

**PRINCE OF PEACE FOR THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH IN CRISIS:
A CONTEXTUAL READING OF ISAIAH 9:1-6 FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF PEACE-BUILDING EFFORTS IN THE EASTERN
PROVINCES OF THE DRC**

by

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DECLARATION

Student Number: **4104-156-9**

I declare that **'Prince of Peace for the Kingdom of Judah in Crisis: A Contextual Reading of Isaiah 9:1-6 from a Perspective of Peace-Building Efforts in the Eastern Province of the DRC'** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE

(KAHINDO, V K)

02 JANUARY 2016

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father LAURENT KAHINDO LUSENGE who frequently encouraged me, since my youngest age, to pursue education at the highest level, through which I will have an opportunity to find my right place in this hastily changing world; and to my mother MELANIE KAHAMBU LUHIMBO, through whose efforts and determination to make these dreams come true, I completed my secondary school although my father has died.

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May the Lord bless you all!

¹ The English translation of "Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique" is Baptist Community in Central Africa.

² "Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs" in English it can be translated as Open University of Great Lakes Countries.

ABSTRACT

The meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 is a very controversial issue, and its practical significance may provoke debates. Even though Scholars have approached this prophetic text from various perspectives on the basis of divergent methods, two principal issues cause uncertainty about the meaning of it. One of these has to do with the socio-historical and literary setting of Isaiah 9:1-6, and the other concerns the identity of the *Prince of Peace* mentioned in verse 5. To deal with these exegetical issues, the present thesis uses the Tri-polar Exegesis Model, a development of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics initiated by Ukpong in order to unfold first the author's intended meaning of the text to the original readers (distantiation pole), and then its practical significance to the contemporary target group, to which the reader (me) belongs (contextualisation and appropriation poles). In this thesis, the target group is the inhabitants of the eastern provinces of the DRC.

The finding is that, Judaeans during the time of the prophet Isaiah celebrated for the advent of the righteous, faithful and legitimate Davidic King whose mission is to release YHWH's people from the foreign vassalship, put an end to the war of aggression and extend his dominion over Israel. His leadership is hidden in the contextual meaning of the four phrases of his *theophoric* compound name: *Wondrous Advisor*, a guide of the people; *Mighty God*, a strong and skilled warrior, *Father forever*, a king concerned by the well-being of his people; and *Prince of Peace*, a promoter of peace and prosperity. Like Judaeans, the eastern Congolese inhabitants yearn for a righteous, faithful and legitimate *Prince of Peace* willing to put an end to interminable violence in their area and whose leadership best suits the community's interest (the

anthropological leadership). They will rejoice and celebrate if he/she is willing to shoulder his/her responsibility as a guide of the people; strong and skilled warrior, a king concerned by the welfare of his people; and *Prince of Peace*, a promoter of peace and prosperity.

KEY TERMS

Ancient Middle East, Assyria, Armed conflict, Biblical text, Congolese people, Contextual reading, Eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Exegesis, Darkness, DRC, Inculturation Hermeneutics, Isaiah, Israel, Judah, Kingdom, light, Negotiation, Peace-building, Prophet, Syria Palestine, Syro-Ephraimitic, Violence, War.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AFDL:** *Alliances des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération* (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo)
- ADF/NALU:** Allied Democratic Forces/National Army of Liberation of Uganda.
- AJCR:** African Journal on Conflict Resolution
- AU:** African Union
- BASOR:** Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
- BCE:** Before the Common Era
- BHS:** *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
- CE:** Common Era
- CBCA:** *Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique* (Baptist Community in the Central Africa)
- CBQ:** Catholic Biblical Quarterly
- CGARC:** Crisis Group Africa Report on Congo
- CIRGL:** *Conférence Internationale sur la Région des Grands Lacs* (International Conference on the Great Lakes' Region)
- CNDP:** *Congres National pour la Défense du Peuple* (National Congress for the Defence of the People)
- CNS:** *Conférence Nationale Souveraine* (Sovereign National Conference)
- DPKO:** Department of Peace-Keeping Operations
- DRC:** Democratic Republic of the Congo
- DSS:** Dead Sea Scrolls
- EHAIA:** Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa
- FARDC:** *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

- FAZ:** *Forces armées zairoises* (Amed Forces of Zaire)
- FDLR :** *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
- FNL:** *Forces Nationales pour la Libération* (National Liberation Forces)
- GLRA:** Great Lakes Region of Africa
- HTR:** Harvard Theology Review
- HTS:** Theological Studies (previously also known in Afrikaans as *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*)
- HRW:** Human Rights Watch
- ICD:** Inter-Congolese Dialogue
- ICGLR:** International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
- IRC:** International Rescue Committee
- JBL:** Journal of Biblical Literature
- JES:** Journal of Ecumenical Studies
- JSOT:** Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
- JSTOR:** Journal Storage
- JTAK:** Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa
- JTSA:** Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
- KJV:** King James Version
- M23:** Movement of the 23rd of March
- MIB:** Mission for the Immigration of *Banyarwanda*
- MLC:** Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of Congo)
- MONUC:** *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo* (The United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic in the Congo)
- MONUSCO:** *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Congo* (United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC)
- MPR:** *Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution* (Popular Movement of Revolution)

MT:	Masoretic Text
NASB:	New American Standard Version
nd:	No date or [sa] (sine anno)
NET Bible:	New English Translation of the Bible
NT:	New Testament
ONUC :	Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (The United Nation Organisation in the Congo)
OT:	Old Testament
OTE:	Old Testament Essays
OTSSA:	Old Testament Society of South Africa
PFA:	Peace Framework Agreement
PSCFA:	Peace, Security, Cooperation Framework Agreement
QS:	Qumran Scrolls
RCD:	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie</i> (Congolese Rally for Democracy)
RCD-KML:	Congolese Rally for Democracy– Kisangani Liberation Movement
RCD-N:	Congolese Rally for Democracy– National
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
SBL:	Society Biblical Literature
Sl:	Sine loco (If it is not possible to guess the place of publication)
Sn:	Sine nomine (If it is impossible to establish who the publisher is)
TJIs:	Targum Jonathan of Isaiah
TNG:	Transitional National Government
TWQ:	Third World Quarterly
UEM:	United Evangelical Mission
ULPGL:	<i>Univesité Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs</i> (Open University of Great Lakes Countries)
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNISA: University of South Africa
v (vv): Verse (verses)
vol (vols.): Volume (volumes)
WCC: World Council of Churches

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PART ONE

OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The first part of the present thesis consists of two chapters. Chapter One introduces the present research project and shows the need for this investigation within the current understanding of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6¹, in relation to the context of the persistent and lethal violence in the eastern provinces² of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)³. It also indicates how this study will contribute to the interpretation of this passage and provide its significance for today's believers living in the aforesaid context. Chapter Two discusses the methodological approach used to investigate the hypotheses and to demonstrate the objectives set in Chapter One. Furthermore, Chapter Two answers the question of why the present research chooses to be conducted in the way it has been conducted. The choice of the methodological approach, the Tri-polar Exegetical Model, the development of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics, is related to the need expressed in Chapter One: putting forward my

¹ In this thesis, the English verse numbering is not followed. Instead, chapters' division of the Hebrew text are taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) the 5th edition, revised in 1997. This is because both the Hebrew and English biblical texts found in this study are either cited or analysed from the BHS. Thus Isaiah 9:1-6 in the Hebrew text is equivalent to Isaiah 9:2-7 in the English Bible.

² The eastern region of the DRC consists of five troubled provinces in the eastern part of the country: Oriental, North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Katanga.

³ This thesis does not take account of the current administrative divisions of provinces in the DRC, which specify 26 new provinces instead of 11. This policy, which was mandated in the new 2006 constitution, was only adopted by the Congolese parliament on January 8, 2015 when this thesis was ready to be submitted for the external examination. (This note was added after the external examination results on 26 June 2016).

contribution on the significance of Isaiah 9:1-6 for the eastern Congolese people. It will enable as well the research to reach the goal set out for this study.

Chapter One

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1.BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Peace is desirable in all societies in the interest of public safety. By tradition, peace is essentially a concept, which applies in particular in connection with a form of harmony and the realisation of a certain order in the society: security, serenity, well-being and harmony (positive peace); and the absence of direct violence: absence of war, conflict and violence (negative peace) (Galtung and Fischer 2013:173-178).⁴ Through the ages, peace in these two aspects has been closely interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Accordingly, negative peace has been considered as a contributing factor in the positive peace and vice versa. That is to say, for instance, the absence of direct violence contributes crucially to people's serenity, which in turn contributes to

⁴ Galtung & Fischer (2013: 173-178) envision negative and positive peace. According to them, peace is "negative" when it is defined by what it's *not*. Accordingly, it is the absence of war, conflict, violence (physical, psychical, moral, cultural, and structural), repression and evil. In this context, peace appears to be unreachable as it focuses on *what is absent*. Positive peace is, however, defined by what it *actually is*. Therefore, it is the concrete peace which can be clearly felt and appreciated. It is the presence of security, serenity, harmony, well-being, human bonds, shared human values (respect, acceptance, kind-heartedness, equity...) and strong feelings for a common humanity.

economic development. Then, the latter helps ensure the reduction of poverty and, subsequently people's well-being (Smidt-Leukel 2011:659). *Ipsa facto*, the risk of conflicts resulting from the dissatisfaction of the economically marginalized communities will be reduced.

Unfortunately, however, violent armed conflicts have been reported from time to time almost all over the world, with a huge humanitarian disaster against civilians, as a result of the use of direct, physical violence when one of two or more social opposing groups want to enforce or articulate their interests (Ide 2014:69). Particularly in Africa, in the late 1980s and 1990s of the last century, widespread violence or warfare of this nature became commonplace in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa, Algeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville and Zaire⁵ (Allen 2007:368). In recent years, armed violence has become more intense in almost all African regions. In many cases, the increased armed violence heightens levels of political instability and social and economic disasters, which in turn intensifies civilians' suffering in all its forms, migration and poverty (Raleigh 2010:77). What is more, peace talks at the national level, and the international efforts at conflict management have not yet been able to bring an end to the cycle of violence on the continent. The central African and

⁵ Zaire was the name of the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* (DRC) during the reign of the late President Mobutu. Note that from 1885 to 1997, the DRC has changed its name several times. In 1885, it emerged as the *Congo Free State* (CFS). In 1908, the CFS became *Belgian Congo* (or Belgian colony). At the time of Independence (30 June 1960), the country became the *Republic of the Congo*. In 1964, the name changed to the *Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)*. In 1971, under Mobutu Sésé Seko, the DRC became *Zaire*. In 1997, the late President Laurent Kabila changed *Zaire* back to the DRC (Kisangani & Woronoff 2010: xv). In this thesis, the DRC is mostly simply referred to as *the Congo*.

the Great Lakes Region of Africa (GLRA)⁶ have not been left untouched by this terrible scourge: repeated failures of peace agreements and therefore, the recurrence of direct violence with its consequences.

The strong evidence in support of the abovementioned facts can be found in the increasing levels of armed violence and homicide rates in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), one of the most troubled countries in the GLRA. From 1994 to date, in the DRC, especially in its eastern region, violent armed conflicts, with multidimensional root causes, have increased and persisted to the extent that the concept of peace in its widest sense as described above appears to be far away from the daily reality. This situation results from multitudes of illegal local and foreign armed groups that have emerged dramatically in this part of the country. Therefore, a series of armed conflicts and an increase in bloody fighting between the DRC's regular army (FARDC) and these armed groups have been reported, resulted in the impoverishment of the society as a whole, the displacement and death of millions of people. In addition to these humanitarian disasters and the incalculable toll of human suffering, fighting in different localities in the eastern provinces has been accompanied by violence that has deepening the suffering of the population, especially the rape and sexual abuse of women and girls. In the hope of putting an end to these scourges of war that have taken many different forms and undermined the country's peace, security and prosperity; several peace negotiation meetings have been held. Unfortunately, they have had a little impact on the peace-building process in this particular affected region. It is evident that the more meetings of peace and security have been held, the more the culture of violence and war, with all

⁶ The Great Lakes Region of Africa (Sometimes called the African Greater Lakes Region) includes the following countries: the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

its negative consequences on the society, has severely escalated across this part of the country.

In an attempt to provide solutions to the issue of repeated failures to implement cease-fire agreements in the region under consideration, it is of interest that in 2011 in my Master's dissertation I tried to analyse the socio-political crisis in the province of North Kivu, and to evaluate national, regional and international peace and security meetings, as well as different peace negotiations in view of the contextual reading of 1 Samuel 25:14-35. The exegetical analysis of how the conflict between David and Nabal was sorted out by means of Abigail's suitable diplomatic negotiation procedures, and the dialogue between North Kivu context and the results of the analysis of 1 Samuel 25:14-35 enabled me to suggest the participative negotiations as a suitable diplomatic means of solving armed conflicts that have repeatedly destroyed the North Kivu province. In reaching this conclusion, I took into account that the repeated failures of various North Kivu peace accords were linked to the poor procedures in which the negotiation meetings were conducted, and the poor involvement of citizens who bore the burden of war.

While the participative negotiations appear to be an appropriate strategy for reaching a just and lasting peace process, I am still more interested in searching for what can be added to the above suggestion in order to build lasting peace and stability for the development of a volatile eastern DRC. This is due to the palpable and continued non-respect for cease-fire agreements that occurred on the 4th of April 2012. For the third time in a row, former rebels who were integrated in the regular army after a peace accord signed by the Congolese

government and armed group factions mutinied against the FARDC.⁷ After them, an increasingly disparate number of militia and illegal armed groups have emerged, which resulted in a new wave of dramatic escalation of insecurity in the eastern provinces of the DRC, especially in the province of North Kivu.

With regard to the abovementioned concern, note that a wide-ranging literature has shown that to avoid repeated failures of peace agreements and to achieve long-term stability in these provinces, peace-builders need to carefully address root causes of violence in the region. They often identified four underlying causes of conflicts, namely poverty, economic disparity, social injustice and exclusion. In the same vein, several recent studies have gone further, showing a link between the eastern Congolese instability and warlords' pursuit of economic interests, particularly the illegal exploitation of the country's mineral resources (McCartin 2013:60, Achankeng 2013:18, Benvato 2014:12,18). Some, like McCartin (2013:60), have suggested lobbies to cut rebels' funding, and have called the multinationals to make positive contributions within their areas of operation in order to end the conflict. Without neglecting the results of these studies, I suggest that by stressing only the economic solution, the abovementioned scholars overlook the multidimensional aspects of root causes of the turmoil in this particular region.

Therefore, in addition to the participative negotiations that I suggested in 2011 and the economic solution as put forward above by recent scholars, I believe that further solutions are possible for achieving long-term stability in the eastern Congo. This has aroused my motivation to objectively review profound reasons that lay behind repeated failures to fulfil the terms of peace agreements

⁷ For further details on failure to implement peace agreements in DRC, read Chapter six of this thesis.

in this troubled area; to identify different actors involved in the persistent violence against civilians and their agendas; and then to see how I should propose a new way to restore peace and stability to this conflict-ridden region. It is evident that multinational corporations and independent enterprises whose aim is to exploit natural resources are at the core of the repeated non-implementation of peace accords and cease-fire agreements, leading thus to the exacerbation of armed conflicts and wars in the eastern provinces of the Congo. Nevertheless, following the conclusions of Aigbe (2014:24) on conflict and poverty in Africa, I suspect that poor leadership has also played a crucial role in armed conflicts that have been plaguing the region. The best way to foster long-term peace would be, therefore, to address good governance in the DRC.

Accordingly, in the present study on the *Prince of Peace*, I would like to further check the Old Testament through the analysis of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, and indicate how the prophet Isaiah understood the key compound names in verse 5, in the context of persistent armed violence in the Middle East, particularly in the Kingdom of Judah during the second half of the 8th century BCE. In this regard, I could see how the results of this analysis could help find solution to my concerns for peace-building in my region. That is to say, the chosen biblical text will spell out its significance, in its literary and socio-historical context, of the leadership needed in the DRC to restore peace, security and prosperity in the eastern Congo. However, it is important to note that, in this part of the country, because of the increasing burden of war-related casualties and tragic consequences imposed on civilians, the theme of the *Prince of Peace* has been subject to allegorical interpretation by many Christians. For this reason, the following section briefly describes this

allegorical interpretation while explaining the relevance and the significance of the present study.

1.2. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Serfontein (2012:18) has shown that “biblical Studies skilfully takes the scholar to a better understanding of the text, but then fails to take the text to the many communicating functions in the church environment”. This would result from the failure to inductively examine the Scripture and systematically apply the exegetical methods (hermeneutic tools) to determine the meaning of a given biblical text, and apply it to the reader's context (Smith 2008:169). Such a failure to comply with rules of a good exegesis that meets all criteria of research has been also observed in the eastern provinces of the DRC in relation to the current situation of violence. Although the region has enough theologians with the capacity to use or explain responsibly but also relevantly the Bible, passages have been erroneously interpreted by many of those who masquerade as pastors or preachers, and who attract many people into their churches. Their preaching and teaching have shown that the recurring and lethal violence in the region under consideration has had a considerable impact on people’s lives and world view to the extent that the exegesis of the Bible has been severely reduced to *eisegesis*, that is, the process of injecting the reader’s ideas into the text (Gorman 2009:16,31).

The aforesaid situation has been common among eastern Congolese Christians⁸ who have experienced a significant number of armed conflicts and wars for more than two decades, and who are at risk of losing their hope in YHWH while they had been told that He was a God who fights for his people. Note in passing that, given that the Congolese regular army has continuously been defeated and various cease-fire agreements have failed to bring about peace in their region, they have ran the risk of feeling that God has been absent in their history. In response to the aforesaid danger of sinking from the faith into the mire of unbelief, many church ministers' preaching has often revolved around the very presence of our Lord, the *Prince of Peace* (Is 9:5), in human-generated conflicts and his support for his people. They emphasise that our Lord, the *Prince of Peace*, will fight for His people and will bring an end to armed violence at the right time (Ex 14:14).

In reaction to the situation above, some critical church leaders have tried to convince ordinary Congolese people that they can passively resist and bring peaceful solutions to armed conflicts and wars that have plagued their region. On the other hand, numerous apocalyptic preachers foretell the signs of the end of the age. For them, nothing can positively change the current situation. Instead, it will get worse. Others are still convinced that this disastrous situation is a punishment from God because Congolese people might have sinned and God has decided to punish them with persistent armed conflicts. As a result, prayer groups of believers who spend their time praying and fasting, confessing their sins and worshipping are proliferating throughout the eastern DRC. The aim is to seek the face of their Lord, the *Prince of Peace*, so that He may restore

⁸ Most of the DRC's people are nominally Christians, and ecclesiastics and religious leaders have a strong influence on people's opinions.

peace in their region (2 Chr 6:24-25). Thus, people have blindly believed that the crisis in the region under consideration is merely a spiritual and moral problem and, consequently, they pay little or no attention to its real underlying causes.

Unlike those previously mentioned, another category of preachers focuses on the internal peace of soul that Jesus Christ, the *Prince of Peace*, who was foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Is 9:5), brings to His believers. They call people to simply believe in the *Prince of Peace* whose peace is different from the physical peace which cannot last long (Jn 14:27). By doing so, they interpret Jesus' peace as the peace in the disciple's heart, not the peace in the disciple's environment. In addition, their preaching is based on the conviction that the current suffering related to, or resulting from armed violence in the eastern provinces of the DRC is only a trial. For that reason, true believers need to remain in their faith glorifying the Lord, the *Prince of Peace*, despite physical distress that they are experiencing (Rm 5:1-5).

The above allegorical interpretation of the *Prince of Peace* in relation to the context of armed violence is, on the one hand, nothing else but the spiritualisation and the moralisation of the situation and its causes and on the other hand, the erroneous interpretation of the prophecy about the *Prince of Peace* found in the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6. These allegorical approaches have had an inherent risk in the search for peace and stability in the war-torn eastern part of the Congo. First, Christians have veiled the real causes of the lethal and persistent violence to the extent that many eastern Congolese inhabitants have become apathetic about getting involved in fighting its underlying causes; being concerned with the peacemaking process; implicated in solving their social, economic and political problems; in denouncing crimes

and in fighting for their rights. As a result, in this particular part of the country, violence and oppression have gained ground and gone unchecked. The balkanisation of the country was openly planned with the connivance of national and foreign plunderers and therefore, the socio-economic life of the community has been placed at the mercy of criminal invaders.

On the other hand, the allegorical reading of Isaiah 9:1-6 has hidden the significance of the text or, even more, the contextual interpretation of the phrases contained in the compound name mentioned in verse 5, especially the phrase *Prince of Peace*. I suggest that spiritualising more completely the content of the chosen passage, and the much longed-for peace from the *Prince of Peace* has not nearly enough value in the context of a troubled region such as the eastern DRC. On the contrary, there is a need to re-read the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 in its socio-historical, geographic, economic and political settings and apply findings to the ordinary and everyday material life of a population that has experienced all possible effects of wars and armed conflicts. It is this sake of filling the gap between the academic reading of the biblical texts and their interpretation in the church environment by ordinary Christians that motivated my choice to thoroughly re-examine Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation to the context of armed violence in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to solve both the problem of spiritualising the context of armed violence and its causes in the region under consideration and the problem of the allegorical reading of the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6. In both cases, I suggest the use of specific techniques of hermeneutics⁹ that revolve around the eastern DRC's context for reaching

⁹ Techniques of hermeneutics are: the lexical-syntactical analysis; the historical/cultural analysis; the contextual analysis; the theological analysis and special literary analysis.

Isaiah's intended meaning of the *Prince of Peace*, and providing this meaning to the socio-political context of this particular region. This methodological approach is developed further in the section about the theoretical framework in Chapter One, and then in Chapter Two of the present study. The next section relates to the research question that will help solve these major interpretative problems.

1.3.RESEARCH QUESTION

Following from the previous discussion, it is necessary to set out what it is hoped to be learnt about the topic of this study, by formulating the central question that will be answered in the present thesis. That research question is "Can the contextual interpretation of the phrase שר-שלום (Sar-šälôm = *Prince of Peace*) in Isaiah 9:1-6 supply a relevant biblical perspective to reach a just and durable solution needed to end armed violence and rebuild lasting peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC?"

This main question is the focus of the present study since it enables me to carry out comprehensive research on the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6 in order to find what the phrase *Prince of Peace* meant in the context of violence and conflict resolution in the Kingdom of Judah, which in turn can make a significant contribution towards achieving the peace-building and the longed-for durable peace and stability in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

Regarding the central question, five sub-questions that will guide my reflection throughout the research arise:

1. Which techniques of the biblical hermeneutics are required to answer the central question of this thesis in order to reach the desired outcome as referred to above?
2. What did the prophet Isaiah have in mind when he prophesied about the *Prince of Peace* in Isaiah 9:1-6? Which issues arise from the analysis of the text?
3. What influence does the geographical and socio-historical background of the chosen text have over the announcement of the prophecy about the *Prince of Peace*? How do they impact on different issues arising from the analysis of the text?
4. How do these issues and the background of the text shed light on the socio-political dimension of the recurrent and protracted armed conflicts and wars in the eastern DRC?
5. How does the prophetic message of the *Prince of Peace* speak to the eastern DRC context and to the issue of the Congolese leadership?

In order to transform these sub-questions, together with the research question, into testable propositions, the next section concerns the hypotheses that the present thesis seeks to substantiate. They are followed by objectives, which provide the outcomes that I want to achieve at the end of this work if the hypotheses are confirmed.

1.4.HYPOTHESES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study works with the general assumption that there are similarities between the setting in which the prophetic text of Isaiah 9:1-6 was uttered, and the current security situation in the eastern provinces of the DRC. Both contexts would be marked by conflicts and wars imposed from outside and over economic interests; unsatisfactory peace deals; and the risk of further imminent crises. Another connecting thread would concern the opportunities available to both the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the eastern DRC, but which were not taken advantage of. The opportunity to be seized in the case of the setting in which the oracle of Isaiah 9:1-6 was pronounced would be to re-establish the righteous Davidic kingship in the Southern Kingdom and then reassert this kingship over the Northern Kingdom of Israel destroyed by Assyrians. In that case, Isaiah 9:1-6 would be directed to Ahaz, the Judaeans¹⁰ King, to reunite Judah and Israel.

Similarly, I would argue that recurrent and persistent lethal violence in the eastern Congo as a result of the repeated non-respect for peace agreements, various military mutinies against the regular army, and multitudes of illegal local and foreign armed groups would not be considered by Congolese

¹⁰ In this thesis, I prefer the word “Judaeans” to the word “Judeans” even though some authors cited in this thesis prefer the second word to the first. My position is justified by the fact that historically, “Judaeans” refers to the ancient independent and separate Kingdom of Judah (931/930-586) whereas “Judeans” alludes to the region of ancient Palestine that existed during the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. In addition, the word “Jew” refers to people in Judaism (since 515 BCE), and it is the modern designation of Israelite or Jewish people. Note that “the people we call ‘Jews’ referred to themselves as *benai yisrael*, the children of Israel, that is, the descendants of the biblical patriarch Jacob. Thus, when speaking of themselves, ‘Jews’ reflected on their common ancestry and their shared family line, not on their geographical origins” (Porton 2000:501).

politicians an occasion for raking in money and lining their pockets. However, it would be seized as an important opportunity to challenge the political, military and police leadership, and the DRC's relationship to the neighbouring countries. As for the case of the Kingdom of Judah, the Congolese leadership should consider this situation as an occasion to move away from the policy that has maintained and exacerbated armed conflicts and wars in the region under consideration. This should be the opportunity to reinforce the authority of the state of the DRC over its entire territory; reorganise and set up a Congolese nationalistic and patriotic army, police, and political leadership respectively aiming at defending the national territorial integrity, maintaining order and public security, and ensuring peace and welfare of Congolese people.

It can be seen from the previous sections that it is my understanding of the phrase *Prince of Peace* mentioned in the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6 that will make an important contribution to each of the aforesaid assumptions. That is to say, after analysing exegetically the chosen text, the dialogue between the text and the context of the eastern DRC would lead this study towards a new perspective on the military, police and political leadership's responsibility relative to the persistence lack of peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC. I assume that the new comprehension of the role of the *Prince of Peace* is that his/her politics will be focused on establishing lasting peace (both positive and negative) and long-term security with a view to ensuring the best possible welfare of citizens rather than self-centred ambitions. This is what this study calls "the *anthropolitical*¹¹ peace-building efforts".

¹¹ The word *anthropolitics* refers to the politics focused on creating a peaceful environment in the countries by leaders in the interests of their fellow countrymen and women (Morin 1965:11).

If these assumptions are confirmed, the general purpose of reading Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation with the socio-historical setting of the eastern DRC would be to contribute towards a fruitful reflection on how the Congolese leadership can be restored and the authority of the state reinforced over the entire country in order to support and invest in peace-building efforts in favour of the entire country's stability and prosperity in general, and the eastern region, in particular. Therefore, the present thesis aims at helping stimulate a process of action in an attempt to transform the current situation in this particular region into achieving the specific purposes of the present study summarized as:

1. Investigating Isaiah's response to the unsatisfactory peace deal between the Judaeans and the Assyrian Kings;
2. Explaining how Isaiah uses the *theophoric* name¹² to designate the leadership (political and military) much longed for in Judah;
3. Spelling out the meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 read in its literary and socio-historical context and relating it to the eastern Congolese setting;
4. Transmitting to Congolese church leaders and ordinary Christians today the qualities of the *Prince of Peace* required for good leaders needed for a peaceful and prosperous eastern DRC;¹³
5. Making some recommendations that would increase the Congolese people's awareness of their right and duty to choose their good (legitimate, powerful, skilled, faithful and righteous) political leaders,

¹² In Antiquity, the practice of the *theophoric* names was known that they did not deify the bearers, but expressed an aspect (s) of the deity intended to be expressed through the lives of those thus named (Brownlee 1955:79).

¹³ This specific purpose has been partially implemented in the Pastor's Conference, which took place at Marian Hill (Kwa-Zulu Natal province) in November 2013, and in which I presented a paper on "The Socio-Political Violence in the Eastern Provinces of the DRC: a challenge for pastor's identity and mission in the CBCA" drawn from this thesis.

Prince of Peace, and actively be involved in making, building and keeping peace in their social environment.

Having considered the hypothesis and objectives of this study, I now analyse techniques of the biblical hermeneutics, through which I will make greater efforts with a view to investigating the anticipated results as proposed above and helping answer the central question and sub-questions posed. These techniques are developed in the next section entitled “theoretical framework and methodology”.

1.5.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

As noted in the previous section, the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6 will be applied to the socio-historical context of armed violence in the eastern provinces of the DRC. Ukpong calls this contextualised exegesis that brings the meaning of the biblical passage in the context of the African reader the “African contextual hermeneutics” (2000:24) or, in other words the “Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics”¹⁴ (Ukpong 1995:3-14). This is an approach in which:

The African context forms the subject of interpretation of the Bible. This means that the conceptual framework of interpretation is informed by African socio-cultural perspectives. Therefore, rather than that the Biblical text be read through a Western grid and the meaning so derived be applied to African context, this model is concerned that the biblical text should be read through a grid development within the African socio-cultural context.

¹⁴ The “Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics” will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

In this way the people's context becomes the *subject* of interpretation of the biblical text (Ukpong 2000:24).

Referring back to the above definition, I choose to interpret the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 from the perspective of my experience of the eastern Congolese's long-lasting lack of peace and fruitless peace-building efforts related to the similar experience of unsatisfactory peace settlement in the Southern Kingdom of Judah during the time of Isaiah of Jerusalem. In short, the reading of Isaiah 9:1-6 will be done in the contextual perspective that involves an interactive engagement between the biblical context of the text and the contemporary socio-economic and political issue of a lack of peace in the region.

Moreover, the use of this contextual theoretical framework is an attempt to bridge the gap between the two worlds: the old and the contemporary world. Therefore, the message of the text will contribute toward the understanding of the contemporary situation in the conflict-ridden and war-torn eastern DRC. In addition, the contemporary insecure situation of lack of peace in this particular area will enrich the understanding of Isaiah 9:1-6. In order to achieve this, my particular option, as mentioned above, is the *Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics* inspired by Ukpong (1995:3-14). However, the use of this previously mentioned approach in the present thesis will follow its development as suggested by Grenholm and Patte (2000), Draper (2002:12-24), West (2009:249-252; 2013b:1-6) and Dada (2010:160-174), to name but a few. I am referring to the "Tri-polar Exegetical Model",¹⁵ which allows the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics to be used in the present study focusing on three main poles: *distantiation*; contextualisation and appropriation.

¹⁵ As for the *Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics*, the *Tri-polar Exegetical Model* will be further discussed in Chapter Two of the present study.

The first stage consists of analysing the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6. This implies a double approach: the exegetical analysis of the text and the analysis of issues arising from this exegesis in relation to the socio-historical context of the text.

In this respect, the text is first exegetically analysed with a focus on its literary context before the issues raised during the interpretation of the text can be located in the socio-historical context of the text. By doing so, the synchronic approach (Aletti *et al.* 2005:67-81) is applied to the analysis of the chosen biblical passage. This means that the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 is subjected to a literary analysis (Stuart 2001:6-12) that includes a survey of its broader and closer literary context. Given that no biblical text speaks in isolation but rather depend on one another and establish relations between them (Mckinlay 1999:74; Cathcart 2014:134), the intertextuality approach is applied here to better clarify the literary context of Isaiah 9:1-6, and understand the relationship between the chosen text and other texts in the Bible and in the book of Isaiah.

It should be noted that this first step does not follow a rigorous study of the text that discusses the form, source and redaction criticism in order to discover the genesis of the text (Adamo 2008:577,578). Nevertheless, they are briefly addressed in Chapter Three in order to better understand the text. Then, the meaning for original readers is discussed through verse-by-verse, focusing on all key words and grammar relevant to the meaning of the text (Smith 2008:179). In the “Tri-polar Exegetical Model”, this step is called “the *distantiation* phase” as explained by Draper (2001:153-154):

This stage of exegesis requires that the readers or reading community allow the text to speak for itself by creating space or critical distance

between themselves and the text. It must be allowed to be other, different, over against ourselves and our concerns and questions.

Even though the present study searches for a clear meaning of the *Prince of Peace* by re-reading the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 with new eyes (Hays 2009:7), the “distantiation phase” allows me to uncover the biblical text's author's intended meaning for original readers.

During the second step of the analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6, issues arising from the exegesis of the text are addressed in relation with the historical context of the text. It should be mentioned that questions regarding the historical context of the text at this level are not to be confused with the diachronic approach named historical-critical methods of exegesis. When the latter is applied to a given biblical text, it implies historical questions about its composition, the tradition criticism, the comparison of translations, the textual criticism, the source criticism, the form criticism, the redaction criticism and the socio-historical criticism (Gorman 2009:16). On the contrary, when analysing the historical context or background of Isaiah 9:1-6, only important themes raised during the analysis of the chosen text are discussed in relation to the socio-economic and political situation in which Isaiah's prophetic message took roots in general and, in which the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 is set out, in particular.

In the second stage of the research, "the contextualisation phase", the focus is on the analysis of the eastern DRC's context of persistent violence. This is done in order to identify the meeting point between the contemporary and biblical contexts by stressing how the issues arising from the analysis of the chosen text and its socio-historical setting shed light on the eastern Congolese context. While doing this, the emphasis is on the root causes of the recurrent deadly armed conflicts and wars in the region and the reasons behind repeated

violations of peace accords. In addition, the description of armed conflicts and wars, and their ominous and harmful consequences that have afflicted this part of the country for more than twenty years leads the study to evaluate the local and the international community's response to the eastern DRC's situation. Investigating the issues in this way helps in understanding how the situation in this region is perceived through history and identify the most suitable solution to put an end to the violence.

In the last stage of this research, through a contextual reading process, the context of the text and the context of the eastern provinces of the DRC are brought together in dialogue. In the "Tri-polar Exegetical Model" this step is called the "appropriation phase". Here the horizon of the text and its community, and the interpreter's horizon and his/her community, are brought together to mediate a new consciousness, leading to a new praxis (Nyirimana 2010:9; Draper 2001:158). Drawing from a dialogue of the "textual and contextual poles" (West 2009:250), a renewed understanding of a faithful leader (the *Prince of Peace*) for the *anthropolitical* peace-building efforts in favour of stability in the eastern part of the DRC is revealed.

Given the description concerning the methodology used in this study, I can say with some certainty that to date, there have been no monographs that have exclusively focused on the use of Isaiah 9:1-6 related to the context of peace-building in the eastern DRC. That is why, in processing my current research, I hope to contribute to the modern African biblical scholarship with a new aspect of reference to the oracle of Isaiah 9:1-6. By doing so, I must avoid unethical considerations, but at the same time, I acknowledge having some limitations when conducting the present research. This is the subject of the next section.

1.6.ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It can be seen from the previous section that my research topic is a very broad and sensitive field, and at the same time entails ethical risk. Therefore, I avoided including issues, which go beyond the framework of this study, such as the systematic use of historical-critical methods of exegesis, as mentioned above; and sensitive topics and unethical considerations as shown below.

In this study, I attempted to steer clear as much as possible from any comments on any particular present-day political, military and religious leader in the analysis of causes and the nature of the eastern Congolese crisis. This is because the issue of leadership's responsibility in the context of recurrent violence and multiple violations of cease-fire agreements in this particular region is a very sensitive one, especially in the situation that another cease-fire agreement was recently violated and illegal local and foreign armed groups are proliferating. Yet, with reference to the topic and the aim of this study, I should have included some information regarding the involvement of individuals in the persistence of armed conflicts and proliferation of renegade armed groups in the region. However, I simply excluded them to avoid the potential harm to their and my safety.

On the other hand, I avoided interviews and limited my information about the eastern DRC crisis to the available formal literature and to my personal experience. I chose this approach because the survivors of the various wars in the provinces under consideration, and those who are still mourning the millions of people who have died so far in the previous armed conflicts and wars

continue to see “the knife being twisted in their unhealed wounds” by the recurring atrocity of violence in the region. Having suffered huge day-to-day torments for more than twenty years, eastern Congolese people have become psychologically traumatised to such an extent that they have lost objectivity in evaluating their years of torments responsibly. Therefore, my fears are fuelled by the possibility that their analysis might be marred by some so-called spiritual convictions or ethnic identity.

However, I cannot claim that I read all the pertinent literature on the topic since I am limited by the restricted period of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) scholarship contract under which I am conducting research. In addition, I acknowledge that the methodological approach that I am using in this study, my perceptions and interpretations may be coloured by my world view, values, biases and experiences. In spite of that, I have made an effort to follow the methodology explained in the previous section relying on a relevant literature on Isaiah 9:1-6, which have helped this study to provide as rich and in-depth contribution as possible to the field of the contextual reading of the Old Testament. I trust that the insights that emerge from this study might lead other researchers to undertake further studies aimed at solving the DRC’s leadership issue.

1.7. LOOKING FORWARD: THE CHAPTERS OF THE PRESENT THESIS

Apart from the general conclusion, the present thesis comprises six chapters grouped under four parts relating to: overview and methodology,

exegetical analysis, contextualisation and appropriation. Starting from the general introduction in Part One, each chapter in this thesis links to both the previous chapter and the following one.

In Part One, Chapter One is the general introduction of the present research project, which consists of an overview of how the study is executed. In this first chapter, the reasons for undertaking this particular investigation are motivated in the background information and motivation of the study, as well as in the explanation of the relevance and significance of the study. The key question and its sub-questions that need to be answered through this thesis lead to the suggested answers (hypotheses), which in turn guide the objectives of the study. These objectives that define the specific aims of the study describe what I hope to achieve with the present study if the hypotheses are confirmed. The methodology used in investigating the hypothesis and demonstrating the objectives is named the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics and was initiated by Ukpong. This method of investigation is applied to this thesis while focusing on the Tri-polar Exegetical Model that attempts to fill the gap that occurs in Ukpong's method. This development is briefly announced in the general introduction, but described in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis. Therefore, in Chapter Two, after reviewing the historical development of the Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach and its definition according to Ukpong, the Tri-polar Exegetical Model is described in relation to the present study. The organisation and content of the following parts flow from the applicability of this approach to the reading of Isaiah 9:1-6. It should be noted that the Tri-polar Exegetical Model consists of three phases namely: *distantiation*, contextualisation and appropriation. That is to say, three poles need to be in dialogue: the text and its context, the reader and his/her context, and the interaction between the two first poles.

Therefore, Part Two is subdivided into two chapters that involve the exegetical analysis of the text. This step, termed “*distantiation*” in the tri-polar interpretative model, consists of a large analysis that allows the text to speak for itself in its own context. For that reason, in Part Two, Chapter Three is devoted entirely to the literary analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6 in order to get what the text meant to the original (historical) audience and then raises issues surrounding the prophecy about the “*Prince of Peace*”. In the same part, Chapter Four attempts to identify the impact that the geographic and the socio-historical backgrounds of Isaiah 9:1-6 had on the announcement of the prophecy about the “*Prince of Peace*” and on different issues arising from the analysis of the text. This investigation revolves around the Assyrian invasion in the ancient Middle East during the second half of the eighth century BCE.

The previous part having focused on determining the meaning of the text in its literary and socio-historical context, Part Three in the tri-polar model consists of the “contextualisation” phase. This phase involves the reader’s context with the intention of getting the significance of Isaiah 9:1-6 for today’s believers. Therefore, Chapter Five provides the analysis of the reader’s context, a setting of persistent and lethal armed conflicts and wars. The aim is to discover possible links between the issues arising from the literary and socio-historical analysis of the chosen text and the context of the lack of peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

Subsequently, Part Four, which consists of Chapter Six, concerns the “appropriative reading” of Isaiah 9:1-6. This chapter applies the result of the exegesis analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6 to the eastern Congolese peace-building efforts. The procedure involves putting into dialogue the two contexts (biblical

and contemporary) analysed in the previous chapters against the outcomes of the exegetical analysis of the text.

Finally, Chapter Seven draws the general conclusion and puts forward suggestions that should improve the DRC's leadership, which must be based on the *anthropolitical* peace-building efforts in the eastern DRC.

The next chapter deals with the description of the methodological approach.

Chapter Two

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:
INCULTURATION BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter is the first step in answering my research question on whether the interpretation of the phrase *Prince of Peace* in Isaiah 9:1-6 can supply a relevant biblical perspective to reach a just and durable solution needed to end armed violence and rebuild lasting peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC. The chapter deals particularly with the first sub-question on the techniques of the biblical hermeneutics that are required to answer this central question.

It was already indicated in Chapter One, in the subsection dealing with the theoretical framework that the contextual approach named Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics, or African Biblical Hermeneutics, or Inculturation Hermeneutics for short, was chosen as the methodological approach that would enable the research needed to present my contribution to the interpretation of Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation to the central question. Therefore, the present chapter provides details about this exegetical approach, which was inspired by the Nigerian scholar Justin Ukpong (1995 & 2000). This approach is known for its

efficiency in connecting *text* and *context*, to the extent that many African biblical scholars followed Ukpong's lead. But later, they started improving Ukpong's approach in terms of focusing on and clarifying the three poles of interpretative process that need to be followed when African Biblical Hermeneutics is applied to the reading of any biblical text (West 2013b:5) in order to maintain the level of scientific rigour in the exegetical discipline. Draper (2001; 2002) has referred to this way of doing as Tri-polar Exegetical Model.

Therefore, this chapter begins with details about Inculturation Hermeneutics, which consists of clarifying its key words, presenting its historical development, providing its components, analysing its different steps and showing its strength and denouncing its limitations. The chapter ends with the analysis of the Tri-polar Exegetical Model as a supplement to Ukpong's method and the examination of its applicability to the interpretation of the text of Isaiah 9:1-6.

2.2 CLARIFYING WORDS IN “INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS”

Before going further, I would like to mention that putting words together to formulate a methodological approach for studying biblical texts can be very confusing when certain words are not clear, and especially owing to the fact that words can have different meanings depending on different contexts. That is why in this section, I briefly clarify keywords in the Inculturation Hermeneutics and allude to four additional words that may be confusing. This is about the term

inculturation vis-à-vis acculturation and enculturation; and the word hermeneutics versus biblical exegesis and interpretation.

2.2.1 Inculturation

The terms acculturation, enculturation and inculturation can sometimes be confused since each of them presupposes an encounter between cultures and connotes a kind of cultural change. However, they are not equivalent in meaning. While acculturation presupposes a contact between different cultures resulting in unavoidable cultural changes in line with the idea of domination (Osei-Bonsu 2005:19; Geaves 2006:1; and Cook and Sim 2015:53); enculturation refers to a process by which a person or a group of persons progressively learns and grows into a new culture (Nyirimana 2010:14). It focuses on the new culture into which the process of socialisation takes place. Both *acculturation* and *enculturation* refer to a one-way process by which elements of a new culture modify the initial culture (Nyirimana 2010:15; and Kim et al. 2009:26). Inculturation, however, refers to a two-way process through which Christian faith becomes part of a specific culture that it encounters. In the process of inculturation, the faith fuses with the new culture and, at the same time, transforms it into a new religious-cultural reality in a process that involves the interaction of mutual critique and affirmation (Magesa 2004:4).

In this case, inculturation is described as a dialogue between faith and culture(s), and involves the insertion of the Christian faith and practices into a

given culture (Shorter 1988:11; Osei-Bonsu 2005:19) from a new reality resulting from a mutual influence between faith and culture. Today, the term inculturation is used in the domain of biblical interpretation in terms of making any community and their social-cultural context the subject of interpretation of Sacred Scriptures (Ukpong 2002:12; Nyirimana 2010:16). The present thesis uses inculturation especially in the African Biblical Hermeneutics.

The next subsection explains the term hermeneutics in comparison with biblical exegesis and interpretation.

2.2.2 Hermeneutics

There is tension among students and scholars in trying to draw distinctions between terms like biblical exegesis, interpretation and hermeneutics (Porter and Stovell 2012:9). Thiselton (2009:4) provides a helpful distinction among these important terms as follows:

Whereas *exegesis* and *interpretation* denote the actual processes of interpreting texts, *hermeneutics* also includes the second-order discipline of asking critically *what exactly we are doing when we read, understand, or apply* texts. *Hermeneutics* explores the conditions and criteria that operate to try to ensure responsible, valid, fruitful, or appropriate interpretation.

Referring to the definition above, the term hermeneutics can be defined as a study of principles and methods of analysis and interpretation of texts. As today the concept of *text* has been extended beyond written documents, *hermeneutics* can refer as well to works of arts, speech, performances, events, and so forth (Brown and Schneiders 1990:1147). But, traditionally,

hermeneutics refers to the theory of interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the literature, religion and law domains. In the present study, the hermeneutics is focused on the Bible, and thus is used in conjunction with biblical interpretation (Porter and Stovell 2012:9). In this case, the term hermeneutics is closely related and often associated with the concept of exegesis. Even though they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different and their distinction remains. When hermeneutics is described as the theory of the interpretation and understanding of a text based on the text itself, the concept of exegesis is known as the practical application of hermeneutics.¹⁶ Furthermore, hermeneutics must be located in the area of the practical theology given the fact that "Christian scripture has practical import for daily life" of present-day readers (Geaves 2006:44; Briggs 2015:217). It is important to note therefore that the above debate fits into what the Inculturation Hermeneutics is all about. This point is further developed in the next subsection.

2.2.3 Inculturation Hermeneutics

It has been indicated previously that Inculturation Hermeneutics is used in reference to a contextual interpretative approach that stresses the African culture and its world view.¹⁷ According to Dada (2010:163), this approach is a

¹⁶ Cf. <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=1006051618374>

¹⁷ According to Dada (2010:166), "the traditional view of reality by many Africans is holistic. Traditionally, many Africans believed that there are three orders of beings that are part of the world, and these are deity, spirits and human beings. These three orders are in functional contact. For example, in traditional African cosmology, the world of spirits and their influence on humans is a living and undeniable reality. The Bible, therefore, cannot be read meaningfully, and interpreted, without taking into consideration these observations."

“contextual biblical hermeneutics in Africa” that makes socio-political and economic contexts a subject of interpretation. He maintains that in this approach “the analysis of the text is done from the perspective of African world view and culture”; and adds that the Inculturation Hermeneutics is “the rereading of the Christian scripture from a thought-out Afro-centric perspective” (Dada 2010:163). Therefore, Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics attempts to create an encounter between the biblical text and the African context by focusing on the context of the community that receives this text. First, comparisons are drawn between African and biblical contexts. Then, hermeneutic conclusions are drawn from the encounter of both contexts. In this way, "the African context provides critical resources for interpretation and is the subject of interpretation of the biblical text" (Ukpong 1999:313; 314). In this way, the African context becomes the explicit subject of the interpretation of the biblical text (Adamo 2015:32).

Furthermore, this approach “seeks to make any community of ordinary people and their social-cultural context the subject of interpretation of the Bible through the use of the conceptual frame of reference of the people and the involvement of ordinary people in the interpretation process” (Nyirimana 2010:16; Ukpong 2002:12). Finally, the importance of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics lies in the fact that it is a principle of interpretation of the Bible that aims at the transformation of Africa (Adamo 2015:31). In order to obtain a clearer idea of the Inculturation Hermeneutics, it is necessary to examine different historical stages that led to this methodological approach.

2.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS

The approach called Inculturation Hermeneutics was inspired by the desire to promote an African interpretation of the Bible (Dada 2010:160). In the 20th century, when the need to resist the domination and the oppression of colonialism in South-Saharan Africa arose, theologians in Africa started showing the need to develop a method of interpretation of their own, in order to create an encounter between the biblical text and the African context (Motlhabi 1994:123). That is to say, the Inculturation Hermeneutics approach is rooted in the early stages of the African theology. Note that the African theology has its also root in the biblical faith and speaks to African Christian communities by expressing the Christian faith in African thought-forms and idioms (Kurewa 1975:36). To be able to understand the link between the Inculturation Hermeneutics and the African theology, the most general and pertinent definition of African Theology that functions within the outlook of the present study, quoted below from Motlhabi (1994:123), is relevant here:

African Theology is necessarily a contextual theology. It is so called because it is intended to relate to the situation or context of the African people. To relate meaningfully it must speak about God in a way that is understandable to the African people, taking into account their background, culture, traditions, customs, history, and their ongoing life experience. In other words, the God about whom African Theology must address the African people must be an African God: God must be God incarnate in Africa as well as in each distinct context of the African continent. Such a God must reveal Godself in the African medium.

The methodological approach of Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics is based on the definition above, in the sense that it refers to African people in their African context.¹⁸

The next three subsections present the three most important stages in the development of the African biblical interpretation. This is done in agreement with Ukpong's subdivision (Ukpong 2000:11-28). He identified first the reactive and apologetic phase (1930s-70s), next the reactive-proactive phase (1970s-90s) and finally the proactive phase (1990s).

2.3.1 Reactive and apologetic phase (1930s - 1970s)

This phase, dominated by the comparative method¹⁹, focuses on legitimizing African religion and culture. It is a reaction against the Christian missionaries who harshly condemned African culture and religion as demonic and immoral, and declared the need for them to be destroyed before Christianity could be spread in Africa (Adamo 2008:579). As a result, reactive and apologetic research projects were undertaken in order to legitimise African religion and culture through *comparative studies* aiming at pointing out similarities between the African religion and culture, and the biblical religion

¹⁸ Nevertheless, Motlhabi (1994:120) acknowledges that the African Theology, in its applicability, has failed to address Africans' problems of suffering, exploitation and dehumanization. This gap has been filled by the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics approach whose development corresponds with the development of the African theology.

¹⁹ The African comparative approach "is a hermeneutical principle that relates the biblical texts to the African context by comparing the convergence and divergence in Africa alongside the culture of the biblical world" (Dada 2010:163).

and culture (Ukpong 2000:12). Although in this stage, a real development was observed concerning the methods of biblical explanation in Africa (Mavinga 2009:25), objections were soon made. Opponents of comparative approach found ancient Israel too different from contemporary Africa in both space and time to be simply compared (Ukpong 2000:13). Ukpong notes as well some limitations for comparative studies. For him, this approach does not either draw hermeneutic conclusions or show interest for secular issues, which are important in today's theological discussion in Africa (Nyirimana 2010:22). The advantage of these studies, however, is that African culture and religions were valorised and known as preparation for the gospel. They remained "foundational to all biblical studies that link the biblical text to the African context" (Ukpong 2000:14).

At this stage, Christianity was still considered a foreign religion because it was still expressed in foreign symbols and idioms. That is why "African theologians were determined to push further the process of Africanisation" (Nyirimana 2010:22). This is expressed in the second stage below.

2.3.2 Reactive-proactive phase (1970s-1990s)

During this phase, the African biblical interpretation started using the African context as a resource for the process of the contextual reading (Ukpong 2000:14). The *Africa and Africans in the Bible* and the *inculturation-evaluative* methods dominate this approach. Both are the expression of the inculturation theology that seeks to make Christianity relevant to the African religio-cultural

context (Ukpong's 2000:15-26; Adamo 2006:16-17). Nevertheless, similarly to the comparative approach, the *Africa and the African in the Bible* model does not seek necessarily the theological meaning of the biblical text, but it is only involved in "creating an awareness of the importance of African nations and peoples in the biblical story" (Ukpong 2000:16; Adamo 2015:41). With regard to the *evaluative studies*, the emphasis is placed on the encounter between the Bible and African religion and culture; and similarities and contrasts between them are addressed and used as a basis for interpretation. The aim here "is to facilitate the communication of the biblical message within the African milieu" and to develop a new understanding of Christianity that is both biblical and African (Ukpong 2000:16, 18). This gives rise to African liberation theology, which addresses the issues of oppression, poverty and discrimination in Africa. African liberation theology was "used as a weapon in the hands of the oppressed and marginalised to reclaim the liberating heritage of the Gospel" (Martey 1993:57). The components of this liberation approach are *Liberation hermeneutics* (Brown and Schneiders 1990:1162; Ukpong 2000:19-20; Mavinga 2009:26); *Black theology* (Ukpong 2000:20-21; see Biko 2012:59); and *Feminist hermeneutics* (Ackerman 1997:63) that rejects the andro-centric reading and interpretation of biblical texts²⁰.

Note that all the aforementioned socio-political and economic issues raised during the period extending from the 1970s to 1990s resulted in African theologians continuing to address a stage in which more attention is paid to the reader. This is the subject of the following section.

²⁰ In the andro-centric reading and interpretation of the Bible, God is portrayed in male terms and given only male attributes, ignoring feminine (Ukpong 2000:21-22).

2.3.3 Proactive: reader-centred phase (1990s)

Since the 1990s, African biblical studies become increasingly assertive and proactive. At this third stage of development of African biblical interpretation, two major approaches of inculturation and liberation advance with two new orientations: the contribution of ordinary readers to the academic interpretation of the Bible, and the African context that becomes the subject of biblical interpretation (Ukpong 2000:22-23). The first orientation (about the reader) is exemplified by the contextual Bible study promoted by West, when the second (concerning the African context) is exemplified by Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics.

As regards the Contextual Bible study, West (2013a:14) states that it "is not merely about interpreting the Bible; it is about allowing the Bible to equip us to change our world so that the kingdom of God may come on earth, as it is in heaven!" This approach aims at empowering non-academically trained African readers of the Bible to be involved in a process of biblical interpretation and critically study the Bible in relation to their situations and for personal and societal transformation (Ukpong 2000:23).

Furthermore, as a response to liberation theologies, which encourage theologians to take the context of the ordinary reader (the oppressed) seriously, Nadar shows that the Contextual Bible Study as defined by many of its proponents engages the community in the struggle to fight the oppression and suffering. Therefore, its end goal is transformation, liberation and change (Nadar 2009:387). However, Nadar re-defines the Contextual Bible Study by making a shift from the liberation discourse to the liberation pedagogy:

Contextual Bible Study is an *interactive* study of particular texts in the bible, which brings the perspectives of both the *context of the reader* and the *context of the bible* into *critical dialogue*, for the purpose of raising *awareness and promoting transformation* (Nadar 2009:390).

In addition, Nadar raises the issue of the changing context of South Africa where it is no longer clear who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor. She suggests that West's understanding of the ordinary reader that he always identifies as the poor and marginalised, and the intellectual whom he describes as invisible, needs to be more nuanced. She recommends therefore that, in the Contextual Bible Study "the role of the intellectual should be more emphasised than ever" (Nadar 2009:400).

The study now turns to Ukpong's suggestion of how to bridge the gap between the academic (intellectual) analysis of the biblical passage and the needs of ordinary African people.

Regarding the Inculturation Interpretative Approach, Ukpong suggests first of all that African theologians move away from Western tradition of interpreting the Bible, which has limited them to find answers to questions about African life. For him, the word of God must be made alive and active in contemporary African societies and in the lives of individual Christians within their sociocultural contexts (Ukpong 1995:5). He adds that this approach seeks consciously and explicitly to interpret the biblical text from the sociocultural perspectives of African people, including their religious and secular cultures, and their social, historical, economic, and political experiences as well (Ukpong 1996:190).

Further details are provided in the next section, which stresses five components of Ukpong's Inculturation Interpretative Approach and the way

they function in the Inculturation Hermeneutics. It is about the interpreter, context, text, conceptual framework and procedure (Ukpong 1995:5-13).

2.3 COMPONENTS OF UKPONG'S INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS

As mentioned above, Ukpong's method contains five distinct components: "an interpreter in a certain context making meaning of a text using a specific conceptual framework and its procedure" (Ukpong 1995:5). Four of these five features are examined in the next subsections, while the fifth component, which is the procedure, is developed in section 2.5 about steps in the Inculturation Hermeneutics.

2.4.1 The interpreter/reader

The focus in Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach is on the interpreter/reader who is understood as a "reader-in-context". That is to say, the point of departure in the interpretation of the text is the reader's socio-cultural context that he/she must be able to explain and view critically in order to avoid specific subjective factors (Ukpong 1995:5). With respect to this, LeMarquand (2006:71) writes:

For Ukpong, the interpreter is a participant in the process of interpretation. There is no neutral detachment. Personal and social factors such as the

reader's race, gender, status in society, all give an interpreter an angle of vision that can be used in the process of understanding a biblical text.

2.4.2 The context of the reader/interpreter

For Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics, the context is an existing human community in which the reader/interpreter must be an insider. It is taken as the subject of the interpretation and, as the background against which the text is interpreted (Ukpong 1995:6). In this case, interpretative materials are drawn from the daily life issues of the reader's community. This daily life of the reader can be identified with either his/her country, or church denomination, or ethnic group, or any other social entity with reference to his/her world view and life experiences within its historical, social, political, economic or religious setting (Nyirimana 2010:6). Furthermore, the reader's community should be seen as a "dynamic reality with its values, disvalues, needs and aspirations" (Ukpong 1995:6).

2.4.3 The text

The biblical text in Ukpong's Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics approach is interpreted with a particular focus on its theological meaning within a contemporary context. In the interaction of the text with a particular contemporary socio-cultural issue, the biblical message critiques the culture and

the cultural perspective enriches the comprehension of the text. In this process, “an integrative view of reality is maintained”. For instance, the religious issues are not discussed without attention to their secular dimension and implications, and *vice versa* (Ukpong 1995:6).

However, in the modern approaches to Biblical Hermeneutics, the text is interpreted holistically. This is to say, “Different aspects affecting the meaning of the text are analysed” (Nyirimana 2010:31) in order to bridge the gap between the text and the contemporary context. This holistic interpretation of a text rotates around four axes that are drawn from Ukpong’s article (1995:7):

1. *The inner logic of the text* that involves a careful analysis of the structure of the argument in the text in order to logically and dynamically read the text in a contemporary context;
2. *The literary context*, that includes the immediate, mediate and larger literary context of the text that helps to avoid reading the biblical text separately from the larger whole to which it belongs;
3. *The historical context*: here once again the text is not seen as isolated, but as belonging to its historical socio-cultural context;
4. *The critical analysis of the interpreter’s context* is, according to Ukpong “the strongest and most specific feature of the inculturation hermeneutic (and other contextual hermeneutics)”. It enables the interpreter to understand and interpret the text within his/her contemporary setting, thus proving that the text is not an archaeological specimen, rather a living reality that can interact with the present context.

Another component in Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics is the mental construction called exegetical conceptual framework, which conditions the interpreter's hermeneutic orientation.

2.4.4 Exegetical conceptual framework

The exegetical conceptual framework is the most important component of the interpretation process. In Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics, the Bible is considered as "the word of God containing norms for Christian living as well as an ancient literary document 'worth attention beyond its time'" (Ukpong 1995:9). During the process of exegesis, the reader of any biblical passage must answer the question: "What was the author trying to communicate to his readers through the text?" (Smith 2008:175-176). In this way, although historical-critical tools are used to better understand the setting of the ancient text; for Ukpong, the exegesis is only complete when it deals with the contemporary significance of the text. Therefore, the exegesis consists of two parts: the first one is theology or "the doctrinal significance of the text" (Smith 2008:176). Here, the focus is on what the biblical text teaches us about God, the creation (particularly ourselves), and the relationship between God and ourselves (creation). The second part is application or "the practical significance of the passage".

It is noteworthy that in Ukpong's *inculturation* interpretative framework, the text does not have one universal and eternal meaning, but it can provide various nuances depending on the reader's context (Ukpong 1995:10). However, Kahl (2000:428) notes that one biblical passage cannot mean

everything. Therefore, “to do justice to a text, one must grasp its intended meaning and/or the aspects of meaning on which it is based” (Kahl 2000:429). That is why, for Ukpong, any significance of the biblical text must be judged with regard to the meaning of the entire Bible; and its theology must be judged considering "the basic biblical affirmations and principles like existence of God as creator and sustainer of the universe, love of God and neighbour etc." (Ukpong 1995:10). But, above all, the safeguard in Ukpong's interpretative process lies in the steps that must be followed by the reader when using the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics. These steps are addressed in the following section.

However, above all, the safeguard in Ukpong's interpretative process lies in the steps that must be followed by the reader when using the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics. These steps are addressed in the following section.

2.5 STEPS IN UKPONG’S INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS

In order to illuminate the meaning (s) of the text, Ukpong (1995:3-14) suggests five steps to be followed by the interpreter during the process of interpretation. The starting point would be to identify the reader’s context.

2.5.1 Identification of the interpreter's own specific context

In this first step, the interpreter's context must dynamically or approximately correspond to the context of the text, and be clarified in relation to the text. In Ukpong's words (1995:10), "equivalent contexts are used to mediate the message of the text where there are no exact equivalent contexts". To achieve the process of identifying the reader's context, a dialogue between his/her contemporary context and the historical context of the text must be done. For this purpose, Ukpong (1995:10-11) suggests some questions to help identify the interpreter's specific context: What sociocultural, political, economic or religious situation does the text reflect? What situation in my context approximates it? How and why would the text have been significant and meaningful in its historical context? What concerns in my context does this reflect?

As it can be seen from the questions above, the identification of the reader's context depends on the historical analysis of the text. The information concerning the socio-cultural, economic, political or religious background of the text must first be provided. However, before dealing with how the analysis of the context of the text needs to be done, the next step in Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics concerns the analysis of the interpreter's context.

2.5.2 Analysis of the context of the interpreter

Once the context of the interpreter has been identified in the first step, the next step in Ukpong's approach would be the critical analysis of this context. Similar to other contextual hermeneutics, this is the strongest specific feature of Inculturation Hermeneutics. The critical analysis of the interpreter's context, which forms the background against which the biblical text is read, is done at five levels; but some of them may not be required in all cases (Ukpong 1995:11; Nyirimana 2010:34).

Phenomenological analysis: this is about clarifying the particular issues in the context of the interpreter. These are issues that can be found in the reader's and the text's contexts and that make both of them comparable or dynamically equivalent.

Socio-anthropological analysis: This analysis focuses on the issues in terms of people's world-view in the interpreter's context. It "seeks to understand how the people in the interpreter's context perceive the issues pointed out in the text, which are also real in their own context" (Nyirimana 2010:34).

Historical analysis: At this level, the study looks into history and seeks to understand how people have experienced the issues identified in their context (the reader's context).

Social analysis: This analysis explores the inter-connectedness of the dynamics of the society in relation to the issues that have been raised. The question to ask here is "how the situation is connected to other aspects of

society (cultural, religious, economic, political implications) and how it is being maintained in existence by the dynamics of the society (Ukpong 1995:11, 12).

Religious dimension of the issue: Here the analysis seeks to indicate the religious dimension of the situation in the life of the people.

2.5.3 Analysis of the historical context of the text

During this process of Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics, the focus is on analysing the historical context of the text. Without the historical perspective to the text, it is impossible to clearly assess the biblical "world", which made the text meaningful at the time of writing. That is why a careful analysis is needed to ensure that the social, political and economic conditions in the biblical world at the time the content of text was uttered or written are taken into consideration. The aim is to understand how people of the text experienced these conditions and which effects they had on people's lives (Ukpong 1995:12). Such analysis is important as it provides insights needed to relate the biblical text to the contemporary context. The next step of Ukpong's approach emphasises the analysis of the biblical text.

2.5.4 Analysis of the biblical text

At this stage, the analysis is done in view of the context of the interpreter. Ukpong (1995:12) suggests different components of this analysis:

One is a critical review of current interpretations. Next is textual analysis employing different tools depending on the nature and motif of the text. Most important however is placing the text in its larger contexts within the canon for the purpose of further clarifying the focus of interpretation...Then follows interpretation.

The goal of interpretation of the biblical text is to reach the meaning of the text dynamically in a contemporary context.

2.5.5 Actualising the message of the text

At this stage, Ukpong suggests that the outcomes of the whole discussion may be gathered in dialogue. To achieve this, the issues raised from the historical context of the interpreter are related to the historical background of the text and, at the same time, the message drawn from the text is actualised in the concrete life situation (Ukpong 1995:12).

The following section shares strengths and limitations of Ukpong's Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics while comparing the latter with the traditional biblical interpretation (the Western tradition).

2.6 INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS VERSUS TRADITIONAL BIBLICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Based on all the foregoing with respect to Ukpong's *Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics*, it is quite predictable that this approach has its merits in comparison with other methods developed by Western biblical scholars. Nonetheless, as it is shown below, this contextual hermeneutics also has some limitations that have been observed and supplemented by other scholars' model.

2.6.1 Strength and effectiveness of Ukpongs' Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics

It has been stated previously that Ukpong's *Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics* is one of the contextual hermeneutics, which allows the dialogue between the biblical text and its context with the contemporary context of the interpreter. The description of this specific contextual approach has revealed how much biblical passages continue "to feature in contemporary religious, political and socio-economic discourse in Africa" (Dada 2010:160). Such an exegetical model turns out to be complete since it moves from the interpretation of the text to the application of the outcomes of the exegetical analysis in today's life of African believers.

Furthermore, the contextual approach as developed by Ukpong is supported by Spencer's highly literary/postmodern view (2012:48-69) in terms of considering significant interaction between the biblical author, text and

reader (p. 40); and the intertextual or dialogical features²¹ during the exegetical analysis of a text (pp. 51-52). This is because we no longer have the original manuscripts. What we do have is the final text, which was read by ancient people, and is now read by contemporary believers. In this respect, while focusing on the text, the Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach considers the contemporary reader and the biblical author in supporting roles since it is the reader who makes meaningful the author's text in today's life. Inspired from critical discourse analysis,²² the approach concentrates on the final text, the "*co-text*" or relationship of a sentence to a paragraph in the text (Green 2010:226), the intertextual references or relationship between texts or books, and the historical context or the surroundings in which the text is involved "with special attention to its *temporal, spatial* and *social* coordinate" (Spencer 2012:49-53).

From the above, it can be seen that the method of Inculturation Hermeneutics deals with the text in a different way from the traditional interpretative methods. These are criticism methods developed in the Western

²¹ Spencer (2012:51-52) maintains that "all texts – indeed, all language and communication – are influenced by other texts and voices they answer, both directly and tacitly... Relationships between texts truly function *intertextually* or *dialogically*, mutually addressing and responding to each other".

²² According to Morgan (2010:3,4), "Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field that includes linguistics, semiotics and discourse analysis (the field of discourse studies), and is concerned with theorising and researching social processes and social change... The techniques can reveal often unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour." Critical discourse analysis requires three kinds of analysis: "text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation)" (Janks nd: 1, referring to Fairclough 1989, 1995). The focus is on analysing "social problems through textual analysis that draws on systemic functional linguistics" (Rogers 2011:12).

culture that include the historical-critical methods (diachronic),²³ to mention the most important. The latter is discussed in the next section.

2.6.2 Historical-critical methods compared to Inculturation Hermeneutics

In contrast to Inculturation Hermeneutics, the historical-critical methods tend “not to raise questions of contemporary significance, application or contextualization; or locate a biblical passage in the flow of redemptive history (that is, in the unfolding story of God’s dealing with humanity)” (Blomberg 2012:40). To make this more clear, Blomberg’s historical-critical/grammatical view (2012:27-47) is summarised by Dray (2014:158):

Blomberg's conservative version of the historical-critical approach emphasises the importance of understanding the original context and seeking the author's original meaning(s) as addressed to the first addressees, all based on grammar and syntax. Thus understood, the believer will 'look for examples to imitate, commands to obey, promises to claim, dangers to avoid, truths to believe, and praises or prayers to offer to God' (28). He adopts a critical realist position: the 'communicative intentions' of the original author were 'largely successful' and any 'fuller meaning' is to be consistent with it (31). He affirms that grammatical analysis must take place within the 'narrative flow of thought' in which it is embedded (38), though he is careful not to adopt an 'ahistorical perspective' (39) and leaves diachronic analysis to systematic theology (40).

²³ Diachronic methods (Historical-critical methods) include Textual criticism, Historical linguistics, Form criticism, Tradition criticism, Source criticism, Redaction criticism and Historical criticism (Gorman 2009:16).

It can be concluded from the quote above that the historical-critical view consists mainly of critically reading biblical texts by focusing on the search for their original authors, their original intended meaning and, as far as I know, even questioning their reliability and evaluating them for accuracy. Referring to Dray's summary, only the theological significance of the text is addressed in Blomberg's approach at the expense of the practical significance that should be made to contemporary life of Christians.²⁴ Regardless of this, Blomberg (2012:47) (like other proponents of the historical-critical methods) believes this as "the only legitimate approach to the biblical text" and "the necessary foundation on which all other approaches must build".

On the one hand, Blomberg's affirmation regarding the exclusive legitimacy of the historical-critical methods, I might say, is not totally convincing. It would be fully convincing, however, if and only if the method would avoid, in some ways, ending in highly speculative conclusions based on hypothesis and theories (Spencer 20012:48). In addition, by including different forms of critical analysis such as source, form, redaction, tradition and textual criticism, the interpretation of the biblical texts becomes highly academic and more intellectual; and the contemporary significance of the biblical passage, poorly and superficially addressed.

This way of approaching academically the biblical text and attaching less importance to its application in the reader's context might result from avoiding deviating from considering exegetical methods as research methods, which require that a good biblical exegesis meets all criteria of research. Therefore, the

²⁴ While the theological significance of a biblical text refers to what the text teaches us about God, creation (including ourselves) and the relationship between God and creation, the practical significance consists of applying the passage to the contemporary life and/or to today's situation of an identified target group (Smith 2008:176).

biblical exegetical goal could be to solve an interpretative problem in the text so as to determine its meaning and its significance (Smith 2008:169). As far as this objective is concerned, the historical-critical methods focus on searching for the text's meaning and its theological significance, but disregard the second kind of significance of the text that is the application or practical significance of the biblical text to the current Christianity. Supporters of diachronic methods (historical-critical methods) avoid, as well, deviating from the biblical exegesis objective that is the interpretative process of drawing the meaning out of a biblical passage. They prevent, thus, falling into *eisegesis*. Unfortunately, by doing so, this approach falls into the interpretation of the Scripture that appears to be more academic type research to the detriment of ordinary believers.

In same vein, the historical-critical methods would appear not to be very helpful for African Christians who would like to see the Bible dealing with challenges they are facing in their daily life. Such academic reading has contributed to a massive distancing between theology and African realities, and therefore, it has not been able to address the African in his/her very context (Nyirawung 2010b:132; 2013:2). In other words, in the church environment today there is a noticeable gap between the academic reading of the Bible and the needs of the ordinary African Christians (Serfontein 2012:18; see West 2011:6). Therefore, every biblical exegete needs to bear in mind what Wall (2012:188) observes in these terms: "The important elements in interpretation are the author, the text, the reader, and the world external to the text." Failure to observe this, the exegetical analysis is left "there and then" without bridging the text to the "here and now", and the reading of the biblical text is left incomplete and abstract (Smith 2008:171). Accordingly, the Inculturation Hermeneutics fits neatly into Smith's observation that "exegesis is not complete until it links

biblical text with the real work, the past with the present, allowing the ancient message to speak to our modern context” (2008:177).

On the other hand, concerning Blomberg’s confirmation regarding the influence of diachronic methods over all biblical approaches, nobody can dispute the fact that their contribution to theological and biblical research remains high. Their significant achievement is that they stand as approaches, which have allowed the theological and biblical studies to reach academic excellence and quality in the scientific world. In addition, historical-criticism, one of the historical-critical methods, remains helpful and relevant to the African contextual biblical hermeneutics. It builds on an integrated approach, which draws on socio-historical²⁵ foundations, even though it is dominated by the synchronic approaches such as literary and rhetorical contexts,²⁶ and the existential approaches like canonical context²⁷ and contemporary context.²⁸ This leads me to my next point, which provides appropriate safeguards for the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics as developed by Ukpong.

²⁵ The text of Isaiah 9:1-6 was written in a specific socio-historical situation.

²⁶ The chosen biblical passage for this study is located within larger context within the book of Isaiah and the Bible; in turn it contributes their purposes.

²⁷ As a Christian, the Bible is my unique and authoritative revelation that God acts in history (here, the history of the eastern DRC)

²⁸ The interpretation of any biblical text (including Isaiah 9:1-6) is done from within the reader’s own social situation and world-view which, in turn, have an impact on how he or she understands the text.

2.6.3 Limitations of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics

As indicated previously, the merit of Ukpong's Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics is that it serves to bridge the gap between the ancient biblical texts and the contemporary interpreter's world. By stressing the relevance of the role of the African context and world view in the interpretative process, this approach plays the role of correcting the Western approaches that do not completely take into account important realities of the African world view (Nyirimana 2010:37).

However, the Inculturation Hermeneutics should not bring Africa to consider itself as a cultural island by insisting only on the African resource in the interpretative process of biblical texts. Although Africa, like any other continent, has its specificity that makes its culture authentic, this African culture should not appear to be a closed and static system. It has to be characterised by its openness to change through encounters with other realities (Nkeramihigo 1986:69). Besides, the interpretative approaches developed by non-African scholars are not to be considered totally irrelevant to the African context even though the Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach emphasises African cultural aspects that either escape non-African interpreters' attention, or are incomprehensible or irrational for them (Nyirimana 2010:38). In brief, the Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach cannot completely isolate either Western or Jewish cultures that served as means for the Christianity in Africa, nor can it isolate the traditional interpretative approaches from our interpretative process.

For this reason, to improve Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics and prevent it from appearing as an incomplete process of interpretation even

though it was claimed to be a complete approach to biblical interpretation, it has gained some additions that have been brought to it. These supplementary elements are summarised in the next section concerning the “Tri-polar Exegetical Model”, the approach initiated by the scholars Grenholm and Patte (2000), further developed by Draper (2002:12-24), and then afterwards clarified by West (2009:249-252; 2013b:1-6) and Dada (2010:160-174), to mention but a few. This approach will be used in the present work, but with some modifications.

2.7 TRI-POLAR EXEGETICAL MODEL AND THE PRESENT WORK

In the previous section, both strengths and limits of the Ukpong’s Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics were discussed compared to the historical-critical methods. After all, nobody can deny that the Inculturation Hermeneutics serves as a corrective to the Western interpretative approaches’ failure to acknowledge, until recently, that text and context are always, at least implicitly, in conversation (West 2008:2). Nonetheless, Ukpong’s attempt to discover the variety of meanings that the text may have in the readers’ contexts may make the Inculturation Hermeneutics more subjective. In addition, the fact that Ukpong’s interpretative process starts by identifying and analysing the readers’ context before analysing the biblical text could mislead the reader into imposing his/her interpretation into the biblical text, and consequently sliding into *eisegesis*.

Therefore, to allow objectivity in the analysis of the biblical passages, the *distantiation*, one of the three poles of the interpretative process suggested by Draper (2001:156), has been appended to the Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics Approach. It should be noted that these three poles correspond to three main steps followed in the interpretative approach called *Tri-polar Exegetical Model*. The latter considers the text and its context as the first pole (*distantiation*); the context of the interpreter/reader as the second pole (*contextualisation*); and the dialogue that brings the text and its background in agreement with the context of the reader the third pole (*appropriation*). In this regard, West (2008:1) writes:

The three key elements of African biblical interpretation are the biblical text, the African context, and the act of appropriation through which they are linked. The biblical text and African context do not on their own participate in a conversation. For dialogue to take place between text and context a real flesh and blood African reader is required! This reader moves constantly back and forth between the biblical and African context, bringing them together in an ongoing conversation which we call appropriation.

To be more practical on how the abovementioned key elements are going to be applied to the present study, the next three subsections address the three poles of the Tri-polar Exegetical Model and establish a clear link between them and the main parts of this thesis.

2.7.1 Distantiation pole

In the Tri-Polar model, the *distantiation* is a phase that emphasises the biblical passage. During this phase, West (2008:10) suggests that the reader considers the Bible first of all as a “collection of ancient texts, each produced in particular socio-historical contexts”. The role of the reader is then “to ‘hear’ the distinctive, ancient voice of the text within its own socio-historical context” before it can be brought into dialogue. In this sense, *distantiation* can be seen as the step during which the interpreter distances him/herself from the text to allow it to give its own voice and speak to him/her. Draper (2001:156) explains this phase:

During the distantiation phase, the reader/interpreter strives to allow the text to speak for itself in its own context, and to address its particular problems and needs. This process requires the reader to stay far away from the text in order to hear what exactly it meant for its original audience before it can also address the reader/interpreter’s life situation. The distantiation is therefore viewed as a moment whereby the reader/hearer seeks to listen rather than to talk. This is a moment wherein various tools are used to allow the text be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context.

From the above, this stage of exegesis requires the interpreter to allow the biblical text to be other, different and over him/her, and his/her concerns and questions. At this level of interpretation, the reader must be aware that the biblical text is rooted in a specific historical, social, cultural and economic context; and that it is addressing its own questions relating to its needs. Draper (2001:153,154) pursues stressing the fact that the biblical language of

composition and rhetorical conventions, and its world view are different to the reader's. For this reason, exegesis should take into account the literary context of the text, its structure and how it came into being.

West (2008:10) specifies that this exegesis is “done by locating the text historically, using historical critical tools, and then situating the historical text sociologically, within a particular social context, using sociological tools.”²⁹ At the same time, West (2008:10), referring to the works of Nadar (2006) reveals however that some African scholars prefer literary tools to historical critical and sociological tools. They, therefore, prefer locating the biblical text within its linguistic, literary, or canonical contexts to obtain its meaning.

In the case of the present research, the first pole is the *distantiation* that is done in two levels starting by analysing exegetically the chosen text, and then questioning its socio-historical background in relation to the outcomes of the exegesis.

At the first level of the *distantiation* pole, the issues surrounding the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 are discussed. These include the controversial debates related to the determination of the socio-historical and literary context of text in relation to the composition of the book of Isaiah. It includes as well the critical review of current interpretations of the text. Then, the exegetical analysis of the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6 is done using the literary criticism based on the final text in order to allow the text to speak objectively for itself. This approach is one of the

²⁹ The tools of sociological research are: Questionnaires/interview, participant observation, controlled experiments, content analysis, historical research and evaluation research.

synchronic methods³⁰, which help me understand Isaiah 9:1-6 as literature. It includes the analysis of the literary genre and form, compositional structure and character of the text, techniques of style, the use of images and symbols in the text (Gorman 2009:14; Hayes and Holladay 1987:73), the intertextual analysis dealing with relationships between Isaiah 9:1-6 and its larger literary unit, and the co-textual analysis that stresses linear connectedness and logical coherence across the chosen text (Spencer 2012:50, 51).

At the second level of the *distantiation* pole, the issues raised from the text during its exegetical analysis are examined in relation to the socio-historical and spatial backdrop against which the prophet Isaiah uttered the content of the text. At this stage, the approach used is the historical criticism, one of the historical-critical methods (diachronic methods) that search for events surrounding the production of the text, especially their relationship with issues raised from the literary analysis of this passage. The historical-critical or literary tools being used during this first pole of the Tri-polar Exegetical Model has the same purpose, which is an exegesis of the biblical passage that allows it to speak to the reader (me) with its own voice (West 2008:10).

In the process of the African Inculturation Hermeneutics, the *distantiation* “pole” needs to be complemented by two more phases, which allow the reader to put into dialogue the text and the interpreter: *contextualisation* and *appropriation*.

³⁰ Synchronic methods include the literary criticism; narrative criticism; rhetorical criticism; lexical, grammatical and syntactical analysis; semantic or discourse analysis; and social-scientific criticism (Gorman 2009:13-14).

2.7.2 Contextualisation pole

The contextualisation phase in the Tri-polar Exegesis Model is concerned with the analysis of the contemporary context of the biblical interpreter, which has been hidden and elided by the Western biblical interpretation. Referring to West (2008:10), this is the context from and for which the biblical text is read. Moreover, the analysis of the interpreter's context determines which kind of questions he/she has to ask the text, as well as which kind of answer he/she may expect (Draper 2002:16). During this stage of analysis, the African biblical scholars are called to provide a thorough analysis of the details of African contexts as they have done about the details of the biblical text using historical and sociological tools (West 2008:10).

Concerning the present thesis, the detailed analysis of the eastern DRC context of the lack of peace is done in relation with issues raised from the exegetical analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6 compared to the research findings from the socio-historical and spatial background of the text. The use of historical and sociological tools turns out to be important here. In the process of critically inquiring the history of violence in the provinces under consideration, the evaluation of the validity of printed materials about past events in this region and the evaluation of the trustworthiness of their contents will help produce an accurate description and interpretation of those events. The sociological tool that is adopted in this part of the study is participant observation (field research). According to what I mentioned in the General Introduction of this thesis, in the section concerning "Ethical considerations and limitations of the study", as I avoided interviews, I represent at the same time the participant and

the scientific observer of the events that have occurred in the eastern provinces of the Congo. Note that my inspiration for choosing the subject of this thesis was based on my knowledge and my personal experiences with regard to the socio-political context of this particular area. Such observation approach helps combine subjective knowledge that I have gained through my personal experience and objective knowledge that I acquire from scientific research on the eastern Congolese crisis.

2.7.3 Appropriation pole

The appropriation “pole” refers to a phase whereby the African biblical interpretation brings together the two poles mentioned above (the text and the context of the reader) into conversation, facilitated by the reader (West 2008:10). In this sense, “it is the reader who enables the regular back-and-forth movement between text and context. That is to say, it is the appropriative reader who makes the text and context to mutually engage” (West 2009:250). As this dialogue needs to bear expected fruits, the reader is called to have a good knowledge of his/her context and to be aware of specific needs that the text should address (Daper 2002:17), and to guard against “simplistic notions of correspondence between text and context” (West 2009:250). At this stage, even though the meaning of the text is owned by the interpreter (Draper 2002: 18), Draper clarifies that “Meaning ... cannot be transferred from the text to the present on a ‘one for one’ allegorical basis.”

In this study, at this stage, dialogue takes place between Isaiah 9:1-6 in its socio-historical context and the context surrounding the eastern Congolese

context of the lack of peace, while taking into consideration the outcomes of the *distantiation* and contextualisation. It should be mentioned that the background of the text and that of the eastern DRC each constitute the socio-political events resulting from a long history of lack of peace with economic and political factors. In both contexts, the persisting lack of peace results in the people's expectation of an *anthropolitical* leadership (*Prince of Peace*) for the lasting peace-building. Despite the similarities above, note however that the two contexts are not equivalent in the direct sense, but are rather dynamically equivalent, as Ukpong (1995:10) points out:

Just as in translation whereby dynamically equivalent words are used to translate the biblical text where there are no exact equivalents, so dynamically equivalent contexts are used to mediate the message of the text where there are no exact equivalent contexts.

Therefore, each of the two dynamically equivalent contexts (the biblical and the contemporary contexts) contributes towards the clarification of a particular aspect of the root causes of conflicts and wars, and the social and cultural implications of the righteous leadership of the *Prince of Peace* hoped for. Through this appropriation stage, the interpretation of Isaiah 9:1-6 brings together the horizon of the text and its community and the horizon of the interpreter (me) and his/her (my) community, to mediate a new consciousness leading to a new praxis (Draper 2001: 158). This stage is the culmination of the interpretative process, where the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 is appropriated in view of my context known as that of persistent lethal conflicts and wars. In this part of the country, people's hope lies in the establishment of a willing *anthropolitical* leadership in DRC capable to restore lasting peace and security.

2.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Two has essentially detailed the way I constructed my theoretical framework based upon the Tri-polar Exegetical Model, a supplement to the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics initiated by Ukpong.

Starting with the description of Ukpong's methodological approach, I reviewed first the historical development, in which I pointed out some contextual approaches as a preparation for the Inculturation Hermeneutics. The goal was to clarify how Ukpong's model came into existence during the era of reaction against the Western tradition of reading the Bible. Next, the components of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics were explained, and it was shown how this methodological approach emphasises the relevance of the reader's context being in dialogue with that of the text in the interpretative process. Then, the steps to be followed in this contextual approach were given, starting with the identification of the reader's specific context, and its critical description, before describing the socio-historical context of the text, which is followed by the literary analysis of the text. In Ukpong's interpretative process, during the last step, all discussions are gathered in dialogue, and the message drawn from the text actualised in the concrete life situation. After that, Ukpong's Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics was compared with the historical-critical methods (diachronic) to reveal its strengths and limitations.

However, apart from having the merit of being a useful corrective to the Western approaches that disregard the reader's context during the exegetical analysis of a biblical text, this contextual approach runs the risk, of either sliding into eisegesis or isolating the African Biblical Hermeneutics from the

worldwide study of the contextual hermeneutics. To prevent the aforesaid risks, three poles were focused on as key elements of the African Biblical Hermeneutics. They include the *distantiation*, contextualisation and appropriation. Slightly different from the Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics, it is only after the *distantiation* pole (when the text has spoken for itself) that the interpreter can speak back to the text, challenging it with the specific questions and problems from his/her life situation and from his/her context. By the same token, I consider it appropriate that, after the exegetical analysis of the biblical text, the reader first puts the text and its context into dialogue stressing issues raised from the text during its analysis, and then puts the outcomes of that dialogue into agreement with his/her context.

To sum up, my use of Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics is at the same time similar and different from that of Ukpong. The similarity is seen in engaging the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 in its context and my context (as the reader) in the interpretative process. However, my use of the contextual biblical reading is different from Ukpong's by the use of the Tri-polar Exegetical Model that consists of exegetically analysing the chosen text of Isaiah 9:1-6 in its literary and historical settings before any analysis of the context of the reader is done. During the appropriative process, the result of the dialogue between the biblical text and its context is put into conversation with the context of the lack of peace and security in the eastern DRC. By doing so, I let the chosen text and my present context mirror each other.

In the process of the Tri-polar Exegetical Model applied to the present study, the next part of this study, which comprises Chapters Three and Four, consists of the *distantiation* pole. It is designed in a way that the abovementioned chapters cover the exegetical analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6, which

will enable this biblical passage to speak for itself. During this stage, the chosen text is interpreted exegetically and historically in the attempt to obtain its meaning for the original readers.

PART TWO

STUDY OF THE BIBLICAL PASSAGE OF ISAIAH 9:1-6

Having argued in the previous chapter that this study adopts the Tri-polar Exegetical Model (a supplement to Ukpong's Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics) it is necessary to remember the steps, which will be followed when using this technique of the biblical hermeneutics. The biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, considered in the framework of the topic of the present thesis, is read through three poles, namely *distantiation* (analysis of the text and its context), contextualisation (analysis of the context of the interpreter/reader) and appropriation (the dialogue between the text and its background, and the context of the reader).

The *distantiation* pole constitutes a response to the second sub-question of the main research question of this study regarding the meaning of the prophecy about the *Prince of Peace* in Isaiah 9:1-6 for the original readers.

In order to find the meaning of the selected text for the original readers, Part Two deals with the two stages of the *distantiation* pole. The first stage consists of the analysis of the text, which briefly reviews first the current approaches to the book of Isaiah and to the reading of the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 before interpreting Isaiah 9:1-6 in its literary setting. The second stage is the socio-historical background of the selected text related to the literary analysis findings. Consequently, two chapters of this study (Chapters Three and Four) constitute Part Two of this thesis.

Chapter Three

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 9:1-6

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter adopts one of the synchronic approaches called literary criticism in order to examine closely the meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6, and therefore fills the research gap³¹ noticed during the discussion summarised in section 3.3 below. Based on the final text as it stands in the biblical tradition and in the book of Isaiah, literary criticism in this chapter includes two-fold analysis: the interpretation of the text verse-by-verse and the analysis of the literary context.

At the first stage, the interpretation involves the analysis of the author's words in order to counter their literal understanding with their deeper meaning related to the immediate literary setting of the text (Is 8:23 - 9:6) determined by the analysis of textual unity of the chosen text. I should point out in passing that the present chapter does not incorporate the preliminary exegetical work, which should involve the presentation of the selected Hebrew passage of Isaiah 9:1-6,

³¹ The research gap consists of missing element in the existing research literature on which I will build the present study.

the analysis of its textual variants and its translation³². As previously mentioned, the chapter starts by discussing the textual unity of the biblical text. Then it provides a short summary of the controversy surrounding the composition of the book of Isaiah, and the current approaches to reading the chosen biblical text, whose goal is to identify the research gap that is addressed in the present study. After that, the study examines the literary features of the text to determine their impact on the meaning of the passage. These features include the literary form and literary structure of the text from which Isaiah 9:1-6 is interpreted verse-by-verse pointing out the interrelation between words, phrases and verses; and finally demonstrating the coherence and cohesion of the text. The rhetorical analysis³³ is referred to as well during this stage.

At the second stage, the analysis of the literary setting includes the broader literary context of the chosen text. It takes into account the key element (light-darkness metaphor) drawn from the interpretation of the text, and put in relation with the three sections of the book of Isaiah. At last, the exegetical synthesis is done, pulling together the exegetical findings and answering the second sub-question of the main research question on what the intended message of the prophet Isaiah to his readers was through Isaiah 9:1-6. Here

³² Even though the Hebrew passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 read from the BHS, and its translation, are not produced in the present chapter; in the draft of this thesis, I produced my own translation. This was done after conducting an in-depth analysis of the textual variants from the Hebrew text in order to check if there might be some alterations that were made by copyists to the manuscripts of the chosen text, which would influence the translation of the text from the BHS. As a result, the English verses that are interpreted in the sub point 3.6 are taken from my own translation.

³³ The rhetoric helps “examine the stylistic features of the text that may influence its meaning; these include compositional techniques such as figures of speech, repeated words, catch phrases and markers of emphasis” (Smith 2008:175).

attention is devoted to the broader literary context of the text (the book of Isaiah and the canonical context).

As mentioned above, the next section consists exclusively of explaining why the chosen text is considered in this study as a literary unit in order to address the controversy surrounding the text.

3.2 TEXTUAL UNITY OF ISAIAH 9: 1-6

It is noteworthy that the beginning of the selected text of this study is controversial. A large number of Old Testament researchers consider 8:23 - 9:1-6 (Hebrew) or 9:1-7 (English versions) as a distinctive unit. They thus segment 8:23 from the preceding text, and link it to the following one. They explain this by the presence of the adversative particle conjunction כִּי (kî = nevertheless or but) that introduces the unit 8:23 - 9:1-6, and a dramatic shift in emotive tone, from negative הִקְלַל (hiq^al, from the root קָלַל = to humiliate) to positive הִקְבִּיד (hikh^ebîdh, from the root כָּבַד = to honour) (Wegner 1992a:153; Kil 2005:139). This view may receive support from the fact that this antithetical composition is also seen in 9:1 with the contrasting parallels צְלִמָּוֶת (ṣalmāwēṭ = from the deep darkness) and to אֵר גָּדוֹל (ʿôr gādôl = a great light). Among scholars who link 8:23 to 9:1-6 is Goswell (2015:101-110), to take just one recent case.

In my view, there is no balance to above argument whatsoever. Its proponents ignore that there is also good reason to separate 8:21-22 from the preceding unit. The most compelling proof is that there is a shift from the

second person singular subject "you" to the third person singular subject "he" (v.21 וְעָבַר v^e'abh^ar = he will pass; and v.22 יִבְטֹחַ y^abît = he will look). These 2 verses can be linked to 8:23 for their content of sin and judgement expressed by the words hungry (רָעֵב ra'ebh in v. 21) and gloom (מְעוּפָה me'û in v. 22 and מוֹעֵף mû'aḫ in v.23). Eminent scholars such as Gray (1912:160); Kaiser (1983:199) and Wildberger (1991:376) strongly support this argument.

Nevertheless, many other well-known researchers like Wegner (1992b:103-112) and Sweeney (2005:32-35) consider 9:1-6 (9:2-7 English versions) as independent unit. Similarly, I share the above view based, first, on the numbering system of Hebrew verses as it appears in the “Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia” (BHS). In the BHS, the division between chapter 8 and chapter 9 comes one verse later than in different English translations of the Bible. Thus, the passage of Isaiah 9:2-7 in English translations is Isaiah 9:1-6 in the BHS. This division goes until the end of chapter 9 (9:2-21 in English Bible = 9:1-20 in BHS). Starting from Isaiah 10:1, the verse numbers are again the same in both the BHS and the English Bibles (NET Bible, note 12; Is 8:23[9:1]). Second, I regard the historical, geographical and literary considerations as being fundamental to supporting the delimitation of Isaiah 9:1-6 as a literary unit.

From a literary and geographical point of view, the chosen passage as a unit can be separated from the corpus 8:19-23, of which the last verse (v. 23) seems to play the role of a bridge (Clements 1980:105; Williamson 1994:75) between 8:19-22 and the chosen text of this study³⁴. Whilst 9:1-6 highlights the

³⁴ As we will see later in this study, when the unities 8:19-23 (theme: deep darkness) and 9:1-6 (theme: great light) are linked together they form the unity 8:19 – 9:6 (theme: contrasting metaphor “darkness-light”), which is considered as the immediate literary setting of the selected passage of 9:1-6. This is further explained in Section 3.6 of this chapter.

themes of light, joy and rejoice; authority and government; peace and great; 8:19-22 describes the extreme misery and affliction (darkness) of the whole land of Israel represented in verse 23 by Zebulun (upper Galilee) and Naphtali (Lower Galilee) (Høgenhaven 1987:37; Tanaka 2013:31). Indeed, verse 23 serves as a bridge between the two literary units above because of its mention of the very sad doom, despair and hopeless situation of the northern tribes; and the note of a decisive change of their fate, that is their future salvation.

Furthermore, the argument of separating 9:1-6 from the preceding unit is corroborated by three elements. As already shown above, there is a move from three geographical designations (Israelite provinces established by Assyrians: Zebulun, Naphtali and Galilee) (8:23) to the new subject “the people” probably from Judah³⁵ in 9:1 and “Yahweh” in v. 2. There is also a shift of image (from deep "darkness" in 8:22 to “a great light” in 9:1); and a little later in the chosen text, the emphasis on “the first person plural language (‘us’), and the focus (a royal child)” (Kil 2005:139). Note as well that the lack of a connector (such as a particle) between 9:1 and 8:23 justifies the separation between the aforesaid units. However, even though there is no connector between 9:1 and 9:2, the two verses are bound since the personal pronoun “they” (in שָׂמְחוּ *śāmḥû* = they rejoice) in verse 2 refers to “people” (הָעָם *hā‘ām* = the people) in verse 1. Therefore, the presence of the particle כִּי (*kî* = for) which connects v. 3 to v. 2; v.4 to v.3; and the vv.5-6 to v. 4, gives sufficient proof that the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 functions as a literary unit (Kaiser 1983:210; Wildberger 1991:392).

From a historical perspective, the fact that verse 8:23 seems to refer at the same time to the Assyrian conquest of Israel (23a) and its future restoration

³⁵ This very crucial problem is further detailed in the next chapter of the present study.

(23b) makes clear that this verse is a pivot between the two literary units (8:19-22 and 9:1-6), even though they are addressing the same audience and the same historical-political situation (Kim 2001:240,241). It should be noted that this historical setting possibly refers, on the one hand, to the time Assyria invaded the Kingdom of Israel, and King Tiglath-Pileser III annexed Israel's territory to Assyria as a province, and then made the Kingdom of Judah a subject (Bratcher 2014:2). On the other hand, the future of the land of Israel that was totally blown away by the Assyrians (2 Kg 15:29) will be in contrast with the past because of what is prophesied in Isaiah 9:1-6 about the Kingdom of Judah: the announcement of the great "light" which is brought by the *Prince of Peace* (Kil 2005:149-157). This is investigated in more detail in Section 3.7 of this chapter.

Finally, I delimited Isaiah 9:1-6 according to its internal composition, which presents the interrelation between verses and the cohesion within the passage. In fact, the text presents the joy arising from the emergence of the "light" (v. 1) in the presence of YHWH (v. 2). This joy increases because of the end of the oppression (v. 3) and the war (v. 4), and culminates with the birth of a child in Judah,³⁶ the *Prince of Peace* (v. 5) whose reign will bring peace, "Shalom", that is not just the absence of the war but it involves all spiritual and corporeal welfare (v. 6) (Goswell 2015:108). The last sentence of verse 6: "The zeal of the Lord of Host shall accomplish this" is the conclusion of the text, and separates 9:1-6 from the section 9:8 – 10:4, which starts a different theme on intensified judgements and further judgement to come. Due to space limitations of this thesis, this study does not examine the corpus of Isaiah 9:8 – 10:4.

³⁶ The meaning of the birth of a child and his name are examined in more detail in the Subsection 3.6.2.3 in this Chapter Three.

After justifying the textual unity of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, and before any analysis of text may be attempted, section 3.3 deals first with the place of this text in the controversial debate on the composition of the book of Isaiah. The section then addresses issues regarding the current approach of reading the chosen biblical text.

3.3 ISAIAH 9:1-6 IN THE DEBATE ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AND ITS CURRENT READING

As already mentioned above, this section is a brief summary of the controversy surrounding the composition of the book of Isaiah and the conservative (Jewish and Christian), and current historical-critical reading of the chosen text. This will help the present research examine the question related to the interpretation of Isaiah 9:1-6 and identify the research gap, which will be attended to in the present chapter and the rest of the study. Beyond all speculations, my view on the place of Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation with the different parts of the book of Isaiah, and my standpoint on the way to approach this text have a significant impact on its interpretation.

3.3.1 Isaiah 9:1-6 and the debate on the book of Isaiah

Since roughly the start of the 21st century, there has been a debate between scholars who support and develop the theory of different sections in the

book of Isaiah (diachronic approach), and those who argue that the book needs to be read as a whole (synchronic approach) (Hays 2011:549-559; 2013:256).

The exponents of the diachronic theory strongly maintain that the composition of the book of Isaiah was made over the course of several centuries BCE. For them, Isaiah is divided into different sections written by various authors from different periods. Among the proponents of this theory of disunity of the book of Isaiah, we should mention Ceresco (2001), Goldingay (2001), Boshoff *et al.* (2006), Evans (2009), Ferry (2008), Blomberg (2012), and many others. According to these authors, the First Isaiah or Proto-Isaiah (1 – 39) is considered as the authentic text from the prophet, largely written in Judah during the pre-exilic period, particularly during the eighth century BCE in the context of the Neo-Assyrian invasion in the ancient Middle East and the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis. Theologically, the section (1 - 39) announces the coming judgement because of Israel's sin. From the above diachronic viewpoint, the text chosen of Isaiah 9:1-6 is an authentic Isaianic text belonging to the aforesaid spatial, socio-historical and literary setting (Gile 2011:548). Moreover, according to this theory, the Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah (40 – 55) and the Third Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah (56 – 66) are seen as Isaiah's disciples' writings believed to be written later respectively during the exilic (Babylonian era) and the post-exilic periods (Persian era). Note however that some exponents of the diachronic theory have been divided for centuries on the date or the authenticity of a given text in the given section of the book of Isaiah (cf. Barth (1977); Sweeney (2005); Prokhorov 2015:18-19). In spite of that, the diachronic approach has influenced many critical exegetes.

On the other hand, there is a tendency for modern scholars to consider the wholeness of the book of Isaiah. Among the exponents of the unity of Isaiah are

holistic and theological exegetes such as Lessing (2004), and proponents of the canonical perspective associated with Childs (2001). Both tendencies stand for the unification of the reading and the perception of the book of Isaiah as a whole. In this case, the historical-critical approach has been abandoned in favour of either a literary approach (intertextuality) (Spencer 2012), or a combination of a literary approach with a redaction-historical interest (De Jong 2007:12), or a canonical perspective (Goldingay and Payne 2006; Tiemeyer 2008; and Wall (2012). Berges (2012), for his part, does justice to both the synchronic and diachronic perspectives on Isaiah, even though these two approaches generally exist in tension with each other. He maintains that the book spread out from the eighth century to at least the third century BCE.

While recognising that there is not a particular theme, which can summarise diverse voices in the book of Isaiah, the theme of "Zion" appears to be the main one. For him, the two major parts of the book of Isaiah are 1 – 35, characterised by a movement against Zion; and 40 – 66, characterised by a movement toward Zion. Each of them was composed independently but bridged later by 36 – 39 "all pertain in some way to Zion's inviolability and salvation" (Hays 2013:256). Berges' approach appears to be convincing in terms of his sensitivity at the same time to various historical contexts (diachrony) but also to the themes of the whole book (synchrony). In addition, for McInnes (2010:68) the "diachronic and synchronic studies frequently share the same objective of explaining Isaiah as a unified whole, but they approach the task differently". Such mixture of synchronic and diachronic views has influenced the choice of my methodological approach to the present study (the Tri-polar Exegetical Model) as it is detailed in Chapter Two. It combines both the diachronic and the

synchronic tendencies to apprehend the meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation to the topic of the present thesis.

In the next subsection, I evaluate the traditional and critical readings that have been applied so far to Isaiah 9:1-6, especially to its verse 5.

3.3.2 Current reading of Isaiah 9:1-6

For centuries, the prophetic text of Isaiah 9:1-6, especially the compound name in its fifth verse, has drawn great interest for the theological problem it poses. Its reading has produced three controversial exegetic tendencies: the Christian and Jewish conservative tendencies and the historical-critical approaches. The analysis of the controversial figure of *Prince of Peace* in Isaiah 9:1-6 has produced countless articles and books over past centuries, and especially in recent times. They have treated the identity of the child mentioned in 9:5 applying either the Christian traditional exegesis, or the Jewish conservative reading, or the historical critical approach.

The traditional Christian exegesis holds that Isaiah 9:1-6 is a messianic prophecy fulfilled in Jesus Christ to whom Christians conferred the titles of “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace” (v. 5) (Barton 2003:115; Coogan 2011:334). For that reason, Christians consider Isaiah 9:1-6 as an Epistle for Christmas Day and explain Jesus as the Messiah, the *Prince of Peace* (Forell 2006:1; Livingstone 2013:300). Given my Christian faith, I respect this traditional Christian way of reading the chosen text of this study. However, this approach has unfortunate consequences for the meaning of

the text. Its weakness lies in the lack of the historical perspective that considers the link of the text to the literary and socio-historical context in which the prophecy was uttered. Following this weakness, the traditional Jewish interpretation constantly and strongly has contradicted the traditional Christian reading while modern scholarship has taken a critical turn.

Regarding the Jewish conservative exegesis³⁷, it must be emphasised that Jews do not consider Isaiah 9:1-6 as a messianic text (Yosef 2011:1-20). Different from Christians, they maintain the “*already achieved*” aspect of their interpretation of this prophetic oracle of *Prince of peace*, which they refer to a human political leader. Note that, in the New Testament, Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the son of God (Mt 16:16; Jn 11:7) conceived miraculously (Mt 1:18-25) and will come again. Unlike the New Testament's claims, the traditional Jewish eschatology maintains that the Messiah who has to come will be a human being, a Jewish “anointed king” (מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ, *mélekh ha-mashíach*), born of a flesh and blood mother and father³⁸ from the Davidic line (2 Sm 7:12-16). The Jewish Messiah will rule Jewish people during the messianic age (Astor 2003:94). One of the rabbinic books, the Talmud, describes the messianic age as an era of freedom, peace and goodness, and adds different signs of the coming of the Messiah (Sanhedrin 98). As regards the reading of the chosen text, the Jewish tendency's weakness lies in the subdivision of the

³⁷ Subsection 3.1.2 ignores the modern Jewish reading of Isaiah 9:1-6 which is characterised by the use of the historical approach by Jewish commentators, and from which current Christian critical exegesis has profited. Goldingay (1999:239) shows that modern Jewish commentators on Isaiah 9:1-6 considered the four compound names (verse 5) as reflecting the ancient Middle Eastern courtly language. He underlines that, according to these commentators, the child could be described as “mighty God” only in a figurative sense, since for them YHWH is the only God.

³⁸ Rabbi Yaakov Astor refers to Commentary to Mishna, *Sanhedrin*: 1-10; cf. *Sanhedrin* 99a.

compound name in verse 5, and the reference of the three first phrases to YHWH, while for the last one (*Prince of Peace*) reference is to the son (Goldingay 1999:244). However, the focal point in both the Jewish and the Christian messianic scholarships is their religious beliefs and their value judgements.

With regard to the contemporary critical exegesis, the claim is that the selected text must be read in view of its historical and literary context. This approach considers Isaiah 9:1-6 as a coronation hymn for Hezekiah's accession to the throne, and the phrases in the compound name (v. 5) as throne's names given to the newly crowned king. Scholars like G. von Rad (1947), A. Alt (1953)³⁹ and Wildberger (1991), who started using the Egyptian background to interpret 9:5, and who referred to the compound names as "royal names" seem to be the basis for the critical exegesis of this prophetic text. Their analyses have led researchers to the contextual understanding of Isaiah 9:1-6. In reference to the foregoing, many scholars believe that Isaiah 9:1-6 is a royal psalm of thanksgiving for YHWH's deliverance of his nation from oppression and the establishment of a new Davidic king. Among them is Sweeney (2005:33) who considers annexing the Kingdom of Israel as a province to the Assyrian empire by Tiglath-Pileser, and the defeat of the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition, as an opportunity for the house of David (the Judaeen Kingdom) to reassert its rule over the remnant⁴⁰ of the northern Kingdom of Israel. Therefore, Coogan (2011:334) for his part maintains that the phrases in verse 5 describe

³⁹ See JJM Roberts (1997:115-129).

⁴⁰The word remnant indicates survivors left in a country or an area after the enemy has scoured it.

the deity's enduring support of the dynasty founded by David for the welfare of God's people. This way of reading the chosen text catches my attention.

The strength of the three above mentioned possibilities of interpreting the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 lies in the fact that each of them can be convincing because of their respective scholarly endorsement. However, the conservative approaches share with critical interpretations the weakness of being merely of technical interest; and the failure to respond to the largely practical need of today's believers, that is, to know to what extent the results of scholarly research on Isaiah 9:1-6 can be fruitful for a more contextual use in their own troubled society. That is why in the present work I have tried to fill this gap in terms of finding another possibility of understanding Isaiah 9:1-6 in relation to my own context. I have therefore moved beyond the Christian conservative interpretation and from the usual critical-historical reading of Isaiah 9:1-6, to the use of the contextual hermeneutics with the aim of creating a dialogue between Isaiah 9:1-6, its socio-historical and political context, and the eastern DRC context of violence. This is done based on the results of the literary analysis of the selected text.

In order to do a good literary analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6, the study must look first at its literary form, which determines its genre and life setting that are related to its meaning.

3.4 LITERARY FORM: GENRE AND LIFE SETTING OF THE TEXT

Any skilled reader of any prophetic passage must have in mind that literary form and content are related to the meaning of the text (Hayes and Holladay 1987:28, 83-84). In addition, given that there is a historical distance between the Old Testament prophetic genre and the contemporary context in which prophetic oracles must be interpreted, the analysis of their literary form that involves their literary genre must be re-placed not only in their literary setting, but also in their historical situation.⁴¹

With respect to the selected oracle, it should be noted that its literary form has given rise to controversy among scholars regarding its literary and historical settings. Based on the details contained in Chapter Three of the present thesis, many critical scholars have suggested that the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 may be read as a thanksgiving hymn, which was sung during the coronation of Hezekiah. Among them Kaiser (1983:125-126) maintains that Isaiah 9:1-6 is a prophetic hymn of thanksgiving that was transformed into a prophecy of salvation. For others, the oracle is seen as an accession oracle for a Davidic king. Kim (2001:241-242) for example, argues that the passage is an enthronement oracle. When referring to the throne names in verse 5 and positioning them in their particular historical situation surrounding the era of Judah and Israel, Kim finds a connection between the literary form of the chosen text and its theological and historical considerations. He, therefore, maintains that this royal oracle should be understood in the theological context of the pre-exilic Judaeen royal theology, "according to which the central task of the Davidic king was to

⁴¹ It is important to note that the historical background of the chosen text is further detailed in Chapter Five of this study.

materialize God's ideal rule for the society of Israel" (Kim 2001:50-51). For him, the names given to the child highlight God's promise to David (2 Sam 7:9; Is 11:2) and the royal responsibilities of a Davidic king (Ps 72:1-4).

Furthermore, he maintains that Isaiah 9:1-6 reflects the Judaeen royal theology, which claims that David was chosen by YHWH to be his viceroy (Ps 2:6-9; 78:5;) (Kim 2001:242; see Robert 1992:42-43). I agree with Kim on that point and declare that the prophetic genre of Isaiah 9:1-6 reveals that this oracle is not a prophecy that holds out hope for an isolated future, but an oracle that gives expression to the Judaeen social, political, and religious expectation for the reign of a Davidic King.

Referring to Kim's connection between the textual form and the historical setting of the chosen oracle, it is noteworthy that Isaiah 9:1-6 is considered as an accession oracle for a Davidic king that addresses both the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel. This is facilitated by the bridge 8:23 as stated earlier, and the fact that 9:7-21 mentions the doom of the Kingdom of Israel in the after-effects of 733 BCE. That doom consists of the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, which was started by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE), and was completed by one of his successors, Sargon II (722-705 BCE) 721.

Irvine demonstrates that Isaiah in his prophecy did not oppose Ahaz, the King of Judah, but supported his efforts for independence from the King of Syria, Rezin, and Pekah, the King of Israel (Lama 2003:2). Contrary to him, it appears here, in my opinion, that the dissatisfaction of both YHWH and his prophet Isaiah over the existing Judaeen King Ahaz gave the opportunity to

reassert the rule over the Kingdom of Judah and the remnant of Israel.⁴² Thus, Isaiah 9:1-6 reflects this opportunity by offering to people who saw trouble, "darkness", and gloom of anguish (8:22) the picture of the brilliant light, the hope of political and religious changes, which will be introduced by the *Prince of Peace*.

Still other scholars consider the oracle of Isaiah 9:1-6 as a birth announcement for people's salvation (Wegner 2009:241). In this regard, Wegner declares that Isaiah 9:1-6 contains a poem that describes Israel's restoration as a whole (Judah and Israel). I agree with Wegner as well in this respect because in my view, the restoration advocated by him surrounds both spiritual and socio-political aspects of God's people as a whole. Thus, the salvation in Isaiah 9:1-6 is announced in a literary genre dominated by the birth report that describes the character of the child through his name (v. 5). This constitutes the subject of the oracle through which prophet Isaiah gives the message of encouragement and hope: YHWH in his grace deals with the past of his people (vs. 1-2) and liberates them in the present (vs. 3-5). At the end of the oracle, the results of YHWH's actions are portrayed (v. 6). This structure is mostly closer to the structure of other birth announcements that can be found in Genesis 16:11-12; Judges 13:3-5; Isaiah 7:14-17; and Luke 1:13-31. This brings me to the next section in which the structure of the chosen text is developed.

⁴² This topic is discussed in more details in the following chapter.

3.5 LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

Referring to the above description of the form and the genre of Isaiah 9:1-6 related to its literary and historical settings; and, for a better understanding of the text, I suggest that the structural division that is provided below may depend on the basic message of encouragement and hope. Thus, the interpretation of the prophetic oracle of Isaiah 9:1-6 in this thesis depends on the following structure:

Announcement of the end of distress (1-2)

1. Light-darkness image (1)
2. Harvest/dividing spoils (2)

Description of liberation (3-5)

1. End of the oppression (3)
2. End of war (4)
3. Birth of a child (5)

Results of YHWH's promise (6)

1. The *Prince of Peace*'s kingdom (6a, b)
2. Zeal of YHWH (see the last sentence) (6c)

Referring to the above structure, it is clear that the prophet Isaiah moves from the discouragement ("darkness") (chapter 8) to the brilliant hope ("light") found in 9:1-6. In the midst of deep "darkness" described in 8:22, Isaiah prophesies hope and salvation, in 9:1-6, brought by *Prince of Peace* from the Southern Kingdom, apparently for the Northern Kingdom, since Isaiah 8:23 mentions Zebulun and Naphtali. However, the possibility is that this prophecy expresses the hope for salvation to both Judah and Israel, the two kingdoms, along with many others, which were oppressed by Assyria. This is also the point

of view of Anderson (2008:91). Thus, the intention of Isaiah is to show that while the Northern Kingdom suffered under the Assyrian destruction and captivity, in the Southern Kingdom where the King had subjugated himself to the Assyrian invaders, there was a new hope for the restoration of the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. This is further explained below.

3.6 INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT

In the previous sections, the genre and structure of the text have been outlined. In the present section, special attention is paid to the aforesaid structure with the main purpose of understanding the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 as a whole in its immediate literary context (8:19-9:6) as identified in the textual unity of the selected text. The findings concerning the prophetic genre of the text are taken into account in this section as well in order to support the argument that the selected text is an oracle that expresses Judaeen social, political, and religious expectations for the reign of a Davidic king. Therefore, this section focuses on the interrelation and cohesion within the text; the significance of the text beyond its metaphorical meaning; and some questions regarding the original setting of Isaiah 9:1-6. These are crucial as they determine the life situation of this biblical passage.

3.6.1 Announcement of the end of the distress (1-2)

3.6.1.1 Light-darkness image in verse 1

9:1 הָעַם הַהֹלְכִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ רָאוּ אֹר גְּדוֹל
 יֹשְׁבֵי בְּאֶרֶץ צַלְמָוֹת אֹר נָגַה עֲלֵיהֶם:

9:1 The people walking in darkness see a bright light;
 light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness.

In verse 1, there is a word sound expressed by a synonymic parallelism found in the repetition of the first line by the second line. This can be seen from the following table:

The people	Walking	in darkness	see	A bright light
On those	who live	in a land of deep darkness	shines	light

It can also be noticed in an antonymic parallelism between light (אֹר [pôr]) and "darkness" (חֹשֶׁךְ [hóšek]) or the shadow of the death (צַלְמָוֹת [tsalmáwet]). The use of these two parallelisms (synonymic and antonymic) in verse 1 invokes the "light" and "darkness" metaphors, which are main images in the discourse unit of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 (Kil 2005:174), especially in Isaiah 8:21 – 9:1. This immediate literary context of the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 is structured "to build up a high level of suspense by first announcing the dramatic shift from 'darkness' to 'light' for the people suffering oppression" (Childs 2001:79).⁴³

⁴³ Further details of this dramatic shift from "darkness" to light in the corpus of Isaiah 8:19 - 9:6 are provided in the subsection 3.7.3.

This shift, the new subject (people) and the lack of a connector between 8:23 and 9:1 support that Isaiah 9:1-6 is disconnected from the previous verses (Isaiah 8:19-23), which describe the judgement upon the People of "darkness". Nevertheless, these verses are part of the immediate literary context of the selected text because their theme about the time of "darkness" constitutes the background of the chosen text, which theme is the expected salvation of YHWH's people. This is the time of the great "light", in which people of YHWH are liberated from the war and oppression, and therefore they rejoice, "For a child has been given to us".

Subsequently, the salvation oracle in Isaiah 9:1-6 adopts a series of images like "darkness" and "light" (v. 1), harvest/dividing spoils (v. 2), the yoke of his burden, the staff for his shoulder, the rope of his oppressor (v. 3), and the burning of the war instruments (v. 4) that finally moves to the throne room of the king and even beyond (vv. 5-6). Having already discussed the theme of "darkness" and "light" images in verse 1, it is time now to develop the theme of harvest/dividing spoils in verse 2 from the list above and with reference to the literary structure of Isaiah 9:1-6.

3.6.1.2 The Harvest/dividing spoil in verse 2

9:2 הַרְבִּיתָ הַגּוֹי
 לֹא הִגְדַּלְתָּ הַשְּׂמֵחָה
 שְׂמְחוּ לְפָנַי כְּשִׂמְחַת בְּקִצִּיר
 כַּאֲשֶׁר יִגִּילוּ בְּחֶלְקָם שְׂלָל:

9:2 You have enlarged the nation;
 you give them great joy.

They rejoice in your presence as harvesters rejoice;
as warriors celebrate when they divide up the plunder.

Verse 2 invokes the joy and celebration, the effect of YHWH's salvation announced in verse 1 as a great light. There is a change of the subject of the verb. The third person of verse 1 passes for the second person in verse 2, leaving open who is the subject of the Joy. Note that the theme of joy appears in this verse three times: twice as a noun (שִׂמְחָה [śimḥā^h = joy or gladness]) and once as a verb (שָׂמַח [sämah = rejoice]), and even the verb “celebrate” or “shout of joy” (גִּיל [g'1]). Two verbs hiphil perfect 2nd person masculine singular הִרְבִּיתָ (hirbîṭā = you have multiplied or enlarged) and הִגְדַּלְתָּ (hiḡdāltā = you have made great) indicate that there is a cause of the joy. The joy is not because of the number of people, but because of the new time, that YHWH has brought. After the light has shone upon the people, there will be a celebration of life like those who have enough food to feed themselves in opposition to the starvation announced in 8:21; and even like those who have won their battles, the foreign oppression as described in 8:22 (Rignell 1955:33; Irvine 1989:390). The celebration for the return of life, for the salvation, is made in the presence of YHWH. Note that the reasons for the greater joy in this verse 2 are confirmed in the three following causal verses (3-5)⁴⁴ which describe the people's liberation, "climaxing in a review of the king's exalted status" (Irvine 1989:390).

⁴⁴ Verses 3-5 are introduced by the Hebrew particle conjunction "כִּי" (kî) with a causal meaning in the present context (*for* or *because*). It can be used also as demonstrative particle introducing a positive clause with an emphatic meaning (*yes, indeed, truly*), or after a negative clause (*rather, but, except*).

3.6.2 Description of liberation (3-5)

As already mentioned above, each verse from the subunit 9:3-5 begins with the conjunction כִּי (kî = for, because) introducing causal clause before main clause, and lists specific reasons for rejoicing. The first one alludes to people's independence.

3.6.2.1 End of the oppression in verse 3

9:3 כִּי אֶת־עַל סִבְלוֹ
וְאֵת מַטְּהָ שִׁכְמוֹ
שֵׁבֶט הַנִּגְנֵשׁ בּוֹ
הַחֲתַתְּ כַּיּוֹם מִדְּיָן:

9:3 For their yoke of their burden
and the rod of their shoulder,
the sceptre of the oppressor against them,
you (YHWH) have shattered, as in the day of Midian.

Verse 3 starts with the particle כִּי (kî = for) to emphasise the first reason for the joy felt by people: YHWH's salvific liberation of his people, which materialises into the advent of the *Prince of Peace*, a political Davidic ruler (9:5-6). In this verse, the reference to three instruments expressed by three Hebrew nouns construct עַל (ʿōl = yoke of), מַטְּהָ (maṭṭē^h = rod of) and שֵׁבֶט (šēbet = sceptre of); and the reference to the substantive הַנִּגְנֵשׁ⁴⁵ (hannōgēs = the

⁴⁵ הַנִּגְנֵשׁ is the combination of הַ (ha, particle article: the) and the participle (verbal adjective) masculine singular absolute נִגְנֵשׁ (nōgēs: pressing, forcing someone to work). נִגַּשׁ is from the qal נִגַּשׁ: to press or force people to work (niphāl נִגַּשׁ: to be pressed).

oppressor, literally: the oppressing or the one who oppresses) is sufficient proof that people were subdued by the use of force under a different power than YHWH's. This oppression possibly refers to the slave labour imposed to Israelite captives by Assyrians; or it refers to the relation of vassalship between Judah and Assyria; or even to the oppressive tyrant who could be the king himself who could oppress people by foreign political alliances. The two last possibilities mentioned above allude to the period when Ahaz brought the Kingdom of Judah into the stage of vassalage and, therefore, had to pay heavy taxes to the Assyrian empire. In such a context, the population was responsible for the supply of the court. This situation may be denoted by the figurative language of חֹשֶׁךְ (ḥošek = darkness) and צִלְמָוֶת (šalmāweṯ = deep darkness; literally: shadow of death) found in 9:1 (Kil 2005:174-176). Thus, Judaeans could only hope the emergence of a new day from the "darkness" of oppression illuminated by אֹר גָּדוֹל (ʾôr gādôl = great light) of the presence of YHWH.

It should be noted that the phrase "as in the day of Midian" in this verse 3 should remind YHWH's people of the end of the war between the men of Gideon and the Midianites, and the victory of Gideon over these oppressive foreign invaders without even fighting (Judges 7 - 8) (NET Bible note 24, Is 9:3). The next subsection concerns the debate about the theme of the end of war in verse 4.

3.6.2.2 *End of war in verse 4*

9:4 כִּי כָל-סֹאן סֹאן בָּרַעַשׁ
 וְשִׁמְלָה מִגּוֹלְלָה בְּדָמַיִם
 וְהִיתָה לְשִׂרְפָּה מֵאֲכֻלַּת אִשׁ:

9:4 Indeed every boot that marches and shakes the earth
and every garment dragged through blood
is used as fuel for the fire.

By the particle כִּי (kî = indeed or behold), Isaiah calls the attention of his hearers, and indicates the second reason for celebrating that is the rise of the “light” reflected in the end of the war. Here again, the prophet mentions two instruments used during the war: סַּאֲוֵן (sōṗēn = boot, sandal); and שְׂמֹלֶה [wəśimlā^h = mantle (מְגוֹלָלָה בְּדָמִים : məgōlālā^h bədāmîm = rolled into blood)]; and three nouns שְׂרֵפָה (ś^erēpā^h = burning), מַאֲכֹלֶת (ma^ʔākōlet^h = food for fire, fuel) and אֵשׁ (ʿēš = fire) to indicate the end of the war and oppression. The whole verse can be interpreted as follows: with the end of the war, the ornaments that bring honour for warriors (their boots as well as their clothing) will only serve to be on fire or to be destroyed. This end of an era marked by war is thus a good reason to celebrate in the face of YHWH.

Note that, the picture of YHWH's salvation in 9:1-4 is essentially, "political or even military in that the verses focus primarily on the deliverance and victory from the oppression of the foreigners" (Irvine 1990:390; Kil 2005:176). However, for Irvine, verses 3-4 must be understood with reference to the long domination of the Judaeen Kingdom by Israel. For him, Judaeen celebrations were thanksgivings unto YHWH for their liberation from Israelite domination. He explains that for seventy or more years, the Israelite kings subdued Judah. Thus, with the fall of Israel, this vassalship relation came to an end, and King Ahaz moved toward independence (Irvine 1990:390,391). Irvine is partially right because the chosen text considered in the setting of the eighth

century BCE, as it is developed in Chapter Four, is to be read against the background of the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis and the consequences of Tiglath-Pileser's defeat of the Kingdom of Israel in 734-732 BCE. At this period, the Galilee and Trans-Jordan regions were incorporated as Assyrian provinces (Sweeney 2005:32).

It is necessary, however, to mention here that there is another position that recognises the Assyrian insertion of these territories as provinces as an opportunity for the Kingdom of Judah to reassert the Davidic rule over the Kingdom of Israel (Sweeney 2005:33, Irvine 1990:133-137). However, at the same time Isaiah 9:1-6 is read against the background of Judah's disastrous alliance with Assyria (Carlson 1974:132). Subsequently, the Prophet draws attention to the political ramification of Judah's freedom from the Assyrian vassalship and oppression (deep darkness), and the peace from the Assyrian war (great light) as a result of the holy war of YHWH, which ends in burning of the boots of soldiers and the burning of the robes rolled in blood (Kil 2005:176).

That is to say, despite the holiness of YHWH's war in 9:3; the reference to soldiers in 9:4 confirms that these two verses are dealing with an implicit military rescue from the Assyrians. Therefore, by recalling St. Augustine's words: "God who created you without you, will not save you without you",⁴⁶ it is clear that YHWH to achieve this salvation uses someone. With the emergence of the new day illuminated from the "darkness" the people have an idea of a new historical moment promised by Isaiah and which is realised with the establishment of a child who will promote and consolidate peace and justice (vs.

⁴⁶ Letter from the Prelate (March 2010). Available at <http://opusdei.uk/en-uk/document/letter-from-the-prelate-march-2010/> [Accessed 20 June 2015].

5-6). This wonderful child is the starting point in the end of an environment of war and oppression: the third reason for people's celebration.

3.6.2.3 *The birth of the child in verse 5*

9:5 כִּי־יֵלֵד יֶלֶד־לָנוּ
בֶּן נָתַן־לָנוּ
וַתְּהִי הַמְּשָׁרָה עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ
וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֱלֹהִים גִּבּוֹר אֲבִיעֶד שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם:

9:5 For a child has been born to us,
a son has been given to us.

And the authority was placed upon his shoulders
and [he] called his name:

Wondrous Adviser, Mighty God (or mighty hero), Everlasting
Father, Prince (or Ruler) of Peace

As already stated, verse 5 starts as well with כִּי (kî = indeed or behold) and presents the third reason for the great joy that appears to be the highest point of the prophecy contained in Isaiah 9:1-6. This causal verse 5 begins with the announcement of a newly enthroned Davidic king, metaphorically designed by a child who was born and given to people. In this culminating point, the new Davidic king has power and responsibility on his shoulders. This new King is announced as the one who is used by YHWH to bring “the great light” and the joy to people, and who achieve the starting point of the new era without the threat of oppression and war. This joy that refers to the hope for days of peace is already announced in verse 3 (end of oppression) and in verse 4 (end of war).

Thus, the loss of all hope (8:21-22) is rescued by the emergence of the powerful and responsible ruler (v. 5) who will end the oppression and value the right and the justice, and by the end of the war he will establish peace (v. 6).

The above statement is confirmed in the child's name, a compound name with 4 phrases (v. 5). What appears to be significant is that this child is born with an identity. And, it is known that in the Old Testament the name has important meaning. However, for many scholars, this name and the identity of the child seem to complicate the verse since, for them, the child who is said to have a physical birth and to be born “for us” or “to us” has the name that appears to go beyond human capabilities (Wegner 2009:244). In addition, Wegner (2009:238) notes that the name “refers to a coming deliverer who will reign forever on the Davidic throne with peace and justice.” In this thesis, I might come to a different point of view. Therefore, to address differences in the ways in which verse 5 is currently read and to better understand who this child is and what his name means a careful analysis of the Hebrew tenses and phrases in the compound name is required.

3.6.2.3.1 Verbs and tenses

In verse 5, verbs in Hebrew are conjugated in the past tense not in the present or future tenses as many English translations [such as KJV (King James Version), NASB (New American Standard Version) to mention only two] have rendered the verse. The first verb יִלֵּד (yullad) from the root יָלַד is in Pual perfect,⁴⁷ third person masculine singular, and can be translated into English by

⁴⁷ The Hebrew verb in perfect is equivalent to the English verb in the past tense. The Hebrew verb in pual is translated in English as a passive intensive.

the passive past tense: “[he] has been born” (or “[he] was born”). The next verb נתן (nittan) from the root נתן is in Niphal⁴⁸ perfect, third person masculine singular. It is translated “[he] was given” (or “[he] has been given”). The next verb is וַתִּהְיֶינָה (wattehî), from the root הִיָּה (to be), is a verb in qal waw consecutive imperfect,⁴⁹ third person feminine singular. It would be translated into English by the future, but because of the presence of the waw consecutive, or conversive-waw ו, which reverses the tense, the verb will be translated by the past tense: “and [she/it] was” (or “she/it was [placed]”). The last verb is וַיִּקְרָא (wayyiqrä´), from the root קָרָא (to call), which is a verb in qal waw consecutive or conversive-waw imperfect, third person masculine singular. As in the previous case, instead of the imperfect being translated by the future or present tense, it will be translated by the past tense because of the presence of the conversive-waw ו that reverses the tense of the verse that it precedes. Thus, וַיִּקְרָא (wayyiqrä´) is translated into English: “and [he] called.”

3.6.2.3.2 Phrases in the compound name

This section mostly refers to the linguistic analysis of phrases in the compound name done by Yosef (2011:8-12). It also refers to the investigations, which were conducted by Anderson (2008:91-93) and Wegner (2009:242-243) about the compound name in verse 5. The re-examination of these phrases follows below:

⁴⁸ The Hebrew verb in Niphal is translated in English as a passive of common stem of a verb.

⁴⁹ The qal imperfect is the equivalent of the future or the present tense. But when it is preceded by the waw consecutive or conversive-waw, the tense is reversed.

The first phrase in the compound name is פֶּלְאָ יוֹעֵצַ (Pele´ yô`ëc), which is rendered by KJV separated into two entities: "Wonderful" and "Counsellor". In fact, when these words are separated they have different meanings: פֶּלְאָ a wonder or a marvel and יוֹעֵצַ an adviser or a counsellor. The KJV reading of פֶּלְאָ יוֹעֵצַ in two separate names appears to be inconsistent with the BHS since the following three phrases in the compound name are each formed by two elements that are not separated, but read together. Therefore, this study maintains the Hebrew phrase with the two entities read together פֶּלְאָ יוֹעֵצַ (Pele´ yô`ëts) to mean "Wondrous Adviser". This would describe the role of the political leader as a guide of his nation (Clement 1980:108).

The second phrase is אֵל גִּבּוֹר (‘ël gibbôr). This expression appears two times in the book of Isaiah in the singular form (9:5; 10:21), and once in Ezekiel in the plural form (32:21) אֵלֵי גִבּוֹרִים (elei giborim = the strongest of the mighty men or the mightiest of heroes). When Yosef (2011:9) comments on the meaning of the first element of the phrase, אֵל (‘ël), he notes that this word is frequently used “in reference to God (e.g. Ex 34:6).” But, it can be applied in reference to other gods (idols) too (e.g. Ex 34:14); and to identify a person strong or mighty (e.g. Ez 17:13; Ps 29:1) or something powerful (e.g. Ps 90:11). Regarding the use of the Hebrew word גִּבּוֹרָה (gibbôr), it commonly refers to someone who is a hero, or mighty, or brave (Gn 10:9; Zech 9:13). Yosef (2011:9) notes that, depending on the context in which these words are used, their combination can lead to different meanings:

אֵל גִּבּוֹר = “might hero, when the context speaks of a person”

אֵל גִּבּוֹר = “Mighty God, when the context refers to God”

Note that KJV rendition of the phrase אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר inserts the capitalized definite article that does not exist in the BHS: The Mighty God. The same is done by KJV for the third phrase אָבִי־עַד (ʿávî`ad): The Everlasting Father. The present study renders אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר: "Mighty God" without the definite article. The phrase "Mighty God" (or mighty hero) in the compound name is taken in its *theophoric* meaning. As already explained in Chapter Three of this thesis, the *theophoric* name does not deify the bearer, but expresses the intention of God through the life of the person who is named (Brownlee 1955:79). It was also shown that even Isaiah gave *theophoric* names to his two sons in order to bring a certain message to people. Therefore, "Mighty God" would emphasise the strength and the extraordinary skill of a Davidic king as a fighter for the peace of his people (Clement 1980:108).

The third name is אָבִי־עַד or אָבִי־עַד (ʿávî`ad). The first component אָבִי (ʿávî) is the construct form (possessive form) of אָב (ʿav) (a father) that means "father of". It can also be applied as:

a grandfather	Gn 31:42; 32:10
a progenitor of a line of descendants	Gn 17:4; Is 51:2
one who is the first of a kind or an inventor	Gn 4:20, 21
an advisor, a counsellor, a patron	Gn 45:8; Jb 29:16
a founder	Jos 17:1; 1Chr 2:50
a form of address to a prophet, a king, and others	1Sm 24:12; 2Kg 5:13

Given the above considerations, אָבִי (father of) can be translated as well by grandfather of, or patron of, and so on. The second element in the third phrase is עַד (ʿad), a Hebrew preposition that can be translated as "by, to, up-to,

till, until". When it is in combination with other Hebrew words it means "eternity". The translation of the combination of the two elements אֲבִיעֶד or אֲבִיעֶד (ʾávî`ad) would be "Eternal Father" or "Everlasting Father". As mentioned above, this phrase is used in its *theophoric* meaning and would be understood as "Father forever" to express the idea that the king is like a father whose major concern is the long-lasting welfare of his people (Clement 1980:108).

The fourth and last phrase in the compound name is שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם (Sar-šālôm). These two words combined together appear in the BHS only in Isaiah 9:5. The first component שַׂר (Sar) in the construct (possessive) phrase שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם used in the BHS is often translated as "Prince of". However, in different uses, שַׂר refers to "a government official" such as a ruler, a minister, or a nobleman, and so on (Yosef 2011:11). In the construct (possessive) form, שַׂר means ruler of; minister of; or commander of, and so on. The second element of the phrase is שָׁלוֹם (šālôm). It appears in the BHS 237 times with the main allusion to the context of "peace" serenity, tranquillity, or security from danger, and "peace" 'good relation among people and between nations, the opposite of conflict or war' (Yosef 2011:11). Therefore, שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם (Sar-šālôm) in verse 5 is "Prince (Ruler) of peace". This is the title that emphasises the political leader's role "as the promoter of peace and prosperity" (Clement 1980:108), and whose mission is to establish a safe socio-cultural and economic environment for all citizens. Referring to the two first phrases analysed above, the title of *Prince of Peace* cannot be borne by a bit of slacker and shiftless leader. Rather, the title pictures the invincible ruler who uses military strength to establish peace by destroying

enemies of the nation (Ps 72 & 144). In this instance, both the governed and their governors will experience safety and prosperity.

With reference to the above analysis and agreed with Kim (2001:245), verse 5 could not be read as alluding to the birth of a royal successor, but to his accession to the throne, symbolised in verse 1 by an occurrence of the “light” which shines upon people and in which they walk, the result of YHWH’s promise.

3.6.3 Results of YHWH’s promise (6)

Verse 6 in Isaiah 9:1-6, coming just after verse 5 which describes the ideal Davidic ruler, emphasises the emergence of the just and long-lasting Davidic kingdom (2 Sm 7:14), the ground for the hope for the abovementioned salvation (symbolised by the “light”). In this verse, Isaiah counterbalances the Assyrian military imperialism (the “darkness”) against the ideal Davidic kingdom.

3.6.3.1 *The Prince of Peace’s kingdom (6a, b)*

9:6a לְמַרְבֵּה הַמְּשֻׁרָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם
אֵי-רָקִיז׃
9:6b עַל-כֶּסֶף דָּוָד
וְעַל-מַמְלַכְתּוֹ
לְהַכִּין אֹתָהּ וּלְסַעְדָּהּ
בְּמִשְׁפַּט וּבְצַדִּיקָה
מִעֵתָהּ וְעַד-עוֹלָם׃

9:6a. for the increase of the authority and for peace

without end,

9:6b. on David's throne and on his kingdom,

to establish it and to support it

with justice and with righteousness;

from now and to eternity,

The analysis of the textual variant of the word-pair **הַמְּשָׁרָה וְלְשָׁלוֹם** (hammisräh ül° šālôm = the dominion and peace) in 9:6a echoes the last phrase in the compound name of the child **שֵׁר-שָׁלוֹם** (śar-šālôm = Prince or Ruler of Peace) in 9:5. At the same time, 9:6b alludes to the Davidic throne and his kingdom. Based on the foregoing, one can understand that the birth of the child in verse 5 is not an end in itself. The son has been born to rule and to reorient the social life. Therefore, there is a use of a symbolic language in verse 5: the birth of the son as the accession of the next Davidic king to the throne (Heskett 2001:57). This constitutes Isaiah's "theological conviction about the continuing existence of the Davidic dynasty as an earthly agent for its suzerain Yahweh" (Kim 2001:236). Focus is here on the fact that this king from the line of David is a legitimate heir to the throne of David, which has been marked so far by war, oppression and subjugation. It means that prophet Isaiah had in mind the individual of verse 5 when he wrote verse 6. Grammatically, this is expressed by the continuity marked by the comma⁵⁰ at the end of the translated verse 5. Thus, the Ruler (*Prince*) of peace portrayed in verse 5 is a Davidic ruler, an

⁵⁰ It should be noted however that there is no evidence of a comma after *Prince of Peace* in the BHS. Verse 5 ends normally with a Silluq, the equivalent of a full stop in English.

anointed king or, better says, the King-Messiah⁵¹ whose reign is described in verse 6a & b. In the context of the selected text, *Prince of Peace* is the political ruler (De Jong 2007:138), with the sense of patriotism, who embodies authority and brings prosperity (“light”) resulting from the end of foreign oppression and war (the end of “darkness”). His authority increases for his people live in security and sustainable peace; and he is able to establish and consolidate justice and righteousness in the Davidic Kingdom. Therefore, he would become a righteous and successful King of Judah, the source of joy to his people.

It is mentioned in verse 6a that the peace for the throne and kingdom of David will be without an end. This would give an idea of an eschatological kingdom. In accordance with Anderson (2008:91-92) and Kim (2001:245-246), however, this may be understood as the Davidic Covenant (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 89:27-28) that the governance of Israel (Northern and Southern Kingdoms) lies in the diarchical relationship of YHWH (father) and Prince (son). Therefore, verse 6a is an expression of hope, which runs all through the Old Testament that YHWH is at work promoting a king like David who made Jerusalem his capital; Salomon who built the Temple, Hezekiah who tore down pagan altars, and was faithful to YHWH, and Josiah who undertook necessary reforms and attempted to reconcile Judah and Israel. It should be noted that, even though these kings brought in part salvation to people, they trusted YHWH and worked hard to fulfil people’s salvation so that the kingdom of David might stand forever. In the case of the birth imagery in verse 5, and the increase of dominion mentioned in 6a, Hezekiah is alluded to. Slotki (1961:44-45) also claims that the phrase *לְמַרְבָּה הַמְּשָׁרָה* in 9:6a is about the Kingdom of Israel "passing over to King

⁵¹ The notion of “king-messiah” is looked at in more detail in subsection 3.7.3.2.

Hezekiah, the first ruler since the division of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms to combine the entire nation as in the days of David and Solomon."

The statement above is justified first by the content of Isaiah 36 – 37 that portrays Hezekiah as a king who trusted YHWH and, consequently, the Kingdom of Judah was spared from the Assyrian devastation. These events gave hope that one day YHWH would bring salvation to His people. Then come the texts of 2 Kings 18 – 20 and 2 Chronicles 29 – 32, in which Hezekiah is described as a righteous king who brought about more important religious reforms. His reputation was known since he defeated the Assyrian king Sennacherib and attempted to reunify the Northern (Israel) and the Southern (Judah) Kingdoms. He achieved what he did because he was motivated by the zeal of YHWH (cf. v. 6c).

3.6.3.2 *The zeal of YHWH (6c)*

9:6c קִנְיַת יְהוָה יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת:

9:6c. the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this.

The end of verse 6 (v. 6c) “the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this” confirms that prophet Isaiah in 9:1-6 acknowledges that YHWH is in action on the political scene of his time. This is noticeable in the selected text since the prophet combines two themes: the destruction of Assyria (vs. 1-4) and the reign of a new Judaeian king, the *Prince of Peace* (vs. 5-6), who brought YHWH’s people from darkness to the great light. The same combination can be noticed in Isaiah 10:33-34; 11:1-5; and continues in 31:8-9. As De Jong

(2007:138) points out, these “passages do not present an eschatological picture, but a political reality that is idealised.” In the context of verse 6, the zeal of YHWH refers to his intense attachment to his people and his love for them “which prompts him to vindicate them and to fulfil his promises to David and the nation” (NET Bible note 37, Is 9:7).

After interpreting the prophetic text of Isaiah 9:1-6 in its immediate literary context, I will now examine how these findings are related to the broader literary context of the text. This involves topical information surrounding the text whilst taking into account the key contrasting image of "light" and "darkness" throughout the three sections of the book of Isaiah.

3.7 אוֹר - חֹשֶׁךְ LIGHT – DARKNESS METAPHOR IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH⁵²

As has been observed in Chapter Three, recent studies concerning the book of Isaiah are characterised by various approaches that emphasise the final form of the book. That is to say these studies suggest reading the book of Isaiah as a whole and thus in its entirety, but against the background of its unity in terms of themes, key words, and images (Kil 2005:18). Therefore, in order to keep the present study on track in terms of the application of the findings from the analysis of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 to the broad literary context of the text, this section brings to light two key contrasting elements that address the

⁵² I express my gratitude to Kang-Ho Kil whose dissertation submitted for the degree of PhD in Theological studies in 2005 provided the foundation for this section.

"light" and "darkness" metaphors in the book of Isaiah. The choice of these two images taken from Isaiah 9:1 is motivated by the fact that they are attested frequently in the three major parts of the book of Isaiah, and provide information about two more principal themes related to the interpretation of Isaiah 9:1-6: the theme of the King Messiah (Davidic kingship) and YHWH's Covenant with his people.

Therefore, before analysing the contrasting "light" and "darkness" images in given texts throughout the three major sections of the book of Isaiah read together, the following subsection focuses first on the place and function of both metaphors according to scholars such as Reece (1988), Miscall (1991), Clements (1996) and Jones (2014).

3.7.1 Function and place of light and darkness metaphors

As mentioned above in subsection 3.6.1 of the present chapter, in Isaiah 9:1-6 the light metaphor is associated with joy, justice, and salvation; whilst "darkness" is related to gloom, injustice, distress, and judgment. It is worth noting that the motifs of "light" and "darkness" are frequently mentioned in all three sections of the book of Isaiah (chapters 1– 39, 40 – 55, and 56 – 66).⁵³ In

⁵³ The Hebrew noun אור (light) occurs 25 times in the book of Isaiah [2:5; 5:20 (x2), 30; 9:1 (x2); 10:17; 13:10 (x2); 18:4; 30:26 (x2); 42:6, 16; 45:7; 49:6; 51:4; 58:8, 10; 59:9; 60:1, 3, 19 (x2), 20]; and its verbal form occurs three times (60:1; 27:11; 60:19). Related terms within the semantic field of the light are אור (fire: 24:15; 31:9; 44:16; 47:14; 50:11), זרח (rise [of sun]: 58:10; 60:1, 2, 3), נגה (shine: 4:5; 50:10; 59:9; 60:3, 9), and חִמָּה (heat)// לְבָנָה (moon: 24:23; 30:26). The use of the nominal form חֹשֶׁךְ (darkness) is also dominant in the book (5:20, 20, 30; 9:1; 29:18; 42:7; 45:3, 7, 19; 47:5; 49:9; 58:10; 59:9; 60:2), but the verbal form occurs only two times (5:30; 13:10). Related terms within the semantic field of "darkness" are אַפְלָה (gloom: 8:22; 58:10; 59:9 cf. אַפְלָה (29:18), עֲרַפְלָה (deep "darkness": 60:2), and צִלְמָוֶת ("darkness": 9:1) (Kil 2005:20).

these three sections, “light” is a rich metaphor, which refers to salvation, truth, justice, peace, law, wisdom and so on. The contrasting images of "light" and "darkness" are found particularly in the key passages of Isaiah which play a strategic role in the deployment of the central message of Isaiah, that is, the final destiny of Zion [judgment (darkness) or salvation (light)] (Kil 2005:20).

Reece (1988:167-190), in the analysis of "light" in the book of Isaiah, maintains that the meaning of this word is connected to its place in the three parts of the book where it plays the role of identifying the general purposes of its larger context such as encouragement, warning, and restoration, information and confession. In the table below, Reece's (1988:184) view on the meaning of “light” related to its place in the book of Isaiah and according to its purpose is summarised as:

General purpose	Chapter 1 – 39	Chapter 40 – 55	Chapter 56 – 66
Encouragement	2:5; 5:30; 26:19	50:10	58:8-12; 60:1-5
Warning	5:18-23; 10:15-17; 18:4; 31:9-11	45:5-7; 50:1	
Restoration	2:5; 4:5; 8:23; 9:1-6; 24:21-23; 30:23-26	43:5-9; 42:14-17; 49:5-7; 51:4-8	62:1-5; 58:8-12; 60:1-5; 60:15-22
Information		53:10, 11	
Confession			59:9-15

Referring to the above table, the theme of “light” appears to be a favourite component of "restoration" in all three sections of the book of Isaiah. However, the table reveals that the term "light" is understood in a similar or

different ways depending on whether it is used in the first, second, or third section of the book. For Reece (1988:184), in the Proto and Trito-Isaiah, "light" is used in the restoration texts to express honour or glory, while in Deutero-Isaiah "light" means guidance or leadership. He concludes that Isaiah preferred to use "light" for some purposes as evidence for reading the book in three separate portions. For him, the word "light" in the book of Isaiah is rich in meaning. Only the context, in which the word "light" is used, determines its significance. Reece's analysis, however, has been judged superficial since it lacks the emphasis on the development of the "light" metaphor in relation to other themes of the Book (Kil 2005:22).

Clements (1996:68), on the other hand, looks at how the "light" develops into an image of salvation or deliverance from oppression, and therefore focuses on its use in verses such as Isaiah 9:1 in Proto-Isaiah; 42:6 in Deutero-Isaiah (see parallel in 49:6b and 51:4-6); and 60:1-3 in Trito-Isaiah. He notes, however, that the conventional division of Isaiah into three separate sections has veiled the links between these sections. In addition, he points out that the Deutero-Isaianic passage of Isaiah 42:6-7 (cf. 42:16, 18-20) takes up the images of light, darkness and blindness together, openly alluding to the earlier occurrence of these metaphors in the section of chapters 6 to 9 (cf. 6:9; 8:22; 9:1). He goes on arguing that Trito Isaianic 60:1-3 "quite plainly assumes that the reader is familiar with the earlier assurance that 'light' will dawn for Israel, marking a new era of deliverance" (Clement 1996:68). He therefore maintains that the message concerning YHWH's purpose for his people in the book of Isaiah is coherent, connected and integrated. This purpose is directly related to Jerusalem (Zion), to the central role of the royal dynasty of David, and to the leadership that Israel is to assume among the nations (Clements 1996:60). In

this respect, Kil (2005:23) notes that Clements has made an important contribution to the studies of Isaiah by making the "light" metaphor a central theme of the book and lending another piece of evidence to the unity of the book of Isaiah.

Miscall (1991:104) however pursues the image of "light" in the book of Isaiah in a typically deconstructive manner. With reference to the verse of Isaiah 2:5, he traces the imagery of "light" back and forth in what he calls a "Labyrinth" (e.g. 10:17; 30:26; 60:1, 19). This expands to an increasing number of images such as "darkness", fire, dryness, water, and to a variety of themes such as rescue and destruction (Miscall 1991:107). Without the sequential order of the book, Miscall indicates, "readers can enter and exit the text at any number of different points" (Kil 2005:25). According to him, the Labyrinth of images is one way to avoid that words and images turn into fixed idols that cannot move, but to have multiple entrances and centres. Darr (1994:21), on the contrary, raises an important interpretative problem, pointing out that to adopt a labyrinth metaphor can become a perfect place to get lost "and perhaps to be eaten by the Minotaur lurking within".

Jones (2014:611) in his study of Isaiah 60 uses, however, the motifs of "light" and tribute to acknowledge Jerusalem's degraded state in the early fifth century and to imagine the means by which the city's restoration will occur. He argues that, in Isaiah 60, the motif of "light" emplaces Jerusalem by marking it out as the cosmic centre and by drawing the nations to the city. Isaiah's rhetoric encourages its audience to re-imagine Jerusalem from their experience in its restored and glorified future state. For more clarity on this subject, Jones (2014:612) writes:

Isa 60 depicts Yhwh's light dawning over Jerusalem (vv. 1-2) and the nations of the world streaming out of the darkness into Zion's light (vv. 3-4, 9), escorting exiled Judahites (v. 4) and bearing extravagant tribute (vv. 5-9, 11, 13). The nations who bear the tribute also rebuild the city (v. 10) and submit themselves to its authority (v. 14). Jerusalem is redeemed and its fortunes are eternally reversed (vv. 15-22).

From the quotation above, I can note that "light" alone does not accomplish Jerusalem's restoration. Even though it defines Jerusalem (Zion) as the centre of the world covered by "darkness"; it is also foreign nations that emerge from the "darkness" (vv. 3 & 5b-14), together with exiled children from Jerusalem (v. 4), who transform Jerusalem into a city worthy of such privilege (Jones 2014:621).

The biblical scholars' discussion above on the metaphor of "light" and "darkness" displays interest in reading the book of Isaiah as a unit even though there is no conformity on what the unity means in relation to these two contrasting images. This discussion does not deal sufficiently with the thematic progression of the images of "light" and "darkness" throughout the book of Isaiah. Therefore, the next four subsections provide consecutively further investigation on the meaning and function of these two contrasting images through different themes drawn from particular texts (Is 1:21 – 2:5; 8:19 – 9:6; 7 – 12; Is 42:1-13; 59:21 – 60:22) in relation with the selected passage of Isaiah 9:1-6.

3.7.2 Call to walk in the light of YHWH (Is 1:21 – 2:5)

This subsection deals with the significance and function of "light" image in Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5 in relation to the Old Testament Covenant; how the "light" and "darkness" images are developed further in relation with the corpus of Isaiah 1 – 6; and the significance of Isaiah 7:10-17 in relation to the call to walk in the light of YHWH.

3.7.2.1 Light-darkness metaphor and the Old Testament Covenant

Note that the first instance of the "light" image in the book of Isaiah occurs in the corpus of 1:21 – 2:5 which theme is Zion's present sinful state and its glorious future. The prophet, at the end of this discourse "challenges his people who were in deep darkness and under judgement, saying, 'Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord' (2:5)" (Kil 20005:77). The verse of Isaiah 2:5 is not to be understood only as a verse that concludes the corpus of 1:21 – 2:5. However, "the light of the Lord" in this verse refers to YHWH's instruction and commands toward his people. Accordingly, this verse expresses the goal of the whole book of Isaiah. Indeed, the phrase to "walk in the light of YHWH" is unique in the Old Testament, even though it is constructed like Psalm 56:14: "walk before God in the light of life." The meaning and function of the "light" image in Isaiah 2:5 are constrained by the thematic focus of Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5 (Kil 2005:119-120). That is, the emphasis is put on YHWH's purifying judgement (1:21-31) and his sovereignty over the nations, which brings great blessing to the world (2:1-5). With reference to the

verse of Isaiah 2:3, to "walk in the light of the Lord" means to live according YHWH's word and his instruction (the Torah). Yet the word of YHWH and his Torah in 2:3 take their meanings from "justice" and "righteousness" (Kil 2005:120).

Therefore, Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5 concerns the life of YHWH's people. They have to live as the righteous people in order to attract nations by their behaviour. This alludes to the Covenant between YHWH and his people, in which YHWH voluntarily elected Israel bound himself to accomplish the promises he had made, and cared for them. His solicitude for their welfare was clearly established (Encyclopaedia Britannica online 2014). This covenant however was conditioned by people's behaviour among nations. They were expected to conform to the conditions of the Covenant such as circumcision, trust in YHWH only and "the standard of morality generally accepted in the society in which they found themselves... Conversely, lack of trust and patience constituted sin" (The Christian Expositor 2008:355). Therefore, the lack of justice and righteousness could cancel that Covenant.

Prophet Isaiah knew and honoured the above Covenant. In Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5, he criticised the people of Jerusalem (Zion) and their leaders who behaved in a different manner than the Covenant people by neglecting their religious, social, and moral obligations. They were accused to have forsaken the social and moral obligations because they abandoned their responsibilities of "justice" and "righteousness" (1:21-28). They have also forsaken the religious obligation by participating in pagan worship (vv. 29-31). The only cure for such problems is the acceptance of YHWH's reign, which is characterised by justice and righteousness (1:26-27; 2:3). From this condition, the prophet appeals in 2:5 to the people to live as Covenant people of YHWH, whose lifestyle is embodied in

the righteousness and teaching of the law. Briefly, "walking in the light of YHWH" in this verse refers to the return to YHWH's Covenant, an act of obedience to YHWH's kingship in the religious, social, and moral obligations expressed in his words and instruction.

Referring to the analysis above, I conclude, saying that prophet Isaiah in his book did not only warn people about YHWH's judgement, but he also developed "the theme of salvation through purifying judgment".⁵⁴ His programme was to offer an alternative that king's and people's destiny depended on their choice. That is to say; the Kingdom (North and South) would survive and be saved not only depending on their acceptance of the ancient moral demands (Encyclopaedia Britannica online 2014). However, it also depends on the accession to the Davidic throne of the peaceful, powerful and righteous leader whose main purpose is to rule and to reorient the social, religious and moral life of his people (9:5-6).

3.7.2.2 Light-darkness motif in section of Isaiah 1 – 6

In the corpus of Isaiah 1 – 6, the first five chapters (Is 1 – 5) are characterised by the interchange between "light" and "darkness", judgement and hope. In 1:2-20, the language is bitter and the tone is dark describing the judgement against people who have forsaken YHWH, except a ray of hope in verses 9 and 18-19. In 1:21-25, the language moves from the judgement of the sinful Zion (Jerusalem) to the promise of the restoration and the future glorification fully developed in 2:1-4. In chapter 2, verses 6-22 return to the

⁵⁴ Available at http://www.angelfire.com/sc3/we_dig_montana/Isaiah.html [Accessed 01 June 2014]

description of the dark condition of the sinful Zion. From Isaiah 3:1 – 4:6, the theme of social injustice found in 1:21-23 is expanded with reference to the leadership failure. Isaiah 5:1-30 is concerned with God's judgement upon his people since they have violated the social justice. The text of Isaiah 6:1-13, which plays the role of both the conclusion of chapters 1 to 5 and the introduction to the following chapters, portrays the transcendental God in reference to the vision of YHWH kingship in Isaiah 2:1-4. The prophetic vision in chapter 6 describes the complete destruction, which opens up a chance for a new beginning for the remnant ("the holy seed" cf. 1:25-27; 4:2-4).

In brief, in the corpus of Isaiah 1 – 6, the combination of "darkness" and "light" images enables the text to move back and forth between the gloomiest judgment and highest hope (Kil 2005:129), from the leadership failure (darkness) to the ideal leadership (light) like the one described in Isaiah 9:5-6.

In the next subsection, the study traces how the tension between the threat of judgement and the promise of YHWH's salvation in Isaiah 1 – 6, especially in 1:21 – 2:5, echoes in Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6, and in addition, which meaning they have within the literature structure of Isaiah 7 – 12.

3.7.3 Darkness turning into new light

As seen in the previous subsection, the motif of light-darkness in Isaiah 2:5 relates to the Covenant through which YHWH's sovereignty is expressed. Furthermore, it refers to Isaiah 1 – 6 that expands the theme of the leadership failure resulting in the rupture of the Covenant between YHWH and his people

by neglecting the religious, social, and moral obligations. In this textual corpus, the images of light-darkness were explained expressing the antithesis of good and evil.

Note that the following discussion contains a clear explanation on how people who had broken the Covenant and who were under YHWH's judgement, the deep "darkness", could bring YHWH's salvation to the nations (cf. 42:6). With reference to the analysis of the "light" and "darkness" metaphors done in the subsection 3.6.1.1, the corpus of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 provides the answer to the concern above, especially by giving the meaning of salvation and new "light" in the context of the selected text of this study (Isaiah 9:1-6).

3.7.3.1 The arrival of an ideal King (Is 8:19 – 9:6)

It should be noted that the images of "light" and "darkness" stand as prevailing images that contain theological implications in the broader unit of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6, especially in 8:21 – 9:1. As it has been developed earlier,⁵⁵ this biblical text announces the remarkable shift from "darkness" to "light" for both Israel and Judah, which were in deep "darkness". This deep "darkness" is expressed through a chain of the "darkness" terms in verses 8:21-22, which describes the distress of the people under YHWH's judgement with vibrant and explicit terms such as oppression (destitution); hunger; cursing; gloom of anguish; and thick, impenetrable "darkness".

In agreement with Gitay, it is clear that these terms are used by the prophet to create "a feeling of concreteness and to establish an atmosphere of

⁵⁵ Cf. section 3.6, subsection 3.6.1.1.

catastrophe" faced by people (Gitay 1991:162,165,167). This picture, I believe, is almost entirely political in that the "darkness" terms apparently deal with a group of people who are under severe pressure and have problems with hunger as well. It may refer to the situation of Israel under foreign domination.⁵⁶ At the same time, however, verse 8:21 indicates that political "darkness" and oppression result from a deeper spiritual "darkness". This is noticeable in 8:19-20 through the prophet's condemnation of YHWH's people who consult the magicians and spiritists instead of God's words. In these times, they were looking for guidance, light and hope through necromantic acts, and relying on human power rather than on YHWH. According to these verses, the result was that the nation would plunge itself into the "darkness" of judgment (8:21-22). Nevertheless, the "light" metaphor in 9:1-6 sheds more light on the meaning of YHWH's judgement and salvation in the corpus of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6.

While "darkness" has been considered above as a symbol for the situation of those who are under God's judgment due to the people's spiritual darkness", "light" in the text of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 has been seen as a metaphor for God's salvation. Therefore, a string of the darkness-light language is used in 9:1, to describe the dawn of salvation (Kil 2005:175). This picture of God's salvation was developed further in the literary analysis of the selected passage of 9:1-6,⁵⁷ and it appeared to be basically political and even military salvation since verses 3 and 4 focus primarily on the deliverance and victory from the war and oppression of the foreigners (Kil 2005:176). Moreover, the specificity of the corpus of 8:19 – 9:6 is that the "light" image in 9:1 is directly connected to the

⁵⁶ This is further developed in Chapter 5 of this thesis under the historical background of the selected text of Isaiah 9:1-6.

⁵⁷ For more details, see section 3.6 of the present chapter.

royal messianic promises in 9:5-6. This text makes it clear that the new "light" that the people in "darkness" were looking for is the coming of an ideal King, namely, the true son of David, the anointed King or the King Messiah.⁵⁸ This ideal Davidic King is not only bringing the final victory against the military powers of Israel's enemy (vv. 3, 4 & 5b), but also is restoring peace and internal rule by establishing "justice" and "righteousness" in his Kingdom (v. 6a).

Furthermore, the theme of the internal ordering of YHWH's community under the messianic King recalls the mentioned corruption of unjust leaders in 1:21-23, 26 (cf. 3:12). Therefore the theocratic ideal of 2:2-5 [or the rule of the great King (YHWH) by a just and righteous rule (cf. 1:27)] will be realized in the reign of the Davidic King, the King Messiah. In this regard, Isaiah 9:1-6 provides a significant clue to the problem raised in the earlier text, that is, the questions how people who have broken the Covenant and who are under YHWH's judgement, the deep "darkness", could bring YHWH's salvation, a new "light" for Israel (cf. 2:5) and then to the nations (42:6). In brief, the accession to the Davidic throne of the messianic leader who accomplishes both YHWH's will and human insight (9:5; 32:1-8; 11:1-2) is that solution. Note that, with the royal passage of 9:1-6, the sharp tension between YHWH's holiness and the doom of his people finds its resolution (Kil 2005:177).

The significance of ideal Davidic king or the King Messiah in whom YHWH's will and human wisdom are united is developed in the next subsection in relation to the literary section of Isaiah 7 – 12.

⁵⁸ Messiah is a Hebrew word, which means, "Anointed."

3.7.3.2 מלך המשיח: *The King Messiah within the corpus of Isaiah 7 – 12*

In this subsection, the purpose is to find the interrelation between the texts of Isaiah 7:10-17; 9:1-6 and 11:1-9, and the theme of King Messiah who shed new "light" on people walking in deep "darkness". Note that in each text, the focus seems to be on a child who is introduced as a sign in a situation of crisis, but who finally becomes the ruler over YHWH's people. However, these three texts in the literary structure of Isaiah 7 – 12 have given rise to various controversies regarding whether or not they are messianic. At the core of the modern debate, there is the issue of locating the messianic hope within the pre-exilic traditions of Isaiah. This study unfortunately is limited in space for such debate, but it supports the messianic nature of the aforesaid texts relating to the Hebrew meaning of the word Messiah.

In fact, referring to VanderKam (2000:194), it should be noted that the Hebrew term מָשִׁיחַ *mashíach* (anointed) is used in the Hebrew Bible in connection with different types of officials or characters to insist on their divine designation for a specific role. They especially include:

- Anointed kings of Israel (1 Sm 12:3, 5; 16:6; 24:7[6], 11[10], Ps 2:2);
- High priests of Israel called by the Priestly writer "the anointed priest" (Lv 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15; Ps 84:10);
- Cyrus of Persia (Is 45:1) named messiah because he was set aside for the noble purpose of carrying out YHWH's will; a future prince (Dn 9:25, 26); and
- Patriarchs (Ps 105:5 = 1 Chr 16:22).

Therefore, in the Hebrew Bible, both the king and the high priest are the most important to be designated as messiah. However, the Messiah par excellence is the king (Collins 2013:4464).

In the context of the foreign oppression mentioned in the previous subsections, and its effects on Israel and Judah's freedom, these three texts (7:10-17; 9:1-6 and 11:1-9) are messianic in the sense that they refer to the historical Messiah, an historical “anointed king” (מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ, *mélekh ha-mashíach*: king-messiah). This King-Messiah is a descendant of the Davidic line, a king who fears YHWH and who always saves His people from their enemies, especially from foreign domination, and who rules the Davidic Kingdom so that it will stand before YHWH permanently (2 Sm 7:12-16; Is 9:6).

As already stated in Chapter Three of this thesis, the consideration above of the King-Messiah is opposed to the Christian messianic interpretation of the texts cited above. For Conservative Christians as it was developed in Chapter Three, the three biblical passages are regarded as messianic texts in terms of directly being referred to Jesus Christ, whom they consider to be the prophesied Messiah. The King-Messiah idea above is, however, similar to the Jewish understanding only because for Jews, the two first selected texts (7:10-17 and 9:1-6) are not seen as eschatological messianic text. For them, the events narrated in the two previously mentioned pre-exilic texts have already taken place in their own history. They consider however post-exilic and eschatological messianic the text of Isaiah 11:1-12. This is done in relation to the Jewish eschatology in which the term Messiah indicates a leader of the future, an end-time Messiah who will lead during the messianic age, an era of justice, truth and peace (Collins 2013:4464). Therefore, some scholars present

the Jewish eschatological messianism as “a strong expectation of metaphysical or miraculous salvation” (Rademacher 2012:639). For the present study, however, Isaiah 11:1-9 is still a text in the context of the Assyrian invasion in the ancient Middle East.

With regard to the above discussion, my argument that the three passages of Isaiah 7:10-17; 9:1-6 and 11:1-9 are messianic is based on the Hebrew biblical meaning of the word Messiah as detailed above. In addition, when this concept is defined in relation to the historical and literary context of the three selected texts, I would suggest that it could not be disassociated from the notion of the temporal kingship. This can be explained by the fact that Isaiah 9:1-6 speaks of the "defeat of the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition with the accession of Hezekiah and it provides, therefore, the ‘concrete fulfilment of Emmanuel’” (7:14) (Seitz 1993:85). In fact, referring to Mowinkel's study (1959), Heskett (2001:57-58) also maintains that Isaiah 9:1-6 and 11:1-9 do not consist of an eschatological expectation and did not exist as a hope until restoration was to be accomplished. He suggests reading Isaiah 9:1-6 "without our preconceived Christian understanding" in order to be able to discover that "the text describes an event that has already occurred." For him the titles in verse 5 and metaphor of light and darkness (v. 1) that speak of the birth of the child (v. 5) describe an ideal royal child's birth (accession to the throne), which only much later would produce a messianic and eschatological hope (Heskett 2001:58).

Furthermore, I maintain that the Isaianic prophecies about the Immanuel (7:13-17), the *Prince of Peace* (9:1-6) and the Shoot of Jesse (11:1-9) are only messianic in the sense that they are subject to Isaiah's denunciation of the monarchy and the removal of the current Davidic king in power. This dismissal, which is the theme of Isaiah, sheds light on the re-signification of the reign of a

son, the “*Prince of Peace*” whose central role and leadership is to be assumed not only in Israel, but also toward the nations (11:9-10). This mission of the *Prince of Peace*, the Servant of YHWH, which is the general theme of the Deutero-Isaiah, is developed further in the next subsection in relation to the light-darkness metaphor.

3.7.4 Becoming a “אור-גוים” (light to the nation): universal ministry

Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40 – 55), especially 42:1-13 (cf. 51:4), concerns the proclamation of God's plan of salvation to the people in exile. This is expressed in the "light" and "darkness" images centred largely on the single phrase of 42:6, "a light to the nations" (אור גוים). This phrase is integrally related to the mission of the Servant of the YHWH, which is at the core of the message of Isaiah 40 – 55. Generally, Isaiah 42:1-13 is connected to the text of Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5 by the terms such as "justice/righteousness", "Torah," "nations" and "light"; and to Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 by the key terms such as "wait for," "first/last," "Torah," "justice/righteousness," and "light/darkness." In particular, both texts (42:1-13 and 8:19 – 9:6) are connected by the facts that the servant is portrayed as a royal figure, and that emphasis is placed on his role of proclaiming and establishing justice (Kil 2015:226,227), in the same way that the royal child in 9:6, *Prince of Peace*, promotes justice and righteousness.

More specifically, the "light" metaphor in 42:1-4 is integrally related to ideas of "justice" and "Torah". The Servant's mission is to bring and establish justice to the nations who are waiting for God's torah (law). The text of Isaiah

42:1-4 resonates at many points with Isaiah 2:1-5, which describes the central position of Zion in the future (e.g., "nations," "Torah," "light," and "bring forth"). When 1:21-31 is included, the parallel extends to the key word "justice" (vv. 21, 26-27). The intertextual connection suggests that the universal ministry of the Servant will result in the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, fulfilling the original vision of Torah's going forth to the nations in 2:1-4. Verses of 42:1-4 are also reminiscent of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 in which "justice" is regarded as one of the primary responsibilities of the Davidic king (9:6).

The common element to chapters 2, 9 and 42 is that the "light" images is associated with justice (1:26-27; 9:6; 42:1-4) and Torah (1:27; 2:3; 9:6; 42:4), and that all of them are set in the context which reveals what must take place before Zion can be exalted (Williamson 1998:203,206). Both 9:1-6 and 42:1-4 are connected especially by the "darkness" and "light" images which refer to YHWH's judgement and salvation. A difference is that, whereas, in 9:1-6, "darkness" and "light" are used in connection with the birth (accession to the throne) of the ruler, in 42:1-13, the task of the Servant is to bring "light" to the nations and release those in "darkness" (Williamson 1994:73). In this regard, "the Servant of Isaiah ... can be understood as a complementary portrait of YHWH's agent, which corresponds to the kings of Isaiah 1-39 (Schultz 1995:159).

In addition, in Isaiah 42:6, "a light to the nations" is seen as parallel with "a Covenant of people" (berith 'am). Generally speaking, Isaiah 1 – 39 reveals the crisis of the Covenant between YHWH and his people, while Isaiah 40 – 66 emphasizes how this Covenant will be restored (Kil 2005:228). Moreover, Dumbrell declares that there is careful theological continuity between chapters 1 – 39 and 40 – 66 since the message of chapter 40 is about the comfort to be

extended to Jerusalem through the revival of the old Covenantal arrangement of YHWH as Israel's God and Israel as YHWH's people (Dumbrell 1989:105). Thus, Isaiah 42:1-13 introduces YHWH's loyal servant, whose task is to establish the Covenant between YHWH and the people (v.6). Furthermore, "by the servant's mission to institute the new Covenant, Jerusalem will be the world centre from which the blessing of salvation will flow" (Dumbrell, 1994:116). Oswalt (1998:119) explains this further:

That the "light" comes by means of Covenant, a Covenant first made with the particular people called to be his servants, and then expanded to the entire world In this Covenant even Gentiles will be invited to participate (Is 56:3-4), and by means of it the light of the Covenant will extend to all the people.

From the above it follows that the principal characteristic of the Covenant is its universal implications. That is to say, YHWH's servant (even the *Prince of Peace*) as the mediator of the Covenant needs to provide the "light" of salvation not only for God's people but also for the Gentiles.

In Isaiah 43:10, being a "light to the nations" is analogous to serving as YHWH's "witness" in the presence of the foreign peoples (cf. 43:10). In Isaiah 54:13, the new Covenant is described further as "the Covenant of my peace" (*berith Shalomi*). In Isaiah 55:3-4, YHWH will make "an everlasting Covenant (*berith 'olam*) with his people and give them "the favours promised to David". The invitation to the people in this passage is made on the basis of the Covenant with David (2 Sm 7:13-14 cf. 9:5-6). What is particularly new in this Covenant relationship is that "this role of the Davidic king is now to be transposed to Israel (if she will but respond), and that the sphere within which she is to exercise that role is universalized" (Williamson 1998:146). In this regard, "a light to the nations" in chapters 40 –55 serves the rhetorical purpose by assuring

the audience of their significant role in God's salvific plan and encouraging them to prepare themselves for a special spiritual mission.

Finally, the images of "light" and "darkness" in Isaiah 42:6-7 are closely related to the blind and deafness motif. In verse 7, the blindness metaphor is seen as parallel to the figures of "the captives from prison" and of "the dungeon those who sit in darkness" (Stern 1994:227). The motif of the "darkness" and "blindness" are developed further in Isaiah 42:14 – 44:23 where the identification of the term "blind" becomes quite specific (the term is applied to Jacob/Israel as God's servant). The focus of this text is on the relationship between the servant's disobedient past and the servant's future deliverance: "The Servant in the past was blind, deaf, and unwilling to walk in the 'way', whereas the Servant of the future, though blind and deaf, will be 'redeemed' and led in the 'way'" (Melugin 1991:27).

In Isaiah 42:16, YHWH promises that he will guide the blind in the right way, turning the "darkness" into "light" before them. The censure of the blind and the deaf in 42:18-19 and 43:8-10 implies the possibilities of their seeing and hearing again. The association of "light", "darkness" and blindness images in these verses "strongly suggests that the earlier occurrence of these metaphors in Isaiah 6 – 9 is being openly alluded to" (Clements 1993:125; 1996:66). Chapter 6 reminds us that a period of judgement, devastating in scope, is to be visited upon God's people who are blind and deaf, though a remnant will survive (vv. 9-13 cf. 8:19-22). As chapters 40 – 55 open, we find that the Day of Judgment is over, and that the salvation, which the prophet predicted, has arrived. In this regard, the association of the "light", "darkness", and blind motifs in Isaiah 42:1-13 serves the central message of the prophet, that is, the turn of the tide from judgement to salvation (cf. 8:22 – 9:1). The point is that, even though

Israel is covered by "darkness", she will surely arise, shine and bring "light" to the nations who are in "darkness."

3.7.5 “קוּמִי אֲוִרִי כִּי בָא אֲוִרְךָ”: Arise, shine: your light has come

Until now, the "light" metaphor has been seen as a characteristic of Israel's hope in the book of Isaiah, applicable both to YHWH's Kingdom and to messianic Kingdom (David's throne) (2:5; 9:1, 6). The same image has been applied to the work of the Servant of the Lord as "a light to the nations" (42:6; 49:6). The light-darkness metaphors throughout the book of Isaiah find their climactic expression in Isaiah 59:21 – 60:22. Building on the previous texts, this corpus describes the glorious future of Zion when the nations come to give honour to YHWH and restore the city (Kil 2005:281). As a climax of Isaiah's message, 59:21 – 60:22 is full of allusions to other parts of the book as developed in previous subsections. Attention will thus be given in this study to the question of how the major themes of early promise and hope converge and are expanded in this text.

First of all, the "light" metaphor in 59:21 – 60:22 symbolises God's salvation that is imparted to Jerusalem. Following a large section of oracles which expose the "darkness" of the social and spiritual depravity of Judah (56:9 – 59:20), chapter 60 announces that God's "light" will destroy the shocking "darkness", and that Zion will finally be restored and transformed. Isaiah 60:1-3 draws heavily on the language and image of 9:1-6 which contrasts the "darkness" over the people with the advent of the great "light", and speaks of

the role of the Messiah (the Davidic king or *Prince of Peace*) that shall dispel this "darkness." However, the difference between 60:1-3 and 9:1-6 is that in the former "light" represents YHWH himself, the true source of salvation, while in the latter "light" is identified with the human Davidic king motivated by the zeal of YHWH. Furthermore, in 9:1-6, YHWH's people are recipient of light while in 60:1-3 Zion (people) is called not only to be the receiver of YHWH's "light" or salvation, but also to shine reflecting the "light" of the glory of YHWH (Whybray 1975:230).

The prophet Isaiah also affirms in 60:3 that out of thick "darkness" which covers the earth, nations and kings come to Zion to share the brightness of her rising. The picture is evidently reminiscent of 1:21 – 2:5 that concerns the pilgrimage of the nations. Both texts are further linked by the themes such as righteous leadership (1:23, 25; 60:17-18), the images such as "light" (2:5; 60:1-3,19-20) and the city as a woman (1:21; and *tch^edaqah* (60:1,15), and the terms such as "*q^edosh Yisrael*" (1:24; 60:14), "*ir*" (1:26; 60:14), 1:26; 60:17). Furthermore, the fact that Zion has to shine with the reflected "light" of YHWH's glory in this text, recalls the Servant's mission as "a light to the nations". The ministry of the Servant is extended to his offspring whose presence constitutes YHWH's eternal Covenant with the repentant (42:6; 59:21; 60:19-20).

Equally important to observe is that Isaiah 59:21 – 60:22 contributes its own variation to the theme of YHWH's purpose for Israel in terms of the "light" image.

First, while the "light" in 1:21 – 2:5 is related primarily to Zion's failure as the Covenant people, the same image here is applied to the text, which concerns the fulfilment of Zion's restoration (60:1-3).

Second, the Davidic royal motif is absent in the present text, while earlier texts speak of the entrance of the messianic reign of a Davidic figure as a goal of God's purpose for a righteous rule (cf. 9:5-6; 11:1-4; 32:1-5). Instead, the emphasis here falls on YHWH's kingship and the "light" image is identified explicitly with the Lord himself who is the true source of salvation. In addition, the Covenant with David is now transferred to the people so that, through the offspring of the Servant, the blessings of God's Covenant will be expanded to the whole earth (cf. 55:33-5; 59:21).

Third, the "light" image in this text stands further as a symbol for a righteous way of living. While chapters 40 – 55 do not deal with conditions for the restoration of Zion, the promise of salvation in chapters 56 – 66 is closely tied to the faithful of Israel who awaits the promised blessings of God. The implication is that the "light" of God's glory, which bursts forth in everlasting brilliance in Zion, can be partially realised in the midst of an unjust society by the righteous way of living of the people of YHWH. As developed in subsection 3.1.2 of this chapter, this can be related to the opportunity that the *Prince of Peace* needs to seize when bringing great "light" to the people walking in deep "darkness." He is called to reunite both the Northern kingdom (remnant of Israel, people supposed to be former worshippers of other gods) and people from the Southern Kingdom (whose King Ahaz withdrew so far from YHWH's covenant) (cf. Sweeney 2005:33; Irvine 1990:133-177,215-233).

3.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the literary analysis of Isaiah's oracle on the *Prince of Peace* (Is 9:1-6) was conducted in two main stages. First, the examination of the closer literary context of the text brought the study into a close examination and detailed analysis of the interrelation and cohesion within Isaiah 9:1-6. The result was that YHWH works within the political events of his people. His salvation action illustrated through the metaphor of a "great light that has dispelled the darkness" is a great joy for his people. The accomplishment of this salvation requires qualities that are hidden in the contextual meaning of the four phrases of the symbolic compound name (v. 5): a guide of the people (Wondrous Advisor), a strong and skilled warrior (Mighty God), a king concerned by the wellbeing of his people (Father forever) and a promoter of peace and prosperity (Prince of Peace). This political ruler is portrayed as a legitimate patriotic leader since he is from the Davidic line. Unlike Ahaz, king of Judah and Pekah, king of Israel, this leader is faithful to the Covenant between YHWH and his people. His mission is to put an end to the foreign oppression and to the war against God's people; to promote the wellbeing of people and the prosperity of the Kingdom by consolidating justice and righteousness; and to strengthen the Davidic dynasty so that it may stand forever before YHWH. This is the reason why the present thesis has preferred to refer to such a faithful *anthropological* leader as the *Prince of Peace*.

Also, during the analysis of the broader literary context of Isaiah 9:1-6, I chose to examine the progression of the contrasting light-darkness metaphor, drawn from 9:1, throughout the entire book of Isaiah. Four main text corpuses

(1:21 – 2:5; 8:16 – 9:6; 42:1–13; 59:21 – 60:22) were selected for analysis because these two contrasting images are repeated in the said texts. Note that this repetition helped to unite the three sections of the book of Isaiah (1 – 39; 40 – 55; 56 – 66) by giving them a meaningful structure. This broader analysis of the light-darkness metaphor also played a central role in providing links between the selected text of Isaiah 9:1-6 and the whole book of Isaiah. This was done while analysing the themes of King Messiah (Davidic kingship) and YHWH's Covenant with his people, first drawn from 9:1-6 and then developed from the deep analysis of the four text corpuses.

The investigation on the light-darkness image in Isaiah 1:21 – 2:5 focused on the contrasting subject of Zion's present wickedness under YHWH's judgement (deep darkness), and the righteous remnant restored (great light). When analysing this corpus, central themes such as Torah, Covenant, justice/righteousness, ideal leadership and YHWH's kingship were discovered as ideas that connected the corpus with 9:1-6, and with all sections of the book of Isaiah. The study of Isaiah 8:19 – 9:6 provided the important answer to the question of how the new light would shine upon people who were in deep darkness. After analysis, it was demonstrated that the coming of the light was connected to the accession to the Davidic throne of the ideal ruler, the *Prince of Peace*. The latter was portrayed as an agent of YHWH capable to bring the military victory against Israel's enemies' powers and restore peace and internal leadership by establishing righteousness and justice. The development of the light-darkness motif in Isaiah 42:1-13 in relation with chapters 1 – 39 introduced the notion of the Servant of the Lord called to establish the Covenant between YHWH and His people, and to be the light to the nations. He was presented as the key person who restored Zion and brought the nations to know

YHWH. Therefore, the light-darkness metaphor implies the universal ministry of the Servant of YHWH. The culmination of the analysis of the light-darkness image throughout the book of Isaiah was found in the text corpus of Isaiah 59:21 – 60:22 with “a high point of Isaiah’s message of hope for the future” based on themes developed in previous text corpuses. That is to say, this corpus, without deviating excessively from other texts developed that YHWH’s light will reverse the darkness of the social and spiritual immorality.

To sum up, the contrasting metaphors of light-darkness is a turning of the tide that characterises Isaiah’s message. Indeed, there is a change of situations from judgement to salvation (the deep darkness, which is replaced by the great light). The coming of the light, Zion’s restoration, is related to the Davidic king (9:5-6) who will militarily reverse the darkness or oppression and distress for his people’s peace and welfare; while the Servant of YHWH (42:6-7) will reverse darkness by carrying the light to the nations (2:1-4; 60:1-3). The light-darkness motif in the book of Isaiah is a metaphor carrying a national and a universal message of restoration.

The research needs now to investigate which relationship exists between the light-darkness metaphors raised from Isaiah 9:1-6 and the geo-historical setting of this selected text.

Chapter Four
GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SETTINGS OF ISAIAH
9:1-6 IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LIGHT - DARKNESS
METAPHOR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As a result of the literary analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6 done in the previous chapter, the light-darkness motif examined in verse 1, and then investigated in the immediate and broader literary context of the text referred to the *Prince of Peace*, a Judaeen political ruler, the Davidic King-Messiah. YHWH's people identified his accession to the throne as the source of joy because he powerfully put an end to their oppression, war and subjugation; worked for their welfare and interest; and lived righteously according to YHWH's Covenant. These characteristics found expression in a deep analysis of the *theophoric* compound names borne by this *anthropological* leader.

In the present chapter, it would be reasonable to relocate the above results of the literary analysis in the crucial historical moment in which the selected text of Isaiah 9:1-6 took place. This is based on the principle that each biblical prophecy is a product of the social, economic and political patterns of its day (Charpentier 1982:12; Sweeney 2005:31; Mavinga 2009:90). With regard to the

book of Isaiah, Sweeny (2005:31) insists on the existence of the interaction between the socio-historical and literary setting of the book in interpreting any of its text because of the long and complex literary history in which the book went through for centuries. To this end, the socio-historical, political and military context of the ancient Middle East, and the geographic and economic situation of the Syria-Palestine during the time of prophet Isaiah will be examined in relation to the aforesaid results.

Everyone is aware that the geographical location and economic situation of a given biblical area can influence the socio-historical setting of a biblical text. For this reason, the first step in the present chapter is to investigate the role that the geographical and economic settings of Syria-Palestine (including Israel and Judah) played in the history of the ancient Middle East during the time of Isaiah's ministry, the second half of the eighth century BCE. After that, the second step deals with the socio-historical background of Isaiah 9:1-6, which led to the images of light and darkness. This section explores the international and the regional political and military history during the time of Isaiah in order to situate the chosen passage in its socio-historical setting. The theological consideration of the chosen passage will be taken into account as well in order to find out its religious setting according to the biblical tradition. Together, these various settings will shed some light on the characteristics of the *Prince of Peace* (symbolised by the "light") who pulled his people from the oppression, war and subjugation ("darkness") as it was revealed in the previous chapter.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON ISAIAH 9:1-6

The basic understanding of the geographical and economic contexts of Isaiah 9:1-6 helps us to understand the conditions that led to the socio-historical setting in which the prophet Isaiah exercised his ministry and uttered the prophecy concerning the *Prince of Peace* in the framework of the contrasting motif of "light-darkness". As mentioned above, this situation should be apprehended in the general geo-economic context of the ancient Middle East, particularly of Syria-Palestine.

In the ancient Middle East, Syria-Palestine was a narrow land bridge situated in the Fertile Crescent.⁵⁹ This geographical area was located at the crossroads between Africa, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Syria-Palestine was a general geographic designation whose scope had no suggestion of political boundaries, but was known as a territory on both sides of River Jordan (Is 8:23) (Aharoni 1979:6). It included the ancient Syrian and Phoenician city-states, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the Philistine cities that were along the southern Mediterranean coast, and the neighbouring Transjordanian area “from Gilead in the north, Edom in the south, contiguous with the Arabian tribal federations farther east” (Blenkinsopp 2000:98-99). Today, the area comprises Israel,

⁵⁹ In the ancient Middle East (ancient Near East), the Fertile Crescent was a wide band of arable land which curves, like a quarter-moon shape, from Persian Gulf northward through Mesopotamia (the land in and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers), then westward, bordering the Syrian desert, and southward into Palestine and the Nile valley and Nile Delta of Egypt. The location and geographic characteristics of the Fertile Crescent surrounded by powerful entities made the area a battleground (Coogan 2009:12). The modern-day countries within the Fertile Crescent are southern Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Cyprus and northern Egypt.

Palestinian territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), Jordan, Lebanon, and parts of Syria (Dever 2001:62).

The geographical location and economy of Syria-Palestine had a great effect on its history. This area was internationally coveted because of its position as one Mediterranean coastal zone. Its wealth, especially its lands highly suitable for agriculture and livestock farming, the “cedar and other wood from the abundant forests of Syria and Lebanon as well as the lucrative trade from the Syro-Palestinian caravan routes and the Phoenician port cities” attracted the great powers of the ancient Middle East (Ceresco 2001:173).

Crossroads of the region, Syria-Palestine was a route of high importance because it allowed northern and eastern nations to have access to the wealth of northern Africa and the Mediterranean seaboard. Its position all along the eastern Mediterranean seaboard and westward to the Arabian Desert involved Syria-Palestine’s territories in the ancient Middle East trade, politics, and warfare (Hayes and Irvine 1987:17). Having been regularly crossed by merchants and travellers who moved from Asia to Africa and vice versa, and from Arabia to the entire Mediterranean world (Hayes and Irvine 1987:17); and having been the passing point for foreign armies, the Syro-Palestinian corridor became the scene of profound confrontations between foreign powers. This situation led to much bloody violence in the region (Fahlbusch *et al.* 1999:14). To that end, Aharoni (1979:6) writes:

(It) became a middle ground between Mesopotamia and Egypt from both economic and political point of view. The mighty kingdoms on both sides of the Fertile Crescent considered this strip of land a thoroughfare; and both of them laboured to impose authority over the region, mainly so as to control the trade routes passing through it and to use it as a bridgehead for defense or offense.

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah as part of the Fertile Crescent and Syria-Palestine were not spared the situation described above.

In addition to this, during the later ninth and early eighth centuries BCE, the political life in Syria-Palestine was dominated by ceaseless wars between Syria and the Kingdom of Israel,⁶⁰ in which the Kingdom of Judah was sporadically involved (Blenkinsopp 2000:99). In the second half of the eighth century BCE, the vulnerable Syria-Palestine was in no position to resist the Assyrian invaders, and ended up being occupied (Bratcher 2014:2): Syria/Damascus was destroyed, Israel/Samaria was deported to Assyria and later annexed to Assyria as a province, and Judah/Jerusalem was subjected by the same Assyrians. In these political realities of expansion of the Assyrian Empire, crisis of captivity of Syria-Palestine and extinction of Israel, the prophet Isaiah was ministering and preaching in Judah. His proclamations included the oracle on the accession to the throne of the *Prince of Peace* whose mission was to free the people who walked in a "deep darkness" of war, oppression and subjugation; and bring the "light" that set up the Davidic Kingdom.

The outline above of the geographical and economic contexts of the selected text introduces the study to the next part about the socio-historical background. This consists of a discussion focused on the historical analysis of international and regional circumstances under which Isaiah prophesied, including a combination of social, historical, political and military factors that influenced the announcement of the "light" brought by the *Prince of Peace* in Isaiah 9:1-6.

⁶⁰ Syria (Aram-Damascus) and Israel (Ephraim) used to be enemies, except when they united against Assyria in the Syro-Ephraimitic war (735/4).

4.3 SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON ISAIAH 9:1-6

From the preceding discussions, it is obvious that Isaiah's history was affected by major political and military events in the ancient Middle East in general, and Syria-Palestine in particular. These events did not spare the two Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It is also evident that the international and regional politics in which Isaiah lived shaped his career and preaching. Therefore, it should without any doubt be concluded that these events lay at the basis of the prophet's involvement in the political and religious life of his society. The subsection below situates Isaiah's ministry in relation to the chronology of kings of his time.

4.3.1 Kings' chronology during Isaiah's time

It is important to note that the name "Isaiah" derives from the Hebrew *Yeshayahu* that means, "YHWH saves or YHWH is salvation". He was son of Amoz ("*ben Amoz*") (Is 1:1) and a citizen of Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. His ministry as prophet started with the death of the Judaeen King Uzziah (or Azariah) (Is 6:1), and lasted until the reign of King Hezekiah (Ceresko 2001:209). This indicates that after Uzziah's death, Isaiah's prophetic career continued through the reigns of the following three Judaeen kings: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Concerning the precise dates in the chronology of the Judaeen kings mentioned above, scholars' opinions differ. Most modern scholars agree either with the old chronologies (Albright 1945;

Thiele 1985), or with the newer chronologies of Galil (1996) and Kitchen (2003). Without going into this debate, the chronology adopted in this study is essentially that of Kitchen (2003:31): Uzziah (or Azariah): 776-736; Jotham (co-regent): 750-740; Jotham (sole king): 740-735/30; Ahaz: 735/31-715; and Hezekiah: 715-687.

During the reign of the abovementioned four Judaeen kings,⁶¹ the northern Kingdom of Israel was ruled by seven different kings, namely Jeroboam II (791/90-750/49), Zechariah (750/49: only 6 months), Shallum (749: only 1 month), Menahem (749/48-739/38), Pekahiah (739/38-737/36), Pekah (737/36-732/31) and Hoshea (732/31-722). Meanwhile, Assyria was rising from four-decade weaker state to a powerful empire. Four successive powerful kings ruled the Neo-Assyrian empire during the time of prophet Isaiah: Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727), Shalmaneser V (727-722), Sargon II (722-705) and Sennacherib (705-681) (Kitchen 2003:23; Blenkinsopp 2000:98; Watts 1985:4-7).⁶²

The next subsection details how Neo-Assyrian kings invaded states in the ancient Middle East during the time of Isaiah, the second half of the eighth century BCE. These invasions are the main factors that I identify as underlying

⁶¹ According to the Jewish tradition, Isaiah seems to have been alive during the sole reign of Hezekiah's wicked son, Manasseh, who came to power in Judaea power in 687/6 BCE (Kitchen 2003:31). In the same tradition it is mentioned that Isaiah was harshly hated by Manasseh to such an extent that the prophet will die sawn asunder (Cf. He 11:37). But, the biblical tradition points out that the prophet Isaiah advised especially Ahaz and Hezekiah (Is 7:3-17; 37:2-7, 21-35).

⁶² Note that, unlike what Kitchen, Blenkinsopp and Watts maintain, Mackey (2007:6) argues that Sargon II and Sennacherib were not two different kings. For him, they were one and the same king who ruled Assyria "during the most climactic part of Hezekiah's reign" (Mackey 2007:2). While this debate is not a matter for this subsection, I chose to mention the two kings (Sargon and Sennacherib) separately and distinctly.

causes of repetitive anti-Assyrian movements followed by bloody violence in the region.

4.3.2 Neo-Assyrian kings within the Ancient Middle East

4.3.2.1 Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BCE)

The accession of Tiglath-Pileser III to the Assyrian throne opened a new era in the politics of the ancient Middle East in general and Syria-Palestine in particular. When he came to power, Tiglath-Pileser III inherited from his two immediate predecessors a weak kingdom torn by internal insurrection, ruined by the bad governance, hit by the economic crisis and troubled by external pressure from Urartian kingdom⁶³ (Hayes and Irvine 1987:19). His predecessors' policy was based on conquering and plundering states in the region (De Jong 2007:192-193). Tiglath-Pileser III, however, was “one of the most active Assyrian warrior-emperors” (Kitchen 2003:38) who adopted, in reaction to his predecessors' policy, a new political military strategy based on establishing a permanent rule in the entire ancient Near East.

To achieve his goal, Tiglath-Pileser III rigorously executed with great success practices and policies that were employed by eminent ninth century

⁶³ In fact, the Urartian king gradually took control of more territories in both the northwest and northeast Assyria. This king prevented trade routes from developing in the zones under its control, and therefore strangled Assyrian economy. This political and economic crisis lasted for four decades before the accession to the throne of the powerful Tiglath-Pileser III.

Assyrian kings: Ashur-nasir-pal II (883-859) and his son Shalmaneser III (858-824). From them he learnt how to run aggressive military operations beyond Assyrian borders, particularly for the search for raw material and transplanted labourers. He then extracted grim cost of war from “both cooperative and defeated states”; established a sophisticated espionage system with the cooperation of pro-Assyrian rulers in other countries to “keep abreast of possible anti-Assyria activity”; and exercised the military force “to ensure the flow of trade and commerce into Assyria” (Hayes and Irvine 1987:19-21). Without any delay, during the first campaign, Tiglath-Pileser III stabilised Mesopotamia, besieged Babylon and defeated the Urartian kingdom. For three years, he campaigned along the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, and then operated on the eastern border of his empire. In the course of these campaigns, several sovereigns submitted to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III and “paid tribute consisting of gold, silver and all kinds of valuable material and treasures” (De Jong 2007:195).

However, his military crusades were not done without opposition. Frequently kingdoms colluded to oppose his imposition, and to protect their local and regional interests. This was the case of some coalitions in Syria-Palestine: the north Syrian coalition (Am 6:2; Is 10:29), the coalitions of “the nineteen districts of Hamath” and that of the coastal region (De Jong 2007:210). In 738, during the second campaign, these rebellious territories were defeated by Tiglath-Pileser III, and then organised as Assyrian provinces, their populations exchanged, and their rulers paying tribute. Among the tributaries were Rezin of Syria, Menahem of Israel, Hiram of Tyre, and Queen Zabibe of Arabia (Hayes and Irvine 1987:22).

Regardless of Tiglath-Pileser's military achievements, the anti-Assyrian coalitions increased and continually repeated in the newly conquered areas: Urartian kingdom, southern Syria-Palestine (strengthened by Rezin), Kingdom of Israel under King Pekah (who joined the coalition in 734-732), Arabia and Babylon. Consequently, in 737 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III started engaging in suppressing anti-Assyrian coalitions until 727 BCE, the year of his death. Note that the Kingdom of Judah took a pro-Assyrian attitude and refused to join any anti-Assyrian movement. Therefore, Judah subjugates itself to Assyria by remaining faithful in paying heavy tribute⁶⁴ (Is 7-12) (Hayes and Irvine 1987:23-24). This burden imposed on the Judaeen population (symbol of a "deep darkness") would be one of factors that pushed prophet Isaiah to announce in Isaiah 9:1-6 the accession to the Davidic throne of a powerful *Prince of Peace*. The latter would fight for his people; save them from foreign oppression, war and subjugation; assure the permanent internal and external protection of the Kingdom (symbol of the "great light").

4.3.2.2 *Shalmaneser V (727-722 BCE)*

Following Tiglath-Pileser's death in 727, his son Shalmaneser V took the Assyrian throne, and carried on his father's campaign to suppress the latest anti-Assyrian revolts. He invaded Phoenicia, Transjordan (Hs 10:14), Moab (Is 15-16), Tyre and Israel (ruled at time by Hoshea, according to Is 17). The Israelite King Hoshea submitted quickly to Assyria and started paying tribute. However, in 725 BCE, under popular pressure, he called Egypt for help (Is 30-31). This

⁶⁴ This is explained in detail below in the subsection 4.3.3.3 regarding the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis.

decision cost Hoshea the prison and the attack of Samaria, the capital city of the Kingdom of Israel, which was besieged by Assyria for three years (2 Ki 17:6). The same year, the Assyrian army surrounded Tyre, but Tyre managed to hold out for five years (Hayes and Irvine 1987:25). Shalmaneser V died in 722 BCE before Israel was subdued to Assyria (Utley 2010:6). Sargon II, his general captured Samaria, the capital of Israel.

4.3.2.3 *Sargon II (722-705 BCE)*

After Shalmaneser's death in 722, Sargon II ascended the Assyrian throne in a context of struggle to power in the capital city Assur. During this period of crisis and insurrection in Assyria (722-720 BCE), the wise and scheming Marduk-apla-iddinna (Hayes and Irvine 1987:25) acceded to Babylonian power. In the meantime, the eastern highland kingdoms started showing signs of their kings flexing their military muscles and "various countries and kingdoms tried to free themselves from Assyrian rule" (De Jong 2007:210). While Sargon II was occupied by imposing his power in the east of its empire through force and threats, the anti-Assyrian movement re-formed in the west. Throughout the empire, vassal kingdoms and provinces rebelled against Assyria, most of them supported by Egypt.

Benefitting from the fact that foreign Ethiopians ruled Egypt at that time (Is 18), Sargon managed to establish friendly relations with Egyptian princes in the Delta. He thus set up an Assyrian-Egyptian cooperative alliance, which viewed the Ethiopians "as a common enemy", and revived the economic growth by improving the business environment between the two empires: he opened the closed trading borders of Egypt and engaged Assyrians and Egyptians in mutual

commercial transactions (Hayes and Irvine 1987:26). Then, he allowed Hezekiah to expand the Kingdom of Judah in the Southwest (I Chr 4:34-43). For Isaiah, Sargon's approach created a more beneficial political environment to promote peace in the Middle East, and he proclaimed him a saviour of Egypt (Is 19:20-25).

After taking control of the eastern and the southeastern parts of the Assyrian empire in 717, Sargon II turned his attention towards the west. But, in 715, organisation for rebellion started in the south of Palestine (Is 20). Sargon II appealed in vain to the Egyptian and Ethiopian rulers for protection. By 712/11, Assyrian forces engaged on many fronts, and by 710, Sargon II gained dominance over southern Mesopotamia and eastern Mediterranean commerce. This move, at the same time, activated "the anti-Assyrian feelings of the Ethiopians, now firmly in command in the Egyptian Delta" (Is 23), and over time all relationships between Ethiopians and Assyrians were severed (Hayes and Irvine 1987:27-28). In 705, just after placing the new Assyrian capital at Dur-Sharrukin, Sargon II was assassinated on the battlefield, fighting in the east Anatolian province of Tabal (Utley 2010:170).

4.3.2.4 Sennacherib (705-681 BCE)

Sennacherib came to power just after the death of his father, the brilliant warrior Sargon II. This was followed by widespread celebrations of nations once conquered by Assyrians, and their attempts to rebel. According to Hayes and Irvine (1987:28), even the prophet Isaiah in Jerusalem at that time incited the Judaeans to rejoice and, at the same time, to rebel against the Assyrians (Is 24-27). This was the opportunity for King Hezekiah of Judah to

break from Assyria. By withholding tribute in 704, he declared an open rebellion against the New Assyrian king. What is more, Hezekiah brokered “an alliance with Egypt over the objections of Isaiah (Is 30, 31)” (Bratcher 2014:9). He therefore became the leader of the rebellion joined by other Syro-Palestinian states.

Despite all that, the powerful Assyria did not experience decline. This was the result of Sennacherib’s Herculean effort to restore order in the empire and his strong desire to hold the empire together. To quiet the rebellion, he marched from the north-western coastal area to the Philistine territory, the south-western coastal region. In 701, he defeated and secured the area. He then turned to Judah where he destroyed numbers of towns,⁶⁵ and finally besieged Jerusalem and humiliated Hezekiah (2 Ki 18:17-18). At this point, there are two different opinions in the biblical tradition about whether Jerusalem was occupied (Is 29:1-4)⁶⁶ or whether God spared the city because of the faithfulness of Hezekiah, just as Isaiah had promised him (Is 37:33-35; 2 Chr 32:20-23) (Clements 1980:18). In fact, Isaiah 29:1-4 seems to deal with the downfall of Jerusalem, but the fall of the city is not claimed even though terminology such as "to oppress" describes a coming disaster. Instead, De Jong (2007:228) shows that various scholars have argued that Jerusalem was not besieged with Sennacherib’s attack and storming in 701 BCE. The siege of Jerusalem consisted, however, of a blockade.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ According to the biblical text of Micah 1:8-16, some towns that were destroyed by Sennacherib were Gath, Beth Leaphrah, Shaphir, Zaanan, Beth Ezel, Maroth, Lachish, Moresheth Gath, Achzib, Mareshah and Adullam.

⁶⁶ In Isa 29: 1-4 אֵלִיָּא (Ariel = lioness of El) is a symbolic name for Jerusalem.

⁶⁷ By common practice, the goal of a blockade was to force cities that could not be easily captured by an assault to surrender through starvation (De Jong 2007:99).

While the new King Sennacherib was campaigning in the west and was securing Syria-Palestine, troubles re-appeared in Babylon. But he managed to establish his authority in Babylon and suppressed completely different revolts in the empire under his rule (Hayes and Irvine 1987:28). As this campaign is the last event mentioned in First Isaiah (1 – 39), the investigation in respect of the Assyrian relation with the ancient Middle East in this part of the study stops at this point.

Having explored how Neo-Assyrian kings extended the Assyrian empire beyond its borders in the ancient Middle East during the second half of the eighth century BCE the time of Isaiah, the next subsection deals with the socio-political history of Israel-Judah during the same period.

4.3.3 Socio-political development within Israel and Judah during the time of Isaiah

Israel and Judah were two small kingdoms “nestled in the mountainous heartland” of Syria-Palestine (Hayes and Irvine 1987:17). The two kingdoms played a crucial role in the history of the ancient Middle East at large, and Syria-Palestine in particular because of their strategic position in the Fertile Crescent, and they were quite prosperous. In the Ninth century BCE, for instance, the Kingdom of Israel was an important local power in Syria-Palestine, before it fell to Assyria in 722 BCE. On the other side, the Kingdom of Judah only emerged in the Eighth Century BCE. During this period, Judah enjoyed a period of prosperity as it became a client-state of Neo-Assyria, and

then of Babylon. Judah was only destroyed in 586 BCE when Judaeans revolted against the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Grabbe 2008:225-226).

While they had much in common and were mutually interdependent for their development, the socio-political relations between Israel and Judah were not without serious clashes during this period. This ambivalence is discussed further in the next paragraphs.

4.3.3.1 Israel-Judah relationship under Jeroboam II and Uzziah/Jotham

King Jeroboam II (791/790-750/49) acceded to the throne of Israel, when King Amaziah (796/5-776/5), ruled Judah. Jeroboam's reign continued under Uzziah and Jotham of Judah (2 Ki 15:1-7; 2 Ki 15:32-38). He completed the Israelite restoration that his precursors Jehoahaz and Joash II had started. He "provided a period of relative peace and prosperity" in the Northern Kingdom (Bratcher 2014:6), and recovered vast territories that were taken from Israel by Syria (2 Ki 14:25). He restored all the original territory of Israel, and that of Judah. Israel reached the zenith of its power under Jeroboam II and became politically and militarily superior to Syria (Morgan 2003:29; Scheffler 2001:105).

Nevertheless, Jeroboam's peace was not a comprehensive peace since the economic and political prosperity and the military victory were accompanied by social and economic injustice. Prophets Amos and Hosea denounced the fact that poor people were exploited by the rich and, therefore, prophesied the future downfall of Israel (Am 2:6; 3:9-10; 4:1; 5:7-12; 6:1; Hs 7:1-7) (Scheffler 2001:105). From a religious point of view, there was an extensive spiritual

decay in Israel. Amos prophesied against the syncretism with Baal worship⁶⁸ as a step toward calamities for the Kingdom (Am 7:10-17). From a secular point of view, however, Israel became a victim of the Assyrian imperialistic policies (Scheffler 2001:106).

During Jeroboam's reign, the weakened Southern Kingdom of Judah benefitted from his economic and military prosperity. As Jeroboam II "maintains a policy of friendship with Judah" (Morgan 2003:29), he helped the Southern Kingdom expand its territory (2 Ki 14:28). This expansion enabled the development and prosperity of Judah under the peaceful reign of the capable leader Uzziah (2 Chr 26). According to 2 Chronicles 26, Uzziah "rebuilt the seaport at Elath" and incorporated it into Judah (Scheffler 2001:119). He fought against the Philistines and built cities; and against Arabs and Meunites, while the Ammonites paid tribute to him. Internally, Uzziah strengthened the Jerusalem army, built defence towers, and equipped and developed the army well (Hayes and Irvine 1987:37-39).

King Jotham, Uzziah's son, carried on and completed the construction projects undertaken over the past year of his father's reign. In addition, he fought against the Ammonites (or probably Meunites) and received tribute from them for three years (2 Ki 17:3-5) (Hayes and Irvine 1987:39). The Judean King Jotham and the Israelite King Jeroboam II acted in cooperation by a joint administration in Transjordan, according to 1 Chronicles 5:11-17. Note here that Uzziah and Jotham were probably acting as vassals of Israel, and the prosperity and expansion of Judah were accomplished "under the protective umbrella of Jeroboam's strength" (Hayes and Irvine 1987:39). Despite of that, the critical

⁶⁸ Jeroboam II did not restore Baal worship since he allowed in his kingdom the devotion of YHWH under Baal's images. He followed the example of his predecessors (Morgan 2003:29)

prophets Amos and Hosea did not criticise them for social and religious matters (Scheffler 2001:119).

Nevertheless, the stable and prosperous reign of Jeroboam II was followed by a period characterised by increased anarchy in the Northern Kingdom as a result of a succession crisis. This is discussed in the subsection to follow.

4.3.3.2 Israelite civil war: Decline of the Northern Kingdom

Following Jeroboam's death (after a reign of 40 years), "the throne passed to five different kings within ten years (Scheffler 2001:106). Jeroboam's son, Zechariah, took the throne (750/49 BCE) and reigned over Israel for only 6 months. He was assassinated by Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who seized the throne (2 King 15:8-12), and therefore put an end to Jehu's line (the Nimside dynasty) after 4 generations⁶⁹. This extermination of the house of Jehu by Shallum also marked the end of the monarchy in Israel, and opened an era of Israel's instability leading up to its final destruction by the Assyrians (Scheffler 2001:106). As stated in the previous subsection, this destruction had been prophesied by prophets Hosea and Amos in some significant prophetic condemnations of the Jehu dynasty (Ho 1:4-5; Am 7:9-13). For Morgan (2003:30), Zechariah's successors were not so much kings as they were assassins, robbers, and tyrants. This might be the reason why prophet Isaiah

⁶⁹ The dynasty of Jehu or the Nimside dynasty (841-750/49 BCE), which succeeded the dynasty of Omri (886/7-841 BCE), was founded by King Jehu (841-814/813) whose successors were four kings of his line: Jehoahaz I (814/3-806/5), Joash II (806/5-791/90), Jeroboam II (791/90-750/49) and Zachariah (750/49) (Kitchen 2003:30-31).<<Zachariah or Zechariah>>

proclaimed in Isaiah 9:6 the just and the righteous Davidic King who would reunify Israel and Judah.

Evidently, Shallum's takeover of power in 749 BCE had lasted only one month for Menahem, son of Gadi who reigned over Israel for 10 full years (749/8-739/8), murdered him. The successful and bloody counter coup of Menahem to put down the Shallum conspiracy was not to the peaceful Israelites' advantage. Supported by his followers, he committed atrocities against his opponents to establish his authority over Israel (he even mutilated pregnant women: 2 Ki 15:16) (Scheffler 2001:106). Therefore, he threw Israel into a state of civil war. For more details, Hayes and Irvine (1987:41) write:

In seizing the throne, Menahem took vicious action against Israelite citizens. The town of Tappuah, a city in Ephraim, perhaps near Shallum's home (...) was sacked and all its inhabitants slaughtered, including the pregnant women (II Kings 15:13-16). Isaiah later spoke of this strife as a time when the people were like fuel for fire; no man spared his brother (see Isa. 9:19). Other groups in addition to the Shallum and Menahem factions may have been part of the general civil strife. Pekah and his supporters were certainly somewhere in the background. Other pretenders to the throne may have arisen, but since they, unlike Menahem and Pekah, never made it to the throne in Samaria, no record of their exploits has survived.

Despite all that, Menahem was a weak king with a weak army. To solidify his hold on the throne, when faced with the Assyrian invasion, he paid a heavy tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III, which he raised by imposing very high taxes on wealthy citizens. As a result, Israel lived in relative peace but surrendered to Assyria and became its vassal state (Scheffler 2001:106). In addition, he only controlled the central hill country for "Transjordan, Galilee, and the coastal plain were taken from Israelite control and absorbed into Rezin's 'Greater Syria'" (Hayes and Irvine 1987:41).

In 739/8 Menahem died naturally and his son Pekahiah took the Israelite throne and reigned only for 2 years (739/8-737/6). He was assassinated by Pekah, one of his officers, who became King of Israel (Is 7:1ff; 2 Ki 15:23-26) (Scheffler 2001:106). The assassination of Pekahiah by Pekah, son of Remaliah (737/6-732/1), led the Northern Kingdom of Israel into the depths of disaster as he tried to create a front against Assyrians with the support of Rezin of Damascus (Syria): the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis.

4.3.3.3 *Syro-Ephraimitic crisis*

Once Pekah rose to power in Israel (Ephraim)⁷⁰, he so desperately wanted to set a programme that could stop the Assyrian invasion (Scheffler 2001:107). He got support from Israelite nationalists and other nations and took no heed of consequences by creating a violent anti-Assyrian movement. Most kingdoms in the ancient Middle East were considered as provinces or vassal states of Assyria in this period. However, as was stated above, Judah was among the few nations, which maintained their independence in that period, but by paying tribute to Assyria (Rolfson 2002:87).

With the Syrian king Rezin, Pekah formed a military alliance to resist Assyria. He invited the Judaeen King Jotham, son of Uzziah, to join their effort in order to form a coalition to withstand Assyrian invaders. But, Jotham refused to join them (Bratcher 2014:4). Supported by Rezin, Pekah thus decided to attack Judah with the goal of removing Jotham using force and replacing him with another King who should agree with their plans. However, before Pekah

⁷⁰ Israel is “named after its main tribe or after the Ephraimite highlands because they may have been the only part of the Northern Kingdom left at this point” (Wegner 2011:468, note 5).

and Rezin reached their goal, Jotham unexpectedly died (2 Ki 15:38). His son Ahaz (735/31-715) succeeded him. The new King of Judah reigned during a critical period of his kingdom's history due to external and internal pressures.

On the one hand, Pekah and Rezin's plan remained under way. They first wanted to launch a surprise attack on Jerusalem and cut it off from the rest of Judah, break its walls, plunder Judah (Vasholz 1987:79). In addition, they planned to replace Ahaz (the Davidic king of Judah) with their own puppet, one of their supporters, probably a son of Ittobaal, the Phoenician king of Tyre who was allied with Syria and Israel (1 Kg 16:31) (Roberts 2010:71-72). Their campaign devastated the Kingdom of Judah: many captives were taken back to the Syrian capital, Damascus; and Israel inflicted many fatalities by killing, according to Chronicles 28:6, hundreds of soldiers (Vasholz 1987:80). Meantime, Ahaz had to face the threat from the Assyrian forces as Tiglath-Pileser III was increasing strength and directly threatening the western nations. To add to these distresses, the united front of kingdoms of Edom and Philistines sided with Syria and Israel against Judah for the security of their own positions (2 Ki 16:6; 2 Chr 28:17-18). Ahaz lost Elath to the Edomites and some territories to the Philistines (Scheffler 2001:120).

On the other hand, while facing previously mentioned external pressures, internal divisions and tensions tore the Kingdom of Judah apart. Much of the Judaeen population favoured joining the Syro-Israelite coalition against Assyria, and therefore became supporters of Ahaz' rivals, the Israelite King Pekah and the Syrian Rezin (Miller and Hayes 2006:395). Ahaz finally found himself in a weakened condition since he was assaulted on all sides. Nonetheless, his neutral position was supported by the prophet Isaiah and apparently by people from Jerusalem. However, when he and the Judaeen court discovered that the Syrian

army was already in Israel preparing for their final onslaught on Jerusalem, all Judah was terrified (Roberts 2010:72). YHWH then sent prophet Isaiah and his son Shear-jashub to king Ahaz to counsel and encourage him not to fear the impending assault but to trust in Him as the protector of Judah (Is 7:3-4) (Wegner 2011:468). Isaiah asked him to choose to hold his neutral position that consisted of “not involving Judah in any foreign alliances, either against Assyria or with Assyria” and trust in YHWH alone as his covenant suzerain (Ceresko 2001:216). As agreed with the prophet, Ahaz opposed to joining the Syro-Ephraimitic front, and therefore asserted the independence of Judah from Israel⁷¹.

Nevertheless, as the Southern Kingdom of Judah still had been threatened on every side, and as the Assyrian forces were advancing westward, it became very difficult for Ahaz not to decide to defend himself and his Kingdom against neighbours’ pressures and the Assyrian superpower (Scheffler 2001:120). He even, according to Isaiah 7:10-14, rejected the offer of a miraculous sign from God by refusing to ask for a sign. Therefore, Isaiah addressed the court and promised a sign involving a soon-to-be-born child named Immanuel, "God with us" (v. 14). In any case, Ahaz was not totally convinced by Isaiah’s advice, but instead decided to ultimately call on Tiglath-Pileser III’s assistance and protection. He sent a large tribute taken from the Temple and the royal treasury to solicit the Assyrian king’s attention (2 Ki 16:7-8) and, therefore, he submitted to the Assyrian vassalship (Clements 1980:10). In this regard, Morgan (2003:35) writes as follows: “Ahaz, rather than becoming a free and independent prince as he had hoped, is made a tributary vassal of Assyria.” This

⁷¹ According to Hayes and Irvine (1987:44-46) who used both biblical and extra-biblical sources, Ahaz never invited Assyria for help, and Isaiah on the contrary supported his effort for independence from Israel.

demonstration of lack of trust in YHWH was qualified as a sin according to the irrevocable covenant that established and defined God's relations with his people (Wegner 2011:468; Roberts 2010:72). Disappointed, Isaiah withdrew from the public life until the reign of Hezekiah, Ahaz's son (Roberts 2010:71; Ceresco 2001:217, 218).

It is noteworthy that the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis and the Judaeen state of being an Assyrian vassal constitute the major setting⁷² of the words of hope that are given in the messianic promise of peace in Isaiah 9:1-6 (Sweeney 2005:32). In this particular text, prophet Isaiah describes the current plight of Judaeen people by the symbol of "deep darkness" (צִלְמוֹת). He represents, at the same time, the change that God will bring for Judah by the "great light" (אֹרֶךְ יְהוָה), which shines upon "a nation that longs for peace and for a leader to bring them to it", the *Prince of Peace* (Turner 2003:141,142).

In the next subsection, the consequences of Tiglath-pileser's defeat of the Kingdom of Israel are highlighted as additional events considered as the background to the selected text as well (De Jong 2007:138).

4.3.3.4 The end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel

Hosea son of Elah who reigned over Israel from 732/31 to 722/1 assassinated the Israelite King Pekah. On this occasion, Hosea attempted to save the nation by changing Pekah's policy towards Assyria. He immediately surrendered Israel to Tiglath-Pileser and paid tribute. But, not long after

⁷² This setting is further explained in section 4.5, which develops the contextual significance of Isaiah 9:1-6.

Tiglath-Pileser's death in 727 BCE, Hosea rebelled against Assyria, made a military alliance with Egypt and refused to pay tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 17:4) (Rolfson 2002:96). As at this time Egypt was militarily weak and divided, it was unable to provide assistance to Hosea (Morgan 2003:36). Shalmaneser V, Tiglath-Pileser's son (727-722), then besieged Samaria for three years, and imprisoned Hosea in 722. Rolfson reveals that in Shalmaneser's annals he indicated that he deported 27,290 people from only the city of Samaria, the total being extrapolated up to 200,000 inhabitants from the countryside. This would be the reason why Isaiah prophesied about the end of war described in Isaiah 9:4 using military tools.

Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon II (722-705) completed the destruction of Samaria in 721 and made it an Assyrian province. This end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was followed by the deportation of inhabitants to different places within the Assyrian empire (Is 8:23). After he had rebuilt Samaria, he imported people from other localities in the empire into the new province (Israel) to be assimilated into the local population (2 Ki 17:24). This forced assimilation explains the origin of the Samaritans with a fusion of culture and religion (Scheffler 2001:107). This situation of Samaria described above is symbolised in Isaiah 9:1 by the motif of the "deep darkness" (צִלְמוֹת) in which YHWH's people walked. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah announces the end of the foreign oppression and war (vv. 3-4) in the imagery of "great light" (אֹרֶן גָּדוֹל) (v.1), which would be enabled by the "Prince of Peace" (שֵׁרֵשֶׁת שְׁלוֹמִים) (v. 5), a Davidic King (v.6) who would reunite the two Kingdoms (Israel and Judah) (Sweeney 2005:33). For that, De Jong (2007:137-138) argues that it makes sense to read 9:1-6 as a reaction to Assyrian oppression. For him, the enemy portrayed in 9:3-4 is Assyria, and the oppression by Assyrians is symbolised by

the image of the yoke, from which Yahweh will liberate Judah by the reign of a new Judaeian king (cf. 10:27; 14:25).

Therefore, prophet Isaiah does not present an eschatological picture in the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, but a political reality that is idealised (De Jong 2007:138). The involvement of Isaiah in the dark political and military situation of his time has defined his mission as a "political prophecy".

4.3.4 Isaiah, the political prophet⁷³

As it has been described in the previous subsections, prophet Isaiah lived and exercised his ministry during the political and military turmoil in the ancient Middle East in general, and in Syria-Palestine in particular, during the 8th century BCE. This resulted from the Assyrian invasion and its increased threats to the stability and independence of surrounding countries, including the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (Clements 1980:9; Barton 2003:29). It was also shown that in an attempt to stop the Assyrian goal of reaching Lebanon, Syria (Aram), Israel (Ephraim) and Judah; threatened nations colluded against the Assyrian pressure through the "Syro-Ephraimitic War" (735/34-733/32 BC) (Wegner 2011:468). During this period, prophet Isaiah played an important role in the Kingdom of Judah in distress, in the same way as other prophets of

⁷³ Political prophecy is a subject well discussed by Gottwald (1964) in his book "All the Kingdoms of the Earth: Israel Prophecy and International Relations in the Ancient Near East".

YHWH: “to speak against religious and political establishments” (Steussy 2003:135)⁷⁴.

It should be noted that Isaiah was “called” to the prophetic ministry when he was serving as one of the royal counsellors in the Judaeen royal court. Therefore, he had an easy and direct access to the kings Ahaz and Hezekiah (Is 7:3, 10), and could be consulted by them when their kingdom was threatened and invaded by foreign enemies (chapters 36 – 39). His prophetic message to these kings was a mixture of religious and political advices. When the prophet urged Ahaz and Hezekiah to avoid possible foreign entanglements, he emphasised at the same time on the trust in YHWH (Browning 2010:94). In the same vein, Roberts (2010:71) writes:

Isaiah of Jerusalem shows a remarkable consistency throughout his long ministry in rejecting the idea that Israel could gain security for itself by a politics of military preparedness and defensive alliances with the major powers of the era, whether Assyria or Egypt and Nubia. From the Syro-Ephraimitic war in 735-732 BC to the Philistine revolt against Assyria led by Ashdod in 715-711 BC through Hezekiah's revolt against Sennacherib in 705-701 BC, Isaiah remains firmly opposed to this approach to securing safety, prosperity, and well-being for his people.

Consequently, Isaiah played both the role of a prophet and socio-political adviser against foreign alliances according to covenantal values. That is to say, as a *political prophet*, Isaiah used the religious ethics to repeatedly challenge Judaeen nation and its kings, and provided “instructions and visions of moral

⁷⁴Steussy (2003:135) defines Biblical prophets as people who "were called forth in a particular context to name the realities of life and interpret them from a theological perspective: they were interpreters of the national story. Prophets were mediators between God and humanity, consultants to kings, and preachers to the religious political establishment.”

renewal and universal peace”.⁷⁵ The chosen passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, as it was developed in the previous chapter, is part of prophecies that are related to Isaiah's political prophecy.

According to Barton (2003:28), Isaiah's political prophecy did not stray from the common mission of other prophets in the ancient Middle East: to warn kings of imminent military disasters and to advise them during war under god(s)'s control. Moreover, the specificity of Isaiah's political prophecy is that his involvement in the political life of Judah was deeply focused on the foreign policy.

The next section presents the theological issues surrounding the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6. This religious background of the text will intervene as well in the practical signification of the text in Chapter Six of this study, during the appropriation phase.

4.4 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH 9:1-6

In the biblical tradition, several texts determine the setting of the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6. In the present section, only three texts, which give a theological meaning to the background of the chosen passage, are referred to (2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 28 and Isaiah 7–8).

⁷⁵ Michael Fishbane explains the term *Political prophet* in his article “Isaiah ben Amoz: Political Prophet (Isaiah 1:9)”, available at http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Prophets/Latter_Prophets/Isaiah.shtml?p=4. [Accessed 30 March 2014].

In 2 Kings 16:2 and 2 Chronicles 28:1, because Ahaz “did not do what pleased the Lord”, YHWH allowed Rezin, the king of Syria and Pekah, the king of Israel, to defeat him and to kill many of his population in battle (2 Chr 28:5-8). This is the Syro-Ephraimitic war described here as the consequence of king Ahaz’ sins (Carter 2000:509-513). However, as it has been demonstrated above, the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis is presented by biblical scholars as a consequence of the Assyrian invasion westward in the ancient Middle East. They also indicate that these two conflicts (Syro-Ephraimitic and Assyrian), which threatened the kingdom of Judah's life, constitute the historical setting of Isaiah’s prophecy contained in chapters 6 to 12, including the selected text of 9:1-6 (Vasholz 1987:79; cf. Sweeney 2005:32-33; De Jong 2010:18,54-202; Wegner 2011: 467-484).

Ahaz’ sins, according to the passages of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, included his encouraging syncretism in the Judaeen worship of YHWH with the pagan beliefs and deities (Hartley 1982:205). He is said to have brought people of Judah to worship Baal and he desecrated the Temple by introducing images of *Baal* and foreign religions from Damascus (Syria). Furthermore, referring to passages of 2 Kings 16:1-4 and 2 Chronicles 28:1-4, Ahaz offered sacrifices to Baal, burnt incense almost everywhere and passed his own son through fire⁷⁶ in the valley of Hinnom. This sacrifice may refer to child sacrifice because the expression “pass through the fire” is undoubtedly an understatement for human sacrifice (Cf. Deut 12:31). Indeed, the passage of 2 Kings 16:3 qualifies this action as “a horrible sin like the abominable practices of nations” (NET Bible 2 Kg 16:3, note).

⁷⁶ This practice of sacrificing his/her son or daughter in fire is forbidden in Deut 18:10 (2 Kg 21:6; 23:10, and Jr 32:35).

What is more, it is shown in Isaiah 7:1-14 that when the Syrian and Israelite troops approached to attack Jerusalem, Isaiah offered Ahaz a word of comfort counselling him not to fear the collusion plan. But Ahaz rejected Isaiah's words and "even refused to ask for a sign from YHWH to confirm the oracle of salvation" (Hartley 1982:205). This is the context in which Isaiah proclaimed the birth of Immanuel, to assure Ahaz that his enemies will never succeed in their plan, but Judah will be ruled by a Davidic King forever (7:10-14; 9:6) (Wegner 2011:468-470). The rejection of the offer of a miraculous sign from YHWH was part of Ahaz' great sin because trusting YHWH's miracle had no meaning for him. This sin, among others, should provoke the wrath of YHWH against Ahaz. Therefore, according to the biblical tradition, he deserved to be punished for his sins by the Syro-Ephraimitic war.

On the other hand, not only did Ahaz not believe that YHWH could save him from the Syro-Ephraimitic threat; he rather, according to 2 Kings 16:7-8, relied upon his wealth and on unbelievers (Assyrians) for his deliverance. Ahaz' dependence on his own resources and on foreign strength was seen as a sign of loss of confidence in YHWH. Therefore, he deserved to be punished for his unbelief by being oppressed by Assyrians. In the same vein, Irvine (1990:4) and Sweeney (1996:132) acknowledge that prophet Isaiah realized that YHWH brought judgement against the king and his people in form of the Assyrian campaigns.

Based on the above, it appears that the dissatisfaction of both YHWH and his prophet Isaiah over the Judaeen king Ahaz provided the opportunity to reassert the rule over Judah and the remnant of Israel (Kil 2005:132). Thus, the chosen passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 reflects that opportunity by offering to people who saw trouble, darkness, and gloom of anguish (8:22) the picture of the

brilliant light, that is the hope of political and religious changes, which will be introduced by the *Prince of Peace* (Cf. Sweeney 2005:33).

Without neglecting the importance of the theological setting of the text as developed above, I reiterate that such a theological view may hide to some extent the real historical events surrounding the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, as already developed in previous sections. In the present study, better still, the holistic context around Isaiah 9:1-6, which meets in one way or another with the theological, and the geographical, economic and socio-historical conclusion, determines the meaning of the selected text. This brings me to the next section about the contextual significance of the selected passage of Isaiah 9:1-6.

4.5 CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ISAIAH 9:1-6

With reference to the previous chapter (i.e. Chapter Three) and sections of the present chapter (Chapter Four), the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 has no specific meaning apart from its specific literary and geo-economic and socio-historical settings. To take this text out of these contexts is to remove the major influences and ideas about it and circumstances surrounding it. From the literary analysis of the chosen passage, it was admitted that the text of 8:19-23 forms its immediate literary context. In this literary corpus, verses 21-23 relate what has been said about the historical and political background to Isaiah 9:1-6. Specifically, the bridging verse 23 sheds light on the geographical-historical information as it was provided in previous sections. At the same time, it was shown that the content of Isaiah 9:1-6 was rooted in the context of the Syro-

Ephraimitic crisis, the Judaeen king Ahaz' apostasy, and his subjugation to Assyria. Therefore, themes raised from the literary interpretation of the text relocated in their historical context concerns both the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Some of them are briefly analysed below.

4.5.1 חֹשֶׁךְ - אֹרֶךְ: light-darkness metaphor

In Isaiah 9:1-6, verse 1 emphasises that Israelites who went and lived in the land of "darkness", of death, of lifeless (Assyria), are given a "great light", life or new hope. The historical and political background of this verse is found in the immediate literary context of 8:21-23 that shows the past humiliation of the territories of Naphtali and Zabulun (deep darkness). In 733-732 BCE, these territories were annexed and "incorporated into three Assyrian provinces: Duru, Mugidu and Galuaza" (Kim 2001:243). Verse 23c in Isaiah is literarily put just before 9:1 to show the contrast between the disastrous fate of the Kingdom of Israel due to the Assyrian treatment, with the salvation which will be brought by the Davidic ruler, from the Kingdom of Judah, aiming to reunify Israel with Judah (2 Chr 30). Verse 1 is then a metaphorical description of the misery, which befell people of Israel and the Judaeen royal relief, which awaits them. The author emphasises here on the key thematic idea of salvation of people.

The Assyrian invasion, the destruction of Samaria and the deportation of the Northern people to Assyria followed by Ahaz's apostasy and his submission to the foreign king Tiglath-Pileser II was a time of "darkness" and sorrow for Judah and Jerusalem as well. In this time of gloom and deep "darkness" for both

Kingdoms, Isaiah preaches the great "light" which shines. The fact that the "light" overlaps the "darkness" indicates the end of an era marked by foreign domination and war. That is to say, life, hope and better days are given to those who have lost their hope in this time of grief and disappointment. The liberation from oppression and war (3-4) expressed through the military salvation from the devastating enemy Assyria is possible because of the enthronement of a just and righteous Davidic King in Judah. This source of hope for YHWH's people salvation lies in the *Prince of Peace* (5-6).

4.5.2 שָׁלוֹם - שֵׁר: Prince of Peace

As it was pointed out in the previous chapter (i.e. Chapter 4), the birth of the royal child in verse 5 is about the enthronement of the powerful (5a)⁷⁷ and disciplined Davidic King (6b),⁷⁸ whose Kingdom is prosperous and permanently secure (6a) in the context of the diarchical relationship with YHWH (6c). In verse 5, the newly enthroned king's compound names⁷⁹ refer to royal names that were given the new Egyptian pharaoh during the enthronement ceremony (cf. 1

⁷⁷ Verse 5b: וְהָיָה הַמְשָׁרָה עַל-שִׁכְמוֹ "wattəhî hammiśrā^h ʿal-šikmô" = And the authority was placed upon his shoulders.

⁷⁸ Verse 6b: וְלִסְעָדָהּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָקָה "ləhākîⁿ ʔōtā^h ûləsaʿādā^h bəmišpāt ûbišdāqā^h" = to establish it and to support it by discernment and with righteousness.

⁷⁹ verse 5b: אֵל גִּבּוֹר אֲבִיעֶד שֵׁר-שָׁלוֹם "pele^ʔ yôʿēṣ ʔēl gibbôr ʔābîʿad śar-šālôm" = Wondrous Adviser, Mighty God (or mighty hero), Everlasting Father, Prince (or Ruler) of Peace.

Kg 3:1) (Kim 2001:246). Therefore, it is clear that Isaiah 9:1-6 is about the accession to the throne of a Davidic king following the Syro-Ephraimitic (8:22-23). The presence of the first person plural speakers in 9:5 further would support the case for situating the selected text in a political and ritual setting, which joyfully celebrates the metaphorical "birth" of a royal son. It is about a contemporary Davidic king who has been enthroned and now has the status of YHWH's adopted "son" (Ps 2:7; 89:27 and 7:14). In this context, Hezekiah's enthronement ceremony should be the convincing historical setting related to such accession oracle.

It is interesting that the son in verse 5 did not receive the title of king (מֶלֶךְ "melekh"), but that of prince (שָׂר "śar"). It is probably because, in the historical context of this prophecy, the king Ahaz did not have a good reputation. I think that the omission of the title king in favour of the term *prince* constitutes the denunciation of a weak and wicked kingship in Judah. Even though the King of that time frame (Ahaz) descended from David, he failed to listen to the word of YHWH through his prophet and to trust in Him for the deliverance of His people. He failed as well to show his military authority when he subjugated himself to Assyrians and, therefore, plunged the Kingdom of Judah into ties of vassalage ("deep darkness"). As a result, he failed to fulfil his task of enforcing justice and righteousness in the Kingdom of Judah. This is the reason why YHWH announced the coming of a new powerful, peaceful, rightful, prosperous and devoted ruler from the line of David.

Given the chaos surrounding the evil plans of the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition against the Davidic royal house to replace the royal succession with the foreign heir (7:6), it is clear that the announcement of the birth of the legitimate child represents YHWH's decision (2 Sm 7:12-16). That is, the

kingship endangered by the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis would never be alienated from the house of David. Moreover, Wildberger (1991:407-410) mentions that the oracle about the *Prince of Peace* is a revelation of YHWH's commitment to the Davidic house beyond the conditional salvation in 7:9.

4.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Four of this study dealt in general with the relocation of the results of the literary analysis of the oracle about the *Prince of Peace* (Is 9:1-6) in its geographical, economic, socio-historical and religious settings. It aimed particularly at illuminating the link that exists between the contrasting metaphor light-darkness together with the phrase *Prince of Peace*, and the historical events in which the prophetic text of Isaiah 9:1-6 took place. The chapter's findings lent strong support to De Jong's idea that "prophetic words relate to events of great political importance and intervene in the political scene" (De Jong 2007:191). Therefore, it was demonstrated that Isaiah played a role in the situation of crucial political importance in the ancient Middle East during the second half of the eighth century BCE. The selected prophetic text took root in, and related to, a concrete geo-economic situation, interfered with Isaiah's contemporary socio-historical events.

The conclusions above were demonstrated by exploring the geographical, economic and socio-political environment related to several key moments of Neo-Assyrian, Syrian, Israelite and Judaeon kings in relation to prophet Isaiah's ministry. After describing relevant events related to these kings, I discovered that Isaiah 9:1-6 is to be understood in the context of the westward expansion of

the Assyrian empire. The underlying causes of this extension lay in the Neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser's increasing strength and successful eastward and northward conquests. These victories convinced him of possibilities that he would conquer western and southern small kingdoms in the ancient Middle East. To these events were added his covetousness of the Syria-Palestinian strategic position in the Fertile Crescent, and its southern Mediterranean coastal location that should help open Assyria to the Western world. The Syrian economic wealth was coveted as well, and Assyrians eagerly wanted to have control over it.

Therefore, in 745 BCE, Tiglath-pileser III started invading the western and southern kingdoms. It was shown in the present chapter that his successors followed his programme, but most of the time, they were confronted with anti-Assyrian resistance held by the collusion of some Syria-Palestinian kingdoms. The consequences of these oppositions brought danger to the life of the Kingdom of Judah, even to the Kingdom of Israel as well. First, Judah was threatened by the Syro-Ephraimitic war in which Syria and the Kingdom of Israel confederated against the Judaeen kings Jotham and Ahaz to force them to join their conspiracy against Assyria. When they refused, Rezin (Syrian king) and Pekah (Israelite king) plundered and devastated Judah. Then, Ahaz turned to Assyria for help, and after that Syria and Israel both experienced a dramatic fall: Israel was incorporated into the Assyrian Empire and Damascus was attacked, and the inhabitants of both Israel and Damascus were deported to Assyria. Finally, while the alliance with Assyria seemed to be Judah's salvation, it led indeed to Judah's subjugation by Assyria.

In short, the Assyrian invasion and its consequences that are the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis, the destruction of Israel followed by the deportation of

Israelite and Syrian inhabitants and the subjugation of Judah to the Assyrian political power constitute the socio-historical setting of the proclamation of the contrasting metaphor of light-darkness in the prophecy about *Prince of Peace* (Is 9:1-6).

Given that no exegetical study is complete until it provides the practical significance of the biblical passage, the next part of this study, Chapter Five, focuses on identifying the target group at which I will apply the result of the study of the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6.

PART THREE
ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT OF THE READER IN RELATION
TO THE LIGHT - DARKNESS MOTIF

The previous major division of this thesis (i.e. Part Two) was the second step in answering the research question of this study. It was at the same time the *distantiation* phase in the Tri-polar model of exegesis applied to the present study, which had to do with the meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 for its original readers. During the *distantiation* phase, the light-darkness metaphor found in 9:1 was analysed in its literary and historical context. This analysis substantiated sufficiently that the chosen text referred to a faithful and righteous *anthropolitical* leader from the Davidic line, the *Prince of Peace*, whose leadership was to draw his people from the foreign oppression, subjugation and war to an era of prosperity, freedom and peace.

After the chosen text has revealed its meaning for the original readers and provided the socio-historical setting in which it was pronounced, Part Three of the present thesis targets and analyses today's readers' context against which the chosen text will be read. Done in relation to the literary analysis and the background of Isaiah 9:1-6, Part Three consists of answering the third sub-question of the central question on how issues raised from the text and its background shed some light on the socio-political dimension of the recurrent and protracted armed conflicts and wars in the eastern DRC. This constitutes the subject matter of Chapter Five below.

Chapter Five

EASTERN DRC: CONTEXT OF CONFLICT AND ATTEMPTS AT PEACE-BUILDING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

With regard to the methodological approach adopted in this thesis, the present chapter consists of the *contextualisation* pole in the Tri-polar Exegesis Model. That is, the investigation of the socio-historical context of persistent and lethal violence in the eastern Congo. Note that the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 will be read against this background in Chapter Six. The background of the crisis in this particular area does not totally differ from the historical context of violence in Israel and Judah during the time of Isaiah. Similar to the wars of conquest that Assyrians led in the ancient Middle East during the time of Isaiah, eastern Congolese wars are not simply civil conflicts but wars of plunder and occupation by foreign nations and multinationals.

In this regard, I will first discuss the responsibility of the political leadership since the colonial era and that of the religious leadership since the pre-colonial period in shaping the security in the region under consideration, particularly in the two provinces of the Kivus (North and South), and the district of Ituri in the Oriental province. A little more attention will be paid, however, to

the province of North Kivu⁸⁰ because of its unique history that constitutes the backdrop for its condition of uninterrupted violence. Besides, it is widely known that the protracted instability in North Kivu is a great challenge to the stability and reconstruction of the entire country. Next, I will briefly describe the "deep darkness" which eastern Congolese people have passed through because of the previously mentioned political leadership responsibility and perversion of Christian faith. In this context, the "deep darkness" concerns in particular the different lethal wars that have occurred in the region from 1996 to 2012. Then, I will assess various so-called peace agreements (the "light" of a kind), which was suggested to end different Congo wars ("deep darkness") in the eastern DRC, but could not be able to do so. Finally, I will analyse the international response to the eastern Congolese crisis that contributed significantly to putting an end to the Fourth Congo War. This can be symbolised by the metaphor phrase: the "light shining in darkness."

5.2 LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE EASTERN DRC

The lethal and protracted conflicts in the eastern provinces of the DRC can be compared to the "deep darkness" motif in Isaiah 9:1 (see 8:21-22). To

⁸⁰ Various ethnic groups populate the North Kivu province: the majority consists of the Bantu, among whom *Nande* (in Lubero, Beni, Rutshuru and Goma); *Hunde* (in Masisi, Rutshuru and Goma); *Nyanga* and *Kanu* (in Walikale); *Kumu* (in Nyiragongo and Goma); *Hutu*, peoples of Rwandan origin (in Masisi, Rutshuru and Goma). The minorities are *Mbutu* (pygmies), who live in the forest; and the *Tutsi* (Nilotics) another group of Rwandan origin (in Goma, Rutshuru and Masisi).

better understand how the political leadership has led this region to massive atrocities and human rights violations over the last two decades; further research needs to be conducted. In this section, I will thus look at deeper causes of conflicts in this most violent area of the country. Therefore, in the following subsection, I will first analyse the remote causes of conflicts before I focus on the immediate factors that have led to the disturbing and conflict situations in the region.

5.2.1 Remote causes of violence in the eastern DRC

“Many causes can have their own causes” which can be called “causes of causes”, to mean that “every cause has a cause in its own right” (Kisangani 2012:5). In this way, the direct causes as trigger for violence and instability in the eastern provinces of the DRC have their own causes in past events that, in turn, are “linked in chains of cause-and-effect relationships” (Weiss 2009:116). Drawing on the statement above, this subsection will take into account the implication of the political leadership in five historical events in which the direct causes of violence in the region under consideration are historically rooted. These “causes of causes” refer to the colonial establishment of African borders, the colonial management of migrations in North and South Kivu, the colonial administration in Ituri, the Congo postcolonial leadership failure, which led to an unstable state; and the decay of the state under the Mobutu regime.

5.2.1.1 Colonial establishment of boundaries between DRC, Rwanda and Burundi

It should be noted that in 1884-1885 the Berlin Conference, which gathered colonial powers on African soil, endorsed the division of the continent, unfortunately without the participation of Africans. As a result, in many cases, European colonisers established boundaries between African countries “without knowledge of, or interest in, local territories and populations”. This resulted in either dismemberment or suffocation of African peoples (Englebert, Tarango and Carter 2010:1096). By dismemberment, it must be understood the extent to which colonisers partitioned pre-existing political groupings, and by suffocation, the degree to which they brought together distinct pre-colonial political cultures. Both dismemberment and suffocation of African populations have been at the root of conflicts throughout the continent. Englebert *et al.* (2010:1093) associates the dismemberment of populations with international disputes and the suffocation with the amplification of the possibility of civil wars, political instability, and secession attempts.

The Great Lakes Region of Africa (GLRA),⁸¹ which was characterised by significant migratory fluxes in pre-colonial times (Jourdan 2005:3), is not an exception to the rule. Dismemberment and suffocation of populations in the GLRA were achieved by the different colonial regimes that landed in the region: Belgians in DRC, Germans in Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania until World War I; and British in Uganda and Kenya (Koko 2011:91.92). When they established artificial boundaries between GLRA countries, some peoples with the same culture, social activities and organisations were separated

⁸¹ The GLRA countries are the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania

(dismemberment). At the same time, distinct or even antagonistic ethnic groups were compelled to live together (suffocation). An illustrative case of suffocation and dismemberment of populations is that of the *Hutu*⁸² and *Tutsi*⁸³ (*Banyamulenge*⁸⁴) ethnic groups mostly found in Rwanda, Burundi and the eastern DRC.

Indeed, the two communities (*Hutu* and *Tutsi*), compelled to live together in Rwanda and Burundi since the colonial period (suffocation), can hardly be said today to have enjoyed long periods of peaceful coexistence. The socio-political history of Rwanda and Burundi is full of bloody civil wars and political instability at the extreme end of which Rugira (2011:6) places the atrocious crimes of genocide. In addition, their inter-ethnic relationship has contributed “to shaping calculations of regional security” (Rugira 2011:9). In the DRC for instance, *Hutu* and *Tutsi* who were dismembered from their fellow tribespeople by colonial boundaries have been at the core of different rebellions and international wars, which have torn the eastern part of the country for more than two decades. In short, in the GLRA, extreme violence has persisted in “the cultural geography” of the *Hutu* and *Tutsi* (*Banyamulenge*) communities with atrocious consequences on the regional security as a result of colonisers' establishment of artificial boundaries between the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi (Rugira 2011:vi).

⁸² The *Hutu* people are one of the Bantu ethnic groups in Central Africa. They mainly live in Rwanda and in Burundi, where they are a majority; and in the east of the DRC.

⁸³ The *Tutsi* people are one of the Nilotic ethnic groups in the Eastern and Central Africa. They mainly live in Rwanda, Burundi and in the east of the DRC where they are a minority.

⁸⁴ *Banyamulenge* people are mainly *Tutsi* of Burundian and Rwandan origins (Rukundwa 2004:369).

5.2.1.2 *Various migrations to the eastern DRC*

5.2.1.2.1 During the colonial period

In addition to the fact that the violence directly flows from the colonial establishment of boundaries, various migrations that colonisers allowed and organised throughout the eastern part of the country remain as well one of the root causes of armed conflicts and wars in the region.

It should be mentioned that, at the end of the World War I when the portion of the German territory in the GLRA (Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania) was removed from German control, Belgians took control of Rwanda and Burundi⁸⁵, along with its Congo colony (today's DRC). They then started mixing populations in their new colony, taking them especially from the two tiny countries, Rwanda and Burundi, to the vast Congo, particularly to its eastern region. The Belgian colonial administration therefore created in 1937 the “Mission for the Immigration of *Banyarwanda*” (MIB) (CGARC 2007:22).

The MIB's two main objectives were to relieve the demographic pressure in the overpopulated tiny Rwanda towards the depopulated areas in the Kivus (North and South), and to create a large pool of loyal workers from Rwanda and Burundi since the vast rich eastern Congolese regions needed more labourers to exploit on plantations and mines (Jourdan 2005:3; Steams 2011:72). The MIB then became an institution aimed to manage all the population movements from Rwanda to the Congo, especially to the eastern provinces (Jourdan 2005:3). As a result, around 175,000 Rwandans over the next twenty years, mostly *Hutu*, but also many *Tutsi*, were imported to the Kivus (North and South) highlands

⁸⁵ At that time, the two colonies (Rwanda and Burundi) were named *Rwanda-Urundi*.

(Stearns 2011:72). Stearns continues, he mentions how Belgians favoured Rwandan immigrants in Masisi:

Belgians leased land from the local traditional chief for a pittance and created the independent but short-lived chiefdom of Gishali, which was ruled by a *Tutsi* immigrant. The lease of land became permanent, and *Hutu* farmers and *Tutsi* ranchers came to dominate the local economy (Stearns 2011:72).

Most migrant workers who were recruited by the MIB for plantations and mining of two provinces of Kivu (North and South), the province of Maniema, even the province of Katanga (Prunier 2001:146) did not return to Rwanda, but instead settled in their new locations (Koko 2011:101). During that period, the Congolese natives were compelled to cohabitate with the new settlers. In the long run, the odd colonial mixture of foreigners with indigenous populations upset the traditional demographic balance in the eastern part of the DRC. This led to the ethnic tensions related to the land issue in the region. Accordingly, it is sufficiently clear that colonisers were the main culprits responsible for this suffocation of populations and its negative consequences in the Kivus (North and South).

5.2.1.2.2 During the postcolonial period

In addition to the above, during the postcolonial era, migrations towards the Congo did not stop but instead they increased, many of them being clandestine. From Burundi, the majority of *Hutus* arrived in the east of the DRC as refugees, fleeing the postcolonial *Tutsi* military dictatorship in their country. In 1972, after the “intellectual genocide” that took place in Burundi, a large number of *Hutus* arrived and settled in South Kivu. Others followed thereafter

during decades of *Tutsi* rule in Burundi (Rugira 2011:37-38). Similarly, in the early 1960s, an extensive spontaneous displacement from Rwanda to the Congo due to the unrest around Rwandan independence was observed. That situation prompted a further 100,000 *Banyarwanda* to flee to the DRC between 1959 and 1964 (Stearns 2011:72). Under Mobutu, in 1973, further waves of *Banyarwanda* migrants, mainly *Tutsis*, followed, among them political refugees due to the *Tutsi* students' revolution. The latter led to the exile of Rwandan elites, including many affluent and well-educated *Tutsi*, who found jobs in the eastern provinces of the Congo, particularly in the administration and education sectors. Most of them became an important part of the Goma⁸⁶ elite.

In July 1994, after the Rwandan genocide, hundreds of thousands of *Hutu* refugees from Rwanda crossed the Congolese borders and settled in the Kivus (North and South). In addition, from 1996 to the present, uncontrolled movements of *Banyarwanda* from Rwanda to the eastern DRC have increased because of their involvement in different protracted wars, which have cast a shadow over the region. Most of them take advantage of the failure of the political and military leadership, and the Congolese external borders, which have always been like leaky sieves that let everything through. Furthermore, the new clandestine settlers always go unnoticed because they easily blend in with other *Banyarwanda* (*Hutu* or *Tutsi*) who had settled before on the Congolese soil.

The result today is that the political instability, international and civil wars and secessionist ethnic movements, which have proven to be a characteristic of the cultural geography of *Hutu* and *Tutsi* in neighbouring

⁸⁶ Goma is the capital city of the province of North Kivu.

countries, had been transferred to the eastern provinces of the DRC with devastating effects on the stability of the entire country.

5.2.1.3 Colonial administration in Ituri district

The historical context of conflicts in Ituri, one of the districts in the province of Oriental, shows that Belgian colonisers' interference in the indigenous socio-political structure created tensions between local communities, especially between *Lendu* and *Hema* ethnic groups. According to Camm (2012:7), neither the *Hema* nor the *Lendu* originated from the district of Ituri. The *Lendu* agriculturalists migrated from Sudan in pre-colonial times, and settled (perhaps before the sixteenth century) in Oriental province, particularly in Ituri district. The pastoralist *Hema* who started occupying the area in the late seventeenth century, having migrated from Uganda (Vircoulon 2010:210), joined them there. They gradually occupied more and more of the *Lendu*'s territory, and ended up dispossessing the *Lendu* of a vast part of their domain without much resistance. This was because of “the abundance of land at the time, combined with the *Lendu* people's hospitality” (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004:389). The two groups cohabited and developed without active confrontations between them (Vircoulon 2010:210). The *Lendu* submitted to the *Hema* to the extent that, “on the eve of colonialism, the *Hema* dominated both the political and economic fields” (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004:389).

However, when Belgian colonists settled in Ituri, they started to deal with different local socio-political structures in order to impose their territorial control on the region. Furthermore, after discovering the resource-rich

highlands of Ituri, they were particularly interested by the region. In the meantime, to stabilise their foreign rule over the whole region, the Belgian settlers made use of the strategy of depriving “the *Hema* King of his powers over all *Hema* and their *Lendu* subjects”. They, therefore, regrouped “the local ethnic communities into separate administrative centres”, and the *Lendu* were given the right to self-rule by Belgians (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004:389).

Since then, as elsewhere in the entire DRC, ethnic groups in Ituri were separated into villages (*localités*, in French). Each ethnic village was ruled by its own chief and was assigned to an ethnic unit (*collectivité*), a territorial unit like a country (Camm 2012:8). While this practice was also used as a response to small clashes among groups, it however created and exacerbated tensions between the groups when colonisers started doing favours for some ethnic groups. Particularly in Ituri, they started considering the *Hema* as “a god-sent superior race, qualified to assist them in their ‘civilizing mission’” (Pottier 2008:433). The *Hema* therefore enjoyed many undue benefits from the colonial power, such as access to commercial and educational opportunities and to plantations and mines (Camm 2012:8). As a result, they quickly consolidated their economic, educational and political power over the *Lendu* and other groups. Therefore, a social asymmetry among ethnic groups remained the most important challenge under postcolonial rule and one of the roots of conflict in Ituri.

5.2.1.4 Postcolonial leadership failure and unstable state (1960 - 1965)

5.2.1.4.1 Political leadership failure

At the time of independence in Congo (June 30, 1960), the First Republic⁸⁷ was doomed to failure right from the start. Belgian colonists left the Congo in an uncertain and unstable state because of the lack of preparedness of the Congolese leadership for independence. There were not enough Congolese leaders capable of running and organising the vast state. Therefore, in the days following the independence, a number of unprepared, inadequate, non-qualified and divided Congolese leaders and personnel led the country. For example, Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of the Congo, occupied his post with only a primary education (Van Rensburg 1975:485).

The low level of education of Congolese political leaders as explained above was a significant indicator of their inability to run and to handle the new socio-political situation of the state. Compounded by the transfer of “all data preparation for work” from the Congolese enterprises to Belgium by colonial authorities, the new government members were totally disoriented (Mavinga 2009:138). Furthermore, instead of protecting the economy of the state, or to pay off debts left by the Belgians, they “began enjoying the material benefits left by the colonisers without referring to ordinary people’s expectations of independence” (Mavinga 2009:138; Nzongola 2002:88). Such misgovernment was one of key elements, which gave rise to the discontent and agitation of

⁸⁷ The postcolonial period in Congo (from 30 June 1960 to present) is divided into three major sub- periods: the First Republic: 1960-1965; the Second Republic under Mobutu: 1965-1997; the Third Republic (informal): 1997-present. The Third Republic officially started on 18 February 2006, with the promulgation of the Constitution approved by the referendum on 18 December 2005, which result was validated by the Supreme Court on February 4, 2006.

Congolese people. They therefore complained and rose up against the new government.

In addition to the above, politicians responsible for independence fell very early into ethnic and political divisions and internal conflicts. Related to this was the lack of cooperation among politicians from different trends. Consequently, they failed to strengthen endogenous capacities in each province, to support the values of peace and tolerance and to improve the quality of Congolese life. They made it impossible for Congolese people to enjoy the practice of democracy, and ended up plunging the country into chaos and anarchy. The situation worsened in many provinces due to former colonisers' interference in these divisions, to the extent that the new Congolese leaders lost control of the country (Kalb 1982:379). The new nation quickly sank into persistent and lethal crisis for five years (from 1960 to 1965) with the death of more than 100,000 people (Mavinga 2009:137).

5.2.1.4.2 Military leadership failure

During the independence of Congo, things did not go well at all for the Congolese armed forces. The Belgian commander of the Public Force (army) refused to "Africanise" the officers' corps. That is to say, there were no Congolese officers. All of them were Europeans. In response to this, five days after the day of independence (July 5), the army mutinied against the all-white officer corps, and without delay, by July 8th, the Africanisation of the officer corps was proclaimed. A series of mutinies spread rapidly through the country, plunging the Congo into turmoil. Tensions grew everywhere and armed conflicts broke out in many parts of the Congo (Edgerton 2002:195). Belgians

were subjected to torture and every form of humiliation. What is more, European women of all ages were gang raped. Despite the increase of atrocities, few Belgians were murdered or burnt since the intention of mutineers was only to humiliate Europeans, not to kill them (Young 1965:319). Many Belgians fled the Congo to escape this ruthless violence, abuse and humiliation (Edgerton 2002:185).

President Kasa-vubu⁸⁸ and the Prime Minister Lumumba tried to appease the situation by negotiating with the mutineers. Nevertheless, at the meantime, Moise Tshombé⁸⁹ from the province of Katanga, a rich mining province, had requested the Belgian government to intervene militarily in the country. On July 10, under the pretext of protecting lives and property of Belgians who remained in the Congo, Belgian troops were sent to the province of Katanga without the agreement of the Congolese government. The following day, with the help of Belgian mercenaries and European miners, Tshombé proclaimed the secession of Katanga, one of the eastern Congolese provinces, from the Congo (Mavinga 2009:138). The brutality, with which Belgian paratroopers operated by killing Congolese soldiers and police, convinced both the national and international public about the Belgian intent to take back the Congo by force. Moreover, the support with which important people in Belgium surrounded the Katangan independence strengthened this perception (Edgerton 2002:190).

⁸⁸ Joseph Kasa-vubu was the first Congolese president elected by the Congo's new national assembly on the 30th of June 1960. He ruled the Congo Free State for five years until November 1965.

⁸⁹ While the First Republic was governed from the capital Leopoldville (Kinshasa) by the President Joseph Kasa-vubu and the Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, the province of Katanga was controlled by Moise Tshombé and the South Kasai by Albert Kalonji.

In response to this, Lumumba asked for UN peacekeepers. On July, 15, several thousand UN troops (ONUC)⁹⁰ were sent to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian troops, to restore peace, to provide military and technical assistance, to help establish law and the Congolese postcolonial government legitimacy, and to supervise the Congo's territorial integrity (Edgerton 2002:190-191). Established in July 1960 and operating until June 1964, the ONUC was "the UN's first peacekeeping mission with muscle...described as a 'pyrrhic victory at best'" (Morrison, Fraser and Kiras 1997:ix).

Lumumba, however, was not totally satisfied by the ONUC's refusal to completely neutralise the insurgence in Katanga. He decided to subdue on his own this insurrection, also having recourse to the Soviet Union. Immediately, the fear that the Congo would be established as a new base for "Cold War proxy conflicts" between West and East arose (Kelly 1993:45-47). Since then, Lumumba's life was at risk. Some months later, with the support of the USA and Belgium, Colonel Joseph Desiré Mobutu⁹¹ ousted Lumumba from power, arrested him and transferred him to Katanga, where he was assassinated on the 17th January 1961.

Following this event, violence escalated to the extent that other provinces, such as Kasai, declared their independence. In 1964, rural insurgencies broke out and affected the other four eastern provinces (Oriental, North and South Kivu, and Maniema). Supported by communist China, Soviets and radical leftist African leaders, the rebellion spread; and violence and terror increased (Young

⁹⁰ *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC), (United Nation Organisation of the Congo) consisted largely of troops from Canada, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Tunisia, Liberia, Ireland, and Sweden.

⁹¹ The Colonel Joseph Désiré Mobutu will become the Congolese Head of State under the Second Republic. He will reign from November 24, 1965 to May 17, 1997.

1966:39). The main targets in this rebellion were not Europeans, but Congolese Intellectuals believed to have been westernised, since they were considered dangerous enemies (Edgerton 2002:203). Among those who were systematically executed were Congolese clerks, political leaders, government officials, provincial and local police, school teachers, nurses, postmen and foremen, to cite but a few. Their executions were carried out with grotesque cruelty (Young 1966:40; Edgerton 2002:203).

The central government responded to the growing insurgency by involving Americans and their Western allies side by side with the Congo National Army led by the Commander-in-chief Joseph Desiré Mobutu. They successfully destroyed the rebellion, which had become internationalised (van Rensburg 1981:432). On the 24th of November 1965, Mobutu ousted president Kasa-vubu by a successful bloodless military coup and remained in power as a dictator for thirty-two years of the Second Republic (Kisangani 2012:93). Since then, the DRC has been headed in a tradition of *coups d'état*, dictatorships, internal conflicts and rebellions that often starts from the eastern provinces of the DRC.

5.2.1.5 Mobutu regime (1965 - 1997)

It should be noted that at the very beginning of the regime of the then president Mobutu, he ruled the vast Congo boosting hope for peace at all levels. However, from the 1970s, his management was plagued by political, economic and social crisis; and extensive corruption that caused long-term poverty and infrastructure collapse. From a social and political perspective, it was from his time that the political and military crises in the DRC started worsening.

Nevertheless, how could this happen and which effects did these crises have on the eastern Congolese safety? These questions are discussed in detail in the following sub-points.

5.2.1.5.1 Political system under Mobutu and foreign interference

As it is indicated above, the Commander-in-chief Joseph Desiré Mobutu emerged from the dark days of five years of chaos and anarchy that followed the independence of the Congo. He was seen as more competent than his fellow political and military Congolese leaders of the time with poor education like him⁹² (Mavinga 2009:2.144). Moreover, he was considered by Western powers as a strong ally against communism in Africa. This was confirmed when he strongly stood up against communism and expelled the Russian Embassy staff from the Congo the within forty-eight hours (Van Rensburg 1981:432). Having demonstrated his political and military bravery, Joseph Desiré Mobutu received political and military support of Belgians and the USA intelligence community who installed him in office and supported him in ruling over the vast Congo as the head of the state. This international interference in the choice of Mobutu was not without consequences regarding the management of the country. The crucial impact of that is described by Mavinga (2009:vii):

... the DR Congo and Mobutu became tools and victims of the international politics of the day, as well as pawns of the Cold War taking place between the West and East. The West managed to place their

⁹² Joseph Desiré Mobutu received only a primary education. When he wanted to further his studies at secondary school, he was expelled while in his second year since he was not a disciplined pupil (Van Rensburg 1975:485-486)

Mobutu as leader and maintain him to represent and maintain their own interests. In this respect, they ensured his security in office. In return, these Western powers drew benefit from the country's vast mineral resources.

On these bases, it was not surprising that such a marionette leader very quickly brought the country into a financial crisis in such a way that Congolese people's lives have been deeply affected until now. Although Joseph Desiré Mobutu, once on power, was able to deal with internal clashes, he never knew how to free the state from external interferences of Western interests in Congolese matters (Skinner 2000:2133). In addition, since he sought to cling to power at any cost, he could not free himself from his backers, but he chose to depend on the United States, from whom he received support over the years (Kisangani 2012:117).

On a positive note, however, during the very first years of his regime, Mobutu built a strong state. He stabilised the socio-political situation and brought about the socio-economic prosperity of that time. His country became "the Black African country with the greatest economic growth potential after Nigeria", and attracted more foreign investors (Van Rensburg 1975:484). Citizens saw in him a strong leader worthy of the name, and they had much confidence in him (Nzongola 2002:165). This prosperity unfortunately made Mobutu so proud of himself that he started considering himself a "god" and wanted people to worship him as the only "light that would guide the nation" (Mavinga 2009:147; Kelly 1993:2).

To consolidate his rule over the country, Joseph Desiré Mobutu created a political party named "Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution"⁹³ in May 1967

⁹³ The political party of Mobutu Sese Seko, the « Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution » (MPR) can be translated in English: Popular Movement of Revolution.

(MPR), which lasted until May 1990 when he agreed to the system of multi-party government. From May 1970, in contrast to postcolonial conflicting multiparty system, the MPR became the only legal party in the country, the single party and the party state, which “could not tolerate any kind of opposition” (Biaya 1999:146-147; Nzongola 2002:142). The most prominent opposition against Mobutu's regime was waged by the Catholic Church⁹⁴ (Arnason 2012:46). Furthermore, it was decreed that all citizens automatically became members of the MPR from birth. This single-party and the government administration were merged and the role of the MPR was extended to all the Congolese administration organs, as well as to student organisations, youth movements and trade unions.

Additionally, the constitution of 1967, reinforced by that of 1974, centralized the Congolese executive powers in President Mobutu, the head of both the state and the MPR. Mobutu, the president-founder of the MPR, therefore assumed at the same time the duties as “head of state, head of government, commander in chief of the armed forces and the police, and in charge of foreign policy” (Biaya 1999:146; Mvuluya 2000:79). Having had considerably more powers conferred on him, he gained all political control over the country. He was able then to manipulate people and to set up his authority and power.

This overblown political manoeuvring of Mobutu climaxed when his rule transformed itself into dictatorship. Consequently, the country became a place where fundamental human rights were violated, and citizens were subjected to

⁹⁴ Arnason shows that the Catholic Church was involved in the struggle for democracy but fought by the Mobutuist regime when she declared: “the Catholics led the Democracy Movement and held the Sovereign National Conference, a movement that was shut down by military force in 1992, during which thirty Catholic activists were killed”.

injustice and extrajudicial executions. Gradually, the MPR became a “veritable political religion around the presidential monarch” (Katho 2003:184). The guiding principle of the MPR, known as the “Mobutuism”, was written in the document called “Manifeste de la N’Sele” (N’Sele Manifesto). Mobutuism was considered as a gospel, and was defined as thought, teachings, and action of Mobutu. Concerning this kind of new religion, Katho (2003:184) writes:

It was recommended to high party officials and state administrators to take up the spread of this highly organic-statist gospel since the MPR had to be considered as a church and her Founder as the Congolese Messiah. It was the Manifeste de la N’sele that had to be learned in school and community, in lieu of the Bible. All the Christian signs (the Cross, and other writings) in classrooms and school office were replaced by Mobutu’s image as the guide. In truth, the Manifesto was about the exaltation of Mobutu himself ... Mobutu’s mother, Yemo (...), was praised as both the queen mother and Virgin Mary. Mobutu was sung as a saviour (the Zairian Jesus) of his people who created order out of chaos. His rule was interpreted as a divine one.

In 1971, with the same purpose as stated above, the president-founder of the MPR changed his name from Joseph Desiré Mobutu to Mobutu Sésé Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa Zabanga⁹⁵ to express the invincibility of his power. He based his actions on his political ideology of the “recourse to authenticity.” In his view, authenticity was a way of giving back pride to the African population alienated by years of colonial domination (Prunier 2001:142). It was defined by him as “the realization by the Zairian people to return to their origins, to seek out values of their ancestors, to discover those which contribute to their harmonious and natural development” (Katho 2003:207). Mobutu therefore changed the name of both the country and the river from Congo to Zaire

⁹⁵ Mobutu Sésé Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa Zabanga means “The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake” (Nzongola 2002:149-150).

(Nzongola 2002:149-150). Wearing European-style suits was forbidden. However, this ideology quickly led to the personality cult and enabled Mobutu to subdue the Congolese people and to have complete control over the wealth of the country.

To gain control over the state and the country's wealth, Mobutu Sésé Seko used his ingenuity, his political power and Western support (Young and Turner 1985:153; Kelly 1993:1). In exchange for his dependence on foreign support, he allowed the Western powers to get their hands on Congolese riches, such as raw minerals, gemstones and precious wood; and they did it with the Congolese ruling class' complicity. This in turn, influenced Mobutu's strategy in relation to this ruling class (including the army and police) to whom he offered as well opportunities and means to access Congolese resources (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2008:40). Consequently, the country, Zaire, became "a landing ground where any external state – especially Western interests – could make plans to exploit the country's mineral wealth" (Mavinga 2009:139).

It is noteworthy that this takeover of the Congolese resources by foreign nations and the Congolese ruling class did not stop over the years in the DRC. As it will be examined later, this explains the internationalisation and the persistence of the bloody violence in the eastern DRC.

5.2.1.5.2 Mobutu's economic policy and the decay of the State

Let us recall that, when Mobutu Sésé Seko started considering himself a deity, he became so conceited that he could not anymore listen to anybody (Biaya 1999:155). Driven by his absolute power and his desire to accumulate

wealth for himself, in 1973 he initiated the programme of nationalisation of private enterprises that he dubbed *Zairianisation*⁹⁶. By the programme of *Zairianisation* (1973–1975), Mobutu Sésé Seko confiscated enterprises and farms belonging to foreign investors. In order to promote a self-serving agenda, he bestowed favours on inexperienced citizens loyal to his regime by allowing them to supplant investors who had been maintaining the Congolese economy at local level for years (Nzongola 2002:148). In 1974, he reduced European cultural and economic authority over his country, by breaking down Congo's relationship with Belgium (Van Rensburg 1975:505).

The nationalisation that was supposed to become a way of developing and expanding the financial and social power of the country, and make life better for Congolese people, became instead the beginning of the slow decay of the state and its institutions, and the slide towards human tragedy. Economic production dropped in the few months between November 1973 and December 1974 to the extent that there was uncontrolled inflation, and the country faced high debt levels (Mavinga 2009:149; Kalb 1982:380). In the administration sectors, national education, public health and other public services gradually deteriorated. Further to the devastating social and economic situation, state institutions started suffering from a generalised mismanagement due to corruption.⁹⁷ As a result, the political and economic systems were ruined to such an extent that the institutions of the state “eventually became unable to maintain existing service delivery” (Mavinga 2009:3; Nzongola 2002:15).

⁹⁶ By *Zairianisation* Mobutu meant “nationalisation” of foreign enterprises by confiscating them in an unfair way. The expression *Zairianisation* is derived from the word Zaire, the name of the Congo during Mobutu regime.

⁹⁷ Corruption in the DRC manifests itself in different forms like bribery, patronage, influence peddling, nepotism and outright looting of resources, to cite but a few.

Following this mismanagement of the public administration and the government, the Congolese population was plunged into a disastrous poverty, cultural destruction, poor educational attainment and socio-economic marginalisation. Moreover, the great majority of Congolese unemployed lacked “the absolute necessities of life” and a large number of government workers (among them teachers, nurses, soldiers, police, to cite but a few) suffered from the dilemma of low pay or no pay. Paradoxically, a greedy selfish minority loyal to the Mobutuist regime lived in opulence or squandered wealth. Among them were the members of the Zairian government, political and military leaders, heads of state companies and private enterprises, and so on. Meanwhile the country’s infrastructure for public services, roads, schools, and housing progressively deteriorated. In addition, as the years went by, the situation gradually became a real struggle, until May 1997 when Mobutu Sésé Seko was ousted from power.

5.2.1.5.3 Land manipulation and politicised ethnic citizenship

If Belgian colonisers are the ones who laid foundations for conflict over land, as was explained previously, it appears that the manipulation of the land in the east of the Congo by the dictator Mobutu Sésé Seko was directly related to the recurrent violence in the area. In fact, this situation has gradually developed into conflicts over land linked to ethnic conflicts, which in turn have been continuously manipulated by contemporary warlords.

In the early years of independence of the Congo, the *Hema* in Ituri and the *Banyarwanda* in North Kivu used the favoured position they held since the colonial rule to acquire large domains of plantations and extensive livestock

farming. They gradually occupied lands while *Lendu* in Ituri and native peasants in the Kivus, who had exploited these lands before they were expelled (Breytenbach *et al.* 1999:6). This became the source of grievance for a large percentage of indigenous people.

In South Kivu, the situation was slightly different. There was no extreme land pressure between the few *Kinyarwanda*-speaking group (*Banyamulenge*) and autochthonous ethnic groups. But, the fact that, during the 1964-1965 rebellion, the *Banyamulenge* in South Kivu sided with the Congolese National Army to kill many local boys (*Bafulero* and *Bavira*) who joined the rebels, created animosity and even hatred of Congolese natives towards the *Banyamulenge*. This murder and cruelty perpetrated by the *Banyamulenge* had never been neither forgotten nor forgiven by South Kivu people (Prunier 2001:150).

Mobutu came to power in 1965 when the inter-communitarian relations were already at risk of getting much worse in the eastern part of the DRC. The state authority in this region was threatened by two critical issues: the Land Tenure Code (especially in the North Kivu and Ituri districts) and citizenship (in North and South Kivu, particularly). Meanwhile, as noted previously, during the second period of Mobutu's presidency (from 1975 to 1997)⁹⁸ the socio-economic situation of the country worsened immeasurably. Desperate to hold on to power at all costs despite the decaying state of the country, and to consolidate his rule over all provinces, he used "political divide-and-rule tactics and the eventual decision to formalize 'geopolitique', or the officialisation of ethnicised local governance" throughout the country (Vlassenroot and Huggins

⁹⁸ As already indicated in subsection 5.2.1.5, the first period of Mobutu's presidency started in 1965 when he took power away from the then first Congolese president Joseph Kasavubu.

2005:117). Therefore, from the early 1970s through the mid-1990s, Mobutu Sésé Seko manipulated ethnic schisms by using the purse and political influence of MPR, the party-state. The outcomes of this politics were most felt in the eastern provinces of the country, where he exploited populations' concerns and manipulated local actors, particularly land chiefs, in order to penetrate local society for fear that it gets out of his hand (Hale 2009:94).

In addition to the above, to assert his rule over the two provinces of Kivu, for example, he forged an alliance with the ethnic groups which felt marginalised within the Kivus' local communities: the *Banyarwanda* (including the *Banyamulenge*) (CGARC 2007:22). To consolidate this alliance, in 1972, Mobutu Sésé Seko introduced a law that granted blanket citizenship to all migrants of Rwandan and Burundian ancestry who had immigrated before 1960. This citizenship law that attributed Zairian nationality to *Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge* “was believed to be the result of the strong influence of a number of *Banyarwanda* on the central government” (Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:132-133; Stearns 2012a:23). The fact that the aforesaid law gave “foreigners” the right to vote and the right to buy land compromised relations between the indigenous community (despite their multi-ethnicity) and migrants.

Furthermore, in 1973-1974, when Mobutu nationalised DRC's foreign-run industries, business enterprises and plantations (the so-called *Zairianisation*), as discussed in the previous subsection, he granted many of the foreign properties to *Banyarwanda* officials in North Kivu, particularly in Masisi and western Rutshuru (Nzongola 2002:149). In Goma, the *Banyarwanda*, principally those of *Tutsi* origins, took control of most of the important economic activities. In the Rutshuru territory and the southern part of

the Lubero territory, they were granted large farms and concessions to the detriment of the *Nande*⁹⁹ natives.

In Ituri, under similar terms, the ownership of prime land was reassigned to elite *Hema*. Moreover, the *Hema* were sufficiently informed on the new land law of 1973. In fact, the new General Property Law declared “all land (including the land under customary control) property of the State” (Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:131). Therefore, the *Hema* took advantage of new opportunities offered by the new land law and used their favoured position with the Zairian authorities to purchase concessions and to get the right to use their land for commercial purposes (Camm 2012:9).

This created a rural capitalism and a *Hema* farming elite in Ituri. Since then, the *Lendu* agriculturalists have been gradually displaced from their ancestral land. The dispossessed *Lendu* became tenants on *Hema* farms. Worse still, when inter-communal clashes occurred, Mobutu’s government sided with the *Hema* elite. This favouritism towards the *Hema* increased the *Lendu*’s resentment. They accused the *Hema* of colluding with administrators who belonged to their tribe to get such large pieces of land (Vircoulon 2010:210). On that point, Vlassenroot and Huggins (2005:133) note:

From 1973 on, the best way to secure access to land was to get close to the state. This included the involvement in patronage-networks throughout which economic advantages were converted into political resources and distributed to those who expressed their political loyalty. Since access to land became regulated by administrative procedures, political power-holders and state administrators came to be crucial members of these networks of patronage, and thus, became enormously powerful. Since the

⁹⁹ The *Nande* are one of Bantu ethnic groups in North Kivu originating in two territories: Lubero and Beni; and largely located in the territory of Rutshuru and in the city of Goma as well.

property rights of new landholders were never secure (concessions could be re-allocated by the state when defined as ‘insufficiently dynamic’), access to land was always conditioned by political favour.

On the other hand, in North Kivu, the *Hunde*¹⁰⁰ chiefs (*Bami*) in Masisi territory played a crucial role in selling large tracts of land to migrants, even though in 1973 the introduction of modern land rights and the new legislation on property drastically limited their authority. Note that, from then on, all land acquired or occupied based on customary law no longer had legal status, and to buy or to sell land under customary rules became illegal. Unfortunately, the administrative authorities did not have enough employees to take control over all transactions, and they were corrupted. The traditional authorities were therefore established as local supervisors of all transactions. No land was sold or bought without their permission. In Masisi/North Kivu, instead of benefiting native peasants from the land sales, the *Hunde chiefs* opened the road to “clientelistic” relations between them, politicians and rural capitalists. This was to the advantage of the *Banyarwanda* because in the Kivus they were Mobutu’s closest allies. At the same time, local authorities reduced their power and their local legitimacy (Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:131-136). By the end of the 1970s, they had lost authority over much of the land formerly under their control (CGARC 2007:22).

As can be seen from the explanations above, during thirty-two years of Mobutu’s dictatorship, the situation of migrants improved dramatically in the Kivus in a similar way to that of the *Hema* in Ituri, while the great majority of dispossessed peasants, and the least-favoured by the Mobutuist government, languished in poverty and misery. It is clear from the foregoing that other ethnic

¹⁰⁰ The *Hunde* are one of North Kivu Bantu ethnic groups originating in Masisi territory, and are also largely located in Rutshuru territory and in the city of Goma.

groups (*Lendu* in Ituri, and natives of the Kivus) found themselves more and more marginalized by the Mobutuist regime. This economic imbalance situation quickly degenerated into a deep feeling of hatred and resentment against the most favoured ethnic groups (*Banyarwanda* and *Hema*). Therefore, during the 1990s widespread discontent and resistance were reported among *Lendu* and Kivu peasants over *Hemas* and *Banyarwanda's* domination in Ituri and in the two Kivus. This provided a fertile terrain for ethnic conflicts, which have taken the form of the ongoing cycle of bloody violence in the Kivus and Ituri. But all of the above happened while the majority of people in the DRC claimed to be Christian.

The next subsection is an overview of the way the Congo was evangelised and its impact on perpetuating the culture of violence in its eastern region.

5.2.1.6 Perversion of Christian faith in shaping the security situation

Apart from the Congolese leadership being accountable for perpetuating conflicts in the eastern DRC, the perversion of the Christian faith is one of the historical roots of violence that can be reported in the history of the DRC. Below is an overview of the impact of this perversion according to three notable moments in the Congolese history: the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods.

5.2.1.6.1 Pre-colonial (1484-1885) and colonial era (1885-1960)

The lethal and protracted conflicts in the eastern DRC, which are compared to the "deep darkness" motif in Isaiah 9:1 (see 8:21-22),¹⁰¹ run far deeper (Arnason 2012:45) than the twenty years of lack of peace that have been experienced. They date back to the 15th to 18th centuries CE, when Christianity was brought to the Kingdom of Kongo¹⁰² by Portuguese missionaries (Fryer 2000:158) before colonialism. In this regard, Katongole (2005:147) reveals that the greatest crimes by Europeans in Africa took place in the DRC during that period. Portuguese explorers and missionaries initiated this dark period of the Congolese history in 1484 (Mavinga 2009:213).

During this pre-colonial era (1484-1885), Portuguese missionaries who brought Christianity in the Kingdom of Kongo were unfortunately agents of the Portuguese Kingdom. They "were more involved in the slave trade than in missionary work" (Mavinga 2009:167). They deviated from their prophetic role, which would consist not only of preparing believers for heaven but also allowing a harmonious life in a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Kongo community; building a just and coherent society; and preparing enough local church leaders, and administrative, political and military leaders for the future of the Kingdom of Kongo (Nsangi 1981:51-52). Instead, they primarily worked side by side with European slave traders and ivory exporters for the Portuguese Kingdom. They, therefore, significantly contributed towards the desolation and the distress of indigenous people who were seen as merchandise to be sold, and

¹⁰¹ The metaphor of "deep darkness" is discussed in the next section (i.e. section 5.3) in relation to eastern DRC's context of violence.

¹⁰² According to Fryer, the Kingdom of Congo included the western part of the present DRC, northern Angola, Cabinda, the Republic of Congo, and the Southern Gabon.

tools for forced labour. By being part of the offending system, missionaries unfortunately caused more harm than good to indigenous people. Subsequently, they created and perpetuated a violent and oppressive environment in the Kingdom up to the present. This situation led to local prophetic reactions mostly through women who, unfortunately, were persecuted, and some of them ended up being burnt by Portuguese missionaries (Hastings 1998:147,152-153). As a result, the prophetic mission of the church was practically ruled out (Hildebrandt 1996:63).

As in the preceding case, in the early colonial period of the Kongo (1885-1908)¹⁰³, Christian missionaries worked also as agents of the Belgian King Leopold II. They were used to sustain the King's interests and to consolidate his political system at the expense of the population who were supposed to be evangelised. Apparently, the Christian missionary work started being promoted. However, even though the slave trade stopped, the country and its population were still exploited and subjected to forced labour and lethal violence. For instance, as a result of Christian missionaries' inaction and passivity, over ten million people were reported to have died¹⁰⁴ due to the ivory and rubber trades, governmental and military officials' cruelty, and cannibalism (Arnason 2012:45). In addition to this disastrous situation, women were systematically

¹⁰³ From 1885 to 1908 the Kongo was the private property of the Belgian King Leopold II. He named his new colony *Congo Free State*, and it covered the entire area of the present day DRC.

¹⁰⁴ Gyesie (2010:78) thinks that more Congolese were killed for the sake of Belgian imperialism than Jews during Hitler's fascist Holocaust. The difference between the two killings is that Germans kept sufficient records on the deaths when they committed the Holocaust, but the Belgians did not. Therefore, there is not sufficient available data showing the exact number of Congolese killed during Leopold II's colony.

raped, people's hands were cut off, locals were kidnapped, and villages were looted and burnt (Osborn 2002:s.p.).

The atrocious context of Christian evangelisation during the abovementioned time led to a lack of interest by indigenous people in the Christian religion. Even when the Congo went into the Belgian government's administration from 1908 to 1960, the country did not cease to be exploited by or with the complicity of missionaries whose principal mission was to safeguard the interconnection between the political, economic and religious "powers". Using the same oppressive principles of the colonial system, their gospel focus was on poverty and the resignation from a better life (Clifford and Murphy 2005:17). Therefore, indigenous Christians were not showed how to improve their socio-economic development and other dimensions of their life. Africans' poverty and struggle for survival were considered a normal life and one of Christian values (Mavinga 2009:171). These unsolved problems among Africans generated and exacerbated interpersonal conflicts over land and ethnic conflicts in the longer term.

It should be noted that throughout the colonial era (1885-1960), the Christianity in Congo was associated with the colonial leaders and reflected the atrocities of colonialism. Consequently, during the crisis that followed the independence of the country, Christianity was at risk of being destroyed with colonialism (Lado 2002:35). If this did not happen, it was only because the Catholic Church prepared some local church leaders to take over the responsibility of the church after independence.

5.2.1.6.2 Postcolonial period (1960 to the present)

When the Congo fell under the one-party rule of the late President Mobutu (1965-1997), the perversion of faith reached its highest point. As was described earlier, corruption and economic crime were institutionalised and opposition movements were not tolerated; and Mobutu attempted to substitute himself as a “Congolese messiah” seeking to establish his one party as a church and himself, the founder, as the Messiah (Katho 2003:184). The Catholic Church leadership resisted Mobutu’s attempt to lead people toward idolatry and to suppress Christianity in the country. There was, therefore, an open fight between the Catholic Church and Mobutu’s regime, which ended up with the killing of 30 Catholic democratic activists. Despite this resistance, the Christian church was overwhelmed by Mobutu’s political ideology and ambitions and by his recourse to authenticity (Adelman 1975:134-139).

On the other hand, the Protestant Church,¹⁰⁵ in contrast to the Catholic Church, decided to closely collaborate with Mobutu’s regime and helped him establish his absolutism. As a result, Protestants failed, for instance, to lead church members toward a right understanding of the causes of the nation’s decay and the origin of their poverty. In their teachings, they rather focused on the spiritual origin of any situation. By so doing, “the Protestant Churches rendered themselves culturally irrelevant and politically unable to help the nation stand against the force of destruction” (Katho 2003:424). Today the consequence is that the majority of Protestant pastors and other leaders have developed the idea that it is inappropriate to involve the Church and its members in confronting the government, even though its policies are disastrous

¹⁰⁵ The Protestant Church was supported by Mobutu and was organized under a loose association called *L’Eglise du Christ au Zaïre* (ECZ), the present day *Eglise du Christ au Congo* (ECC), in English *Church of Christ in Congo* (CCC).

for the society. Instead, they emphasise the fact that Christians must let the Lord fight for them and against all the ills befalling them. They have let people believe that the disastrous situation experienced in the DRC and people's current suffering are either a punishment from the Lord against the Congolese people's sins, or just ordeals of life to be endured, and then the Lord will wipe away every tear from the eyes of suffering people. As a result, a large number of Protestants have become apathetic about getting involved in fighting for their legitimate human rights. In my view, the unimaginable suffering that Congolese people have endured from the pre-colonial era, through the dictatorial rule of the then Congolese President Mobutu, to the present provides a horrible example of the evil that can occur in a country when church leaders do not involve the Church and its members to stand against the force of destruction.

Even now, many Congolese Christians still live according to missionary teachings and behaviour, and still respect and comply in all aspects with them. To that must be added Mobutu's dictatorship, which has affected Congolese life today. There is evidence of this in the lethargy and slowness of Christian people in the eastern DRC to involve themselves proactively in the peace process, to fight against human rights abuses, bad governance and corruption, which are at the root of the deadly violence in their region and their extreme poverty. On the other hand, many Congolese in power (such as religious, political, military and police leaders) find it normal to amass possessions for themselves and plunder the country's properties and resources to the detriment of the population like colonisers and Christian missionaries did. They forget that a desperate, poor and hungry population cannot be stable.

In short, the degree of perversion of Christian faith since the pre-colonial era, Mobutu's dictatorship and the impoverishment of the population by the

Congolese ruling class are among underlying causes of the escalation of the culture of violence in the entire DRC in general and in its eastern provinces in particular.

After raising remote causes of violence in the eastern Congo, the next subsection discusses its immediate causes.

5.2.2 Immediate causes of violence: beginning of mass violence

In contrasting the remote causes that have been detailed in the previous subsection (i.e. 5.2.1) the present subsection will deal with incidents that directly produced the ongoing violence and instability on which the devastation of lives of millions in the eastern DRC are based. These include the issue of migrants' citizenship and the mass exodus of Rwandese refugees to the region under consideration following the 1994 Rwandan genocide. While detailing these two elements, I will be discussing the issue of scarce natural resources, which has become a contributing factor to the protraction of bloody violence in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

5.2.2.1 Controversy regarding migrants' citizenship in the two Kivus

It is necessary to recall that the 1972 citizenship law, which granted the migrants the right to access land, had grave consequences for the relations among ethnic communities given that the land was the basis for the economy in the two Kivus. The rivalry over the land was so pronounced that it exacerbated

animosity between the Kivus' communities (Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:131). In addition, despite the law of 1972, the indigenous populations have never seen the *Banyarwanda* and the *Barundi* ethnic groups as real Zairian citizens. For them, those people that they considered as “foreigners” should have been excluded from land rights. Since the dictatorial government involved had no plans to solve the problem situation, pressure from local communities mounted against migrants' influence in the Kivus.

After several years of controversy over migrants' citizenship, in 1981 Mobutu reversed the 1972 nationality law by a decree that stipulated that “citizenship had to be obtained upon individual application and was only available for those who could trace their Congolese ancestry back to 1885” (Kahindo 2011:34). This decree stripped most of *Banyarwanda* and *Barundi* migrants of their Congolese citizenship, and consequently expropriated much of their properties since the ethnic citizenship and the right to access land were linked. Therefore, they soon realised how shaky their status had become in the Congolese society, especially in the two Kivus (CGARC 2007:23). Afterwards, the two communities (natives and migrants) started perceiving each other as a threat to their respective lives. In the meantime, local politicians and people with strong commercial interest manipulated these ethnic tensions from both sides for their own interest.

In the early 1990s, because of the mismanagement and the political uncertainties, the dictatorial regime of Mobutu found himself under pressure from the Catholic clergy and from the West to open the *Conférence Nationale Souveraine*¹⁰⁶ (CNS, National Sovereign Conference). In the meanwhile,

¹⁰⁶ The CNS (Sovereign National Conference) was held in Kinshasa from 1990 through 1992. It gathered various political parties, public institutions, representatives from civil society and

Zairian economic, political, existential problems and insecurity reached crisis proportions (Kisangani and Bobb 2010: Lxxvi). The goal of the CNS was then to rule out Mobutu's dictatorship, to promote democracy and to find a new social order in the country. Unfortunately, the CNS reinforced Mobutu's politics of ethnic division (Prunier 2001:145). This became particularly apparent when; first of all, *Hutu* and *Tutsi* delegates were excluded from attending the CNS. Then, in the context of hasty democratisation, local and regional political discourse was dominated by issues like *geopolitique*, which reversed the tradition of appointing people who do not originate from a given province to top provincial posts. Consequently, provinces started to be ruled by their original members. Finally, debates surrounding the issue of "who is an authentic Zairian" (Hale 2009:121) were topical. Note that the *geopolitique* was undoubtedly not without consequences for the socio-political stability of the eastern DRC.

In North Kivu province, like other provinces, all civil servants who did not originate from the region were removed and replaced by members of the autochthonous tribes. The latter undertook to reverse "the course of the political and economic favouritism, which had benefited the *Banyarwanda*" (Prunier 2001:148,149). As a result, the identity crisis (the denial of *Banyarwanda* citizenship) reached a deeper level, and gave rise to serious clashes. All this added up to the old issue concerning the land ownership, as previously mentioned and brought about radical escalation of violence between different ethnic groups. Moreover, the ethnic and political competition became increasingly commonplace in the region. But, the situation was still further

guest members. They worked on the democratisation of the political system and a new constitution (Prunier 2001:145).

complicated when politicians, fighting for power, called on their social and electoral bases to defend their identity from the menace and the disloyalty of other ethnic groups. It soon became clear that the struggle for identity degenerated into struggle for power.

The crunch came when, from 1991 to 1993 each ethnic group organised themselves into either a political or a development organisation that later transformed into ethnic militias. The lack of social security in the region raised xenophobia, which in turn slid towards the recourse of security violence. In 1993 for instance, tensions escalated in North Kivu, and autochthonous ethnic militias massacred tens of thousands of Banyarwanda (Jourdan 2005:4). Thereafter, tension grew and scenes of murderous confrontations between both local and *Banyarwanda* groups raged on.

In 1994, the arrival of Rwandan *Hutu* refugees in North and South Kivu deteriorated the security situation in the region to the extent that the fear of a *Hutuland* in the two Kivus gained ground. As a result, on 28 April 1995, the transitional parliament produced by the CNS promptly adopted a resolution that stripped *Banyamulenge* and *Banyarwanda* of their citizenship (Kisangani 2012:28).¹⁰⁷ This led to growing insecurity in North Kivu. In response, the Zairian army was sent in the region to carry out large peace operations. But Stearns (2012a:29) shows that these peace operations paradoxically only brought more violence and atrocities among communities to higher levels in North Kivu since Zairian soldiers were selling large quantities of weapons to local militias (natives and migrants).

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that in 2004, the Congolese transitional government had revised the law on citizenship and agreed on the key date of the independence of Congo, 30 June 1960, in determining citizenship. This law is still valid (Stearns 2012a:24).

The following point is the debate on how the Rwandan genocide added a new dimension of massive cross-border violence that brought the aforementioned ethnic tensions to unknown levels of violence in the Eastern DRC (Prunier 2001:145).

5.2.2.2 Genocide in Rwanda and refugees' exodus to Zaire

In late July 1994, a large number of Rwandan *Hutu* refugees, including many of the perpetrators of killings of an estimated 800,000 ethnic Rwandan *Tutsi*, crossed into the eastern Zaire, especially in North and South Kivu. This massive migratory flux of Rwandan *Hutu* gave the ethnic conflict in the Kivus a regional significance (Zbikowski 2009:43, 44) and completely changed the balance of power in these two provinces.

Upon their arrival in Zaire, *Hutu* border crossers (armed and non-armed) were housed in North and South Kivu provinces in United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) camps, close to the Rwandan border. In these camps the political and military personnel that had been responsible for the genocide re-established themselves and launched attacks against the new *Tutsi*-dominated government of Rwanda (Weiss 2009:116). The establishment of the armed *Hutu* camps close to the border between the DRC and Rwanda by UNHCR, and their use as bases by the Rwandan *Hutu* militia (Interahamwe) and former *Hutu* Rwandan army (the ex-FAR [Forces Armées Rwandaises]), was not only contrary to UNHCR principles, but constituted a danger to international peace. However, the number of Rwandan *Hutu* refugees overwhelmed the UNHCR with its limited resources. In a feeble and misguided attempt to gain some control over the camps, the UNHCR hired members of

Mobutu's presidential guard (allies of the Rwandan *Hutu* military) to police the camp populations.

From the Zairian perspective, the ethnic balance in eastern Congo, in the Kivu provinces, was seriously disrupted. The Rwandan *Hutus* became a dominant force in some parts of the Kivus. In collaboration with Zairian *Hutu* militias, they proceeded to isolate and attack Zairian *Tutsis*. These attacks gained political and eventually military support from the Zairian army and some Kivu politicians. Consequently, with the Rwandan *Hutu* refugees "the loose coalition that had existed between Congolese *Hutu* and *Tutsi* collapsed" (Stearns 2012a:29). Moreover, with the changed balance of power in the two Kivus, Zairian *Tutsi* society had to face the danger of an ethnic cleansing campaign organized against them.

The problem of *Banyarwanda* "citizenship" in North Kivu also concerned the *Banyamulenge* in South Kivu. Since the latter was threatened by both the Zairian army and the Rwandan armed *Hutu* refugees who participated in genocide, an increasing number of young *Banyamulenge* prepared themselves to defend their community by seeking cross-border training and supply from Rwanda. In addition to that, many *Banyamulenge* and other *Tutsis* from South Kivu were integrated in the Army and the administration of the Rwandan regime (Stearns 2011:57-67). Meanwhile, *Banyamulenge* rebellion was formed in Rwanda and armed units started infiltrating South Kivu, and clandestinely carrying out their acts of terrorism on the Zairian territory. Their operations endangered the lives of the rest of *Banyamulenge* and other Zairian *Tutsi* civilians whose situation became extremely precarious in South Kivu. Accused of collaborating with their fellow tribespeople, and being agents of Rwandan and Burundian governments, *Banyamulenge/Tutsi* became subject to threats and

discrimination, and some of them lost their jobs, even their lives. In reaction to this situation, some of them undertook a preventive strike against the Zairian army (Forces armées zairoises: FAZ) and the *Hutu* “refugee” camps in their neighbourhood in September 1996. It is very probable that these *Tutsi* attacks were coordinated with the assistance of Rwanda. At any rate, Rwandan forces entered the battle and many *Banyamulenge* ended up joining Laurent Kabila’s army¹⁰⁸ *en masse* and played key role in the run-up to First Congo War (1996-1997) and Second Congo War (1998-2003) with many *Tutsis* from North Kivu who joined them (Vlassenroot 2002:499-515).

In rapid succession, the Rwandan army attacked the *Hutu* camps and Mobutu’s army with the result that many Rwandan *Hutus* were massacred (men, women, and children), since there was no serious effort to protect them (Weiss 2009:117, 118). The remnant perpetrators of the genocide, often referred to as FDLR after its French name *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*,¹⁰⁹ have remained in the DRC for 20 years, and continue to hunt and terrorise the Congolese civilian population today. Furthermore, the failure to remove these refugees from the eastern DRC in the 1990s has given the neighbouring countries a convincing pretext for invading the Congo on numerous occasions since 1996 (Zbikowski 2009:44) as it is developed in the next section.

¹⁰⁸ Laurent Kabila's presidency (the way and when he came to power) and its impact on the crisis in the Kivus are discussed further in section 5.3, subsection 5.3.1 of this chapter.

¹⁰⁹ The English translation of *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* is the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda.

5.3 DEEP DARKNESS FOR EASTERN CONGOLESE PEOPLE: FROM LOCAL CONFLICTS TO INTERNATIONAL WARS

It should be recalled that the 1994 genocide of the *Tutsi* people in Rwanda, followed by the massive afflux of *Hutu* refugees to the east of the DRC, is the first event that transformed the Congolese society into an arena of massacres and wars, of which effects are still being felt today as a deep "darkness" for eastern Congolese. The following subsections set out a short description of the aforesaid situation and mention various cease-fire agreements from the Lusaka peace accord (1999) to the one signed on the 23rd of March 2009.

5.3.1 The AFDL and the First Congo War (1996-1997)

The First Congo War (the so-called Liberation War) was a foreign invasion of Zaire led by Rwanda. According to Stearns (2012a:29), the twin catalysts of this war “would be the presence of Rwandan refugees and the decay of the Congo state”. However, the First Congo War ousted the dictator Mobutu and replaced him with the rebel leader Laurent Kabila. This war began on the 6th of October 1996 in the South Kivu province following the *Banyamulenge* revolt.¹¹⁰ The latter was relieved by the *Alliances des Forces Démocratiques*

¹¹⁰ The previous point 5.2.2.2 has more details about the *Banyamulenge* revolt.

*pour la Libération*¹¹¹ (AFDL) headed by Laurent Kabila, strongly supported by Rwanda and Uganda because of Rwandan *Hutu* refugees' campaigns of terror, as highlighted previously. AFDL and their two supporters (Rwanda and Uganda) received in turn support from a coalition of some African states namely Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Stearns 2012a:31). These states were determined to get rid of Mobutu who had become an embarrassment to the continent since he had been playing a destabilising role in central and southern Africa for years (Nzongola 2004:2).

After a successful seven-month march on Kinshasa that ousted the Mobutuist dictatorial regime on the 17th of May 1997, Laurent Kabila proclaimed himself President, and Mobutu fled to Morocco where he subsequently died. The country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), but little true change was brought about. The self-proclaimed President Laurent Kabila began his rule under the tutelage of Rwanda and Uganda. James Kabarebe, the current head of the Rwandan armed forces in Rwanda, served at the same time as chief of staff of the Congolese army in the DRC. The Congolese *Tutsi* people with close ties to the Rwandan regime occupied higher positions in Kabila's administration, including those of foreign minister, personal secretary to the president, and secretary-general of AFDL (the regime's political organisation) (Nzongola 2004:2).

In July 1998, Laurent Kabila did not avert any possibility of a coup since he alienated his Rwandan and Ugandan allies by expelling all their forces from the DRC. This event was a major cause of the Second Congo War, which broke out in August 1998.

¹¹¹ The English translation of *Alliances des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération* is Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo.

5.3.2 The RCD and the Second Congo War (1998-2003)

The Second Congo War was subsequent to the rupture of the alliance between Laurent Kabila and allies (Rwanda and Uganda) following the announcement asking their troops to leave the country (Stearns 2012a:32). Without delay, Rwandan government launched a rebel movement largely composed of Kinyarwanda-speaking rebels against Kabila (*Tutsi*, joined later by *Hutu*). The movement was named the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), in English: Congolese Rally for Democracy.

This Second Congo War (the so-called Second Liberation) is known as “the deadliest war in modern African history” (Stearns 2012a:32), or “the First African Continental War” (Weiss 2009:119), or “the First African World war” (Weiss 2009:120). Lasting between August 1998 and July 2003, this war directly involved nine African countries¹¹² and twenty armed groups, bringing with it the worst fighting ever seen in Africa (Stearns 2012a:33). This war quickly devastated the country, but centred mainly on the eastern DRC causing the death of more than 3.3 million people from, among others, violence (rape, torture and murder), starvation, disease, insect and snakebites or attack by wild animals in their bush hideouts. Note that millions more were internally displaced or fled to neighbouring countries. In this regard, the IRC (the

¹¹² The nine African countries that were involved in the Second Congo War are: The DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Namibia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Chad.

International Rescue Committee¹¹³) estimates that the 1998-2003 war was “one of the most deadly wars ever documented in Africa, indeed the highest war death toll documented anywhere in the world during the past half-century” (IRC 2003:ii; Coghlan, Brennan, Ngoy *et al.* 2006:44).

Similar to the first war, in which the survival of the new Rwanda regime was a major factor, the 1998-2003 rebellion resulted as much from Rwandan and Ugandan efforts to secure their borders against their opponents, respectively Rwandan rebels (FDLR) and Ugandan rebels (ADF/NALU);¹¹⁴ and to secure the *Tutsi* community in the DRC as well. More discretely, Burundi also sent troops into the DRC to support the RCD rebellion, and to intervene against the bases of Burundian rebels (FNL).¹¹⁵ The hidden agenda, however, was to oust Laurent Kabila, to replace him with a "more pliable puppet" and to have access to the DRC's wealth (Breytenbach *et al.* 1999:15; Nzongola 2004:2).

The RCD rebellion, backed by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, quickly gained ground in the eastern provinces of the Congo, advancing towards the city of Kisangani (the capital city of Oriental) and the two Kasai provinces in the west, seizing the northern half of Katanga province in the south-east (Stearns 2012a:32, 33). However, they failed to move ahead and to overthrow Laurent Kabila whose forces, supported by several African countries, including Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Chad; blocked their way (Nzongola 2004:2). Consequently, the rebels from the RCD movement and their backers fell back to

¹¹³ The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is a United States-based humanitarian non-governmental organisation.

¹¹⁴ ADF/NALU: Allied Democratic Forces/National Army of Liberation of Uganda.

¹¹⁵ FNL: *Forces Nationales pour la Libération* (National Liberation Forces)

their starting point (Nord Kivu), and settled on a partition of the eastern DRC to enable their unimpeded access to its resources.

The rebellion was headquartered in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, in the eastern DRC (Stearns 2012a:32). In fact, North Kivu is an area of high strategic value because of its location on the border of both Rwanda and Uganda, its international airport and its considerable mineral wealth (gold, cassiterite, coltan, and oil). Therefore, for about five years, North Kivu together with other provinces in this particular area, were under siege from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. During that period, the three countries openly engaged in the systematic plunder of the eastern DRC's natural resources. Kisangani and Bobb (2010: xlvi) note in that respect that, on the 12th of April 2001, the first report of a UN Panel of Experts published on the exploitation of resources in DRC concluded that Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi were profiting from the war by looting tax revenues and raw materials.

As economic interests started to prevail, the exploitation of the Congolese natural resources (minerals, mostly diamonds, gold, cassiterite and coltan, and other resources such as wood, ivory and even cows) became the main interest behind the war (Jourdan 2005:4). In the logic of a war economy or a war of resources (Nzongola 2004:3), the maintenance of at least a low-intensity conflict has become functional to the economic interests of the various belligerents. Export of coltan from the eastern DRC to European and American markets was cited by experts as helping to finance and to sustain the war in this particular region.

For the control of DRC's resources, fracture lines started appearing in the RCD rebellion and their backers. Rwanda and Uganda fought over the area,

which they considered they owned. For the control of diamond trade in Kisangani, heavy fighting erupted between the Rwandan and Ugandan armies in the town, once in August 1999 and twice in 2000 (Nzongola 2004:3). As Rwanda won all these wars, Uganda was forced to relocate to Ituri district. The presence of the Ugandan army in Ituri has prolonged the Ituri conflict following the divisive role that Ugandans played there. They favoured the *Hema* community at the expense of the *Lendu* who later fought against this exclusion by ethnic confrontations that have degenerated over the years into intractable bloody Ituri conflicts (Kisangani 2012:202, 204).

Note that in 1999, Uganda backed a new formation of a rebel group called the MLC (*Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo*), which drew support from among ex-Mobutuists and ex-Zairian soldiers in Equateur province (Mobutu's home province). Together, Uganda and the MLC established control over the northeast of the Country (Oriental province). On the other hand, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) split into RCD-Goma backed by Rwanda and headquartered in Goma, and RCD-ML¹¹⁶ supported by Uganda and headquartered in Bunia in Ituri. As a result, the North Kivu province was divided into two portions: Petit Nord (the southern part of the province) fell under control of the Banyarwanda-led RCD, while Grand Nord (the northern portion of the province) became the base of a *Nande* fragment group, the RCD-ML, and *Nande Mayi-Mayi*¹¹⁷ groups (CGARC 2007:24).

¹¹⁶ RCD-ML stands from the French *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Mouvement de la Libération*.

¹¹⁷ In DRC, the term *Mayi-Mayi* is used to designate local militias with numerous tribal and political allegiances opposed to Rwandan intervention in the DRC. They do not have a collective leadership and are present mainly in North and South Kivu, but also in other provinces. These groups of armed combatants were believed to resort to specific magic rituals

On the basis of the above, it was clear that the Second Congo War, the inter-African war of 1998–2003, imposed on the eastern DRC’s territory and its civilian population, was far from a liberation war, but rather a war of resources, a war of partition and plunder (Nzongola 2002:227). Jackson (2003:1) deduces that the so-called Second Liberation was the reinvasion of the DRC by a new set of Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian-backed rebels. Note that within this larger war, men were perceived as competitors or potential enemies, women were sexually violated and thousands of civilians lost their lives (Nzongola 2004:3; HRW 2002:1).

The only possible peaceful way to put an end to such an odd business with multifarious targets consisted of calling on all belligerents to bring their differences and disputes to the negotiating table. In August 1999 under President Laurent Kabila, all national and regional warring parties, except the RCD-Goma rebellion, signed the Lusaka Accord which called for a cease-fire, the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation MONUC (UN Mission in the DRC), and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the DRC (Autesserre 2010:274). After the assassination of Laurent Kabila in his office on 16 January 2001, by one of his bodyguards who believed he had betrayed them¹¹⁸, negotiations developed into the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) under Joseph Kabila. After the abortive Addis Ababa dialogue in October 2001, the “Global and all-Inclusive Agreement” was signed in Pretoria (South Africa), on the 17th

such as water ablutions (*Mayi* in Congolese Swahili) and to carry amulets prepared by witchdoctors that would make them invulnerable and protect them from ill fate.

¹¹⁸ Until now, there is no clear report on why the "child soldiers" bodyguards of the ex-president Laurent Kabila turned against him and plotted his assassination.

of December 2002, by all Congolese parties¹¹⁹ to the ICD. This was followed by the “Final Act” signed in Sun City (South Africa), on the 2nd of April 2003, in order to put the DRC on a path to peace. The signing of this agreement culminated in the formation of a Transitional National Government (TNG) (Diercks 2011:8).

On 29 June, all former combatant groups finally signed an agreement on power-sharing in the future integrated transitional armed forces. But, the members of the RCD-Goma signed the agreement on the condition that they keep control of North Kivu and the military region commandment under officers from the RCD-Goma (Stearns 2012a:35). Although the establishment of the TNG in DRC, the eastern part of the country was still characterised by on-going violence and armed conflicts, resulting in a humanitarian disaster and civilian deaths in the very presence of the world's largest UN peacekeeping force (MONUC) (UK BA 2009:20). One year later, the Sun City agreements were violated with the beginning of the Third Congo War.

5.3.3 The CNDP and the Third Congo War (2004-2008)

The CNDP¹²⁰ was a rebel group formed by renegade troops largely made up of *Banyamulenge* and many other Congolese *Tutsis* under the command of

¹¹⁹ The Inter-Congolese Dialogue was inclusive, open to belligerents (including Congolese government, RCD-Goma, RCD-ML, RCD-N, MLC and Mayi-Mayi) and non-belligerents (including members of the political opposition and Civil Society) (Stearns 2012a:35)

¹²⁰ CNDP stands for the French *Congres National pour la Defence du Peuple* (in English: National Congress for the Defence of the People).

Laurent Nkunda. The latter was a former rebel from the RCD-Goma. In 2003, following the power-sharing agreements, he joined the new integrated national army of the Transitional National Government (TNG) of the DRC as a Colonel, and by 2004, he was promoted to General. Surprisingly, General Nkunda soon rejected the authority of the government and retreated with some of the former RCD-Goma troops to the Masisi forests in North Kivu. There, he raised the flag of rebellion against the government of President Joseph Kabila, and then created the CNDP and made himself leader of rebellion. During that period at least the *Banyarwanda* identity issue was already solved by a new nationality law, which was promulgated in November 2004. The new law “confers the right to Congolese nationality on all people – and their descendants – who were resident in DRC on or before 30 June 1960” (Turner 2007:142).

In spite of the benefits mentioned above that this renegade received regardless of his political alignment, his main demands were still linked to the *Tutsi* community in the DRC. He claimed to be defending *Tutsi* interests in the eastern Congo. Nkunda's movement insisted on both the eradication of the Rwandan *Hutu* FDLR rebels from the eastern DRC whom it accused of orchestrating genocide against the Congolese *Tutsi* community, and the return and reinstallation on their lands (in DRC) of the 45,000 Congolese *Tutsis* living in refugee camps in Rwanda (CGARC 2007:3). The CNDP leader, also, was sympathetic to the *Tutsi* government of Rwanda, which decisively backed his group (Stearns 2012b:51). Until March 2009, without disregarding other many armed groups in the region, the CNDP was the most powerful combatant group against the Congolese regular army, the FARDC.¹²¹

¹²¹ FARDC stands for the French *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (in English: Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Therefore, despite the official end to the Second Congo War, the establishment of the transitional government, the creation of an integrated national army and the promulgation of the new citizen law, the violence in the eastern DRC did not come to an end. The Third Congo War pitted the CNDP rebellion against the integrated Congolese army, the armed militias (*Mayi-Mayi*), the United Nations forces (MONUC), and the Rwandan *Hutu* rebel troops (FDLR). It was known as the armed Kivu Conflict, but Weiss (2009:122), for his part, talked about “a neglected, lethal conflict”. Weiss qualified the Third War as neglected by Western powers and MONUC because during that time they only emphasised the establishment and the success of the Transitional National Government (TNG) at the expense of the politics and the war in the eastern DRC, which surprisingly did not stop even after the democratic election of the Congolese government in 2006.

During the lethal CNDP war, all the factions engaged in fighting committed human rights violations and abuses, including systematic killings, rapes, sexual exploitation, kidnappings, forced conscription of children, looting, plundering of crops, illegal taxation and general harassment of civilians. Among them were particularly the CNDP, *Mayi-Mayi* militias, the FDLR and, very surprisingly, the Congolese regular army, as well as many other Congolese armed militias. More specifically, Rwandan *Hutu* rebel troops (FDLR) have conducted widespread and brutal attacks against Congolese civilians for several years. Their attacks have been regularly accompanied by deliberate gang rapes. Note that in all circumstances rape and sexual violence against women have been used as a “weapon of war” in series of battles in the eastern provinces of the DRC (Chelala 2005:1).

In January 2007, in attempts to break down Nkunda's command structure, President Joseph Kabila struck a controversial deal allowing thousands of Nkunda fighters from CNDP to be inducted into special mixed army brigades mandated to track down FDLR rebels. Unfortunately, these operations against Rwandan *Hutu* rebels deteriorated into a campaign of terror against Congolese civilians with hundreds of thousands killings¹²² and more than 200,000 (the largest new displacement since 2003) forced to flee their homes. By March 2007, the campaign was called off, leaving the CNDP stronger than before (UK BA 2009:135). Unexpectedly, in mid-2007, the fighting between government forces and the CNDP escalated into a major confrontation, both playing off and exacerbating long-standing animosity between *Tutsis*, *Hutus*, and other ethnic groups in the two Kivus (North and South).

In order to bring any concrete solutions to the antagonism between the groups involved in fighting mentioned above, two peace pacts between CNDP and other Congolese armed groups were successively signed in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu. These included first the "Goma peace pact" signed in January 2008, after a peace conference on *security and development in the Kivu* (Kisangani and Bobb 2010:86). The second "peace agreement" was signed on March 23, 2009 to stop the war in exchange for the release of members of CNDP from prison, including the integration of CNDP rebels and other armed groups into the regular army, the FARDC. Neither of the two agreements will be respected by the signatory parties despite having benefited from the aforesaid advantages. Evidence of this comes from the creation of a

¹²² "A study published by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in January 2008 said that 5.4 million people had died from 1998 to 2007 in Congo, with 45,000 more victims being added to the death toll every month." Available at: <http://www.caritas.org/activities/emergencies/SixMillionDeadInCongoWar.html> [Accessed on 26 June 2013].

new rebellion named the "Movement of March 23" (M23), on the 4th of April 2012, with reference to the peace deal signed by the CNDP with the Congolese government on the 23 March 2009. This is why the general opinion is that there may be a hidden agenda behind the creation of all these rebellions led by Congolese of Rwandan origin.

5.3.4 The M23 and the Fourth Congo War

As mentioned above, former CNDP rebels who integrated into the Congolese regular army (FARDC) mutinied against the FARDC, and formed a new rebel armed group, "the Movement of March 23" (M23) in April 2012. The latter is named after the peace agreement signed on the date of 23 March 2009 to put an end to the CNDP rebellion. The M23 was in many ways similar to the RCD and the CNDP since it belonged to the same Congolese *Tutsi* ethnic group, which has always been mainly supported by Rwanda, partially by Uganda and in secret by some multinationals (Hawkins 2004:8). To justify their support of different *Tutsi* rebellions that have already taken place in DRC (including the M23 rebellion), Rwanda and Uganda often referred to the threat which FDLR (Rwandan rebels) and ADF/NALU (Ugandan rebels) present to their respective national territory. In addition to that, the Rwandan authorities always invoked as well the need to protect the *Tutsi* ethnic population in the eastern DRC from Congolese natives and Rwandan *Hutu* extremists (FDLR).

Moreover, as in the previous rebellions, RCD and CNDP, and the M23 mutineers reneged on their commitment to work for the just and durable peace

in the east of the DRC and, launched military operations against the FARDC to liberate, according to them, the DRC from the burden of the current government. But this is far from the truth because, instead, M23, including the two previous rebellions, insurgents created disorder, committed horrific atrocities by slaughtering and extensively violating the civilian population in territories under their control.

In November 2012, M23 rebels left the rural areas under their control and launched attacks against the provincial city of Goma that they occupied. This action shocked international actors such as the African Union (AU), the SADC, the CIRGL, the DPKO,¹²³ to name but a few. Suddenly, there was intense media coverage on the growing bloody conflicts in North Kivu, which awakened the rest of the world to the extent that the United Nations (UN) and the international community condemned the M23 attacks and occupation in the strongest terms possible. In similar vein, British government threatened to hold back aid that goes straight to Rwandan government.¹²⁴ These threats led to an agreement arranged by Rwanda and neighbouring countries to force M23 rebels to withdraw from the city. They went to take a stand in their previous controlled-territory. Even though it was not yet the end of the war, the attention given by the International Community to the events following the M23 withdrawal from Goma, established a convincing way that there could at least be some kind of lasting peace process ("light") in North Kivu.

¹²³ SADC: Southern African Development Community; CIRGL: *Conférence Internationale sur la Région des Grands Lacs* (International Conference on the Great Lakes' Region); DPKO: Department of Peace-Keeping Operations.

¹²⁴ A recent UN report provides "credible and compelling" evidence of neighbouring Rwanda backing the M23 rebels (McDevitt 2012).

Before tackling the international community response to the abovementioned crisis, the crucial issue, which needs to be dealt with, is to know why peace agreements from 1999 to 2012 always failed miserably to bring lasting peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC. This is further discussed in next section.

5.4 ASSESSING PEACE AGREEMENTS FROM 1999 TO 2012

Although some agreements have produced peaceful results in some parts of the world, various cease-fire agreements referred to in previous subsections did not succeed in ending armed conflicts and wars in the eastern provinces of the DRC. In my opinion, if all parties involved in armed conflicts and wars in this particular area truly wanted to see peace prevail, they should have respected and implemented peace agreements of which they have been signatories. Yet, “those who support diplomacy contend that peace treaties are a necessary step towards ending conflicts” (Mims 2008:64). The negotiation procedure, the takeover of the Congolese resources and the security issues of neighbouring countries are the source of peace process failure.

5.4.1 The negotiation procedure

Among factors that inevitably hurt the peace process, one can cite the poor negotiation procedure, principles and practice that have over the past two

decades revealed their limitations in attempts to end wars and armed conflicts in the eastern DRC. As it was developed in my master's dissertation (Kahindo 2011:113-124), the participative negotiations remain the suitable diplomatic means to solve eastern DRC's armed conflicts and wars and create a lasting peace in the region, if and only if their guidelines are respected. Note that it was maintained that participative negotiations as inspired by the Abigail strategy (1 Sam 25:14-35) contrast with the diplomacy of avoidance and competitive negotiations. Both diplomacy of avoidance and competitive negotiations probably led to inefficiencies and mistakes during various negotiations to end the wars in the region under consideration. Indeed, participative negotiations suggest, however, that the strategists of peacemaking involve above all eastern Congolese rank-and-file (men and women) in the peacemaking process if they want to deal with underlying causes of conflicts in the region. Then, strategists must build mutual confidence between the parties in conflict during discussion and help them to analyse their respective interests while bringing them to suggest suitable strategies by using objective criteria able to lead the parties to true consensus.

Mims reinforces the above viewpoint:

Of course there are clear factors that inevitably hurt the peace processes, for instance the negotiations were poorly constructed, fighting continued throughout negotiations, the ceasefire wasn't properly enforced and the parties involved did not follow through with their end of the commitment (Mims 2008:65).

It is necessary to reveal another crucial reason for repeated peace agreement failures and the continuation of wars in the eastern DRC.

5.4.2 The Congolese resources and the social security of neighbouring countries

The takeover of the Congolese resources by foreign nations and the Congolese ruling class is one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of peace agreements, which always resulted in the continuation of conflicts in the eastern DRC. This looting dating from the Mobutu regime has become aggravated, during these last two decades, by the implication of multinational companies in natural resource plunder. According to three reports submitted in 2001, 2002 and 2003 by the "UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and other Forms of Wealth in the DRC to the UN Security Council", a number of Congolese officials, foreign countries involved in the war (such as Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe), and multinational corporations were accused of illicit trafficking of Congolese minerals and diverting substantial state sources of revenue (Kisangani and Bobb 2010:416). Almost all accused, despite denials, are believed to work behind the scenes by providing military and logistic assistance to rebels and armed groups in the region under consideration, in order to achieve their aims.

On the other hand, the specific issue of assuring access to affordable and suitable social security benefits to all Rwandese citizens in general and all Congolese *Tutsis* in particular, explains also the internationalisation and the persistence of the bloody violence in the eastern DRC. In this respect, the M23 rebel group, following in its predecessors' footsteps, has been fighting, backed by its allies, over the DRC's extensive mineral wealth, no matter how tragic loss of eastern Congolese life. Analysts such as Stearns (2012b:9), reveal also that:

The main force driving the rebellion is the belief, held in Kigali as well as among Tutsi businessmen and military commanders in North Kivu, that the dysfunctional Congolese government will not be able to protect their varied interests—their security, investments, and political power. In order to safeguard these assets, they have backed armed groups: the CNDP between 2004 and 2009 and, since April 2012, the M23.

In my view, as long as the interests mentioned above will not be guaranteed, the world will witness continual cease-fire violations and interminable wars in the eastern DRC.

5.5 LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS: RESPONSE BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

During the three previous wars (First, Second and Third Congo Wars) that ravaged the conflict-ridden eastern DRC before the eruption of the M23 rebellion, any reasonable person would find very surprising the resounding silence from the International Community regarding such a worsening humanitarian crisis. This was because those who were supposed to act against the crisis at the national level and/or to report the true levels of human rights abuse, killings and human suffering at international stage were, unfortunately, those who contributed considerably to the distortion of the reality.

However, according to what was written in the previous subsection, ultimately, the world awareness focused great attention on massive human rights abuses and widespread atrocities that had been committed on civilian populations. Therefore, since 2012, the international community undertook a search for the ways and means to end large-scale suffering in the eastern DRC

and to bring about a lasting solution to the crisis. An international diplomatic sequence was developed, and it culminated in the signing of the “Peace Framework Agreement” (PFA). This PFA was named “Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region”¹²⁵ (PSCFA), and was signed on Sunday February 24, 2013 in Addis Ababa.

Following the signing of the PSCFA, a special brigade of an intervention force made up of 3,000 troops from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi was established by the UN Security Council with a more offensive mandate than that of the MONUSCO. This UN-backed brigade was empowered by UN Security Resolution 2098 to neutralise and disarm all armed groups in the eastern DRC “whilst taking into account the necessity to protect civilians and reduce risks”.¹²⁶ The creation of this brigade was the culmination of a long process of lobbying activities, which resulted in the M23 rebel movement being defeated in battle in November 2013. Fortunately, since 2012, the situation of the eastern DRC has become the focus of global media and diplomatic attention (Stearns 2012b:52) to the extent that there is hope.

Nevertheless, there are still sporadic massacres that are accompanied by inhuman treatment of civilians living in the countryside of the eastern DRC.

¹²⁵ This peace framework agreement was signed by the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Angola, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and Zambia. The Secretary-General of United Nations, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Chairperson of the SADC, and the Chairperson of the ICGLR also signed the agreement as witnesses. See more at: <<http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/peace-security-and-cooperation-framework-for-drc-and-the-region-signed-in-addis-ababa#sthash.yMGghkt5.dpuf>> [Accessed on 26 June 2013].

¹²⁶ Read more at: <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/98140/ngos-concerned-about-new-drc-intervention-brigade>> [Accessed on 26 June 2013].

Uncontrolled armed groups under the passive eye of the Congolese regular army (FARDC), the MONUSCO and the brigade of the intervention force perpetrate these massacres. This situation is making sensible people fear for the worst for the future if the DRC cannot address its own governance and decisively stop these killings, instead of relying only on the international community intervention, since "the Congolese government "bears the primary responsibility regarding the reform of its security sector" (McCartin 2013:76).

5.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Part Three, consisting of Chapter Five of this thesis, was devoted to the analysis of the historical dimension of the repetitive and persistent warfare in the eastern DRC, examining the international response to protracted and lethal violence after the repeated failure of various peace agreements. Contrary to the religious and moralising interpretation of the conflict context of the eastern provinces of the DRC, done by some Christian preachers¹²⁷, it was shown in this Chapter Five that the roots of the persistent culture of violence in that region stretches back to the pre-colonial era. It was demonstrated how this culture was shaped by Belgian and Congolese political and military leadership failure, and the missionary and Mobutu's perversion of the Christian faith. They have been at the root of the inter-communal resentment that has been fuelled, for most of the time, by either competition for land, or citizenship issues, or even political and economic powers. In addition, the study found that eastern Congolese local

¹²⁷ For further explanation of religious and moralising interpretations of the eastern DRC's crisis, read Chapter One, section 1.2 Relevance and significance of the study.

conflicts have been so protracted and exacerbated by warlords, both Congolese and foreign nationals, for the purpose of the political or economic control, that they have reached national and international levels.

To apprehend how the political leadership in Congo has been the source of local conflicts that acquired a national and an international dimension, Chapter Five retraced an overview of the role of historical root causes of violence in the eastern Congo dating from the pre-colonial period. Among historical events and situations that gave rise to violence in the region, it was examined in missionaries' attitude during the pre-colonial period, which was diametrically opposed to their mission, the role that the colonisers and postcolonial Congolese political leaders played in generating and perpetuating conflicts in the eastern provinces of the DRC. Above all, the political leadership failure was pointed out as a major factor that has led the DRC to suffer chronic instability for more than fifty years in general, and the eastern DRC to become the theatre of intensive civil and international wars for more than twenty years, in particular. The immediate causes and the development of different wars (from 1996 to 2012), which always started in the eastern provinces of the DRC and affected the entire country, were analysed as well as various peace agreements signed to attempt to end the wars.

In view of the above, the burden of responsibility falls solely on the political leaders who did not play a strong socio-political role to ensure that peace prevails in the entire country in the interest of citizens. This had opened the door to the interference of outsiders in fuelling armed conflicts and wars in the eastern DRC as it was developed in this chapter. In addition to that, some of them have been accused of complicity with rebel activities and in war crimes. Therefore, they have avoided their responsibility to protect the national security,

prevent cross border attacks, protect endangered civilian populations; denounce human rights abuses, violence, war of aggression and plunder. Their attitude has led most Congolese people, in their hope for a better future, to hide behind a fragile and vague religiosity, as it was detailed in Chapter One, section 1.2 about the relevance and significance of this study.

After this deeper investigation of the context of the reader, the study will identify from the analysis of the text of Isaiah 9:1-6 and its context, some suitable, relevant and adapted solutions that will put an end to persistent violence in the eastern DRC. This is the subject of the next part of this study, which consists of Chapter Six. It deals with the appropriative reading of Isaiah 9:1-6, the last phase of the contextual reading process in the Tri-polar Exegesis Model, which will allow the text and its context to engage in dialogue with the reader's context.

PART FOUR

PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ISAIAH 9:1-6

Part Four of this thesis seeks to locate the hermeneutic approach, which I applied to the reading of the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, in the African Biblical Hermeneutics. This part of the study is thus the answer to the last sub-question of the central question of this study. It provides the response to the question on how the prophetic message of the *Prince of peace* speaks to the eastern DRC context and to the issue of the Congolese leadership. My attempts at answering this question will allow me to use the research findings from the preceding chapters in order to support my hypothesis and to reach the goal that I set for this study.

It should be noted that through the contextual reading process termed the “Tri-polar Exegetical Model” (Draper 2002:18), which involves three main steps: the contextualisation, the distantiation and the appropriation phases, two steps have been completed in the five previous chapters. That is to say, before analysing my contemporary context (contextualisation), I allowed the text to speak for itself through its literary analysis and its socio-historical setting (distantiation). Therefore, the next chapter (Chapter Six) deals with the third and last step, the “appropriative phase” (West 2009:252), which is designed to facilitate the dialogue between the text, together with the results of the exegetical analysis, and the context of the eastern provinces of the DRC.

Chapter Six

REREADING ISAIAH 9:1-6 FOR THE EFFECTIVE PEACE- BUILDING IN THE EASTERN DRC

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The appropriative reading of Isaiah 9:1-6, the last pole in the Tri-polar Exegetical Model, takes shape in the reality that the composers and transmitters of the Old Testament wished to communicate not only with their contemporary generation, but also with generations of later readers. The exegesis of Isaiah 9:1-6 must now move from the past to the present (Smith 2008:171). On the basis of this, the biblical text of Isaiah 9:1-6, in the much older context of lack of peace and security, is re-read in this chapter against the specific contemporary context of recurrent violence in the eastern DRC. Building on the exegetical research findings, which focused on the "light-darkness" metaphor and the characteristics of the *Prince of Peace*, the present chapter attempts to develop an expected image of a "Prince of Peace", that is the *anthropolitical* Congolese leadership. His or her starting point in peace- building efforts is to bring the eastern Congolese people who have walked in a "deep darkness" for many years to see the "brighter light". That is to say, their liberation from repetitive wars, armed conflicts, chronic killings of innocent peoples,

kidnappings, and other cruel, degrading and inhuman treatments perpetrated by uncontrolled militias, together with the development of their well-being, are predicated on good governance and greater Congolese leadership accountability.

To reach the above aim, I envisage first, to review any possible link between the context surrounding the political turmoil in the Kingdom of Judah during the time of Isaiah and the current context of the persistent lack of peace in the eastern DRC. Second, I will try to develop the mission of the *Prince of Peace* in accordance with the exegetical analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6, compare the findings with the current Congolese leadership, and describe the mission of an ideal leadership capable of establishing an *anthropolitical* reign in the DRC. Finally, I give a proposal of the Church role in re-educating the Congolese leadership for the peace-building in the DRC in general, and in its eastern provinces in particular.

6.2 CONTEXT OF LACK OF PEACE IN JUDAH AND IN THE EASTERN DRC

In an attempt to identify the common features between the lack of peace in the Kingdom of Judah and in the eastern DRC, this section is built on the socio-historical background of both situations in accordance with elements developed in Chapters Three, Four and Five of the present study. Note that it is far from merely searching for similarities between Isaiah's historical context and the eastern Congolese socio-political background. The section is however

reviewing the cause-effect relationship between the Judah's domination by Assyrians and the prophecy about the *Prince of Peace* in comparison with the inter-relationship between the lethal, persistent violence in the eastern DRC and its root causes.

In such a context, no peaceful and efficient solution (peace agreements) can be taken for a lasting peace unless three main issues, which are common to both the Judaeian and Congolese contexts, are properly addressed. They include leaders' perversion of the Christian faith, the economic dimension of violence and the inadequacy of the leadership and the managerial skills of local conflicts in the previously mentioned setting.

On this point, the first subsection is focused on the link between the abovementioned two contexts stressing the perversion of the religious faith.

6.2.1 Perversion of the religious faith

While the motives of the Assyrian invasion in Syria-Palestine are known to have been at the core of the lack of peace in Judah, Ahaz' religious behaviour was also denounced by the prophet Isaiah for the same reason. Likewise, even though the research revealed the socio-political dimension of violence in the east of the DRC, the religious misconduct of Christian missionaries since the pre-colonial era and the perversion of faith during the Mobutu regime are decried to be among the causes of the culture of violence in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

The book of Isaiah was described in Chapter Three of the present thesis as a formulation of a prophetic exhortation addressed to the Kingdom of Judah and her King to adhere to YHWH's covenant (Sweeney 2005:15). This appeal appears as a significant point in the structure of Proto-Isaiah (Is 1 – 39). In the particular section of Isaiah 6:1 – 9:6, Isaiah's exhortation is made to King Ahaz to believe in YHWH's promises of peace and security for Judah and Jerusalem, even though Syria and Israel were threatening his Kingdom. However, considering that Ahaz chose to reject Isaiah's exhortation and YHWH's promises, he was considered as a faithless and sinful king with reference to the covenant that considers the lack of trust in YHWH's promises as a sin.

Apart from losing confidence and not trusting in YHWH by rejecting Isaiah's proposition of the miraculous sign from YHWH, it was shown that Ahaz, the renegade, also broke the covenant by relying upon foreign unbelievers, such as the Assyrians. What is more, King Ahaz's reign was characterised by religious syncretism, which consisted of worshipping YHWH through pagan practices. By way of pagan people, he performed child sacrifice by immolating his own son, and he mixed the worship of YHWH with the reverence of a foreign deity, Baal. Consequently, he became unable to lead the people to follow YHWH. Note that, in ancient Israel, even though to lead people in religion and in the observances of YHWH's commandments was the priests' mission, kings' belief had a great impact on their people's behaviour. According to the biblical tradition, these horrible sins of King Ahaz should not fail to draw the wrath of YHWH and should only deserve punishment. Therefore, YHWH to punish the Kingdom of Judah would use the Assyrians and Egyptians (Is 7:17a-25). Indeed, during the eighth century BCE, both Assyria and Egypt put pressure on the Kingdom of Judah. Assyrians wanted to

use the Kingdom as a base from where they would attack Egypt, while Egypt wanted to use Judah in order to block the road to Assyrian aggressors (NET Bible Is 7, note 38).

On a similar note, and yet not exactly in the same way, the perversion of Christian faith is denounced as one of the historical roots of violence in the eastern DRC. It was described in Chapter Five how Christian missionaries since the pre-colonial era generated the culture of violence in Congo in general, and in its eastern region in particular. Instead of accomplishing their mission to evangelise, they unfortunately became part of the offending colonial system, caused more harm than good to indigenous people. This degree of perversion of Christian faith generated and perpetuated the culture of violence and oppressive environment in the DRC in general and in its eastern provinces in particular.

In addition to the abovementioned, it was described in Chapter Five how the distortion of religious belief reached its climax during the 32-year dictatorship of Mobutu. In creating the single party-state MPR that he established as a church, he substituted himself as a “Congolese Messiah.” In the same way that King Ahaz led his people toward idolatry, Mobutu attempted to suppress Christianity in the country by imposing his political ideology and his recourse to authenticity,¹²⁸ which included the veneration of ancestors. The Catholic Church, by its democratic movement, resisted Mobutu's idolisation of the country and the church. The movement was subject to military forces' reprisals, and then shut down by the killing of 30 Catholic activists in 1992. As the Protestant Church decided not to be part of the Catholic rationale, they

¹²⁸Adelman (1975:134-139) wrote that the recourse to authenticity consisted of a return to African/Congolese cultural values. However, this ideology enabled Mobutu to subdue the Congolese people and to have complete control over the wealth of the country. For further explanation of the recourse to authenticity, see 5.2.1.5.1, section 5.2 of Chapter Five.

firmly worked in partnership with the dictatorship regime and contributed to Mobutu's establishment of his despotism. As a result, up to the present, most Protestant church members have been politically unable to stand against the force of destruction of the Congolese population. They do not know that they must denounce the complicity and duplicity of some members of the Congolese government and army in escalating violence in the eastern Congo. They even ignore that they must engage seriously and effectively themselves in the search for lasting peace and security in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

It was also mentioned in Chapter Five that, during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis, the Kingdom of Judah ended up becoming a vassal of their alleged rescuers, Assyrians, who coveted Judaeian economic resources. Similarly, it emerged in Chapter Five that, in the DRC's troubled history of violence the government has always relied on foreign forces and assistances for peace, security, and development of the country. This is why; there is evidence that the country has fallen prey to world powers and multinational companies that have more interest in the Congolese wealth than the Congolese people's welfare. Subsequently, they have been ready to promote and fund eastern Congolese armed groups, who are hostile to the effective implementation of various peace agreements that have been signed until now.

In view of the above, the following point will deal with the economic hidden agenda as another underlying cause of the lack of peace in Judah and in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

6.2.2 Economic dimensions of the recurrence of hostilities

It was mentioned in Chapter Five of this thesis that the Kingdom of Judah, part of Syria-Palestine, was an area coveted by surrounding powerful empires for its geographic position and its wealth. As was noted in that chapter, Syria-Palestine was located in the Fertile Crescent, an arable land highly suitable for farming and livestock raising. It had abundant and rich forests with cedar and other highly coveted precious wood, and it was open toward the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, the caravan routes in Syria-Palestine played an important role in linking the northern regions (Asia) to the southern (Africa), and the western areas (Arabia) to the eastern (Mediterranean regions). From these Syro-Palestinian caravan routes and the Phoenician port cities, the most lucrative trade in the Ancient Middle Eastern region were developed. Given the fact that for centuries, the politics of powerful empires in the Middle East were all focused on having control over the arable land, the sea trade on the eastern Mediterranean coast and the wealth, different states within the Syria-Palestine region became victims to many invasions and foreign occupations from great Middle Eastern powers. Syro-Palestinian kings found themselves in a situation where they had to cope consistently with the danger, which threatened from outside their kingdoms, rather than taking advantage of their own wealth and strategic geographical position to develop their states. This is why the Syro-Ephraimitic war that took place during the prophet Isaiah's time was an anti-Assyrian war of resistance from which Syria and Israel called Judah to join their self-defence.

Chapter Five discussed a similar context to the abovementioned. It was about the explanation how, since the pre-colonial period, the eastern Congo was coveted by neighbouring countries and by the international community for its arable land and raw materials. As a fertile area bordering Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, it was always faced with frequent voluntary migration flows of populations in search of fertile land suitable for the agriculture and the livestock. Therefore, earlier in the nineteenth century, as today, there could be noted in the eastern Congo violent conflicts between the various ethnic groups and the involvement of forces from outside, such as Swahili slave traders and Rwandan chiefs (Stearns 2012a:11-12). Moreover, it was reported in Chapter Five that after the Congo, including Rwanda and Burundi, had been colonised by Belgians, the eastern region of the DRC was subject to multiple forced migrations in order to provide Belgian colonisers' large plantations with manual labour (Lange 2010:48). Furthermore, various key factors brought into the eastern DRC thousands of refugees of Rwandan and Burundian ancestry (Hutu and Tutsi) who have settled permanently in the DRC, especially in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. These include the famine in the previously mentioned neighbouring countries; the 1959 social revolution followed by series of political instabilities in Rwanda and Burundi; the 1994 Rwandan genocide; and various eastern Congolese wars backed by neighbouring countries since 1996.

Decades of mismanagement of the abovementioned foreign population movements, the mismanagement of ethnic diversities resulting from the mixture of native and foreign populations, the government injustice in land distribution and revenues among natives and migrants, and the Congolese government and army decay, especially during Mobutu's regime, have plunged the eastern DRC

into persistent civil wars with foreign support. Therefore, from the local dimension of clashes the eastern DRC's conflicts have developed into international wars over wealth and natural resources. With reference to the plundering of the Congolese wealth, Baregu (2004:6) asserts that:

Contrary to what should be expected, resource endowment in the DRC has turned out to be a bane rather than a boon. These resources include minerals such as cobalt, copper, diamonds, cadmium, petroleum, gold, silver, manganese, tin, germanium, uranium, radium, bauxite, iron ore and coal and large forests for exploitation of timber. In the DRC, the resources have attracted all manner of plunderers who have combined with gun-runners, drug pushers, money launderers, war entrepreneurs (mercenaries and private military companies), generating endless cycles of violence and predation and spawning growing numbers of warlords. This unholy alliance has not only obstructed the Lusaka peace process but has also created entrenched interests or elite-networks that fuel the proliferation and widespread availability of arms.

The statement above explains the economic roots of the political crisis in DRC that has left the eastern part of the country occupied by several armed rebel groups, which stand like bridge between raw material plunderers and Great world Powers. They often impose incessant wars with horrendous consequences on innocent eastern Congolese populations so that the region has become “the home of violence and prolonged conflicts that have caused untold suffering and have also blocked meaningful socio-economic progress” (Baregu 2004:1).

This is one of the reasons why various peace agreements, which have been signed so far to end hostilities in the eastern DRC, have not been effectively implemented, or have only been partially implemented. Above all, the political dimension of these conflicts of interest in both the Kingdom of Judah and the eastern DRC must not be overlooked.

6.2.3 Political and military dimension of the conflicts of interest

As mentioned above, the economic factors are at the core of the permanent violence in both settings. A part from that, the political and military leadership failure to prevent potential conflicts of interest was identified in both Chapters Four and Five of this thesis as the basis of the lack of peace and security in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and a crucial cause of the persistent violence in the eastern Congolese provinces as well. Regarding the former, it was revealed first that Israel was military and politically powerful under King Jeroboam II. However, his peace was not comprehensive because it was full of social and economic injustice, since rich people exploited poor people. Moreover, the spiritual decay starting during the time of Jeroboam, the succession to the throne in Israel by assassin, robber and tyrant kings after Jeroboam, and a weak army led the kingdom toward civil war. In order to cling to power at all costs, some of the above-mentioned kings chose to be protected by powerful kingdoms and to pay them heavy tribute raised by imposing very high taxes on citizens. When the policy changed, for instance during the anti-Assyrian revolts, to take revenge on insurgents, these former Assyrian subjects fell into either going to jail or being deported and replaced by new occupants; or else exterminated, or their towns being completely destroyed.

On the Judaeen side, the refusal of King Jotham and then King Ahaz to join forces with Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, to resist the Assyrian invasion of Syria-Palestine, was maintained as the reason for the outbreak of the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis, which had devastating effects across

Syria-Palestine. Regarding Ahaz, while attempting to protect himself and his Kingdom against their neighbouring nations' pressures and the Assyrian threats, he openly invited the Assyrian King to the South for help. Ahaz therefore placed Syria, Israel and Judah's other neighbouring states into a precarious position (Wegner 2011:468). He provided the Assyrian army an opportunity to decimate Philistine territories in 735; to take most of Israelite territories and surrounding areas in 733, to destroy Israel and deport population to Assyria in 722, and later to ravage Syrian territories. By pledging his loyalty to Tiglath-Pileser III as a vassal, King Ahaz spared in some ways the Kingdom of Judah from Assyrian destruction and deportation. However, the irony is that the Assyrian protection was at the cost of the national freedom of Judah, for the Assyrian intervention in support of Judah constituted at the same time a threat to the Davidic throne (Widyapranawa 1990:38). As a result, the political independence of Judah started being destroyed, and despite the presence of the vassal king Ahaz on the throne, the Kingdom was treated as an Assyrian province.¹²⁹ According to what has been developed in previous chapters of this study, this is the reason why, in the text of Isaiah 9:1-6, the prophet Isaiah prophesied about the hope in a Davidic *Prince of Peace*, a peaceful, but at the same time powerful and perfect ruler who could restore the throne and safeguard the independence of the nation from the Assyrian dominion. This probably met the need of Judaeans who were yearning for their independence.

¹²⁹ Concerning how the political independence of petty states was destroyed during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, Cogan (1993:406) mentions three stages: "(1) a vassal relationship was established, marked by the payment of annual dues and tribute and the enlistment of national troops for Assyrian campaigning; (2) upon the discovery of disloyalty, military action to remove the unreliable vassal was undertaken, followed by his deportation and that of his supporters; a new ruler over a reduced territory, bearing increased obligations, was appointed; (3) in the end, and after further rebellion, even this vassal might be removed, his kingdom incorporated and provincialized after Assyrian fashion."

Regarding the eastern provinces of the DRC, it was pointed out in Chapter Five that, first the recurring violence experienced in the region was the result of the dismemberment and suffocation of populations in the GLRA by European colonisers. These phenomena date back to the establishment of the artificial boundaries between African countries. Next, the failure of the Congolese postcolonial governments to deal correctly with migration issues, land and property retribution, citizenship of the migrant populations, and land-law in the eastern DRC was identified. Under the then president Mobutu, the aforesaid issues worsened and led to ethnic and local violent conflicts in the eastern DRC. These local conflicts escalated greatly into widespread armed conflicts and wars with negative effects on the national and Great Lakes regional stability. All of this was escalated by decades of decay in Zairian military Forces. As a result, from 1996 to the present, the Congolese governments and army Forces have so far not been able to cope with the long years of these armed conflicts and wars in this particular area.

Various peace accords that were signed to end violence in the eastern DRC, and multiple power-sharing agreements that always formed the so-called integrated national army,¹³⁰ were also pointed out. In spite of these agreements, the situation degenerated, resulting in the worst atrocities ever in the history of the Congo against civilians, and the systematic looting of natural resources with the complicity of both local and foreign warlords and criminals. By incorporating undisciplined forces (militia and rebel), the Congolese army always ended up incorporating indiscipline and traitors in their ranks. And worse, all these accomplices have become richer while causing the death of

¹³⁰ In order to manage armed conflicts in the eastern provinces of the Congo, non-state armed groups (different wings of armed groups including militia and rebels) were integrated into the Congolese national army.

thousands, creating and perpetuating poverty in the area, destroying the environment and creating forced migration. In my opinion, their greedy desire to always have control over mineral resources in the eastern DRC has caused the situation to continue declining and the peace-building efforts to continue being undermined despite the mobilisation of the international community, including the AU and the UN, in the search for peace and in humanitarian assistance in the region. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the Kingdom of Judah lost its independence by relying on a looter foreign power. In a similar way, the DRC is at high risk of being exploited permanently and abusively, and therefore lose some of its economic and political sovereignty in favour of hidden interests of Western (even African) nations and organisations, which are involved in peace-building efforts, and in humanitarian assistance of civilians.

It was noted that Isaiah uttered the prophecy of *Prince of Peace* during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis about the hope for a Davidic King whose principal mission was to fight for YHWH's people's liberation from war and foreign oppression, and to bring peace (from "darkness" to "light"). With reference to that, I can say that it is high time for the Congolese political leaders to put their hands to the plough, redefine their mission toward the entire nation, and learn to rely primarily on the national strengths. By doing so, they will work for the nation's benefit and for a lasting peace in the entire country in general, and in the eastern DRC in particular. This is developed further in the next section.

6.3 MISSION OF THE *PRINCE OF PEACE* SUITED TO THE NATION'S INTEREST

In the previous section, I identified the religious, socio-economic, and political situations that led to the culture of violence in the eastern DRC, and which approximate the religious, political, and socio-economic causes of a lack of peace in the ancient Middle East during the time of prophet Isaiah. This dialogue between the contemporary and the biblical contexts has shed some light on the practical signification of the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 to the current Congolese context. In the present section, attention is given to how the meaning of this particular biblical text can be explained to people of the eastern provinces of the DRC, connect the Congolese leadership with that meaning and identify how the chosen text applies to the present situation in DRC (cf. Smith 2008:176). The focus is put upon the mission of the *Prince of Peace* since it links the hoped-for qualifications of the Judaeian leadership to the hopefully expected leadership for peace-building in the region under consideration. To reach this contemporary significance of the text, the mission of the *Prince of Peace* according to Isaiah 9:1-6 is first of all reviewed, and then its application is done to the contemporary context as helpful suggestions in order to build lasting peace in the eastern DRC.

6.3.1 Mission of the *Prince of Peace* according to the exegetical analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6

From the discussion of the analysis of the text in Chapters Three and Four, it emerged that the chosen text of this study is deeply rooted in the context of the Assyrian invasion and the Syro-Ephraimitic war during the second half of the eighth century BCE. It announces the reign of a Davidic king, the *Prince of Peace*, who would release YHWH's people, once and for all, from the Assyrian oppression; restore the temporal power to the Davidic throne; and "establish the Kingdom of peace, justice and righteousness guaranteed by YHWH" (Sweeney 2005:32). The fact that the prophet Isaiah referred to such a leader during the situation of serious political and religious crises sufficiently substantiates that this was indeed what YHWH's people were yearning for.

The evidence in support of the position above can be found in the result of the exegetical analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6. As indicated in Chapter Five, Israelites and Judaeans' life during the second half of the eighth century BCE went through a time of sorrow and distress following the events connected to the Assyrian westward invasion, the Syro-Ephraimitic war, Ahaz's apostasy, the destruction of Samaria, the deportation of the Northern people to Assyria and Judah's submission to Tiglath-Pileser. That time was described by Isaiah as the time of gloom and "deep darkness" (צִלְמָוֶת "tsalmavet": the shadow of the death) since people were disappointed and plunged into hopelessness and frustration (Is 8:22). The prophet therefore announced the new era of celebration, and the reasons to rejoice. He proclaimed the end of the era marked by distress symbolised by the darkness (or the death) and the rejoicing over their deliverance, which is represented by the return of the "great light"

(אֹר גָּדוֹל "ôr gādôl") (Is 9:1). That is to say, the emergence of the conquering new Davidic King [the newborn, the *Prince of Peace*] re-establishes in Judah the presence of YHWH who delivers his people from the death to the life, and increases the joy of his people (v. 2). The enthronement of this legitimate King (v. 5) constitutes another reason for celebration, and hope, because he enables people's liberation from Assyrian slavery (v. 3) and puts an end to the war (v. 4), values right and justice and establishes lasting peace (v. 6). Furthermore, this Davidic King is obedient to YHWH, leads his people to repent and to obey Him according to the covenant. In turn, YHWH guides the *Prince of Peace* in restoring his people's peace, which expresses itself in public safety and security and political and economic freedom and prosperity (v. 6).

The contextual interpretation of four phrases, which form the *theophoric* compound name in verse 5, supports the preceding analysis. Indeed, as indicated in Chapter Three, the four phrases in the compound name refer to the abovementioned individual human king from the line of David (Stromberg 2008:656). Different from Ahaz, a Davidic leader who chose to deviate from the right path and led the nation astray from YHWH's covenant, the political sovereign mentioned in v. 5 is portrayed as פֶּלֵא יוֹעֵץ ("Pele' yô'ëc": Wondrous Adviser), a political guide of his nation, a paradigm to follow. At the same time, he is אֵל גִּבּוֹר ("'ël gibbôr": Mighty God or mighty hero). This means a strong and extraordinary skilled fighter for the peace of his people, in contrast to a mere (weak) ruler (Ahaz and his army) who relies only on outside (foreign) support when it comes to fight for the peace and the security of his nation. He is also portrayed as a father whose major concern is the welfare of his children (אָבִי־עַד "'ávî'ad": Everlasting Father) a monarch who neither plunders his own

country, nor preys upon his vulnerable population who have suffered his ill governance. Above all, he is a *Prince (Ruler) of Peace* (שַׂר-שָׁלוֹם “Sar-šālôm”), the promoter and guarantor of peace, security and prosperity for his people in a safe socio-economic and political environment (v. 6).

In short, Isaiah 9:1-6 is about the legitimate, powerful, skilled and accountable leader who works hard to end the war and the oppression of his people; who strengthens his political and economic powers by promoting right and justice, maintaining people’s welfare, safety and security for the lasting peace and prosperity in the nation (v. 6). These necessary qualities are required of the *anthropolitical* leaders who strive to improve human lives by dealing with everything that can damage people’s welfare. The qualities above are needed for political, military and social leaders in the context of the lack of peace in the eastern DRC.

6.3.2 Mission of the *Prince of Peace* for the peace-building efforts in the Eastern DRC

The mission of the *Prince of Peace* described in the previous subsection reveals qualities of a ruler to whom I have referred as an *anthropolitical* leader (Morin 1965:11). Zaghouani-Dhaouadi (2008), on reflection regarding the political dimension of Morin’s work, declares that the field of *anthropolitics* is spread over various domains that serve the peace of human beings of all social sectors. This implies religion, politics, socio-economics, finances, security, ecology, education, housing, health, wealth, welfare, leisure, and so on. He adds

that the *anthropolitics* aims at justice, equality, integrity, and level-headedness; in short, all values devoted to the existence of human beings in a society (Zaghouani-Dhaouadi 2008:148, 149,151).

This will help define the virtues required for the Congolese leadership in the context of armed conflicts and wars of aggression. In fact, they are called to fulfil their mission through the effective peace-building process in the eastern provinces of the DRC. It is recalled however that in this particular area, the peace-building process has failed to put an end to the persistent violence in many localities. Many researchers have thought that the Congo has to find answers to the eastern Congolese conflicts by addressing the underlying causes of these conflicts. This matter is discussed in the following subsection.

6.3.2.1 Addressing underlying causes of conflicts

It was shown, in Chapter Five that after two decades of armed conflict and wars, the culture of violence has become prominent in many localities in the eastern DRC to the extent that peace and security have remained elusive. In such situations, development has proven far more difficult and complex to be achieved. The best way to eradicate armed conflicts, wars, and the culture of violence among populations would be the Congolese leading powers' commitment to timeously address the root causes of the crisis and assign priorities to the implementation of certain peace agreements in order to categorically break the deadly cycle of violence. However, although the root causes of the persistent deadly violence are known, the Congolese leadership, along with key regional states involved in the peace process and the international community, have shown little inclination to address them in order

to find suitable solutions for preventing and managing violence and armed conflicts. Their approaches to and methodologies for peace-building do not take into account the relationship between social, economic and political factors and the recurrence of lethal conflicts in the eastern DRC. They do not consider as well the interests of the local citizens who have been victims of the scourge of violence for too long and have already waited so long for peace and stability in their region.

It is noteworthy that no one can hope to remove or alleviate some underlying causes of the ethnic conflicts and violence over land, such as the dismemberment and suffocation of populations resulting from the establishment of colonial boundaries between GLRA countries. There is no one who could suggest putting an end to consequences of the colonial odd mix of foreigners and natives in the eastern Congolese region, and the favour won by some ethnic groups from particular colonial and post-colonial institutions and social structures. Given these difficulties, to build peace after a long period of violent conflicts in this region would involve the search for "stability within the confines of a system which already made the war possible" (Fetherston 2000a:196). This form of peace-building involves the engagement to deliver development while only maintaining stability in the region (Denskus 2007:657). To prevent future recourse to ethnic conflicts and conflicts over disputed access to land, Congolese leadership needs to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. They need to be aware of the fact that none of these issues can be addressed in isolation from one another. That is, the reform of the land tenure law and the distribution of national wealth must be done to the benefit of all the Congolese ethnic groups without discrimination.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, religious, economic, political and military underlying causes of the eastern DRC's crisis, as developed in the previous section of this chapter, can be lessened or eradicated if only the Congolese leadership accomplishes what YHWH's people expected from the *Prince of Peace*. As presented by prophet Isaiah in 9:1-6, his (her) mission was to look after their interests and fulfil their joy. This second mission is the subject of the next subsection.

6.3.2.2 Looking after the interest of the Congolese nation (anthropolitics)

Populations who have suffered interminable armed conflicts and insecurities have longed to see the Congolese leadership committed to looking after their well-being and ensuring lasting peace in their region. This can be made possible through working as people's liberator; guide of the nation; strong, skilled and invincible fighter; father of the nation and righteous, faithful and legitimate ruler.

6.3.2.2.1 Liberator of his/her people

The hoped-for liberator of people from the eastern DRC can be portrayed as the leader whose regime inaugurates a new era that makes a shift from the deep darkness, which populations had worked in for years, but now which they have needed to walk away from to the wished-for great light (cf. Is 9:1). That is, he/she is capable to bring greater joy to eastern Congolese who have been deeply scarred by more than twenty years of armed conflicts and wars. This is because his/her government starts up an era in which the law is applied and enforced at all level (cf. v. 6b) in order to provide a peaceful and secure

environment for citizens in general. As regards for inhabitants from the region under consideration particularly, they will experience freedom from the foreign Great Powers and from multinationals vassalship, exploitation and oppression (cf. v. 3), and therefore, peace and security from the violence and wars perpetuated by local and foreign militia who have been backed by the abovementioned institutions (cf. v. 4). Their celebration of joy will be considered as a celebration of the return to life since the materialisation of the long-awaited freedom, peace and security will open a new era of economic prosperity (cf. v. 6) after a long period of economic insecurity and exclusion, which had made citizens vulnerable in a politics based on exclusion.

Addressing political and economic exclusion is the greatest potential, which can accelerate the eastern Congolese provinces towards positive peace and economic self-sufficiency (McCartin 2013:64). This can only be achieved by a leader who opts to manage the nation as a political guide exercising his/her power for the people and in their interest, and involving people of all political persuasions. This is the next required quality of the *anthropolitical* peace-building leader, as further developed in the next subsection.

6.3.2.2.2 Political guide of his/her nation, a Wondrous Advisor

As a guide of the nation, the hoped-for *Prince of Peace* for the *anthropolitical* peace-building efforts in the eastern DRC has to highlight "the need for democratic capacity building, with clear participatory processes involving communities and the leadership as a necessary condition to mitigate new ... conflicts" (Warfield and Sentongo 2011:84). Far from the so-called "big

man" style of leadership¹³¹, the above-mentioned ruler will stand as an example to be followed in providing political leadership and peace-building guidance. His/her leadership falls well within the leadership definition as "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (Gardner 1990:1 cited by Warfield and Sentongo 2011:84). This kind of community capacity building through grassroots leadership will generate people's joy and celebration; and will appear as a necessary and sufficient ingredient for the development and sustenance of the eastern Congolese peace, security and prosperity (cf. Is 9:6).

The above achievements must result from a combination of creativity; vision; technical, political, economic, social and military expertise; and collaborative leadership. For the *anthropolitical* peace-building efforts in the eastern DRC, the next subsection develops the above qualities expected from the Congolese government.

6.3.2.2.3 Strong, skilled and invincible fighter

As described above, the eastern Congolese populations eagerly await for a political leader that would emphasise fighting for their peace and security; and for the stability and prosperity of their provinces. Even though they need to be protected during wars and armed conflicts, above all, they also require what YHWH's people was expecting from the *Prince of Peace* in terms of legitimacy, strength, skills, and invincibility, as presented in Isaiah 9:1-6. Furthermore, in

¹³¹ In the form of "big-man" leadership, decision making over the distribution of authority, power, and resources is exclusively controlled by the president.

view of persistence of violence in many localities of the eastern Congolese region for more than twenty years now despite the deployment of the largest and most expensive UN peacekeeping, it is obvious that the International Community's efforts to stabilise this particular region has failed to restore public security. Where politics are involved, inhabitants, in their profound disappointment, would like to see their leaders realise that the primary responsibility for building peace in the eastern provinces of the DRC lies with Congolese themselves. That is why, from research results of the analysis of Isaiah 9:1-6, I call Congolese leaders to learn that they should not be moved by the fatal flaw in their thinking that the solution to the eastern Congolese crisis lies elsewhere. They need to work hard with the intention to lay foundations for the DRC's politics based on democracy, human rights and rule of law.

On the military side, the national army needs to be restored in its vocation and responsibility of protecting the DRC's borders and maintaining security and peace of the populations. In addition to this, within the country, the national police needs to be brought to keep people safe, to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens. For this purpose, the main aim of the Congolese government would be the creation and management of a more legitimate, more professional and more disciplined army and police provided with modern equipment to secure the country and preserve peace. This would be just like the mission of the *Prince of Peace* [שר-שָׁלוֹם (Sar-šālôm = ruler or commander of peace)] announced by prophet Isaiah in 9:5, and who has military power [עַל-שִׁכְמוֹ הַמִּשְׁרָה hammiśrā^h ʿal-šikmô = the authority upon his shoulders). As a result, the army and the police would have necessary qualifications such as strength, knowledge, skill, know-how, experience and the aptitude, to make use of this equipment powerfully in order to help build a

lasting peace in the east part of the Congo, after the era of recurrent and persistent violent conflicts and wars.

This way, people would celebrate the military action of their nationalist, well-trained and defensive army, which does not attack civilians, but prioritises the neutralisation, once and for all, of plenty of local and foreign armed groups, which have destabilised the region and caused terrific suffering to innocent civilians. Similarly to what Isaiah mentioned in 9:4 as "the burning of soldiers' boots and robe rolled in blood" for the liberation of YHWH's people, this action would completely protect the DRC's independence and ensure that the eastern Congo is viewed as a stable region that contributes to the entire country's peace and GLRA's stability. A political leader who would make the abovementioned qualities possible would behave like a diligent father (administrator) of the nation. The following subsection explains this in more details.

6.3.2.2.4 Father of the nation

Further to the previous point, eastern Congolese inhabitants would like to see the Congolese political leadership behave like the "Father of the nation" for the peace-building efforts, in the same manner as for the *Prince of Peace* described in a *theophoric* phrase as an אָבִי עַד (ʾávîʿad = Father for ever). Being a peace-loving leadership, and as a father would do to his children, all political, military and social action would be followed by the great concern, namely the long-lasting welfare of the Congolese people. Within this perspective, eastern Congolese populations need to see their political, social and military leaders uniting their efforts to primarily ensure people's peace, safety,

security and welfare; and the stability and the increasing prosperity of their region.

Contrarily from the leading power with the hidden intentions in favour of the escalation of violence in the eastern DRC as denounced in Chapter Five of this thesis, the awaited Congolese *anthropolitical* leadership will fight for peace serenity, tranquillity and security from danger (hunger, rape, poverty, unemployment, corruption...). He/she will also fight for peace good relation among people, between nation (the opposite of conflicts and war). However, this cannot be achieved unless the central government is legitimate, righteous and faithful to their commitment to the well-being of the population.

6.3.2.2.5 Righteous, faithful and legitimate ruler

In Chapter Five, it was demonstrated that, starting from the colonial era, the failure to practice the justice and righteousness in the Congolese civil government brought anarchy to the entire country, especially to its eastern provinces. Over the years, those who ruled the Congo behaved like illegitimate and unethical leaders¹³². They were unwilling to think beyond their greed interests and personal gain, involving harming and looting their own poor populations to make more profits. They habitually used their authority, knowledge and the national wealth and resources to maintain their hold on power, and just like illegitimate rulers, they simply deviated from their mission of serving and benefiting first their own people without bias. Had this been done, the ruling power could have contributed to establishing and maintaining

¹³² For the leader to be ethical, it is implied that "he or she is moral, accountable and not corrupt, fair and does not manipulate or abuse people for his/her own advantage. Such ethics is found in one's heart, world view and value system" (Mayanja 2013:114, note 1)

peace, security, serenity, welfare, justice and righteousness to the entire Congolese society's benefit. This is actually frustrating; especially as those leaders who worked against the construction of peace in the eastern DRC are now the same persons that every day called on civil society to strengthen their involvement in the efforts to maintain peace and security, to promote democracy and to reinforce human rights. If only they could have carried on their *anthropolitical* management obligations, they would have fulfilled their ethical leadership in reference to the characteristics of the *Prince of Peace*. Note that after analysing Isaiah 9:1-6, the *Prince of Peace* was portrayed as a strong and righteous promoter of peace and prosperity for his/her people; and a legitimate head of state called to establish a safe socio-cultural and economic environment for all citizens.

In short, after the devastation suffered by the eastern Congolese populations, they have put hope, beyond all human despair, in YHWH's presence in the political reality of the DRC and YHWH's zeal (cf. Is 9:6c) that refers to His powerful attachment to them and His love for them. This hope is rooted in the YHWH's covenant (v. 6ab), the expression of His involvement in the process of promoting legitimate, righteous and faithful leaders like David. With the sense of patriotism, these leaders should embody authority and bring prosperity (“light”) resulting from the end of foreign oppression and war (the end of “darkness”). In reference to verse 6ab, Congolese leadership needs to let YHWH's authority increase for them since He is able to establish and consolidate justice and righteousness in the DRC. They will let this happen by conforming to the *Prince of Peace* mission and to the Church teachings when exercising their prophetic mission. Congolese people will therefore live in security, stability, sustainable peace and prosperity, which can be symbolised by

the metaphor "great light" and would become the source of their joy and celebration.

Given that the abovementioned leadership qualities are seriously lacking in many of our Congolese leaders today, and many leaders are not willing to change their behaviour; the Church in the DRC needs to carry out its prophetic mission in the national political affairs, like Isaiah, the political prophet got involved in the policy area of his time. The next section is a summary of how the church should behave and what they should do in ensuring that the DRC has a leadership that carry out its mission like the *Prince of Peace*.

6.4 THE CHURCH MISSION IN RE-EDUCATING THE CONGOLESE LEADERSHIP

I cannot address this issue without making it clear that a Judean King was aware of having a divine mandate to lead the people according to YHWH's ordinances and statutes. Therefore, the admonition of the prophet was a reminder of the breach of a covenant that established the Davidic kingship. However, in the DRC, things are different because the state is secular and leaders do not feel being accountable to God. If the *anthropolitical* Congolese leaders would take action without any reference to God, unless he/she is a committed Christian, they would act on ethical basis by strengthening ethical political leadership through the leadership qualities of the *Prince of Peace*, the democratic principles, civil and political rights, and the rule of law. Linked to this, they would promote the democratic participation of local, national and

international actors to achieve sustainable peace and social justice (Mayanja 2013:113).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, almost all Congolese powerful leaders are members of local churches although they do not put into practice the elementary principles of the Christian faith such as "in everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you" (Mt 7:12). For this reason, the present thesis suggests a real call to the church leaders to exercise their prophetic role in reminding the political (as well as military, police, economic and social) leaders about their responsibility.

In addition, one can wonder what Church I have in mind to re-educate Congolese leaders and the people concerning good governance and peace-building when the Church in DRC seems to be divided and, in some cases, even to be part of the problem faced by Congolese people. Note that this study is a call to all churches in the DRC (Catholic, Protestant, Charismatic, Revival and Independent churches) to play their prophetic role. In this Section, I have focused on that prophetic role to which the Church leadership from any Christian denomination is called through the example of Isaiah. Isaiah ministered during the political crisis to a corrupt society and unfaithful King in Judah. He faced a shortsighted leadership of the day in Judah. In spite of that, he did not hesitate to accompany, rebuke, warn and correct the political leader and to address to the people the message of hope.

Before I deal with the prophetic mission of church leaders, the next subsection reviews first the role that missionaries and Church Missions played alongside the political system in exacerbating the culture of violence in the eastern DRC, and in preparing the failure of leadership in the DRC.

6.4.1 Overview of missionaries' part in shaping the culture of violence in the DRC

It was indicated in Chapter Five of this study that missionaries who brought the gospel in the kingdom of Kongo during the pre-colonial period contributed towards the culture of violence in the country. Together with Portuguese explorers, they initiated the slave trade in the DRC in 1484 and were involved in the ivory trade. These activities made them part of the offending system, caused more harm than good to autochthones and therefore contributed to their desolation and distress. Dehumanisation and discrimination that indigenous people suffered from Christian missionaries were among the frustrating phenomena that have affected their identity and led them to the culture of violence (Church 1971:331-332). Unfortunately, during the colonial period, churches created by other missionaries were not totally different from those of the pre-colonial time. In addition to working side-by-side with Belgian colonisers, missionaries and colonisers were partners in the process of furthering the Belgian economic agenda in the region (Gyesie 2010:77). That is why they could remain silent on the issue of the brutal mistreatment and tragic death, of genocidal proportions, of the indigenous people during the period King Leopold II of Belgium owned Congo (from 1885 to 1908) (Hochschild 1998:123). The same conditions of Congolese autochthones' life continued when the country was colonised by the Belgian government from 1908 to Independence in 1960 (Borel 1992:369). Consequently, people started revolting against the colonial church leaders' teachings and behaviour, and thus the

culture of violence started invading communities. After the independence of the country in 1960, it was indicated that the situation worsened through 32 years of the then president Mobutu's dictatorial regime (Kelly 1993:7).

Furthermore, it was pointed out that neither enough local church leaders, nor socio-economic and political leaders were sufficiently prepared by missionaries. A small number of Africans who study at the Catholic Church's mission were just worked on in a civilizing and humanitarian capacity. Furthermore, a class where pupils received sufficient education could be created in order to prepare them to become capable to be of service to the Belgian colonial administration or clerical administration (Gyesie 2010:80). As a result, during and after the postcolonial era, church missions did not completely abandon the Belgian policy. They were characterised by keeping quiet about injustice and, subsequently, they prevented Christians from being involved, for instance, in political and military affairs. At present, the only exception is the Catholic Church, which has so far openly denounced some human rights abuses, political manipulations and corruption despite threats of reprisals against them by the Congolese government.

In addition, the missionaries and colonisers' behaviour has had a direct effect on the current Congolese political leadership (Van Rensburg 1981:415; Borel 1992:368-369). This is explained by the weakness of the existing political leadership and their heavy dependence upon the great powers. As a result, armed violence that started as local conflicts over land or citizenship have been fuelled by the connivance of the Congolese ruling class with the Western powers in looting the State's wealth. The Church today cannot remain silent before this situation. To keep quiet is synonymous with being an accomplice and letting Congolese people continue walking in the "deep darkness". Church

executives must then look for mechanisms to launch a re-educative programme. The following subsection briefly elucidates this programme that is, the church's prophetic role among its church members and the public (the future and current leaders) for the *anthropological* peace-building in the eastern DRC.

6.4.2 Prophetic mission of the Church for a re-educative programme

6.4.2.1 Imitating the political prophet Isaiah

It was shown in Chapter Five that, by concluding the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 with the sentence "the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this", prophet Isaiah recognised that YHWH was in action on the political scene of his time. That is why, while exercising his prophetic ministry during the political and military turmoil in the ancient Middle East, he accepted to be used and sent by YHWH to intervene and prevent King Ahaz to make an unfaithful decision about either colluding with Syria and Israel, or accepting to be subdued by Assyria. This was possible given that the political prophet Isaiah had an easy access to the king, and he could advise him when the kingdom was threatened and invaded by foreign enemies. In such a difficult political situation in Judaea, Isaiah's prophetic message to the king (e.g. Is 7:3-14) and to YHWH's people (e.g. Is 9:1-6) was a mixture of religious and political advice.

Contrary to missionaries and Church Missions, which worked side by side with political and military tyrants in causing harm to indigenous Congolese, or kept quiet about severe human rights abuses against them as summarised above; today, churches in DRC are called to learn from the political

prophet Isaiah. In a similar way, they should stop establishing a dichotomy between theology and societal realities. Even though spiritualisation sermons are still valid, they need to "be balanced with messages that equip the public with the capabilities of confronting injustice and oppression" (Nyiauwung 2010a:5). That is why the evangelisation effort should not draw only on spiritual resources or concentrate only on regular members who attend church services and other programmes, and therefore forget to challenge those in power "to strive for a committed and responsible stewardship" (Nyiauwung 2010a:1). Churches in the DRC need to be concerned as well with the political life of the country by playing a vital role in fighting for the social transformation as prophet Isaiah did. There is a need for them to move beyond the "non-engagement" ministry "to a ministry of involvement and participation" (Nyiauwung 2010a:5) in order to help church members to do the same. Furthermore, learning from the political prophet Isaiah, they need to break barriers between them and the state leaders (political, military and police) and plan training programmes together aimed at re-educating and empowering the aforesaid leaders to take more responsibility in exercising their role with a view to ensure a stable and peaceful environment for the Congolese development. By doing so, the church will raise hope for the eastern Congolese population who yearn for an *anthropolitical* leadership, like the *Prince of Peace*, with the main purpose of restoring a lasting peace in their region, a key for a prosperous DRC.

6.4.2.2 Raising consciousness and leadership training

The negative impact of the missionaries' perversion of their prophetic mission and that of the European colonisation on all aspects of Congolese life

needs to be healed. There is also a need to decolonise the religious, social, political and economic sectors. In that respect, Mavinga (2009:214) argues that "the affected identity of the leadership and people requires a healing in several aspects of life". For him, this recovery process means that people must first reconcile among themselves, then with the former colonisers and then with the Western allies who are involved in Congolese politics. Above all, the church needs first to raise awareness among individuals, the state leadership and the public in general about the social, economic, military and political concerns of the country. If every Congolese becomes aware of what has brought the country into decay for such a long time, it would help them start changing their mind (Maluleke 2001:27-28). Then, the church can plan a training programme that includes the right way of ruling over the state while looking after the interest of the nation (*anthropolitics*) like the *Prince of Peace's* mission developed in section 6.3.

It is noteworthy that the change of the social situation in the DRC, and construction of peace in its eastern region torn by armed violence in particular need the participation of every citizen in order to find an effective solution (Cf. Kalungu-Banda 2006:10-11). Because anyone willing to be a leader or to vote for a leader must be informed about the requirements of a good leader, the church can request the Congolese Ministry of Education "to reform the educative programme from the primary school to university" (Mavinga 2009:215). Learners or students will be taught about ethics, values and leadership skills needed for political responsibilities and other services of the country. The spirit of community and the devotion to the homeland will be strengthened as well in order to develop the readiness to do public good and cooperate, to create a sense of duty and to build a love of the country, the nation

and humanity. Such programmes will prepare, at the same time, future Congolese leaders and the electorate who will vote for qualified leaders.

Furthermore, the consciousness-raising training and skill-based workshops that involve "presentations, speeches, speaking tours, discussion groups, and conferences" and seminars (Wildau, Moore and Mayer 1993:309) should be planned to educate the public and, especially the current Congolese leaders about leadership qualities of the *Prince of Peace* and other qualities, such as the ones developed by Mavungu (2008:151-155). These qualities include:

Effectiveness: Foreign powers do not have to impose leaders in DRC. Congolese people must choose them according to their ability to rule and lead the nation towards reconstruction, eradication of the wars and armed conflicts, and restoration of peace and stability for the prosperity of the country.

Competence/Productivity/Skilfulness: Congolese leadership must be based on competence, productivity and skilfulness. That is to say, the DRC needs educated leaders, not ones who occupy positions of leadership with poor performance despite the training received, but are capable to carry out the leadership that meet Congolese expectations. They will avoid following outside influences, which deviate from these expectations. Moreover, the effectiveness of these qualities requires self-determination to serve the nation as a whole.

Integrity/Honesty/Trustworthiness: Leadership based on integrity, honesty and trustworthiness will avoid corruption, but will take punitive action against perpetrators, serve constituencies instead of serving themselves, and fulfil promises for more credibility. "A lack of trust of the leaders makes it more

difficult to establish a leadership model that people can copy" (Mavungu 2008:153).

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the present chapter, I first demonstrated that armed conflicts and the culture of violence and their aftermath in both the Kingdom of Judah and the eastern provinces of the DRC, set within the religious, socio-political and economic contexts are issues arising from the poor leadership. To this, I added the perversion of the Christian faith, the foreign powers' covetousness with regard to natural resources and economic opportunities, and the decay of the army. These religious, socio-political and economic roots of crisis in both cases were maintained, in turn, as major factors which served as basis for Judaeans and Congolese people's expectations for the *anthropolitical*, effective and ethical leadership like the one exercised by the *Prince of Peace*.

Next, with reference to the analysis of the text of Isaiah 9:1-6, the mission of the *Prince of Peace* that suits the Judaeans and the Congolese nation's interests (*anthropolitical* mission) was developed. In both context of persistent conflicts and violence, a hoped-for *anthropolitical* leadership was portrayed as a legitimate, faithful and committed government whose primary preoccupation is to build peace for the nation's benefit. To accomplish this mission, political, military and social leaders, in a concerted action and with sound strategies, need to address at national and community levels underlying causes of conflicts. They must also provide excellent governance and political will; offer an ethical,

moral, skilled and caring leadership; strongly fight for the liberation and security of his/her people; improve their living conditions and welfare; promote and secure social peace in order to attain a society, which bans violence and reduces the gun culture. The leadership that meets these abovementioned responsibilities must result from the commitment of a political and legitimate ruler capable to take the lead and provide the leadership that can transform the entire eastern DRC by pointing the way to the economic, social and political peaceful future of his/her people.

Last, it was shown that, if the Church plays its prophetic mission and plans consciousness-raising training and skill-based workshops in order to re-educate the Congolese leadership and the public about the qualities of a good leader, the eastern Congolese populations can still hope for having fair, accountable and *anthropolitical* leaders capable to make and build peace in their region. The recurrence of armed conflicts and wars in their area of living and the non-respect of different peace agreements ("darkness") will end with the coming of the "great light" that will shine upon the entire DRC. This would be the advent of a *Prince of Peace* in the DRC as described above with reference to the analysis of Isaiah's prophecy (Is 9:1-6) addressed to the Kingdom of Judah in distress. That is, the success of the peace-building process in the eastern DRC is predicated on good governance and accountability.

Chapter Seven

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the general conclusion of this study, I look backward over my entire research in order to condense into a few paragraphs precisely what has been accomplished in each phase of the research (Leedy and Ormrod 2014:329). I then comment on my work by specifying problems encountered (Hofstee 2006:156-157), summarise my contributions to the field of the Old Testament exegesis (Hofstee 2006:160), engage in self-critique that reflects on the research process, and make suggestions for further research based on the problems encountered. This is the conclusion to the whole study in which evaluations are done rather than a mere reporting of facts (Swanepoel 2014:13). Hofstee dictates the outline of this chapter (2006:155-163).

7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

With reference to the research questions and the objectives of this study, the findings that are going to be summarised in this section are interpretative¹³³

¹³³ According to Mouton (2001:113) research findings are grouped depending on research questions and objectives. They include empirical, descriptive, causal, theoretical, interpretative, and evaluative findings.

since I advanced a new interpretation of the existing biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6.

The goal of the contextual reading of Isaiah 9:1-6 was twofold: to understand Isaiah's oracle on שָׂרֵי-שָׁלוֹם (Sar-šālôm = *Prince of Peace*) in view of its literary context and its socio-historical setting, and to find out whether its contextual interpretation has some relevance for the peace-building efforts in the conflict-ridden and war-torn eastern provinces of the DRC. To reach this goal, I used the Tri-polar Exegetical Model, a development of the Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics initiated by Ukpong. This technique of biblical hermeneutics is a multidisciplinary and integrative method that combines both the synchronic and the diachronic approaches in order to capture the meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 in connection with the eastern DRC context of violence.

The abovementioned interpretative approach started with a description of the *distantiation* pole, the phase of the exegetical analysis that allowed the chosen text to speak for itself. It included the literary analysis and the socio-historical context of Isaiah 9:1-6 from which emerged the parallelism moving from the synthesis to the antithesis (darkness to light; death to life; oppression to liberation; war to peace), and reaching the high point in the expression of joy and the celebration for the birth of the child with a *theophoric* compound name. After analysis, the result was that this birth symbolised the advent of the *Prince of Peace*, the legitimate Davidic King, in the context of the turbulent history of the Kingdom of Judah in order to liberate YHWH's people from the foreign vassalship and to put an end to the war of aggression. Such interpretation demonstrated sufficiently that YHWH worked within the political events of His people during the time of Isaiah. His salvation action of providing a righteous, faithful and legitimate Davidic King for Judah was a great joy for His people.

This contextual reading of the text showed as well that the accomplishment of YHWH's salvation to His people required a human being from the Davidic lineage with leadership qualities that were found hidden in the contextual meaning of the four phrases that constitute the symbolic compound name of the child (v. 5):

No	Hebrew Phrases	Translation	Contextual Meaning (qualities required)
1.	פְּלֵא יוֹעֵץ	Wondrous Advisor	A guide of the people
2.	אֵל גִּבּוֹר	Mighty God	A strong and skilled warrior
3.	אבִּיעַד	Father for ever	A king concerned by his people's well-being like a father (an <i>anthropological</i> leader).
4.	שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם	Prince of Peace	A promoter of peace and prosperity

Then, the study moved toward the *contextualisation* pole, the phase that was concerned with the identification and analysis of the reader's context in view of the literary analysis results. The research finding was that the socio-historical context of the contemporary eastern DRC and that of the biblical passage of Isaiah 9:1-6 present some similarities in terms of religious, geographical, economic, political and military roots of persistent violence. In both contexts, it was denounced three main factors that brought people to walk into צְלִמּוֹת (ṣalmāwet = deep darkness; literal meaning: shadow of death). These factors included the perversion of the religious faith of leaders, the covetous eyes of Great powers (as well as neighbouring countries) on the geo-strategic position and wealth in coveted areas, which end up being attacked, and the political weakness and decay in military forces, the main reason for relying

on foreign support and guidance. Consequently, in both contexts the aforesaid factors generated people's expectations for אור גדול (ʔôr gādôl = great light), a symbol of leadership with qualities of the *Prince of Peace*, which would shine (נגה) (nāgah) upon them. In other words, People expect a leadership willing to end interminable wars and foreign oppression.

Finally, during the *appropriation* phase, the reader (me) allowed a dialogue between the biblical and the contemporary contexts in view of the exegetical results. The conclusion was that, like Judaeans contemporaries of prophet Isaiah whose joy was fulfilled in the advent of the *Prince of Peace*, the eastern Congolese inhabitants are yearning for a righteous, faithful and legitimate *Prince of Peace* whose leadership best suits the community's interest (an *anthropolitical* leadership). They will rejoice and celebrate if he/she is willing to shoulder his/her responsibility as a guide of the people toward their well-being, a strong and skilled warrior eager to put an end to persistent armed conflicts and wars, and to eradicate foreign and local armed groups in their region using a national patriotic army. People will celebrate if a *Prince of Peace*, a promoter of peace, a righteous ruler whose concerns are means of his/her people's welfare and prosperity leads him/her. To finish, a call was made to the Church in DRC to ensure that such leadership as described above are established in the country for the peace-building in the eastern provinces of the Congo. A re-educative programme through consciousness-raising training and skill-based workshops for individuals, the public, and especially for the present Congolese leadership, was suggested to the Church.

The next section is a comment on problems that I encountered in this study when I was discussing the socio-historical setting of the chosen text.

7.2 DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

During the analysis of the socio-historical background of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, I was faced with the differences of opinion among scholars about the audience to which this text was addressed. It was not easy for me to have a more rigorous particular position because of my contextual approach that would not allow me to hold a fuller discussion on this important question. Fortunately, this breach did not adversely influence the meaning of the text with regard to my topic. Despite this situation, my position regarding the addressee of the selected text cannot be read clearly through Chapters Four and Five of this study. Before I synthesise, my contribution in the next section, I should first like to summarise below scholars' differences on the issue.

Many scholars who carried out research on the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, and whose writings were available to me, consider this text as part of the personal memoirs of the prophet (Is 6:1 - 9:6)¹³⁴ during the Syro-Ephraimitic war (Esterhuizen 2007:1, referring to Budde 1928; Rolfson 2002). Their convincing suggestion is that Isaiah 9:1-6 must be read in the setting of the anti-Assyrian revolts during the Neo-Assyrian invasion westwards in the ancient Middle East led by Tiglath-pileser III in 740 BCE. Even though Irvine (1989:379) agrees with the scholars above concerning this historical setting, he understands the selected text as an address to a Jerusalemite audience, and a celebration of Judah's independence from Israel's control. He supports his

¹³⁴ Scholars like Clements (1980) and De Jong (2007; 2010) suggest, however, Isaiah 6:1 to 8:18 as memoirs of Isaiah during the Syro-Ephraimitic war.

argument by showing that the "son born" and the "child given" in verses 5-6 is none other than Ahaz who stood against the anti-Assyrian alliance between Syria and Israel, and this position "resulted in a vindication of Davidic theology" (Dearman 1992:749).

On the other hand, in this study, the above viewpoint was contrasted with the view of eminent scholars like Wildberger (1991:376-393) and Kim (2001:242-243) who see Isaiah 9:1-6 as a royal oracle related to the Davidic king's accession to the throne, whose audience is the Northern Kingdom. They refer to Isaiah 8:21-23, which they consider the historical and political background of 9:1-6. Kim (2001:243) for instance argues that "the literary arrangement of 8:23 before 9:1 aims to contrast the disastrous fate of Israel at the hands of Assyria, which came as a consequence of the disunity between Ephraim and Judah, with the salvation that could come if they were reunited under a single Davidic ruler (2 Chr 30)". In a view contrary to Irvine (1989), Kim (2001:242-247) is among researchers who persuasively argue that Isaiah 9:1-6 specifies the political freedom from the Assyrian vassalship after the Syro-Ephraimitic war, and maintains that Isaiah 9:1-6 refers to Hezekiah's coronation ceremony.

The researcher Kil (2005:143-147) like other eminent scholars such as Oswalt (1986:19-95) and Irvine (1990:131-132), places 9:1-6 in the corpus of Isaiah 7 - 12. I found this unit coherent and organized around the theme of trusting in Yahweh during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis. My attention was also attracted by Kil's statement that, by the selected text, the prophet Isaiah announces the reestablishment of the house of David. YHWH lifts among his people an ideal king who will bring an end to all wars and oppressions (2005:143). Following Kil's argument, I concluded that the selected passage of

Isaiah 9:1-6 was Isaiah's attempt to bring the political rulers of Judah to trust in YHWH rather than in human foreign alliances. Even though Kil (2005:154), referring to Clements (1980:106), concurs with scholars who maintain that Isaiah 9:1-6 refers to the people of the Northern Israel suffering at the hand of Assyria (cf. 8:23), he also suggests that the content of the text includes people of Judah as well. This persuasive view is shared by Webb (1996:68) who thinks, "The oracle subtly anticipates the reunification of Israel and Judah under a single, ideal, Davidic ruler of the future", and by Sweeney (2005:33) who finds in Isaiah 9:1-6 the opportunity given to Ahaz to reunite the tribes of Israel. In agreement with both Kil and Sweeney's idea of reuniting Israel, they nevertheless, put me in a bit of dilemma because of their differences in view about the king to whom the text was addressed: the former refers to the coronation of Hezekiah while the latter maintains that the text was directed at Ahaz.

In spite of the above ambiguities, I presented in this study new contributions worthy of the Old Testament research. The next section summarises them.

7.3 SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Despite controversies over the recipients of Isaiah's prophetic message contained in 9:1-6, my hypothesis could not be negated because of the technique of biblical hermeneutics named *Tri-polar exegetical method* that I used. This interpretative method, which combines the synchronic and

diachronic approaches, permitted me to focus first on the literary analysis of the chosen text, and then discuss the socio-historical context of the text related to issues raised from the analysis of the text in order to obtain first its meaning for the original readers. It can be read, therefore, through this study that I stood firmly on the argument that the chosen text was addressed to YHWH's people (Israelites and Judaeans) with the principal aim of creating hope for a peaceful reign of a legitimate and righteous Davidic King who should reunify the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. This argument found support in the socio-historical background of the passage of Isaiah 9:1-6, that is, the socio-political events of Isaiah's time, which include the Neo-Assyrian invasion and its consequences. These consequences were the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis, the destruction of Israel followed by the deportation of its population and the subjugation of Judah by Assyrians. After that, I compared the contextual meaning of Isaiah 9:1-6 with the eastern DRC context of violence in order to show what the mission of the *anthropological* Congolese leadership for the peace-building efforts in the eastern DRC would be with reference to the mission of the *Prince of Peace*. Finally, I suggest a re-educative programme for the Church through consciousness-raising training and skill-based workshops of individuals and the public.

The next section shows how my study would have differed and if I had chosen the approach, which would have enabled me to investigate further the issue of different addressees of the prophetic message of Isaiah 9:1-6.

7.4 CRITIQUE OF THE RESEARCH

In order to clarify certain ambiguities as presented in section 7.2 of this last chapter, I should have discussed different possible settings of Isaiah 9:1-6. However, as already stated, I used the contextual method, which did not permit a more in-depth investigation of this issue. I have just referred to the eighth-century events as the historical setting of the text, leaving aside other settings. For instance, I did not discuss the view of scholars who believe that Isaiah 9:1-6 is to be understood in the setting of the anti-Assyrian redaction of the tradition of Isaiah during the seventh century BCE. These scholars include De Jong (2007:136-138) who, referring to Vieweger (1992:79) and Wagner (2006:81-83), argues that Isaiah 9:1-6 "combines the themes of the destruction of Assyria and the reign of a new Judaeian king". In this respect, the text refers to the reign of Josiah. I did not allude to some other researchers, such as Sweeney (2005:33-34) in reference to Kratz (1991:175-199), who are of the view that the chosen text is to be read in relation to the sixth century edition of the book of Isaiah. In this respect, the text justifies "YHWH's sovereignty exercised through Cyrus as a legitimate expression of the Davidic promise of a peaceful and righteous rule from Zion" (Sweeney 2005:34). Finally, it should be important to mention as well Goswell's suggestion that this particular text can also justify the fifth century's vision of YHWH's world rule from Zion (Is 66), the fulfilment of the Davidic promise (Goswell 2015:101-110; see also Sweeney 2005:34).

The following section briefly presents the suggestions, which arise from problems encountered in order to further investigate different settings of Isaiah 9:1-6 as mentioned above.

7.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In view of the problems encountered, and given that the oracle of Isaiah 9:1-6 does not provide any clue regarding the identity of the king or the historical circumstances of his reign, I suggest that further research on this particular prophetic text be undertaken using in-depth the Literary/Postmodern view (Spencer 2012). Concerning the use of this approach, Spencer insists that; while it concentrates mainly on the text, and the readers and authors are working in supporting roles; the chosen passage for study cannot be dislocated from its historical issues such as the final text, intertextual references, and the historical context surrounding the text (Porter and Stovell 2012:49-53). Without having to take more time analysing the context of the reader, as was the case with the present study, this view would help the researcher have more time to verify in-depth whether Isaiah 9:1-6 would really be read in the literary and socio-historical settings of each edition of the book of Isaiah, and to determine to whom the peaceful reign of the righteous Davidic monarch is referred.

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