rhetorical Analysis

The various forms of biblical criticism (analysis) in general include literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, postmodern, theological criticism (Robbins 1996:1-2; 2010:192), source criticism, form criticism and historical criticism (Howard 1994:90). M. Avioz (2006:175), who undertakes a rhetorical study of Jeremiah 7:1-15 and its usefulness in giving understanding to the reader, describes rhetoric, which is the focus of this research, as the use of usual stylistic devices to stimulate interest, to emphasise, and to gain control over the audience (see also Gitay, 2001: 101-27). Therefore, for him, rhetorical analysis deals with a critique of how these devices are used in a text (for example, the Bible) or oral speech and the responses that they elicit in the audience on account of such usage (Avioz 2006:176).

Most forms of biblical rhetorical criticism focus primarily on the final form of the text (Olson 2010:13-14). In his discourse on literary and rhetorical criticism, Dennis Olson focuses on appreciating "the artfulness of texts" (2010:15) and on the "intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions" of the text (2010:22). This analysis is done through nine steps, namely the scope, repetition, narrator's viewpoint, structure, plot, characterisation, syntax, particles

(small words), and the rhetorical qualities of the text drawn from all of these named elements (2010:22-24).

Robins (1996:1) proposes a more robust approach called "sociorhetorical criticism". Here, the focus is laid first of all on the text itself, moving "interactively" into "the world" of the writer, then "our present world." Thus, sociorhetorical criticism brings together the way language is used in the Bible and the way we live in the world. The sociorhetorical approach focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live (Robbins 1996:2). This mode of biblical interpretation engages "various kinds of pragmatic, linguistic, social, cultural, motivational, and ideological strategies of interpretation" (Robbins 2005:4). The analysis is done through an examination of the different "textures" of the text being studied, namely the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins 1996:2-4). Robins examines particular Bible texts using all five textures.

In this chapter, under methodology (1.6) the researcher will refer to the rhetorical method that he will use for the analysis of Mican text in this research and provide a detailed description of this method in chapter 2.3.


## 1.5    The Theoretical Framework

Over the years, African Christian Theologians have discussed ways by which the Christian faith could find a home in Africa (Togarasei 2013:466-474; Orobator 2010:3-11), to the extent that Africans would not consider it western but would be able to sense that God sent the Savior to meet them in their own contexts. This agrees with Anselm's definition of theology as "faith seeking understanding" - *fides quaerens intellectum* (Williams 2015). For Anselm, faith means more than just belief. He would rather view faith as "love for God and a drive to act as God wills" (Williams 2015). So, if such faith seeks to understand, then theology in this context would be "an active love of God seeking a deeper knowledge of God" (Williams 2015). Stinton (2010:xv-xx) and others such as Draper (2002:12-24) and Van Heerden (2003:739) term this sought-for understanding as "conversation" or "dialogue" concerning the Scriptures in their historical past and the ongoing discussion on crafting a method for functional/home-grown Christian theology for Africa. In fashioning such conversation for contextualisation, African scholars have used descriptive and conceptual

words, such as incarnation, inculturation, translation and contextualisation (Adamo 2003:2-27). I consciously accept Maluleke's recommendation that "The contours of the emerging face of the twenty-first century African theologies must be sought in a thorough grasp of the ground captured so far, plus a keen awareness of new and emerging currents" (1997:23). Therefore, gleaning through past discussions, it was noted that a great deal has already been done to free African Christianity from the western cultures which brought it and which claim to be the only universally acceptable form of Christianity (cf. Draper 2002:12-13).

The current debate on a theoretical framework for biblical studies in Africa is centred on a contextual hermeneutic that involves a conversation or dialogue between the biblical text in its historical context (the world behind the text, see below), on the one hand, and the African reader and their own context (the world in front of the text, see below), on the other.[12] W'ehusha defines contextual hermeneutics as:

> …an assertive procedure which strives to integrate the context of the Bible and the reader's context in order to bring awaited change in the society. The procedure is broad and should not be confined to or labeled as liberation hermeneutics alone. It is a positive contribution to understanding the biblical text (2007:12).

If Ukpong's (2002:17) assessment, which covers all facets of the people's life and influence, is used by preachers, it will help the audiences to see how to use biblical truths in finding solutions to existing issues in their faith and practice of religion. The text is allowed to speak to the context of the reader naturally in their immediate communities (Ukpong 2002:20).

In this research, the researcher explores the role that the dialogue between biblical rhetorical language and African sayings plays in effective communication and persuasion in Christian sermons. The researcher uses the following lenses, models and theories to examine the use of biblical rhetoric and wise sayings among Mwaghavul preachers:

**The first pole** deals with the language and meaning of the text in its historical background, i.e. it deals with *the world behind the text*. In reading behind the text, the reader first determines the structural limits (the pericope) of a particular passage, which is an on-the text reading strategy (see below). The reader may then use various historical tools, such as form- and redaction criticism, in order to locate the text within its original historical setting, thus

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[12] The following scholars have discussed this form of a needed conversation in contextual hermeneutics in Africa. They are: Maluleke (1997:23); West (2010b and 2012); Togarasei (2013); Orobator (2010); Van Heerden (2006:1, 12); Pieterse (2010:113); Morris (2014:1); and Lombaard (2009:279-280).

enabling the reader to understand why the story is shaped the way it is. *Reading behind the text* also involves determining the sociological setting of the text, the society that it represents (the poor, the leaders, etc), by means of various sociological models, such as those of Kuwornu-Adjaottor nd: np, Sneed 2, 3-4, West (2013: 2), Koskinen and Lindstro̎m (2013:758) among others. It also involves re-reading the text in light of its socio-historical reconstruction that either supports or questions the text's contents and perspectives. This then enables the present reader's context (the world in front of the text) to interact with the social and historical settings that produced the text. With this pole, the reading community allows the text itself to speak while keeping what Draper calls a "critical distance" between them and the text (2001:155).

Having examined the world behind the text, the reader can then deal with the *world of the text*, namely the text itself, by means of a variety of *on-the text approaches*, such as close reading, and/or literary-, narrative-, or structuralist criticism. A detailed, close, and careful reading and re-reading of the demarcated text (pericope) is conducted so that the text is allowed to utter "its own voice" and be better understood, or better heard among the voices of its readers.

**The second pole** is the context of the reader, or the *world in front of the text*. This pole is important because the meaning of a text is determined by the community of readers in their own context who bring their own questions to the text (Draper 2001:156-157). This pole demands an in-depth analysis of a particular context, especially with regard to the main issue that the interpreter wishes to address. The analysis may involve the historical-critical method (Olagunju nd: np) and the socio-historical method (Draper 2015:9).

**The third and final pole** is the 'appropriation' of the text in the present context. This pole is considered the climax of contextual exegesis; for it is here, that the text becomes "normative" for the community of faith in guiding them in their belief and practice of faith (Draper 2001:157-158).

Considering the understanding gained from the exploration of both the history and the text itself, i.e. the behind-the-text and on-the-text readings, appropriation examines how the text may engage with the reader's context. Armed with the understanding gained from the preceding poles, the reader again engages the text with critical questions that border on its application/appropriation. This is an *in-front-of-the-text reading* that is the goal of contextual hermeneutics.

Draper, West, and others[13] have extensively developed this method of contextual hermeneutics. The researcher uses Micah's text along with the data gathered from the research participants (preachers and congregants) from Mwaghavul land in central Nigeria to discuss how the use of both biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul wise sayings, enhance the congregants' understanding of and response to the sermons preached (cf. Draper 2015:16-20). Thus, the researcher has emphasised the scholars' proposal on 'dialogue', 'conversation', and other related approaches (Morris 2014; van Heerden 1997, 2002, 2003, 2006).

Since African biblical scholarship believes that biblical texts in their context derive their meaning from interaction with the reader in her/his context, the 'African social cultural context a subject of interpretation' (Adamo 1998:60–90; Ukpong 2002:17–32). African biblical scholarship equally recognises the affinity between African proverbs, a prominent component of communication in the African context, and biblical interpretation. Adamo (2015a) adopted the dialogical discourse as it relates to the use of both African and biblical proverbs from the Nigerian perspective. Such African based biblical studies are aimed at transformation. It is an Afrocentric interpretation of Scripture using storytelling traditions, proverbial philosophies and sayings and a worldview that transformatively meets the local needs of Africans (Adamo 2016:4). These devices, Ukpong considers as "part of the sacred texts used in Africa" (Masenya 2016:5). Similarly, Adedun & Mekiliuwa (2010), focus on other rhetorical devices like metaphors and stories which are elements that may offer a helpful guide on their use in the African context. These are categorised as scholars that locate meaning in the world in front of the text; the reader(s) or reading community, in the case the African society, thereby giving a base for African Biblical Studies, centred on Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics (Kuwornu-Adjaottor ND 1, 12-16). When such indigenous wisdom is used interpreting the rhetoric of the Bible, transformative appropriation is centre-staged and the community "symbolically" owns the text in their context – a model Nel calls "model-dependent realism" (Nel 2012:460-464; Adamo 2016: 1, 7-10). In this way, biblical teaching will find ancestries in and produce a greater impression on the societies in Africa (Chifungo 2013:3,210).

The dialogue engages biblical rhetoric, especially that of Micah, in its historical context, with the 21st-century Mwaghavul land in central Nigeria, and its appropriation in the Mwaghavul context as a "reading community" (cf. Draper 2015) that is fond of using the traditional

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[13] West (1993, 2010b, 2013), Draper & West (1991), Draper (2008, 2014, 2015), Williams (2015), Stinton (2010), Samba (2002), W'ehusha (2007), Decock (2003).

rhetorical devices otherwise called "wise sayings."[14] The mutual interaction with 'willing suspension of disbelief' between the text and contexts (of the text and reader) may lead to proper understanding and an effective response from the side of the reading community.

Secondly, the researcher uses Justin Ukpong's inculturation hermeneutics to examine how biblical rhetoric can be interpreted in Nigeria where cultural sayings portray similar nuances to address practical existential issues of life. Orobator (2008:125-138) sees inculturation to be based on the biblical text of John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." He advocates that true inculturation is "a process where both parties, gospel and culture, Christianity and African religion, word and flesh, can and should be opened to a process of mutual listening, appreciation, and transformation" (Orobator 2008:125-138) with the sole goal to gain better understanding as well as practical guidelines on how to live the Christian life. The focus here, Ukpong (2002:17) would say, is on how Africans conceive what Christianity actually means to them, and how to live it out rightly in their unique context and life circumstances. As he states:

> African readings are existential and pragmatic in nature and contextual in approach. They are interested in relating the biblical message to contemporary and existential questions and lay no claim to a universal perspective. They are concerned with the meaning of biblical text not in an intellectualist but in an existential sense. The results of their investigation are considered valid for the contexts concerned but with possible validity for other contexts (Ukpong 2002:17).

In order to make the gospel understood and practised by Africans as indigenous, the following conditions must be met. The gospel and the African context must relate in an atmosphere of freedom, mutual enrichment, sincere desire to be creative, mutual respect, tolerance, humility, conversion of mind and attitude, exchange of value, and each must mirror the pattern of Christ, according to Orobator (2008:132-137). Where such a relationship is genuinely established, the interpretation of biblical rhetorical language, alongside appropriate sayings which are corresponding elements, would result in practical and contextually relevant conception. This is possible because, as Ukpong (2002) again postulates, biblical rhetoric and African sayings can be transformed into a 'new creation' to speak to Africans with the potency with which biblical rhetoric impacted the original hearers. This newness must be experienced across gender and social status in terms of true liberation (Umorem 1995; Obiwulu 2012).

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[14] See figure 4 for a pictorial representation of the conversation between the book of Micah in its context, the Mwaghavul of central Nigeria in the 21st Century and the reader.

Thirdly, the researcher uses Stuart Hall's Reception Theory. Reception Theory is, generally, a branch of modern literary studies that is concerned with the ways in which literary works are received by readers. The term has sometimes been used to refer to reader-response criticism in general, but it is associated more particularly with the "reception-aesthetics" propounded by Robert Jauss in the 1970s (Hall 1993). Hall (1993), however, being a cultural theorist, centres his scholarship on the place of cultural background and personal experiences on the audience's interpretation and understanding of literature (Hall 1993; Yung-Ho 2017: 218-230). Today, Reception Theory has further been broadened to analyse spectators of a performance of art (Bennett 1990) and landscapes (Hall 1993). In this research, Hall's "approach based on cultural background, called the encoding/decoding model of communication" (1993) is used. In a culturally based study, it is understood that audience members receive the message based on factors like life-experience, the mood at the time of reception, age, culture, beliefs, and gender. An audience may adopt any of the following positions when they decode the text: "dominant", "negotiation" and "opposition" (Martin 2007:1-3. See also, Hall 1980, 1993, 1999).

Schrøder (2000: 233-258) however, challenges Halls one-dimensional theory, where actual readings show more complex nuances than simple encoding and decoding, but have a practical base involving six dimensions, namely: "motivation, comprehension, discrimination, position, evaluation and implementation" that help in examining politics and social changes in a culture. In this case, I observed that Schrøder has broadened the scope of realities the reception theory can investigate.

Discussing the reception of the Bible in Nigeria, therefore, Adamo (2000:336-338) identifies the potential dilemma the early missionaries left for Africans, and indeed, Nigerian Christians, to face with regard to the issues of healing, protection and solving daily needs which were not essentially addressed in the emerging new religion. Consequently, the Nigerian Christians began to use the Bible, especially the Psalms, in different ways. Using what Adamo (2000:336-338) calls "vernacular hermeneutics", these churches use the Bible for "protection from enemies, healing, and success in work, school and business", thus making the Bible their own, and meant for their own use.

Drawing from the concept of reception, the question would be, "When Mwaghavul preachers use wise sayings to interpret the biblical text, what is the current knowledge and presuppositions of the audience concerning such sayings?" In other words, a wise saying may be misunderstood or interpreted to mean a different thing from one member of an audience to

another. Some even find it difficult to understand these sayings and to accept them. However, each congregant interprets the meanings of the text based on their individual cultural background and life experiences. In essence, these factors may create divergent interpretations which may contribute positively or otherwise to the individual's understanding of the sermon. In Hall's words, "different spectators will decode the text in different ways, perhaps not in the way the producer intended" (1980:2). In that case, an audience member may accept, oppose or negotiate the message. The heterogeneous nature of my research participants (based on age, gender, educational and social status) showcases the various conceptions on the effectiveness of the use of biblical and Mwaghavul sayings in making sermons persuasive in Mwaghavul land.

To sum up all these theories, while the tripolar model tries through transformation to contextualise the biblical text to the socio-historical context, inculturation, with its cultural lens, further dialogues with the people's culture in that context to bring about a transformed understanding of the give-and-take conduct phenomenon between culture and gospel. The reception theory helps to determine the divergent exposure to and reception of the wise sayings and biblical rhetoric among the congregants considering the different age groups, location, and historical factors impacting the research participants in the existential contexts.

## 1.6 Methodology

Having briefly looked at the concept of biblical rhetorical analysis, as a way of critiquing the stylistic use of language in the final form of the biblical text and its emotional and intellectual effects, on the original audience as well as the contemporary reader (Avioz 2006:176), it is important at this point to detail it as a method. In the researcher's endeavour to analyse the rhetoric of the Old Testament text of Micah, which is the first aspect of my study, he will follow to a great extent, Robbins' socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI)[15].

As noted in the previous paragraph, the researcher has adopted Robbins' interpretive analytics approach and SRI, to study the selected texts of Micah (i.e. 1:7-16; 3:8-4:5 and 6:1-8),[16] because it claims to bring other forms of interpretation, which were earlier considered separate, together. It integrates those skills which people use in ordinary daily life in interpreting the text. The SRI believes that "language is a means of negotiating meaning in

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[15] In his earlier writings (1996a; 1996b), Robbins preferred to insert a hyphen between "socio" and "rhetorical" while writing "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation." In later development of the concept (2009:xiv), however, Robbins now prefers removing the hyphen to read "Sociorhetorical"; i.e. SRI or SRA (Jodamus 2015:18). Thus, I will also refer to it as such except where a quote is directly taken from an earlier publication where S-RI is used.

[16] In these texts, the prophet has used a lot of the rhetorical devices like metaphors, rhetorical questions, historical reflections and so on in persuading his audience.

and among the worlds in which people live" (Robbins1996:2). It engages both the literary as well as rhetorical processes in the biblical text which "creates multiple modes of argumentation" (Robbins 2002b:27).

Robbin's SRI (1996:1. See also 2002a; 2009 etc.), especially its different textures of text, is a very dynamic approach that agrees with all the three theories used for this study namely, contextual hermeneutic (using Draper's tripolar model), Ukpong's inculturation and Hall's reception theories. Robbins' discourse on the different "textures" of the text (Leander 2013: 44) addresses the concerns of these theories in one way or the other. For instance, the focus of SRI's "intertexture" is the text's relation to both the written and oral cultures and its relevance to it. This, in some ways, relates to inculturation. In addition, SRI spans oral and written literature from Ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman periods to the present and cuts across the "literary, historical, social, cultural, theological, ideological and rhetorical approaches of today" (Gowler 2010:193). This is helpful in that it can apply to many aspects of the African context that is predominantly oral in its social-cultural orientation.

The sociorhetorical views the text as "an intricately woven tapestry" with strands or layers called "textures" (Robbins 1996:3-6). These textures are: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins 1996:3-6). The researcher will examine the three texts (1:7-16; 3:8-4:5; 6:1-8) in the light of these five textures to enable me to view the text in about five angles[17]. In brief terms, the researcher will look at the following:

a. **Inner Texture** by having a close reading of each of these texts while noting the language, structure, sayings and other features in them that Micah purposefully employed to persuade his audience/s.

b. **Intertexture** by looking at other contemporary texts, objects, socio-cultural constructs, or history that relate to Micah in general and to the specific selected texts (1:7-16; 3:8-4:5; 6:1-8) that enrich our understanding of the entire Mican text.

c. **Social and Cultural Texture** where the researcher will note the conception and reception of the message of Micah in the socio-cultural context of central Nigeria with reference to its conversation with the common cultural behaviours, laws and ways of communication in that context.

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[17] These textures will be fully discussed under 2.2 in the next chapter.

*d.* **Ideological Texture** in determining areas of agreement and disagreement between the languages, point(s) of view and conceptions of the book of Micah and that of the people in Nigeria of the reading community.

*e.* **Sacred Texture** through noting what Micah tells the Nigerian community about their relationship with God. This would deal with the texts views on God, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, religious community and ethics (i.e. right actions taken as a result of a commitment to God). This will be treated in greater details in chapter 2.2.

Thus, the researcher will use Robbins' SRI in the analysis of the rhetoric of Micah, an Old Testament text, flexibly. Though Robbins used this method primarily in studying the rhetoric of New Testament (NT) texts, he clearly indicates that SRI, which is "a multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and dialogical interpretive framework, offers interpreters the possibility of a more holistic interpretation of *any text***"** (Jodamus 2015:7. See also Robbins 1992: xxv, 1996b:41, 2002a:58).

This is done to identify the various rhetorical devices employed by Micah in his prophecy and how they work out to possibly affect his hearers. The analysis focuses on three selected pericopes, namely Micah 1:7-16, 3:8-4:5, and 6:1-8, where metaphors, rhetorical questions, or historical reflections are used and responses elicited in the contexts of these texts as a result. It examines the contribution of these texts/pericopes to the development of Micah's message and their effect on the original audience.

With regard to the analysis of the African proverbial wisdom, the researcher has used the model provided by two seasoned African scholars, Masenya and Ramantswana (2012, 2015a, 2015b etc.), who have both extensively engaged African wisdom in their interpretation, especially of the Old Testament. For an analysis of the sermon rhetoric, the researcher has employed the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis (Vaessen 1999:4) which notable African researchers have used in analysing sermons on the continent ((Nhiwatiwa 2012 a&b; Chufungo 2013).). Though SRI, which is a broad-based method, could equally be applied to the context of the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria, who are fond of using their local rhetorical devices. The researcher has explained in Chapter 2.4.4 and 2.5.3.4 why different methods for analysing Mwaghavul sayings and sermons are used.

This study involves qualitative research methods, which are especially relevant because they can be used to "analyse the various factors that motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing" (Kothari 2004:3). Löfgren's (2015) six steps to rhetorical analysis of qualitative interviews are employed to evaluate the role that the rhetorical language, especially that of Micah and Mwaghavul sayings, have on the congregants' ability to understand, respond to and retain the sermons preached. These steps are:

1) to process and record data immediately,

2) to begin analysing data as it is being collected,

3) data reduction,

4) the identifying of meaningful patterns and themes,

5)  data display; and

6) conclusion drawing and verification (see also "How Can the Evaluation Toolkit Help You?" in the *Evaluation Toolkit* of the Pell Institute 2015).

Before embarking on the field research, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate with the reference number HSS/0290/016D from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee after an oral review; where the researcher explained the nature of the research, what was needed of the research participants, and signed consent letters from gate-keepers were presented.

In conducting the interviews, the researcher did the following:

i.     Obtained permission from the gatekeepers (the Chairmen of PCCs Gindiri and Panyam; that is, gatekeepers from clusters "A" and "B" respectively).

ii.    Used the stratified random sampling method to sample the pastors who would preach and the possible interviewees.

iii.   Sought for and obtained informed consent from each the participants before commencing each interview.

iv.    Requested six preachers, three from each cluster ("A" and "B"), who preached from Micah 3:9-4:5. This text is chosen particularly because it contains both a message of judgment and hope which are the two main aspects of prophetic oracles. The preachers from Cluster "A" were simply given the text to preach from, with no further

instruction. Cluster "A" thus functioned as the control group while those from Cluster "B" were simply asked to use Mwaghavul sayings in their sermons (details of the researcher's role in the production of the sermons is in chapter four).

v.  Requested church secretaries to audio-record the sermons.

vi. Produced transcripts from a comparison of the audio-recordings and the sermon notes of selected pastors so as not to miss out on any aspects of the preachers' rhetoric. These were then analysed in order to determine the extent to which the preachers in Mwaghavul land engaged Micah's language and Mwaghavul sayings, in their sermons.

vii. Conducted one-on-one interviews with five Mwaghavul youths, elders, and leaders concerning the place of wise sayings in the history and culture of the Mwaghavul people group.

viii. Interviewed four members from each of the six participating churches in the two clusters three months after the sermons were preached to determine the extent to which an engagement of both biblical rhetoric and African wise sayings could help congregants to understand, respond to and recall the sermons preached.[18]

ix. Coded and analysed the responses to determine whether or not the pastors' use of both biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings was effective in enabling their congregants to better respond to the sermons. To determine the different levels of effectiveness using the responses of the congregants, the researcher used these educational terms that are known as learning domains in education, coined around behavioural objectives: "cognitive (thinking), affective (emotion/feeling and attitude), and psychomotor (physical/kinesthetic)" (Wilson 2014:1).[19] This way the researcher was able to determine the level of impact the sermons, had on each interviewee as they responded to the questions.[20]

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[18] The sermons were presented in six congregations representing the congregations of COCIN churches in the Mwaghavul land in Mangu Local Government area. From each cluster ("A" and "B"), four members from each of the three congregations were interviewed. There were therefore a total of twenty-four (24) congregants among the interviewed.
[19] This model was developed between 1956 and 1972 by Benjamin Bloom, David Krathwohl and Anita Harrow (Wilson 2014:1).
[20] The researcher will give the details on this in chapter five.

After having followed all the above steps pertaining to the interviews, the researcher reviewed the notes, coded them and grouped them into categories for analytical purposes, in line with Osmer's statement:

> Typically, researchers begin by reviewing all their field notes, transcripts, and interview notes to gain a sense of the whole and to spot recurrent language, issues, or themes. Researchers then begin to code the data, chunking it into smaller units for analysis and gradually forming categories that allow these chunks to be organized and compared across different data sources (different interviews, focus groups, or events) (2008:5).

A form of measurement is vital to any kind of research and the dependability of the measurement process is crucial. To verify that the instruments and the process were reliable, a uniform process and the same set of questions were used to investigate the same phenomena, e.g. the same semi-structured questions are posed to congregants from both clusters. As Best and Kahn state, "Carefully designed directions for the administration of the test with no variation from group to group, providing an atmosphere free from distractions and one that minimizes boredom and fatigue, will also improve the reliability of the testing instrument" (1993:218).

To guarantee a considerable level of validity, carefully coded worksheets were used to assess the sermon and interview transcripts. This was done to ensure that the instrument was able to determine effectively whether or not the use of biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings enables congregants better to understand, remember and respond to (henceforth remember) sermons.

The research process was quite rigorous, involving all the steps outlined in the methodology, and the analysis of Micah's rhetoric ran parallel to the sermon deliveries and interviews. Through SRI, the researcher developed a deeper understanding of the Mican texts. Thus, he was able to relate this understanding to the preachers' exegesis and the congregants' responses in the interviews.

Eventually, the researcher compared the outcomes of his findings to determine the levels of retention between congregants from cluster "A", the control group, and those from "B", the experimental group.

**1.7 Limitations**

It is estimated that COCIN has about three thousand congregations with a total membership of over 2.3 million people globally (*2017 COCIN Diary*, 2017:13) with over sixty per cent of them found in central Nigeria. That means COCIN has over 1.38 million members in central Nigeria. The researcher was therefore aware that the field research sample was too small and had inadequate sample representativity. It cannot, therefore, be used to draw general conclusions about the effects of a synergy of biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings on all the COCIN congregants in Central Nigeria. However, the researcher wanted to use this sample heuristically, to determine the feasibility of conducting the study on a far larger scale outside of this thesis.

**1.8   The Relevance of the Study**

The Greek Sophist Gorgias eloquently wrote as follows in 414 BC:

> The power of speech has the same effect on the condition of the soul as the application of drugs to the state of bodies; for just as different drugs dispel different fluids from the body, and some bring an end to disease but others end life, so also some speeches cause pain, some pleasure, some fear; some instill courage, some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion ("How Rhetoric can make your presentations powerful, effective & memorable" ND).

Preachers use words to persuade people. Their ability to use words well, is a priority since this skill determines their success or failure in their vocation. Applying both rhetorical principles and African wise sayings in preaching and other forms of teaching such as contextual Bible studies, is therefore highly relevant in many ways. Within the scope of my study, the relevance of doing so revolves around issues of biblical rhetoric, African wise sayings, Mwaghavul context, congregants' response to sermons, and the results of a synergy between biblical rhetoric and African wise sayings. Among the recommendations in the concluding chapter, the researcher provides pointers to the relevance of a synergy between Bible text and context in biblical interpretation. However, outside the scope of this study, the researcher trusts that the work will contribute in the following ways:

i   **It could open up a new area of study that seeks to apply the rhetorical element of a whole book of the Bible to particular readers' context/s:** In the studies done on the rhetoric of the Old Testament, scholars examine the artistic rhetorical elements

employed by the Bible writers and their contribution towards the persuasion of an audience. This study, however, uses biblical rhetoric alongside Mwaghavul cultural sayings in a way that may increase the persuasiveness and impact of sermon data on congregants in central Nigeria. This study could showcase a fresh aspect where the biblical rhetoric of a particular scriptural book is allowed to dialogue with other possible and identical African sayings, to result in a genuine and deep impact on the audience. This could, therefore, result in a deeper understanding of the text and its message in such a way, that it informs their decisions and actions.

ii **It could postulate relevant ways to contextualise**: Studying biblical rhetoric alongside relevant cultural sayings could lead to more relevant contextualisation. Where the preacher uses the language system and illustrations from cultural contexts to explain the biblical texts and doctrines to a people, it will make the people feel more at home with the gospel. The gospel would no longer be considered a foreign religion but will speak to the very essence of the people. A conscious determination to engage biblical and cultural rhetoric in the exposition of the Bible, will require that the preacher studies the context of their audience so that he/she can relevantly relate the sermon to that context. As David Hillis states, for success in such engagements, the preacher would need to analyse the audience, their language form, how communication is carried out in that culture, and "more traditional purviews of speech studies" (1997). Therefore, contextualisation, which is concerned with the audience's circumstances, is particularly important in preaching. In preaching, as Lischer (in Hillis 1997) would say, the preacher is expected to use words that are suitable for the rhetorical situation in which they speak. In this, "the now of God's summon finds its now in the congregation of listeners" (Lischer in Hillis 1997). No doubt, such contextual proclamation greatly impacts the congregants.

iii **It could enhance effective communication:** Effectiveness in communication in the context of preaching refers to the impact the sermon has on the congregants. Where it has a lasting positive effect on the congregants in such a way that it informs the way they act, the sermon would be judged as being effectively communicated. This can only be achieved where the concepts and principles are presented in the language common and comprehensible to the listeners.

iv **It could enhance mutual enrichment between Christianity and culture**: The study could enable the spirit of give-and-take between the language use of the Bible writers and the Mwaghavul people (or any people group to which such a study might be applied). There might be concepts that the Bible has expressed in a language that the Mwaghavul language is deficient in or vice versa. In this case, the study could help the readers see that there are values in all cultures that can be tapped to improve our understanding of the Bible. The aim of such mutual enrichment would be the use of language that enriches the audience's comprehension of the Bible message.

v **It could assist readers/preachers to recognise how receptive the congregants in Central Nigeria are to preaching that identifies the language use of both the Bible and its 21st century audience**: The study should enable the reader/preacher to observe how, even in the 21st century, African congregants can still respond differently to sermons that are couched in their cultural and social milieu than those expressed in purely western garb.

vi **It could challenge preachers to positively apply the principles of classical rhetoric in their preaching**: The key elements (appeals) of classical rhetoric are *logos, ethos* and *pathos*. These are equally important in the preacher's ability to make an impact on the congregants. Augustine is said to have mastered the art of rhetoric and in his ministry years, "purposely appropriated common rhetorical elements in his preaching for the purpose of making Scripture both plain and compelling to his audience" (Sypert 2015:19).[21] This not only involves the rhetorical devices but its elements, which are *logos, ethos*, and *pathos*. Hughes (2012:11-12) states that God is happy if preachers faithfully involve both the rhetorical devices and appeals in their sermons. By *logos*, Hughes refers to the actual biblical text when he states that it should be preached as the "homework of the preacher...Then our preparation will be such that as we preach, we will not be preaching our own thoughts about God's Word, but God's actual Word, his logos" (2012:11). The term *ethos* expresses the personality or integrity of the preacher. A preacher is expected to preach God's *logos* by passionately (*pathos*) declaring the truth not only by words but through the personality that is subject and obedient to the truth the preacher proclaims. Hughes concludes that "When a preacher's ethos backs up

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[21] John A. Sypert (2015:29-31) particularly made reference to Augustine's Book Four of his treatise *On Christian Doctrine* in discussing how he used various rhetorical elements in his preaching.

his logos, there will be the pleasure of God" (2012:11-12).[22] Both Quintilian and Augustine are said to emphasise this virtue says Lester de Koster (1997:311-319). Finally, the preacher can use the rhetorical appeal called *pathos* which refers to the speaker's "personal passion and conviction". It is expected that a preacher would preach out of his personal belief if a great impact is to be made.

The researcher believes that using all these elements of rhetoric in preaching should bring preachers and listeners together in every context, in such a way that God will be pleased as a result (Hughes 2012:12).

vii **It could encourage the thorough study and application of the Bible:** It is difficult to faithfully apply biblical texts written centuries ago to a context completely foreign to both the original authors and the modern audience. It requires a deliberate and careful study of the Bible alongside an awareness of the readers' context and culture as well as "intensive study of all the elements of oratory, of speeches made by experts in the craft, and a lifetime devoted to the study of the whole world of knowledge" (de Koster 1997:311, following the great Roman rhetorician, Cicero). This should enhance an informed application of the word to the world of the preacher. This is basically because preaching is meant to touch the lives of the listeners of Christ. Engaging the complex avenue of rhetoric is aimed at achieving that ultimate goal which is the salvation and changing of the lives of the congregants (Gill 2013:5-6).

This should be what drives the preacher to be devoted to the art of persuasion.

## 1.9   Definition of Key Terms

The following operational definitions pertain to this research:

**Micah**: Micah was an eighth-century prophet in Judah who came from Moresheth, a town most often called Moresheth-Gath (Mic. 1:14). Gath was a Philistine town at the borders of the territory of Judah. According to McComiskey (1985:397), Micah's hometown is located near the area from which Proto-Isaiah came, that is the district of Shephelah. Moresheth, in particular, is situated in the eastern part of the modern town of Eleutheropolis (von Orelli

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[22] In his explanation on *ethos*, Hughes referred to the works of other scholars like Phillips Brooks and William Ames.

1939:2048). This might be a pointer to the reason behind the very close nature of their prophecies (McComiskey 1985:397).

Micah's full name is מכיהו (Heb.), meaning "Who is like Yahweh?"[23] References to this full form are found in 2 Chronicles 17:7; 1 and Kings 22:8. All that is known about him in the Bible is recorded in the books of Micah and Jeremiah 26:18-20.

**Sermon**: A sermon at its basic level is an address, lecture or conversation. In essence, it is "a religious discourse delivered in public, usually by a clergyman as a part of a worship service" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition* 2002:1066). This means the word "sermon" is an equivalent of what the Bible calls "preaching".

The Bible records various Hebrew and Greek biblical words for preaching. The Hebrew words for preaching are נְבוּאָה "inspired teaching", and נָטַף, "figuratively to speak by inspiration". Its Greek equivalent is κήρυγμα (Luke 11:321 Cor 2:4), meaning "a proclamation (especially of the gospel; by implication, the gospel itself)" (Strong 2006.).

According to Craddack (1985:818), the Old Testament uses the word "preaching" to denote an announcement. The content of such an announcement depends solely on the context within which it came. For instance, in Nehemiah 6:7, it forms part of the lie Nehemiah's enemies had made up, that he had set up prophets to declare him king in Judah. Furthermore, it stands for an announcement of good news (Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 61:1) and for prophetic sermons on behalf of God. The Greek version of this nuance was consistently used later in the Christian era. The word κήρυγμα is translated in the NT as "to bring good news", "preach the good news", "to evangelize" (Matt. 11:5; Rom. 1:15) or "to make an authoritative proclamation" (Matt. 3:1; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 4:5) (Craddack 1985:818), among others. In John 3:3, the word is used in the context where Jesus declares the fact of being born again as a requisite for salvation. That means that 'sermon' is a synonym of 'preaching'.

Craddack (1985:818) further indicates that the church was launched, grew and is growing through the proclamation of the gospel in Christian sermons. In fact, sermons are mostly the means through which the biblical message is made relevant to the lives of congregants in a particular context. The written sermon is what is known as 'sermon data'.

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[23]This full name has been abbreviated severally into different biblical names among whom is the canonical prophet Micah (Mic. 1:1; Jer. 28:18) (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1906/2014:567).

**Culture:** Adang (2015:97-98) defines culture as "the sum total of the peculiarities shared by a people" including everything that marks them out from other groups of people (Azaza 2001:31). Those distinctive traits are people's values, religious as well as philosophical beliefs, rites of passages practices, aesthetic forms, systems of communications (e.g., languages), institutions of society, and the variety of ways their life is influenced by language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, food, dance patterns, taboos and even "nature does not escape inclusion in the definition" (Falola 2003:1-19; Adang 2015:98; Azaza 2001:31).

**Saying (דבר *debar*):** This biblical word primarily means 'word', 'thing', or 'matter'. In his survey, Clarke (2006) writes that the term is used more than 1500 times in the OT. However, in most of those contexts, *debar* stands for 'saying' with myriads of significations including a proverbial song (1 Sam. 18:8), a piece of advice (2 Sam. 17:4; Est. 1:21), recorded words or oracles of court prophets (2 Chron. 13:22), and the orderly records of event of the seer (2 Chron. 33:19). Renn's definition goes close to what the researcher means by 'saying' in this study as he defines *debar* as "riddles" or "puzzling words" (2005:855). Similarly, Proverbs 1:6 identifies 'proverbs, parables and riddles' as the literary forms of sayings that instructors used when teaching (cf. 22:17, 20; 24:23; 30:1; 31:1). In Ecclesiastes 12:11, the effectiveness of such wise sayings for instruction is compared to "goads" and "nails". A vivid description of the effectiveness of sayings as "goads" and "nails" is provided by Barnes, Murphy, Frew, and Pusey's commentary on Ecclesiastes 9:11:

> Verse 11 literally, Words of wise men are as goads, and as nails driven in (by) masters of assemblies; they are given from one shepherd: "goads," because they rouse the hearer and impel him to right actions; "nails" (perhaps tent-spikes), because they remain fixed in the memory: "masters of assemblies" are simply "teachers" or "preachers" (see Eccl 1:1, instructors of such assemblies as Wisdom addresses (Prov 1:20) (2006).

A preacher aims at persuading the hearers with biblical truth in a way that the truth that comes in their "own native and awful solemnity" (Exell 2006) impacts them. In essence, sayings are rhetorical devices used for effective communication which climaxes in a deep understanding of genuine and informed response to and recall of, what is communicated.

Its Mwaghavul equivalent, *sumpoo,* is a noun referring to the name given to the act of uttering proverbs; wise sayings which may be in the form of a statement or *nyam* (poem) (Blench, Daapiyaa & Bess 2012:138). The term *sumpoo* generally stands for any utterance

with a form of hidden meaning which can come in the form of a story, proverb, riddle, parable or any literary devices.

**Mwaghavul**: The word, "Mwaghavul" is both the name of the language and of the people group who speak it. The word is coined from two Mwaghavul words, "*mun*" and "*vul*", meaning "we are two", signifying a similar concept to the biblical connotation of 'two are better than one'. Even though this understanding of the word is challenged by one of my interviewees (PWS.4) who states that it is not the original idea conveyed by the name; "we are two" is what is generally maintained as its meaning. This understanding is drawn from the peoples' desire and strive for unity.

As a language, Mwaghavul is an Afro-Asiatic language that is spoken in the Plateau State of Nigeria. Gowon (2011:21), who refers to several other scholars,[24] noted this fact. The Mwaghavul are further referred to as "Nilo-Saharan".[25] Gowon also noted that the Mwaghavul form a part of the other Chadic-speaking peoples groups scattered between the Chad-Borno basin and the Jos Plateau hills (Gowon 2011:21).

**Response**: Response refers to an act representing a reaction to a stimulus (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2010:1258); a 'definition' that is more germane to my study. Response refers to the reaction, spoken word or written word as a consequence of demands or stimuli. Such a response may be expressed in different forms and levels. Lake (2003:202-203) suggests that "the language of educators" like "cognitive, affective or psychomotor responses" to evaluate and categorise the kind of reactions congregants exhibit as responses to sermons. These words are used for measuring the evidence of mastery of knowledge acquired (University of Jos Postgraduate Studies Prospectus 2004:110; See Preez 2013:231-232), because, like the teacher, the preacher transmits knowledge through his sermons that yield different levels of convictions demonstrated by the congregants' kind of behavioural responses.

**Rhetoric**: Gitay (2011:7) defines rhetoric simply as "the art of argumentation and persuasion" which expresses communicative skills which is also used by Bible authors in their attempts to communicate with their audience. Rhetoric is closely related to oratory. This

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[24] Isichei (1982), Meek (1971), Morrison (1976) and Wambutda (1991).

[25] The Nilo-Saharan is a language family that is spoken mostly in central part of northern Africa and around "the Nile basin" extending down to the Sahara desert. It is "similar to Afroasiatic languages" (Dimmendaal 2016). These languages are spoken in many African countries including the large Kanuri of northern Nigeria who live in the Chad area from where the Mwaghavul migrated ("Nilo-Saharan Language Family | About World Languages" ND).

affinity is observed in Yeager's (1974:618) definition of an orator as a skilful speaker who is able to sway his audience to a particular course of action through eloquence. As Yeager states, "The art of an orator is called 'oratory' or 'rhetoric'" (1974:618).

Kennedy (1991:3) writes that the term rhetoric originates from the Greek, *rhetorike*, used during the fifth century by the disciples of Socrates. He views it as a civic art that involves speaking in public, primarily where deliberations are made, like in a law court, with the goal of persuading an audience. It is an art where words are skillfully used to change the mindset of an audience for or against a proposal ("What is Rhetoric?" 2003-2016).

Furthermore, Aristotle added that rhetoric is "the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion". Here, Aristotle places an importance on discovering the possible means of persuasion for each situation (case), not the actual effect of persuasion. The rhetorical situation is relevant in deciding which means to use for persuasion to occur (Fleese ND:vii) or more simply as "the science/knowledge of eloquence/speaking well" (Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* II:15-21 in Cornelius 2000:254).

Within the context of my study, rhetoric refers to a speaker/preacher's ability to choose and use words and gestures to influence and convince her/his hearers toward a particular action or inaction.

## 1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a general framework for the research project and has detailed the basic motivations of the researcher that has served as the background to the study. The context located the setting for the research as the Mwaghavul land in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State, in central Nigeria. The research parameters have outlined the research questions and objectives that centre on the thesis statement that when preachers, especially those in Africa, use both biblical rhetoric and African indigenous sayings to compose their sermon rhetoric, it would persuade the congregants to better respond to and recall the sermons. Other scholar's views are reviewed, and the theories surveyed have provided giant shoulders to stand on and a roadmap to guide. The methodology provided a clear and practical step-by-step guideline on the procedures taken in the research. The outline of the relevance of studies acted as pointers to the goal set and the target to reach. Finally, the

key terms are defined to enlighten the reader on what the research conceives of when these terms are used.

The next chapter examines in detail the concepts and development of rhetoric, biblical rhetoric, wise sayings and sermons. This will build on the background already established in the first chapter, as well as showcase past and current trends in these concepts before relating them to both the book of Micah and the context of the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria.

## Chapter Two - Rhetorical Moments Leading to African Contextual Preaching: Nature and Analytic Methods

*"for it is not sufficient to know what one ought to say, but one must also know how to say it"* (Aristotle 1926:345).

The task of engaging in a rhetorical analysis of African sermons requires a long journey through the different terrains the African preacher has gone through to have finally arrived at the stage of actually presenting the sermon. The journey may seem to have been a seamless, smooth path from the text in its original context (the world behind the text), to the readers' context (the world in front of the text), and to the preacher and his audience living in the context of a contemporary African community (appropriation) which is what is called the tripolar model of contextual exegesis. In reality, however, a lot of different influences have punctuated the process of sermon production and presentation, namely, the rhetoric of the text, indigenous rhetoric, and the rhetoric of the sermon itself. This journey and the processes entailed may be described as circles of rhetoric. Every outpouring of rhetoric is best understood not only by identifying the rhetorical devices, but primarily by noting the rhetorical moment or what others prefer to call the 'rhetorical situation' (Sproat, Driscoll & Brizee 2013:1; Crowley & Hawhee 2004:27) (see below).

In line with the above, Barker identifies two important aspects of rhetorical criticism as being the "analysis of the text itself" (an on-the-text reading) and the "analysis of the milieu in which the text was formed and to which it contributes" (a behind-the-text reading; Barker 2016:16). Thus, each text must be analysed in the light of its relationship to its original context.

A rhetorical moment, therefore, reflects different forms of relationships starting with the issue being discussed and how it relates to the audience being addressed, the rhetor's reputation in the eyes of the audience, her/his relationship to and knowledge of the subject matter, the time and location in which the topic is discussed (Crowley & Hawhee 2004:27), and the audience's interest in the topic. The rhetorical situation helps in strengthening the rhetor's argument, making the address audience-focused and well structured (Sproat, Driscoll & Brizee 2013:1).

The previous chapter laid the foundation that touches on the key areas of consideration in this entire research project. It showed that the research focus is on the role that biblical rhetoric and indigenous African sayings play, in the response of central Nigerian congregants to sermons prepared and preached there, by the local pastors. In this chapter, the concepts and

analysis of biblical rhetoric, African rhetoric and sermon rhetoric, all of which have to do with the art and mode of persuasive speech delivery, are discussed. Originally, each of these concepts was located historically and circumstantially to different rhetorical moments. Since these are multifaceted, the researcher will only discuss each of these three rhetorical situations briefly and suggest ways of analysing each one. Before delving into these rhetorical moments, however, the researcher will start by briefly explaining the term rhetoric.

## 2.1 General Conception of Rhetoric

Aristotle's observation, relayed at the outset of this chapter, points to the importance of the mode of speech delivery in any given context. The style a speaker chooses determines much of her/his success or failure to achieve the desired response from the audience. Though the speaker may have very important and relevant information for an audience, until the right style of delivery is used, she/he will not be able to persuade the audience regarding her/his point of view. In a bid to create the right impression in a speech, much training and/or skill in speaking is required (Aristotle's Rhetoric 2011). Thus, language use and style are closely related to the concept of rhetoric and are crucial to persuasive speech delivery and persuasive writing.

### 2.1.1 Definition of Rhetoric

The Greek noun *rhētōr*, from which rhetoric is derived, typically referred to the orator "who speaks in court as an attorney or advocate (either for the prosecution or for the defence)" (Vine 1985). Thus, a rhetor was a lawyer, attorney or an advocate. However, as Vine notes, a rhetor can be "a public speaker, an orator", as per Acts 24:1 which describes Tertullus, who was not a lawyer by profession, but "hired, as a professional speaker, to make a skilful presentation of a case in court. His training was not legal but rhetorical" (Vine 1985). [26]

Rhetoric is closely related to both logic and politics according to Aristotle. It is consequently described as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle 1926:168. See also, Kennedy 1991:14, Gill 2016:2). The contextual focus of rhetoric is also noted in Kennedy's description that it is, "a more general concept of the power of words and their potential to affect a situation in which they are used or received" (Kennedy 1994:3). Thus, the effectiveness of rhetoric is based on the circumstance that

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[26]As noted in chapter one, historically, the term rhetoric emanated from Socrates in the fifth century. Plato used it first in his dialogue called *Gorgias,* which was probably written in 385 B.C. but portrayed as being from an earlier setting (Kennedy 1994:3).

necessitates it and its ability to influence its audience in such a context. In this study, 'rhetoric' is viewed as an exploration of how the preacher can utilise the art of persuasion to communicate biblical truths, in such a manner as to elicit an appropriate response from the audience and enhance their recall of the sermons preached.

**2.1.2 The Three Technical Proofs of Rhetoric**

According to Aristotle, the mastery of rhetoric calls for "the power of logical reasoning (*logos*); a knowledge of character (*ethos*); and knowledge of the emotions (*pathos*)" (DeCaro 2010:4). These indispensable elements of rhetoric have variously been called Aristotle's "three technical proofs of rhetoric", "three means of persuasion", or the "three perspectives" of rhetoric (Jeong 2010:136. See Nel 1998:107; Mitternacht 2007:76; Crowley & Hawhee 2004:269; Gill 2016:5).

**Logos:** The term *logos,* means knowledge, reasoning, information, structure, and purpose of the discourse, that is, the 'truth' or content of the message (Richmond & Silva ND:23-24). It is "concerned with actively thinking about, and reflecting on, a situation and then making appropriate choices of words and arguments, given the situation" (Jeong 2010:140-141). It refers to content, structure, reasoning, and diction, and "how strong the logic or reasoning of the text is" (Sproat, Driscoll & Brizee 2013:4).

**Ethos:** Aristotle (1926:489) views *ethos* as the moral character of the speaker, with its ethical proofs being seen in the speaker's lifestyle. As Aristotle states, people who have fair minds are more readily trusted than those whose characters are questionable even when what they say appears believable ("Persuasive Power" 2013:2. Cf. also Jeong 2010:139). In this study, *ethos* would refer to the rhetorical influence of the preacher's life on the sermon that she/he preaches (Hughes 1999:51).

**Pathos:** The second proof of persuasion is *pathos*, which refers to emotion in ancient Greek and may be translated as 'passion'.[27] An ideal orator, therefore, can inspire the feeling of the judge to be angry, move him to tears or sway his feelings to a direction the orator desires so as to get the most of the situation (Hendrickson 1988:93.322). Thus, rhetorically, *pathos* refers to an appeal made on the audience's emotions, "feelings, values, prejudices or

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[27] Crawley and Hawhee (2004:167) reflect historically that early conceptions of the term *pathos* among the Greeks are equated to passive terms, like the word "experience" and later to suffering. It wasn't until the 5th century BC that Plato and Aristotle began to use the term *pathos* to discuss the emotions in general, which is still being used in English along with *sympathy* and *empathy*.

interests" (Lawrie 2005:21) to elicit "anger, fear, pity, indignation" or other feelings like love, joy, and longing (Shin 2004:65, 67; Aristotle 1926:17).

Each of Aristotle's proofs of persuasion aligns with one of the three main aspects involved in linguistic communication. First, *ethos* is clearly associated with the speaker, especially her/his character. Secondly, *pathos* is directed towards the audience's emotion or mind – the emotional state the rhetor places in his/her audience. Lastly, rational, factual and carefully reasoned argumentation called *logos* is associated with the rhetor's speech or message itself (Kraus 2005:79).

## 2.1.3: Origin and History of Rhetoric [28]

People have always used language to convince and influence their listeners, making the art of rhetoric as old as human language itself (Aristotle 1926:vii). However, it is also true that rhetoric formally started in Greek culture at the beginning of the fifth century B.C, when it was first "discovered" (Shin 2004:18) and given technical descriptions. Even so, as is evident from various Ancient Near East (ANE) texts, the prophetic corpus and other forms of literature in the Old Testament, a conscious choice of persuasive strategies and devices similar to the developed nuance of classical rhetoric (Lipson & Binkley 2004:3) existed long before the 5th century BC.[29] Each of the literary types found in the Old Testament are also found in the literature of the Ancient Near East (Weinfeld 1972:178). It would also be true to assert that classical Greek rhetoric emerged from a development of some unrefined forms and motifs of ancient rhetoric[30]. That could be the reason why the prophets used rhetorical devices that could safely be defined in similar terms used in classical and modern rhetoric (Lewin 1985:105). Jeremiah, for example, is said to have mastered "such techniques as chiasmus, inclusio, wordplay, repetition, assonance, and alliteration" as seen especially in the seventh chapter of the book (Lewin 1985:105), all of which are elements discussed in classical rhetoric. This means that it is possible to use the terms and conception of classical rhetoric to discuss the rhetoric of Micah.

When Aristotle states that "The birthplace of Rhetoric as an art was the island of Sicily" (1926:viii. Cf. Kennedy 1994:3), he was only referring to its formal start in Greek culture. At

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[28] Crowley and Hawhee (2004:440) provide an outline of the history of ancient rhetoric that can be viewed at a glance to give a general picture of its history and development. The researcher found this helpful and has also used Yeager's discourse on this, because it provides the information in brief terms.
[29] The authors of various chapters in Lipson and Binkley (2004) discus the ancient rhetoric of various nations like Egypt, nations in Mesopotamia and China.
[30] The Greek leaders might have sustained their kingdoms, power, and influence using some organised forms of speech (Lipson and Binkley 2004:3).

that time, it emerged as a result of increasing lawsuits in the new democracy in Syracuse in Sicily in 466 BC (Yeager 1974:618) by returning exiles who wanted their property back through court procedures. They needed people who would present their cases clearly. Corax of Sicily and Tisias, the founder of rhetoric, began to render such assistance (Aristotle 1926:ix), followed by teachers like Protagoras and Lysias (Aristotle 1926:viii). The art of rhetoric reached Athens in the 400s where most males became trained rhetors (Yeager 1974:618. See also Aristotle 1926:vii).

In the Classical period, interest in the art of rhetoric increased in Athens with rhetors and politicians like Themistocles and Pericles (Aristotle 1926:viii), and others such as Demosthenes, Aristotle, Isocrates (436-338 BC) Aristotle, and Plato (Kennedy 1991:11, 14) took the centre stage. In the Roman communities, Cicero developed five steps towards preparing a speech (Goholshak 2000:11). He, Pericles, Demosthenes, and Aristotle held first place among the early orators of that age who began to train others in the art of rhetoric.

Later growth in rhetorical arts saw the emergence of Christian preachers using the principles of rhetoric in their preaching style, motivation, and focus (Yeager 1974:619). Powerful preachers like the apostle Paul, John Chrysostom ("John Chrysostom" 2016), and Augustine ("Saint Augustine of Hippo and the Order of Saint Augustine" 2010) who were influenced by oratory art inspired this tradition (Brien 1993:553; Goholshak 2000:13; 15-16).

After the reformers,[31] political oratory came back to the fore in both Europe and America in the 1700s with Edmund Burke, Benjamin Disraeli, and William Churchill. Other orators were Patrick Henry, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Stephen D. Douglas, and William Bryian Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, Clarina Howard Nichols, Mary C. Vaughan and Ken Burns (Mattingly 2002: 99, 101-102; Yeager 1974:619).

The medieval and Renaissance times, witnessed the rise of rhetoric with its focus shifted to the church as a skill used in soul winning (DeMan 1988:21; McKay & McKay 2010). Rhetoric was also studied in the universities[32] and its branches (or "trends"[33]) were established (DeCaro 2010:9).

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[31] Savonarola (late 1400s), Martin Luther and John Calvin (in the 1500s)

[32] In the Universities, Hugh Blair's book, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres,* that was published in 1783 became a key resource for the study of rhetoric throughout the European and American universities (McKay & McKay 2010).

[33] The three trends in rhetoric that characterised the modern period are - epistemological, belletristic, and elocutionist.

Much more recently, English language instruction has taken the place of training in communication skills. DeCaro (2010:10) noted that in 1910, American universities began to develop the art of rhetoric again. These universities eventually developed a manual on writing skills for students in the 1970s (Brooks & Warren 1970:xiv). Today, mass media is a platform for rhetoric (McKay & McKay 2010).

## 2.1.4 Basic Structure of Rhetoric

DeCaro (2010:5) sums up what Aristotle considers as the three essentials of a speech, namely persuasion, the language to use, and the right arrangement of the different parts of the speech. The focus of this section is on the third point, namely arrangement. As early as the 460s BC, Corax "with the aid of his pupil" Tisias, developed a five-point guideline on the organisation of public speaking (Yeager 1974:618):

a. *Proem* (Introduction)
b. Narrative
c. Argument
d. Subsidiary Remarks
e. Summary

Aristotle calls this five-point guideline for organising a speech "the canons of memory and rhetoric," which are still vital today, especially in legal circles because most legal presentations are written (Wright 2009:1). This five-pronged approach has to do with the steps to preparing the rhetorical address.[34] The structure of the rhetorical speech itself, however, consists of one of the steps preceding the address, popularly called, 'the arrangement'. Having discussed the meaning, proofs, history, and basic structure of rhetoric, it is appropriate to discuss rhetorical criticism itself at this point.

## 2.1.5 Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis is seen as a close and systematic examination of any form of communication with the aim of identifying and describing the elements, form, and dynamics involved in that communication, and "to explore the situations, past or present, which

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[34] See also Aristotle 1926; Crowley & Hawhee 2004; Gill 2016; Rhetoric/St Augustine of Hippo 2010; and Kennedy 1994.

generate them and in which they are essential constituents to be comprehended" (Bryant 1973:35). This definition identifies two parts involved in a rhetorical criticism: the identification of rhetorical elements or devices and the role of context for the understanding and functioning of such devices.

In line with the above, Hughes (1989:23) and Andrews (1990:3, 6) believe that rhetorical criticism entails more than an analysis of the rhetor's style or her/his understanding of the socio-historical location of her/his audience. Rather, it has to do with concentrating on the effort that the rhetor has put into her/his speech and the methods she/he has used to communicate her/his ideas with the goal of persuading a specific audience.

Cornelius sees rhetorical criticism as "an interpretation and evaluation of a specific act of communication" (2000:259). Similarly, for Rechard (1954:180), the role of the critic is two-fold: to understand the idea being transmitted to the audience and to determine how successful the communicator has succeeded doing so. The key purposes of undertaking a rhetorical criticism of any form of communication are as follows.

## 2.1.6 The Goals of Rhetorical Criticism

Cornelius (2000:258) identifies the primary goal of rhetorical criticism as the description, interpretation, and evaluation of an act of rhetoric. For him, the objective of rhetorical criticism is to unpack "the communicative functions of a text" through evaluating how functional it is in a particular context (Cornelius 2000:258). To determine this functionality, the critic examines how the author has adapted the rhetorical strategies she/he has used and the ideas conveyed to the audience (Croft 1965: 408). This is important because the more a speech is connected to an audience's socio-cultural tenets, the more effective it will be in persuading the audience in favour of the rhetor's argument (see Larson, 1998:210-233). Croft (in Cornelius 2000:258) pinpoints the following goals of rhetorical criticism:

1. The *historical function*: The historical goal of rhetorical criticism is to record and interpret how the social values of the speaker relate to the social values of her/his audience as she/he adapts /her/his rhetoric to those social values.

2. The *evaluative function*: This refers to weighing the efficiency of the rhetorical act by assessing the suitability and evaluating the distinctiveness of how the speaker has adopted the related ideas of the audience.

3. The *creative function*: Here, the critic is able to re-examine, re-evaluate, and if possible modify contemporary rhetorical theory through her/his analysis, which is key to the development of rhetorical theory.

It is clear that rhetorical criticism is not simply an endeavor to evaluate the outcome of a rhetorical act in terms of an audience's response to a rhetorical act, but also an attempt to probe into the relationship that exists between "text and context in order to offer the most reasonable explanation for the probable result of any given message" (Cornelius 2000: 259). In the next section, the researcher will discuss how these functions relate to the methods of biblical rhetorical criticism below.

## 2.2 Biblical Rhetoric and Biblical Rhetorical Criticism

The first of the circles or moments of rhetoric (text, context and sermon) involved in this study is an evaluation of the rhetoric of the biblical text. In this case, the selected text will be critiqued in terms of its persuasive qualities. A rhetorical criticism of the Bible, particularly that of the Old Testament, is defined by Muilenburg, who initiated the concept. He urged biblical scholars to go beyond the ancient "form criticism" to understand "the nature of Hebrew literary composition, in exhibiting the structural patterns that are employed for the fashioning of a literary unit … and in discerning the many and various devices by which the predications are formulated and ordered into a unified whole" (Muilenberg 1969:9). In terms of my study, Muilenberg's admonition means that the preacher must grapple with these patterns and devices in order to better understand the meaning and emphasis of the text. Therefore, after further deliberating on the concept of biblical rhetoric and placing it in its ANE context, the researcher will briefly discuss the common rhetorical structures and devices in the Old Testament. This discussion will then set the background for the three main tasks in this section which are:

1) to survey the key historical developments in rhetorical criticism,
2) to survey and summarise the nature, premise and objectives of Robbins' socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI); and
3) to examine how SRI can impact the interpretation of the Old Testament prophets, particularly the book of Micah.

### 2.2.1 The Nature of Biblical Rhetoric

Biblical rhetoric is broadly seen as "the means by which a text establishes and manages its relationship with its audience in order to achieve a particular effect" (Koptak 1996:28). Wilson (1991) defines biblical rhetoric from its practical persuasive nuance, that is, as that technique by which language is used within the literature of the Bible for the effective communication of its message. According to Wilson (1991), the Bible was written for the general purpose of convincing its audience to accept God's gift of eternal life. Therefore, a study of the way the biblical writers strategically used language to help in achieving that purpose is biblical rhetoric.

### 2.2.2 Ancient Near Eastern Rhetoric

Identifying any clear divide between ANE rhetoric, Old Testament rhetoric and Greco-Roman rhetoric is difficult because they share many commonalities. The forms of biblical rhetoric found in the Old Testament appear to be a development from ANE forms of rhetoric (Weinfeld 1972:178). For instance, a close examination of the rhetoric of the Old Testament prophets reveals that the "forms as well as basic motifs of classical prophecy are rooted in the ancient Near-Eastern literature" (Weinfeld 1972:178). Furthermore, the historical narratives and prophetic oracles (of the Old Testament employ various rhetorical devices which are comparable to those used by classical rhetors for the purpose of persuading their audience/s (Sternberg 1983:45-82; Gitay 1980:293-294).

Walton sums up his exploration of the religions of the ANE by saying, "in all of these areas we can see that the actual ritual practices show some degree of commonality across the ancient world, including Israel" (2006:134). Ritual rhetoric was used as a pretext to consolidate the king's right to power and to provide divine reasons for his failure or success in battles (Watts 2009:41-45). Such rhetoric often laid claims on the admirable picture of the afterlife, thereby inducing loyalty in giving lavish offerings by king and subjects, payments of taxes and peace. Epic narratives also portray subtle rhetorical categories among ancient cultures. This is evident in the flood narrative of the Babylonians, the Enuma Elish, which was probably meant to inculcate loyalty to a status quo (Watts 2009:49). In this epic, divine beings also rhetorically persuaded each other to take particular actions (Sumner 1991:15).

Ritual rhetoric was sometimes used to condemn the ruler, mainly because religious leaders preferred one ruler above another. Watts states that such situations "fueled such

propagandistic uses of ritual criticism in royal inscriptions… Ritual, thus, frequently provided political justifications for royal rule, military conquest and rebellion, and for priestly critiques" (2009:51).

In relation to prophetic activity, Weinfeld notes that "basic procedures of prophetic activity, as well as basic patterns of the prophetic message are found in the ancient Near East, especially in Mesopotamia" (1972:195). For example, the Mari tablets indicate that ANE prophets used messenger formulas like those of Israel (cf. Ex 7:16; Isa 6:8; Jer 26:12), claiming that a god had sent them, and began their oracles with words such as "This is what Shamash said," or "Dagon spoke to me saying" (Smith 1979). Smith (1979) also records a sentence in the oration of a prophet that he calls the "Admonitions of Ipuwer" where the speaker condemned Egyptian social conditions in the 20th Dynasty. In such cases, there are clear similarities to the Hebrew prophets who claimed divine authority and gave overt condemnation against lawlessness (Smith 1979). These examples of religious pronouncements may be termed rhetorical in the sense that they attempt to change behaviour (Howard 1994:88).

### 2.2.3 Old Testament Rhetoric and Rhetorical Devices

Since Muilenburg's initiative of undertaking a rhetorical study of the Old Testament in the 1960s (see 2.2.3.1), this kind of study has grown in influence and value as different scholars have developed his ideas. For example, Lundbom (1975:1-2) proposed that fundamental to rhetorical analysis is the identification of the literary units in a text. According to Rinquest[35], two "generally known rhetorical features (*inclusio* and chiasmus) [should] be seen as the important controlling factors" (2003:64-65) in determining literary units. An author's use of stylistic devices is also very important in delineating units and determining the rhetorical thrust of a particular text (see Gitay 1993:139-140). In their use of such devices, the biblical authors in general, and the prophets in particular skillfully[36] used words that were receptive to their audiences. Rinquest (2003:63) is thus correct in stating that the Hebrew prophets were rhetors in their own right. The line of thought in narratives was also framed with particular

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[35] Rinquest describes Old Testament rhetoric as "preconceptual" because there is "no established critical tradition within the Old Testament being primarily rhetoric" (2003:63). Even so, as Patrick and Scult state, "rhetoric is an inherent function of language use" (1990:13).

[36] For example, Jeremiah, whose prophecy has enjoyed considerable scholarly engagement, is considered a prominent ancient Israelite rhetor (Lewin 1985:105). According to Lundborn, Jeremiah's mastery of rhetorical techniques like "chiasmus, inclusio, wordplay, repetition, assonance, and alliteration" (in Lewin 1985:105) is exceptional.

rhetorical motives (see Sternberg 1983:45). This shows that Old Testament writings are in themselves evidence of great rhetorical achievements because they use rhetorical devices in ways that establish relationships between them and their audiences. Applying rhetorical strategies in studying the Old Testament prophets is, therefore, appropriate given their use of rhetorical devices in attempting to persuade their audiences towards various ends. The researcher would, therefore, define biblical rhetorical criticism as an examination of the contextual use of rhetorical devices in the book of the Bible and the extent to which such usage promotes the achievement of the author's purpose of convincing his audience to a desired mode of response. Various methods of doing so are discussed under the literature review (1.4) and methodology (1.6) in the previous chapter.

### 2.2.4 The Uses of Rhetorical Devices in the Old Testament

As already indicated, biblical authors used various rhetorical devices to add persuasive force to their works. According to Muilenburg (1969:9), these devices consist of the structure of the discourse and the figures of speech used. However, recent academic discourse has expanded the concept of rhetorical devices "to include nonverbal items and social settings" (Howard 1994:88).

Owing to spatial-temporal concerns, this section cannot deal with all the stylistic and rhetorical devices that biblical authors used. However, the term "common structures of biblical rhetoric" refers to those compositional techniques that have a direct bearing on the purpose-driven arrangement of points and persuasion, including pericope, parallelism, and chiasm, that are found in all biblical literary types:

**Pericope**: Pericopes are commonly defined as "the smallest units in a story, such as the account of a miracle, a parable, a short speech" (Meynet 2012:9) or even a statement that stands as a part of a story. The pericope is also referred to as a "small unit" (Morris 2012:168), or a complete section of teaching (Kulikovsky 2012:5). It is a section or literary unit of a "text from a book or a document" (Knowles 2014) which is sometimes characterised by *inclusio* (Stuart 2001:173). For Meynet (1998:374), the pericope may be formed by one or several parts or sections. A pericope therefore can be one verse (Prov. 12:1), or a complete chapter or even several chapters (plagues in Gen. 7:8-11:10) which form a unit.

Pericopes are sometimes characterised by *inclusio,* a literary device in which the end of a passage is similar to its beginning, thus framing the rest (Stuart 2001:173).

**Parallelism**: For Wilson (1991) parallelism is the essential element that makes up Hebrew bible poetry. It is "a balanced repetition" consisting of parallel lines of almost the same length which Wilson describes as an instance where "two or more clauses are related to each other through the lines of a poetic structure in order to make a larger point" (1991. See also *Asbury Bible Commentary Online* 1986:38).

There are various types of parallelism in the Bible, namely synonymous (where the second phrase expresses the same thought as the first); antithetic (the succeeding line introduces a thought that is directly opposite to the first); and synthetic (the second line adds something fresh to the first, or else explains it) (Goholshak 2014:19-20). Basically, parallelisms help the reader to determine the logical balances and correspondences between lines of poetry that determine the beauty appreciable in the text (Stuart 2991:174; Richard 1995:53-65. See also Schilling 1998:36). By way of example, Isaiah 1:27-28 consists of two sets of synonymous parallelisms, A-A1 and B-B1, that are juxtaposed to each other so that A-A1 is antithetical to B-B1. This 'mixture' of parallelisms brings across the prophet's message of repentance more forcefully.

**A**      ***Zion*** will be redeemed with <u>justice</u>,

**A1**     ***her penitent ones*** with <u>righteousness</u>. [The word "redeemed" is only implied here]

**B**      But ***rebels and sinners*** <u>will both be broken</u>,

**B1**     And t***hose who forsake the Lord*** <u>will perish</u>.

Using the content or subject matter can also help in determining the structure of a text. Indicators of a possible structuring would include "content changes, introduction of a new subject, repetition or change in form of statement and so on" (Richard 1995:56). When such pointers are identified and appreciated, the reader is able to see at a glance the aim of the writer and so follow the line of argument in the text.

**Chiasm or Chiasmus:** Chiasm is a device "in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated *in reverse order"* ("What is a chiasm/chiastic structure in the Bible?" 2002-2017, original italics). It is "a crosswise arrangement of concepts or words that are repeated in reverse order" (Carmichael 1991). For example, Meynet (1998:118) renders the chiastic structure of Psalm 113:2-3 as follows:

**a** Blessed be the name of the Lord

   **b**      From this time forth and forevermore

**b¹**     From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same

**a¹** The name of the Lord be praised

In these verses, the praise due to God is expressed in **a** and **a¹** while **b** and **b¹** express the extent to which such praise is to be rendered in both time and space.

Some chiastic structures may be concentric, revolving around a certain point, as it were, as in this example from Joel 3:17-21 ("What is a chiasm / chiastic structure in the Bible?" 2002-2017), which has seven parts with X conveying the central idea:

> **A** God dwells in Zion (verse 17a)
>> **B** Jerusalem is holy (verse 17b)
>>> **C** Foreign invaders are banished (verse 17c)
>>>> **X** The blessings of the Kingdom (verse 18)
>>> **C¹** Foreign enemies are destroyed (verse 19)
>> **B¹** Jerusalem and Judah are preserved (verses 20–21a)
> **A¹** God dwells in Zion (verse 21b)[37]

The structure of this pericope shows that where the blessing of the Kingdom is (X), there is no threat, whereas there is holiness and God's presence.

Other rhetorical devices include: acrostic (Psalm 119), alliteration (Gen 9:6), allusion (John 8:58), anthropomorphism (Gen. 6:6), apostrophe (Ps. 43:5), assonance (Isa. 7:9; Isa. 5:7), dramatic irony (Job), hyperbole (Ps. 42:3; II Chron. 1:15), imagery (Dan. 2:24-45), metaphor (Ps. 23:1), metonymy (Lev. 26:6; 2 Sam. 12:10), paradox (Eccl. 9:11a; Amos 2:14 Prov. 12:10), paronomasia (wordplay) (Mic. 1:10; Mt. 16:18), personification (Ps. 77:16), repetition (Gideon's story in Judg. 6-7), rhetorical use of number (Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13etc), rhetorical questions (Psalm 113:5 ), satire (Isa. 3:16), simile (Ps. 1:3-4), symbolic use of numbers (Rev. 4:1), symbolism (Dan. 2:24-45), synecdoche (II Kings 8:9), theophany (Ex. 40:34-38) and typology (John 3:14-15 cf. Num. 21:9);[38] were used. Other devices used by Bible writers include parable or storytelling (2 Sam. 12:1-14), historical reflection (Dt. 24:18, 22), and song (Dt. 32). The writers even used what Bill Muhlenberg (2007) calls "negative" rhetoric like satire and parody (Amos 4:1; Matt. 23:16ff), taunt (Is. 44:12-20), strong and

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[37] The researcher has simply taken the example given, but rearrange and changed its appearance to make the illustration
more intelligible.
[38] These rhetorical devices are selected from Wilson 1991; Schilling 1998; Ryken 1984; Stuart 2001; Muehlenberg, 2007; and Carmichael 1991.

emotive language (Phil. 3:2; John 8:44), mockery, sarcasm (1 Kings 18:27), ridicule and insult, exaggeration (Matt. 19:24), and irony (Job 12:2; 1 Kings 18:27).

## 2.2.5 Biblical Rhetorical Criticism

Having discussed the nature of biblical rhetoric and the uses of rhetorical devices in the Old Testament, The researcher will now do trends in biblical rhetorical criticism, especially that of the Old Testament.

Prior to discussing Robbins' SRI, the rhetorical-critical method that will be adopted in this study, the researcher would like to note the historical emergence of various rhetorical-critical methods, so as to contextualise Robbins' approach.

As noted above (2.2), what is now known as rhetorical criticism of the Old Testament began with Muilenburg in 1968 (Howard 1994:87-88). Even so, Pemberton (1999: 46) correctly notes that rhetorical criticism in biblical studies, especially the New Testament was prominent among early interpreters up to the 17th and 18th centuries (See also Mack 1989:10). He uses St Augustine (354-430 CE) among others, as an example of an exegete who used rhetorical analysis in biblical interpretation. In what follows, the work of selected scholars whose rhetorical approaches are paradigmatic of each stage in the development of rhetorical criticism of the Bible, is discussed.

## 2.2.3 .1 James Muilenburg

In his 1969 paper, "Form Criticism and Beyond," that acted as a turning point for Old Testament interpretation, James Muilenburg urged biblical scholars to move beyond form criticism. He suggested that rhetorical criticism can be applied to the interpretation of the Old Testament (Rinquest 2003:67) and so, save them from the popular practice of severing particular biblical texts from their historical context, which form critical studies does when interpreting a text (Freeman 1992:713). His proposal for rhetorical criticism was to supplement form criticism, that sometimes fragments the text and so distorts the content (Muilenberg 1969: 2). The ultimate goal is to understand the nature of the literary composition of the Hebrew Bible.

Generally, Muilenburg was concerned about two things: a) defining the limits of a literary unit, and b) recognising the structure of the composition, in order to discern the configuration of its component parts (House 1990:34-39). Unfortunately, his method focuses upon the

literary features of texts (Cornelius 2000:264); and the social location of the audience is also not considered or discussed (Rinquest 2003:6769). However, Patrick and Scult (1990:20, 24) applaud Muilenberg's vision and assert that the relationship between rhetoric and biblical hermeneutics, is a blend of both the religious and the critical approaches in a way that such fusion leads to the fulfilment of his vision of rhetorical criticism.

## 2.2.3.2 Yehoshua Gitay

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the rise of some Old Testament scholars[39] with flair for rhetorical criticism that is focused on the persuasive element of the text. Most of them focused on the prophetic corpus "since the prophets tended to speak in discrete oracles, and a primary concern of theirs was persuasion (or conviction)" (Howard 1994:100-101). Prominent among these scholars was Yehoshua Gitay. He moved from Muilenburg's concentration on composition and style (Trible 1994:40; Gitay 1981:72) to mimic the rhetorical frame of Aristotle, thus using a "classical framework" in studying the biblical text that acts as the "controlling factor" for such a study (Gitay 1981:36). He sees rhetoric as a discipline that seeks to harness the collaborative relationship between the text and its audience (Gitay 1980:293). For example, he analyses Amos 3:1-15 using the system of classical rhetoric where he looks at the rhetorical unit, rhetorical situation, invention, organisation, and style of the pericope. Rinquest states that although Gitay studied the literary character of the text, he was also concerned about the "historical, sociological and religious context" (2003: 69) of the text. This helps in establishing "mutual relationships among author (speaker), his address and his audience" (Rinquest 2003: 69). Thus, Gitay would opine that understanding the text depends on the interpreter's choice of a "proper exegetical method fitted to the genre of the text" (Mamahit 2009:14).

## 2.2.3.3 Phyllis Trible

It would be safe to state that Trible was among the first to embrace the rhetorical analysis that is based on the 'holistic' nature of the text in the early 90s. This form of rhetorical analysis concentrates on analysing the world of the text, i.e. the form, language, and rhetorical function of the text (Beavis & Kim-Cragg 2002: xxvii). Studying selected texts from Genesis and Ruth, Trible (1994:44ff) believes this method would open the possibility to undertake both specific and general studies. In her explanation, this rhetorical critical method primarily focuses on the "textual features" as the determinant for "meaning within the text". For Trible,

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[39] These scholars include, T. Boomershine, M. Fox, Y Gitay, E. Lewin, J. Lundbom, and M. Sternberg, most of whom are referred to in the discussion on methodology (1.6) and framework (1.5).

meaning is not determined by the "world-behind-the-text" (Rinquest 2003:71; Wuellner 1987:449-50). This form of synchronic study of the text (what it originally meant) is the means to a diachronic study (the development of meaning over time) (Trible l994:94ff). This shows that she embraces the focus of historical-textual critics in her methodology as well. Her greatest contribution is the design of "practical guidelines" for rhetorical analysis that consist of a "basic ten-step procedure" (Trible 1994: 101-105). Rinquest (2003:72) summarises Tribles' guidelines as including:

a) reading the text several times over in the original Hebrew and various English translations with literary questions in mind,

b) researching what other scholars using various methods have concluded about the text,

c) doing a background study on the text (eg Form criticism),

d) becoming acquainted with rhetorical terms and how they are used in the text,

e) attending closely to features like: literary boundaries; repetition of words; phrases and sentences; types of discourse; design and structure; plot development; character portrayals; syntax and particles,

f) showing the structure of the text by using the text's own words,

g) translating the Hebrew by trying to maintain the same number of words,

h) devising a series of markers to indicate prominent features of the text, especially repetition,

i) describing and interpreting the structural diagram; and

j) correlating discoveries.

The guidelines provide a broad methodology that can be used along with other rhetorical strategies aimed at determining how meaning is created, in the interaction between the text and its reader in multiple contexts, without socially locating to the implied audience (Rinquest 2003:72).

## 2.2.3.4 Vernon Robbins

On the broad-based nature of the rhetorical criticism, Robbins aligns with Trible, but remains far apart on the absolute divorce of the social context in Trible's proposal that does not socially locate any implied audience of the text (Rinquest 2003:72). Robbins' socio-rhetorical

interpretation (SRI) has been developed over the last, almost, five decades.[40] It has claimed to be one of the most comprehensive methods of interpretation in recent times. It emerged in the early 1970s, but SRI only received its name in 1984 when Robbins integrated rhetorical, anthropological, and social-psychological understandings in a study of the Gospel of Mark (Robins 2010:192). In other words, SRI is the approach that brings most other forms of criticisms "together into an integrated approach to interpretation" (Robbins 1996:2).

As Mouton notes, "A growing awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of textual communication during the second half of the twentieth century stimulated the urge for some kind of an integrating, organizing, comprehensive, all-encompassing approach toward the biblical documents" (2002:25). One would say Robins' approach could be placed within this growing awareness. For instance, his early publications explore the concept of the multi-textures of texts, which he named: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (See Robbins 1996a:2; 2002a:49). This development transformed the SRI methodology into an "interpretive analytic" (Robbins 2010:192) that touches on many facets within and outside the text.

Robbins (2002a:123) trusts that SRI provides an all-rounded model for biblical interpretation that allows for "translocational, transtextual, transdiscursive, transcultural, and trans-traditional interpretations that include disenfranchised voices, marginalized voices, recently liberated voices, and powerfully located voices" (Jodamus 2015:7; see Robbins' 1996a; 1996b). Robbins' claim, with which Jodamus (2015:7) concurs, is that SRI affords "a multi-disciplinary, transdisciplinary and dialogical interpretive framework for analysing New Testament texts [and] offers interpreters the possibility of a more holistic interpretation of any text" (Robbins 1996a:41; 1992:xxv; 2002a:58). Various methods could be employed to analyse different textures of the text. As Mamahit (2009:21) asserts, "in doing exegetical work the rhetorical approach is not independent since it cannot stand on its own apart from other approaches." An analysis of the name SRI indicates that the "socio" indicates the incorporation of conceptions in anthropology and sociology in the interpretive task (Robbins 1996a:1). These include "cultural discourse, social contexts and sociological and anthropological theory" (Robbins 1998a:288). The "rhetorical" demonstrates how language is used in the text to communicate the message it is meant to (Robbins 1996b:1). Being a

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[40] The 1939 American born NT scholar started researching on biblical interpretation since the 1970s. From his 1973 publications to his current 2018 publications, Robbins has developed a formidable base upon which biblical scholars can build.

rhetorical approach goes beyond literary study to the connectedness words establish between the speaker and audience (Robbins 1996b:1; 1998a:288. See Jodamus 2015:9).

The plus in integrating old methods in this method, Robbins (1984:6) says, "The interpreter needs to use disciplines that reach beyond the confines of traditional forms of New Testament criticism to explicate the intermingling of social, religious and literary traditions and convention." The sociorhetorical method means that emphasis must be made on both obvious and secret/obscure tactics that form a persuasive communication (Robbins 1984:6); thus the text is analysed as a purposeful element meant to influence the community, culture, and religion and literature of the ancient world by inducing "change and action" in the reader (Robbins 1984:6-7).

Rinquest observes that the SRI's ability to bridge old and recent interpretive methods also points to its potential to be used for greater understanding of prophetic rhetoric, while noting the possible meanings occurring due to the gap in the application (Rinquest 2003: 74). Apart from the difference in time, repetitions, conventional forms the Mediterranean world and any minor forms that are used, should be considered in interpretation because the "entire literary product is the result of the compositional activity of the author" (Robbins 1984:13). Finally, a summary of the rhetorical argument will be provided (Robbins 1984: 12ff).

In a later publication, Robbins gave an elaborate description of SRI as that which centres on "values, convictions, and beliefs" found in both "the texts we read and in the world in which we live" (1994:1). From a detailed study of the text, the method "moves interactively into the world of the people who wrote the texts and into our present world." Thus, the process of understanding and applying the text in contemporary 21st century society goes through a "thickly textured tapestry" (Robbins 1994:2). These are what Robbins calls "textures". A study of each of the five textures individually enables the reader better to understand the text (Robbins 1994:3),

Jodamus (2015:9-10) further explores Robins' current addition of three types of analysis, namely; rhetography, rhetology, and rhetorolect analysis. These additions are aimed at integrating the flexible and textured phases of SRI (Robbins 2010). This extension pays attention to "sociorhetorical analysis and interpretation of conventional types of discourse" (Robbins in Judamus 2015:9; c.f. Robbins 2002a; 2002b).

Rhetography is the picture language in a rhetorical description which allows "a hearer/reader to create a graphic image or picture in the mind that convey a kind of truth" (Robbins 2002a:17–18; 2009:6, 16, xxvii). Then rhetology represents "the logic of rhetorical reasoning" (Robbins 2009:16) more like invention in classical rhetoric. Rhetorolect on the other hand, is purely a New Testament phenomenon, that a belief system that emerges as a result of the reality of interaction between the "rhetorical dialects" that shaped the Christian message in the first century (1996c:356; 2009:xiv, xxvii). In this assessment of the rhetorical elements in Micah, the researcher will not adopt the aspects of rhetorolect, as it is limited to New Testament reality.

**The Texture of Texts in SRI**

As noted earlier, SRI views the text as "an intricately woven tapestry" with strands called "textures". Going through these layers enables the interpreter to view the text from about five angles, namely: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins 1996:3-6).

*Inner Texture* concerns the literature of the text that includes "linguistic patterns within a text, structural elements of a text, and the specific manner in which a text attempts to persuade its reader" (Gowler 2010:195), like repetition, inclusion, etc. These are elements that are observed through "close reading" of the text. These are literary-rhetorical features and patterns in the text (Robbins 1996:3, 7-8. Cf. Sternberg 1983: 45; Olson 2010:22-24).

*Intertexture* refers to elements that relate or have reference to the text in the world but are "outside" it. These include oral-scribal, social, cultural, and historical intertextures (Robbins 1996:3); "including a text's citations, allusions and reconfigurations of specific texts, events, language, objects, institutions and other specific extra-textual contexts with which the text interacts" (Gowler 2010:195). Examining the text's alignment to the world around it makes the text to take "on a richer and thicker quality" (Robbins 1996:3).

*Social and Cultural Texture* is where a text converses with society and culture by involving in the general social and cultural behaviours, laws and ways of communication that are known by everyone in a society, and through identifying itself with the system of the dominant cultural which either agrees with, rejects or transforms those behaviours, values and attitudes. The question is what cultural and anthropological values are evident in the person that lives in the "world" of a text? (Robbins 1996:3, 71; Gowler 2010:195).

*Ideological Texture* is all about specific areas of agreements and clashes that are built and evoked by both "the language of the text and the language of the interpretation as well as the way the text itself and interpreters of the text position themselves in relation to other individuals and groups" (Gowler 2010:195. See Robbins 1996:4). As a reader, it is expected that one identifies and interprets the conceptual point(s) of view that a text brings out (Fiorenza 1996: 33), as well as the reader's ideological point(s) of view as a reader (Robbins 1998: 286-88).

*Sacred Texture* refers to the way that a text transfers understanding concerning the relationship that exists between humans and the divine. Pillay (2008:64) states that "Sacred texture exists in a text that somehow addresses the relation of humans to the divine." This texture includes aspects concerning such things as a deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, religious community and ethics. This texture deals with those right actions taken as a result of a commitment to God (Robbins 1996:129). It appears to be a subset of ideological texture (Gowler 2000: 456; 2010: 195).

Robbins' SRI will be used in the analysis of the rhetoric of Micah. Though Robbins used this method primarily in studying the rhetoric of New Testament texts, he clearly indicates that SRI, which is "a multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and dialogical interpretive framework, offers interpreters the possibility of a more holistic interpretation of any text" (Jodamus 2015:7. See also Robbins 1992: xxv; 1996b:41; 2002a:58).

In rhetorically analysing the selected passages from Micah using SRI as the interpretive tool for this search, the researcher will not strictly apply all the five textures in the examination of each of the three selected texts from the book of Micah. By this, the researcher means to examine any three particular textures or interpretive possibilities available in SRI in studying each of the selected passages. This is because it is "not practical (or even possible) to utilize all the interpretive possibilities available through SRI in any one instance of interpretation" (Pillay 2008:26). Thus, I will be able to then "foreground some aspects of SRI" that are most appropriate for understanding each chosen text. That would mean that the reading of another text may require "a different selection of interpretive tools" from the vast range of strategies available in SRI (Pillay 2008:26; cf. Robbins 1996b:3). At any stage, the researcher will explore at least three of the five textures of the text.

The researcher agrees with Jodamus' (2015:11-13) outline of the benefits of SRI as a method of biblical exegesis which include:

Firstly, SRI's multifaceted approach is able to treat texts as emerging from particular social and cultural constructions for appropriate persuasive communications. In this, SRI involves a historical-critical method to explore "the inner nature of texts as written discourse" (Robbins 1996a:8) and to provide information on historical and theological fact about the believers the text addresses. Rhetorically, the method helps in identifying the art of persuasion the author engages in as produced from his "historical" and "sociorhetorical" vantage point. As Gitay states that the Bible authors' argumentation and persuasive skills enable us to "penetrate the feelings of biblical characters and their way of thinking" (Gitay 2001:7).

Secondly, SRI provides the prospect of a rich and complex analysis and interpretation of texts. Since the aim of this research is to engage in the complex transaction that goes on from the rhetoric of the text and indigenous wisdom which together synergistically emerge in the rhetoric of an African preacher, this provision of SRI is invaluable. It will allow all the voices to seek discourses with and in the text (Robbins 1996a:11). The complexity of analysis in SRI also seeks insights from "socio-linguistics, semiotics, rhetoric, ethnography, literary studies, social sciences, and ideological studies" (Robbins 2002a:1) which is crucial for this ethnographic research: a conversation based upon an "ethnography of orality, writing, and reading" (Robbins 1998a:287).

Thirdly, SRI utilises the same procedures used to investigate "other people's interpretations of the text under consideration as the strategies for analyzing the biblical text itself" (Robbins 1996a:41). By nature, SRI as a method has the capacity to survey the "history, society, culture, and ideology" of a text (Robbins 1996a:41). A rhetorical criticism of Micah as a circle of rhetoric that interactively engages with the reading community in Nigeria, this study will construct the history, society, culture, and ideology of both Micah in the 8th century BC and the Nigerian reader today.

**2.2.4 The Aims of Biblical Rhetorical Criticism**

When Old Testament rhetoricians consciously focus on how the Bible passage attempts to persuade using the tools of rhetoric, it is termed 'rhetorical criticism' (Howard 1994:103). The benefits that would result from such careful analysis of the rhetoric of the biblical text include, among others:

   a. It will enable greater understanding of the compositional nature of Hebrew literature by exploring the structural patterns the Bible writers employed in literary units in

either prose narratives or poetry (Howard 1994:88). In this way, the biblical texts are understood, especially when the pericope or limits of such units are clearly defined (Meynet 2012:2).

b. It will help to identify and discern the numerous and diverse devices used in the formulation of the messages that are composed into a unified whole (Howard 1994:88; Wilson 1991). The writers of the Bible used their God-given abilities to compose the passages of Scriptures using these rhetorical devices in expressing what God communicated through them (Howard 1994:103; Carmichael 1991).

c. Wilson states that a rhetorical analysis helps in understanding and interpreting the Bible in a way that the interpreter is able to convince others through their own rhetoric (1991). Thus, a recognition of rhetorical devices and how they work makes the work of interpretation easier and more appropriate (Ryken 1984:25).

The key question is the relevance of this study of biblical rhetoric regarding sermon preparation, delivery, and the congregants' retention and application of sermon data. The Bible writers effectively used these means of appeal with their immediate audiences then, but can we use the same today in our own age? Since the analysis of Biblical rhetoric in this study is meant to be appropriated within an African context, the corresponding rhetorical art within the African society, namely wise sayings, needs to be investigated.

## 2.3 Indigenous African Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible

> The art of oratory is in West Africa carried to a remarkable pitch of perfection. At the public palavers each linguist [official spokesman] stands up in turn and pours forth a flood of speech, the readiness and exuberance of which strikes the stranger with amazement, and accompanies his words with gestures so various, graceful, and appropriate that it is a pleasure to look on, though the matter of the oration cannot be understood. These oratorical displays appear to afford great enjoyment to the audience, for every African native is a born orator and a connoisseur of oratory, a fact that becomes very manifest in the Courts of Justice in the Protectorate, where the witnesses often address the juries in the most able and unembarrassed manner; I have even seen little boys of eight or ten hold forth to the court with complete self-possession and with an ease of diction and a grace of gesture that would have struck envy into the heart of an English member of Parliament (Wolfson in Finnegan 2012:431).

Even though Shahada (2010:33) has warned that in African society, like any other society, it is always changing, it does not totally negate the truth in R.A. Freeman's statements quoted

above.[41] Generally speaking, Africans speakers are powerful rhetoricians. Examples include Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe and [Tafawa Balewa] of Nigeria, [Nelson Mandela of South Africa] who are world renowned orators (Okodo 2012:1). Even in Christian worship services, eloquence is achieved through the use of African indigenous wisdom devices like songs, proverbs, and storytelling. In discussing African sermons, therefore, it is pertinent to examine the use of African indigenous wisdom in biblical interpretation as a rhetorical moment to be analysed. In such interpretations, African biblical scholars employ methods that make the African context the "subject of interpretation" (Adamo 2015c:32, 33; 2016:1, 5). Making Africa the subject of interpretation has led to the development of what Mijoga calls "African Christianity", which is a migration from the westernised Christianity implanted in Africa without Africa being fused inside it (2000:11).

Cathcart (2012) notes the close affinity between preaching and culture. As we have seen in this section, two issues are at stake: Firstly, preaching cannot be accomplished apart from a culture which calls for the preacher's careful study of culture; cultural sayings in this case, and how to engage them. Secondly, it is clear that there are inadequate resources and empirical studies done on the ways in which effective preachers engage cultural realities (Cathcart 2011:1). This research hopes to contribute to cultural studies as it relates to preaching and the role of such engagement in the area of conviction and persuasion.

## 2.3.1 The Rhetorical Moment of African Indigenous Wisdom

Interpreting scripture in Africa and for Africans requires knowledge of the African people and the socio-cultural and linguistic norms they are familiar with. The African environment is thoroughly saturated with rhetorical art as Okodo states, at every turn, at home, in political rallies, sermons by preachers, African traditional worship and rituals, naming and marriage ceremonies and most other social gatherings, "African people are treated to rhetoric" (2012:1).

In analysing how rhetoric impacts sermons in the African community of the Mwaghavul people, it is beneficial to know this innate character of the society that daily impacts the preachers themselves. Such analysis aligns perfectly with both the second pole of my interpretive model, the tripolar model of interpretation (Draper 2015: 8, 13); and the "socio-cultural texture" of my analytical method for examination of the text in the readers' context (Robbins 1996a:71-94). As indicated previously, Africa, like any context, is an ever-changing

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[41] R. A. Freeman is said to have made the statement during his visit to Ashanti in 1888 (Shahada 2010:33).

matter.[42] Despite this, and despite modernisation, we remain Africans in culture and worldview, in love and at home with our mode of speech making. In fact, we learn rhetoric when we were learning to speak from infancy.

Both Lar (2009:23) and Mwiti (2012) separately acknowledge that one of the greatest inheritances that Africans have handed down from one generation to the next, is their wealth of wisdom. Wise sayings are passed down orally in songs, poems, chants, narratives or simple statements in various formal and informal situations.

Fundamentally, such indigenous rhetorical devices or wise sayings function as identifying marks of a given people because they reflect a people's worldview, history, and folklore, forms of relationships, authority, dreams, symbols, and vocations (Fritz 1991:257, 261; Galadima 2012:12-13). A very notable fact is that most of the areas of human life reflected in these wise sayings are also discussed in the Bible. Therefore, they can be used as points of contact between a particular culture and cognate biblical passages.

### 2.3.2 The Nature of Indigenous African Rhetoric

Several things constitute what we term African indigenous rhetoric or wisdom. The evidence of the speaker's eloquence involves both verbal and action-based skills used in the presentation of the speech. These dual aspects of rhetoric are presented in Okodo's (2012:3-10) list of elements of rhetoric in Eastern Nigeria that includes, proverbs, wellerism, idiom, euphemism, fable, rhetoric, personality, special opening, preparation, content and aesthetics. The list of these rhetorical devices is large, so the researcher will only expound on the two most prominent ones (proverb and story-telling) as examples.

### 2.3.2.1 Proverb

A proverb, as a constituents of wise saying, is defined by Bello as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, moral and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (1985:21).[43] Proverbs are admonishments taken from real life experiences and common sense (Arnold & Beyer 2008:314; Wolfgang, M. 1985: 11). As such, Mwiti states

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[42] Segovia (200b:11, 14-15) addresses the current emergence of social flux being witnessed in most locations in Africa and around the world due to massive movement of people. He therefore proposes an interpretation model that addresses a multicultural context since diaspora studies and biblical criticism relate.

[43] It must be noted that proverbs are generally what turns out to be true in life, but may not be true of every setting. They are not promises, guidelines, prophecies, assurances, or commandments, but general truths about how things turn out to be in life (Arnold & Beyer 2008:314; Menn 2017:15).

that proverbs convey wisdom, encouragement, warnings, and advice on "learning, patience, unity, wealth, poverty, community, family, love and marriage" (2012). In this way, proverbs are aimed to impart practical knowledge (Arnold & Beyer 2008:314. Similarly, Fayemi opines that proverbs are metaphoric expression of truth, which cuts across all strata of human life, and used by elders, to convey ideas and fact on particular life circumstances (2009:6). Being a key identity feature and heritage of African culture (cf. Wanjihi 1897:92), current scholars and preachers working for and in Africa must not ignore what makes Africans what they are (Tchimboto 2017:5).

In Africa and the world over, proverbs function in the following ways:

- Proverbs reveal the core of a culture (Hughes 1984:251-52; Penfield 1996:98, 10-24).

- They are symbols that shape reality in a culture (Berger & Luckman 1966:66; WaThiong'o 1986:15).

- Proverbs provide memory hooks for oral learners (Moon ND:5).

- They are used to ingrain the message of Christianity on the African soil (Moon ND:12).

- Proverbs do not relativise biblical teachings, but act as vehicles to drive them home.

### 2.3.2.2 Storytelling:

A young man is reported to have sat by the bank of an overflowed river because he could not swim across. When an elderly man came by, he rolled up his trousers and simply walked across, to the young man's amazement. After two other men came and walked across, the young man decided to try it out himself. "He rolled up his pants and tried to walk across the surface of the water – only to sink and be carried away by the swift current." Looking back, the three elders wished that the young man had enquired whether or not there were stones that could be used for people to safely cross the river (Maguire in Moon ND:1).

This story can serve as confirmation of the Hausa proverb, "*matambayi ba ya ɓata*" ("The enquirer does not get lost") and emphasise the place of discipleship.

In discussing storytelling, Mbiti describes stories as mirrors of life indicating that they reflect expectations of what happens in real life. He says "what people do, what they think, how they

live and have lived, their values, their joys, and their sorrows..." (1994:31). He explains that they are used to demonstrate human responses to the environment, life, and relationships.

Basically, Africans are storytellers who use such means to pass knowledge down to subsequent generations. This art, according to Galadima, is "as old as mankind" (2012:12). In Africa, these stories are often told by the elderly to the young around a fire built for the purpose, and possibly as they enjoy an evening meal after a long day's work. There, they tell stories that are often punctuated with folklore and proverbs. Bitrus (2007:17) acknowledges that in such settings history, customs and other things that make them who they are carefully passed down to the young.

However, as Galadima (2012:12-13) notes, even the interpretation of stories is influenced by a people's worldview. Thus, the meaning of many stories may only be fully grasped by those who understand their use in the original settings from where they came, just like Bible exegetes seek to determine the original meaning of various passages so as to guarantee better interpretation.

Stories were highly valued in African societies as channels of communication. Just as Jesus profitably used stories in a culture similar to the African culture, so the African cultural heritage is coloured and fascinated by stories as a means of effective communication in that culture. The question remains as to how to use these African resources profitably for functional interpretation of the Bible in Africa.

With the coming of the missionaries, storytelling in Africa became neglected and devalued even up to the present and among African preachers themselves. Bartimawus (2012:88) sees this as a reason why the gospel is still seen as foreign in Africa.

## 2.4 African Biblical Rhetorical Criticism

Engaging the elements of African indigenous wisdom discussed above in the interpretation of the Bible in Africa, has a long history and divergent approaches are taken by different scholars. To begin with, there is a need to understand what we mean by African biblical interpretation or cultural hermeneutics. The researcher will historically survey African scholars' involvement in Bible interpretation and what they identify as the nature of African biblical criticism in general, and the use of indigenous African wisdom in particular. The

researcher will then propose a framework for engaging African wisdom in African biblical criticism.

Adamo defines African biblical hermeneutics as follows:

> African cultural hermeneutics in biblical studies is an approach to biblical interpretation that makes social cultural context a subject of interpretation. Specifically, it means that analysis of the text is done from the perspective of an African world-view. African Cultural hermeneutics is rereading the scripture from premeditated Africentric perspective (2001:8-9).[44]

While African biblical hermeneutics seeks to address issues in the real life of the people in interpreting the scriptures (Adamo 2015c:34-36), African biblical rhetorical criticism is particularly interested in the aspect of speech-making and persuasion used in the scripture and bringing that to the African mode of interaction. Described in different phrases, "proverbial wisdom for inculturation" (Heeden 1997:513), "African biblical transformational studies" (Adamo 2016:4), "wisdom research" (Nel 2012:460) and so on, African biblical rhetorical criticism is interested in the way that the rhetorical devices are used in scripture and in African cultures in order to improve the interpreters' and congregants' understanding of and better response to scriptural truths. This is a form of inculturation using African wisdom. The researcher will start by looking at the terrain of African biblical interpretation, and then discuss African biblical rhetorical criticism in particular.

## 2.4.1 A Brief Historical Survey of African Biblical Rhetorical Criticism

Adamo (2003), in a historical survey of the different approaches Africans adopt in their involvement in biblical interpretation, starts from the Old Testament period with Yehudi, an African descended Israelite (Jer. 36:1-23) who interpreted Jeremiah's letter to Jehoiakim. We also see the Ethiopian Eunuch, who read Isaiah's prophecy (Acts 8). He must have engaged in some form of interpretation before help came. In the post biblical period, great African interpreters like Clement, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprianus, Augustine, Cyril, Athanasius and others employed a predominantly allegorical method of interpretation (Adamo 2003:10-13); which might not have had any African undertone (cf. Speckman 2016:204). By contrast, Adamo (2016) opines that even the interpretations by the Israelites themselves could be considered "African or Israelite", since historically, they have sojourned in Egypt and so been

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[44] Similarly, Ukpong (2002:17; Adamo 2015:32).

influenced by African culture (See also Adamo 2012: 67–78; 2013b: 409–425; 2013c: 221–246).

During the 1930s to 1990s, African scholars within and outside the continent advanced different interpretive methods like the African comparative and African cultural hermeneutics (Ademo 2013:10). Since then, there has been an increasing improvement in African biblical interpretation in sub-Saharan Africa where most scholars present biblical readings through a postcolonial lens (Adamo 2013:27-30; Dube 2012:2). In all these divergent methods, the place of the legitimate and pivotal role of the African context (Ukpong) in such interpretive endeavour is placed at the fore.

## 2.4.2 A Brief Review of the Methods of African Biblical Exegesis

Nyiawung (2013:3) reports that the beginning of contextually-based African biblical interpretation, may be traced to the conference of African biblical scholars in Ibadan, Nigeria called the "Consultation of African Theologians" in 1966[45]. Since then, African biblical scholars have increasingly shown an interest in developing methods for African biblical studies. This development could be summarised as follows:

The first stage of African biblical exegesis, according to Nyiawung (2013: 3), is Afro-centric hermeneutics, which led to the development of the following four methods: a) liberation hermeneutics (with Dube (2012:2) calling for others voices, apart from the west, to be heard cf. Mosala 1989:67), b) white South African hermeneutics, c) missiological hermeneutics, and d) neo-traditional hermeneutics (Krog 2005: 33-38).

The next stage was the popular intercultural Biblical exegesis (Loba-Mkole 2008:1347). This was primarily the brainchild of Ukpong, initiated in 1996 as "Inculturation Biblical hermeneutic", but further developed along with others in the years that followed. Inculturation hermeneutics is a readers' context-based interpretation with the aim of relating the meaning of the text to life for spiritual and social transformation (West & Dube 2001:86,496). In this case, the context and people of Africa stand as the subject of interpretation (Adamo 1998:60–90; 2001b; Ukpong 2002:17–32).

The third move still focuses on the context of the audience with a few modifications. It began with 'the comparative method' championed by Van Heerden wherein the reader could enable

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[45] See too Mbiti 1986:73.

discourse "between the African context and Bible texts for the purpose of appropriation" (Nyiawung 2013:3). Identifying links between Africa and the Bible, in terms of theology/anthropology/literature, Van Heerden compares ancient Hebrew and African proverbs (cf. Van Heerden 2002:462-475; cf. also Adamo 2003:18, 21-22) and deliberates on how such proverbs could be applied in Africa (van Heerden 2009). From this, the focus moves a little further to contextual/reading with the ordinary people approach (West 2012:16), with the colouration of inculturation and liberation still evident in African biblical studies. Today, West (e.g. 1991/1995; 1998:3-32; 2006:31-59) is considered a leading scholar on the "reader- response" of ordinary - poor, marginalised readers in their contexts, to the Bible text. Such readers are transformed through an Afrocentric interpretation of the Bible "using storytelling traditions, proverbial philosophies and sayings and worldview that transformatively meets the local needs of Africans" (Adamo 2016: 4).

This study has a strong resonance of the tripolar approach as it equally emphasises the place of the reader, her/his context as well as the biblical text. It takes the argument further by its particularity on the treatment of proverbial wisdom as a particularly African contextual and cultural element, thus contributing to African biblical scholarship.

Before discussing African proverbial Hermeneutics, it must be stated that John Mbiti had for long started by simply collecting African Proverbs.[46] Moving from a mere collection of proverbs and Adamo's statement above (Adamo 2016: 4), African scholars now search for methods that emphasise the application of the text to the context of the reading community rather than focusing on the text in its original context only, especially in relation to African wisdom. Nel (2012:460-464), for instance, opines that when African wisdom is interpreted through a '*model-dependent realism*', a model that recognises a meeting point between the western and characteristic African interpretations, a deep realistic appropriation in the African context that now owns the text would be possible. Nel (2012:468-468) proposes this because both Western and African interpretations have values and flaws, which through transformative interaction within them (without the idea of fixity), an improved African model may emerge. Others quote African proverbs in their writings to back up their points without recourse to a particular methodological model for such an engagement (Wünch 2015:2; Stinton 2010:xiv), but as a "characteristic feature of African theology" (Holter

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[46] Over the years, Prof. John Mbiti has been involved in the collection of African proverbs published in five volumes under the title, "African Proverbs Series." He edited the series and provided an "Introduction" to each of the first four volumes (http://www.afriprov.org/bibliography/346-african-proverbs-series- html).

1998:241 in Wünch 2015:5). Even before this, scholars used proverbs. Pobee has pointed to the value of proverbs in interpretation. He states that African theology is built on both the "intellectual rigour" of the West and is "expressed … in proverbs, art, music, liturgy, poetry, stories and biography" (Pobee 1996:165) which can be seen to be anthropological, pedestrian, natural, cultural, stimulating and memorable.

### 2.4.3 Masenya/Ramantswana, African Wisdom and Biblical Criticism

It is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a clear line between the end of one stage of development in African biblical interpretation and the start of the next. What the researcher does is simply showing that Masenya and Ramantswana (2012, 2015a, 2015b etc.) have only brought in the clear engagement of particular examples of African wisdom into play in their interpretation of scripture, to what other African scholars (black and white Africans[47]) have developed over the years. In their interpretation, both the required western academic rigour and African wise sayings expressed in proverbs, art, music, liturgy, poetry, stories and biography, are used as complements.[48] The complementary usage of wise sayings is done in a bid to contextualise the biblical to aspects of African politics, socio-economic justice, and the environment (Nyawung 2013:3).

In examining their work on African wisdom and biblical criticism, the researcher will critique the way they do 'proverbial hermeneutics' primarily in the three articles (2012, 2015a, 2015b) which they co-authored and other works by them as individuals and other scholars' examination of their works. It must be noted that in the spirit of the African storytelling style, these scholars did not take time to describe their methodology. What the researcher has here is a mere gleaning of the method as conceived from what is being discussed, in which case the researcher may be accused of being 'un-African'.

Masenya and Ramantswana do not stop at the comparative engagement between proverbial wisdom and the rhetoric of the Bible, but they allow insights from various disciplines, such as theology, anthropology or literature, to inform the reader on interacting with the Bible text.

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[47] As noted above, not a few African biblical scholars (Justin Ukpong, Musa W. Dube, David T. Adamo, Gerald O. West, Philip J. Nel, though not overt on the pace of the use of African wisdom in biblical interpretation, have discussed at varying length (see above discussion). West (2005:1), a white African has creatively used the proverb, "Give a man a fish," the saying goes, "and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will always eat;" along with Jesus teaching to illustrate and challenge the land tenure system of South Africa. Interestingly, collaborative efforts and genuine engagement of these White and Black African biblical scholars is seen in West, GO and Dube, MW (eds.)'s *The Bible in Africa. Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Nel 2012:469).
[48] This is an oversimplified description of the mode of their engagement of African wisdom in Biblical Interpretation which I will discuss in more detail in 6.2.3.

This balance is clearly seen, for instance, in the form of Masenya's *bosadi*/womanhood interpretations (e.g. Masenya 1997:439-448; 2001a; 2009b etc.). Thus, these scholars think outside the conventions created by the West, to overtly express clear transformative and interactive engagements in proverbial hermeneutics, that brings the Bible alive in the African readers' context.

In one of the first articles they co-authored (2012), "Anything New under the sun of Old Testament scholarship?" the duo surveyed the articles written in *Old Testament Essays* (*OTE)* from 1994 to 2010 by South African Old Testament scholars. They decry the slow rate of transformation in the content and issues discussed in the articles concerning OT studies in Africa, despite the sociopolitical changes witnessed on the continent. That is, almost the same old colonial subjects are still resurfacing in the recent articles (Masenya & Ramantswana 2012:630). What is noticeable is a little change in the ratio between black and white membership of the Old Testament Society of Southern Africa without a real, clear and conscious African engagement with the Bible (Masenya & Ramantswana 2012:632). The truth revealed in this poor engagement with context is compared to the truth in the Tshivenda proverb that says, "*hu si halwo lukunda a lu kokomedzwi lwa kokomedzwa lu a thara*" which literally means, "do not force a bracelet where it does not belong if it is forced it gets damaged." The poor contextualisation indicates that the nature of OT scholarship done in Africa is a disservice to the continent in a post-colonial era, because it does not fit. Though these scholars do not explicitly discuss how African wisdom should be used, judging from the way it is used in their works, the following may be said, which are not at all addressed by Robbins' SRI[49]:

First, they consider both the Bible and African Wisdom as Sacred Texts, indicating that both have authority (see e.g. Masenya 2016:5). As one of the greatly respected texts in African religion, proverbs are used in different ways. Though they are sometimes used intentionally to sideline some sectors of society, they are valuable tools in interpreting the Bible in transformative ways that dismantle oppressive systems and structures leading to an abundance of life. For instance, Ramantswana (2017:14-15) interprets Psalm 82 by using both the proverb *vhufa* (inherit) and the story of the Great Fall of the Tortoise. He considers

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[49] Though it is mentioned in 1.6 that SRI examines both oral and written literature from Ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman periods to the present and cuts across "literary, historical, social, cultural, theological, ideological and rhetorical approaches of today" (Gowler 2010:193), the issues of African veneration of wise sayings, the act of using African wisdom to ingrain the Bible message, taking African wisdom as a framework or lens for the interpretation of scriptures and so on are better addressed in practical terms using examples by Masenya and Ramantswana.

all three as equal in authority. For him, "they are laments in the face of injustice against the poor and oppressed and the weak and fatherless, are also stories of the administration of justice" today (2017:14).

Secondly, they focus on motif as a guide to the use of African wisdom in biblical wisdom hermeneutics in Africa. Masenya has skillfully played around with the story of Vashti to showcase both the reason the African woman responds the way she does when pushed to the world by patriarchy in African HIV and AIDS context (2017) and her struggle for survival in general (2003) using African stories and proverbs. One example is her use of this Northern Sotho proverb, "*Serokolo se sennyane se ikoketša ka go nkga*: A small herb increases itself /makes impact by a strong odour" to portray Vashti's influence in contesting for and lifting the place of the female gender in the Persian male-dominated society (2003:332). In these cases, she takes up the key motif of the text and that of a relevant African wisdom with same or contrary focus/message.

Thirdly, they use African wisdom as a means to contextualise and ingrain the Bible message in the African context. Mansenya and Ramantswana attempt an interpretation that facilitates interaction between the Bible and what is happening on the socio-political arena of the continent (Snyman 2011:24). By means of a Northern Sotho proverb on disobedient children who refuse to take advice from others, Masenya uses corresponding wisdom from Israel's relationship with God in the deuteronomistic history, and argues that the fall of the Afrikaner regime in 1994 illustrates the wisdom in that proverb that; disobedience comes at a heavy price (Masenya 2009b:17). Ramantswana (2017a:1-2) uses the *vhufa* (heritage) approach to decolonise the reading Scripture, especially Psalm 82, to find freedom and shape in the African reading of this biblical text. He authenticates his stance using the Tshivenda proverb, *nyavhumbwa wa dagaila wa kanda vho u vhumbaho* (You who are formed, you have become proud and trample over those who formed you (2017:1). This is portrayed as a requirement for African biblical scholars to engage their root, circumstance or heritage as they read the Bible. He had, in an earlier publication, stated that such decolonisation is only possible "if we as Africans realize that hermeneutics is not a foreign art" (Ramantswana 2016:406) as we have always been interpreters of our own world. This is a move from the Western, universal models to models emanating from the "margins" or "minorities" (Segovia 2000a:170-75).

Furthermore, African wisdom is used as a framework or lens for the interpretation of scriptures in African proverbial biblical criticism. Masenya uses another psalm, Psalm 132:3-

5, with some Northern Sotho proverbs as a framework for her analysis (Van Heerden 2009:705). This approach contributes to an understanding and appropriation of the Psalm in the African context as well as the liberation of the downtrodden. Ramantswana (2017a:2) uses the proverb, 'Knowledge is like a baobab tree: no one can encompass it with their hands', as a framework for examining the contributory role of knowledge from all races, cultures, and perspectives, for a fuller understanding and use of the Bible in Africa. Such understanding is possible when "the hermeneut can bring the plural perspectives into conversation with each other through the knowledge gained from grafting one into another." He also used the story "The Great Fall of the Tortoise" (2018b:351) as a lens of justice to be used in reading the Bible against the systemic injustice of leadership in South Africa (Ramantwana 2017a:8-9). Using the story as a lens in reading Psalm 82 Ramantwana (2017a:14) indicates African administration of justice even from the oppressed on the oppressor. Thus, they objectively and purely use an African mindset to interpret the Bible in Africa without over-dependence on western influences for appropriation.

Though Masenya and Ramantswana decry White African involvement in African biblical studies, they do not emphasise the reason for such concern. They also tread dangerously on the brink between pure biblical truth and syncretism, especially where Mesenya almost proposes a veneration of ancestors and a seeming equation of the ancestors to God (2016:4; Dube 2012:19), while "diminishing the sanctity and authority of the biblical text" (Nel 2012:465). Despite this, Masenya and Ramantswana have demonstrated how African biblical scholars could engage African wisdom in biblical interpretation in Africa. This is inculturation "that seeks to incarnate Christianity in Africa, to make Christianity an African-thing" (P.O. Abioje 2001:1). In doing this, African wisdom should be used where it portrays the same truth as the text of the Bible. It should be conceived as equal to the Bible in authority. The focus should be on the motif as a guide to contextualise and ingrain the Bible message. It is used as a framework or lenses interpretation. Their presentations, as in the most African storytelling pattern, just flow in the rhetoric without much emphasis on formal structure or textures. They do this while being conscious of the flaws in the African context as well. This demonstrates a balanced view, towards the often idealised notion of a 'purely African' context that is always portrayed as though it were faultless.

Biblical rhetoric and African indigenous wisdom are components of truly African sermons. In the next section, therefore, the researcher will discuss how sermon data from an African socio-cultural location could be analysed to see how these two circles of rhetoric interplay in

such data. An independent/liberated African Christian interpretation of the Bible is needed when a conscious epistemic African situated knowledge is involved. In Ukpong's words quoted by Ramantswana (2017a:1), it is "rereading through the African eyes" by conquering the colonial damage done to our minds and embracing the "great heritage left us by our African ancestors". A form of similitude is seen between an African reading, Draper's emphasis on the context of the reader (reading community) (Draper 2015:20), and Robbins' "intertexture", especially dealing with cultural intertexture (Robbins 1996:58) which examines the reader's context and bases for the production of meaning.

## 2.5 Sermon Rhetoric

Having looked at the rhetorical moments of the text and indigenous rhetoric (2.3 and 2.4 above), the researcher came to the third and final circle of the rhetorical moment – sermon rhetoric. It could simply be said that preaching is a special form of public address meant to persuade and elicit transformation. This singular fact is what makes preaching rhetorical. In African preaching, as in any other type of preaching, the persuasive elements in the Bible and the contextual rhetorical forms impacting the preacher and audience come into play in what constitutes sermon rhetoric. The context or rhetorical situation impacts greatly on the mode and effectiveness of persuasion (Ukpong 2002:17; Freese 1947:I.I.15; Gitay 1983:220). An examination of sermon data as another rhetorical moment would involve considering sermons as texts to be critiqued in terms of their persuasive qualities. Therefore, the researcher will begin this section by discussing the nature of African sermons and their structure. Then the researcher will outline some common rhetorical devices used by African preachers, and then discuss the concept and process of carrying out a rhetorical analysis of a sermon. It is clear that centuries span the period between the Old Testament writings and the development of Christian sermons, but it seems that sermons have adopted features directly from classical rhetoric than from biblical rhetoric, especially that of the Old Testament. As noted earlier (2.2.2), while Old Testament rhetoric emerged from ANE forms of rhetoric (Weinfeld 1972:178), texts such as Jeremiah 7 equally exhibit similar categories of devices formally identified by classical rhetoricians, like *inclusio* and *chiasmus* (Lumburn 1975:16; Avioz 2006). Similarly, with regard to the New Testament, some of Paul's letters are structurally identical to classical rhetoric (Shin 2004:106-126). Christian sermons have, therefore, exhibited a clear influence of classical rhetoric from the time of early Christianity, as is notable in Augustine's achievements. By contrast, he sees the use of wise sayings in Bible

interpretation and preaching in Africa as an emerging phenomenon (see Ramantswana and Masenya above) that is in the process of being refined. This development is important because a preacher's creative employment of both biblical and cultural rhetorical elements makes the message better understood and remembered (Cathcart 2011:15-59).

Jesus has modelled the use of parables and illustrations from common things that are familiar to his audience in his preaching. This is a model for preachers, to use common rhetorical devices and wise sayings in preaching for effective communication. The Prophets also used local well-known rhetorical devices in conveying their message to their audiences as evident in the previous list of rhetorical devices used in the Bible (2.2.2). In Africa too, common illustrations and sayings have been used by priests, elders and leaders. Since preachers have taken the center-stage in the use of rhetoric rather than political speakers and, by extension, the prophets and the African spokespersons in the Christian era (Yeager 1974:619), they are expected to use such illustrations for effective communication.

## 2.5.1 The Nature of Christian Sermons

### 2.5.1.1 Nature of Sermons in General

The word sermon literally stands for any moral or religious instruction given by a religious leader in particular. In Christian circles, this act is also called "preaching" or "exposition" which stands for "that process whereby the meaning of a particular passage in the Bible is so explained in terms of the needs and circumstances of the congregation that the people understand what God is saying to them" (Lane 2004:25). The aim of such sermons, Lane adds, is impacting the will and actions of the audience by carefully informing the minds, moving and stirring their hearts to respond (2004:25).

### 2.5.1.2 Nature of African Sermons

According to Niles, who wrote in the 1980s, even though African American preachers did not often write their sermons out, record them, or make them available for criticism, he was able to discern how they spoke picture language with "great voices now rolling like thunder, now whispering like the sighing of the wind in the trees" (Niles1984:46). Niles's study of one hundred African American sermons (1984:46) reveals that over half of them concentrated on the hereafter and the rewards awaiting those who "overcome" in this life. Most of the other sermons concentrated on current life situations. Only a few preachers focused on doctrinal or

theological issues. The topic of the sermon aside, all of the preachers varied in their use of the Bible. They would either use multiple passages in a sermon; verse by verse exposition of a passage; or approach the text thematically (Niles 1984:46).

In the African narrative form of oral presentation, African American preachers seamlessly moved from a captivating and emotional start (using humour, general statements, song, or an invocation) meant to arouse deep feeling of rapport and faith, to an explanation or re-reading of the Bible story, repeated with new insight. They then moved to the climax of their sermons with the audience responding to the goodness of God (Niles 1984: 467-467). In this way, their sermons ended in a forceful, strong, and unforgettable way. The preachers' used contemporary language, figures of speech, and personal experiences as a means of contextualisation (Niles 1984: 468-50), and elicited spontaneous responses like, "Oh Yes," "Praise God," "Thank You, Jesus," or "Have Mercy" from the audience (Niles 1984:51). Close affinity marks such churches (Mijoga 2000:71). Niles (1984:51) regards their use of tempo, rhythm or pace in their form of speaking as remarkable.

Mijoga (2000:18-103) explains that the same type of picture language is conveyed by preachers from African Independent Churches in their creative use of wise sayings. Most of these resources that convey cultural values, no doubt, develop from background myths (Okpewho1983:215-221). Mijoga opines that all African churches use these cultural resources in their exegesis/preaching (2000:73).

### 2.5.1.3 The Structure of a Sermon

Most writers on the nature of African preaching state that sermons exhibit a somewhat fluid structure. Thus, they prefer to focus on how African preachers would start a sermon and build it up to its climax where the audience is moved rhetorically to respond (Mijoga 2000:9-15; Niles 1984:44-51 Nhiwatiwa 2012b:77-94). Despite the diversity of design and style, most authors generally accept that elements in the structure of an African sermon are similar to the following model by Ramesh Richard (1995:99)[50]

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[50]Allebach (2015:14) gives a very simple structure that includes a title, an introduction, a story or illustration and a closing. Robinson also suggests a threefold outline that consists of an introduction, that "introduces the idea, the subject, or in the case of inductive sermons, the first point;" the body of the sermon that "elaborates on the idea;" and a conclusion which "brings the idea to focus and ends the sermon" (2001:132-133).

*Title of Sermon*
*Bible Text*

1. Introduction to the Sermon
   A. Sub-Introduction
2. Body of the Sermon
   A. First main section
      1. First sub-section
      2. Second sub-section
   B. Second main section
      1. First sub-section
      2. Second sub-section
   C. Third main section
3. Conclusion

Given the above, it seems that both the Western and African designs of sermon structure consist of three main components: introduction, body and conclusion.

## 2.5.1.4 The Influence of Rhetoric on Christian Preaching

Paul (2013) observes that interest in rhetoric is on the increase in the current day and age. The question is when and how this interest is manifesting. A selective survey of evidence of this renewed interest, as noted above, shows that the influence of secular rhetoric can be seen even in Christian sermons from the New Testament period through to modern times. This influence is seen in the preachings / writings of Paul in the Bible, Saint Chrysostom, Saint Augustine and other modern preachers.

Thus, the use of rhetorical persuasion in Christian proclamation is still upheld in the modern homiletical community today (Shin 2004:34). In addition, when the preacher uses rhetoric and persuasive power and skills, the communication of the gospel becomes effective. Therefore, rhetoric is a needed art the preacher could use beneficially. However, if it is misused, it could be dangerous as well (Shin 2004:29, 65; Kennedy 1983:245).

## 2.5.2 The Uses of Rhetorical Devices in African Christian Sermons

We should go down to the grassroots of our culture, not to remain there, not to be isolated there, but to draw strength and substance there from, and with whatever

additional sources of strength and material we acquire, proceed to set up a new form of society raised to the level of human progress (Touré in Shahada 2010:5).

In line with guaranteeing progress by tapping strength from cultural resources, Janvier rightly states that "If you cannot tell stories you cannot preach in Africa" (2002:105). Thus, even success in preaching requires reclining on the cultural roots of the African people, not only in the area of storytelling, but in using many other rhetorical devices. The following are examples of such devices that can be used in sermons:

**Songs:** Because Africans are singing people (Nhiwatiwa 2012a:70; Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:79), using music in sermons elicits the audience's emotional response to biblical truths, especially where such songs and melodies are familiar to the people (Fritz 1991:62). Preachers often burst into (native) songs as they preach to prepare the audience for the reception of the message and the preacher for its delivery.

**Stories:** Stories, or 'analogic rhetoric' (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:79; Mijoga 2000:18-103) are used mostly as illustrations. Though Nhiwatiwa (2012a:73) cites Fred Craddock on devaluing the place of illustration in a sermon, the African hearer is still attuned to storytelling and parables from which they draw lessons for life (Fritz 2010:62).

**Rhetorical Questions:** Nigerian sermons are said to involve the use of rhetorical questions (RQs) meant to call attention, provoke and influence the minds and action of hearers (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:75).

**Imagery:** Figures of speech like metaphors, similes, hyperboles, personifications can paint a certain picture in the mind of the hearer for the purpose of persuasion. They are "sermonic rhetoric" for making sermons memorable (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:77). These authors provide the following examples: "Leaping high in the leap year" (Pun); "Jesus lived a dead life" (Oxymoron); "a Lamb of God married to a lion of the devil" (Antithesis), etc. (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:77).

**Poems:** Using African poems in the sermon appeals to the hearers' emotion and imagination in ways that many ordinary words cannot do. See, for example, the following beautiful and familiar Yoruba poem about God as creator:

He is patient, he is not angry
He sits in silence to pass judgment

He sees you when he is not looking

He stays in a far place but his eyes are on the town (Janvier 2002:110-111).

**Proverbs**: When the preacher uses proverbs from time to time, it shows that she/he is able to enter the world of the African listener and is contextual, especially when preaching to rural communities. Proverbs carry a strong sense of authority and impersonality, and quoting a proverb is equated to quoting a sacred text of the people. For instance, when conflict arises in a Mwaghavul congregation, the preacher, preaching on unity, can use the saying, "*Múnvul a long, mɨsak a muut*" (togetherness is wealth, division or being divided is a disease). This makes her/his communication much more effective.

**Logical Argument**: African preachers employ a combination of facts, reason, and intellectual arguments to convince listeners of biblical claims. This is a more sophisticated form of persuasion than the previous strategies. In fact, several Bible verses are used to prove the logic in the point the preacher intends to communicate too. The following excerpt, taken from a sermon by Bishop E.A. Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria is a clear example.

> I'm going through all these scriptures because I have always told you one thing, anything I say that cannot be supported by the Bible…, but if you can find it in the Bible, then you can be sure, forever o Lord, thy word is settled. (Excerpt: "It is Raining" by Pastor Adeboye, in Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010:73-74).

This shows that since the Bible has ample evidence of the truth being pronounced, hearers should not doubt.

Other figures of rhetoric used by these preachers include: pathetic argument, restatement/repetition, three-part list, possibility talk, imagination, provision of rich historical context for their passage, establishment of parallels between the biblical problem and the problems faced by their audience, use of drama to illustrate key concept, use of symbolism, culturally adapting means of communication, quotations, startling statements, newspaper articles, vivid word pictures, examples, pictures, problems, humor, a proposal, an object lesson, a personal observation, a riddle, and comment on a news item, a prophecy, a fitting scripture, a prayer, reference to a popular speaker, reference to popular event, or a reference to a special season, etcetera. Having discussed the nature of African sermons, the researcher

will now deal with the task of sermon analysis in general and a method, the researcher suggests, is best suited to the analysis of African sermons.

**2.5.3 Methods of Sermon Rhetorical Criticism**

**2.5.3.1 The Nature of the Task of Sermons Analysis**

The sermon script, in this research, acts as a place of complex convergence of contours of rhetoric and layers of interpretations. The sermon script, as the subject of analysis, consists of the rhetoric of the Bible that emerged from its ancient historical background, and the rhetoric of the preacher from their shared socio-rhetorical background with the audience. The interpretation begins with the preacher interpreting amidst all that forms part of her/his frame of reference. The analyst comes to the sermon as a potential congregant (Vaessen 1999:1) using well-known tools but seeking to interpret the sermon based on their impression, learning and other influences.

Gaines has opined that "scholars who desire to define preaching need to closely read sermons as rhetorical artefacts" or text (Gaines 2017:42) with its texture. In the process of analysing the sermons, therefore, the researcher will consider sermon data as texts with complex "textures" (Robbins 1996:2-6). However, the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis will be used, rather than Robins SRI for the following reason: Though Robbins' analysis of the textures of texts overlap with the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis, in areas of text and context analysis as well as hermeneutics, the Heidelberg method (see 2.5.3.3) further looks at audience response to the sermon which Robbins does not discuss. In essence, the Heidelberg method examines how well the congregants understand, respond to, and recall the sermon which is the focus of my study.

**2.5.3.2 The Goal of Sermon Analysis**

The ultimate goal of analysing sermons is the future (Vaessen 1999:2). The expectation is that both the future of the presentations of the preacher and the capacity of the audience to understand and use sermons will improve. The interface of the language of scripture, the body language of the preacher, and the language of the audience whose language the preacher speaks are analysed with the goal of such improvement. It is hoped that such analysis will act pastorally to equip preachers to present genuinely Bible-based sermons that lead to the transformation of their congregants.

### 2.5.3.3 Sermon Analysis and African Preaching

Prof. B. K. Nhiwatiwa, a Zimbabwean homiletician, and D. K. Chifungo of Malawi have successfully used the Heidelberg method of Sermon Analysis to evaluate African preaching.[51] The first person to use this method in the South African context is Johan Cilliers (1982; 2006:8-9), who has developed the method further in his writings[52]. Nhiwatiwa and Chifungo have combined this method along with Osmer's methodology[53]. The key intention of this combined method is to unveil both overt and implied language forms used in the sermon. It also contributes directly and indirectly to the theological and practical evaluation of sermons.

The Heidelberg method of sermon analysis was developed at the University of Heidelberg in Germany in the 1980s by Rudolf Bohren and Gerd Debus. The method became popular at an international symposium held in September 1986 (Chufungo 2013:68). It developed out of the fact that congregations have the right to assess the sermons that are preached in their churches. Thousands of sermons were assessed.

The components of the Heidelberg method use the linguistic and hermeneutical questions that the interpreter brings to the text. The linguistic questions enable the analyst to interrogate the sermon text to see what it says and what it does not. It focuses on critiquing the structure, words, sentences, emphases, and use of negations in the sermons. Theological analysis is made possible through an examination of the interaction between both the obvious and implied language in the sermon. Analysing a sermon's theology focuses on how the picture of God, the biblical texts, the preacher's role, and congregants' context are portrayed in the sermons (Chifungo2013:68-69). My own focus will be primarily on the linguistic analysis because the focus of the work is rhetorical, which deals with language use.

### 2.5.3.4 Applying the Heidelberg Method

Vaessen (1999:4) states that a viable sermon analysis involves a linguistic analysis of the sermon text, an analysis of the interpretation given to the Bible text, leading to an analysis of the preacher's thinking, as well as an analysis of culture, ecclesiology and theology taken up in the sermon.

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[51] Nhiwatiwa 2012b: 73-77; Chifungo 2013:31-37. Cf. Vaessen 1999.
[52] (Cilliers 2004a&b, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012a&b, 2013 etc.)
[53] The Osmer method of analysis responds to such questions like; *"What is going on?"* "Why is this going on?" "What ought to be going on?" And "How might one respond?" These are general questions and not specific to enable an analysis of a particular phenomenon like use of rhetorical language (biblical or cultural).

In analysing the sermons, the researcher considered the following questions as they relate to the use of rhetorical elements of the sermons discussed previously:

1. **The Preacher and Task of Preaching**: Does the Preacher demonstrate an understanding and control of her/his task in producing the sermon data prepared and delivered? Does the sermon reflect any formal structure?

2. **Content/Hermeneutics of Sermon**: Does the sermon convey the biblical truth found in the biblical text? Is there an indication of good hermeneutics concerning the central truth developed in the sermon?

3. **Use of Biblical Rhetorical Language**: How does a preacher use the context from which the text comes in their sermons? Is there any particular referral to the rhetorical language used in the biblical text? How were these rhetorical devices used in such rhetorical situation then?

4. **Use of Indigenous Wisdom in Preaching**: Does the preacher employ cultural sayings in the sermon? What are the particular rhetorical devices used by the preacher? If so, how appropriate are these elements used in the rhetorical situation of the sermon?

5. **Context and Contemporaneous Issues:** How contextually related is the language employed in the sermon to the traditional background and contemporary events bordering the congregants?

6. **Audience Response:** How well do the congregants understand, respond to, and recall the sermon?

Since this research agrees with Osmer's guide on sermon analysis, the researcher will also be able to respond to some of the following questions:

(i) "**What is going on?**" This question will help to determine the real events in the congregants' context not mentioned in the sermon notes.

(ii) **"Why is this going on?"** This question explores how oral culture comprehends, organises, and transmits indigenous knowledge when preaching.

(iii) **"What ought to be going on?"** Through a careful and repeated reading, the researcher will be able to suggest what ought to have been done especially through his interaction with congregants.

(iv) **"How may we respond?"** With this question, the researcher will be able to make informed recommendations on strategies to train contextually conscious capable pastors as local preachers.

## 2.6 Defining the Rhetorical Moments in African Christian Sermons

It is true that Christian rhetoric has been greatly influenced by classical rhetoric, but that it has also parted from the old rhetorical models (Malica2015:1). Christian sermon rhetoric has emerged from this influence, especially with St Augustine (Malica 2015:2), where value is placed on the personality of the preacher before the audience as well as the diction employed to make the discourse clear (Malica 2015:3 cf. 1 Tim 4:12). For Augustine, a sermon must aim at being heard with "understanding, pleasure and obedience" (Malica 2015:4). Finally, such rhetoric, found in the letter and spirit of the biblical text, is articulated in simple, middle or grand style depending on the context so that the audience is able to convert understanding of the sacred text into conduct (Malica 2015:5-6).

This brief review of the roots and contours of Christian sermon rhetoric agrees with the assertion of Nhiwatiwa that, "The sermon reflects many languages. There is the language of the Bible, the language of the preacher, and the language of the people" (2012b: 74). The word "language" applies in African Christian rhetoric to both verbal (Bible and its textures [Robbins], and doctrinal language, cultural rhetorical devices like storytelling, parables, myths, fables and other strategies) and non-verbal (culturally based gestures) rhetoric. This complex is what Osmer (2008:51. See Wepener 2009:4-5) calls, "thick description" or Oluwaseun's (2015:2) "multifaceted" because if the various strata of rhetoric that form the African Christian sermons. Dreyer (2005:793) struggles with the changes brought by post-independence and the mainstreaming of indigenisation, defines African Christian sermon in terms of the relationships that exist between culture and preaching. He discussed how the interpretation and proclamation of the gospel are done with the appropriate language, which is akin to culture and connected to the African context.

From the foregoing, the rhetorical moment of African Christian sermon is a synergy of the long and complex rhetorical background of sermon development, the Bible and the post-colonial as well as the changed and changing socio-cultural contexts the African preacher considers as s/he produces and presents pertinent sermon data.

## 2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed rhetoric, biblical rhetoric, wise sayings and sermons. The investigation into classical rhetoric, biblical rhetoric, and indigenous wisdom and their relationship to African Christian preaching has shown that both rhetoric and wise sayings can play powerful complementary and persuasive roles in preaching. This ambitious outlook of this research has necessitated the employment of different methods of rhetorical analysis to assess each of these rhetorical elements as well as sermon rhetoric to be applied in subsequent chapters.

One big question for reflection is: How has the pattern of biblical rhetoric, especially that of the Old Testament (OT), been taken over and used by any public speakers? How has this been done? It appears that OT rhetorical devices like word-play, parallelism, proverbs, stories, etc. have often been used in writings or mentioned by preachers while preaching. However, using prophetic styles or speech patterns in fresh contemporary contexts is not directly used. Instead, there seem to be stages of development from the ANE to the OT, the Classical Greek period and to the early church, at the time of St Augustine, where rhetorical patterns were drafted into Christian sermons. The employment of biblical rhetoric and African indigenous wisdom as rhetorical devices in Christian sermons promises to bring transforming rhetorical effects on African audiences. The next chapter is a rhetorical analysis of the entire book of Micah in general and selected periscopes (1:7-16, 3:8-4:5, and 6:1-8) in particular using Robbins' SRI. In these passages Micah uses ample rhetorical devices as well as where such passages indicate evidence of the roles of such oration in the persuasion of his audiences.

# Chapter Three - A Sociorhetorical Analysis of the Book of Micah

Having engaged with the tripolar model in chapter one, the researcher will henceforth briefly reflect on it and discuss how biblical rhetoric relates to African biblical interpretation and how African sermons can be a platform for "appropriation" in chapter two. In this chapter, the researcher deals with the first pole which, in terms of this research, focuses on the Mican text and its historical 8th century BCE context (see Draper 2002:14). The researcher highlights some wise sayings used by Micah along with the rhetorical devices he employed to persuade his audience. Then the researcher engages with the text in its context with the hope of identifying points of eventual appropriation and production of meaning in the Mwaghavul context in chapters four and five.

In the actual rhetorical analysis of the selected texts, 1:9-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8 (chosen for their rhetorically rich content; 1.6), Robbins' SRI method will be used. As noted in the previous chapters, SRI is a recent and emerging explanatory analytic for the 21st century (Robbins 1997:32). It challenges interpreters to "explore a text in a systematic, plentiful environment of interpretation and dialogue" (Robbins 1996a:4) and to draw from the complex ways that words communicate meaning. Robbins refers to the complex of textures as the five "textures of texts". As Robbins (1996a:5-6) suggests; the researcher will neither follow the order in which the textures are presented in his writings nor will he discuss all five textures for each of the selected textures. Based on the researcher's interest in Micah's persuasive use of language, he will examine the "inner text" which focuses on "the specific manner in which a text attempts to persuade its reader" (Gowler 2010:195) in all three instances. In thickening[54] the interpretation, the researcher will include the "intertexture" and "sacred texture" for the first text (1:9-16), the "intertexture" and "sacred texture" for the second text (3:9-4:5); and the "intertexture" and "sacred texture" for the third text (6:1-8). The reason for this selection of textures is given in the examination of each text in 3.3.1; 3.3.2; and 3.3.3 respectively.

This chapter is divided into three major sections: a) the background to the book of Micah, b) an overview of the rhetorical structure of Micah, and c) a rhetorical study of the three selected passages, namely 1:10-16; 3:9-4:5; and 6:1-8.

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[54] By "thickening" an interpretation, Robbins (1996a:5) refers to the examination of the many textures of a text.

**3.1 Background to the Book of Micah**

**3.1.1 Micah in the Geopolitical Context of 8th Century Judah**

The prophet Micah was not a lone voice on the prophetic scene of the 8th century BC. In fact, this century is generally considered as the Golden age of prophecy in Israel (Lieberman 1979:54; Williams 1933:10) as it featured proto-Isaiah and the three minor prophets, Amos, Hosea and Micah. As Brueggemann's states, "We know only a little about the persons of these prophets" (Brueggemann 2013). As indicated previously, 1:1 provides a brief introduction to Micah. However, he has no known genealogy, nor is his occupation mentioned[55]. He is not even called a prophet in the book (Wolf 1990:7). He is only identified with Moresheth (1:1, 14), possibly because "he no longer lives in his place of origin" (Smith 1984:4). Secondly, 1:1 indicates that he prophesies "during the reigns of Ahaz, Jotham and Hezekiah." Thirdly, the same verse states that his prophecies concerned Samaria and Jerusalem. We may, however, supplement this scant information with inferences regarding his character that are based on the content of his prophecies: Micah had a deep concern for the poor oppressed lower classes and a passion for social justice (Folarin 2004:63) He "lived close to both the people and the soil" oppressed by the "unscrupulous" rich (Maxey 2015:1). He fearlessly condemned the corruption perpetrated by both secular and religious leaders in Samaria and Jerusalem (Maxey 2015:1; Keil 1996). He knew exactly how the leaders' policies affected the everyday life of ordinary peasants (Mason 1991:23), so he was rightly recognised as a prophet of the oppressed, giving voice to the groaning of those who could not speak for themselves (Waltke 1998:594). Lastly, as indicated in Jeremiah 26:18-20, Micah was a prophet who was remembered (Boice 1986:14) as his prophecy changed the course of history due to the overwhelming response of his audience, especially King Hezekiah (c.f. Micah 1:1). His words were "remembered nearly one hundred years later" and he is "the only Old Testament prophet to be mentioned by name in another prophetic book (unless we include the mention of Jeremiah in the book of Daniel, which is in fact not a prophetic book)" (Mason 1991:25-26). As indicated in 2:1; 33:12, this may be because Micah used striking language (Blanchard 2017:132-136) and many graphic figures of speech when challenging the elite of Samaria and Jerusalem.

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[55] It is difficult to be certain of Micah's occupation even when Oursler writes that Micah was "a peasant, with a knowing sympathy for farmers constantly suffering eviction under warrants from greedy landlords" (1953:404).

Historically, 8th-century Palestine experienced tremendous turmoil as a result of the ascendance of the Assyrian empire[56]. From the 9th to the 7th century, Assyria dominated the ancient world which greatly affected Palestine as a whole. In particular, in the 8th century, under the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III (745 B.C. - 727 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (727 B.C. - 722 B.C.), Sargon II (722-705 B.C) and Sennacherib (705 B.C. - 681 B.C.), Israel and Judah endured several threats, incursions and exile (Heater 2012:7-8; Nelson1986). This precipitated the rise of numerous prophecies. Five key prophets spoke the oracles of God in this time: "Amos foretold the approaching end of Jeroboam II (Amos 7:10-17); Hosea spoke out against kings (Hos 1:4; 7:16; 8:4); [proto]-Isaiah announced God's judgment on Ahaz (Isa 7:10, 17), the king of Assyria (10:12), the king of Babylon (14:4-23), and Hezekiah (39:5-7)" (Wiseman 1979). Jonah was a contemporary of Jeroboam II (793 B.C. - 753 B.C.) (2 Kings 14:25). Micah, a younger contemporary of Isaiah, worked from Jotham's reign (739 B.C.) to the end of King Hezekiah's reign (Mic 1:1), before Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. (Nelson 1986).

Micah 1:1 provides the general period within which Micah worked, namely "in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah". Even so, the fruit of his ministry was seen more clearly in Hezekiah's reign as repentance by the king and subjects followed (Jer. 26:18-20). Before that time, both Israel and Judah had gained a position of great economic influence among their neighbours. This was fostered by the earlier proficient leadership of Jeroboam II of Israel (786-746) and Uzziah of Judah (783-742). The economic activities led to the development of a middle class that became rich at the expense of the poor majority (Nelson1986).

Like Amos, Micah therefore decried the social and economic conditions of the poor. The way in which he spoke portrayed his fury regarding the corruption in the land (2:1-2; 3:3) which saw to humans being treated as though they were animals, chopped and prepared for the pot (Summary and Analysis of Micah ND). Indeed, "No writer in the entire Old Testament was ever more indignant than Micah over the ways in which the rich and powerful use every opportunity to exploit the poor and the weak" ("Summary and Analysis of Micah" ND).

The great violations with regard to religious practices also attracted the attention of the prophet who spoke up against them (McComiskey 1985:395). Micah spoke out strongly against those who claimed to be prophets of the Lord (Mic 3:6). His love for God would not

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[56] Marrs (2003:64) describes the period as "the most fascinating and dynamic periods in the history of ancient Israel."

allow him to offer false hopes to those who were unfaithful in their allegiance to God and were therefore under his judgment (Chisholm ND:261, Utley 2012; Folarin 2004:63-67; Keil 1996). Their unfaithful made Micah to view Sennacherib's invasion of Samaria (1:13-14 cf. 2 Kings 18:14-17) and the destruction of Jerusalem (3:12; 7:13) (Fausset 2006) as punishment from God, so he appears to have stood at the city gate (cf.1:9, 12) during their festivities to preach (6:9, 15; 7:1) (Wood 20006:50).

**3.1.2 Micah's Rhetoric in the Context of the 8th Century**

> With the rise of literary prophecy about 750 B.C., the seers and the ecstatic non-literary prophets gradually disappear from the pages of the Bible. These literary prophets expressed their messages in verse and their poems are some of the most beautiful in all antiquity. They proclaimed a new morality as one after the other contributed those things which go to make up the best in our present-day civilization (Williams 1933:1).

The persuasive quality of the poems preserved by the prophets is immediately noticeable. Most often, the prophetic writings employed such expertise aimed at influencing and persuading their audience/readers of the certainty of their messages (Weisman 2003: 152).

The 8th-century prophets, Amos and Hosea (Israel) and Isaiah and Micah (Judah), as is the case with other OT prophets, seem to have drawn their rhetorical prowess from a pre-existing ANE rhetorical tradition. Wood (2000:662) states that the poetry of the prophets, as seen in the book of Micah, "does not need to be seen as something standing apart, or as something conceptually distinctive and different from all other [ANE prophetic] texts". As compared to the Sumerian performance texts, the prophetic literature shares common threats and themes. For instance, Sumerian city laments are identical to the dialogical expression in 6:3-8 with "frequent change in speaker [that] reflects their dramatic function" (Wood 2000:662). Moreover, Black (1987:257) affirms that elements of rhetorical principles were an existent art even in the 8th century BC as popularised later by the Greek rhetor, Homer, and then developed by Crax and Tisias of Sicily and others in the 4th and 3rd century BC. This is proven through relics found in "specific historical cities and temples" (Wood 2000:646-647).

The prophets predominantly present their oracles in poetic form. Poetry is purposefully metaphoric, presenting its messages using imagery, figures of speech and verse form (Bang 2004:26-27). Though there are instances of the mixture of both poetry and prose in other prophetic books, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah are attested to be "cast

entirely in the poetic form" (West &Donald 1971:234). As noted earlier (2.2.2), prophetic acts are sometimes used in the presentation of these poems (Wood 2000:649).

I would like to highlight only a few of the poetic and rhetorical devices used by the prophets below which are most frequently employed in Micah, especially in the selected passages:

a) **Symbolic Actions:** Adopting elements of ancient traditions, in some instances, the prophetic poems were performed rather than spoken, or performed and spoken. Such performances are called prophetic acts, performance, or symbolic action (Wood 2000:649; Bang 2004:29). Instances of this rhetorical device are found in Isaiah's love lyrics (Isa 5:1-2, 4-5, 1 1-12), Amos' dirge or funeral song (Amos 6:4-7) and Micah 1:7-9.

b) **Metaphor:** A metaphor directly compares one phenomenon to another without using 'like' or 'as'. The attack of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrian king is referred to as a wound that would come to Judah (Micah 1:9; cf. Amos 3:9-15). Hosea's marriage is used as a metaphor for the relationship that existed between God and Israel (Heater 2012:19, 58). Other metaphoric usages are Amos 4:1 and Isaiah 3:15 (Mamahit & Venter 2010:1, 6).

c) **Poetic Techniques with Sound Effects:** The rhythm and sound of words also played a rhetorical role in prophetic utterances. For instance, Micah uses rhythm (*bāttê 'ak$^e$zîb l$^e$ 'ak$^e$zāb*-[lit. "the houses of deception will be a lie or deceptive"]) in 1:14b; Isaiah uses alliterations (1:18-20), assonance (53:4-7), paronomasia (5:7) and onomatopoeia (42:14) to either attract his audience's attention, provide a vivid picture of grief and sorrow, or to make the words mimic reality ("Prophetic Literature" ND).

d) **Proverbial Wisdom:** a scholarly discourse on wisdom, to which proverbial sayings belong, is found in the books of Isaiah (5:1-7), with Amos showing that the art preceded and influenced the 8th-century prophets (Bradshaw 1995; Khiangte 2009:6). These prophets used parables and proverbial sayings in their prophecies. Amos (5:7) and Micah (Mic 1:6, 8; 3:9 7:1 etc.) particularly show a profound sway of tribal wisdom (Khiangte 2009:6-7). For example, Micah 2:4 reads:

> In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song: '**We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up. He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors**' (my emphasis).

The mournful song, which in Hebrew is מָשָׁל *māšāl*, is regarded by some as a term that is used to refer to wise sayings. It means "to speak in a proverb" or a "byword" often used to precede doom (e.g. Ps 44:15; Jer 24:9; Ezek 14:8; Deut 28:37) (Hamilton 1980). Micah told his people that a song will be lifted up *māšāl* against them, possibly by passers-by (See also Isaiah 14:4ff; Hab. 2:6) (BDB). In another prophetic context, Micah warns that God is making Judah the taunt of the nations (Hamilton 1980). This indicates that in the lines that follow, the prophet might be using a well-known proverbial saying among the people then. How are those "wise sayings" used in the book as elements of persuasion in the context of Micah? Micah uses tens of other proverbial sayings (1:10, 15, 16; 2:1, 4, 11; 3:4, 11; 4:5, 8; 7:17, 19), but the researcher will only discuss those that occur within the three selected texts as a justification for thesis of chapters four and five of the work.

e) **Structures and Patterns:** The patterns adopted by the Prophet Micah in presenting the message served rhetorical purposes. For instance, repetition (Micah 6:1-5), *inclusio* (1:8-16), parallelism (3:11) and chiasm (3:9-4:5) are ancient structural patterns that perform such roles in prophetic speeches (Bang 2004:33-37).

Micah and his contemporaries took a lot from the rhetoric of their context to use in their prophetic vocation and so spoke convincingly in the language of the people to whom they ministered. In many ways, his prophecy betrayed his country of origin. As Fausset (2006) attests, Micah used common "vivid dialogue," "Pastoral and rural imagery." He also employed "many images from country life (Mic 7:1)" (Nelson 1986) as persuasive tools. His choice of words is untainted and his parallelisms evenly used (Fausset 2006).

### 3.1.3 Composition and Background of the Book

By composition and background, the researcher means to discuss all that pertains to the writing, authorship, date, place of writing, and purpose of the book. This is necessary because the historical setting of the prophecy does not give us many clues as to the information related to the composition of the book itself.

### 3.1.3.1 Authorship and Date

The authorship of the book of Micah was not seriously questioned until the middle of the nineteenth century when Ewald argued that Chapters 6-7 were not Micah's work but

stemmed from a contemporary of the dark reign of Manasseh. For Ewald[57], whose work was published in 1867, "there are complete changes in style and historical background in Chapter 6-7" (Smith 1984:6), which show that these chapters were not penned by the same hand that wrote the preceding ones. In 1878, based on 6:1-7:6, Wellhausen agreed with Ewald, and proposed that an editor could have added 7:8-20 during the exile. In addition, in 1881, Stade denied that all passages on promises of hope are from Micah (Mason 1991:29). Similarly, Allen stated that that 4:1-4 was written earlier than Micah's time while 4:6-8, and 7:1-20 are exilic. For Allen (1976:241), these sections of the book were editorial additions. Thus, the scholars attribute varying portions of the text to the prophet Micah, while assigning others to the work of later editors/authors.

Given these scholarly opinions, it is very difficult to give a specific date when the book was written. For example, while Dus assigned 7:7-20 to 1100 BC, Robinson dated the same text to the time of the Maccabees in the 2nd century.[58] Today, however, many scholars attribute the whole or most of the book to Mican authorship. Oden and Ferreiro (2003:149) and Mackay (1993:67) outrightly assume Mican authorship of the whole book without much argument. While treading along the same path, McComiskey has argued that the nature of the book itself does not indicate that "a later redactor" (1985:398) worked on it; "on the contrary, it may reflect the author's purpose to use a variety of literary devices" (McComiskey 1985:398) for the sake of persuasion.

In this research, Wessels' position (2013) has been adopted. Some texts associated with the person and proclamation of Micah might have been added, but that there are no conclusive answers on the authorship of the whole book because the tools used in the research are not adequate (cf. Mason 1991:28-341). So, assigning particular portions to Mican authorship is now "a matter of preference and emphasis" (Wessels 2013). However, Wessels affirms that in biblical tradition, this text was associated with Micah all along (cf. Jer. 26:18, 19).

Thus, in the stages of development of the book of Micah up to its current form, different additions were possibly brought into play and we could attempt a possible identification of those stages by discerning different rhetorical patterns of the current text of Micah. Observing the arguments of literary, form, and redaction critics, one would conclude that in its present

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[57] *Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, Vol. 24.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
[58] All these arguments are picked up by Smith (1984) to present the complexity involved in dating the Mican corpus.

form, Micah is a postexilic work. No doubt, some parts of the book address both Judah and Israel in the time of Micah, while others clearly address the nation under a post-exilic context still in need of deliverance.

### 3.1.3.2 Audience and Purpose of the Book

As indicated previously, Micah was fully aware of the injustices and greediness of the Judean and Israelite leaders. He showed interest in the politics of his time because it was negatively impacting on the state of the nation. His aim was to draw the leaders' attention to their corrupt practices that did line up with their professed beliefs. For Micah, "Worship and morality cannot be divorced from each other" (Maxey 2015:3). As he concluded in the rhetorically rich text of 6:6-8, what God requires is just acts, loving mercy and a humble walk with God. This book, in its pragmatic statements and demands, addresses the covenant peoples (Judah and Israel). It reminds us of the book of James (2:17, 26) on the issue of living faith and true religion. Micah bluntly declares, with great passion, the demand of God against the social evils that prevailed in his day. As he stated in 3:8, he refused to follow the popular trend of the false prophets, but courageously stood against evil. This makes Micah a book that contains many lessons for Christians of every age (Constable 2015:5).

### 3.1.4 The Structure of the Book of Micah

The structure and literary unity of the book of Micah are very complex and highly debated matters. As noted in the previous chapter, the prophets and/or their editors generally do not have a particular way of arranging their speech as indicated by the final forms of their books. They are accused of jumping from one issue to the other without clear logic, that informs the jump from one subject of discussion to the next (Smith 1984:7; von Rad 1965:33).[59] Several attempts, however, have been made to determine the structure of Micah and other prophetic books.

Barker (1998:437-438) identifies four ways that scholars divide the book of Micah:

(1) Three major divisions: chapters 1-3, 4-5 and 6-7;

(2) Four major divisions:  chapters 1-3, 4-5; 6:1-7:6; and 7:7-20;

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[59] According to Martin Luther King, "They have a queer way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next so that you cannot make heads or tails of them or see what they are getting at" (von Rad 1965:33).

(3) Two major divisions: chapters 1-5, and 6-7; and

(4) Another three major sections: chapters 1-2; 3-5; and 6-7.[60]

Barker (1998:439) himself argues for the last three-pronged division (1-2, 3-5, and 6-7) because, for him, the imperfect *waw* consecutive in 3:1 is a division indicator and not a linking phrase between chapter 2 and 3. This three-pronged division is also supported by Willis (1969:197. See also Keil [1885], Allen [1976], Waltke [1998], Childs [1979] and Barker [1998] among others). Clearly, this division is favoured among scholars.[61] For Barker, each of these three sections opens with a call on the listeners to "hear" using the same root verb, followed by identifying those being addressed so that each section is a balance of "judgment and salvation" sub-sections. The current form of the book, therefore, demonstrates a balanced arrangement.[62]

Expounding further, Barker (1998:438) states that the first and last sections (divisions) of the book of Micah have longer segments of judgment, than of hope. The two divisions equally consist of four pericopes each.[63] The second and central division, however, has a longer section on hope than judgement.

Waltke (1998:594) further explains that the hope sections of this book of prophecy (2:12-13; 4:6-7; 5:6-7[7-8]; 7:18), concern "in part" the remnant, thus the book is arranged in such a way that there are alternations between judgment and hope in each major section.

From the preceding discussion, I observe that though the detailed structure of Micah seems to exhibit some lack of connectedness, its final form exhibits coherence in its general structure (so too Jacobs 2001:11). This coherence is recognisable only when its different units and the relationship between them are understood (Longman & Dillard 2006:452).

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[60] Jacobs equally (2001:62) tabulated the opinions of 17 scholars according to the four groupings above in order to show the divergent opinions on the matter.

[61] Jacobs (2001:11-12, 62), names Keil (1885), Willis (1969), Allen (1976), Waltke (1998), Childs (1979), and Barker (1998) among the supporters of the three pronged division of Micah into 1-2, 3-5 and 6-7. When Shaw's (1993:221-225) proposed rhetorical situation and historical settings for each of his suggested six sections of the book of Micah as tabulated by Cuffey (2015:65 cf. Wessels 2013) is lumped into a three-pronged structure, it tallies with my earlier proposal (i.e. Chapters 1-2, 3-5, and 6-7). Cuffey (2015:65. concurred to this structure as well, but focused on the remnant theme to analyze the coherence of the book of Micah.

[62] See also Keil who states that "The contents of the book consist of three prophetic addresses, which are clearly distinguished from one another in form by similarity of introduction (all three commencing with *shim-'uw*,['hear' or 'listen'] Mic. 1:2; 3:1; 6:1), and substantially by their contents, which pass through the various stages of reproof, threat, and promise, and are thereby rounded off" (Keil 1996).

[63] The four periscopes in each of Chapter 1-3 and 6-7 are "(a) a covenant lawsuit (1:2-7 and 6:1-8), (b) a lament (1:8-16 and 7:1-6), (c) an explanation ... for the impending catastrophe in the form of a reproach (2:1--11 and 6:9-16); and (d) a hope oracle (2:12-13 and 7:7-20)" (Barker 1998:438).

In summary, the researcher will follow Hagstrom's statement that the form of the book of Micah, as we have it, is deliberately shaped so as to portray the book as "a unified, coherent whole; that is, the individual units of Micah are so shaped, structured, and linked together as to make it possible to read the book as a unit" (Hagstrom 1988:1).

Having looked at the general background of the book and its structure, the researcher will in the next section, examine the general line argument in the entire book to show its coherence, then he will study selected texts in some details.


**3.2 A Brief Rhetorical Analysis of the Final Form of the Book of Micah**

The analysis of the book of Micah will be based on the final form of the book. This is important, especially for this research, because both the participating preachers and the ordinary readers or congregants only have the final form of the text of Micah.

**3.2.1 Basics of Rhetorical Analysis of a Text**

After this general and initial description of the rhetorical terrain of the book, the researcher will use the socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI) approach of Vernon Robbins by examining the following selected texts (1:9-16 3:94:5 and 6:1-8) through some of these textures of texts: the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins 1996:2-4).

These multiple textures of Robbins' align with Bryant's description of rhetorical analysis as a systematic entrance into the "inside transactions of communication to discover and describe their elements, their form, and their dynamics and to explore the situations, past or present, which generate them and in which they are essential constituents to be comprehended" (Bryant 1973:35).

In that case, the researcher would analyse the selected passages using SRI as a flexible guide. By this the researcher means to select only some aspects of the interpretive possibilities available in SRI in studying particular passages. This is because it is "not practical (or even possible) to utilise all the interpretive possibilities available through SRI in any one instance of interpretation" (Pillay 2008:26). It is then possible to carefully "foreground some aspects of SRI" that are most appropriate at certain instances, while another reading of the text may require a selection of different "interpretive tools" from the vast range of strategies available

in SRI (Pillay 2008:26; cf. Robbins 1996b:3). At any stage, the researcher will explore at least three of the five textures of the text, not only because Robbins expresses its possibility (Robbins 1992: xxv 1996b:41 2002a:58), but because the content of each of the text could adequately be understood when viewed in the light of any three relevant textures. Furthermore, in interpreting each selected text, the "inner texture" will be among the strategies employed due to its primacy in determining the rhetoric of biblical texts which is made accessible through "close reading" (Gowler 2010:195; Gaines 2017:43).

The textures listed at the beginning of this section (3.2.1), however, must not be used as a set of mechanical steps; the interpreter can move back and forth in using them as she/he discerns, allowing room for new discoveries. In this way, a persuasive reading and analysis of the biblical text within a given interpretive community emerges.

So, in rhetorical analysis, the interpreter uses the text at hand and does not claim certainty or timelessness in the meaning that emerges from her/his interpretation. She/he seeks to be sufficiently convincing using evidence interpreter's context and using the context of the text being analysed, and this is done in a particular real-world context where the interpreter has a relationship with the intended audience (Olson 2010:24). In this case, the real world of the prophet is the 8th century Israel while that of the researcher, preachers and their audiences is the Mwaghavul land in Plateaus State of central Nigeria.

### 3.2.2 An Overview of the Rhetorical Analysis of the Book of Micah

What follows is rather a cursory overview to showcase the line of argument conveyed in the book at a glance. In doing this, the researcher will follow the division set out in 3.1.4. Allen (1976:146) asserts that, in terms of style, Micah "has more of the qualities of an orator than of a poet".

Prophetically, Micah issued strong words of warning for the gross evil prevalent in Israel and Judah in the 8th century BCE, as well as words of hope, where his warnings are heeded. Directed by the Spirit of God (3:8), which forms a basis for his appeal to *ethos*, Micah's prophecies aimed at warning the covenant people, especially Judah, of the consequences of their covenant infidelity. Micah also let both kingdoms know of God's justice and love even in the context of discipline. He wanted to show them God's sovereignty in planning a future restoration of the people ("An Introduction to the Book of Micah" ND).

Micah begins his first prophecy (1:2-2:13) by hailing the capital cities, Samaria and Jerusalem, and their leaders. He accuses them of being the actual cause of the chaos in the cities around Micah's locality because they were guilty of violently confiscating land from poor landowners. In his summons, Micah heightens the urgency of his message and the devastation of the impending doom by exclaiming "Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads the high places of the earth" (1:3). This theophany is followed by the use of other rhetorical devices like metonymy (1:5), metaphor (1:9), pun (wordplay) (1:10-15), repetition (2:1, 3), direct quotation (2:6-13), and sarcasm (mockery) (2:4) to warn the covenant community. Micah's emotional outpouring expressed through the use of these devices deeply challenged Israel's neglect of the core prophetic values of righteousness, justice and compassion.

The prophet then moves to the central division (3:1-5:14), where he addresses the corrupt Judean leaders concerning the nation's imminent destruction. However, he immediately contrasts this gloomy picture with a message of hope for deliverance and a universal restoration of peace emanating from the Mountain of the Lord (Cuffey 2015:65). He appeals to the *logos* of covenant unfaithfulness, using different farming metaphors (3:10-4:5). He also appeals to his own personal *ethos* to declare to Israel his divine call and inspiration (3:8) as contrasted with other self-appointed prophets and leaders. Some rhetorical strategies used in this section are anaphora (5:9.13; repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive sentences); apostrophe (5:1); introverted parallelisms or chiasm (3:12; 4:2); synecdoche ( (4:1; 5:4; representation like name of God for God himself); and mimesis (3:11 cf. 2:11; imitation/description of the words of another for emphasis). With the long section on hope (4:1-5:14), Israel is assured of Yahweh's steadfast love.

Micah ends his prophecy (6:1–7:20) by confronting Judah, in post 722/21 BC, with the fact of their feigned piety. When he contrasts their attitude to God's enduring faithfulness, Israel is presented as having been moved by remorse to repentance (6:6-7). Starting with a lawsuit scenario (6:1-8), Micah demanded that Judah should defend herself. This provoked a repentant response. Other rhetorical appeals used at the close of the text are rhetorical questions (6:5-7), didactic sermons (6:2-8); hyperbole; (6:7); antonomasia or name-change where proper name is changed for appellative; or vice versa (7:12); and proverb (7:5, 6) (Bullinger 1899). Reflecting on the exodus, Israel's archetypal image of God's deliverance, Micah convinces his audience of a better future.

This brief overview indicates that Micah persuades his audience with many, contextual rhetorical devices he used in the rhetorical situation in which he addressed his audience. As indicated in Jeremiah's (26:16-19) reference to Micah 3:9-12, the prophet's skilful use of language persuaded the king, Hezekiah (cf. Jer. 26:18-20), and the nation to repent. Consequently, this prophecy was heeded and remembered a century later.

**3.3 Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Passages in the Book of Micah**

As James Muilenburg laments, a study of the meaning of the entire text of a biblical book cannot be an effective study. What is required is that each smaller unit needs to be "studied as a unique piece of rhetoric in which the biblical writer advocates for certain ideologies, beliefs, and values" (2014:1). That is why in the following discussions, individual selected units of Micah (1:8-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8) are taken up and studied in details. As noted earlier (1.6), apart from being rhetorically rich, each of these selected passages clearly demonstrates the effect that Micah's rhetoric had on his original audiences who responded positively to his messages.

**3.3.1 The Fast-Spreading of an Incurable Wound 1:8-16**

Micah foresaw the coming judgment of God that would come through a defeat of Israel and subsequently a systematic destruction of Judah by the Assyrian army (1:3-16). Using various rhetorical techniques, Micah tried to convince his Judean audience to repentant (1:8-16) so as to avert the judgment. In applying SRI, to this text, the researcher will apply three "textures" of the text in the following order: inner texture, intertexture then sacred texture.[64]

**3.3.1.1 The Inner Texture**

The inner texture will enable me to focus on the way this Mican text "attempts to persuade its reader" (Gowler 2010:195). This is worked out by taking note of repetitions, the *inclusio*, figures of speech, prophetic action "progressive, open-middle-closing, narrational, argumentative and/or sensory aesthetic [emotional] texture" (Robbins 1997:31). As the researcher discusses this first aspect of the inner texture, he will also note the second aspect,

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[64] This complex treatment will have to be brief due to the number of texts to be analysed and the textures to be examined from the text. The researcher will explain the rationale behind using each texture as it is discussed.

which is identifying "the participation of the unit of the text in the overall written document in which it occurs" (Robbins 1996a:38).

The structure and argumentative line of the unit are clear. This unit, which talks about the fast approaching judgment on sin that is coming from the north, is framed by an *inclusio*[65]. The section begins with the prophet mourning the "death" of the Northern Kingdom and the inevitable eminent judgment (v. 8), It then mentions the cities and towns of Judah that will suffer from the approaching disaster (vv. 9-15), and closes with another prophetic call on Judah, personified as a mother, to join in mourning because her "children" or inhabitants will be exiled (v. 16). Thus, verses 9-15 are enclosed by the theme of mourning in its first and last verses (vv. 8, 16).

This unit comes after Micah's first summons to the whole world to pay attention (1:2) to his message. This divine call had introduced the divine covenant lawsuit (1:2-7) where a legal process is involved: "testimony is given, charges are brought, and sentence is pronounced" (Barker 1998:441) concerning the covenant infidelity of the Northern Kingdom in particular; will go into exile (vv. 6-7)[66]. Verses 8 to 16 describe the great unfaithfulness of the Northern Kingdom that has entered into the Southern Kingdom and its consequences to the land and people.

Within this unit (1:8-16), Micah shows that the fall of Samaria (vv. 6-7) is a signal to the imminent fall of Judah as well. This leads the prophet to voice a lament that declares what would later happen from verse 8. Micah envisioned an Assyrian army, possibly, led by King Sennacherib in 701 BC, where twelve Judean cities, including Jerusalem, were overrun and their inhabitants deported (Barker 1998:442). Barker also states that Micah described the effect of the approaching army by the use of "wordplays on the names of the cities and towns" (Barker 1998:442. Cf. also Constable 2015:13) which explains what will happen to the cities, as conveyed by the meaning, sound or significance of these names – each wordplay conveys an ill omen. An example is "In the house of Aphrah (לְעַפְרָה, *l<sup>e</sup>aphrah*) roll yourself in the dust (עָפָר, *aphar*)" in verse 10b. All the cities named in these verses are fortified cities within the Shephelah built as a defence system (2 Kgs. 18:17-19; 37). Some of these towns are well known to us while others are only mentioned here and no other place in the entire

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[65] An *inclusio* is a literary construction in which the boundaries are marked off by a similar word, clause, phrase or theme (Murphy 2003).

[66] This is part of the second aspect of the inner texture that deals with the textual context of the text (Robbins 1996a:38), but included here to enable understanding and flow of the discourse.

Bible.[67] Verse 16 clearly states the end result of this coming destruction – exile – and closes the unit with a summons on Judah to mourn. The unit is, therefore, Micah's mourning over the inevitable coming destruction of Judah.

In this unit, Micah uses numerous rhetorical devices like:

**Metaphor:** Micah opens this oracle with a description of his own personal response to the looming judgment coming upon the land of Judah in verses 8 and 9 (Constable 2015:12). He appeals to the emotion (*pathos*) of the audience to evoke their own response. In a metaphoric description, he acts as a professional mourner at the "funeral" of the Northern Kingdom and the falling state of the Southern Kingdom.

In Verse 8**,** the phrase עַל־זֹאת (*al-zoth)* 'for this', 'on account of this', and 'because of this' is a demonstrative referring to the preceding theophany in verses 3-7, where the fall of Samaria is described. Having envisioned the destruction of Samaria that occurred in 722 BC, and its implications for Jerusalem, the prophet has to lament. He describes his lament with the Hebrew words אֶסְפְּדָה (wailing) and אֵילִילָה (yelling). The word אֶסְפְּדָה ' 'wailing' is from the root word, סָפַד which Strong (2006) defines as "to tear the hair and beat the breasts (as Orientals do in grief); generally meaning to lament; by implication, to wail". The word אֵילִילָה is from יָלַל for shouting in a boisterous way (Strong 2006). It shows that the language he uses characterises that which is used in mourning, especially in mourning the dead at near eastern funerals (Mackay 1993:79).

Micah (1:8) states, "I will go about barefoot and naked!" If he actually did that, then he was performing a prophetic action with deep significance. In the Hebrew culture, walking barefooted and becoming naked are a common way of expressing distress, defeat and great grief over the loss of a loved one (cf. 2 Sam. 15:30; 22:12; Jer. 25:34; Constable 2015:13) [68]. Doubtlessly, the Israelites adopted a mode of mourning from their association with the pagan world around them (cf. Lev 19:28). The prophets took up this cultural mode of showing grief "to warn of a coming national death in accordance with the just judgment of God" (Patterson 1980. See Isa 32:11 ff.; Jer. 4:8; Joel 1:8, 13 ff). Micah (1:8) goes on wailing and mourning

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[67] While Gath, Lachish, Mareshah, Aczib and Adullam are well known towns, Beth Ophrah, Shaphir, Zaanan, Beth Ezel and Maroth are only mentioned here and no other place in the entire Bible.

[68] Other ways by which the Jews demonstrate their grief include shaving the beard, cutting the body, fasting (or banqueting), scattering ashes on oneself, or beating parts of the body (Patterson 1980).

for Judah. It is possible that he actually walked the streets of Jerusalem naked and barefooted (cf. Isa. 20:2)

Micah pushed the metaphor further by describing how he would mourn. He said, "I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl" (1:8b). These animals, 'jackal' and 'owl' or ostrich, live in the desert. So the prophet uses these animals to help his audience picture the condition that the land of Judah would find itself in, deserted and filled with the long drawn out nocturnal howling of jackals and the harsh, doleful cries of the owls (Mackay 1993:79).[69] Out of love for his unrepentant people, Micah solemnly warns them of the coming disaster in a mourning tune. Under normal circumstances, mourning would begin at the death of the loved one and go on throughout the burial procedures and would continue until seven more days from the date of the burial (Patterson 1980). But for Micah, his was a double mourning; mourning for the dead Northern Kingdom and for the Southern Kingdom that faces the same fate, as indicated in verse 9.

Verse 9 answers the question, **"Why is Micah lamenting, grieving and mourning?"** He does so because of the situation in both Samaria and Jerusalem. He says Samaria's wound (מַכּוֹתֶיהָ "her wound") is "incurable". The "wound" is the devastation God fashioned against the Northern Kingdom. The Hebrew word for "wound" is מַכָּה *makkah*, which refers to "blow", "stroke" (Dt 25:2); "wound" (1 Kgs 22:35); "plague", "misery" (Dt 28:61) or "defeat" (1 Sam 4:10) (Holladay 1988:1993-194). In its verb form, the word is used for "beating", "slay", "kill", "strike dead" or to "attack" and/or "destroy" (Lockyer 1986). Of particular theological importance is the fact that God is often the subject of מַכָּה. It is God who "smites" people with blindness (2 Kings 6:18) and plagues (Deut. 28:22, 27-28, 35). In this context, Micah, like other prophets, used "wound" symbolically, to describe the situation where God's people have been defeated or conquered by their enemies as a punishment for sin (Jer. 30:14; cf. Isa 1:5-6). He says the wound of Samaria is not only "grievous" (Jer. 10:19; 14:17; 30:12; cf. Assyria in Nah 3:19), but completely "incurable" (Mic. 1:9; Jer. 15:18) (Wilson 1980). As a result, the Assyrian attack on Judah, which is here metaphorically described as a wound, cannot be stopped just as Samaria was unable to stop it.

Micah was particularly overwhelmed with grief because "it has come to Judah." The Hebrew word נָגַע "he is come" is supposed to be denoted by a masculine noun as there is no separate

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[69] These two animals are also linked together in Job 30:29 in a context of mourning and affliction (Mackay 1993:79)

word for he/it in this text. In this case, however, the noun is "wound" which is feminine described in the previous phrase by the 3fs verb בָּאָה "she is come". Thus, "He[70] has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself" (v. 9b) is purposefully used here.

Micah speaks as if the Assyrian attack on Judah has already happened – it is in the perfect aspect in Hebrew indicating a completed action. This is the usual way that prophets expressed the certainty of their predictions. Prophetically, Micah sensed that what would happen to Samaria, is already a past event, even though it is in the future. This is a prophetic presence that is "actualizing a future catastrophe" (Wolf 1990:49-50). The ills of the North Kingdom had spread to the South even to the "gate", that is the centre of the community life. As the centre of the community life, the city gate is a symbol of authority and power (Lockyer 1986) and signifies the place where important judgments and decisions are taken (cf. Ruth 4:11; Deut 16:18; 21:19; 25:7). Easton (2006) adds that the gate served as a marketplace (2 Kings 7:1) where prophets and teachers mostly delivered their messages (1 Kings 22:10; Jer 17:19; Prov 1:21; 8:3; 31:31); and figuratively, the gate represented "for the glory of a city" (Isa 3:26; 14:31; Jer 14:2; Lam 1:4).

The situation in the south was desperate because "He has reached the very gate of my people" (v. 9b) After the fall of Samaria into the hands of the Assyrian powers in 722 BC, the Assyrian King made several attacks on the Southern Kingdom, resulting in the conquest of many areas around Jerusalem. Historically, Jerusalem itself was left on the verge of defeat in 701 BC (Mackay 1993:80; 2 Kings 18:13-16).

Micah rounds off this section (vv. 8-16) by returning to the theme of mourning (v. 16). In this verse, Micah personifies Jerusalem as a woman in anguish. Micah urges her to go into deep mourning for the loss of her children. She would, *sāpad* ("wail") and its parallel *bākâ* ("weep"). In fact, the basic Ugaritic connotation of the word is "wailing women", and women were those most often employed as professional mourners in the later development of the tradition (Patterson 1980); so the personification of Jerusalem as a woman is culturally

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[70] NIV has an alternative translation to the Hebrew word for "it" in the footnote. Other versions however translate the word as "it" or "judgement" as expressed in the following: NASU "It has reached", NLT "It has reached", ESV "it has reached", THE MESSAGE "Judgment has marched", NKJV "It has come", CJB "it reaches" and NCV "it will reach" The NIV uses "He" instead of "It" as a translation of the Hebrew *qal* perfect 3ms verb, נגע (lit. he is come) indicates, * – meaning, "he has reached or touched." Here, it does not refer to the wound itself but to the Assyrian king, the invader himself. I support that rendering because the metaphor of the "wound" has all along referring to the king of Assyria as reprinting the whole kingdom and נגה is 3ms itself which equally backs this stance.

rooted. The instruction, "Shave your heads … as bald as the vulture", especially as it relates to a woman, is also a common metaphoric expression of deep anguish over the loss of close relatives (Isa. 22:12; Jer. 7:29, 16:6).

Jerusalem is urged to join in and begin to mourn, as the prophet had started to in verses 8 and 9, "For the children in whom you delight… will go from you into exile" because they have broken the covenant (cf. Dt. 28:41) (Mackay 1993:32). This prophecy was later fulfilled (2 Kgs. 17:6) when Judah was taken into exile by the Babylonians in 586 BC. This is the dreadful climax of events that Micah had been lamenting over. The message is still the same as it was then; that "unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Lk.13:5).

**Wordplay, Pun or Paronomasia:** Being moved into mourning, Micah portrayed the urgency of the coming judgment using the language of prophetic presence, made known to each named city in his home district of Shephelah concerning the "threatening confusion it faces" (Ellis 2007). Ellis (2007) also adds that with vehement words expressed in artful short sentences, Micah foretold his vision in profuse powerful wordplays which will be discussed in regard to the next couple of verses (10-15). These made his messages more memorable (Ellis 2007).

Using a rhetorical device known as a pun (wordplay, or paronomasia), Micah continues his lament, mentioning a number of these towns or villages, many of whose names occur only here in the Old Testament. It appears that Micah particularly chose their names because they gave him the opportunity for word association that would fit his message. Interestingly, whether by choice or coincidence, even Sennacherib used wordplay in the record of his victories that marked the fulfilment of this prediction (Allen 1976:249). Addressing each town by name, Micah would pronounce their judgment by associating the judgment with the name of the town (see below). From verse 10 to 15 is one of the longest known sustained puns in the Old Testament where the prophet describes the advancement of the Assyrian army (Maxey 2015).

Micah began by naming Gath, a Philistine town closest to his own hometown. He said, "Tell it not in Gath." It appears Micah chose this town because "Gath" גַת sounds like the Hebrew for "tell" תַּגִּידוּ (Constable 2015:14). In essence, he was saying, "Tell it not in Tell City" (Maxey 2015).

Next, Micah declares, "In Beth Ophrah, roll in the dust." "In the house of Aphrah (לְעַפְרָ֖ה, l'aphrah) roll yourself in the dust (עָפָ֑ר, aphar)." "Beth-le-aphrah means "house of dust", rendering the word-play as "In the house of Dust roll yourself in the dust" (Bullinger 1899). To roll in the dust is an expression of grief and it also symbolises a humiliating defeat (cf. Isa. 47:1). To 'roll in the dust' is also a way of displaying extreme anguish (Josh. 7:6, Job 16:15; Ez. 27:30). In this city, in the "house of dust", they were sarcastically permitted to express their grief in view of their coming, certain humiliation.

In the first and third clauses of verse 11, Micah seems to use sarcasm or irony, as he plays on the meaning of the names of the towns mentioned. This is because no word rhymes in sound with שָׁפִ֖יר "shaphir" (meaning "pleasant" or "beautiful") or בֵּ֣ית הָאֵ֑צֶל "Beth Ezel" (meaning "house of the side" (Strong 2006)), which will be discussed later, in each of these clauses. That shows Micah uses both "rhyming and meaning of the names" (Bullinger 1899) to deliver his warnings.

The inhabitants of Shaphir – "pleasant" or "beautiful" – are commanded to "Pass on in nakedness and shame." This depicts the reversal of their current condition in the future, where they would become naked prisoners moving in shame (Mackay 1993:82). Boice (1986:17) indicates that in Israel, nakedness is greatly detested, and for Shaphir to be naked is a great disgrace. Shaphir is wealthy and the inhabitants generally live in luxury, peace and enjoy extreme extravagance (Boice 1986:17). In addition, they progressively add to their iniquity. The multiplication of evil in Shaphir will bring nakedness and shame. They will be marched out in shame (Boice 1986:17); so the plenitude in the land will become nothing and the pride of the rich in their splendour will be stripped to nakedness.

Micah resumes the use of assonance in the second of the three lines in verse 11 concerning Zaanan. "Zaanan" (1:11) צַאֲנָ֔ן *Tsaanan* sounds like the Hebrew for "come out",[71] that is *yaats-'aah* יָצְאָ֣ה. According to Maxey (2015), Zanaan is known for its military strength with well-armed fighting men. But its weapons and military strength will not prevail on the day of the destruction when the Assyrians will attack; so Micah is saying, "Those of you in 'Go Out City' will not go out" (Maxey 2015); thus the Zaananites cannot 'come out' at all because they will be surrounded and hemmed in.

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[71] The NIV text note states this.

Micah next mentions 'Beth Ezel'. The town's name means "house of the side" (Strong 2006). Unfortunately, Bullinger (1899) erroneously calls it "house of rest" in which sense it stands for "house-of-sloth, inactivity, idleness, indolence or laziness." The word אצל, in the BDB (2014:69) means proximity with something or "to join." It is used as a preposition to show relationship. For instance, "in proximity to", "beside", and stood beside (1Sam 5:2) or "in proximity to". אֵצֶל is used in Micah 1:11 as a proper masculine noun בֵּית־הָאֵצֶל which may probably mean the town of nearness (perhaps to God), would be pushed far away as its support is removed. The town would suffer a fate that is in contrast with the meaning of its name. In the last part of the verse, Micah seems to focus directly on the inhabitants instead of the apostrophic address to the city itself when he uses מִכֶּם "from you", instead of מִכָּה "from her". He is saying that the walls of protection would not withstand the attack of the Assyrians and thus its inhabitants would be destroyed.

Verse 12 mentions "Maroth" which is another town whose name sounds like the Hebrew for "bitterness" (cf. Ruth 1:20).[72] Maroth מָרוֹת will experience a fate that corresponds to her name: she will "writhe in pain", waiting for relief which will not come (Mackay 1993:83). The word, translated "writhe in pain", חָלָה here, can mean "to grieve, make sick; also to stroke (in flattering), entreat" (Strong 2006). Micah uses the sound and meaning of a word that conveys the message to this town because Maroth sounds like Mara, "bitter", thus they will experience the bitterness of heart. Instead of bringing relief, God will move Assyria to intensify her pains. Assyria is the rod of God's wrath that has reached 'the gate of Jerusalem', the centre of Judah's national life, so in Bullinger's words, "For the inhabitant of Maroth (Bitter-town) waiteth anxiously for good (R.V. marg., 'is in travail'), because evil is come down from the Lord into the gate of Jerusalem" (1899).

Micah again plays on the sound of the name "Lachish" in verse 13, a well-known strongly fortified town neighbouring Moresheth, the town from which Micah comes. It's name לָכִישׁ 'lāchîsh' sounds like the Hebrew word for "team לָרֶכֶשׁ (lārᵃkesh lit. 'to the team') of war horses used to pull a chariot" (Mackay 1993:83). But the command, "You who live in Lachish, harness the team to the chariot", seems ironic because the purpose of preparing the chariots is not to fight, but to escape (Mackay 1993:83. Cf. Ellinger & Rudolph 2006). That is why Feinberg states:

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[72] NIV text note on Ruth 1:20 refers to Maroth as a pool, or well, of bitter water in the Wilderness of Shur (Num 33:8-9). Marah was the first place where the Israelites stopped after crossing the Red Sea. The water from the well at Marah was so bitter and undrinkable (Ex 15:23-25) (NIV1986:423).

<blockquote>
Sarcastically, Micah urged the people 'of Lachish' (Heb. *lakish*), a town known for its horses, to hitch a "team" (Heb. *rekesh*) of 'horses' to a "chariot" to escape from the enemy. They would not be able to escape, however, because Lachish had led Jerusalem, as horses lead a chariot, into the sin of idolatry. 'There is no record of this in the historical books of the Old Testament, although it has been suggested that the horses given to the sun (2 Kings 23:11) related to idolatry were kept there.' (Feinberg in Constable 2015:14).
</blockquote>

Jerusalem and her people are personified as 'Daughter of Zion' and it is stated that Lachish is 'the beginning of sin' to her. Lachish has captured the faith of Zion (Judah) by its weapons and idols (cf. Hos. 10-13; Dt. 17:16). Any successes of the people were possibly attributed to the chariots and idols of Lachish, so she is "the beginning of sin" to Zion, and idolatry, as was found in the north "were found in you" (V.13).

Such sins made Micah state in verse 14 that**,** "you (Jerusalem) will give parting gifts", that is, farewell or wedding gifts "to Moresheth Gath" (cf.1 Kgs. 9:16). This verse is strongly connected to the previous verse as it shows the consequence of Jerusalem's dependence on Lachish at the expense of her faith in God. This is clearly expressed in the New International Version (NIV) and Bullinger's translations of לָכֵן as "therefore"; "Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to Moresheth-Gath (Gath's possession)" (Bullinger 1899) or the possession of "Tell" (Constable 2015:14). The name 'Moresheth' means possession (מוֹרֶשֶׁ ת). However, it also sounds like the Hebrew for 'betrothed', (מאֹרָשָׂה *'m<sup>e</sup>'ooraashaah'*). The name 'Gath' means "tell". But in this context, the gifts Micah is talking of are rather the tribute paid by the land to the conqueror (2 Kgs 16:8:18:14-16) as he deports the inhabitants of Moresheth, Micah's hometown, to a distant land. It would be impossible for the Davidic King to prevent the Assyrian army from capturing and exiling Moresheth-Gath (Constable 2015:15). And on that tragic day, "Aczib" (that is Hebrew for "deception"), Moresheth's neighbouring city, "will prove deceptive to the kings of Israel", who represent the entire covenant people (Mackay 1993:84). Aczib, that looks like a reliable support will disappoint the covenant people, represented here by the "Kings" – a clear example of metonymy.

Between Aczib and Lachish lies "Mareshah". Its name relates in sound to the Hebrew for Conqueror,[73] "*morashah*". In verse 15, God says "I will bring a conqueror against you who live in Mareshah." It would read as, "I will bring a "*morashah*" against you who live in Mareshah." The said "conqueror" would be the Assyrian king (Isa. 1:17; 10:5, 6). When the

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[73] NIV text note.

conqueror comes, the king of Israel and its nobility "will come to Adullam". Adullam is another fortress city well known as a place for the discontented (like David and others in I Samuel 22:1) seeking refuge in Saul's day (Smith 1984:33-34). "The point here may be that the situation would be so bad that the proper *heir* and *glory* of the nation, that is, the members of the royal family, would have to flee in terror to remote hiding places" (Constable 2015:15).

Therefore, the fortunes of Judah will be so reversed that out of extreme discontent, they would seek refuge in Adullam.

### 3.3.1.2 The Intertexture[74]

> The intertexture of a text, according to Robins, is the connection a text has with phenomena outside the text like, "oral-scribal, historical, social or cultural intertexture" (Robbins1997:31). Examining the intertexture would involve analysing how the text alludes to, s to, or cites either a written document, events, social or cultural knowledge available to the audience (Robbins 1996b:96).

Assyrian Connectedness: It would be reasonable, to think, to locate this prophecy (1:8-16) to a period between the end of Jotham's rule (750-732 BC) and Ahaz's reign (732-715 BC), as was noted earlier in 3.3.1.2. Maxey (2015), while citing other scholars,[75] it was indicated that it is possible that most of Micah's message was delivered during the reign of King Ahaz. At that time, religious and economic corruption was prevalent as indicated by the neglect of religious activities and a lack of moral restraint. Ahaz's religious perversion was the reverse of all that his grandfather Uzziah had done (cf. 2 Chron 28:1-4, 22-25). Caldecott and Schultz (1979) write:

> He erected molten images to Baal in the Hinnom Valley, burned his son in the fire, and generally conformed to heathen practices…. The doors of the temple porch were shut, the golden candlestick was not lit, the offering of incense was not made, and other solemnities were suspended.

All this was done despite Isaiah's warnings throughout Ahaz's reign. Change occurred later, during his son Hezekiah's reign.

Based on the annals of Tiglath-pileser II, Wiseman (1979) states that although Ahaz received some help from the king (Tiglath-pileser II) against a coalition of Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel, "Judah was invaded, Jerusalem itself being besieged (2 Kings 16:5; 2 Chron 28:17)".

Given the above, the nation would not be surprised by the vehement prophecies of Micah against the social ills prevalent in the land. Thus, the crisis later caused by Sennacherib's

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[74] This is Shaw's way of referring to the historical context or circumstance that provoked the speech.
[75] He refers to Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks,* and Hailey, but does not provide details to the references.

(705-681 BC) campaigns that were announced by the prophet Micah (1:10-16), is clothed with theological significance. That is, the political and military plans of the Assyrian king are turned into divine plans meant as punishment for sin. The great judgment made the prophet take up mournful lament to begin and end the oracle or pericope (Barker 1998:442).

The cultural intertexture, which examines "special cultural knowledge that is insider knowledge for people of [ANE and] Jewish … origins" (Robbins 1996b:96), is clearly reflected in Micah's use of the phrase, "קָרְחִי וָגֹזִּי literally, "make (self) bald and shave" (v.16) (Strong 2006). Barnwell (1980:32-34) writes that when a metaphor emanates from the speaker's and hearer's shared background knowledge, deeper understanding is gained and a greater impact is felt. Similarly, understanding the metaphor of shaving the head will be better understood only when ancient Hebrew culture is studied and it is understood to indicate a sign of demonstrating deep grief (Barnwell 1980:34). That may be the reason behind the NIV translation, "Shave your heads <u>in mourning</u> for the children in whom you delight", even where the Hebrew does not mention the noun, אֵבֶל (lamentation or mourning). The Hebrew is simply קָרְחִי וָגֹזִּי literally, "make (self) bald and shave" (Strong 2006). The construction is made up of two imperative feminine singular verbs joined by a waw-conjunctive, "and". It is the implication of the act of shaving the hair, especially a woman whose hair, in Jewish community, is her pride, which might have informed NIV's translation, "Shave your heads <u>in mourning</u>".

Another important element of cultural intertexture that stands out in this unit is Micah's use of proverbial sayings in 1:10; 2:4; 2:7 among others. Proverbs or wise sayings are cultural categories (Robbins 1996:86; Jodamus 2015:146) which might have been picked from the known collected body of proverbs familiar to the people.[76] One such saying is found in 1:10, "**Tell it not in Gath**", because it occurs within the text being considered now.

Micah 1:10 has a saying;

"**Tell it not in Gath**; weep not at all. In Beth Ophrah roll in the dust."

This statement, "**Tell it not in Gath**" comes through as a proverbial saying (Innes 1967:126). It is equally a word play (pun) as I discussed in 3.3.1.1 above. In curiosity, the researcher

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[76]Bradshaw (1995) indicates that ancient kings of kingdoms were preoccupied with the study and collection of wise sayings by employing "men to collect and record wise sayings", which assist their people in making good decisions. These included proverbs are "highly concentrated statement of truth" (cf. Fee &Stuart 1993:217). Micah might have gleaned from such body of situated knowledge of his immediate environment.

asks, what this expression evoked or meant and why did the prophet say, "Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all"? There might be one of three reasons. First, Gath was a Philistine city and to let them hear what was about to happen would bring insult to Judah. Second, if the Philistines heard of it, as an enemy nation, they would be motivated to take action immediately and attack the Judaeans. Finally, the greatness of the coming disaster would not give an opportunity for shedding tears. Judah will be overwhelmed by the intensity of the destruction, so much so that they cannot really cry. It appears that Micah is using the saying in a similar context as it occurs in 2 Samuel 1:20, where the reason for it is provided. The text reads, "**Tell it not in Gath;** proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice." It is, therefore, indicating that the doom that looms ahead of Judah will result in untold shame and humiliation.

### 3.3.1.4 The Sacred Texture

The sacred texture (2.3.3.4) deals with facts related to "deity, holy person, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption human commitment, religious community and ethics" (Robbins1997:31-32). In terms of this text (1:6-16), sacred texture relates the impact of the divine exhortation on the faith community. The personified woman in mourning represents Israel as a faith community responding in fresh religious commitment and expressing remorse as a response to a divine instruction that came through Micah the prophet.

In conclusion, Micah as a messenger of God said in his lament in verse 8, that he would strip himself naked. In the case of Micah, it was not clear that he actually walked the streets of Jerusalem naked. In the case of Isaiah, his contemporary, however, the Lord commanded, "'Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet.' And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot" (Isaiah 20:2-4) for three years. As noted earlier, being naked may simply mean moving out without an outer garment.

As noted, when looking at the rhetorical device (prophetic action) above (3.3.1.1), Martin (2013) explains that for a community in the Middle East this would be an unthinkable act, especially for a prophet. The audience must certainly have been gripped by both the dramatic rhetorical device of taking off one's clothes and the picture of mourning generally. Micah got the full attention of his Middle Eastern audience, particularly Judah, because even in ancient times, they strongly abhorred nudity no matter its form, unlike in Europe of today, where nakedness is not abhorred in the same manner (Martin 2013). Isaiah, Micah's contemporary, used the same strategy to reach his audience (Isa. 20:2-4). Micah immediately stated that the

approaching "incurable wound" from the north is the reason that necessitated the detestable contemplation of nudity.

Micah skillfully connected the nature of punishment that awaited each city either to the meaning, sound or importance it holds in Judah, which created a sense of certainty of the threat he foresaw.[77] This made the hearers spellbound and anxious for a way to escape the disaster pronounced concerning their particular town or village. That the gloomy pictures painted by the prophet are tightly aligned by language to the names of these towns, undoubtedly made the message to each of these towns and villages memorable to the inhabitants of each town. Micah's outburst of rhetoric intends to challenge his audience towards a change in behaviour. Eventually, these messages elicited a response of remorse and submission.

Micah began by demonstrating how the coming judgment has emotionally affected him but finally urged the entire audience to join in the lament as it concerns all not only him. This is an aspect of sacred texture that focuses on "ethical demands and responses" (Gowler 2010:195). Jerusalem is personified as a woman mourning the loss of her children. The towns are spoken of as the children of Jerusalem and her leaders. The leaders, as responsible parents, should care about the plight of their children under such terrible conditions, so they were prodded to join in the lament over what is happening to the children. As a mother weeps over a lost child by shaving her head, the people were emotionally stirred to show concern and rightly respond to avert the impending disaster.

### 3.3.2 Chiasm of Condemnation and Hope Micah 3:9-4:5

Due to the key historical events that are reflected in the 3:9-4:5, especially 3:12-4, namely the invasion of Judah, and the promise of a glorious future. I will start the analysis of this pericope with the intertexture of 3:9-4:5 to see the historical developments in Judah after the reign of the evil king Ahaz (see 3.2 above). This will provide a contextual outlook of the text as it related to the environment from which originated. This will be followed by the inner texture due to the literary beauty, chiastic structure and flowery language which are discernable only through "close reading" (Mamahit 2009:35). I will close the analysis with the sacred texture by focusing on God's redemptive plan for and ethical demands on His people (Robbins 2014:202) following their contrition.

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[77] It appears that no other OT prophet used such an intimidating style to communicate to particular peoples.

**3.3.2.1 The Intertexture**

The warning of an impending disaster and the promise of a brighter future in Micah's oracles, seems to have aligned with the historic relationship Israel had with Assyria during Hezekiah's reign in Judah (Freedman 1987:22). In exploring this relationship, Robbins provides the intertexture as a tool (1996a:3). The intertexture of a text critiques how the biblical text conforms to "phenomena outside the text" or in the world. Such observable facts may include the text's interaction with "physical objects, or historical events (historical intertexture), texts themselves (oral-scribal intertexture), customs, values, roles, institutions and systems (social intertexture)" (Muderhwa 2008:42). In the case of Micah 3:9-4:5, Robbins' intertexture, which deals with how a text relates to the socio-historical environment from which it emanates (2.2.3.4), is preferred because the text discusses historical issues related to Palestine in the 8th century.

Engaging this texture enriches and thickens the depth of our understanding of the text (Robbins 1996:3). According to Van den Heever and Van Heerden (2001:113), the intertextual analysis also enables one to "to determine the extent to which the changes made to these references help to create meaning in the text".

In determining the historical, political and social context of Micah 3:1-4:8 in general and 3:9-4:5 in particular, the researcher will attempt to investigate possible "situations that are particular to those specific moments of communication" (Sproat, Driscoll & Brizee 2012:3) that assist Micah in influencing the perception of the audience or listener (Sproat *et al*. 2012:1. See also Gitay 1980:296).

As previously stated, Micah presents a picture of an evil pre-exilic 8th-century context (1:1) when Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah reigned. According to Shaw (1993:109-117), Micah 3:1-4:8 is the prophet's address to the leaders of Judah who had failed to acknowledge the decision Ahaz took in 734 BC not to join in an anti-Assyrian coalition with Pekah of Israel and the King of Syria (cf. Cuffey 1993:109-117). The last part of the address (3:9-4:5) might be addressing King Hezekiah. Proto-Isaiah (7:10-17), an earlier contemporary of Micah, scolded adamant Ahaz, and was most probably supported by Micah in 3:1-8. Ahaz might have been deceived by the false prophets (3:5-7) who would still pronounce peace concerning him and his leadership (3:1-3), despite the fact that evil prevailed in his reign. Lockyer (1986) opines that, contrary to his four predecessors (Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham), Ahaz was a great apostate, making images of Baal and even sacrificing infants (2 Chron. 28:3). He

even ordered the priest in Jerusalem to build an Assyrian altar (2 Kings 16:10-16) "as the official place of the bronze altar" (Lockyer 1986). Ahaz's persistent idolatorous practices "brought divine judgment to Judah in the form of military defeats" (Nelson 1986) and led to his disgraceful end [78].

Unfortunately, these acts of apostasy happened under the watch of the consenting prophets, who were the official state prophets linked to the king (3:5-7). Therefore, in verse 8, Micah starkly contrasts his own vocation with that of the other prophets (Mays 1976:78, 84). He asserts that he is being led by the "Spirit" and "power" of God for the purpose of scolding God's people because of their sins (Mic 3:8). It is possible that Micah made similar declarations to the new king, Hezekiah. In 3:9-11, Micah re-iterated and re-strategised by rephrasing 3:1-3 in more vehement language. He said their apostasy would end in God's judgment (v. 12) followed by future restoration (4:1-4). This moved the audience to repentance in their response (v. 5).

The researcher believes that Micah (3:9-4:5 cf. Jer. 26:18-20) addresses King Hezekiah who had succeeded King Ahaz, after Ahaz's reign. For, if 3:1-4:8 addresses Ahaz's leadership only, then what led to Hezekiah's repentance? It would appear that, having heard Micah's warning and his father's negative response (3:1-8), which ended in dishonour (2 Kgs. 15:5-6; 2 Chr. 28:27), Hezekiah bowed to the words of the prophet (Wessels 2013:4) and brought about religious reforms that resulted in the reversal of the destruction (2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chron 29:3-36; 31:1).

Freedman's (1987:9-24) rightly speculates that the reforms came at the heels of the precarious situation that Hezekiah, the contrite king of Judah, found himself in at that time. Judah was attacked by the Assyrian King, but God miraculously spared the city in 701 (Isa 37; 2 Kings 18). Freedman (1987:22) states that we may not term this a victory but, "the deliverance of the city and the royal house [by Yahweh] was certainly worth a prayer of thanksgiving and the recognition that the nation had been spared by a compassionate deity" as was conceived of a century later (cf. Jer.26:18-19). The compiler of the book of Micah seems to indicate that God's deliverance was not the climax yet, but will be succeeded by a glorious future (4:1-5). Thus, the bright future painted in 4:1-5 was born out of the belief that just as God had promised the glorification of Jerusalem in the last days, He would certainly do more to change His peoples' conditions going forward.

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[78] He was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings of Judah (cf. 2 Kings 16:20; 2 Chron 28:27).

This stance seems to be supported by the textual context. The rhetorical analysis using the text's intertexture enables us "to understand better how a text functioned in its historical context" (Watson 1988:182) and how the truth is expressed. This prophecy, and its impact eliciting the memorable response it provoked in the days of King Hezekiah, is referred to in Jeremiah 26. Thus, 3:9-4:5 was probably written in the days of Hezekiah, but was possibly used in the post-exilic period for liturgical purposes as alluded to in v.5. The inner texture of the text will further show the content of this oracle.

### 3.3.2.2 The Inner Texture

The aspects of the inner texture that seem to be prominent in this pericope (3:9-4:5) relates to tools of communication like the linguistic patterns, structural elements, manner of persuasion, aesthetic of future hope/divine plan and ethical demands (Gowler 2010:195; see Robbins 1996a:7;1997:31) in 3:9-11;4:1-5.

In Shaw's (1993:100-109) literary and rhetorical analysis of the book, Micah 3:9-4:5 forms only a part of the third unit of Micah's prophecies (3:1-4:8). Shaw further divides this section into five sub-units. Units 3:1-4, 5-8 and 9-12 are considered to be oracles of judgment while 4:1-5 and 6-8 are seen to be oracles of salvation. Barker (1998:439-440), however, sees 3:9-4:5 as part of the second section (chapters 3-5) of three sections or "cycles" of the book, chapters 1-2, 3-5 and 6-7 respectively.

To understand this text well, the context of Micah 3:9-4:5 within the prophetic book must be determined.

I suggest that 3:9-4:5 consists of two sub-units, 3:9-12 and 4:1-5, with both united and focused on the rebuilding and exaltation of Jerusalem, with 4:1-5 being the climax. That climax, however, would come true only after Judah's destruction (3:12). The prophet opens the unit with a summons in 3:1, שִׁמְעוּ־נָא "Please listen". The addition of the interjection נָא to the imperative verb 'to listen' indicates an expression of strong entreaty or admonition (BDB 1906:609) in this context.[79] Contrary to what the false prophets of verses 5 to 7 postulate and their fate, Micah is filled with the כֹּחַ "power" and the רוּחַ "spirit" of God (v. 8)

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[79] נָא – Both Harris (1980) and BDB (1906) consider נָא as a particle of entreaty or exhortation when attached to an imperative (e.g. Gen 12:13). BDB however added three other meanings based on the contexts as follows: when joined (a) to the perfect with *waw* consecutive, it has a precative (precautionary) sense (Gen 40:14); (b) to the imperfect, it refers to a request, prayer or desire expressed (Gen 19:8); (c) to conjunctions and interjections to mean craving for a favourable consideration of the fact so pointed.

for the purpose of telling the truth. He declares Israel's sinful state, which would lead to God's just destruction of Jerusalem, after which He would rebuild her (3:9-4:5). The unit closes with a beautiful prophecy of restoration (vv. 6-8). Though verse 8 does not have a clear indication of a closing remark that marks it off from the rest of the text, verse 9 clearly shows a change of addressee from masculine personified place to "daughter of Zion" (Mays 1976:102). This shows that verse 9 opens a fresh unit, not a part that discusses the exaltation of Jerusalem.

Following Shaw's (Shaw 1993:100-109) argument that regards 3:9-4:5 as a unit which consists of two different subunits (3:9-12 and 4:1-5) that seem to present contrasting messages of judgment and hope respectively, the researcher will discuss the two sub-units together. It is believed by the researcher, that these two sub-units, when treated together in a rhetorical analysis, will present a summary of the message of the larger section (3:1-4:8). This appears to be Boice's (1984:31) view as well when he writes that 4:1-5 belongs to the previous section (that is chapter 3) and not the succeeding one. The researcher considers Boice's grouping important because here, Micah deliberately presents the divine message using a chiastic structural pattern (Bullinger 1899), containing the messages of judgment and hope. In this chiastic structure, the prefix to the first word of 4:1 forms the linking element of the two parts of the chiasm. So, the textual insertion of וְ ("but", "and", "or", "even", "also" [Wheeler 1988-2006]) as a prefix to the first perfect verb הָיָה (an emphatic "be or become, come to pass" [Strong 2006]) of 4:1 is a *waw* consecutive verb which acts merely as a connection that "precedes without any expressed contrast" (Deane 2006) to the preceding text of 3:9-12.

Chiasm[80] is also known as alternated symmetry. That means the order of two or more "terms (phrases or clauses)[81] of the second member (line) is different from the first (ab/b'a')" (Maynet 1998; see Bullinger 1899). A chiasm can be an *epanodos* (introversion of words) or *antimetabole* (introversion of proposition) (Bullinger 1899). Depending on the context, chiasms are presented to either show contrast, or two sides of a matter, depending on the linking word; or just "used for stylistic variation" (Barnwell 1980:42). It must also be noted that there are total as well as partial chiasms, depending on how much of the two sides of the symmetries correspond.

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[80] Bullinger (1899) also calls chiasm "introverted parallelism."
[81] 'Term' refers to the smallest unit of a poetic statement or lexeme

Psalm 142:3 is a clear example of a total chiasm as shown below:

**a** I pour out
  **b** before him
    **c** my complaint
    **c$^i$** my trouble
  **b$^i$** before him
**a$^i$** I tell

It must be noted that the structure in some chiasms is not as clear as Psalm 142:2. Micah 3:9-4:5 is such a case where there is a full chiasm, but its chiastic structure is not quite obvious. Its chiastic structure involves an introversion of subjects meant to enable the reader to see two aspects of the circumstances around Zion.

a. Prevalence of evil in Jerusalem and concentration of injustice and bloodshed vv. 9-10

    b. Evil leaders' brutality and hypocrisy v.11

        c. Complete humiliation of Jerusalem/Zion and abandonment by people v. 12

        c. Exaltation of Zion to the peak and thronged by people v.1

    b. Righteous leader reconciles nations – Jews and Gentiles – in loyalty to God vv. 2-4

a. Unreserved and never-ending allegiance to YHWH in Zion v. 5


In this text, the וֹ that links the two sides (judgment and exaltation) is translated as "and", because it is a conjunction that links the humiliation of Zion to her exaltation that will emerge after God's judgment. Thus, וְהָיָה ("but" or "and it will come to pass") in 4:1 implies that "it was impossible that the temple, to which God's high promises attached, should lie waste forever" (Deane 2006).[82]

As a result, the sub-unit that starts with a call on the evil leaders and the certainty of God's coming judgment ends with a promise of an eventual exaltation. Verse 5, which seems to be a later additional admonition against idolatry (McKane 1998:126; Wolff 1990:8/115), brings the sub-unit to a perfect close with the congregants' self-reproof.

Several rhetorical devices are employed by the Prophet Micah in this text as tools of persuasion. Generally, some of the devices and imagery employed (e.g. 1:6,8; 2:12; 3:12;

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[82] Note these translations: "And it will come about" (NASU), "Now it shall come to pass" (NKJV), "In days to come" (NRSV), "In the last days" (NIV); all indicate a conjunctive use of the וֹ (waw) particle that links the two scenes.

4:3,12-13; 5:4-8; 6:15; 7:1,4,14) betray his pastoral and rural background (Fausset 2006). I will examine some of these devices/images so as to illustrate the rhetorical prowess of the prophet.

**A Call to Attention:** The prophet opens (v.9) with a summons for attention, שִׁמְעוּ־נָא זֹאת "Hear this, I pray you!" or "Please listen to this!". He immediately identifies whom he is addressing, so as to get their full attention. Like a classical rhetorician, Micah uses this as an *exodium*, "introduction", to hold his audience spellbound as they listen. The combination of the imperative masculine plural verb שמעו and entreaty particle נה adds force to this call. The "leaders" and "rulers" are not only singled out, but are immediately characterised and condemned in the introduction (Waltke 1998:670), even before Micah tells them what he refers to by the demonstrative זאת "this". They were branded as those who "despise justice", "distort all that is right", and "build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with wickedness" (vv. 9-10).

**Direct Accusation in Parallel Lines:** In what may look like the classical *narratio* or *proof*, Micah suddenly switches from second in verse 9 ("you leaders" - In this context, נָא, which is a Hebrew interjection of provocation and appeal commonly translated, "I entreat (pray/beseech) you" (Strong 2006). In this sense, it would literally be, "I pray you, leaders and [you] rulers."), to the third person pronouns in verse 11 (רָאשֶׁיהָ "her leaders") (3:9-11). Like persistent and ceaseless raindrops, line after line, Micah frankly directs his words against the culprits, stating their faults (v. 11). In two sets of synonymous parallelism, Micah identifies the evil being practised and the persons perpetrating it. Micah saw sacrilege. There was an utter profanity of ordained human dignity. Note the expressions of the heinous sins of the leaders (judges).

| | |
|---|---|
| בֹּנֶה צִיּוֹן בְּדָמִים | who build <u>Zion</u> with *bloodshed*, |
| וִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בְּעַוְלָה׃ | and <u>Jerusalem</u> with *wickedness*. |

And three half-lines parallelism, he declared;

| | |
|---|---|
| רָאשֶׁיהָ בְּשֹׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ | "the **leaders** (heads) judge for reward" |
| וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ בִּמְחִיר יוֹרוּ | "and the **priests** teach for hire" |
| וּנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּכֶסֶף יִקְסֹמוּ | "and the **prophets** divine (soothsay) for money" |

For poetic emphasis, Micah adds the paragogic *hey* as suffixes to the substantive "leaders", "priests" and "prophets" (Wheeler 1988-2006). In Micah's words, the prophets do not נָטַף (*nātaf*) "prophesy" or "speak by inspiration" but קָסַם (*qāsam*) "divine" or "determine by lot or magical scroll" (Strong 2006). In summary, Micah directly shows that the people's shepherds have compromised their high calling for gain. For them, money speaks louder than God. Though they get their inspiration from the amount of money slipped into their pockets (cf. v. 5), the leaders ironically lay claim on the divine origin of their acts. Micah's use of *mimesis*, where their words or thoughts are imitated for emphasis (Bullinger 1899), in the verse (11b), further magnifies the leaders' ills. In verse 12, Micah blames the leaders' wickedness as the direct cause of the coming disaster. In a judicial manner, Micah declares, "Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill, a mound overgrown with thickets".

Micah speaks up fearlessly for the impoverished peasants who are exploited by the elites. In essence, he requires that the elites let justice roll, grant liberty to the poor, and return confiscated lands to their rightful owners (Smith-Christopher 2010:80-84).

**Chiasm of Judgment and Hope:** As noted while determining the rhetorical unit, the whole sub-unit (3:9-4:5) is structured in the form of a chiasm. Constructing a chiastic design using a beautiful picture of hope (4:1-5)[83] and devastation of judgment (3:9-12) in a chiastic design would seem to be in direct contrast to each other. But the whole sub-unit presents the processes that would lead to the exaltation of Jerusalem/Zion (3:12; 4:1-2). Like most other prophets[84], Micah (v. 3:9-4:5) writes that judgment must come, after which God will reverse every aspect of it, if the people make the appropriate positive response.

Mason reflects the chiastic nature of the text as follows:

> The city which was to be laid low as a heap of ruins will be 'raised up above the hills' (4:1). The place where the priests taught for hire (3:11) will become the place to which the nations come 'that he may teach us his ways' (4:2). The city whose rulers "abhorred justice" (Heb.) will be the place where God will 'judge' (Heb. –the verb from which the noun 'justice' derives) all nations (4:3). The place where the leaders claimed in unfounded confidence… [3:11b]

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[83] The occurrence of this oracle in both Isaiah and Micah is a question of redaction and form critical analysis rather than rhetorical. For interests sake, the researcher has an interesting reflection of this in his Master's thesis (Goholshak 2005:65-68) where it is postulated that this was a well-known poem that summarises Israel's future hope and so quoting from this may have some rhetorical undertone here. See also Sweeney (2001 esp. pp. 121-122).

[84] Jeremiah gave both messages of condemnation, and of reassurance and of hopefulness (Jer. 2: 1-2 and 46: 27; c.f. Isa 2:1-5).

will be the goal of the nations…in the justified confidence that they would encounter him in 'the house of the God of Jacob' (4:2) (1991:49).

In summary, the denunciations are listed below.

- The destruction and humiliation of the old temple/mountain/Jerusalem in 3:12 is in direct contrast to the exaltation of the new in 4:1.
- The old Jerusalem is built with bloodshed and injustice (3:10) while the new is built on justice and is a centre for the Lord's teaching (תורה) (4:1-2).
- The self-serving, and evil judging and teaching of the leaders of the old Jerusalem (3:9-11) is contrasted to the Lord's loving and beatific (blessed) judging and teaching (4:1-3).

So, verse 12 pictures Judah at the lowest point of humiliation and in the valley of judgment. Smith-Christopher (2010:85) shows that the vehement language used in this verse is meant to disrupt the unfair leadership set up, of the evil elites so as to allow for a fair hearing where the voices of all could be heard. This will then result in the picture of justice, freedom in life, productivity, self-realisation of every person and such peace seen in 4:1-5. Ultimately, therefore, the buildup from 3:9-4:5 is aimed at this realisation (Smith-Christopher 2010:85).

Both 3:9–12 and 4:1–5 are concerned with Zion and present seemingly contradictory messages, but they mirror a situation like moving from the mountain of sin into the valley of judgment, then transformed והיה into the exalted mountain of righteousness, justice, love and peace for all who come.

**Direct Quote**: Rhetorically, Micah directly quoted the words of the leaders in Micah 3:11, who tried to counter his God-given message. In similar contexts, Micah also quoted directly the very words of the false prophets to bring their falsehood to the fore (3:5); and he quoted them in 2:4 to condemn their confidence in God's favour, even when they adamantly continued to live in complete disobedience. In the context of chapter three, the leaders whom he was addressing are quoted.

Micah 3:11b reads,

> 'Yet they lean upon the Lord and say,
> **"Is not the Lord among us?**
> **No disaster will come upon us."**'

The expression "**"Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us**" finds similar phraseology in Amos 9:10 and Jeremiah 5:12, indicating that these instances could reflect a well-known "saying" which was being used with different nuances. In Amos 9:10, it reads:

> 'All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say,
> "**Disaster will not overtake or meet us**".'

A similar reading occurs in Jeremiah 5:12; 'They have lied about the Lord;

> they said, "**He will do nothing!**
> **No harm will come to us;**
> **we will never see sword or famine**".[85]

Why would Micah use quotations in telling his audience what God would have them do or know? What rhetorical benefit would that yield? This "fascinating aspect of Hebrew thought and creativity" is rooted in "Egyptian and Babylonian Wisdom literature" with helpful conceptions from familiar sources (Gordis 1949:157). Oriental quotations were thus an authentic norm for speaking in both "Biblical and extra-Biblical" writings. The engagement of quotations in ancient speech, as it appears in Micah's texts, is meant to enable "the free play of varying emotions and the lively conflict of ideas, which characterised the ancients no less than their modern descendants" (Gordis 1949:218); thus presenting a clear contrasting line of thought has a rhetorical effect of a sense of defeat especially when one's idea is proved to be incorrect. The audience then senses a weakness in its initial stance, leaving them with no better option, than to give in to the alternative that Micah recommends and promotes (cf. 4:5).

**Climax:** This is a device where things are stated in a sequence from the least exciting to the most exciting, or from smaller points to the main point. It is expressed in the judicial declaration of judgment in verse 12 that moves from "plowed like a field", to "become a heap of rubble" and then to "overgrown with thickets" (Mic 3:12). These are references to the topography around them. Micah portrays the future hope of God's people using the picture of an emerging indomitable mount ushering in an age of earthly abundance, peace and God's presence (4:1-2). The graphic interplay of simile and metaphor is strongly engraved in the minds of the people related to familiar concepts of farming as picture of the judgment (v. 12): Jerusalem will be plowed and overgrown with thick bush; and in the exaltation, inhabitants of Zion will peacefully farm and weapons of destruction will be transformed into productive,

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[85] While direct quotation of others' words are used among the prophets to disprove the people's stance that God would never bring disaster upon though they sin, it appears that Moses, in contrast, had used a similar phrase to rather challenge those who doubted God's presence in Exodus 17:7. This text reads, "And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the Lord saying, "**Is the Lord among us or not?**"

creative and life-giving tools. Rhetorically, this would make Israel "recognize that it is about them" (Cathcart 2012:221-222) that Micah speaks.

### 3.3.2.3 The Sacred Texture

With respect to Micah 3:9-4:5, sacred texture will be used "to explore the religious community of Israel and her response to divine messages" (Pillay 2008:64). In this case, the divine message exposes societal injustice, especially Judah's unethical leadership (3:9-11). It would appear that the religious community responded positively to the ethical demand on the leaders, leading to their redemption (Robbins 1997:31), if 4:5 is taken as their response to the divine call.

As alluded to above, Micah's words in 3:9-4:5 seem to have persuaded his audience to take action. The "shocking severity" (Constable 2015:25) of Micah's language in verse 12 is described as "an exploding bomb … formulated in direct address; "Therefore because of you" (Wolff 1990:108). Similarly, Smith writes, "What a bombshell this oracle would have been in Jerusalem" (1984:35). For us today, we consider this language use as harsh, but Micah aimed to quicken his audience to "the true gravity of their situation and [to] lead them to repentance" (Boice 1986:35). Smith-Christopher (2010:77-79) notes that violent rhetoric in the social setting functions as a means to release emotion and verbal force that produces strength from the audience, instead of violence.

The strengthening effect of violent language would appear to be true, even in Micah's case. After 4:1-4, which is like making known the prize (to the listeners) before the race ends so as to encourage faithfulness and resilience, verse 5 gives a form of response from the audience. Being hopeful of its fulfilment, though still in the difficulty described in the previous chapter, the audience immediately decided for the Lord (Mays 1976:99). They resolved that, even while the nations are yet to turn from their gods, "we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever" (Micah 4:5). Micah 4:5, which is distinct in vocabulary but remarkably similar "in subject matter" to Isaiah 2:5 (Wagenaar 2001:128), may be a summary of what is reflected in Jeremiah 26, where the supporters of Jeremiah reflect on the response[86] of King Hezekiah to Micah's forceful prophecy. It is also noteworthy that the

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[86] Even though this story is neither reported in I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, nor in I and II Chronicles, maybe for political reasons, it is reliable because the elders who recalled Micah's message were respected based on the position they held. It is possible that a phenomenal event and message that moved Hezekiah to repentance had been passed down, especially among the elders of the land. Unfortunately, though the princes who were ready to sentence Jeremiah might have been told by succeeding kings of what happened behind the scene in Hezekiah's

prophecies of Micah came to Hezekiah at an early stage in his reign and so resulted in the religious reforms that took place in his reign (Andersen & Freedman 2000:387). Thus, suitable rhetoric gives the audience the strength to turn away from evil. The people's positive response delayed the judgment for a century. Yet, as long as that peaceful period lasted, this threat of judgment hung over the city still (Mays 1976:87). Some elders recalled, possibly from a collective or common memory, and quoted Micah's prophecy in Jeremiah's days as having gained a positive response when first spoken by the prophet.

The sacred texture of this text indicates that God is the God of new beginnings. Though judgment may be imminent, God would bring restoration to His people in due time (Wessels 2013). This truth can be appropriated in our context today as Roberton shows in his description of the texture as that which "refers to the religious, ethical, and communal aspects of the text" that may "work to appropriate the text for the modern reader" (1999:64), Thus human redemption comes at a price, namely through repentance.

Micah's use of the word *torah* (teaching/training) is also central to the role of teaching and professional training that this thesis attends to, as well as the transformation it seeks to bring. Before the statement, "we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever", which illustrates the transformation that training brings, use two forms of the word *torah* in 4:2. The verse reads:

> Many nations will come and say,
> "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
> to the house of the God of Jacob.
> He will **teach** us his ways,
> so that we may walk in his paths."
> The **law** will go out from Zion,
> the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. NIV

Micah uses the verb וְיוֹרֵ֙נוּ֙ from the root יָרָה (*yarah*) meaning to "direct, teach, or instruct" (BDB 2006) This word is the root of the noun *torah*. Micah sees the act of teaching or training as the transforming agent that will enable the trained to become societal tansformers by passing on the תּוֹרָה "the law". The noun תּוֹרָ֗ה (law; direction; instruction) is not preceeded by a definite article in this context which would have been a reference to the Law of Moses, here primarily signifying "direction, teaching, instruction" (Vine1985). Like other

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day that guaranteed his success, yet they were bent on killing the prophet. When they were reminded, they could not reject the counsel of the elders. Even the 'false' prophets and priests who were there would have opposed the motion of the elders (v. 18), had they not known of the truth; so complied because rejecting such counsel would mean undermining their own vocation as a whole as well as their initial proposal (v. 8).

prophets, Micah calls Israel to return to the *torah* ("instruction") or training of God. The spiritual elevation of Zion (cf. Rev. 21:10) above other nations is occasioned by the fact that "the law of the Lord issues from it" (Keil & Delitzsch 1996) making it conspicuous for other nations near and far to stream to it.

Micah prophesies that in future the righteous rule of the Messiah will attract nations to Jerusalem clamoring for education. Micah's rhetorical power is precisely his proclamation of collective vocalisation by the community of nations in Micah 4:2. The transformation is not just about individual morality but also about collective education and reform. This fact will be noted as I analyse the sermons which are based on this text. It will equally anchore the pedagogical and curricular recommendations in the last chapter.

### 3.3.3 The Rhetorical מָה ("what?") that Provokes Repentance in Micah 6:1-8

The third and final text to be analysed (Micah 6:1-8) is constructed in a highly dialogical pattern within the scenario of a divine court. Micah 6:1-8 is a vivid dialogue in which God reproves Israel for their sinful and great ingratitude towards God's past acts of kindness, and they attempt to reply and are convicted (Fausset 2006). Due to the rootedness of the influences outside of the text, I will begin with Robbin's intertexture. In the pre-exilic period, prophets most often anchor their messages of judgement or hope around Israel's Egyptian experiences of slavery or deliverance (the exodus). These experiences give 6:1-8 a rich texture. In the dialogue creatively painted in this text, Micah combines both rhetorical artistry that conveys God's divine message and the audience's transformation in an inseparably woven pattern. So, because of the combination of both hope and judgment in this text, the researcher will, though such a possibility is not suggested by Robbins, interactively use both the inner and sacred textures simultaneously.

### 3.3.3.1 The Intertexture

Micah 6:1-8 as a pericope is a very popular text, especially the last verse. For example, the founders of the nation of America (e.g. John Winthrop, John Adams, and George Washington), who variously used this text, believed that a self-governing people must be a virtuous, self-controlled people and righteous if it is to be a stable, prosperous, and tranquil nation – one blessed by Almighty God (Dreisbach 2009:92-95). Micah 6:1-8 challenges recalcitrant Judah to reconsider God's demands on them for the sake of their own stability against the endless attacks on their land by Assyria; God's rod for punishing Judah. It appears

Judaeans had forgotten their special relationship to YHWH. Micah presents this issue in the form of a covenant lawsuit (6:1-8) where the judicial term רִיב (contend, plead, defend, debate or plead (Strong 2006), is used. In this case, Judah is the defendant and the Lord is both the plaintiff and judge. Because of Judah's covenant unfaithfulness, God arraigns her before a heavenly court of law.

The root of the רִיב pattern of presentation comes from the ANE covenant lawsuit concerning either a court context or a breach of cultic (covenant) context where natural features like mountains are called to witness (Huffmon 1959:292-293). The latter context fits Micah's allegorical use of רִיב (Ellis 2007). Smith explains : "When a wife failed to maintain her marriage covenant relationship with her husband, he could take her to court to seek justice, so the prophet Micah pictured God calling his covenant partner Judah to court to answer for her unfaithful acts towards Him (Mic. 6:1–16)" (2014:31), with the aim of "moving the Israelites to contrition" (Ramsey 1977:46).

In discussing the rhetorical situation for the prophecy in this text (6:1-8), Knud (1978:22-23), seems to conclude that, because Northern cities are named in 6:16 and 7:14, the North might have been the rhetorical setting for the prophecy. However, historically Shaw (1993:224) locates this prophecy (4-5; 6-7:7) to 725 BCE, before the arrest of Hoshea, the last king of Israel (cf. Leitch 2011:2-3), in direct contrast to McKane's (1998:19-20) proposal of any date from the days of lamentation (587 BCE) to the exilic period. In line with this, Bratcher reasons that at that time, the "Northern Kingdom had already been destroyed" (2016:4). Since no particular audience is mentioned, it is difficult to contextualise the prophecies to any particular historical or geographical situation.

This section of Micah's prophecy is framed by both a covenant lawsuit and a question and answer section. Micah possibly used the former after the events in 701 BC, when Assyria sent a delegation to warn erring Judah during Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings. 18:17-25; Isa. 36:1-10). Micah, as God's delegate, is telling Judah that there is a greater threat to their lives from God for breaching His covenant than what happened in 701 BC (Mackay 1993:132). The latter literary form, that is the question and answer, probably has its *sitz im leben* in an entrance liturgy, a prophetic sermon, in a wisdom teaching or didactic situation (Wolff 1990:145). This literary form possibly has its root developing from as far back as Hezekiah's day in the 8th century and was used in both the 7th century and into the post-exilic period. Thus, what happened in 701 BC is the most probable rhetorical situation that occasioned the

lawsuit. The question and answer section therefore, is the people's response to the suit brought against them possibly in the late 8th century BC after God's deliverance of Jerusalem. Verse 8 conveys the prophet's verdict on the people's questions. It shows that the breach of trust is rebellious and what God demands is justice, mercy and loyalty.

The text also makes reference to selected events in the exodus as a summary of the experiences of deliverance from Egypt under Moses' leadership. Though the historicity of the events from Israelites' sojourn in Egypt to the exodus is not affirmed by contemporary[87] Egyptian scribes (Osman 2014), the Israelites value it as a picture of God's salvation in all future interventions in human history, so Micah points to the exodus to contrast God's grace with Israel's recalcitrance as a rhetorical means to evoke repentance.

### 3.3.3.2 The Inner and Sacred Textures

An analysis of the inner texture of Micah 6:1-7 would reveal a vivid form of dialogue in which God calls Israel to account. With deliberate exaggerations of proposed lavish sacrifices, where Micah uses hyperbole and other rhetorical devices, Micah shows, as in the case of Samuel to King Saul that, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam 15:22). The fact that the inner texture focuses on those communicative devices and their use for persuading readers (Gowler 2010:195), leads the researcher to discuss that texture simultaneously with the sacred texture in the pericope. The inner texture is an interesting texture of text (Robbins1997:31) which in this text (Micah 6:1-8) relates closely with its sacred texture that focuses on the ethical/religious (Robbins 1996a120, 123-130) response of the faith community to such an appeal. Both the inner and sacred textures of the text are interwoven in the dialogical interchange.

The literary unit forms the first part of the last of three sections of the book (6:1-7:20), as discussed in 3.14 above. The researcher will start by placing the text in its literary context based on the book's final form while reflecting on the scholars' views, on the divisions of the text. Finally, the researcher will suggest some reasons and ways that this sub-unit (6:1-8) can be considered as a unit on its own.

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[87] However, this Egyptian story is not completely absent from historical records. For instance, Manetho, a third century BC Egyptian priest who was also a historian is said to have recorded the history of Egypt in Greek to be placed in the Library of Alexandria. In that record called *Aegyptiaca*, he included the story of Moses (Osman 2014).

The researcher will not repeat all the discussions and proposals by Barker (1998), Shaw (1993), Cuffey (2015), Leitch (2011), and Andersen and Freedman (2000:504ff) concerning the structure of Micah that was first discussed in 3.14. Simply put, 6:1-8 comes after the predominant oracles of judgment on Israel and Judah (chap. 1-3) and of hope and restoration (chap. 4-5). Immediately after the oracle in chapters 4-5, Micah further proclaims oracles of judgment and hope (chap. 6-7). Thus 6:1-8, which is a dispute (Heb. ריב rib) between YHWH and His people prodding them to justice and covenant loyalty (Mason 1991:14), acts as an introduction to chapters 6 to 7 (Jacobs 2001:157).

Though Jacobs (2001:157) suggests that the unit can further be divided into three sub-units (vs.1-2, 3-7 and 8) around the theme of YHWH's dispute with Israel, while Bratcher (2016:6) suggests two (1-5, 6-8). The researcher would prefer to divide the text into four (verses 1-2, 3-5, 6-7 and verse 8), as the succeeding statements show. Verses 3-7 appear to be spoken by God, with Judah's response to God's accusation being found in verses 6-7. Interestingly, the literary structure of the unit is distinctly formed into four parts around the interrogative particle מה ("what") or אשר. In verses 1 and 2, אשר introduces us to "what" is at stake – a call to hear what God has to say to his covenant people, through his delegate Micah, in the presence of permanent witnesses, the mountains and hills. The other three parts of the pericope are structured using מה "what". Though the root of this word occurs seven times in the pericope, only three have structural significance: verses 3-5 tells us "what" evil Judah is accused of committing; verses 6-7, "what" response the people would give to the accusations; and verse 8, "what" God had made known and expects of His covenant people. This will be further treated under rhetorical techniques later (3.3.3.2).

The structure is similar to the chiastic outline given to the section by "Literary structure (chiasmus, chiasm) of the Book of Micah" which runs as follows:

A (6:1-2) Hear, O mountains, the plea of the LORD (6:2)
  B (6:3-5) Questions of the LORD
  B' (6:6-7) Questions of the people
A' (6:8) You have been told (6:8).

Finally, the end of the unit is clearly marked by the judicial verdict of verse 8 and by the פ in the Masoretic text.[88] That means that the line that פ is attached to belongs to the preceding lines and does not belong with the succeeding lines.

Though a bright future is promised in preceding chapters, Judah is still struggling with societal ills. Micah employs many rhetorical devices at the beginning of this last section of the book (Mic 6-7) to convey his message in the clearest possible ways. These devices include:

- ✓ Covenant lawsuit (vv.1-8)

- ✓ Apostrophe (v.1 "let the hills hear what you have to say"; v. 2 "Hear, O mountains")

- ✓ Repetition (vv. 3, 6, 8 "what"; v.6 "Shall I come" etc.)

- ✓ Historical reflection (v. 4-5, e.g. "I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery.")

- ✓ Rhetorical questions (vv. 3, 6-7)

- ✓ Hyperbole (v. 7 "ten thousand rivers of oil")

- ✓ Sarcasm (v. 6-7)

- ✓ Climax (vv. 6-7, "calve a year old, thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil, my first born")

The researcher will only discuss three of these elements, namely covenant lawsuit, *Dialogismos* (or dialogue) and rhetorical questions, as most of the other devices will be highlighted in the course of discussing these two. These two rhetorical devices are themselves intertwined in this section.

**Covenant Lawsuit:** This form is also called a "Prophetic Lawsuit", from the Hebrew word ריב *rib* for "controversy", or "contention" (Davidson 2010:45). The term 'Covenant lawsuit' is a combination of two Hebrew terms, ברית "covenant" and ריב "lawsuit". ברית (covenant) basically refers to "a binding agreement between two parties" (Lopez 2004:72), like the treaty between nations, the agreement between individuals, or a constitution between a king and his

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[88] The Aramaic word פתוחָא *Parashah*), is a paragraph marker which indicates an "open paragraph": i.e., a paragraph starting a new line after an empty or incomplete line (Wheeler 1988–2006).It is normally indicated by the Hebrew letter פ at the end of the paragraph.

subjects. Here, it basically refers to a relationship treaty between God and man "accompanied by signs, sacrifices, and a solemn oath that sealed the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it" (Smick 1980). ריב means the act of engaging in a court case with someone. It is often translated "to plead" (Ps. 43:1) "to defend" (Ps. 74:22), "present" (Prov. 18:17) or "take up" (Prov. 22:23) (Mounce 2006:517-518). It also means "to plead, strive, conduct a legal case, make a charge" with words (Gen. 26:20) or a physical fight (Ex 21:18) (Vine 1985). Therefore, a covenant lawsuit would be strife that arises due to a breach of covenant demands.

Usually the prophetic ריב (*Rîv)* is used as an indictment of God's people for their breach of the covenant (Smick 1980), pictured in a metaphorical court (Amos 3:1-8, Hos 4:1-5, Isa 1:8; 3:13, Jer 2:9, 12:1, etc.). Davidson clarifies that "the *Sitz im Leben* of the lawsuit is in Israelite secular law conducted at the city gates" (2010:46) and is normally organised in a five-fold structure (preparations for the trial, cross-examination without expectation of reply, accusatory address, official declaration of the accused's guilt, and condemnation expressed in threats or positive instructions as to how the accused is to respond) that is intended to showcase God as guiltless and ultimately to "awaken a positive response of repentance for better future relationship (Richard 2010:49-50).

Vine considers Micah 6 as "a classic example of such a legal case against Judah, calling on the people 'to plead' their case 6:1 and progressively showing how only God has a valid case 6:8" (Vine 1985). This text is typically structured in the pattern of the ANE "vassal's breach of covenant and the suzerain's just actions toward the vassal" (Richard 2010:65).[89]

**Verses 1–2a Preamble to the Lawsuit**

Here God lodges a lawsuit against his people. Micah sets the scene with a beautiful metaphor of a covenant lawsuit with Israel as the defendant and the Lord as both plaintiff and judge. It is presented in a carefully structured dramatic poem full of emotionally moving words and actions.

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[89] Richard (2010:65) patterned Micah 6 as a vassal's breach of covenant in the following format: List of witnesses (heaven and earth; mountains and hills): 6:1–2a; preamble (introduction of the suzerain and call to judgment): 6:1–2; historical prologue (review of the suzerain's benevolent acts toward the vassal): 6:3–5; indictments (breach of covenant stipulations): 6:6-8; verdict (guilty, "Therefore") and sentence (pronouncement of the curses): 6:13–16.

After the general call for attention, the next two cola in verse one take masculine singular imperative forms קוּם "arise, stand" and רִיב "contend, debate or defend", as well as the second person masculine suffix קוֹלֶ֑ךָ "your voice". The unknown addressee is commanded to

"Stand up, plead your case before the mountains;

let the hills hear what you have to say."

Mackay (1993:132) and McKane (1998:179) assume that this is a command to Micah to act as God's representative, in which case the inverted commas would close at the end of verse one. However, Micah seems to be addressing Judah as an individual (synecdoche) that is required to speak in defence of its behaviour. Hence from verse 6, the singular representative worshipper would respond as an individual, "With what shall I come …" (Mays 1976:128). McKane (1998:179) states that Micah, demands "everyman" in Judah to debate the accusation that would be pronounced. It is plausible to note, then, that the legal process spans the whole pericope.

Verse 2. Judah is summoned to the holy court, in order to debate its case against an accusation yet to be pronounced. The prophet started by commanding the הָרִים "mountains" and וְהָאֵתָנִים מֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ "and everlasting foundations of the earth", i.e. the permanent fixtures in the physical world, to act as witnesses to the charge the Lord has against his people Israel: "Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation … listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth." Micah uses a rhetorical device called apostrophe, where the speaker diverts attention from the main audience to address a new person (who is absent or dead) or a non-living thing. Also called prosphonesis, the apostrophe is known for its emphatic and solemn undertone (Bullinger 1899).

Hiller (1997:72) writes that it was usual to have prophets call for witnesses at the very beginning of a covenant lawsuit. Such witnesses sometimes include the permanent natural features as well as deities, especially in the case of non-Israelite prophets among the gentile nations.[90]

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[90] Hiller (1997:72) noted that "The prophetic call for witnesses at the outset of a covenant lawsuit is common. The heavens and earth, normally present at the ratification of the covenant between Yahweh and his elect nation (Dt. 4:26, 30:19, and 31:28), appear as witnesses in later contexts (Dt. 32:1; Ps.50:4; Isa. 1:2). Although, for us, the call for mountains to serve as witnesses is unique in biblical literature, it is customary in ANE treaties, where, after listing various duties, Akkadian and Hittite treaty texts address 'the mountains, the Rivers, the springs, the great deep, heaven and earth'" to act as witnesses to the treaty.

In essence, these physical fixtures are called as witnesses because they have been around for a very long time (note the root אֵיתָן for "permanence; hence (concrete) permanent; specifically a chieftain"[91] and have witnessed all of God's dealings with Judah as recorded in verses 3-5.

Verses 3-7, though divided into two sub-units (vv. 3-5 and 6-7), are a complexity of dialogical engagement combined with rhetorical questions where the prophet presents God's case against Judah.

*Dialogismos* (or dialogue): This has to do with the conversation and presents one or more people speaking about something. There are two forms of dialogue in Micah. In this pericope, the person speaking conveys the thoughts of both parties (Judah and God) in the conversation. The figure is called *logismus*, while what is stated is said to be *in dialogismo*. In Micah 2:4, a related form of dialogue called *sermocinatio* is used where the speaker brings forward another as speaking, and uses his words, adapting them to the object in view (Bullinger 1899).

**Rhetorical Questions:** These are questions asked by a speaker either to simply make a statement or produce an effect rather than expecting an answer. In the Bible such questions are used to: emphasise a fact that is obviously true; specify a particular condition under which something applies; introduce a new topic or a new aspect of a topic; express surprise; rebuke or exhort someone; and to express uncertainty (Barnwell 1980:30-32).[92]

Micah uses the interrogative pronoun "מה *Ma*" (what) that prefixes the series of rhetorical questions and divides the dispute into seven parts (Andersen & Freedman 2000:518). Thus, after the summons (vv. 1-2), the rest of the passage unfolds in the form of a dialogue, allowing the audience to participate in the event (vv. 3-5, 6-7, 8). Each speaker begins the argument with "what?". The plaintiff who is also the prosecutor asks the accused (Israel) what fault they find with him (vv. 3-5)? The false worshipper asks "with what" sacrifice the Lord would be pleased (vv. 6-7)? Note verse 6 is expressed as though it were a personal individual response. Micah has the last word; the Lord has made known "what" he wants (v. 8).

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[91] This note is from James Strong (2003) in the data base of *PC Study Bible*.
[92] These uses are a little different from why Nigerian preachers use such devices as I looked at in 2.4.4 of chapter two where they are used to influence the minds of hearers to take action; to provoke deep thought, allowing hearers to provide the obvious answer for themselves; and to avoid giving a tricky answer.

**The Divine Indictment vv. 3-5**

It is important to take note when something is repeated in a Bible passage because the repetition may be for emphasis. In verse three, עמי "My people," is repeated twice, and here, Micah is quoting YHWH's words directly. Repetition or *anaphora* uses "the same word at the beginning of successive clauses" to add "weight and emphasis to statements and arguments" (Bullinger 1899). Where God repeats a matter, it is meant to emphasise the friendly and loving bond between him and Judah (Mackay 1998:133). When Micah uses עמי (my people), it was a reminder of their covenant relationship with God and a counsel for recalcitrant Judah!

Out of love and concern for straying Judah, God demanded, מה עשיתי לך ומה הלאתיך ענה בי עמי "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me." The way the question is framed shows that the people had lost interest in God. Ironically, God has faithfully shown love to the people in the Exodus (Ex 15:13) despite all odds. In this text (6:3-5), YHWH asks Judah, who had no reason to be tired in this case (Andersen & Freedman 2000:518), "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me." They would not need to answer this question because he had not failed them in any way. His question appealed to their emotions (*pathos*). Historically, God has been faithful (cf. 1 Sam. 17:29; 20:1; 26:18; 29:8; Isa. 5:4) (Constable 2015:35). God continued the prosecution's case in the form of a survey of Israel's redemption history from Egypt to the Promised Land; so, rather than wearying Israel, Yahweh has redeemed the nation.

To make the historical development of their covenant relationship clearer, the leadership God provided Judah and four representative events of the exodus, illustrating aspects of his redemption of the nation, are pointedly being called to remembrance (vv. 4-5). The events are as follows:

**The rescue from Egypt:** an unforgettable act of God's goodness to them (Constable 2015:36).

**The leadership of Moses, Aaron and Miriam:** all are well respected throughout Israel's history.

**God's intervention in Balaam's intended cursing of Israel:** the knowledge of the narrative of Numbers 22:24 is simply assumed (Mays 1976:135).

**The crossing of Jordan:** Shitim being the last main encampment east of Jordan, and Gilgal the first on its western bank.

To further appeal to *pathos* through logical facts, Micah now calls upon the covenant people to זכר *zakar* "remember" these acts of grace so as to enable them to ידע *yada* "know" the righteous acts of God. The command to "remember" serves many purposes: (a) it justifies God's innocence; (b) shows that Israel is ungrateful and lacks faith; (c) and more importantly, it opens the door for Israel to participate anew in God's saving acts. Childs (1962:56) rightly states that *zakar* means to actualise the past into the present, not merely to recall past events as in a historical examination. By actualising the past, Childs (1962:56) means that though the 8th century audience of Micah, is a generation that is historically far removed in time from the ratification of the covenant and God's showed faithfulness in the exodus, recalling the past events would draw them closer to respond to the great acts of redemption (Cf. also Mays 1976:135). In summation, Micah calls Judah to re-experience God's grace simply through the memory of the past and, on that spiritual foundation, to keep their covenant with God.

Micah also commands them to "know" God's righteous acts. The term "To know" refers to both cognitive and affective knowledge. It refers to an intimate and practical acquaintance with what one has already stored up in one's heart (Mackay 1993:136). The purposeful nuance of this verb, "to know", is reflected in the infinitive construct form of the verb דעת in this context: "that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord" (v.5). They were to acknowledge and respond to all that the Lord had done for them (Mackay 1993:136). The successive identification of the Lord's acts must have "evoked the memory of Sinai and the giving of the *Torah*, the 'instruction' for how to live as God's people" (Bratcher 2016:9-10), the entire exodus, and God's enduring love even in the face of their failures. Therefore, remorse and repentance were resultantly triggered (vv. 6-7).

**Verses 6-7. Response and Lavish Sacrifice**

The false worshipper rhetorically asks, במה אקדם יהוה אכף לאלהי "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God?" "With what" sacrifice would the Lord be pleased (vv. 6-7)? Knowing what God really requires, Micah places these words in the worshipper's mouth with a sarcastic tone (Bratcher 2016:14).

The court scene switches to the formerly defiant, but now contrite Judah accepting her guilt. The series of questions that follow heighten the tension in the text. The prophet appropriates the people's response to frame it as a male individual seeking priestly instruction (Wolff 1990:177). The "Israelite" inevitably expresses his desire to bring acceptable worship in terms of the sacrificial system familiar to him. In essence, the worshipper is asking whether the magnification (amplification) of offerings would enable them to win the favour of God, and make amends for their past failures. The offerings the worshipper envisaged steadily increase in value from small to reach an exaggerated climax. For instance, according to Micah 6:7:

"Will the LORD be pleased with **thousands of rams**,
    with **ten thousand rivers of oi**l?
Shall I offer **my firstborn** for my transgression,
    the **fruit of my body** for the sin of my soul?"

Burnt offerings represented total dedication. Though the identity of the respondent is clear, Leitch states that the "first-person narrative of verses 6-7 shows that the people recognize the need for a corporate, unified response" (2011:10). Calves that were a year old, represented the most desirable kind of sacrificial animal (Leitch 2011:10). Thousands of rams (cf. 1 Kings 8:63) and ten thousand rivers of oil represented lavish sacrifice. One's first-born represents one's most valuable possession. All these will fail to remove their transgressions (Constable 2015:37). All these exaggerated sacrifices suggested are meant to make a point and not necessarily the real expectation of what would be done. This is worth noting to avoid any unusual reading of the text (Bradshaw 1995).

As such, the hyperbolic and ever increasing volume of sacrifices suggested by the worshipper add to the sense that the sacrifices are more than s/he really meant to bring, but heighten the sense of his/her deep desire to offer the best (Bullinger 1899). Conversely, sacrifices are signs of the worshippers' acknowledgement of their relationship of grace to God and their duty to act faithfully (Bratcher 2016:12).

**Verse 8. YHWH's Desire Communicated**

The rhetorical "What" opens the final verse of this pericope (Micah 6:1-8). After the accusation in the second person masculine singular (vv. 3-5) and the response of the repentant addressee in the first person masculine singular (vv. 6-7), verse 8 again changes person to the second masculine singular (cf. vv. 3-5), thus indicating a change of speaker

(Leitch 2011:11) who relates "what is good" (v. 8). Rhetorically, the prophet appeals for sober reflection on God's revealed will in their historic covenant relationship with YHWH.

Micah, God's spokesman, has the last word concerning the importance of faith and true religion. This is not man's suggestion, but what the Lord has made known; "what" God wants (v. 8), i.e. nothing but the worshipper (Mays 1976:136). In verse 8, having noted the ultimate ineffectiveness of the prescribed system of sacrificial worship (cf. Heb. 10:4), the prophet gives an answer unsurpassed in spiritual insight anywhere in the Old Testament (Smith 1984:51). He says that sacrifice in and of itself without a proper relationship to God and neighbour, is useless. God has told the plaintiff/s what he seeks from him/them, that is, "what is good", and "beneficial": a change in the behavior of each sinner (Constable 2015:37), who then opts "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Mic 6:8). Bratcher translates *ḥesed* as "Covenant faithfulness, compassion, loyal love, loving devotion, and steadfast love" (2016:18). The three concepts – justice, mercy and humility, summarise the covenant requirements (Mackay 1993:138). They show that when one comes before God, "it is not so much what is in one's hands but what is in one's heart that expresses itself in conduct that is important" (Smith 1984:51).

The success of Micah's rhetorical prowess in 6:1-8 is evident in the persuasion elicited and revealed through the audience's response in verses 6-7 and their readiness to know the demands of God with the determination to uphold them. This persuasion may be a pointer to the positive response that occurred in Hezekiah's days to which Jeremiah 26:18-19 alludes. The revealed fact at the end of the text calls the worshipper to look beyond the rituals and demonstration of offerings (Bratcher 2016:21), to what is really important: being just, loving mercy and walking humbly before God.


## 3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with how Robbins' SRI would be applied in the rhetorical analysis of the book of Micah. This is followed by a brief background or introduction to the book of Micah, in terms of its rhetorical context as it relates to other 8th century prophets, Hosea, Amos and Isaiah. The composition and structure of the book of the book were also explored. It then reflected broadly on the rhetorical strategies that Micah used to counsel his people and transform their perceptions and attitudes, after which a detailed rhetorical analysis of Micah

1:8-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8 are done using Robbins multitextural approach, especially the inner texture, the intertexture and the sacred texture.

The general reflection or overview showed that Micah used numerous common rhetorical devices and sayings to bring God's words of judgment and hope, while the analysis of the selected texts showed that Micah was able to persuade his audience so well, that their positive response moved God to delay the punishment for over a century (cf. Jer. 26:18-20). This is a great lesson for Bible teachers today and an encouragement for them to explore and learn the best ways to use biblical rhetoric in tandem with common local sayings in their context. In the next chapter, I will examine whether and to what extent pastors in Mwaghavul land use both biblical rhetoric and their local sayings or *sumpoo* in communicating Micah's message.

## Chapter Four: The Persuasive use of Biblical Rhetoric and *Sumpoo* among Preachers in Mwaghavul Land

**4.1 The Mwaghavul People and the Rhetorical Engagement of Wise Sayings (Sumpoo)**

> Proverbs are to the traditional Africans what the Bible or Quran is to the religious leaders; where the religious leader would reach for a passage in the Holy book, the African would reach for a proverb. Proverbs are to one traditional African, what a book is to a student; he studied and mastered proverbs just as a student studies his subject matter in books (Momoh 2000: 361).

Having discussed the first pole of the tripolar theory of interpretation, the researcher now comes to the second pole, which is the readers'/ congregants' context (Draper 2015:8; Farisani 2017:8-9; Adamo 2015: 36; West, 2010:30). In this chapter, the researcher will look at the readers' context in the first part of the chapter and the appropriation in the second part.

Momoh's statement (above) reminds us of Masenya's (2016:5) thesis that the Bible and proverbs are the sacred texts in African biblical scholarship. It also foregrounds the centrality of the reader's context in African biblical interpretation, where, in interacting with the context of the text, the meaning of the text is produced (Ukpong 2001:24).

The inculturation theory of Justin Ukpong as a lens, is central in "bringing the text within its historical-social context to bear on the [African] contexts of the present day ordinary Bible readers" (Masenya 2016:2; also Ukpong 2001, 2002). The actual act of such interaction between the two contexts, called appropriation, is only possible through the reader (Draper 2001:151) who is influenced by her/his "ideo-theological orientation" (West, 2010:30). Such dialogue/appropriation is the third pole of the tripolar model of interpretation dealing with the interpretive process (Nyirimana 2012:22). The second part of the chapter will transit from the reader's context to looking at the appropriation of the two rhetorical moments (biblical rhetoric of prophet Micah and Mwaghavul *sumpoo*). As Rose Nyirimana opines, these poles are simply "interwoven interpretive moments/poles" (2012:22). The appropriation will continue into the next chapter. The way preachers in Mwaghavul land take ownership of the two rhetorical moments and interactively blend them into the sermon rhetoric will be analysed at the close of this chapter. In the rhetorical analysis of these sermons, the Heidelberg method, a popular method for analysing African sermons (Chifungo 2013: 3, 67-69;

Nhiwatiwa 2012b:74-77; Vaessen 1999:4), will be used (see 2.5.3.3).[93] This will enable the researcher to establish how Mwaghavul preachers use indigenous wisdom in their preaching. Even though Robbin's socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI) could be used to analyse aspects of the sermons, it is not a tool designed for this task as the aspect of application in current (African) contexts is not assessable by SRI.

In the previous chapter, the researcher studied the text of Micah in light of its 8th century BC context. In this chapter, the researcher will examine the socio-rhetorical context of the Mwaghavul people and how the bible is read, understood and used among the ordinary Mwaghavul people as a reading community. This is necessary because, in Draper's words, "the work of exegesis is not complete if we end with 'what the text meant' for the first hearers/readers even if we have proofs to those claims. Exegesis has to come to terms with 'what the text means' today" (2001:156-157). So, this pole examines the reader's present context and the questions that the Mwaghavul bring to the text. In the ever-changing nature of the African context, Draper's (1996:59-77) conception of residual knowledge with which we approach the text is helpful in addressing areas of outside influences.

The Mwaghavul people (4.1.1), as an African people group, use indigenous wisdom (*sumpoo*) in communication for different purposes and in different ways to gain acceptance by the audience (individual or group). With the emergence of Christianity as promoted by the missionaries, such deep-seated wisdom was demonised and alienated from any Christian discourse as an archaic and unholy form of language (Dube 2012:13; Ramantswan 2016:23). It is possible that the missionaries attempted to produce a pure Christianity, that has no connection with idolatry, given that these cultural sayings were mostly used for religious rituals. In the postcolonial era, African biblical interpretation, as discussed in chapter two (2.3 and 2.4), privileges a synergy of the Bible reading that centre-stages the readers' context "a postcolonial lens" (Dube 2012:2; See also Adamo 1998:60–90; Ukpong 2002:17–32). In the case of this research, the cultural wisdom in the Mwaghavul culture is brought to the fore as a point of engagement with the Bible in creating sermon rhetoric.

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[93] Davidson K. Chifungo (2013:26-27) rightly privileges the Heidelberg's method of sermon analysis over others because it enable the analyst to both observe as well as do an in-depth analysis of sermons by asking specific *theological questions* about how the Bible is used in the sermon, the "theology being preached, the language and rhetorical strategy being used in the sermons".

As described earlier (2.5), the rhetoric of African sermons is a conglomerate of rhetorical moments.[94] Chapters four and five focus on the rhetoric of these African sermons, laying particular emphasis on the rhetorical strategies of the preachers than on the effectiveness of the synergistic usage of the rhetorical moments in their sermons. The assumption here is that echoing of the rhetoric of a biblical text with local/indigenous rhetoric (e.g. proverbs) through the rhetoric of a sermon, better conveys the "message". Thus, the researcher's hypothesis is that the Mwaghavul people, as the reading community whose mode of communication is rooted in African wisdom, would better understand the Bible through such voices of inculturation (1.3.2).

**4.1.1 Geographical Location and History of the Mwaghavul of Central Nigeria**

In discussing the history and development of the Mwaghavul language building up to the people's use of wise sayings, it may be useful to reflect more deeply on the description and history of the context of the study stated in chapter one. Since *sumpoo* is a form of language used in communication, the researcher will concentrate more on the social and cultural aspects of the Mwaghavul people.

Sketching the early history of the Mwaghavul, as with any oral culture, is a difficult venture. The Mwaghavul people who speak the Mwaghavul language are also called "*Sura*" by the Hausa immigrants (slave traders). They are said to be from the East. However, "no one knows exactly how far east from their present abode" (Datok 1981:1). Being horse riders, they were great warriors as acknowledged by Captain H. D. Faulkes of the British patrol team into Panyam in 1907 (Datok 1981:2). Oral tradition has it that the Mwaghavul moved from the East and settled in the Chad area.[95] From there, "Possibly they were compelled to leave as a result of the incursion of the Kanembu during the fourteenth century AD (c14)" (Datok 1981:2-3). In fact, Barnabas noted that "the traditions of the people and linguistic evidence show that they migrated from the Lake Chad basin into their present abode" and even "Names of places in Mwaghavul land such as Kwa and Mangun bear similarities to Dikwa and Monguno in Borno" (Barnabas 2011:27, 30).

Geographically, having sojourned at different places as they moved from Borno between 1100 AD and 1350 AD (Blench *et al.* 2012:vii; Nyang, Bess, & Davum 2013:1; Barnabas

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[94] In this research, the researcher has identified three rhetorical moments in African sermons which includes rhetoric of the text, indigenous rhetoric and of rhetoric of the sermon.

[95] Though this is the general view, there are a few villages that claim that they have always lived in the particular place they now live and their ancestors all came from the same place – they are indigenous (Barnabas 2011:28,32).

2011:29-35). They now occupy the nine districts in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State in central Nigeria as their base (Barnabas 2011:27). Due to secondary migration, the Mwaghavul are found in different settlements within and outside the state, especially in central Nigeria as a whole. Barnabas (2011:34) adds that this is because, "During the colonial and post-independence periods there was a great outflow of Mwaghavul outside their home country to many parts of the Plateau, Nassarawa and Kaduna State".

In 2011, their population was estimated to be about 700,000 speakers (Barnabas 2011:29). The main towns of the Mwaghavul are Mangu and Panyam. This figure may likely be true because the Mwaghavul people are proud of having large arable farmland that helps support their usually large families.

The socio- religious life of the Mwaghavul people is also discussed. Haggai (2011:35-40) opines that the social organisation of the Mwaghavul people was (and still is) based on kinship through patrilineal descent and biologically determined on the father's side, forming the basis of inheritance. The family (mostly extended and polygamous), known as *tulu,* was the first, primary, and most desirable stratum in the social structure and was headed by the husband or eldest male in the household, who was referred to as the *ngulu*. Haggai (2011:37-40) notes that, in pre-colonial times, the men, women, youth, and children played distinct roles: men led and farmed; women raised children and prepared food, and the youths assisted them, based on their gender, and ran errands for their parents. The nature of the assistance rendered by the youth depended on their gender. Apart from the family unit, we get the *sakan* (clan), the age group and the village/group of villages led by the *Mishkagham* (chief) with lines of strata of responsibilities.

This complex socio-cultural structure also existed in the rite of passage and religious strata headed by the chief priest and numerous officials. Almost every stage of life was and is inseparable from religion and coloured by responsibilities and education or exposure to war, hunting, farming, and leadership, among others (Danfulani 2011b:41-127). In this complex social structure, various levels of interactions occurred – learning through storytelling, community life, and complex channels of communication take place using the Mwaghavul language. However, things started changing from 1907 when the Mwaghavul encountered the colonialists and missionaries. Churches began replacing religious shrines and schools replaced some parental roles in providing life orientation to children. By 1981, in Panyam

district alone, there were 21 primary schools (Datok 1981:8-9), and in Mwaghavul land from 1963 to 1979, there were 59 (Lere 2011:219-221).

**4.1.2 The Development of the Mwaghavul Language and the Extent of its Use**

Regarding the Mwaghvul language itself, Nyang, Bess, and Davum state that the Mwaghavul language is a dialect of the Angas [Ngas] tribe who belong to the "West Chadic group of the Afro-Asiatic language family" (2013:2). Gowon (2011:21), through extensive scholarly interactions, convincingly confirms this position. She (Gowon 2011:21-22) adds that in their present abode in Plateau State in central Nigeria, the Mwaghavul people are surrounded by neighbours from similar language groups who are found in places along the path through which the Mwaghavul were believed to have followed in their journey from the Chad-Borno basin.

Equally supporting this position, Warren adds that the Mupun language is a dialect associated with Mwaghavul, and "several smaller nearby tribes use Mwaghavul as a second language" and "trade language" (2003:5). Gowon adds that tribes like the "Goemai, Ngas, Montol, Mupun, M'ship, Chakfem, Yuom, Mushere, Kulere, Jipal, Njak" use Mwaghavul because "Mwaghavul became the language of Christianity and education" (2011:21). The language was used in the songs and preaching of the Bible as well as teaching in schools. This made it possible for their neighbours to learn and speak it (Gowon 2011:21). Therefore, even Mwaghavul dance steps are used by these surrounding cultures. Thus, the language "is the most important cultural heritage of the Mwaghavul people; the most important ethnic identity, the original religious language, the main language of communication; and the language used to discuss secrets in the presence of others" (Nyang *et al*. 2013:3-4).

Unfortunately, like other languages of the Plateau, Mwaghavul was clearly facing possible extinction between the 1930s and 1980 when only a few studies were done on it and the younger generation readily embraced the languages of later immigrants, namely English and Hausa, which were used as languages of civilisation. For instance, Nyang *et al*. write that, "Today, the language (Mwaghavul) is rarely used in worship" (2013:8) or even at home "by both parents and the younger generation" (Daapiyaa 2012:iv-v). This is saddening because "the death of a language is the loss of a whole culture, tradition and a people" (Gowon 2011:22). Daapiyaa, therefore, suggests that Mwaghavul should be used in churches and schools (Daapiyaa 2012:v) as it was previously.

Fortunately, Nyang *et al*. note that "recent strides in documentation and promotion of the language have held the extinction drift in check" (2013:6) and the "anti-extinction war will end in favour of the language" (2013:6). In addition, the translated book of Psalms (*Ngarvip mu Nyam*) is being used as a hymnbook in churches to promote the language's use. Another indirect fight against extinction is the move by MBTC (Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee) to establish a cultural centre where Mwaghavul artefacts would be preserved for the younger generation to periodically visit them and learn the stories behind them.

### 4.1.3 The Place of Wise Sayings (*sumpoo*) as a Rhetorical Component in the Mwaghavul Culture

Historically, the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria are proud users of their own language. As indicated previously (4.1.1), they, like most African cultures, use different forms of wise sayings and proverbs; expressing their thoughts on different occasions and for different purposes such as instructing children, praying, resolving conflicts, or attempting to hide a message from those for whom it was not meant and so forth. They have a very broad conception of a saying. They call any technical use of language that is not to be understood literally as *sumpoo, mwaghavul, tep-nkɨrang or bɨghɨt poo* (Blench *et al* 2012:110, 138; Yenle 1996:ii); that is, a language with hidden meaning. Unfortunately, there are very few written records on the special place that wise sayings occupy in the life and culture of the Mwaghavul. Among the few resources, Danfulani (2011:90-92) has shown that even Mwaghavul names provide proof that Mwaghavul people highly regard wise sayings as a medium of communication. Yenle's (1996) publication that lists and explains 1044 Mwaghavul wise sayings and the instantaneous outpouring of necessary wise sayings from my interviewees on this subject, also support Danfulani's stance.

Before examining the place and use of wise sayings in the culture of the Mwaghavul, the researcher will briefly describe the components of *Sumpoo* among the Mwaghavul people.

### 4.1.3.1 Components of Wise Sayings

*Sumpoo* is a noun which means, "an utterance of proverbs, wise sayings" (Blench *et al*. 2012:138). As indicated above, *sumpoo* constitutes any utterance that has some hidden or special meanings that can't be translated literally. *Sumpoo* are found in Mwaghavul short stories mostly involving animals or humans. Secondly, sayings include *pwaghal,* praise or victory songs. *Pwaghal*, according to Lar, is "a long narrative poem usually about the actions

of great men and women or about the story of a nation or country" (2009:4. See also Danfulani 2011:275). *Nyàm*, meaning a song, chant or a poem is another component of wise sayings. Blench *et al*. (2012:110) define *nyàm* as "music, a song in which praise or insults are used, proverbs, wise sayings, self-praise". Finally, *sumpoo* consist of proverbs too. The most popular and commonly used in the home, almost on daily basis, is the *nyàm.*

The *nyam* itself has other sub-elements which are: *nzeltet* (taunt song) or *nwang* (show-off song); *jwàt poo* or *shwat poo* (quarrelsome talk); *kárshak* (instigation); *gwakshak* (counsel); *sat tap lee nshak* (warning); *cín ciin nshak* (advice); and *nyàm maap* (dirge or elegy, like lamentation at a funeral) (Blench *et al*. 2012:110; Lar 2009:4). *Sátpoo* (story-telling), including folklore, like animal stories or fiction, are meant to teach lessons and convey real-life histories. Some of these elements are closely related in meaning and can be used interchangeably.

Drawing on the above, the researcher will use *sumpoo* or 'wise sayings' as a comprehensive concept of well-known sayings meant to provide lessons and memory hooks that lead to the persuasion of listeners.

### 4.1.3.2 The Rhetorical Use of Wise Sayings

Expressing the dominant place that wise sayings occupy in the culture of the Mwaghavul, Yenle (1996:ii-viii) compares the number of *sumpoo* across the Mwaghavul nation to the sand at the river bank. He (Yenle 1996:ii-viii) states that different types of sayings[96] may be combined and used together. Being an elderly man, he (1996:ii-viii) acknowledges the ever-changing nature of language and therefore the change in the meaning of some wise sayings, especially due to contact with other cultures, time, the fading relevance of *sumpoo* among the young, or lack of usage and migration. To curb some of these negative trends, Yenle (1996:ii-viii) and upcoming authors have started recording the sayings for the next generation.

In this research, as indicated in 1.6, two major groups were interviewed. The first group was made up of five participants concerning the place of wise sayings in the Mwaghavul culture. The group was made up of three males and two females from all ages chosen randomly from the districts within Mwaghavul land. The questions used for these interviews is in appendix

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[96]The categories and/or instances of using wise sayings are (1) *Anpee* (maap); (2) *gwakpee, gwakshak, gwakshik*; (3) *kam-kam, karpee, karshak, satciin*; (4) *mbiiloghot, diiret, diigyetyam, mbiilap ndaa*; (5) *nwang, nzeltet, jwatpoo, shwatpoo, nwangpoo;* (6) *nyam, kwoop, pwaghal*; (7) *sumpoo*; (8) *tepnkirang, teppoo, tetpoo*, and *tetshak.*

1a (i). The second group was made up of twenty-four congregants from some COCIN Churches. Details will be given on these matters in the second part of this chapter (4.2.1.1) as well as 5.1.

The five interviewees contributed a number of ideas in addition to what Yenle (1996:ii-viii) offers. For instance, PWS.3[97] acknowledged[98] that using these wise sayings is a characteristic feature in speech making among the Mwaghavul people. He said they are used to add to the authority of what is said and the dignity of the speaker. In particular, leaders' and elders' speeches are spiced with relevant wise sayings to illustrate the points made. So, when a person is chosen to be a spokesman, on any occasion, they equip themselves with several wise sayings that suit such an occasion. The Mwaghavul sayings are unique because they are not similar to those of other tribes within the area. Among the other tribes, most of their sayings are borrowed or translations of others' sayings, which is not the case with Mwaghavul sayings. The unique nature of Mwaghavul sayings is proof of their originality with the Mwaghavul culture, according to PWS.1.[99] PWS.1 also made reference to Mr Yenle's book as proof that these sayings are endemic to the Mwaghavul culture.

The other interviewees, PWS.4[100], PWS.2[101], and PWS.5,[102] also agreed to the fact that sayings are widespread and original among the Mwaghavul people. PWS.2 added that since wise sayings are usually created based on the circumstances of the speaker, new sayings are still being created. On a general note, therefore, wise sayings occupy a dominant place in the culture and language of the Mwaghavul people.

**4.1.3.3 Wise Sayings and Possible Rhetorical Situations for Their Usage**

To demonstrate the impact wise sayings have on the Mwaghavul culture, the interviewees gave a number of proverbs that have been helpful in their own lives, of which a few are reflected here.

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[97] PWS is an acronym for "Place of Wise Saying". There were 5 participants in this category, hence PWS 1-5.
[98] PWS.3 is a retired Pastor of between 65 and 70 years old and knows a lot about the culture of the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria.
[99] PWS.1 is an educated middle aged woman who is an elder in the Church.
[100] PWS.4 is an elder and a community leader who participates in Bible translation and is compiling cultural sayings and origins of Mwaghavul festivals etc.
[101] PWS.2 is a well-educated young man of about 30 years old but with vast knowledge of the Mwaghavul language and culture.
[102] PWS.5 is a barely educated village girl of about 26 years old.

PWS.1 said, *Mun vul a long, misak a muut* ("Unity is wealth but loneliness is a disease"), is the saying that illustrates the essence of the name "Mwaghavul", which means "two walking together".[103] It shows that the Mwaghavul people are lovers of peace and unity. Historically, he noted, the Islamic Jihadists could not conquer the Mwaghavul people and Islamise them as had happened to the surrounding tribes and peoples because they were united. Secondly, PWS.1 added that the Mwaghavul consider all their neighbours as friends, even where such people take them for enemies. For instance, the Fulani herdsmen (who are a small minority) have collaborated with their colleagues from other lands to steal all the cows of the Mwaghavul people, yet the Fulanis still move freely in the land with their own cows. This is so because the Mwaghavul people are peace lovers. It is not surprising that this proverb was repeated by PWS.5 and PWS.4 because it is the characteristic saying of the Mwaghavul people. In fact, some neighbours of the Mwaghavul people joking call them "*mun vul*" (togetherness – lit. "we are two"), which might be the reason why some people think the name of the tribe comes from this phrase and especially considering its phonetic affinity to Mwaghavul. This saying is used mostly in resolving conflicts, especially between Mwaghavul people. It, therefore, acts as an authentic reminder for what the Mwaghavul stand for as a people.

PWS.1 provided a second saying: *Nwòr a ɓak káa, gyàl a sak máar* ("Buying and selling [i.e. business] are unreliable, it is better to farm"). The Mwaghavul strongly believe that farming is the most reliable source of livelihood since it hardly fails completely. They raise animals, grow crops and engage in different businesses, but rely mostly on growing crops like maize, acha, Irish potatoes, yams, and beans; so this proverb was used to encourage those who were becoming lazy to farm because of the quick cash from buying and selling.

PWS.2 considers the following proverbs as some of the most important for him. He said that if a good man has a son who behaves badly or is a disgrace, the Mwaghavul would say, *Koghorong làa nyingying, put le ngurummu shwar* ("A hero has given birth to a weakling, making people jeer"). This could be used by a parent or neighbour to challenge a child who seems to abandon the good ways of his parents. After talking to the child, this proverb could be quoted mostly while the speaker looks in a different direction as though in the form of an apostrophe or soliloquy – an indirect address.

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[103] This meaning for the word "Mwaghavul" was however rejected by PWS.4 who argued that peoples' proposition that the name comes from the Mwaghavul statement," *Mún a vul*" – "we are two" is a late creation and an over-reading into the meaning of the word. He said right at the beginning the name of the language and people is Mwaghavul not "*mún a vul.*"

Secondly, he said, if one wants to choose a wife, the Mwaghavul would say, "*A náa mat ɗáng ɓe a la, ji ayaa lá màt kyakpee, ku gha hos ɗi nkoos páa*" ("Be careful in your choice of a wife so that you do not marry a nagging woman that will force you to frequent the diviner"). As it is, this saying is used either when a wife is troublesome or it may be used when advising boys that are preparing to marry. I have noted that this saying has a hint of patriarchy or gender bias, as it implies that only women could be bad spouses. It may, however, arise from the cultural practice of where only boys go after girls and not the other way around. Be that as it may, the absence of a proverb for girls intending to choose a husband, privileges males over females.

PWS.5 provided two very inspiring wise sayings. She said, if a husband does not work hard on the farm and yet complains when the food is either not enough or not delicious, the wife would sing a song saying, *As kwar kom míllóm, sak gong lee wá!* ("A dog refuses to eat cocoyam leaves, as though he is able to cultivate a virgin land"). Cocoyam leaves are used to make soup. The poor in the villages considered it a special soup. This is an example of a *nwàng* using *nyàm* also known as *"a scornful or taunt song"*. Since the dog does not farm, it should not complain when food is given to it, no matter its quantity or quality. The wife uses this song especially when milling the corn, thus using the millstone for the next meal. Since the words are part of a song, no one would challenge her no matter how abusive the words may be. One can only respond with another song. This is the only "direct" means by which a wife could talk to her husband, as she cannot challenge the husband directly, given the patriarchal nature of Mwaghavul society. The level of restriction on women's freedom to challenge their husbands is, however, changing with the coming of Christianity.

PWS.5 said that if person who considers herself/himself to be unworthy, but is visited or honoured by an important person, that person who is visited can say, "*Lwaa (kɨ) ngoro fwoon, fwoon màa mu nkoor; fwoon mpòo kɨ nyèm nan*" ("The meat of a raven looks more inviting than that of a castrated he-goat; especially it tastes sweet in the mouths of elders"). The Mwaghavul people do not eat the meat of a raven because they say it is watery. Ironically, however, elders who are expected to know the best meat take that of a raven as their choice meat. In other words, the highly placed visitors have visited and so honoured the 'raven' (i.e. the worthless), making her/him look very important. When you are honoured or promoted to a high position that you do not think you are worthy of, then this saying can be quoted. It means you are humbled by the great honour.

PWS.3, in naming his own two most important proverbs, stated that if they went to the farm and the land was tough, the father or the champion in that age group would say, "*Maar dung a mbii zillang, gwóm ntúghúl a mbii shɨrop*" ("A farm beside the river (which is normally difficult to cultivate) is for young men; pap in the pot belongs to women"). This may sound patriarchal, but it was the men who cultivated the land and women who planted. The wise saying was used to encourage or challenge the young men to prove themselves so that they would not be discouraged because of the difficult nature of the work. Naturally, they would like to prove themselves to be responsible men. It may equally be seen as viewing the females as weak while men are strong, which is not always so.

If girls come to pound the grain for the dedication of a child seven days after the child is born, they would chant as they pound, *Wan ncìn jwát ntar pas kás, lughun mang dáng an shwat káa, jonghilók fwan táa. Nanyáng ɓwaghat nyang, wura a reep kas, zilang mu kwar da. Am kí daa ɓwer, an mwaan ki ni a ar. Mbìi ɗiisi vít, ngul muu chɨghir wan. Daar wan nsham nChíp, mpee lá kaghar kóm, pe daa dì'a yíl.* This is a long poem literally meaning, "I will not dress well in the farming season, until the dry season that I will loosen my hair [to be platted]. The raindrops, the deliberate woman intentionally refuses to dress well. She is not a girl, boys reject her. She carries a dish full of water, on the roads. This thing oh, maybe they have bewitched me. Tomorrow I will go to Chip, where my father is on the farm to beg for groundnuts (peanuts)." The poem expresses despair. The girl is disturbed about where she will place herself as boys have rejected her (in contrast to the one who has just given birth). This is a warning for girls who do not want to take care of themselves by plaiting their hair and looking clean even though they are very busy with farm work. If she doesn't take care of herself, no one may be interested in asking for her hand in marriage. This implies, once again, that the female gender is at the receiving end of the struggle to attract the opposite sex and it seems that women have no choice but to accept any male suitor. Indeed, it would appear that most of these sayings are patriarchal in nature.

Apart from the wise sayings and possible situations of their use as discussed above, wise sayings are also used among the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria in other ways, including giving instruction to children so that they do not easily forget; as a prophetic word addressed directly to the farm that is being cultivated; at the birth of a child; when advising those who want to marry; by beggars when begging; when one is unable to meet the demands of one's in-laws; when help rendered is not appreciated; to encourage unity and resolve conflict; when parents of intending couples meet to declare their interest in a girl and to

decide on the bride price; as leaders speaking to their subjects; in counseling situations; and during public discussions or community meetings. This list is by no means exhaustive.

The wise sayings discussed above, were a few of the many that some of the interviewees gave. Regrettably, spatial concerns prevent a discussion on all the sayings that they presented. Even so, the examples discussed illustrate the fact that wise sayings are used in most life situations among the Mwaghavul people.

**4.1.4 Biblical Rhetoric and the use of Mwaghavul Wise Sayings (*Sumpoo*) for Preaching**

It is evident, from the foregoing, that when the Bible is read in the Mwaghavul context, its voice is likely to be transformed to make the meaning of the text relevant, especially when relevant wise sayings are employed. The clear prevalence of patriarchy, for instance, would require careful interaction of the Bible with the culture to find an entry point for an assertion of the equality between men and women. It would entail using some of the wise sayings to either contrast or encourage the interpreter's stance, using biblical truth. In this way, the African context would shape the reading of the Bible and its message (Van Heerden 2002:464).

Therefore, when we talk of using Mwaghavul wise sayings "alongside" biblical rhetorical devices, it would mean allowing the Bible and the reader's context to influence one another interactively in a give-and-take fashion, that shapes the meaning of the text. The new meaning that emerges potentially transforms the African context (West 2010:22). This is central to the third pole of the tripolar model. Thus, in the spirit of appropriation, using biblical rhetoric "alongside" indigenous wisdom, with their various ideologies, is, in essence, an attempt to connect text and context (Farisani 2015:9). Being aware that the Bible as much as the African wise sayings are authentic text indicates that the African biblical interpreter allows a mutual enrichment to occur in the sermon rhetoric.

The authority of the Bible as the sacred text of Christianity is not debated but is made useful in every context through the interpretation accorded it. African indigenous wisdom (proverb) encapsulates "the accumulated wisdom and experiences of countless generations and they constitute an authentic door that allows access to the religious and ethical orientation of African peoples" (Bosman 2002:359). When these two aspects "encounter" each other, Van Heerden writes, it results in "a newness, a freshness, originality, a difference like a spice that brings a new taste to food" (Van Heerden 2002:464).

It is the effectiveness of this mutual enrichment that the researcher intends to investigate by using the biblical rhetoric of Micah and Mwaghavul wise sayings in Christian sermons among COCIN congregations in Mwaghavul land. As demonstrated by the PWS interviewees and Yenle (1996:ii-viii), the Mwahghavul people are fond of using wise sayings in communication ). The art is a blessing that can be harnessed and used for the preaching and communication of the gospel. It is hoped that enabling a dialogue between the sayings and insights from the rhetoric of the Bible would challenge and improve the reading of the Bible in local churches (see Van Heerden 2002:464).

## 4.2 Description of Data and Method of Data Analysis

### 4.2.1 Description of the Data

Having discussed the location and context of the research, the researcher will start the description of the data gathered from the preachers who preached the sermons by clarifying his role in the production of these sermons.

### 4.2.1.1 The Production of the Sermons

In determining whether and how preachers in Mwaghavul land of Central Nigeria use biblical rhetoric and wise sayings in their sermons, the sample churches selected in the location of the study are divided into clusters A (PCC[104] Gindiri) and B (PCC Panyam), the experimental and control groups respectively, as stated in 1.6. The researcher gave specific written instructions to each of the preachers in each cluster as described below.

The preachers in both clusters were informed of the fact that the main goal of the research is contextualisation and making the message relevant to the culture and life circumstances of the congregants, just as the prophets did in conveying their oracles. However further specific directions were given to the preachers in both clusters.

Following Kothari's idea, the preaching in Cluster "A" (PCC Gindiri, the control group) was "exposed to usual conditions" (Kothari 2004:35). The preachers were allowed to construct their sermons as they would normally do. Each of the pastors in cluster "A" was given a letter with the following details on the production of the sermons:

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[104] PCC is an acronym for Provincial Church Council.

1. Prepare a fully written sermon from Micah 3: 9-4:5, making it as relevant as possible to your congregation.
2. Please write you sermon out in full and then present it either at the end of July 2016 or at the beginning of August 2016. During the presentation, let the sermon be audio-recorded. Both the written and recorded sermons will be collected by the researcher between 22$^{nd}$ and 28th of August, 2016.
3. The researcher will use the written and recorded copies of the sermon to produce a transcript which will be analysed. After a space of three months, he will interview four members from the congregation to determine how much of the sermon they can still remember and its impact on them (1.6).

With regard to PCC Panyam, the preachers in Cluster "B" (the experimental group) were specifically instructed to use relevant wise sayings in their sermons. As Kothari added, therefore, the preaching is "exposed to some novel or special conditions" (2004:35). They were encouraged, in Adeyemo's words, to "use African proverbs, metaphors [songs, adages] and stories to make it speak to African believers in the villages and cities across the entire continent" (2006:ix). In light of this, the preachers from Cluster "B" were given the following guidelines:

a. You are required to prepare a sermon from Micah 3:9-4:5 and interpret it using relevant local resources like proverbs, stories and other relevant cultural devices that will help in communicating the message of the scriptures to your congregation.

b. Please write your sermons out in full and then present it either at the end of July 2016 or at the beginning of August 2016. During the presentation, let the sermon be audio-recorded. Both the written and recorded sermons will be collected by the researcher between 22$^{nd}$ and 28th of August, 2016.

c. The researcher will use the written and recorded copies of the sermon to produce a transcript which will be analysed. After a space of three months, he will interview four members from the congregation to determine how much of the sermon they can still remember and its impact on them.

The goal of these instructions given to preachers in cluster "B" was to determine how *sumpoo* as a rhetorical tool could be used in preaching today. A rhetorical analysis of these sermons would unveil how the rhetorical strategies are engaged by the preachers. This would lead the researcher to determine the extent to which a synergy between biblical rhetoric and cultural sayings provoke the understanding, the response, and recall of sermon. Determining that would be possible by interviewing some congregants from each of the two clusters.

Biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings are rhetorical devices used to facilitate persuasion. The persuader or preacher uses these devices to influence the thought, understanding, and actions of his congregants in relation to the desired outcomes. In 4.3, the researcher will outline the devices that the preachers from both clusters used in their sermons and how they contribute to bringing home their messages and exhorting their audiences to positive responses.

**4.2.1.2 Describing the Data**

The data was drawn from the transcripts of sermons from three randomly selected preachers from each of the two clusters (see 1.6 for details). Since the ratio of the sample size of the participating churches from each cluster is 3:30, which is ten per cent of the churches. This is high enough to ensure higher accuracy (see Kothari 2004:16). There are 30 Local Church Councils in each of the two selected Regional Church Councils. These sermon transcripts would reveal the use of rhetorical devices of various lengths consciously used by these preachers to enhance understanding, contextualisation and persuasion among their congregants. These sermons were preached either on July 31, 2016, or August 7, 2016, using the biblical text of Micah 3:9-4:5 as follows:

| Code[105] | Date | Place | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cluster A: Provincial Church Council Gindiri (RCC Mangu)** | | | |
| 1. Pr1A | 31/7/16 | Lahir | "God's Message to the Religious/National Leaders and the Future of Jerusalem" |
| 2. Pr2A | 7/8/16 | Millet | "Imitating Christ through Prophet Micah's prophecy" |
| 3. Pr3A | 31/7/16 | Wanpyak | "God's Message to the Religious/National leaders and the future of Jerusalem" |
| **Cluster B: Provincial Church Council Panyam (RCC Kerang)** | | | |
| 1. Pr1B | 31/7/16 | Tim | "God's Judgment Against evil Leadership" |
| 2. Pr2B | 31/7/16 | Diyes | "Admonition Against Judgment on Sin and the Hope for the Future Kingdom" |
| 3. Pr3B | 7/8/16 | Tingkum | "Judgment and Hope for God's people" |

**Table 1: Code for the Participating Preachers**

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[105] Wherever a reference has to be made to a specific preacher, the codes (Pr1A, Pr2A, Pr1B etc.) will be used as **pseudonyms** instead of the preachers' real names to ensure anonymity.

In this study, the researcher aimed particularly to examine the COCIN preachers' rhetorical use of the prophet's language, which they take up raw as it is in the text, without recourse to its own context, as well as the persuasive use of well-known indigenous wise sayings, in which they and their audiences are cultured, in the rhetoric of the sermons as indicated previously (1.3.4). The researcher wanted to see if COCIN preachers in Mwaghavul land engage the Bible and wise sayings rhetorically in their sermons for the purpose of persuasion. This was determined by a comparison of such rhetorical engagements in the two clusters, "A" and "B". Applying the principles of the Heidelburg method and Osmer's questions, discussed in 2.5.3, enabled the researcher to "explore the interactions between the sermon, the author [preacher] and the audience" (Iivari 2014:42).

The transcripts were thoroughly studied and the instances of the use of rhetorical devices, biblical rhetoric and cultural wisdom, as well as other related devices, were underlined. These were then coded at the left margins of the printed scripts, outlined on the front page of each transcript, indicating all the pages in which a particular device was found in a particular sermon script. Transferring these underlined points to a fresh document enabled the researcher to categorise the major themes and their sub-themes with coloured marks on the computer. The mere coding and thematic grouping of the data generally reveal four rhetorical themes. The four main rhetorical elements so identified in this theming include:

1. **Persuasion through biblical exposition**. This involves analysing how the preachers used rhetorical devices like metaphors, word plays, hyperbole, sarcasm, chiasm among others, from the text of Micah to convey messages of judgment (warning) and hope (assurance). Here, the preachers try to contextualise using the art of hermeneutics. All these have to do with the use of Micah's rhetoric or the Bible as it relates to Micah.

2. **Persuasion through cultural wisdom**. This includes the use of Mwaghavul, choruses, and poems.

3. **Persuasion through storytelling**. Namely references to known events known to their congregants and which they (the preachers) believe relate to the text of Micah are focused on. Topical events include references to local history and well-known events.

4. **The use of figures of speech**. These may be biblical or indigenous picture language, like proverbs, simile, alliteration, rhetorical questions or dialogical devices; in the sermons.

These themes emerge from the sermon data produced by the six preachers. Each of these themes emerges from the use of both biblical and indigenous wisdom. The use of indigenous devices in preaching would appear to be a common African phenomenon in general. Nhiwatiwa, while analysing sermons from Malawi, stated that "the use of song, proverbs, idioms, and storytelling was evident in a number of these sermons" (Nhiwatiwa 2012b:100), though his focus was not particularly on rhetorical analysis.

In the actual analysis of these sermons, the researcher will only consider those themes that apply directly or indirectly to either biblical rhetoric or indigenous wisdom, using the Heidelberg and Osmer method of sermon analysis which is discussed in chapter two (2.5.3.3) and applied below.

### 4.2.2 Method of Data Analysis

A rhetorical analysis generally entails thoroughly examining the flow of communication in such a way as to discern and define specific forms of rhetoric and the changing aspects of the rhetorical components, with the aim of discovering the rhetorical situation in which such rhetorical components are used. It also looks at the original context to which such rhetorical components are a part of (Bryant 1973:35). This analysis of sermons will focus on discerning the communicative elements and art of persuasion used by the preachers and the way such elements are connected to the rhetorical moment of the sermon in that congregation where it is best aligned and understood.

As stated earlier (2.5.3.3.2), the researcher will analyse the sermons using Heidelberg's method of sermon analysis[106]. In doing so, however, all the questions listed in the above-mentioned section, which the Heidelberg method uses to analyse the sermons, will not be asked. This is because the analysis is biased towards rhetorical analysis, while the stated method analyses all aspects of sermons in general.

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[106] As noted in the indicated section of this work, this method involves an interactive "close reading" of sermons as well as a rhetorical and theological critique of the interpretation. It asks questions like, "How is the biblical text implemented in the sermon?" "What congregation is presupposed and/or invoked?" "What role does the preacher play?" And, "What (kind of) God is pictured in the sermon?" Of specific importance for this research are the first two questions that deal with the text and context. The researcher has twiged the words to suit his context (Cilliers 2012:2-3).

**4.2.2.1 Applying the Heidelberg Method in Rhetorical Analysis of Sermons**

The researcher will undertake a linguistic analysis of each of the sermon texts and how the Bible is used in them. This will involve analysing the preacher's persuasive power through the use of the audience's culture and traditions. Using some questions from the Heidelberg method the researcher will analyse the sermons in terms of the following:

1.  **The Preacher and Mode of Preaching**: Does the Preacher demonstrate an understanding of her/his role in preparing the sermon data and persuasively delivering it in a way suitable for her/his particular audience?

2.  **Content/Hermeneutics of Sermon**: Does the sermon correctly reflect the message of Micah 3:9-4:5? How does the preacher locate the message in light of the Bible teaching regarding it?

3.  **Use of Biblical Rhetorical Language**: How does a preacher use the text of Micah in persuading the congregants? Is there any particular way the rhetorical language of Micah is used by the preacher in the rhetorical situation of the preacher?

4.  **Use of Indigenous Wisdom in Preaching**: Does the preacher employ cultural sayings in the sermon? What are the particular rhetorical devices used by the preachers? What role does indigenous wisdom play in connecting the text contextually to the audience?

5.  **Context and Contemporaneous Issue**s: How contextually related is the language employed in the sermon to the traditional background and contemporary events of the congregants?

6.  **Possible Audience Response**: What possible responses could be elicited in the audience considering the sermons' connectedness to the context of the Mwaghavul audience of Central Nigeria? This question will enable the researcher to speculate on the possible responses of the audience and to compare such responses to what would be eventually encounter.

**4.2.2.2 Applying the Osmer's Four Analytical Questions**

Osmer's four questions: "What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? Or How may we respond?" may be asked at random in the process of the analysis (See 2.5.3.3.2 above for details on Osmer's discussion on sermon analysis).

After the rhetorical analysis of the sermons presented in each cluster, the researcher compared the outcome from both clusters to determine the extent to which preachers in Mwaghavul land use the synergy of biblical rhetoric and indigenous wisdom. Furthermore, it was examined how effective that synergy was, especially in persuading the congregants.

As O'Connor and Gibson indicate:

> It is important to relate the findings back to the context of the cultural experience within each respective community. This is not only important in terms of finding explanations for the results, but also in terms of findings' implications for that community. The implications of the findings are an important part of the final report (ND:76).

In line with this, Iivari also opines that in sermons, "the meanings of the words used depend very much on the context they are used in" (2014:42; see Draper 2004:642). That is why the interpretation of a rhetorical device used by any of the preachers would largely be determined either by the Mwaghavul context or the point at which it is used within the sermon.

As noted earlier, Heidelberg's method of sermon analysis to examine the preachers' use of the four main rhetorical themes that are relevant to the research was used. In the next section, special attention is given to how, biblical exposition, culture, topical events, repetition, figures of speech, and pronouns and admonition, blend to form the rhetoric of the sermons and how such rhetorical elements fit within the context of Mwaghavul cultural milieu.

## 4.3 Analysis of the Composite/Blend of the Rhetoric of Persuasion in African Preaching

Young seems to be alluding to the multi-faced nature of categories in preaching rhetoric in his description of the act of preaching thus, "Preaching takes place through language. It is an act of linguistic communication related to God's language, human language, and both" (2018:37). In the case of this research, the Bible is God's language, while human language is the language of the preacher that conveys the thought through the complex of myriads of contextual influences and orientations. As noted in 2.5.4, African sermons, as any form of preaching, are meant to persuade an audience through both the language of the Bible and of the culture. In these sub-sections, it will be shown how these facets of rhetoric are used in the sermons of the selected preachers in each of the geographical clusters of Mwaghavul land.

### a. The Setting of the Sermons Presented

Confusion, hopelessness, fear, doubt and uncertainty are words that would best describe the feeling in Nigeria in general and Mwaghavul land in particular, that sets the background to the presentation of these sermons. In the political and economic spheres, the sermons were presented between July and August 2016, a little more than a year into the Buhari led administration, when recession held the nation hostage and people struggled for survival due to the harsh economic condition. A 2016 publication of Export-Enterprises SA states that "After growing to 5% between 2010 and 2014 and 2.7% in 2015, Nigeria's economy contracted by 1.6% in 2016" (The Economic Context of Nigeria 2016). Systemic corruption and poor economic policies had occasioned the economic problems. Religion, namely Christianity, which the Mwaghavul people had embraced over a hundred years prior, seemed to provide no real solution to the spate of killings and cattle rustling by the Fulani Herdsmen. Though the churches were still full, many had sought assistance like protection against existential challenges outside conventional Christian ways like going to *sangomas* for protective charms. This was worsened by the emergence of prophets who rose to provide some "help" to the people. For example, many "men of God" predicted that the president of the country was the problem and would soon die (Ibani 2017). The church in Nigeria strived to establish both a reason and solution to the looming problems on a theological level.

### b. Memory and Communication

Despite the influence of modernity, there are elements of culture and orality that have resisted change and elimination (Olyott 2015:109-111). Draper would describe them as, "the contours of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems which sustained resistance to colonialism and continue to provide resources for the struggles of post-apartheid society in Southern Africa." (2003: cover page; see Bosch 2016:2). Those aspects of culture that stand the test of time are mostly what we term "cultural memory". Studying memory and remembering is important in examining both the temporal and historical mode of communication in the Mwaghavul societies (Bogdanova 2011:158).

The study of memory and mentality started in the first half of the 20th century with Maurice Halbwachs and Marc Bloch (Confino: 2008:77; Erll & Nünning 2008:v). There are generally of two types of memory namely, individual and collective. As a social construct, it is difficult to draw a clear line of difference between the two (Kuhn 2010:1; Schacter et al 2009:83). As Misztal states, "while it is the individual who remembers, remembering is more than just a

personal act" (2003: 6. See Schacter et al 2009:104). As Brianna puts it, "Individual memory" is "a personal interpretation of an event from one's own life" (2010), but being a social being, one's recollection involves the contribution of other factors. "Collective memory" is seen as, not only individual shared memories but those widely known symbols that society maintains and preserves (Coman *et al.*-2009:126; Roediger & Desoto 2016). In line with this study, collective memory is a kind of "ethnic memory" (Wright 2009:8). It is also known as "cultural memory", "social memory", and "images of the past" (Bogdanova 2011:159); thus Mwaghavul cultural memory is a collective memory shared by the people of an ethnic group which, includes among others, wise sayings. Such shared memories of the past are preserved in complex ways and through various media such as songs, proverbs, stories and others[107] (Erll & Rigney 2006:111). The relevance of this study on memory lies in the fact that it helps cultures appreciate their past, present, and even the implication of the future.

**4. 3.1 A Rhetorical Analysis of the Sermons of Preachers in Cluster "A"**

As indicated previously, Cluster "A" is the control group, where the sermons were presented under 'normal conditions' and as these preachers would ordinarily preach. The outcome of rhetorical scrutiny of these sermons reveals the ways the preachers use rhetorical strategies in their presentations to persuade their congregants. How they use the rhetorical tools is presented in the following sub-sections.

**4.3.1.1 Persuasion through Biblical Exposition**

Biblical exposition "is an effort to explain, illustrate and apply the Scriptures to life" (Knott 1930:11). Knott (1930:11) further explains that the process of exposition involves the close and deep study of the text so that the spirit of the biblical passages passes through the preacher, so enabling listeners to understand what the scriptures mean and what it means for their lives. By biblical exposition as a category, the researcher is referring to all that has to do with the persuasive elements from the biblical text in question, namely Micah 3:9-4:5. In other words, it is persuasion through the Bible, both the text of Micah and the use of other biblical texts to explain the text for better understanding. This will deal with the first three of the five aspects of Heidelberg's method of sermon analysis (4.2.2), namely: The Preacher and Mode of Preaching, Content/Hermeneutics of Sermon, and the Use of Biblical Rhetorical

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[107] See next paragraph.

Language. The first aspects, "The Preacher and Mode of Preaching", would span some other steps too.

*a. Rhetoric of Micah*

Going through the sermon transcripts it became clear that the preachers made ample use of the rhetoric of Micah, both of his warning concerning the coming judgment (3:9-12) and of the assurance of salvation or hope (4:1-5) as they attempted to persuade the audiences towards a change of attitude. Three facts emerged: they appropriated many of his actual words, showed understanding of the text, but some of them seemed to misunderstand the implications of aspects of the rhetoric and Micah's message. What the researcher would do here, is an examination of how the preachers use the language of Micah in their sermon rhetoric.

(i) Judgment: In discussing the judicial pronouncements on evil leadership, the preachers started with what Micah said about the evil behaviours of the Israelite leaders before his verdict. They then used phrases like: "The leaders failed in their responsibilities as the custodians of the law, they abhor justice and pervert all equity" (Pr1A). This formulation mimics Micah's words, "who despise justice and distort all that is right" in 3:9. This shows that the preacher understood how to convey Micah's rhetoric and the implication of what it means for his context. The preacher connected his message to the situation in central Nigeria, at this time, where there was impunity and the law seemed to apply only to a few. Even as killings were going on, the security apparatuses were in place, but no arrests were being made. The phrases on the headlines always read, "Unknown gunmen" or "suspected herders". It would appear that good was not upheld by those in authority.

The same preacher also equated "build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness" (v. 10) to the oppression of the poor and rightly so when he said: *"*The leaders subdued the poor by operating in businesses that result in exploiting the poor, and they use it to build Jerusalem" (Pr1A). In the Mwaghavul land, the rich business people, especially those that deal in farm produce or farm inputs like fertilizer, are known for exploiting the peasant farmers.

Very deep understanding and close engagement with the text is seen in the interpretation of "her prophets tell fortunes for money" (11). Pr1A says, "Their prophecies are without a base... is not true". And Pr3A also declares, "Prophets divine for money", an indication that

they were not inspired with a prophetic message. This shows a deep understanding of the Hebrew text where the word used for prophecy (put it in brackets) here is "soothsay" not "prophesy".[108]

To stress the hypocritical behaviour of the leaders, one preacher declared, "Yes, the buildings in Israel were impressive (even today)… The temple in Jerusalem became the talk of the town… people were outwardly committed in the temple (evil rich men inclusive). That notion made them to say, 'Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us'" (Pr3A). Pr2A added "they continue to deceive themselves," "they forgot that God cannot be... manipulated". Here, these preachers acknowledge Micah's use of mimesis to heighten the hypocrisy of Judah's leaders.

Even when explaining the verdict passed on the leaders' actions, these preachers (Pr3A and Pr2A) show a clear sense of understanding what Micah meant. Pr2A rightly calls this verse "God's judgment… because of the ills and wrongs committed" because it is God's verdict on the sin of Judah's leaders.

(ii) Hope: The preachers also assured the audience through Micah's words that judgment is not God's final word. Pr1A said, "The Mountain that was reduced to a forest now becomes the highest of the mountains." Salvation, peace and tranquillity are being hoped for in the 21st century, a sense that in the plan and desire of God, there would be a transformation from the ugly to the beautiful.

The above are appeals to *logos* and help to make the audience aware of the plain, simple, message that Micah related to his 8th-century audience.[109] These preachers seem to be arguing that Micah ultimately intends to admonish the audience towards a transformation that would guarantee a brighter future. This would help the preachers' audience see God's interest and presence in all they do by using symbols and metaphors of everyday life (Louw 2016:1). That is what he meant by what he said.

On the other hand, both Pr1A and Pr3A seem to have misunderstood the meaning of the biblical metaphor, "Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets" (Micah 3:12) as an indication of desecration or defilement since the

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[108] For the difference between soothsaying and prophecy, please see 3.3.2.
[109] By plain meaning, the researcher means what John Stott also calls "the rule of simplicity" which has to do with looking at the obvious and natural meaning of Scripture. This looks at whether the language of the text is literal or figurative.

wild animals would inhabit it. Pr3 pronounced, "The holy hill became a haunt for wild animals thus it became unclean." In the researcher's opinion, however, the metaphor refers not to the desecration, but humiliation and desertion of Jerusalem, that is the exile, especially considering the reverse in 4:1-4 which describes Jerusalem's exaltation and repopulation, with God's presence fully seen. The researcher thinks it has to do with the Lord's desertion of the temple mount, allowing the exiling of Judah (7:13). That means God regarded the land and its inhabitants as unclean and unfit for his dwelling so He punished them. It does not mean the punishment makes them unclean. So, when the preachers explained 4:1-4, which shares a reverse message to this, 4:1-4 was rightly seen as the exaltation as well as the sanctification of Zion which becomes habitable to God.

*b. Contextualisation*

Biblical exposition involves exploring the purpose of the text and doing so requires close attention to its context. The socio-historical context of the biblical text, the textual context, and the audience's context are things a preacher needs to understand and appeal to. When preaching from a biblical text, the preacher should start by paying attention to the text and the congregation, "but with an emphasis on the congregation" (Adams 1998:21).

There seems to be a faint demonstration of a practically relevant connection of the preachers' sermons to their Nigerian audience in their own socio-economic context. All three preachers in this cluster introduced their sermons in a similar manner by discussing the authorship, purpose, audience, date, and setting of the book of Micah. Given that Cluster "A" is the control group, it means this manner of introduction is 'normal' or the usual kind. Only one of them added, "unlike many today who are keeping quiet while all kinds of ills and wrongs are going on in their families, clan," (Pr2A) regarding Micah's boldness. Other general statements regarding current trends among Nigerian leaders were: "some leaders are extremely bad and wicked"; "People kill people to make money"; "People abandon the way of truth for selfish desires" (Pr3A). "Even today" people using prophesy as "business". "Today there are many false teachers". Pr1A concluded, "If the leadership of Israel causes the collapse and destruction, it means it can happen to our generation today." These statements are appeals to the *logos* of scripture, but there is no concrete story or explanation of what is happening currently in the life of a particular audience which relates to the content of the Bible text though they were primarily referring to their own audiences.

From the titles of the sermons to their content, the sermons do not relate the message to any scenario in the life of the audience before attempting to appeal for a response or give an admonition. For instance, when Pr2A stated, *"unlike many today who are keeping quiet while all kinds of ills and wrongs are going on in their families, clan,"* (Pr2A), one would have expected that he would explain things that were happening in that community which would demand that Christians speak out. Instead, he simply made the above statement immediately after expounding the passage in the context of Micah. Therefore, it could be said that the preachers in Cluster "A" laid little emphasis on the "reader's context" and the circumstances in which the hearers find themselves as well as the goal which the preachers themselves wish to achieve in their preaching. This appeared unusual to the researcher as it was expected that the African sermons centre more on practical existential issues. The lack of contextualisation may be the result of: a) the fact that Cluster "A" preachers were not prompted to contextualise, and/or b) given that they know me as a teacher in COCIN's Seminary, they might simply have gone back to the westernised homiletical principles learned in the seminary with the thought that that might be what I was expecting.

*c. Hermeneutics of the Sermons*

The focus here is an examination of how the sermon notes locate Micah 3:9-4:5 in the light of other Bible teachings. Nhiwatiwa phrases this aspect of Heidelberg's method as "How has the preacher handled the biblical text and the general use of the Bible" (2012b:76).

While Mead (2014) suggests that it is normally good to stick to a text and expose it fully, reference to related texts of the Bible is helpful when: (a) the text is "heavily influenced" by another; (b) a key point in the sermon seems to be "new or unusual"; or (c) when the preacher aims to show that a particular point is not peculiar to a particular text. However, helpful as it is, cross-referencing can be distracting when done too often or when people are expected to remember all references. For the researcher, it was essential that cross-referencing was done purposefully and in moderation, so that the audience was not burdened, distracted, or confused.

The preachers in Cluster "A" made ample references to other parts of scripture to support their points. For instance, Pr1A made good use of a cross-reference to the NT idea on "love of money as root" of "the level of corruption with the leaders of Jerusalem". Concerning false prophets, he said, "Today there are many false teachers and preachers as the Bible rightly puts it in 2 Timothy 3:1ff and Matthew 24:1ff." Concerning the danger of their sinful deeds

and repentance discussed in 3:11-12, Pr3A quoted 1 Kings 9:6-8 to show the warning God had given in the days of King Solomon in the event that Israel broke the law. Pr3A said, "People were deeply in sin and fake preachers were busy pronouncing that it is well and or that it shall be well with you." In contrast to the stance of these teachers, he quoted 1 Kings 9:6-8 which states:

> But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, 'Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?'

This text reminds Judah of God's demands and backs up Micah's prophecies of destruction pronounced in 3:11-12.

It is clear from the foregoing that the preachers in cluster "A" amply explored Micah's rhetoric and his persuasive intent to admonish their audiences by warning them of the danger of sin as well as the joy that righteousness living guarantees. They also somehow made an attempt to relate such admonition to the context of the audience, though without any concrete counsel on how to do so, and what other scriptures assert, all with the aim of a transformation that guarantees their audiences to live life in its fullness.

*d. Creative Use of Micah's Rhetoric*

The preachers also used Micah's rhetoric in fresh and creative ways that aimed to emphasise their points in appealing ways. They transformed some of Micah's points through "repetition", a technique that is meant for emphasising a point by way of saying the same thing, and/or making the same sound more than one time. This may involve the repetition of the same word over and over or different words to reiterate or emphasise ("Figures of Speech" n.d.). The preachers used repetitive techniques like climax and rhythm.

**i. Climax**: This is presented in the form of "the Rule of Three, the Rule of Four Chunks". As noted above, Micah does not use such a rhetorical device directly, but the preachers pick up on his point and present it in this form in their sermons.[110]

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[110] "The rule of three is a mechanism by which three related words or points are presented in quick succession for literary effect," e.g. Julius Caesar's "I came, I saw, I conquered" ("Rule of Three"). Here, Caesar's statement indicates a climax (see 2.4.1.2 and 3.3.2.2).

Pr2A's exhortation, "The old days of keeping guards, raids and terror by night will become things of the past" is a good example of a three-point with climax, with terror as the peak. Pr2A similarly uses a recurrence of a rule of five chunks[111] that transforms the biblical rhetoric on Micah's vision of a tranquil future. He appealed to the audience's imagination by stating:

> The prophet lifts his eyes and looks across the centuries **beyond** the coming of Babylon, **beyond** the rise of the great eastern empire of Greece, **beyond** the Roman Empire and the days of the Caesars, [the coming of Christ], **beyond** the middle ages, beyond the Reformation and Martin Luther and John Wesley, and even **beyond** our day. In his vision, Micah saw the coming of the one who is a Godlike…a scene that is yet to come in the last days.

The rule of four is also used in the following statement on 4:5, which Pr2A further says is a description of our present age, so we need to "confess [to], love, obey and rely on the Lord forever and you will see what the Lord will do in your life, family, community, land, clan, state and nation".

All these strategies are used for emphasis and to help the congregants to understand, respond to, and retain the preachers' sermon data that is preached.

**ii. Rhythm**: In presenting the centrality and exaltation of the Mountain of the Lord in Zion above others mountains, Pr3A views Micah 4:1 as a metaphoric exaltation of YHWH above other gods. He then presents this point in the form of rhythm.[112] "God will be enthroned and other gods dethroned." These are the English words the preacher used as he preached during the English worship service. Though the statement is not from a Mwaghavul literary root, it has much in common with Mwaghavul poems eliciting some sound effects, as will be seen in the poem on an ideal king (in 4.5.3.2 below).

### 4.3.1.2 Persuasion through Culture

Culture is considered a people's total way of life. Culture may refer to acceptable ways of life passed on from one generation to the other. Some of the pastors in Cluster "A" either quoted or referred to such customs, songs, chants, or proverbs as relevant to the rhetorical situation.

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[111] A chunk in linguistics is a phrase or group of words which can easily be learnt as a unit. This may involve the repetition of some of the words or phrases making it memorable by somebody who is learning a language (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2010).

[112] Nordquist defines rhythm as a "sense of movement in speech, marked by the stress, timing, and quantity of syllables" (2016). Poetically, it is a replication of sounds or movement that alternates in some form of music bits between "strong and weak elements" in a line or sets of lines. Francine Prose describes rhythm as that which "gives words a power that cannot be reduced to, or described by, mere words" (in Nordquist 2016).

*a. Song(s)*

Songs are short piece of music with words meant to be sung (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2010). They are a common cultural feature of many, if not all African societies (4.1.3). Unfortunately, only two of the Preachers in cluster "A" (Pr1A and Pr3A) used a song each. Pr3A used a familiar Hausa chorus, which metaphorically, presents God as the controller and provider of everything, indicating that God is reliable. Even though it was not in his original manuscript, Pr3A started his sermon by singing a chorus which speaks of relying on God. The lyric goes; *"Kai ne kome na, Uba na kai ne kome na, Yesu kai ne kome na, Ni zan yabe ka;"* meaning "God, you are my everything; I will worship you." The preacher could have used this song as an allusion to Micah 4:5 which indicates the worshippers' willing resolve to keep on the path of God. This song was rhetorically relevant in its being familiar to the audience and its appeal to the people's emotion and imagination, as it achieved more with the audience than numerous words could have (see Janvier 2002:110).

*b. Storytelling*

Topical events are those events that are well known by the community or country as a whole. These can be key news headlines and recurring events in the life of the community from which the preachers draw illustrations for their sermons[113] (Bawa 2009:122). These are stories in the "familiar domain". In a comprehensive sense, these stories may even include historical events.

Stories in the "familiar domain", as the Heidelberg method suggests (Cilliers 1982; 2006:8-9), prompt the elicitation of possible responses in the audience because they connect the message to the context of the Mwaghavul audience of Central Nigeria. The seeming allusion to the spate of cattle rustling and nocturnal attacks by Muslim herdsmen on local farmers in Mwaghavul land is made clear by what Pr2A said when he encouraged, "Tranquility will dominate the earth to the extent that every man shall dwell in peace. The old days of keeping guards, raids and terror by night will become things of the past" when "the word of the Lord [Bible] is the universal law." Persuasiveness is therefore enhanced particularly with the message of hope that things would be better in future. Thus, the audience must have been encouraged to remain standing in their faith.

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[113] Like "fees must fall" in South Africa.

### 4.3.1.3 The Uses of Figures of Speech

*a. Simile*

A simile is a figure of comparison of things or states with the use of "as" or "like". Micah uses simile in 3:12, where the level of the destruction of Zion is compared to a cultivated field. However, instead of picking up on the simile in 3:12, Pr2A uses a simile to picture the coming Messiah in 4:1-4 by comparing it to a typical eschatological scene, whereas the text in 4:1-4 does not use a simile. He states, "In his vision, Micah saw the coming of the one who is God <u>like</u>…a scene that is yet to come in the last days." This is used to create a highly glamorous vision of the future; hoping to spur the audience to live in the hope of sharing in the future glory. Though the preacher had explained and applied the judgment section in terms of his present audience; he did not pick up on the figurative language Micah had used.

*b. Metaphor*

As indicated in 2.3.2, a metaphor is a direct comparison of two or more items/aspects. Pr2a states, "the word of the Lord is the universal law" (Pr2A). This statement is a comparison of the Bible to a known global law. Pr2A, however does not use "like" for the comparison. The future global recognition of the Bible is implied here. This echoes Micah 4:2b that states, "The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". In this case, the Bible would eventually become a law for all as its message is preached everywhere and is accepted that the word would become "the universal law".

### 4.3.1.4  Summary of Sermon Analysis from Cluster "A"

The rhetoric of the sermons from Cluster "A", has demonstrated their ample and varied uses of the rhetoric of the Bible as well as their scanty use of indigenous wisdom.

| S/N | Rhetorical Element | Cluster "A"[114] |
|-----|--------------------|------------------|
| 1.  | Biblical Exposition | 19 |
| 2.  | Cultural Wisdom | 3 |
| 3.  | Figures of Speech | 2 |

**Table 2: The Use of Rhetorical Devices in Clusters "A"**

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[114] The numbers in this column reflect the frequency to which the category of the rhetorical device occurs in the preachers' sermon transcripts.

The above gives a summary of the instances of use of rhetorical devices in the preachers' sermons from cluster "A". In various ways, these preachers take up Micah's rhetorical use of judgment and hope. They also attempt to contextualise Micah's text to the to their audience's context generally, but with less attention on their socio-cultural peculiarities. They were also able to relate Micah's thesis in 3:9-4:5 to scripture as a whole. In a transformative way, the preachers take up Micah's rhetoric and present it in fresh forms of poetic repetition. Their engagement with cultural wisdom is only demonstrated through the use of a Hausa song, not a Mwaghavul one, which contained a pearl of proverbial wisdom and the art of storytelling alluding to what is happening in central Nigeria. They also engaged with Micah's use of figures of speech like simile and metaphor.

Having analysed the sermons in Cluster "A", the researcher now turns to analyse the Cluster "B" preachers' sermons.

## 4.3.2 A Rhetorical Analysis of the Sermons of Preachers in Cluster "B"

As indicated previously (1.6), Cluster "B" is the experimental group whose sermon data was, as Kothari would say, "exposed to some novel or special condition" (2004:35), in this case the engagement of indigenous wisdom with the rhetoric of the text. This experimental group is necessary to prove or disprove the hypothesis in 1.3.2. As explained in 4.2.1.1 above, the preachers in Cluster "B" were instructed to use relevant Mwaghavul sayings (*sumpoo*) in their sermons. The outcome of the rhetorical scrutiny of these sermons reveals the ways the preachers used both biblical and indigenous rhetorical strategies in their presentations to persuade their congregants.

In the previous section, the researcher described the basic concept of each of the rhetorical devices used by the preachers in Cluster "A" before discussing how the preachers used them. Therefore, the researcher will only describe those that were not reflected in Cluster "A". For those devices that were already used by preachers in Cluster "A", the researcher will simply make comments on how the preachers use such devices in their sermons instead of repeating the definitions of such devices again.

### 4.3.2.1 Persuasion through Biblical Exposition

*a. Rhetoric of Micah*

After his introduction of the sermon, Pr2B creatively reflected on the content of Micah 3:9-4:5, noting that the text is a summary of Micah's prophecies because the prophecy is centred on judgment and hope. What the researcher thinks Pr2B meant is that 3:9-12 represents all the other prophecies of judgment and 4:1-5 stands for other prophecies of hope. This summary would give the audience a general picture of the content of Micah's book.

 (i) Judgment

In general and in contrast to the preachers in Cluster "A" the preachers in Cluster "B" did not use the direct words of Micah very much, but they did closely follow his argument.

**1. Warning:** In exposing the moral and social evil practised by both secular and religious leaders, Pr1B went to the literature of the Bible as a rhetorical means to link God's word to parallel happenings in the context of the congregants. Concerning secular leaders, he referred to phrases like, "despise justice, distort all that is right, committing murder (3:11), taking a bribe." Pr3B also said, "They detested justice and perverted all that is upright," T in complete opposition to what God demanded from them. He then referred to the original expectation from leaders in Dt. 16:19-20.

With regard to religious leaders, Pr1B paraphrased the text saying: they "interpret the law for pay, give revelation for money, and still said, God is with us, there will be no any harm." To emphasise the leaders' hypocrisy, the preacher quoted various Bible verses (Ezk. 22:26; Tit. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:5a) against such evil and used mimesis that quotes the thoughts or words of the leaders of Israelites to show the utter baselessness of their claim to divine presence and protection.

**2. Verdict:** In making reference to the consequence of wrong leadership, Pr1B paraphrased part of verse 12 using terms that are used in common conversation as a way of contextualisation. He said 'God address Israel's leaders and said, "because of you, that is secular and religious leaders, Zion will be cultivated like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble 'or ruin', the temple hill 'will become [a] forest'." As though he intended to bring a solution to such a punishment, the preacher quickly made reference to the days of Jeremiah concerning Hezekiah's response to the warning (Jer. 26:18-19). In similar fashion,

Pr3B considered the verse as "the judgment of God". He added, "Since the leaders of Samaria and Jerusalem refused to obey him, God designed a punishment for them". He rounded off with the historic repentance of Hezekiah. He added that what followed the king's repentance was a delay in the judgment which then came in 586 BC when Babylon had overrun their land of Judah, that is, long after Micah's prophecies.

## 3. Hope (Assurance)

"The Message of Hope" described in the imagery of the exalted and attractive mountain of God's dwelling, is taken up by the preachers rhetorically. Taking the mountain of the God of Jacob for the only eternal source of salvation, Pr3B declares:

> It will be above all other mountains because God has chosen it as his dwelling on earth… Zion, the mountain of the Lord will be like a magnet drawing all peoples of the earth to the Lord, to come and learn God's law…the word of the Lord will go out from Zion, for they will carry it with them as they return to their lands to put it into effect…All nations will have become part of the true Israel that enjoy the blessings of the new covenant…they will enjoy the blessings of peace. With no wars, there will be no need for weapons…weapons of the time will be turned into agricultural implements… individuals will live out their lives in prosperity… (Pr3B).

Pr1B did a comparative examination of 4:1 using two versions of the Bible. The New Living Translation uses, "In the last days" and the Good News Version phrased it as, "In days to come". Both translations refer to a future reality. The rest of the text, 4:1-5, is also paraphrased the by the preacher. He points that Hezekiah was among those that "took notice of Micah's message". For him, the message of hope then is God's will for all who listen and respond.

By relating very closely to the rhetoric of Micah and the movement in his argument, these preachers aimed to let the congregants understand the plain sense of Micah's message before applying it to their current circumstances.

*b. Contextualisation*

The preachers in Cluster "B" expounded on the context of the text (behind the text), textual context (location of the passage in the book), as well as the audience's context, which assists in appropriating the message. For instance, Pr3B provided a long introduction to the historical, social and economic milieu of Micah and the general message of judgment and hope. Developing on the above, Pr2B further examined the textual context of 3:9-4:5 by a passionate reflection on 3:1-7 in a few short but graphic sentences. For example, he states the

following concerning Judah's leaders: "they built Jerusalem, city of peace, with violence and bloodshed." This helped the audience in seeing 3:9-4:5 text in the light of the whole book of Micah, so an examination of the context of the text made it possible for the preachers to see relevant parallel points for application to their audiences' lives, as will be seen in the preacher's use of other rhetorical devices.

*c. Hermeneutics of the Sermons*

The preachers from Cluster "B" preached from Micah 3:9-4:5 with the whole canon in view. Pr1B introduced the sermon by quoting the Good News version of Proverbs 29:2, "Show me a righteous ruler and I will show you a happy people. Show me a wicked ruler and I will show you a miserable people." This quotation is a pointer to the critical place of leadership, which is the key theme of the text. Since Micah's prophecy condemns the evil leaders of Judah and proclaims the impending doom that loomed ahead as a direct consequence of their evil doings, Pr1B uses this text from Proverbs as a succinct statement of the scenario.

In order to show the extent to which the leaders had deviated from God's demands in their judgements, Pr3B draws the attention of his audience to Deuteronomy 16:19-20, "Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you." Contrary to this high calling, the preacher compared the leaders' acts to Amos 6:12 which reads, "Do horses run on the rocky crags? Does one plough there with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness." In essence, Pr3B demonstrated that faithfulness is required in order to enjoy fellowship with God..

**4.3.2.2 Persuasion through Cultural Wisdom**

*a. Mwaghavul Choruses*

Preaching to his typically Mwaghavul village audience, Pr1B utilised local choruses at different points in his sermon. Applying the flood of evil in Micah's day to the audience's context, the preacher spontaneously started this popular Mwaghavul chorus in the middle of the sermon as a rhetorical device that enabled audience participation and reiteration of the message:

| Mwaghavul | English |
|---|---|
| *A mun gùrùm a mún wàt ni* | We people are the ones that spoil it |
| *A mun, baa mee mbii bish yíl ni kas ooo* | Oh, We are! Nothing else corrupts the land |
| *Yil Mwaghavul yaghal dée a kaa Sodom si oo.* | Oh! Mwaghavul land is now like Sodom. |

Later in the course of the sermon, after expressing hope for a better future, the preacher again sang a chorus spontaneously.

| Mwaghavul | English |
|---|---|
| *Ɗem ɗii milep di a kyeen funu* | There is a green pasture ahead of us |
| *Sháng mpee mún oo.* | Oh! What joy is set before us! |

This song is drawn from the popular Mwaghavul context of animal husbandry. The greener pasture is a sign of a better life. The elder in the house would normally go out in the late afternoon to explore better grazing land where the animals would be taken the next day. As he came back, he instructed the children in the direction they would have to go the next day. It is assumed the children would then lead the animals out with great expectation of a better day, as a shepherd boy finds great joy when his animals are well fed even if he is hungry. Having fed the animals well, he would be treated well (like a king) when he returned home. To say a greener field is ahead of where we are heading, is a familiar picture of hope and future joy.

*b. Poetic Rhythm*

In his book, *Biblical Preaching in Africa,* Janvier stated that "African poetry… makes a fine illustration… It speaks to the heart of a person in ways a song may not" (2002:110). This is because not only do the words convey meaning, but even the diction and sound of words have an effect on the hearers.

Pr2B used a Mwaghavul poem, arranged in lines based on alliteration, regarding the ideal King in order to illustrate how a true leader or king should be. The preacher reminded the congregants:

| Mwaghavul | English |
|---|---|
| *Mishkagham a kagham.* | A king is well-being. |
| *Mishkagham a man kagham.* | A king is fellowship. |
| *Mishkagham a tong kagham.* | A king is peaceful living. |
| *Mishkagham a ngudyel kagham.* | A king gives healthy judgment. |

*Mishkagham a kamnaar zàk,*　　　　　　　A king is also a mediator,
*mpee cìn zéen ki mpee can dyél mu zéen zàk.*　　for doing the truth and for truthful
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　judgment

The preacher's use of this poem might have challenged the local leaders, whose stories of past judgments on land, boundaries, and the right to the throne, among others, are shared immediately after the poem. The juxtaposition of the poem and the stories will allow recourse for transformation and better living.

*c. Proverbs*

Two of the three preachers in Cluster "B" included common well-known proverbs in their sermon's rhetoric. Proverbs are brief, persuasive, well known and down-to-earth sayings based on life experiences meant to teach lessons (Arnold and Beyer 2008:314; Sefa 2014:61; Tchimboto 2017:5; Klasińska 2015:217). They are understood in context and in Africa, are considered sacred and authentic (Masenya 2016:5; Penfield 1996:1024; Momoh 2000:361; Malica 2015:5-6). Refer to 2.3.2 for full discussion of proverbs.

The rhetorical worth of proverbs is discussed in 2.3.2. The Cluster "B" preachers used three proverbs to persuade their congregants. The researcher will discuss two of these for want of space and because the third, *"Ri ghan nkoghop sarse kí sarkul"*, meaning, ("He laid on both his left as well as his right sides"; Pr1B) simply acknowledges that Micah addressed both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, which has little rhetorical significance relating to transformation and change of attitude.

The first proverb expresses the irony of leadership as follows: *"Yil bish, ne nyem tileng wa ɗen a nyem ntaa naa, ku dumu mo wa ɗen ɗi a mishkagham kɨ gurum mo."* This means, "The land is so bad, that leaders have become worms, while hyenas have become the kings of people" (Pr1B). Acknowledging the prevalence of injustice among leaders in the Mwaghavul land, Pr1B laments in desperation by using this proverb. The proverb clearly portrays the irony that results from injustice where genuine leaders are replaced by corrupt greedy persons. In many Mwaghavul proverbs and folklores, the hyena represents greed and self-indulgence. It is never associated with the concept of sacrificial leadership. The preacher's association of the Mwaghavul leaders with this proverb speaks volumes to the people in this context.

It is interesting that, immediately after this proverb, the preacher alluded to a song of a popular Nigerian musician that reminded the congregants of an evil deed of a past Nigerian leader who killed a journalist that was about to publish a report that would expose his evil deeds. The preacher then appealed to leaders in homes, the church, the Mwaghavul land, among others, to learn a lesson that no matter how much they attempt to hide evil, a day will come when it will be revealed.

In stating the fact that religious and political leaders commercialised their divine mandate and turned their positions into a means of getting money, Pr2B used a Mwaghavul proverb taken from the traditional context of divination: *"Kum mu zéen múu tok ghaa kwee; a kum mu dúng ɓe múu tok wurá aa shaghal"*, meaning, "True divination its fee is a hen, but false divination its fee is money." All that Pr2B was saying is that religious and civil officers' collection of bribes is abnormal and unethical. This would no doubt have challenged leaders at various levels who may have collected or even given bribes.

*d. Use of Quotations to Support Argument*

This is the flip side of the African way of citing proverbs, in this particular case to establish authority. The focus here is not so much on what the proverb means, but on the fact that the proverb is cited as a source of 'higher' authority to make the point indisputable. Citation of proverbs appears to share a semantic field with the preachers' citation of scholars in support of their theses, because they "bear certain specifiable relations to one another" (Lehrer in Nordquist 2016; see Carson 2013). In this context, the researcher uses "semantics" particularly to compare the way the preachers quote scholars and Africans quote indigenous proverbs to validate a point.

Towards the end of his sermon, Pr3B, quoted two scholars on leadership to authenticate a point. The preachers in Cluster "A" quoted neither scholar nor directly made reference to any wise saying. The Cluster "B" preachers' use of quotations in this way accords with quoting proverbs where the African articulation of "Our elders say…." is used. Sefa (2014:60), in his sermon, Pr3B quoted John Maxwell[115] who writes, "True leadership always involves other people (as the leadership proverb says - 'if you think you are leading and no one is following you, then you are only taking a walk'). Followers do not trust leaders whose character they know to be flawed, and they will not continue following them."

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[115] Though his documentation provides only the name of the author, the point they make is relevant.

The preacher (Pr3B) also cited Albert Schweitzer as follows: "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: The ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Pr3B used these quotations to authenticate his thesis that whatever position one occupies, from the home to the public sphere, as he had previously stated, what is required is collaboration and humility as the keys to sucessful leadership.

*e. Storytelling*

Storytelling is an old and popular art in most African communication systems. In 2.3.2, the researcher discussed that stories are avenues through which the wisdom of a people is transmitted to the next generation and that they inform, persuade and entertain (Boeman 2010). In the Mwaghavul culture, as it is in many African societies, moonlight stories were highly regarded (1.1 and 4.1.2). These stories are used to pass down "cultural traditions, values, behaviors, etc" and "to persuade people to act a certain way or adopt a particular world view" (Boeman 2010).

*i.* Reference to Local History

Several stories of historical events known locally and nationally were used by the preachers in this cluster to illustrate the deeds and effects of evil leadership relating to land, chieftaincy, false teachers, as well as stories of the neglect of earlier preachers' warnings. They used familiar cultural art to illustrate the issues in the sermon data.

For example, Pr1A told of the subtle way a Nigerian musician revealed the leader who killed a journalist, to which the researcher referred to in 4.3.3.3a above, because the journalist was about to publish a story relating to the leader's secret evil moves. He sang in a Nigerian English (Pigeon-English). The lyric of the song goes, "Who killed Dele Giwa, na Baba, if you say Gida, na you sabi," meaning, "Who killed Dele Giwa? It was "Baba", if you say "Gida", then it is you that knows." The actual name of the evil leader is "Babangida." This would remind the audience of how impossible it is to hide evil forever, especially where the all-knowing God is involved.

Pr3B provided a graphic description of how Islamic Jihadists or Fulani Herdsmen have used the sword and local weapons and guns to butcher Christians in their homes and farms. In contrast to this scenario, Micah 4:3-4 provides a picture of a peaceful life as farmers, which the Mwaghavul audience may long for. Pr3B said, "Swords and spears, the major weapons of that time will be turned into agricultural implements, no need to train soldiers. The peace of the messianic kingdom is also described using farming imagery". Using this description of desirable tranquillity which his audience has longed for for the past 15 years, the preacher appealed, "Obeying God's word will affect every area of our society… We have not experienced stable peace for about 15 years; our wish and desire is to experience the Messianic Kingdom of peace and security" (Pr3B). He said peace will only be realised when the audience does the will of God, just as the worshippers in Micah's day chose to do (Micah 4:5), where they declare, "All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever".

## *f. The Rule of Three, Four chunks* (Climax)

This rhetorical device, the chunk, was also used by Pr3B as a basis to appeal to his audience for commitment while interpreting the clause, "walk in the name of the Lord our God." He declared, "I am here making a loud call on all faithfuls in Christ in these last days, to remain resolute, trusting and obeying the word of the Lord, even though others around us are not following him." This appeal may have been made because the recurring crisis had made many to turn away from God and to seek powers and protection from diviners.

The activities of the Fulani Herders is rhetorically used as a punishment from God against the disobedience of the Mwaghavul Christian communities. On that basis Pr3B admonished for a total commitment as found in Micah 4:5, where he presents the resolve of Judah as a model for Christians to be committed to God going forward. Though this story is not a cultural folklore, the art of story telling used here is.

## 4.3.2.3 The Use of Figures of Speech

## *a. Simile*

Pr3B described the attractiveness of the mountain of God's house as being "like a magnet drawing all peoples of the Lord to come and learn God's law". Pr3B maintained that the

people are so attracted to God's law that they are prepared to put it into practice. When one compares what Pr3B says to the universal invitation to come (cf. Gal. 3:26-29) , the use of a common item like a magnet would make the concept of God's house mentally visible for the audience and so making it easier for them to recall it.

*c. Rhetorical Questions or Dialogical Devices*

Pr2B used a rhetorical question to round up his introduction when he probed, "Seated among us today we have leaders of families, clans and ethnic groups like village heads; is God condemning or praising us in this passage?"

After stating how the church and state in central Nigeria have suffered great losses due to the perversion of justice and terrorism, in his introduction, Pr1B asks, "Who is the cause of all these and who is to blame?" Instead of giving an answer straight after, he paused, allowing for reflection. He then quoted the NLT version of Proverbs 29:2: "When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan."

The question and Bible verse that is quoted were used as a way to provoke reflection on the part of the audience without necessarily seeking for any verbal response.

**4.3.2.4 Summary of Sermon Analysis from Cluster "B"**

| S/N | Rhetorical Element | Cluster "B"[116] |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1.  | Biblical Exposition | 9 |
| 2.  | Cultural Wisdom | 10 |
| 3.  | Figures of Speech | 3 |

**Table 3: The Use of Rhetorical Devices in Clusters "B"**

In Cluster "B", as indicated by the table above, the preachers used the rhetoric of the Bible in persuading the audiences by taking up Micah's warning, verdict and hope, and making them relevant in their contexts and as upheld by the whole Bible. Employing several nuances of cultural wisdom found in Mwaghavul art, music, and literature, these preachers used choruses, poetic rhythm, proverbs, stories, and quotations. They also used figures of speech

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[116] The numbers in this column reflect the frequency to which the category of the rhetorical device occurs in the preachers' sermon transcripts.

like simile and rhetorical questions. All these figures of speech are engaged with as channels of persuasion.

### 4.3.3 A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Rhetorical Devices in the Two Clusters

Unlike the preachers in Cluster "A," who made scanty use of indigenous wisdom in their sermons as compared to their use of biblical rhetoric, the preachers in Cluster "B' used both forms of rhetoric to a high degree. A survey of the sermon transcripts of the six preachers in clusters "A" and "B", shows that these preachers generally engaged the biblical rhetorical language of Micah and cultural sayings in their sermons. In doing so, however, the manner and extent to which these elements were used vary significantly between the two clusters as indicated in the table below.

| S/N | Rhetorical Element | Cluster "A"[117] | Cluster "B" |
|------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. | **Biblical Exposition** | 19 | 9 |
| 2. | **Cultural Wisdom** | 2 | 10 |
| 3. | **Figures of Speech** | 2 | 3 |

**Table 4: Comparing the Use of Rhetorical Devices in Clusters "A" and "B"**

While those in cluster "A" centred almost exclusively on the rhetoric of the text, the latter swayed a little more towards the wise sayings thereby giving preachers from cluster "B" a balance of the use of both indigenous and biblical rhetoric in their sermons.

As noted, it appears that the preaching presented by preachers in Cluster "B" blended both the rhetoric of the Biblical text and indigenous wisdom. This is needful because understanding a biblical text for preaching in any context, would involve an interface between the context of the listeners and that of the text in the light of the challenges of contemporary life situations (Pieterse 2010:116).

The preachers in Cluster "A" profusely used the rhetoric of the Bible and Micah's 8th-century context. They extensively explored the background of the book and its rhetoric. Though the researcher did not demand preachers in Cluster "A" to use wise sayings, the researcher issued a written general instruction to each of the participating pastors to demonstrate an understanding of the text and make their preaching speak to the life and

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[117] The numbers in this column reflect the frequency to which the category of the rhetorical device occurs in the preachers' sermon transcripts.

context of their audiences. They, however, paid almost no attention to the context of their audience. That is why they made no direct reference (only allusions) to or quote any wise sayings, the cultural circumstances in and around the Mwaghavul land. For instance, there is very little on parallel forms of stories of unjust dealings, folklore, false prophets, Mwaghavul choruses, poems, proverbs, references to local history, familiar domain, correlated semantic field, rhetorical questions or dialogical devices which were more culturally based.

In summary, deliberate contextualisation was lacking in Cluster "A", whereas scholarship seems to have drawn the preachers' attention. There are many ways they could have engaged the audience using questions, stories, posting possible problems to provoke reflection, or a statement related to the sermon theme (Adams 1998:59-64), but they chose not to use such rhetorical devices. This lack of contextualisation leads to what Helm calls "Blind Adherence," where the preacher presents no explanation on how the text relates to the listener but requires an adherence or a response (Helm 2014:15-16).

The sermons of the preachers in Cluster "B", however, were far more audience-centred. This is possible because they were instructed to use wise sayings (4.2.1), which means their attention would have be drawn more to the context in doing so. That is, they related the message very well to the context of the audiences. They connected the audience to the text through numerous stories, poems, proverbs, and concepts that are akin to the Mwaghavul people's culture and orientation. However, the biblical rhetorical devices, though used, were not visibly central in their sermons. This could be because they felt that relating the text to the relevant indigenous sayings, to which their audiences were accustomed, would be more beneficial to them (their audiences). Micah's rhetoric is used in condemning an evil dominant culture as well as to strengthen an alternative righteous culture. Most dominant in this cluster, indigenous songs, a poem and proverbs are used to illuminate the text's appropriation to the Mwaghavul land. Local history and stories that are familiar, act as direct areas of applying the message for transformation. The imagery in figures of speech engaged the minds of the listeners in unforgettable ways. This was coupled with the deep-seated cultural memory from which these genres arise (Assmann: 2008:114).

However, the dominance of engagement with indigenous wisdom in the sermon rhetoric was not without its challenges. There is an inadequate inculturation of some of the wise sayings that suggest ATR as in a proverb used by Pr2B. The proverb runs, *"Kum mu zéen múu tok ghaa kwee; a kum mu dúng ɓe múu tok wurá aa shaghal"* (Pr2B) meaning: "True divination

its fee is a hen, but false divination its fee is money." The word *kum* means an inquiry made of the gods concerning a matter. If such a proverb is used, the preacher has to explain the point being made very clearly to avoid such tendencies. The preacher could have made it clear that no payment of any kind should be made for favourable prophecies or judgements.

Generally, however, the preachers from Cluster "B" have amply used both biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings in their sermons in different ways. Most of them use biblical rhetoric taken from the judgment section of the text and few in the area of hope. They used these devices to ensure understanding, to challenge the current state of a thing, to give hope for the despairing, to remind the audience of the ideal, to call for repentance and to equip listeners for quality service for God.

In closing, I am drawn to reflect on what might have been the reason that the preachers from cluster "A" barely used any wise sayings. Though no interpretation is free from cultural biases (Vanhoozer in Cathcart 2012:219), a preacher is expected to deliberately engage the congregants in their own socio-cultural contexts. This is because even though the Holy Spirit convicts, "deliberate attention to the audience's culture and preferences can help reduce the physical and mental hindrances to the gospel" and so build the bridge that enables the audience to see the practical application of the truth in contemporary contexts (Cathcart 2012:211, 18).

It is possible that the nature of preachers' training does not predispose them favourably towards the engagement of culture in the preaching of the gospel.[118] But when required to do so, the preachers from Cluster "B" were able to provide ample and relevant cultural sayings to clearly communicate to the audience in an unprecedented, fresh and effective manner. It was unprecedented because one of the preachers was even requested to present the same sermon for a second time because God's message reached the audience like never before. This may be a call for trainers in the COCIN pastor training institutions to redesign a more practical contextual hermeneutics (see 6.2.2).

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[118] As will be seen in chapter 6, these pastors were trained in the seminary the researcher had been teaching in for the past 19 years. There is no course on contextual hermeneutics, but westernised description of courses like "Hermeneutics and Exegesis" and "Homiletics." The contents of these courses are adoption of the description given by the missionaries.

## 4.4 Chapter Summary

It would appear that the synergy between *sumpoo* and biblical rhetoric may be an effective element in preaching today. In this chapter, the researcher looked at the background and language of the Mwaghavul people and their use of wise sayings (4.2). The researcher then went on to describe the way the preachers used sumpoo and biblical rhetoric in their sermons. Thus, in this chapter, the researcher dealt with the second and third poles of the tripolar model, where the readers' context and appropriation are examined. The following discoveries were made: the Mwaghavul people of Plateau State in central Nigeria are said to have come from the Chad region of West Africa. The Mwaghavul language, an Afro-Asiatic language, has developed significantly through the long history of her proud speakers, who have many wise sayings that are used as special tools for communication. Since the Mwaghavul language became a language of the new religion, Christianity, and of education, its wise sayings have found their way to the pulpit as well. Therefore, the preachers from Cluster "B" had ample relevant Mwaghavul wise sayings to use alongside the biblical rhetorical devices when requested to do so. They used biblical exposition, culture, stories, figures of speech, and other forms of admonition to persuade their congregants of their point of view. In the sermons from cluster "B", biblical rhetorical devices and cultural sayings acted in complementarity to bring home the message. By contrast, preachers in Cluster "A" scarcely used indigenous wisdom. Instead they dwelt on the rhetoric of the text and its context which resulted in little application to the context of their audiences.

In Cluster "B" the preachers' use of these rhetorical devices is reminiscent of what the final form of the Protestant canon describes as its main purpose. That is, that scriptures are used as a means to teach, rebuke, correct and train one in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16-17), i.e. enabling the congregations to be equipped to serve God.

The question we are left to battle with in this study, is to have proof that the mode of rhetoric a preacher employs in a sermon determines to a great extent the difference it makes to her/his congregants. Would Nhiwatiwa's (2012b:105) assumption that "contextual preaching is the most appropriate option for communicating the gospel effectively in Africa" be proven to be correct? Which group of preachers, Cluster "A" or "B", were able to better address the African "existential situation both for its message and modes of communication" (Nhiwatiwa 2012b:105)? An attempt will be made in the next chapter towards answering its probing questions.

# Chapter Five: A Critique of the Level of Understanding, Recall of, and Response to Sermon Data amongst Congregants in Central Nigeria

*"The test of a preacher is that his congregation goes away saying, not 'What a lovely sermon,' but 'I will do something!'"* Francis de Sales (in Rowell 1996:136).

A preacher ultimately aims to see that the sermon rhetoric persuades the audience as did the rhetoric of the scripture she/he used its original hearers. The effectiveness of each category of sermon rhetoric (from Clusters "A" and "B") analysed in the previous chapter as a rhetorical tool in preaching today, is critiqued in this chapter through an examination of the congregants' responses. This is essential as the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis examines the responses of congregants too (2.4.3.32). In essence, this chapter continues with the third pole (appropriation) of the tripolar model by enabling interaction between the reading community and the preached word and its impact on them in their real-world situation (see West 2013:1; Draper 2006:189-192). Thus, in the discussions that follow, it will be seen that the ordinary African hearers, in their own context, get so immersed in the sermon that they, as the reading community, are able to "re-live Israel's past", in Le Roux's (2009) words. Through the lens of reception theory (1.6), the researcher would be able to test their levels of acceptance of each category of sermon rhetoric (see Hall 1993; Baldick 2001; Martin 2007). In examining the practical impact of the sermons on the congregants, Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* will be used to comparatively assess the levels of such impact on the congregants from Clusters "A" and "B" (see Lake 2003; Bloom 1956; Bloom *et. al*.1964).[119] The comparison would help critique MacBride's (2014) general assertion that sermons do not merely inform but also transform the listeners. If this is true, then which type of sermons rhetoric more effectively persuades listeners in the post-colonial African context?

By using the lens of Stuart Hall's (1993) reception theory (discussed in detail in 1.5), the researcher will attempt to determine the congregants' level of acceptance of the synergy between wise sayings and biblical rhetoric in the sermons. The levels of acceptance (as noted in 1.5) may be categorised as follows:

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[119] The Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives was developed between 1956 and 1972 (Wilson 2014:1) for the analysis learning outcomes called the domains of learning, namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Wilson 2014:1). This was also taken up by homileticians to assess the outcome of sermons rhetoric on congregants (Robinson 1980:109; Lake 2003:202-203). The researcher will discuss this further in 5.4 while analysing the congregants' response to sermon rhetoric.

i. **Domination** would be a position where both the preacher and the congregants share an understanding of the mode of "communication, assumptions and cultural biases" with no misunderstanding.

ii. The position of **concession** or **negotiation** is where the receiver of the message understands most of what is communicated, but has a different sense from the dominant position.

iii. Thirdly, **disapproval** is a position where the congregant decodes the sermon, but because of societal and cultural differences, conceives an unintended meaning from what is communicated (Martin 2007:1-3). Here the researcher will examine how the congregants receive the tapestry of African sermon rhetoric in Mwaghavul land, impacted by cultural and "historical changes affecting the reading public" (Baldick 2001:213-214; see Hall 1993).

For Hall, the audience's reception is impacted upon by their cultural background and personal experiences (1993; Livingstone 2007:20). From the interviews conducted, it was noticed that the young predominantly do not readily appreciate the use of wise sayings in sermons. Reception theory will help to analyse the level to which the central Nigerian audience receive sermons using communications models that engages the use of indigenous sayings, and how they respond to the sermons in addressing existential issues (Adamo 2000:336-338). The theory equally assesses the subjective and sensory-emotional values (see 1.5).

Chapter four dealt with an examination of the sermon transcripts of six participating preachers, three each from Clusters "A" and "B," and their use of Micah's rhetorical language and/or Mwaghavul wise sayings in their sermons on Micah 3:9-4;5. In this chapter, the researcher would like to determine the differences in the extent to which the sermon data from each of the clusters, impacted their congregants using the third pole of the tripolar model of contextual hermeneutics, the reception theory, and Blooms *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. To determine this, four congregants were selected from each of the six participating congregations (LCC), making it twelve from each cluster, and interviewed. The transcripts from those interviews form the data to be analysed.

Before describing what will be done with the data, several questions need to be answered around the selection of the interviewees. Such questions centre on how (procedure and criteria used) and why such a number of persons were selected to represent the two clusters.

## 5.1 Description of Data Analysis Methods

How was the selection of interviewees done? The researcher conducted these interviews either after Sunday worship services or on a weekday when there were various church programmes. Whenever he arrived at a church for each set of interviews, he instructed the pastor to select four congregants consisting of women, men, the young and the aged. The four were selected from an average population of 90 congregants per church. The three congregations from each cluster represent about 10% of the congregations in each cluster, giving the ratio of about 1:30. This was done to prevent any form of preparation by the interviewees prior to the actual interviews. Despite his instructions, some of the selections were male dominated.

The congregants were interviewed within three months after the sermons were preached. The analysis of the interview data involved the integration of "comparative case studies" method (Goodrick 2014:9) which is explained below. This has helped to determine how the use of Mwaghavul sayings along the biblical rhetoric of Micah influenced the patterns of outcomes obtained in cluster "B" over and against that of cluster "A" where no Mwaghavul rhetorical devices were used in the sermons.

In this case, the Mwaghavul sayings serve as Goodrick's "causal mechanisms" (2014:9). "Causal Mechanisms" are interventions added to a process for the purpose of examining the extent to which such interventions influence the results, particularly outcomes and impacts. In this case, the elements of the intervention are the use of wise sayings by preachers in Cluster "B" that may cause a difference in the outcome of the research, according to the researcher's hypothesis (1.3.2). The sole purpose for this proposal is the expectation that the synergy wise sayings and biblical rhetoric in the sermon rhetoric would bring about better response and recall of the sermons by the audience. To determine the effectiveness of using sayings in the sermons, the "similarities, differences and patterns" (Goodrick 2014:9) across the interview outcomes of the two clusters were analysed, by incorporating elements of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The general premise was that the engagement of Mwaghavul wise sayings (*sumpoo*) and the rhetorical language of Micah, by the preachers in Cluster "B" (chapter 4), would act as a means of contextualisation, thereby enabling congregants to better understand, recall and respond to the sermons, with responses including practical appropriation and functional

application. As Wong[120] suggests in his proposal for preaching amidst varied cultures, "It would be good to interview congregations to see if these perceptions [that there are relevant strategies for speaking to specific African ethnic groups] hold true" (2004:7).Therefore, the selected congregants from both clusters were interviewed for the purpose of assessing the level to which they remember the sermons, namely their "ability to encode, store, retain and subsequently recall information and past experiences in the human brain" (Mastin 2010:1) and put them into practice.

Through these interviews, it was discovered that the congregants in cluster "A" were able to retain and recall more of Micah's rhetorical language than those in cluster "B", but were only able to see vague and unclear areas that required personal practical response from the messages preached. However, in addition to their ability to recall some of Micah's rhetoric, congregants in cluster "B" remembered more of the cultural rhetorical devices used in the sermons and also demonstrated a greater ability to see areas of application in their daily lives – evidence of true persuasion.

In the rest of this chapter, the researcher will undertake a comparative study of the interview outcomes from the two clusters using "the common trait method" (Soles 2005:26). This method is used here as it helps to inform readers of what emerged and to provide proof for the premise set forward above. Under each sub-topic, the researcher will examine the level and quality of information that emerged from each of the two clusters based on the Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) that informs the chapter, that is, "How well is sermon data understood, responded to, and recalled amongst the Mwaghavul of Central Nigeria?"

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the researcher is aware of the lack of representativity issue in the sampling and the difficulty it would constitute in arriving at reasonable conclusions, but are using findings heuristically, to determine the feasibility of doing the study on a far larger scale outside of this doctorate. In addition, there was a response rate of 100% from all the expected interviewees. This makes for a margin error of only 5% and confidence level of 95%

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[120] Wong (2004) wrote on intercultural homiletics, centering on the effectiveness of using cultural elements in preaching across cultures. He suggests that there are issues and settings that make a speech impact a local congregation which the preacher needs to consider.

**5.2 Extent of Initial Recall of the Sermon Preached**

The ability of the congregants to outrightly remember the event and content of the sermon preached from the book of Micah is rated in this sub-section. Figures 1-7, at the end of the first question, are the range within which this rating is determined as a simple guide towards some form of standardisation. Since most of what the interviewees stated here, is on all they recall of the sermon as a whole, they may repeat some of what they have said when asked on specific and related aspects of the sermon in subsequent questions. In that case, there may be some repetition or overlap.

At the start of the interviews, the interviewees (congregants) were required to tell what they were able to recall of the particular sermon. The rating here is based on the content of their responses. Their ability to recall the content, lessons and application as well as some rhetorical devices added to the rating given, because it showed that these devices acted as part of what aided their ability recall as much. Thus, as noted earlier, a small element of quantitative research is carried out. The qualitative aspect will indicate the number of those who were able to recall the rhetorical elements, even before a reminder of the rhetorical devices used by the preacher is given in subsequent questions. Such a reminder often leads to better remembrance of the sermon itself. The reminder equally enabled the researcher to understand not only how much they would recall of the sermons, but most importantly, the practical guidance and lessons the congregants got from the sermon preached.

**5.2.1 Initial Recall of the Sermon Preached in Cluster A**

In rating the responses of the congregants from Cluster "A" between the ranges of 1 to 7, the researcher started with determining the base for such a rating, by examining how many congregants were able to recall the sermon on the spur of the moment and at what rate they were able to recall its central message, biblical rhetoric, cultural sayings, context of the sermon as well as lessons/action derived from it. This would demonstrate significantly the level of impact the sermon had on them.

*Recalling the Central Message*

Recalling the central message refers to the respondents' ability to articulate what the key point of the sermon was. It was discovered that as many as ten of the twelve respondents (75%) in cluster A made reference to the judgment aspect of the message whereas only three

of the ten (25%) referred to the message of the future hope. For example, Int.4Amlt[121] said, "the preacher spoke against injustice which is a denial of the truth for personal gain. In this text, we are made to understand that if the church does not practice the truth, the church will not grow." Int.2Alhr similarly stated, "The message was titled, 'God's message to national leaders, pastors in Jerusalem.'" But, she added, "In the end, God gave the nations a message of hope. God will make Jerusalem a new place. Even other nations would one day come and seek refuge." Thus, though a very large percentage of interviewees recalled the message, nine of them (75%) could only remember the first part of the passage dealing with judgement, while only three (25%) remembered the hope section.

*Recall of Biblical Rhetoric*

Here the researcher is referring to whether the congregants were able to express statements that show a mimicking of Micah's rhetoric, as they recalled the sermon. As with the recall of contents, those who recalled Micah's vehement language of judgment far outweighed those who recalled his language of salvation and hope. In this case, only one of the twelve interviewees (8%), Int.2Awpk, recalled the language of restoration and hope. She said, "What he [the preacher] talked about the use of blood money used in building Jerusalem, false prophecies for selfish interest and God was not happy. So he pronounced negative judgment on the land because of the ills. However, there is a promise of restoration in 4:1-5 where the lost glory will be revived." The rest (11 of 12, or 92%), could only recall the aspect of judgment. For instance, Int.2Amlt said, "The kings disliked the truth and were not acting according to the truth. Even the priests were teaching only for money. Even prophets looked for money in what they said. Their attitudes were generally condemnable."

*Cultural Sayings/Contextualisation*

Initially, none of the interviewees in this cluster remembered any wise saying or illustrations used by the preachers. This is not surprising, for, as we noted in the previous chapter, no cultural sayings were used except that two of the preachers, Pr1A and Pr3A, used popular local songs in the Hausa language. In terms of recalling how the message related to the congregants' context, only three (25%) of the twelve actually linked the message and their

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[121] The code for the interviewees follows a pattern that gives each of them an identity. Int.4Amlt, for instance stands for Interviewee (Int.) 4th in cluster A (4A) from the congregation at Millet (mlt). Thus, Int.2Alhr stands for the second interviewee from cluster "A" from the congregation at Lahir. Check out details on "List of Codes for Research Participants" on page xi.

context. For example, Int.2Awpk said, "The pastor [Pr3A] said what is happening in Nigeria today has been happening a long time ago even in Micah's day. Unfaithfulness today is seen among leaders of the nation where the treasury is looted and the masses oppressed. Even in Church leadership, leaders fulfil their selfish interests, by covering them up with false prophecies. This is a fulfilment of what Jesus predicted." It is possible that Int.2Awpk here refers to what pastor Pr1A said which was that, "We have uncountable numbers of deceitful preachers today. Even when the people are deeply into sin, these fake preachers are busy pronouncing that it is well or it shall be well with you." Int.4Amlt brought the matter home further by applying it to the recurring subject of land disputes. He said, "Land issues and bribes lead to troubles and in the family, falsehood planted in a family a long time ago can bring troubles even today." Although the preachers did not clearly relate the message to practical issues affecting the peoples' day-to-day lives, some of the congregants were able to see links between what was explained to real life circumstances. In fact, at the end of the transcript of the last interviewee, the researcher inserted a note stating, "He seems not to depend on the sermon but his own reflection on the text." Int.2Alhr further recalled in some detail how her pastor, Pr1A, somehow contextualised the message:

> He related it to the current situation in Nigeria. Both the political and religious leaders who use their constituency allowances for selfish reasons, not in developing those areas – building houses, buying cars and sometimes even supporting church projects. Religious leaders leave the mainline churches to set up their own ministries. The people are attracted to such places without investigating the sources of their powers. Such Ministers set up the prayer houses for their selfish interests.

The problem with this sermon application is that none of the congregants occupies such political positions or has set up a ministry. They are primarily peasant farmers and small-scale traders. Consequently, they are left without a message for their own lives.

*Lessons Learned/Action Taken*

Did the congregants provide any indication of how the sermon impacted their lives in terms of the lessons they had learned and/or decisions they had taken as a result of the sermon preached? Only two (17%) of the twelve interviewees indicated some evidence of the application of the message to life. Even so, such applications are prefixed by words like "the church", "our leaders", or "we" instead of "I". Though the use of "our" or "we" may function rhetorically in this context as a device about African communal identity and accountability. It may also be evidence that the message did not sink to an individual level, as with the

congregants' application of the message to political position and ministry, above. For instance, Int.2Alhr said, "In applying this to us, he [Pr1A] said that no matter what we go through now, if we come to God, our fortunes will be changed where others will come to learn about God from us." Pr1A did not say these exact words, but alluded to a possible change in fortune when the people turn to God in repentance. Similarly, Int.2Awpk stated that "At the end, we are told to follow God's intention so that we will be fruitful and enjoy life on earth." His interviewee has demonstrated a lot of personal reflection on the sermon preached and was not quoting the pastor. It is possible for some members to demonstrate specific applications beyond what is actually said. This was also demonstrated by Int.2Awpk who contextualised the message, as noted earlier, though his pastor did not. It shows then that a preacher can never estimate the radius of the influence of the message on the congregants.

In summary, data analysis shows that all twelve interviewees (100%) in Cluster "A" recalled at least some aspects of the central message preached, though few remembered the message of hope. Only nine (75%) could remember the biblical rhetoric of Micah. In Cluster "A", only three (25%) interviewees could relate aspects of the text to their context. Their lack of contextualisation could also be a result of the lack of *sumpoo* being used by the preachers in combination with the other factors. Finally, only two (17%) indicated that the sermon had a little influence on their intellects. From this data, the researcher would rate the practical responses of Cluster "A"' to be two of twelve (17%). A sermon is expected to be audience-centred, but here, only 17% of the interviewees are able to contextualise and/or draw some lessons from the sermon.

**5.2.2 Initial Recall of the Sermon Preached in Cluster "B"**

To establish a basis for rating the responses of the congregants in cluster "B" to the first question, the researcher again indicates the following themes: the central message, biblical rhetoric, cultural sayings/context, and lessons learned and/or actions that were taken. As cluster "B" was the experimental cluster, preachers were requested to use both indigenous wisdom and biblical rhetoric in their sermons (see 4.2.1.1). The aim was to determine whether or not using wise sayings alongside biblical rhetoric, would lead to a greater understanding, recall, and response to the sermons among congregants.

*Recalling the Central Message*

Eleven (92%) of the twelve respondents remembered what the message was. However, only three of the eleven (27%) made reference to the second aspect of the message concerning the hope of the future and the exaltation of Jerusalem. Encapsulating the message of the sermon, Int.1Btim said, "The pastor preached from Micah 3:9-4:5 and spoke on God's judgment on bad leaders and he said in Micah's day they turned the black into white." Similarly, Int.4Bdys stated, "He [the preacher] said, in the days of Micah, many prophets, leaders and judges were looking for money instead of doing the work of God." On the other hand, Int.4Btim pointed to the same things but added: "The pastor also said that if you believe and live by the truth, there is joy ahead of you, which he illustrated by a green pasture."

*Recall of Biblical Rhetoric*

The rhetoric of Micah and the flow of his argument (*logos*), which consists of both his language of judgement and comforting words of hope, were amply recalled as shown in the following statements. All twelve congregants (100%) recalled Micah's message of judgment. Only three of the congregants (25%) from this cluster (Cluster "B") referred to Micah's message of salvation and hope for the repentant. To illustrate this, Int.2Btkm said, "In Micah's day, the leaders, judges and priests did not do what they were called to do until bribes are given." Int.3Btkm also referred to the preacher. "He said the prophets, priests and judges did their work based on what payment they get. They were receiving bribes." They all said, these attitudes will bring judgment on them. On the area of hope, Int.4Btim, as one of the three, made a passing statement on future as "there is joy ahead of you illustrated by a green pasture". In a pastoral community like the Mwaghavul land, to talk of green pasture ahead is a picture of positive expectation. As a shepherd takes the flock out to the field, he or she hopes that the animals will get luscious pasture with enough green grass to feed on. There was also evidence of reflection on Micah's context by on congregant (8%). Reflecting on the rhetoric of Micah, Int.3Btim said, "I noted a big difference in the way the prophet spoke and I thought that maybe the messengers of God in the past were different from those of our day. He spoke very clearly on what God wanted to do and did not dull the sharpness of the prophecy". This indicates a reflection of the fearless nature of Micah's rhetoric for possible appropriation.

*Cultural Sayings/Contextualization*

There is a very impressive recall of the message as it relates to the context of the interviewees as well as recall of relevant wise sayings used in connection with the message. During the interviews, it became clear that these contextual elements and wise sayings helped the congregants in better relating and responding to the sermons. For instance, as many as eight of the twelve interviewees recalled some wise sayings used in the sermons. Similarly, about nine of the twelve interviewees were able to relate the message of the sermons to their own contexts. Int.3Btim, for instance, shows the remarkable impact of the preachers' sermon as she said:

> What I remember was the song he sang which was originally sung by Ezra Jinang, [a very popular Mwaghavul gospel singer], about the green pasture we expect ahead of all who remain true to the Lord. He equally said, because the situation in the land is uncertain due to evil leaders, he used a proverb, *"Yil chighir nighin, jwak yaghal mwan,"* meaning, "The land has transformed into something evil."

These statements start from the message of hope to that of judgment, instead of the reverse as is seen in Micah. It may be recalled that Pr1B, the pastor of Int.3Btim, used the lyric of the popular chorus; *"Dem dii milep dyakyen funu... Sháng mpee mún oo"* (There is a green pasture where we are heading to. There is enjoyment there for us) (4.3.3.2). She (Int.3Btim) then refers to the present evil days in which we now live as expressed in the proverb. It is remarkable that different genres of indigenous wisdom, a chorus and a proverb, are creatively used to paint Micah's two pronged-message.

In similar vein, Int.4Btkm said "Today, many preachers focus more on the payment they receive instead of the work they are called to render. But he [Micah] told them again that punishment is not the last word, for there is a bright future for his people." These are indications that the congregants were able to see a connection to their culture and context as well as feel that the message is for them to respond to. This is seen in the direct connection the interviewee (Int.4Btkm) sees between current preachers and the Israelite religious leaders, as seen from his statement.

*Lessons/Action Taken*

Building on the foregoing, remarkably, seven (58%) of the twelve congregants in this cluster pointed to both the lessons learned and actions they had taken as a result of the sermon, without being asked for such information. Responding to a later question regarding application, the

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remaining five of the twelve congregants (42%) pointed to the impact of the sermons on them. But since the responses of the seven came about as a result of sharing about the sermon generally, their responses indicate more clearly the impression the sermon made on them. They not only used "we", "us", and "our" but also "I" or "me" when responding to the questions on the lessons learned. What Int.3Btim learned from what the preacher said was:

> …to help us know that if we are committed to serving God sincerely, even though leaders may be corrupt, God can change things around for our good. He said leaders should try to be exemplary because sometimes other people are looking to them as models, especially, the pastors, pastor's wives, village heads and elders. He said, only a few are able to keep standing when these leaders fail.

This is not directly what the preacher said, but the congregant has taken these to be what the preacher wanted them to learn. Another lady, Int.1Bdys said, "This encouraged me to stand for the truth and not be moved by the new churches that are coming up because some may be simple money-making venture by the founders."

Judging from my analysis of the responses from Cluster B as seen above (the initial 58% and later 42%), the researcher can confidently say that a large percentage of the data was recalled by the congregants in the initial questions on the message itself (see table 5 below). In this cluster, the responses of the congregants to the question concerning their general comment on the preaching shows a remarkable difference from those of cluster "A" in terms of the impact the sermon had on them. They were able to see that the message was not only for Israelite leaders but for them to take and use. In other words, a higher percentage of cluster "B" interviewees could see how the message related to their context and the response that had to be taken as a result of its persuasive nature.

Though general comments will be made at the end of the chapter concerning issues that emerge very clearly, an initial comment concerning the first question may be made. Clearer evidences of understanding, recall and responses to the sermons seem to be numerically more from the congregants from Cluster "B" than those from Cluster "A". This is represented by the following simple comparative statistic drawn from the drafted and marked transcripts.

| | Cluster "A" | | | Cluster "B" | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Themes | Type | Number | | Type | Number |
| | Central message (+ve/-ve) | 10/3=108% | | Central message (+ve/-ve) | 8/2=83% |
| | Biblical rhetoric (+ve/-ve) | 1/9=83% | | Biblical rhetoric (+ve/-ve) | 3/10=108% |

| | Cultural sayings/context | 0/3=25% | | Cultural sayings/context | 8/9=142% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lessons/response taken | 2/0=17% | | Lessons/response taken | 3/4 =58% |

**Table 5: Comparative Statistics of Initial Rhetorical Devices Recalled**

Even though the researcher did not start out looking for gender differences, the researcher is compelled to state that it appears that women listened more keenly to sermons than the men. Unfortunately, the pastor of the first church in Cluster "A" in which the interviews were conducted, did not select any women participants and it was insisted that in the other churches, the selection should be gender sensitive. The lack of female involvement would be a clear case of patriarchal discrimination. Most of the men that provided a reasonable amount of detail seemed to speak from their own general knowledge, rather than directly from the sermons themselves. Some of the interviewees in Cluster "B" were able to recall more as wise sayings were brought to light in subsequent questions, as the ensuing discussion will show. The ability to recall that much seems to corroborate the assertion that, when a figure of speech is from an already familiar socio-cultural context, the message sticks in the brain more (Memory: A Primer." 2013).

The responses gathered through the interviews have indicated the impact of the sermon rhetoric on the congregants, especially their ability to recall and respond to the sermons preached. The rest of the chapter is a reflection and proof of the general fact that wise sayings assist congregants to recall sermons preached.

**5.3 An Analysis of the Figurative Language Recalled by Congregants**

After the general question on the ability of the congregants to recall the sermons preached, the researcher then enquired specifically regarding their ability to recall figurative language used in the sermons. The congregants of Cluster "B" were asked to identify figurative language from the sermon. They then picked up a lot of figurative language, some of which related to Micah and some to indigenous wisdom. It is from there that the researcher attempted to determine how much of the recalled figurative language of sermon rhetoric were biblical and which are indigenous. In essence, the researcher intended to look at how each category of rhetorical language (biblical or indigenous) makes a contribution to the sermon rhetoric and their possible impact on the congregants. This is an attempt to offer a way of thinking about the cycles of rhetoric in African sermons, namely how indigenous and biblical

wisdom shape the rhetoric of the sermon and the way the hearers engage with these different contours of rhetoric.

**5.3.1 Micah's Figurative Language Recalled by Congregants from Both Clusters and Its Implications**

In the first section of chapter two (2.1.1), rhetoric, was defined in general terms, as the persuasive use of language in a speech or writing. Therefore, examination of the art of persuasion in the Bible could be seen as identifying the biblical art of persuasion as a development from the ANE roots through the Old Testament to the classical and New Testament periods (2.2). As indicated in 2.2.2, the book of Micah, like other books of the Bible, contains numerous examples of figurative language as part of the rhetoric used in persuading the different audiences in different rhetorical situations (Muehlenberg 2007).

Like any other form of rhetoric, biblical rhetoric aims at helping the audience understand the message. Where a preacher understands the rhetoric of the text, s/he is better able to use the text in a way that its rhetorical effect, would impact the audience. In the previous chapter, the preachers' sermons preached on Micah 3:9-4:5 were analysed. In this section, the researcher intends to examine the ways and extent to which the congregants understand and recall the persuasive language of the preachers that are identified as coming from Micah. Thus, the researcher is looking at how much of Micah's rhetoric, as used by the preachers, resonates with the congregants as a demonstration of their understanding of the sermons and their effect on them. The researcher looks at the persuasive power of the text and its effects on the congregants, and how the congregants feel as a result of their exposure to the sermons. Is there evidence that the congregants understand what Micah said and why? Thus, my focus is on the preachers' rhetoric and how this helped their audiences to understand the message of Micah.

As a guide, the researcher subdivided the text (3:9-4:5) into 3:9-12 and 4:1-5 in order to note the parts that were more frequently reflected in the figurative language the congregants could recall. It was noted that the congregants generally recalled more of the sermon rhetoric that relates to the first part of the text, especially 3:9-11. Verse 12 however, is reflected by about 8% of the respondents only and the metaphoric representation of peace and security through obedience in 4:1-5 is barely remembered. This may be as a result of scanty reference to this part of the text in their sermons (4.3.2.1), even though the prophet Micah presents it using a peaceful farming metaphor, with which congregants in central Nigeria are very familiar.

**5.3.1.1 Micah's Rhetoric Recalled by Congregants in Cluster "A"**

The aspects of the sermon that mimic the rhetoric of Micah and which the congregants readily recalled, are those which the preachers convey in language comprehensible to the Mwaghavul of Central Nigeria. This is because persuasion is intrinsically related to understanding. So, the preachers' simplicity of diction and yet sober explanation and interpretation of the text is key (Volk-Birke 1991:115). Evidence of understanding and the impact (or lack thereof) of the rhetoric of the biblical text on the audience, will be seen in the following responses gathered from cluster "A".

**5.3.1.1.1 Evil Leaders**

Micah 3:9-11 contains a number of rhetorical features, that is, features "that [help] convince readers of a certain point of view" (Hansen 2018). In this text, Micah uses structure and different figures of speech to portray the evil nature of the leadership of his day. The focus here is to establish the congregants' response to a sermon's rhetoric relating to evil leadership.

Of the twelve interviewees in Cluster "A", seven (58%) referred directly to these aspects of the preachers' emulation of Micah's rhetoric. For instance, Int.2Awpk stated that the preacher "talked about the use of blood money[122] used in building Jerusalem, false prophecies for selfish interest and God was not happy." His statement shows an understanding of the oppressive nature of Judah's leadership at that time. The phrase "blood money" is a common expression that refers to any money obtained through oppressive means, whether or not it leads to someone's death in the process of obtaining it. Similarly, Int.2Alhr, states that "The leaders were building houses, even temples with blood money".

The leaders' attitude to the truth of Micah's words relating to money is carefully captured by Int.2Amlt, whom the researcher had referred to, when looking at the general survey in 5.21. In her words, "The kings disliked the truth and were not acting according to the truth. Even the priests were teaching only for money. Even prophets looked for money in what they said. Their attitudes were generally condemnable." This can be compared to the response of Int.4Alhr, "The sermon tells us how the leaders rejected the law and oppressed the subjects. In that sermon, it was revealed that God would normally warn people before he punishes

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[122] The metaphoric expression, "blood money" refers to any money obtained through dubious means or oppression of the less privileged.

them. God is no respecter of persons when it comes to his punishment on sin." The responses from Int.2Amlt and Int.4Alhr show an understanding of the text and thought flow in Micah's text. The diction is not necessarily a direct reflection of Micah's words but conveys his strong message. The last part of the second quote begins to point to the second section of the text (v. 12) concerning God's verdict. The fact that Int.4Alhr views verse 12 as a possible verdict on any sinner shows that she has understood and contextualised the sermon. As Rampura (2015:8), a neurologist, opined, it is possible to make learned facts more memorable if we use pictorial words or sentences. The few examples of responses from the congregants in Cluster "A" stated above appear to demonstrate this fact.

### 5.3.1.1.2 God's Verdict

Micah eventually pronounced God's sentence on the leaders in verse 12, using two comparative devices; a simile ("Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field") and two metaphors ("Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins," and "the mountain of the house a wooded height"). As noted in chapter four (4.3.2.1), the preachers laid more emphasis on the evil leadership than on the hope of future restoration. The lack of emphasis on the hope of future restoration may well have resulted in the fact that only three of the twelve congregants (25%) made allusions to this aspect of the preachers' rhetoric.

In brief terms, Int.2Awpk said, "So he [Micah] is said to have pronounced negative judgment on the land because of the ills." This statement in itself may not look rhetorical, but it likely alludes to Micah's pronouncement, "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field." The next two responses seem to reflect closeness to the picture language of Micah. Int.2Amlt describes what the preacher said concerning Micah as follows, "He was not happy, so he was angry. He said the land will be cultivated like a field." Furthermore, Int.3Amlt starts with the cause of this pronouncement, saying "Because the leaders of Israel were doing this, Micah said God will make their land to be a desolate place and Jerusalem will be like a defeated gate or stronghold." The use of the word "like" by the last two respondents may well illustrate the impact of the use of simile as a rhetorical device in the sermon. The words "cultivate" and "desolate" in relation to land are familiar pictures to the Mwaghavul people, reflecting their agrarian lifestyle, where a piece of land is cultivated leading to total disruption of the ecology, but after four or five years of cultivation, it is left fallow and untamed for some years. In this context, the word "desolate" reflects total destruction and abandonment. The terms used are therefore from understanding and not mere memorisation of the text.

**5.3.1.1.3 Peace and Security**

Having stated that sin (3:9-11) is the cause of destruction (v. 12), Micah, in reverse form, says exaltation, peace, security and blessings (4:1-4) come as a result of obedience (v. 5). This latter section (4:1-4), though painted in a familiar narrative metaphor of a tranquil agrarian context, was unexpectedly recalled by only two (17%) of the respondents. Considering the contextual circumstances in central Nigeria, one would have expected that the congregants would not have missed the preachers' interpretation of statements like "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills"; "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks"; and "they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid" (NRSV). As indicated in the analysis of the rhetoric of sermons in Cluster "A" (4.3.2.2), the preachers made little effort in explaining these metaphors expecting future peace in terms related to the context of the Mwaghavul people. This oversight may have accounted for the congregants' poor reference to the future hope.

In fact, only two congregants (17%) slightly recall the restoration aspect. For instance, after narrating the destruction that would come on Judah, Int.2Awpk said, "However, there is a promise of restoration in 4:1-5 where the lost glory will be revived." Int.2Alhr equally indicated, "In the end, God gave the nations a message of hope. God will make Jerusalem a new place. Even other nations would one day come and seek refuge." This shows how the flow of Micah's argument is recalled by the congregants as it relates to future peace.

Though the dual nature of Micah's discussion in 3:9-4:5 (3:9-12- judgment and 4:1-5-peace) is carefully explained by the preachers in their sermons, less attention is paid to the metaphoric explanation of the future hope and its significance are completely absent. Therefore, the very few respondents (2=17%) that recalled the preacher's message on this section of the text (4:1-5) are an indication that the preachers themselves paid little attention to this portion of the text.

**5.3.1.1.4 The Worshippers' Response**

The last portion of the text (4:5) is a proposal of the expected response of the worshipper presented in antithetic parallelism where the second member or line states the opposite of the thesis of the first: "For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, **but** we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever" (NRSV). This verse reminds us of Jeremiah

36:18-20 where Hezekiah is said to have exhibited such an exemplary response to the prophecy. None of the preachers in cluster "A" made reference to Jeremiah's text or similar instances of the impact of the prophetic message on audiences in their sermons.

Few of the preachers' sermon rhetoric mention the peace that will come but not the obedience that it requires. Unsurprisingly, none but one of the congregants recalled this part of Micah's argument as a proposal and means to enjoy God's blessings. The lone voice is that of Int.2Alhr and alludes to some form of requirements: "While chapter three is a caution to me against conducting an evil lifestyle, chapter 4 gives me hope as long as I have walk in his will".

The preachers' generally lopsided emphasis on Micah's rhetoric of judgment over and against that of hope is evident in the words the congregants used to describe Micah's use of language as gleaned from the sermon rhetoric. The congregants described Micah's diction using words like "radical", "raw", "direct", "blunt and undiluted", "without fear", "fearless", "frank", "strong language", "commanding", "was bold and spoke openly", "specific and fearlessly", "with commitment", "uncompromising" and "courageous" to showcase Micah's stern prophecy against sin. It is possible that the reason the preachers emphasised the vehement language of Micah, is that it is the kind of language use, that is needed to address the challenges of Islamic terrorism that Christians are facing in central and northern Nigeria. The preachers may have believed that the challenges are the result of the people's sin and so the people need to be warned through the use such strong language.

 Of course, as many conceive of the challenges faced by the church in both central and northern Nigeria as God's punishment and the fulfilment of prophecy, it is natural to recall any form of warning, such as that of Micah, since it touches on what the church is experiencing.

**5.3.1.2 Micah's Rhetorical Language Recalled by Congregants in Cluster "B"**

As a way of contextualisation, the preachers in Cluster "B" engaged the use of cultural sayings in interpreting the biblical text. How did the synergy of biblical and African rhetorical forms influence the ability of the congregants in Cluster "B" to recall and respond to the sermon rhetoric? Kennedy would say a rhetorical analysis should enable the audience to hear the texts "as an ancient audience would hear them" (1999:146-147). My reading of this statement is that when a rhetorical analysis is done well, present audiences will hear the message in their own language and context with the same effect it had on the original audience.

Though the extent to which the preachers' presentation of Micah's rhetoric is recalled in cluster "B" is almost the same as in cluster "A", the interviewees in Cluster "B" recall a little less of the rhetoric of Micah.[123] Despite this, however, they inclined more toward the application of the text than its actual words and line of argument. In the examination that follows, the researcher refers the reader to the identification of the different devices used in the text which were dealt with in the previous section.

**5.3.1.2.1 Evil Leaders**

Micah's words and the message related in the sermons concerning the leaders of Israel were discussed by only six (50%) of the congregants in Cluster "B". Three of these are used here as examples. The closest to Micah's words is Int.1Btim who said: "The leaders, the judges and prophets work based on what money is given them." This is a rewording of the parallelism in 3:11 where the evils perpetrated by the leaders were listed. Shifting more to a form of application, Int.2Bdys said, "This will prevent us from falling prey to false teachers and leaders who judge based on the bribe they receive." In recalling the words of Micah as preached, the interviewee immediately applies the message to "us." However, there is no explanation as to the particular practical aspects of Mwaghavul socio-cultural and religious life to which such an application could be made.

Going deeper than the first two, Int.1Bdys brings the sermon rhetoric home and even balances the one-sided emphasis on the notion of payment for service. 1Bdys said:

> It is true. The saying goes that "*Peedî ghaa cìn dák di ɓe gha nsisé a di"*, literally, "Where you work is where you get your food." While it is true that these leaders were supposed to get their pay from what services they render, they were demanding extra payment directly from their clients apart from their salaries. Such payments were determining the kind of service they render. The way Micah spoke out vehemently against them is something I have learned.

Int.1Bdys not only contextualises the rhetoric of the sermon but even applies it. It is interesting that the preacher in Int.1Bdys's church did not use the Mwaghavul saying used here. This indicates that the words of Micah, as expressed in the sermon have found a home in the mind and experience of the congregant, even beyond what the pastor said.

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[123] See 5.5 for explanations on the significance of the local cultural sayings to audience persuasion.

### 5.3.1.2.2 God's verdict

On the pronouncement of judgment on the wicked leaders, only one (8%) of the twelve interviewees recalled what the preacher had said on this, in the course of the interviews. This is despite the fact that "plowed as a field," "a heap of ruins" and "a wooded height" are familiar metaphors. Making a faint reference to the judgment message, Int.4Btkm stated that, "The Israelites did evil before God and God sent a warning to them concerning the planned judgment that would come upon them." This is not a very clear reference to the strong words of warning in the verse and in the rhetoric of the sermons by Pr3B (4.3.3.1 above), but an allusion to them. In the preacher's words, "Since the leaders of Samaria and Jerusalem refused to obey him, God designed a punishment for them. The prophet said the city shall be turned into farmland; the city will be reduced to ruins, and, on the Temple mount shrubs shall grow instead of the temple". Int.4Btkm's use of the words, "the planned judgment" seems to mimic the pastor's words, "God designed a punishment for them".

### 5.3.1.2.3 Peace and Security

Pictured in a metaphor of a peaceful agrarian society of abundance and less strife, the tranquil scenario (4:1-4) is the hope of salvation that awaits those who obey (v. 5). This passage not only discusses the exaltation of Zion, but contains some of the most remarkable scriptures of all time like "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

As noted, the way the preachers' sermons were recalled indicated a more contextual (twenty-first century) application of the prophet's words. Int.1Btkm said, "The Mountain in Zion will be the ultimate which is an illustration of the prime place of Christianity above other religions." He sees a direct connection between the exalted mountain and Christianity.

### 5.3.1.2.4 The Worshippers' Response

Even though only three (25%) of the twelve congregants recalled the aspects of the sermons that echoes Micah's statements concerning the responses that his immediate or future audience would show, because of the promised peace that would ensue. It demonstrates an amazing outcome. This is because the congregants of Cluster ("B") recalled the responses by contrast to in the congregants of Cluster "A", none of whom cited this portion of the sermons (5.3.1.1). Though some of the congregants discussed these responses in vague terms, it is a

marked difference. Contrary to what the other nations do, the worshipper of YHWH (Judah) expressed resolve and commitment to tenaciously keep faith with Him.

For instance, Int.1Btkm's statement, "The prophets do their work for pay instead of helping and guiding people concerning the future," paints only a vague future picture with no indication of what future they should expect to be guided on and what such guidance is. A better response is given by Int.3Bdys who said, "It is good that Micah was frank, which should be a lesson for our leaders. When someone does well, he should be praised, but when that person does badly, they should be condemned." This means that when the audience works in obedience, it will be praised or rewarded in future.

A better reflection of this requirement on the worshipper is expressed by Int.2Btkm who said, "Just as the judgment on the temple hill in Jerusalem and the hope of its future glory, if these lawyers and leaders and in fact the whole people come back to God, the glory and respect the church had will be restored." Interestingly, his pastor, Pr1B, was the only preacher in Cluster "B" who cited Jeremiah 18:7-10 and indicated that only repentance will reverse the judgment as in the days of King Hezekiah. In the pastor's words, "My brothers and sisters know this; God is seeing the way you are leading… His prediction of punishment is a warning for you to repent and his present punishment is for you to come back" (Pr1B [4.3.2.1]). This response may be a pointer to the indispensable relationship between the pastor's exposition and the people's ability to understand, recall, and respond to sermon data.

When requested to describe Micah's use of language, the congregants in cluster "B" stated that Micah spoke "in line with what God would want", in a "strong voice", "clearly", "did not dull the sharpness of the prophecy", "sounded a warning", "vehemently," "condemned", "frank", "unique", "as directed by God", "without fear or favour", and that as "a model in life". Again, this reflects an emphasis on the judgment aspect of the prophecy.

On the whole, the interviewees in this cluster seem to have passingly referred to the biblical rhetoric and frequently moved to either its contextual relevance or application in their lives. There also seems to be evidence of profuse indirect quotation of the preacher rather than the rhetoric of the text.

The following are statistics of congregants who consciously referred to different aspects of the sermon rhetoric preached on the book of Micah.

| Themes | Type | Cluster "A" Number | Cluster "B" Number |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | a. Evil Leaders | 7=58% | 6=50% |
|  | b. God's Verdict | 3=25% | 2=17% |
|  | c. Peace and Security | 2=17% | 1=8% |
|  | d. Worshippers' Response | 10=83% | 3=25% |

**Table 6: Statistics of Micah's Rhetorical Language Recalled**

The rhetoric of Micah, as reflected in the sermon, was not readily recalled congregants from Cluster "B" as much as those in Cluster "A". However, what might have guaranteed the solidification of the memory and a sense of persuasion of the congregants in Cluster "B" to that level eventually (Tables 7&8 below), despite their lower ability to recall the sermon rhetoric on Micah, is possibly due to the synergistic use of between the biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings in the rhetoric of the sermons preached by the preachers in the cluster. A recent survey of a study that is done by some neurologists[124] reveals that figures of speech, especially metaphors, play a great role in consolidating information that comes into the brain, so that it becomes long-term memory. In a video documentary on how to boost one's memory, Pogue is optimistic that one can form a strong memory when the information that comes in is translated into "visual metaphors" (2015) that engage different parts of the brain; that is, parts that process audio, images, taste, feeling and so forth.

**5.3.2 Mwaghavul Wise Sayings Recalled by Congregants**

Here, I examine how the preachers' utilisation of both cultural sayings and the Bible in the production and presentation of the sermons, assist to appeal to the socio-cultural situation of the congregants and the extent to which their sermon rhetoric, has enabled congregants to recollect the sermons data.[125]

When preachers are aware of the rhetorical value of knowing the audience's linguistic and cultural biases in communication and the general scope of the tradition of speech studies

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[124] For example, Baddeley (2012); Piccirillo (2010); Sperling (1963); and Scoville & Milner (1957).
[125] Iivari (2014:7) has undertaken a similar study that examines the rhetorical devices Joel Osteen uses which make his US listeners to hear, like, and find him relevant in their own socio-cultural context.

(Hillis 1997), the work of persuasion would be easier, especially when they are determined to use such knowledge. This is because the audience would more easily recollect what the preacher preaches. This premise seems to be proven in this section.

**5.3.2.1 Mwaghavul Wise Sayings Recalled by Congregants in Cluster "A"**

As was seen in chapter four, none of the preachers in Cluster "A" used Mwaghavul sayings except that preachers Pr1A and Pr3A used some local Hausa songs (see 4.3.1.2 & 5.2.1 above). However, the interviewees were asked for whether any Mwaghavul saying was used that helped them to better understand and relate to the sermon. When none of such sayings were recalled, they were requested to suggest possible wise sayings that would make the sermon memorable and more down-to-earth.

While the first preacher, Pr1A, used the song to illustrate a point as he preached, Pr3A simply sang the song before the start of the sermon as he walked to the podium. He did not make any reference to the song in his sermon thereafter. It is noteworthy that none (0%) of the congregants from that church recalled the song in the course of the interviews. However, because Pr1A used the song to illustrate a key point, his song was remembered.

Recalling the song, Int.2Alhr said:

> He used songs to illustrate the fact that the things that were happening in Micah's day are things that we see happening today. One of the songs he used to illustrate that is:
>
> *"Amma ku kulla fa, dama a zamanin karshe za a sha wuya.*
> *Gama wadansu zasu zo cikin suna na, cewa sunne Almasihu."*

The interviewee, Int.2Alhr, also noted that this is a Hausa song meaning, "But be careful that in the last day, there will be suffering. For some will come in my name and say they are the Christ." With that song, she added, the preacher grasped the attention of the members. This is because people like songs. She added that the preacher also illustrated the prevalence of falsehood with examples of some ministries and prayer houses that some of the members might have visited before now.

The fact that she, Int.2Alhr, could recall the lyrics of the song indicates how indelible the song is in her mind. That is why Okodo (2012:1) would stress the need for speakers to speak in clear terms to their audience using intriguing styles that will captivate their minds. They should use gestures and words that would make a permanent picture in the minds of their

listeners. The fact that other members of this same congregation did not mention the words of the song means that sometimes, not everybody is equally attracted to the same things.

Therefore, the congregants in cluster "A" whose preachers did not use any cultural sayings, were required to suggest other ways that would make them understand, respond to, and remember sermons better. Their responses may act as a guide for improvement for preachers. In brief terms, they made a number of objective and subjective suggestions.[126] They suggested five categories, which will be discussed below: the engagement of current issues; personal reflection and Bible reading; illustrations (stories, songs, images and proverbs); the interesting nature of the topic of the sermon; and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The researcher will briefly discuss these categories.

a. **Current Issues:** Nine of the twelve interviewees (75%), felt that sermons can be effectively communicated when the preacher relates the sermons to the life circumstances of the audience or what the members of the audience have observed or experienced. Linking this to the issue in Micah, Int.2Awpk states "What makes me remember this message is if it has a link with what is happening in the nation. The economic recession is traceable to the activities and antecedents of our leaders who loot the treasury." He is suggesting that the preacher could or should have related the message to the state of Nigeria's national leadership and its effects. On a personal note, Int.2Amlt, said, "If the sermon is in line with what was happening then, in Bible times and is happening today, it helps me in remembering and relating better to the sermon that is preached." Though the interviewees were optimistic that relating the message to current issues helps in shaping the spiritual life and members' consciousness of sin (Int.3Alhr), they did not provide anything specific that preachers can use.

b. **Illustrations (stories, songs, objects and proverbs):** Only three (25%) of the respondents suggested the use of other illustrations like storytelling, songs, images or proverbs as ways to improve communication in sermons. The first is Int.2Alhr, who referred to the song quoted above as a way of improved communication when asked for her suggestion. Int.1Awpk said, "Sometimes I teach the young children Sunday school where I use these things (stories, objects and songs) to instruct the children." He added

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[126] These, the researcher thinks, can be seen as involving objective (current issues, illustrations and the topic of the sermon) and subjective (personal reflection/bible reading and the leading of the Holy Spirit) ways of making sermons easily recallable.

that such illustrations enable the children to recall the lessons taught, just as the adults find illustrations in sermons as memory hooks to recall sermons preached.

**c. Topic:** Only one (8%) interviewee suggested that the attractiveness of the topic leads to better recall. That means the preacher's creativity in using the correct choice of words in framing the topic makes it appealing to the audience. Combining his suggestions with other things, Int.4Awpk opined that "If the topic captivates you or the illustrations are on current and recent happenings… it makes you remember."

**5.3.2.2 Mwaghavul Wise Sayings Recalled by Congregants in Cluster "B"**

Many wise sayings (proverbs, stories, songs and other cultural illustrations) were recalled from the rhetoric of the sermons preached by the selected congregants from the churches in Cluster "B". Due to the cultural and contextual touches in the sermons, the congregants were themselves motivated to bring out other Mwaghavul sayings as attempts to summarise the key message that the sermon portrayed. Even in the course of the interviews, as some of them gave explanations, they sporadically used other proverbs as well. As a cultural memory, these wise sayings are a part of them as the humans themselves form the "database" in which the sayings are stored (Assmann: 2008:114; Confino: 2008:77, 83).

In this cluster, as already noted, the preachers had tried to speak with some level of audience analysis with the view to reaching them with the message through their own very cultural-linguistic orientation. They used wise sayings alongside the rhetoric of t Micah 3:9-4:5 in the production of the sermon rhetoric. This seems to have made the communication more effective, as can be seen by the preachers' contextualisation of the message. Where speakers are able to take themselves into the audience's situation in such a way that they appreciate how the audience feels and thinks or reasons in the deepest sense of the word, communication is most effective (Lutz 2007:ix). Culture has that penetrating tendency because it is part of a people's identity and forms a major innate quality of who they are.

a. *Proverbs*: Of the proverbs that were either recollected or alluded to, the researcher has drawn the following from the interview transcripts: Int.3Btim recalled, "What I remember was the song he sang which is originally sung by Ezra Jinang… He equally said, because the situation in the land is bad due to evil leaders, it can be described by the proverb, *"Yil chighir nighin, jwak yaghal mwan."* Literally, "The world has turned into a mother so that the rock begins to embark on a journey." Pr1B did not actually use

this proverb, but a proverb with the same meaning,[127] that is "unusual things are happening". Int.3Btim continued, "He assured us that God can change things around for our good." The proverb helps this respondent to recall the spate of evil in a different light.

b. *Stories/Topical Events*: Eleven (92%) of the twelve interviewees remembered the stories used or simply alluded to them. Due to want of space, I will summarise some of the major facts they were able to recall along with one or two quotes from the transcripts as illustrations. The congregants were able to recall the stories the preachers used around land tenure in Mwaghavul land which has been severally altered as a result of the corruption of the leaders. The interviewees mentioned some chieftaincy issues that have risen in the community and suggested ways of resolving them through their own reading of Micah 3:9-4:5. They also remembered the story of an evangelist, who had predicted the ongoing insurgency by Islamic fundamentalists, and some stories of false prophets who had recently arisen in the land.

Acknowledging some of these issues they recalled, Int.2Bdys said, "He [the preacher] said the local chiefs are almost being taken over by moneybags who give them money to decide issues in their favour, like land issues. Even orphans' lands are taken over. He warned that these will result in God's punishment against them." Such financial crime and greed would serve to remind the congregants of the danger of greed and so move them towards a change.

Amazingly, Int.4Bdys demonstrated the memorability of stories as he recollected, in one go, many of these stories. He said:

> The pastor talked about the prophecies of Evangelist Paul Gindiri who had prophesied about the crisis we face in this land. But at that time, no one saw it coming. But today we are suffering because no one took him seriously. In Mamsa and Mangu here, we have preachers who use the Bible, but yet only manipulate people. He mentioned the scourge of Boko Haram Terrorists and cattle rustling as parts of the evil that have come upon us as a result of our evil acts as leaders and the led.

It appears that most of the interviewees more readily remembered the stories than the proverbs, chants and poems the preachers used. This might be because the diction in poems, proverbs and chants is more technical in nature than the plots in stories.

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[127] Pr1B used the proverb, *"Yil bish, ne nyem ta tileng wa den a nyem taa naa; ku dumu mo wa den di a mishkaham ki gurum mo."* (see Sermon Transcript from Cluster "B" in appendix 2 below)

*c. Songs*: As acknowledged by Int.2Alhr from cluster "A", a song grasps "the attention of the members. This is because people like songs. Where the lyrics of a song relate clearly to the message being preached, it appeals to the emotion and brings in the audience to share, at personal levels, in the message by reiterating it in such a song." Three (75%) of the four congregants interviewed from the same church congregation recalled the same gospel song the pastor used.

One of the congregants, Int.4Btim indicated:

> Our pastor spoke on land problems where people take each other to court and sometimes the rightful owners are denied justice. He also spoke of the future joy. That when we endure, we will reach the green grass in times to come, but if we do give up, we will not taste of its joy. The song says, *"Dem ɗii milép di a kyeen funu; Sháng mpee mun oo."*[128]

This song was used when applying the agrarian metaphor in Micah 4:1-4, of peace, tranquillity and abundance, and relates very well to the audience's context and experiences.

a. *Other Cultural Issues*: Eight (67%) of the congregants loosely referred to issues that relate to the Mwaghavul conception of a king as an epitome of peace and justice. In fact, all (100%) the interviewees in Pr2B's congregation recalled the role of the king, possibly because of the poem on the ideal king that he used, which was discussed in 4.3.3.2(*b*) in the previous chapter, even though they did not quote the poem. On a general note, therefore, Int.1Btim said, their own pastor (Pr1B) "used several examples around us, which really helped us to understand and learn clear guidance for life from the message."

b. *Additional Wise Sayings*: When asked to give a summary of the sermon, some of the congregants decided to use different proverbs that pointedly summed it up. For instance, three (25%) of the twelve participants independently used this art in the following ways: Int.1Btkm said, "The Mwaghavul people say, *"Kat a kaa bríng kɨ ngu ribet mbii, bé a so a sham a nlu shwaa jeel",* meaning "If you climb the horse of a greedy man, you will be made to alight at the park of misery." This is because greed can lead to sorrow. He is, in a way, referring to the greedy leaders whose greedy acts

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[128] As previously indicated, the song literally means, "There is a green pasture ahead of us; Oh! What joy is set before us!"

were leading to the judgement the Lord pronounced. Equally, if any person imbibes their attitude, it will lead to the same result, namely judgement.

Int.2Btkm also said the sermon reminded him of the Mwaghavul saying, *"Kat a kwar kílíng ni ɓe baa a nkwar náa ni kás."* This means, "If you refuse to listen, you will not refuse to see the result." The implication here is that, when one is warned but refuses to listen, the consequences may be grave.

Concerning the sermon, Int.3Btkm said, "It goes in line with our saying in Mwaghavul which says, *'Mbii dì gha kop ɓe gha diip a ni',* meaning, 'What you plant is what you will harvest.' If you are true in your service to God, you will get a good outcome but if you do not, the result will be in line with what you have done." She then sang a song using the words of this song which she said can be a good reminder of the message.

In addition, some of the congregants used the sayings as they explained some other aspects of the sermons. Int.1Bdys, for instance, used a saying as she described the leaders' attitudes towards taking bribes. In her words:

> It is true. The saying goes that *"Peedî ghaa cìn dák dì ɓe gha nsisé a dì",* literally, "Where you work is where you get your food." While it is true that these leaders were supposed to get their pay from what services they render, they were demanding extra payment directly from their clients apart from their salaries. Such payments were determining the kind of service they render. The way Micah spoke out vehemently against them is something I have learned.

Int.2Btkm described Micah's language as graphic. He added, "Even in our interpretations of these words, it is possible we have reduced the gravity of the word. It goes in line with what the Mwaghavul people say that *'Kook mpoo kɨ ngumbíi ɓe nii kí sháng mét',* meaning, 'A song from the mouth of the original composer is more melodious'."

|  |  | Cluster "A" | Cluster "B" |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Indigenous Wisdom** | **Type** | **Number** | **Number** |
|  | a. Song/Chorus | 1=8% | 5=42% |
|  | b. Proverbs | 0=0% | 5=42% |

| | c. Stories | 0=0% | 15=125% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | d. Poem | 0=0% | 4=33% |

**Table 7: Statistics of Maghavul Sayings Recalled**

From the foregoing, as contained in the table above, it is now clear that wise sayings can act as memory hooks and a means to reach the heart of the people from whom such proverbs originate, and when carefully explained, can be used in any context. As can be observed, these sayings also indicate the wide use of the art among the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria. Therefore, the congregants found it easier to use these sayings to express themselves more successfully. That may be the reason that, when the preachers used the sayings, the congregants were not only able to remember the sermons, but they also realised that these sayings can equally be used to express Christian ideologies and concepts. But those in cluster "A", where the preachers did not use wise sayings, seem to have felt it inappropriate to use this resource because it might have been conceived of as devilish to use cultural sayings to express Christian (western) ideas.

**5.4 Micah's Rhetorical Language, *Sumpoo,* and the Enhancement of Response**

Even though verbal responses may not necessarily mean actual heartfelt responses, it is the only reliable means by which the researcher can draw some conclusions that would illustrate the impact and level of change in the congregants as a result of the sermons preached. In 4.3.1.2, the preachers' interpretation of Israelites' supposed response to Micah's warnings and message of hope in 4:5 was discussed. In this section, the researcher concentrated on the impacts of the sermons on the congregants in Mwaghavul land. With learning being a relatively permanent change in behaviour which results from experience (Kolb & Whishaw 2014:33. See also Barron et al 2015:405), the responses of the congregants to the sermons from the two clusters will be categorised into the three domains of learning, namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor as discussed in 1.6 (i) and 5.1 above. In retrospect, these terms are known as learning domains in education, coined around behavioural objectives teachers design to measure the level of their achievement in the teaching-learning process: "cognitive (thinking), affective (emotion/feeling and attitude), and psychomotor (physical/skill/kinesthetic)" (Wilson 2014:1).

Recently, homileticians have taken this up to assess the behavioural transformation and impact of sermons on congregants. Robinson (2001:109-110), for instance, has used such language of educators, in writing the objectives of sermons upon which the responses to such sermons are measured. He argues that since such terms and related verbs are normally used in "dealing with the purpose of giving knowledge and insight … and changing attitudes and actions," the Bible interpreter can target any particular domain in preparing the sermon. Lake (2003:202) noted that for Robinson, a written sermon purpose should align with the measurable verb lists used in writing instructional objectives (see also Yount'1996:152-153; Richards and Bredfeldt 1998). These objectives do not only make the congregants' responses measurable but enable the preacher to be more concrete in applying the message in the sermon (Robinson 2001:111).

First, in analysing the cognitive response of congregants to the sermons preached in each cluster, the researcher focuses on their ability to remember, delineate, recognise, understand, interpret, exemplify, classify, summarise, compare, describe, apply and analyse (Jantan 2011:9-10; Ward 2004:1, 6; Bloom 1956:18; Lake 2003:203) the sermon preached.

Secondly, the affective domain[129] determines the congregants' interests, attitudes, opinions, appreciations, values, and emotional sets from what they express in the interview transcripts. This domain deals with emotional and attitudinal responses (Jantan 2011:18), so the researcher concentrated on the responses like their enthusiasm about, desire to, sympathy towards, confidence in, commitment to (Lake 2003:203) and acceptance of the sermon rhetoric (Wilson 2014:3-4), which have influenced their choices and attitude (Rondeau, Le Rieser & Bostian 2004:8; Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia 1964:176-185).

Finally, the psychomotor domain would refer to an expression of the congregants' ability to put what is learned into practice in terms of physical, visible and muscular skills as an impact of the sermon heard. Expressions of actions taken or to be taken as an impact emerging from the sway the sermons had on the congregants, will be the focal point of this aspect of the analysis (Jantan 2011:15; Rondeau *et al* 2004:16 8). The capacity the sermons developed in the congregants to apply, internalise, produce, use, practice, study, or solve (Lake 2003:203).

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[129] Affective domain is related but different from affect theory. While affective domain deals with learners' or audiences' appreciation and attachment to fact exposed to, affective theory is an attempt to systematise feelings into categories and how each category of emotions (pleasant or unpleasant) manifests in an individual's relationships (Figlerowicz 2012:3-4; Hogan 2016). It is a vibrant area in literary study like the Bible (Marin 2001:1-2;).Thus while both deals feelings, affective theory is wider in scope than affective domain that deals with response of appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes to learned phenomena (Jantan 2011:18).

The researcher finds this categorisation appropriate because there is a close affinity between the aims of an educator and of a preacher. These aims are to create exposure through the learning activity to effect a positive change in the students'/congregants' behaviour, like understanding, attitude, and skills of life.

The responses gathered from the congregants that express these three different ways of learning are, understandably, profusely dotted by the use of personal pronouns like, "I", "me", "we" and "us". These and other personal pronouns are succeeded by statements indicating the interviewees' level of persuasion and how they have changed in understanding, attitudes and concrete acts as a result of the sermons.

### 5.4.1 Evidence of Persuasion and Responses from Cluster "A"

While one (8%) of the twelve respondents did not respond to the question, as all attempts to simplify the question yielded vague answers, the others (11 - 92%) gave responses that show the different levels of impact that the sermons had on them. For instance, four (33%) of the congregants show understanding of the issues raised in the sermons, six (50%) indicate an appreciation and change of attitude and only one stated the actual steps taken in response to the sermon.

**Cognitive/Intellectual Response:** These are responses that demonstrate intellectual reasoning, recall and analysis arising from the sermons preached. The four respondents in this category showed their faint awareness of the common practice of evil in both secular and religious settings; learned a lesson for possible reception and implementation of the message; demonstrated knowledge of God's justice; and have come to realise the worth of obedience to God.

In the words of Int.1Awpk: "Comparing what was happening in Israel with what is happening today; corruption was the order of the day. This, I see, is also happening among the politicians and traditional leaders and perhaps in the church." This does not show personal involvement but general awareness of the fluid distinction between the secular and religious setting in the perpetration of evil.

Int.1Alhr said he learned a lesson from Micah's boldness which, going forward, he would possibly put into practice. Int.4Alhr similarly noted this and also showed a level of awareness of God's justice when he said, "I learned that when God sends me, I should deliver that message and not any other one. Again, even as a leader, I learned that God can punish me where I do wrong. These two things I have firmly held." Finally, the knowledge of the value

of obedience is seen in these words of Int.2Awpk: "At the end, we are told to follow God's intention so that we will be fruitful, and to enjoy life on earth."

**Affective Response:** This indicates the level of appreciation, attitudinal change and how the congregants now related to the message preached. Six (50%) of the interviewees indicated such attitudes in relation to the impact that the sermons had on them. These six appreciated the value of living an exemplary life as a Christian in a way that demonstrates justice, fairness and truthfulness, the warning and hope portrayed in the sermon, as well as the worthy lesson concerning the future. They also valued the worth of the message for personal and group use.

Their appreciation of and identification with the sermons is expressed by some as follows: Int.4Awpk said: "The fact that God frowns at every sin, we as leaders should be exemplary and allow the law take its course and be fair in the treatment of the poor. The law is for everybody, rich or poor." This is an appreciation of the challenge for leaders to be models of justice and fairness as detailed in the sermon. This appreciation was equally upheld by Int.2Awpk and Int.1Amlt who pointed to the benefits of an exemplary lifestyle in any form of leadership and for the future.

On a similar but personal note, Int.2Amlt realised, through the sermon, the need for truthful living: "What I particularly picked from the sermon is that in everything I do I must be sincere and act in truth."

Int.3Amlt said: "I have a leadership role in this church and this sermon has permeated my being, especially the fact that leaders can use their position for personal gains. Therefore, I feel that this message is for us as elders and the pastors under whom we work. I have learned a lot." This is an acknowledgement of the value of the message for personal and group use.

Being appreciative of both the warning and hope portrayed in the sermon, Int.2Alhr said: "I was challenged and encouraged … While chapter three is a caution to me, chapter 4 gives me hope as long as I walk in his will."

All these responses can be viewed as expressing attitudes, feelings and emotions that relate to the level to which the sermons were received, responded to and valued by these congregants. That is why it is termed an affective response. In this cluster, cluster "B", this is the dominant form of response, forming fifty per cent of the responses drawn.

**Psychomotor Response:** Psychomotor response refers to life skills identified and practical steps learned through the sermons and used by the congregants. This, to me, is the highest form of expected response where transformation, obedience and growth are observable.

From the control group, Cluster "A", only one (8%) congregant, Int.3Alhr, demonstrated a psychomotor response to the sermon data when she said, "It makes me take a stand on telling the truth at all times. Nothing deters me from telling the truth. In my life, the will of God comes first before any other business. The will of God is first." This is not only a demonstration of awareness or emotion but a change of lifestyle, of truth-telling and setting God's will as a priority. Even though there is no clear statement that she has done this, her words, "Nothing deters me from telling the truth", suggests habitual engagement.

As derived from the responses given by the respondents from cluster "A", there is a clear demonstration of understanding Micah's message. However, the majority of the respondents show no substantive evidence of transformation in their daily lifestyle as an outcome of the sermons preached. Instead, as many as eleven (92%) of the twelve respondents proved that they had an intellectual understanding and affective appreciation of the sermons. Only one (8%) shows clear evidence of the transformation and development of new life skills. Even in that single response, no verb is used that demonstrates any practical evidence of change in action.

## 5.4.2 Evidence of Persuasion and Responses from Cluster "B"

For the preachers from cluster "B", having added the rhetorical element of Mwaghavul wise sayings, to the sermons preached from the book of Micah to the congregants in Cluster "B", the researcher expected that they would understand and respond better. According to Biava (1991), even second language learners understand expressions that are presented in figurative or picture language to a larger degree than they do when literal language is used. This indicates that it is easier to recall data that is coloured in figurative forms more readily than literal language. Biava's (1991) thesis, indeed, flies in the face of the belief that figures of speech are said to be harder for learners of the L2 category. Since the congregants in this research are predominantly of the Mwaghavul cultural background itself, it is expected that there will be better comprehension of the sermons using wise sayings. This agrees with Gibbs' argument that when wise sayings are used within their culture of origin, the audience does not necessarily have to "first analyze and reject their literal meanings when these expressions are seen in realistic social contexts" (Gibbs 2001:318).

In this analysis, the researcher has, again, used the educational categorisation of cognitive, affective and psychomotor forms of responses to the sermons in this experimental cluster (cluster "B") to determine the extent and quality of impact and influence the sermons had on the congregants.

**Cognitive Response:** In expressing responses to the sermons, three (25%) of the twelve respondents displayed knowledge and understanding of the key message of the sermons by recognising, recalling and evaluating it. However, the dominance of the pronoun, "you" shows a lack of personal attachment to, or change of attitude as a result of the sermons. While one of the three respondents, exhibits an understanding of the subject matter, he does not see a personal application or lesson to be taken from it. The other two prove to be aware of what is required from the believer, from the sermons, but point to the second person, "you", for its application instead of "I". While it is true that the use of "you" may indicate this, it equally acts as a rhetorical device in the African socially knitted context to be a mark of mutual identity and accountability.

Int.1Btim and Int.4Btkm, for instance, provide very odd responses concerning the impact that the sermon has had on them. Int.1Btim said, "Do not be a leader who would always show that you are above others by using power. Instead be a leader who desires the joy of your followers. In this way, people will love you as a leader at all times." Similarly, Int.4Btkm simply said, "If you are to help, to render that help without expecting any payment." These responses are strange because, instead of telling about the impact of the sermon on them as individuals, they seem to start new sermons, directing the message to some "you" whom Int.1Btim even commands not to be a certain type of leader. They prove that they are aware of the core message but exhibit no direct personal decision or pointer to any definite change.

In the same vein, Int.1Btkm states, "I really learned that when we do well then there is hope for the future. It is my choice. That if you are of the Lord the reward is clear and vice-versa." The respondent started on a personal note by stating what he has learned and what choice he needs to take but eventually turns to a "you" as in the case of Int.1Btim.

All these responses demonstrate that the interviewees recognised that what is required in leadership or any Christian service is selflessness if at all any reward would be envisaged.

**Affective Response:** Three (25%) congregants clearly appreciated and identified with the sermons. They revealed feelings of being influenced by or having developed an emotional

attachment to the sermons preached. These congregants expressed trust in and sustained reliance on God's presence, as well as a clear desire to change as a result of the impact the sermons had on them.

For instance, Int.1Bdys held, "Instead, I should rely on God for all the challenges I face because God is everywhere." This indicates trust in God's ever-presence. Int.3Btkm indicates that "It teaches me to continue in the Lord despite the challenges of life because the way I live determines what will come in future." She makes obvious indications that the sermon has made her to build her dependence on and hope in God. Int.3Bdys "I learned I need to be humble." This indicates a desire for change.

**Psychomotor Response:** An impressive fifty per cent (6) of the congregants in the experimental cluster "B" demonstrated practical skills and acts that are the direct result of the sermons' impact. Indeed, this agrees with Rondeau *et al*'s description of the psychomotor domain in education as "Learning related to actions and motor skills" (Rondeau *et al* 2004:1). Rondeau *et al*'s discussion, suggests that the sermons enabled the congregants to progress "from observation to invention" (Rondeau *et al* 2004:8) of Simpson's taxonomy; and climbing from the hierarchical stratum "of sensory, to physical and to that of psychomotor tasks and skill of Thomas' taxonomy of the psychomotor learning domain" (Rondeau *et al* 2004:8).

Judging by the verb tenses and diction used by these six congregants, the researcher was able to identify indicators of a resolved attitude of lasting change as a result of the sermons. From their responses, the researcher could observe a determination not to turn from what was taught; a decision to always tell the truth due to its enduring worth; a resolve and action taken to stand for truth and be stable in God's service going forward; a realisation of past mistakes, solution sought and prayers going on towards success; steps of actions taken already; and even action taken to help another person. The researcher will refer to most of the responses from the congregants in this section to demonstrate the impact that the synergy of biblical rhetoric and cultural sayings in the sermons had on the congregants in this cluster (Cluster "B").

There seems to be a pattern of two respondents, each indicating three categories of psychomotor responses like determination (Int.2Btkm and Int.2Bdys), action taken/being further taken (Int.1Bdys and Int.3Btim), and action that has been taken already (Int.2Btim and Int.4Btim).

The determination to continue is reflected by Int.2Btkm and Int.2Bdys. Int.2Btkm admitted, "I really learned that if God sends me, I will do just that without expecting some payment. I will focus on what He has given me to do"; and Int.2Bdys declares, "I have learned to be truthful in my life, no matter the circumstances I find myself. This is the best because falsehood has its clear limits, but the truth always stands." The repetition of "I will" by Int.2Btkm emphasises his determination not to turn from what was taught. Furthermore, Int.2Bdys has clearly decided to always tell the truth due to its enduring worth.

Int.1Bdys and Int.3Btim have made up their minds to take steps concerning particular actions they took in the past, but still, to pray to keep on track. In the testimony of his resolve and action taken already, and for stability going forward, Int.1Bdys said, "This encouraged me to stand for the truth and not be moved by the new churches that are coming up. I learnt a lot because it encouraged me to be stable in my service to God. Several churches are rising up, and the sermon encouraged me to stop moving from one church to the other." Similarly, Int.3Btim acknowledged, "I find this message very important to me even in my home. I discover that we are supposed to make things right with my husband. I told him, if he were in the church he would have heard so that we would discuss some relationship problems together. I am still praying for a change in the home." This shows that the sermon enabled Int.3Btim to realise past relationship matters for which she even sought a solution and is praying. She is even coveting a change.

In practical terms, Int.2Btim and Int.4Btim testified on the action they had already taken. Int.2Btim, for instance, confirmed:

> I even met the pastor after the service and we discussed how the leadership of the land is and what is happening. I suggested that he, the pastor, can spearhead the discussion on the way forward, though he is not originally from the village, some strangers bring good to the people going forward. This is because many have lost confidence in the traditional leaders here.

Int.4Btim also supported her response by action: "The picture of the future glory has made me meet a youth, telling him to stop the false witnessing he does concerning land ownership so that he would get to the green pasture that is ahead of us." This picture of a bright future again reflects the pastoral lifestyle of the Mwaghavul people, as explained in chapter four, which has so impacted Int.4Btim that action, is taken towards helping another person.

It is great that at least there is one congregant from each of the churches in this cluster that displays the psychomotor level of response. It is, however, surprising and difficult to

understand why three of these (Int.2Btim, Int.3Btim and Int.4Btim), forming 50%, are from the same congregation. What was it that was unique in this pastor's (Pr1B's) sermon? Is there any reason for this great response, from an analysis of his congregation? One clear, unique fact about this pastor's sermon was his emphasis on the future hope that Micah portrays, where he even gave the illustration of a green pasture that awaits those who repent (4:1-5). This church is also a village church where 99% are Mwaghavul people. It may be that people respond better to the message of hope than of threats. It appears that many of them, if not all, are familiar with that picture language in the Mwaghavul culture. Talking about the relevance of inculturation in the use and understanding of figures of speech, Colston and Katz (2004) write that figurative language has social and cultural influences on "figurative language cognition". No wonder many of these congregants (75%) made references to the green pasture illustration, indicating their understanding, and could relate to it.

The responses to the sermons from both clusters indicate that in cluster "A", where the preachers predominantly used only the rhetoric of Micah, affective responses form 50%, followed by those based on cognition, taking about 33%, and only 17% show the psychomotor response in practical life skills as a result of the sermons. In cluster "B" where the preachers engaged both the rhetoric of Micah and *sumpoo*, the opposite picture seems to be presented. Here, 50% display responses in practical terms while both the cognitive and affective responses take 25% each. It indicates that for congregants to respond better, beyond cognition and appreciation to a psychomotor response, inculturation is needed.

It would appear that the synergy of both the rhetoric of the text and that of indigenous African wisdom, produced a balanced, memorable and impacting meaning that enables the congregants to understand, respond to and recall the sermons as demonstrated in the table below. Though wise sayings were used, such engagement of indigenous wisdom did not overshadow the rhetoric of the sermon. Therefore, indigenous wisdom has shaped the rhetoric of the sermon contextually. In this way, the hearers are able to engage with these different layers of rhetoric resulting in positive transformation.

The following table presents a summary of the types of responses obtained from both clusters.

| Responses | Cluster "A" | | Cluster "B" | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Type | Number | Type | Number |
| | Cognitive | 4=33% | Cognitive | 3=25% |
| | Affective | 6=50% | Affective | 3=25% |
| | psychomotor | 1=17% | Psychomotor | 6=50% |

**Table 8: Summary of the Types of Responses from both Clusters**

It was not surprising that, after listening to one of the sermons in this cluster, the congregation unanimously requested the preacher, Pr3B, to preach the same message of hope again the next day. It might have come to them with an unprecedented freshness and found a home in their context, more so than other sermons they had heard before. It was indeed repeated as demanded. But should a sermon ever be repeated more than once, especially to the same congregation?

Lane (2004:105-106), who asks a similar question, responds as follows: "if a sermon is not worth repeating, then it is equally unworthy to be preached at all." However, he warns that it should not be repeated on the same day, to enable the preacher to have time to recoup; repeating the sermon will not be any easier, and the Holy Spirit must be allowed to rekindle its fire in the preacher's heart. If these warnings are noted, Lane concludes, "then the second, third or tenth time may be more effective than the first" instead of a "disaster" (Lane 2004:106).

## 5.5 Chapter Summary

Breitkreuz (2009:124) argues that where a preacher combines both persuasion and aesthetics it gives a better understanding of what preaching is and enables the preacher's content and style to be relevant and theologically sound. In line with this, this chapter explored how well sermon data was understood, recalled and responded to among congregants in Mwaghavul land of central Nigeria through a comparison of the outcome of interviews conducted in two geographical clusters, "A" and "B". Selected congregants, twelve from the three churches in each of the two clusters, were interviewed three months after the sermons preached from the book of Micah.

The outcome shows that, on a general note, it is possible that the engagement of Mwaghavul wise sayings (*sumpoo*) and the rhetorical language of Micah by preachers in cluster "B" aided the congregants to better understand, recall and respond to the sermons than those from cluster "A", whose preachers used no cultural wise sayings. A summary of the data shows that the rhetoric of the Bible was recalled almost at an equal rate in both clusters.[130] However, while elements of contextualisation and use of wise sayings were recalled very highly in Cluster "B", lower results are obtained in cluster "A" where the preachers neither attempted deliberate contextualisation nor used any cultural sayings. Eventually, the use of indigenous wisdom possibly led to very strong evidence of persuasion shown in the responses given by respondents in cluster "B" that indicate a transforming impact.

Lastly, the congregants from both clusters advised that the following factors would enable better understanding of sermons and increase their persuasiveness: the preacher's *ethos* (10);[131] the preachers' dependence on God (5); the preachers' kind of relationship with the people (5); and a connection of the sermons to things that affect the life of the congregants in that context (8).

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[130] Although the synergy of the biblical rhetoric and cultural sayings would seem not to have better activate a recall of the biblical rhetoric of congregants in Cluster "B" than those in Cluster "A", it does elicit the contextualisation, persuasion and impact sermon rhetoric as a whole which are the essence of rhetoric.

[131] The figures in the brackets or parentheses represent the number of congregants who suggest the points. A congregant may present more than one point.

## Chapter Six – Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

So far, this study has centred on contextualisation with a dual focus on the sociorhetorical analysis of Micah (in particular 1:7-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8. See 1.6) and the practical use of rhetoric in preaching, based on an African social context. The study has emphasised the necessity of using African rhetorical resources and knowledge systems (which had previously been undervalued (see 2.4) during colonial times), in biblical interpretation and preaching especially in the post-colonial African context. The value of such an endeavour has further been heightened by the fact that my heuristic study of the use of African wise sayings in sermons to Central Nigerian COCIN congregants seems to suggest that the synergistic use of indigenous wisdom and biblical rhetoric in preaching, has a greater impact on African congregants than cases in which African wise sayings are not used. Because of this, I would like to propose that the study be extended in scope and that contextual hermeneutics should become a prominent feature of COCIN preachers' training. These recommendations are dealt with in 6.2. For now, the researcher would like to summarise the work.

### 6.1 Summary

The hypothesis (1.3.2) informing this study was that when preachers synergistically use the biblical rhetoric (of Micah) alongside Mwaghavul sayings, it would enable congregants in central Nigeria to better understand, respond to, and remember a sermon's message. As such, the main research question was stated as follows:

*How can the rhetorical language of Micah and Mwaghavul sayings assist congregants in central Nigeria better to understand, respond to, and recall sermons preached?*

In order to answer this question and so test the hypothesis, the researcher aimed to:

a) *Investigate how Micah used rhetorical language to effectively persuade his audience.* This was accomplished in chapter three by providing a general structure of the book of Micah, and then using Robbins' SRI to analyse three selected passages (1:8-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8).

b) *Determine whether and how preachers in Mwaghavul land of central Nigeria use the biblical rhetorical language, especially that of Micah, and cultural sayings in their sermons.* This was determined through a rhetorical analysis of both the transcripts of

the sermons presented and the analysis of transcripts from interviews with the congregants, in chapters four and five.

c) *Examine how well sermon data is retained amongst the Mwaghavul of central Nigeria.* Evidence to this effect was gleaned from the data gathered from congregant interviews that took place three months after the sermons were preached. The results were presented in chapter five.

d) *Suggest how Mwaghavul preachers can use biblical rhetorical language and indigenous wise sayings in their sermons to assist their congregants better to retain and respond to sermon data*. Suggestions to this effect will be made in 6.2.3.

The study used three lenses to bring the matters identified above into dialogue:

a) Draper's (2001) tripolar model of contextual hermeneutics was used to examine the dialogue between Micah 3:9-4:5, in its historical context, the Mwaghavul readers in their context, and their appropriation of the sermons. The tripolar model informed the structure of chapters three, four and five of this work.

b) Justin Ukpong's inculturation hermeneutics was used to determine how biblical rhetoric can be interpreted in Central Nigeria, where cultural sayings represent identical roles to biblical rhetorical devices, in dealing with real African life issues.

c) Stuart Hall's Reception Theory was used to examine the ways in which cultural sayings and biblical rhetorical devices are received and responded to by Mwaghavul audiences.

Methodologically, the study adopted various largely qualitative research approaches:

The researcher began by introducing the study in chapter one. In chapter two, the concept of rhetoric as a speaker's ability to skillfully use language in a given situation in order to persuade the audience to change their attitude and/or behaviour in favour of the speaker's desired intent, was discussed. The researcher then focused on Robbins' (1996 etc) SRI, the African proverbial hermeneutics of Masenya and Ramantswana (2012 etc), and the Heidelberg sermon analysis method (Nhiwatiwa 2012 a&b; Chufungo 2013). These aspects carried over methodologically into the discussions in subsequent chapters.

In chapter three, Robbins' (1996) SRI was used to analyse the structure of the book of Micah in general terms, followed by a detailed analysis of three rhetorically rich passages, namely

1:9-16; 3:9-4:5 and 6:1-8. Three of Robbins' five textures of texts to analyse each of the selected passages were used. These passages provide clear evidence of the response that ensued as a result of Micah's outpouring of rhetoric. The aim of this chapter was to determine how Micah used rhetorical devices "to warn and to change the views and the attitudes" (Wessels 2013:3) of his audience. It was found that the book of Micah is divided into three units (1-2, 3-5, 6-7) in which Micah used a variety of available rhetorical devices to bring across God's message of judgment and hope. It was also shown, through the detailed analysis of the selected passages, that Micah's rich use of rhetoric persuaded his audience so well with regard to his message that God's judgment was delayed for over a century (cf. Jer. 26:18-20). This passage (Jer. 26:18-20) shows that the impact that Micah had on his audience was so remarkable that it became a collective memory in Israel – a great lesson for modern-day preachers.

Qualitative research methods were also used in the field research itself which, as was stated previously (1.7 and 5.1), was heuristic in nature. Five participants were interviewed on the place of wise sayings in Mwaghavul culture. These participants were drawn from the RCCs and chosen randomly by the church leaders from different sociological strata (elderly men and women, the youth, and other members) of the church.

The researcher then requested the chairmen of the selected RCCs in Mwaghavul land to select six preachers, three from each cluster ("A" and "B"), to preach from Micah 3:9-4:5. While the preachers from cluster "A" (the control group) were simply given the text to preach from with no further instruction, those from cluster "B" (experimental cluster), were instructed to use any relevant Mwaghavul sayings in their sermons. Twenty-four other participants, twelve congregants from each of the two clusters ("A" and "B") were interviewed three months after the actual preaching to determine their understanding, response to, and extent of recall of the sermons.

The transcripts of the interviews and sermons were produced, coded and analysed, yielding the information upon which chapters four and five have been based.

As stated in the previous paragraph, chapter four focused on the extent to which preachers in Mwaghavul land of central Nigeria used both biblical rhetoric and cultural wisdom (wise sayings) to persuade their audiences. Having introduced the Mwaghavul people, their language, and love for using wise sayings in communication, the researcher briefly discussed the place of wise sayings in communication among the Mwaghavul socio-cultural group. The

five participants who were interviewed on the place of wise sayings among the Mwaghavul supplemented extant literature by noting, among others, the uniqueness of Mwaghavul sayings and their authoritative place in Mwaghavul culture. As Masenya would say, African indigenous sayings, like proverbs, are sacred texts in Africa (Masenya 2016:5. See also Penfield 1996:1024). These five interviewees then provided several examples of wise sayings that had been meaningful to them. The literature and interviews established that there is indeed a large base of wise sayings upon which preachers can draw in their sermons. However, it was noted that, while preachers in the control group (Cluster "A") used Micah's rhetoric, they barely made use of any cultural sayings. In addition, the preachers in this cluster made little effort to contextualise the message they preached. By contrast, preachers in the experimental group (Cluster "B") made ample use of wise sayings, as they had been instructed to do. They used biblical exposition, culture, repetition, figures of speech, and other rhetorical devices in their attempts to influence their audiences. One may infer that, among others, their use of wise sayings drew the preachers in Cluster "B" towards contextualising, and helped them make their sermons more understandable and memorable than the preachers of the control group.

Chapter five critically probed the difference sermons made to the audiences when both biblical rhetoric and cultural sayings were used as part of the sermon rhetoric The chapter began by analysing how well sermon data was understood, recalled and responded to among congregants in Mwaghavul land of central Nigeria through a comparison of the outcome of interviews conducted in the two clusters, "A" and "B." A total of twenty-four (24) congregants from three churches in each of the two clusters were interviewed three months after the sermons had been preached from Micah 3:9-4:5. It would seem that the preachers' use of both Mwaghavul wise sayings and the rhetorical language of Micah assisted the congregants of Cluster "B" to better understand, respond to and recall the sermons than those of cluster "A". A summary of the data shows that biblical rhetoric was recalled almost at an equal rate in both clusters. However, contextualisation and use of wise sayings were recalled to a very high degree in cluster "B". In this cluster, 25% of the interviewees demonstrated a cognitive response, namely showing an awareness and comprehension of the key message of the sermons. Similarly, another 25 % exhibited an affective response, showing their appreciation and identification with the sermon. Finally, an impressive 50% of the congregants showed a psychomotor response where they revealed practical skills and deeds that were the direct influence of the sermons preached.

Given the possiblilty that the use of indigenous wisdom added to the effectiveness of the sermons, and the fact that the preachers in Cluster "B" readily use indigenous wisdom upon simple demand for them to do so, it may be suggested that, when pastors are trained to use such sayings, greater effectivenes may be be achieved.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### 6.2.1. Extension of the Study

i.  Given that this was a heuristic study, the first recommendation would be that the empirical parts of it be conducted on a far larger scale, so as to fulfill the demands of representativity. As indicated in 1.2 and 1.7 there are about three thousand congregations with a total of over 2.3 million (*2017 COCIN Diary*, 2017:13) congregants globally. Over sixty per cent of the members are found in central Nigeria. That means COCIN has over 1.38 million members in central Nigeria, so that the six congregations and 24 participants chosen cannot possibly represent the whole of COCIN in central Nigeria.

ii. Exploration of and research in further related areas:

• First of all, there are numerous aspects of culture, such as festivals and symbolism that can be further investigated to enhance the contextualisation of the gospel through sermons. These aspects can be studied in terms of their relation to cultural hermeneutics.

• Secondly, researchers may choose to investigate cultural symbolism, including the preacher's use of biblical symbolism and its cultural equivalents. For instance, when a preacher intends to preach in an African congregation, s/he should choose familiar and related symbolisms to that in the Bible. Fritz (1991:261) asserts that if this is done, the audience will experience a rich understanding of the truth of the symbolism in the Bible.

• Thirdly, the following question related to this research may be worthy of further reflection: "At what point in the sermon presentation should the preacher make reference to biblical rhetoric and wise sayings?" Could they be most effectively used

in the introduction, at the beginning or end of each key point in the sermon, as a theme of the message, or in the body and in the conclusion?

- Finally, due to the ever-increasing levels of interchange among African cultures, a study on intercultural communication is a viable and fertile field for studies on contextual hermeneutics. As noted in chapters four and five, the congregants from Mangu town, in particular, were of mixed backgrounds, so it might have been difficult for the pastors who preached in this town to use the cultural sayings of a particular tribe in the preaching.

**6.2.2 Developing a Course for Preachers on using Contextual Hermeneutics in Preaching**

As indicated above, the crux of the research is contextualisation, i.e. making the Bible message meaningful, impacting and memorable to the African audience through engaging both the rhetoric of the text and African wisdom in sermons. Our location as Africans is important in Bible interpretation and preaching. In other words, we must use the indigenous African wisdom resources present in our context in our biblical interpretation and preaching if we are better to persuade our congregants regarding personal and societal transformation. This stance reverses that of our colonial history, which tended to undervalue African knowledge systems and thus replicated the same colonial stance in curricula developed for pastor training at Seminaries today. Several issues arising directly from the research have shown a need for the training of preachers on the values and ways of synergistically engaging both biblical and cultural rhetorical resources in interpreting the Bible and preaching. As Chifungo opines, when preparing people for "preaching the Word of God, contextualization must be prioritized in any training of ministers" (2013:192-193).

Furthermore, one of the key texts of this study, Micah 3:9-4:4, emphasises the role of teaching for transfomation. The exegetical study of Micah 3:9-4:4 in chapter three (3.3.2.3) points to the fact that Micah 4:2 presents a paradigm for training that brings transformation, unity and peace. Interestingly, the subject of discussion in the context of this text is the *torah* which basically means instruction (BDB 2006), and through the impact of the *torah,* societal transformation came about. That is, Micah rhetorically uses the word *torah* as a means by which people are trained such that, communally, they could walk in the ways of God.

Secondly, use of cultural sayings is intrinsically a part of African culture. The study on language and retention in chapter one (1.4.3) indicated that picture language, by which wise sayings are characterised, is typically memorable (Olyott 2015:109-111; Pogue 2015; Rampura 2015; "Memory: A Primer" 2013). This understanding is also echoed in the discussion on wise sayings, which form a part of the cultural memory of African societies, in chapter four (4.3(b). In that sense, figurative languages are part of their "database" from which such societies refer to when the need arises. Thus, wise sayings are part of the cultural memory of the Mwaghavul people of central Nigeria. They represent knowledge situated in the fabric of this African society (Assmann 2008:114; Confino: 2008:77, 83) whose people skillfully reach out for them with ease when various rhetorical situations demand. Since applying wise sayings to the context of Christian sermons may be a new environment, it is necessary that some form of guidance is given to the African pastor so that such wise sayings would be used appropriately (6.2.2 below). The researcher therefore proposes that a curriculum should be designed for ministerial training purposes.

Bringing training and contextualisation together is strategic to the success in ministerial formation and consequent performance of pastors. It must, however, be noted that due to the new emerging challenges in ministerial formation in Africa, like globalisation, recent scholarship has centred on training that is contextual, practical and relevant to Africa as well as being global in outlook (Naidoo 2016:1, 3-4; Berry 2013:38, 42; Pfaffe 1996:29; Nell 2018:1; Swinton & Mowat 2006:6-9). Foster (2012:359) argues that the theology educator must note this, because of the changing nature of the ministry environment in Africa today, because it is increasingly becoming multicultural. Thus, the proposed training would prepare preachers from Mwaghavul land and indeed from any particular African context, to be able to identify the indigenous wise sayings [*sumpoo*], which are situated cultural memories, as relevant for contextual hermeneutics.

Conversely, if the preacher is ill-disposed towards contextualisation in their theological training, they find themselves either adapting lay people's methods of sermon delivery or the hegemonic style of the West, because rooting the message to the context becomes difficult (Chifungo 2013:196).

The researcher therefore, recommends the development of a course called "Contextual Hermeneutics," which is described below:

This course will start with a study of the principles of biblical interpretation. This will lead to understanding the text in its ANE setting and its appropriation to comparable practical situations in the 21st African postcolonial cultural context using the tripolar model of biblical interpretation. The student will learn the importance of the historical, cultural, and literary contexts in which the biblical passages are found. The differences between law, narrative, poetic, prophetic, epistolary and apocalyptic genres of the Bible and the particular principles of interpreting each will be studied and practical applications of these texts will be examined.[132]   This will be followed by a study of the basis for preparation and delivery of sermons culminating in the students' actual sermon delivery under the lecturer's supervision. A study of how to bridge the cultural patterns in the ANE to comparable patterns in Africa in the sermon will be done. Attention will be given to the past and present economic, leadership, religious, family, social lifestyles and linguistic forms and forces of change in both cultural contexts.

As the last part of the description shows, Africanising and decolonising theological education would require a serious inward looking at our African locality and how such education would best relate to it, as a basis for knowledge production (Naidoo 2016:6). For Nell, such inward looking involves answering "the challenges of interculturality and inclusivity" (2018: 5-6) in a way that places Africa at the centre of knowledge production. Thus, Naidoo acknowledges that indigenous knowledge should be used "as a foundational resource for theological education in terms of sharpening teaching methods, relevant research methodologies and practices" (2016:6), like the communal nature of African lifestyle of *Ubuntu* in Southern Africa and *Mun vul* in Mwaghavul land.

This proposal would also require training for the trainers. Since the tripolar model of biblical interpretation would be a relatively new concept to some of the Seminaries, a workshop will be organised for the staff, especially those in the biblical and practical theology departments. The focus of the workshop will be on how the tripolar model fits into what they already know in biblical interpretation.

In this way, the proposed course would highlight ways by which preachers can use the biblical rhetoric and cultural sayings to assist congregants better to understand, respond to

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[132] The researcher has adopted some phrases from the description of "Hermeneutics and Exegesis" in *University of Jos Students' Handbook : Institute of Education.* (2010:137).

and retain sermons preached.[133] The question still is, in practical terms, "What are the ways that the synergy of biblical rhetoric and African indigenous wisdom could be achieved in preaching in the African context?

**6.2.3 A Guide to the Synergistic Engagement of Biblical Rhetoric and African Wisdom in Sermons**

In the absence of such a course, which must still be developed, the researcher would like to provide a guide for preachers in Mwaghavul land, based on the fourth objective in 1.4 in the first chapter, regarding how to use indigenous wisdom in sermons.

   a.  **Use common stories around you illustratively:** While teachings and stories from the Bible must be foregrounded, the preacher can use ample stories at her/his disposal to illustrate and illuminate them. Such stories may be drawn from personal experiences, 'the fan over the head", the key to the office, traditional cultural stories or any ordinary simple things (Adams 1998:97-103). Such stories enable the listeners to understand (Afiku 2016:43), actively participate (Fritz 1991:262), and easily learn principles taught (Robinson and Robinson 2003:21). Stories may also be used to illustrate or explain the message. Such stories must, however, be related carefully to the point the text or sermon is trying to make.

   b.  **Note and explain any figurative language used in the text:** The preacher must study, understand, identify, and explain rhetorical devices present in the text. This will help the preacher not only to understand and expound the text using comparable extra-biblical stories and devices but to also apply the teachings gleaned from the text to her/his audience's context. Using and expounding on figurative language will, in turn, assist the congregation better to understand the text, remember the teachings drawn from it, and apply it to their context/s,

   c.  **Engage in an audience analysis of the congregation:** Audience analysis entails the preacher getting to know her/his congregants' well, including their culture, living conditions, worldview, profession, level of education, economic status, gender, and sexuality (cf. Culture and Community 1999:115-116). As Adams (1998:34) states, the preacher should explore such information to adapt her/his sermons to meet the

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[133] A good use of wise sayings should leave the audience aware of: (a) what the text means; (b) what it means to them as individuals; (c) what each person must do; and (d) the application drawn by the preacher actually comes from the Scripture (Logan 1986:353).

congregation's needs and the stage at which s/he would speak (*How to be a Leader* 1963:123).

Conducting an audience analysis will also assist the preacher in choosing extra-biblical stories and sayings that will illuminate her/his message in a way that the congregation can better receive and understand it (*Communication, culture and Community* 1999:35). Using unfamiliar stories and sayings may well mean that the message is completely misunderstood.

d. **Learn and speak in the language form of the people:** Learning the language of her/his congregation – not just their stories and sayings, equips the preacher with a better understanding of their worldview (Hesselgrave 1978:99). When studying Hebrew, for instance, we discover that time is not organised according to past, present, or future tenses. Rather, the Hebrew conception of time is similar to its African counterpart in that time is marked by events, e.g. the perfect tense relates to a completed action rather than the past tense. The preacher from the West would, therefore, need to know this to speak cogently to African congregants.

Furthermore, Cathcart (2012:211-218) advocates that, among other cultural elements, the way aural elements are introduced in the sermon, can either serve as "aides or barriers" (2012:213) to the reception of the message. Therefore, the preacher has the responsibility to deliberately regard the culture of her/his audience by using "discourses, voices, and everyday experiences" (2012:215) familiar to them. In fact, as Iivari (2014:37) added, the preacher's success lies in his ability "to adapt one's language style to the language style common to one's audience."

e. **Use familiar and contextually relevant sayings that point to Bible truths:** As discussed in 2.4, the preacher may choose to introduce the sermon with a familiar and contextually relevant African wise saying that portrays a biblical principle. As Fritz puts it, such sayings should be used as "links, bridges, and [points of] comparison" which will improve contextualization (1991:257), arrest the attention of the audience and cause them to 'chew' on the message being preached (Fritz 1991:261).[134] Fritz (1991:262) also argues that, in the African context, the preacher can go a step further

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[134] Though familiar, such a saying must not be offensive to the people's culture.

by finding familiar and relevant choruses or simply putting biblical words to familiar melodies from that community.

f.  **Know what the sayings are meant to clarify:** Lane (2004:92) correctly proposes that the preacher should be sure of the point a saying is meant to elucidate. The preacher must be very familiar with the saying and what s/he would like it to explain. Thus, serious preparation is required before a wise saying is chosen and used. Failing that, the rhetorical device may instead mar the message and lead to obscuring the reception thereof. As Lane (2004:92-93) noted, it is normally better to use a single biblical or cultural rhetorical device to illustrate or emphasise one point, than to use it for many purposes. Not doing so may lead to the audience feeling bored or confused, in which case the point of using such a device is lost. Following the example of Jesus' use of parables, the preacher need not elaborate broadly on a particular saying. Rather, s/he should let the audience see the one point the saying puts across.

g.  **Wise sayings must be direct and reduced only to essential use:** A saying should be summarised to basically illustrate the point being explained. In this vein, Lane (2004:94) also adds that the preacher should not be expected to use illustrations at every turn. When the sermon contains only essential sayings, it will enable the audience to use them as a pointer to the key point being made. Conversely, when sayings are used too often, they will draw the audience's focus away from the biblical text. Once the preacher has used a saying, s/he must refer the listeners to the main point that it illustrates.

h.  **Maximally explore and exploit the rhetorical situation:** The preacher must note the central role of the rhetorical situation in persuasion (cf. Aristotle 1926:168) to determine the appropriate rhetorical devices (Bible or cultural story) to be used. Bitrus states that, when an African proverb is used or quoted in an unsuitable context, it "loses its punch" (2007:11). However, if it is released in a fitting context, "it does not need to be explained. Like a sledgehammer, it drives the message home" (Bitrus 2007:11) AsHoward (1987:31-75) noted, the three-fold task of the preacher is to creatively explore the life setting of the Bible text, note the rhetorical situation (circumstance) at the time of the sermon, and explore her/his personal talents, experiences, and exposure about the text and the congregation. Doing so will enhance the preacher's ability to influence the listeners towards a particular course of action.

**6.3 Conclusion**

In this research on the role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the response to sermons among congregants in central Nigeria, it is seen that both sets of rhetorical devices play a vital role in generating persuasion. The study premised theoretically on the general frame of contextual hermeneutics, used a qualitative research method. It was discovered from the review of scholars and interview of congregants, that synergy of the rhetorical language of Micah and Mwaghavul sayings assists in sermons, to enable the congregants in Mwaghavul land as a microcosm of the central part of Nigeria, to better understand, respond to and recall the sermons preached. This speaks to the reiterated fact that in our African context, the need of utilising our own African resources in biblical interpretation and in preaching, cannot be overemphasised, considering the colonial history, which tended to undervalue the African knowledge systems.

The seeming lack of independent reference to culture and or any contextual issues by the pastors in cluster "A" seems to suggest an unfavourable orientation concerning culture right from the pastoral training received. It now shows up in their lack of attempt to explore the listener's background for possible application. This is the reason why contextual hermeneutics is suggested as a key course to be taught at Gindiri Theological Seminary. It is also hoped that this will open up doors for wider studies on contextualisation and further improve on pastors' sermons and congregants' response to sermons.

Being a work that is focused on contextual hermeneutics perspective, this research discusses how the use of both biblical rhetoric and Mwaghavul sayings can help bridge the gap between the preacher/expert and congregants. In this way, the preacher is able to drive the message of scriptures home making the sermons more relevant, understandable, persuasive, interesting and memorable. Though it is a little concerning that the indigenous rhetoric appears to overshadow the rhetoric of the text, a synergy of the two by preachers in the experimental cluster has resulted in the transformation of the audience by the truth through their responses. In this light, the indigenous wisdom shaped the rhetoric of the sermons and the way the hearers engage with these different layers of rhetoric.

While this result may be a pointer to the contribution of the research to the call for making Christianity to find a home in Africa using African resources for interpretation, the researcher simply is offering a way of thinking about the different layers (tapestry) of rhetoric in African

sermons and how they work out to transform hearers in our context. I still think more work needs to be done in this area.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX ONE: INSTRUMENTS

## a. INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### i. The Place of Wise Sayings in Mwaghavul

**Format of Interviews**

1. Name:_____ Date: _____
2. Position in the Community: _____
3. Location: _____

**Study Title:** "The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria."

**Interview Procedure:**

**Step 1.** Introduction and Protocols/Consent Form

**Step 2.** Questions for the Interview

   a. Do Mwaghavul people originally have wise sayings (*sumpoo*) in their culture or was it borrowed?
   b. In which occasions where these proverbs mostly used in this culture and tradition?
   c. How important or what role/value do the wise sayings have in the culture of the Mwaghavul people?(Follow up if not clear: Does it have anything to do with preserving knowledge or enhancing memory? Explain)
   d. Can you give two of the most useful proverbs that you have learned and their basic meaning?

**Step 3.** What comments or advice would you personally give on how to sustain the use of Mwaghavul wise sayings among the Mwaghavul people today?

**Step 4.** Closing remarks and appreciation

**NB** Since this is a semi-structured interview, there is space to ask questions that are prompted by the discussion

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## Interview Schedule for Congregants from Clusters "A" and "B"

This is the Post-Preaching Interview of 24 congregantans, 12 from each Cluster, the Control Group (Cluster "A") and the Experimental Group (Cluster "B")

**Step 1:** Welcome formalities, the signing of consent form and introduction.

**Step 2:** Questions for discussion

Your pastor preached from the book of Micah a few months ago.

   a. Can you tell me anything about the sermon? Please tell me all that you remember of the sermon and how it went? (Note sequence 1-7)

b. Do you remember any figurative language from Micah that was used in the sermon?
c. Can you remember whether or not the pastor used any Mwaghavul sayings in his sermon? **(if not mentioned in "a" above)** (Remind them of the cultural saying)
d. How did these saying (s) help you to understand the message?
e. Does this message remind you of any other wise saying or story that could be used to illustrate that sermon?
f. What lessons did you learn from the sermon? Have you taken any different step in your life as a result of that sermon?
g. What advice would you give to the researcher or the church on how to make the members better to respond to sermons today?

**Step 3**: Conclusion and Appreciation

## b. SAMPLES OF CODED SERMONS TRANSCRIPTS WITH RHETORICAL DEVICES UNDERLINED

### i. A Coded Sermon Transcript from Cluster "A"

**Preacher**: Pr2A

**Date**: 7/8/2017

**Text**: Micah 3:9-4:1-5

**Topic**: Imitating Christ through Prophet Micah's Prophecy.

### Introduction

The name Micah means "who is like the Lord?" "*Wanene kamar Ubangiji*?" Very little is known about the prophet Micah beyond what can be learned from the book itself. Micah was a man from the town of Moresheth (1:1); probably Moresheth-Gath (1:14) in Southern Kingdom, Judah.

The prophecy attests to Micah's deep sensitivity to the <u>social ills</u> of his day, especially as they affected the small towns and villages of his homeland. Micah never stopped <u>talking and rebuking</u> the wrongs going on in his hometown and village, unlike many today who are keeping silent while all kinds of ills and wrongs are going on in their family, clan, village, town, church, state and country.

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah (1:1; Jer. 26:18). The prophet used <u>vigorous language</u> and many figures of speech which show great tenderness in threatening curse or punishment and in promising justice or hope for the future.

### a. Micah 3:9-12) Rebuke for Leaders and Prophets

Verses 9-11 tell us about the terribly bad live condition, ills, Wrongs, evils and wickedness committed and practised by the leaders of the house of Jacob, rulers or kings of the house of Israel and the priests or pastors of the land.

1) They <u>despised justice and distorted all that is right</u>. (V9)

2) <u>They build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness</u> (VIO)

3) <u>The leaders or judges judge for a bribe</u>. (VII)

4) <u>The priests teach for a price</u>. (VII)

5) <u>The prophets tell fortunes for money</u> (VII)

With all the ills and wrongs going on and practised by the political and spiritual leaders, they continue to <u>deceive themselves</u> that their reliance or dependency is upon the <u>I.ord,</u> saying that <u>he is among them.</u> This pathetic delusion leads them to the false hope that <u>"No disaster will come upon us</u>." Their fatal mistake here was that they forgot that God cannot and can never be <u>manipulated or twisted like men</u>, and God will rather reject Zion than betray his own Holy nature. (V.12) Micah therefore, fearlessly pronounced and proclaimed God's doom, curse, Judgment, punishment and destruction upon the land of Jerusalem because of the ills and wrongs committed and practised by the leaders.

1. <u>Zion will be plowed like a field</u>

2. <u>Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble</u>

3. <u>The temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets</u>. Like mounds, a Large pile of earth or stones in a wood which marks were ruined buildings lie.

Micah has been seeking godliness in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and he looks for where he expects to find it among the rulers of the nation, among the representatives of God (<u>priests, prophets or pastors and all Christians</u>). But there he found corruption, oppression, bribery and injustice.

Micah boldly, confidently and fearlessly exposes and publicly revealed the mess that is going on in his town (Jerusalem) and village (Moresheth). He said the reason for God's judgement upon the people is that those who have been given the authority to act on God's behalf have forgotten that they are responsible to God for accountability and transparency.


**APPLICATION**

In <u>our generation today</u>, whenever <u>we are in a position of authority</u>, <u>we</u> are told that we also have an authority over <u>us</u>. The New Testament <u>reminds us that masters</u> are to remember that they have a master in heaven as well. God holds all authority responsible and accountable to himself (Eph. 6:9). Anyone who forgets this is using power only for personal advantage self-aggrandizement. <u>Corruption, despising of justice, distortion of all that is right, bloodshed, wickedness, bribery among others are the ills responsible for bringing a person, people, family, clan, nation, society and church under God's judgement</u>.

Whenever <u>you</u> are serving in a position of authority whether in government, in Church, in a business organisation or in <u>your</u> family, <u>you</u> are representing God in that position. No wonder, Paul declared, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which <u>God has established</u>. The authorities that exist have been <u>established by God</u>" (Rom 13:1), forgetting the responsibilities that we have as leaders and authorities' leads to corruption, oppression, bribery, suffering and judgment.

   b. **Micah 4:1-5: Hope for the Future**

Here we encounter a wonderfully exalted vision of Micah concerning the future. The prophet lifts his eyes and looks across the centuries - <u>beyond</u> the coming of Babylon, <u>beyond</u> the great eastern empire of Greece, <u>beyond</u> the Roman Empire and the days of the Caesars; <u>beyond</u> the Middle Ages, <u>beyond</u> the age of the Reformation and Martin Luther and John Wesley, and even <u>beyond</u> our day. In his vision, Micah sees the coming of one who is Godlike. The passage describes a scene that is yet to come in the last days.

The phrase, "<u>in the last days</u>" in 4:1, alerts the reader to eschatological nature of the reference.

<u>God's house in the last days shall rise on mountain tops above the hills</u>, and towards it, the nations will find coverage. Nations will exhort each other to seek the guidance of God's law. Recognizing that they cannot settle disputes by themselves, they desire to be taught God's ways and to walk in them.

- (4:2) So Zion will become <u>the legislative centre</u> for the whole earth, and all disputes will be brought before the God of Jacob. Strong nations, who would otherwise be unchecked in their aggression, will accept God's rebuke. They will scrap their armaments in which they once lay their confidence and pride, and <u>they will turn their weapons metals into implements of peace</u>. They will <u>no longer declare war against one another nor be trained for war</u>.

- The energy, power and wealth once devoted to learning war, will now be directed to more constructive and profitable ends of God's honour and glory.

(4:3) Tranquility will dominate the earth to the extent that <u>every man shall</u> dwell in peace. The old days of <u>keeping guards, raids and terrors by night</u> will become things of the past.

(4:4) <u>Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree</u> and rest. No one and nothing will make them afraid again. The nations will be able to develop their lives undisturbed and uninterrupted. God pledges his word that every man shall be in safety and peace is assured because the word of the Lord (Bible) is the universal law.

Unfortunately, the supremacy of God's house and his law is not yet a matter of worldwide recognition. We are still at the stage of (4:5) which may be translated: "<u>for all people walk everyone in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of our God forever and ever</u>" - <u>confess, love, obey and rely</u> on the Lord forever and you will see what the Lord will do in your <u>life, family, community, land, clan, state and nation</u> (Zech. 10:12). God will change things around.

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## ii. A Coded Sermon Transcript from Cluster "B"

**Preacher**: Pr1B
**Date**: 31/07/2016
**Text:** Micah 3:9-4:5
**Topic:** God's Judgment against Evil Leadership

**Introduction**
Today, our state and the Church to some extent, has been turned into a <u>wilderness</u> of suffering of different kinds because justice doesn't really grow as it ought to be. It has been perverted and abandoned.

He asked, *"<u>Who is the cause of all these and who is to blame</u>?"* Instead of giving an immediate answer, the preacher paused allowing for reflection.

The then gave an answer, "Evil leadership by evil people."

No wonder, The New Living Translation **of Proverbs 29:2**says,

"When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked are in power, they groan."

"Show me a righteous ruler and I will show you a happy people, show me a wicked ruler and I Will show you a miserable people (**Good News**)

Therefore, Preaching on this topic "God's judgment against evil leadership" is very crucial and vital since it is believed that no any home, organisation, land, nation, Church etc cannot rise above the level of the quality of its leaders whether visible or invisible.

But then: - What is judgment?

What is leadership?

What do we mean by the term evil?

What is evil leadership?

Judgment refers to an opinion, or an evaluation to punish or negative attitude. It involves present and future

Leadership is simply the art of getting things done through people. It is a function of what is to be done by people and not so much of what...they are. It entails the ability to inspire, motivate, communicate, influence, guide, direct: and organize men and material to accomplish one's aim or the goal of a home, organization, land, nation, Church etc.

Evil refers to anything or anybody that is very bad, wicked, sinful and harmful. If he lettered' is to be prefixed, the word evil. Becomes 'devil' which means that the devil is the daddy or father of evildoers (John 8:44).

Evil leadership: Evil leadership simply refers to the art of getting things done through people who leads contrary to divine or righteous law or order i.e. to lead morally, bad, wrong, wicked and sinful which can be characterized by calamity, trouble or sorrow and ill reputes.

Yes; One clear example of evil leadership in the Bible is that of King Ahab. He did not only lure the people into the worship of Baal and returning the prophets to fugitives, but also perpetuated injustice and wickedness in the land with the support of his foreign wife, Jezebel.


**The text we are considering is Micah 3:9-4:5**

A Brief background to the book of Micah shows that:

**Micah is the author of the book** (1:1)

- The name of the prophet means "who is like God;" translated in Mwaghavul as "*A we Kaa Naan si ye?*"

- He was a native of Moresheth near Gath, 20 miles South West of Jerusalem.

The **purpose** for the prophecy was to warn God's people that judgment is coming and to offer pardon to all who repent.

**His audience were t**he people of Israel, the Northern and southern kingdoms identified as "Samaria & Jerusalem." *Ngan kohop sarse ki sarkul; (he spoke to both sides).* But the prophet spoke mainly to the Southern Kingdom and to all people.

The book was possibly between **742 and 687BC**, during the reigns of King Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Jeremiah 26:17,19).

**Yes;** Micah alike Jonah and Nahum speak about 'God's just demand; God acting in mercy and judgment benefit his people.

From where we have read, Micah 3:9-4:5, we will be looking at <u>why God judges evil leadership</u>

**Wrong leading,** as potrayed in **verses 9-11,** means taking people to the wrong places and into doing bad things contrary to God's divine injunction by wrong leaders.

Micah exposes the <u>moral and social evil the prevailed in his days</u> and traces them to their sources i.e. <u>secular</u> and <u>religious</u> leader

**The Secular leaders,** <u>Despise justice; Distort what is right; Murder their people (3: 1 ff); and Taking bribe</u>.

**He read** Jeremiah 22: 13-17 ()

<u>King Jehoiakim, the son of King Jotham of Judah forced his people to labour for his palace. He built injustice as the wall of his palace. He makes their neighbour work for him without pay</u>.

Ezekiel 22:25 says;"The leaders are like roaring Lions over animals they have killed.

**The Religious leaders equally** <u>interpret the law for pay; give revelation for money. And still said, "God is with us, there will be no any harm.</u>" He then gives an interpretation:

*Nyem kam ar ki Naan ni mu:* (lit. the teachers of God's word)

-*Kam war ki Naan mpee<u>kwat</u>* (lit. they teach God's instruction for money)

-*Woo mbii mu Naan mpee <u>shahgal</u>* (lit. Oh, what belongs to God's has been turned into a money making venture)

- *Dang be mu wa sat ne <u>Yahwe di nnaar funu, ba mee boghon kyam</u> kat dun kas.* (lit. And we state that Yahweh is in our midst, no evil will befall us.)

**Ezekiel 22:26 says**

"The priests break my law and have no distinction between what is holy and what is not. They do not teach the differences between clean and unclean things

**Mathew 23** is all about wrong leadership

**Titus 1: 16 says, "**They profess to know God, but they deny him by their needs, they are detestable, disobedience, unfit for any good deed."

**II Timothy 3:5a says,** "They will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject it real power"

He gave story as an **Illustration**

*"Yil bish, ne nyem ta tileng wa den a nyem taa naa; ku dumu mo wa den di a mishkaham ki gurum mo."*

In Nigeria, somebody sang a song and said; "Who killed Dele Giwa? Na Baba; if you say Gida, na you sabi ram!"

**He drew some application for the audience**

> Today, there are bad or wrong leader in our homes, organization, land, nation, Church etc
>
> We have many unconverted leaders in leadership positions.
>
> Evil leaders are in circulation- beware!

In fact, like the days of prophet Amos (5: 13) says "Therefore the prudent man keeps quiet in such times for times are evil. Because of leadership that are contrary to God's divine injunction.

**Yes! Those in leadership should know this;**

- When you serve in a position of authority, you represent God in that position."

- Leadership is from God (Roman 13: 1ff) therefore leadership must be for God.

- All of human life is subject to the requirement that God imposed on it.

**He stated tha verse 12 gives the Consequences for wrong leading.**

Consequence simply refers to result or something that follows from an action or condition display.


**Explaining** this, the preacher said:

- Because of you, that is, the secular and religious leaders, Zion will be cultivated like a field.

Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble or ruin.

The temple hill will become a forest (Mwaghavul Translation is then given).

**No wonder:** - This psalmist says

"Unless the Lord builds the house its builder's labour in vain"(Ps 127: 1ff).

Yes, it comes to pass that;

- Jerusalem was taken captive in Babylon in the year 586BC

- The temple in Jerusalem was also destroyed during the time of Emperor Titus 70AD.

-It was because of King Ahab's leadership that the land went through a moment of roughness for 3 l/2years(I King 18: 18)

- It was because of King Herod's leadership that children were killed in Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus Christ (Mathew 2:6ff).

**Choruses -**   *A mun gurum a mun wat ni*

> *A mun ba mee bi bish yil kas OO.*
>
> *Yil Mwaghavul yahal dee kaa Sodom si OO…*

**He Gave these Applications to life from the text**

Jeremiah 18: 7 -10 says, If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, breakdown or destroy any nation or Kingdom but the nation or Kingdom turn from their evil I will not do what I said.

But by implication, if it disobeys me I will do what I said.

**He asked,** Who is or what were the causes of what we are passing through now:

- In our homes; In our organizations; In our land; In our nation; In our Churches and worship centres?

**In these areas of our existence, we are plagued by:**

Diseases; Poverty; Spiritual poverty ; Hatred; Tribal sentiments; Sectionalism; Crisis; Cattle restless; Kidnapping.

- Are these not resulting in wrong leading? Are you one of them?

Check our pattern of leadership


**3. God's Consequence for Wrong Leading Goes with Hope (Micah 4: 1-5)**

Hope simply means something that is to be trusted onto to bring success.

**The preacher explained that;**

- "In the last days" (**New Living Translation**)

- "In days to come" (**Good News**)

- The mountain where the temple stand-will be highest one of all towering above all ills

- Many nations will come streaming to it

- Their people will say let go up to the hill of God, the temple of Israel to have to teach

- To walk in his path

- It wills from there, Zion or Jerusalem that the Lord's speaking comes.

- Dispute will be settled

- War ammunitions will become useful creative implement (Isaiah 2: 1-4)

"People that took notice of Micah message were saved.

"When Hezekiah was King of Judah, the prophet Micah of Moresheth told all the people that the Lord Almighty had said, 'Zion will be ploughed like a field, Jerusalem will become a forest' ... "(Jeremiah 26: 18).

Yes:-some of the prediction had got their fulfilment and some are yet.

- Some got their fulfilment when Christ came.

- Some got their fulfilment among Christian as salt and light of the world(Mathew 5: 13-16).

- The final fulfilment should be during Christ second return.

**He sung a popular chorus;**

> **-** *Dem dii milep dyakyen funu...*
>
> *- Sháng mpee mún oo*

**Applying this to the audience life he explained;**

--Are you as leaders doing what is wrong?

--<u>Are people experiencing difficulties because of wrong leadership?</u>-When the people of Israel sinned against God, he punishes them through their enemies. But when they cried unto God in repentance he gave another judge and they succeed. (In book of Judges)…

<u>God's intention in punishing us is for our good</u>

- Hebrews 12:6 says, "Because he corrects every one he loves and punishes everyone he accepts as his child."

**In Conclusion** my brothers and sister know this:

God is seeing the way you are leading

He is against wrong leadership

He will certainly punish those leading wrongly, both now and hereafter

His prediction of punishment is a warning for you to repent and his present punishment is for you to come back

**Come out of wrong leadership else you and those you are leading will perish. LET US PRAY**.

## c. SAMPLES OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS WITH RHETORICAL DEVICES UNDERLINED

### i. A Coded Interview Transcripts on the Place of Wise Sayings in Mwaghavul

**Format of Interviews**

1. **Name**: PWS.1 **Date**: July 18, 2016
2. **Position in the Community:** Coordinator, Mwaghavul Bible Translation
3. **Location:** Interview took place at Ntam in Mangu

**Study Title:** "The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria."

**Interview Procedure:**

**Step 1.** Introduction/Signing of Consent Form

**Step 2.** Questions for the Interview

a. **Do Mwaghavul people originally have wise sayings (*sumpoo*) in their culture or was it borrowed?**

Yes, <u>we have had wise sayings right from the beginning.</u> You might have noticed that we have wise sayings being used in the home, at workplaces, on the farms and in the markets. <u>The Mwaghavul man did not copy the use of wise sayings from any culture but he originally speaks using them from the very beginning.</u> Looking at most of the proverbs used by the people, you will note that they are distinct from those of the tribes around us. There are, however, a handful of those our people have started translating and using which are from other surrounding tribes, but they are very few. I think what you would need in Geoffrey Yenle's book, *Bighit Po Mwaghavul* where many wise sayings of the Mwaghavul people have been written and discussed

b. **In which occasions were these proverbs mostly used in this culture and tradition?**

Wise sayings are used in different situations by the Mwaghavul people. These would include the following:

i. At home especially as a **parent talk to the growing children**. These wise sayings make the children think deeply about what is told them as they reflect on the picture created in their minds through the wise saying.

ii. These are also used by **farmers** as they work on the farm to either challenge them to work harder or endure and to express the value of hard work or team spirit.

iii. Wise sayings are also used in **public discusses or community meetings**. Speakers after speakers would bring out wise saying(s) that best illustrate their point. These help in "nailing the point on the wall."

iv. They are used generally in most **counselling situations**.

v.   They are used when **resolving conflicts** between aggrieved parties.

vi.   They are very frequently used by **leaders as they talk to their subjects** which go to show the leaders ability to communicate.

vii.   Wise sayings are used a lot when **parents of intending couples meet to declare their interest in a girl and to decide on the right price.** Most often everything they would say everything in picture languages.

c. **How important or what role/value do the wise sayings have in the culture of the Mwaghavul people?**

From our previous answer, you can see that the Mwaghavul people see this as very important in many aspects of their livelihood.

d. **Can you give two of the most useful proverbs that you have learned and their basic meaning?**

***Munvul a long, misak a muut***- literally "Togetherness (being two of us) is wealth but loneliness is disease/illness."

This saying is the saying that illustrates the essence of the name Mwaghavul-walking together. It shows that the Mwaghavul people are lovers of peace and unity. If you notice, in history, the Islamic Jihadists could not take the land of the Mwaghavul people and Islamize it as it happened to the surrounding tribes and peoples because they were united. Secondly, the Mwaghavul consider all their neighbours as a friend, even where such people take them for enemies. The Fulani herdsmen have collaborated with their colleagues from other lands to come and still all the cows of the Mwaghavul people, yet the Fulani people move freely in the land and feed his animals on our own land because the Mwaghavul man is a peace lover.

***Wor a ɓākkaa, gyal a sakmar***- Literally, "Buying and selling (business) is unreliable, it is better to farm."

The Mwaghavul people strongly believe that farming is the most reliable source of livelihood since it hardly fails. The Mwaghavul people mostly raise animals, and different forms of business, but rely mostly on growing crops like maize, *acha*, Irish potatoes, yams, beans etc.

**Step 3. What comments or advice would you personally give on how to sustain the use of Mwaghavul wise sayings among the Mwaghavul people today?**

A good shepherd would always prefer to feed the sheep on food that are most suitable for his animals. He does not give them a foreign food that they may find it difficult to feed on. In line with that, the word I would leave with the preachers in Mwaghavul land is to contextualize the gospel message. Most people consider the gospel as a foreign thing because it is mostly communicated to the people in a language that is not familiar to the people. The first missionaries came, learned our own language and use it to preach to our parents, but

today, we used either Hausa or English languages even in the village setting. In the office, I have a Mwaghavul translation of the gospel of Mark published in London in 1915. That means, when the missionaries arrived Mwaghavul land in 1907, they immediately set to learn the language that within a short period. The fact that the gospel was preached in the language of the people, it made the gospel take root among the people. Thus preachers should use what is familiar to the people. This will keep them in the faith.

**Step 4.**Closing remarks and appreciation

**NB** Since this is a semi-structured interview, there is space to ask questions that are prompted by the discussion

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### ii. A Coded Interview Transcript from Cluster "A"
**Interviewee: Int.2Alhr**

**Date: 24/10/2016**

a. **Can you tell me anything about the sermon? Please tell me all that you remember of the sermon and how it went (Note sequence 1-7)**

The message was titled, "God's message to national leaders, pastors in Jerusalem."The leaders were building houses, even temples with blood money. This is because they do not care how the money is obtained. Even if others would die so that they get the money they do not care. He related it to the current situation in Nigeria. Both the political and religious leaders who use their constituency allowances for selfish reasons not in developing those areas- building houses, buying cars and even supporting church projects. Religious leaders leave the mainline Churches to set up their own ministries. The people are attracted to such places without investigating the sources of their powers. Such Ministers set up the prayer houses for their selfish interest. God was not happy. In the end, God gave the nations a message of hope. God will make Jerusalem a new place. Even other nations would one day come and seek refuge. In applying this to us, he said that no matter what we go through now, if we come to God, our fortunes will be changed where others will come to learn about God from us. Even when the religious leaders who had derailed and the members who turn to them repent, they will be accepted.

b. **Tell me any figurative language from Micah that was used in the sermon that you remember?**

Micah was specific and fearless in giving the message. Some preachers try to polish the message to make it soft, but Micah called sin, sin. This is what God said and God is not happy. His language is specific and contemporary.

c. **What things, do you believe, would make you better remember and respond to the sermon? Explain why?**

He used songs to illustrate that what was happening in Micah day's day are things that we see happening today. One of the songs he used was, "*Amma kukulla fa, dama a zamanin karsheza a sha wuya. Gama wadansu zasu zo cikin sunana, cewa sunne Almasihu.*" (A Hausa song meaning, "But be careful that in the last day, there will be suffering. For some will come in my name and say they are the Christ." With that song, he grasped the attention of the members. This is because people like songs. He also illustrated with examples of some ministries which some of the members might have visited.

d. **What lessons did you learn from the sermon? Have you taken any different step in your life as a result of that sermon?**

I was challenged and encouraged. It shows me that all the things we are acquiring by any means, God can destroy them one day. Our God is a loving God who always has new promises and can rebrand where peace will come to us. While chapter three is a caution to me, chapter 4 gives me hope as long as I live to walk in his will.

e. **What advice would you give to the researcher or to the church on how to make the members better remember and respond to sermons today? (Making it more relevant)**

Preachers should be like sales managers who should present their message in an attractive manner. Give it the way the people will be drawn to listen to you. This should be seen in their gestures, and in an undiluted manner in which they give the message of God.

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iii. **A Coded Interview Transcript from Cluster "B"**
**Interviewee: Int.3Btim**

**Date :29/10/2016**

a. **Can you tell me anything about the sermon? Please tell me all that you remember of the sermon and how it went? (Note sequence 1-7)**

He preached on Judgment against evil leaders. He tells us examples of leaders who do not stand for the truth which can lead to the corruption of the land. He also gave many examples. What I remember was the song he sang which is originally sang by Ezra Jinang, a very popular Mwaghavul Gospel singer, about the green pasture we expect ahead of all who remain true to the Lord. He equally said, because of the situation in the land, it is uncertain because of the evil leaders. He also used a proverb, *"Yilchighirnighin, jwak yaghal mwan."* Literally, "The land has turned into a mother so that the rock begins to embark on a journey." That means unusual things are happening. He said these to help us know that if we are

committed to serving God sincerely, even though leaders may be corrupt, <u>God can change things around for our good.</u> He said <u>leaders should try to be exemplary</u> because sometimes other people are looking to them as model-pastors, pastor's wife, village heads and elders. He said, only a few are able to keep standing when these leaders fail.

**b. Do you remember any figurative language from Micah that was used in the sermon?**

I noted a big difference in the way the prophet spoke and I thought that maybe the messengers of God in the past were different from those of our day. <u>He spoke very clearly on what God wanted to do and did not dull the sharpness of the prophecy.</u>

**c. Can you remember whether or not the pastor used any Mwaghavul sayings in his sermon?**

**d. How did these sayings help you to understand the message?**

If a preacher uses an example of something that you are familiar with, it will keep reminding you of what was said, especially when similar things happen.

**e. Does this message remind you of any wise saying or story that could be used to illustrate that sermon?**

**f. What lessons did you learn from the sermon? Have you taken any different step in your life as a result of that sermon?**

I find this message very important to me <u>even in my home. I discover that we are supposed to make things right with my husband. I told him, if he were in the church he would have heard so that we would discuss some relationship problem together</u>. I am still praying for a change in the home.

**g. What advice would you give to the researcher or the church on how to make the members better to remember sermons today?**

My advice is that, <u>if the pastor is very close to the people in their homes</u>, it will attract them to him, especially when the preacher visits those who have backslidden/the weak and encourage them [an appeal to *ethos?*].

# APPENDIX TWO: CONSENTS OBTAINED

## a. LETTERS TO GATEKEEPERS

### i. Letter to PCC Gindiri (Cluster 'A')

The School of Religion, Philosophy &Classics
University of KwaZulu – Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
Private X01
Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg
South Africa.

January 27, 2016

The Chairman
COCIN PCC Gindiri
Mangu Local Government Area
Plateau State, Nigeria.

Dear Sir,

**A Request for Permission to Conduct Research in PCC Panyam**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am a student of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa conducting a research on the topic: "The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria."

In the research, I will have five of your pastors preach from passages from the book of Micah. They would be required to utilize the text alongside local resources like proverbs, stories and other relevant cultural devices in communicating the messages of the scriptures in the sermons. These sermons will be fully written as well as audio-recorded. The researcher will analyze both the written and recorded copies of the sermon. After a space of three months, he will interview three members from each of these congregations to determine how much they still could remember the sermon.

I would like to request your kind permission, Sir, to conduct this research on how pastors can these utilize local resources from the culture of their congregants in communicating the messages of the scriptures in their sermons.

I will be grateful if my request is granted.

Yours in His Service,

Rev. Hezekiah H. Goholshak

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## ii. Letter to PCC Panyam (Cluster 'B')

The School of Religion, Philosophy
&Classics
University of KwaZulu – Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
Private X01
Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg
South Africa.

January 27, 2016

The Chairman
COCIN PCC Panyam
Mangu Local Government Area
Plateau State, Nigeria.

Dear Sir,

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Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am a student of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa conducting a research on the topic: "The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria."

In the research, I will have five of your pastors preach from passages from the book of Micah. They would be required to utilize the text alongside local resources like proverbs, stories and other relevant cultural devices in communicating the messages of the scriptures in the sermons. These sermons will be fully written as well as audio-recorded. The researcher will analyze both the written and recorded copies of the sermon. After a space of three months, he will interview three members from each of these congregations to determine how much they still could remember the sermon.

I would like to request your kind permission to conduct this research on how pastors can utilize these local resources from the culture of their congregants in communicating the messages of the scriptures in their sermons.

I will be grateful if my request is granted.

Yours in His Service,


Rev. Hezekiah H. Goholshak

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## b. LETTERS FROM GATEKEEPERS
## i. Letter from PCC Gindiri

# CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NATIONS (COCIN)
## PROVINCIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
### PCC GINDIRI

Via Mangu

Our Ref:_____    Your Ref:_____    Date: 24/2/2016

Rev. Hezekiah H. Goholshak

From the School of Religion, Philosophy &Classics
University of kwazulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg campus
private X01
Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg
South Africa.

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSON TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PCC GINDIRI**

Greeting in Jesus name,
Yours dated February 22,2016.

Your request for permission to conduct an analysis sermons of some pastors to determine how they utilize local resources like proverbs, stories and culture in communicating the message of the scriptures, and also interview some members of in churches is granted.
We wish you success in your studies.
Your in his vineyard,

REV.Idi E. Tongpan
Chairman, PCC Gindiri

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## ii. Letter from PCC Panyam

# CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NATIONS (COCIN)
## COCIN PCC PANYAM, VIA MANGU, PLATEAU STATE

Our Ref:_____ Your Ref:_____ Date: 26th Feb. 2016

Rev. Hezekiah H. Goholshak,

From the School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics
University of KwaZulu - Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus
Private X01
Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg
South Africa.

### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PCC PANYAM

Greetings in Jesus name,

Yours dated February 22, 2016.

Your request for permission to conduct an analysis of sermons of some Pastors to determine how they utilize Local resources like proverbs, stories and culture in communicating the message of the Scriptures, and also interview some members of the Churches is granted.

We wish you success in your studies.

Yours in his Vineyard,

*Rev. Ezekiel J. Lakur*
Chairman, PCC Panyam

**COCIN HEADQUARTERS:** No 5 Noad Avenue P.M.B. 2127 Jos Plateau State Nigeria Tel: (073)453679
Founded By Sudan United Mission (SUM) British Branch Now Action Partners Who First Arrived in Nigeria in 1904

### c. SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT
## Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:_____ Place: _____

My name is Rev. Hezekiah H. Goholshak (student number 214583986). I am a Ph.D. student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa. My Ph.D. is in the field of Biblical Studies in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study about the role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria.

For this study, I will select eight participating COCIN churches, whose pastors will be requested to preach from a selected passage in Micah. I will then interview five (5) Mwaghavul elders and twenty-four (24) congregants, three (3) from each church, about their understanding of biblical rhetorical language and the use of Mwaghavul sayings in sermons. While other Mwaghavul youths, elders and leaders will be interviewed at a place of their choosing. All congregants will be interviewed at the participating churches. If you choose to participate in this research, the audio-recorded interview will take 30 to 60 minutes of your time.

The study will provide no material or financial benefits to participants, but your participation will help greatly in understanding how Biblical rhetoric can be used alongside Mwaghavul sayings for better understanding and retention of sermons preached.

If, as a result of your participation, you find that uneasy feelings or memories are provoked and that you wish to speak to someone, please contact me directly and I will give you a referral to your pastor with whom we will discuss. You may also withdraw from the study with no repercussions to yourself.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: **HSS/0290/016D**). In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at No. 2 Carbis Road Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; email goholshakhezekiah@gmail.com or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

> Research Office, Westville Campus
> Govan Mbeki Building, Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000
> Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
> Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Alternatively, you may also contact my academic supervisor, Dr Helen Keith van Wyk (helenkeithvanwyk@gmail.com). I can be contacted through the Post-Graduate administrator of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, +27 33 260 5560.
.
Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your name will be anonymized in the study.
- Any information given by you will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in securely on-campus location storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- You may withdraw from the study at any time, and you will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- There is no financial or material benefit for participating in the interviews.


Sincerely,


Hezekiah H. Goholshak


## CONSENT

I _____have been informed about the study entitled: 'The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria' by Hezekiah H. Goholshak.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study and the interview schedule. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and interview schedule and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time understanding that I have no any financial benefits attached because of my participation in the interviews.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at SRPC UKZN, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; goholshakhezekiah@gmail.com; +27618671920 or +2348076634421(Nigeria) or Post-Graduate administrator of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, +27 33 260 5560.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:


**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building, Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za


I hereby agree to be interviewed and provide consent for my interview to be audio-recorded:
YES / NO


_____                          _____

**Signature of Participant**                          **Date**

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## d. ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**UNIVERSITY OF ™ KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

06 April 2016

**Reverend Hezekiah H Goholshak 214583986**
**School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics**
**Pietermaritzburg Campus**

Dear Reverend Goholshak

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0290/016D**
**Project title: The role of Micah's rhetorical language and Mwaghavul sayings in the retention of sermon data amongst congregants in Central Nigeria.**

**Expedited Approval**

In response to your application dated 22 March 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.................................
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr Helen Keith van Wyk
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Denis
cc School Administrator: Ms C Murugan

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**Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**
**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building**
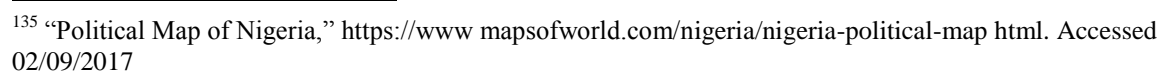Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609  Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
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# APPENDIX THREE: MAPS AND FIGURES

## a. MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING THE 36 STATES AND FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY[135]



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[135] "Political Map of Nigeria," https://www.mapsofworld.com/nigeria/nigeria-political-map html. Accessed 02/09/2017
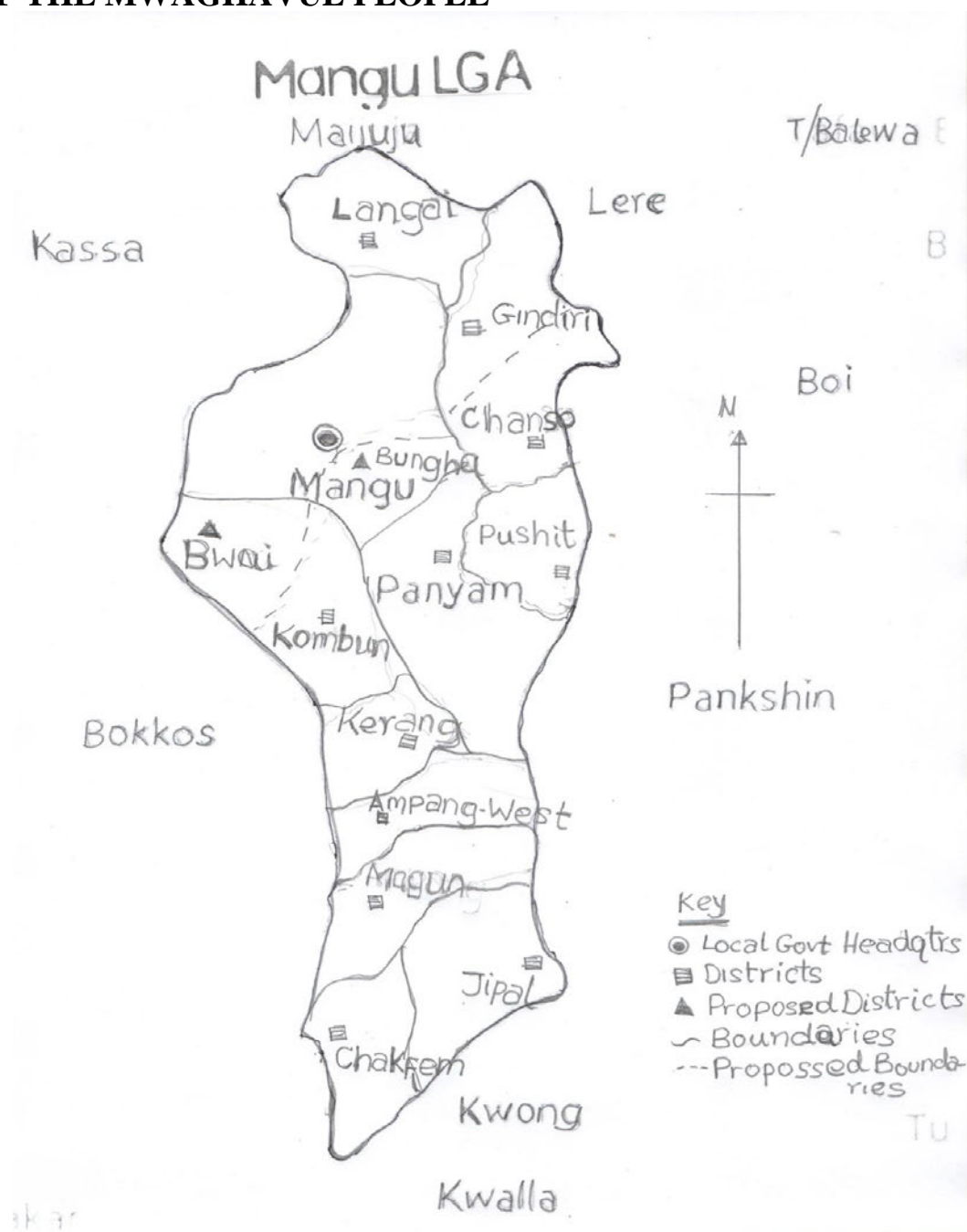
## b. MAP OF PLATEAU STATE[136] SHOWING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS



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[136] "Plateau State Map," http://www.realitynewspaper.com ng/2016/08/scam-residents-in-plateau-state-are html Accessed 01/09/2017

## c. THE MAP OF MANGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT:[137] HOMELAND OF THE MWAGHAVUL PEOPLE[138]

[137]Mangu,
https://www.google.com ng/maps/place/Mangu/@9.3609995,8.8876753,10z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!
1s0x1053f5956196cae9:0x78ff7c52e93974ab!8m2!3d9.3819992!4d9.1456153 Accessed 01/09/2017

[138] Mangu is a Local Government Area in Plateau State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Mangu at9°31′00″N 9°06′00″E. It has an area of 1,653 km² and a population of 294,931 at the 2006 census. This info is from Jump up^ *"Post Offices- with map of LGA". NIPOST. Archived from the original on 2012-11-26. Retrieved 2009-10-20.*

## d. FIGURE REPRESENTING THE TRI-POLAR MODEL OF CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY

'Mwaghavul Reader'

Appropriation

Text (Micah in the 8th Century BC)

Context (Mwaghavul land in the 21st Century)