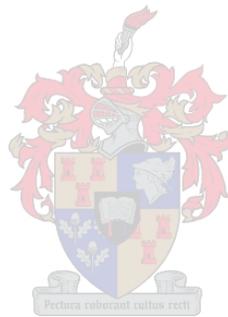


**A historical study of reconciliation as a challenge to the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) 1970 - 2010**

**By**

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**Promoter  
Prof. Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Van Huffel**

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## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the young pastors of ELCIN to remind them that the Church's work for justice and peace is an essential part of its role.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study entails a historical theological research of reconciliation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia's (ELCIN) and includes amongst others the engagement of ELCIN in reconciliatory work for a just society in both the pre-independent and post-independent era of Namibia (1970-2010). The study concluded that ELCIN is not actively involved in addressing human rights issues in the post-independent Namibia. The ELCIN should therefore revisit her position regarding national reconciliation and should address the social justice issues currently unfolding in Namibia. Reconciliation is a huge challenge for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia.

This study is an overview of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia regarding her engagement in the reconciliation before and after Namibia's independence, particularly, the period during 1970 – 2010. The study highlights on the one side the ministry of reconciliation and on the other side the role the ELCIN in corroboration with member churches of council of Churches in Namibia should play in order to address socio-justice issues in post-independent Namibia adequately.

It is further argued in this study that the legacies of separation through the South African government in Namibia, tribal conflicts and church judicial regulations of Lutheran churches in Namibia contributed to the current challenges regarding reconciliation of the Lutheran churches in Namibia. The ELCIN are called to be ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation namely: restorative justice, atonement and forgiveness, fellowship with God, peace and healing. God has entrusted this ministry of reconciliation to the church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), as the largest denomination in the country has important role to play in the church and society regarding the pursuing of both spiritual and national reconciliation.

The ELCIN jointly with other churches in Namibia should engage actively with all role-players regarding the conceptualization and implementation of a national policy of reconciliation in Namibia. Amongst others cognisance should be taken in the discourse about national reconciliation of the African understanding of reconciliation in Namibia.

ELCIN with the other two Lutheran churches in Namibia, that is ELCRN and ELCIN/GELC, represent the majority of the Christian population in the country. A huge responsibility to embody reconciliation rests on the church in Namibia. ELCIN in corroboration with member churches of the Council of churches in Namibia should revisit their positions regarding the role of the church in the post independent Namibia.

The study concludes with recommendations regarding reconciliation for further research.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing behels 'n histories-teologiese ondersoek met betrekking tot versoening in die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibië (ELKIN) en sluit onder meer in werk met betrekking tot die daarstelling van 'n regverdigde samelewing in beide die voor en na onafhanklike era van Namibië (1970-2010). Die studie konkludeer dat ELKIN onbetrokke is in die aanspreek van menseregte aangeleenthede in die post-onafhanklike Namibië. Die ELKIN behoort haar standpuntname met betrekking tot nasionale versoening in herooring te neem en behoort aandag te verleen aan die sake wat betrekking het op sosiale geregtigheid wat tans besig is om in Namibië te ontvou. Versoening is 'n groot uitdaging vir die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibië.

Hierdie studie het betrekking op 'n oorsig van die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibië met betrekking tot haar betrokkenheid in die versoening voor en na Namibië se onafhanklikheid, veral, die tydperk 1970 – 2010. Aan die een kant beklemtoon die studie die bediening van versoening en aan die anderkant die rol wat ELKIN in samewerking met die lidkerke van die Namibiese Raad van Kerke kan speel met betrekking tot die aanspreek van sosiale-geregtigheid sake in post-onafhanklikheid Namibië.

Daar word verder in hierdie studie aangevoer dat die nalatenskap van aparte ontwikkeling deur die Suid-Afrikaanse regering in Namibië, stam konflikte en kerk-juridiese bepalinge van Lutherse kerke in Namibië bydra tot die uitdagings van die Lutherse kerke in Namibië met betrekking tot versoening. Die ELKIN word opgeroep om ambassadeurs vir die bediening van versoening te word naamlik: herstellende geregtigheid, versoening en vergifnis, gemeenskap met God, vrede en genesing. God het hierdie bediening van die versoening toevertrou aan die kerk.

Die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibië (ELKIN), as die grootste kerk in die land het 'n belangrike te speel in kerk en samelewing met betrekking tot die najaag van geestelike versoening sowel as nasionale versoening.

Die ELKIN in medewerking met ander Namibiese kerke behoort aktief betrokke te raak met alle rolspelers met betrekking tot die konseptualisering en implementering van die nasionale beleid van versoening in Namibië. Daar behoort onder andere kennis geneem te word in die diskoers met betrekking tot nasionale versoening van die Afrika verstaan van die begrip versoening in Namibië.

ELKIN saam met die ander twee Lutherse kerke in Namibië; dit is ELKRN en ELKIN / DELK, verteenwoordig die meerderheid Christene in die land. 'n Groot verantwoordelikheid om versoening te beliggaam berus op die kerk in Namibië. ELKIN in medewerking met die lidkerke van die Raad van Kerke in Namibië moet hul standpuntname met betrekking tot nasionale versoening en die rol van die kerk in post-onafhanklike Namibië in heroorweging te neem.

Aan die einde van die tesis word aanbevelings met betrekking tot verdere navorsing insake versoening gedoen.

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## List of Abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AIDS   | Acquired immune deficiency syndrome  |
| AG     | Administrator – General  |
| CCN    | Council of Churches in Namibia   |
| CO     | Churches in Owambo   |
| DELK   | Deusche Evangelisch Lutherische Kirch in South West Africa                             |
| ECC    | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia Church Council                                  |
| ELCIC  | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  |
| ELCIN  | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia   |
| ELCRN  | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Republic of Namibia                                     |
| ELOC   | Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church   |
| ELCF   | Evangelical Lutheran church of Finland   |
| ELCSWA | Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa                                       |
| ELK    | Evangelise Lutherse Kerk in Suid Wes Afrika  |
| EIN    | Ecumenical Institute for Namibia   |
| EFTC   | Female Theologians’ Conference for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia          |
| EKC    | Kwanyama Circuit for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia                        |
| EWB    | Women’s Board for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia                           |
| EWCM   | Western Circuit’s meeting for the Evangelical Lutheran church in Namibia               |
| EPC    | Pastors’ Conference for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia                     |
| EPKC   | Pastors’ Conference for Kwanyama Circuit in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia |
| GELC   | German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia  |
| FELM   | Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission   |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| FMS      | Finnish Mission Society   |
| FELCSA   | Federation of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa        |
| IDAF     | International Defence and Aid Fund  |
| KMRC     | Karl Marx Reception Centre  |
| LXX      | The Septuagint (from the Latin Septuaginta, "seventy")                    |
| LWF      | Lutheran World Federation   |
| NNC-LWF  | Namibia National Council for Lutheran World Federation                    |
| OFTA     | Owambo Female Teachers' Association                                       |
| PL       | Pastoral Letter   |
| RCN      | Reformed Church in Namibia  |
| RCC      | Roman Catholic Church   |
| RRR      | Repatriation Resettlement and Reconstruction                              |
| SWANLA   | South West Africa Native Labour Association                               |
| SWAPO    | South West Africa People's Organisation                                   |
| WCC      | World Council of Churches   |
| UCC-NELC | United Council of Churches for the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches |
| UELCSWA  | United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Namibia                           |
| UNSCR    | United Nations Security Council's Resolution                              |
| UNTAG    | United nations transitional Assistant Group                               |
| USA      | United States of America  |
| YMCA     | Young Women's Christian Association                                       |

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

The majority of churches in Namibia are members of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) (*Council of Churches in Namibia Report 1992*). Over the half of the inhabitants of Namibia are Lutherans. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is the largest Church in the country, comprising of a membership of 730, 685 (*ELCIN Report 2012*).

The ELCIN is obligated by her *Constitution* to take care of her members wherever they are. Article IV of her *Constitution* mandates the ELCIN to render a holistic service through “worship services, administration of sacraments, pastoral counselling, youth ministry, demonstrating Christian love and engaging in missionary work and social services (*ELCIN Constitution 2001:10*). Therefore, every parish of the ELCIN demonstrates Christian love and caring: “*Every parish should holistically take care of its members wherever they are*” (*ELCIN Constitution 2001:49*). Similarly, the ELCIN leadership is assigned with the task to oversee and to ensure that peace and justice prevail in the society. The church leaders of the ELCIN oversee that the members of ELCIN are celebrating the gift of reconciliation (*ELCIN Constitution 2001:80*). It is a constitutional obligation for the church leaders of the ELCIN to see that peace, love and justice maintained in the parishes as well as in the society (*ELCIN Constitution 2001:76*).

The Church leaders of the ELCIN are therefore obliged to proclaim the hope of an alternative society in which God’s reconciliation is at work. In his paper: *Being the Church of God in Contemporary Africa: Ecumenical Perspective*, Dr. Zephaniah Kameeta, a pastor of ELCRN, argues that the Church should proclaim with her life and deeds the hope of an alternative society where God is King. The church should be present where people feel powerless and should give hope and courage to them (Kameeta 1997:19). Kameeta further maintains that the mission of the Church in

world is not a mere utterance of words. It is rather God's actions which liberate and renew people.

During the liberation struggle of Namibia, the ELCIN like other churches in Namibia took up her social responsibility. The mission of ELCIN was to proclaim God's freedom and liberation to the oppressed people of Namibia. The ELCIN denounced apartheid as an injustice system contrary to the will of God.

*Apartheid* is an Afrikaans term. Literally means *apart-ness, set apart or separation*. It came in popular usage early in 1948, with the coming into power of the National Party of South African government, under Prime Minister Dr. D. F. Malan. *Apartheid system* is known as the agenda of National Party to enforce the separation of races (Nambala 1987: 194). Subsequently, *apartheid system* works to keep races away from the wide national integration. It is a system that denied all people other than whites of the right to political and economic participation. It forced the blacks to live in the most arid and peripheral areas of South Africa and Namibia (Nambala 1994:127).

During the period 1915 - 1990, Namibia was under the South African administration. The Churches in Namibia have experienced how the apartheid system was applicably enforced to the Namibian people and how it paved the way for the total implementation of the apartness to its full extent in the territory (cf. De Vries 1978; Nambala 1987: 196; 1994: 128). In 1924, the South West Africa administrator divided Ovamboland in term of religious partisans for Lutherans, Catholics and Anglicans. For example: Ondonga region was exclusively reserved for Finnish Mission Society and some areas outside of Ondonga were the missionaries had already established the stations. Uukwanyama region was assigned for Anglican Church. While Catholic Church by that time it had tendered her application to the South African Administration for missionary work, was requested to choose two regions from Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Ombalantu, Uukwaluudhi, Eunda and Uukolonkadhi. The Catholic Church chose: Uukwambi and Ombalantu (Hunke 1996:44). Furthermore, the churches were forced to pledge in writing to help the South African government in its administration of Ovamboland by encouraging all

natives to seek employment in South West Africa within the so-called Police Zone. (Hunke 1996:44).

In 1964, the Churches in Namibia experienced with great concern the implementation of Odendaal Commission plan which divided Namibia into 10 homelands or conservations (IDAF 1989:16). The Odendaal plan was a concrete manifestation of apartheid policy enforcement in Namibia (Hunke 1996:55-56). The Commission regrouped Namibia into twelve racial groupings: Whites, colored, Rehoboth Basters, Namas, Damaras, Hereros, Ovambos, Kavangos, Caprivians, Twanas and Bushmen (IDAF 1989:20). With an exception of the whites, each racial group was separately allocated into homelands. The policy of homelands raised a worried--same concerned, mainly among the black churches as it was creating and promoting the disunity and spirit of inferiority within the effected Namibian folks.

Furthermore, the ELCIN affirmed that the divisions in church and society were not ordained by God, but was rather created by the apartheid regime. The apartheid policy divided the Namibian nation into various oppositional groups which ultimately led to animosity between the different tribes in Namibia. However, the ELCIN affirms that God in Christ reconciled different tribes and nations with Himself and amongst themselves. Christ broke down the walls of animosity and reconciled oppositional groups with each other (c.f. Ephesians (2:14): "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

The CCN condemned the injustices of the South African government in Namibian people. The policy of "divide and rule" that was introduced in Namibia during the South African colonial government led to animosity and superiority complex between the ethnic groups in Namibia. "We have now a country on the verge of – or actually deep in civil war, with sons of the same mother fighting each other, a situation where it is difficult to trust anybody" (Benzi 2016:7).

According to Abisai Shejavali (1999:2), a former Secretary General of Council of Churches in Namibia, the CCN was the voice of the voiceless during the struggle for independence:

During the pre-independent Namibia the church as a leadership, bishops, pastors, priests, were speaking out against the apartheid system, either collectively or individually. Often the Council of Churches spoke on behalf of the Church as a leadership and of the people of Namibia. The church leaders were happy to speak collectively through the Council of Churches against the evils of apartheid system and against social, political and economic injustices. They even regarded themselves as the voice of the voiceless people. People were definitely happy and supportive to what the church leaders were doing on their behalf.

The churches in Namibia suffered because they stood for justice. The South African government in Namibia labelled the CCN to be an arm of liberation movement in the exile. It vowed to persecute the churches in Namibia disrespected the government's order. A letter written by some pastors served in the South African government in Namibia states the following:

We as the government will not tolerate your challenge [prophetic voice] you as the church leader are always pronouncing in challenging the State. One of the days we will crush the church as a result. Because we have learnt you're arrogant and disrespected toward the government as contained in all your statements addressed to the people here in Namibia and abroad are common increasingly (*Auala* 2009:184; Translation mine).

Many Namibians expected the churches to engage actively with the reconciliation process in Namibia post-independence. On the contrary, the churches have a lackadaisical attitude. They cease to be a voice of the voiceless. Abisai Shejavali challenged the indifference of the churches regarding reconciliation process in Namibia as follows:

It seems that the church is putting people down, as not to come up very clearly on the critical issues, touching and sometimes harming the people. ... ELCIN should work in the spirit of the *Open letter* [1971]: 'I will suffer with my people.' But when one thinks of this 'creed' 'I will suffer with my people,' in this post independent Namibia, one starts to question why this creed is no longer actively fulfilled. (Shejavali 1999:6).

Christians in Namibia are questioning the credibility of the church leaders in independent Namibia who opted to a “blind solidarity” with the government. At the World Council of Churches’ Pre-Assembly held in Windhoek, Namibia during 29th November to 4<sup>th</sup> December 1997 the Namibian churches acknowledged that they were no longer playing a prophetic in church and society: “What we seem to have today, in most cases are the churches in blind solidarity with [the] state. Churches are no longer playing their prophetic roles. Gone are their prophetic voices.” (*Pre-Assembly Report World Council of Churches 1997:50*).

In 2009 Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, a retired bishop in the ELCIN, recalled a member of the church who came to him and urged the church to defend the rights of God’s people in Namibia:

Please! The Church of Christ should not remain silent [in the midst of injustice]. The [Namibian] nation is suffering. Please act to help us [from this fate] ... We confidently believe that the Kingdom of God is more powerful than all the powers of the earthly kingdoms. Why is it that the church leaders are so silent? Defend the rights of God’s people in Namibia. (Cited in *Auala 2009:6, 159*).

Reconciliation is a huge challenge to the churches in post-independent Namibia. The Latin word *reconcilio* defines the act of “restoring, repairing and uniting.” The word gives the sense of bringing together something that was torn apart or part away with. It has a broad meaning that covers the actions of reconditioning, redressing, regaining, renovating, renewing, reuniting and rehabilitating. The presumption amongst the ELCIN members is that the ELCIN, as the largest church in Namibia should take a lead in reactivating the churches in the reconciliatory process in Namibia. The churches in Namibia should stand together to raise their voices to combat divisions in church and society. The churches should speak in a united voice of reconciliation and the reconstruction of Namibia.

## **1.2 Problem statement and focus**

Systematic separation in Namibia was caused by colonialism, apartheid, political instability, ethnic rivals and liberation struggles (Andre du Pisani cited in Melber 2003:130). The Namibian people as from the years 1880 to 1989 underwent various

series of separations caused by the legacy of colonialism, political instability, ethnic rivals and liberation struggles (Melber 2003:130). Namibia's past history is a stony ground of intolerance under apartheid and a narrative of ethnic nationalism, social exclusion and divisions. The South African policy of "divide and rule" introduced in Namibia during the South African colonial government by establishing conservations according to ethnic groups; culminated into the spirit of hostility where each group was taught to despise the other and to consider it to be better off. Cited in Benzi (2016:70), Bishop Dumeni explained that the history of Namibia has taught the Namibians to hate, to discriminate, to segregate and not to love others. It tempted the Namibians to think about an eye for an eye when colonialism razed the country. The Odendaal Commission of November 11, 1962 suggested Namibia to be converted into ten homelands (*IDAF* 1989:16). Consequently, homelands were created one for each ethnic group, and were separated from one another and far away from white areas. Consequently, the *Native Laws Amendment Bills of 1957* paved the way of racial segregated churches for blacks and whites (Vila-Vicencio 1988:18-20). This Bill introduced the creation of racial segregated churches for blacks and whites in Namibia. Consequently, the theological justification of apartheid led to what Villa Vicencio termed "a religious legitimating of the resulting conflict, pride and antagonism and denial in principle of the ideals of gospel" (Vila-Vicencio 1988:18-20).

Steve Titus, a former lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Namibia argues that these divisions hamper the credibility of the gospel of reconciliation in Namibia. His presumption is that the Christians are not reflecting Christ-like relations (Lombard 1995:46). Titus enclosed:

Arrogance, pride, disunity, racial and social injustice. The [society] is sick of apartheid, discrimination, exploitation and hypocrisy. People remember that the missionaries who first brought the Christian gospel to Namibia were closely associated with colonizers who caused so much suffering to our people. Apartheid is recognized as a policy which was first conceived and propagated by the church (Lombard 1995:46).

Both the colonial era and apartheid created animosity amongst the Namibian people. The liberation struggle for Namibia's independence also splits the Namibian nation

into camps of political ideologies. In the post - independent era the Namibia people are facing new forms of social ills and injustices; that are: poverty, self-enrichment, tribalism and unemployment to mention but few. The churches in Namibia are paying less interest in combating these injustices (*Namibian Council of Churches* 1992:22). The members of ELCIN expect the church to be engaged in the reconciliatory work in Namibia and to should stand up and defend the rights of the Namibian people in the post - independent era (*ELCIN Report* 1996:1).

The CCN in their 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting gathered on 8 – 10 December 1992 in Windhoek expressed their commitment to play an active role in reconciliation. The CNN further called a *National Conference on reconciliation*. The CNN resolved to act as mediators at the *National Conference on reconciliation* which would discuss amongst others the issue of the missing people during the South African occupation of Namibia and during the period of liberation struggle (*Council of Churches in Namibia* 1992: 22). The Council of Churches in Namibia unfortunately failed to keep this noble commitment. The reason for failure was none, but the fear to address the issue of former-detainees that suffered under the care of the liberation movement in the exiles. The Council of Churches in Namibia wanted not to be seen associated with the book of Pastor Siegfried Groth, a German Lutheran pastor, *Namibia - The walls of Silence: the dark days of the liberation struggle*, which exposes the stories of brutal sufferings and human rights problems within SWAPO. The book highlights amongst others the issue of former "detainees," who allege widespread mistreatment of suspected dissidents during the liberation struggle by Swap's leadership in exile, and are demanding a full confession and apology from the perpetrators, possibly through a process modelled after the South African Truth Commission (Dobell 1995:30).

Even ELCIN, the largest church in Namibia, failed to adhere to the statement of intent of the *National Conference on reconciliation*. In 1996 in a three - page document ELCIN reminded the Council of Churches in Namibia of the mediating role it envisaged to play regarding the issue of missing people during the South African occupation of Namibia and during the time of liberation struggle (*ELCIN Report* 1996:2).

The lack of a united and prophetic voice in the Council of Churches in Namibia caused Christians in Namibia to lose their hope in the leaders of the Council. Steve Titus states:

They no longer listen or respond to the words of the church because they are empty words which never turn into works. Even the words and the expressions which the church uses reveal its isolation from the [society]. Christians use words which make no sense to people outside the church (Lombard 1995:46).

Conway concurs that the Council of Churches in Namibia failed to rise up the prophetic voice of reconciliation because the leaders of the mainline churches feared to discredit the liberation movement (Conway 2003:68). Conway therefore maintained that prior to Namibia's independence, the Council of Churches in Namibia acted more as the arm of the liberation movement than as an independent moral force. Hence in a post-independence it is difficult for the leaders of Council of Churches in Namibia to take a stand against the liberation movement (Conway 2003:68).

The ELCIN affirmed on the *National Conference on reconciliation* the importance of reconciliation for "the harmonious togetherness of the people of Namibia":

ELCIN agrees that new nation has been fragmented by factors manifested through the historical legacy of the past; such as apartheid policy of the colonial regime and the liberation war which culminated in a free Namibia. Therefore, ELCIN believes that reconciliation is imperative for a harmonious togetherness of all the people in our country. (*ELCIN Report* 1996:1).

According to John Pobee confession is the only gateway to the engagement into the process of reconciliation:

To undertake the demand of the gospel, we need to repent because there is a lot for which we need to repent of- our arrogant and poor treatment of those who do not belong to our denomination, our tribe. We need to change our ways and attitudes regarding our women and youth and children. ... "Let us repent and turned to God" (*World Council of Churches Report* 1997:16).

### 1.3 Hypothesis and research questions

The hypothesis which undergirds this research study is the following: *The engagement of the ELCIN, as one of the largest Christian denominations in Namibia, regarding reconciliation and restorative justice, in pre-independence and post-independence Namibia, is indicative of the important role churches play in the restoration of peaceful and amicable relations in church and society in Namibia.* In the words of Töttemeyer, “the church can therefore not escape the responsibility to make its voice known when the human dignity and human rights are tampered with or declined and would have not healed” (*The Namibian* 17 May 2010).

Currently the Namibian churches are being challenging to engage in the process of reconciliation in Namibia. Already on 23 May 1989 Central Committee of SWAPO at its extraordinary session held in Luanda, from 7-11 February 1989 adopted a policy of national reconciliation in order to enhance the chances of peace in Namibia (See Addendum 5). The Central Committee of SWAPO, within the frame-work of the policy of national reconciliation, issued a general pardon to all those who infiltrated the rank and file of SWAPO with the aim of serving the war efforts of the adversary. Furthermore the Central Committee of SWAPO called upon all Namibians to return to the people's fold and work for peace, unity and national reconciliation (*Resolution of the Central Committee of SWAPO* 1989:552).

The *Constitution of the Republic of Namibia* (1990:6) states the following regarding national reconciliation: "We, the people of Namibia will strive to achieve national reconciliation and to foster peace, unity and a common loyalty to a single state." The full text of the Preamble of the Constitution of Namibia reads as follows:

**Whereas** recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is indispensable for freedom, justice and peace;

**Whereas** the said rights include the right of the individual to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, sex, religion, creed or social or economic status;

**Whereas** the said rights are most effectively maintained and protected in a democratic society, where the government is responsible to freely elected

representatives of the people, operating under a sovereign constitution and a free and independent judiciary;

**Whereas** these rights have for so long been denied to the people of Namibia by colonialism, racism and apartheid;

**Whereas** we the people of Namibia

have finally emerged victorious in our struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid;

are determined to adopt a Constitution which expresses for ourselves and our children our resolve to cherish and to protect the gains of our long struggle;

desire to promote amongst all of us the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Namibian nation among and in association with the nations of the world;

*will strive to achieve national reconciliation and to foster peace, unity and a common loyalty to a single state;*

committed to these principles, have resolved to constitute the Republic of Namibia as a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State securing to all our citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity (*The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia* 1990).

After the independence of Namibia, the government announced a policy of reconciliation. The *Constitution of Namibia* requires all the agents of peace and unity, including the Namibian churches, to engage actively in the reconciliation process. The aim of the Namibia's policy of national reconciliation as embedded in the Constitution of Namibia is that the country should come to terms with its violent and disparaging past in which thousands lost their lives, were traumatized by imposed violence, loss of land, dignity and self-respect. The churches in Namibia should have given guidance on topics and themes regarding reconciliation and in so doing fostering a spirit of reconciliation in Namibia and nationhood. It is indeed a biblical imperative and a constitutional obligation of ELCIN together with other Namibian Churches to restore peaceful and amicable relations in church and society.

The researcher addressed the following questions in the research:

1. What is the historical background of the position the Churches in Namibia took during and after the war for liberation with regard to reconciliation?

2. What lessons can be deduced from the historical data?
3. What should the role of the churches be with regard to the quest for reconciliation in Namibia?

#### **1.4 Research methodology**

It is a historical theological study which focuses on the largest denomination in Namibia namely ELCIN and it traces the theology of reconciliation as understood in this church and applied through various phases of its history. The study walks on two legs methodologically: historiography and theology. The theological chapter (chapter 2) deals with the concept of reconciliation whilst chapters 3, 4, 5 deal with the history of the ELCIN and the engagement of the ELCIN regarding the quest for reconciliation.

According to Charles Busha and Stephen Harter (1980:91) there are six steps for conducting historical research:

1. The recognition of a historical problem or the identification of a need for certain historical knowledge.
2. The gathering of as much relevant information about the problem or topic as possible.
3. If appropriate, the forming of hypothesis that tentatively explains relationships between historical factors.
4. The rigorous collection and organization of evidence, and the verification of the authenticity and veracity of information and its sources.
5. The selection, organization, and analysis of the most pertinent collected evidence, and the drawing of conclusions; and
6. The recording of conclusions in a meaningful narrative.

Historical research or historiography, “attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present.” (Berg & Lure, 2012:305).

The research-project therefore involves a critical evaluation of primary sources and secondary sources on the subject matter. Archival documents of the ELCIN and the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) which attend to the question of reconciliation

in Namibia were the primary sources of reviews of this study. Some examples of primary sources being used in this research include the following: acts and agendas, minutes, books, magazine and newspaper articles, articles in journals, speeches, letters, statements, records et cetera. The study involved a critical evaluation and examinations of documents and texts that deal with the reconciliation. Special attention was given to several articles that deal with reconciliation, justice *inter alia* Anderson 1998, Allard 2012, Ashipala 2001, Aarni 1982, Auala 2009, Brown 1986, Bayinsana 1996, Barret et al 2001, Bujo 1992, Buys & Nambala 2003, Ekandjo 2006, Ekem 2005, Hopeasalmi 1946, Hiltunen 1993, Hunke 1996, lileka 2006, Isaak 2011, Kameeta 1986, Kapolo 1991, Katjavivi et al 1989, Kiljunen 1981, Lombard 1998, Mbiti 1970, Mndende 2009, Mosala 1987, Munyika 2004, 1994, Nambala 1994, Namuhuja 1996, Nashihanga 1993, Ndeikwiila 2016, Niitenge 2013, Peltola 2002, Richardson 1956, Segal 2001, Shejavali 1970, Shuuya 1995, Tirronen 1977, Tronjes 1996, Voipio 1981 and Zehr 1990.

This study is preceded by researches done by Buys and Nambala (2003). *History of the Church in Namibia*; Diescho (1997) *The link between truth, reconciliation, justice and peace*; Groth (1995) *Namibia - The walls of Silence: the dark days of the liberation struggle*; lileka (1991) *From Liberation to Reconciliation: The Namibian theology of liberation and reconciliation*; Lindeke (2011) *The long aftermath of war – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*; Lombard (1998) *The Role of Religion in the Construction of Namibian Society: The Churches, the New Kairos and Vision of Despair and Hope*; Malua (2005) *From Civil war to Development: A study of the construction of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (IELA) toward reconciliation, peace and reconstruction and Development among the Ovambo community in Southern Angola*; Munyika (1994) *The message of national reconciliation as a challenge to the church in Namibia*; Isaak (2011) *God's mission as praxis for healing and reconciliation*; Peter (1999) *Namibia: Making democracy works*; Siiskonen (2009) *Land use rights and gender in Ovamboland, North- Central Namibia, since 1930's* as well as Simon (1996) *Restructuring the local state in post-apartheid cities: Namibian experience and lessons for South Africa*. These studies explored reconciliation as a challenge to the church in Namibia. It identified also a number of areas that needed further attention with regard to reconcile the broken society that is torn apart by apartheid policy and discriminations. This research will

attend therefore to *A historical study of reconciliation as a challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia*.

The researcher contextualizes the relevant themes regarding reconciliation in a Namibian context. This method would help the Christians in Namibia to interpret the concept of reconciliation, restorative justice, forgiveness in their own context and enable them to practice the spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation denotes a change from enmity to friendship. In his book: *Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1959:46) argues that human beings are caught up between cheap grace and costly grace.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes a distinction between two kinds of graces, namely “cheap grace and costly grace” (1959:45). He further describes “cheap grace” in relation to a preaching of “forgiveness without any repentance, absolution of sin without personal confession, grace without a cross” and all alike. He further argues that cheap grace took place when forgiveness is pronounced without any repentance, absolution of sin is made without personal confession and grace is shown without a cross (Bonhoeffer 1959:47). Among many others, grace is costly because “it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.” It costs “a man his life” as well “it gives a man the only true life” (1959:47).

And if we answer the call to discipleship where it leads us? What decision and partings will it demand? To answer this question, we shall have to go to him, for only he knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us to follow him, knows the journey’s end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. (Bonhoeffer 1959:41).

Furthermore, “the costly grace condemns sin, and justifies the sinner” (1959:48) Similarly, Bonhoeffer’s assessment on the concept of cheap grace is tantamount to a concept of a false reconciliation that took place without confession of any wrongdoing committed. While his concept of a costly grace, stands in agreement with a genuine reconciliation which is preceded by repentance and forgiveness. For these reasons, therefore, peace and justice should be viewed as the delicate fruits of reconciliation.

The forgiveness of sins grants the complete break of guilty and paved the new beginning of reconciled life (Bethage 1955:53). The forgiveness of sins is preceded by the conversion, because through conversion the wounds that are inflicted can be healed and gradually the process of healing is taking place (Bethage 1955:54). Bonhoeffer argues that the proper forgiveness and true reconciliation take place only when the offending party comes to the awareness of the nature of the offence and expresses remorse to the victim, offering an apology and asking for forgiveness (Bethage 1955:54). Bonhoeffer holds:

Reconciliation and the quest for justice go hand in hand. After an offense is committed, the wrongdoer comes to an awareness of the nature of the offense. The wrongdoer then expresses remorse, and goes to the victim, offering an apology and seeking forgiveness. The victim, after hearing the wrongdoer and judging the wrongdoer to be genuinely remorseful, extends forgiveness to the wrongdoer, and then reconciliation between wrongdoer and victim takes place, (Bethage 1955:54).

In his interpretation of the Letter to Corinthians (I Cor 15:12 – 15) Martin Luther (*Luther's Works* 1959:96-99) argues that the knowledge of God is universal and it has been made known through and by nature (*Luther's Works* 1959: 96). He further argued that God has spoken through Adam and gave His basic principles to his people throughout the history of humankind to which we Christians have based on our faith today (*Luther's Works* 1959:97). Luther argues: "One must not dispute with him who desires to deny what nature teaches everybody and what everybody's reason and understanding must concede" (*Luther's Work* 1959:96). If anybody denies what God's general knowledge, Luther claims that "such person must be advised to consult a medical doctor" for healing (*Luther's Work* 1959:96). It can be argued that if anybody claims to deny God's general knowledge to Aawambo, s/he is rejecting God's existence in the history of creation in which they are also part and parcel. Aawambo believe that life is a gift from *Kalunga* [God] (Hiltunen 1993:34). Aawambo therefore, perform ritual healings in order to maintain life as a gift from God (Hiltunen 1993:34-36).

### **1.5. Specific contribution of the dissertation**

This research opens a window of opportunity, especially to the ecumenical, evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Namibia and other parts of the world to participate in the *missio Dei* (mission of God) to witness in word and deed by being the prophetic voice in this world on world affairs and the active and direct participants in God's mission as reconcilers within the churchly-political-socio-economic contexts in Namibia and world-wide. Bosch argues that mission is, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belief. For Bosch mission is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of community, for the sake of the world (1991:519). "Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate ... Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people." (Bosch 1991:392).

### **1.6 The scope and the limitation**

The researcher focused to English as well as Oshiwambo, documents on the topics on reconciliation, peace and justice. Since the official language of ELCIN is Oshiwambo and most of the documents in ELCIN are published in Oshiwambo, the researcher therefore focused in the study also on the Oshiwambo documents. The researcher translated the Oshiwambo documents in English.

### **1.7 The outline of the study**

**Chapter 1:** Introduction to the study. The first chapter is an orientation to the study. It includes the introduction, background of the study, the purpose and research methodology. The churches in Namibia were prophetic during the pre – independent era. In post – independent era, however, the churches are silent. A spirit of animosity is prevalent in the society. The understating of reconciliation is a challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. This dissertation is a historical research of reconciliation as a challenge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). The study explains the role of the ELCIN regarding the reconciliation in Namibia. In co-operation with the Council of Churches in Namibia, ELCIN denounced the injustice done by the South African government in Namibia harshly.

The **second chapter** discusses the different paradigms of reconciliation from Judaism, Christianity to African theology. Using the theories *inter alia* of atonement and forgiveness, restorative justice and Christians as the ambassadors of reconciliation, as well the concept of life is a unity; the chapter argues that the churches are the agents of peace, love and justice in church and society.

**Chapter three** describes the historical origin of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). It explains in brief the historical background of other two Lutheran Churches in Namibia: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN/GELC). This chapter shows that even the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia are divided along racial or languages boundaries. The chapter argues that the social-political, economic, religious, and ecclesiastical context in Namibia paved the ways for the creation of the walls of separations within the Namibian communities and even the churches.

**Chapter four** examines how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia engages in the process of reconciling church members who had been pushed aside by the ecclesiological practices within ELCIN. Using the insights of the synodical records, minutes, church newspapers articles of the ELCIN, the chapter argues that between the periods of 1970 to 1989 the leadership of ELCIN embarked on a process regarding reconciliation, justice and peace.

**Chapter five** discusses the involvement of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) in the reconciliation process. By means of reports, minutes, and letters of the CNN body, the chapter argues that the Council of Churches in Namibia attended to human rights issues and advocated for peace justice and reconciliation in the pre – independent Namibian.

**Chapter six** concludes the dissertation with a critical examination and evaluation on historical discourses of reconciliation and practice in ELCIN in the light of the chapters two – five. This chapter suggests recommendations to ELCIN to be consider for the

## Chapter 2

# Different paradigms of reconciliation from Judaism, Christianity to African theology

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.2 Definition of a term reconciliation

Reconciliation has a host of meanings. The English word: *reconciliation* comes from Latin *reconciliare*. It is spelt out: *re* = again and *conciliare* = to bring together or to unite. Reconciliation is a restoration of a good relationship between enemies (Brown 1986:145). It is a fundamental biblical word that carries three theological meanings:

- i. Firstly, in worship usage, reconciliation defines meaning of an offering or sacrifice. It is to ask the forgiveness to the task left undone or to the things that went wrong.
- ii. Secondly in legal use reconciliation explains the arts of restoring the right relationship.
- iii. Lastly in social matters reconciliation acts to put to an end guilt and its consequences (Fahlbusch et al 2005:504).

The purpose of reconciliation is to bring about peace, love and justice (Fahlbusch et al 2005: 504; Nurnberger & Tooke 1988:7). Reconciliation is a basic principle of the divine action. It is God who out of His love reconciled humankind with Himself. Reconciliation is therefore an ongoing movement of God's unconditional love to the human beings (Fahlbusch et al 2005:505). Borrowing Karl Barth's definition, reconciliation clarifies God's movement to the humankind. God's unconditional love was demonstrated through Christ Jesus: "reconciliation is God's crossing the frontier to [human being], supremely legitimate and yet supremely inconceivable or conceivable only in the fact of His act of power and love" (Barth 1956: 92, Fahlbusch et al 2005:505). In this study, therefore, reconciliation is applied in its religious meaning and usage. It is referred to the task of the church God has entrusted with the keys of peace, justice and healing.

Barret asserts that God reveal himself to us as the One who stands “for us.” Reconciliation therefore is for Barret “God’s unconditional approach” to us. Hence, to live in an unforgivable life to others is to do harm to God’s unconditional approach. In Barth’s terms reconciliation is God’s condescension movement to us by the way of crucifixion. Reconciliation is an act of bringing back something or an act of fixing the unhealthy relation to its original and state of affair. It is the act that restores the damaged or broken relationship to its renewed relation (Barret et al 2001:504). God’s action heals the breach between God and man (c.f. Gen 37 – 50). Reconciliation involves confession and forgiveness the wrongs doings. Reconciliation as a sacrifice pleases God to show grace and mercy (c.f. 1 Sam 26: 19; Gen 8: 21). Reconciliation was later understood as “ransoms” to pay back something.

This chapter examines the concepts of reconciliation within Judaism, Christianity and African Christian Theology (c.f. Friesen 1994:37-50). Emphases are being laid in this chapter on atonement and forgiveness, restorative justice, African Christian perception with references to communion with triune God as well as the Oshiwambo perspective of healings, *ubuntu* and *onkombambinzi*. Conversely, reconciliation is a return to a condition in which one was prior to the wrongdoing. It is the re-establishment of relationships. Claudia Margarethe Nolte-Schamn, a theologian and scholar of African Traditional Religions argues that reconciliation is a re-establishment and restoration of the relationships (Nolte-Schamn 2006:287).

## **2.2 The Old Testament understanding of Reconciliation**

### **2.2.1 Reconciliation within Judaism**

The Old Testament scholar, Domeris (1987:77) argues in *Biblical Perspective on Reconciliation* that the actual use of the word reconciliation never occurred at all in the Hebrew Scriptures. He maintains that readers may read of sin and judgement, repentance and sacrifice, but hardly of reconciliation in the Hebrew Scriptures (Domeris 1987:77).

However, it can be argued that although the term reconciliation does not appear in the Old Testament writings, its meaning and purpose are implied by the Old

Testament basic categories of repentance, confession and forgiveness (Mosala 1987:23-24). Mosala argues that all these concepts narrate God to be the subject and humankind the object of reconciliation (c.f. Mosala 1987:24). According to Domeris (1987:77) these concepts are the fundamental concepts utilized in the Jewish Religion to refer to reconciliation. Hence, the themes reconciliation, atonement, forgiveness and restorative justice will be discussed in this chapter.

### **2.2.2 Atonement and forgiveness: acts of reconciliation**

Atonement and forgiveness are two Jewish concepts for healing and reparation. These concepts define reconciliation as the act of unity in the life circle of a Jewish community (Graubart 2001:2). A day of atonement is an annual Jewish festivity. Literally speaking atonement is an act of forgiveness and acceptance which takes place at one moment.

The Hebrew word for 'atone' is *kapar* (Allan (1957:25)). It denotes a reconciling action directed toward an offence. *Kapar* symbolizes the act of sacrifice which turns away God's wrath over a transgressor. Coin-sided, it is an act that unites a human being with God or a human being with the fellow human being. Gen 32:20 is an example of *kapar*. Jacob's gift to Esau serves as a means to reconcile them. Atonement involves confession, forgiveness and acceptance. The Day of Atonement is preceded by nine days of a total forgiveness and acceptance called *Rosh Hashanah* festival. According to the Jewish tradition, during *Rosh Hashanah* festivity, an offender is expected to go to the offended part and confess the wrongdoing in order to be forgiven and bring about reconciliation. Sue Penney (1995:16) describes this festival to be "*the days of returning. In ... [which] Jews think about the things they have done wrong in the past? They make promises to themselves and to God that they will do better in the future.*" Hence, every Jewish transgressor is expected to ask for forgiveness from his/her offended. Significantly, *Rosh Hashanah* is the annual festival of forgiveness and acceptance within a Jewish community. The festival symbolizes the new beginning or the new life. The tenth day marks *Yom Kippur* festival, an atonement festivity. On the day, the whole nation goes to the temple of Jerusalem to confess their sins to God and ask for the forgiveness from God, as they forgive each other's wrongdoing during the *Rosh Hashanah* festivity. For the Jews,

confession, forgiveness and acceptance are the prerequisite to reconciliation. Subsequently, Jews strongly believe that a true reconciliation should be a process resulting from the above three steps. Repentance and forgiving are the core principles of the concept of reconciliation.

A biblical scholar, Richardson (1956:25) equates the Hebrew word *kapar* to an English term 'atone.' Botterweck Johannes, Helmer Ringgren & Heinz – Josef Fabry (1995:290) in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* traced *kapar* to an Arabic word: *kuppuru* which means to purify cultishly (Botterweck et al 1995:290). Botterweck et al argues that the Arabic used *kuppuru* in the healing cultic ceremonies (Botterweck et al 1995:290). *Kapar* is an act of sacrifice which turns away of God's wrath over a transgressor (Richardson 1956:25). Jews believe that God mandated them to be burnt on bronze altar as a means to please God. "Sacrifice to please me, must be completely burnt on bronze altar" Lev 1:2. They considered the sacrifice an aroma pleasing to the Lord (Lev 1:9, 13, 19). Atonement is a central concept in the Jewish biblical theology (Barret, et al 2001:152).

The history of sacrifices in Old Testament is dated back to the primeval period (Colin 1986:425). Abel and Cain are examples of the archaic sacrifice (Genesis 4:4ff). Job offered burnt offerings (Job 1:5) and Abraham stood a test to God's call to offer his son Isaac as burnt offering (Gen. 22:1ff) to mention but few primeval sacrifices. A Biblical scholar and former principal of Ridley College Melbourne, Leon Morris (1983:16) argue that atonement as a sacrifice in Jewish religion is a universal religious rite associated with animal offerings. Lev 8:15 "And he killed it, and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar around it and purified the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it to make atonement for it."

Atonement is an act connected with blood sacrificial offerings. Sin offerings are the common ritual practices exercised by the Jews:

- a. "If the anointed priest sins," declares the sacrificial code that such act brings "guilt on the people." Therefore, he "must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering" for his individual wrongdoings he has done" (Lev. 4: 3).

- b. “When a leader sins... he must bring a male goat without defect. It is a sin offering. The priest will make atonement for the leader’s sin, and he will be forgiven. (Lev. 4:22 – 26).
- c. “If the whole Israelite community sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands ... the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the tent of meeting. The priest will make atonement for the community, and they will be forgiven” (Lev. 4:13-21).
- d. “If any member of the community sins ..., they must bring ... a female goat without defect. ... The priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. (Lev. 4:27-31)
- e. “If someone brings a lamb as their sin offering, they are to bring a female without defect.... The priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven” (Lev. 4:32 – 35).

In addition, there was also a special offering for a sin offering for poor individuals who were unable to offer the animals. Giving a turtle dove as the offering was considered meeting the requirement (Lev. 5:7):

Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as a penalty for their sin—one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. They are to bring them to the priest, who shall first offer the one for the sin offering.... The priest shall then offer the other as a burnt offering... And they will be forgiven.

The burnt offerings symbolize God’s acceptance of each one’s offerings. As a result, the blood of a young bull (Lev. 4:20), a female goat without defect (Lev. 4:23), a female lamb without defect (Lev. 4:33) and “a dove or a young pigeon” (Lev. 5:7) was shed for sacrificial offerings (c.f. Lev. 4: 22 – 5:1), as means of purification (Botterweck et al 1995:290). The animals of sacrifices should be without blemish, perfect of its kind (Lev. 23:23).

The animal blood played a crucial role in the Jewish ritual rites. It was a central feature in sacrificial offerings. According to Morris the term blood appears 362 times

in the Old Testament (1983:55). 103 times it refers to the blood of sacrifice, ninety-four times being sacrifices in the Levitical systems (Morris 1983:52). The Jews, connect blood closely with life (Morris 1983:54). “You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood” Lev 17:12-24). Jews believe that it was God who commanded them to practice blood sacrificial rites. The animal blood sacrificial rite was seen as atonement: “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar, it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Lev 17:11). Subsequently, Morris, like other Biblical scholars argues that the significance of the Hebraic sacrificial rite hardly lies on the death of the animals. It rather lies on the blood of the animals (Morris 1983:54-55). He argues as follows:

It is life not death that blood signifies. When the priest stood by his altar with a basin full of blood it was not really blood: it was a basin full of life. It was the animal’s hard luck that the priest could not get his basin full of life without the animal dying. But its death was not significant part of ritual. It was the release of its life that mattered (Morris 1983:54-55).

The blood ritual or animal killing and the shedding of the blood signal that sin could not be taken lightly (Morris 1983:49). Sin is washed or purified with blood; Blood is therefore a means of purification (Botterweck et al 1995:290). Every Jewish family is accountable for the atonement sacrificial rite for their sins.

“Every day you shall offer a bull ....” (Ex. 29:36). It is a Jewish belief that once they offered a bull or animal as a sacrifice, God no longer counts their wrongdoings. “The whole Israelite community ... must bring a young bull ... for the sin offering for the community” (Lev. 4:13-21). Through offerings God is appeased and all their sins, including those of omission are forgiven. Sacrifice signifies the act of atonement. Conversely, life is believed to be surrendered, released, and set free for a new function, therefore atonement is secured (Morris 1983: 57).

It is within this understanding Jews commemorate atonement day. For them, atonement day is a day of the vertical reconciliation at work consolidating the broken relationship within the Jewish nation and with God (Penney 1995:16-17). The removal of sin that caused broken relation between God and human beings and human being with their fellow beings should be taken place. Richardson (1956:202) describes a healthy relationship as “the perfect circumstance where two or more parties are equally enjoying a strong spirit of partnership or brotherhood [/sisterhood].” Such perfect circumstances are traditionally depicted with a Hebrew term *tsedaqah* which is translated to mean righteous. Righteous is measured in terms of a good relationship. Consequently, *tsedaqah* is thought to prevail in a community when peace and justice meet. As a result, healthy relationship is understood to coin-side with reconciliation.

Significantly, atonement is the act of forgiveness and acceptance. Both two aspects take place in the process of the atonement rite. Human beings are simultaneously forgiven and accepted by God as well as united with their fellow human being. Two parties that have been estranged from each other are therefore reconciled (Ekem 2005:1). *Shalom* as God’s peace encompasses all dimensions of human life (spiritual, physical, cognitive, emotional, social, societal and economic) is perceived to prevail in the community. According to Ekem the Jewish atonement is a human act which mends the broken relationship existing between God and human beings (2005:22). Jean Graubart (2001:1) argues that forgiveness saves and heals both the individual and the Jewish nation as a whole. Individual forgiveness can therefore not be separated from the context of the community (2001:2).

The individual and communal forgiveness are the core principles of Jewish festivals of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) celebrations (Graubart 2001:2). During *Rosh Hashanah* Jews embark upon the task of examining their lives and repenting for any wrongs they have committed during the previous year. *Rosh Hashanah* is all about making peace in the community and striving to be a better person. “God does not forgive our sins against others until we ask and receive forgiveness directly from the person we wronged” (Graubart 2001:2). As a result, every Jew is spiritually obliged to confess the wrong doings to their fellow human

beings whom s/he offended, before asking their communal forgiveness to God on *Yom Kippur*. Graubart explains:

We set aside the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the days of repentance in between as a time to look at our own behaviour over the past year and to come face to face with the Jewish concept of forgiveness, a psychologically demanding and ultimately, spiritually fulfilling obligation (Graubart 2001:2).

Any person who had committed crimes should confess his/her wrongdoings in order to obtain atonement. This process of repentance is called *teshuvah*. Jews are encouraged to make amends with anyone they have wronged. Sue Penney, the author of *Discovering Religion: Judaism* argued that *Rosh Hashanah* festival is “the days of returning” (Penney 1995:17). It is in these days of returning Jews are reflecting on their wrongs they have committed in the past and asking for the forgiveness and reconciliation (Penney 1995:17). Similarly, Morris (1983:72) argued that *Yom Kippur* (atonement day) is “a day of special solemnity.” “On this day,” Morris claims Jews do not do any work. Rather they fast from the evening of the ninth day of *Rosh Hashanah* until the following evening of *Yom Kippur*” (Morris 1983:120). They consider their wrongdoings, asking forgiveness from those they offended and making promises to their fellows and to God that they will strive to change behaviours and do better in the future (Penney 1995:17).

Both *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* are significant Jewish annual festivals of forgiveness and acceptance (Penney 1995:16). They are festivals that symbolize new beginning or new life. It is within this symbolism of healing and repair that the Jews believe that God forgives their sins and heals broken relationships (Graubart 2001:2). Hence, Jews close the *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* festivals with the ritual of atonement at the temple:

He [The High Priest] took the blood [of the bull] and return to the Holy of Holies. There he sprinkles it once upwards and seven times downwards. ... He slaughtered the goat that had been marked for ‘The Lord.’ He collected its blood and did with it what he had done with that of the bull (Morris (1983:77).

The blood has atoning power for both the Priest and the people (Botterweck 1995:297). Therefore, the High Priest also offers a sacrifice for his own sins before entering the Holy of Holies. “The High Priest begins with the bull and offered it for his own sin offering [...] and his household” before entering the Holy of Holies to take the offering for the whole nation” (Morris 1983:76-78). Later on, he mixed the blood of the bull with that of the goat to sprinkle the horns of the golden altar of the incense (Morris 1983:77). The High Priest poured than the rest of the blood at the western base of the altar of burnt offering (Morris 1983:77).

According to Botterweck, it is a ceremonial purification of the temple (1995:298). This ceremony is concluded with the release and sending away of the scapegoat in the wilderness after the High Priest laid his two hands on the animal and made confession for the sins and transgressions of His nation before God (Morris 1983:78). “The laying of hands,” explains Botterweck, denotes the act of transferring the sin in a material form to the sacrificial animals (Botterweck 1995:297). The Jews believe that on the arrival of the scapegoat at the wilderness, the scarlet wool which is tied to the door of the sanctuary at Jerusalem turn white (Morris 1983:79). It happened in accordance with God’s words: “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). Atonement day is therefore ended with the great “relief and joy” both to the High Priest and to the people of Israel as well (Morris 1983:80).

It could be argued that the fifth petition of the Paternoster prayer in Math 6:12: “*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us,*” is derived from the above mentioned Jewish festivals. Jesus taught his disciples this petition within the Jewish understanding of reconciliation to remind them of their obligations to forgive others before they plead forgiveness from God. Forgiveness and atonement are basic Jewish principles (Penney 1995:17). It is the Jewish belief that their annually process of forgiveness and reconciliation during *Rosh Hashanah* culminates in divine cleansing for the whole nation at *Yom Kippur* (Segal 2001:192).

### 2.2.3 Restorative justice as a means of reconciliation

Restorative justice is being interpreted in the Jewish Religion in terms of the ceremonial laws that serve to execute punishment, restitution and atonement. Leviticus 5:20-26 spells out the laws regarding robbery and how to deal with it accordingly. Questions of restitution, punishment and atonement all play a role in the laws of robbery according to Eliezer Segal, a Hebrew scholar; the Torah treats robbery on at least three levels:

- 1) Restoration to its rightful owner of the stolen object;
- 2) An additional punitive payment to the victim probably deterrent in purpose, consisting in this case of one fifth of the total;
- 3) Atonement for the trespass against God, to be administered by a priest, through the bringing of an "*asham*" sacrifice, the so-called guilt-offering (Segal 2001:184).

There are two types of guilt offerings, namely certain and doubtful guilt offering. A certain guilt offering is made when the offender is aware of his or her deed whereas the doubtful guilt offering is made on behalf of person who is uncertain whether they have committed a transgression. Segal (2001:183) argues that genuine repentance involves stages of confession, remorse and a strong will to improve one's future conduct. According to Segal the Jewish's religion encourages individuals, even those who have been wronged, to treat the reformed sinner with compassion and forgiveness (Segal 2001:183).

The *Torah* set out the procedures how to handle the restorations of crimes within the Jewish community (Segal 2001:184). The word *Torah* means 'instruction' and is applied narrowly to the first five books of the Bible. The books of the Torah are being considered in the Jewish tradition as more important and authoritative than the others (Segal 2001:181). According to Segal (2001:185) the Jews believe atonement to affect the divine forgiveness only when reparation of the damage has been given to the victims. Any transgressor happened to lose or to destroy the misappropriated object a person is required to appease the victims with money valued to the object, (Segal 2001:185). Citing from Mishnah (Baba Qaman 9:5) Segal further illustrated the significance of restoration: One who robbed his fellow and submitted to an oath

must carry it to him all the way to Media. It is not allowed to hand it to the victim's child or agent, though it may be turned over to a court-appointed bailiff (Segal 2001:185).

In a case the thief is unable to repay the damage caused, the *Torah* requires him/her to be sold. "If he (the thief) has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" Exodus 22:3. He becomes a victim's servant (Segal 2001:186). To turn a thief into victim's servanthood is to satisfy the demand of *Torah*. It serves as the restoration of the misappropriated property (Segal 2001:186). To sell a thief is to remove the root cause of his/her crime. It is to provide honest employment for the criminal (Segal 2001:186). The Jews believe that servitude was understood primary as an act of benevolence to a thief [...] to serve the master [...] for a maximum of six years," (Segal 2001:187). Talmudic tradition cited in Segal (2001:187) advises: "And if they brother [...] be sold unto thee" (Deut. 15:12) – You must treat him in a brotherly manner [...]" [c.f. Ben-Sira 33:35-36]

Capital punishment is one of the Jewish limited options for the execution of restorative justice. Death was the punishment for the murder (c.f. Ex. 22:12). An early Jewish tradition however, argued against capital punishment on proportion of reverence of human life. According to Segal (2001:188) the *Mishnah* (Makkot 7a) teaches the following:

A Sanhedrin that passes the death penalty once in seven years is called a murderous court. Rabbi Eleazer ben Azariah says that this is true of the court that passes such sentence even once in seventy years. Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva say: Had we been members of the Sanhedrin, no one would have been executed.

Capital punishment is most often associated with specifically religious and cultic violations; the witnesses must have warned the culprit of the criminal status of the act and its penalty; and the culprit must have stated that he or she was going to commit the crime despite the warning (Segal 2001:188). Short-sighted compassion is not encouraged. Jews believe that short-sighted compassion can be the cause of a long-term societal catastrophe. According to Rabbi Joshua ben Levi if a person

acts compassionately in a situation where cruelty is required, in the end that person will act cruelly when compassion is requiring (c.f. Segal 2001:196). The act of short-sighted is in itself cruelty. It turns honest people to liars. The Torah declares: “Do not take bribes to give unfair decisions. Bribes keep people who are wise from seeing the truth and turn honest people into liars” (Deut. 16:19).

Compromise was not honoured in Jewish tradition (Segal 2001:193). It had a rarely practice in the Jewish biblical justice. The law should be executed straight forward without any u turn.

When you settle legal cases, your decision must be fair. It does not matter [...] the case is between two Israelites, or between an Israelite and a foreigner living in your community. [...] no matter [...] one is helpless and the one is powerful. Do, not be afraid. [...] God will help you make a fair decision. (Deut. 1:16-17).

Compromise is prohibited in the Jewish culture. And any decision taken as a result of compromise is being seen as unjust and sinful (Segal 2001:193). Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Yosef the Galilean cited in Segal (2001:193) claimed: “Anyone who does effects a compromise is a sinner, and anyone who blesses the one who effects a compromise is blaspheming. [...] Rather, the law must pierce the mountain.”

Jewish restorative justice requires the restoration of the stolen object or its equivalent value. Atonement, understood as the effecting of divine forgiveness, was conditional upon the criminal's repairing the damage caused to the victim (Segal 2001:185). “Those of you who become judges must completely fair when you make legal decisions, even, if someone important is involved” (Deut. 16:18).

To expect reparation while the effects of the damage have not been removed is, is impossible: “Those of you who become judges must completely fair when you make legal decisions, even, if someone important is involved” (Deut. 16:18). Post-Talmudic law generally favoured the path of compromise (Segal 2001:193). Justice should preclude the establishment of peace. According to Segal (2001:194) Jewish *halakhah* shares several of the features that have been proposed by supporters of restorative justice, such as an interest in the criminal's repentance, direct confrontation between litigants and avoidance of punitive incarceration.

According to Segal (2001:193) restorative justice themes like compromise, conciliation and arbitration prompt the question as to whether the judicial system should be bypassed in favour of compromise between the parties. Pierre Allard, the Chaplain for Prisons in Canada, however argues that contemporary application for restorative justice emphasizes the reduction of pain or harm on crime, offended and community people who suffer as a result (Allard 2012:1). Restorative justice firstly acknowledges that crime is a break of relationships (Allard 2012:1). Secondly it seeks to mend the broken relationships by using non-professionals, the victim(s), offender (s) and the community (Allard 2012:1). Allard agrees with Howard Zehr's theory of restorative justice. In his book: *Changing Lenses*, Zehr argued that restorative justice defines that crime is a violation to people's rights and their relationships (Zehr 1990:181). Zehr further asserted that restorative justice seeks to bring about healing for the crime that was committed (Zehr 1990:181).

The healing is effective when restorative justice involves the victim, the offender, and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation and reassurance (Zehr 1990:181). Allard like Zehr's theory argues that restorative justice seeks to reduce the level of pain so that the healing can take place. It is then healing can freely last effectively on individuals and communities (Allard 2012: 8). Allard further argues that the ultimate goal for restorative justice is to restore shalom. It is to keep harmony and security for all people in the community. This *shalom* happens only when these three stakeholders are mutually involved in the search of solution. It is through this involvement that reconciliation and healing will replace revenge and pain (Allard 2012:8). Restorative justice therefore creates a room where mercy, truth, justice, love and peace meet together (Ps 85.10). As such, restorative justice is owned, and forgiveness and reconciliation can function.

### **2.3 New Testament concept of reconciliation**

Reconciliation (*diallassó*: διαλλάσσω) comes from the Greek family of words that has its roots in *allasso*. It means to change, to exchange, to *reconcile*, or to reach *mutual concession*: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and **be reconciled** to them; then come and offer your gift

(Math. 5:23-24). Reconciliation involves a change in the relationship between God and man or man and man. It assumes there has been a breakdown in the relationship, but now there has been a change from a state of enmity and fragmentation to one of harmony and fellowship. (c.f. “For if their rejection brought **reconciliation** to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 1:15); “and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility” (Eph. 2:16).

Stanely Porter (1994:13), a Biblical scholar and a professor at Biola University, argues that the New Testament concept of reconciliation is borrowed from the Ancient Greek Literatures. Colin affirms that the classical Greek word *katallasso* is a compound of *allasso* (c.f. Colin 1986:166; Porter 1994:13). Porter asserts that the Greek word *allasso* gives a sense of exchanging one state or condition for another (Porter 1994:13). Greek scholars therefore use *katallasso* to describe an act of exchanging goods or things and *antikatallasso* in a context where hostility is being eliminated and friends are made (Porter 1994:13). It is also used to indicate the exchange emotions, for example to give up one’s own anger against his /her opponents through kindness (Porter 1994:33-34).

According to Colin *katallasso* is being used in the Septuagint (LXX) to mean the restoration of God’s favour (Colin 1986:166). The New Testament therefore employs *katallasso* in essence to indicate the reconciliatory work of Christ (Colin 1986:166). Paul uses the concepts *katallasso* and *katallage* in order to give a greater theological and Christological meaning to Christ and his works (Colin 1986:167).

Subsequently, the New Testament usage of *allasso* involves a change in the relationship between human beings and God, and human beings with fellow human beings (Colin 1986:168). The word *allasso* explains the drastic change in relationship from the state of enmity to a state of harmony and fellowship. Such drastic change was also reflected in the change of Paul’s life on the way to Damascus when he encountered with Christ (Acts 9:3). Reconciliation focusses on issues of justice, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

### 2.3.1 The reconciliatory work of God

God is the author of reconciliation. Reconciliation is God's initiative. It is God who reconciled human beings with Himself: "For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life. Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **reconciliation**" Romans 5:10-11. God fulfilled this through the death of Christ (Hedquist 1979:225). In Christ, both Jews and Gentiles are all brought near to God as reconciled people of God (Bayinsana 1996:2). Reconciliation is therefore solely the act of God and is a divine action that embraces the whole world, changing people's relationship with God and making them new creatures (c.f. Hedquist 1979:224; Cone 1977:209). According to Paul it was not the world that was in Christ reconciling God with human beings, but it was God Himself through Christ (II Cor 5:18). "God has done [it] through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:11). God is not in need to be reconciled to humanity. It is the humanity that needs to be reconciled to God (Frank 2003:139). It is God alone who can reconcile humanity with Himself. Therefore, Paul states that God is the very author of the whole process of reconciliation: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of *reconciliation* that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of *reconciliation*." (2 Cor 5:18-19).

Reconciliation is solely the work of God prior to and independent of any abandonment of enmity to God (Martin 1981:150). God has reconciled humankind with Himself (Hedquist 1979:236). Yet in Christ Jesus he entrusted human beings with the office of reconciliation: "and through him **to reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross... But now he has **reconciled** you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation." (Colossians 1:20 and 22). The ministry of reconciliation is an ongoing process (Martin 1981:150).

### **2.3.1.3 Christ the agent of reconciliation**

Christ's death is a representative act. Reconciliation through Christ's blood (c.f. Colossians 1:19-22) Christ died as a representative for all. He died in place of God's people (Frank 2003:11). Christ's redemptive work overcame the enmity between Jews and Greeks, males and females, slaves and frees and brought about peace. "Christ is our peace, who made us [...] one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility to an end" Ephesian 2:14 -15. This was brought through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Christ, the original and unilateral and sovereign triumph of God was done (Barth 1956:89). In Christ God, has removed both unfaithfulness and wrongdoings of human beings. It is only by Christ's gracious act of reconciliation that human beings are new creatures (2 Cor 5:17) (c.f. Penney 1995:8).

### **2.3.1.3 Christians as ambassadors of reconciliation**

After God reconciled the human beings with Himself, He entrusted Christ's followers with the ministry of reconciliation: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*" (2 Cor 5:18-19). Reconciliation is achieved and done by God in Christ Jesus. It is then the responsibility of human beings to accept God's act. It is their task to establish consistent, obedient and loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Penney 1995:13). Christians are God's ambassadors (Hedquist 1979:238). They are sent out to proclaim God's act of reconciliation in Christ to the world (Hedquist 1979:236).

### **2.3.1.4 Peace with God**

Reconciliation is associated with the peace of God (*shalom*) Romans 5:10 "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." *Shalom* (שָׁלוֹם) is a biblical concept of peace with God. Richardson 1956:165) states that it occurs 237 times in Hebrew Bible. It is a state of wholeness, wellbeing, peacefulness,

completeness, soundness, welfare, peace. *Shalom* includes right relationships of human beings with God, within themselves, with one another and with the created world. *Eirene* is a Greek word for peace, peace of mind; invocation of peace a common Jewish farewell, in the Hebrew sense of the health (welfare) of an individual. Peace is an absence or end of war (Richardson 1956:165). It occurs 93 in Greek Bible. According to Richardson (1956:165) it is in fellowship of human beings that peace (*shalom*) is enjoyed. The new fellowship with God includes all people notwithstanding race, language, gender (Gal 3:26-28). Reconciliation brings about a spirit of fellowship; Reconciliation is associated with fellowship with God. Communion with God is another image of reconciliation.

#### **2.3.1.5. Communion with God**

Reconciliation is associated with fellowship God (1 John 1:3). It is in fellowship with one another a human being is able to commune with God. Communion with God is another image of reconciliation. It presents the life of a Christian in relation to God. It is to live a life under confession and forgiveness. *“He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* 1 John 1:9. It is when Christians are responding to God’s love and commands John 14:15. A real communion with God is where Christians are both loving God and their fellow beings as well *“If we keep on loving others, we will stay united in our hearts with God and he will stay united with us”* (1 John 4:16). Communion with God is a state of relationship that is constantly united and loving. It is every day’s activity with God (1 Thessalonians 5:17f).

#### **2.4 Barthian view on reconciliation**

Karl Barth argues that reconciliation is God’s crossing the frontier to come to a far land of human beings (Barth 1956:82). He maintains that reconciliation is not a human initiative but is rather *God* whom initiated and effected the reconciliation through Christ (Barth 1956:3). It is God who did it first (Barth 1956:3). *“God Himself,”* argues Barth, has *“actively intervenes Himself taking in hand [...] in the event of reconciliation”* (Barth 1956:128).

Reconciliation is God's act. It is God who takes "the lost cause of man," not a man at all (Barth 1956:3). God did it solely because it is His eternal purpose to ever be with human beings. "Let us create a human being after our likeness" (Gen 1:26). For Barth, a phrase: "God with us" defines that God to choose His people for salvation (Barth 1956:10). As a result, God vowed to cross the frontier because a human being surrenders the self to sinfulness (Barth 1956:79). In words of Karl Barth: "He [God] acts to maintain and defend His own glory" (Barth 1956:79). This, "own glory" is perceived in terms of God's ultimate will to save the human being rather not to allow them to perish (Barth 1956:80). As St John (3:16) puts: "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die." Conversely, Barth asserts reconciliation to be a divine action. It is hardly a human progress toward God, (Barth 1956:82). He argues as follows: "Reconciliation is God's crossing the frontier to [human being]: supremely legitimate and yet supremely inconceivable – or conceivable only in fact of His act of power and love." (Barth 1956:82)

Reconciliation is the act out of a divine mercy. It is an act of God who humbles Himself, to be the reconciling God (Barth 1956:79). Reconciliation is according to Barth a gracious act of God in a person Jesus Christ (Barth 1956: 22). Furthermore, Barth states that reconciliation is an act of restitution a fellowship that was abandoned by a human being. The restitution of fellowship was done in act of grace and mercy (Barth 1956:35). It is an act of kindness of God for the human being (Titus 3:4). Barth maintains: "Reconciliation is the restitution, the resumption of fellowship which once existed but was then threatened by dissolution (Barth 1956:22).

For Barth, the act of crossing the frontier is a very unique movement because it is neither taken by a human being nor by both God and human being but by God alone (Barth 1956:82). God did it so graciously in a person Jesus Christ when human beings were against him. God crossed the frontier in the existence of the Jesus Christ (Barth 1956:89). The condescension of God indicates how He is a gracious and merciful Lord toward his beloved sinful human being. In Christ Jesus who is the grace of God therefore "the offence offered to God by the unfaithfulness of His co-covenant- partner, and the misery of that partner, are both removed" (Barth 1956:89). Hence, a human being "is accepted by God" (Barth 1956:90). For Karl

Barth, reconciliation is a daily process in which God freely conveys His ever-gracious love and peace to His people. “God’s grace, His sovereign act, His free turning to [human being] as new and strange every morning [...] reservedly therefore and unreservedly, [human being] can hold fast to God and live by and in this holding fast to him/ [her]” (Barth 1956:85).

Reconciliation is a human’s movement to God’s love. Barth argues that the people should always believe that by the power of Holy Spirit they are brought back into a right relationship with God. In Christ Jesus, they have become a new human being (Barth 1956:93). Faith, love and hope conceptualize this new relationship which Christ Jesus has brought about. Barth argues that it is only by faith a human being can come to know and believe that through the death of Christ, God ‘s verdict on human beings has a positive meaning. “It is a verdict which recognizes and accepts” (Barth 1956:94).

God’s verdict declares once and for all that “God receives [human being], and that [human being] ... can confess himself/herself a faithful servant of God.” So, human being should not only confess but to acknowledge also that “[s]/ he [is a] recognized friend and well-loved child” (Barth 1956:94). Barth further argues that by faith only a human being can become a new being (Barth 1956:96):

It is in faith that [human being] can find and know that s/he is justified with ultimate confidence and assurance. For His own honour and glory, acting solely in His own cause, God has renowned his/her being in unrighteousness. [...] That is why the believer will not perish. That is why his/her sins are forgiven.

According to Barth love is the human response to God’s act of reconciliation (Barth 1956:102). He maintains that “Christian love is the human response to His [God] direction” (Barth 1956:102). God is love. Out of His love, He gave Jesus Christ to the world. As a result, Christians too have to respond to this love. They should love God and their fellow human beings as well. “Christian love” is for Barth, “an active human recognition” of God’s love (Barth 1956:103). This “Christian love,” however is the fruit of the Holy Spirit who calls the people into the Christian community. It is the Spirit of God that enables the Christian community to put love of the others in action to love

each other and love God. For “Christian love is at the same time the love to God and love to the neighbour – and it is love to the neighbour because it is love to God. It is the response to God’s own love [... which] is the work of the Holy Spirit” (Barth 1956:106). The Hebrew word “berith” carries the idea of a covenant, agreement or testament. This word “berith” models the basis relationship between God of Israel and His people. The etymology of a term “berith” seems to be uncertain (Barth 1956:22). Allan (1957:53) states its origin to be equalized with the Assyrian word “berith” which means “a bond.” Barth (1956:22) premises are that the word denotes an element in a legal ritual where two partners together accept a mutual obligation. Under this concept, reconciliation therefore is associated with mutuality and responsibility where each partner is fully obliged to maintain or foster peace and sound relationship. Each part is duty bound to execute its task faithfully toward the other for the sake of peace and justice.

## **2.5 An overview of reconciliation in ELCIN**

In his doctoral dissertation: *The Ovambo Sermon: A study of the Preaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church in South West Africa*, Seppo Löytty (1971:13 – 14) argued that the preaching of Ovambo pastors have got very little publication (Löytty 1971:13). The very little sermons that were published would hardly correspond to the delivered ones, though they reflect the ideals of the proclamations; they are shorter than the ordinary sermons (Löytty 1971:13). He further voiced his critic on few pastors who prepared for their preaching task in writings however it was done on brief jotting surface (Löytty 1971:14). Handwritten sermons were also rare (Löytty 1971:14).

Löytty’s observation is correct. It reflects how ELCIN lived a life based on oral tradition which resulted in many of the resourceful wisdoms to go with her faithful members to their graveyards at the end of their days. This dictum is also true to the publications regarding theology of reconciliation in ELCIN. One of the ELCIN prominent theologians Veikko Munyika (2004:377) once lamented the same that ELCIN lacked the culture of theological debate on current issues that are unfolding. He further singled out the only few ever documents on certain theological or ethical issues have been produced he could recall were the “voice of ELCIN on AIDS and her statement on abortion” (Munyika 2004:379). He argues:

There is no platform in ELCIN where theologians can debate the theological issue[s]. No theological magazine or journal. The only Church newspaper, *Omukwetu* is theologically dry. If a theological article appears, people either reject or accept it silently. Nobody dares to question what has been said. It is for this reason that we have very few theological books written by own theologians (Munyika 2004: 377).

The overview of ELCIN of reconciliation therefore has drawn some of its sources from the writings of the missionary's theology of reconciliation as contain in various expressions from the ELCIN hymn book, *Ehangano*. This hymnal book has been primarily a source of religious and spiritual inspiration to the ELCIN members. References are also being made in this section to the wisdoms and the teachings of Martti Rautanen (10 November 1845 – 19 October 1926). The latter is regarded by some ELCIN members as an apostle of ELCIN.

Munyika (2004:295) argues that Martti Rautanen was the pioneer of the theology of the Finnish Mission Society (FMS) in Namibia. According to Munyika neither the history nor the theology of FMS in Namibia can be complete without the name of Martti Rautanen (Munyika 2004:295). Rautanen worked as missionary in Ovamboland over 50 years. He was the director of mission who established Olukonda missionary station in 1880. He translated the Bible as well as the hymnal book into Oshindonga language in 1892. Rautanen also wrote poems which were used as texts for new hymns in Ovamboland. An ELCIN member, Wilhelmina Gustaf born 7<sup>th</sup> May 1909, quoted by Munyika (2004:296) views Martti Rautanen to be “energetic missionary and a man of peace.” Hence, Martti Rautanen's theology of reconciliation is being utilized in this section in order to reflect on reconciliation in ELCIN. The few theological books written by ELCIN theologians on reconciliation and several primary sources also serve in this section as the basic sources of ELCIN's understanding of reconciliation. In his article: *Eitedhululo nehupitho*, ELCIN Pastor Joseph Ngula puts it authentic that reconciliation preceded by the repentance (*Omukwetu* no 7, 2014). Ngula states that repentance is the stepping stone to the process of reconciliation. Ngula however, attest that both repentance and the process of reconciliation are the precious gifts from God. “Repentance is the gracious gift of God in which a person is given a golden opportunity to change

his/her mind-set and behaviours, and moving from his/her old nature to the newness of the reconciled life” (*Omukwetu* no 7, 2014).

### 2.5.1 Reconciliation as the triune God’s work

ELCIN holds that reconciliation is the work of God. It is God who took initiative to reconcile the world with Himself. In his writings “*The Grace and Mercy of God,*” cited in *Ehangano* 163:1, Martti Rautanen asserts that it is God who restored the broken relationship between Himself and human beings:

Kalunga Tate nguka okwe tu tumine

Moluhepo lwetu nduka, Omuwa’ omuholike

[It is God Himself through his Son Jesus Christ

Who came down to us, while we were powerless and weak]

(*Ehangano*163:1). (Translation mine)

For Rautanen, it was God alone who broke the power of the devil. It was Him alone freed the poor and helpless human beings from the bondage of sin. “Luhihi okwe lu teya, Oondu lwondeveli” [He broke the power of the devil] (*Ehangano* 163:2). Rautanen emphasizes further that God acted out of His grace and mercy to seek a human being. God did so while a human was lost and run astray from Him (*Ehangano* 266:2). In Rautanen’s words: “It is God’s grace that seeks a human being. It is His mercy that found a human being” (*Ehangano* (266:1). For Rautanen, reconciliation is a costly act of God’s grace through Jesus Christ (*Ehangano* 266:3). It is a costly reconciliation because Jesus Christ himself took upon the shameful crime on the cross at Calvary. Christ took the shame to pay a ransom on behalf of the human being. His aim was to bring them back to God (*Ehangano* 266:3) In Christ therefore the human beings are at peace with God:

Wa pandje egundjilo. Molwoye [Christ] ndi li po nda pwa.

[It is God who restores my relationship (life). In Christ, therefore I am at peace with Him] (*Ehangano* 266:3). (Translation mine)

Rautanen further claims that God Himself alone reconciled the human being while they were still clinging in the darkness of their sinful nature (*Ehangano* 266:2). He states: “Sho nda li moluhe po lwandje, Momuthitu goondjo dhandje ndho, Ohenda ye

ya toola ndje.” [When I was so helpless, deeply stuck in the realm of my own sinful actions, His grace and mercy found me] (*Ehangano* 266:1-2).

Many of Paul Gerhardt, a Lutheran minister and hymn writer, best-known hymns are being published in the ELCIN hymn book for example. *A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth* (c.f. *Ehangano* 76). This hymnal emphasizes that it is God alone in Jesus Christ who shared the cross on behalf of human beings. Christ did it so to bring about reconciliation (*Ehangano* 76:1). Out of His good will and humility He came down to reconcile the world with Himself. It is God alone who took upon Himself the sins of the human beings. Gerhard asserts that it was God alone who willingly and decisively caused Himself to suffer. God did it to bring the human beings back to God Himself:

Ondjona ye li twika po. Onyanga ei younyuni. [...] Ndee nande yi udite oudjuu. Oye liyandja nee moupuyu. [...] Ondjona veihepeka. Yatya ohai va file. A lamb goes uncomplaining forth. The guilty of all men bearing; [...] none else the burden sharing! Goes patient on, grow weak and faint. [...] Bears shame and stripes, and wounds and death. Anguish and mockery, and said: Willing all this I suffer (*Ehangano* 76:1).

*Ehangano* 125, composed by, Paul Gerhardt, urges believers to peacefully work for a true reconciliation.

Omhepo, ov' ohole, Onghee twa hala yo. Tu yadife ohole. Tu holafane yo. Ondumbo keelela. Tu ku f'etondafano. Nefupa. Tu p'omaano okuliyakula. Oiwana i p'ombili i kwatakafane. Nekwatafano shili. Noku ku ku longela. Tu pa eitavelo. Tu nangeka nouputa. Nomhepo ei yoixuna, Mufye imana mo. [Be gracious to us, you the Spirit of love. Fill our hearts with love, to love each other. Keep jealous away from us. Take hatred and envy away from us. Graciously pour on us the spirit of self-giving love. Give peace to the Nations as to love each other's, and to exercise a true reconciliation and to serve you still. Give us faith and send us away with your blessings. Root out from us this troubled spirit within.] (*Ehangano* 125:6-7). (Translation mine)

In Ehangano 301, Abraham Falk, a Christian composer, emphasizes reconciliation as God's merciful act in Christ Jesus. It is God Himself in Christ who reconciled the world to Himself (*Ehangano* 301:2). It is through Christ's obedient and selfless actions on the cross that relationship between God and the people was restored (*Ehangano* 301:2). In Ehangano 301 Jesus is being describes as the Prince of peace:

Muye uuyuni wa hanganithwa naHe, elago Iya longekidhwa. Momuti Ombinzi yaJesus ya tilwahi. Siku ndyo ye e tu hepekelwa. Shili oongunga dha futwa kuye. Nkuya uulunde wa humbatelwa. Jesus omukwafi, a geelwa kuHe. Kwa si. Kalunga a geulukithwa.

[In him, the world is reconciled with his Father. Goodness is assured, At the Cross; the blood of Jesus is shed. The day he suffered for us. At Calvary, our debts were paid. There, our sinful natures were borne by him. There, Jesus our helper was punished by his Father. He died and through his death, God was conciliated.] (Translation mine).

Falk claims in this hymnal that Christ's death is a ransom for human sins. Christ's death on a cross is an act of appeasement to God. Christ's blood paid it all. It gave life. God was satisfied. At Calvary, our debts were paid. Our sinful natures were borne by him. Jesus died and through his death, God is conciliated (*Ehangano* 301:2).

One of Sigmund von Birken (1626-1681), a German poet, hymns, *Jesus, hear my call for rescue*, is taken up in the ELCIN's hymnal as Ehangano 233:

Oonzi ndhoka dha halakana, konga, adha, galula, Manga iilikama ha y'ilyana Inayi dhi halakanitha po. Shitulula oomwenyo dhadho. Ngu u dhi kuth' epuko lyadho. Adhihe dhi kale mo Omungoy' egameno.

Jesus, hear my call for rescue. To your small sheep turn your ear. Teach me, Lord for help to ask you, when the vicious wolf draws near. Let my cries to you be pleasing. Grant me comfort without ceasing, when I pray, "Please hears my words." Jesus, says, "I have heard you." (Translation mine).

Siegmud von Birken depicts Jesus' reconciling role in a fourfold dimension as:

- i. An outreach ministry, in which Jesus' task is to call and to seek the sheep that are not a part of the fellowship
- ii. Healing ministry, where Jesus' comfort and attention are extended to the traumatized sheep happen to get lost in the thick jungle and living in fear of vicious wolves that seem to draw near. Jesus grants comfort unceasingly.
- iii. Educative ministry, in view of Jesus' admonishment to his flock to lean on his amazing care - giving love and protection
- iv. Renewal ministry, in a way that when Jesus acts to comfort, the end result is ever a holistic renewal. When Jesus returned having a lost and found sheep in his comforting arms it was a different lamb filled with joy and strong feelings governed by a sense of security and belonging

The hymn *The Holy Spirit is a comforter*, attributed to Magnetius Maurus Hrabanus (c. 780 – 4 February 856); a Frankish Benedictine monk is being taken up as Ehangano 118 in the hymnal. Ehangano 118 underpins reconciliation as a work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of “an endless joy and happiness.” The Christians are therefore first and foremost encouraged to invoke the Holy Spirit when they are to engage for a true reconciliation. Because the Holy Spirit alone could give and sustain the endless joy and everlasting peace to those who seek and work for comfort:

*Ombepo ndjo Ondjapuki oyi n'efudhitho. Lyenyanyu lyoye Mukulili, Itali hulu po. Lyenyanyu lyoye Mukulili, Itali hulu po. [The Holy Spirit is a comforter. O Lord, it gives us your everlasting happiness. The endless and boundless joy] (Ehangano118:4). (Translation mine).*

Jul Nilsen Kolsrud 1885-1945 depicted the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of wisdom, a source and renewal to which all human beings should lean on for the lasting peace in this world. Hence the Spirit of wisdom is there to guide and direct the hearts of all that work for a true reconciliation. This hymn of at is taken up in ELCIN's hymnal as Ehangano 113:

*Tungila egumbo lyoye Momitima dhetu ndhi. Yoga po nOmbinzi yoye Ondjapuki, Oondjo dhetu. Mukulili, Tu p'ohole ompe ndjo Yi tu pe uuladhi uupe (Ehangano 113:4). [Come down into our hearts. Make them your place*

*to stay. O Lord, Wash our sins, with your Holy Spirit. Create in us a new love, which renews our hope]* (Translation mine).

One of Friedrich Adolf Lampe, (1683–1729), a German pastor, theologian and professor of Dogmatic, is also taken up in ELCIN's hymnal as Ehangano 43. Lampe attests the Christian life to be narrow corridor surrounded by evils yet it is the life Christians are called to live as peaceful makers. For Lampe, Christian life "*is but a pilgrimage*". It is a life journey under God's command of furthering the process of reconciliation till to the end of the times. To engage in the process of reconciliation is not an easy way. It is to embark on a rough and steep road. *Ehangano* 43:3 confirms:

Ka pe na ondjila kai n'oudjuu. Yomwenyo nayo ke'ipu. Oi yand' Omalwa aa manene. Ya finana, noosatana. Alushe tava Kondjifa. Tu dje mondjila ei yOmwenyo. Oi nomakiya-eembuwa yoo. Dipyuu di henouyepelo.

[There is no path without tribulations. The way to eternal life is not an exception. It has lots of troubles. It is a narrow way, wherein Satan ceaselessly tempting us, to go astray from the eternal life. Alluring us to choose that is wide and easy leads to destruction. Narrow way is relatively a thorny and wildly, yet ever requires unshakable faith] (Translation mine).

Inspired by Friedrich Adolf Lampe's attestation of the Christian life as a pilgrimage, ELCIN members are encouraged to work as pilgrims for peace in their society whatever the cost might be. Knowing that working for peace and reconciliation requires them lot of patience to unearth suitable ways in overcoming confrontations and setbacks. Hence Lampe figuratively painted a Christian life as process of reconciliation to be a narrow way which is to be engaged with tools of peace and justice. *Ehangano* 389:3:

Ondjila yOmakweega ndjo. Nosheelo shi n'oothina. Omushigakano gu li ko. Neyemato nuuyina. Oombuga odhindji dhi li mo. Noondundu nomamanya ge li mo woo. Ga vulitha oondjendi. [A thorny path with narrow gate, path of suffering and of a Cross, of loneliness and aguish, looks as if of emptiness. A way passes through hills, valleys and mountains, which causing sojourners to fall and get weary] (Translation mine).

Lampe marks the road to reconciliation with images of sufferings, narrow gates, thorns in the flesh, hardships, mountains and hills as representing sacrificial and obedience. Hence, reconciliation is the way of the cross. Any one works for peace and reconciliation has to take up the cross, willingly suffers for the sake of others.

Magdalena Kambundu, one of the few female composers in ELCIN's hymnal, portrays the road to forgiveness in Ehangano 391. She maintains the way to forgiveness to be narrow in a sense that those who work for peace and justice are stirred up by various storms of hatred and animosities. Kambundu heartens the Christians to bravely uphold the spirit of reconciliation:

*Enda Ondjila yiikungulu. Ino tila enda ngaa' Jesus Omuwa gwomegulu oye te ku humbata. Jesus okwa sindi uuyuni. Ngashingeyi ta adhima. Nge ngoye oto sindi uuyuni nangoye oto ka adhima. [Stand the storms, fear not steadfast in faith, Jesus the Lord of Heaven will lead the fight. ... Jesus has conquered all the earthly storms. Now, he is shining. When you stand fast in faith, storms will be over. You, too will be shining] (Ehangano 391:1, 3) (Translation mine).*

Gabriel Taapopi, a Namibian teacher and ELCIN member composes Ehangano 179. An admission of wrongdoings on the side of the perpetrator is according to Taapopi the key step towards genuine reconciliation. Taapopi emphasizes in Ehangano 179:1-3 that there is no "genuine reconciliation" without the concerned party's acknowledgment of their wrongdoings committed in the past. For Taapopi repentance is very crucial point in the process of reconciliation. Taapopi's plea to God is eminent: "Omwene ino valula Makulutimba ange. Shounyasha wange fufila, Omufilighenda wange, Omwene, kenukile nge. U dimbulukife nge Ouwa wonghenda yoye." [Do not count on the sins of my youthful life, O Lord. Gracious Lord, have mercy on me. Remind me ever of your loving kindness.] (Ehangano 179:3) (Translation mine).

Antti Raty in Ehangano 181 agrees with Taapopi on the question of repentance as prerequisite to a genuine reconciliation. Raty underlines repentance as a focal point for a genuine reconciliation well as the importance of confession:

*Nda xwa mofuka youlunde. Ondjila yoye, nda kanifa. Woo, kwafa alula ng'omulunde. Ndi shune, movaxupifwa. Eenghonomhepo dike nge. Ndi kole, no ndi pepale. [I deeply went astray into a sinful realm. I lost the way to eternal life. Woe me! Please take me out, [O Lord]. Take me back into the fellowship of the redeemed [reconciled]. Crown me with your Mighty Spirit, so that I may able to stand strong and to be renewed in faith.]* (Ehangano 181:4). (Translation mine).

A hymn of Johann Heermann (11 October 1585 – 17 February 1647), German poet and composer is taken up in ELCIN's hymnal as *Ehangano* 593. Johann Heermann whose ministry were several times interrupted by the “*Thirty Years' War*” wrestled with the question of a true reconciliation. Later on, he concluded his dep't search underscoring repentance as the absolute means to a true reconciliation. Heermann's conviction is being stated clearly in *Ehangano* 593: “Tu hanganithitha. Ombili yoye mpano. Ongoye we tupa Ombili omagano Tu kwatathanitha. Sho tu n'oohepele. Ohenda yi tu pa. Tse tu ku kalele” [You gave us a gift of peace. Unite and bind us together Oh Lord. Be gracious to us and help us to show love to the poor. We remain your faithful servant.] (Ehangano 593:4). (Translation mine).

Johann Heermann teaches in this hymn that forgiveness is a second step or a means to absolute reconciliation. For Heermann “peace as God's gift” takes only place in the hearts of those whose wrongdoings are removed and they are reconciled with each other's.

### **2.5.2 Reconciliation a human response**

The ministry of reconciliation is a mandate from God, the Author of reconciliation, Hence ELCIN, like other Christian Churches in Namibia, believes that the ministry of reconciliation is a mandate from God.

The Church is called to be a mediator in the society, to reconcile the conflicting parties and bring about reconciliation. ELCIN fulfilled the ministry of reconciliation during the liberation struggle. The Church stood up and sided with the oppressed people. It suffered together with the poor people. The Church faithfully condemned all the atrocities and oppressive systems of the

then South African colonial government in Namibia. ELCIN stood against the spirit of hostility and Apartheid because of God's mandated ministry of reconciliation (Ashipala 2001:28). (English version is mine).

The ministry of reconciliation should reflect the love of God as was seen in Christ's salvific activities here on earth. The church is called to emulate Christ's work, namely to be a church for others. David Iileka (2006:160), a Namibian Lutheran pastor, in his Doctoral dissertation: *A Systematic-Theological study of the Relationship between Jesus, political Power and the Contemporary Church in Namibia*, argues that the Christology of reconciliation theology should not be necessarily dogmatic or theoretical rather ethical and practical (Iileka 2006:160). He maintains further that Christology of reconciliation theology should take its model to Jesus's deeds. It should base on liberative praxis, (Iileka 2006:160). Hence, Christians should reflect their faith that emphasizes Jesus Christ' salvific actions. That is, on what God did to them through the life and works of Jesus Christ on earth, (Iileka 2006:160).

In his book, *Towards Liberation: Crossing boundaries between church and politics. Lectures - Meditations - Sermons*, Zephania Kameeta (2006:81) a retired bishop of ELCRN, states that in the third article of the Apostolic Creed Christians admit that the work the Holy Spirit is to call and to gather the people into the church "as a community of God's people" (Kameeta 2006: 81). He further explains that the Holy Spirit does not only gather the believers into a reconciled community but also enables them to share peace together, and to equip them to live a forgivable life in the hope of sharing the everlasting life. (Kameeta 2006:81). For Kameeta, the Holy Spirit is the agent of reconciliation working to encourage and empower Christians to live a life of harmony and peace. According to Kameeta the Spirit of God empowers Christians in their plight to overcome the spirit of animosity and hatred and to work for justice and equality. Kameeta affirms that the Spirit of God is actively at work to transform the bond of love which binds and renews daily the human –human relations and human – God relationships. He maintains:

The Holy Spirit is the Principle of the bond of love between the Father and the Son and the love and reconciliation between one human being and the other. She calls us sisters and brothers to one another and to follow Jesus Christ as

a community of disciples and a sign of God's kingdom who sets in motion an example of a just and loving praxis of a new heaven and new earth for a new Namibia and a new community (Kameeta 2006:81-82).

Kameeta (1986:13), like Iileka (2006:160) argues that those people liberated by Christ from the power of the devil and reconciled with God should live a life as instruments of reconciliation in this world. He asserts: "those who have really tasted this liberation do not withdraw into a "spiritual" sphere, but they should go into the world and sacrifice themselves for the liberation of their neighbors. They should go out as bearers of good news to the poisoned community [...] and confront the reality of sin within the ungodly structure," (Kameeta 1986:13). The Church is mandated to carry out the ministry of reconciliation wherever there is oppressional structure that enslaves and violates the peace of God's people. "The church has the responsibility to "establish friendship and peace [...] to remove the hatred and enmity of the past" that created by ungodly structure, (Iileka 2006:218),

In his presentation: *Being the Church of God in Africa: Ecumenical Perspective*, delivered at the World Council of Churches meeting in Windhoek on 4-14 December 1998, Zephania Kameeta argues that the mission of the Church in a contemporary world is to proclaim with its life and deeds the hope of the alternative society in which God is the King (Kameeta, 1998:39). For Kameeta, the church should proclaim the hope "in the midst of an apparent hopeless situation that reduces people to a powerless," (Kameeta, 1998:39). Kameeta further argues the church is entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation which means to follow the footprints of Christ and to concentrate on healing and changing the broken-hearted people into a caring and loving society (Kameeta, 1998:39).

The Church's ministry of reconciliation in the society is not empty words but God's action of love in Christ Jesus. Love should be a driving force for the church in the response to what God has done to the human beings in Christ. "The church has not been called to spent herself in a flood of irrelevant words, but to a powerful witness and service leads to [reconciliation] and renewal" (Kameeta 1986:50) for those who are in need of healing; the broken-hearted (Isaak 1997:56).

### 2.5.3 Reconciliation a call for conversion

In the words of Christo Lombard, a former Director of the Ecumenical Institute for Namibia (EIN), “reconciliation should be based on truth, confession, forgiveness and on process of restitution” (Lombard 1995:27) Reconciliation requires the change of hearts. In his paper, *Christ the Reconciler in Pauline Theology and Contemporary Rwanda*, Bayinsana argues that only conversion reverses the radical rupture that is created by the sin (Bayinsana 1996:3). The latter holds that conversion and reconciliation go together in order that a full reconciliation to be completed (Bayinsana 1996:6) He argues: “It is impossible to split these two realities or to speak of one and say nothing of the other (Bayinsana 1996:7).

Confession of wrongdoings is a step forward to a genuine reconciliation. In his writing, *I do open my heart to you*, in Ehangano 179:1-3, a Namibian teacher and composer, Gabriel Taapopi, states that conversion and repentance are the requirements to a genuine reconciliation. According to Taapopi genuine reconciliation is not possible without the acknowledgment of the wrongdoings committed in the past (*Ehangano* 179:3):

Omwene ino valula Makulutimba ange. Shounyasha wange fufila, Omufilighenda wange, Omwene, kenukile nge. U dimbulukife nge Ouwa wonghenda yoye.” [Do not count on the sins of my youthful life, O Lord. Gracious Lord, have mercy on me. Remind me ever of your loving kindness] (*Ehangano* 179:3) (Translation mine).

Already in 1851, Antti Raty, a Finnish hymnist and writer, addressed the question of a genuine reconciliation from a repentance point of view (c.f. *Ehangano* 181:4):

Nda xwa mofuka youlunde. Ondjila yoye, nda kanifa. Woo, kwafa alula ng’omulunde. Ndi shune, movaxupifwa. Eenghonomhepo dike nge. Ndi kole, no ndi pepale.” [I deeply went astray into a sinful realm. I lost the way to eternal life. Woe me! Please take me out, [O Lord]. Take me back into the fellowship of the redeemed [reconciled]. Crown me with your Mighty Spirit, so that I may able to stand strong and to be renewed in faith] (Translation mine).

## 2.6 The African understanding of reconciliation in Namibia

### 2.6.1 Aawambo Concept of Reconciliation

Owambo is a locality mainly situated at the Northern part of Namibia. Its people are called *Aawambo* in a plural form while *omuwambo* is a singular. Although its locality is at the Northern part of the country, nowadays Aawambo are all over in each region in Namibia. Formally, the area was known as *Owamboland* before the independence era. It comprises of eight tribes: Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Ombalantu, Uukwaludhi, Uukolonkadhi and Ombandja. Such communities are speaking the same language called *oshiwambo* and sharing the same traditions and cultures. Etymologically *Aawambo* means “good people.” According to Estermann (1976:55) and (Bruwer (1966:372) Aawambo is Herero of origin, attributing to their ethical natures of good relationships among themselves and in relation to their fellow neighbouring tribes.

African Traditional Religion refers to the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans (Awolalu 1974:1). African Traditional Religion attributes souls and spiritual powers to natural objects and phenomena (Awolalu 1974:8). The Aawambo incorporates traditional beliefs and practices into their religious life. Luther however, argues also that God’s general knowledge guides people only to know God but cannot help them to know His intentions (*Luther’s Works* 1959:258). Luther argues: “[human beings] naturally know that there is a God: but what His will is, or what is not his will, they do not know” (*Luther’s Works* 1959:258).

The *Oshiwambo* concept of reconciliation is deeply rooted from African view of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is the Nguni word describes an African concept of a human being to be a human being through interacting with other people. The *Oshiwambo* term for human being is *omuntu*. *Omu* is a prefix denotes a relation, while *ntu*, a root which means a being. Hence, *omuntu* is a being which is in relation to their fellow beings. *Oshiwambo* saying: *Omuntu omuntu omolwaantu ooyakwawo* (a person is a person through others” correlates with the Sotho proverb: *Motho ke motho ka batho babang*; that is translated to mean a human being is human only because of others, with others and for others. *Omuntu* is therefore defined in a spirit of kinship which crosses both races and creeds to unite humankind for a common purpose.

Hiltunen (1993:187) describes the Aawambo to be a peaceful community who strives to maintain and appreciate good human relations. She maintains: “The *Ovambo appreciates good human relations. They strive to live in peace with their relatives, nearest of kinship, neighbours and etc.*” It is within such understanding that *Aawambo* emphasize strongly the human relations and the wellbeing of a society.

### **2.6.2 The locality of Owambo**

Owambo is situated at the Northern part of Namibia. It borders Angola at the North, Kavango on the east, Etosha National Park in the South and Kaokoland on the West. It comprises of eight tribes: Ndonga, Kwanyama, Kwambi, Ngandjera, Mbalantu, Mbadja, Kolonkadhi and Kwaluudhi (Williams 1991:56, Hiltunen 1993:15 and Munyika 2004:143). The said communities are speaking the same language called *oshiwambo* and sharing the same traditions and cultures (Loeb 1962:10, Munyika 2004:143, Nambala 1994:29, Buys & Nambala 2003, and Shejvali 1970:15). Its people are called the *Aawambo* in a plural form and *omuwambo* in singular. Nowadays, Aawambo are found across Namibia. Before the independence of Namibia, the area of Aawambo was known as *Owamboland*. As from the Namibian independence in 1990, the area was demarcated into four O's regions called: Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto and Ohangwena.

### **2.6.3 Origin of Aawambo**

The Aawambo, like other African Bantu groups migrated into the Southern African regions either from North-eastern or North-western Africa. Scholars of African history have different versions on the migration of the Aawambo (c.f. Williams 1991:51, Munyika 2004:140, Nambala 1994:28). However, according to Bruwer, all these scholars agree that the Aawambo are part of the Bantu groups of people migrating from Central Africa (Bruwer 1966:15). According to Loeb (1962:10), in comparison with the Zulu, the Aawambo ought to be the oldest settlers in Southern Africa. For Loeb, the Zulu are “cousins” to the Aawambo (Loeb 1962:10.) He furthermore claims that the “Early Mediterranean influence” to have an impact on the Owambo

cultures. Hence, he drew up the conclusion that it could be so as they might have journeyed together from Saudi Arabia into Africa (Loeb 1962:11).

Williams (1991:51) further developed that the Aawambo are part of the Bantu groups that migrated from the western part of Africa. Williams maintains that the Aawambo are part of the Bantu speaking group which migrated from Cameroon and Nigeria, having among them the Tiv, Batu, Botare, Mambila and Jawara who lived near Central Benue Valley in the West Africa (Williams 191:51). Namuhuja (1996:4) concurs with Williams that the Aawambo migrated from the Western area of Africa. Although Namuhuja did not mention the names of the African country, he made references that they crossed afar, from the lands or countries of many lakes, the lakes of Africa, (Namuhuja 1996:6).

According to Hahn the Aawambo is a branch of the great Bantu family that came to settle to Owambo (c.f. Hahn 1928:28; Estermann 1976:55; Bruwer 1966:22). The name *Aawambo* means good people (c.f. Williams 1991:53-54; Nambala 1994:28). According to Loeb (1962:372) the *Aawambo* is from Herero origin, but for him for the word *Aawambo* means wealthy people or people with-the-cattle pots. Namuhuja (1996:6) premises is that the name *Aawambo* is to be of San people's origin; as they were former inhabitants of the country before the arrival of the *Aawambo*. Namuhuja (1996:6) claims the term *Aawambo* to mean *Aayamba* "rich people." Munyika (2004:142) argues that whatever the description of a term is given, its usage conceptualizes a collective name for the numerous Bantu people of the northern [Namibia] and Southern Angola.

#### **2.6.4 Oshiwambo perception on reconciliation**

The *Oshiwambo* word *okuhangana* means to come together again or to reconcile. The term *okuhangana* is solely applied to human being alone. The *Oshiwambo* term for human being is *omuntu*. *Omu* is a prefix denotes a relation, and *ntu*, a root which means a being. Hence, *omuntu* is a being that is in relation to their fellow beings. The *Oshiwambo* saying: *Omuntu omuntu ike omolwaantu ooyakwawo* (a person is a person only through other people) equals with the Nguni word: *ubuntu* which holds a meaning of generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate (Tutu

1999:34). According to Tutu *ubuntu* means one's humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in fellowship of other people because human beings belong to a bundle of life. Tutu describes a person with *ubuntu* to be open and available to others, to affirm others, to be generous and feel compassion with others (Tutu 1999:34-35). The Oshiwambo saying: "Omuntu omuntu ike omolwaantu ooyakwawo, like Xhosa expression: *ubuntu ungamuntu ngambanye anabantu* describing a person depends on the other people to be a person (Battle 2009:39). According to Mbiti a human being is human only because of other, with others and for others (Mbiti 1970:207; Mbiti 1975:180). *Omuntu* is therefore defined in a spirit of kinship which crosses both races and creeds to unite humankind for a common purpose.

Hiltunen (1993:187) describes the Aawambo to be a peaceful community who strives to maintain and appreciate good human relations. She argues: "Ovambo appreciate good human relations. They strive to live in peace with their relatives, nearest of kinship, neighbours and etc." For the *Aawambo*, social life is a complex thing that should be shared by all people within the community. They underpin that any violation to one's peace is tantamount to a violation to all people in the society. Subsequently, reconciliation is a societal issue that works to bring about the peace for the entire community. The Owambo concept of reconciliation is deeply rooted in the African view of *ubuntu* (Hiltunen 1993:187). The *Aawambo* therefore emphasize strongly human relations and the wellbeing of a society.

#### **2.6.4.1 Life is Kalunga's gift**

*Kalunga* is Oshiwambo name for God. *Kalunga* is the Origin, Master and Creator of all (Munyika 2004:148). According to Estermann (1976:181), *Kalunga* is the "Most intelligent Being, above all the beings." In the words of Bruwer (1966:133f), *Kalunga* is the Supreme Being of the Aawambo. For the Aawambo, *Kalunga* is the source of life. "God is the source of life [...] He produces life before the people themselves know [it]" (Bujo 1992:19). Life is therefore God's gift to human beings (Hiltunen 1993:34). Each person is a gift for the each other. Life therefore is the highest gift humanity received from God (Bujo 1992:23; Munyika 2004:220). Aawambo like many other African communities, claim that *Kalunga* mandated their ancestors to live

a life of participation and caring. Aawambo believe that God obligated each human being in a hierarchical order the responsibility for caring for one another.

Life is a participation in God, but it is always mediated by one standing above the recipient in the hierarchy of being. This hierarchy belongs both to the invisible and to visible world. [...] founding fathers of the clans, then tribal heroes, deceased elders and other dead members of the family [ ...] then beings belonging to visible world [...] from kings to oldest members of the families; heads of house holders; family members (Bujo 1992:20).

#### **2.6.4.2 Life is to be respected**

Life is to be held sacred, (Nolte-Schamn 2006:92) because it is a gift from Kalunga, (Hiltunen 1993:34). Aawambo believe that Kalunga channelled His blessings through “parents, grandparents, senior citizens, tribal leaders and religious leaders” (Munyika 2004:215). They reckon that respect for the elder people bring about prosperity to the *oshigwana* (community), that is to the individual, families, clan and a community as a whole. To respect life therefore is to honour the elders and live in harmony with each other. This is the fundamental view of *ubuntu*. According to Nolte-Schamn *ubuntu* focuses on the community as a fundamental human good (Nolte-Schamn 2006:101). Nolte-Schamn claims that *ubuntu* entails life in harmony and cooperation with others, a life of mutual consideration and aids of interdependence (Nolte-Schamn 2006:101). The respect of humanness is the source of social reconciliation. According to Nolte – Schamn *ubuntu* is to value the good of the community above self-interest, to strive to help other people in the spirit of service and to show respect to others as well to be honest and trustworthy (Nolte-Schamn 2006:105) In his book, *Living, our faith and reviving the Spirit of Ubuntu*, Sefara (2010:51) argues that it is imperative to take care of the poor and the needy and to promote love and peace (Sefara 2010:53). His presumption is that it is the responsibility of everybody to restore the image of God in the human beings (Sefara 2010:55).

#### **2.6.4.3 Life is unity**

According to Mbiti’s human life is a unity between physical and spiritual entities (Mbiti 1987:156). The Aawambo like many Africans presupposition is that the mandate of

taking care of one's life is a shared responsibility that involves the living and the departed. The African concept of *koinonia* (Greek word) is a participation of a community life that involves the hierarchical orders of the living people and the living dead (Bujo 1992:20). Hence, every member in the African *koinonia* has an inalienable responsibility to protect and to sustain the life of the community in all aspects (Bujo 1992:22):

In the African concept of life however it is not simply religious and political leaders who have the obligation to preserve and transmit life. Every member of the community, down to the least significant shares the responsibility for strengthening the force of the tribe or clan and of each of its members. [...] Africa society is a real "mystical body," encompassing both dead and living members, in which ever member has an obligation to every other (Bujo 1992:22).

For the Aawambo, *Ehanganitho* [reconciliation] is a three stages process: *eihempululo* [confession], *edhiminathanopo* [forgiveness] and *etaambathano* [acceptance] (Isaak 1997:53). *Eihempululo* is a first step in a healing process. An offender should acknowledge his/her wrongful acts as the root cause of breaking a relationship. S\ he must therefore extend a word of pardon to an offended party expecting to receive forgiveness (Isaak 1997:53).

Consequently, *eihempululo* is a key to *edhiminathanopo*. The Aawambo maintain that where there is no *eihempululo* there is no *edhiminathanopo*. "The important issue is that the dispute or enmity should be done away after an intensive discussion and a commitment from both parties to forgive each other. The reconciliation is therefore "possible" when *eihempululo* which is a key to *edhiminathanopo* has taken place (Isaak 1997:53).

*Edhiminathanopo* is the second step which assures both parties that estrangement which existed is no more and *etaambathano* is a reality. *Etaambathano* is a profound final step that cements the healing process for a true reconciliation. According to Paul John Isaak the process of reconciliation involves "truth telling, confession and forgiveness" (Isaak 2012:332). For the Aawambo, a true reconciliation involves confession, forgiveness and acceptance of each involved parties. Without these

three components, reconciliation will remain mere words. Reconciliation requires only a soft word from the mouth of an offender. It is a soft word that can win the hearts of the offended parties. The Oshiwambo saying puts it as follows: “Elaka lyombili olya futa oondjo” [a soft word heals the wounds] (Haapanen 1958:91). It is only when three stages have been taken in amount concurrently, the broken relationship is restored. It is then peace and the well-being of the society is achieved.

For the Aawambo, as it is the case of some African communities, a person who breaks moral laws, is viewed to suffer a shame in the sight of the society (Mbiti 1970:207; Mbiti 1975:180). All the family members, relatives and extended families are also believed to be affected by the same shame consequently. The Oshiwambo maxim declares: “Sha yona gumwe sha tukitha oyendji,” (the wrongdoing of a family member affects the entire family shamefully) (Haapanen 1958:175) Likewise, the transgression of a citizen understood to bring misfortune to the whole nation. In some case the transgressor finds the self on the other side of the customary law feels being casted out from the society because the norms of the society which give the directive to others to dissociate themselves from such companion: “Omuhahuhahu oha yiwa ontuku kwayehe” No one is a friend to an irascible person.

The moral teaching (Haapanen 1958:34) behind this theory is that irascibility is condemned. Therefore, it is being taught among the Aawambo that people should stay away from the irascible person as a symbol of condemnation. People are advised not to entertain irascibility rather be at peace with peacemakers. People do not like an irascible person. They will rather go with a peaceful one (“Aantu ihaa li ongeyo, ohaa li iikulya”) (Haapanen 1958:153). Where there is irascibility, a nation perishes, but where there is peace a nation grows, flourishes and its well-being will be sustained. Irascibility poisons the circle of friendships while peace nourishes the circle of friendship. Fostering a healthy society, therefore the ethical norm of Aawambo strongly encourages the people to overcome retaliation by using the peaceful tools. Reconciliation is therefore most necessary to bring an offender within the circle of friendship and fellowship as the means of fostering the peace and well-being of a society. Reconciliation is therefore of an extremely necessity for the well-being of the society.

The Aawambo believes that Kalunga channels His blessings through parents, grandparents, senior citizens, tribal leaders and religious leaders (Munyika 2004:215). They taught that respect for the elder people leads *oshigwana* (community) to prosperity, in terms of individual, families, clan and the community as a whole. To act contrary, is to invoke God's wrath upon the society. Disrespect is a sign of poison which defies the wellbeing of the society. It was therefore thought to be a break of relationship when a person contravenes traditional or customary laws, rule and regulations. Such action is believed to endanger the wellbeing of the individual concerned, his/her family, clan and eventually the whole community, (Munyika 2004:216.).

The Oshiwambo moral teachings emphasize strongly the importance of the love for others as a pillar for the wellbeing of the society. The teachings consider love of others to be the basic principle of maintaining a good relationship toward the others. This love for others goes even beyond enmity. The Oshiwambo proverb (Haapanen 1958:32): "Okagumbo u tonde oko nake ku edhilile" (a home you hate will basically host you in need) is one of these examples. It discourages people to take revenge because revenge is a poison to the wellbeing of the society as the Aawambo. Haapanen 1958:30 declares: "Gondjahi iha tungu" (he who revenges never builds peace).

The Aawambo asserts: "Omupopi gwoye oye ho pe, omuhokoli gwoye oye ho gwayeke, e ke ku hokole e noshidhe." Do goods to those who hate you and turn not back your kindness to your adversaries. This theory of doing goods to an enemy is a nonviolent policy that is understood by the Aawambo to bring the wrongdoer to a sense of guilty and confession (Haapanen 1958:163).

On the contrary the Aawambo discourage people from a tendency of acting from violent spirit as it is eminently known to detriment the well-being of the society. Such unethical action is colloquial compared to "a moon eclipse that shattered darkness on earth." Oshiwambo saying puts: "Sha lyomweedhi kegulu oshe eta ko omilema." (Haapanen 1958: 171).

## **2.7 The ritual expressions of reconciliation**

### **2.7.1 The Onkombambinzi [The blood of purification]**

*Onkombambizi* is a ritual practice amongst the Aawambo. In his paper: *An offering for once and all* Shaanika argues that the Oshiwambo ritual, *Onkombambinzi [the blood purification]* expresses the act of reconciliation within Aawambo community (2004:5).

Shaanika holds that the practice is not merely a custom or tradition for the two opposite clans happens to solve for example murder. The practice rather aims to restore justice. It aims to restore health relationships (Shaanika 2004:4). Shaanika further argues that the significance of the ritual lies in the symbolic figures of the head of the family. The head of the family or clan has a reconciliatory obligation namely to invoke the mystical union with the ancestors. He or she is responsible for the shedding of the blood (Shaanika 2004:4-5):

When a member of the family transgresses the customary norms or traditional laws, the head of the family or the head of the clan is obliged to arrange an appeasement offering. He/she slaughters an animal for Onkombambinzi. He/she releases the blood or sprinkle the blood. The meat is cooked. The portion of the meat is first offered to the ancestors. Then rest is eaten by the people who congregate at the ritual ceremony. Thereafter the head of the family invokes the ancestors not to count this act of transgression. Rather to blot it out and bring about a reconciliation.

According to Williams (1991:187- 188) the traditional laws of the Aawambo were strict in terms of the social welfare and its sacred life of the community. It forbids any person to take the life of the others into their own hands (Williams 1991:187). In case of a murder, the offender should pay the ransom of ten oxen to the deceased clan:

The offender pays to the deceased's clan ten oxen. The two clans, that of the offender and that of the victim, were summoned to a certain place, where an ox would be slaughtered with a spear. The blood spilled was a sign of the deceased's blood. This ox was never skinned; it was just cut and roasted with

its skin in the open flames. Another ox was given to the king and the rest to the deceased's clan (Williams 1991:187).

Apart from oxen given to the deceased's clan, the offender's clan should also give a string of pearls made from ostrich eggshells, a ball of tobacco, a loaf of salt and a pipe to a deceased clan (Williams 1991:187). The string pearls signifies the intestines of the deceased. A ball of tobacco symbolizes the deceased's head. A loaf of salt symbolizes the deceased's brain (Williams 1991:187). The eating together of the meat roasted with its skin signified that two clan members have swallow together the painful break of relationship that was caused by act of merciless murderer. The meat of unskinned ox is associated with *eyakantoni*, a bitter herb (Hiltunen 1993:220). After the function, the members of the two clans smoke in turns a pipe. It symbolizes that two clans are now at peace. They are bound together by the act of *onkombambinzi* ritual (Williams 1991:187). Therefore, *Onkombambinzi* is a ritual to restore justice, forgiveness and peace. According to Hiltunen *onkombambinzi* is nothing else than reconciliatory purification (Hiltunen 1993:221). Its purpose is to renew the broken relationship through a ransom payed to an offended party (Williams 1991:187).

*Onkombambinzi* is also an ancestral evoking ritual. The killing of an ox by a spear signifies *onkombambinzi* to be a talking ritual. The spear is not a merely an object used to slaughter an ox, but it is sacred spear of the family (Williams 1991:187). It is the sacred spear because it is officiated by the family in public (Mndende 2009:101). For the Aawambo, like African speaking people, rituals are to be performed as mandated by family ancestral spirits. Hence, an ox reserved for the ritual should be selected from the sacred animal of the clan. If not, then it has to go through a purified ritual before being slaughtered. Otherwise, according to Mndende "it will not be an ox that speaks" (Mndende 2009:101).

The Aawambo believe that through *onkombambinzi* ritual the unity and healing of the *koinonia* will be achieved, the broken relationships within the community and between the living and the ancestors will be revived (Mndende 2009: 100). Conversely, *onkombambinzi* is a renewal mechanism to bring about the good

relationship within the offending / offended clans and for other members of the society (Mbiti 1975:180).

Literal speaking, *onkombambinzi* means the blood that purifies or the purifying blood. The ritual is called *onkombambinzi* because it involves the shedding of an animal blood which is killed for such definite purpose. It is a twofold purposes ritual: for appeasement and cleansing. *Onkombambinzi* requires the payment in a form of the cattle given to an offended clan by the offending clan. Firstly, the payment is given as a token of forgiveness. Secondly it serves as an appeasement to an offended clan in order to restore the broken relationship existed between the two clans. Practically, one of the cattle given to the offended party is to be slaughtered and its blood is sprinkled on the body of an offending person, in a case of murder. The meat is cooked and meal is eaten and shared together among the members of the two clans assembled for a ceremonial event. The sprinkling of the blood symbolizes the act of taking away the wrongdoings or a cleansing of the transgressor. Eating the meal together accentuates the reconciliation process at work. Hence the ritual is called *onkombambinzi* (the blood that washes away the wrongdoings.)

In his sermon of Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) Oshiwambo Service, Shaanika (2004:5) explained the concept of *onkombambinzi* follows:

Paitaalo lyOshiwambo, omuntu ngele okwa pogola. Mwene gwegumbo nenge onkungulu yezimo oku na oshinakugwanithwa shomagandjelondjambo. Ota dhipaga oshikombo nenge ongombe, yo ombinzi otayi shashaminwa, onyama tayi pakwa po nokuyambelwa aakwampungu. Naku gandja omayambo oti indile epogolo ndyoka lyaayalulwe. Eshashamino lyombinzi nomagandjelondjambo oyo omukalo tagu tagu lalakanene okutula po ekwatathano pokati komuyoni nomuyonenwa noshowo pokati komuyoni naakwampungu.

English translation goes:

In Oshiwambo Religion, when a member of the family transgresses customary norms or traditional laws, the head of the family or the head of the clan is obliged to offer an appeasement offering. He/she slaughters a goat or [cattle] and sprinkles the blood and then cooks the meat where a portion is offered to the ancestors while the rest to be eaten by the people who

congregate at the ritual ceremony. In so doing, the head of the family invokes the ancestors not to count this act of transgression rather to blot it out and instead to bring about reconciliation. The sprinkle of the blood and the act of offering to the ancestors are the signs indicating the bridging channel of reconciliation between the conflicting parties.

It is the obligation of head of the family or the head of the clan to make sure that the broken relationship is restored. The sprinkling of the blood and the cooking of meat are significant in the ritual. Firstly, for the Aawambo, blood is associated with life. It signifies the washing away of misfortune. Misfortune is understood to be taken away only through the sprinkling of the blood. Secondly, for the Aawambo the cooking of a meat for the offering purpose is a very sacred thing. The meat becomes *ohula*, *incense* which gives a delicate aroma to the ancestors. Hopeasalmi (1946:93-95) speaks of “blood offering” given to the ancestor as conciliatory act that satisfies them from acting wrath, but showing grace and kindness to the living ones. The blood of sheep or an ox is offered to the ancestors for reconciliation purposes (*onkombambinzi*). Where *Onkombambinzi* is not applied the ritual of cleansing is being done with an aloe plant. Maija Hultinen (1993:220-221) describes how this ritual, as healing process was done:

The aloe plant seems to be involved in the rites that have something to do with blood. This is the case in the twin curing rite, in which an aloe was planted to grow in the purifying pit or on the site where the blood was buried. The killer had to chew a root of aloe. He [had] to chew also the leaves from the *omuhongo* tree. ... The killer [had] to drink water in which there was a powder from the *eyakantoni* herb.

The Aawambo believe that the *eyakantoni* tree and the root of aloe to have the purifying substances. The drinking of water and eating of the bitter herbs signal the washing away of all hostility caused between the clans or between the offended and offender. The two parties seek for peace and agree to forgive each other in the presence of a mediator. Where there is no reconciliation such parties are not allowed to eat together. John S Mbiti (Mbiti 1975:180) explains the ritual for the reconciliation as follows:

The offended person blesses the offender by spitting or blowing water on him and saying that the matter is nothing, and may he be at peace. The people believe God sees all this and frees the guilty man from the consequences of his act.

After the two parties forgive each other and the reconciliation has taken place, they are then served with the meal prepared by a diviner who acted as a mediator. The meal symbolizes the state of peace. Maija Hiltunen explains:

The diviner takes a porridge and butter and slashes a wound in the wrist of his left hand, mixes porridge with the blood coming out and gives it to both persons. After this they eat all of the porridge. Thus, they make peace. There is no more hatred. A meal eaten together also symbolizes a state of peace existing between those sharing the meal even (Hiltunen 1993:221).

The blood and the common meal serve as the visible symbol of reconciliation. The blood signifies the new life. It denotes that the two parties are now brought into a new life where they should assimilate the life of acceptance and walk in togetherness as partners, companions, followers or friends.

## **2.7.2 Ritual purification**

### **2.7. 2.1 The oxula ritual**

The *oxula* ritual is an offering ceremony for an individual member of the family. The *oxula* should be offered according to customary law. The animal served for *oxula* should be stabbed with a sacred spear (Mndende 2009:97,101; Munyika 2004:195). Any person feels ill or committed an offence was believed to possess bad spirits. As a result, the relationship within the family and the society was at stake. The Aawambo believe that the mutual dependence between ancestors and their living relatives is broken down. The living relatives should offer sacrifice to their ancestors. In return the cursed was removed and they are blessed (Aarni 1982:62; Munyika 2004:193).

The head of the family or head of the clan should kill an ox, sheep, goat, dog, or a chicken for *oxula* sacrifice (Hopeasalmi 1946:93; Munyika 2004:193). The traditional healer acts as intermediary between the ancestors and living relatives (Estermann 1976:192). Traditional healers were regarded as being possessed by ancestral spirits. Munyika (2004:193) demonstrates the *oxula* sacrifice:

A small stick wrapped with palm fibres is dipped in the blood [...] and it is stroked on the ill person's forehead, chest, arms and legs. After this, the liver, heart and kidney are roasted on the fire and porridge is made. [...] A piece of the roasted parts is put into the porridge for the ill person and after having sacrificed to ancestors again, the sick person must eat the meat (2004:193).

In case the *oxula* sacrifice is performed for a child, s/he must be bathed in the blood of the cattle slaughtered for *oxula* (Munyika 2004:195). The child should be assisted by the traditional healer. After the bathing, the *oxula* meal should be served. The invited guests should join the meal (Munyika 2004:195). The eating together symbolizes a state of peace and friendship existing between the eaters (Hiltunen 1993:221; Nolte-Schamn 2006:122). Blood is the sign of life (Isaak 1997:98). The common meal signifies victory of life, over the life-threatening trends (Isaak 1997:98). The meal is a visible symbol of reconciliation. The whole ritual function marked the restoration of relationship, the new life in which a person is now brought into. It is a life of acceptance, togetherness, partnerships, companions, and friendship. The meal or the eating together explains the act of sharing life together in peace and harmony.

### **2.7.2.2 Uutoni Sacrifice**

*Uutoni* is Oshiwambo word for murderer's guilty consciousness regarding his own act of shedding the human blood. *Uutoni* sacrifice is a ritual for cleansing the murderer from blood that could also contaminate other people. When a murder took place in the community, it is the duty of the head of the family or the head of the clan to ensure the cleansing of a murderer from blood guilty (Nolte-Schamn 2006:122). With regards to the importance to *uutoni* sacrifice Hiltunen emphasises that an individual who became contaminated with the blood of a person whom he/she killed needs purification (Hiltunen 1993:218.)

The cure from blood guilty was necessary for a murderer in order to be united again with his/her family members, community members and to unite with their ancestors. According to Hiltunen (1993:218) a murderer was thought to be possessed with foreign and dangerous power that could also contaminated other people when the killer is not subjected to purification. Subsequently, a murderer was to be cleansed so that the blood of the person killed could be conciliated as well (Hiltunen 1993:218). The same purification rite was also performed to the warriors who returned from the war (Hiltunen 1993:218). The ritual of the “washing of the spears” aims to stop the zeal of violent actions in a warrior and to enable him to return to normal and peaceable relations with his family, community and his ancestral spirits (Nolte-Schamn 2006:132).

Mark Hay cited in Nolte-Schamn 2006:132 argues as follows:

It was a ritual cleansing of “spears” to remove the urge to kill. Before the battle, or war nyanga or (herbalist) would prepare a concoction of medicine or herbs, called *intelez*. *Intelez* is a kind of medicine or herbs to be taken by the warriors to remove the fear to go to war. There was the belief in African worldview that after the war the warriors needed to be cleansed in order to stop their urge to continue to kill. The effects of the *intelez* needed to be removed before the warrior could return to the village” (Nolte–Schamn 2006:132).

The washing of spears symbolizes the act of cleansing from the wicked powers (Hiltunen 1993:221). It is a ritual that integrates peacefully a warrior into his community and ensures him to carry on his business as reconciled people. Hiltunen explains of the individual warrior’s integration into the family:

If a man has killed someone in war, he licks blood from his spear [...] He goes to the diviner. The diviner gives [him] the root of an aloe plant and leaves of the omuhongo tree to chew. After this, the diviner grinds an eyakantoni herb and mixed the powder with water. He gives the solution to a person to drink. [Thereafter] the diviner winds a ring made of the root of an aloe-plant, and put it on the left wrist of the person (Hiltunen 1993:221).

The Oshiwambo word *ehanganitho* is a noun describing the act of atonement; act of settling the unusual human relations caused by a break down, part ways or divorce. For the Aawambo the word refers to an act of healing that took place after a broken relationship that existed between the two or more parties have been restored.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

This chapter deals with the idea and concept of reconciliation in the religious backgrounds on which the ELCIN rest: the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and the African and Oshiwambo ideas of *Ubuntu* and sacrifice. Peace and healing is for all. The Oshiwambo teaching in this regard is to strive to maintain peace and healing with everybody since you never know who will become your fellow neighbour “Kala nombili naantu ayehe oshoka ino tsey a oye ta ka ninga omushiinda gwoye (Haapanen 1958:177). Real peace and healing are maintained only by a soft word. Oshiwambo axiom states: “Elaka lyOmbili olya futa oondjo” (a soft word restores a peaceful and a healing relationship) (Haapanen 1958: 91).

## **Chapter 3**

# **An overview of the history of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the historical origin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). It makes some references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN/GELC). The Lutheran Churches in Namibia are divided along racial or languages boundaries. Furthermore, the chapter explains the social-political, economic, religious and ecclesiastical contexts in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia has found itself. It brings also to light some ideologies and practices that paved the ways for the creation of the walls of separation within Namibia. German South-West Africa was a colony of the German Empire from 1884 until 1915. In February 1915 South African invaded German South-West Africa. In July the German forces in the colony surrendered. The Union of South Africa (part of the British Empire) took over the colony. The territory was administered as South-West Africa.

#### **3.1.1 The origin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia**

The Finnish Mission Society worked tirelessly in the Northern part of the country in order to spread the gospel. The early history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is being equated with Carl Hugo Hahn. The latter is one of the German missionary pioneers in Namibia (c.f. Peltola 2002:40; Löytty 2012:52). Hahn is a Latvian by decent and was born in City Riga in Germany during 1818 (Buys & Nambala 2003:51). Hahn came to Namibia in 1842 to establish the German missionary station in the country (Anderson 1998:273). Carl Hugo Hahn and Heinrich Kleinschmidt of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) arrived in 1942 in Windhoek on request of the Orlam Afrikaners. Hahn developed a small missionary of laypeople consisting of an African Christians community at Otjimbingue, Karibib in 1846. He

founded the Lutheran Seminary in Namibia in 1868 (c.f. De Vries 1978:133; Anderson 1998:273).

Carl Hugo Hahn initiated the missionary work in the northern part of Namibia (Tironnen 1977:12). During 1861 to 1863, whilst being in Germany, Carl Hugo Hahn met Rev K J G Sirelius, a Finnish pastor and the director of the Mission Institute of the Finnish Mission (Nambala 1994:80). In this encounter, Carl Hugo Hahn informed Rev Sirelius that the people of Ovamboland in Namibia were in dire need of evangelization (Peltola 2002:25). Rev Sirelius enlightened the Finnish Mission Society in Finland about the dire need for evangelization amongst the Aawambo of Namibia. In 1862, Carl Hugo Hahn took a trip to Finland and delivered a heart moving speech about his missionary work in Namibia (Tironnen 1977:11).

Carl Hugo Hahn vision was to establish a mission field in Owamboland. During 1866, after Hahn paid a visit to King Shikongo shaKalulu of Ondonga, King Mweshipandeka Shaningika of Uukwanyama, King Sheya Uushona of Ongandjera and King Iita Nalitoke of Uukwaluudhi, he wrote a letter to the Finnish Mission Society inviting them to engage in mission work in Owamboland (c.f. Tironnen 1977:12; Ekandjo 2006:34-35; Niitenge 2013:84). Hugo Hahn's letter was accompanied by the request of the non-Christian Owambo kings who also extended their warm invitation to the Finnish Mission Society to send them missionaries. The Kings' invitations read as follows: "Please, we want the missionaries" (c.f. Auala 1969:2; Auala 2009:166; Miettinen 2005:88-89).

In 18 September 1867, upon the receipt of Carl Hugo Hahn's letter, the Finnish Mission Society in its Annual General Meeting decided to respond to the invitations of the Owambo kings with regard to doing missionary work amongst their subjects (c.f. Shejvali 1970:25; Muniyika 2004:267).

On 24<sup>th</sup> June 1868, the Finnish Mission Society sent off the first five missionaries to Africa (c.f. Shejvali 1970:26; Peltola 2002:29). The first five Finnish missionaries were Martti Rautanen, Botlof B Bjorklund, Pietari Kurvinen, Karl L Tolnen and Karl A. Weikkolin (Peltola 2002:26). In Germany, they were joined by three Finnish missionaries, namely Juho Heinonen, Erkki Juntunen and Antti Piirainen. The group

spent few months in Barmen in order to undertake the missionary orientation. On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1868, the group of eight Finns sailed to Africa and arrived in Cape Town on 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1868. In South Africa, they spent a month in Stellenbosch in order to attend orientation courses regarding African life and culture presented by Johannes Rath, a missionary from Rhenish Mission, who earlier worked in Namibia (Peltola 2002:34).

In Cape Town, these Finnish missionaries were joined by Alexander Malstrom (Peltola 2002:76), a Finn who was working in South Africa (Nambala 1994:81). On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1869, the group of ten Finnish missionaries left Cape Town by boat and went ashore on Namibian soil at Walvisbay on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1869 (Nambala 1994:81).

They stayed in Walvisbay for a month waiting for the agent of the Rhenish Mission in Namibia to take them to Otjimbingwe. On 8<sup>th</sup> March 1869, guided by Carl Hugo Hahn they left Walvisbay to Otjimbingwe by road with eight ox-wagons (Peltola 2002:36). After spending a year and 6 months in Otjimbingwe learning Herero, English and Dutch languages, the Finnish Missionaries under the leader of a trader Frederick Green left Otjimbingwe to Owambo with six ox-wagons on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1870 (Nambala 1994:81). They arrived at Omandongo, Ondonga, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1870 (c.f. Peltola 2002:48, Sheyavali 1970:28).

Hence, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1870 marked the arrival day of the first group of the Finnish missionaries in the northern part of Namibia, known as Ovamboland. On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1870, they met with King Shikongo Kalulu, of Ondonga. Pietari Kurvinen, one of the missionaries greets the king as follows: "Tse aatumwa yelaka lyombili." (We are the missionaries carrying the message of peace) (C.f. Tirronen 1977:26; Peltola 2002:48) He further introduced the Finns' group to the King Shikongo and his delegation and briefed them about their coming to Owambo as a divine mission. They did not come to seek worldly riches rather to bring to the words of everlasting life to Aawambo. He emphatically states the following: "When we were in Finland, far away overseas, we heard your voice crying for help. That you want the missionaries to teach you God's Words. For this reason, we left our families and friends back home in Finland and we have come here in Ovamboland as a response. We did not

come here to seek the worldly riches. We came here because we merely want your souls to be saved. Do not think that death is the end of your souls. God whom you use to mention His name every day, He wills that you may be to be with Him enjoying the everlasting life up yonder.” (Shejavali 1970:28).

### **3.1.2 The Finnish Mission Society’s activities in Namibia**

During the early years of the Finnish mission activities in Namibia the missionaries orientate them to the Owambo way of life (Peltola 2002:82). Early in 1873, two missionaries: Karl Emmanuel Juverlin and Alexander Malmstrom abandoned the mission work and returned to Finland. They never came back (Peltola 2002:76).

The following year Antti Piirainen requested to be released from missionary activities in Owambo in order to become a trader in Omaruru (Tirronen 1977:36; Lehtonen 1999:10). The reason for the release was for Piirainen to get away far from King Kambonde kaNankwaya, the King of Ondonga tribe, who was hostile to his missionary activities (c.f. Tirronen 1977:35; Lehtonen 1978:10; Peltola 2002:76). In Omaruru, Piirainen acted as an agent of the Finnish Mission Society (Peltola 2002:76). By the end of the same year, the family of Pietari Kurvinen left the Owambo due to the serious illness of his wife, Wilhelmina Kurvinen. Karl Tolonen asked the permission to the Mission Board to go home and he returned to Finland in 1876. Equally, Juho Heinonen’s family was struck seriously by the illness and left Owambo at the end of March 1878 (c.f. Lehtonen 1978:10; Peltola 2002:76 – 77).

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1874 King Shikongo shaKalulu died and King Kambonde kaNankwaya succeeded him as king. King Kambonde kaNankwaya was negative towards the Finnish missionary activities and forbade his subjects to become Christians (Shejavali 1970:39).

During 1880 diseases like measles and malaria struck Owamboland. Tonje, one of the Rhenish missionaries, describes the suffering of both Finnish Missionaries and natives as follows: “The Finnish mission, which has been working in the Ondonga area ... has suffered from this frightening disease, which has also claimed a number

of victims... Large quantities of [quinine] precious medications are given to the natives suffering from the fever at the mission stations,” (Tronjes 1996:23).

During May 1880 Botlof Bjorklund wrote in his dairy affirming that the fever disease was extremely horrible that year for both the natives and the missionaries: “Fever disease is horrible this year among the natives and us. I was ill. Brother Rautanen and sister Rautanen had recovered before their son died. Their remaining two children are ill as well as our two daughters. Sister Reijonen is ill. The Lord alone knows how this will end” (Peltola 2002:85-86). On 22 April 1880, the missionaries had put to rest their fellow co-worker in mission field Gustaf Mauritz Skoglund (c.f. Peltola 2002:84; Tirronen 1977:39). No less than eleven members of the Finnish community in that area died of diseases (Buys & Nambala 2003: 91).

Another setback for the Finnish missionary endeavours was an order of Chief Samuel Maharero, of the Herero tribe, to his people to kill all the white people who were found in the territory; except women, children and the missionaries (c.f. Tirronen 1977:97; Peltola 2002:179). Even the Finnish missionaries were not protected. The subjects of the king persecuted the missionaries by robbing and vandalizing their properties (c.f. Auala 2009:30; Peltola 2002:149). Tribal conflicts and infightings in Ondonga hindered the evangelization of the Owambo people.

Al the above challenged the Finnish missionaries whether they would continue their mission endeavours in Owambo or surrendering from their missionary outreach (Peltola 2002: 206 – 207). The missionaries, however, decided at their annual meeting of 1877, to continue with their missionary work in Owamboland despite the rivals. The rivals were seen as challenges which missionaries have to overcome anywhere (Tirronen 1977:38). Martin Rautanen’s words of admonishment encourage them:

Where the spirit of God reigns, things are not happening the way we want them to develop so easily and fine. Where on earth, there is a country and its people has accepted Christianity and yet so peacefully and stable live without any rivals? We too (missionaries) could not expect something else rather persecutions. ‘When we are deported from here and there it does not mean

that our works are nothing and will vanish. God who made it possible that His words are preached to them will gracefully determine how his words will bear the fruits to them. Tirronen (1977:34) (Translation mine).

It took almost thirteen years for the missionaries to labour in the Northern part of Namibia before the first Owambo converted to Christianity: “For thirteen years the missionaries laboured without any official converts. The Owambo ... came to listen to the preaching, but no one was publicly ready to commit himself or herself to baptism” (Nambala 1996:82). The Aawambo were unwilling to attend worship services or to study the Word of the Lord. In Ondonga Kings Kambonde kaNankwaya and Nehale IyaMpingana had forbidden baptism to take place in their territories (c.f. Tirronen 1977:37, 67; Munyika 2004:271). The Aawambo were afraid to be baptized. They were afraid to be killed by their kings once it was found out that they were converted into Christianity (c.f. Ekandjo 2006:45; Nambala 1995:10). The death of a young man murdered by King Madume of Oukwanyama in 1911 remained a horrific story amongst the African people who wanted to become Christians. The young man was killed because did not adhere to the order of the King to refrain from association with the missionaries and to refrain from becoming a Christian (Shejavali 1970:92-93).

Between 1878 to 1882 approximately sixty (60) Owambo people attended the worship services at Olukonda mission station yet they remained unwilling to register for the baptismal classes. They feared unbearable consequence from their traditional authorities and relatives once their intentions of becoming Christians are known (Ekandjo 2005:51). Two young men, Shigwedha lithoko and Martin Rautanen’s former domestic worker, who is only known by his last name, lipinge, were among the group of 60 worship attendees (c.f. Lehtonen 2005:9; Shejavali 1970:39; Peltola 2002:97).

By the end of January 1879, lithoko and lipinge went together with a German pastor Gottlieb Viehe of the Rhenish Mission Society to Omaruru outside of Owambo district to attend the catechism schools (Shejavali 1970:39). At Omaruru they were received by Finnish missionary Antti Piirainen and subsequently they started the catechism classes in the German missionary Gottlieb Vieh’s school (Peltola 2002:97). On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1881, the two young men were baptized by Pastor Gottlieb

Viehe at Omaruru. Shigwedha lithoko was Christianized: *Gustav* and lipinge: *Martin* (Nambala 1994:83; Shejvali 1970:39).

Willem Amutenya and Gabriel Nangolo were the other two Owambo young men constituted the group of four Christians from Northern part of the country to be baptized at Omaruru by pastor Gottlieb Vieh (c.f. Munyika 2004:271; Peltola 2002:97). After ten years of the Finnish Mission Society in Namibia planned to convert Aawambo and Kavango from African Religion to Christianity. The Finnish missionaries at last witnessed with a great hope of the baptism that took place at Omaruru. They believed that more non-Christians in Owambo to become Christians (Munyika 2004:272).

During 1874, an Omuwambo young woman Nanguroshi, a domestic worker of the missionary Pietari Kurvinen travelled her master to Finland (Nambala 1994:81). Nanguroshi stayed in Finland till the mid of 1878. Before returning home, she was baptized in Helsinki on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Nanguroshi was then christened: *Eva Maria*, by K J G Silerius, the Director of Mission Society in Finland (Seppala 1978:28; Shejvali 1970:38).

In 1880 (Seppala 1978:28) Eva Maria Nanguroshi returned to Namibia and stayed at Omaruru as a domestic worker of a Finnish missionary Antti Piirainen. Later in April 1882 she married to Martin lipinge (Shejvali 1970:39), one of the four young men who were baptized at Omaruru on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1881 (Nambala 1994:83). Eva Maria Nanguroshi was the first Owambo person to be baptized and she was the first Owambo woman whose marriage had been solemnized (Munyika 2004:271). Her first born was the first Owambo child to be baptized in ELCIN on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1883 (c.f. Seppala 1978:28; Nambala 1994:82). The Finnish missionaries in Owambo were encouraged by the positive events that unfolded in the Owambo (Tronjes 1996: 257).

6<sup>th</sup> January 1883 marks the dawn of a splendour harvest for the missionaries. On that day six men were baptized in Owambo at a river of Naame, in Ondonga district (c.f. Shejvali 1970:40; Auala 2009:22; Nambala 1994:82). An ECLIN historian Nambala (1995:10) remarked: "They had to work for over ten years before the first

converts gained courage to come forward asking for baptism. ... It was not till 1883, when first baptism took place in Ovamboland [where] six young men came forward for baptism.”

The first baptism in Owambo is being seen as the birth of ELCIN, formerly known as the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo - Kavango Church (c.f. Shejavali 1970:108; Munyika 2004:270). Apart from Eva Maria Nanguroshi, Gustav Iithoko, Martin Iipingene, Willem Amutenya and Gabriel Nangolo whose baptisms were administered outside of the Owambo district, the names of the first Christians in ELCIN baptized in Owambo are treasured as follows: Moses Limene, Abraham Shikongo, Jakob Angula, Elias Nangolo, Tobias Nengonya and Johannes Nangombe (c.f. Nambala:1994:82; Tirronen 1977:46; Munyika 2004:272; Niitenge 2013:86). The founding members of ELCIN are authentically listed: Eva Maria Nanguloshi baptized on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1876, Gustav Iithoko, Martin Iipingene, Wilhelm Amutenya and Gabriel Nangolo baptized on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1881 (Nambala 1994:83). The baptism of the first six indigenous people in Owambo was a turning point in the mission endeavours of the Finnish missionaries in Owambo (Niitenge 2013:86). It encouraged the missionaries to go ahead with their mission endeavours in the Northern part of Namibia (Munyika 2004:273).

In January 1907, Kaukungwa, a prominent, wealthy headman from Oukwanyama requested a missionary to be admitted into the baptismal lessons in order to become a Christian: “Teacher I also want to be admitted into baptismal lessons. I do not care what the king and his aunt Nekoto have to say. I [want to] become a Christian” (Tronjes 1996:27). Kaukungwa was then baptized. Sam Kaukungwa and Kaukungwa was later ordained into a Lutheran pastoral ministry (Shejavali 1970:196).

On Thursday of 8th August 1912 King Kambonde kaNgula of Ondanga was baptized at his sick bed and was named: *Eino Johannes* (Tirronen 1977:126). In December 1<sup>st</sup> 1912, his successor King Nambala Kadhikwa was christened: *Martin Elifas* at the worship service held at Olukonda, where 56 of his people were also baptized (c.f. Shejavali 1970:91; Tirronen 1977:127; Nambala 1994:85; Munyika 2004:273). The Christianization of the Kings: Eino Johannes Ngula and Martin Elifas Kadhikwa have

brought to an end the spirit of hatred and animosity among the Owambo kings and headmen towards the Christians. Since then there were cordial relationship between kings and missionaries existing. Members of the loyal families become Christians (Shejavali 1970:41). In April 1899 Martin Rautanen confidently acknowledged: 'Things are going in a new way ... Dear heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ may be thanked and praised for Thy great manifestation of grace' (Peltola 2002:197). However, it should be noted that during the period 1883 – 1925 the Finnish Mission field concentrated in the area of Owambo only. Till then the congregations were known as Finnish Mission congregations in Owambo. The Finnish Mission was then extended further to Kavango in 1926. Hence the membership of ELCIN in Owambo and Kavango increased considerably amongst the tribes of Owambo and Kavango (Auala 2009: 33).

Until 1970, there were 34 congregations in Owambo and Kavango and about 194 884 souls of the Aawambo and the Kavango having touched by Christ's ministry of peace and become Christians, (Shejavali 1970: 29 -90). The gospel united the Aawambo and Kavango. In the words of Shejavali (1970:80): "When the gospel was preached for many years ago, many people from each Owambo [and Kavango] tribes have accepted the gospel of peace and healing. They become one nation. No one is considered an outsider. We all have become a new nation, one congregation and one church."

The missionary sermons and humanitarian services considerably won and transformed the hearts and minds of both the Aawambo and the Kavango. The Oshiwambo spiritual song summarizes: "Ombimbeli, embo eyapuki Iya Kalunga. Embo Iyahanganitha iigwana. Embo Iye eta ombili moshilongo. Tu na okusimaneka Ombimbeli" [The Bible is God's Holy book that brought peace to the nations. The book which amicably reconciled the tribes, hence it should be honoured.] (Translation mine).

In 1904 King Maharero of the Herero's and King Jonker of the Namas put aside their animosities, after their tribes were fighting each other. They worked out plans to bring about peace, reconciliation and development of their tribes. After the peace agreement, King Jonker wrote a letter to King Maharero states the following:

After we signed a peace treaty at Okahandja, I decided to keep silent and be at peace. I walked and wondering in peace seeking food for my householders and teach my children to know God's words. As it is standing in the words of the agreement: 'Even the elderly woman walking with a staff should be now allowed to walk freely from Cape Town to Owamboland without any harm or without any protection' (Laurmaa (1949:79). (Translation mine)

### **3.1.3 The union of congregations of the Finnish Mission Society in Namibia**

Till the early 1950's the ELCIN was not declared by the Finnish Mission Society as an independent church. All the congregations established by the Missionary Society in Owambo and Kavango between 1880's – 1950's was classified as "congregation's union of the Finnish Mission Society in Namibia, governed by the Administrative Board of the Finnish Owambo - Kavango Mission (Löytty 1971:37). The premise of the Finnish missionaries regarding self-governance of the congregations in Owambo and Kavango was to "prepare the Christians in Owambo and Kavango to grow to a maturity of faith and to acquire sound knowledge and skills on how they should run their own Church affairs" (Löytty 1971:36).

The years between 1880's – 1950's is a period of educational and leadership development. The priority was foremost given to the training of clergies for the church in Owambo. The motto "Ordination of one African pastor is a more valuable thing than the conversion of a thousand heathens" guided the Finnish missionary in preparing the indigenous people into the leadership positions (Löytty 1971:36). Therefore in 1921 the Finnish Mission Society took a decision to train any African teacher who would meet the requirements for pastoral training and to ordain him for pastoral ministry (Löytty 1971:36).

The Finnish Mission Society in Namibia firstly planned to convert Aawambo and Kavango from their African religion to Christianity. Secondly, they nourish them spiritually to grow in faith before the Mission Society could establish the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Owambo and Kavango (Auala 2009:19). To achieve the above the early Finnish missionaries committed themselves to the preaching and teaching to the Aawambo and the Kavango. The Finnish missionaries built schools and

engaged in teaching ministry, teaching people how to read and write in order to prepare them for the future leadership. According to Lehtonen they were driven with the conviction that the gospel of Christ called them to serve their fellow human-beings holistically (1978:3).

During 1870 – 1954 the missionaries worked towards the union of the congregations of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo. Later they prepared these congregations to become self-sustainable. After reaching the above the Finnish Mission Society declared the establishment of the independence Lutheran church in Owambo and Kavango (Auala 2009:38 – 40). In Buys and Nambala's words (2003:160): "The Finnish Mission Society organized 'mission churches' which were controlled by Mission Council for many years. [...] 'Mission churches' gradually received more self-control, according to the availability and capability of the indigenous leadership. Self-dependency is then reached an independent synod is established."

The Finnish missionaries in Namibia have been engaged in the training of the members prior to the establishment of the pastoral training in Owambo in 1922. Lay preachers and assistant teachers were trained to assist the missionaries in the ministry of the church. Abisai Shejavali (1970:108) argues: "Ovahongi ova hovela okulongifa vamwe vomovashashwa ngovayakuli vavo mokulilikolela Kristus ovanhu" [the missionaries started to train some of the very first baptized members to become assistant preachers and teachers. They were also entrusted with a holy task of winning the hearts of their fellow people for Christ.]

In 1898 Gustaf lithoko, an Owambo assistant teacher, together with his wife Johanna Todd were assigned to work amongst the Oshigambo (Lehtonen 2005:10). August Pettinen described Gustav lithoko as a brilliant and brave teacher who tirelessly brought about an incredible development at Oshigambo, the area that was known as a thick forest without any single home but has become a beautiful Christian community of many believers (Lehtonen 2005:12). His quality leadership, provoked August Pettinen to write a letter to the leadership of the Finnish Mission Society in Helsinki recommending them to confer an award of a successful achievement to Gustaf Lithoko (Lehtonen 2005:12).

Eeva Maria Nanguroshi was the first Owambo girl to visit Finland in the late 1870's. Upon her return to Owambo from Finland during 1884 Eeva Maria Nanguroshi was designated as school teacher at Omandongo (Lehtonen 1978:12).

During 1885 Elizabeth Iihono, an Omuwambo woman, received a scholarship to study tailoring work in Finland. Upon her return to Owambo by the end of 1892, she developed a tailoring school for girls. First in Elim and then afterwards in Oniipa (c.f. Seppala 1978:30; Buys & Nambala 2003:34). Iihono skilfully imparted knowledge and the skills for to the Aawambo women. Till her death, at the age of 50 on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1921 (Tirronen 1977:89).

In 1910, (Shejavali 1970:60), Abraham Namwandi Iintamba a lay preacher from Ongandjera was assigned to plant a church in Uukwaluudhi and in Uukolonkadhi (c.f. Munyika 2004:27; Nambala 1994:85; Ekandjo 2006:67). Iintamba was known as "a Great Preacher and a faithful teacher of the Word of God (c.f. Ekandjo 2006:67 and Shejavali 1970:60).

Lay preachers: Simson Shituwa and Willem Kafita developed Engela mission station early in 1916 (Munyika 2004:273). In the same year, Mayor of Onamakunde, Fairle and King Mandume Ndemufayo of Oukwanyama built the Onamakunde Church that was dedicated on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1918 by Rev Emil Liljeblad for Sunday worships, school activities and social events purposes, (Shejavali 1970:67-77). During 1917 two Owambo teachers, Gideon Iitula and Sakeus Iihuhwa, were sent to do missionary work to Uukolonkadhi and Ombalantu (Seppala 1978:54).

In 1928, a missionary, Aatu Jarvinen, together with three gifted and knowledgeable Owambo teachers, Mateus Shiininge, Elia Shanyengange and Samwel Shaanika, were commissioned to evangelize the Kavango tribes. Matias Shikondomboro was the very first product of the missionary endeavours in Kavango. Shikondomboro became a teacher and later an ELCIN pastor in 1942 (c.f. Seppala 1978:56; Shejavali 1970:197).

The Finnish Mission Society's Board meeting of May 1924 in Finland therefore resolved to supervise and control the activities of all the congregations of the Finnish

Mission Society in Namibia. They reasoned to do so till the time proves beyond doubt that the congregations are willing to become an independent Church (Shejavali 1970:110).

In doing so, the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo and Kavango established the institutes in their mission fields. The institutes aim to train the Aawambo and the Kavango for sustainable leadership, good governance and development. Pastoral Training Centre was established at Oniipa in 1922. In 1901 a Mission Society Publishing House was erected at Oniipa. The Teachers Training College for male was founded at Ongwediva in 1926. In 1947 the Teachers Training Seminary for female started at Okahao. Engela Parish Institute was initiated at Engela in 1950. In 1952 Oshigambo High School was instituted. While Onandjokwe Finnish Mission Hospital was established in 1908 (c.f. Niinkoti 1978:39; Lehtonen 1978:44-83; Mpanda 1998:13; Shejavali 1970:1040; Buys & Nambala 2005:245), For 84 years the Finnish Mission work in Namibia targeted mainly the African people. Therefore, the congregations of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo and Kavango moved from dependency to self-governance (Shejavali 1970:111).

## **3.2 From Mission field to self-governance**

### **3.2.1 Towards self- governance**

According to Kritzinger (1972:56 - 57) the vision of the Finnish missionaries was to prepare the *Congregations of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo* to become an independent church governed by indigenous leaders. The Finnish Missionary Society eagerly fostered the indigenous leadership and the growth towards independence. It perceived its role of being of assistance to the indigenous leadership of the church. The Finnish Mission Society Board meeting held in 1921 therefore agreed to draft a constitution for the envisaged indigenous church (Kritzinger 1972:56-57).

During 1925 the meeting of *Congregations' union of Finnish Mission Society in Owambo* started with the preparations which ultimately led to the establishment of a Lutheran Church in Owambo. It drafted the first *Church Constitution* for the envisaged Lutheran Church (Auala 2009:40). The constitution was reviewed in 1952

by the Superintendent of Finnish Mission Society in Owambo after he compared it with the constitutions of other Lutheran Churches in Africa. The draft Church Constitution was then tabled for further considerations to the ELCIN Synod of 1954 (*ELCIN Church Council 8-9 April 1954:1*).

Meanwhile, before the Synod of 1954 had been constituted, the *Congregations' union of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo and Kavango* called a Synod in 1952. The Synod endorsed the Church Constitution which suggested the establishment of a daughter Church of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo and Kavango. It further resolved to establish a daughter church of the Finnish Mission Society. The Synod suggested that the autonomy of the church would be discussed further by the ordinary Synod of 1954. The Synod 1952 also entrusted its interim Church Council to discuss amongst others the name of the envisaged church (*ELCIN Report 1952:9*).

Two years later, on 8-9 April 1954, the interim Church Council met at Engela. It was chaired by Rev Briger Eriksson, superintendent of FMS in Owambo and Kavango. Other members of the interim Church Council present were: Rev Erriki Hynonen, Vilho Kaulinge, and Leonard Auala (*ELCIN Church Council 8-9 April 1954:1*). Per its resolution 2/1954, the Council resolved to convene a synod on 31<sup>st</sup> August to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1954 at Engela. Under resolution 9/1954, it suggested a name of the Church in waiting to be called: *Ongeleki OnkwaEvangelii paLuther yomOwambokavango / Evangelical Lutheran Church-Owambo-Kavango* (*ELCIN Church Council 8-9 April 1954:1*). The interim Church Council further referred the drafted Church Constitution and Regulations to be read and procedurally adopted by the Synod of 1954 in order to become the Church Constitution of the envisaged Lutheran Church (*ELCIN Church Council 8-9 April 1954:19*).

Four months later the constituting synod took place at Engela. The synod was mainly called to establish the Lutheran Church in Owambo and Kavango. Bishop Martti Simojoki, the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society in Helsinki, Finland was among the witnesses of the constituting of the Lutheran Church in Owambo and Kavango (Auala 2009:47). In his opening address, Bishop Simojoki kindly requested the delegates to be the transformational tools of God's Spirit as for

the synod to bear the fruitful results. He further cautioned the parishes' representatives to observe the guidance of God's words throughout all the sessions, because without such, the synod would serve for no purpose and the church could no longer survive (ELCIN 1954:31/08 – 03/09).

Equally, Rev Tuure Vappaavouri ensured the synod of God's right time that was at hand to transform the *Congregations' union of Finnish Mission Society in Owambo and Kavango* into a vibrant independent Lutheran Church in Namibia. He believed that all the preparations that have been made toward the creation for an independent Lutheran Church in Namibia were solely God ordained developments. Vappaavouri encouraged the delegates that their capabilities of fulfilling the work (*ELCIN Report 1954:31/08 -03/90*). Lastly, Vappaavouri urged the delegates to commit all their deliberations to God. Both Finnish missionaries and the delegates of the synod were seen as merely co-workers in the mission of God. Vappaavouri states the following emphatically: "We the Finnish Missionaries are saying: 'It is not us who determine the right time for your church to be independent. No, it is God. What we want is to see you proof that you are mature enough to lead your own church to independence. When the right time comes, God will plainly reveal it 'to us all'" (*ELCIN Report 1954: 31/08 – 02/09*).

In its deliberations, the Synod observed that God's right time to establish the Lutheran Church in Namibia was at hand. Efraim Nangombe, one of the delegates, acknowledges: "We believe that God's right time is now to establish his Church and he will lead it all the ways in the future" (*ELCIN Report 1954: 31/08/ – 03/09*). After the long serious considerations, the synod unanimously resolved to establish an *Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOC)*. The synod resolved further to ensure that all the legal procedures are followed to officially register the church and entrusted the decision to register the church with the government to the Church Council (*ELCIN Report 1954: 31/08 - 03/09*). Henceforth on 9 May 1957 the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango church was finally official registered by the South African government in Namibia (Shejavali 1970:113).

The autonomy of ELCIN was not only a symbol of unity among her members, but marked a further step to a cordial relationship between herself and the Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF). On behalf of ELCF, Archbishop Martti Simojoki ensured ELCIN of their continuous and ceaseless cooperation ahead. He requested both churches to be fully committed and engage in the ways that cementing the wonderful fellowships which have been enjoyed since the Finnish missionary works in Owambo and Kavango. Archbishop Simojoki further exhorted both churches to observe the importance of working together and sharing together God's richest blessings. Simojoki's words explain:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland will be glad to hear your eminent decision that your Synod took [to establish your independent church]. It has been the aim of the Mission Society to see that your Church should take such direction. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Evangelical Lutheran Owambo – Kavango Church are in need of each other. Hence both of us should hold each's arm and together walk side by side on this earth, till that day when the Finns will truly highly feel glad when sharing together the richest blessedness in heaven with Aawambo [and Kavango] (translation mine) (*ELCIN Report 1954:31/08 -03/09*).

The wisdoms of Rev Tuure Vapaavouri and Efraim Nangombe were later after thirteen years resonated by the ELCRN Synod of 1967. The Synod argued that God has been in charge of the leadership taking His church to independence and maturity of administration:

We have clearly observed it in all the sessions throughout this Synod, that God has drastically prepared the independence and maturity of this church in [Namibia]. All the reports [read] from different institutions and congregations as well the church report have crystal shown how the Lord God has blessed all our church activities. There has been a good and sound co-operation among women, men and youth leagues in building up our parishes. (*ELCRN Synod 1967: 09/ 24 -29*).

### **3.2.2 ELCIN under indigenous leadership**

Right from the beginning of its mission outreach, the dream of the Finnish Mission Society has been to engage the African Christians in various responsibilities of the church. Early in 1887, the Finnish missionary Kurvinen had appointed African

Christians at Omandongo Church in the positions of elders. The following year, Kurvinen called for the first congregational meeting to take place. In the congregational meetings, the members of the congregation decided to erect a church building which at the end of the year was completed (Buys & Nambala 2005:28). During 1898 Albin Savola shared his vision to train the newly converted members to attain knowledge on how they should run congregational affairs. Savola's aim was to enable the parishioners to run their own congregations independently (Ekandjo 2001:8). Savola went furthermore suggested that the African people should be allowed to be baptized by their traditional names rather than given European names (Ekandjo 2001:8). Walde Kivinen, one of the Superintendents of Finnish Mission Society in Owamboland proposed in 1937 to the Director of Finnish Mission Society in Finland that leadership should be transferred to the devoted local clergymen and teachers; "these people would be listened and entrusted to carry on the task of the mission" (c.f. Ekandjo 2001:8; Löytty 1971:58).

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1925 seven indigenous pastors were ordained in the pastoral ministry of the ELCIN, by Dr. Matti Tarkanen, the Director of Finnish Mission Society, at Oniipa (Shejavali 1970:98). The names of the first ordained pastors in ELCIN are Simon Shituwa, Juuso Ngaikukwete, Nabot Manasse, Obadja liuhwa, Sakeus liuhwa, Gideon litula and Paulus Amutenya (c.f. Shejavali 1970:98, 196; Tiironen 1977:10, 140; Nambala 1994:86; Shejavali 1970:98). The abovementioned were placed to shepherd the flocks in the following congregations: Simson Shituwa, Endola, Juuso Ngaikukwete, Olukonda, Nabot Manasse, Onayena, Obadja lihuwa, Onesi, Sakeus lihuwa, Nakajale, Gideon litula, Oshitayi and Paulus Hamutenya, Eenhana (Tiironen 1977:11). For first time these congregations were headed by indigenous pastors. They established numerous new congregations (Buys & Nambala 2003:169). These first indigenous pastors played a huge role in leading the church to autonomy. Abisai Shejavali wrote:

"We have noted that their zeal and actions were not coming from their own wills, but were originated from Christ who is the source of all and whom graciously worked in their hearts. These first seven indigenous pastors were trustworthy to lead largest congregations and they did it with open hands" (Shejavali (1970:99). (Translation mine).

Later the first group of seven pastors established many new congregations. Ultimately, they created a high level of self – dependence in the activities of the Mission Church (Buys & Nambala 2003:169). Bishop Leonard Auala is a sterling example of the indigenous leadership in ELCIN. He later became an influential figure in the ELCIN and abroad. In 1935 Auala graduated from Augustinium Teachers' College, Okahandja and become a teacher at Oniipa Lutheran Theological Seminary. During 1942 he was ordained into the pastoral ministry of the Lutheran Church in Owambo Kavango (Shejavali 1970:196; Buys & Nambala 2003:212; Nambala 1994:90). He became the first indigenous minister to be appointed in the position as the Dean for the Ondonga Circuit in 1955 (Buys & Nambala 2003:230). In 1960 he became the first indigenous minister to be elected as a Moderator of the ELCIN and consequently became the first bishop of the ELCIN in 1963 (c.f. Auala 2009:193-196; Buys & Nambala 2003:212; Löytty 1971:53). Auala represented the ELCIN in the Lutheran *World Federation* (LWF) as the member of Executive Committee of LWF in 1963 – 1970 (Auala 1970:142). He served as the first President of the *United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in South West Africa* 1972 – 1975 (Niitenge 2013:104). He was one of the signatories of the *Open Letter of 1971* addressed to John Balthasar Vorster, the Prime minister of South Africa (Shuuya 1995:28; Buys & Nambala 2003:212).

### **3.2.3 ELCIN's engagement in Co-operations and Federations**

#### **3.2.3.1 “Drie-hoek” agreement**

As early as 1940's, there was an urgent need for the pastoral care among ELCIN members. Particularly, among the young men who worked through the contract labour system in the central and southern part of the country. The need of pastoral care was even aggravated by the policy of apartheid system in Namibia. Under the South African rule in Namibia, ELCIN was confined to minister within the Northern parts of the country among Owambo and Kavango tribes only. Many of the young men from Northern and North-eastern Namibia were hired to work further down the contract labour system in farms and police zone in the South and central part of Namibia. Hence the need for pastoral care among the said members of ELCIN (Voipio 1981: 112).

In 1941, two Church leaders, J T Potgieter a pastor and Director of Mission for Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Namibia and Rev. Birger Eriksson, a Superintendent of the Finnish Mission in Owambo and Kavango met in Gibeon. They discussed matters regard the ecumenical mission outreach (Nambala 1987:221). The two leaders agreed to seek another platform where the Rhenish Mission could be included to discuss further the burning problem of the Aawambo and Kavango men working under the contract labourer system in the Southern part of the country. Particularly, those on farms (Niitenge 2013:102 - 103).

Meanwhile, in 1943, ELCIN sent an evangelist Tomas Kalumbu to Mariental to take care for the spiritual life of the contract labourers who worked in the Southern part of the country (Miettinen 2005:145). Five year later in 1947, J T Potgieter together with few DRC pastors travelled to the North of Namibia. They visited ELCIN and met with ELCIN Church Council, at Engela. The leaders of the two churches discussed further the issue of spiritual care for the Owambo and Kavango Contract labourers in the South (Auala 2009:134). Both two parties agreed on principle to work together on ecumenical level over the spiritual care for the Contract labourers in the South of the country. The meeting suggested further to call a consultation that would finalize the memorandum of understanding.

On 9<sup>th</sup> May 1947 at Karibib, the three Churches, Finnish Mission Society, Rhenish Mission Society and Dutch Reformed Church finally decided to enter into a co-operation called: “*Driehoek*” Agreement (Triangle Agreement). It is called “*Driehoek*” because it is contracted by the three parties (Miettinen 2005:145; Nashihanga 1993:78; Saayman 2011:204). Under the *Driehoek Agreement* the three churches agreed to jointly work for the spiritual ministry mainly among the contract workers in the Southern Namibia (Saayman 2011:204). The DRC was obligated to render financial assistance for the church - workers’ salaries and traveling’s enumerations. ELCIN pledged to provide candidates and educational materials for the ministry. ELCRN provided the facilities and membership materials for the ministry (Diehl 1995:19; Auala 2009:134; Buys & Nambala 2005:251). The three churches through this agreement have responded positively toward the spiritual needs of the contract labourers. During the two decades of the *Driehoek*’s existence the number of

contract labourers who worked in the South of Namibia was estimated to 30 000 men. The Driehoek cooperation also created a cordial ecumenical relationship among the members of the concerned Churches. It was seen as the first and fruitful joint venture among the three churches in Namibia (Buys & Nambala 2003:362)

In 1969, Rev P.C. Van Rooyen, General Secretary of the DRC wrote a letter of notification to the individual Church Council of the concerned three parties of Driehoek agreement. A letter informed its representatives about the DRC's intent to terminate the agreement in due course (Shejavali 1970: 32). In fact, the Driehoek agreement came into dispute on the ground of political situations, as the DRC was the state church for the South African government in Namibia (Saayman 2011:205). As a result, the DRC broke away from the Driehoek cooperation, but continued doing mission work in Kaoko amongst the Himba and in Kavango, east of Rundu area (c.f. Auala 2009:135; Saayman 2011:205; Buys & Nambala 2003:251, 362). In 1970 the Synod of GELC decided to fill the vacant obligation in the agreement which Dutch Reformed Church left open when exited the tripartite convention (Diehl 1995:19).

### **3.2.3.2 Cooperation on theological education**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1954, two months before ELCIN could be declared an independent Church; the Church Council received and discussed an invitation of cooperation in the area of Theological training with South African School of Theology in Oscarberg, Natal. In his letter of 4<sup>th</sup> May 1954, the School Principal of the Oscarberg School of Theology extended their offer of scholarships to ELCIN. It intended to train ELCIN students in the field of pastoral ministry at Oscarberg for a four years' program. The letter further stated that the School of Theology intends to cover the travelling's, accommodation and all the academic expenses for ELCIN prospective students. Furthermore, it suggested the prospectus candidates to assume their academic studies in two years' times from then (*ELCIN Church Council* 1954:06/03). The ELCIN Church Council of 1956 accorded a scholarship to Rev. Mathias Ngipandulua to further his theological studies at the School of Theology in Oscarburg, Natal (Shanghala 2016:3). It also rendered a Scholarship to Rev. Efraim Angula and Rev. Leonard Auala to pursue further their theological studies at Moravian School of Theology in Port Elizabeth (Ekandjo 2005:86).

During 1962 the two black Lutheran Churches in Namibia, namely the ELCIN and the ELCRN established a joint Theological Seminary and in so doing to bid farewell to separate theological training. Dr. Beckmann, Praises of the Rhineland Church and Prof Dr. HW Gensichen, the Director of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches (WCC) who visited Namibia in 1960 were the two figures behind the development of the United Lutheran Theological Seminary (Buys & Nambala 2003:222). Dr. Beckmann promised to support the expansion of Paulinum Theological Seminary financially, whilst Prof Dr. Gensichen promised additional funding, provided the two Lutheran Seminaries in Namibia were to unite and become one institute (Buys & Nambala 2003:222) They mobilized their institutions to raise funds to construct the buildings for Paulinum Seminary (Buys & Nambala 2003:222). On 2nd May 1962, the two Lutheran Seminaries: that of ELCIN at Elim and the other of ELCRN at Karibib merged into a newly institution called: *Paulinum United Lutheran Theological Seminary* located in Otjimbingwe (Buys & Nambala 2003:22).

Early in 1963 Paulinum United Lutheran Seminary opened its door for the training of its young men and women who registered for the pastoral ministry within their respective churches (Niinkoti 1978:43). Nevertheless, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELC) did not send her candidates for the training at the Paulinum United Lutheran Seminary, however, GELC pledged to support the Paulinum United Lutheran Seminary financially. Until now no single candidate from GELC underwent theological training at Paulinum United Lutheran Theological Seminary. “Even Paulinum Theological Seminary has been open for the students of all the Lutheran Churches; the ELCIN (GELC) so far has not sent any student there for pastoral training” (Shuuya 1995:22). GELC’s pastors have been hired either from Mission Societies in South Africa or from Germany. Her candidates for pastoral theology are sent to study at the Lutheran Theological Institute at Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

### **3.2.3.3 ELCIN in Lutheran World Federation (LWF) membership**

The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOC) held from 31<sup>st</sup> August 1954 to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1954 opened the door for ELOC to engage

ecumenically both locally and international. The Synod approved application for membership of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) (Synod 1954:10). During 1958 ELOC applied for membership of the LWF. The application however was referred back, because the church was still under the missionary leadership. Therefore in 1960 the ELOC Synod elected Leonard Auala as the first black moderator of the church. Later, that year the ELOC reapplied for membership LWF.

The ELOC was officially accepted into the Federation as a member in 1961 (Auala 2009:142). ELOC was the first Namibian Lutheran Church to join Lutheran World Federation (Gurirab 2002:25). Its delegation participated for the first time in the LWF at the 4th Lutheran World Federation Assembly held at Helsinki, Finland from 30th July 1963 – 11<sup>th</sup> August 1963 (*LWF Document* 1963). The first ELOC delegates to the 4<sup>th</sup> Lutheran World Federation were three members of the following names: Liina Mpanda - teacher, Matias Ngipandulua, - pastor and Leonard Auala -Bishop. In this Assembly, ELOC broke a record to send a female representative which has been not a case in African and Asian countries. Hence, Liina Mpanda was the very first female in the Lutheran Family in the whole Africa and Asia continents to attend the LWF Assembly. Bishop Leonard Auala was elected in this Assembly into the Central Committee of LWF to represent Africa in the Lutheran World Federation body (Auala 2009:142).

#### **3.2.3.4 Co - operations on denominational matters**

The ELCIN-Anglican cooperative agreement is dated back to the early 1966. Bishop Colin Winter of the Anglican Church and his team visited the ELCIN Church board on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1966 at Oniipa. They discussed the cross -denominational marriages between the members of these two churches. They signed an agreement guided the officiating of the cross – denominational marriages (Auala 2009:145).

Following the ELCIN-Anglican agreement, a joint Ecumenical Committee between the two churches was established in 1985. The ELCIN-Anglican Ecumenical Committee drafted an ecumenical statement stating the willingness of these two churches to faithfully open the doors of their churches and mutually serve their members for Holy Communion and Baptism. The cooperative agreement opened the

doors for ELCIN and Anglican pastors to share the pulpits and created the platforms of representations to monumental events of each sister church. It also enabled the members of the two churches at grassroots level to daily experience and practicing the unity of the body of Christ (Shaanika 2010:1).

On 15 September 1985, the two Church leaders, Bishop Bonifasius Haufiku of Roman Catholic Church and Bishop Kleopas Dumeni of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) met at Okatana Roman Catholic Centre, Oshakati. The Bishops' meeting was held to discuss matters of cooperation regarding the officiating of the cross – denominational marriage ceremonies and administering of cross – denominational baptismal services for their members (Shaanika 2010:1). The two bishops signed a memorandum of understandings which guides their members regarding the cross –denominational marriages or a cross – denominational baptism (Shaanika 2010:2).

The agreements of cooperation created the living spirit of ecumenism among the members of these churches. It enhanced the members to acknowledge the sound Christian identity and values of one family, one body, one faith, one baptism, one church, one Lord, one God. Eventually, it enables the members to appreciate each church's worship service or to freely participate in joint worship services and own such services (Shaanika 2010:2).

The co-operations changed the mind-set of the members of these churches to the respect of one another denominational background and rites and enhance ecumenism. Shaanika (2010:2) exhorted: "In Christ there is no eastern catholic and western Lutherans. In him, there is neither southern Anglicans nor northern other denominations. But all are Christians saved by the blood of one Lord Jesus Christ and reconciled with God. Therefore, Christians should also try to reconcile with one another."

### **3.3 Relation of ELCIN to other Lutheran Churches in Namibia**

#### **3.3.1 Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia is one of the two Black Lutheran Churches in Namibia. It was then known as Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suidwes Africa (ELCSWA) and worked mainly among Damara, Herero and others non-Europeans communities in the country (Graba & Zarvedinos 2011:7). From the beginning, ELCSWA was more accommodative as far as the indigenous groups of Namibia were concerned. In exception of the Owambo and Kavango groups constituted the other black Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church, which is now ELCIN; all other indigenous groups belong to ELCSWA.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) is the daughter church of the Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) in German which came to do its missionary works in Namibia in 1842 (Frederik 1995:13; Nambala 1994:72, 74). It started its mission station at Warmbad, south of Namibia, a station which the Mission received from the London Mission Society that closed its activities in the country in 1940 (Nambala 1994:70). The Rhenish Mission Society begun to work first among the Orlam and later it quickly expanded the missionary activities throughout the most places on the Southern and Central of the country. After five decades of the Rhenish Missionary outreach in Namibia, the Mission quickly attained and established more than 25 mission stations in Hereroland and Namaland (Nambala 1994:73).

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 1891 RMS sent two missionaries: August Wulfhost and Friedrech Meisenholl to extend the mission activities as far as the Northern part of the country among Kwanyama people (Shejavali 1970: 66; Tronjes 1996:227). However, during the First World War, the Rhenish Mission's activities at the Northern Namibia were closed down by the Portuguese Government in Angola by the end of 1916 (Shejavali 1970:69). Hence in 1920, RMS handed over the stations to Finnish Mission Society in Owamboland and remained mainly concentrating her missionary activities merely at the Southern, Southwestern and Central parts of Namibia (Shejavali 1970:71; Nambala 1994:74).

Till the mid 1930's there was no training for indigenous pastors in ELCRN. The Church's leadership has been for a century in the hands of Rhenish Mission Society. It took a century for the Rhenish Missionary activities in Namibia to develop a single indigenous pastor. In the late 1930's the RMS decided to prepared the indigenous people for the future leadership. In 1938, the first synod of the RMS in Namibia was convinced in to map out the way forward for the future of ELCRN (Baumann 1965:54-55). The Synod discussed the need for training the church workers in spiritual matters and later it resolved to establish the theological seminary in order to train evangelists and pastors for the future leadership of the church. "The leadership of the work still is in the hands of the mission. Earnest efforts however are being made to lay a foundation for the formation of a young church. A great effort is being put forth for the training of pastors and evangelists in Karibib." Nambala (1994:74).

During 1939 a theological seminary, under the leadership of a German missionary Frederick Ponnighaus, was established at Karibib. 18 students enrolled for theological training (Buys & Nambala 2003:107; Frederik 2013:4). In 1941, however Pastor Ponnighaus was arrested and put in the consecration camps during the Second World War. The training therefore ceased during the Second World War. Shortly after the War, Pastor Ponnighaus and others German missionaries in Namibia were released from concentrations camps. The theological education was then reintroduced and the seminary reopened under the leadership of Pastor Ponnighaus (Frederik 2013:5). Later in 1948 the very first indigenous pastors for the Rhenish Mission were ordained.

The first group of 14 pastors ordained in the ELCSWA consists of the following: Hendrik Samuel Isaak, Josef Hanse, Eliakim Hoabeb, Ananias Nangolo, Frederick Awaseb, Josua Tjiurutua, Winfried Nouseb, Andreas Kukuri, Fritz Gariseb, Hendrik Goagoseb, Jakobus Beukes, Cornelius Isaak, Daniel Goliath and Daniel Jakobus Strydom (Frederik 2013:5). The ordination of the local people paved the way for the Rhenish Mission congregations in Namibia to become an independent church. On 4<sup>th</sup> October 1957, the Rhenish Mission congregations in Namibia were therefore declared as an autonomous church named as the Evangelical *Lutheran Church in South West Africa (ELCSWA)* (Frederik 1995:13). Hans Karl Diehl was its first Church leader (Nambala 1994:75).

ELCIN's close co-operation with ELCRN is dated back to 1891, through sound relationships between Finnish Mission Society in Namibia and Rhenish Mission Society in Namibia (Kaulinge 1992: 6). In 1917 the missionaries for Rhenish Missionaries received an eviction order from the Portuguese government in Angola to leave Ovamboland. The Rhenish missionaries entrusted their converted Christians in the care of the Finnish Mission Society (Buys & Nambala 2003:91). In 1920, under this close corporation the RMS field in Uukwanyama (Ovamboland) was formally transferred to the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) (Shejavali 1970:113; Kaulinge 1992:7; Nambala 1994:74).

### **3.3.2 [German] Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC)**

ELCIN – GELC was not born from the missionary activities in Namibia. Its history is however associated with the work of the Rhenish Mission Society in the country. ELCIN – GELC is a church that has a connection from the first group of German officials who came to settle in Namibia as a part of the early part of colonization in the early 1883” (Garaba & Zarvedinos 2011:12).

Most of the German settlers in Namibia as colonizers were mainly Lutherans from their native United Evangelical Church of the German Federation and Roman Catholic Church (Buys & Nambala 2003:77). Nonetheless, Rhenish Missionaries in Namibia considered their work among indigenous Namibians; they felt obliged by Christ's gospel to serve the German settlers in Namibia belonging to the Lutheran community as their pastors. In the beginning the ministry of Rhenish missionaries to German settlers was supervised by the Evangelical Church of Germany (Buys & Nambala (2003:78).

In 1890, Ludwig Leutwein, a Governor in Namibia, representing German administration in the country requested the Director of Rhenish Mission Society, Dr Scheiber to establish a German speaking parish in Windhoek and appoint a pastor for the German settlers in the country (Diehl 1995:17). Later in 1896, the Rhenish Mission Society agreed and approached the Evangelischer Ober-Kirchenrat in Germany to send Pastor Siebe to Namibia to serve the Nama congregations of the

Rhenish Mission as missionary, and the same time to shepherd the German inhabitants as their local pastor (Diehl 1995:17). In the same year, the German evangelical parish in Windhoek was established to look after the spiritual needs of the white inhabitants.

The white German evangelical church in Windhoek continued to receive a direct supervision from the Evangelical Church of Prussia. At the sixth decade from the establishment of the GELC, 10 white Lutheran parishes were erected throughout Namibia (Diehl 1995:17). On 30<sup>th</sup> May 1960, the white Lutheran parishes in Namibia constituted as an independent church called: *Deutsche Evangelisch – Lutherische Kirche in South West Africa (DELK)*, which was renamed in 1992 as the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia* (Diehl 1995:18; Nambala 1994:76).

### **3.3.3 United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (UELCSWA)**

As early as the 1960's, the Lutheran Churches in Namibia felt the need of establishing 'A united body' to be a voice of the voiceless majority. In 1961 they met together at Karibib and decided to come together more often in order to work on the unity process (Gurirab 2002:35).

The *United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in South West Africa* (UELCSWA) was emanated from the joint meetings of the Lutheran Churches. The UELCSWA is founded by the two black Lutheran churches at Otjimbingwe, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1972, during their combined Church Councils' assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) (Shuuya 1988:1). The inauguration of the Federation for the two Lutheran Churches was officiated by Rev S W Habelgaard, the then President of the Federation of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (FELCSA) (Gurirab 2002:36). Initially, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELC) which is a white Lutheran church did not join the federation (Shuuya 1995:23). The two black Lutheran Churches agreed to work together toward an establishment of one Lutheran Church in Namibia (Shuuya 1988:1). The prime vision of the UELCSWA was to prepare the two black Lutheran Churches toward the formation of one Lutheran Church in Namibia (*Omukwetu*: no 9, May 1980:2).

In its convention of the 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> April 1975 at Engela, the UELCSWA Synod discussed the application letter of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELC), seeking for the full membership into a federation of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia (UELCSWA 1975:5). After a careful consideration, the Synod deferred GELC's application and referred a letter to the UELCSWA Church Council to discuss further its theological points that per Synod perspective, were not in agreement with UELCSWA. Nevertheless, the Synod kept its door wide open for the GELC to join the federation when all preparations were completed.

The Synod mandated the Church Council to accept GELC into the UELCSWA membership when the matter in question was finally resolved. Finally, the Synod reiterated its commitment toward the vision of establishing one Lutheran Church in Namibia (*Omukwetu* May 1988:2; UELCSWA 1975: 6). Thereafter the UELCSWA Synod appointed the various standing committees to work out the modalities for the ways forward to the one Lutheran Church. The Synod further tasked the Church Council to start with all necessary preparations to enhance the smooth establishment of one Lutheran Church in Namibia (UELCSWA 1975:8).

The German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELC) was finally accepted into full membership of the federation as the third member during the Synod meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> May 1980 at Windhoek (UELSWA 1980:15). GELC's approval into the membership of the federation marked a positive beginning of UELCSWA toward the intensification of one Lutheran Church (UELCSWA 1980:18). It motivated the Synod to write a pastoral letter addressed to all the members of three Lutheran Churches, requesting them to strengthen the unity among themselves. The letter further appealed the members to resort to the ministry of reconciliation and allowed them to act as the tools of peace and justice in the midst of political torment and hatred (*Omukwetu* 1988:2). Part of the message reads:

Die Gewone Sinode van VELKSWA doen 'n baie dringende beroep op al die drie Lutherse Kerk in Namibia en op die hele Kerk van Christus en op die volk van hierdie land om buite die raamwerk van politieke programme en verskille vir 'n oomblik aan die voet van die kruis van Jesus Christus te gaan staan en om nederig in die geloof ons verhouding tot God en die meedmens

te ondersoek, en om van Hom te leer, wat terville van ons gekruisig en opgestaan het om ons te regverdig en met Hom en die medemens te versoen, ongeag van ras, kleur en taalverskille. (*UELCSWA* May 1988:22).

The Synod maintained that the one Lutheran church in Namibia will be materialized only when their members of the concerned three churches accept one another as brothers and sisters. It is through accepting one another that the unity of purpose and unity in diversity will pave the right way to the unification of a one Lutheran church in the country. The Synod further wrote a letter to their congregations requesting the members of the Lutheran Churches to acknowledge their obligations to work for the unity so that the vision of one church might become a reality. The letter exhorted the members to observe that races, colours and languages should not be regarded as barriers to a one Lutheran Church, but to be viewed as God's manifestation of His reconciling love to the humankind (*Omukwetu* 1980:8).

No tangible progress was noted on the way towards the realization of one Lutheran church in Namibia. Till early 1980's the federation did a little progress toward the accomplishment of one Lutheran Church in Namibia. At the opening ceremony of the fourth ordinary Synod of UELCSWA in Ongwediva on, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 1983, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni the then President of UELCSWA remarked:

It is now eleven years since the existence of UELCSWA in 1972. The aim [of UELCSWA] is [to] form a one Lutheran Church in Namibia. I regret to report to the respectful Synod that no progress has been noted in realization of unity or even coming closer to that goal." (*UELCSWA* 1983:27).

Bishop Kleopas Dumeni acknowledged the slow pace in the mobilization of the Lutheran unity that occurred nearly for the past eleven years as the hindrance to realization of the unity. Through the proceedings, the Synod discerned further the variations of approach each Lutheran church had on the question of a Lutheran unity as the other barriers: ELCIN's viewpoint was in favour of a development for one Lutheran Church in Namibia. The ELCIN maintained that she looked forward to see a draft constitution of the intended one Lutheran Church in Namibia be given to each individual Church's Synod for discussion and adoption. The ELCIN was ready for the unification: "We do want to unite" (ELCIN Synod 1988:20). The ELCRN supported

the idea of a federation of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia. The ELCRN projected the vision of a federation of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia to take place after 25 years of consultations. The ELCRN was hardly ready to welcome the GELC in all the future discussions of the federation (*UELCSWA* 1983:40).

The GELC was neither in favour of the unification of the racial segregated Lutheran churches, nor was they ready to take up any further discussions regarding the unification of the Lutheran churches in Namibia. The GELC however, kept encouraging ELCIN and the ELCRN to continue accompanying each other on their way towards one Lutheran Church in Namibia. She further appealed to them to keep the door open in case she deemed necessary to resume the negotiations on basis of a federation (*UELCSWA* 1983:43). In 1989 the GELC therefore withdrew her membership from UELCSWA (Tötemeyer 2010:55). The ELCIN and the ELCRN continued to function on a federal basis rather than striving for the future merger (Nambala 1987: 224).

Three years later, all three Lutheran Churches in Namibia met at the consultation of 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> June 1992 at Gross-Barmen near Okahandja. They took a decision to start anew towards the attainment of the Lutheran unity. The Lutheran Churches in Namibia strove for a one United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia in the near future (Isaak 2000:80). The consultation requested the bishops of the three churches to regularly consult each other and to promote the Lutheran unity through congregational visitations (Veii 1996:6). The church leaders agreed to further unity both on grass-root and church-leadership levels. They sent a letter of clarifications to all Lutheran congregations in the country explaining the importance of unity. They requested their members to enhance trust among themselves and to work for unity (Isaak 2000:82).

Ten years later, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2000, the four bishops of three Lutheran Churches in Namibia wrote a letter to their members in which they encouraged their members to work together for Lutheran unity. The bishops further appealed to their members to discuss the question of unity within the Lutheran family. "We are convinced that the communion we already have can find better expression, also in a structure of one Lutheran Church" (*NCC-LWF Information Letter* 2001:2). The Lutheran bishops

admitted the guilt because of their mistakes of the past. They confessed that they negligently lacked a commitment on the road to unity. Their confession reads:

However, we as a Lutheran family in Namibia have in the past been divided by walls of apartheid and colonialism, by the lack of courage to raise a prophetic voice on economic justice and political and human rights for all, by lack of mutual love and sinful attitudes despite the Christian doctrine that all people are created in the image of God (*NCC-LWF Information Letter* 2001:2).

Subsequently, Lutheran Churches strived to proclaim the message of reconciliation “with confidence and credibility” (*NCC-LWF Information letter: 2001:2*). In so doing, they formulated their basic statement of faith for the Lutheran Unity. The statement entails the following (*NCC-LWF Information Letter* 2001:2):

1. The three Lutheran Churches are one in Jesus Christ all Christians in the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
2. The three Lutheran Churches are one in their confession that justification happens by grace through faith in Christ.
3. The three Lutheran churches believe that the Bible is the authoritative source and the norm for Christian faith and life.

The Lutheran bishops acknowledged that the unity is achieved only when the members of the three Lutheran churches start to appreciate each other and value each other as a transformative pillar for the unity of the church. They argued that the main challenge was to come to know each other and to build trustworthy relationships. They should build a trustworthy relationship that transcended beyond the boarder of one’s original Lutheran church. Therefore, they requested every member of the churches to contribute immensely to the process of Lutheran unity (*NCC-LWF Information Letter* 2001:4) in 1993, UELCSWA officially dissolved and the vision of one Lutheran Church in the country came to a standstill. In the words of Bishop Kleopas Dumeni UELCSWA “was laid to rest” (*Omukwetu* 1994:10).

### 3.3.4 Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)

Since their inceptions, the churches in Namibia were divided on racial lines. Till early 1960's all churches in the country were under the foreign leaderships. After their independences, they were led by the indigenous leaders. They soon began to seek for local and international co-operations with other churches (Nambala 1994: 150). On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1973, the ELCIN, ELCRN, Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church met in Windhoek to form the Christian *Centre* (Lombard 1998:166; Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 14 -15). Later in 1974 the Roman Catholic Church decided to co-opt as observer (Buys & Nambala 2003:367). During September 1982, the Roman Catholic Church became a full member of the Council of Churches in Namibia (Hunke 1996:83).

The purpose for a Christian fellowship was for the Churches in Namibia to address the social issues in the society in Namibia with a united voice (Nambala 1987: 226; Kapolo 1991:100). The mainline churches in Namibia, except the white Dutch Reformed Church, constituted the Windhoek Christian Centre which was the forerunner of the Council of Churches in Namibia (Nambala 1987:226).

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 1976 in its sixth general meeting, the Christian Centre decided to establish an ecumenical body for the churches in Namibia called: *Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)* (Hunke 1996:83). On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1978, the Council of Churches in Namibia was officially launched as a legal body of the churches in Namibia (Buys & Nambala 2003:368). All mainline churches in Namibia, except the Dutch Reformed Church, were hence on united in the Council of Churches in Namibia. Other churches and associations joined the Council of Churches in Namibia in the late 1990. They were: Coptic Orthodox Church in Namibia (COCN), Pentecostal Protestant Church (PPC) and Protestant Unity Church (Oruano). The Reformed Church in Namibia (RCN), Ecumenical Institute for Namibia (EIN) and Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA) joined the Council in the mid- 2000's (Buys & Nambala 2003:368).

The member churches of the Council of Churches in Namibia in a post-Namibian independent era are recorded as follows:

African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa/Anglican Diocese of Namibia (ACSA), Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church), Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC), Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), Rhenish Church in Namibia (RCN), Roman Catholic Church (RCC), United Congregational Church in Southern Africa, Namibia Synod (UCCSA), United Methodist Church in Namibia (UMCN) and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Namibia Region (URCSA) (Nakamhela 1995: 27).

The purpose of the Council of Churches in Namibia remained the same as that of the Windhoek Christian Centre. The Council

- i. Promotes Christian unity,
- ii. Bring about justice to the Namibian people,
- iii. Fosters self-help projects,
- iv. Renders educational programs (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 14-15; Buys & Nambala 2003: 368).

The Council of Churches in Namibia played a significant role of being the voice of the voiceless for the Namibian people especially under the leadership of the Kleopas Dumeni (ELCIN), Hendrick Frederik (ELCRN), Boniface Haushiku (RCC) and James Kauluma (ANGLICAN).

Locally, the Council of Churches in Namibia assisted the Namibian communities with health, educational and other societal resources during the liberation struggle. The Council rendered humanitarian services to the Namibian exiles. The Council of Churches in Namibia together with Lutheran World Federation attended to the need for chaplaincy in the refugee camps. The Council played also a great role during the repatriation of Namibian exiles to their homeland, under the supervision of the United Nation Transitional Assistant Group (UNTAG) in Namibia in 1989. It resettled and rehabilitated the exiles within their communities and families (Buys & Nambala 2003:369).

### 3.3.5 The United Church Council of UCC-NELC

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006, the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia met in Windhoek, to discuss the future of the Lutheran family in the country. They gathered under the umbrella of Namibia National Council - Lutheran World Federation (NNC- LWF). The Namibia National Council – Lutheran World Federation was a loose federation of churches which existed for 14 years after the abolishment of UELCSWA (*LWF-NNC 2006:11/28*). The three Lutheran Churches decided to form the United Church Council of the Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC). It replaced NNC – LWF concurrently (NNC - LWF 2006:11/28).

The UCC-NELC was established on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 at Windhoek, Namibia. It is a national body of the three Lutheran Churches of Namibia. The Council is represented by six ELCIN, five ELCRN and four ELCIN-GELC members. These members hold also membership in their individual church boards (*UCC – NELC Constitution 2006:3*). The members of the United Church Council served for the period of 2007 – 2010 are recorded as follows:

*Bishops Thomas Shivute, chairperson, Bishop Zephania Kameeta, vice chairperson, Bishop Erick Hertel, General Secretaries: Rev Beate Vogtes, Executive Secretary, Rev Eliakim Shaanika, vice Executive Secretary, and Rev Petrus van Zyl. Treasures: Mr. Carl Schultz, treasurer, Mr. Leonard de Vries, vice treasurer and Rev Linus Shimakeleni. Additional members: Mrs. Hilma Amaambo, Mrs. Ellen Rene, and Mr. Traugot Todd (United Church Council 2007:04/20).*

The main function of this national body is to attend to the question of Lutheran unity (*United Church Council 2007:04/20*). The UCC-NELC is obligated to:

- i. prepare and issue statements on common concerns,
- ii. prepare joint conferences for pastors and co-workers of the churches
- iii. Prepare, promote and coordinate an overall plan of new congregations and church building to be established (*Constitution United Church Council 2006:3*).

In a press release of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2007, Angela Vei a former coordinator of the LWF-NNC expressed her hope in the UCC-NELC for a realization of one Lutheran Church in the near future. Vei maintains that the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia were already spiritual united, but through UCC – NELC they could gradually make visible unity a reality. "On a spiritual level, we are united already. Now we have to make this unity visible step by step" (*Economic News* 2007:04/22). The UCC – NELC affirmed that it will challenge the divisions within the Lutheran Churches and that prevailed along ethnic lines throughout the country's history. Therefore, it committed herself to be a vocal body of the Lutheran Churches which speaks with one united voice (*Economic News* 2007:22).

### **3.4 The Church and Society in a divided social and religious orders**

#### **3.4.1 Languages and cultural barriers**

The Khoisan people are commonly accepted as the earliest inhabitants of Namibia from pre-historic times (Kiljunen 1981:28, Niitenge 2013:79). Prior to the Dutch East India Company came to establish its station at Cape of Good Hope in 1652, Namibia was populated by the Aawambo, Damara, Herero, Nama and San peoples living between the Kalahari and Namib deserts (Katjavivi 1988: 1-3).

Throughout the colonial era, Namibia was mainly divided for management purposes in a northern and a southern division, the northern part consisted of the ethnic homelands such as: Owambo, Kavango, Kaokoland and Caprivi. The northern part was mainly populated by blacks. The southern part comprised of ethnic homelands for blacks as well as Colored settlements, including farms solely for white ownership. The Bantustans or homelands for blacks were located on the areas that were unproductive. Whilst the regions full of mineral resources and land suitable for farming were reserved for whites.

Blacks entering the so-called Police Zone were considered dangerous foreigners and their movements were controlled. They were only allowed to work at the so-called Police Zone as foreign workers with passports (Hunke 1996:53). Proclamation no 11 of 1922, known as the Pass Law, regulated blacks entering or leaving a specific territory without a pass. Blacks suffered victimization, harassment and confinements under the Proclamation no 33 of 1922. This law even prohibited black

people to walk in the streets or to stay in public places of any town between 21h00 in the evening and 4h00 in the morning without a pass. “Curfews were imposed on Africans in Urban areas” to curb their movements at the Police Zones (IDAF 1989:14).

With exception of the Whites (11.6%), the other 12 distinct ethnic groups in Namibia were the victims of harassments and confinements under the Proclamation 11 and 33 of 1922: Ovambos (46.5%); Kavangos (6.6%); Damaras (8.8%); Herero’s (6.6%); Namas (4.3%); Coloureds (3.8%); Caprivians (3.4%); San (3.0%); Rehoboth Basters (2.2%); Tswanas (0.6%) and others (1.8.%). C.f. (Kiljunen 1981:27; 1974 census). Afrikaans, a language of the Afrikaner minority group of people in Namibia, was a historical usefulness as *lingua franca*. The major indigenous language groups: Damara-Nama, Herero (*Otjiherero*), Kavango (*Rukwangali*), Owambo (*Oshiwambo*), Lozi (*Silozi*), San, and Tswana were not considered as important for official communications and instructions (Kiljunen 1981:29). Apartheid also divided the black population groups into social, educational, cultural and legal segregations. In the townships, each cultural group has its own location, schools, churches, sport facilities and transportation (IDAF 1989:22).

### **3.4.2 The Church and segregation policy**

In Namibia mission and colonialism had a long history of close relationship, particularly between the German colonial government and German missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society (De Vries 1978:75; Niitenge 2013: 96). The conducts of the German missionaries were the classic examples. They worked to paralyze the countries’ natural powers of defines and pave the way for colonial subjugation (Isaak 2000: 29). The Rhenish missionaries, as the patriotic Germans, naturally welcomed the setting up of the German protectorate. The protectorate was an extension of the missionary opportunity (Nambala 1987:186). The German settlers in Namibia focused their attention on colonial subjugation. The white Lutheran congregations founded in the country were generously sponsored by the imperial family, church and state authorities. The ecclesiastical provisions to the colony were regarded as a national duty, by means of which Germany intended to express its cultural and religious superiority over the indigenous cultures and languages (Isaak: 2012:16).

In his book, *Mission and Colonialism in Namibia*, Lukas de Vries (1978: 75) argues that the Rhenish Missionary Society supported the colonial rule. The Missionary Society established separate ecclesiastical structures for blacks: (*the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia[ELCRN]*) formed in 1957 and whites/German-speaking Christians (*the Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche[DELK], the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa*) constituted in 1960 (Katjavivi *et al* 1989). The separation of ecclesiastical structures was the creation of Rhenish missionaries. It created the separate administrative ministries for blacks and whites at local, regional and national levels. In the words of Katjavivi: “The RMS saw the colonial system as a divinely-created policy; the Kingdom of God would be effective within it-not in opposition to it” (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 10).

The Rhenish missionaries did not issue any sympathetic statement against German colonial authority during the war of mass extermination of the Herero, Damara and Nama 1904- 1907 (Nambala 1987: 192) The Rhenish Missionary Society did not rise its prophetic ministry to denounce the injustice of the colonial government (Buys & Nambala 2003:69).

The churches remained silent on social issues even during the South African occupation in Namibia as 1915 onwards. Under South African apartheid system in Namibia racial and religious divisions were legally maintained through the policies and structures of segregations. The Dutch Reformed Church in Namibia was the example of a religious institution that defended policy of apartheid with the biblical passages. Subsequently, churches under the missionary leaderships in Namibia remained neutral or in some cases opted for the interests of the colonial government (Niitenge 2013:98).

The issue of church and apartheid in South Africa and Namibia was discussed at the Lutheran World Federation Assembly gathered in Helsinki in 1963. Both Lutheran Churches in Namibia and South Africa were questioned why they exist on racial lines. The Lutheran World Federation suggested that they should denounce racial discrimination (*LWF Report* August 1963:62-63). In Namibia, therefore, the leaders

of the Lutheran churches were motivated to fight the policy of racial discrimination. The participation of the Church in the struggle against apartheid became imperative especially after the LWF 1963. The ELCIN, ELCRN, Roman Catholic Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church rejected any kind of cooperation with the South African racist regime in Namibia (c.f. Isaak 1997: 44; Niitenge 2013:98).

### **3.4.3 The Church and the problem of labor contract system**

During 1907 the German government in Namibia established a system of contract workers (Hunke 1996:59). The system required the black males from Northern Namibia to come and work for the whites in the so-called Police Zone areas on contract. Male workers were hired from Owambo and Kavango to work for the heavy duties in mines, factories, hotels and farms on contract of eighteen to 24 months. In 1930's, South African administration in Namibia introduced a state own company called: South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) to deal with the recruitment, transportation and allocations of workers from north (Voipio 1981:112).

SWANLA erected large gatherings camps one in Owambo and the other in Kavango to register and doing medical check- up for the recruited male contract workers. The medical check- up was conducted in a humiliated and undignified manner for any personal shame, privacy or respect (Hunke 1996:60). A Catholic priest, father Heinz Hunke explains:

[Workers] who were accepted signed a contract and were carried off in huge buses that were closer to large containers and lead to the mines, farmlands and cities. [...] The contract worker was a prisoner of a system that one can compare in many respects to slavery. After eighteen months, the contract was terminated, and the worker was obligated to go home, in order to start anew the whole procedure of enlistment.

In her research titled: *Contract work through Ovambo eyes*, a former Lecturer of Paulinum Theological Seminary, Rauha Voipio revealed various social, economic and religious implications in the life of the Namibian contract workers that were caused by the contract labour system. Among others the contract labour system:

Affected the marriage life of the married workers negatively, loneliness and divorces resulted from the long period of couples separated from each other for twelve months or more. According to Voipio (1981:114) the contract labours did know why a man is separated from his wife for twelve months. Contract workers lived and worked under poor, unhygienic and unsafe conditions. They sleep under a zinc plate erected in unsafe place. They were exposed to rains and colds. They served for far too many months with too little salary (Voipio 1981:120). *Namibia Facts* (IDAF1989:14) describes the conditions at the mines where even funds were abundant that “poor medical health and dietary conditions persisted. Pneumonia and scurvy were common.

The contract workers were made nothing but the cheap labourers. No freedom of choice was granted regarding the nature of works they wanted to do. They took any nature of works offered to them. Therefore, contract labour system was a destruction of the human dignity (Voipio 1981:114). It undermined the God given human dignity of an Ovambo worker (Töttemeyer 1978:158). The contract system was a form of slavery. It was a forced labour. It denied the workers a freedom to choose employment and place of work. It was a system that never grantee the legal protection to the labourers (Töttemeyer 1978:159).

#### **3.4.4 Apartheid a threat to peace in Namibia**

Dr. Leonard Auala was consecrated as Bishop of ELCIN in 1963. Early in February 1964, Bishop Auala raised his concern about the introduction of the Odendaal Commission plan in Namibia, at the public meeting for Ongandjera people, organized by the South African Minister of Bantu Affairs, de Wet Nel (Kiljunen 1981). Auala anticipated the conflicts and the spirit of disunity the Odendaal plan would cause among the black elites that were already engaging in the process of national unification in their ancestral fatherlands. Auala asked: “All three Lutheran Churches in South West Africa [...] have a joint Seminary at Otjimbingwe. Now I have a fear that your new dispensation of ‘Homeland’ for the non-whites of South West Africa will not promote apartheid between the non-whites of South West Africa. And such,

apartheid between the non-whites of South West Africa will also hinder church co-operation. And what about our theological seminary?" (Ellis1981:132).

Bishop Auala did not only raise his concern out the fear of the unknown future that could be resulted from the creation of the policy of segregations, but he also ensured the Minister about the unpleasant attitude of the non-whites in Namibia toward the policy of the partition developments. Homelands were in views of the blacks the creations of enmity and disunity among the Namibians. "We non-whites people fear that with these new "homelands", we will not be at home with one another in our South West Africa as a whole." He further uncovered the wishes of his people who would have liked to be given a platform to share their views on the Odendaal commission's plan prior the implementation of the policy (Ellis 1981:135).

Equally, Auala singled out a discriminatory case that happened in the ELCSWA. Rev Elifas Eiseb, a Damara speaking person, who fluently could speak Herero language, was appointed by his church board to be the Dean of the Lutheran congregations located in Hereroland. According to Odendaal plan, the Hereroland belongs only to the Herero people. The black populations were not allowed to work or live in a homeland of the different cultural group (Auala 2009:156). On his way to Hereroland, Rev Eiseb was denied entrance into the Hereroland by the South African white immigration official in Namibia, on the ground that he belongs to the Damara group of people. "I will not authorize you to proceed to Okakarara, because your name Eiseb declares that you are a Damara group of people and the Okakarara is a home town for the Herero people only." Eiseb's case is one among many cases that explain how the Odendaal plan has negatively affected the works and unity of the churches in Namibia (Auala 2009:157).

The church in Namibia had been silent on the issue of homelands until the prophetic public statement of Bishop Auala on the Odendaal Commission plan. It called the churches in Namibia to play their prophetic to role in a society that suffered under institutional divisions. It was a call to challenge Christian churches to reacted against the socially, economically, geographically and politically segregation of the people of Namibia.

It was not until the 1970s that the ELCIN was able to issue official statements condemning the apartheid policy. The ELCIN leadership under the whites or foreigners who at the same time enjoyed the privileges of the white race necessitated the churches in Namibia to remain silent and not to condemn the social evils of apartheid. As a result, German missionaries, could not resist because they collaborated with the government. They could not express any discontent. They took the same stand when South Africa seized over the administration. The German missionaries could not resist the apartheid policy because of the fear to lose their mission field (Niitenge 2013:100).

The Finnish missionaries too opted to keep away from political sphere, because most of them were from the pietistic background (c.f. Löytty 1971:56, Munyika 2004:262 -336). For them religion and politics were not to be mixed. Initially, the Finnish missionaries “refused to protest South African policies of apartheid because of their belief in the separation of church and state” (Arnold 2009: 39). Hence, they supported the *status quo*. The Anglican Church was not yet established among the indigenous people (Niitenge 2013:101).

In 1957, during establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (ELCSWA), the Synod of the Rhenish Mission Church (RMC), met with a feeling of superiority by some members of the Rehoboth Basters community. Because of apartheid and racial discrimination, Rehoboth Basters refused to join the new Lutheran Church. They did not want to share membership with other ethnic groups feeling that their special rights and identity as Basters might be lost. Instead they opted to form the “Rhenish Congregation” which is purely for the bastard race only (Niitenge 2013:101).

The white German Lutherans in Namibia did not join ELCSWA also on basis of segregation policy and superiority. In 1926, the German community established its own Synod. In 1960 all the congregations of the white Germany community joined forces and formally established their own elite Church, the “*Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche*” [DELK], the German Evangelical Lutheran Church [GELC] (Nambala 1987: 199; 1994: 130). Therefore, the Lutheran Churches in Namibia from the beginning existed on racial basis. The other reason for white Lutheran church in

Namibia not willing to join ELCSWA was strongly the feelings of the White Germans, who did not wish to associate with blacks and share communion with the non-whites. The German community did not feel equal to the black community and, therefore they decided to remain a white Church (Isaak 2000: 29).

In Namibia context, apartheid is an ideology or a system that was maintained and sustained by Missionary Churches used the Bible and the power of the state through mass media to communicate and to propagate a belief by promoting a social order based on races and divisions (Niitenge 2013:101). Since 1970's when most Namibian Churches were led by the indigenous leaders, where many of them were very young and academically sound, they started to question the apartheid system in the light of gospel. Hence apartheid was declared incompatible with Christ Jesus' gospel of peace and reconciliation. It is an evil system (Hunke 1996:87), an immoral and unacceptable system (Niitenge 2013:101). Theologically, it is a heresy (*Kairos* 1985:6-7). Apartheid stands diametrically opposing the gospel of Christ. Cited in Gurirab (2002:80) Kameeta argues:

God tells us in Jesus Christ he has broken down the wall of separation between himself and us, and between us and our fellow human beings. South African government proclaims and builds the wall of separation which brings about alienation, mistrust and prejudices, fear, hatred and enmity.

Subsequently, the indigenous leaders argued that it is the responsibility of every Christian in Namibia to fight against the discriminatory rules of the South African government in the country. They further argued that the discriminatory rules applied by the South African government in Namibia are not only a political question, but they are the threat to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gurirab 2002:80).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The chapter attempted to describe the origin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), hatched from the Finnish Missionary's hard labours of perseverance and steady focus to a self-propagating and self-reliance church. This chapter highlights the quest for unity in the Lutheran family in Namibia.

The Finnish Mission Society worked tirelessly with full commitments to plant the seeds of Christianity to Aawambo and Kavango which led to bring together the groups and formed a one Christian community: *Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church (ELOC)*. The name of the church accentuates and summarizes the reconciling act of the gospel which has united the then Oshiwambo and the Kavango speaking peoples to become one Christian family irrespective their languages, cultures and traditions. Furthermore, ELOC acknowledged her task as church is to call all nations to be partakers of God's Kingdom regardless tribes, races, languages, cultures. In 1984 therefore ELOC changed her name: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) to accommodate all the Namibians. Moreover, the chapter discussed and highlighted the ways of cooperation ELCIN worked tirelessly to engage her-self as the starting points to overcome the spirit of apartness in mission and that of separate developments in the society. Though ELCIN and ELCRN are the daughter churches from the two different Lutheran Societies of different countries, the political will of not coming to term of unification have the impacts of separate developments. ELCIN-GELC was purely born and grew maintaining the practice of racial discrimination and policy of separation development.

The research acknowledges that the both three Lutheran Churches in Namibia are divided along racial or languages boundaries within a Lutheran tradition in the country. Furthermore, the realities of divisions were supplemented by social-political, economic and ecclesiastical contexts under which the two colonial governments ruled Namibia almost for a century. The search for unity within the Lutheran community has resulted in the formation of UELCSWA, a shaky and shattered federation. The current infant Council of the Lutheran Family in Namibia called: United Church Council of the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) was born in 2007 at Windhoek is the hope of the Lutherans in Namibia toward the road of overcoming the impact of apartheid and racial developments in the society. Within the umbrella of UCC-NELC, the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia are seeking the ways together to the unification of a Lutheran Church in Namibia today.

## Chapter 4

# The ELCIN's engagement with reconciliation

### 4.1 Introduction

Article 4 of the ELCIN's Constitution defines the existence of the church is to preach Christ's ministry of reconciliation. The article requires further the ELCIN to engage constructively in advocating social justice and fostering sustainable community developments (*ELCIN Constitution* 2007:12). In his statement of faith, delivered at Kitwe, Zambia on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1987, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni underlined the role of ELCIN aims to seek peace, justice, reconciliation and the dignity of all in Namibia (Dumeni 1987:1).

It is stated in the previous chapter that the ELCIN is shepherding two mainly groups of Namibian tribes: Aawambo and Kavango. In his Church report of 11<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> December 1978, Bishop Leonard Auala refers to ELCIN as God's Kingdom established for Aawambo and Kavango (*ELCIN Report* 1978:1). Under the sub topic: "The Kingdom of God in Owambo and Kavango," Bishop Auala argues that the ELCIN is a Kingdom of God that was slowly established as a small haven but later she grew to a greater fortress wherein Aawambo and Kavango are assured of their social and spiritual well-beings (*ELCIN Report* 1978:1-2). The Church report indicated that the ELCIN's reconciliatory role was only confined within two mainly groups of tribes who were traditionally, culturally and customary apartness as a result of tribalism and nationality. ELOC, the former name of the ELCIN is a witness to the religious organization established based on tribal lines. Miettinen (2005:231) maintains that before the Christianization, Aawambo were living in a state of considerable isolation from other communities that were different from theirs. Subsequently, he debated further that their cultures, social system and daily lives remained unaffected by the outside influences. He argues that it is be attested to the Kavango community as well (Miettinen 2005:231).

As late as 1950's, the tribal lines necessitated and influenced the ELCIN's administrative works and systems. In line with Article 3 (b) of the ELCIN Constitution, the church demarcated itself in four zones known as the ELOC *Circuits* namely: *Kavango, Kwanyama, Ndonga and Western* (ELCIN Report 1978:8). The purpose of the church demarcation in four zones was to bring down the service close to the church members (ELCIN Report 1973:2; Pentikainen 1974:1). While the spirit of article 3 (b) serves to help the church to achieve its purpose, the mode of demarcation remains bearing the seed of segregation. Consequently, it can be argued that the circuits were delineated based on cultural backgrounds of the inhabitations, rather than promoting the integration of the members of the church.

In the same vain, Apollos Kaulinge, an ELCIN pastor and the Dean of Oukwanyama Circuit, argues in his deanery report of 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> March 1992 that the circuits of ELCIN are operating alongside tribal lines. Kaulinge further affirmed that the kind of establishment cultivated the spirit of apartness between the circuit members (Kaulinge 1992:1). He therefore gave a directive to the church members to refrain from the spirit of tribalism and resort to the spirit of unity (Kaulinge 1992: 5, 8).

Double standards among ELCIN members were another great concern to the church leaderships. The cultures and traditions of the Aawambo and Kavango were so strong and influential in the life of ELCIN members until early 1970. A number of Christians lived their life guided by both Christian and traditional ways of life. In his speech delivered to the Western Circuit annual meeting of 12-14 July 1962, Johannes Shifiona, an ELCIN pastor argues that the honour and fear of heathenism are the blasphemy for God. He sturdily believed that a Christian who honours and fears heathenism is no longer worthy to be called a member of the church. Shifiona further advised the Christians to draw lines between Christian life and traditional way of life. "There should be a line drawn between Christianity and heathenism," he argued (*Western Circuit* 12 -14 July 1962:3). Double standards were for the Church leaders, of which the majority were Finnish missionaries, a thorn in the flesh in the sense that Article 75 of ELOC Constitution (by then, now is Article 58 of *ELCIN Constitution*) condemns it as unchristian behaviour and refers to the practice as syncretism (*ELCIN Constitution* 1958:39; *ELCIN Constitution* 2007:67). The questions therefore remain standing: Should the Church leadership strictly apply the

Article 75 in such situation? If that is the case, how should the Church leadership apply it without hurting the family members of “the backsliders”? (*Western Circuit* 12 -14 July 1962:3). Per a recommendation from the Western Circuit Annual meeting of July 1962, the Church leadership appointed an ad hoc committee to do a study on double standards with special reference to Christian festivals. The work of the Committee was to find the reasons why the Christians do accommodate African traditions when celebrating Christian festivals. The Church leadership instructed the Committee to present its findings before the next Annual meeting in 1963 (*Western Circuit* 14 -14 July 1962:3). In the face of a prevalent critical situation, the Church opts for the excommunication model. The Church leaders argued that excommunication was the only Christian way to heal the society affected by heathenism.

The issue of women’s status in the church was also a contentious issue in ELCIN. In term of membership women is in the majority in the church (*ELCIN Statistic 2012 & 2011*). Since the inception of the ELCIN women actively and in a great number participated in the worship services and prayer meetings (*ELCIN Report 1988-1991:19*). In *ELCIN Combined Report 1979 – 1995*, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni argues praised the women of ELCIN for faithful service rendered to the church (*ELCIN Report 1979 -1995:25*). However, despite their activeness and skills women were not been considered in terms of holding executive positions in the ELCIN.

The *ELCIN Women Report* of 26-28 August 1988 commended the coherent faithfulness of the women in executing their cardinal roles in the church and in their respective communities. It asserted that women are taking full participation in the church activities yet they are hardly taking part in high decision making bodies (*ELCIN Women Report 1988:4*). The *Report* went further to encourage the women in the ELCIN to challenge the human traditions and values that are oppressing the women in the society as well within the church structure. It advised them to know their inalienable right and to strive for social justice, peace and reconciliation. The *Report* presented a case of structural oppression and hard life for the women in the church and the society with a view to challenge the ELCIN’s role for the ministry of reconciliation (*ELCIN Women Report 1988:5*).

The ELCIN resolved on the 12th Synod to divide the church into three Dioceses (ELCIN Synod Minutes 1984:29; Ngipandulua 1986:1). Consequently, the ELCIN leadership was given six years to bring the conflict within the church to a halt amicably. The era of crisis challenged the church authority to work for justice and peace in reconciling the church members who were offended by the resolutions of the concerned Synod (*ELCIN Synod* resolution 110/84 1991:10-11). This chapter will therefore refer to the synodical records, minutes, and Church newspapers articles of the ELCIN on reconciliation, justice and peace in the light of: The memorandum of 1964. The Open Letter of 1971, Epistle to the Namibians of 1974, The Dilemma of ELCIN Women, The plight for Women ordination, Ngipandulua's Letter of appeal 1985, Kwanyama Circuit Z proposal 1986 and Appointment and replacement of Church workers in ELCIN

## **4.2 ELCIN's early modes of engagement in the reconciliation**

### **4.2.1 Excommunication an iron gate for reconciliation**

Before 1970's, ELCIN leadership faced a problem of double standards amongst members of ELCIN. In the Synod of 1977, Bishop Auala referred to it: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church Owambo-Kavango is a largest Church in numbers but very shallow in spirituality" (12<sup>th</sup> Synod 1977:1). Elia Niinkoti, an ELCIN pastor, argued that the quality of the Church is not being measured on quantity of names crafted in the registration book, but it is assessed on the spiritual growth of the Church members (12<sup>th</sup> Synod 1977:1-2). In *Omukwetu ELCIN Newspaper* of September 1962, Leonard Michael, an ELCIN member of Ohalushu argues that the period before 1970's was an interval where a number of the Church members turned to their old way of life. His premise is that the Christians who turned into heathen way of life or praxis become enemies of their fellow Christian (*Omukwetu* No 9, September 1962:12). "They were no longer part of the Christian fellowship, they become the anti-norms," he argues. He further cautions his fellow Christians to act as peaceful tools in reconciling and calling them to return to the Church and become faithful members of the church (*Omukwetu* 1962:12).

It can be argued that Michael's words of admonish called the Church leaders to resort to the suitable ways for a real peace justice and reconciliation among the

ELCIN members. In the same way, Axel A Nambahu, an ELCIN member from Oranjemund, argues that a number of Church members failed to live a life in accordance with the ministry of reconciliation. “Though Aawambo have now become Christians and Church going members, their behaviours reveal opposite,” he argued. “The spirit of apostasy was the root cause of the double life because the Christians who practiced such life were not totally denouncing their old ways of living” (*Omukwetu* No 9, September 1962:12). Nambahu strongly believed that the only way to overcome the life of double standard is simply to return to Christ and to become His tools of peace for the church and the society. He maintained:

“They failed to serve God as they ought. They failed to cling on the fellowship, which Christ established through his own blood that shed at Calvary. Hence, together we should work for the ministry of reconciliation that Christ continuously has entrusted His church to fulfil. Only if we believe and confess that in Christ we are reconciled with God, could be able to live in peace with others; and work toward a genuine reconciliation and peacefully could develop our church and society” (*Omukwetu*, No 9, September 1962:12)

Nambahu’s viewpoint received slight attention from the church leaders. The church leaders based on Article 75 of the *ELOC Constitution* maintains that excommunication was on one hand a means to retain the faithful Christians and on other hand, it was serves to caution the back sliders about the penitential courses. Excommunication therefore was a legal tool for justice in maintaining the order in the church (*ELOC Constitution* 1958:75).

The ELCIN Church Council of 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> February 1967 held at Oniipa addressed the issue of double standards in the church. The item from the Olukonda Parish Council in the Ondonga Circuit was a referral for final action. Olukonda Parish Council’s letter of reference states that seven young women have violated the peace of the Christian community at Olukonda. They contracted marriages according to the customary “apart” (*ELCIN Church Council* 1967:19). In its resolution 19/67, the Church Council endorses the recommendation from Olukonda to excommunicate the seven young females from the church (*ELCIN Church Council* 1967:19).

On 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> August 1967 ELCIN Church Council deliberated on the similar issue which occurred at Tsandi Parish in the Western Circuit. The Tsandi Parish requested the Church Council to excommunicate 13 young women from the church. It argued that the 13 young women violated the peace within the Christian fellowship when they entered into the matrimonial life in accordance with the customary initiation rites. The Tsandi Parish requested the Church Council to excommunicate other four adult women on the ground of the consent they had granted to their young daughters to be married in accordance with traditional marriage rites (*ELCIN Church Council* 1967:17).

In her well-known chant, she composed after Tsandi Parish Council wrongfully excommunicated her, and later a case rectified, Gertrud Taapopi argues: “Oshike nda ninga megongalo. Mongeleka nda tidhwa mo. Tanga Jesus, Omuwa. Tanga Jesus Omuwa gwoye. Tanga Jesus egameno.” [What have I done in my parish to deserve the crucial excommunication? I thank Jesus who stands aside and secure my life.] Taapopi premise is that the Parish and Church Councils are subjected to human errors in their resolution, but God never errs. God’s mercy is far beyond human retribution. Taapopi further acknowledged God’s power that set her free from the power of human retribution. Hence, Jesus’ love and power are above the human powers (*ELCIN Church Council* 1970: 3, 24).

#### **4.2.2 ELCIN and women in the leadership**

At the second ELOC Synod convened at Engela on 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 1958 only 10 women out of 126 delegates were part of the Assembly which is the highest decision making body in ELOC (*ELOC Synod* 1958:25 – 28). The following five Finns and five Namibians were the participants: Helena Johannes (Onayena), Selma Amutana (Oniipa), Rosalia Haujave (Endola), Rakkell Hamutumua (Ongenga), Lea Petrus (Ongenga), Helmi Haapanen (Finn), Sylvi Kyllönen (Finn), Liina Lindström (Finn), Anna-Liisa Sorsa (Finn) and Annikki Turtinen (Finn) (*ELCIN Synod* 1958’s Appendix No 1).

Women in the ELCIN have been denied full participation in the highest decision-making body right from the beginning of the constituting of the church. Women were

not represented in the Constituency Assemblies of the Church, the first ELOC Synod of 1954 and the second ELOC Synod of 1958, which mainly discussed, amended and passed articles and resolutions that are now *ELOC Constitution (ELOC Synod 1958:25 – 29, 32, 34, 41 - 45)*. The ELCIN inherited the tradition to put women down from Martin Rautanen (Peltola 2002: 276).

At the beginning of his missionary works, Rautanen did not allow his fellow Finnish women missionaries to attend the Finnish Brothers' Meetings in Owambo on basis of human made by-rules that were requiring the women to submit to any paternalistic authority (c.f. Peltola 2002:280, Shuuya 1976:6; Shomagwe 1988:11). In his letter addressed to Jooseppi Mustakallio, a Director of Finnish Mission Society in Finland 1903, Martin Rautanen argues that Finnish women particularly single female missionaries should not be recommended for the mission work in Africa. His premise was that the African men could deceive them to indulge into unethical behaviours (Peltola 2002:278 -279). Rautanen therefore, concluded that Finnish women who want to become missionaries were not welcomed to work for the mission field in Owambo and Kavango (Peltola 2005:280). Later however, Rautanen argued differently. He believed that a Finnish woman worker can be allowed to “work as a teacher, nurse and a handiwork instructress ... in the mission field in Africa”, provided she was prepared to be “humble and submits herself to the rules” (Peltola 2002:271).

Under the indigenous leadership of Bishop Leonard Auala, ELCIN acknowledged the role women were playing in the church and society. ELCIN approved to prepare and to train the women holistically for future leadership in the church. In the late 1960's ELCIN encouraged Maria Amakali, the first Owambo female teacher to pursue her Bachelor Degree in Education at the Fort Hare University in South Africa (*ELCIN Church Council* 1967: 3).

In the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> April 1968 ELCIN leadership suggested to establish the Engela Private School for the blind as part of the Church's social responsibility among the disabled people in the society. It proposed to send two female teachers: Ms. Kristofina Kantu and Ms. Saara Nehale for further study at Effat Blind School, Umthata, Transkei. The leadership further argued that upon the completion of their

studies, they should engage in the teaching for the Church's Private School for the blind at Engela (*ELCIN Church Council* 1968: 26; 23). Similarly, it recommended Liina Mpanda for a short course program to study children literatures in Johannesburg, South Africa (*ELCIN Church Council* 1968:13). While Otilia Kaholongo for further study on diaconal works in Helsinki, Finland (*ELCIN Church Council* 1968:20).

In her letter of 1967 addressed to the Church Council of 28<sup>th</sup> August 1967, Liina Mpanda on behalf of ELCIN women expressed their profound gratitude to the Church Council. Because of the positive development that was arising in the Church by sending the women to attend the conferences locally and internationally. Mpanda states that the ELCIN women who have exposed to the local and international conferences gained enormously wisdoms and skills. Hence, they were utilizing it for the women uplift in the Church and the society accordingly (*ELCIN Church Council* 1967:6). Mpanda further indicates that her participation in the fourth Lutheran World Federation Assembly from 30<sup>th</sup> July 30 to 11<sup>th</sup> August 1963 in Helsinki, Finland as well her partaking in the Students' Christian Movement Conference in July 1967 at Graham's Town, South Africa; was an unmeasurable blessing to the church and society (*ELCIN Church Council* 28 August 1967:6).

The women in the ELCIN therefore, believed and trusted that they have a great role to play in the church as well in the society. The participations of women in the international conferences brought uncountable blessings to the ELCIN. The Okahao teachers' annual meeting of 1967 held at Okahao resolved to establish an association called: *Owambo Female Teachers' Association (OFTA)*. OFTA mainly aimed to support ELCIN's missionary activities in Angola. It also aimed to transform the life of the women in the church and society (*ELCIN Church Council* 30 March 1967:7). To equip the OFTA the Church Council approved that Wilhemina Amweelo-Shikomba, a member of OFTA and a theologian, should represent the ELCIN women at the Women's Conference organized by the Lutheran World Federation, at Geneva, Switzerland on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> January 1984 (*ELCIN Church Council* 1983:545). A female teacher, Hilja Shivute represented ELCIN to the LWF 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Budapest, Hungary on July 22 – August 5, 1984 (*ELCIN Church Council* 14 – 15 March 1984:99).

Subsequently, in the Women Convention that took place at Ongwediva, Northern Namibia, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1989, Wilhelmina Amweelo–Shikomba strongly challenged her fellow women in the ELCIN to stand up for their inalienable duties in the church. She argues that God has also called the women in the ELCIN to serve their society. “The women too have been entrusted with the responsibility of bringing about peace, forgiveness and reconciliation”, she argued (*Women Desk* 1989:1). Amweelo - Shikomba further appealed to the women in ELCIN to work in partnership with their fellow counterpart in CCN. Arguing differently, Eva Nangula Kathindi, a coordinator of Women Desk ensured the ELCIN Women of the assistance the Desk of Council of Church in Namibia (CCN) could offer when approached for advocacy and wisdoms. “All the Women in Namibia should know that the CCN Women Desk is an office responsible for the women affairs of all member Churches, and all the women should own such Desk,” she argued. Kathindi further explained that the aim of the Women’s Desk is to work for women emancipation. She emphasized that it will equip all member churches with necessary skills on how the member churches should uplift and developed the role of women in their churches (*ELCIN Women Desk* 1989:2-3).

The ELCIN as a member church of the CCN therefore worked to empower women gradually. The ELCIN Church Council argued that one way to empower women was to delegate some of the theologians to lead the parishes. It assigned therefore, the two females theologians, Aune Shilongo-Hamunyela to shepherd the Ongenga Lutheran Parish and Aino Kapewangolo to head Arandis Lutheran Parish (c.f. *ELCIN Church Council* 25-26 March 1986:132; *ELCIN Church Council* 14 – 15 March 1984:105). The Annual Report of Ongenga Parish for 1986 commended the Church Council for the upliftment of women in the ELCIN (*ELCIN Church Council* 25 -26 March 1986:132).

The church leaders maintained that the students are the future leaders of the church and that they should therefore be the prior target. As a result, theologian Sylvia Shiwa Heita was assigned to supervise the spiritual life of the students at Eengedjo Secondary School., whilst theologian Eeva Liisa Amadhila -Shitundeni was assigned to lead the Sunday school children in ELCIN and a theologian Hilma Mpingana Tshilongo–Pauly assigned to direct the Office of Christian Education in ELCIN

(*ELCIN Report* 1988:12). Helena Muteka was responsible for the supervision of the Growing Group in ELCIN, the post Hilja Shivute held before the Church Council assigned her to engage on research program for the Historical development of women in ELCIN (*ELCIN Church Council* 26- 28 September 1984:391).

The ELCIN Church Council was in favour of the establishment of a Women Desk in the ELCIN to supervise the women affairs. It delegated theologian Wilhelmina Amweelo-Shikomba to run the Women League in the ELCIN and Otilia Kaholongo to oversee the diaconal works among the deacons of the ELCIN (c.f. *ELCIN Report* 1976:7; *ELCIN Church Council* 16- 17 July 1968: 20; *ELCIN Report* 1988:13). The *ELCIN Report* of 1976 states that the ministry among the women was still at the infant stage but it was making a tremendous progress in ELCIN (*ELCIN Report* 1976:7). A decade later the ELCIN took note that the works among ELCIN women were progressing (*ELCIN Church Council* 26 -28 May 1982:210). The women even developed a cordial co-operation with the other two sister Lutheran Churches in Namibia (*ELCIN Report* 1988:13). The three Lutheran Churches were faithfully working together to make a vision of one Lutheran church in Namibia become a real in the near future (*ELCIN Report* 1988:13).

In the *ELCIN Church Report* of 1981 – 1984, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni highlighted it that until then the Church has failed to produce any single woman to the membership of Church Council. Hence, he requested the 12<sup>th</sup> ELOC Synod to consider a woman in the membership of the Church Council of ELCIN. Bishop Dumeni requested:

“Sigo onena ELOK ina hogololela omukiintu omuvalelwa mo mElelongeleki. Ondi inekela otashi vulika Oshigongingeleki shika otashi ka hogolola omukiintu omuvalelwamo gwotango mehistotoli lyOngeleki. Onawa ngele aakiintu otaa pewa uuthemba miilongayakulo mOngeleki, moka inaa ya manga, uuna pwa talika taa shi vulu (*ELCIN Report* 1981 - 1984: 10). [Until now, ELOK did not elect any single woman into the membership of the Church Council. It is my sincere hope that this Synod could elect the woman to become a very first woman in the history of the church registering into the membership of the Church Council. It is right to allow women share their leadership skills in the decision-making body wherein they so far do not part take.] (Translation mine).

The 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod of October 1991 took note of the request of Bishop Dumeni which he made almost a decade ago that the Synod should elect the women into the membership of the Church Council (*ELCIN Report 1981 – 1984:10*). It argued that God calls men and women alike into the service of the Church. Hence, the Synod resolved that women also should elect into the various high posts within the ELCIN structures (*ELCIN Synod 1991:27, 57*). The 14<sup>th</sup> Synod further therefore, resolved to elect Petrina Shiimi, her deputy Karolina Kautondokwa and Rosaria Nghidinwa into the membership of ELCIN Church Council. They were the first women in the history of ELCIN members of the Church Council. The deputy of Rosaria Nghidinwa was a male (*ELCIN Synod 1991:28, 5 9*).

#### **4.2.3 ELCIN and the plight for women ordination**

The question of women ordination has been on the ELCIN's agenda since 1968 (Shuuya 1976:2). It became important to address the issue of the ordination of women duly because the ELCIN Church Council sent two females, Wilhelmina Amweelo and Hilma Mpingana Tshilongo, to study theology at Paulinum Lutheran Seminary, at Otjimbingwe during the late 60s (*ELCIN Church Council 1-2Feb 1968:6; Shuuya 1976:2*). The question became more urgent when the two female theologians completed their theological studies. In his article: *How do the ELCIN members view the women ordination?* Rev Kristof Shuuya argues that the issue of women ordination is not only an ELCIN subject of concern, it is a global matter, which sometimes misunderstood and misinterpreted by women and men in various churches (Shuuya 1976:1). He acknowledged that the topic of women ordination has split the ELCIN into two schools of thoughts. One school of thought claimed that female theologians should not be allowed to preach from the pulpit. While the other groups argued that the pulpit should remain open for women theologians (Shuuya 1976:4-5).

In her presentation: *Contributions of Laity to the Theological Education and the Roles of Women in the Theology from the Perspective of a Namibia Lutheran women*, Selma Shejvali (2013:106), a former teacher and ELCIN active member, argues that during church meetings, synods, seminars and conferences, the debates

on women ordination were not given priority or urgency. She claims that debates concentrated on irrelevant excuses. Many irrelevant excuses were given or expressed:

*Women have many heavy responsibilities in their homes. There is no need to add that of leading congregations or church offices. Women experience difficulties in their marriages or families, they might carry these burdens to the congregations and such could disturb their work. Women pastors will not be able to be sent to congregation whenever the need might be, especially if their husbands are lay people. What will the pregnant women pastor look like on the altar? What about if the morning sickness or labour starts there?* (Shejvali 2013:106).

The ELCIN's Extraordinary Synod of 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 1977 at Engela deliberated further the possibility to ordain the women into the priesthood of the church.

The Synod affirmed that the women ordination is theological justifiable and that God calls both men and women (*ELCIN Synod 1977:16*). Christ gave both women and men the mandate to equally participate in the mission of God. The ordination of both women and men is a proof of the fact that both genders have equal responsibility to proclaim the message of salvation (Shejvali 2013:106). However, regardless the theological justification, the Synod objected, based on Article 79 (a) of *the Constitution of ELCIN* which stipulated that only a man aged 24 and above to be profitable for ordination, against the ordination of women (*ELCIN Synod 1977:19, 40, 53*). As a result, the Church Council referred Article 79 (a) of the Constitution and the issue of women ordination for further deliberation and decision to the next Synod (*ELCIN Synod 1977:16*).

There was no a justification for the Synod to defer Article 79 (b) to a next Synod. According to article XXIV.1 of the ELCIN Constitution the power to change anything from this Constitution; to amend or to repeal any law or regulation is invested in the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) (*Constitution 1959:9; 1978:16; 2007:29*). Article XXIV.3 of ELCIN Constitution directs further, "This article provides an opportunity to the Synod in critical moment to condone even any resolution, and instead to pass an urgent bill when deemed necessary. Such bill

should be tabled twice to gain a 2/3 majority in each session of sitting Synod to become an Act.” (*ELCIN Constitution* 1988:26; 2007:29).

Meanwhile, the ELCIN pastors discussed further the question of the ordination of women at their ELCIN Pastoral Convention (EPC) held on 14<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 1985 at Ongwediva. They based their arguments on the proposals of the seventh Lutheran World Federation Assembly at Budapest, on July 22 – August 5, 1984, that suggested to its member churches to allow women to participate fully in the decision-making bodies and to ordain women (*ELCIN Pastoral Convention* 1985:38, 79). A group of pastors argued that the ELCIN should make a thoroughly baseline study to gain the overviews of the Church members regarding the women ordination. They believed that the findings would guide the highest decision making body to make an informed decision.

The other group of pastors argued that God gave different gifts to all Church members for the benefit of the Church of Christ. They further argued that God is calling both men and women into the pastoral ministry of the Church (*ELCIN Pastoral Convention* 1985:38, 80). Subsequently, the Convention agreed that the issue of women ordination in ELCIN was not a theological problem, but a constitutional matter. Hence, ELCIN pastors suggested that an act of amendment must resolve the subject of women ordination (*ELCIN Pastoral Convention* 1985: 38, 81). The Pastors’ Convention proposed:

“Oshigongi shaasita sho sha kundathana natango eyapulo lyaakiintu, nosha dhimbulula kutya okwaa yapulwa kwawo, eimbo lyawo oli li momauthompango, otashi popile momauthompango mu e gululilwe ompito ndjoka, notashi indile Oshigongingeleki shi longekidhile ompito yonkundathana ndjoka.” (*ELCIN Pastoral Convention* 1985:39, 82) [When the issue of women ordination was further discussed in the Pastors’ Convention, it was felt that there is no any provision in the Article 79 (b) of ELCIN Constitution which allows women ordination. The Convention is therefore recommending the relevant highest decision making body of the Church to amend Article 79 (b) of the Constitution, to enhance the women ordination. Henceforth, the Convention deferred the issue of women ordination to the Synod.] (translation mine).

In her letter of September 30, 1988 to the Chairperson of ELCIN Women Board, Hilma Mpingana Tshilongo-Pauly, a theologian and the Secretary for Christian Education in ELCIN suggested that the women in ELCIN; from grass root level to the national Church level should discuss the issue of women ordination in their conferences extensively (Tshilongo-Pauly 1988:1). Tshilongo–Pauly argued that the only way to help women understand the necessity of women ordination was to create platform of awareness for the women to discuss openly and to share their ideas among themselves (Tshilongo-Pauly 1988:2).

ELCIN Women Board (EWB) meeting of 27 October 1988 gathered at Oniipa, acknowledged the content of Hilma Mpingana Tshilongo – Pauly’s theory on awareness for women ordination in ELCIN. However, it suggested that ELCIN Church Council should established a special commission, entrusted with a special task to visit ELCIN parishes, and meet the church members to educate and create awareness on the meaning and purpose of women ordination. The Board further argued that both women and men were in need of adequate information on why women ordination in ELCIN (*ELCIN Women Board* November 27, 1988:2, 27). Similarly, Vilho Kaulinge, a senior pastor, at the ELCIN Pastoral Conference of Kwanyama Circuit (EPKC) on 17-19 May 1988 that gathered at Engela, argued that both men and women are God’s servants, and God can use both of them in his service. He suggested that ELCIN should ordain women because there is a theological justification; in Christ, there are no men and women but both are God’s servants (*ELCIN Pastoral Conference of Kwanyama Circuit* 1988:8, 15). The Kwanyama Pastoral conference resolved to send the topic of women ordination to the parishes’ level to discuss it further before the highest decision-making bodies take the final actions on the matter (*ELCIN Pastoral Conference of Kwanyama Circuit* 1988:8, 15).

In view of her theory, Hilma Mpingana Tshilongo-Pauly convened female theologians in ELCIN to meet at Ongwediva on 11 -13 February 1991. The Female Theologians’ Conference for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (EFTC) expressed their gratitude in having such ever conference after twenty years since their ministry in the Church (*EFTC* 11 – 13 February 1991:1). They argued that the conference was a

sign of God's Kairos. It is God's Kairos to redeem the hours for ELCIN to acknowledge the female theologians as equal co-workers in God's vineyard (*EFTC* 11 – 13 February 1991:1) Aino Kapewangolo, an ELCIN theologian argues:

We female theologians in ELCIN are entrusted by God to preach the gospel of reconciliation. ELCIN's procedures and policies that seem to close for us the door to serve God's people as ordained ministers should not discourage us. It is so essential for us to know that God has called us into this ministry to serve God's people faithfully. More importantly, we should know that God's love and grace is shown to all mankind equally, to both men and women (*EFTC* 1991:1). (Translation mine).

The female theologians further raised their grievances, on ELCIN's procedures and policies that discriminate and categorize the Church workers on basis of sexism: "okotongotongo hoka taka tongolola omuntu kokashike ko okantu ota ka yematelwa." "To discriminate a person on basis of sexism is unchristian and should be condemned at all cost," they argued (*EFTC* 11 -13 Feb 1991:2). The female theologians concluded the conference recommending ELCIN leadership the following:

1. ELCIN leadership in conjunction with other leaders of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia to start a new beginning on the question of the Lutheran unity seriously.
2. ELCIN leadership may suggest a join-conference for the female theologians of the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia as one of the means to encourage and to strengthen the Lutheran unity.
3. ELCIN may consider the national policy of reconciliation seriously and where possible to mainstream such policy in all the ELCIN programs
4. ELCIN should amend an Article 79 (a) of the Church Constitution to allow women to be ordained into the pastoral ministry of the church.

However, ELCIN female theologians argued that they will all the times remaining ready to join their counterpart men in the pastoral ministry of the Church (*EFTC*: 11 -13 Feb 1991:6)

The fifteenth ELCIN Synod met at Ongwediva on 1 – 5 October 1991, finally closed the topic of women ordination in ELCIN. The Synod argued to amend an Article 79 (a) of the constitution to allow women ordination in ELCIN. It phrased and amended an Article 79 (a) thus. “Any one to be ordained into the pastoral ministry of the church should be a person who reaches the age of 24 and above” (*ELCIN Synod* 1991 27, 57). (Translation mine). It further acknowledged that women too are the images of God having full right, abilities and responsibilities to share their gifts in the church and the society. Hence, it resolved to ordain women who received the theological training and feeling been called into the pastoral ministry of the church (*ELCIN Synod* 1991:27, 57). The amendment of Article 79 (a) of the *ELCIN Constitution* enhanced the women ordination in ELCIN. 17<sup>th</sup> May 1992 is a historical day in ELCIN. It was on May 17,1992 that 4 female theologians: Aune Shilongo – Hamunyela, Aino Kapewangolo, Magdalena Ya-Shalongo and Wilhelmina Mpingana Amweelo - Shikomba were ordained into the pastoral ministry of the church (*ELCIN Report* 1979 -1995:43; *ELCIN Church Council* May 1992:1, *ELCIN Report* 1979 – 1995:43).

#### **4.3 The Open Letter of 1971**

The *Open Letter of 1971* (See Addendum 1) is a joint memorandum written by two Church Boards of the two Lutheran Churches in Namibia: The Evangelical Lutheran Owambo - Kavango Church and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa. It was written for two purposes. Firstly, to welcome the International Court of Justice’s decision that declared South African government in Namibia to be illegal and should withdraw its administration straight away. Secondly to give a collectively response to the representatives of South African rule in Namibia on their question seeking the individual reaction of the Church leaders regarding the Court’s judgement. Hence, to answer the South African representatives in Namibia, the Church leaders addressed their memorandum to the Prime Minister Balthazar John Vorster on June 30, 1971 (*Open Letter* 1971:1). In first instance, the Church leaders argued that the letter is the response of the Church boards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa and the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church that represented the majority of the Namibian indigenous population (*Open Letter* 1971:1).

The Church leaders put it straits forward that the Namibians believed that South African government in Namibia total failed to develop Namibia and she failed too to treat the Namibian people with full dignity and respect. “We believe that South Africa in its attempt to develop South West Africa has failed to take cognizance of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (1948)* with respect to the non-white population,” they argued (*Open Letter of 1971:1*). In the Letter, the Church leaders totally rejected South African government’s claim that its race policy in Namibia is to promote and preserves the life and freedom of the population. On contrary, they argued that under such policy, the non-white population was experiencing intimidations and sufferings in their daily life. The people are not free and the treatment they received was inhumanly (*Open Letter of 1971:1*)

The Church leaders affirmed the Namibian people’s voice of unit and nationalism. “We cannot do otherwise than regard South – West Africa with all its racial groups, as a unit,” they further argued (*Open Letter of 1971:1*). The leaders maintaining that under the police of segregations, people were denied the right of freedom of movement. The people in Namibia were restrictedly allowed to move within the segregated boundaries stipulated by the policy of Odendaal. “People are not free to express or publish their thought or opinion openly. Many experience humiliating espionage and intimidation, which has as its goal that a public and accepted opinion must be expressed.” The Church leaders remarked (*Open Letter of 1971:1*). The Church leaders continued to argue that the implementation of the South African segregation policy in Namibia, make it more difficult for the indigenous political parties to work together and they do not have the rights to vote in the country of their own. The Church leaders requested the South African government in Namibia to allow the indigenous people the right to the voting process regarding the political affairs. They further demanded the abolishment of the contract labour system that was causing unhealthy families relationships and divorces because of the prohibition of a person from living where he works and not allowed to take his spouse to the work places (*Open Letter of 1971:2*). Lastly, the Church leaders strongly demanded South African government to obey the Internal Court of Justice and should seek a peaceful solution in bringing about peace, justice and reconciliation and total independence for Namibian nation (*Open Letter of 1971:2*).

#### 4.4 The Epistles to the Namibians 1971 & 1974

On June 30<sup>th</sup> 1971, the same day the Church Leaders of the two black Lutheran Churches wrote also the Open Letter to South African Prime Minister Balthazar John Vorster, they also wrote the *Epistle to the Namibians* (See Addendum 2). The Church leaders firstly wished the Namibians the peace of God to guide their lives and bind them together during the time of sufferings and racial discriminations. They argued that it is their sole responsibility to direct the words of leadership and guidance to their congregations in the time of difficulties and oppressions (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:1). The leaders of the two Lutheran Churches further argued that their words of leadership and guidance are holistic. Their words focused to the future of the Country itself and to the future of different Namibians inhabitants as a whole (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:1).

The church leaders felt motivated by the International Court of Justice of the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1971 at Hague that pronounced South African rule in Namibia being illegally. Hence, they felt that the Churches in Namibia should no longer remain silent when the international communities are standing alongside with them in fighting against injustice and racial discriminations. The leaders regarded the judgement of the International Court as God's answer to the prayers of the Namibian people as it involves the hope of freedom and recognition of personal dignity (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:1).

Encouraged then by the hopes of freedom and human dignity, the Church leaders affirmed the judgement entails the message of true peace. The peace that does not allow people to hate each other, as it is case of the teaching of separate development in Namibia under the policy of segregations. "We observe that our people are caught up with fear and that the hate between people is increasing, especially between white and non-white. In our opinion this fatal development is caused and upheld by the policy of apartheid", they argued (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:1). The church leaders further argued that there is a false impression arisen from the South African authority when maintaining that the peace reigns in Namibia. They maintained that such peace is retaining by forceful measures only. The church leaders acknowledged that there is no freedom of movement between various groups of people in Namibia because of the application of segregation laws and this

hindering the Christians from different groups to freely gathering together to listen the word of God. “The application of the Group area s’ Laws, the activities of the Church are severely restricted and the unity of various races of the Church curtailed. Individual minister of the Gospel and Christians are filled with fear and distrust. They are also sometimes hindered in their evangelizing by the refusal of permits.” (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:1).

The epistle to the Namibians further ensures the members of congregations that the true development of the Namibians can be seen only when Christians take a lead to live in unity and fraternity between the races. It states that such living should be the lasting goal for further and future development. The Epistle further argues that the Government’s homeland policy creates division between races and leads the country not to freedom but rather to isolate each racial group and denies the chance to take a proper part in the development of Namibia (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:2). Lastly, the Epistle appeals to the Christians in Namibia to maintain peace and peaceful disposition to continue seeking a harmonious living with different racial groups; to be peace builders; to stand for the truth and for the better future of all notwithstanding race even it involves them to suffer the consequences. They request the Christians to continue praying for all authorities that they may take recognizance of the interests of Namibia and its people (*Epistle to the Namibians* 1971:2).

Beside the memorandum to the South Africa’s representative in South West African (Namibia), the two Lutheran Churches in Namibia (ELC and ELOC) wrote a *Pastoral Letter* to their parishes, requesting their members to maintain peace and unity. In the midst of racial separation, the Churches appealed to their members to enjoy the spirit of fellowship in which Christ Jesus has called them to glorify God (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:1). The letter argued that in Christ Jesus, members of the Churches are one flock that should obey to the voice of their Lord and their Good Shepherd. It further argued that they are not a flock by the human power but through the grace of Christ who reconciled the human beings with God (*Pastoral Letter* 1974: 1). The letter acknowledged the prevalent situation of the day that was dominated by hatred because political ideologies that enabled people of different groups to hate each other. It recognized that the spirit of hatred has torn apart families (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:1). The Pastoral Letter therefore, called the churches members to pursuit

peace and to work for the love of the enemies and, where possible to live in peace with all people (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:1).

The letter ensured the church members that the church leaders have written a memorandum to the South African government demanding the South African authority in Namibia to stop to remove by force the indigenous people to the new settlement against their will. "We are in opinion that peace and tranquillity of this country is not maintained through racial discrimination and policy of segregations based on groups of people, the letter argued (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:1). The church leaders kindly requested their church members to practice tolerance, respect for others and the mutual understanding. They further requested the Christians to get rid of prejudice over the other group of peoples because such behaviour was deemed unchristian (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:1). In the Pastoral Letter, the church leaders exhorted their members to know that they are parts of God's flock. They are a reconciled community that God established through the blood of Christ Jesus. The church leaders therefore strongly warned their members not to allow the spirit of enmities and hatred to control their lives (*Pastoral Letter* 1974:2). They concluded the pastoral message calling their members to live their life according to St Paul's exhortations:

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you received. Be humble and gentle keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. ... You were called to one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and the Father of all, who is over all and through all in all (Ephesians 4:1 – 6).

Shortly after the two black Lutheran Churches' memorandum to their parishes, the Church leaders of the four Churches in the Northern Namibia, hereafter referred to as Churches in Owambo (CO), wrote the join memorandum. On 27 June 1974, they wrote a memorandum to the Administrator General (AG), a representative of South African government in Owambo. The Churches are: Evangelical Lutheran Church Owambo-Kavango, Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church and Baptist Church. The memorandum was an answer to the Administrative General's question: why do the Namibians leave the country into exiles? (*Churches in Owambo*1974: 1).

In their memorandum, the church leaders expressed their gratitude to the Administrator General for the sound relationship between the churches and the government and that he arranged the meeting between churches and government. They requested the Administrator General to ensure the deliberations that scheduled on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1974 and 6<sup>th</sup> August 1974 between the churches and government be conducted not in the spirit of hatred or prejudices but be rather supervised in a spirit that bears peaceful and fruitful results (*Churches in Owambo* 1974:1).

The church leaders also uttered their surprise to the government to call the churches to a political negotiation to which the government declined before when the churches requested the kind of meeting with the government. The church leaders maintained that churches are vehicles of peace, and since it has been the aim of churches to discuss issues pertaining the welfare of society, they positively responded to the invitation (*Churches in Owambo* 1974:1).

In responding to an Administrator General's question: *Why do Namibians leave the country into exiles?* The church leaders argued that they response to a question is a research based findings from their parishes' members (*Churches in Owambo* 1974:1).

They conveyed that people have lost interest in South African government because it failed to develop Namibia per trusteeship of the League of Nations. South Africa is governing Namibia on basis of segregation and discriminatory policies. Hence, black people in Namibia are suffering under the Odendaal plan which denying the indigenous people of Namibia their rights while whites are enjoying their rights in Namibia (*Churches in Owambo* 1974:2). The black intellectual elites could not participate and exercise their political rights. The church leaders argued that the South African government in Namibia never allows black intellectuals to register their political parties legally. The leaders led to the General Administrator that the government may seriously discuss and peacefully solve the grievances of the Namibian people for peace, justice and reconciliation to prevail in the country (*Churches in Owambo* 1974:2).

#### **4.5 The quest for unity of purpose**

In the Church report of 30<sup>th</sup> June 1984 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1988 prepared for the ELCIN Synod of 1988, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni acknowledged that there were a number of grievances from church members regarding the resolutions of the church decision making bodies for the past four years (ELCIN Report 1988:19). He further claimed that the Church leadership noted with a great concern the people's hardships and sufferings caused by war for the liberation of Namibia. Bishop Dumeni continued to enumerate the forms of hardship as "the detention of some church workers, brutal killings, torture and sufferings on church members." He affirmed that in the face of critical situation, the church ceaselessly wept and mourned together with its members (*ELCIN Report 1988:18*). Bishop Dumeni strongly requested the Synod to find new ways for the church to help members to engage in the programs for social justice and reconciliation in Namibia (*ELCIN Report 1988:6-7*).

##### **4.5.1 Ngipandulua's Letter of appeal 1985**

As the ELCIN grow in great numbers the workloads of the ELCIN leadership were heavy to accomplish. In 1973 the Synod introduced an office of a Presiding Moderator to assist the bishop's office in the ELCIN. It appointed therefore Rev Kleopas Dumeni, to assist the bishop Auala (*ELCIN Synod 1973:1*). Upon the retirement of Bishop Auala in 1978; the Synod elevated Kleopas Dumeni into the Episcopal office in ELCIN (Synod 1978:1). The Synod further argued that the position of a Presiding Moderator in ELCIN beside an Episcopal office is unconstitutional and resolved that it should be dissolved (*ELCIN Synod 1978:1*).

Regardless the Synod's attestation, Bishop Dumeni continuously requests the Synod to re-open the position of an assistant in the bishop's office. Bishop Dumeni argued that he could not accomplish the Episcopal duties alone. In the ELCIN Report of 1984 – 1988, prepared for the ELCIN Synod held during 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July 1988, Bishop Dumeni argued: "Omumbisofi gumwe itaa vulu wee okutsakanitha iilonga nando na kale a hala" [*Regardless the will to serve, one Bishop in ELCIN could not be able to accomplish his apostolic mission as he ought*] (*ELCIN Synod 1984- 1988 -8*). Bishop Dumeni therefore requested the ELCIN Synod either to elect an assistant bishop or to establish dioceses that would be headed by the bishops:

Otandi indile neifupipiko Oshigongingeleki oshiholike shi hogololele Ongeleki aayakuli ya gwana, nokuutha iilonga yawo. Opo iilonga yuumbisofi yi tsakanithwe pamaufu, omagongalo niikandjolonga yi yakulwe ngaashi aakriste ya yuulukwa.” [I am kindly requesting the esteemed Synod to elect for the church suitable candidates who will assist the Bishop in order for the Bishop could fulfil his Episcopal duties effectively.] (*ELCIN Report 1984 - 1988:8*) (Translation mine).

The above statement is self-explanatory. The workload of the Bishop was the driving factor to opt for the establishment of the dioceses in ELCIN. “One Bishop in ELCIN could not able to accomplish his apostolic mission as he ought.” It is a leadership argument that replicates Bishop Auala’s assertion: “ELCIN na hogolele omumbisofi omutiyali mOngeleki. Opo ya kwathathane miilonga, omuyakuli gumwe awike ota nyengwa shili.” It is better for ELCIN to elect a second bishop to assist each other for the episcopal duties in the church. One bishop alone for this task will fail to deliver the duties, as he ought.] (*ELCIN Report 1978:9*). (Translation mine).

The researcher had been part of the delegation at the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod who argued against the introduction of the structure of dioceses in the ELCIN. The leaders led to Rev Hosea Nampala into the deliberations on the subject of establishment of the dioceses, exhorted. “Natu endeni kashona tse inatu endeleni mokuninga omatokolo” [Let us not be quick to take a decision on this matter] (*ELCIN Synod 1984*). Nampala further suggested that the proposed new structure of dioceses in ELCIN should be discussed further on parishes’ level. He maintained that the proposal regarding the establishment of dioceses in ELCIN should be referred back to the parishes for the thorough discussion. According to Rev Nampala the inputs from the parishes will be the directive sources for the next Synod to take an informed resolution (*ELCIN Synod 1984*). Rev. Kristof Shuuya premise was that the Synod delegates would face the unbearable consequences of their resolutions. “The seed we plant today has the effect on the harvest. If we are sowing the bitter seeds today, we will reap the consequences tomorrow!” (*ELCIN Synod 1984 :1*). (Translation mine).

In his note addressed to the Synod, shortly after the delegates passed a resolution to establish three dioceses in ELCIN, Rev. Mathias Ngipandulua requested the Synod

to review and thereupon to repeal the resolution that grantees the establishment of the three dioceses in ELCIN. However, he lamented over the church leaders who did not follow the constitutional procedure in handling his appeal right away in the Synod (Ngipandulua 1985:1). The Synod admitted that the church leadership failed to consider the good wisdoms from the parishes' representatives. However, the Synod opted to appease the wisdoms of the leadership and therefore resolved:

Oshigongingeleki oshiti 12 shOngeleki OnkwaEvangeliki paLuther Owambo-Kavango (ELOK) osha tokola Ongeleki yi topolwe mlikandjongeleki itatu. Elelongeleki otali indilwa li longekidhe edhiko lyiikandjongeleki mbika ayihe oshita (Resolution 110/1984 in ELCIN Synod 1984:16,110; Amadhila 1985: 1) [The 12<sup>th</sup> Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church resolved to demarcate the church into three Dioceses. It requested the Church Council to start with all the preparations to establish all three dioceses at once.] (Translation mine).

ELCIN Pastors in their Pastoral Conference of 14<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 1985 at Ongwediva squabbled with the logic of above mentioned resolution (Resolution 110/1984 in *ELCIN Synod* 1984: 16,110). The premise of the pastors was that the Resolution 110 / 1984 was the source of conflicts and mistrust over church leadership. "The Pastors are not happy with some of the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN's Synod resolutions," reads a statement from the ELCIN Pastors' Conference (EPC 1985 October 14 -19, 1985:32, 64). The pastors argued that the vision of the three dioceses in ELCIN should had rather been referred to the ELCIN Pastors' Conference for discussions and suggestions before it was tabled at the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod (ELCIN Pastors' Conference, October 14 -19, 1985:32. 64)

In his letter of 15<sup>th</sup> October 1985 Rev. Mathias Ngipandulua appealed to the Church Council to revisit Resolution 110/84. Ngipandulua argued that the resolution to establish three dioceses in ELCIN was impracticable [*"kashi na omaningilo"*] (Ngipandulua 1985:1; (*ELCIN Church Council* December 12 – 13, 1985). He wrote:

*"As a member of the ELCIN Church Council, that was entrusted and obliged by the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod, to implement the decision of the Synod to establish three dioceses in ELCIN; I have reviewed the implementation plan of the three dioceses. I fully believed and convinced that to introduce the structure of three*

*dioceses at a time in ELCIN it is an impracticable mission*" (Ngipandulua 1985:1). (Translation mine).

Ngipandulua requested the Church Council to review first the practicality of the decision to demarcate the ELCIN into three dioceses, before they entrusted the parishes to start with the execution of the resolution. He suggested to the Church Council to seek for alternative ways when it is convinced that the implementation of the resolution 110/84 is impracticable (Ngipandulua 1984:2). Ngipandulua further reminded the Church Council to think over the consequences the ELCIN will face when the resolution is irreversible. Ngipandulua enumerated some of the problems ELCIN could face when continue to implement the resolution. The problems were: financial constraints, high salaries of the handy officials in each diocese, numbers of transportation required, heavy burdens for parishes and contravention of the progress of the Lutheran unity in Namibia (Ngipandulua 1985:2 – 4).

Ngipandulua argued that three dioceses in ELCIN will affect negatively on the finances of the ELCIN. He stated that many offices will be needed for each diocese that will also require highly qualified and salaried officers. He further indicated that a number of parishes and circuits offices in ELCIN failing to pay their staffs in due times (Ngipandulua 1985:2). "New Dioceses to be established will need transports. Currently, the church has the shortage of transportations. Where will the Dioceses get transportations?" He asked (Ngipandulua 1985:3).

Ngipandulua envisaged that part of some of ELCIN parishes would not accept to be part of the dioceses that they were located against their consent. He continued to argue that those parishes would not be able to participate in the Church activities because they would felt that the Church had abandoned them (Ngipandulua 1985:3). He claimed that establishment of the three dioceses in ELCIN was the violation for the process of the Lutheran Unity in Namibia. "*How shall the ELCIN Dioceses fit in the Lutheran Unity's own proposed structure of Dioceses when they will emerge into a one Lutheran Church in Namibia?*", he asked (Ngipandulua 1985:4). Ngipandulua concludes his letter with an appeal to the Church Council to reverse the establishment of the Diocese into two dioceses. He further suggested to the Church Council to suspend the implementation of the resolution 110/84 if the reverse was

not possible and to recall the Extra Synod of ELCIN to consider its resolution (Ngipandulwa 1985:4).

The Church Council of December 12 – 13, 1985, discussed Ngipandulua's letter of appeal. The letter requested ELCIN Church Council to suspend resolution 110/1984 of the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod. After careful thought in the letter, the Church Council argued in favour of Ngipandulua's letter and resolved the following:

- In accordance with Article 7 (5) of ELCIN and in line with the letter's content thereof, the Church Council will call an Extra Synod early in 1986 to revisit its resolution.
- The Church Council suspended all the arrangements regarding the establishment of the three dioceses in ELCIN until the Synod decided otherwise.
- It suggested the Extra Synod to convene on 2 – 4 April 1986 at Ongwediva. It further invited all the 13<sup>th</sup> Synod delegates to attend the synod and discuss the way forward (ECC 1985: 2 – 4 December 1985: 8, 606).

Finally, the thirteenth Synod of ELCIN gathered at Ongwediva on 2 – 4 April 1986; to discussed the future of ELCIN after all the arrangement regarding the establishment of three ELCIN Dioceses were put on halt (*ELCIN Church Council* 2 – 4 December 1985:8, 606). In his presentation, Ngipandulua first argued that he was obliged to appeal for the Synod to revisit the resolution 110/84 right shortly the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod took a decision to introduce three dioceses in ELCIN:

*Konima ashike yoshitokolitho shoka sha ulikwa pombanda sha tokolwa eti 14/07/1984, onda nyola okambapila pafupilela taka indile etokolo ndyoka lyokutopola ELCIN mlikandjongeleki itatu li tatululwe, he reasoned (Ngipandulua 1985: 1). [Shortly after the Synod passed a resolution I wrote a short note to the high table, requesting the Synod to reconsider its resolution 110/84 that demarcated ELCIN into three Dioceses]. (Translation mine).*

Ngipandulua thanked the Church Council because it referred his letter of appeal to the 13<sup>th</sup> Synod for further deliberations (Ngipandulua 1985:1). He thereafter requested the Synod to reverse the resolution and to resort to two dioceses only (Ngipandulwa 1986:5).

The Synod argued that letter of appeal 1985 was genuine and an eyes opener to many delegates. It was by then many delegates observed the implications that resolutions 110/84 could cause if not repealed. “Ombapila yatate Ngipandulua oye tu ulukile kutya ope na enkolo ndyoka li nomakwena”, [Ngipandulua’s letter has opened our eyes to note that the establishment of three Dioceses will lead the Church to a dead rock]. Confessed Maria Nangombe (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:7, 11). Nangombe argued that the letter opened their minds to realize that the Church of Christ in ELCIN was sailing toward the unsafe and stormy direction. “Ombapila yetamaneko ombwanawa, oshoka oye eta omadhiladhilo ogendji omawanawa. Nani opwa li epuko, oshili ngashingeyi aantu otu na omadhiladhilo omape.” The letter of appeal is a genuine document. It openly revealed to us various constructive ideas. It enables us to know the core of the real problem. Now we have a new approach to the problem]. Leevi Moses, another Synod delegate’s reaffirmed (*ELCIN Synod* 1986: 6, 11).

Nangombe argued further that Ngipandulua’s letter of appeal was the source of guidance and directives. He suggested to the Synod to utilize the wisdom of the letter before they take the final decision regarding resolution 110/84. The other delegate, Filippus Shikomba wanted to know on which ground was decision to established three dioceses based: “Otwa pele owala okangundu komauthompango ka ka egululile momauthompango ompito yokukala tu na aambisofi ye vule gumwe. Onda ki itsa owala tatu popi etopolo lyOngeleki miikandjongeleki. Osha zi peni ano?” [*We had instructed the Constitutional Standing Committee to ensure only a clause in the Constitution which allows the Church to have more than one bishop. However, I was surprised to learn that the previous Synod decided to establish three dioceses. Where did it come from?*] (Translation mine). (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:8,11).

Shikomba argued that the 12<sup>th</sup> Synod of ELCIN acted un-procedurally. He therefore exhorted the Church leaders to be consistent with Synod’s directives to avoid making the resolutions that act to hurting, causing conflicts and injustice within the Church. To correct the un-procedural action that led to Resolution 110/84 Fredrich Nghihlua suggested: “Otandi koleke ombapila yetamaneko. Ombapila oya wilikwa kombepo Ondjapuki. Kalunga ne tu kwathe moonkundana” [I do support the Letter of appeal.

The Letter is inspired and guided by the Spirit of God. May God reveal this inspiration through our deliberations] (Translation is mine). Nghihalua argued that Ngipandulua's letter is a prophetic voice warning the church leadership to read the sign of the times and to guard on the directive from God. He further argued that Synod representatives should always rely on the guidance from God because the Church belongs to Christ (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:6, 11).

After the open deliberations on the letter of appeal the Synod therefore, resolved to repeal the resolution 110/84 of the 12<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod of 9 – 14 July 1984, which demarcated the Church into three Dioceses. It reasoned further to demarcate ELCIN into two dioceses (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:8, 13). The 13<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod resolved:

Oshigongingeleki osha tokola Ongeleki yi topolwe mlikandjongeleki iyali. Oshigongingeleki osha thigile Elelongeleki oshimpwiyu shomalongekidho glikandjongeleki iyali patokolo epe, ngaashika ga uthilwe mOshitokolitho 157/84" (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:8,13b) [Synod resolved to demarcate ELCIN into two Dioceses. In accordance with resolution 157/84, the Synod it has entrusted the Church Council to ensure that all the arrangements regarding the establishment of the Dioceses are implemented]. (Translation mine).

The Synod decided also to demarcate the borderlines between the two Dioceses. It endorsed the suggestion contained in Ngipandulua's letter of appeal to be borderlines of the two Dioceses. The resolution 31/86 reads: "Oshigongingeleki osha tokola opo oongamba dhlikandjongeleki dhi kale ngaashi dha fanekwa mombapila yaMatias Ngipandulua" (*ELCIN Synod* 1986:14,31). [The Synod resolved to endorse the borderlines of the two ELCIN's Dioceses be delineate as suggested by Mathias Ngipandulua's Letter of appeal 1986]. (Translation mine).

#### **4.5.2 The Kwanyama Circuit's grievances 1986**

The ELCIN was demarcated into four circuits (Kavango Circuit, Ndonga Circuit, Kwanyama Circuit and Western Circuit). The circuits were headed by deans under the supervision of a bishop. However, there had arisen a need to delineate ELCIN into two dioceses. The delineation of ELCIN into two dioceses led into one of the

circuits, Kwanyama Circuit, to feel that their religious and human rights were being depleted.

In 1986, the ELCIN Kwanyama Circuit (EKC) expressed its dissatisfaction and disagreement over resolution 31/86 of the ELCIN Extra Synod of 2- 4 April 1986 that resolved to delineate the borderline between two dioceses, splitting the Kwanyama Circuit into two halves (EKC 1986: EKPC 17 – 19 May 1988:5,10. The parishioners' representatives for Kwanyama Circuits, in their meeting of 02 – 04 April 1986 gathered at Okongo, registered their grievances against the Synod resolution 31 /86 EKC 2 – 4 Aril 1986:5,16). They explained that their dissatisfaction was not merely on the decision of having two dioceses in ELCIN but on the methods, how the Synod demarcated the Church into two dioceses. They argued that the Synod's delineated borderline was not approved by the parishes of the Kwanyama Circuits (EKC 1986:5, 17). The Kwanyama circuit further nominated the following persons to accompany their letter of grievances to the ELCIN Church Council: Werner Shihepo, Toivo Ndevaetela, theologian Aune Shilongo-Hamunyela, L Shikongo and Vilho Kaulinge (EKC 1986: 8.20).

In the letter of 4<sup>th</sup> July 1986 addressed to the ELCIN Church Council, the Kwanyama Circuit maintained that the Parishes in the Kwanyama Circuits were not happy with the Synod resolution 31/86. They raised their reasons that it was their circuit among others circuits which was only negatively affected by delineation of the proposed Dioceses. The Circuit meeting reminded ELCIN Church Council that the Kwanyama tribe was already suffered a humiliation by the Portuguese colonial boundary which divided the very tribe in two a half without their consent.

Church's demarcation that divided Oukwanyama into two halve served as a reminder for the Kwanyama people to recall the colonial boundary in their memories. Hence it could also suffer the same delineation of ELCIN. They further claimed that to divide Oukwanyama was equal to deny the Kwanyama of their God given human rights. "Dividing Oukwanyama into half will affects many of the ELCIN members in Oukwanyama to denounce their membership from ELCIN and seek for the transfer to other denominations" They argued (EKC 1986: 8, 20).

The letter to the Church Council alleged that to demarcate ELCIN into two dioceses could affect negatively the question of Lutheran Unity in Namibia. It further argued that two dioceses in ELCIN would cause a negative impact on the financial status of the Church. “Kwanyama Circuits feels not happy because it is the only circuit in ELCIN that will no longer exist in the future” It raised the fear of unknown. The Kwanyama Circuit therefore requested the Church Council to give clarifications on and to responds to their demands. The Kwanyama Circuit informed the Church Council of their intention not to send their representatives to the Dioceses’ Conference that was scheduled to take place in December 1986, if the ELCIN Church Council failed to meet their demands (EKC Letter of July 4, 1986).

The Letter of Kwanyama’s Circuit to the Church Council concluded their grievances suggesting three recommendations that: “ELCIN should reconsider the resolution 31/86 of ELCIN Extra Synod of 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> April 1986. ELCIN Church Council should accept Kwanyama Circuit suggestion that the whole Circuit be part of the Ndonga Circuit. If not possible, then the Kwanyama Circuit is part of Western Circuit” (EKC Letter, July 4 1986:2).

The ELCIN Church Council of 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July 1986 gathered at Oniipa among other items, it discussed the Letter of grievances from Kwanyama Circuit as was handed by the Circuits’ representatives. It further noted that the grievances pertaining in the letter were beyond its limitation. It argued that the grievances were the effects for resolution 31/86 of the Synod. Hence, the Church Council reasoned to channel the letter of grievances for Kwanyama Circuit to the next Synod to discuss the matter further (ECC 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> July 1986:372). The Church Council Resolution 372/86 reads as follows:

Per Article VII (4 -8) of ELCIN Constitution and from a careful study and deliberation on the letter, the Church council noted that the case is beyond its jurisdiction; therefore, it resolved to refer the letter of Kwanyama Circuit, which requests the revisit of borderlines, to the next Synod that has the power to resolve the matter. The Church Council therefore clarifies that this resolution never put on halt all the arrangements pertaining resolution 31/86 of the Extra Synod. The Church Council entrusted the Bishop’s Office to write a response letter to the Office of the Kwanyama Circuit. (Translation mine).

In his letter of August 18, 1986 addressed to the Church council, Apollos Kaulinge, the Dean of Kwanyama Circuit echoed his words of wisdoms, he uttered in the ELCIN Extra Synod, prior to resolution 31/86 was taken. He exhorted the Synod of a possible schism that could occur in ELCIN if they resolved to delineate Kwanyama circuit. Kaulinge's words recapping: "I foresee the schism in ELCIN if the borderline between the two dioceses aims to destabilize the existence of Kwanyama Circuit only" (Kaulinge 1986a: 18<sup>th</sup> August 1986:1) (translation mine). He argued that the purpose of the resolution 31/86 of ELCIN Extra Synod was merely to divide Kwanyama Circuit and to deny its right to exist among ELCIN structures. Kaulinge continued to squabble with the logic of the Church Council resolution 372/86, which accepted the claim of the Kwanyama Circuit and referred it to the next Synod. For Kaulinge, the Church Council under its resolution 372/86 failed to put on halt all the arrangements regarding the establishment of the Dioceses. Therefore, it was an unconstitutional procedure (Kaulinge 1986a, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1986:1).

The Kwanyama Circuit, however, in its extra meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1986 congregated at Engela to discuss the response from the ELCIN Church Council, rejected the Council's response. It argued that the next Synod serves no purpose because it will be convinced according to a new structure, which stills a great concern of the Kwanyama Circuit. It further argued against the clarification of the Church Council on resolution 372/86. The Church Council insisted that it was in proper to halt all the arrangements that were in accordance with resolution 31/86 of the previous Synod. The Kwanyama Circuit therefore decided not to send their representatives to the Combined Dioceses' Conference of ELCIN to take place in December 1986. It argued that the Circuit's boycott of the combined meeting is a direct appeal to the Church Council to find an amicable way to solve the crisis and to nurture the Oneness of ELCIN (EKC 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1986:2, 9).

Following the Kwanyama Circuit's rejection on a response of the Church Council, Kaulinge wrote a letter of clarification to the Church Council. Kaulinge's letter of 03 September 1986 strongly argued that Kwanyama Circuit's rejection on the Council's response is a collective decision seeking a further and amicable new way to the solution (Kaulinge 1986b: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1986:1). He further argued that the Church

Council resolution 372/86 is not a part of solution rather it generates more a spirit of division within ELCIN. Kaulinge therefore recommended to the ELCIN leadership to introduce a reconciliatory organ to seek a new way to solve the crisis in question (Kaulinge 1986b: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1986:2)

Meanwhile, the Church Council of 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September 1986 convened in Oniipa discussed the response of Kwanyama Circuit regarding a resolution 372/86 as was communicated by Kaulinge, the Dean of the Circuit, in his letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1986. The Church Council has reaffirmed its resolution 372/86 to send the grievance of Kwanyama Circuit to the next Synod. It resolved to jog the memories of all the parishes in ELCIN to send their representatives to the Combined Conference as planned by the end of the year 1986 (ECC: 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September 1986:11, 484). The Council argued to revisit partly of resolution 235/86 to call no longer a Combined Dioceses' Conferences but rather a Combined Circuits' meeting by the end of the year to discuss the new borderlines of the ELCIN Dioceses. It further argued that the partly revisit of the resolution 236/86 was a means to find a new way that foster and nurture the oneness of ELCIN (ECC 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September 1986:11, 484).

In his third letter of 13<sup>th</sup> October 1986 to the Church Council, Kaulinge on behalf of the Kwanyama Circuit meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> October 1986 expressed the profound gratitude to the Church leadership for its good understanding and amicable way it has developed toward the grievances of the Circuit. Kaulinge argued that the Church Council responded correctly to the grave concern of the Kwanyama Circuit by opening the door for discussions on delineate the borderline of the ELCIN Dioceses. Kaulinge further argued that the new door that the leadership has opened was an overdue dream of the Kwanyama Circuit. Hence, the Kwanyama Circuit meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> October 1986 openly welcomed the Church Council resolution 484/86 (EKC 11<sup>th</sup> October 1986:2. 6; Kaulinge 1986 (c), 13<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1).

Kaulinge ensured the leadership of ELCIN about the Kwanyama Circuit's withdrawal of its decision regarding the boycott to the ELCIN Combined Circuits' meeting. He further informed the Church leadership that the Circuit works tirelessly to mobilize their parish's member to send their representative to the Combined Circuits' meeting. However, the Kwanyama Circuit resolved to reaffirm its decision to stand on its "Z"

proposal regarding the delineating of border. It solely considered that the kind of proposal would create a new structure, which will bring about a long-lasting peace and justice among the members of ELCIN (Kaulinge 1986 (c), 13<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1).

In accordance with a directive from Article 146. 1 of ELCIN Constitution, and upon the recommendation of Rev Kaulinge, the Church Council of 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1987, suggested an Ad hoc Committee to revisit and seek the peaceful ways forward in responding to the Kwanyama grievances 1986 (ECC: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1986:11, 181). The Council further appointed two members from each Circuit: Salomo Elago and Hans Daniel Namuhuja (Ndonga); Heikki Ausiku and Amos Sirongo (Kavango); Ananias Iita and Erkki Tauya (Western); Veikko Munyika and Aune Shilongo (Kwanyama) (ECC: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1986:11, 181). The Church Council urged the ad hoc Committee to convene soon and give the report to the next Dioceses' Synod that was to meet in July 1987 (ECC: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1986:11, 181).

On 13<sup>th</sup> June 1987, the Ad hoc Committee presented its report to the Church Council (ECC: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987: 8, 259). The Church Council requested the Ad hoc to send the Kwanyama circuit's "Z" proposal to all four ELCIN Circuits for further discussion. The Ad Hoc Committee further requested the Circuits to send their inputs and recommendations to the Church Council before the Synod commence in the mid-year of 1988 (Ad hoc Report 1987: 13<sup>th</sup> June 1987:2). Per resolution 259/87, the Church Council endorsed the report and referred it to the Deans of the Circuits for further considerations and actions (*ELCIN Church Council 22nd – 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987: 8. 259*).

The Ndonga Circuit endorsed the current border as resolved by resolution 31/86. It suggested further to the Synod where possible and for the sake of unity of the church to revisit the resolution 31/87 of the previous Synod and nullify the border (Synod 1988:13, 18). The Kwanyama Circuit endorsed its own proposed border in a form of "Z" delineation. It maintained that the "Z" proposal is the sole proposed border to overcome tribalism in ELCIN and bring about the new structure in the church (Kaulinge 1988: 7; ELCIN Synod 1988: 13, 18). The Kavango Circuit argued for the Synod to repeal the resolution 31/86. The Circuit further opined that ELCIN better be divided into three dioceses, and headed by one bishop only, (ELCIN Synod

1988:13. 18). While the Western Circuit argued that peace and unity are the essential commodities in ELCIN, therefore Church Council should suspend the resolution 31/86 and referred the matter to the next Synod for further consideration (ELCIN Synod 1988:13, 18; Church Council for the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 1987:19. 539).

In his document of eight pages, Dean Kaulinge, on behalf of the Kwanyama Circuit, presented the “Z” proposal to the 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod assembled at Ongwediva on 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July 1988. Kaulinge clarified that the Kwanyama Circuit grieved since the 13<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod, because of the resolution 31/86, which targeted the Circuit in question only. He argued that Kwanyama Circuit is hurt and discouraged hence, it rejected the resolution. Kaulinge explained further that in grieving and hurt the Kwanyama Circuit therefore turned to the 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod seeking for a healing process (Kaulinge 1988:1). “The Grieved Circuit strongly believes that the esteemed synod has the healing techniques to handle the Kwanyama Circuit’s grievances. It is our hope that the Synod will bring about healing and restoration” (Kaulinge 1988:7).

Kaulinge however, continued to express the Circuit’s profound appreciations to the Church Council for the open-door discussions they have engaged peacefully. He honoured the logic of the resolution 484/86 which enhanced the grieved Circuit to present its case to the 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod. “By its Resolution 484/86, the Church Council sought the way through to foster the unity and to advocate for peace in ELCIN. It enabled the Kwanyama Circuit’s grievances to be heard, listened and discussed until the consensus is reached” he remarked (Kaulinge 1988:1). Kaulinge argues that ELCIN Circuits are delineating on tribal lines. “Who else in ELCIN denies that ELOC’s Circuits were not delineated following the tribal boundaries? Which Circuit can claim that it never practiced tribalism in its dealings?” (Kaulinge 1988:5).

He further reasoned that the proposal is designed to call to the minds of ELCIN members to work for a new structure in ELCIN that root out tribal delineation in the Church. “To end the structure that is built on tribalism, a borderline form of Z proposal is introduced as the only means to conquer the spirit of tribalism within the circuits and rather in ELCIN as a whole” (Kaulinge 1988:6). Kaulinge further argued that the Kwanyama Circuit’s decision to reject the resolution 31/86 purely serves to

fight against institutionalized tribal structure in ELCN. “Ovakwanyama do not aim to establish the church of their own, as some people asserted, but their purpose is to kindly request the leadership to resort to a method that triggers peace and oneness of ELCIN” (Kaulinge 1988:6).

Subsequently, Kaulinge reminded the Synod representatives that the Kwanyama Circuit would neither accept the resolution 31/86 of the thirteenth Synod nor shall approve any borderline that is not “Z” oriented (Kaulinge 1988:6). “If the 14<sup>th</sup> Synod of ELCIN does not consider our grievances but kept endorsing resolution 31/86 which purposely delineated only one circuit, then all the representatives from Kwanyama Circuit will opt to walk out the Synod,” he concluded (Kaulinge 1988:8).

The 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod, in its deliberations on the resolution 31/86 and the Kwanyama Circuit’s grievances noted that the unity of the Church is very essential. The Church’s call is to foster Jesus Christ’s ministry of reconciliation. The nature of the Church is to heal wounds and care for the broken life, Synod is therefore resolved:

“Opo tu adhe etsokumwe moshinima shetendo lyongamba yiikandjongeleki, ndjoka ya ziminwa kOshigongingeleki shopaulumompumbwe oshiti 13 shoka sha gongala mOngwediva eti 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Apilili 1986 noyi indilwa koshitayingeleki shUukwanyama yi lundululwe kOshigongingeleki oshiti 14, Oshigongingeleki osha ningi etokolo tali landula: [In order to close a chapter on the issue of borderline of the ELCIN Dioceses; that is delineated and approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Extra Synod, which met in Ongwediva on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April 1986; and is rejected by the Kwanyama Circuit and consequently, requesting the 14<sup>th</sup> Synod to revisit it, the Synod is therefore resolved the following:] (Translation mine).

- i. Oongamba adhihe mbali, ndjoka ya ziminwa kOshigongingeleki oshi ti 13 naandjoka ya “Z” ya thanekwa koshitayingeleki shUukwanyaman na dhi ethiwe ko ku tendwe ongamba ompe yi li pokati ka “L” na “Z.” [All the two borderlines, namely, the one which already approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> Synod and the draft of Kwanyama Circuit in “Z” form, should be nullified and replaced by a very new border which is 50% “L” and 50% “Z”].

- ii. Oshigongingeleki osha tokola shi hogolole okangundu, opo ka ka thaneke ongamba ompe yo yi talwe moshigongi shika, ihe itaku ningwa etokolo, manga omagongalo inaaga yelithilwa miigongi yaasita noyitayingeleki, opo ihe etokolo lyahugunina li ka ningwe mOshigongingeleki oshi ti 15” (*ELCIN Synod* 1988; 19, 34). [The Synod resolved to establish the Standing Committee to draft the new borderline for the two dioceses to be discussed further in the Synod and sent it to the parishes for their considerations before approval]. (Translation mine).
- iii. The 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod further resolved to establish the Standing Committee to delineate the new borderline of ELCIN Dioceses. Hence, the Synod discussed and approved a new borderline. Subsequently, the 14<sup>th</sup> ELCIN Synod is argued to be an agent of a healing process of the Kwanyama Circuit, and a preserver of peace, justice and reconciliation in ELCIN.

## **4.6 Redefining a ministry of reconciliation**

### **4.6.1 ELOC a tribal church**

The Constitution of ELOC is clear on the policy of an official language of the church. Its Article V states that the official languages of the Church are: *Oshiwambo and Rukwangali*, (*ELOC Constitution* 1959:10; 1978:12). By the implications an article affirms that ELOC belongs to Oshiwambo and Rukwangali speaking groups only. It holds that ELOC’s doors are open only to the members belonging to Aawambo and Kavango. In the words of Shejvali (1970: 108): “Nge taku popiwa Ongerki yomOwambokavango, otaku diladilwa ongundu yovakriste aveshe ovakwaevangeli vomomaongalo omOwambo nookoKavango.” [When we speak of Owambo Kavango Church, we are referring to the group of all the evangelical Lutherans from the parishes of Owambo and that of Kavango] (Translation mine).

The name: *Evangelical Lutheran Owambo – Kavango Church* explains loudly and clearly that ELOC is a child of the tribal affiliations (*ELCIN Church Council* 8 – 9 April 1954:2, 18; Constitution 1958:2, 1). In 1950, ELOC has introduced a policy of

Circuits into her structure based on tribal lines (Shejavali 1970:90). Namely, Kavango, Ndonga, Kwanyama and Western Circuits (Reports 1978:8; Pentikainen 1974:1; Shejavali 1970:116).

The Circuits are the administrations of the combined parishes in a certain tribe or parishes that are scattered in the other different tribes. For examples: Kavango Circuit includes all the ELOC parishes found in the Rukwangali speaking tribes of Kavango. Ndonga Circuit comprises of all the ELOC parishes established within the boundary of Ondonga tribe only. Kwanyama Circuit covers only the ELOC parishes located within the Oukwanyama tribe. While the Western Circuit, as the name declares; exercises the unity of purpose among the ELOC parishes found within the other six tribes of Owambo such are: Uukwambi, Ongadjera, Uukwaludhi, Uukolonkadhi, Ombalantu and Ombandja.

In his report of 1984, Bishop Dumeni acknowledged the spirit of tribalism permeating within the Church structures. He therefore, exhorted the Church members not to be absorbed by tribalism but rather they should continue to maintain the unity within ELOC. He asserted:

“Oshayela kutya oku na okukala uukwashigwana, nuukwamuhoko mokati kiigwana. Ihe nando ongawo, tango otatu lalakanene eyakulo ewanawa lyiilyo yomagongalo getu. Onda dhimbululula oshinima shuukwamuhoko “tribalism” mOngeleki ndjika ya ELOC shi shi okukotokelwa opo shaa yone po uukumwe wOngeleki” (*ELCIN Report* 1984:18, 33.5). [It is a fact that the spirit of nationalism and tribalism seems a practice of patriotism among the nations. However, our purpose as a Church should aim first at delivering a quality service to all of our people. I have observed the spirit of tribalism within ELOC. For the sake of the unity of the Church, such spirit should be avoided.] (Translation mine).

A letter of the grievances of 1986 from the Kwanyama Circuit is self - explanatory. One of the grievances contains an element of tribalism. “Oshoongalele osha tala yoo kutya okutukula Oukwanyama nghaho, osho omukalo wokuninipika ewi lovakwanyama” [mOngeleki] (EKC 1986:5) [The circuit meeting viewed that dividing Oukwanyama is equal to deny the Kwanyama of their God given human rights

(within ELCIN]. A statement is purely a manifestation of the spirit of tribalism within the Church.

The premise of Apollos Kaulinge is that tribalism is being institutionalized in the structure of ELOC. He argued that ELOC and her structure of Circuits are established based on tribal lines. Hence, the spirit of tribalism is significant. Kaulinge further attested that “eholokepo nediko la ELOC noitaingeleki yaye ... o li li ... momutungilo wa kuminina oukwamuhoko.” (Kaulinge 1988:6) [The history of ELOC and the establishment of her Circuits has been structure in line with tribal affiliations].

Early in 1962, Epafra M Angolo, an Owambo pastor who received a pastoral training from Dorothea Mission School in South Africa, had made a remarkable observation of ELOC and toward her historical development of the Circuits. During the Western Circuit Meeting gathered at Onesj, 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 1962, Angolo commented that ELOC has a structure that opened a door only for the certain tribes or believers. After therefore he advised ELOC members to restructure the organization to be able to welcome all people from different languages, tribes and nations. He argued that the Church of Christ is the communion of saints from different nations and races. He further reasoned that in Christ Jesus, there is no a Church for Aawambo and Kavango but a Church for all people. “In Christ Jesus, all are one Church,” he argued (EWCM 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 1962:3, 23).

#### **4.6.2 Location of church workers on tribal lines**

ELOC has a long history of transferring church workers in the parishes or into the posts according to their geographic origins or Circuits of their origins. An example of the transferal for a group of 1954 ordained pastors. Elia Neromba and Gideon Muremi from this group of pastors were originally from Kavango, therefore the Church Council had placed them to shepherd in the parishes of Kavango tribes. Herman Shongolo, Johannes Nantinda, Timoteus Shipanga and Matias Ngipandulua were Oshindonga speaking people originated from the Ndonga tribes; hence the Church leadership posted them to lead the parishes from Ndonga Circuit. Johannes Kalenga, Johannes Shifiona, Malakia Alugongo, Moses Shikongo, Naftali Amadhila, Simson Ndatipo, Titus Heita, Tomas Tuutaleni were all from the Western Circuit.

The Church Council therefore resolved to place them to the Western Circuit to shepherd their own local parishes. Paulus Andreas was the only pastoral candidate in this group of students emanating from the Kwanyama Circuit. Ironically, the leadership placed him alone to shepherd one of the parishes in Kwanyama Circuit. Surprisingly, Johannes Ekandjo a candidate in the said group, from Western Circuit has been placed to the Ndonga Circuit, as there was no vacant post in any parish of the Western Circuit. Subsequently, the Church Council resolution on the placement of 1954 Pastoral candidates reads: Elia Neromba, Mupini; Gideon Muremi, Rupara; Herman Shongolo, Ontananga; Johannes Ekandjo Eheke; Johannes Kalenga Etilyasa; Johannes Nantinda, Okankolo; Johannes Shifiona, Onaanda; Malakia Alugongo, Elim; Matias Ngipandulwa, Oshigambo; Moses Shikongo, Onawa; Naftali Amadhila, Ogongo; Paulus Andreas, Kongo; Simson Ndatipo, Angola; Timoteus Shipanga, Titus Heita, Nakajale and Tomas Tuutaleni, Okalongo (ECC 1954).

The Church Council of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1968 is another example among many locations of the Church workers that were executed on tribal lines. The Church Council had placed the following pastors to lead the ELOC parishes based from their respective Circuits and places of their origins: Andreas Haimbili, Elim, Lot Hambia, Uukwandongo, Hiskia Haufiku, Ompundja, Filemon Alugongo Othika, Samuel Ndinoshiho Elondo, Johannes Hamulungu, Eenhana, Tomas Shivute, Olukonda, Abisalom Hasheela Endola and Heikki Uushona, Oshakati (ECC, October, 12, 1968:1, 10).

In his letter of 7<sup>th</sup> May 1974, Jason Amakutuwa, a Lecturer of Church History at Engela Parish Institute, Engela, suggested to the ELOC Church Council that the pastoral students of 1974 should be assigned according to the places and Circuits of their origins. “Ote holola mpaka omatengeneko getu na Fillippus Shikomba omupashukilishitayingerki gUukwanyama mEngela eti 26 April 1974” he ensured the leadership (Amakutuwa 1974:1). [I bring to your attention the suggestions (for placements) we have discussed with Fillippus Shikomba, the dean of Kwanyama Circuit on April 26, 1974 at Engela]. (translation mine). The motive behind the recommendations was a mere tribalism. Amakutuwa argued that the pastoral candidates might be motivated to lead their home parishes or parishes within their

own Circuits progressively because they are familiar and know very well their own environments (Amakutuwa 1974:1).

Upon Jason Amakutuwa's recommendations, the ELOC Church Council therefore placed the 1974's ordained pastors in line with their places and circuits of origin as followed: Ismael Amupolo, Okando; Daniel Imalwa, Ekamba; Lasarus Katoma, Oshilemba; Benjamin Shuuvani, Oluteyi; Fredrich Nghihalwa, Ohalushu; Samuel Mateus, Etunda; Immanuel Mungungu, Endola; Immanuel Kamho, Angola; Toivo Muonde, Angola; Timoteus Mwafutya, Onesi; Moses Mundjele, Eembaxu; Fillipus Uusizi, Olukonda; Petrus Shivute, Oshigambo; Matias Nepela, Okankolo and Vilho Shiyandja, Windhoek (ECC 1974).

As from 1970 onward, at the National Church level the posts for leadership located to the Church workers were fills cantered on tribal lines. Bishop Auala's administration team 1963 – 1978 is an illustrative. Bishop Auala being a church leader from Ndonga Circuit, his senior administrative team was mainly from his original Ndonga Circuit. The team includes: Petrus Shipena, General Secretary, Hileni Shipena, a cashier at the Head office, Andreas Nuukwawo, a Finance administrator, Matias Ngipandulua, the Secretary to the bishop and later a Secretary for Finance and Stewardship, Efraim Angula, an Evangelist of the Church and Director of Evangelism, Moses Amkongo, Director of ELOC Printing Press, Magdaleena Namalenga, Secretary of Music, Vilho Kamanja, Finance Administrator and Timoteus Shipanga, Director of Marriage Affairs and a long serving Chairperson of ELOC Constitutional Standing Committee.<sup>1</sup>

During Bishop Dumeni's administration 1979 – 1999, the scenario of tribalism was still observing. Geographically, Bishop Dumeni is emanated from the ELOC Western Circuit. Bishop Dumeni's key administrative officers at the National Church level throughout his durations have been mainly elect from the Western Circuit. The administration team covered the following senior officers: Matti Amadhila, Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> C.f. ECC 1967:1; ECC 1987:3,554; ECC 27 -28 September 1971:4, 21; ECC 2 -3 August 1972:1, 5; ECC 1964; Auala 2009:104; ECC: 17 -18 April 1968 3, 27; ECC 17 July 1970:2, 17; ECC 27 -28 September 1971:4, 21; ECC, 30 March 1967:1,6; Report 1973:4; ECC 9 October 1972:4,19; Report 1978:7,17ECC 17 July1970:3,22; ECC 18 – 19 Mai 1972:6,35; ECC 22 August 1972:1,2-3; ECC 1977; Ekandjo 2001:77; ECC 17 July 1970:1.6; Auala 2009:79; Synod 1977:9,27.

to the Bishop and later an assistant to the Bishop, Set Son Shivute, Secretary to the Bishop Director of Projects, Sebulon Ekandjo, Chief Editor of Omukwetu, Kristof Shuuya, Secretary of Deacons and latter, UELSWA General Secretary, Festus Ashipala, Director of Deacons and Social Services, Abrosius W. Amutenya, Editor of *Omukwetu*, Sakeus Hekandjo, Treasurer, Josaphat Shanghala, Youth leader and long serving veteran in Church Councils, Wilhelmina Amweelo, Women League leader, Joseph Avia, Youth leader and Administrative Secretary, Hosea Iiyambo, Men league Leader. Justus David, Director of Mission works. Hilma Tshilongo – Pauly, Director of Christian Education. Eva Liisa Shitudeni, Crowing Group leader and Sunday school leader. Mateus Kapolo, Director of Christian Education. Magdalena Ya-Shalongo, Women league Leader. Jonas Mweutota, School Chaplain. Ananias Iita School Chaplain and member of the Church Council.<sup>2</sup>

In 1987, Paulus Ndamanomhata, an ELCIN pastor have on one occasion warned ELCIN's leadership to pay a heed on the danger that might destroy the unity of ELCIN as a result of the placements of Church workers done on tribal influences. He advised the church leadership to change the mode of placing the Church workers according to the origin of their places of birth or the origin of their Circuits. Ndamanomhata argued that such replacements were but the pure decisions grounded on tribal lines. They are unethical decisions that stand against the just practices of the Church. They are detriments to the unity of ELCIN (ECC 18 -20 August 1987:11. 381). The letter of Ndamanomhata was written within the spirit of ELCIN's new plan that introduced the structure of Diocese in ELCIN in 1984. The introduction of Dioceses in ELCIN was to bring the Church into a unified leadership structure that is not tribally. The Report of 1981 – 1984 explained: "Efaneko lylikandjongeleki lyongashingeyi olya hala okupopila uukumwe miigwana yetu nomoshilongo ashihe shaNamibia. Uukumwe onawa u mone omukanka

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<sup>2</sup> c.f. ECC 19 – 21 April 1983: 7. 150; Report 1979 -1995:36.15.3; ECC 28 December 1984:2, 544; Synod 1988:34. 68; ECC 19 – 21 April 1983: 9.58; Report 1979 -1995:35, 15.3; ECC 5 – 8 May 1987: 2. 143 Report 1988 – 1991:23.13.7; ECC 1 -2 February 1968:1.9; Report 1981:10, 16.7; ECC 19 – 21 April 1983: 16, 191; ECC 18 – 20 August 1987:11.382; ECC 28 -30 November 1984:5. 537; Ekandjo 2001:76, ECC 28 December 1984:2, 548; Uushona 1978:25; ECC 19 – 21 April 1983: 9. 157; Report 1981 – 1984: 9. 16:1; Benzi 2016:67; Report 1988 – 1991 9:7.2; ECC 19 – 21 April 1983: 9. 157; ECC 1987:12, 520; Report 1991 – 1992:17, 19.1; Report 1981:10, 16.8; Report 1988 – 1991:19,13.6 ; Report 1988 – 1991: 19, 13.7; Report 1991 - 1992:18. 19.7, ECC 28 – 30 November 1984:6, 539; Report 1981:13,22. Synod 1988: 21. 42; Report 1979 -1995: 28.14.5; Report 1988:12. 12.2; Report 1979 – 1995: 24. 14.4.4.1; Report 1991 – 1992:15.17.2.1; Report 1979 – 1995: 23, 14.4; Report 1988 – 1991:19.13.6; Report 1991 – 1992:18. 19.6; Report 1991:17,19.; Synod 1988:29, 61; Report 1979 – 1995: 24 ,14.4.2

momagongalo gaELOK” [The vision of ELCIN to establish the Dioceses serves to strengthen the unity among the tribes and races in Namibia] (ELCIN Report 1981 – 1984:18, 33.5).

#### **4.6.3 From ELOC to ELCIN: A Church for all**

As early as 1980, the wind of change refreshed the minds of young ELOC pastors to revisit the Church’ structure that is design based on tribal influences. In their Pastors Conference of the ELOC pastors deliberated on how they should restructure the church to accommodate people of different races and tribes in Namibia. Pastor Matias Ngipandulua proposed the name ELOC to the envisaged Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (Shaghala 2016:2).

The Pastors Conference however proposed to get rid of the name ELOC and replaced it with a name that will be welcoming of all the people from different languages and cultural groupings in Namibia. The following names were suggested to be sent to the next ELOC synod for the highest decision body to adopt one among the three: *Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa, the Lutheran Church in Namibia* (EPC 1981:1). In 1984, the Synod reasoned to change the name of ELOC to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (Synod 1984:1). The Synod however failed to suggest the acronym of the given name (EPC 1985: 19, 33).

The ELCIN Pastors’ Conference of 1985 deliberated on the acronym of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and suggested to the Synod the Church’s name to be abbreviated as ELCIN (EPC 1985: 19, 33). Two years later at the next Extra Synod of 1986 the acronym ELCIN was approved (*ELCIN Synod 1986*). The reasons for naming the church Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia ELCIN were twofold: Firstly, it is a name that serves to accommodate all people of different groups and races across Namibia who wants to join ELCIN membership. Secondly, it provides an opportunity in future for a unified name of a one Lutheran Church in the country when the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia willing to unite and form one Church (*ELCIN Synod 1986*).

In 1982, Dr. Tomas Shivute, Director of Christian Education suggested to the Church leadership for the Circuits of ELOK to be given the proper names rather to call them by tribes' names. He argued that referring the Circuits by proper names create the sense of the Church understood as the organization for all races and nations. Demonstrating his views therefore Dr. Shivute, referred to what known as Kwanyama Circuit to be Engela Circuit and Western Circuit addressed as Okahao Circuit. The Kavango Circuit was renamed as Rundu Circuit and Ndonga Circuit was renamed Oniipa Circuit (Shivute 1982:1). As a result, the new names of the ELCIN Circuits added a considerable value to the Church's transitional journey toward the organizational transformation. ELCIN Report 1981 – 1984 emphasizing: “Oshinima shokuuva ko uukumwe wOngeleki, onawa shimone omukanka momagongalo gaELOK” [It is of cardinal importance to cultivate strongly the concept of the Church unity in all ELOC parishes] (1981 – 1984: 18,33.5).

Subsequently, in 1991 at Ongwediva, ELCIN established two Dioceses: Eastern and Western. Eastern Diocese was a constituent of three Circuits: Uumbangalantu, Oniipa and Uupumezuva and Western Comprised of two Circuits: Engela and Ruacana. The five ELCIN Circuits were mainly targeting the North, Northwest and North-eastern parts of Namibia only. Twenty years later ELCIN extended further her Circuits structure to cover the central and southern areas of Namibia (*ELCIN Synod* 1988: 33, 66). In 2010, Eastern Diocese marked the growth of nine Circuits: Auala, Epembe, Omandongo, Omuthiya, Kongo, Oshigambo, Rundu, Tsumeb, Uumbangalantu and Windhoek (*Ondjalulamasiku* 2010: 33 – 36). While the Western Diocese covered the following ten Circuits: Elim, Engela, Etilyasa, Naanda, Nakajale, Ongwediva Okahao, Okambebe, Tsandi and Swakopmund (*Ondjalulamasiku* 2010: 37 – 42).

Only so far Peter Pauly from a White German Lutheran Church in Namibia become a member of ELCIN in 1986 (EPC 1985:4, 7.11). A number of the Himbas and Dhimbas in Opuwo joined an Opuwo ELCIN parish in 1991 (Report 1988 – 1991: 7, 5.3). On 20 September 1992, about 562 San people joined ELCIN at Mangeti Duane (Report 1991 – 1992: 30, 6). In 1991, the group of the Caprivians joined also the ELCIN in Katima Mulilo (Report 1988 – 1991: 6, 5; 5.2). Despite such observation however, ELCIN remained dominantly an Owambo and Kavango speaking people

church. It remains a great challenge for ELCIN to actualize her dream of a church for all the Namibian groups of people.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Chapter 4 deals with ELCIN's "engagement" with reconciliation throughout its history, however mostly concentrating on the prophetic interventions in the struggle years of the seventies and eighties, before independence. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia participates in the process of reconciling church members who had been ostracized by the ecclesiological practices within ELCIN. Using the insights of the synodical records, minutes, church newspapers articles of the ELCIN, the chapter argues that during 1970 to 1989 the leadership of ELCIN embarked on a process regarding reconciliation, justice and peace.

## Chapter 5

# The Council of Churches in Namibia and the quest for reconciliation (1978-2010)

### 5.1. Introduction

The Namibian people experienced systematic separations, oppressions and hardships caused by the legacy of colonialism, apartheid policies and political instability. Andre du Pisani observed their life to be a stony ground of intolerance under apartheid and a narrative of ethnic nationalism and social exclusion” (Melber 2003:130). Steve Titus, a lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Namibia described the Namibian situation as characterized by *“arrogance, pride, disunity, racial and social injustice. The [society that] is sick of apartheid, discrimination, exploitation and hypocrisy.”* (Lombard 1995:46). During the 80s the liberation movement for Namibia's independence intensified its struggle for liberation. The Namibian nation was divided into different political and ideological camps, which led thereto that hatred and animosity became prevalent in Namibia. In this chapter, the researcher will examine and narrate how the churches in Namibia prior to Namibian independence era, played a great role in breaking the walls of separation among themselves and amongst the Namibian nation. The researcher analysis in this chapter two ecumenical bodies wherein ELCIN has membership in both ecumenical bodies the decisions and statements of the Ecumenical Christian Centre, in Windhoek, and the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN).

### 5.2. The Ecumenical Christian Centre in Windhoek

The purpose for Ecumenical Christian Centre in Windhoek is briefly narrated in chapter two under paragraph 3.2.4. Nambala argues that the Centre existed to unite and to overcome the divisions of denominational lines that had been created through the different missions and organizations in Namibia (Nambala 1994:150). The

Ecumenical Christian Centre gave humanitarian support to the victims of the unjust system in Namibia. Daniel Tjongarero, a former director of communications in the Council of Churches in Namibia, asserted that “the Christian Centre” was born out of humanitarian necessity. He stressed: It was born out of a necessity to heal the wound, to minister those in prison, to clothe the naked, to provide water and food to the hungry and thirsty, while calling the authorities that is, in the admonition (*Council of Churches Documentation* 1992, Appendix 5).

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1973, the leaders of ELCIN, ELCRN, Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church decided to form a Christian fellowship which would serve as a common ground for the churches in order to address the social issues in the society with a united voice. This fellowship was later known as the Christian Centre (Lombard 1998:166; Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 14 -15).

In 1975, the Christian Centre organized an ecumenical service in Windhoek, under the theme: *Reconciliation – does that concern me?* which had been attended by 4000 participants (Hunke 1996:69). This service was a call to all the Christians in Namibia to experience and share the life of togetherness and fellowship in the light of the Gospel (Hunke 1996:20). In his reflection to a theme: “*Reconciliation – does that concern me?*” Archbishop Fitzgerald, from Johannesburg, in his keynote address commended the churches in Namibia for their concerted actions to establish the Ecumenical Christian Centre. Amongst others he said that the Ecumenical Christian Centre is a symbol of unity and companionship, *inter alia* where the Churches are working together to combat the social-economic and political injustices of the Society. Archbishop Fitzgerald furthermore conveyed to the participants the different types of discrimination: such as cultural, educational, social or political nature.

According to Fitzgerald, discrimination is a blasphemy to God (Hunke 1996:69). His premise is that it is a cardinal responsibility of the Church to caution the government when it ceases to execute justice to its subjects. Therefore, it is the alienable duty of the Church to approach the state and to denounce its unjust systems and actions. “If a state was guilty of such discriminating laws and practices, the church had the obligation and right to attack these and condemn them. ... That is what Jesus had

done and that is what He wants us to do. He who did not grant the same fundamental human rights and legally guaranteed them to other men, as he demanded for himself, offended the core message of Jesus” (Hunke 1996: 69).

The participants affirmed at the ecumenical service that reconciliation is not possible where harmful and unjust practices prevail in society. They therefore resolved to draft a manifesto of reconciliation as a guide to the nation to work for peace, justice and reconciliation. A group of clergies was commissioned to draft a manifesto of reconciliation and thereafter it was signed the by the participants of the ecumenical service (Hunke 1996:69). The manifesto acknowledged the inadequacy of the churches in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation. For example, the manifesto criticized the churches for allowing the development of the policy for constitutional racial discriminations in Namibia to go on unchallenged. Furthermore, the manifesto called upon the Namibians to abolish all the structures and divisions that serve as the barriers to a true reconciliation. The manifesto of reconciliation therefore maintained: The minority in power should stop all the violence that aim to oppress the majority. All the people should be granted the equal rights and responsibilities without delay. Every political prisoner should be granted a lawyer of their own choice without delay. The court cases should be dealt with in a fair trial without delay. Forgiveness should be a first and real step towards reconciliation. There should be fair and free elections for the Namibian people to choose their political representatives to lead them to a total freedom and independence (Hunke 1996:70).

The participants affirmed in the manifesto for reconciliation that the plight of Christians to fight for social justice is anchored in Christ Jesus, who is the source of liberation and reconciliation. “It is [Christ who] guarantees the deliverance, reconciliation and the restoration of the humanity.” (Hunke 1996:70).

### **5.3. The Council of Churches in Namibia 1978**

The Council of Churches in Namibia was established on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1978 in Windhoek, Namibia, as an official umbrella body of the Namibian Churches (Buys & Nambala 2003:368). The Council’s vision is to promote Christian unity, work for justice, foster

self-help projects, train and render educational programs for the Namibians (*Council of Churches Brochure* 1980:1). Amongst others, the Council cultivates for the exchange of information both local and international regarding the socio-political life in Namibia (Katjavivi *et al* 1989:14-15). During the struggle for liberation, the Council acted as the true voice of the voiceless. The Council's primal aim was to assist the local people with health, educational and other societal resources during the liberation struggle.

### **5.3.1. The Council of Churches a voice of the voiceless**

The vision of Council of the Churches in Namibia was to be true a voice of the voiceless and therefore supported the Namibian people in their plight for social justice. The Council of Churches committed them to work for justice, peace and reconciliation (*Council of Churches Namibia Statement* 12<sup>th</sup> June 1981:1). The Council of Churches played a mediation and reconciliatory in Namibia especially during the 1980s. The Desk of Faith, Justice and Society of the Council defines the role of the Council of the Churches in Namibia as follows: CCN is determined to mobilize the member Churches in their role of mediation and reconciliation. [It still addressing] the ongoing tension of the colonial [legacies] constructively in order to bring community together in unity as citizens of one country. The Church in its moral responsibility needs to respond to all moral and ethics issues as it afflicting the society (*Council of Churches Faith, Justice and Society brochure* 1981).

The presence of Churches Council in Namibia during the dark hours after the bomb blast at Oshakati First National Bank, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1988 highlights clearly that the response of the Council of Churches in Namibia to moral and ethics issues which had been afflicting the Namibian people. The incident claimed more than 30 lives and many hundreds had been maimed. On 20<sup>th</sup>– 21<sup>st</sup> February 1988, the Council of the Churches in Namibia sent a delegation to the scene, in order to express solidarity and sympathy with the victims of the bomb blast (*Council of Churches Statement* 25<sup>th</sup> March 1988:1). On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1988, two days later the Council of the Churches in Namibia issued the following statement: We wish to express our deepest condolences with and prayers for all the victims, the family of the bereaved and in particular for those who for the foreseeable future will experience pains and

suffering as the effect of this dreadful deed, - especially those children who have left orphaned. We are aware that many of members of our churches including family members of leaders and pastors in our church have suffered direct injury and death (*Council of Churches Statement 25<sup>th</sup> March 1988:1*).

The moral support of the Council of the Churches in Namibia was highly appreciated by the Namibian people. The Council of the Churches in Namibia appeal to the South African representatives in Namibia to set up an independent judicial commission in order to investigate the case and to bring the wrongdoers to book. The Council of the Churches in Namibia condemned the act of violence and furthermore condemned the South Africa Defence Force raid of the Namibian camps for exiles in Angola. The Council further asserted: "We believe that so-called retaliatory raids into Angola serve only to escalate the level of violence in this region, which violence we have sought to avert by our attempts to mediate between the conflicting parties and with our abortive attempt to meet with the South African State President" (*The Council of the Churches in Namibia Statement, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1988:2*).

The Council of the Churches in Namibia further called upon the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church to show their solidarity with the victims, bereaved families and the entire Namibian nation. It requested the President of the USA to discontinue tactics that delay the implementation of the United Nation Security Council's Resolution (UNSCR) 435 of 1978 for Namibia. The Council of the Churches in Namibia further called upon Namibians to observe 4<sup>th</sup> May 1988 as a day of prayer for repentance, justice and peace in Namibia. The 4<sup>th</sup> May 1988 coincided with the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cassinga, massacre (*The Council of the Churches in Namibia Statement 25<sup>th</sup> March 1988:2*).

### **5.3.2. Letters to the South African Governors in Namibia**

As early 1980, the Council of Churches in Namibia wrote several letters to the South African Governor in Namibia. The letters were the prophetic voices of the churches to the South African Government. These letters denounced the apartheid system and injustice. Amongst others the Council of the Churches in Namibia critiqued the

conscription of young Namibian schoolboys into the South African Defence Force and advocated that military service should not be compulsory (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on Conscription* 1981:1).

In 1982, a number of young Namibians boys approached the head office of the Council of Churches in Namibia; seeking legal advice on resistance to the conscription into South Africa's Army. The Council of the Churches in Namibia premise was that the forced conscription of Namibians into South Africa's Army was a serious violation of the international norms and opinion (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on Conscription* 1980:1). The Council of Churches in Namibia spoke up with a united voice against forced conscription. The Council supported the young Namibians in their plight. Furthermore, the Council released a press statement regarding to the forced military conscription of Namibians into South Africa's Army. Part of a press release reads as follows:

Once again, the South African Government shows its complete disregard for the legitimate aspirations of the Namibian to freedom. The Churches represented by this Council are opposed to the idea and alarmed by the tendency of turning the struggle for true independence into a civil war by Namibianizing the armed conflict between the South-African occupational forces and the Namibian people (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription* 1982:1).

The Council of Churches in Namibia argued that the zeal for peace and justice obligated it to sympathize with the young Namibians in their plight. It observed that the young Namibians were the victims of the brutal dilemma. It acknowledged that the plight for the young Namibians to resist the forced conscription into the South African Defence Force was a justifiable endeavour (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription* 1982:2). The Council of Churches in Namibia argued that the forced military service, in terms of the Defence Act to the Namibians was serving only the interest of the Republic of South Africa. Specifically, it served only the white minority government's policy towards Namibia. Hence, the decision of South African Government to extend forced military service in terms of the Defence Act to Namibians was condemn by the Council of the Churches in Namibia (*Council*

*of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription 1982:2*). The statement reads as follows:

The Council of Churches in Namibia condemns this inflexible approach to the very real problems young Namibians are faced with, and which are not their own making. They are simply forced to surrender their political ideals and moral convictions to dictate of the South African law makers.... We urge the South African government to withdraw the amendment by which Namibians can be 'legally' forced to render military service in the South African Defence Force... The CCN condemn forced conscription as an unchristian state of affairs. (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription 1982:2*).

The Namibian Churches further called the international communities to join hands with the Namibians and concertedly condemn forced conscription. (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription 1982:2*). The Council argued that military conscription should only be applicable in a free country. Furthermore, the Council insisted its irrelevance to the Namibian situation. The Namibians were still under South African Government's oppressive regime. It further argued that the conscription to military service of Namibians is similar to provide forced labour for South African Defence Force (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on conscription 1982:2*). Furthermore, the Council of Churches in Namibia affirmed that it would works to bring about peace and true independence to Namibia (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on military conscription 1982:2*). The Council appealed to the all-progressive movements and organizations and all individuals to take the flagrant violation of international law and the dignity of human beings in Namibia very serious. "It is after all only a free citizen, who should be called upon to fight in defines of his country and for the protection of his freedom" (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Release on military conscription 1982:2*).

In 1987, South African government in Namibia refused to grant the visas to the Lutheran World Federations (LWF) delegates to visit Namibia. Both LWF delegation and the churches in Namibia considered it as an act of violation to the peace, sound relationship and fellowship. On 29<sup>th</sup> October 1987 Abisai Shejvali, the General

Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, issued a press statement. Shejavali condemned the South African government as the enemy of Christianity in Namibia. He stated the following:

The Council of Churches in Namibia expressed its shock and dismay on the visas refusal to the Lutheran World Federation delegates who were to visit their fellow Christians in Namibia. This arbitrary refusal of visits to the Church leaders is an indication that whoever was involved in an act of refusal of visas is an enemy of Christianity in this country (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Statement, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1987.1*).

Shejavali accused South African government as a Hippocratic authority that pretend as a Christian regime. He claimed that South African government's arbitrary actions contradicted its talks. Shejavali argued that the Pretoria Government is a dangerous and rival number one of the church of Christ in Southern Africa (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Statement 29<sup>th</sup> October 1987.1*).

Shejavali further enumerated cases of a handful Namibian church leaders whom the South African government refused to grant visas in order to enable them to travel abroad. He argued that the reason for refusal of visas were purely on the ground of that they were the key opponents of the South Africa's apartheid system. The refusal was the counter act to silence the voice of peace, justice and reconciliation in Namibia. The same applies to the refusal of granting visas to the delegations of the international church leaders from Canada, Netherlands and Sweden. The refusal to grant the visas to the international church leaders was seen as a sing of the South African Government to mute the Church's prophetic voice (*Council of Churches in Namibia Press Statement 29<sup>th</sup> October 1987.1*).

During April 1987 eight church leaders in Namibia, *inter alia* Fr Benhard Nordkamp, Roman Catholic; Bishop James Kauluma, Anglican Church; Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia; Rev Peter Lamoela, Congregational Church; Bishop Hendrik Fredrick, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa; Rev Bartlomeus Karuaera, African Methodist Episcopal Church; Rev Demetris Palos, Methodist Church and Rev Karl Sundermeier, Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische

Kirche wrote a letter to the South African Government's representative in Namibia, His Excellency, Administrator-General, and Advocate Mr. Louis Pienaar (*Council of Churches in Namibia Letter, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987*). The signatories requested the State President of South Africa to use his power to resolve the war situation in Namibia before it reached a calamitous stage (*Council of Churches in Namibia Letter, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987*). The church leaders state the following:

We believe that these warnings are being fulfilled and the situation is deteriorating month by month and day by day, and needs urgent attention to prevent it from escalating beyond the present already dangerous point (*Council of Churches in Namibia Letter 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987*).

The church leaders sought an urgent audience with the President of South Africa, Mr. Pieter Willem Botha. The church leaders took an advocacy role in order to express the people's concerns over the escalating conflicts in Namibia (*Council of Churches in Namibia Letter 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987*).

### **5.3.3. Memorandums to the South African Prime Minister**

On 29<sup>th</sup> October 1980, the leaders of Council of Churches in Namibia petitioned to the Prime Minister of South Africa, Pieter Willem Botha. The petition was a twofold purpose. Firstly, to ask the concerned line ministry to review the compulsory military service in the territory of South West Africa. Secondly, request the Prime Minister to seek an alternative peaceful solution to the armed conflict (*Council of Churches in Namibia October 1980*). The introduction of conscription of the learners into South Africa army in the territory of Namibia forced parents to withdraw their children from the public schools. The church leaders argued that the introduction of the conscription would create conflict between parents and the private schools of the churches in particular and between the government and the people in generally. The church leaders were of the opinion that they would find it difficult to co-operate or support such directive and/or legislation (*Council of Churches in Namibia Petition, October 1980*).

The church leaders further argued that the South African Defence Act could not apply to the Namibians. There was no threat of an onslaught by a foreign power that

Namibians that could compel Namibians to defend their territory: “If the Defence Act desires to oppose the factions involved in the present guerrilla war, the enlistment of SWA/Namibia nationals for compulsory military service would result in that war becoming a Civil War.” (*Council of Churches in Namibia Petition*, October 1980). The Council of Churches in Namibia interpreted the introduction of compulsory military service as an instrument for South African government to block the internationally accepted formula that will bring Namibia to a desired independence. The church leaders further affirmed that the immediate exodus of many Namibians men and women into the neighbouring African countries was a direct result of the introduction of the compulsory conscription military service into the South African Army. The church leaders argued that compulsory conscription military service into the South African Army led to furthering polarization of the Namibian people:

The further polarization of the people of this territory at the time when consensus and reconciliation are being sought. This could well further escalate the proportions of a bloody, civil war and anarchy (*Council of Churches in Namibia Petition*, October 1980).

The Council of Churches in Namibia further warned the South African Government about the possibility of students protests and strikes if the Defence Act will become applicable to the Namibian territory: “Damage to the educational system, so vital to the future development of an emergent independent nation, would be enormous, as parents would withhold their children from schools in an attempt to protect them.” (*Council of Churches in Namibia Petition* October 1980:3). They concluded their petition with a request to the Prime Minister to use his power to seek the alternative means to bring a cessation to an armed conflict. They argued that a peaceful and supervised electoral process in conjunction with United Nations Security Council Resolution 435/1978 (see Addendum 3) and with an absolute minimum of delay is the only alternative mean to bring armed conflict to halt (*Council of Churches in Namibia* October 1980:3). Lastly, however, the church leaders advised the head of State to pursue God’s guidance in their decision-making process for a lasting and peaceful solution. They concluded as follows:

We express our gratitude to you for considering our petition and assure you of our prayers for the guidance of Almighty God in the decision that you, in

co-operating with others, have to make on the future of our nation. (*Council of Churches in Namibia* Petition, October 1981:3).

#### **5.3.4. Council of the Churches in Namibia and Western Contact group**

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1983 in Windhoek, the Executive Council of the Council of Churches in Namibia argued to raise the prophetic message to the Western Contact Group which worked out the formula for Namibia's independence, namely Canada, France, West Germany, United Kingdom and United States of America. It reasoned that the churches in Namibia was duty bound to inform the Western Contact Group of the continued violation of peace, justice and reconciliation by the South African government in Namibia (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983:1). In the letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 1983, the Executive Council of the Council of the Churches in Namibia ensured the member states of the Western Contact Group about the sincere commitments of the Council of Churches in Namibia toward the independence of Namibia. The letter highlights the Council of the Churches in Namibia moral obligation to work for peace justice and reconciliation in Namibia:

As we continue to hear and experience further wanton acts of destruction of life and property in our country, we the Executive Committee of the Council of Churches in Namibia, representing 81 per cent of Namibia Christians would like to state our commitment to reconciliation, justice, peace, and the preservation of human life (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983:1).

The Executive Council supported the initiatives of the Western Contact Group regarding to the implementation of the *United Nations Security Council's Resolution* (UNSCR) 435/ 1978 (see Addendum 3) . The Executive Council however, expressed its dissatisfaction on the slow process of negotiations on the implementation of the UNSCR 435 / 1978. The Executive Council of Churches in Namibia argued that the Namibians considered the UNSCR 435/1978 the only just and concrete solution to the country's plight. It therefore, requested the Western Contact Group to speed up its implementation immediately without a delay (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983:1).

The Executive Council of Churches in Namibia condemned the linkage of Cubans' presence in Angola to the solution of Namibian independence. It stated that the Cuban presence in the free and independent Angola is a different case. It was not a threat to the Namibian people. It further argued that the historical threat to the Namibian people was the presence of South African government in Namibia. The Executive Council stated:

We wish to state also that the Cuban presence in the sovereign state of Angola were not a threat to the Namibian people. The historical priority is South Africa's continued occupation of Namibia without the consent and mandate from the majority of the people (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983.1).

The Executive Council registered its disapproval against the conflict of interests of some members of the Western Contact Group who objected to the implementation of UNSCR 435/1987, due to their own political gains in the negotiations of Namibian independence. The Executive Council warned that such approaches to the independence of Namibia served to accelerate more sufferings and bloodshed in Namibia. These approaches also delayed the implementation of the international program toward the Namibian independence (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983.1).

The Executive Council appealed to the Western Contact Group to take heed of the wills and rights of the Namibia people and their interests. Equally, it appealed to the Western Contact Group to use their power in order to speed up the implementation of the UNSCR 435/1978. The Executive Council urged the Western Contact Group to act promptly in order to restore the diminishing hope and expectations that Namibian Churches had originally had in the Western Contact Group (*Council of Churches in Namibia* January 1983.2).

### **5.3.5. Council of the Churches in Namibia and International Communities**

Early in 1984, Mr. Pieter Willem Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa, visited some of the European countries. In his visitation, he depicted the different pictures to the

world that were contrary to what was happening in Namibia. Mr. Botha's visitation provoked the Council of Churches to write an open letter the Church in Europe and North America in order to update them on the reality in Namibia. The Council of Churches explained in the open letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:

On the occasion of the visit of the South African Prime Minister, P.W. Botha, to certain European countries, we would like to write you this open letter to give you an up-date on the reality of the situation prevailing in our country. (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984; 1*)

The Open Letter of 1984 argued that peace that the South African political leaders propagated to the world was virtually contrary to the peace of Christ. The Namibian Church leaders continued to reason that a true and Christian peace or the reconciliation could not be built upon the doubtful foundations of injustice and inequality. They further argued that the peace or reconciliation that was contracted on the bases of injustice and inequality would not prevail (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984.1*).

The *Open Letter of 1984* asserted that a steady growth of militarization in Namibia went to the extent that the church leaders portraying Namibia as "a kind of military camp" (*Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:2*). "The suffering of our people goes on ... [T]he activities of forces under South Africa command continued to intimidate and insult the well-being and humanity of the local population" (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:3*).

The Executive highlighted in the Open Letter that the political detainees of Mariental were denied legal resource for justice, since Cassinga raid into Angola in 1978. The Executive premise was that South Africa government was against a peaceful solution of the situation in Namibia. The refusal of visas for visitors and passports for international partners of the Council of the Churches in Namibia was seen an act of violation to the peace, justice and reconciliation in Namibia (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:3*).

Furthermore, the letter refuted the South Africa's claim that the Multi Party Conference in Namibia is an initiative of the Namibian people. It repudiated:

We continue unconvinced that the Multi-Party Conference is entirely free of South Africa influence, nor do we believe, without a mandate from the people, that it commands anywhere near the support which it claims (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:3*).

The Open letter, therefore, argued that UNSCR 435 of 1978 was the only political ground for the people in Namibia to rest their hopes for a genuine and total independence of their country. It warned the readers to observe that failing to adhere to the spirit and letter of the internationally- accepted formula would further cause more bloodshed in Namibia (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:3*).

Socially, the Open letter registered the peoples' dissatisfactions toward the media in Namibia. It argued that the people were expecting the media to act as reconciliatory tools in uniting the communities together. On, contrary they observed otherwise. "One would have expected that the time was now for bringing Namibians together in a spirit of national reconciliation - however, the radio, TV and Press do little to contribute positively to that spirit. Often, we are sad to note, the reverse." They persistently argued. Moreover, the spirit of hatred and discrimination made it hard for the victims of destructive system to understand and accept the Gospel of love, peace and reconciliation (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:4*).

The signatories of the Open letter concluded the prophetic message urging their fellow brothers and sisters in Europe and North America to continue praying for the future of Namibia and its peoples. Equally, they should continue to play the advocacy role to their government leaders for the sake of justice and human dignity in Namibia. The Church leaders persuaded:

We asked you to convince your government leaders that human beings created by God are far more important than diamonds, gold, silver, copper or, even uranium and that human rights of freedom and independence should be protected (*Open letter Council of Churches in Namibia 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1984:4*).

In 1986, two years later, the Council of Churches in Namibia received a letter of comfort and solidarity from abroad, written by the International Consultation of

National Councils of Churches. The World Council of Churches ensured the Council of Churches in Namibia that the International Consultation of National Council of Churches abroad has taken note with great concern of the critical situation in which the Namibian people were living (*International Consultation of National Council of Churches* 24<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1). The letter of solidarity reads as follows:

We call on South Africa to stop its aggressions against neighbouring countries, using Namibia as a springboard. ... South Africa to abandon the so-called 'Government of National Unity' and come to the table with the rightful leaders of the Namibian nation in order to negotiate the independence of the country. (*International Consultation of National Council of Churches* 24<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1).

The National Council of Churches appealed to all concerned governments in Europe and North America to put more pressures on South Africa in order for her to grant the freedom and independence to Namibia without a delay. It called all National Councils of Churches and Churches around the globe to continue praying and assisting the Namibians in any possible way in their struggle for peace and justice (*International Consultation of National Council of Churches* 24<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1). The letter assured:

We call on the Churches around the world to refrain from perpetuating apartheid through their association with the South African regime or by investing money in corporations which are supporting apartheid. We call on the Churches and governments to support fully and comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa (*International Consultation of National Council of Churches* 24<sup>th</sup> October 1986:1).

In 1986, the same assurance was observed from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) (Katjavivi et al 1987:174 -175). In a certain meeting with the Namibian delegation in Ottawa, Canada, the ELCIC ensured the Namibian delegates that it fully supports the plight of Namibian people toward their way to independence. It had developed a program to educate the North Americans about Namibia. It further argued that the Lutheran Church in Canada did review its

investment policies to get away with any element that support economic system to South Africa. Hence, through the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Christians continued to support morally and financially the exiled Namibia liberation movement. It affirmed that Christians have put pressure and called Canada to withdraw from the Western Contact group. They consistently call for full sanctions against South Africa and Namibia. ELCIC argued that her members in Canada stood steady in support of the Council of Churches in Namibia (Katjavivi et al 1987:174 - 175).

### **5.3.6. The Council of the Churches in Namibia and Ai-Gams Declaration**

The Council of Churches in Namibia did not only play an advocacy role internationally, but also functioned internally to ensure the spirit of a unitary nation in Namibia. In 1986, it introduced a national forum in Windhoek, known as *Ai-Gams Conference*. *Ai-Gams* is a people's forum where different Churches, faith based movements, organizations and political parties could come together to discuss issues of the common concerns (*Ai - Gams Declarations* 1986:1).

*Ai-Gams* is a Namibian word, stemmed from the Nama noun: *Ai //gams*, which means *hot spring*. Before the arrival of European in the country, the place currently called Windhoek was referred to as *Ai //Gams* by the Namas of Namibia, (Katjavivi et el 1987:152). It was in *Ai-Gams*, that a very uniquely conference took the place on 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 1986. Hence, the joint statement from the Conference is referred to *Ai-Gams Declaration* (*Ai - Gams Declarations* April 1986:1). (see Addendum 4).

As early as 1980', the Council of Churches in Namibia strived to ensure peace and justice prevails over the social upheavals in Namibia. The week of 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 1986 marked the beginning of the uniquely forum in the history of Council of Churches in Namibia. It is the birthday of the *Ai-Gams*, a people's forum, which the Council of Churches has faithfully hatched in the hall of Klein Windhoek Pastoral Centre, Windhoek (*Ai-Gams Conference* 1988:1).

It comprises of Churches, students' unions, political parties and civil organizations. The Churches attended were the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia,

Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West in Africa, Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Diocese of Namibia, and African Methodist Episcopal Church. Three organizations had observer status, namely the Namibia National Students Organization, Namibia Women Voices and Young Women's Christian Association. Political parties participated were the Damara Council, Mbanderu Council, Namibia Christian Democratic Party, Namibia Independence Party, South West Africa National Union and South West People's Organization (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1986:4).

The Council of Churches in Namibia assured that the political instability, the worsening economic and social life as well as the military situation in Namibia will be discussed extensively and informed decisions will be taken. The Ai-Gams Conference registered its dissatisfaction over the doubtful signs of the delay in the process of Namibia's independence. It noted that majority of the Namibian people are frustrated because they are denied justice, freedom and reconciliation (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1986:2).

The Conference therefore, consistently resolved to reject South Africa's continued delay and refusal to observe UNSCR 435 / 1978; the linkage of Namibia's independence with the issue of Cuba's troop withdrawal from Angola; the South Africa's interim government in Namibia that was never elected by the Namibian people; the presence of South African Army in Namibia, as well as the forced conscription of Namibians and the South African oppressive laws in Namibia such as AG 9, AG 26 and Terrorism Act of 1967 (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1986:3).

The Ai-Gams Conference affirmed that the Namibians have the inalienable right to gain their self-determination and independence and that Namibia was a one country and a one nation. It also affirmed that UNSCR435/1978 was the only peaceful and democratic way to achieve the internationally recognized independence for Namibia (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1986:3).

The Ai-Gams Conference therefore collectively committed itself to mobilize the Namibia masses to resist the *status quo*. It pronounced to engage actively in positive actions that provoke the immediate implementation of UNSCR 435 /1978. It further

committed to participate in the campaigns that fight against the introduction of the compulsory military service (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1986:4). Subsequently on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1986 all representing the churches, political parties and organizations at the Ai-Gams Conference endorsed the *Ai-Gams Declaration* (Katjavivi et al, 1989: 152).

A year later, Council of the Churches in Namibia organized a conference at Ai-Gams Pastoral Centre in Klein Windhoek on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1988 in order to review the Ai-Gams Declaration of 1986. The participants expressed the dismay of the Namibian people over the unending tactics to delay the implementation of UNSCR 435/1978. They blame the South African Government and the Western Contact Group for delaying to implement the international formula intended to bring about peace, freedom and independence to Namibia. They argued that the delay would continue to cause further enormous loss of many lives and to sky rocket the number of the maimed people in Namibia. The participants further reasoned that South African's numerous delaying tactics have entertained the intimidations and the detentions without trials in the different parts of Namibia (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1988.1).

The Ai-Gams Conference of review therefore, observed that South African government was strategizing to lay the foundations for a civil war in Namibia (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1988.1). The Ai-Gams Conference states that a forced conscription to the Namibian professionals and students is the immediate strategy for South African government to draw Namibia into a civil war. It singles out the unemployed and the school dropped out to be economical forces for conscription into South African Defence Force as well as the high failure rates in Standard 5, 8, 9 and 10 were observed from the Black schools all over in Namibia. The Ai-Gams Conference affirmed that South African government in Namibia was systematically creating high failure rates in Black schools to justify the need of conscription in to South Africa army (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1988.1). Subsequently the Ai-Gams Conference resolved to call all fellow Namibians to stand firm behind the UNSCR 435/1978. It further requested its members and supporters to strive for unity at all levels. The Conference advised fellow Namibians to defy military conscriptions. Lastly, it called upon fellow Namibians to reject the South African Interim Government in Namibia (*Ai-Gams Declaration* 1988:1-2).

### 5.3.7. Council of the Churches in Namibia and human rights violations

In 1979, after the introduction of compulsory military training, many Namibian students left the country to seek refuge in the neighbouring African countries. Apparently, when they arrived in Angola, the leaders of the Namibian liberation movement in exile interrogated them (Ndeikwiila 2014:32 – 34). They argued that the students were the agents of South African government and that they were instructed infiltrate the liberation movement (Dicker 1992: 47).

In his report: *Accountability in Namibia: Human rights and the Trials to Democracy*, Richard Dicker uncovered ungraceful cases of sufferings and interrogations of the detainees through the Namibia liberation movement. For example, detainees from Southern Namibia had been interrogated at Karl Marx Reception Centre (KMRC) in Lubango, during the month of April 1982. They were labelled as the spies and agents of the enemy (Dicker 1992:46-48). The Johan explained:

I was being buried alive. By the time the sand was up to my neck, I was unconscious. I only regained consciousness when I was back in my room. I thought what can I do [is to] falsely confess or else I will lose my life. Perhaps one day I will be able to clear my name but now I will do what they want. I agreed [to their allegations] that I was an enemy's agent. It is quite mindboggling to do something against your conscience (Dicker 1992:48).

According to Johan, his false confession was to save his life from the interrogators whom did have any respect for human rights (Dicker 1992:49). Johan's case represents thousands of ungraceful and brutal cases experienced by the ex-detainees under the care of the Namibian liberation movement in Lubango. About 1100 former detainees were alleged to suffer interrogations at Karl Max Reception Centre during the eighties (Dicker 1992:49ff). In his book: *Agony of Truth*, Samson Ndeikwila, an ex-detainee, unearthed many cases of systematic human rights violations which took place in Tanzania, Zambia and Angola between 1963 - 1989 under the Namibian liberation movement in exile. As a result, he found been one of the large group of detainees jailed at Keko Prison, Tanzania in January 1970 (Ndeikwiila 2014:34 -37). He described that the condition of the jail was inhuman and unhygienic. "The cells were overcrowded, humid, filthy and lice-infested.

The large number of people arrested daily in Tanzania, particularly over weekends, and general condition in cells shocked us to the extreme.” In June 1976, the liberation movement in exile imprisoned and issued a deportation order to Rev Salatiel Ailonga, a chaplain to the exiled Namibians, and his wife Anita (Ailonga 1977:1). They argued that the couple was sympathizing with the rebellious youth leagues (Ndeikwiila 2014:56). The Ailonga family sought refuge in Finland. In 24 May 1977, Rev Ailonga wrote a letter to the church leadership in Namibia about the inhuman condition of the Namibians detained in the political camps in Zambia (Ndeikwiila 2014:66; Lombard 1998:173). According to Ailonga, there was a conflict between the leaders of the Namibian liberation movement in exile and the members of the youth league. It culminated into the imprisonment of many members of the movement. “Over one thousand Namibians disappeared” (Ailonga 1997:1; Ekandjo 2002:116).

The tortures and cruel interrogations were known to be prevalent within the structure of the Namibian liberation movement in exile. Some of the senior and higher officers affirmed that some of their fellow senior officers had acted brutally towards prisoners in exile (Dicker 1992:104). Theo Ben Gurirab, one of the senior staff in the liberation movement affirmed:

Some [of the detainees] were tortured; and that some officers [who were] charged with gathering [of the] information. ... Have taken the laws into their own hands, and carried out brutalities against these persons which we are very much regret (Dicker 1992:105).

Sam Nujoma also admitted that “there were certain elements that were sent by the Boers.” (Dicker 192:106). He however was of the opinion that these detainees should remain in the prisons until Namibia got its independence his premise was that the detainees should be judged by the people of Namibia after independence. Nujoma argued: “You were sent by the Boers and you will stay there until the time that we liberate Namibia and we take you to your parents. We will take you to Freedom Square and you will be judged by the people of Namibia.” (Dicker 1992:106).

In its eighth ordinary general meeting in 1992, at Windhoek, the Council of Churches in Namibia committed them to act as a mediator on the issue of the missing people and the former detainees. The Council of Churches resolved to reconcile all the Namibians from the different political spectrums. It further resolved to appeal to the international communities to put pressure on South African Government to give adequate information on the Namibians who went missing. It tasked the office of Council of the Churches in Namibia General Secretary to request the office of the Prime Minister to make a public declaration about Namibian who went missing during the liberation struggle. It further appealed to the members of the public to register the names of missing people to the offices of the Council of Churches Namibia (*Council of Churches Namibia Documentation* 1992:22).

### **5.3.8. Council of the Churches in Namibia and the repatriation for Namibian exiles**

In 1989, the International bodies together with the Namibian Liberation movement in exile entrusted the Council of Churches in Namibia with a responsibility to receive the Namibian exiles during the repatriation process. This task had been carried out under the supervision of the United Nation Transitional Assistant Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. The Council played a reconciliatory role in resettling and rehabilitating the exiles within their communities and families (Buys & Nambala 2003:369). In its meeting of February 1989 at Windhoek, the Executive Council of Council of the Churches in Namibia established the National Repatriation Committee that was called: Repatriation, Resettlement and Reconstruction (RRR) (*Council of the Churches in Namibia Executive Council Minutes* February 1989). It further endorsed the following to be members of the National Committee: Rev Wilfried Neusel, Rev Ismael //Goagoseb, Mr. Immanuel Dumeniand Mr. Carl Schortz (Shejavali 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1989). On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1989, the National Committee of Repatriation, Resettlement and Reconstruction welcomed the exiles under the supervision of the UNTAG.

Rev Wilfried Neusel, Chairperson of Repatriation, Resettlement and Reconstruction (RRR), officially welcomed the first group of the Namibians exiles, on behalf of

Council of the Churches in Namibia staff (*RRR Minutes* June/July, 1989:1). In his welcoming address, Neusel highlighted that all Church leaders and fellow Namibians who fought together with them for the independence of their beloved country were glad to witness their homecoming and warmly welcomed them with open hands (*RRR Minutes* June/July, 1989:1). Neusel argued that that the arrival of the exiles marked the resounding victory over the decades of persecution and destruction. “Colonial rule and apartheid will come to end” he assured them. He requested the exiles to join hands with them in the plight of repatriation and resettlement (*RRR Minutes* June/July 1989:1). Moreover, Neusel reminded the exiles to take the good courage to the challenges they could meet in their communities.

He argued that some of the exiles could encounter the rejections: “Some of your beloved ones are no more among us. Sometime you will be encounter division, hatred and fear. ... The tears of joy which you will find on so many faces now, show you that your hard work in exile was not in vain.” (*RRR Minutes* June/ July 1989.1). Ongwediva, Engela, Nakayale, Okahao, Rundu, Katima Mulilo, Grootfontein and Dobra were the main reception centres for the CCN to host temporally the exiles before the reunion with their family members. Any exiled person received within their family circles was taken to the worship services of their original parishes for blessings and reconciliation (Ekandjo 2002:114 -115).

#### **5.4. Council of Churches in Namibia and National policy of reconciliation**

The Council of Churches in Namibia held a conference on the theme, the *future role of the Church in Namibia* in Windhoek on 27<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> March 1990. Amongst others, the conference resolved to change her role from a political role to a developmental role (Mbako, (ed) 1990:10). The Council of Churches in Namibia maintained that during the South African colonial government in Namibia, people could not identify them with the authority of those days.

During the struggle for justice and reconciliation in Namibia, the Church identified herself with the oppressed people in their plight for a just cause to bring about the independence of Namibia (Mbako (ed) 1990:10). The Council of Churches in

Namibia affirmed that the church should engage constructively in the process of national building, peace, and reconciliation: The Church can become a bridge in national building and reconciliation and therefore should abstain from all activities that make it guilty of separation of the people. Namibia is ethnically divided and the Church can bring [these] people [of different backgrounds] together. Any church prefers to be separate from others be challenged (Mbako (ed) 1990:11).

The Council of Churches in Namibia commit herself to address social justice namely the redistribution of land and wealth, unemployment, racism and ethnicity (Mbako, (ed) 1990:56). The Council of Churches in Namibia further reaffirmed to spearhead the tusk of uniting people across racial, ethnic, class and gender barriers. The Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Churches in Namibia cautioned: While working for reconciliation and mediating in situations and occasions of political strife, the church must remain partial to justice (*The Council of Churches in Namibia Documentation* 1992:22).

This strategy of the Council of Churches in Namibia complements the policy of national reconciliation which the Namibian government adopted with the dawn of the independence. “[We] believe [national reconciliation] was only possible through God’s good grace in our country. Through God’s love towards us” (*The Council of Churches in Namibia Documentation* 1992: Appendix 7). According to Veikko Munyika, the ruling party adopted a special policy to avoid civil war and economic breakdown: It was on basis of this that [the leaders] of liberation movement decide to embark on the programme of general amnesty and national reconciliation. [They] believed through accepting each other and uniting the wounds of war will heal, and [give] room for development, political stability and general peace will be created (Munyika 1994:161).

## 5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 5 deals with reconciliation after independence (1990-2010) via the role of the CCN and thus not so directly with the quest of reconciliation within ELCIN itself. In his presentation: *Situation in our Country: A policy of national reconciliation*, Bishop Bonifacius Haushiku, a former President of Council of Churches

Namibia asserted that the Council of Churches Namibia lost its prophetic voice after independence: CCN fought for Independence of Namibia, now it has stop to exist. Council of Churches has nothing to say now. Many people say that the CCN has lost its prophetic voice in our society. There are wrong things going on this society. There is no [a] prophet left to point out the wrongs and animate society. No guidance from CCN (*Council of Churches Namibia Documentation* 1992:8). Bishop Haushiku criticized the silence, individualistic and sectarian attitudes of the Council of Churches Namibia. He urged the Council of Churches Namibia to become again a united ecumenical body addressing the social ills of society (*Council of Churches Namibia Documentation*, 1992:9; Appendix 5:4).

Abisai Shejavali, the former Council of Churches Namibia General Secretary concurs with Bishop Haushiku. In his presentation: “*The role of the Church in the Current Namibian Situation: Post Independent*” addressed to the pastoral symposium on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 1999, Shejavali stated that the prophetic voice of the Church was no longer be heard in Namibia (Shejavali 1999:3). Shejavali challenged the church leaders to play a pivotal role in the peace building and the process of reconciliation in Namibia. He argued: The church is putting people down. [It does] not come up very clearly on the critical issues, touching and sometimes harming the people. ... [It] should work in the Spirit of the Open letter [1971]: ‘I will suffer with my people.’ But when one thinks of this ‘creed’ ‘I will suffer with my people,’ in this post independent Namibia, one starts to question why this creed is no longer actively fulfilled. (Shejavali 1999:6)

According to Shejavali, the silence of the church after independence led that the church members in Namibia to question the credibility of their church leaders. The participants at the World Council of Churches Pre-Assembly in Windhoek on 29<sup>th</sup> November – 4<sup>th</sup> December 1999 also criticized the blind solidarity of churches in Namibia with the state: What we have today, in most cases are the churches in blind solidarity with [the] state. Churches are no longer playing their prophetic roles. Gone are their prophetic voices. (*World Council of Churches Pre-Assembly report* 1999:50).

Finally, the chapter reasons that the period of 1990 – 2010, the leadership of ELCIN absconded of being the prophetic voice of the church. There are many social issues within the Namibian society today that remain unchallenged and uncorrected. Social issues such as: war victims during the struggle for independence, poverty and high rates of unemployment, the land issue and the gap between the rich and poor people in Namibia are growing wide daily. The chapter argues further that these are the unresolved and standing social issues that need the attention and prompt response from the Namibian churches for a peaceful and amicable just society. This chapter indicates the continued need for ongoing reconciliation. Here one has to deal with issues not only within the church (culture, tribalism, gender and unity), or heroic issues of “liberation” (former detainee issue), but also with socio-political and economic issues (such as poverty, human rights, abuse of power, racial and ethnic division) – in the context of post – independent Namibia, which is a different context than the one of colonial and apartheid hegemony.

# Chapter 6

## An evaluation on reconciliation in ELCIN

### 6.1. Presumptions regarding reconciliation

The researcher suggests that the ELCIN should take account of the following presumptions deduced from the research in order to address reconciliation in Namibia appropriately:

- i. God is the author of reconciliation (6.1.1.)
- ii. The church as ambassador for reconciliation (6.1.2)
- iii. The society is God's arena of reconciliation (6.1.3)
- iv. Confession is the pre-requisite to reconciliation (6.1.4)
- v. Restorative justice the key to a healthy relationship (6.1.5)
- vi. Doing mission work in a divided society (6.1.6)
- vii. Engagement with reconciliation (6.1.7)
- viii. The prophetic voice of the church (6.1.8)

#### 6.1.1. God is the author of reconciliation

The premise of the researcher is that reconciliation is not a human initiated process (c.f. Chapter 2). The ELCIN should therefore remember when they want to embark on reconciliation that such a project started with God. In Karl Barth's term: "It is God who does it first." It is God who came down from heaven to his people on earth [God's condescension] (Barth 1956:3). Both Judeo-Christianity and African theologies emphasize God as the author of reconciliation: The Jews acknowledge that it is firstly God who instructed the people to offer the sacrifice. It should be a sacrifice that pleases Him (Lev 1:2). The Jews allege also that it is God who proposed the kinds of animal for sacrifice. "A young bull is mine" Lev 4:20. Equally, the Christians maintain that it is God who initiated the project of reconciliation. It is God in Christ Jesus who has reconciled the world with himself. It is God who willed

and acted to reconcile the world with himself (Fahlbusch et al 2005:504; (Barth 1956:3). The members of ELCIN should therefore go a step further than the Jews. ELCIN should teach that God is both an initiator and the actor of reconciliation (c.f. Chapter 2). African theology declares: *Onkugo yEpongo, o Kalunga he yi tondoka*. [It is God who came to the aid for the poor]. Martin Rautanen, the founding father of ELCIN explains: *Sho onda li momilema dhoondjo dhandje, momutitu goondjo dhandje. Ohenda ye ya toola ndje*. Rautanen cited in (*Ehangano* 266:1 -2). It is God only who “teya luhahi lweso [who broke the power of death.] *Ehangano* 163:2. It is God who is “yina yuwanawa auhe,” [the mother of all goodness] (Oshiwambo saying). Reconciliation therefore is a part of the all goodness which God offers to His people. The ELCIN should therefore keep in mind that the starting point of reconciliation process is always initiated by God. Not by human beings. Human beings are merely respondents of God’s initiative of reconciliation.

The intention of God is to restore broken relationships. Reconciliation is not a one day’s program or an event. It is rather an ongoing process. According to Paul in 2 Cor 5:19 -20 God entrusts the church with the task to oversee and to supervise the process of reconciliation:

<sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God (11 Cor 5:19-20).

### **6.1.2 The church as ambassador for reconciliation**

The intention of God is to restore broken relationships. Reconciliation is not a one day’s program or an event. It is rather an ongoing process. According to Paul in 2 Cor 5:19 -20 God entrusts the church with the task to oversee and to supervise the process of reconciliation:

<sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (11 Cor 5:19-20).

The researcher concurs with Penney that reconciliation is achieved, and done by God in Christ Jesus (Penney 1986:13). It is therefore the responsibility of the members of ELCIN to accept God's act and to establish consistent, obedient and loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It is the task of the church to ensure reconciliation where there is hatred and animosity. The church should maintain and keep peace. It should advocate justice for the poor and down trodden people. This is the office for the ministry of reconciliation that church has to fulfil.

### **6.1.3 The society is God's arena of reconciliation**

The society is an object or arena for God's process of reconciliation. It is a part of God's Kingdom. The condescension of God took place in a society. It is in a society where God has met His people. God is "with us" in the society. God came down in the society to see His people. Therefore, the society is a loveable realm of God. "Peace on earth, to everyone who God pleases." (Luke 2:14). Equally, society is a realm of God's order and relation. It is God's realm of oneness and completeness. The society is a terrestrial society subjected to failures and shortcomings. This God's loveable society however is vulnerable to divisions, poverty, sufferings and injustice. In view of this concept of vulnerability, the church should educate the people how to maintain peace and harmony in the society. It should monitor the signs of the times in the society. Where there are, unfamiliar signs appear in the society, the church should study, evaluation and act to empower the people with love and justice.

### **6.1.4 Confession is the pre-requisite to reconciliation**

Confession is a requirement for reconciliation (c.f. Bonhoeffer 1959:46; Lombard 1996:27). Genuine reconciliation without remorse of wrong doing is not possible.

Reconciliation cannot be achieved without true repentance and forgiveness (Shaanika 1992:114). Reconciliation without remorse is not genuine reconciliation. Confession is a lifestyle and signifies humility. In Oshiwambo for example reconciliation takes place only when an offender reaches a state of remorse (*a gwaya omutoko*). Remorse opens the door for forgiveness and acceptance. *Okugwaya omutoko* enables a transformation. It changes an old life into a new life free from all hatred and retaliations.

In African context for example the mediator should perform the blood sacrifice only when the parties involved have exchanged their vows of confession or forgiveness. It is only then a sacrifice signifies meaningful reconciliation. For this reason, reconciliation is associated in African context usually with animal blood sacrifice. As Mndende rightly says: Because blood is life (2009:101). Africans and Jews share the similar concept (Morris 1983: 54). For the Aawambo, the shedding of the blood in a ceremonial rite is an act that talks about a new life. An ox blood that spilled for *Onkombambinzi* the ritual signifies the deceased's blood (William 1994:187). It talks of a new life that brought about by the reconciliation. It is a sign of a conciliatory act. The researcher therefore holds that confession or forgiveness is a prerequisite to reconciliation. Where there is no confession, there is no forgiveness of wrong doings and genuine reconciliation. (Chapter 2.5.3).

#### **6.1.5. Restorative justice the key to a health relationship**

Restorative justice serves to correct the wrongs, recompense and for reparation what is lost or damaged (c.f. Chapter 2.2.3). In the Namibian context, we should therefore take cognizance thereof that restorative justice means that any object unlawfully taken should be taken back to the rightful owner. Anyone fails to do so is violating the peace of the offended party and robed the peace of the entire community (c.f. Zehr 1990:18). The premise of the researcher is therefore that restorative justice may help to assist the healing process in Namibia. Restorative justice includes the victim, the offender and the community (c.f. Zehr 1990:1981).

### **6.1.6. Doing mission work in a divided society**

The three Lutheran Churches in Namibia are divided along racial or languages boundaries (c.f. Chapter 3). These Lutheran Evangelical Churches in Namibia operates independent from each other. These Lutheran Churches are not divided on theological grounds. They are divided due to the influence of the mission societies which constituted them (Chapter 3.3.1; 3.3.2). Chapter 3 traces the origin of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) from the Scandinavians traditions. ELCIN was established from the activities of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) in Namibia. FELM was formerly known as: Finnish Mission Society (FMS). ELCIN is a daughter church of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, which came to Namibia in 1870 to plant the seed of Christianity in Namibia.

There are three Lutheran Churches in the Republic of Namibia namely, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), formerly, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (ELC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC), formerly known: German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (GELC). ELCRN was born from the Rhenish Evangelical Lutheran Mission of German, which came to do mission work in Namibia in 1842 (Tjibeba 2013:9). Despite, ELCRN a black church, it accommodated most of the Namibia black elites and few European Lutheran whites.

The GELC is a unique Lutheran Church in Namibia. It remained a pure white, Germanic and Lutheran Church in the country. GELC was neither a missionary church nor born from the missionary activities in Namibia. GELC has been a pre-dominant and pure white Lutheran church till the independence of Namibia in 1990. Only then a few blacks joined the membership of this church. These few blacks were the children of the Namibian freedom fights who were born and lived in German during the liberation struggle of Namibia. The divisions were worsened by social-

political, economic and ecclesiastical contexts inter alia colonial rule and apartheid as explained in Chapter 3.3.3.

The Finnish Mission Society worked tirelessly to reconcile Aawambo and Kavango. It was their ministry that reconciled these two groups into one Christian community namely the *Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church (ELOC)*. ELCIN tried to engage other Lutheran family in the co-operation to overcome the spirit of apartness in mission. The “Drie-hoek” co-operation was a starting point. The churches fought together against the policy of separate developments in Namibian society. It gave a sense to the Namibian people to feel that the church is sided with them in breaking the walls of injustice in the society. The Lutheran Churches in Namibia failed to establish a united Lutheran Church. The ELCIN–GELC maintains the practice of racial discrimination and policy of separation development. The constituting of the United Church Council of the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) gives hope to the Lutherans in Namibia to overcome the legacy of apartheid. It is the premise of the researcher that Christians in Namibia can play a role in breaking the walls of division among themselves.

The ELCIN embraces the Finnish Christian tradition (c.f. Chapter 3.1). The ELCIN gained its independence in 1954. After independence ELCIN seeks communion with the fellow Lutheran Churches in the country (c.f. Chapter 3.2.3). It is the premise of the researcher that ELCIN should work with other Namibian Churches in order to challenge the divisions which still exist in Namibia (c.f. Chapter 3.4.2; 3.4.4). The Lutheran Churches have worked and are still seeking to unite the Lutheran church in Namibia.

#### **6.1.7. Engagement with reconciliation**

In this chapter the research discussed ELCIN's engagement with reconciliation. The socio- political situation in Namibia challenged ELCIN to work for peace and justice (c.f. chapter 4.1; 4.2; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.3). The practice of excommunication till late

1970's, in ELCIN caused divisions in marriages and relationships amongst family members. The ELCIN moved from excluding women in decision making structures and ordination to the inclusion of women in decision making structures teaching and ordination (Chapter 4.2.2; 4.2.3). Attention has also been given in the research to the resolve of conflict in ELCIN regarding the Synodical decisions (Chapter 4.6.1; 4.6.2). The Church leadership took ample time to listen to the church members' voices and resolved the cases amicably.

### **6.1.8. The prophetic voice of the church**

The Council of Churches carried out her prophetic voice in a pre-independent Namibia (Chapter 5.2). The Council of Churches in Namibia denounced apartheid and played a huge role in advocating for the freedom of the people of Namibia (Chapter 5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.3.4). The Council of Churches in Namibia played a huge role in unifying all churches, student unions, political parties and civil organizations in order to search for peace and justice in Namibia (Chapter 5.4.). The research highlights also the silence of Council of Churches in Namibia in the post-independence. The Council of Churches in Namibia failed to address issues like the unjust distribution of land and wealth, unemployment, racism and ethnicity as well as the detainee issue (Chapter 5.5.4; Chapter 5.5.5; 5.6).

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The dissertation analyses the meaning of reconciliation in the Old Testament and New Testament. The research also attends to ELCIN's views on reconciliation as well as to some *Oshiwambo* ritual sacrifices, particularly, rituals used to solve conflicts in the community. The main purpose is to find how the ancient *Aawambo* applied rituals to maintain peace and good relations within their communities. It is the premise of the researcher that *Oshiwambo* traditional rituals of reconciliation should be utilized in order to bring about reconciliation. The dissertation recommends to ELCIN the followings:

### **6.2.1. The Finnish missionaries: role models of the ministry of reconciliation**

Aawambo express their gratitude through the saying: *Waa pandula noyaka*. Meaning, unthankful person never contents. Gratitude pays a good relation. The ELCIN will always be in debt to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Namibia for selflessly services rendered by the Finnish missionaries to the Namibian society (see Chapter 3). Their social services were the manifestation of their love for others. The health services they rendered were part of their social responsibility to the Namibian people. The education they provided to the Namibian communities is the intellectual properties of the Namibian society. The gospel messages they preached have changed the Namibians to realize the liberating power of God. The ELCIN should highlight the courage of the missionaries who suffered persecutions by the indigenous leaders without retaliation. ELCIN should develop and cultivate the ethics of love, reconciliation, peace and justice as demonstrated by the Finnish missionaries.

### **6.2.2. Decade of reconciliation with the poor**

Namibia is a free and independent country, but the legacy of colonial as well as apartheid, suffering and hardships are still prevalent in the society. There a high rate of unemployment, especially amongst the youths, in Namibia. The gap between the rich and the poor grows daily. The majority of the citizens of Namibia are poor. They live below the breadline. People are in need of land. Mostly the young generation are landless. There is a dire need for the churches in Namibia to take a “radical reconciliation” seriously (Shaanika 1992:112). Namibians are questioning the presence of the church in the society: Where is the church? Why the church is so silent? They are challenging the churches in Namibia to seek new ways to attend to the social justice issues regarding reconciliation. ELCIN should attend to the outstanding issue of reconciliation. ELCIN should launch a decade for reconciliation: a church in solidarity with the poor.

### **6.2.3. The theological debates on the role of the church in reconciliation**

ELCIN is one of the largest churches in Namibia. She is blessed with human resources. However, ELCIN does not have a culture of theological consultations. She is poor in theological discourses. The church is in dire need of a platform for theological debates on social justice issues. This platform will help the church to sharpen her theological understanding of reconciliation. ELCIN should launch a theological forum in order to discuss topics related to reconciliation. The church is the light of the world. It is not called to shine its light to heaven. It is not called to live in isolation. It is called to shine into the world. It is sent into the society, to be the light of the society. "The Church should follow the examples of her Lord and concentrate on healing and changing people in [Namibia] and transform them into humble, honest, caring and loving women and men" (Kameeta 1998:39). ELCIN should not wait to be asked to address the nation on the issue of reconciliation. It is the task of the church to do so. It is the task of ELCIN to carry out the ministry of reconciliation. ELCIN should take the lead in the creation of awareness of the importance of national reconciliation.

### **6.2.4. Mainstreaming reconciliation in church and society**

The task of the church is to carry out the ministry of reconciliation. The government's task is to keep law and order. The government has a responsibility to maintain peace and justice. As a result, the Namibian government declared the policy of national reconciliation for peace and order in the society (*Constitution of Republic of Namibia* 1990:6). The premise of the researcher is that the ministry of reconciliation and the policy of national reconciliation can serve to safeguard peace and justice in the society. The premise of the researcher is that ELCIN should actively engage with the government with regard to the implementation of the policy of national reconciliation and streamline.

The Namibian Churches and society are hugely divided due to the political, socio-economic and denominational ideologies. These divisions kindled the spirit of hatred, animosity and tribalism among the people of Namibia for example the genocide of

1904 – 1908 by the German government in Namibia. The commemorations of some historical events in Namibia, for example Cassinga day, which is 4 May 1978, are calling back the past into present on a negative way. Usually these events are not commemorated in the spirit of reconciliation. They are days of remembrance. In many case commemorations are putting emphasis on the murder and destruction of life of the fallen heroes and heroines.

Rather emphasis should be placed on the heroic actions of the sacrificial love of the fallen heroes (Shaanika 2011:3). Namibians should commit themselves to the spirit of national reconciliation. ELCIN could suggest to the government to declare one of the public holidays as a day of national reconciliation. A national status confession on remorse should also be formulated to be read on the day of national reconciliation.

One of the outstanding issues in Namibia is the debriefing of the ex –combatants. The legacies of wars and their consequences have negative influences on the ex – combatants. After the independence, the churches in Namibia never attend to the debriefing of the ex –combatants on a systemic way. The Churches in Namibia should attend to the *intelez* and *uutoni* rituals known to the people of Namibia in order to welcome the ex – combatants. The issue of ex-detainee for liberation struggle is still a testing case for the Council of Churches in Namibia. The former detainees suffered torture, humiliation and detention by both through the apartheid forces and through the liberation movement in the exile. They are members of the churches of the Council of Churches in Namibia and they are looking to the churches for healing and counselling.

The Churches in Namibia should learn a lesson from the history of Namibia. The Herero and Nama’s debate on genocide issue against the German government is an example. They are raising their grievances against the German government for its merciless and brutal killings of the Namibians during the years 1904 – 1908. It is a case of more than 100 00 souls perished. If the genocide took place after 112 years ago, but its impact has still a psychological effect to the current generation, how on

earth the issue of former detainees could not hurt? The Churches in Namibia should sensitively resuscitate the discussions on the detainee issues.

### **6.2.5. Lutheran unity in Namibia**

The vision of one Lutheran Church in Namibia is overdue. The end of UELSWA in 1993 (*Omukwetu* no 10, 1994:10) was great concern among those who strive for the Lutheran unity of the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia. The end of UELSWA ceased the expectations of one Lutheran Church. In 2003 the Namibian National Council for – Lutheran World Federation (NNC-LWF) was launched to prepare the establishment of the one Lutheran Church. However, the Namibia National Committee –Lutheran World Federation was dissolved in 2006. It was replaced by the United National Council of the Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Namibia in 2007. Under the said Council, the Church leaders of the three Lutheran churches in Namibia are discussing the way toward the establishment of the one Lutheran Church in Namibia. The researcher therefore suggests to ELCIN in consultation with other Lutheran churches in Namibia:

- i. To establish pilot congregations in Namibia, one in each region of Namibia.
- ii. To engage the youth of the Lutheran family to participate fully in the development of one Lutheran Church.
- iii. To select a preparatory body for one Lutheran Church in Namibia that consists also of youth from the pilot congregations of the United Council of Churches of the Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC – NELC).

### **6.3. Conclusion**

The hypothesis of the study is *the engagement of the ELCIN, as one of the largest Christian denominations in Namibia, regarding reconciliation and restorative justice, in pre-independence and post-independence Namibia, is indicative of important role churches play in the restoration of peaceful and amicable relations in church and society in Namibia.* The mission of the church is to engage in the task of

reconciliation which God in Christ has entrusted to all Christians (c.f. Chapter 2). The Church is called to the ministry of reconciliation (c.f. Chapter 4). The church is sent into the society to emulate the footsteps of Christ Jesus who cared the needy and empowered those who felt outcaste and neglected by social, economical, political, racial and even by ecclesiastical systems and barriers of separations. Reconciliation, however, is a constant challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (c.f. Chapters 2-5).

This study showcases how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia struggle to become a unified church, based on “divide and rule” politics of the German and South African periods, but also on inherent tribal influences which led to heavy debates on “boundaries” within the dioceses – mostly along tribal, language and cultural lines (c.f. Chapters 3 and 4). These chapters highlight important issues to be taken into account for the ecumenical unity within the ELCIN and within the broader oikoumene inter alia (c.f. 3.4.1 Languages and cultural barriers).

The ELCIN together with other member churches of the Council of churches in Namibia actively engaged in ministry of reconciliation during the pre-independent era (c.f. 4.4. The Epistles to the Namibians 1971 & 1974; 5.3.2. Letters to the South African Governors in Namibia; 5.3.6. The Council of the Churches in Namibia and Ai-Gams Declaration). The churches in Namibia did not actively engage in the advocacy for reconciliation, peace and healing in the post-independent Namibia. The churches in Namibia have to revisit their positions pertaining to reconciliation in the post-independent era. Subsequently it is argued in this study that ELCIN, one of the largest denominations in Namibia, was reluctant to speak out regarding the outstanding issues pertaining to reconciliation as well as with regard to social issues in a post-independent Namibia (c.f. chapter 5).

There are many pressing social issues in the post-independent Namibia that need the voice of ELCIN. The church in Namibia still has to attend to the quest for national reconciliation, justice, to issues regarding human dignity and human rights, economic justice as well as the issue of the former detainees. The church in Namibia should take cognisance of Lombard's notion that the society is sick and loosing hope if the church is not paying attention to the needs and the cries of the people in the society (1995:48).

The theological outline of the concept of reconciliation highlights the imperative task of the church as the agent of peace, restorative justice, healing and reconciliation (c.f. 2.2.1. Reconciliation within Judaism; 2.2.2. Atonement and forgiveness as acts of reconciliation; 2.2.3. Restorative justice as a means of reconciliation; 2.3.1 The reconciliatory work of God; 2.3.1.3 Christ as the agent of reconciliation; 2.3.1.3. Christians as ambassadors of reconciliation; 2.3.4. Peace with God; 2.3.5.1. Communion with God as well as 2.4. The Barthian view of reconciliation). Reconciliation is indeed a call for conversion (c.f. 2.5.3). The Church should work within this theological framework in responding to the challenges that are facing her obligatory task of reconciliation in the Namibian society.

The Church received this office of ambassadorship from God, to work on behalf of God for the peace, healing, justice and reconciliation (c.f. 2.3.1.3.). As a result, the church should become advocates for the right of those who are silenced by the political, economic, social, ecclesiastical and tribal orders. The church is the voice of the silenced. It is in such situation that the church should acknowledge that there are people in the society being silenced and need to be advocated for. It is an imperative obligation of the church to speak out under "a given circumstance on social, political and economic issues and in matters of human rights is increasingly being recognized" (Hoffman 1984:12).

The ELCIN like other Namibian churches should engage actively with all role-players regarding the conceptualization and the implementation of the national policy of reconciliation in Namibia (c.f. Chapter 3). Many Namibians lack knowledge about the policy of national reconciliation.

The church in Namibia should take the recognitions of tribalism, unemployment, poverty, unfinished and unresolved issues regarding people who lives with the hurting hearts as the results of the wounds incurred from the pre-independent Namibia. In so doing, however, the Church has to act great sensitivity and dignity.

Amongst others cognisance should be taken in the discourse of national reconciliation of the African understanding of reconciliation in Nambya inter alia 2.6.1. The Aawambo concept of reconciliation; 2.6.4. The Oshiwambo perception of reconciliation; 2.6.4.1 Life is Kalunga's gift; 2.6.4.2 Life is to be respected; 2.6.4.3. Life is unity; 2.7. The ritual expressions of reconciliation namely 2.7.1. The Onkombambinzi (The blood of purification) which includes the oxula ritual (2.7.2.1) and the Uutoni sacrifice (2.7.2.2.).

The ELCIN like other Namibian churches should engage actively with all role-players regarding the implementation of the national policy of reconciliation in Namibia. The church in Namibia should take recognitions of tribalism, unemployment, poverty, unfinished and unresolved issues regarding people who lives with the wounds incurred from the pre-independent Namibia. In addressing these issues the Church has to act with great sensitivity and dignity.

ELCIN like other two Lutheran churches in Namibia; that is ELCRN and ELCIN/GELC represent the majority of the Christian population in the country. A huge responsibility to set an example of reconciliation and forgiveness rests on the church in Namibia. A lack of fellowship, peace, love, justice and reconciliation within the individual Lutheran church and/or unity in the Lutheran family would silence

also the reconciliatory voice of the Lutheran church in the society. The voice of the Lutheran family become real and relevant regarding the ministry of reconciliation when its walk their talk of a genuine unity of the Lutheran Church in Namibia (c.f. 3.3. Relation of the ELCIN to the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC); United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (UELCSWA); The United Church Council of UCC-NELC).

ELCIN in corroboration with member churches of the Council of churches in Namibia should revisit their positions regarding the role of the church in the post independent Namibia. In so doing, the churches should address the unfinished as well the current new socio-economic issues that are unfolding. It is only then; the people in the society could experience a peaceful and amicable situation in Namibia. A church which disobeys its mission of reconciliation betrays its calling.

Issues like the national policy for reconciliation, socio economic and human dignity issues as well as the issue of former "detainees," require further research.

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## The Open Letter 1971

Lutheran World Federation 31/71

OPEN LETTER TO HIS HONOUR THE PRIME MINISTER OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE CHURCH BOARDS: Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church  
P.B. 2015, Ondangwa/Ovamboland

Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA  
(Fhenish Mission Church)  
P.O. Box 5069, Windhoek

His Honour,  
The Prime Minister,  
Mr. B.J. Vorster,  
P R E T O R I A.

His Honour,

After the decision of the World Court at the Hague was made known on 21st June, 1971, several leaders and officials of our Lutheran Churches were individually approached by representatives of the authorities with a view to making known their views. This indicates to us that public institutions are interested in hearing the opinions of the Churches in this connection. Therefore we would like to make use of the opportunity of informing your Honour of the opinion of the Church Boards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA and the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church which represents the majority of the indigenous population of South West Africa.

We believe that South Africa in its attempts to develop South West Africa has failed to take cognizance of Human Rights as declared by U.N.O. in the year 1948 with respect to the non-white population. Allow us to put forward the following examples in this connection:

- (1) The government maintains that by the race policy it implements in our country, it promotes and preserves the life and freedom of the population. But in fact the non-white population is continuously being slighted and intimidated in their daily lives. Our people are not free and by the way they are treated they do not feel safe. In this regard we wish to refer to Section 3 of Human Rights.
- (2) We cannot do otherwise than regard South West Africa, with all its racial groups, as a unit. By the Group Areas Legislation the people are denied the right of free movement and accommodation within the borders of the country. This cannot be reconciled with Section 13 of the Human Rights.
- (3) People are not free to express or publish their thoughts or opinions openly. Many experience humiliating espionage and intimidation which has as its goal that a public and accepted opinion must be expressed, but not one held at heart and of which they are convinced. How can sections 18 and 19 of the Human Rights be realized under such circumstances?

(MORE)

Lutheran World Federation 31/71

(4) The implementation of the policy of the government makes it impossible for the political parties of the indigenous people to work together in a really responsible and democratic manner to build the future of the whole of South West Africa. We believe that it is important in this connection that the use of voting rights should also be allowed to the non-white population. (Section 20 and 21 of the Human Rights)

(5) Through the application of Job Reservation the right to a free choice of profession is hindered and this causes low remuneration and unemployment. There can be no doubt that the contract system breaks up a healthy life because the prohibition of a person from living where he works, hinders the cohabitation of families. This conflicts with sections 23 and 25 of the Human Rights.

The Church Boards' urgent wish is that in terms of the declarations of the World Court and in cooperation with U.N.O. of which South Africa is a member, your government will seek a peaceful solution to the problems of our land and will see to it that Human Rights be put into operation and that South West Africa may become a self-sufficient and independent State.

With high Esteem,

Bishop Dr. L. Auala

Chairman of the Church Board  
of the Ev. Luth. Ovambokavango Church

Moderator Pastor F. Gwaseb

Chairman of the Church Board  
of the Ev. Luth. Church in S.W.A.  
(Rhenish Mission Church)

Windhoek, 30th June, 1971.

ADDENDUM 2

Epistle to Namibians 1971

Lutheran World Federation 31/71

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN OVAMBOKAVANGO CHURCH  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN S.W. AFRICA (RHENISH MISSION CHURCH)  
THE CHURCH BOARDS

To the Congregations and Members of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church and  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in S.W.A. (Rhenish Mission Church)

-----

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

We greet you with the words of Jesus: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19).  
On the 30 June, 1971, we gathered together as the Church Boards of our two  
Lutheran Churches because we felt that we must direct words of leadership and  
guidance to our congregations in this hour of need.

We are concerned about the future of this country and about the future of  
the various peoples who live here. We not only feel this concern today but  
because of the judgment of the World Court given on the 21st June, 1971, we  
can no longer remain silent. We feel that if we, as the Church remain silent  
any longer, we will become liable for the life and future of our country and  
its people.

The judgment of the World Court was the answer to the prayer of many of  
our people, because this judgment involves the hope of freedom and recognition  
of personal worth. We believe that our people would not have taken themselves  
to other bodies and also not to the U.N.O. if the Government of South Africa  
had not withheld from them the basic rights of man.

The mandate which was given to South Africa included the obligation to  
create conditions of peace and freedom and to guarantee such conditions for  
all the inhabitants of South West Africa.

True peace does not allow people to hate each other. But we observe that  
our people are caught up with fear and that the hate between people is increasing,  
especially between white and non-white. In our opinion this fatal development  
is caused and upheld by the policy of apartheid. We believe that a false im-  
pression arises when it is stated that peace reigns in our country. The peace  
is maintained by forceful measures.

To the freedom of the people belongs also the freedom of the spread of  
the gospel. We are concerned that Christians of various population groups are  
hindered by numerous laws and regulations from freely gathering together for  
the word of God.

As a result of the application of the Group Areas Laws the activities of  
the Church are severely restricted and the unity of the various races of the  
Church curtailed. Individual Ministers of the Gospel and Christians are  
filled with fear and distrusted. They are also sometimes hindered in their  
evangelizing by the refusal of permits.

(MORE)

Lutheran World Federation 31/71

The true development of the inhabitants of South West Africa on a Christian basis ought to lead to unity and fraternity between the races. We are convinced that this must be the lasting goal for further and future development. The Government, by the application of the Homelands Policy, constitutes to the creation and continuation forever of the divisions between the races. It is stated that this policy is intended to lead the races to selfgovernment and independence. But our small race groups cannot really be aided by separation. They will be isolated and denied the chance to take a proper part in the development of the country.

We want to also inform the members of our congregations that we are determined to inform the Government of this state of affairs and of our conviction of what changes must occur. We appeal to you to maintain the peace and with a peaceful disposition to continue seeking our brothers in all racial groups. We want to advise you also to build bridges and not to break down contact.

Dear Congregations, we as your Church Boards do not intend sowing seeds of animosity, discord and strife. Our purpose is to stand for the truth and for a better future for our people and races, even when it involves suffering for us.

May the Lord be with you in His Mercy and give you guidance through His Spirit. Let us continue praying for all authorities (1 Tim. 2:1-2), so that they may be prepared to alter the grievous circumstances and to take cognizance of the true interests of this country and its people.

On behalf of the two Church Boards

signed: Dr. Leonard Auala  
Chairman of the Church Board  
of the Ev. Luth. Ovambokavango Church

signed: Paulus Gowaseb  
Chairman of the Church Board  
of the Ev. Luth. Church in S.W.A.  
(Rhenish Mission Church)

Windhoek, 30th June, 1971.

## ADDENDUM 3

### United Nation's Security Council Resolution 435

Namibia

#### Abstract

Resolution 435 (1978) of 29 September 1978 The Security Council, Recalling its resolutions 385 (1976) of 30 January 1976 and 431 (1978) and 432 (1978) of 27 July 1978,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 431 (1978) and his explanatory statement made in the Security Council on 29 September 1978 (S/ 12869),

Taking note of the relevant communications from the Government of **South Africa** to the Secretary-General,

Taking note also of the letter dated 8 September 1978 from the President of the South West Africa People's Organization to the Secretary-General, Reaffirming the legal responsibility of the United Nations over **Namibia**,

1. Approves the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the proposal for a settlement of the **Namibian** situation and his explanatory statement;
2. Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of **South Africa's** illegal administration from **Namibia** and the transfer of power to the people of **Namibia** with the assistance of the United Nations in accordance with Security Council resolution 385 (1976);
3. Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transition Assistance Group in accordance with the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council in paragraph 1 of its resolution 431 (1978), namely, to ensure the early independence of **Namibia** through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations;
4. Welcomes the preparedness of the South West Africa People's Organization to co-operate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from its President of 8 September 1978;

5. Calls upon **South Africa** forthwith to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
6. Declares that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal administration in **Namibia** in relation to the electoral process, including unilateral registration of voters, or transfer of power, in contravention of resolutions 385 (1976), 431 (1978) and the present resolution, are null and void;
7. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council not later than 23 October 1978 on the implementation of the present resolution.

Adopted at the 2087<sup>th</sup> meeting by 12 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

ADDENDUM 4

Ai-Gams Declaration

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EPISCOPAL CHURCHPEOPLE for a FREE SOUTHERN AFRICA

339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012-2725  
(212) 477-0066

30 April 1986

NAMIBIA - THE AI-GAMS DECLARATION

'We, the duly authorized representatives of the undermentioned churches, political parties and groups, women's organizations and the student movement, who represent the overwhelming majority of the Namibian people, having gathered in Klein Windhoek at a meeting under the auspices of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) on the 29th and 30th April 1986 -

Having discussed, reviewed, analyzed in depth the worsening political, economic, social and military situation in Namibia today, having noted the frustration felt by our people at the continued delay in gaining an internationally recognized independence, unanimously resolve as follows:  
1.1 to reject South Africa's continuing delaying tactics and its persistent refusal to have United Nations Security Council resolution 435 of 1978 implemented (which resolution was accepted by all parties concerned, including the Republic of South Africa and the United States of America);

1.2 to reject the unholy alliance between the United States of America and the Republic of South Africa in their attempts to bypass the said United Nations Security Council resolution 435 by linking the independence of Namibia to issues which are totally extraneous, such as the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola;

1.3 to reject the succession of Pretoria installed puppet governments of which the so-called Transitional Government is the latest creation;

1.4 to reject the so-called Transitional Government on the grounds that -

1.41 it is forced upon our people by South Africa; 1.42 it is kept in power only by the sheer brutal force of the army of occupation, the police, 'Koevoet', etc.; 1.43 it is not elected and has no mandate from the Namibian people;

1.5 to reject the increasingly repressive nature and dictatorial actions of the so-called Transitional Government, in particular the latest ban on all gatherings in the Windhoek magisterial district in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act, an act which in itself is such a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights that it has even been abolished in South Africa;

1.6 to reject the illegal presence of the South African army in Namibia, the forced conscription of Namibians, the creation of the so-called South West Africa Territorial Force through which civil war is being forced upon the people of Namibia;

1.7 to condemn all the oppressive and inhuman laws applicable in Namibia, in particular AG 9, AG 26 and the Terrorism Act of 1967;

THEREFORE, WE REAFFIRM -

2.1 the inalienable right of the Namibian people to gain their self-determination and independence now;

2.2 the inviolability of the territorial integrity of our country and our commitment to ONE NAMIBIA, ONE NATION;

2.3 the international status of Namibia and the obligations of the international community;

2.4 that United Nations Security Council resolution 435 is the only peaceful, democratic way of achieving an internationally recognized independence for Namibia.

CONSEQUENTLY, WE SEVERALLY AND COLLECTIVELY COMMIT OURSELVES TO -

3.1 mobilize and conscientize the Namibian masses so as to actively resist the status quo;

3.2 embark on a campaign of positive action aimed at bringing about the immediate and unconditional implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435;

3.3 work towards the abolition of the so-called Transitional Government and its replacement by an internationally recognized and democratically elected government truly representative of the Namibian people;

3.4 carry on the campaign against compulsory military service.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NAMIBIA  
METHODIST CHURCH  
SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLES ORGANIZATION  
DAMARA COUNCIL  
NAMIBIA CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
NUDO PROGRESSIVE PARTY  
NAMIBIA WOMEN'S VOICE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA  
SOUTH WEST AFRICA NATIONAL UNION  
MBANDERU COUNCIL  
NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE PARTY  
NAMIBIA NATIONAL STUDENTS ORGANIZATION  
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

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**EPISCOPAL CHURCHPEOPLE for a FREE SOUTHERN AFRICA**

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1.4 to reject the so-called Transitional Government on the grounds that -  
1.41 it is forced upon our people by South Africa; 1.42 it is kept in power only by the sheer brutal force of the army of occupation, the police, 'Koevoet', etc.; 1.43 it is not elected and has no mandate from the Namibian people;

1.5 to reject the increasingly repressive nature and dictatorial actions of the so-called Transitional Government, in particular the latest ban on all gatherings in the Windhoek magisterial district in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act, an act which in itself is such a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights that it has even been abolished in South Africa;

1.6 to reject the illegal presence of the South African army in Namibia, the forced conscription of Namibians, the creation of the so-called South West Africa Territorial Force through which civil war is being forced upon the people of Namibia;

1.7 to condemn all the oppressive and inhuman laws applicable in Namibia, in particular AG 9, AG 26 and the Terrorism Act of 1967;

**THEREFORE, WE REAFFIRM -**

2.1 the inalienable right of the Namibian people to gain their self-determination and independence now;

2.2 the inviolability of the territorial integrity of our country and our commitment to **ONE NAMIBIA, ONE NATION**;

2.3 the international status of Namibia and the obligations of the international community;

2.4 that United Nations Security Council resolution 435 is the only peaceful, democratic way of achieving an internationally recognized independence for Namibia.

**CONSEQUENTLY, WE SEVERALLY AND COLLECTIVELY COMMIT OURSELVES TO -**

3.1 mobilize and conscientize the Namibian masses so as to actively resist the status quo;

3.2 embark on a campaign of positive action aimed at bringing about the immediate and unconditional implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435;

3.3 work towards the abolition of the so-called Transitional Government and its replacement by an internationally recognized and democratically elected government truly representative of the Namibian people;

3.4 carry on the campaign against compulsory military service.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NAMIBIA  
METHODIST CHURCH  
SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLES ORGANIZATION  
DAMARA COUNCIL  
NAMIBIA CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
NUDO PROGRESSIVE PARTY  
NAMIBIA WOMEN'S VOICE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA  
SOUTH WEST AFRICA NATIONAL UNION  
MBANDERU COUNCIL  
NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE PARTY  
NAMIBIA NATIONAL STUDENTS ORGANIZATION  
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

## ADDENDUM 5

### **Resoluton of the Central Committee of Swapo adopting the Policy of National Reconciliation<sup>3</sup>**

The Central Committee of SWAPO of Namibia at its extraordinary session held in Luanda, from February 6-11, 1989, conducted an in-depth review of the political situation within Namibia and critically analysed the diplomatic efforts aimed at the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia. The extra-ordinary meeting of the Central Committee was convinced that there were real chances of a peaceful resolution of the Namibian independence question. The Central Committee therefore, decided:

1. SWAPO was committed to the resolution of the independence question through the United Nations controlled and supervised election as provided for under United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (1978). The President of SWAPO was mandated to inform the United Nations Secretary General accordingly.
2. SWAPO in its capacity as the leading political force in the liberation of Namibia recognised its responsibility to the Namibian people. Hence, the Central Committee resolved to adopt a policy of national reconciliation in order to enhance the chances of peace in Namibia.
3. The Central Committee decided that the policy of national reconciliation should form the corner-stone of current and future SWAPO activities in Namibia.
4. This was regarded as an imperative necessity in view of the polarization imposed on the Namibian people by the colonial war.
5. Mistrust, suspicion and fear are some of the ugly features of the Namibian society today. Communities have been set against each other, tribe against tribe, race against race., wife against husband, son against father, daughter

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<sup>3</sup> SWAPO press release on its policy of national reconciliation Reproduced by the Namibia Communications Centre Solidarity Freedom – Justice SWAPO Press release Luanda, 23 May 23, 1989. Page 552

against mother, etc.,. The SWAPO policy of national reconciliation is aimed therefore to heal these wounds of war.

6. The Central Committee, within the frame-work of the policy of national reconciliation, issued a general pardon to all the misguided elements who infiltrated the rank and file of SWAPO with the aim of serving the war efforts of the adversary.
7. SWAPO had to isolate these misguided elements from the general public in order to protect the struggle for national liberation and also at the same time to protect them from the wrath of the people.
8. Now that the war has come to an end that resolution 435 is being implemented, thus, finally paving the way for peace for all Namibians, SWAPO, therefore, decided to pardon and release all those elements who were misguided by the adversary during the course of the war.
9. They have been freed and are already registered with the UNECR to return to Namibia like all other Namibians in exile who voluntarily decided to return to their Motherland - Namibia.
10. The Central Committee of SWAPO calls all Namibians to return to the people's fold and work for peace, unity and national reconciliation.

