THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN) AND POVERTY, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA - A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signed: _____   Date_____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late mother Eunike Nakuuvandi Nelago Iiputa (Niitenge), who passed away while I was working on this study. If mom was alive, she could share her joy with others to see me completing this doctoral study.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
ACSA	Anglican Church of Southern Africa
AAP	Anglican AIDS Programme
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AMEC	African Methodist Episcopal Church
CAA	Catholic AIDS Action
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCDA	Christian Community Development Association
CAFO	Church Alliance for Orphans
CUAHA	Churches United Against HIV/AIDS
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
COPSA	Church of the Province of Southern Africa
COSDEC	Community Skills Development Centre
CLIP	Community Land Information
DELK	Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
ELC	Evangelical Lutheran Church
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCF	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland
ELOC	Evangelical Owambo-Kavango Church
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
EIN	Ecumenical Institute for Namibia
EASA	ELCIN AIDS Action
ELCSWA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
FMS	Finnish Missionary Society
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FCA	Finn Church Aid

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GELCSWA	German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa
GELC	German Evangelical Lutheran Church
GRN	Government Republic of Namibia
HIV	Human Immune Virus
KAYEC	Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre
LMS	London Missionary Society
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWF/NNC	Lutheran World Federation-Namibia National Committee
LUCSA	Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa
MCN	Methodist Church in Namibia
MOHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
NGK	Neder Gereformeerde Kerk
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PLWHA	People Living With HIV and AIDS
RMC	Rhenish Mission Church
RMS	Rhenish Missionary Society
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCN	Reformed Church in Namibia
RCN	Rhenish Church in Namibia
RRR	Repatriation Resettlement and Reconstruction
SWA	South West Africa
SWANLA	South West Africa Native Labour Association
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples Organization
SWATF	South West African Territorial Forces
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force
SDFN	Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia

UNO	United Nations Organization
USA	United States of America
UELCSWA	United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa
UCCA	United Congregational Church in Southern Africa
UCC-NELC	United Church Council of the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
YMCA	Young Women Christian Association
WMS	Wesleyan Missionary Society
WCC	World Council of Churches

ABSTRACT

This study is an evaluative study of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). It is presupposed in this study that, although the ELCIN, since it became autonomous in 1954, has a long history of doing mission and diaconal work according to her Constitution, it has been recorded that, the Church is more and more lacking in the capacity to meet the challenges and needs of the Namibian post-independent society and subsequently cannot effect social transformation, yet it undoubtedly has the potential. This study focuses on the communities of the Ondangwa and Oshakati informal Settlements situated in the Oshana Region of northern Namibia, in the former homeland of *"Owamboland."*

The study is an overview of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) with regard to her public witness before Namibia's independence that is during 1971 to 1989 and seeks a better understanding of her functionality fundamental to the *Missio Dei.* Throughout its history, the Church has been called to have a deep concern for the poor and oppressed. The post-Namibian socio-economic problems present a huge challenge to the church, thus raising questions such as: How well has the Church been responding to the challenges of our times? How helpful has it been to those who turn to it to seek social justice? How helpful has it been to those who seek economic and political justice? How helpful has it been to those seeking gender equality and to the marginalised? How helpful has it been to those infected, affected and afflicted by HIV/AIDS? In short, how helpful and relevant is the Church in addressing persons, laws, structures and institutions that degrade and oppress God's people? These questions arise from concern regarding the emerging culture of corruption and crimes in the nation as well as questions concerning the prophetic task of the Church regarding socio-political and economic issues.

It is argued in this study that the socio-economic challenges faced by the informal settlement inhabitants pose a challenge to the Church regarding poverty. A holistic approach to Church's mission in context should embrace radical discipleship, coupled with socio-political and economic involvement, integrating both economic, social, ecological, and spiritual change, and leading to healing and transformation. This means that the mission of God is as comprehensive, broad and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence that is why spiritual and physical ministry cannot be done separately. A holistic mission approach will enable the Christian faith to penetrate and have its roots deep in the Namibian soil. The most

adequate formulation subsumes the total mission of the church under the biblical concept of *marturea* (witnessing), *kerugma* (proclamation), *koinonia* (fellowship) *didache* (teaching) and *diakonia* (service). The context should indicate where the emphasis ought to be, and the circumstances dictate the way in which this witness has to be communicated. It is of cardinal (paramount) importance for the Church to continuously minister to the marginalised because of its concern and divine calling to the *Missio Dei.* The empowerment of people in development at the grassroots level is crucial to overcoming oppression and exploitation.

The Church, particularly the Evangelical Lutheran in Church in Namibia (ELCIN), has a responsibility to foster and encourage self-reliance in order that, people can exercise their rights to determine their own future, rights which include sovereignty over natural resources, land, production and distribution. It is argued in this study, based on an analysis of the Church as a Community called by God that the essence of community development and the people-centred participatory development process, is that the Church as a Community-based organization is essentially best served in effecting social change by orientating itself according to the people-centred participatory development approach. The conclusion is drawn, among the key challenges identified, that there is a need for the church to evidence holistic theology and sustainable action with regard to social responsibility. Action remains, for the most part, in a dominant charity mode. Partnership, in its various forms, is identified as necessary and as the more sustainable strategy in a context of inequality. Recommendations for action are proposed at the end of this study in order to guide the ELCIN in areas such as Ondangwa and Oshakati, to become a meaningful role player in these communities.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is 'n evaluerende studie van die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibie (ELKIN). Daar word in hierdie studie veronderstel dat, hoewel die ELKIN, sedet dit in 1954 outonoom het, 'n lang geskiedenis het van missie en diakonale wek volgens haar Grondwet, dit aangeteken is dat die Kerk is meer en meer aan die kapasiteit ontbreek om te voldoen aan die uitdagings en die behoeftes van die Namibiese post-onafhanklike samelewing en daarom geen invloed op sosiale transformasie het nie, maar ongetwyfeld die potensiaal daartoe het. In hierdie studie word gefokus op die gemeenskappe van Ondangwa en Oshakati se informele nedersettings gelee in die Oshana-streek noorde van Namibie, in die voormalige tuisland van *"Owamboland."*

Die doel is om 'n oorsig van die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibie (ELKIN) met betrekking tot haar openbare getuienis voor Namibie se onafhanklikwording in die tydperk 1971 tot 1989, te gee en om 'n beter begrip van haar funksies onderliggend aan die *Missio Dei* te bewerstelling. Dwarsdeur die geskiedenis, is die kerk geroep is om 'n diepe besorgheid vir die armes en onderdruktes te he. Die post-Namibiese sosioekonomiese problem bied 'n groot uitdaging aan die kerk, dus die vehoging in die aantaal vrae soos: Hoe goed het die Kerk ge reageer op die uitdagings van ons tyd? Hoe dra die Kerk tot die soeke na sosiale geregtigheid? Hoe nuttig is dit aan diegene wat die ekonomiese en politieke geregtigheid soek? Hoe dra die Kerk by tot die soeke na geslagsgelykheid en hulp aan diegene wat gemarginaliseer word? Watter hulp bied bied die Kerk aan diegene wat met MIV/vigs besmet is of wat daardeur geraak en verdruk word? In kort, hoe nuttig en relevant is die kerk in die aanspreek van persone, wette, structure en instellings wat God se volk verneder en verdruk? Hierdie vrae ontstaan as gevolg van die kommer wat ontstaan weens die opkomende kultuur van korrupsie en misdaad in die land sowel as vrae oor die profetiese taak van die Kerk ten opsigte van sosio-politieke en ekonomiese kwessies.

Daar word aangevoer word in hierdie studied at die sosio-ekonomiese van die inwoners van die informele nedersetting 'n uitdaging aan die kerk ten opsigte van armoede. 'n holistiese benadering tot die Kerk se sending in die konteks moet omhels radikale dissipelskap, tesame met 'n sosio-politieke en ekonomiese betrokkenheid, die integrasie van beide die ekonomiese, sosiale, ekologiese, en geestelike verandering behels. Dit lei tot genesing en transformasie. Dit beteken dat die missie van God net so omvattende, breed en diep is soos die behoeftes en vereistes van die menslike bestaan, dit is waarom die geestelike en die

fisiese ministerie kan nie apart gedoen kan word nie. 'n holistiese missie benadering sal die Christelike geloof in staat stel om deur te dring en het sy wortels diep in die Namibiese grond. Die mees geskikte formulering behels die totale missie van die kerk onder die Bybelse konsep van *marturea* (getuie), *kerugma* (verkondiging), *koinonia* (gemeenskap) en *diakonia* (diens). Die konteks behoort te le en die omstandighede dikteer die manier waarop hierdie getuienis gekomminikeer word. Dit is van kardinale belang vir die Kerk om voortdurend die Word aan hierdie mense te bring, en om hul te versorg, in hehoorsaamhed aan die goddelike roeping tot die *Missio Dei.* Die bemagtiging van mense en hul ontwikkeling op voetsoolvlak is noodsaaklik vir die voorkoming van onderdrukking en uitbuiting.

Die kerk, veral die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibie (ELKIN), het 'n verantwoordelikheid om selfstangigeheid te be vorder en aan te moedig, sodat mense hul regte, hul eie toekoms, soewereiniteit oor natuurlike hulpbronne, die land, produksie en verspreiding kan bepaal en uitoefen. Daar word aangevoer in hierdie studie, wat gebaseer is op 'n analise van die Kerk as 'n Gemeenskap wat deur God geroep is, dat die essensie van ontwikkeling van die gemeenskap en die mens-gesentreerde deelnemende ontwikkeling proses, is dat die Kerk as 'n gemeenskaps-baseerde organisasie in wese die beste gedien word in die bewerkstelliging van sosiale verandering, deur om te orienteer in die rigting van mens-gesentreerde deelnemende ontwikkeling. Nadat sleutel uitdagings uitgeken word, word die studie afgesluit deurdat daar tot die slotsam gekom word dat daar getuiens gelewer moet word holistiese teologie en volhoubare aksie met betrekking tot sosiale verantwoordelikheid. Aksie sal nog steeds hoofsaaklik liefdadig van aard wees maar daar word vasgestel dat Vennootskappe, in die konteks van ongelykheid, die mees volhoudbare strategie blyk te wees. Aanbevelings vir aksie word aan die einde van hierdie studie gedoen om die ELKIN te lei in gebiede soos Ondangwa and Oshakati, 'n betekenis volle rol speel.

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and methods of working with the poor in African cities and squatter settlements. I thank him for being always available despite his busy schedule. As a mentor and academic supervisor, has been a reliable sounding board, critical voice and source of great moral support from my first encounter with him during my Master's degree studies up until now. He has inspired my Community Development and Witness (Theology and Development) Studies at Stellenbosch and contributed to this study through his encouragement, critical comments, and suggestions. Words are not enough when attempting to express my sincere heartfelt thanks and gratitude for his patience, sound advice, admonition and encouragement on this journey; I learnt more than academic requirements for my studies. I will always treasure his fruitful insights. It is my prayer that the Lord almighty may continue to uphold him and increase grace upon his life and ministry as he continues to serve Him.

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Soli Deo Gloria*/Esimano olyaKalunga awike!*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 INTRODUCTION

The urban informal communities are the poorest communities in Namibia. Due to the poverty that occurs in these disadvantaged communities, many people living in such areas experience pain and suffering. Some of these people are attached to local churches, hoping to find hope, love, to be cared for, and most of all, to be comforted. This means that local churches in their ministry should get to know their members' circumstances, experiences, needs and problems. Pieterse (2001: 22) states that a congregation in which preaching takes place is a serving community. He went further by saying that the local church does not exist for its own sake but for the sake of serving the world. Hence, the congregation is a serving and sharing community. Urbanization, poverty and unemployment are one of the most serious post independent challenges facing the Churches in Namibia, particularly the Lutheran Church of which ELCIN is the largest.

The research topic, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and poverty, with specific reference to semi-urban communities in northern Namibia", is of relevance to the capacity of the Church; in challenging its Diakonia and Social Services Department. New approaches are needed in response to human crisis and to carry out the diaconal mission of the church in today's changing world and so that the church can become an effective agent (catalyst) for social change and in the process of developing a theology of Christian community development. Bosch (1991: 389) states that there is a need to identify the church's role in society of being in context as both a holistic theological and as a sociological reality. Within disadvantaged communities such as the informal settlements in Ondangwa and Oshakati, the Church could and should be a key role player in addressing socio-economic challenges. The practical question is how to stimulate, service and sustain multi-pronged strategies for church involvement in combating poverty and promoting a kind of human development so that people might experience what Christ called "the abundant life" [Jn. 10:10] (Hall 1990: 243). In cases such as: socio-political and economic (context) situation, one should question the old theological debate whether spiritual goods are qualitatively more

important in the nourishment of the life than material ones. What is needed today is human development and not relief work, because the rationale behind relief work is different from that behind development.

The researcher is of the opinion based on the actual socio-political and problem of urbanization (realities of urban challenges) in the northern Namibian context that the role of the ELCIN in community-based development at this time should be to respond positively to the socio-economic challenges facing the modern Namibian society, especially the urban dwellers (inhabitants) and to help to reduce violence and poverty; and assist with skills training to negotiate mutually beneficial agreements on critical issues such as; land, housing, health and education. Since Diakonia is service work based in a Christian love for one's neighbour, that knows no boundaries, in practice it means working on behalf of and alongside the marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities. As agents of transformation, healing and reconciliation, the Church must engage with people who are marginalized, such as persons with HIV/AIDS, or who live in poverty or are affected by violence. Our approach should be characterized by compassion, mutuality and an eagerness to understand and further the struggles of those who seek justice. Christ is the source of the Church's hope for abundant life for all, but structures and practices can sometimes impede that hope from being realized. Such cases call for change.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

People of the world are moving to cities around the globe at an amazing speed. For better or worse, rural populations are declining and urban centres are increasing in destiny and absolute numbers. In the urban context unchecked population growth leads to poverty (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 265-269; Harper 1999). All towns or cities around the globe have *inter alia* places of residential space, transportation line, economic activities, service infrastructure, commercial areas and public buildings. The character of urban environments throughout the world is the outcome of interactions among, a host of environment, economic, technological, social and demographic forces that operate at a variety of geographic scales. In most cases, it has been reported that people are always seeking beautiful cities to dwell in, even though much of our urban experience is very discouraging. The economic environment of contemporary African communities is a grim one, known to be burdened with skyrocketing unemployment, broken families and social disintegration. The city promises

relationships of security, justice, and sharing; and yet, the urban dwellers constantly fail to realise that promise, and experience instead urban violence, injustice, and deprivation. When we speak of cities today, we may have in our mind the plight of city dwellers such as poverty, homelessness, shelters, soup kitchens, drugs abuse, and the problem of isolation and loneliness, or on the other hand, ambitions, power, and excitement. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 235) note:

> Physical needs such as food, shelter, exercise and a healthy environment are covered by physical development-stature. And the need to develop, nurtures, and maintains horizontal relationships with other individuals and groups are covered under social development-favour with man.

The cities of the Third World are growing very rapidly (Greenway 1979: 88). This results from rapid rates of population growth among urban populations, migration from rural areas into cities and the sprawl of many cities over outlying towns and villages. It results in an increasing number of cities with large populations but infrastructures built for much smaller populations (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 291-292; Linthicum 1991: 17). Slums and shanty towns go up and growing fast, but this phenoron puts a strain on infrastructure and public health and threatens social stability. Housing is often woefully inadequate. Many basic public services are beyond government's capacity to provide (Tonna 1982: 78; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 292). Todaro (1989: 349) states:

> Unchecked urbanization of the developing world is placing a strain on infrastructure and public health and threatens social stability. Shantytowns and similar makeshift settlements represent over one-third of developing country urban residences. About half of the urban labour force works in the informal sector of low-skilled, low-productivity, often self-employed jobs in petty sales and services.

The urbanisation process is also one of the most significant factors also shaping Southern Africa (Greenway & Monsma 1989). One of the major challenges facing the developing world today, including Namibia, is the phenomenon of urban growth. The cities of Namibia, like other African cities, took root more by default than by design and as such it causes challenges to the country. Cities in Africa are the result of mushrooming towns. Most African cities started off as slowly growing towns, well integrated with the surrounding rural areas. Some other cities originated as commercial, administrative, colonial or religious centres (Shorter 1991: 22-25). Hughes & Bennett (1998: 285) state:

> Urbanisation, in itself, conflicts with Gospel values as it favours the growth of secularism, which does not recognize God. The impact of secularization is indeed a major cause of concern to the church. It is against this background, that urban ministry is a challenge to the mission of the church today.

Namibia became independent in 1990 with a well acclaimed constitution. One of the major problems in Namibia today is urbanisation, i.e. people flocking from the rural areas into towns and cities in the hope of finding jobs so that they can live a good life. New towns and semi-urban settlements in Namibia were established after her independence in the year 1990. Establishment of new settlements combined with freedom of movement, allowed and inspired many people, especially young people, both men and women, to rush to urban centres, often to the slums around the cities in search of work (job) or for mire adventures. The most populated area is Katutura in Windhoek, but other cities struggling with similar problems are: Walvis Bay, Gobabis, Rundu, Oshakati and Ondangwa. The mushrooming of shantytowns, corrugated-iron shacks and informal settlements *("uumbashu")* around cities and towns became common. Rising unemployment, poverty, violence, overwhelming crimes rates, corruption and lack of moral fibre characterize the socio-economic and political context (Nambala 2003: 7-8; Pomuti *et al* 2005: 14). The absence of employment and basic needs such as food, proper shelters, clothes and other used or known life supportive systems, accorded unemployed masses too much free time for ill-use. Hence many people were drawn into diverse social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, criminal and violent acts, robbery, stock-and other property theft, shoplifting and housebreaking for survival purposes. Urban settings, especially the squatter areas became placers of retrogression and dissolutions, instead of being havens and anchorage for progression and development (Shorter 1991: 51).

Ondangwa and Oshakati are major towns in Owamboland, the former homeland of the Aawambo people in northern Namibia. From the beginning, these two towns have always attracted people due to educational and medical facilities as well as their locality positions as the main economic and communication centres in the former homeland of Owambo. These towns were used as assembly centres for the contract labour system that employed contract labourers from the north to work in mines and farms in the southern part of Namibia. Since the mid 1990ies informal settlements have been organized around Ondangwa and Oshakati Townships. Urban migration breeds poverty and the consequent social erosion, promoting the gap between rich and poor. Such a scenario favours human exploitation and unjust working conditions. In commenting about the exploitation of unskilled labour in the northern Namibian urban centres, Pomuti *et al* (2005: 22) notes that, "Approximately 40% of 45 694 residents of Ondangwa and 60% of 50 000 residents of Oshakati are settled in "informal"

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settlement areas on land for which they have no tenure rights and which are insufficiently serviced".

Most of the people who are settled in 'informal' settlements are Namibian Aawambo-speaking people from the seven Owambo kingdoms of: Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi, and Ombalantu (Hangula 1993: 4). Squalid shanties are pressed together in precarious balance. These settlements have got mainly communal services, such as water standpipes and ablution blocks shared by groups of households. Sanitary facilities are particularly lacking or badly maintained, roads and drainage are sub-standard and streetlights are few and far between. The majority of households in the informal settlements are female-headed households (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 14). Those urban dwellers who cannot find employment in the formal sector seek livelihoods in the informal economy; that is why most of them survive by selling "*okapana" (a term used to designate all kinds of food fried or cooked in the street).* The saying: "where there is a hungry woman, there is a hungry child" is now a reality. Those people who live in such a pathetic condition within Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements are mainly informal residents in communities characterized by levels of poverty, food security, and HIV/AIDS. Both Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Councils, like other new local governments, do not have capability to cater for the needs of the fast growing population of urban poor. In this situation, it must be noted that these communities are in need of basic needs such as; provision of land, water supply, sound relations between Town Councils and Communities, as well as good governance based on popular participation. Elected councillors and council officials are without adequate skills, knowledge, and experience, and few alternatives to their conventional roles as service providers exist on Namibia. They find it difficult to envision the totality of their roles as service providers and facilitators of social and economic development that benefit their communities and then to initiate and co-ordinate effective actions (Hangula 1993: 23, 26; Pomuti *et al* 2005: viii).

There is a negative conception on the part of those in government authority towards people who live in such a pathetic condition in the informal settlements. Sometimes the government regarded those people as useless, drunkards, lazy, and being always engaged in sexual immorality (Burkey 1996: 3). Sadly, politicians often pay attention to the poor only when they need their votes. Refuse and garbage are seldom collected where the urban poor live and, and as a result, these areas propagate diseases, epidemics and infections of all kinds

(Shorter 1991: 138). This means that both during the period of colonialism and the period following the attainment of political independence, the basic issues that could bring about happiness to the majority were never addressed. Yet, political independence was supposed to be the gateway to real freedom from want and to a conducive environment for a culture of inclusiveness wherein everybody feels equal and as happy as the next person. Thus, in most cases, the residents of the informal settlements are to a large extent excluded from urban services. Although the poor maintain the city by providing services for the city's wealthier population, they are not accorded equal rights with the city's rich. Shorter (1991: 139) notes:

> The migrant becomes a non-person, a surplus individual, an illegal and unwanted intruder in the eyes of the affluent established urban dweller. A situation has developed in the cities and towns of Africa that, if it is not apartheid in a racist sense, is analogous to the apartheid.

Although most households possess individual service connections for water supply and sewerage. Few people have regular employment and the little income that they do receive goes entirely to meet minimum survival needs. Most are at best nominally illiterate, and the government has failed to provide adequate education for children.

To feed a large family both parents have to seek employment. The children are insufficient cared for. They may even be taken out of school prematurely to help earn living; some never make it to go to school at all. Most of children spend their time out on the streets begging for money, shining shoes, washing cars or occasionally even trying to steal money from old age people. Nürnberger (1999: 106) states that, "They hang around in streets and receive a street corner education. They begin to smoke, use drugs, get involved in gang warfare and become sexually active at an early age." Furthermore, there are no continuing opportunities of any kind for vocational or technical training for the unemployed.

Addiction is a major problem. The selling of *"Otombo"* brew and beer are readily available, and drug usage is common among younger people. There is much sickness and diseases due to poor and dangerous working conditions together with new and returning diseases like HIV/AIDS and TB, hit and affect those who are already vulnerable to financial hardship and poor housing conditions. Many diseases such as gastroenteritis, typhoid and cholera are water-borne (cf. Green 2003: 104). Most household in the informal settlements lack organizational structures that would permit them to address problems or seize opportunities that require collective action. Individual households, lack the connections that would bring them information about access to better skills, to more productive activities, to public

services, to better health, to technical improvements of their housing and generally about how to participation in decisions affecting their lives. With the influx of job-seekers, the lack of housing became a serious problem, that is why many people who migrated from rural areas to towns are to be found in pathetic condition and living in shanties built from the easiest obtainable materials such as carton boxes, plastic and scrap metal which provides little protection during periods of violent weather. Many people tried to meet their accommodation needs by erecting shacks of corrugated iron in the periphery of formal settlement area (Hangula 1993: 23). Against this background, HIV/AIDS is flourished. The result is orphans and vulnerable children without parents. Many orphans who lose their parents at a young age grow up as street children, while others are forced to provide for themselves in child-headed households to avoid being separated from siblings or to grow up in often overcrowded grandparent-headed households.

1. 3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The extent of socio-economic realities of Namibia enhances a feeling of disempowerment in disadvantaged communities. While the majority of disadvantaged communities feel unable to change their own destiny and escape poverty, advantaged communities feel overwhelmed especially in the face of the increasing difficulty to maintain their own living standards. The church has a long history as a pioneer in social involvement, both globally and locally, and it has played a pivotal role in the creation of soft infrastructure such as: schools, hospitals and welfare institutions (Korten 1990: 116; Pierson (1993: 8) in Bowers (2005); Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 4-12). The Christian Church in Namibia, particularly the Lutheran Church of which ELCIN is the largest, is an important part of the civil society and it is present even in many small communities that are situated out of reach from centrally located services. It has a long history of providing pastoral care, medical services, community support and education and unparalleled local networks (Nambala 1994; Lehtonen1999). However, the churches are facing a historically and practically novel situation with rapid urbanization, increasing poverty, worsening social, housing and health problems; including the implication of the spread of HIV and impacts of the growing prevalence of AIDS.

The Church in Namibia has been struggling in the fight against racism, injustice and apartheid which caused poverty to many, particularly black Namibians who lives in the northern part of the country (the former homeland of Owamboland) which was affected

heavily by the war of liberation. Further more, during the Namibian struggle for liberation (1966-1989) until independence in 1990, the Church was a prominent opponent of apartheid done by the South African racist regime and often the voice of the disempowered black masses. It played a pivotal role by being the voice of the voiceless, the partner in the struggle for freedom and justice (Katjavivi 1989: 133-161; Nambala 1994: 133-136; Buys & Nambala 2003: 325). The struggle for national independence also united Namibians across their diversity in many ways: chief amongst these was the common quest for freedom and to live in one free country as a nation. These included church leaders, traditional and community leaders, women, students and workers, waging the struggle in their own ways (Isaak 1997: 37-47). During that time, it was a great honour for many to be associated with the Church, particularly ELCIN. However things have changed since independence in 1990, the Church has been almost mum on many of the social issues facing its members in their day to day lives. The poor and the neglected of society such as the inhabitants of informal settlements in particular, are fast losing interest in the Church and its programmes. The Church may still be growing numerically, but it might be declining in relevance, efficacy and popularity (Munyika 2004: 1). That is one of the serious post independent challenges facing the Namibian Churches, particularly the Lutherans of which the ELCIN is the largest.

The Church has enormous potential to play a major role in developmental work in the Namibian context. Many of us think that the church's role in development is to enable the lame and the poor of our society to rise up and walk and not just to continually bombarding them with alms (Kushera 1991: 5). Isaak in (Koegelenberg 1992: 11) writes:

> Namibian independence challenges the churches and the society to be involved in development instead of relief work. What is needed today is human development and not relief work. The rationale behind relief work is different from that behind development.

However, the Church does not realise the above-mentioned potential "insofar as it fails both its sociological and its theological functions, it is unable to provide strength and healing for the painful process of social transformation. The Church appears to have a development problem in its own. If leadership could be taught a methodology for facilitating the mobilisation of church members, and of mediating them and the remote social structures of their society, then a process of transformation could begin to take place. This process would ultimately result in a stronger church as well as a stronger community" (Koegelenberg 1992: 82). In the light of the above quotes, I would say that, the Church should play a role as an

enabler, motivator and empowerer of people in various aspects related to economic development.

It has been reported that, at this time, in the midst of socio-economic challenges faced by those who live in disadvantaged urban communities, the Church has neglected its prophetic role of being the barometer of the conscience of people; even though it is called to be a central institution for, especially the marginalised and neglected of society (cf. August 1999; 2010). Churches are quilty of being open only on Sunday mornings and being almost irrelevant to the felt needs of people around them. The problem statement therefore poses the question as to the level and/or character of the Church's involvement in response to the plights of the urban poor and marginalised ones of society. The Church is less visible in towns than in the rural areas, and finds it harder to make headway against the materialism implied by modernization (Shorter 1991: 142). Therefore, being the Church in the city means locating in and among the poor. There is a number of negative implications that accompany urbanization such as; secularization, poverty, pollution, and disorientation among them. Secularization results from disadvantaged people busily searching for survival strategies with little time, if any, for worship services. Secularization as a process levees no part of urban life untouched; politics, economics, education, and communication feel its impact.

Diakonia has been an integral part of the holistic ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) since its beginning with the arrival of the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) in Namibia in 1870. Traditionally, as part of parish ministries, the Churches particularly the ELCIN have been carrying out diakonia in the parishes; mainly by visiting the poor, the sick, the disabled and the elderly for their basic wellness (ELCIN Constitution: Regulation 98: 2). Assistance to those in need included washing and feeding them, cleaning their places (dwellings), and bringing them to the attention of the parish leadership has been provided mostly on individual basis. **It is presupposed in this study that the daconal service of the Curch (ELCIN) is more and more lacking in capacity and inadequate in addressing the many socio-economic challenges such as poverty facing the modern post-independent Namibian society and subsequently cannot effect social transformation, yet it undoubtedly has the potential. And yet the ELCIN, as part of the diaconal mission of the church, is obliged to address these challenges.** In other words, diakonia (community development) is, in essence, understood as service work in support of the marginalised and vulnerable of the society.

How does the Church, particularly the ELCIN, affirm the dignity of people, motivate them, and help them to take responsibility for their own lives? How best to mobilise and equip the poor, through personal motivation and structural change, how to be actively involved in the development process? This research problem is rooted in the conviction that the Church as a community-based organization amongst the marginalised can be an effective vehicle for community development due to the biblical commitment to the poor. It has the capacity in terms of capital and resourceful members, and has the understanding and experience of social realities and the holistic nature of her activity to help the people concerned to acquire the broad minds and the ability to investigate their environment with a view to discerning the problems therein.

This study will endeavour to show that the church as the representative of God in the community has an important role to play in people's socio-economic needs. The Church as an institution in the community cannot separate itself from the community, it should, however, be part of it. It is presupposed in this study that the diaconal ministry has been greatly neglected within the ELCIN. The emphasis over the past several decades has been on 'mission and evangelism' rather than on 'practical caring and diakonia'. There is, however, a growing awareness that this ministry of service (diakonia) and caring is urgently needed. This study challenge the Church to act as a social conscience and not a muted conscience, to break its silence and to take on the task is has towards the poor and negelected of society. The primary aim of this study is to challenge the Diaconal and Social Ministry of the ELCIN to respond positively to the socio-economic challenges faced by Namibian Aawambo-speaking people living in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The task of the ELCIN, as outlined in Article 4 of the Constitution and Regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is to "preach the gospel of Jesus Christ through holding divine worship services, administering the sacraments, pastoral counselling, educating the youth, demonstrating Christian love through deeds, and doing mission and diaconal work." It is essential to note that demonstrating Christian love through deeds in essence embodies the last two points of doing mission and diaconal work, and presents a significant portion of the role of the Church in society. Needless to say, however, given the

many social issues that exist within the social fabric of Namibian society, fulfilling the role of mission and diaconal work can be a difficult one, but is imperative nonetheless. This means that the Church, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), should take care of the poor, love them and embrace them. By doing this as a Church, poor people will realise that they are humans: they will find hope, and they will realise that they are in the image of God. If the marginalised or poor people in the community are not part of decision making in the community, certainly development is not centred on them. It is for this reason that Eddie Bruwer (1997: 45) asked the question, what is the place of the poor in the Christian community? This question posed by Bruwer shows that everyone in the community has a right to be treated as a human being, as we are created in the image of God. And development should put people first.

The reason for this topic, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and poverty, with specific reference to semi-urban communities in northern Namibia, was selected is because of the issue of socio-economic challenges such as poverty which we face daily in our most disadvantaged urban informal communities, particularly in the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati. In this regard the Church should practice its incarnational ministry or duty as messengers of hope. August (1999: 1; 2010: vii) puts this clearly when he states that the church is a central institution and location of especially the marginalised ones in society. It therefore stands in an acknowledged, favourable position when it comes to the development of the marginalised and the restoration and healing of the community. At general level, development may be defined as the improvement of the life chances and living conditions of residents in a given community, particularly with regard to the poor of that community. One of the problem which has been recorded today is that, the Church, particularly the ELCIN is not involved herself in developing her communities as the missionaries (FELM) have done in the past. Concerning the Church's involvement in development works, August (2005: 70) states:

> From a very early stage, during the missionaries' era, it has been recorded that, the inhabitants were helped to erect simple structures for each family and were taught to respect the neighbour's property. With Christian education (teaching) in the centre of the community's life, they (the inhabitants) were also trained to read and write, to garden and to herd their livestock properly as well as to protect the interest of the common good. Thus skills-training was integral component of empowering the people.

More concretely, within contemporary Namibian cities and towns, the major developmental issues are becoming clear: housing and land requirements, education and job creation, health

and the form of the development process itself have been identified as among the most urgent. It is important for this study to conclude by finding out what the role local congregations and/or Churches as bigger spectrum can play in alleviating socio-economic challenges such as poverty in disadvantaged areas. Now that the ELCIN has fulfilled the mission of being a herald (foretell) through proclamation of the gospel and administering of the sacraments, there are some dichotomies to be found in her way of doing diaconal and social ministry today among the people who are living in northern Namibian s' informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati Townships. I think that the local congregations of ELCIN in these two towns needs to be congratulated for their efforts and endeavours of erecting parsonages (a Church house that hosted all pastors who served the congregation) and sanctuaries (Church buildings) which accommodates all Church gatherings and events such as Sunday worship services, baptism, confirmation, Sunday school and youth meetings, prayer and bible study groups. I stand firm that, the church tried its best in the mission of let Christ be known through evangelism and outreach to the communities.

This study is based on the conviction that the Church as a community-based organisation, particularly amongst the marginalised urban poor, can be an effective agent or/catalyst for community development. Based on an analysis of the church as a community called by God, it is argued in this study that, the essence of community development and the people-centred participatory development process as well as the Church as a community-based organisation is essentially best served in effecting social change by orientating itself according to the people-centred participatory approach. **The question the researcher would like to raise in the study, which will also be relevant for the topic, is: How can the Church help in the struggle or fight against poverty in disadvantaged areas, especially in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati in northern Namibia?**

1. 5   HYPOTHESIS

It is the objective of this study to find out about the role of the Church and how its prophetic voice can be raised in the community with regard to the issue of community development, especially regarding the issue of poverty. If the church does not help the community fight against poverty, then the poor will not realise the purpose of God for their lives. The church should reaffirm the principles and values which recognise the value of human life. In order to fulfil the outcomes of this study it will be very important to reflect somewhat on the history

of Namibia. Isaak in (Koegelenberg 1992: 122-123) states that on March 21, 1990, our country gained independence and democratically accepted the name, The Republic of Namibia. He (Isaak) further stated that, the challenge of the 1990s is to develop an integrated form of life as a necessary component of sustained long-term economic growth, aiming at bringing people to their full potential. At the very least, people should be able to educate themselves, live long and healthy lives and possess the resources necessary for attaining a decent standard of living. Where a minimum of these have not been actualised, there is a permanent loss.

Apartheid played a big role in Namibia by segregating people according to their race. During that time of apartheid, the two northern Namibia formal towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati were divided into a white town and a black township, with the white section being separated from the rest by an intricate system of roads, fences and barbed wire. Due to the apartheid policy and war situation there was a strict separation between urban areas and the rural Owambo hinterland that is why Ondangwa and Oshakati for all practical purposes, became fortified towns. This segregation led (contributed) to a lack of development in most black rural areas. During that time of segregation black people were placed alone in certain areas (locations) which were far from coloured and white districts, and where there was no proper infrastructure (Hangula 1993: 24-26). This resulted in societal or community poverty for black people-groups. Swanepoel & De Beer (2008: 2) state that if many or even the majority of people are poor, then we talk about societal or community poverty. This is what is happening in the Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, where many people are experiencing or facing poverty in their daily lives. In order to fight against or alleviate hardship and unemployment, other characteristics of poverty should be taken into consideration. The Church as God's agent on earth has to make its holistic influence felt and introduce Christian values in fighting against poverty. If it does not do so, it fails in its duty as God's representative.

The Church should adopt a holistic approach to human needs. It should take both the spiritual and physical needs of God's people into account, such as; advocacy and care for the poor, the needy, and the marginalised. This entails critically analyzing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation. Many people including parish pastors expect governments to play a pivotal role in alleviating the plights and miseries of the society. Can the church not contribute in this regard? The church should pave the way, living on the

borderline between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. It is therefore proposed that, there is a need for the Church (ELCIN) to both recognise and understand its role and transformative identity. "The God who has revealed himself in Jesus makes it very clear in his word to those who welcome his revelation, that our response to poverty is a crucial test of the reality of our faith. It is impossible to really know Jesus and be indifferent to the plight of the poor." (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 1-2).

The hypothesis of this study is that if the Church acts according to the challenges and needs of the context in obedience to the purpose and values of the Kingdom of God it could bring about transformational development. The mission of preaching to the whole person needs to be redefined (reconstructed), because how can a person who has nowhere to sleep (shelter/accommodation), no clothes and no one to care for him/her will listen to the Gospel. How can pastors as preachers of salvation communicate this message to the people who have severe physical basic needs, including lack of food, shelter, clothes, health care, education and other essentials but cannot help alleviate them? These people to whom the word of God is preached are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, but as human beings who live on earth, they are not exempted from physical needs (Isaak 2000: 101). The content of the gospel of salvation as such, it involves the whole person, that is, both spiritual and physical.

The challenge is: Will the Church in Namibia, particularly the ELCIN allow itself to be drawn into Jesus' compassionate care for the people, by siding with the marginalized, the poor, the needy and the vulnerable ones of the society as it has done in the past during the long and painful struggle for liberation? Anything we can do? We will rejoice to see so many urban churches, especially all denominations in Ondangwa and Oshakati Towns, if they can extend their social diaconal (programmes) ministries to the informal settlements by providing various ministries (acts of mercy) such as; soup-kitchens to provide lunch for orphans and vulnerable children, and pensioners' and by becoming involved with school-leavers young people's groups and projects; designed to serve the needy and help build up the community. In other words, the cry of the poor is that poverty and wealth are not fossilised topics but occasions where we meet (can see) the various faces of God. The urban Church must function intentionally as a community and a family for the socially marginalised people, through caring teams, house-groups, cells, and ministries to people in crisis and to the elderly (Bakke 1987: 151). Social ministry that includes an emphasis on changing social circumstances and

structures (rather than changing people themselves), must have to be guided by biblical teachings on justice and liberation, and by narratives such as Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The researcher is of the opinion that the Church in its mission should react to the problems (plight) of the large city and the small one, the comfortable materialist suburbs as well as the squatter areas and townships, the inner-city and the outer ring of informal urbanising people. The Church's role is to work for a just society by struggling (fighting) against social, economic and political structures and systems that generate and perpetuate injustice and which dehumanize people (Micah 6: 8). The Church should also be aware of its complicity in an economic order which is unfair and oppressive, leading to the misery and vulnerability of many people. Christians must also recognise that the migration of people from rural to urban situations puts severe strains on the capacity of cities to provide. Attention should be paid to tackling the factors that force people to leave rural areas. Attention should also be given to the development of cities into places that encourage human flourishing (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 285). Much has been written about the Namibian urbanisation phenomenon by University of Namibia (UNAM) students from the Department of Social Sciences, but very little on the Church's response to it. This study is based on the hypothesis that, a review and analysis of the ELCIN will be helpful for the Church to see her pivotal role of being in context in responding to the socio-economic challenges faced by Namibian-Aawambo speaking people living in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, and become an agent (catalyst) for community based development among the marginalised and neglected ones of the society.

1. 6 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The researcher grew up in the village of Tsandi located in the northern part of Namibia (Owamboland) and was ordained into the pastoral ministry in the ELCIN on June 12, 1994. After his ordination he was called to serve as the associate pastor of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in the capital city of Namibia Windhoek, which is in the central part of the country. This was shortly after Namibia become independent in 1990. During his early years in the ordained ministry and his pastorate of the urban congregation in Windhoek (1994 to 1996), informal Settlements consisting of shacks and shanties came into being primarily as a result of urbanisation has become a serious question. Such communities suffer high levels of

poverty and ill health. Being a minister in Windhoek at Emmanuel congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), the researcher sometimes visited the Church members in Katutura Location informal settlements for pastoral care and he came across the poverty in many families. During these home visits in the informal settlements, he discovered that there are no job opportunities in the area. Most of the children are malnourished because they do not have a well balanced diet. In some families, people existed on grandparents' monthly pensions while others existed on borrowed food. As a result of this experience, the researcher developed compassion and desire to work in urban slums in order to promote the well-being of the poor. At the same time, he has a passion for the Kingdom's norms and values as inseparable realities of life and development of the urban poor. The Church could play a vital pivotal role in addressing the issues of fledgling Namibia's democracy on matters relating to social justice.

The researcher is both interested in and committed to investigating the church's contribution and involvement in community based development and nation building in a new Namibia after her independence in 1990. The choice of the topic on Ecclesiology and Community Development (Church and Society), is therefore a deeply personal one. It is for this reason that the researcher developed an interest in establishing the role the Church plays in addressing the issue of poverty within the community. The motivation behind this study is the role the Church can play by introducing Christian values such as hope, love, care, and support to those who are affected by poverty. In commenting on the importance of the church's vocation in promoting the relief of human problems in the squatter settlements surrounding townships, Linthicum (1991: 144) states that, the church is to be the people of action-those who call the city's structures and systems to accountability, who defend those oppressed and exploited by those systems, and minister to those who are deceived but who benefit from the city's principalities.

The researcher is also strongly motivated by Karel Thomas August's book; *The Quest for Being a Public Church: The South African challenge to the Moravian Church in context 2005,* where it is written that, the Church needs to be informed by a "public theology", because Christians have to offer salvation to the world and theology must give guidance to the structures and policies of public life. Since reading this book the researcher's interest in theology of Christian Community Development has grown. Academically, the researcher is inspired by the quest of theological students of his time to see the Church more active in

exercising its prophetic and social advocacy role in Society. The field of development, particularly as an academic discipline in Namibia, is a fairly recent yet essential discipline within a context struggling with high levels of unemployment and inequality (De Beer & Swanepoel 1986: 10). Furthermore 'theology and development' is an even more recent addition to theological discourse and needs to be introduced to the theological seminaries in Namibia in order to train Christian leaders, so that they may in turn guide other leaders in their contexts toward holistic development strategies as a dimension of Christian witness in communities (cf. August 1999; August 2010).

Namibia, where 45% of its citizens are classified as abjectly poor, is considered to be a Christian country. About 95% of its population belongs to various Christian faith communities, including charismatic churches, apostolic churches, and syncretistic movements. The Church, however diverse, is challenged by this context to help transform the public towards being a caring society (Isaak 1997; Buys & Nambala 2003; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 106). With the total number of about 1, 830, 330 (2001 Population and Housing Census) but the latest figures estimates to be 2 millions of the Namibian population, it is recorded that; about one third of the population lives in urban areasWith churches being some of the biggest and most influential non-governmental organizations in the country, churches have a very important role to play in order to help curb social and welfare problems in the community. The government's interest in Churches as NGO's is based on their organizational infrastructure, human resources and their credibility amongst people (Koegelenberg 1995). Churches also elicit the highest degree of trust amongst all NGO's from all people in Namibia. The Church played a prominent role in social life in the past, that is why it was good to be associated with the church at that time; but today in a free and independent Namibia, the Church is quiet. It is the quest of this research to point out to the Church that it can once again be a voice of the voiceless, marginalised and the neglected in the society.

What role must the ELCIN play when it comes to the socio-economic challenges faced by informal residents in Ondangwa and Oshakati and in the restoration and healing of the community? What must the response of Christians be to the plight of the poor and the (inner city) urban communities today? The desperate conditions that face the poor call for a revolution in the Church's attempts at a solution. The motivation is therefore the role of the Church, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in serving as servant people of God in the world through forming creative programs of community

development. What responsibility does the church have for local communities? What is the proper role of the Church in a time when the dignity of human beings is at stake? When is the Church true to the mission of Christ in the world of today? How does the Church exercising its calling in social, political, and economic life? How does the Church perform its responsibilities to and for this facet of God's creation? How do we affirm the dignity of people, motivate them, and help them take responsibility for their lives? (Bosch 1991: 117; Braaten & Jensen 1997: 101). Human beings are the central focus of the Church's mission, because the human body is the temple of the Lord (1Cor. 6: 19). Dulles (1991:43) started his discussion of this model by outlining the difference and tension between a society and a community:

> "Society" refers to the formally organized, structured perspective of social relationships, while "community" refers to its informal or interpersonal perspective. When the Church serves people, it is involving in taking care of the temple of the Lord.

Every day, we are reminded of the reality of just how big a challenge the Church in Namibia faces at this time. We see more and more gruesome crimes being committed on a regular basis, a high and heightening HIV/AIDS prevalence, a large number of unemployed persons, orphans and vulnerable children, an increasing rate of alcohol and drug use, a mounting disregard of the elderly, gross disparities between the rich and the poor, a rising number of informal settlements, and much more. The question is: What can the Church do in this situation? Can the Church of Christ fold its arms and watch her people (members) sinking in the sea of poverty and vulnerability? For the Church to contribute to the nation building and the physical wellbeing of God's people, it should play the role of being an agent (catalyst) for community development. The immediate challenges in this context (gangsterism/gangsters, drugs, high levels of assault and murder) arise largely out of urban poverty, which leads to a vicious deprivation trap of poverty, powerlessness, vulnerability, physical weakness and isolation (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 12).

The motivation is, therefore, to redefine (recon structure) the role of the Church, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in serving as servant people of God in the world through forming creative programmes of community-based development. Concerning the church's mission to the needy and marginalised ones of the society, Ellison (1974: 19) states:

> Overseas mission is surely part of God's call, and many courageous people have responded to it. But what about those who remain behind in comfort and in apparent disregard of the needs next door? Is

not our neighbour the one in need (Luke 10: 29-37)? How can we continue to ignore those in need who live right near us, and be self-satisfied in our disregard? How can we fail to believe that God wants his people sent into urban centres where the greatest concentrations of population are?

In the past, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in co-operation with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) carried out mission work in Angola and Senegal. Autonomous (Independent) Churches have, in the meantime been established in those two countries. However, ELCIN is still doing internal mission work in the Kunene (Kaokoland), Omaheke (Bushmanland), and Caprivi (East and West Caprivi) regions. The researcher is in full agreement with Bakke who says that mission and outreach is today no longer about crossing the oceans, jungles and deserts, but it is about crossing the streets of our neighbourhood in rural and urban communities where our people are to be found struggling to find a better way of living (Bakke 1997: 13). Jesus gave a command to his church to "go and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28: 19) and to "be his witness to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). Today, we know where "all the nations" and "the ends of the earth" are, and they are in our urban neighbourhoods. People who live in towns have (live under different circumstances) different ways of living. Some of them are poor, some are hungry, or homeless, some are robbers, some are alcohol and drug addicted, and then there are the sick (HIV/ AIDS). These are heart-stirring scenes. We are called to use our gifts in the service of others. Christ's humble social status indicates God's understanding of and deep concern for people of every stratum. Jacobsen (2001: 18) notes that, "The parable of the Last Judgment directs us to a charity based on personalism and compassion. The hungry must be fed and the homeless must be sheltered, because the works of mercy were central to the teaching of Jesus". The church 's involvement in social ministries with the poor, the homeless, hungry, refugees, HIV/AIDS patients, and their families, leads her to the experience and perspectives of the poor. Hanson (1987: 503) comments:

> The community of faith that lives true to its calling is thus a place fostering the process of restoration and healing that lies at the heart of biblical vision of the in breaking of God's order. Such a community, united with all other true faith communities, can be seen as a part of the reconstitution of a healthy nucleus that in turn becomes a source of healing for the entire created order.

As a Church, we are called to walk in Jesus' footsteps (life) in order that we can preach the good news (word), initiate community development projects (deeds) and nurture our communities by all means that can help break the cycle of poverty (signs). As a community of faith, the Church needs to focus on ways of witnessing through holistic Christian ministry

to a broader community. This left the researcher with many questions about the holistic ministry of Jesus in connection with the poor and neglected in the society of his time.

1. 7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is both interested in and committed to investigating the Church's involvement in community based development in the post-independent Namibian context. The study focuses especially on the situation in the northern part of Namibia, particularly two urban congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) which are located in and serving people who live in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati, by challenging the Church to respond to socio-economic challenges faced by Aawambo-speaking people who lives in disadvantaged communities. This should provide an insight to the ELCIN to think anew about relationship of the Church to society and about the public responsibilities of Christians, and to develop a theology of Christian community development. In the past the Church was concerned that people should have the right belief, a correct dogma, regardless of whether what Christians do matches up to their verbal professions. In the light of this, Namibian Churches and the ELCIN in particular, should insist that the right belief (orthodoxy) and the right doing (orthopraxis) belong together; both are equally important tests of authenticity and integrity of the gospel (Isaak 2000: 101). The focus of this study is practical, communal, holistic and contextual according to missiological perspectives. Its purpose is to discern God's will and to participate faithfully in the *Missio Dei* (Bosch 1991: 389). To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.

The purpose of this study is twofold. The primary purpose is to investigate and evaluate the Church's involvement in community based development and to identify its social advocacy role in the post-independent Namibian society with regard to social, political and economic issues. The aim is to identify the Church in its quest for holistic ministry, which is to act true to its calling and serve as a holistic theological and a social reality by serving her members within a given socio-political and economic context. In the public ministry of the Jesus, there is no clear distinction (dichotomy) between preaching, teachings, and social services. Thus, mission in His ministry is service. The emphasis of this study is that in consistency with this integrated approach, Christian mission especially that of the ELCIN ought to be understood as total witness for the whole person in a holistic society.

The second purpose is to challenge (educate) and mobilize the Church of Jesus Christ at large to reconstruct her role of being involved in holistic community development and to find strategies of Christian community development within the Namibian (eccelesial setting) context at this time. The Christian faith community through its members, irrespective of denomination or confession engage society by means of involvement in activist groups concerned about political, social, moral or ecological issues. Today with poverty, crimes and HIV/AIDS on the increase, faith communities and individual believers are constantly challenged to form partnerships in plural society with other groups in order to combat social evils (August 2005: 28-29). A teamwork and effective networking between different denominations in responding to socio-economic challenges through holistic development and community based projects, advocacy, and HIV/AIDS awareness raising can be encouraged, as Dulles (1991: 154-154) states clearly that:

> All the churches' services are rendered to the only one God through serving our fellow human beings, and God's worlds is the only dialectically or paradoxically to be identified with the word of any man who purports to proclaim it. Christian churches needs to be together for the purpose of service to the world. It is only doctrine which divides us, but service unites and the only way to unity is none other than Christ, who is the way par excellence.

The theology of Christian community development can lead us to a clear understanding that, every church and ministry has its beginning with a deep stirring and burden from God. Community ministry unites practical social responsibility and active Christian mission across all denominations to serve the people around us. This is the challenge to Christians bear responsibility towards one another. It is of great importance to urge the ELCIN and other Churches to address the current situations in their capacities and/or through the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN). In the midst of the soci-economic challenges stated in this study (1.1 and 1.2), the Church might have failed to reassess and review its public and prophetic role and did not seek to make itself relevant in the day-to-day life of the entire society. There is an urgent need for the Church of Christ to commit itself to effective holistic ministries to the poor, the weak and the marginalised ones of the society who are located in the suburbs, towns and cities' informal settlements, by using Jesus' approach which is not just right but also practical; because Jesus' whole Gospel is the most powerful message the world has ever seen and heard. This study challenges the church to act as a social conscience and not a muted conscience; to break her silence and to take the obligation towards the poor and vulnerable ones of the society.

1. 8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology for this study was developed as the research progresses and evolved, with the expectation that several strategies of enquiry would be utilised. This was initially done though the observation of participants. Ethnographic strategies were instituted, and interpretive data analysis was done to assess the participants' lived experience systematically. Systematic enquiry, through the process of interviewing the participants, was a primary source for extracting information and of data collection. This was being done using several interviewing techniques (De Vos 1998: 299).

The researcher uses the triangle method in carrying out this research, using; a) literature studies (books and various theological articles), b) historical-cultural and descriptive aapproaches, and theological analysis, c) field work research (interviews and participatory observation) which is a very important aspect, because it will shed more light on the subject matter to be documented. The contextual analysis was done via empirical investigation using qualiatative and quantitative research and other relevant documents.

1. 8.1   A Literature study

In order to conduct the study the researcher has focused on a literature study that is productive and relevant and that contribute to understanding the problems. This will guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) to reconstruct and analyse its diaconal role as a holistic theological and a sociological reality as well as to identify its role in society. Modules on Community Development (Development Theories and Theology of Development), Ethics, and Missiology oriented the researcher with regard to essential concepts such as poverty, ideologies and approaches to development. The course of Practical Theology on Church and Community/Society (Theology and Development Studies) offered by the University of Stellenbosch's Faculty of Theology's department of Practical Theology and Missiology also increased the researcher's understanding of a wide range of current issues and authoritative resources on development. Academic materials/relevant books have been used as a source for the argument and also as references. A literature study has been done in order to identify the role of the church in meeting various social challenges and to address various perspectives necessary to construct a theological framework within which the study is anticipated to take place. This will provide ways of examining life by making sets of

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assumptions about the nature of reality (Babbie 2004: 43) from what others have written on the topic. The study focuses mainly on a conceptual framework in which the theology and development are intergrated and seen as essential to the church's ministry and witness through community development. There has been a careful and critical examination of concepts and practical methods for developing community.

1. 8. 2 Empirical research

Because this study concerns the being and public witness of the ELCIN, the methodology used was ethnographic research (participant observation) and a quantitative approach linked to participatory research was adopted. Using empirical or participatory research (semi-structured interviewing) throughout the course of this research, efforts were made to elicit participant accounts of meaning, experience and perceptions, which can necessarily involve identifying the individual and group's beliefs and value systems (Osmer 2005:xv). Therefore, the research paradigm for this study was primarily a quantitative mode of inquiry, using a quantitative survey from a sample of the informal settlements population to ascertain overall attitudes and belief regarding the relationship of the socio-economic challenges and the local church. From a theological perspective, Hendriks (2004: 217) says that a person must take the incarnational approach and be anointed with the attitude of a servant, with love and humility, with ability to be one with the people, to hear them and help them to discern God's will in their contextual situation. Here, the researcher's function is to serve as a resource for those being studied, typically the disadvantaged groups, and to provide them with an opportunity for them to act effectively in their own interest. Participatory research demands an unusual degree of awareness and humility on the side of the investigator (Burkey 1996: 61; Babbie 2004: 29). In addition, in order to obtain valid information from people, there must be trust between the researcher and the researched, which can only be attained through human closeness, not separation (Reason & Bradbury 2001: 83). This is in addition to the gaining of perceptions on issues pertaining to socio-economic challenges, which has been the main focus of the collected data.

According to Groenewald (1986: 57-60) and Søgaaard (1996: 18), this type of research (empirical research) uses participatory observation as data sources, which can be substantiated by structured interviews and sometimes questionnaires within a fieldworkers' set-up. With regard to the empirical component, the following should also be noted: as

indicated, a quantitative approach was followed in the research, and interactions between the researcher and the researched must be taken into consideartion. Such empirical research has been conducted to answer specific research questions and to test the hypothesis. The researcher take up residence in the community, and detailed data have been obtained by observations. The research has been narrowed down to Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, Oshana Region, northern Namibia in the eastern and western Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. The research design makes use of a quantitative approach for statistical purposes. Here, figures (statistics) have been used to explain factors such as quantity, distance, and age. In addition to statistics in the literature, data were collected by means of empirical research, personal interviews, direct observations and discussions with the local church pastors (church officials) and community target groups which consisted of Namibian Aawambo-speaking people who live in the marginalised communities of both Ondangwa and Oshakati 's informal settlements.

During the field visit, a period of time was spend with inhabitants (residents) in those communities that are usually poor, under privileged, or socially and economically exploited and oppressed. Against this background, the research design of this study is an ethnographic study with an emphasis on participant observation (Søgaaard 1996: 106). Most of us are aware that, people do not have an in-depth knowledge of the problems that faces them on a daily basis, whether social, political or economic. Participatory Research enables the development worker (researcher) to understand the local situation and increases the insight of the local people (researched), especially the poor, into what factors and relationships are the root causes of and contributing factors to their socio-economic problems such as poverty (Burkey 1996: 60; Babbie & Mouton 2001: 322).

Participatory research is an approach to social research in which those being studied receive control over the purpose and procedures of the research. This is intended to counter the implicit view that the researchers are superior to those whom they study. Some of the principles of participatory research such as the model of community development leader as the one who serves and witnesses through love, understanding, and mutual respect and dialogue will be highlighted (Rahman 1993; Babbie 2004: 296). The basic tool of participatory research is dialogue, which is entails open questions asked by the investigator (researcher) and answered by the target population (researched), both individually and in small groups (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 327).

1. 8. 3 Semi-structured interviews

Before going to the research field, I have started by asking permission from the ELCIN General Secretary to visit some of the congregations in Ondangwa and Oshakati in the eastern and western Dioceses. Community leaders such as: Regional governor and Town council officials (mayors) were approached for permission to do research of this kind in locations where they served. The quantitative part of this study, which is the dominant paradigm in this methodology, employs semi-structured interviews with informal inhabitants and clergy in the communities of the Ondangwa and Oshakati towns' informal settlements. This form of interviewing ensures that the researcher has a guideline in that it contains questions that have been predetermined (Søgaaard 1996: 103; De Vos 1998: 299).

The researcher made use of observations, the quantitative approach and spend some time of interviewing the informal residents in order to examine and observe their way of life, socio-economic conditions, housing, literacy, and health condition, and to hear what they say about their future. The purpose was and to find some collective efforts on how the church can address and solve their social (challenges) problems ("Participatory Research"). The questionnaire administered to the target population (informal inhabitants/residents) used open-ended questions, based on human situation like housing conditions (including water supply and sanitation), employment, education, and literacy, and household composition, was the main source for analysis and facilitation of the research. Dialogue is a key notion in collective research techniques and participatory research in general, given that participation is perceived in terms of a "continuous dialogue" (Søgaaard 1996: 22; Babbie & Mouton 2001: 327).

The analyses of primary data (observation and interviews with the target population) as well as secondary data (2001 Namibia Population and Housing Census, National Report) formed the basis of this study (Mouton 2001: 164-165). A selected number of people were interviewed in their shacks and to show respect, the researcher assumes a non-argumentative attitude. The population of this study was the Namibian Aawambo-speaking people living in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements. The major focus of the study was on the informal settlements where informal residents were interviewed and considered as the target (primary data) population while clergymen were considered as secondary data sources (Søgaaard 1996:114). The researcher listened more than he spoke as Burkey (1996: 81) says

that a "change agent" must listen more than talk, learn more than teach and facilitate more than lead." Personal interviews were conducted with informal inhabitants of the towns stated above. The method that was used was the semi-structured interviews (Carroll *et al* 1986: 84-85; Sanders 2010: 202) with questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions written in English, but translated into the people's vernacular "Oshiwambo." Analysis of the data was done by manual tabulation. Discussions were also held with church officials from different denominations that exist in Ondangwa and Oshakati such as: ELCIN, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Roman Catholic Church, Baptist, Methodist, Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Church of England in Namibia [Formerly known as Owamboland Independent Anglican Church] which broke away from the Anglican Church of Southern Africa in 1971 respectively, Dutch Reformed (DRC) Churches and others, in order to gain information on how they rendering holistic service to the people who are living in poverty situations in the informal settlements at this time; and evaluating whether the churches are making effective use of available networks and external structures to play their role in the society.

1.8. 4 The area of research

Oshana is one of the thirteen regions in Namibia. The region is located in North-Central Namibia, in the former Owamboland homeland. North-Central Namibia is still a mostly-rural region, in which subsistence agriculture and communal land-ownership are practised. Agriculture as a means of earning living is often supplemented, however, by other income strategies, including the labour migration of (mostly) male family members. The Oshakati-Ongwediva-Ondangwa complex has experienced dramatic urban growth in recent years and forms an important commercial and potentially industrial focus.

In order to sharpen my skills, actual field visits to informal settlements were carried out to facilitate personal interviews and observations. As these communities (informal settlements) live in neglected conditions of abject poverty without proper shelters and sanitation, I approached them peacefully and in a friendly way in order to facilitate empirical research, observation, and personal interviews. A representative sample was used to provide quantification. This was also done with a much smaller sample of respondents (Carroll *et al* 1986: 156; Søgaaard 1996: 110-112; Babbie 2004: 203-205). In sampling, the researcher chose a subset from a larger group to represent the whole group that is why in each informal settlement; five men and five women were randomly selected for personal interviews.

The study concentrated on socio-economic challenges faced by Namibian Aawambo-speaking people living in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements. Five informal settlements of Ondangwa were identified namely Uupopo-Uumbenge, Onguta, Omahenene, Ondiyala and Omakulukuma. The other five informal settlements identified in Oshakati were: Oneshila, Okandjengedi, Evululuko, Oshoopala, and Uupindi. These informal settlements were selected, because this is where most of the Namibian Aawambo-speaking live. Most of the people who live in informal settlements in Ondangwa and Oshakati, moved there in search of jobs, but when they did not find any, some of them especially women started to engage themselves in illicit (prostitution) sexual behaviours. There is, also a high number of young people without employment which is why crimes and prostitutions come into a picture as survival mechanisms. These are marginalised areas affected by poverty.

Some changes affect only small segments of life, while others seem to turn everything upside down (Ammerman *et al* 1997: 3). The latter seems to be true for northern Namibian Urban Communities. After Namibia's independence in 1990, communities, churches, villages, trading centres, towns, and cities experienced dramatic changes, which forced each group and individual to struggle to regain a sense of their future. These changes affected all areas of life: economic, socio-political, security, morality, education systems, health systems, community transformations, and rural-urban migrations, just to mention a few. These changes had their own influence on people's way of life, including economic survival (daily life survival) mechanism. Practical theology views the context of people as a part of theology (Ammerman *et al* 1998: 25).

While doing field study, the interviews went smoothly because there was no language barrier in communication between the researcher and researched, because the researcher is also from that ethnic group, the Namibian Oshiwambo-speaking people. The researcher had a good relationship with these people at the time when he embarked on the research. Therefore, it was possible to focus on local and particular issues with the purpose of addressing the reality and problems that the faith communities, as well as society are faced (Hendriks 2004: 33). These ten informal settlements were chosen because they are located in areas where the ELCIN is serving, and because there is a clear need for the church and other social bodies to get involved in making positive impacts in towns, particularly in the informal settlements.

1. 9 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher does not have knowledge of the Germanic languages such as German and the Afrikaans, so the study is limited to English literatures.

In this study the researcher is in search of a better understanding of the meaning of serving in the Name and cruciform power of Jesus Christ through bearing witness in word and deed, because evangelism is a natural part of our personal relationships with those among whom we work and live. In the study the researcher tries to integrate the practice (praxis) of theology and theological reflection with holistic community development strategies as a dimension of Christian witness in community.

As a foundational basis for the study, this study has undertake a brief history of the Namibian Church before the country's independence in 1989, will be given, then the focus will be mainly on the post-independence period, namely the period between 1990 and 2010. Although general references to the concept of urban poverty and the plights of urban poor will be made, the research is carried out within the ELCIN, focusing on socio-economic (social) challenges faced by Namibian Aawambo-speaking people living in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati Townships of northern Namibia. Even though what is going to be said in this study applies to the entire Christian community (Church) in Namibia, this study targets the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN).

The study is an overview of the ELCIN because it seeks a better understanding of the functionality of the Church fundamental to the *Missio Dei,* and seeks to gain insight into the way in which the Church is currently conducting its mission work, and to find where it falls short in meeting its objective. Since Missional Theology is about the Church's serving function to the community, these functions, viz. mission, proclamation, fellowship, education, growth, habitual change and transformation, are brought to bear on the image of the ELCIN. It was the intention of this study to look at some historical analysis and theoretical construct regarding the public role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). The significance of this research is to contribute positively towards a clearer understanding of priority areas on which the Church needs to focus in order to become more relevant in addressing the concerns of Namibian society.

1. 10   RESEARCH ETHICS

This research was conducted within the ethical boundaries of the University of Stellenbosch's Research Ethics Committee, Division for Research Development. In order to conduct a research study, the researcher had to apply for Ethical Clearance and this was granted to him on 22 September 2010, before the research was done in the field. The researcher had worked independently under the supervision of his academic supervisor. The work contains in this study is the researcher's own work, unless otherwise stated. All sources that are used, either quotations or paraphrases, are clearly referenced. The researcher is accountable for the work. The materials and consultations are and will be kept confidential where necessary.

1. 11   CHAPTERS OUTLINE

The study consists of seven chapters deal with the missionary praxis of the Church in the society. The study trying to intergrate the practice of theology and theological reflection with holistic community development strategies as a dimension of Christian witness in community, specifically the Church's pivotal role in response to the socio-economic challenges faced by northern Namibian urban dwellers.

CHAPTER ONE: This chapter serves as an introduction to the study. How the topic was chosen is explained and there is an attempt to justify its academic investigation. The academic orientation is explained and the chapter includes the introduction, subject of research, background to the problem, problem statement, research problem/question, hypothesis, motivation for the study, purpose, and the research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO: This chapter is about conceptualisation and the theological perspectives on the role of the church in the community are explained. These are illustrated by the biblical calling of the church and the injunction to demonstrate its role in the community. Attention will be paid to the Church as institution and organism. Terms like Church, community and development are defined because in every situation, all these terms go together. The Church is called to be for the sake of others. Some constructive images of the Church as a servant people of God in the world can be of help in forming creative programmes for community development, therefore the role of the church in the context of society must be a holistic theological and a sociological reality.

CHAPTER THREE: The origin and historical background of the ELCIN as well as her self understanding in the society is dealt with in this chapter. How the ELCIN came into existence in 1870 and how the Gospel was brought to the Aawambo and Kavangos of northern and eastern part of Namibia, by the Finnish missionaries will be addressed. The ELCIN is predominant in the northern Namibia, the region that was known as Owamboland. ELCIN was originally a rural area church operating in the extreme north of Namibia. This was later reinforced by the colonial division of the country into tribal areas. Thus, ELCIN was originally known as the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOC). This region was an important source of labour for the central and southern regions, and it was also most affected by the war of liberation from 1966 to 1989. Some of the social challenges that confront both the Church and society, especially those that present a huge challenge to the Church are mentioned. In a post-independent Namibia, the church generally teaches and preaches to a poor and hungry society. It works among those who need land for resettlement in the free society and those in need of employment.

CHAPTER FOUR: This chapter comprises of a contextual analysis, giving a historical background and statistics of the Oshana Region, and northern Namibia. A community analysis of the community of Ondangwa and Oshakati townships is also given. The demographic profile is discussed, and mention is made of other institutions and their involvement in the community. Currently in Namibia, especially in urban areas, poverty is a serious challenge but many congregations are not aware of this issue. If they are, they do not really help communities fight against it. The issue of poverty which takes place in the townships of Ondangwa and Oshakati in northern Namibia will be dealt with. Above all, the intention is to show:

- How poverty takes place in the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements (intellectual challenge);
- What role the ELCIN local congregations and other local Churches of Ondangwa and Oshakati can play in fighting against poverty in those communities (diaconal challenge);
- What relationship a Church can have with other organisations or institutions (role players) within the community (ecumenical challenge);
- The assets of the local Church, i.e. asset-based approach (ecclesiological challenge);
- How disadvantaged people in the community understand the idea of development (social challenge).

CHAPTER FIVE: In this chapter the relevance of the Church, in particularly the ELCIN, is addressed from a prophetic perspective by taking into consideration some of the contemporary challenges. Although Namibia attained its independence in 1990, socio-economic empowerment has not taken place, because the vast majority of Namibians continue to be denied full enjoyment of full abundant natural resources of their country. The gap between the rich and the poor in Namibia is the worst one and has widened after independence. Yet, there seems to be blindness on the part of the leaders towards those who live in abject poverty. We live in a world dangerously divided between rich and poor. The division between the *haves and have nots* in the Body of Christ which is the Church, is a major hindrance to world evangelism. The ELCIN in its ministry among the marginalised and neglected of society has to act true to its calling as the divine proponent of the reconciled, transformed humanity. In this chapter suggestions are made regarding the capacity of the Church to respond to these socio-economic (social) challenges in a post-independent and democratic nation.

CHAPTER SIX: This chapter contains suggestions, based on the findings of the empirical study, for a constructive understanding of transformational mission and holistic development within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). The ELCIN has to serve (prophetically and sacrificially) a "broken" society with a view to its transformation, which is essentially to its missional quality. There is a need for the Church which is the universal body in the world today, to be involved in the public sphere to address all forms of poverty and injustice, as well to develop an effective congregational-based public (advocacy for justice) ministry. This ministry requires faith in the knowledge that God's righteousness and justice will prevail, because justice is central to our calling as Christ's witness in the world. Special attention will be paid to the concept of the Church as "incarnational agent" which identifies with and lives with the community with the attitude of a servant. The Church is set apart in order to be sent back into the world. The Faith communities need to be transformed, equipped, and empowered in order to carry out their ministries in the broken world. Because the Church is called, transformed, and transforming; the Christian faith communities through its members, irrespective of denomination or confession, it needs to cooperate with society by means of involvement in activist groups concerned with the plight of the poor and neglected of society. In this chapter strategies for Christian community development within the Namibian context are proposed.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: This chapter comprises the summary of the arguments and the general conclusion of the whole work. Some recommendations on how the ELCIN can reconstruct her diaconal advocacy role and be a catalyst for community development in response to God's common vision for the 21st century are outlined. The importance of interpretation because of different confrontations that an individual or group experiences, is acknowledged. To achieve this, a process of reconfiguration that involves re-interpretation and blending has been suggested and discussed.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will indentify foundational principles and theological perspectives concerning the Church's relationship to society. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the Church as a messenger of hope can play a role in community development. According to August (1999: 1; 2010: iii), the church is a central institution and location of especially the marginalised in society. It is therefore stands in a distinguished position when it comes to the development of the marginalised and the restoration and healing of the community. Therefore the Church should address the issue of poverty theologically to the people of God and restore their hope and human dignity. The lifestyle of the Church is characterized by commitment to love, vulnerability, sharing, mutuality, integrity, humility, justice, and righteousness. These qualities of community become the message the Church has to offer to the world. The Church being founded by Jesus Christ lives by the proclamation of the apostolic message and is vivified by the continuing acts of God in the sacraments and carries out its mission of worship, witness, and service in the world. It is a Church sent by Christ, living by his continually renewing presence in its midst, and responsible to him for all its life and work. God's vision for His Church is that, it must be: a learning Church; a Church of fellowship and caring; a worshipping Church as well as an evangelising Church. An understanding of the Church's missiological and ecclesiological identity is central to its mission and ministry in this world. The Church's role in society is to be a holistic theological and sociological reality. In order to get a direction in this chapter it will define and outline few concepts, such as: church, community and development.

2.2 THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTUALISATION ON THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

Many people, even Christians, associate the word "Church" with a building or an organised institution. The Church is not a building, although we sometimes do refer to it as the place in which Christians gather for worship (Aarflot 1988: 14-15). The concept *Church,* according to

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Koegelenberg (1992: 1-2 in August 1999: 29; 2010: 43) is an ambiguous one. Generally speaking, it refers to *a community of people* (who share a common faith, tradition and commitment), and it is constituted by God himself (through the work of Jesus Christ). As a community of ordinary people, it is characterised not only by mutual love, fellowship, service and solidarity, but it also associated by all the imperfections of humankind. It is a community that strives to fulfil God's purpose for humanity. As a community of people it consists not only of individual members, but of different levels of organisation, local, regional, national and even international (cf. August 2005: 22-23). The Church is part of God's new creation, part of God's new reality. The Church is God's agent on the earth-the medium through which He expresses himself to the world. God has no other redeeming agency on earth, other than the Church. The Church then has a permanent divine mandate to be the means whereby world evangelization is undertaken and the kingdom of God proclaimed and exemplified (Koegelenberg 1992: 2-3).

The concept of Church is much more complex than many perceive, and cannot be described as a single, unchanging, a contextual or transcendent concept. In fact throughout history the term 'Church' has come to refer to a "collective" term for diverse movements, institutional and organizational forms, groups and communities. In his book, *Models of the Church,* the Catholic theologian, Avery Dulles (1991) delineates five such models (configurations): the institutional, the mystical-communal, the sacramental, the proclamatory or kerugmatik, and the diaconal or servant model. As a result, both Dulles (1991: 34-89) and August 2003: 33-34) identify at least six possible configurations or depictions of the church in order to cover the broad scope of what it means to be 'church'. The configurations include "church as worshipping community"; "church as a local congregation"; "church as denomination"; "church as ecumenical body"; "church as believers in their involvement with voluntary organizations" and "church as individual believers in their daily lives." These modes of being church are identified by August (2003: 29) as helping to influence public life in various ways. This is done through engagement with issues, which "affect the common good in public discourse and through visible actions of witness" and therefore bridge the gap between the other publics of state and market, which may dominate and exclude the marginalised (Fowler 1991: 154). The Church constantly faces new challenges in a changing society as stated in the problem statement (1.3) and motivation (1.6) of this study. While the gospel and the basic mission of the Church do not change, the continual (rapid) changes in our society confront us with new opportunities, possibilities, and problems. The Church serves as ambassador of

Christ in this world, but the Church is neither the kingdom of God, nor does it build the kingdom, or extend it on earth, or work for its realization. The Kingdom is the reign of God, which the Church hopes for, bears witness to, and proclaims. The goal of the Church is simply to herald (foretell) the message. The Church is not the bringer or bearer of the reign of God which is to come and is at the same time already present, but its voice, its announcer, its herald. And God alone can bring His reign (kingdom), while the Church is devoted entirely to its service (Alston 2002: 107). It is, therefore, a challenge to the Church of Christ to play an effective or strategic role in the community when development is initiated among its members. As a prophetic and royal people, faith communities (Churches) seek to witness to the will of God and to influence the course of events of the world.

The Church, as an institution, is called by God to play an important role to serve the needs of the community and respond to God's call. The Church is an organisation within which groups of people express their shared religious belief (Koegelenberg 1992: 67). It is of vital importance to understand what is presupposed when reference is made to the Church-as locale, as space, in time, and in its core practices in society. In its local form the church has structure and a constitution (August 2003: 27-28). The institutional forms through which this community seeks to express itself might and do vary; but these forms are to a large degree irrelevant insofar as the essential nature of the community is concerned. According to David Bosch (1991: 113-117), the church's mission must be grounded in the contextual realities of specific people, as they define their felt needs. By beginning with the people's felt needs, it is possible to establish a relationship and trust, which then enables the church to move to deeper issue of development. In reality, the Church as both a theological and a sociological reality it has a pivotal role to play in the (society) community. This is the mission that the Church has been given to do in the world. In this study the primary focus will be the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) working amongst the Aawambo-speaking people of northern Namibia.

2. 3 CHURCH AS COMMUNITY: THE MEANING OF EKKLESIA

The Church is an organisation within which groups of people express their shared religious belief (Dulles 1991: 17). The word ["Church"] is derived from the Greek term *"ekklesia"* which means "congregation" or "gathering" and sometimes "community". But it also refers to individual congregations rather than to a universal Church (Bosch 1991: 120). The original

Greek word *"ecclesia"* means "the called-out ones" (Acts 8: 1; 1 Pet. 2: 4, 9), speaking always about people; in secular Greek it was used for a meeting or assembly of citizens. The Bible used 'church' to translate *ekklesia* rather than use 'congregation'. 'Church' has a strong flavour of place, while *ekklesia* means a particular group of people gathered together-as a congregation (Dulles 1991: 48). The Greek term *ekklesia,* "church" is always used to translate some form of the Hebrew word *"qahal"* which the Lexicon defines as 'an assembly', 'congregation', or 'convocation' (August 1999: 30; 2010: 44). The Hebrew word *qahal* and the Greek word *ekklesia* express the calling of people out from the broader community and together within the broader community of the inhabited world to become the community of God-for God's redemptive purpose for the world. Christians trace the beginnings of the Church to the origins of Israel-the call of Abraham to embark on his journey of faith (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 72). According to August (2010: 92) "The Church is the community called by God for service and for community-forming: for and on behalf of the world, God's created reality-the inhabited world and the environment."

The word 'Church' as it is used in the Bible has two different meanings. It means 'belonging to God' and 'those who are called' and also refers to a group of people called out for service in and witnessing to the community. Church refers to both, an assembly and a particular congregation (Hall 1985: 13). The Church is the community in which by faith the new life, reconciliation, justification, and peace are received, lived, attested and thus communicated to humanity (Aarflot 1988: 34). The most common use of *"ecclesia"* was in the sense of a public assembly of its citizens duly summoned, which was a feature of all the cities outside Judea where the gospel was planted (Acts 19: 39). The dominant use of *"ecclesia"* in the New Testament is to describe an assembly or company of Christians, called out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1Pet. 2: 9-10). It is used for the following ways: the whole body of Christians worldwide, a local Church constituting a company of Christians gathering for worship, sharing and teaching as well as Churches in a district (Samuel & Sugden 1987: 261; Jacobsen 2001: 94). David Bosch (1980: 222-223) describes the Church as "the community of believers, gathered by divine election, calling, new birth, and conversion, which lives in communion with the Triune God, is granted the forgiveness of sins, and is sent to serve the world in solidarity with mankind."

In the New Testament, however, the word "Church" mostly designates a local congregation of Christians and is never used for a building. Church in the New Testament does not refer to

buildings or hierarchical structures but simply to people whose lives are focused on Jesus Christ, through believing, worshipping and honouring Him (Samuel & Sugden 1987: 261; Mead 1996: 55). The whole body of those who believe in and worship Jesus wherever they may be are the 'church'. The whole body of those who are followers of Jesus in a particular locality are the 'church'. Those who gather together to worship the Lord Jesus in certain people's houses is the 'church'. When Christians assemble together to honour Jesus and to praise God there the 'church' is (Dulles 1991: 83; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 72-73). From the New Testament we can deduce that the congregation is the Church of Christ, but differs in the number of members and the form that it takes in different places. Johnson (1983: 21) states:

> The question 'where is the church' cannot be answered in terms either of organizational charts or ecumenical conferences. It must be answered by another question: 'where does the church really live'? The church in the strict sense is found where there is a specific group of people who assemble together to call on the name of the Lord in prayer and fellowship.

The Church in its first and living sense means the local assembly, God's convocation in a particular time and place. The doctrine of the Church must begin at this local level (Koegelenberg 1992: 1). The church is nothing other than 'the gathered congregation' in a particular place at particular time (Moltmann 1997: 201). The Church is people of faith who believe in God and worship God in gathered congregations responding to God's saving grace by devoting themselves to God's plan for the restoration of all creation (Hanson 1987: 514; Alston 2002: 31).

The community of faith in the Bible is people called. It is the people called from diverse sorts of bondage to freedom, called to a sense of identity founded on a common bond with the God of righteousness and compassion, and called to the off twin vacations of worship (communion with God) and participation in the creative, redemptive purpose that unifies all history and is directed to the restoration of the whole creation within a universal order of *SHALOM* [building community] (August 1999: 30; 2010: 44). The Church is the community called into being, built up, and sent into the world to serve in the name and power of the triune God (Migliore 2004: 265).

A faith community is a people, living in a particular time and place called to witness within the confines of their world (Hanson 1987). They must answer questions such as: What is happening here? How should we address the problems and challenges confronting us? Ethical

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questions abound in our ever-changing world: What is right and what is wrong? The Christian Community of Faith (Church) must be able to deal with vexing local problems (Carroll *et al* 1989: 154). By the church, I mean not an organization but a living organism. I mean a local community gathered on the basis of the word of God and committed to Jesus as Lord (Johnson 1983: 51). The Church is composed of all its members in their various relationships to Christ and to one another. Hans Küng (1971: 125) states that, "The Church is always and in all case the *whole* people of God, the *whole ecclesia,* the whole fellowship of the faithful. Everyone belongs to the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation". The Church is a specific type of human community. The Church is the people who produce fruits that are characteristic of the kingdom of God (Dulles 1991: 16; Hughes & Bennet 1998: 75).

The community of believers becomes visible *("ecclesia militant")* when these members gather to listen to God's word, respond in prayer and praise, celebrate their fellowship in sacramental acts and rejoice in their common faith. This visibility is seen in the practice of the community, truth, peace, freedom and justice. Some of the identity happens through the basic disciplines of the faith community which are: worship, service, communion, preaching, teaching, witness, administration, pastoral care, justice and ecumenism (Dulles 1991: 41; Braaten & Jensen 1997: 100; Hendriks 2004: 34). According to regulation 125: 1 of the Constitution and Regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), "the church is a community (congregation) of Christians in which the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered". The Church is a human community that lives at the beck and call of a will and purpose beyond its acquaintance; it is a community of people responding to the living presence of the living God who is always moving ahead into a future of challenge and adventure (Nessan 1999: 28-28; Alston 2002: 4).

The Church as *"the community called"* is ever renewed by its Biblical calling which replaces a totally routines and static sense of identity by a far more dynamic and positive sense of purpose in response to the call to be full participants in the advocacy of mercy and justice in all areas and facets of life (August 1999: 31; 2010: 45). The Church has to explore its unique role in facilitating community development because it has an essential impact in the betterment of the community. In this context, the Church is the community of believers in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) as part of the community of believers shall be used as a model of the whole Christian Community.

2. 4 THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: CHURCH AS KOINONIA

In the Old Testament God's special people gathered together at the central shrine to offer sacrifices and to rejoice together 'before the Lord'. There were also a special times when they came together to listen to the word of God or to renew their commitment to him (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 73). According to Guder (1998: 103), "The church shares this calling with Jesus, though; its vocation is corporate, not individual". The Church, embodying in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of humanity, participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ who built up an incalculably deep fellowship *(koinonia)* with them (Hall 1990: 45). Fellowship *(koinonia)* is the means par excellence of introducing people to Jesus the messiah and to the messianic community which the bible calls *ecclesia* ("Church"). The Church as a community of ordinary people is characterized by mutual love, fellowship, service and solidarity with all the imperfections of humankind (Verkuyl 1978: 221; Perkins 1994: 39). Our faith communities (Christian Churches) ought to show that the followers of one God live together as one people in fellowship with that one God.

Preaching (Witness*)* and *diakonia* (Social ministry*)* are not the only ways of announcing the good news about God's coming kingdom. Another very important way is through fellowship *("koinonia")*. *Koinonia* (fellowship) is the ministry of the Church that is intentional about nurturing and building the faith community internally through fellowship, worship and so on (Nessan 1999: 4). The basic verbal form from which the noun *'koinonia'* derives means "to have something in common", "to share", "to participate", "to have part in", "to act together" or "to be in a contractual relationship involving obligations of mutual accountability" (Gunton & Hardy 1989: 66- 68; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 73; Alston 2002: 38).

The Apostles' Creed talks about the 'communion of saints' *('communio sanctorum')* immediately after it has mentioned the church, while on the other hand the *'congregatio sanctorum'* is the 'assembly', the 'congregation', 'Christian people', who live in mutual concern for one another and mutual self-giving (Moltmann 1993: 314-317, 358). *Koinonia,* or community in and through Christ and the Holy Spirit, may be experienced in all the church's activities in local or ecumenical relationships (Küng 1971: 110; Guder 1998: 145). The *koinonia* (Community/fellowship) exists for a purpose that is infinitely greater than itself. It is to serve the God of a grace that is universally offered. It is to participate in the extension of

that grace throughout the world (Hall 1990: 45). By the Church having a distinct self-understanding of its character as being a 'called out' community and 'called to' community, the churches can help in the restoration of the communities they serve. It is this redefined sense of community and God's grace that empowers people in their wider community to rediscover a sense of God-given destiny (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 184). The community of faith that lives true to its calling is thus a place fostering the process of restoration and healing that lies at the heart of biblical vision of the in breaking of God's order. Such a community, united with all other communities, can be seen as a part of the reconstitution of a healthy nucleus that in turn becomes a source of healing for the entire created order. The community of faith is thus a gathering of those responding to God's saving grace by devoting themselves to God's plan for the restoration of all creation (Hanson 1987: 503, 514). God revealed himself to the faith community. Congregations are special because they focus on God, in whom the members live, move and have their being (Ammerman 1998: 23-38).

The church has often become domesticated in certain contexts (for example in the entanglement between mission and colonialism), but in reality the church is everywhere in Diaspora, called out of the world to be sent back into the world with the message of the world to come (Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 38). The missionary church must therefore become church-with-others (Bosch 1991: 368-389), must truly incarnate the essential *koinonia* of the body of Christ. The New Testament community was a loving and caring fellowship (Acts. 4: 32-35). Fellowship is a caring community which transcends tribal, ethnic, national and class boundaries (Nessan 1999: 5; Nürnberger 1999: 217). Christians believe that God blessed human beings with possessions, and therefore, they must use them wisely to the service of others in the community. The gifts each has received should be shared with others in the *koinonia,* because human beings are intended to share in God's gracious provision, and that means human beings are intended to share (Hall 1990: 25-26). We are made for each other and belong to one another. Human beings are created to live in community, in *koinonia,* to sustain and stimulate each other. When God gave stewardship over creation to Adam and Eve, it was mean to be responsible stewardship: responsible to God, to the human community (present and future generations) and to creation as a whole (Koegelenberg 1992: 43-44).

The Church of Christ is a community of stewards and it must have to apply its Christian community's daily life to other institutions in the society such as: Government, and Economic Structures, Ethnic of Social Responsibility and Extra human world (Hall 1990:

46). The saying *"Ujamaa"* in Kiswahili and an African proverb *"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"* in Zulu, as well as *"Omuntu omuntu molwaantu"* in 'Oshiwambo' Namibian language, both meaning that "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (a person is a person by means of other people/a person exists only as "being-in-relation"), or "one's own humanness depends upon recognising the humanity of others and their recognising of yours." The meaning of this proverb indicates that, we can only be complete human beings in relation with other; therefore, in the process of development one should promote a culture of conviviality. In such a culture humanity is to be conceived as being "in relation". According to the above-mentioned and the African saying, *"ubuntu",* Africans recognise life as being life-in-community.

Human beings can truly know themselves if they remain true to their respective communities, past and present. Our nature as human beings-in-relation is a two-way relation: with God and with our fellow beings; this is why one can say that as God's stewards, human beings are accountable to God and to fellow creatures (human beings). Belonging to a family or community is what makes a person truly human (Hall 1990: 45). The local Church is usually the group that makes up a faith community. Christians are called to be good stewards in God's family which is the Church and liable to give account before God concerning their stewardship in service to others (community). Koegelenberg (1992: 44) comments that, "Human beings have the right to use the resources provided by creation but not the right to abuse them. The difference between use and abuse is the difference between utilitarianism and responsible stewardship." Bonhoeffer (1976: 94) comments that, "In a faith community everything depends upon whether each individual is an indispensable link in a chain. Every faith community must realize that not only do the weak need the strong, but also that the strong cannot exist without the weak." It is very important that, the Church should participate in community development works because of the example of Jesus during his earthly ministry. Christians are called in communion to love God and one another (their neighbours); that is why the Church has to be involved in community based development (works) projects, by creating jobs, and encouraging self-employment for all its members and the target group must be the vulnerable ones of the society who are the poor and the needy (Nicholls 1986: 88).

There is a unique fellowship shared by members of the body of Christ who are poor and marginalised, that is why the Church is the Church only when it exists for those in need. The

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true Church is not only the Church of the ear and eye, but it is also the Church of the helping hand. Christ is present among the poor, the hungry, the sick; and the Church has to be in solidarity with the poor and marginalised (Dulles 1991: 94-95). The Church means an inviting community with an open door to the suffering world. The Church has concern for the weakest and is willing to be involved in social condition of the poor. *Koinonia,* or community in and through Christ and the Holy Spirit, this may be experienced in all the Church's activities in local or ecumenical relationships. Since the Church operates on the basis of love, there needs to be a noted mutuality amongst different (Churches) denominations (Moltmann 1993: 342; Nessan 1999: 101). The divisions among the denominations as well as the failure of their members to live in true and full *koinonia* with one another affect and hinder the mission of the Church.

2. 5 THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY

The ministry of the Church reflects always on the meaning and purpose of Christians together. The Church exists solely for the purpose of bearing witness to Jesus Christ. As a human community, the Church lives always with reference to its calling which is its ministry (Aarflot 1988: 11). The ministry of the Church should concern itself primarily with the individual's relationship to Jesus Christ, and its outreach to people with spiritual or physical needs outside of the believing fellowship (Sider 1999: 138). Alston (2002: 107) states that, "The ministry of the church is active service to God and people in subordination to Jesus Christ. It is a ministry to God in which people are served, and a ministry to people in which God is served." The Church is a sign of the values of the Kingdom: freedom, equality, justice, peace, hope and participation. The Church is called to announce in word and deed the Christ event, the event with which God broke into history to begin a new time, a reign under God which includes every creature. It is the time when those who mourn shall be comforted, when those who are confined shall be free, and when the poor shall receive good news [Lk. 4: 18-19] (Sider 1999: 144). Bowers (2005: 21) comments:

> The Church's role as worshipping community draws people into its celebration of the sacraments and proclamation of Word and provides space and place both for the expression of pain for those suffering from oppression, marginalisation or any form of suffering within these contexts. It often provides acceptance as a loving and committed community, which people can participate in.

The fundamental form and structure within which the encounter between God and human beings is manifest, is the Church as the body of Christ, the fellowship of believers (Dulles

1991: 50; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 82). In order for Holistic ministry to be 'practical' it must be concerned with the portrayal of Church ministry: the service of faith *(diakonia).* The faith community's *diakonia,* which is the central theological-practical portrayal of salvation, can be classified as follows: witnessing (proclamation); celebration (liturgy); teaching (catechetics); fellowship *(koinonia, ecclesiology)*/habitual change and transformation (August 2003: 34; 2005: 23). All this stresses the praxis of the Church. The Church should be a confessing community, by being a faithful witness to God's word, by witnessing to current issues, and by giving guidance to the world on current issues that confront the society from a normative point of view. The Church is also called to be an agent of social change that should challenge people to confront injustice in society (Alston 2002: 105). At this time, the ministry of the ELCIN can be divided into four main functions such as: proclaiming the good news, teaching, establishment of a caring community (diakonia), and expression of the good news in a loving service (development).

2. 5. 1 The Threefold nature of the church's ministry

The Christian mission is a comprehensive ministry with various dimensions which can be distinguished, but never separated. We believe, therefore, that the goal of mission can only be accomplished through a holistic approach (Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 36). The ministry of the Church to bear witness to Jesus Christ takes place in the proclamation (preaching), the explication (teaching), and the application (social service) of the gospel with which the church is entrusted (Moltmann 1993: 307; Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 36; Alston 2002: 108). These three categories strongly shape the Church's ministry in this world and are programmed by God in human beings so firmly in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation and can indeed largely be accommodated in the holistic approach. With these ministries, the Church could try to define its role in terms of the incarnation, the cross, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost and the second coming of Christ *[Parousia]* (Alston 2002: 108).

The doctrine of the threefold office of Christ (prophet, priest and king) also brings clarity and direction to the understanding of the church and its ministry. The Church's ministry will always include the priestly activity of proclaiming forgiveness and reconciliation; it will always include the prophetic activity of teaching God's will made known in denouncing injustice and oppression; and it will always include the royal activity of being a protector and advocate of the weak and lowly for the sake of God's coming reign of justice and peace that

has dawned in power in the royal life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The institutional elements in the Church must ultimately be justified by their capacity to express or strengthen the Church as a community of life, witness, and service (Dulles 1991: 45). In other words, the Church's witness in the world includes proclamation (witness), service (social ministry) and formation (education or teaching). Bevans & Schroeder (2004: 394) state:

> Mission to the world points to the fact that the church is only the church as it is called to *continue* Jesus' mission of preaching, serving and witnessing to God's reign in *new* times and places (Mt. 28: 18-20; Mk. 16: 15-16; Lk. 24: 44-47; Acts 1: 8). Mission has a basic threefold structure of word *(kerygma),* action *(diakonia)* and being *(witnessing or martuea).* Thus, mission shares and continues the threefold office of Christ as prophet, priest and servant-King.

Harvie Conn (1982) writes about holistic ministry and says that the different modes of ministry are not isolated parts of the kingdom. Each does not exist in its own in a room with closed doors. Terms such as *kerugma, didache and diakonia,* are merely different ways in which the same room is described. The one door to the room is called *kerugma,* the other one *didache,* and the third *diakonia* (Conn 1982: 35-36). According to Conn, these different modes of ministry are completely integrated. Under these three rubrics, the total missionary task of the church can be described as preaching, witnessing, healing, teaching, developing, and the building up the church. This integration (partnership) is clearly seen in the public ministry of Jesus, who not only preached the Gospel but fed the hungry and healed the sick. Other theologians suggest a similar threefold function for the Church, namely; a faith function, formation function and social function (Bosch 1980: 227; 1991: 511-512; Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 36; Clinebell 1996: 46; Nessan 1999: 6). In Jesus' ministry, *kerugma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (ministry of service) went hand in hand. His words (teaching) explained his works, and his works (service) dramatized his words (Johnson 1983: 151). Both were expressions of his compassion for people, and both should be ours. If we proclaim the good news of God's love, we must manifest His love in caring for the needy.

2. 5. 1. 1 Kerugma (Proclamation)

The Greek word *kerugma* can be best translated as proclamation, and is usually linked to the gospel or good news. With the kerugmatik dimension we are therefore referring to all the various forms of ministry of the word in mission: preaching, witnessing, providing literature, theological education, etc. The content of this ministry is the good news that "God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so

supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Lord of history, Saviour and Liberator"(Bosch 1991: 412; Osmer 2005: 223). *Kerugma* (proclamation) refers to the ministry of the church that is intentional about proclaiming Christ in words and through its proclamation or representation, the Gospel lives in contemporary history as a historical fact. Bevans & Schroeder (2004: 357-358) write:

> Proclamation is the act of communicating the gospel *about* Jesus and the gospel *of* Jesus. It tells the story of Jesus, his life, ministry, death and resurrection, and it introduces this man whose life and person were so transparent of God. But proclamation also tells of the gospel *of* Jesus-how his parables called his disciples to be forgiving, how his miracles called them to be agents of healing and wholeness, how his exorcisms called them to be agents of healing and wholeness, how his inclusive lifestyle called them to be inclusive.

Proclamation comes out of jubilation, experience, witness and conviction of the truth regarding the person and work of Christ. It is always leads to an appeal for response (Nicholls 1986: 146). The main aim of preaching is to make known the Good News of Jesus Christ through which salvation can be appropriated and to draw people into his community of faith, love and obedience and to help people to gain insight into their own condition, the condition of the world in which they live, and the way in which they can follow Christ. Preaching is usually done from the pulpit, street preaching is a popular form of ministry in urban environments, and in mass meetings preacher-evangelists focus on calling people to conversion. In fulfilling this task, the Church must contextualize its preaching (Bakke 1997: 13). To make the proclamation of the Good News effective, Linthicum (1991: 178) states that, "The Bible may be good news, but if it is not applied to our world; it is news that is irrelevant to us. The newspaper, by contrast, is always relevant news, but without biblical interpretations, it is only bad news. Proclamation requires both conceptual framework-the Bible and one's context-the newspaper".

Because of its access to the preaching of the word, the Church is in a unique position to articulate *what* is wrong, and *why* it is wrong. This involves the holding up of biblical standards of justice and righteousness against the merely expedient or conventional (Maggay 1994: 68). The Gospel, rightly understood, is holistic. It responds to people as a whole and does not single out just spiritual or physical needs. Any Gospel that proclaims only one side; the spiritual, or the physical/social, is narrow, impotent and disobedient (Perkins 1999: 21; Myers 2003: 212). The authenticity and validity of the witness of the Christian Church is tested by its proclamation. To proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour has social implications,

since it summons people to repent of social as well as personal sins, and to live a new of life of righteousness and peace in the new society which challenge the old. Community Christian leaders who want to be effective witness must follow in Jesus' footsteps by preaching and living the "whole" Gospel.

2. 5. 1. 2 Didache (Teaching)

Investigation of early Christianity indicates these basic elements: discipleship, teaching, learning and growing. Myers (2003: 46) notes that the church is trying to explicate the gospel, by explaining what it means and showing how it makes itself intelligible to people. The incarnation of Jesus Christ (Jn. 1: 14) makes people not only to hear but to behold God's glory.

In Christian education or teaching, education (teaching) means the activity that listens with people to the stories of their lives and the stories of the faith community in the past and in the present, that attends to God's activity in the present, and which envisions God's kingdom as it is worked out in our lives and communities (Guder 1998: 137-141). Teaching should lead people from where they are through a process of learning to a new place where God wants them to be. In discussing the importance of the Church's educational work, Nash (1984: 22) comments:

> …to educate conscience and to develop informed and competent Christian commitment to the struggle against dehumanizing poverty, locally and further afield. This means that in addition to scripture and liturgy other inputs are used: visits from people from relevant situations-squatter settlements, hunger relief projects, tape and video recordings, newspaper and other media reports.

Through Educational ministry, the Church can help the people concerned to acquire the broad mind and ability to investigate their environment with a view to discerning the problem therein. As a matter of fact, education is part and parcel of the community's development. It incites self confidence and advancement of the people. To succeed therefore, the Church has to organize trainings, community outreach and awareness raising, because people must be made aware of their situations (August 1999: 8).

Education (nurturing) is the means to this end. The researcher is of the opinion that, nothing other than the community of faith (Church) is capable of affirming the dignity of the people and enabling them to meet their own felt needs. It is practically impossible to do effective Christian Educational (teaching) ministry which is holistic, apart from the local Church. A

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nurturing community of faith can best provide the thrusts of evangelism, discipleship, spiritual accountability, and relationships by which disciples grow in their walk with God. One of the problems has been recorded today is that; the Church does not involvd itself in holistic ministry education aiming to developing its communities like the missionaries did in the past. August (2005: 270) states that:

> From a very early stage, during the missionaries' era, it has been recorded that, the inhabitants were helped to erect simple structures for each family and were taught to respect the neighbour's property. With Christian Education (teaching) in the centre of the community's life, they (inhabitants) were trained to read and write, to garden and herd their livestock properly, as well as to protect the interest of the common good. Thus skills-training was an integral component of empowering people.

The Church is commissioned by its Lord Jesus Christ to do Christian Education, but it is also challenged by the ministry of education, to become involved in literacy and tutoring programs, running for school board office, and seeking economic freedom. What the Church does on Sunday mornings can make a difference-all week long. Education concerning health, economic and social questions is important. This includes the right interpretations of scriptures, socio-economic and political questions, and the associated effects of anger, conflict, depression, and lack of peace (Samuel & Sugden 1987: 57). In order to minimize poverty situation, the Church and other Social Organizations can establish some community based programmes targeting the poor and the illiterate, by training them in a variety of skills and tasks. Training can be both practical as well as basic training in producing quotations, writing tenders, procedures, baking, marketing (entrepreneurship skills) as well as principles of business survival. All these factors are extremely important, in order that the people can respond to the need for creating a sustainable provision in the long run, and to alleviating overall poverty.

2. 5. 1. 3 Diakonia (Service)

The Greek word diakonia can be translated as service, ministry. Christ as the King who came to serve, and not to be served (Mk. 10: 45), heralded a new 'upside-down' Kingdom order, which sees the Church as a servant of its community, the embodiment of the true *diakonia.* The diaconal dimension of the mission approach therefore refers to the various forms of ministry and service in which the Christian community, in imitation of Jesus of Nazareth [who was among us as one who serves] (Mk. 10: 45), puts itself at the service of the whole world (Kritzinger 1994: 37; Gunderson 1997: 15). Diakonia or Christian service to those in need, is a term that is often used by Christians and Church-related organizations to describe

the work that they do in response to the biblical mandate to do justice and to respond to those who are poor. "Serving the poor in our midst is a biblical command. Being involved in (community) development by serving the poor is not an option in terms of Christian doctrine, but it is a biblical injunction. For the followers of Jesus Christ, to serve Him is to serve the poor" (August 1999: 33; 2010: 47). *Diakonia (*Service) refers to the service that 'brings righteousness', or the service of reconciliation. It also used specifically of the service of giving alms and seeing to the physical needs of the poor (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 86). Diakonia is service work based on a Christian love for one's neighbour that knows no boundaries. In practice it means working on behalf of and alongside the marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Diakonia Ministry is rooted in the mission of Christ. When we study the Gospels we note that Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour came into this world that we may have life and have it in abundance: 'I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full' [Jn. 10:10] (Hall 1990: 243). This life in abundance was proved by His acts of mercy during His earthly ministry: curing the sick, feeding the hungry and even raising the dead to life (Mk. 6: 56).The Bible tells us that *diakonia* is the service of a slave of the new Kingdom. The biblical concept of *diakonia* is the radically interpreted commandment to love God and one's neighbour, as set forth in the teaching of Jesus. The love of one's neighbour should even be extended to those who react with contempt and animosity. The service for others should even include giving away more than it was reasonable to demand (Aarflot 1988: 85-86). Dutchrow (1998: 123) defines *"diakonia"* as a service which concerns the relationships people has with one another. It means no more or less than that the question of God is ultimately about society's constitution. He continues to emphasies that with Jesus Christ's love in a socio-economic sense means precisely acting like brothers and sisters, which occurs in the household and between households as completely equal form of cooperation in the mutual service (Dutchrow 1998: 187). Samuel & Sugden (1987: 261) comments that, "Our love and commitment must extend to the stranger (Mat. 5: 43-48). Our involvement with strangers is not only through charity, but also through economic and political action."

Hughes & Bennet (1998: 86) define *'Diakonia'* (Social Service), as "a generic term which has to be qualified in order to indicate the type of service which is in view. The term was used specifically of the service of giving alms and seeking to minister to the physical needs of the poor. Aarflot (1988: 83) also states, *"Diakonia* is an expression of the responsible care for

god's created world. God uses human beings and human structures to safeguard the dignity of human life. God wants to renew and re-establish what is broken down in nature and in the lives of people." Dulles (1991: 99-100) notes:

> The term *diakonia* is certainly one of the most important New Testament terms applied to the Church. It applies to all types of ministry-including the ministry of the word, sacraments, and compassion. All offices in the Church are forms of *diakonia,* and thus the term, in biblical usage, cannot properly be used in opposition to preaching or worship. The diaconal role of the Church consists in its dedication to the transformation of the world into the Kingdom.

Because holistic development is a part of the church's social and diaconal ministry, Nadine Bowers (2005: 57) comments:

> As the church, we are called to facilitate the reconstitution of broken people and communities. This implies an attitude of respect and dignity towards the people we are journeying with in relationship-one which calls the Body of Christ to reach out to every form of need in the world, becoming slaves as our King did in order to embody God's great love and compassion for His world.

Myers (2003:127) identifies one of the key roles of the Church in transformational development as that of servant and source of encouragement of what God intends and what God offers, not a commander or judge. As such, the church may be regarded as the "Church for others"-journeying with the poor, the marginalized, suffering and oppressed through and in their circumstances. The Church is called to embody *Emmanuel-* Christ with us, the hope of Glory-and to embody and appropriate true *diakonia,* which identifies with the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, naked, ill (sick) and prisoners in suffering with them (Mt. 25: 31- 46 (Morisy 1997). As the Church, we are called we are called to facilitate the reconstitution of broken people and communities. *Diakonia* implies coming alongside people with the intention of serving in a way that affirms their dignity and self-worth. In effect, it is journeying on a 'people first' path (Burkey 1996: 27-29), which in the mode of the suffering servant places the need of the other first, and recognises the need of the individuals and groups being served to identify and act upon their own needs. Journeying in loving service is in direct opposition to the modernistic imposition of values, beliefs, technology and methodology imposed from above by previous notions of development. Christian (1999: 187) suggests that such notions are often project-and issue- based and that initiatives of community organizations must rather be built around authentic relationship-based involvement with the poor. A covenant quality community such as the church "emphasizes that solidarity with and among the powerless should never be reduced to an issue based social programme".

Our understanding of Christian mission should go back to what Christ's mission entailed: He fully focused on the needy people and evangelized on earth through His service (Lk. 19:10). As we consider the work of our Lord during His earthly ministry, there is no doubt that the helping and healing done by Jesus definitely belonged to His mission. The unfolding of His gospel ministry was under the compulsion of the servant's "I must" (Mt. 16: 21; Lk. 24: 26). Musembi (1999: 79) notes:

> *Diakonia* makes the preached Word visible and credible. The commission to serve is found in the gospel as clearly as the commission to preach. This is why neither of them has to receive its justification from the other. According to Scriptures, *diakonia* is neither subordinate to preaching nor is it simply its aid, but it finds its own place in the gospel. All missionary preaching needs the serving action as its testimony. The Good News of Christ's love demands practicality.

He who served as one in the midst of us (Lk. 22: 25-27) has given us an example, because "He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2: 7). Are we, as His servants, greater than our Master? (Jn. 13: 15) Dulles (1991: 97) comments:

> The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation and the Body of Christ; because it has a mandate to serve. That is why the Church must offer itself as one of the principal agents whereby the human community is made to stand under the judgement of the enduring values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: freedom, justice, peace, charity, compassion, and reconciliation.

Diakonia is the church's ministry about the application of the gospel. Alston (2000: 109) states:

> The church does not proclaim and explicate the gospel in a vacuum, just as it does not live in a vacuum, but in relation to the particular human realities, needs, questions, problems, and possibilities of the world in which it lives. This ministry rests upon the conviction that God is a living God, whose love for people is particular and contemporary and whose will is to encounter people where they really are and what they are and where they may be reached and addressed.

When we read about the life of the early Church we note that the Church has always been puts a special emphasis on mutual care and compassion. According to this biblical concept of *diakonia,* it has been reported that the early Christian believers involved themselves in works of charity and in caring for the people in need (Acts 4: 34-35; 6: 1-6; Rom 12: 7; 1Pet. 4: 11). Aarflot (1988: 88) comments:

> The community of faith is the basis for that kind of brotherly love which is designated for those who belong to the family of God. This love and care is an expression of the spiritual life of the congregation. Through faith a deepened understanding of the life in mutual service emerges among the Christians [Gal. 6: 1-2; 10].

The theological basis (essence) for works of charity is love which is summed up in two inseparable commandments: Love for God and love for (one another) thy neighbour [Mt. 22: 37-39] (Perkins 1999: 22). Love is the basis in which the Church has to involve itself fully in solving the problems of the community. The people of God's love for Him can only be demonstrated by their love for their fellow humans (Hall 1990: 242). By caring for God's people, the Church in *diakonia* deals with the creation, a humanity which God sustains through love and care. We are therefore God's Stewards (1Cor. 4: 1-2) and as the Church have no choice but to accept this responsibility. Identification with other people's pain leads to concrete action on their behalf (Samuel & Sugden 1987: 260; Sider 1999: 71).

Diakonia is central to what it means to be the Church. As a core component of the Gospel, diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship. Diakonia reaches out to all persons, who are created in God's image *(Imago Dei).* While diakonia begins as unconditional service to the neighbour in need, it leads inevitably to social change that restores reforms and transforms. Christians are called through baptism to live out diakonia through what they do and how they live in their daily life in the world. Because of the holistic mission of God, diakonia is deeply interrelated with *Kerugma* (proclamation of the Word) and *Koinonia* (sharing at the Table). According to Samuel & Sugden (1987: 224), "The Church's ministry of service *(diakonia)* promotes humanity, enabling it to develop its full creative potential. In choosing to serve the poorest, most marginal sectors of society, the ministry seeks to redeem both the oppressed and the oppressor".

Diakonia is witnessing through deeds. Poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS are three of the major issues in our day that churches cannot ignore. They provoke the church to move into more prophetic expressions of diakonia (August 2009: 23). For the church to fulfil her diaconal ministry it needs to go and reach people in their daily situation and address their daily basic needs. There is a great need for our Church's diaconal programmes to be oriented to its proclamation and evangelism. To preserve its integrity, the Church must be ever ready to wash disciples' feet. It must be concerned about service *(diakonia)* rather than being triumphalistic. Bowers (2005: 57) notes that, *"Diakonia* implies coming alongside people with the intention of serving in a way that affirms their dignity and self-worth. In effect, it is journeying on a 'people first' path, which in the mode of the suffering servant places the need of the other first, and recognises the need of the individuals and groups being served to

identify and act upon their own needs." In the words of Bosch (1980: 248), it is the church crossing frontiers in the form of a servant.

The history of Christian mission has often been characterized by a difference of opinion about the forms Christian service is allowed to take. More and more the realisation is growing today that, "We should find a way beyond every schizophrenic position and minister to people in their total need, that we should involve individual as well as society, soul and body, present and future in our ministry of salvation" (Bosch 1991:399). The service we should render need therefore not be limited only to charitable service to the victims of sickness, poverty, disaster, etc. Christian mission should also serve to correct the structural imbalances and injustices which cause sickness, poverty and oppression (Krtizinger *et al* 1994: 37). Our churches need to involve themselves in holistic ministry which aims to provide the lacking infrastructures which may be the cause of sickness, famine or poverty. Christian diakonia is inspired by a specific understanding of salvation:

> Those who know that God will one day wipe away all tears will not accept with resignation the tears of those who suffer and are oppressed now. Anyone who knows that one day there will be no more disease can and must actively anticipate the conquest of disease in individuals and society now. And anyone who believes that the enemy of God and humans will be vanquished will already oppose him now in his machinations in family and society. For this has to do with salvation (Bosch 1991: 400).

The needs of other people, especially those who are poor and exploited should be considered before one's requirements. It is a mission of love and compassion to be continued by His Church on authority given to it by Christ Himself (Mt. 9: 35-10:1). It is of the essence to the life and ministry of the Church. Diakonia means active participation of the church in the drama of real life of those who are suffering in real situations of poverty/suffering. It means striving towards helping the poor to have an equal share in God's gifts. In short, diakonia means the involvement of the church in helping those who are suffering.

2. 6 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The Church is the most important institution in the community; therefore, its mission should be visible in the community. At an ecclesial level, the faith community is a missional church (Guder 1998). Whether at local, national or global level, the Church is called to serve the people within its community. Community development should therefore be on the priority list of both the Church and larger society. The Church itself is the community of people who are

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called by God to be His people. When it is faithful to the life of Jesus, The Church is radically distinctive socio-historical community in the world. Christ had compassion for the poor and marginalised: He reached them; He took care of them; and He loved them (Morisy 1997: 2). The term "Mission" according to David Bosch (1991: 1) "presuppose a sender, a person or persons sent by the sender, those those to whom one is sent, and an assignment." With this view the Church has been given a task to do in this world, and it ha to go beyond its limit. It is the mission of God *(Missio Dei),* sending the Church to do God's work, on what it has been assigned. The Church in its mission should practice its incarnational ministry: to reach people; to listen to them; to give them hope and love; and care for them (Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 36). Both spiritual and physical needs need to be addressed together; this is why no one can talk about witness without mentioning the mission of development (Nicholls 1985: 225). The Church is not authorized to represent the reign of God, His justice and His peace, in any other way than in which Jesus represented it, namely by being partners with Him in challenging the powers of evil and bearing in its own life the cost of the challenge. The primary solidarity of the Church is not with the governments, but with the poor, wronged and vulnerable (Newbigin 1989: 134).

The Church is called to manifest God's mercy to humanity, and to bring humanity to its purpose-to praise and glorify God together with all the heavenly hosts. The Mission of the Church in God's world is not empty words but God's action of liberation and renewal. Mission is the action of Christ, and the action of Christ is the action of love because love is the heart of mission, therefore, the church's vision and mission will have a direct relationship to its identity, processes and programmes (Lewin 1987: 154-155). The essence of the Church's existence in the community is mission. Bosch (1991: 390) claims that; there is Church because there is mission, not vice versa. The Church, by its virtue of character as the Church, participates in God's mission in the world. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 57) state:

> The task is to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them, and to teach them to obey everything that Christ has commanded. What then were these commands? The people of God were to "preach this message: 'The Kingdom of heaven is near.'" They were also to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, [and] drive out demons [Mat. 10: 7-8].

The Church's mission is the proclamation, service and witness to the fullness of humanity (Bevans & Schroeder 2004: 70). The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalised. This entails

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critically analysing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation. The Church is called to proclaim the words of hope and comfort of the Gospel, by its works of compassion and mercy (Lewin 1987: 289).

The starting point for the Church to practice its mission in the community is to build and develops strong and effective relationships with other organisations, institutions and business in local community. The Church should help those who feel hopeless to regain their hope; to help those who feel dehumanised to realise that they are made in the image of God. And it should help those who are poor and marginalised to realise their position and true value in the community (Guder 1998: 79). To confine the Church's mission to the sanctuary or mission house does not only make Christianity a religion for the next world and not for this life, but also denies the Church its rights of mission to act on behalf of the neglected ones of the society. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 222-223) comment:

> The Church must preach a full gospel that allows no separation between the spiritual and physical needs of humanity. The mission of the Church is thus threefold: first, to plead the cause of the poor, defending the weak and helping the helpless (Prov. 22: 22; Ps. 12: 5; 10: 17-18); second, to stand for equality and social justice (Prov. 14: 10; and third, to institute structures that will create a just and more equitable distribution of wealth [Lev. 25: 28].

The Church as the body of Christ in this world has a mission of spreading the light of Christ, declaring His grace through the message of salvation, and proclaiming His word and judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination (Mugambi 1989: 16). The mission of the Church is to proclaim that which is heard, believed, and that it was commissioned to proclaim because the church is being sent into the world to proclaim the good news of salvation (Dulles 1991: 76). By its very nature, the Church is missional, profoundly marked by God's grace and the good news that gives hope and the future for all humanity. Mission implies a holistic and Kingdom orientated approach (Verkuyl 1978: 203). Therefore, it involves a comprehensive ministry with various dimensions, which can be distinguished, but never separated. The words of Bosch (1978: 227-229) and August (2005: 23) are appropriate to the Church's mission "Christian mission should have a total view of the Biblical concept: *Leutergia* (liturgy), *Marturea* (witness), through *Kerugma* (proclamation), Catechism or teaching, education or formation *(didache), Koinonia* (fellowship), and *Diakonia* (Service)". The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events. The Christian faith stimulates the Church to look for the actualisation of the

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kingdom in history in terms of justice, equal access to the creation that God intended for all, and the creation of human community through love, worship, proclamation, service and formation (August 1999: 36). The Church, then, is a community in mission to the world (Guder 1998: 221). The Church's mission is not to proclaim the gospel in a vacuum but to be in relation to the particular human realities, needs, questions, problems, and possibilities of the world (context) in which it lives. The Church's mission is to appeal to the individual Christian's conscience and inculcate the idea that respect for human dignity requires individual fundamental freedoms to be respected. It is also the role of the Church to stress that the Christian idea of justice is not only a matter of claiming one's rights, but also fulfilling one's obligations. The kingdom of God would seem to be equated with the building up of the social order and salvation part of the historical process of liberating humanity from political and social injustice (Cheyne 1996: 90). The Church is a community in mission to the world. The *'ecclesia visibilis'* is God's people making the presence of the kingdom of God felt in all areas of life, then the leaven which permeates all of human activity. It is the church in academia (education), the church in health and social services (diaconal social ministry), the church in politics (prophetic ministry), the church in the market-place [economic justice]" (Maggay 1994: 21).

As a Church, we are called to be in Jesus'footsteps (life) in order that we can preach the good news (word), initiate community development project (deeds) and nurturing our communities in all means that can eligible them to be out of poverty (signs). "Our life and deeds make our words intelligible; our words help people understand our life and deeds" (Myers 1999: 134). The Church's participation in God's mission can take various forms: The Church participates in God's mission by proclaiming in word and deeds both the presence and the coming of the kingdom and by conveying the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to the world (LWF 1988: 5). The essence of the Church is mission, because the Church is "missionary by its very nature." Church and mission belong together from the beginning. The Church in society makes a difference when it retains its two basic functions: as an agent of God's reconciliation and as a nurturing community. The Church is the manifestation of the new society, a community of faith and love which is called to be at the same time the people of God and the Church for others (Bosch 1999: 372).

As a community of faith, the Church today can respond to the contemporary challenges faced by its (her) members as an agent (catalys) of development in the world dedicated not to the

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partial plans for humanity of different nations or interest groups, but to the universal plan for peace wedded with justice intended by the God of all nations and people. The Church has a critical role to play in ensuring that the voices of the poor reverberate in the halls of public policy. In this regard August (1999: 29; 2010: 43) makes it clear that the Church as an integral part of God's new creation needs to emphasise the holistic meaning of the Gospel: salvation is not only spiritual-it not only changes people's lives, it changes changes people's relationships and living conditions, it changes structures, in fact it changes the world. Theologically the Church is engaged in the struggle against sin and evil embedded in immorality, poverty, injustice, suffering, crime and violence because of its eschatological perspective of the new creation.

2. 7 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The life of the Church has to be measured in the context of how it is revealing the presence of God in the community, in being a healer, liberator, a sign of hope, and a channel of Grace (Isaak 1997: 89). The Church is the people of God in society. It is also an agent of the kingdom. God uses the church as a king, prophet, and priest to bring societal transformation. The church's prophetic role is to give witness to the truth and declare her faith in public (Lewin 1987: 286). The Church is always a part of a larger community, called society which consists of a vast range of routine and complex sets of human relationships in which every person participates. The society in which the Church exists includes family, job, school, leisure and local, state, national, and international levels. The society has the following aspects: race, class, economic level, emotional planes, age, sex, education, opportunity, geography, time, and health. These two communities, the Christian community (Church) and society, are not mutually exclusive or easily distinguishable. They are very nearly completely intermingled. Christians are members of society even within their Christian communities, because they cannot easily separate the two in either function or thought (Hanson 1987: 485).

Sider (1993: 51) notes that, "Christians act as salt and light in the world in their callings in secular society, to preserve a just human and social order. This theology of development extends Christian strategy to education, health, agriculture and other projects which enhance the dignity of man". Genuine development work is that which empowers a person; which enables them to build organisations that like a hydro-electric dam, pool their resources, and generate power where previously there was none (Wilson & Ramphele 1989: 262). In order

for the Church to play any meaningful role in development of communities, there need[s] to be a sound theoretical understanding of 'development' (Burkey 1993: 39).

The Church is the only institution which can offer a holistic approach to development, and this is the only way to promote reconstruction and development aimed at healing the wounds of apartheid and bringing about sustained improvement in the physical, political, economic, social and spiritual well-being of people (Koegelenberg 1995: 115). As the Church seeks to be involved in the community it is very important to note some of the key issues that might hinder its mission: It is of profound importance for the church to realize that there is a high rate of illiteracy in many countries of Africa and illiteracy causes an inferiority complex. People are afraid to take part, thinking that they can not make any worthwhile contribution. They believe that innovation must come from educated people or from the rich. The other hindrance to the community development is the dependence syndrome. People may have become so used to being dependent on the government and other agencies that receiving hand outs becomes the norm. Also apathy may become a big hindrance to the community development because of the fact that people may have become so used to being poor and suffering all the consequences of poverty that they have no real wish to do anything but to survive. They accommodate their poverty and misery by accepting it as life. They are also fearful of trying and of innovation because it carries tremendous risks (Swanepoel 1997: 9-10).

In doing its ministry in this world, it is essential that the Church pay more attention to the ministry of diakonia/service (e.g. a homeless shelter). Precisely because of their faith, Christian communities (Churches) may not stand idly by in the face of major calamities affecting human health, such as famine and starvation, natural disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to August, the Church will have to pay a particular attention to its configurations of *koinonia* and *diakonia*; and motivate its members to get involved in civil initiatives, actions and movements that strive for the interest and values of society in accordance with biblical evangelical convictions (2005: 30).

To address poverty is a great challenge for the Church. Bruwer (1997: 19) affirms "Poverty has become the most burning issue the Church has to handle. And the Church's biggest problem is to shift its emphasis from word ro deed and from dogma to action." The issue of building community is of primary concern. The reality of crimes, fear and violence are the very outcome of modernity itself, and haunt almost everyone, of whatever social structure or

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station in the world. Whatever the Church's primary focus might be, it is needed that elements of proclamation, service and fellowship have also to be include as part of its ministry. The Church in Namibia, especially the ELCIN is the light of the wolrd through its words and it has a role to play. If something which causes suffering to the society happens, the community comes to the Church for help. For example, during the struggle for Namibia's liberation, the community came to Church hoping that its prophetic voice of being "a voice for the voiceless" would change the situation. Much later on, independence was achieved. The role of the Church in a community faced by many socio-economic challenges, especially one that is facing poverty, severe suffering (HIV/AIDS), unemployment and poverty, substance abuse, crime, rape etc, is crucial.

2. 7. 1 Community: congregational study

A community is a place whereby people share common things like land, culture, lifestyle, tradition and/or religion. August (1999: 19; 2010: 5) makes it clear that a community is composed of individuals or groups living in the same geographical areas and which often have different or even opposing interests (cf. Burkey 1996: 41). Community starts from the individuals, groups or household. The way Myers (2003: 102) depicts the concept of household defines the community. He quotes Friedman, who says the household is made up of three-dimensional human beings living in dynamic interaction with others. He believes people have an obligation to one another as well as needs and wants. Human needs, he says, include the psychological need for affection, self expression and esteem; these are not available as commodities but arise directly from human encounters. He goes further by also stating that the household exercises three kinds of power:

1) Social power
2) Political power, and
3) Psychological power.

Burkey (1996: 3) expands the list of basic individual needs to include those of community. He defines them as sexual regeneration, a system of communication (language), a belief and educational system for cultural security, a political system defining leadership and decision-making, and a system of work and recreation for maintaining well-being amongst sufficient numbers to maintain the community.

The community exists when a group of people perceives common needs and problems, acquires a sense of identity, and has a common set of objectives. Community rests at the heart of things. Our lives, their excitement, and their fulfilment are most intimately involved with the rivers, mountains, forests, meadows, sun, moon, stars, air, soil, rocks, other animals, and humankind (Rasmussen 1996: 324-326). One can define community as the vast array of routine and complex sets of human relationships in which every person participates. Community comprises family, job, school, leisure and local, state, national, and international levels. It has aspects we call race, class, economic levels, emotional planes, age, sex, education, opportunity, geography, time, and health. The community has certain measures of local autonomy and a degree of local responsibility. Community is usually defined in terms of geographic locality, of shared interests or needs, or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage.

In our (African) situation, implicit in the use of the concept ("community") is either the (sometimes romantic) image of the traditional African village or, because of its prominence and visibility, the urban squatter or informal settlement (De Beer & Swanepoel 2006: 43). These groupings of people, be it rural village or urban informal settlement, are always seen as poor deprived or disadvantaged and are described as receivers or non-receivers of services as targets for development and as beneficiaries. Unfortunately they are not often seen as very important role-players in their own development.

Community is the basis of moving from a theology of exclusion to a theology of inclusion. Categorical exclusions also reflect a lack of trust in God and lack of appreciation of the unconditional nature of God's love. Jesus was consistently engaged in breaking down the categorical exclusions imposed against such people, the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed (Lk. 4: 18-19). Communities are there for people not homogenous entities. Burkey (1996: 40) makes it clear that the harmony model of community, which was adopted in the past, was adopted without much analysis. This is defined as all people living in a certain area as people belonging to a certain Church. The Christian community (Church) and society are not mutually exclusive or easily distinguishable. They are very nearly completely intermingled. The Christian is a member of the society even within his/her Church (Christian community), because it is not easy to separate the two in either function or thought. The community around us is our first mission field, as Jesus said; "Be my witnesses (first) in Jerusalem" (Lk. 24: 48; Acts 1: 8). The community consists of all kinds of different people watching the

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Church (Bevans & Schroeder 2004: 35). What influence do our Churches and local congregations have in the community? Is the community influence (i.e. traditional customs such as ancestor worship) so strong that it has infiltrated into Church life? Are, our Churches and local congregations having the effect of flavouring and preserving against decay by exposing the light? Are we like that tasty salt and that shining light in the community? The church is an institution of believing Christians in society. As an institution in its own right, it makes statements explaining its views on issues which involve it in many kinds of activities: teaching, sanctifying, and governing. Our understanding of what the Church is often affects our estimation of the role and influence of the Church in the world around it (Mugambi 1989: 62). The living Church, as salt and light (Mt. 5: 14-16), should always be present and holistically engaged in the life of the surrounding community.

2. 7.2   Development: discovering and doing

The world, especially its developing part, as well as humanity is in crisis and faced with many problems such as; poverty, hunger, ecological problems (environmental destruction), communal violence and unemployment. The proposed remedy to this crisis is development. 'Development' is a term Western humanists devised to describe the process that a community needs to go through in order to bring about the elimination of poverty (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 3). More concretely, within a contemporary third world urban context, the major developmental issues are: housing and land requirements, education and job creation, health and sanitation. At a general level, development may defined as the improvement of the life chances and living conditions of residents in a given community, particularly with regard to the poor community. The term "Development" is not to be found in the Bible, just like other terms such as; "Trinity" or "Mission". Hughes & Bennett (1998: 5) state:

> Development may not be a biblical term but the idea is certainly present in terms that express the ideas of Growth and Revelation. God created human beings full of potential for growth. He created us to handle the resources of the earth in co-operation with others in a way that would reveal the wisdom and glory of our Maker.

"Revelation" is another biblical idea which is also close in meaning to development. It is difficult to define the term "development" because there are so many issues that come into play when deals with development. Burkey (1993: 33) comments "There can be no fixed and final definition of development, merely suggestions of what development should imply in particular contexts. Development necessarily involves structural transformation which

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implies political, social and economic changes." But one can say that, Development is a process that a community needs to go through in order to bring about the elimination of poverty. According to David Korten (1990: 66), Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources in order to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. Hiebert (in August 1999: 34-35) clearly indicates that, "For Christians, development has two dimensions to it: *theological* and *contextual.* Theologically, the Church's vision of its mission and motivation must emerge out of its fundamental understanding of the nature of God, humans, the fall, redemption and the kingdom of God. Contextually, this development process must promote self-reliance in meeting basic individual and community needs; it should progress toward the equitable distribution of human, economic and material resources; and it should provide each person with an opportunity for fuller participation in the economic and political life of his/her community or country, providing personal life-experiences which are consistent with God's intentions for humankind."

There is a growing understanding that the different dimensions of the Church's mission (proclamation, diakonia, and advocacy) cannot be separated form one another, but must be interrelated. This has to be done in a conscious, critical and theologically well-founded way, and in a dialogue that respects the fact that contexts are different, each demanding its specific approach.

People, even within the Church's constituency, live under poverty and inhuman conditions. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 235) note:

> Physical needs such as; food, shelter, exercises, and healthy physical environments are covered by physical development-stature. The need to develop, nurtures, and maintain a vertical relationship with our creator is covered under spiritual development-favour with God. The need to develop, nurture and maintain horizontal relationships with other individuals and groups is covered under social development-favour with man.

As God's steward, the Church must study the causes of these social problems with the aim of improving them. The Church is expected not to be taught by the world, but to take a lead in solving problems that are confronting humanity. In doing holistic community development and empowerment, the Church envisages providing services that are aimed to improve the economic welfare of people, to eradicate hunger, poverty and diseases and to defend human rights in order that peace and justice can be raised in the world. The interdependence of the

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Church and Community cannot be over-emphasized, even in economic matters. People of God live in economic situations. So, the healthier the economy, the better are opportunities (chances) for Christians and therefore, the Church must have to flourish and be strengthened. The reverse is also true. The Church will therefore do well in strengthening communities, because they will strengthen it in return, and enabling it to carry out its calling and mission to care for the whole person.

Korten (1990: 218) further states that, Development can be defined as a process that leads to improving the quality of people's life. It ensures their cultural, social, political, spiritual and economic well-being through a participatory and integrated process of empowerment, self-reliance, regeneration and the removal of obstacles to this process. It is a process of change that leads to a better life for people and society. Koegelenberg (1992: 67,120) comments that, "Development is something more than relief work which is motivated by benevolence or charity. It is not a benevolent response, but a concern for social justice. Development always aims to transform the socio-economic situation". Development can be also best be defined as a process towards a goal by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future, in order to realize the full potential of life that God has made possible (Sider 1993:19). From a Christian and biblical perspectives, a theology of development reflects on the reasons for which Christians' involvement in development, the method of involvement, and the goal of involvement. The development process is a continuous one. It starts where people are; with their perceptions of their situation and their needs and assets (ELCA-DGM 2000: 2).

In search of a clear definition of development, the work of Myers in his book, *walking with the poor,* is very helpful. Myers (2003: 171) refers to Mary Anderson and Peter Woodrow (co-directors of the International Relief and Development Project at Harvard University). These two defined development as, "The process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased." By "vulnerabilities" they mean long-term factors that affect the way in which the community is able to respond to disasters or direct its development. By "capacities" they mean long-term strengths within a society. The capacities of survival strategy should be displayed. All people of both genders and different ages ought to participate (take part) in the displaying process. According to Myers (2003: 171), "Anderson and Woodrow suggest that the analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities be done for men and women, and for the rich, middle-class, and poor." The term "development", according to

Bryant Myers (2003: 96), as quoted from David Korten, "is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life, consistent with their own aspiration".

Also, as Myers states, according to Korten, development is not something arrived at, an end point; it is a continuing process. And it should be driven by three principles: sustainability, justice, and inclusiveness. The concept of development is understood by a variety of people with different perspectives and, therefore, there is no final definition of development, but it is about being people-centred. Development is the remedy to human mishaps. It must be aimed at the awakening, awareness, capacitating and empowerment of the person being developed. It must provide people with opportunities for fuller participation in the economic and political life as well as helping them to be able to help themselves. Thus, it should enable, educate, foster justice and enhance ecumenical cooperation. "Development is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. Development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within the society. These changes must come from within the individuals and groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside" (Elliston 1989: 85-67; Burkey 1996: 48).

Through "Community Development" approach, a community should take responsibility for its own future. Community development can only be sustainable if challenges and solutions to them are identified by communities themselves and the community has the main responsibility of projects. People from outside can provide help and advice; but in the end, the community should decide what to accept and it should be administered (Krtzinger *et al* 1994: 145). The full participation (people-centred development) of community members in its activities cannot happen without leadership. Korten (1984: 300) notes that, "People-centred development places substantial value on local initiative and diversity. It thus favours self-organizing systems developed around human-scale organizational units and self-reliant communities." People-centred development working with the people, not for the people. Allowing the poor to participate in their development enables them to address the challenges amicably. Burkey (1996: 130) warns:

> It is difficult for the poor to break away from the vicious circle of dependence and poverty individually. It is only though collective effort and organization that they can reduce dependence and initiate a

course of participatory, self-reliant development. Thus participation implies mobilisation, conscientisation and organisation ... in that order.

According to August (1999: 24), "Development is participatory, self reliant and people-centred." *Development* in the context of this study is not in the first place about statistics, about increasing gross national products, about technological innovations or bureaucratic blueprints, but it is essentially about people. People-centred development tries to remind us that the economy is not an end in itself, but merely an instrument to serve the needs of people and to enhance life (Elliston 1989: 87; Koegelenberg 1992: 2). Development concerns people-people experiencing the reality within which they find themselves day by day and moment by moment, feeling its implications and seeing its practical functioning around them (Coetzee (1988: 1). Development in any meaningful sense must begin with, and within, the individual. Unless motivation comes from within, efforts to promote change will not be sustainable by that individual. The individual will remain under the power of others (Burkey 1996: 35). Through this process of conscientisation, people become aware of their own needs and can embark upon self-reliant ventures where they themselves feel that they are contributing the maximum human, material and financial resources relative to their ability.

"Sustainable development is a process of change whereby the needs and the rights of individuals and communities in any given society are realized without jeopardizing the needs and rights of other communities and future generations. Sustainable development includes four main objectives: meeting basic human needs, expanding economic opportunities, protecting and enhancing the environment and promoting pluralism and democratic participation" (ELCA-DGM 2000: 3).

Hall (1985: 4) comments:

> Genuine development however should be perceived and defined from the vantage point of its impact upon people's economic, political and social conditions. It must ease people's suffering, abate their absolute poverty and elevate the level of their income. It must expand people's opportunities and allow the fulfilment of their aspirations.

From the above information, one can also say that, development is a process leading to a rise in the capacity of rural people to control their environment and situations in order that they can derive benefits from such control. It is through development, that, people are awakened to opportunities within their reach, and empowered to take control of their destiny. To achieve this goal, development has to focus on human attitudes, hearts and minds. Therefore, the only measure of development is its impacts on people, their attitudes and quality of life. If

development is: "A dynamic continuous process in which people, individuals and other engage themselves in the struggle towards the restoration of fullness of life…"(Held 1988: 6) then, it calls for people's active participation, through which they will be empowered. At the end of the day, people must be able to assume responsibilities for their health and welfare, and develop the capacity to contribute to their own and their community development.

The basis and motivation for the Church's role in development is its relationship with its calling by God. The Church, other than the secular agencies with their altruistic goals, does development out of its sense of God's concern for humanity and in obedience to God's plan (August 1999: 35). Community development seeks to promote human development with emphasis on the relationship between economic, social, and political aspects of development (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 125). As God's steward, the Church must study the causes of social problems among its members with the aim of improving the situation. Kotze (1997: 62-63) comments:

> It is clear that, community developers have been struggling to understand the communities (people) whom they have been working with. At this point they have started to acknowledge the value of local knowledge and empowerment. Community developers are coming to feel the need for understanding communities, as well as the processes of interactions involving both themselves and communities.

Development simply means improving society. Because the society consists of people, development therefore, always aims at enabling people to achieve their aspirations. Clark (1991: 22) notes that, "Development is not a commodity to be weighed or measured, but it is a process of change that enables people to take charge of their own destinies and realize their full potential. It requires building up in the people the confidence, skills, assets and freedoms necessary to achieve this goal." The principal objective (goal) of development must be enabling society or individuals to ascertain their basic needs, to solve and eradicate the root cause of poverty and its underlying causes, ignorance, diseases, injustices, and other problems facing society. This necessitates an understanding of what these causes are. De Beer & Swanepoel (1997: 8) states that, "Development's main goal is to eradicate poverty. Put another way, development wants to free people from the deprivation trap. The extent of the poverty crisis is not always realised, especially when the 'not-so-poor' or the 'enterprising part of the community' are targeted for development." August (1999: 8; 2010: xi) comments that, "A further aspect of people centered development approach is the preference for development participation by marginalised and that they progressively own responsibility, i.e.

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that the poor attaion greater participation in decision-making, planning and execution in respect of development."

For the church "Development" can be broadly defined as the harmonious response to God's creation and salvation. Therefore church engagement in Community Development is part of her service to the world. To define Community Development more specifically, it means enabling people to improve the quality of their lives through self-help. The church takes development seriously, not in the first place because of its good infra-structure to function effectively at grassroots level as a development agent, but because development is ultimately about a new vision for society; about a new humanity, about empowerment of people, about experiencing the full time that God is giving; and about appreciating God's creation. The church takes development seriously, because God takes the pain, the poverty and the suffering in this world seriously. There is therefore no discrepancy in building a structure that will be used both as a church and as a basis for community development (Koegelenberg 1992: 3; August 2010: 51). The church is the only institution which can offer a holistic approach to development. Koegelenberg states that this is the only way to promote reconstruction and development aimed at healing the wounds of apartheid and bringing about sustained improvement in the physical, political, economic, social and spiritual well-being of people. He writes:

> The church itself as a part of the broader religious community needs to undergo a process of reconstruction and development as a part of the essential processes of reconstructuring the social relations in line with human development (Koegelenberg 1995: 115).

The government; the people; business, labour, and religious institutions need to work interactively to bring about a fundamental change in the existing patterns of social and economic relations (Koegelenberg 1995: 116). Development also aims at transforming the lives of people through healing the marred identity of the poor. In general terms, development necessarily involves structural transformation, which implies political, social and economic change.

2. 7. 3 The Church and Social action

From its very beginning, Christian mission has been holistic, modelled by the example of the mission of Jesus, who preached the word, cared for the needy, and defended the excluded. Our understanding of the holistic mission therefore includes the dimensions of proclamation, service or diakonia, and advocacy. In the society, the church has an important role to play

through witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and proclaiming prophetically that justice be done to all people (Rasmussen 1996: 91). The central responsibility of the Church is to seek God's will of righteousness and peace in this world, that is why the Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy, and marginalized (Aarflot 1988: 73; Hall 1990: 47). God calls people to embrace social justice and to alleviate the burdens of ignorance, poverty and hunger. Mission that was given Jesus Christ calls for infiltration of all segments of society, starting with the poor, with holistic ministry in which there is no dichotomy between evangelism and social transformation. Christ as the head of the church gave the church a task in the great commission (Matthew 28: 16-20). The purpose of that commission was to reach the people, to change their lives and situation. In this regard August (1999: 29; 2010: 43) makes it clear that the church as an integral part of God's new creation embodies the holistic meaning of the biblical message, viz. that salvation is not only spiritual- it not only changes people's lives, it changes people's relationships and living conditions, it alters structures, in fact, changes the world. Theologically the Church is engaged in the struggle against sin and evil embedded in immorality, poverty, injustice, suffering, crime, and violence, because of its eschatological perspective of the new creation (cf. Koegelenberg 1992: 1).

The Church is not only called to seek God's kingdom, but is also sent to pursue its righteousness, and its justice. According to biblical data, justice can be described as 'fidelity to the demands of a relationship'; it is a concern for the marginal people in society, the widow, the orphan, the alien, the poor, the refugees (Nicholls 1986: 168). The Church is called to place itself at the side of the weak and persecuted, to be the voice of the voiceless among the poor and exploited and to transcend the borders that divide people from other people, be the borders of political, ideological, or economic nature or barriers related to race, belief, or social status (Aarflot 1988: 73). Maggay (1994: 68) comments:

> It would seem that the Church in its social involvement *vis-a-vis* the secular powers has tended to swing between power and powerlessness, separation and solidarity. Some parts emphasise social compassion, others social construction. Factors that shaped its responses have to do mainly with the level of theological sensitivity to cosmic and structural dimensions of the gospel, with a degree of concern for self-identity on the one hand and solidarity with the poor on the other.

The Church's social responsibility is based on Jesus' mission (Lk. 4: 18-19; Is. 61: 1-2; Jn. 17) in terms of proclamation, healing and liberation. Musembi (1999: 78) states:

> It is the Church's mission to preach the gospel which affects the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation, be it hunger, ignorance, blindness, despair or paralysing

fear. Like Jesus, the advocate of the poor and the oppressed, the believing community is invited, at times justly obliged, to show in action a preferential love for the economically disadvantaged, the voiceless who live in a hopeless situation. Although the "people of God" are not of this world, they are here for both spiritual and social (holistic) service to others. The Church needs to understand this as an essential dimension of its identity. In this way, the Church signifies, participates in, and anticipates the new humanity God wants, and also serves to proclaim God's grace in human situations and needs until Christ comes in glory [Mt. 25: 31].

The entire ministry of Jesus and his special concern for the poor and marginalized of the society such as: the weak, and the outcast or socially ostracised, the disabled, children, tax-collectors, drunkards, prostitutes, and lepers, is the ministry which the Church is called to emulate (Bosch 1991:86). Since God cares so much for the poor, God also wants His people to do the same and care for one another. Equal justice for the poor in court is a constant concern of scriptures that is why the Church preaches about God's concern for the weak ones of the society: the widows, the orphans and the strangers (Amos 5: 10-15). The way we treat the poor can be a way of announcing that a different spirit is at work in the community (Maggay 1994: 68). The Church has to orientate itself with regard to its calling and role in the public sphere in relations to politics, economics, global forces, poverty, health, employment and all other relative issues stemming from the public tide (August 2009: xiii). The mission of the Church as the community of Jesus' disciples is to communicate the gospel of freedom and bear witness to the total liberation of human being. The eternal model for the mission given by Jesus Christ calls for social justice to alleviate the burdens of ignorance, poverty and hunger, racism, and other forms of oppression. The Church's mission is to be the body of people which, through the grace of God, participates in the initiatives which God takes in the world (Morisy 1997: 2). The Church has a mission to proclaim an integral liberation, because nothing is left untouched by the saving work of Christ.

Social ministry *(diakonia)* is firmly programmed by God in human being that is why the Bible bears constant witness to it, from Genesis to Revelation. Unruh & Sider (2005: 28) note that, "Social ministry refers to any corporate effort of the church to influence society or improve quality of life beyond the church's membership. Social action, social activism, and social outreach are here interchangeable." Christian social action is thus a physical action that serves as a demonstration of a spiritual "reality" in which there is a union between God and humanity and people and people (August 1999: 33). Social Service refers to the response of the Church and Christians to basic needs: food, clothes and shelter. Ministries of service sometimes include soup kitchens, clothing closets and temporary shelters. This kind of

ministry is a reflection of the compassion of Christ and we learnt from the example of Christ that we need to attend to the felt needs of our neighbours, whoever they might be. It is an imperative to continue serving people in the way the Good Samaritan responded to the victim of robbers. The problem with ministries of service is that they often remain band-aid ministries, dealing with the symptoms only. The issue of poverty and struggle are not addressed, and often these ministries keep the status quo in place, since they address the needs without asking questions about the causes. Churches should move beyond service ministry to address systemic issues, without abandoning these deeds of compassion (Hinsdale *et al* 1995: 313).

Deeds of charitable service are basic, but they do not go far enough if the causes (structural as well as personal) of the needs are not also addressed. The church may be regarded as the "church with others"-journeying with the poor, the marginalized, suffering and oppressed through and in their circumstances. The church must show compassion to all its members who are vulnerable, because those members need to live in good circumstances in order that they might respond faithfully to the preaching of the gospel (Dunne 1969: 6). To give food to the hungry (diakonia/social responsibility) has an evangelistic implications, since good works of love, if done in the name of Jesus, are a demonstration and commendation of the Gospel. In Acts, compassion and sharing were practised within the Christian fold where many members were poor, so that Paul had to appeal to the Gentile Churches to come to the aid of the poor Christians in Judea (Bosch 1991: 18; Moltmann 1993: 126-127).

The task of *diakonia* therefore also has to venture into difficult economic and even political issues. *Diakonia,* or the service or ministry of the Church, has many forms: taking care of one another, responding to those in need, ensuring that justice is done in all spheres of life, as well as caring for the earth. In other words, the cry of the poor is that, poverty and wealth are not fossilized topics but occasions where we meet various faces of God. Such faces invite churches and governments to assist the thirsty and hungry, to provide water and food for themselves; offering one's accommodation facilities to refugees, assisting the naked to dress themselves, building hospitals and clinics to cater for the sick, to provide education for all, and empowering prison chaplains who visits prisoners on behalf of all Christians (Nessan 1999: 113).

Harvie Conn (1982: 41-44) feels that, justice is a part of *diakonia.* Part of the service of the church is to seek justice. It is important that the church will go beyond mere deeds of service,

in order to seek justice. When people are oppressed and treated unfairly, it is not helpful if the church only addresses the symptoms. These people need advocates to stand with them against those who deprive them of opportunities. The church should accept that social development of people means rebellion (Hinsdale *et al* 1995: 18). Unless the church participates actively in the rebellion against those social structures and economic organizations and condemns evils such as; poverty, humiliation, injustice, corruption, and degradation, the church will become irrelevant to man and the Christian religion will degenerate into a set of superstitions accepted by the fearful. Unless the Church, its members and its organizations, express God's love for man by involvement and leadership in constructive protest against the present conditions of man, then it will become identified with injustice and persecution. The diaconal department (ministry) of the church must do ministry in such a way, that marginal people will be liberated from socio-economic or political oppression, and that people's dignity will be re-affirmed. People must be helped to enter into new relationships with God and their fellow human beings. Bakke (1987: 152) notes:

> Christians are people of God who received mercy (1 Pet. 2: 10) and they are called to be stewards of minds, bodies, abilities, position and relationships. Their stewardship services and acts of mercy must be demonstrated through the work towards social systems-for health, education, justice, housing and sanitation-because God is concerned for the health and fairness of these systems.

The Church must get involved in social actions such as; community development projects and awareness raising that will enable the people of God, to overcome weakness and share in the abundance of life for which Christ has come (Jn. 10: 10). There is no limit to justice-the justice that can work to the benefit of the poor and oppressed who have been so long with us; justice in relation to the minorities in our own midst; justice in the distribution of earth's treasures that belong, finally to no one else, but to all people (Hall 1985: 99-113).

The Church, in whatever context, has to take action that shows the Christ it preaches as Saviour of the world. The social action of the Church is to reflect on the salvific aspect of the Gospel...God's action in Jesus Christ. The church's intrusion into the sphere of material development is part of its evangelism programme expressing the Gospel for humanity in its totality, the goal being humanisation (Cheyne 1996: 69). The church has to take into consideration the socio-economic challenges that are faced by its members and need to extend her social diaconal ministry to the poor who lives in disadvantaged communities. The contemporary community of faith that seeks to live true to the Biblical model will similarly

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be a community adapting its institutional structures to its central confessions and missions (Hanson 1987: 468).

In commenting on the importance of the church's vocation in promoting the relief of human problems in disadvantaged communities, Linthicum (1991: 144) states that the church has a vital positive role to play in such a community such as; to work for a just society by fighting against social, political, and economic structures and systems that are generate and perpetuate injustices. The church should adopt the holistic approach to human needs. It should take both spiritual and physical needs of God's people into account, such as; advocacy and care for the poor, the needy, and marginalised. This entails critically analysing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation. This comprehensive mission approach would be ideal for the Namibian context, which has become complex.

2.8 CONCLUSION

From a theological and social ethical point of view, the Church is an institution of Christian believers in society. As an institution it has the right to practise and manifest its function in society. It cannot exist by and for itself, because of being mandated to serve the people of God. The Church is the communion of those who live in a personal relationship with God who speaks to them and calls forth their trustful response-the communion of the faithful. The state of mind of the Church is fundamental to its faithfulness in being the agent of God's mission *(Missio Dei)* which demands nothing than a missionary ecclesiology. The Church is called by God to declare Christ's lights (love) in this world and to serve as a healing and caring community. According to the Church's mission, it is commissioned to bring people the message and grace of Christ which permeates and heals our broken world. Its service in the world is not only through worship and witness but also in a holistic way which includes caring for the hungry, the poor, the sick and the distressed. The Church must see itself as finding its fulfilment in faithfully representing Christ and His mission, because by its very nature as the body of Christ, it is called to become a caring community where holistic ministry has to take place.

This community must be a safe space of openness and acceptance providing education, service and fellowship. Christ's caring community should be an environment of trust and commitment. The Church would not be true to its calling and mission if it neglected matters that affect the welfare (wellbeing) of the total human being. But the Church has to be seen as

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a communion (fellowship) of significant minorities and the neglected in society. In order for the Church to respond holistically and sustainably to its missiological and ecclesiological challenges in a context of poverty, an understanding of its missiological and ecclesiological identity is central. The Church has to take the responsibility to proclaim that, according to the scriptures, the human vocation is that of being God's steward, responsible for God and fellow creatures (neighbours). This the Church understands as an essential dimension of its identity. As a community of faith, the Church today can respond to contemporary challenges faced by its members as an agent (catalyst) in the world dedicated not to the partial plans for humanity of different nations or interest groups, but to the universal plan for peace wedded with justice intended by the God of nations and peoples. The Church of Christ makes a difference when it retains its basic functions: as an agent of God's reconciliation and as a nurturing community.

The Church is the manifestation of the new society that sprang up from Jesus Christ, a community of faith and love which is called to be at the same time the people of God and the church for others. In fulfilling its mission, the Church has the duty of sending heralds of the Gospel to proclaim the good news of salvation. It is the Church, entrusted with the mission of evangelisation by Jesus Christ, which in turn bestows this mandate and thus sends missionaries. The Church, to be fully and genuinely herself, must always be missionary. The Church manifests its spirituality and fecundity in giving birth to new churches. This applies also to the local Churches. The fruits of the early Christians abound, and that is why we have indigenous and autonomous churches in our different contexts, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) which was established by Finnish Missionaries in the 19th Century in the far north of Namibia (former homeland of Owamboland) which will be discussed on the following chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

CHURCH AND SOCIETY: SELF UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN)

3. 1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a brief historical overview of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) will be given to depict its history and ethos from its founding in Owamboland, (Omandongo) northern Namibia (1870) to the autonomous (indigenisation) of the ELOC in 1954 and up to its demarcation (division) into two Episcopal dioceses in 1991. Each diocese is led by a bishop. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) grew out of the work which the Finnish missionaries from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) started in 1870, among the Aawambo and Kavango speaking People, in the North-Central Namibia of what later (1884) came to be known as "German South West Africa". ELCIN being a product of the missionary work done by missionaries from a Northern European country, Finland, takes the stand of serving a person in a holistic way. Such an approach was course inherited from the work done by missionaries, already at the outset. Upon their arrival, the Finnish missionaries have started preaching the Good News of salvation among the Aawambo Namibian Speaking people living in the densely populated area northern part of the country. Besides preaching, they also implemented some literacy programmes that were aimed at teaching their converts how to read and write.

ELCIN has also been a church of preaching while practising other dimensions, such as: health care, basic and further education and diakonia. These were however subordinate to preaching. Schools and Hospitals were also being erected alongside Church buildings. Due to historical facts, ELCIN was originally and characteristically been a church of rural areas, particularly strong in the northern parts of Namibia, Owamboland and Kavango. ELCIN's position has also been stable due to the long historical links with her main and long-term supporter, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). The relationship between ELCIN and FELM is based on shared ideologies and practices.

3. 2 NAMIBIA: THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

Namibia is a very large country (vast territory), covering an area of 824 295 square kilometers (317 827 square miles), located in the south-western part of Africa, as was indicated by its colonial name: South West Africa. In area it is larger than Texas, or four times the size of the United Kingdom. Namibia shares borders with Botswana in the east, Angola and Zambia in the north and South Africa in the south-east. Namibians have relatives in these countries and share common languages and cultures with all of them. Along the west coast, the country is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Namib Desert. The eastern border runs through the Kalahari desert, which Namibia shares with Botswana, while the west coast is lined with the sandy Namib desert, fifty to seventy kilometers wide and stretching the full length of the coastline from the Orange River to the Kunene River (i.e. the southern and northern borders. The population density is 1. 8 persons per square kilometere, compared to 15. 5 persons per square kilometere in Africa and 32. 5 persons per square kilometere for the world. With its low population density, compared to most countries in Africa, Namibia makes up 3% of Africa's land area, but only 0.2% of its population. This is mainly due to the fact that a large part of the country is too dry for human settlement. While there are on average only about 2 people per km^2, people are not spread evenly across the country. For many centuries the Namib Desert protected the Namibians inferior from penetration by European seafarers, excluding any form of slave trade (Du Pisani 1986: 6; Nambala 1994: 7-8, 21; 2001 Population Census; Vision 2030 of the Republic of Namibia 2004: 25, 28).

It was only in the nineteenth century, European missionaries and traders found a way into Namibia, mostly from Cape over the southern border. The effect of the nineteenth century 'scramble for Africa' is today vividly demonstrated by the international borders of Namibia. Although Germany was almost too late in the scramble, it managed to get a fair share as a result of the Berlin Congress of 1884-1885. The international borders of Namibia cut right through the tribal lands of the Aakwanyama (Owamboland), the Aakwangali and Mbukushu (Kavango) and the Lozi of Caprivi. Particularly the awkward shape of the Caprivi strip, shooting out the north-eastern corner of Namibia for almost 500km, is a fine example of the arbitrary cutting of borders during the colonial 'scramble for Africa'(Katjavivi 1988: 5; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxi).

The country is called *Namibia after Namib*, a Khoekhoegowab word that means "the enclosure." That is, the country is enclosed by two deserts: in the west by the Namib and in the east by the Kalahari. The Namib Desert after which the country is named, stretching from the Orange River to the Kunene River along the Atlantic coast, ensured the anonymity of the hinterland. The name *Namibia* derives from the Namib Desert, which was considered by the earlier leaders as a shield that protected the inhabitants inland from the encroachment of the Europeans arriving on ships. Different names were used to refer to this great territory, before it became known as Namibia in 1968. Namibia was colonized by Germany in 1884; that is why during colonial times the whole territory was called German South West Africa. During those years the oppression of the indigenous population included massacres and the attempted genocide of certain populations has been taken place. As from 1915, when South Africa took control of the territory it became South West Africa. The notorious system of apartheid was enforced in South West Africa/Namibia, together with violent oppression of any form of political resistance (Du Pisani 2010: 217).

The history of Namibia has passed through several distinct stages from being colonised in the late nineteenth century to independence on 21 March 1990. The arrival of increasing numbers of Afrikaner and German settlers seriously disrupted Namibian societies. In trying to establish control over Namibia the Germans relied upon the use of force and the old colonial tactics of divide and rule. Eventually, such tactics led to a widespread war of resistance to German rule by the Nama and Herero people, from 1904 to 1907. The Herero and Namaqua Genocide is considered the first genocide of the 20th century. In total, between 75-80% of the Herero population had been killed along with 35-50% of the Nama population. The genocide was characterized by widespread death, starvation, thirst and preventing the fled Herero returning from the Namib desert (Katjavivi 1988: 8-11; Du Pisani 1989: 9-11).

The war of independence was fought largely in the northern part of Namibia, on the border with Angola, where most SWAPO, the liberation movement's camps were situated. The entity of Namibia was decided upon by colonial Europeans. The indigenous inhabitants did not perceive themselves as one nation. They perceived themselves as distinct communities and even nations with independent social and political structures. These communities developed modes of economic relationships with one another. They traded in food and other products and even began to form relationships that included intermarriages. These earlier

relationships form the basis of inclusiveness on which every Namibian can build (Du Pisani 1986: 21; 89: 7-8; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxii).

Because one of the world's biggest deposits of gemstone diamonds can be found in Namibia as well as large quantities of copper, zinc, vanadium, uranium, lithium, tungsten and salt; both Germany and South Africa considered the country to be suitable for extensive settlement by Europeans. Subsequently colonial policies made the settlers richer and richer and, until today, left the indigenous people poor. Under these conditions, any challenge to colonial rule was tantamount to disparaging national honour and grandeur. During the liberation struggle the name 'Namibia' was introduced and the majority of the people accepted the new name, for a free, independent country. This name became official on 21 March 1990, when Namibia became an independent country, after it was first colonised by Germans (1884-1914) and later by South Africa (1915-1989). It is now accepted and loved by all, as a unifying name. The capital of Namibia is Windhoek, formerly known called *Aigams* (/Ai-//Gams) by the Nama tribes and *Otjomuise* or *Omukutu* by the Herero tribes. Walvis Bay and Lüderitz are the two major ports (Nambala 1994: 8; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxiii). After independence in 1990 the country was subdivided into 13 regions, each having its own regional governor and regional council, as follows (alphabetically): Caprivi, Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Okavango, Omaheke, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa. The harshness of the country is demonstrated by the coastal area, bearing the name of 'Skeleton Coast' due to the many shipwrecks found along its coast line. It seems that the political history of the country emphasized this harshness (Nambala 1994: vii; Munyika 2004: 143).

The nomadic Khoisan Bushmen inhabited the country from prehistoric times and are generally accepted as the earliest inhabitants of Southern Africa. At the time that the Dutch East India Company founded its small station at the Cape in 1652, Namibia was occupied by Agricultural and Pastoral Communities of Aawambo, Damara, Herero, Nama and San peoples living far to the north between the Karahari and Namib deserts (Katjavivi 1988: 1-3; Du Pisani 1989: 21). Namibia's population structure is pluralistic. During the colonial era, the country was divided into a northern and a southern section, for administration purposes. The northern section contained ethnic homelands (Bantustans) such as: Owambo, Kavango, Kaokoland and Caprivi which were exclusively for blacks. The southern section consisted of ethnic homelands for black and Coloured settlements, and white farming areas exclusively

for white ownership, as well as towns with a multiracial composition (Du Pisani 1986: 8). Namibia comprises the following 11 distinct ethnic groups, which are further broken down into subgroups: Owambos (49%); Kavangos (9.3%); Damaras (7.5%); Hereros (7.5%); Whites (6.4%); Namas (4.8%); Coloureds (4.1%); Caprivians (3.7%); San (2.9%); Rehoboth Basters (2.5%); Tswanas (0.6%) and Others (0.9%). People commonly speak at least more than two languages in much of Namibia. After independence in 1990, the official language became English, with a local vernacular, Afrikaans enjoying a historical a historical usefulness as *lingua franca.* The local languages are recognized and protected by the Constitution. In other words, Namibians have the right to speak their mother languages anywhere and at anytime with pride. Namibia has a small population of 1. 8 million (Population and Housing Census 2001), but the people are diverse in language and ethical composition. The major indigenous language groups (vernaculars) are: Damara-Nama, Herero *(Otjiherero),* Kavango *(Rukwangali),* Owambo *(Oshiwambo),* Lozi *(Silozi),* San, Tswana, Afrikaans and German. These language groups are sub-divided into several related languages and dialects. It is clear that the Afrikaans, English and German speaking groups are the most privileged in terms of education, health and income. Also ethnically, most of these groups are from European decent. The Owambo *(Aawambo)* peoples of north-central Namibia consist of seven related communities (ethnic groups): the Ondonga *(Oshindonga),* Uukwanyama *(Oshikwanyama),* Uukwambi *(Oshikwambi),* Ongandjera *(Oshingandjera),* Ombalantu *(Oshimbalantu),* Uukwaluudhi *(Oshikwaluudhi),* and Uukolonkadhi *(Oshikolonkadhi)* (Du Pisani 1986: 8-11; 1989: 21; 2010: 72; Nambala 1994: 2; 2001 Population and Housing Census; Miettinen 2005: 35). All these have their own dialects as indicated in brackets.

3. 3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ORIGIN OF THE AAWAMBO PEOPLE

The Aawambo have lived in Owambo since at least the mid sixteenth century. Originating from the Great Lakes of East and Central Africa, the Aawambo settled north of Etosha in the mid fifteenth century (Du Pisani 1986: 8; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii; Miettinen 2005: 37).

There are several theories about the origin of the Aawambo. According to ELCIN historian, Nambala, the origins of the Aawambo are unclear and it is not even known how long they have been living in Namibia (1994: 28). According to him, there are many possibilities

concerning the origin of the Aawambo. One possibility is that Aawambo came from east sometime between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. Another possibility is that they may have come from the northeast over the Zambezi and Okavango Rivers and trekked westwards until they reached what is Owamboland today. Another version is that they may have come from the north through Angola and crossed the Kunene River or between the Kunene and the Okavango Rivers. They divided into groups; some followed the rivers while others moved southwards parallel to the rivers. It was not clear whether they came as a group or as a small family in clan unities. Nambala concludes that the Aawambo are part of the great Bantu movement form the northeast to the southwest of Africa (1994: 28).

The name 'Owambo' was probably given by their Herero neighbours. Owambo is a collective name for eight different (some authors prefer seven) Aawambo kingdoms (tribes), namely: the, Uukwanyama, Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Ombalantu, Uukolonkadhi and Eunda. The last two tribes occupy the same tribal area, which is Uukolonkadhi (Du Pisani 1986: 8-11; 2010: 72; Nambala 1994: 28; Munyika 2004: 143; Miettinen 2005: 35). Each tribe has its own language (dialect), with no specific *lingua franca*. The tribal languages are of the Bantu origin and are inter-intelligible, but only the language of first two groups (Aakwanyama and Aandonga) mentioned have a written form. Due to the close relationship between these languages or dialects, a collective term 'Oshiwambo', is often used when referring to all these languages or dialects all-together. All tribes, except the numerous Aakwanyama tribes, have accepted Oshindonga as the written language in their schools and churches. The Oshikwanyama language differs substantially from Oshindonga, and therefore has its own Bible translation (in addition to the Oshindonga Bible). Nowadays, the vast majority of the Aawambo are Christian. This is mainly Lutherans, converted by missionaries from Germany and Finland in the 1870s.

The Aawambo are pastoralists and agriculturalists, divided into broad kinship groups based on the matrilineal system, and live in family complexes. They breed cattle (animal husbandry), plant crops and fish the rivers, showing little interest in the southern or central parts of the Territory where natural conditions were unsuited to their traditional lifestyle (Katjavivi 1988: 3; Peltola 2002: 49; Miettinen 2005: 39).

3. 4 THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN)

History has witnessed the heroism of Christian men and women who have obeyed the commission of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28: 18-19) by leaving their homes, families, communities and countries to go to "unknown" lands and peoples preaching the Good News of human fellowship and everlasting life in God. Those who lived by the gospel touched the hearts of their hearers and transformed their lives in many ways (Nambala 1994: 59). In most cases this was done or happened through much hardship and unceasing patience nourished by burning Christian love within the breasts of preachers and missionaries. Although mission work can be traced back to the Apostles, especially Paul, there was a time when the Church did not embark on mission or what is known as foreign mission. The first Christian in Southern Africa was not a direct result of mission work in the region. Those Christians did not come with a planned operation for missions when they left Europe. There was no overall grand design for evangelism. The idea of evangelizing the indigenous people of Southern Africa developed after the European discovery of a trading route from Europe to East Africa via South Africa and the establishment of Portuguese colonial settlements along the coast of Africa (Nambala 1994: 60). Throughout the pre-colonial period, Namibia experienced European influence from a number of explorers, hunters and above all missionaries. The pioneer missionary societies who started to plant the seed of Christianity in Namibia were the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) and the Finnish Missionaries [FMS] (De Vries 1978: 119; Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 4-5; Gurirab 2002: 9; Buys & Nambala 2003: 14-26).

Sixty percent of Namibian Christians today are Lutherans. These Lutherans are for the most part credited to the German and Finnish Lutheran missionaries who courageously worked in Namibia, beginning in the mid-1800s. However, the Lutherans did not find Namibia a completely unchristian country. The missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) had worked there since 1805. The first white settlers in the country were, however, two German brothers, Abraham and Christian Albrecht, sent by the LMS to initiate evangelistic work on what was hoped to be a self-supporting basis among two Nama tribes. They were joined in 1811 by the remarkable Johann Heinrich Schmelen and two other missionaries, including William Threlfall, who was murdered in 1825. The first missionaries sent by the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS), Carl Hugo Hahn

and Friedrich Kleinschmidt, began their work with the Herero and Nama, respectively. Nevertheless, the Lutherans were the first to establish mission stations throughout the territory from Warmbad and Blydeverwacht to Engela and from Gobabis to Swakopmund (Du Pisani 1986: 14-15; 2010: 106; Nambala 1994: 68; Gurirab 2002: 15). It was these stations which later became independent Churches under the indigenous leadership of the Namibians themselves. The Lutheran influence was so strong that it never occurred to most people that there were other missionaries before them (Lutherans), indeed there had been for at least thirty-seven years. Less is known of the early history of Finland than of any other European country.

Christianity was introduced to Germany in the eighth century, and Christianity was accepted in Finland by the twelfth century. Finland was the last of the Northern Nations to receive Christianity but it underwent a general religious awakening between 1820 and 1830. The establishment of the missionary society in Sweden in 1835 caused many Finns to think of unchristian peoples and they desired to organize a similar society. On January 19, 1857 Finland celebrated the seven hundredth anniversary of its Christianization. It was on this date and occasion that the "Finnish Missionary Society" was founded. There were Finns who felt strongly that it was a time they did something: the Gospel had been preached to them for hundreds of years, they should carry it further to Nations which had not yet heard the Glad Tidings (Nambala 1994: 79; Lehtonen 1999: 8). This society contributed to the mission work of the Leipzig and Gossner Mission Societies in Hermannsburg and Berlin respectively. From 1860, the Finns supported the German foreign mission work with both money and personnel. This connection led to the Finns comming to Africa and do mission work.

Although the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) was established as the missionary organ of the national Church which is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), it was, nevertheless, a free society. The first contact of the gospel with the Namibian Awambo-speaking people came in 1870 when the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) started its mission in Owamboland, northern Namibia. The explorers Francis Galton and Charles John Anderson visited Ondonga as early as 1851, while Carl Hugo Hahn of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) made two missionary journeys to Owamboland, northern Namibia in 1857 and 1866 (Wood 1988: 388; Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 4). Some chiefs, not always interested in evangelization itself, but impressed by the ancillary benefits brought by the missions, were guardedly supportive of their work. Thus, on his second visit to Owamboland

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in 1866, that king Shikongo shaKalulu of Ondonga and king Mweshipandeka shaShaningika of Uukwanyama asked Carl Hugo Hahn to send missionaries to them. After his second visit to Owamboland in 1866, where he spent four months (May-September) meeting all the Aawambo chiefs of Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Uukwaluudhi and Ongandjera tribal areas, Hahn promised them that the missionaries would arrive within two years (Peltola 2002: 40; Miettinen 2005: 88-89). Hahn sent a diary of his journey and wrote a letter to the Finnish Missionary Society urging them to come and help them, just as the Apostle Paul had been invited to go to Macedonia (Acts 16: 9). In 1867 the Finnish Missionary Society considered whether or not to decide to accept the invitation to Owamboland. On account of the letter, in its extra meeting of the directors of the Society decided on September 18, 1867 to send missionaries to Owamboland (De Vries 1978: 128-131; Kapolo 1991: 11; Nambala 1994: 80; Gurirab 2002: 18-19; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii). This led directly to the arrival of the first eight Finnish missionaries at Otjimbingwe in 1868, which started the Finnish Mission in Owamboland in 1870. It was only after the First World War was the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches planted in Owamboland.

On December 31, 1868 the first group of nine Finnish missionaries arrived in Cape Town where they went as far as Stellenbosch to meet with the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) director on the next day which was January 1, 1869. They included: Erkki Juntunen, Juho Nissinen, Juho Heinonen, Antti Piirainen, Karl Leonhard Tolonen, Botolf Bernhard Björklund, Karl August Weikkolin, Pietari Kurvinen, Karl Emmanuel Jurvelin and Martti Rautanen who worked in Namibia for more than 50 (1870-1926) years (Tirronen 1977: 18; Nambala 1994: 80; 1995: 6; Lehtonen 1999:10; Peltola 2002: 26-27). All the first missionaries were young men armed with remarkable patience. Not all were ordained pastors. It was said that "five students of their mission school and three colonists were commissioned for Owambo". This statement was made at the time of their departure from Finland because they stopped in Germany, where they picked up the ninth man. After their stay in Germany, they left for London to board a ship, "Cape city" to Cape Town. Arriving on January 1, 1869 at the Cape, after their journey of sixty four days, the missionaries were met by an aged Rhenish missionary P. D. Luckhoff. The same day, they left for Stellenbosch to meet C. H. Ritter, the director of the Rhenish Missionary Society (Nambala 1994: 81). On the 4th February, this group, accompanied by some Germans boarded a hired boat from Cape Town to Walvis Bay, Namibia. Ten days later, they arrived in the Namibian port. It was at Walvis Bay that the missionary Carl Hugo Hahn met the group in early March. He eventually took

them to his mission colony at Otjimbingwe which was the German's Mission Station, where they stayed for a year and a half to learn the Otjiherero, Dutch and English languages (Tirronen 1977: 20; Lehtonen 1999: 10; Miettinen 2005: 89). This shows that there was a good relationship between the German and Finnish Missionaries. At times, those who were pastors were given chances to preach to the Herero in order to learn the language. When king Shikongo shaKalulu of the Ondonga Tribal area Northern Namibia, heard that the Finns had arrived in Otjimbingwe, he sent his request and urged them to head to his place. His request was considered for the next year which was 1870.

3. 4. 1 Finnish mission in Owamboland

After their six ox wagons had been reared, the first eight Finnish missionaries were ready to start on the journey to Owamboland, Northern Namibia. The journey began on May 27, 1870 and on July 9, 1870 the convoy of missionaries led by the trader Frederick Green arrived at Omandongo near king Shikongo shaKalulu of the Ondonga tribe's palace. They were well received and welcomed by the king (Tirronen 1977: 25; Nambala 1994: 81; Lehtonen 1999: 11; Miettinen 2005: 87; Peltola 2002: 48). It was here that the gospel was first preached. It then spread throughout the Northern parts of Namibia. The 9th of July is observed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in commemoration of the missionaries' arrival. Soon missionaries were to be found scattered all over Owamboland, establishing many mission stations. From the beginning, Björklund served as their mission director, but eventually Martti Rautanen (called *Nakambalekanene by the Aandonga*) emerged as their 'Bishop'. Eventually, between 1870 and 1884 mission work spread to the tribal areas of Owambo: Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi and Uukwanyama. Mission stations established during this period were: Omandongo (1870), Olukonda (1871), Okahao (1871), Elim (Uukwambi 1872), Oniipa (1873), Ondjumba (1873), and Omulonga (1874) (Tirronen 1977: 20; Nambala 1994: 82). In fact, by the end of 1873 all missionaries had been expelled from all other Owambo tribal lands except Ondonga tribal area (among the Aandonga tribe). For thirteen years the missionaries laboured without any official converts.

The Owambo, like other Namibian indigenous people, were sceptical, suspicious and antagonistic towards the missionaries' real purpose and ultimate aim (goal). They came to listen to the preaching, but no one was publicly ready to commit him/herself to the baptism. Through the patience and forbearance of these preachers of the good news, the first public

baptism among the Aawambo Namibian Speaking took place on January 6, 1883 at Omulonga when six men: Iimene (Moses) Kodhi, Nangolo (Elias) Iilonga, Shikongo (Abraham) Iilonga, Angula (Jakob) Iindongo, Negonya (Tobias) Shilunga and Nangombe (Johannes) Iilonga came forward for holy baptism. With them was an infant, a child of Eva Maria, who was also baptised on the same day. In March of the same year three more people were baptised at Omandongo. A significant advance was made in 1884 when four more people: Paulus (Omushimba), David (Niitembu), Elias (Ashikomba) and Elizabeth (Kaukaus) were baptised at Olukonda (Nambala 1994: 82-83; Lehtonen 1999: 25; Gurirab 2002: 18). This was a breakthrough by the Finnish mission and from this stage Christianity took root among *Aawambo.*

During this period, the Europeans were exporting large quantities of strong drink into Namibia, Owamboland included. The Portuguese in Angola were trading slaves with the Aawambo kings and chiefs.

However, after 1883 the missionaries still continued to evangelise, teach and translate the Scriptures and write small books in local languages for local usage. Unfortunately, some of the difficulties encountered and/or mistakes made in the mission field during the year 1890 were causing poor progress, because many missionaries had either died of malaria or gone back to South Africa or Finland. There was a time when only two missionaries were left in the mission field. During that time, "King Kambonde kaMpingana, in the West of Ondonga, appealed to the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) for more missionaries" (Nambala 1994: 83). Despite the missionaries' lot, the few who had remained continued the work. But, in spite of the hardship they experienced the missionaries were filled with praises because they were able to bring good news of salvation to the people "who were living in darkness of heathenism" (Tirronen 1977: 19). In 1888 new missionaries August Pettinen and Albin Savola joined the staff. And soon after the year 1900 new missionaries and professional teachers from Finland came to the field. Hilja Lindberg came for the purpose of teaching and weaving. The Finnish missionaries, especially Rautanen, Pettinen and Savola made significant efforts to produce a grammar for the Oshindonga language. Literacy and education received much emphasis, while congregations (churches) were organised and activated. The mission launched significant relief efforts in times of community disasters, helping the Aawambo people with much empathy, with a positive result for the church and its witness in the community. New stations were built: Ontananga (1900), Onayena (1902),

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Nakeeke (1903), Ombupupu (Okahao/Rehoboth) (1908), Onashiku/Elim (1908), Oshigambo (1908) and Tshandi (1909). More and more Aawambo co-workers were appointed (Nambala 1994: 84; Buys & Nambala 2003: 91; Miettinen 2005: 90). Ondonga remained the main centre of the Finnish mission. Oniipa in the Ondonga area with its theological education, printing press, hospital (at Onandjokwe), and large congregation (cathedral) remained the main administrative centre of the Finnish Mission Church which later became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). Congregations were gradually established throughout the northern and north- eastern part of Namibia among the Aawambo and Kavango speaking people.

In 1920 missionary Martti Rautanen completed the translation of the Old Testament into the Oshindonga language and six years later, he died after a ministry of 56 years (1870-1926) in Owamboland area northern Namibia. He rightfully deserved the title 'Apostle of Aawambo' (*'Omuyapostoli gwAawambo'*), due to his lifelong commitment to the Namibian Aawambo speaking people. Like other missionaries he was a child of his times, but still became a symbol of the brightest qualities of the pioneer missionaries in Namibia. Disease had severely afflicted Aawambo people before the arrival of missionaries. Malaria was widespread and traditional taboos would not permit handicapped children, albinos or twins to live (Buys & Nambala 2003: 93).

3. 4. 2 From mission to local church: A historical background of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)

The church which today is known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) grew out of the work of the Finnish missionaries. In 1870 the first eight Finnish missionaries of the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) came amongst the indigenous people, the Aawambo, at Omandongo in the Owamboland area, northern Namibia. The first baptism in Owamboland occurred in 1883. The missionary activities were carried out among the Owambo and Kavango people, in the North of what became in 1884 German South West Africa (Winter 1977: 14; Buys & Nambala 2003: 90). Unlike the Rhenish missionaries, the Finns opened up doors for African leadership early in their mission. Several institutions were established in the history of this Church (ELCIN). They trained their local assistant teachers very early. In 1913 the Teachers Training College for men was opened at Oniipa with six students from the area and with the missionary Emil Liljeblad as its first headmaster. In 1928,

girls' schools were established at different places in Owamboland. The development of schools for girls was a slow process. Similar schools were established at: Onandjokwe (1922), Oshigambo (1924), Engela (1924), Tshandi (1939), Eenhana (1940), Elim (1950), Ondobe (1951), Omundaungilo (1951), Okalongo (1951), Ontananga (1953), Oniimwandi (1953), and also in Kavangoland. A boys' school *("Jongenskool")* was founded at Engela by the missionary Walde Kivinen in 1926 and others followed at Ongwediva (1926), Engela (1926), Nakayale (1944), Olukonda (1945), Elim (1950), Eenhana (1953), Oniipa (1955) and Onayena (1955). It was the student's responsibility to build their own classrooms since there were no funds available for school projects. In 1927 a technical school was opened at Ongwediva (Nambala 1994: 85; Lehtonen 1999: 14; Miettinen 2005: 91-92). It was not until 1947 that Teachers Training College for women was begun at Okahao. To provide for adequate facilities and training and to cut short distances to schools for young people, it was necessary to establish boarding schools (Wood 1988: 388).

Theological Training for pastors and evangelists was established by missionary Nestori Väänänen in 1922 at Oniipa Theological Seminary (1922-1946) then at Elim (1947-1962). The first graduation of pastors was held in 1925. Seven became pastors while the remaining ten become teachers and evangelists. The first pastors were ordained on September 27, 1925. They were: Simson Shituwa, Juuso Ngaikukwete, Nabot Manasse, Obadja Iihuhwa, Sakeus Iihuhwa, Gideon Iitula and Paulus Hamutenya. Later in 1929 three other men: Abisai Henok, Festus Ambinga and Filippus Uusiku were also ordained (Nambala 1994: 86; Lehtonen 1999: 60-61; Buys & Nambala 2003: 169). The ELCIN also had a preparatory course for pastors at Oshigambo (1953-1959). That course was intended to bring the students to the level of standard eight qualifications; this standard was not begun at Oshigambo until 1960. In 1963 this Seminary and that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) were united and become known as the United Lutheran Theological Seminary in Namibia (Paulinum) at Otjimbingue. Its inauguration took place on June 16, 1963. The Seminary was located at Otjimbingue up to 1996 but was then relocated to Windhoek in 1997 owing to a lack of infrastructure and facilities. In 1952 the Engela Parish Institute was established to train church workers other than pastors, such as: evangelists, deacons, (men and women), youth leaders, catechetics, choir directors, Bible study group leaders, Sunday school teachers and other necessary Church workers (Shejavali 1970: 170-189; Buys & Nambala 2003: 169).

The Finnish Mission in Owamboland assumed the name "The order of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Owamboland" in 1924. Its first synod was called in 1925. In 1954, the ELCIN was constituted and it ordained its first indigenous bishop, the late bishop Dr. Leonard Auala, in 1963 who served in that position as from 1963 to 1978. He was then followed in leadership by Dr. Kleopas Dumeni (1979-1999). The Church was recognised officially by the state in 1957 (Buys & Nambala 2003: 230; Gurirab 2002: 24). Formerly known as the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOC), but due to the hope of a future merger with other Lutheran Churches in the country such as; the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (GELC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and to create a sense of nationhood, it was decided to cover the areas of Owambo and Okavango and to get away from the tribally oriented name. The name "Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia" (ELCIN) was, therefore, changed and adopted at the 12th Synod in 1984 to replace the old name, "Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church" (ELOC) (Nashihanga 1993: 49; Nambala 1994: 90). As a result, there are two Lutheran Churches in Namibia with the same name: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN, Rhenish Mission) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN, Finnish Mission).

Most of the ELCIN members live in the northern part of the country, and most of them are subsistence farmers. Historically concentrated in the northern part of Namibia, the Church is now spreading to other parts of the country. At the 15th Church General Synod of the year 1991, the decision was taken for ELCIN to be demarcated (divided) into two Episcopal dioceses, Eastern and Western, which stretch from the very North to scattered congregations in the South of the country. The congregations in the South consist of members who migrated from the North. Each diocese has 9 deaneries and a total of 140 parishes, both dioceses combined. The ELCIN has a "relied" structure "top down" or "bottom up" vis-á-vis, Head Office, Diocesan Offices, Deaneries and Parishes plus side service institutions. The Synod is the highest body of the Church. The work of the whole Church is coordinated from the Head Office, whilst the diocesan activities are coordinated from the Diocesan Office. The Head Office consists of three main departments under the General Secretary: Administration, Education and Training and Finance and Development. While the Church head Office is headed by the General Secretary, the Church Constitution provides that each diocese is led by a bishop (Nambala in Lutheran Churches in Namibia 1995: 11; Gurirab 2002: 25).

Ecumenically, the ELCIN is a sister church to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia-Germany Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC). In 2007 the ELCIN, ELCRN and ELCIN-GELC established the United Church Council of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia, with the ultimate aim of becoming one church. The ELCIN which is so far the largest Church body in Namibia and especially dominant in the Northern part of the country, collects statistics of its activities and of the participation of its members annually. ELCIN membership used to grow with about 10 percent annually, but today it grows with between 3 to 5 percent, because the death rate has gone up to 90 percent.

At the end of 2009, ELCIN had 703 893 members, of which about 80 percent lived in the northern part of Namibia, with 20 percent living in the remainder of the country (ELCIN Statistics 2009). With a large network of parishes, pastors, laity, (lay preachers and elders), deacons and assistant deacons, ELCIN has the potential to make an extensive contribution to tackling the social challenges facing the nation in this millennium, and this role is indeed an important one. The majority of the active pastors are in parishes, but some of them are run offices or performing other outside Church national duties. In the past, ELCIN in co-operation with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) carried out mission work in Angola and Senegal. Independent (Autonomous) Churches have in the meantime been established in those countries. However, at this time, ELCIN is still doing internal mission work in the Kunene and Omaheke regions, Kaokoland, Bushmanland as well as East and West Caprivi.

The ELCIN will continue to serve the whole person. There are Church divisions such as: Mission and Evangelism, Sunday Schools, Youth, Men, Women, Diaconal and Social Services, Music and Christian Education. Throughout its history, it has been recorded that, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) has not only been involved in preaching the Word and administering Sacraments, but has also put emphasis on mission and development work in order that it could care for the people in a holistic way. The thrust is to reach the whole person, body and spirit. Holistic development work of ELCIN involves formal education with two Secondary Schools at Oshigambo (1960) and Nkurenkuru (1990), Rehabilitation and Resettlement among the San (Bushmen) people, Rehabilitation with the physical, mental and visually handicapped; consulting and advising small business communities; conducting courses in skills training such as: sewing, secretarial work, and

hotel and catering management as well as promoting programmes against HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drugs abuse. Other activities such as: guesthouses, workshops, book depots, printing press, public library, vestment and rehabilitation centres are all part of the Church's development work within the Church. There are also service institutions responsible for training, income generating and other social services (Nambala in Lutheran Churches in Namibia 1995: 10-12).

During the missionary era and untill Namibia's independence in 1990, with the financial assistance from external donors, such as: The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), the Church assisted in small community based projects, such as: bricks making, sewing, bread making, water supply, agriculture and *mahangu* mills. Apart from parochial and day schools which were found all over in the villages, a printing press accompanied by a Church newspaper, *'Omukwetu'* was founded in 1901. The promotion of health care is done through the two Church hospitals at Onandjokwe (1911), Nkurenkuru (1952) and affiliated clinics. These institutions were built in step with local developments, and evolved from simple huts to large concrete buildings. The first female medical doctor in Owamboland from the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) was Dr. Selma Rainio *(Gwanandjokwe),* assisted by a corps of Finnish nurses, who arrived in 1908 and founded the Onandjokwe Hospital in 1911. Until the first male doctor arrived from Finland in 1952, professional medical care among the Aawambo was entirely in the hands of women. Most, if not all, of the Church and her institutions' running costs budget came from FELM and was calculated there. Apart from local pastors, there were also many missionaries in the Church performing diverse Church activities and running programmes (Nambala 1994: 87; Lehtonen1999: 84; Miettinen 2005: 93-95).

The Church's concern for political liberation and social freedom originated from the teaching and preaching of the Gospel by the missionaries, that is why ELCIN played a major significant role in the resistance against the South African apartheid regime and the struggle for liberation and independence. A name to be mentioned in this regard is former presiding bishop, Dr. Kleopas Dumeni who served as the second bishop from 1979-1999. This Church as part of oppressive system and of people's liberation is clearly evident in Namibia's history because it suffered much during the occupation of Namibia by South Africa, including having its printing press firebombed (destroyed) twice by "unknowns" in 1973 and 1980 with another attempt made in 1982 (Du Pisani 1986: 229; Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 19; Nambala 1994:

87; Gurirab 2002: 26). Many of the ELCIN members fled to neighbouring Angola and Zambia as refugees. During the war of liberation in Namibia (1966-1989), the ELCIN have supported the liberation struggle by raising up her prophetic voice, supplying the International Christian community with information about the Namibian situation and speaking out against the injustices and oppression done by the racist government of that time. Because of its geographical location close to the border with Angola, the Church found itself for many years in the middle of this war zone where the South African army opposed SWAPO (Du Pisani 1986: 233-234; 2010: 112-115; Gurirab 2002: 26; Miettinen 2005: 172-173).

ELCIN does her ministry in groups with other ecumenical partners and stakeholders who in diverse manners complement the Church. A few examples of these are: The Namibian Government (GRN), Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), Lutheran World Federation Namibia National Committee (LWF/NNC), United Church Council of the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC), Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland (ELCF), Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), Finn Church Aid (FCA), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and World Council of Churches (WCC) and other partners in Germany. With its active participation of all these ecumenical bodies, ELCIN is trying to promote ecumenism.

3. 4. 3 The Lutheran Ethos: Theological understanding of a Lutheran Ecclesiology

"The beliefs and ethos of the ELCIN are based on biblical teaching, the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, as well as the small and greater catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther" (ELCIN Constitution and Regulations, article II). According to Dr. Martin Luther (cf. regulation 125. 1 of the ELCIN Constitution and Regulation), the Church is to be found where the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are being administered in accordance with God's will. The task of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), as outlined in Article IV of her Constitution and Regulations, is: "To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ through holding divine worship services, administering the sacraments, pastoral counselling, educating the youth, demonstrating Christian love through deeds, and by doing mission and diaconal work." By its doctrine, life and service, the ELCIN clearly commits itself to be the sign and leaven for Church unity whether through a merger with her sister churches: the

ELCRN and ELCIN-GELC by forming one United Lutheran Church in Namibia or by a federation of the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia (Isaak 2000: 80). ELCIN regards the Holy Bible as the Word of God and the primary task of the Church is to preach the Good News to all people and to serve them according to their needs. Above all these, the Church is committed to proclaim the Good News to all and to bring people close to God, no matter in what situation they are to be found. Only through faith in Christ can a person become a member of the Church.

The Church of Christ is not confined into a certain locality. The Church is the community of believers who relying on nothing else than God's grace and mercy. The Church can be regarded as both a theological and as a sociological reality in its relation to one another in the society. A Christian community can be found wherever interaction between the Word of God and human response takes place. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, People can understand their responsibilities towards one another; this is why they can become missionaries, educators, community developers and health workers. Salvation of God for people and the whole creation starts from earth and it continues into eternity. The dimension of here and now of the salvation should not however overshadow the eschatological aspect of the Gospel. Then the Church becomes a social club. On the other hand, the Church should not keep silent about all that disturbs the earthly life of the people. The Church's mission is to take the word of reconciliation and redemption to humankind and the world (Mt. 28: 18-20; Lk. 4: 16-18; Acts 1: 8). It is essential to note that demonstrating Christian love through deeds in essence embodies the acts of doing mission and diaconal work, and comprises a significant portion of the role of the Church in society (Nessan 1999: 45).

Needless to say, however, given the many social issues that exist within the social fabric of Namibian society, fulfilling the role of mission and diaconal work can be a difficult one, but it is imperative nonetheless. The Church, particularly the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), is in a pivotal position to be at the forefront of creating change. At this time, priorities within the ministry of the ELCIN are the following: Congregational ministry, Christian Education, Training and Human Resources Capacity Building, Achievement of financial stability and Self-reliance which has to do with salaries; utilisation of Church lands, property and its maintenance as well as expenses incurred while carrying out various activities within the Church like Urban Ministry, Mission, Development and Diaconal work (ELCIN 1996: 6).

The Church is the Church only if it exists for others (voice of the voiceless) and shows concerns about poverty, violence, and all evil forces that oppress the people of God. The Church needs to differentiate between the Kingdom of Christ and His Body. His Kingdom is the whole world, but His Body is the Church. The Church received the mission to serve the world. This mission fundamentally comes from God *(Missio Dei)* with the aim of transforming humanity towards its betterment. Jacobsen 2001: 15 states that, "The Church focused only on self-preservation may indeed grow and prosper but it will do so at the cost of betraying its Lord and belying its identity. It may save its institutional life while losing its soul." The old structure of the Church needs to be reviewed in the light of the new contemporary challenges that confront the Church and society today. The challenge is the contextualisation of the teaching of the Church and reforming its activities without compromising the Christian witness. The Church is not based on an ideology; therefore, it cannot be equated with ideologies. The Church is not even equal to democracy, but it can use democratic means to organise itself (Nambala 1994: 167; ELCIN 1996: 7). The Church is to be understood as God's instrument for His mission to transform what is into what ought to be. Therefore, the Lutheran understanding of ecclesiology can bring us to a conclusion about the Church's mission statement that: the Church is a part of the world, but it is that part which enlightens and gives life to the world.

3. 5 MISSION AND COLONIALISM: THE CHURCH UNDER COLONIALISM

The mission of the church in Namibia has been affected by several factors, including severe droughts and famines, diseases and deaths of missionaries and church workers, expulsions and exiling of priests and church members, and the World Wars. Colonialism, apartheid, and the migratory labour systems were factors doing the most harm-and these could have been avoided (Nambala 1994:117). According to Lukas de Vries (1978:67), a Namibian who completed his doctoral studies on the theme of mission and colonialism in Namibia, the mission theology "lacks a theological understanding of the relationship between mission and the existing powers", and "idealizes the fatherland's imperialism". Consequently, the "twisted conception of the Two Kingdoms teaching prevented an answer" to the following two questions: "To what extent is the church really obliged to be obedient to the state", and "what is understood by the concept 'passive resistance,' or to what extent may violence be used for the sake of bringing justice to the oppressed and wronged?"

Christian mission is taken to mean the proclamation of the gospel to the unconverted everywhere according to the command of Christ with directives of making disciples, baptising and teaching to observe all things commanded by Jesus. The problem of reconciling mission and colonialism has restricted the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Rhenish and Finnish Mission Church) in Namibia and has hung like a dark cloud over the work of the Church.

The term "colonialism", on the other hand, appears to be a recent arrival in the languages of the Western world, taking the place of the older and more familiar "imperialism". It is used almost exclusively as a term of reproach, implying that the only aim of colonial rule was the exploitation and impoverishment of weak and defenceless peoples, and that its only results have been the destruction of what was good in Ancient civilizations and the multiplication of measureless evils (De Vries 1978: 73-74).

The arrival of European travellers, traders and missionaries in the 18th century began to destabilise the political and social integration in the Aawambo communities of northern Namibia. German colonisation of southern and central Namibia (1884-1904) introduced wage labour and forced migration, and missionaries had a considerable impact on social relations and family organisation. Traders and explorers laid the foundations of European penetration, but missionaries were never far behind. Generally accepting that their work would be assisted by and successful under the formal sanction of colonial rule, the missionaries welcomed and contributed to its advent (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 4; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 106).

Christian missionaries entered Namibia over eighty years before the territory was subjugated under colonial rule. The missionary enterprise was a matter of fighting darkness with light, evil with good, heathenism and/or paganism with Christianity. Sometimes it was to convert both heathens and Protestants or to evangelise the "darkened hearts" and "lost souls" of the Africans. There were many aims and goals of the several missionary activities. However, the good intention of even those who came to Namibia cannot be denied. Many good things have happened in their name and mission (Nambala 1994: 117). They also suffered separation from their relatives and those whom they knew. They exposed themselves to many dangers both on sea and land. They took pains to learn new languages.

History suggested that Colonialism has introduced a state of landlessness in Namibia. The owners of the land were evicted by colonists and then confined in reserves. The best land

became the property of the foreign colonists and turned it into commercial farms. In this manner many Namibians lost most of their traditions. The land which was taken from the indigenous Namibians was proclaimed "white areas" in which the black people lived as foreigners in search of the work on contract basis. As soon as the contract was over, they had to return to the reserves (Winter 1977: 94-95; Du Pisani 1986: 8). The explosive nature of this history will be analysed from the ideological, colonial, imperialistic, and possibly capitalistic points of view in the next section.

3. 5. 1 The Political and Theological Implications

The story of the relationship of mission and colonialism in Namibia is a long one. It begins with German missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS), which established itself in the country in 1842. The arrival of other Germans is related to crucial events in the German homeland. It is also worth noting that the connection between mission, politics and colonial occupation of Namibia was very close. The German missionaries played a role in the acquisition of Namibia. Their conduct was one of the classic examples of how Christian missionary societies could paralyse countries' "natural powers of defence and pave the way for colonial subjugation" (Nambala 1987: 182, Isaak 2000: 29). The Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) came after the RMS and started doing mission work in 1870 but restricted its efforts to the Aawambo-speaking people in the northern part of the country. Two self-sufficient indigenous Churches grew out of the work begun by these two missionary societies. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) became autonomous in 1954, and in 1957 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) was constituted (Katjavivi 1988: 32; Isaak 2000: 29).

The history behind the origin of these two African churches that developed in parallel indicated great differences, conditioned on the one hand by the diverse theological background and origin of the missionaries, and on the other by the fact that Finland was never a colonial power in Namibia. Thus, the problem of having to come to terms with a colonial Government in Namibia did not exist for the Finnish missionaries. The question as to who deserved their first loyalty-the colonial Government or the people whom they wished to convert-was never put as clearly to the Finnish missionaries as it was to the Rhenish. In Namibia, it was a German mission that carried the most total responsibility. The Rhenish missionaries, as patriotic Germans, naturally welcomed the setting up of the German

protectorate. But they also saw an extension of their missionary opportunity. But in the issue, these happy anticipations were far from being realised, as twenty years later they were compelled to admit. Some, it is true, expressed misgivings at the time, counselling caution in relations with the government in case matters went awry, but such warnings were rejected as unpatriotic (Nambala 1987: 186).

 In his book, *Mission and Colonialism in Namibia,* Lukas de Vries (1978: 75) noted that the Rhenish missionaries had never come to grips with a theology that opposed colonialism; thereby they spread the doctrines of colonialism instead of the liberating work of God. This assessment is accurate and has historical roots as well as theological causes. The Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS)'s support for colonial rule was expressed in its policy of establishing 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. Long before the imposition of apartheid by the South African authorities, the RMS chose to establish distinct congregations on the basis of language. Unlike the Roman Catholics and Anglicans, the Rhenish also created totally separate administrative ministries for blacks and whites at local, regional and national levels. In practice 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; Isaak 2000: 29).

The mission of the church was negatively affected by this collaboration with the government. Although the missionaries were involved in concluding treaties between colonial rulers and local chiefs, the Namibians were never fully informed that they were German subjects. In 1880, the Nama and Herero chiefs found themselves standing on common ground in their mutual desire to fight back and resist the colonial powers. The Rhenish missionaries were to leave most of their former stations, especially in the northern part of the country because of being affected by the major World Wars I and II. In the wake of the war, German missionaries were not totally expelled from Namibia, although they had financial problems because all resources from Germany were cut off. Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries experienced the same problem with funds. The work of missionaries was thus crippled by the war. This was most true with the German missionaries. The Finnish missionaries in Owamboland were able to continue unhindered and even took over the former Rhenish

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stations in that region, despite the fact that they, too, had been cut off from the outside world for almost a year (Nambala 1994: 124).

The post-World War I period in Namibia brought with it a number of issues. The arrival of the English soldiers made it possible for the Anglican Church to come to Namibia. English pastors came in as chaplains to the soldiers and later extended their work to evangelise the indigenous peoples. It was from the Anglican Church that most of the later pioneers in public denouncement of colonialism and the apartheid policy came. On other hand, the Rhenish missionaries were criticised and labelled as participants in the subjugation of the Namibian population. The criticisms were based on their writings and conduct. The criticisms had already started at the beginning of the German takeover of the territory. These missionaries generally seemed to show no sympathy to the conquered blacks in the war of mass extermination of the Herero, Damara and Nama and the enslavement of those who survived the genocide (Nambala 1987: 192). The cooperation of the missionaries and the German colonial government was also recognised abroad in their endeavours to neutralise the indigenous people who attempted to be independent instead of submitting to their new "masters".

Coming from German colonialism to South African rule was like jumping from frying pan into the fire for the Namibians. Although the post-World War I period brought Namibia into the international arena within the League of Nations as Mandate Territory "C", it has not helped in any way thus far (Nambala 1994: 126). As colonialism was combined with the apartheid system, it was no longer a question of a foreign power only, but now there was also the issue of apartheid, which was maintained by Draconian laws and defended with passages from Scripture. Apartheid was thus harder to deal with from the biblical point of view, since the Bible was used to justify it. Although colonialism and apartheid continued to be felt among the Namibians after World War I, the Church did not play a big role between the two World Wars. The momentum of the Church was increased only after the Second World War. During the period of missionary leadership the church in Namibia tried to maintain neutrality or balance between the interests of the colonial government and that of the Africans. But after the leadership of the Church was given over into the hands of the Africans the participation of the Church in the struggle against apartheid became imperative.

It is not true, however, that all missionaries were neutral or were in favour of the colonial occupation. Some missionaries must be credited for speaking out against injustices which

were done against Africans and they paid a price for doing so. Some were expelled, detained or killed (Isaak 1997: 44). During those years of colonialism and oppression, the Namibian Churches, especially the black churches (ELCIN, ELCRN, RCC, AMEC, Anglican etc), essentially said "No" to any kind of cooperation with the South African racist regime. It was very easy to galvanize people into action, to excite and attract sympathy against the evil of political, economic, and racial and gender exploitation. The objective was straightforward. The Church was opposed to apartheid and colonialism in Africa. During that time of independence struggle, the task of the Church was made relatively easy because there was an identified common enemy.

3. 5. 2 Church and Apartheid: The Role of the Church in the Liberation Struggle of Namibia

"Apartheid" is an Afrikaans word which literally translated means "apart-ness", "set apart" or "separation". By the early 1940s Afrikaans newspapers in South Africa were already using the term (Nambala 1994: 127). Among those government officials who used it was Dr. D. F. Malan, the former NGK (Dutch Reformed Church) minister, news editor of "Die Burger" and, beginning in 1948, the first National Party Prime Minister. He used the term frequently to describe South Africa's goals and system of government (Du Pisani 1986: 235; Nambala 1987: 194). The central theme of the "apartheid system" was to enforce the separation of races. That is to say, it was a system dedicated to keeping blacks unintegrated, if possible forever, depriving all people other than whites of the right to political and economic participation, and forcing blacks to live in the most arid and peripheral areas of South Africa and Namibia. This system does not take into consideration the size of the population of "non-whites" as long as they were seen as "inferior" by the minority "non-colours" or whites who monopolised the socio-political and economic privileges.

The entrenchment of the apartheid system was developed to its highest form since 1948, when it was legalised. However, the systemic oppression of the blacks by the whites in every field of life goes all the way back to the white settlement of 1652 and was fully implemented by "apartheid" or "racial separate development" policies.

Namibia has been administered by South Africa after 1915. The Odendaal Commission of 1964 paved the way for the implementation of the policy to its full extent in the territory (cf. De Vries 1978; Nambala 1987: 196; 1994: 128). It is always and should be natural for the

Christian Church to react to the way races are socially, economically, geographically and politically rigidly and compulsorily separated from one another. But, except for some individuals, the Church was silent for too long. It was not until the 1970s that the Church was able to issue official statements condemning the apartheid policy. The factors which contributed to the evasion of the issue by the Church can be looked at from different angles. For example, the Church leadership was under whites or foreigners who at the same time enjoyed the privileges of the white race. German missionaries, as collaborators with the government, could not express any discontent. When South Africa took over the administration, the missionaries (being Germans) were afraid of losing their mission field.

The Finnish missionaries were of a pietistic background, that is why for them religion and politics were not to be mixed. They supported a "status quo". The Anglican Church was not yet established among the indigenous people. When the Anglican Church was established among the Africans, its position was soon changed to that of participation. By the mid-1940s Rev. Michael Scott was one of those who took an active role. When the leadership of the Church was changed and handed over to the Namibians themselves in the 1960s and 1970s, participation of the Church became imperative. The joining together of the Churches in the formation of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) was an indication of the willingness of the Church to be one voice and to demonstrate concern (Nambala 1994: 129).

However, the Church was not completely silent, because through the Missionary Reviews of 1909 and 1913, it reacted to legally prohibited marriages between blacks and German white soldiers which resulted in "illegitimate bastard children" being born. The stand of the Colonial Society was approved by the missionary circles in Germany and this led to the establishment of "bastard" children's asylum schools by the Rhenish Missionary Society at Okahandja and Keetmanshoop where they could be educated as future German soldiers. This caused a problem to both the missionaries and the government of that day (time), because both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionary leaders protested strongly against such prohibition. Because of the pressure from the Church, the German government adopted a resolution on May 8, 1912 which favours the legal recognition of marriages between blacks and whites in order to solve the problem.

In 1957 the Synod of the Rhenish Mission Church (RMC), which had been working among various peoples of Namibia, including the whites, constituted the Church to be the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa" (ELCSWA) which later known as the

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic in Namibia (ELCRN), a Church which was to be inclusive. Unfortunately, the establishment of the ELCSWA was met with a feeling of "superiority" by some members of the Rehoboth Basters community, because racism has been ingrained into the people of Namibia for too long. This group of people refused to join the new Lutheran Church and instead formed the "Rhenish Congregation", where they felt that their special rights and identity as Basters might not be lost. On the other hand, the white German Lutherans did not join this new Church either. Thus, in 1926, the German community established its own Synod. In 1960 the various congregations of the white Germany community joined forces and formally constituted an identifiably exclusive Church, the "Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche" [DELK], the German Evangelical Lutheran Church [GELC] (Nambala 1987: 199; 1994: 130). Thus, the Lutheran Churches in Namibia initially existed on racial lines. Although the formation ELCSWA was based on a non-racial understanding, opposition to its formation came not only from the Rehobothers, but, even more strongly, from the White Germans, who did not wish to associate with blacks. They as "non-blacks" did not want to hold communion with the "non-whites".

The Rhenish missionaries also worked among German-speaking Namibians. However, they did not consider their work among the whites as missionary work in comparison to their work among the black people. The early missionaries were saddled almost overnight with the spiritual care of the German garrison, namely farmers and business people. They now had to play the dual role of missionaries to the blacks and on the one hand, and of spiritual shepherd or pastors to the growing white German community on the other (Isaak 2000: 29). The German community did not feel equal to the black community and, therefore, preferred to remain a white Church.

Apartheid must be seen as something maintained and sustained by a combined force of clergy and laity, using both the Church and the Bible and the power of the state through mass media for communication to propagate an ideology and promote a social order based on it, which other Christians believe to be incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The correct teaching of the Church and apartheid are diametrically opposed. Therefore, apartheid is an immoral, evil and unacceptable system. The famous Open Letter of 1971 by the two Black Lutheran Churches in Namibia to the South African Prime Minister B. J. Vorster was the most important breaking through of the Church which continues to issue official statements against the policy based on racial segregation. From that stage onwards, Churches in Namibia

underwent a radical change from being foreign missionary institution to becoming indigenous Churches ready to challenge the apartheid system and laws. The Church leadership was for and with the people during their times of affliction, struggle and their times of delight. Together with their people, Church leaders were detained, tortured and deported and even killed (Du Pisani 1986: 228-229; 2010: 107). Both in internal and international communities, apartheid became a moral/immoral issue to be dealt with by both the Churches and States. It was discussed extensively in all major global organizations, including the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the United Nations Organization (UNO). The Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) demonstrated that there was no contradiction between the gospel and political involvement. Popular movements used Church facilities for their activities. The Church in Namibia was particularly applauded for providing spiritual care to the Namibians in exile and this was done by Church leaders such as Bishops from the Lutheran and Anglican Churches; because of being committed to the task of the Church which is to follow her members wherever they are to be found.

3.6 EARLY ECUMENICAL INVOLVEMENT: THE QUEST FOR UNITY ON THE CHURCH FRONT

Two key questions arose during the early years of the two black Lutheran Churches in Namibia, namely the question of Lutheran Unity and the issue of the Church's position regarding political development. Despite resentments which prevailed among different missionary societies, it cannot be denied that cooperation existed among them in the planting of Christianity in Namibia. Here, we are more interested in the more organised co-operations in the history of the Church in Namibia. Through the "Tripartite"/"Driehoek Agreement" (Triangle Agreement), the vision of ecumenical co-operations among Churches in doing mission was first noted by a Dutch Reformed Church minister, J. T. Potgieter at Mariental in Gibeon Circuit. In 1941 Potgieter invited Rev. Birger Eriksson of the Finnish Mission in Owamboland to attend the Gibeon Circuit meeting (Nambala 1987: 221). The Rhenish Mission was also approached in this connection. The burning issue here was the Namibian Aawambo speaking contract labourers in the South, especially on white farms. The three churches: the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the Finnish Mission (FMS) and the Rhenish Mission (RMS) had to do something to see if these men were ever to be assisted spiritually. Most of the contract labourers were from the North where the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) was working.

As from the year 1941, the matter of co-operation and partnership in ministry was discussed but no further concrete steps were taken. Four years later, a preliminary agreement was achieved at Engela and the final agreement among the three Churches (FMS, RMS and DRC) was reached at Karibib on May 9, 1947. It was called the *"Driehoek"* Agreement (Triangle Agreement), because of its three representatives (Nambala 1987:222; Nashihanga 1993:78). It was to undertake responsibility for the spiritual care to tens of thousands of contract workers from Owamboland (northern Namibia) working in the South. The other Churches or missions were also represented in this Agreement. The responsibility of each was that the Finnish Mission would provide literature and train evangelists for work; the Rhenish Mission would provide buildings for conducting services free of charge; where as the DRC would take care of salaries, transportations and accommodations. This cooperation continued even beyond the time when the Evangelical Lutheran Owambokavango Church (ELOC-later known as ELCIN) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (ELCSWA-later known as ELCRN) were constituted as independent churches in 1954 and 1957 respectively. Besides the *"Driehoek"* Agreement, the three Lutheran Churches, ELOC, ELCSWA and GELCSWA also began to discuss cooperation among themselves. With the view of starting its own independent mission work among the blacks, the DRC Synod of 1969 decided to break the *"Driehoek"* Agreement (Shejavali 1970: 32). The two black Lutheran Churches, ELOC (ELCIN) and ELCSWA (ELCRN), opposed the policy of apartheid and challenged the government. They declared apartheid as heresy. But the two white Churches, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the German Lutheran Church in South west Africa (GELCSWA) supported the government's apartheid policy, probably because their all white members were not oppressed. The two remaining Churches could not continue on the same basis, so the *"Driehoek"* became another detail in the history of Christianity in Namibia.

3.6. 1   United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (UELCSWA)

When the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) broke its *"Driehoek"* Agreement with the two Lutheran Churches (ELCIN and ELRCN) in 1969, those two Churches decided to establish their own new agreement to further the work previously done by *"Driehoek"*. Since three Lutheran Churches do exist in the country; two for blacks and one for whites, efforts toward cooperation had been undertaken even before the *"Driehoek"* Agreement was broken. In 1961 such an effort toward cooperation was considered at the "Conference of the Lutheran

Churches in South West Africa" (Nambala 1987: 223; Nashihanga 1993: 78). Furthermore, ELOC and ELCSWA decided to work together and serve as the voice of the voiceless. Working cooperatively they could challenge the heresy of apartheid. The doctrine of the unity of the Body of Christ was enlarged to include the unity of the Namibian people which nobody has the right to divide up into pieces, reserves, homelands or Bantustans. Thereafter the Church Councils of the three Churches met each year to discuss and explore issues of common concern and one of the results of these gatherings was the amalgamation of the two black Lutheran Seminaries into a joint Theological Seminary, the so called, "United Lutheran Theological Seminary, Paulinum" in 1963 (Tjibeba 2003: 149). The joint meeting of the two black Lutheran Church Councils decided to move a step ahead towards complete union and this was approved by their respective extra ordinary synods (Wood 1988: 633). Meanwhile, the other Lutheran Church, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (GELC), also decided to join the negotiations towards union in 1969, but within less than a year it withdrew. On March 2, 1972 the move was taken at Otjimbingue by the two black Lutheran Churches to form the "United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa"(UELCSWA) headed by a president. Bishop Leonard Auala of the ELCIN became the first president (1973-1975), followed by Präses (Moderator) Johannes Lukas de Vries of the ELCRN (1975-1978), Bishop Kleopas Dumeni of ELCIN (1978-1983), Bishop Hendrik Fredrik of ELCRN (1983-1986) and Landespropst Wilfried Blank of GELC [1986-] (Nambala 1994: 149; Du Pisani 2010: 108).

According to the UELCSWA Constitution, the union was on a federal basis rather than a complete union but its main aim was to strive for full unity and merger of the Lutheran Churches (ELOC, ELC and GELC) in the country into one Lutheran Church. After the formation of the federation, the German Lutherans continued to be hesitant about joining the UELCSWA. One of the main reasons was that the UELCSWA participated in the socio-political witness in the country's crisis (Gurirab 2002: 30). The open letter of 1971 marked a new understanding of what role the Church would play in the community. The church which inherited quietism from her mother missionaries now was shaping its own future regardless of heavy criticism that the church had lost its traditional European way of doing theology in dealing with the socio-political problems that faced the country. The establishment of UELCSWA was a significant step taken by the two Black Lutheran Churches to speak out with one prophetic voice for the sake of the masses. It was a majorstep towards the defeat of

the apartheid policy which aimed by all means at separating the people in their country of birth (Kapolo 1991: 98; Gurirab 2002: 35).

In 1975 the GELC withdrew their application for UELCSWA membership. The other two UELCSWA members (ELCIN and ELCRN) were, at this time, hesitant to accept application. Although the application was accepted at one time, it was soon withdrawn and was withheld until 1977 when the GELC removed its major condition for joining the inter-racial body. This condition was the twin demand of "non-interference in political issues" and of keeping the UELCSWA only on a federal basis rather than striving for future merger (Nambala 1987: 224). At their consultation from 25-27 June 1992 at Gross-Barmen near Okahandja, all three Lutheran Churches in Namibia (ELCIN, ELCRN and ELCIN-GELC) decided to make a new start towards attaining the goal of seeking ways to Lutheran unity and striving for a one United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia in the near future (Isaak 2000: 80).

Suggestions to further unity at a grass-root level as well as at Church-leadership level were made, and a communiqué was released and sent to all Lutheran Congregations in the Country. What is needed most for unity is the building of trust, which is not an easy task. It requires clarification and decisions about priorities, and revisiting those priorities form time to time. Isaak (2000: 82) notes that, "This is a challenge to leave one's comfort zone in familiar territory and, in faith, embrace the unknown. This includes working at one's own character, as well as developing a long-term vision, patience, perseverance, focus, commitment, and acting out the fruits of the Spirit-no matter what challenges need to be overcome". The vision at the Church leadership level is that the different departments of the three Lutheran Churches in Namibia namely: music, men, women, youth, diaconal services and development projects like that of HIV/AIDS, mission and evangelism, Christian education and stewardship should start consulting, coordinating and cooperating with each other. By coordinating efforts, by sharing methods, material, resources and expertise, all of the above Church work will benefit: its quality will be enhanced and job satisfaction will improve.

3. 6. 2 Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)

For a long time the Church in Namibia has been divided by denominationalism. Families have been divided because members of extended families belong to different Churches which will have nothing to do with each other. The traditions separating Roman Catholics and

Protestants dominated even in Namibia, often without any reason as to why this should be the case. We can speak here of mental colonialism in the Church (Nambala 1987: 225). These divisions are not a Namibian creation. They were brought to us. Then we clung to them blindly simply because the different missionaries told us that we were different. The unifying message of the Bible was ignored because of preoccupation with these divisions.

It is necessary to say all this in view of the membership of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN). The Council serves as an example of an attempt to keep the traditions of each Church intact while at the same time maintaining the importance of the Church as one body. The process towards closer cooperation among Churches was speeded up not only by political colonialism and oppression, but more so by the process of indigenisation of the Church. In 1960 all Churches in the country were under foreign leadership (Nambala 1994: 150). The ELCIN was the first to elect an indigenous leader, in 1960. Soon other "mainline" Churches followed in indigenising their leadership. As soon as an indigenous leader took the lead, cooperation with other Churches was easily sought. The quest for unity is a necessity both to form Christian fellowship among Christians of different Churches and to combat oppression and colonialism. To make this vision practical, a Christian Centre was established in Windhoek. One of its services was to dispatch information to Churches (Du Pisani 1989: 52; 2010: 110-111; Kapolo 1991: 100). Nambala (1987: 226) states, "Although we do not have much information at hand on how all this was done, the Windhoek Christian Centre which was incorporated all the main denominations except the White Dutch Reformed tradition, is usually referred to as a forerunner of the Council of Churches in Namibia [CCN]".

The Council was organised in 1977, constituted formally in 1978 and officially opened in 1979 in order to speak up with one voice as a Church in Namibia. All the main Christian denominations, with exception of the White Dutch Reformed Church, are united in the Council of Churches in Namibia. The purpose of the Council was to promote Christian unity, to bring justice to the Namibian people, to foster self-help projects, training and educational programs. It also fostered a communication system for the exchange of information at home and for keeping Churches abroad informed (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 14-15; Buys & Nambala 2003: 368). The CCN-Centre was firebombed on January 23, 1986. Most of its properties were destroyed, but with assistance from its member Churches and friends overseas a new office was built in Katutura, Windhoek. Under the leadership of Bishops Dumeni (ELCIN),

Frederik (ELCRN), Haushiku (RCC) and Kauluma (ANGLICAN), the Namibian churches have played an important role in the independence struggle during the 1980s. The CCN has helped with the establishment of the Trade Union, Student and Community Organisations. In the war zones, the churches provided health, educational and societal resources to local people, and they formed an important part of community life throughout the territory. They also provide support for Namibian exiles; including a chaplaincy in the refugee camps (Du Pisani 1989: 52). The Council also played a great role during the repatriation of Namibian returnees in 1989. The Churches through CCN established Repatriation, Resettlement and Reconstruction (RRR) office which assisted Namibians returning to their homeland.

The Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) has three categories of participants: corporate (voting) members, associate members who are moving towards corporate membership and observers. The latter two have the right to speak but not vote in the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The membership of the Council of Churches in Namibia includes corporate members such as: 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 Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Namibia Region (URCSA). On the other hand the Associate member Churches are: Coptic Orthodox Church in Namibia (COCN), Pentecostal Protestant Church (PPC) and Protestant Unity Church (Oruuano); while Reformed Church in Namibia (RCN), Ecumenical Institute for Namibia (EIN) and Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA) serves as Observers (Nakamhela in Lutheran Churches in Namibia 1995: 27; Buys & Nambala 2003: 368).

The CCN also has various departments, each with its own director. They include: Theology and Youth, Communication (Publishes CCN-Information news letter), Education, Rural Development, Social and Diaconal Programme and Administration and Finance. With the main aim (purpose) of proclaiming God's word and teaching Christian principles, the mission of the CCN is also to: promote ecumenism and build a culture of peace, tolerance and

reconciliation in its member Churches and the Namibian society; support and enable the member Churches to respond in faith to social, political, economic and spiritual needs of God's people; and to be a prophetic voice for the poor, women, children, the disabled and all the vulnerable people in society (Kapolo 1991: 101; Nambala 1994: 151). The vision of CCN is to be a living fellowship of Christian Churches, united and obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ in serving, loving and caring for God's people. One of the goals of the CCN is to contextualise theology and to seek for holistic service to meet the needs of God's people both physically and spiritually. Since its inception (the formulating of its constitution) in 1978, the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) has demonstrated Christian commitment and has been ever a true promoter of ecumenical spirit among the member Churches, but there are still many problems that need to be overcome so that this ecumenical body can withstand challenges and reach its objectives (Isaak 1997: 24). The CCN represents 86% (percent) of Namibian Christians and has pleaded with the South African government and World bodies, including the United Nations (UN) to grant Namibia independence.

The Namibian nation is a child of ecumenism, both politically and religiously. Throughout the years of the liberation struggle to gain independence, Namibians have looked to and found solidarity in the ecumenical movements, namely from the United Nations (UN) and the world Council of Churches (WCC). These two leading ecumenical organizations were courageous enough to support the liberation movement and challenge the churches to redouble their efforts to ensure that Namibia would be free. The UN, along with Namibian political parties such as the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO), and the WCC, along with the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) as well as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), has offered Namibians a window of perception on ecumenism. These international and national organisations have played a role in the liberation of Namibia. Their decisive contribution culminated in the UN-supervised elections in Namibia (1989) and, as a result, the long-awaited Namibian independence became a reality on 21March1990 (Isaak 1997: 24; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 115). It should be noted that, since Namibia's independence, the CCN has been observed to be following the spirit of ecumenism. The Challenge for the CCN today is to take up the issue of interreligious dialogue more seriously. Thus, the new post-independent role of the CCN challenges the Christian community to redefine ecumenism across different religious boundaries.

3. 7 THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE (NAMIBIAN CHURCHES BEFORE 1990)

The purpose in this section (3.7 to 3.7.3) is to follow more closely the political and theological implications, as well as socio-political engagement of Namibian Churches in the struggle for liberation and politico-economic freedom of Namibia. The history of the Church in Namibia is full of conflicts, and Namibia underwent a radical change from being a foreign missionary field to becoming indigenous Churches ready to challenge the apartheid system and laws. Guided by a vision of their responsibility as Christians, steeped in a society of repression and exploitation, the members of Namibian Churches were eager recipients of a liberation theology, preached and lived by the inspired and courageous leaders of their churches. This stand made the role of the Church in Namibia unique (Isaak 2000: 28; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 114).

By the early 1960s the Church of Christ in Namibia was guided by its Lord to take up its prophetic witness to the South African colonial government, which was still ruling Namibia according to outdated colonial systems. This prophetic witness had immense consequence for the liberation struggle process. On the *ideological* level, the two Black Lutheran Churches (ELCIN and ELCRN) have developed a theology of liberation. In their respective church periodicals, *Immanuel* and *Omukwetu,* regular articles appeared which tried to evaluate the social and political situation of the Namibian people in the light of the Gospel event (Wood 1988: 633; Katjavivi 1988; Buys & Nambala 2003: 318). However, the indigenous Christian leadership did not take on its prophetic task immediately after 1957. It took time for the Black Lutherans, along with the other main Churches (Roman Catholics and the Anglicans), to break through their conservative legacy which decreed that they should not intervene in political issues and should work within the existing social order. This "political theology" enabled the churches to ask the question of legitimacy and reject the South African claim to be the legal administrator and to defend a Christian society and Christian values. Thus the Black Namibian churches (ELCIN, ELCRN, RCC and Anglican) became "anti-authoritarian" in the sense that they refused any recognition of the inhuman and illegal status quo (Wood 1988: 633). How did this Christian maturity eventually emerge? Three important historical processes prepared the Church for embarking on the rough course of raising a clear prophetic voice towards the South African government. Since then, the Church in Namibia became known as "The confessing Church in the midst of injustice, violence and death".

3. 7. 1 Joint memorandum: Opposition to the odendaal plan (Bantustan Policies) of South Africa

From the standpoint of theological history, the nineteenth (19th) century came to an end for the Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) in Southwest Africa/Namibia on a date set by the white government...1962/1962..when South African government commission published a report known as the *"Odendaal Plan"* ("Bantustan policies") implemented in 1963. This lengthy report contained a programme which the government had drafted and which indicated a readiness to accept and introduce South Africa's "apartheid" policy into South West Africa (Namibia). The apartheid policy provided for the establishment of independent 'homeland governments' (Bantustans), based on an ethnic subdivision of the country (Isaak 2000: 30; Buys & Nambala 2003: 320). It was recognised immediately that this government programme was diametrically opposed to the movement favouring Church unity, and hence the "*Odendaal* Plan" ("Bantustan policies") was rejected (Isaak 1997:43; 2000: 30). In 1964 and 1967, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) together with her sister Church the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) drew up a joint memorandum to the government, referring to the programme of "separate development" in which both the two black Lutheran Churches objected to the implementations of the "*Odendaal* Plan" and pointing out its inhumane and unjust effects (Isaak 2000: 30; Gurirab 2002: 31; Buys & Nambala 2003: 320; Tjibeba 2003: 149). This "heart-felt" protest, which marked the first time that the young Churches actually took up a position on an acute question, remained without apparent effect. Nevertheless, it signalled a development that was to confront the Church, both internally and in its political stance, with enormous tensions and trials.

As the influence of the missionaries diminished and the two young black Lutheran Churches discovered the extent to which blacks had been oppressed by them, one of their special pastoral services to the society was to do their part for the ultimate liberation of the blacks. Meanwhile, these two Churches found that the heavy German emphasis of acceptance of colonialism in the theology which the missionaries had brought with them to Africa rendered it irrelevan in the African context. The theological discussion of the traditional acceptance of colonialism grew more intense as the Church began to accept its political responsibility. The consequences of this were:

- Complete incomprehension among missionaries still active in the young Churches who either theoretically or in practice were unable to give up their doctrine of obedience to the government.

- Increasing alienation from the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (GELCSWA) which had been formed in the meantime and which continued to preserve unbroken (apart from a small group) the theological tradition inherited from the pioneer missionaries.

- Confrontation with the state, which reacted by issuing threats, deporting Church workers, and sharpening laws directed specifically at Church activities, for example, by not giving passports to people such as black Lutheran liberation theologian activists and Finnish missionaries.

At this stage, the two black Lutheran Churches rebelled by stating their total objection to South Africa's colonialism. They declared their desire that Namibia should be free and independent. In the midst of resistance and institutionalised violence, the topic of resistance was not only history to the Namibians; it was a living reality (Nambala 1987: 248; Isaak 1997: 44; 2000:30- 31). It is in that reality that the Church took its stand. The Church was in support of resistance against apartheid and colonialism because it had chosen the side of the oppressed and the colonised. Church statements and press releases were crystal clear on this point, that the Church in Namibia wanted only one thing together with the majority of the people: that Namibia must be free. The Church joined the people's resistance. Through its strong theological emphasis on Christian unity, and its opposition against independent homeland governments, the two black Lutheran Churches began shaping a Namibian Contextual Theology. The abovementioned history of the prophetic witness of the Churches towards the South African government, started with independent synods in 1957, even though it only won public attention in 1971 with the publication of the famous Open Letter.

3. 7. 2 Open Letter: The Prophetic Voice of the two Black Lutheran Churches (1971)

On June 21, 1971 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) reversed itself. It surprised the world, and electrified Southern Africa, with the announcement that its 1950 ruling declaring South Africa's mandate to occupy Namibia had been in error, the Republic's continued occupation of Namibia was in fact illegal. Indeed, ever since the 1970s, Namibian black Lutheran Churches had continued to issue significant policy statements condemning South

Africa's occupation and calling upon the Pretoria regime to withdraw from the country, as demanded by numerous United Nations (UN) resolutions (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 133). The news of the declaration of South Africa's illegal presence had an immediate impact in Namibia. It changed the *chronos* of an old-grey haired people into the *kairos:* a young people running swiftly because the time for Namibia's independence was now.

The decision of the International Court of Justice was significant because it brought about a most appropriate time for Namibia. The first group of Namibians who made use of this historical moment were a group of young theological students and two lecturers at the Paulinum Lutheran Theological Seminary at Otjimbingue. They were the ones who prepared the way for a public prophetic voice of the Churches in Namibia and proclaimed the message of the 1971 Open Letter to the entire world. The final event which launched this prophetic voice, was the publication of the Open Letter of the Lutheran Churches to the South African Prime minister (Isaak 2000: 31; Buys & Nambala 2003: 325; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 107). At the Paulinum Seminary a group of students, fresh from a study of Romans 13, were struck by the religious implications of the World Court's announcement. The students were in heaven because of the good news: South Africa is illegal in Namibia. Traditionally, Romans 13 had been used in South Africa to justify apartheid: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Romans 13: 1). Looking at the text with the eyes on the Southern African context of that time, Romans had held that it is the task of those in authority to reward the good and to punish evil doers. But, in the students' experience, up to that day in Namibia, authority (government) was there to punish those who were doing well and to praise those who were doing wrong. That is why, students were asking: What is the responsibility of the Church in this kind of situation? Has the Church anything to say? Should the Church only be concerned about what is to come? Or should the Church be concerned with the first-taste of the kingdom of God? Should the Church keep quiet in view of the suffering of the people, in view of the injustice? (Katjavivi 1988: 32-33).

Some of the students started sharing their stories on how they had been oppressed and at the end of the day they decided to come up with a written Open Letter addressed to the world at large. They respectfully sent the Open Letter to the Church boards of the two large black Lutheran Churches in Namibia which were meeting at that time, and the students received the strongest of support. The boards chose to adopt the students' letter as their own and to issue it

over their own signatures. On June 30, 1971 the Open Letter became the official position of the two black Lutheran Churches themselves. Signed by two Church leaders: Bishop Leonard Auala of ELCIN and Pastor Paulus Gowaseb, Moderator of ELCRN; the Open Letter was addressed and sent directly to the South African Prime Minister Mr. B. J. Vorster, to protest against apartheid and the violation of human rights and to promote the World Court's decision of bringing Namibia to independence, informing him that the Churches in Namibia supported the findings of the World Court of 21 June 1971, and that South Africa's continued presence in Namibia was illegal (Du Pisani 1986: 197-198; 2010: 107; Nambala 1987: 247; Katjavivi 1988: 66-67; 1989: 13; Isaak 1997: 37; Buys & Nambala 2003: 232; Gurirab 2002: 33; Tjibeba 2003: 150). On the same day the letter was sent to the South African Prime Minister Vorster, the Church leaders sent at the same time a letter entitled "Epistle to the Congregations" in which they notified the Church members about their mission of defending the poor and the oppressed, and being a voice of the voiceless. In remarkably language the letter claimed that the South African government had failed over the years to comply with the United Nations Charter of 1948 with respect to the non-white population. The government was now morally obliged to initiate a comprehensive series of fundamental reforms. Seven major criticisms were cited:

- The racial policy of the Republic of South Africa has intimidated the Namibian people, and violated their freedom and safety.

- The Group Areas legislation of the Republic has prohibited Namibians from exercising the rights of free movement within their own country.

- South Africans espionage and intimidation have violated the people's rights to freedom of the press.

- The Namibian people are denied freedom of speech.

- The refusal of the Republic to grant voting rights to the black sector of the population has made it impossible for "the indigenous people to work together in a really responsible and democratic manner to build the future" of the nation.

- The Job Reservation act has effectively broken up family life, "hindered the cohabitation of families" and caused low remuneration and unemployment.

- Most fundamentally, South Africa's imposition of apartheid separates the Namibian people who see themselves as one.

Therefore, the church boards concluded, "our urgent wish is that your government will cooperate with the United Nations Organisation, 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 (Charter) be put into operation and that South West Africa may become a self-sufficient and independent state" (Isaak 1997: 45; 2000: 32). The Open Letter acted as a kind of shibboleth for the Churches. It forced all Churches in Namibia to take a stand with respect to the socio-political situation of the apartheid era, either for or against it (Katjavivi 1989: 133- 137; Buys & Nambala 2003: 325). Isaak (2000: 32) notes:

> It must be emphasised that the Open letter forced the South African Government to recognise Church leaders as one of the major players in Namibia politics. Most importantly, the letter was the political conscientisation of the black population in general. The letter sought to reconcile spiritual commitment with political involvement. In short, the content of the letter signified that God was not to be diminished, that faith was not to be diminished, and that praxis was not be avoided.

The Namibian Churches had spoken in the name of God and it was good. The creation and liberation had taken place. The dream has come true, and on March 21, 1990 Namibia gained its independence at last when the national flag was hoisted for the first time. Africa's last colony had finally received independence after a long and bloody liberation struggle. The nation became the 160th member of the United Nations.

3. 7. 3 Reactions from Ecumenical Churches in Namibia

The Open letter was supported by other ecumenical Churches in Namibia, both in theory and practise. Since then, the silence of the Church on social and political issues such as: the situation of oppression and apartheid had thus been broken. The Church thenceforth continued to express its opinion on matters that required social and political change as part of its message of hope in a dehumanised society Nambala (1994:136 in Isaak 2000: 32). In fact, the Church became a threat in the eyes of the South African Government. After the Open Letter most of the mainline (Churches) denominations joined the two black Lutheran Churches in speaking out publicly against the apartheid regime of South Africa by pointing out examples of injustice and oppression in the Namibian society. The theological discussion of the traditional acceptance of colonialism grew more intense as the two black Lutheran Churches began to accept their political responsibilities basing their statements on a biblical

theology and addressing the Namibian context. This was soon called Liberation Theology (Buys & Nambala 2003: 325). Because of its continuous expressing of opinions and views in matters that required social and political change, as part of its message of hope in a dehumanized society, the Church became a threat in the eyes of South African Government. It must be emphasised that the Open Letter forced the South African Government to recognise Church leaders as one of the major Role players in Namibian politics. Most importantly, the letter was the political conscientisation of the black population in general. The letter sought to reconcile spiritual commitment with political involvement. In short, the content of the letter signified that God was not to be diminished, that faith was not to be minimised and that praxis was not to be avoided.

The letter was welcomed among the oppressed black community as an answer to their cry. However, during 1971 the majority of the country's white population belonged to the Dutch Reformed and Lutheran Churches and the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (DELK), which as a Lutheran sister Church, might have been expected to show sympathy for the actions of their black sisters and brothers; received the letter with resistance. The white community thought the Church had gone too far and the Church had become more political than spiritual, that is why on 23 July 1971, a few days after the publication of the Open Letter and the concomitant Pastoral Letter, the DELK issued a statement disassociating itself from the Open Letter and its political implications (Kapolo 1991: 75; Isaak 1997: 46). Nevertheless, the oppressed black Namibians saw the letter as a liberating good news. It was good news because the letter expressed the true situation and context of the people. The people believed that the Church had begun to understand the pain and cry of the community.

The move of the two black Lutheran Churches to approach the government with a prophetic voice was supported and welcomed by other Christian Churches in Namibia such as: the Catholics and Anglicans. The letter was strongly supported by the Anglican Bishop, Colin Winter who wrote, "The Christian Church, as the conscience of this nation, must speak out with clarity and without fear. Apartheid must be denounced as unacceptable before God. Who else but the leaders of the Church can do this?"(Winter in Isaak 1997: 45; 2000: 32; Kapolo 1991: 100). The Roman Catholic Church in Namibia, too, in a statement on 12 August 1971, placed itself firmly on the side of the black Lutherans. It declared that the Lutheran Church leaders had spoken out imbued with the spirit of the Gospel (Isaak 1997: 46; 2000: 32). From this time on, the ecumenical Churches such as the Anglican Church, the

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Lutheran Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, representing 80 percent of the total population, increasingly identified with and participated in the struggle for national liberation. In short, the Open Letter represented a watershed in ecclesiastical history.

3. 8 THE CHURCH IN POST-INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA

Namibia's history is a history of suffering and oppression, a history of colonialism and exploitation, a history of hatred, and racial discrimination. The Church in Namibia is known for its stand against colonial oppression and the apartheid government of South Africa. The Church sided with the oppressed and suffering ones in their struggle for freedom and liberation. At this time, many people asked the Church in Namibia these questions: What shape will the Church in Namibia take to be in context in the post-independent country? Will the Church continue to be a voice of the voiceless as it was during the colonial era of apartheid and liberation struggle? Will the Church be ready to speak up against oppression and social injustice irrespective of who is the oppressor? (Nambala 1994: 165). These and similar questions are asked simply because the Church in Namibia sided with the oppressed in the colonial era. The Church in Namibia was in the front-line of the decisive battle. She fought bravely and became a fearless voice of the oppressed.

During the liberation struggle, the ELCIN together with other mainline Churches in the country such as: ELCRN, Anglican, AMEC, RCC and others fought for justice so long that what was done to their members versus what the Church did to them gets blurred. Because of the national crisis, the Church in Namibia has rejected a neutral stand. During the years of colonialism and oppression, the Namibian Church essentially said "No" to any kind of cooperation with the South African regime. It was very easy to galvanise people into action, to evoke and foster sympathy against the evil of political, economic, racial and gender exploitation. The objective was straightforward: we were opposed to apartheid and colonialism in Namibia. The task of the Church was made relatively easy because there was an identified common enemy (Isaak 2000: 111).

Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990. On that day, the age dawned of having a choice between saying "No" or "Yes" to the Government, or even both "No" *and* "Yes". Suddenly, however, the Churches did not know when the right thing to say was "No", and at what moment it was right to say "Yes". It was not clear that the prophetic "No" under the

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new situation had to include the prophetic "Yes" to options for socio-political and economic renewals. In other words, the task of the Church in an independent and democratic state is to learn when to say "No" by remaining vigilant to the dangers of political power, namely its ability to serve its own interests rather than the common good. In short, the prophetic struggle against injustice must continue. In any political situation, the most important task of the Church is, simply, to tell the truth. Many Namibians feel that during the first years of independence, the religious communities, member churches of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), and other non-member churches neglected the prophetic role of being the barometer of the conscience of the people. In other words, during the years of struggle against apartheid church members were challenged to adopt a position of critical solidarity with the liberation movements. Now that the liberation movements have become political parties the situation has changed. What is needed now is not critical solidarity with political parties but critical solidarity with the poor and critical participation in the ongoing process of building a more democratic society through involvement at local, regional, national and global levels (Isaak 2000: 112).

Although so much has taken place in Namibia since March 1990, certain things remain just the same as they have been. National political leaders have not changed. They are still where they were seventeen years ago, twenty years ago, and even longer. This is characteristic of virtually all people who have done so much in the cause of freedom. They remain fossilised in their own experiences and beliefs that they have brought a freedom, which could not have come without them. Sadly, this perception leads to another. Anyone who questions the way the pioneers of freedom do things is automatically viewed as wishing to bring back oppression. Such a person is squashed, discredited and demonised as an enemy of the people. Whatever vision people have for the future in the post-independent Namibia is deduced from what they know today. Kapolo (1991: 132) states that, "The situation has changed, but the role of the Church will remain the same, to be faithful to the prophetic biblical witness of the gospel in the community. The prophetic role of the Church remains the same whether it is under a colonial government or under an elected democratic government."

Being the Church today in this world means to be a Church with a prophetic voice, which includes, amongst others, the political-cum-prophetic voice and the economic-cum-prophetic voice. These roles often require conflict, mutual reprimand and bitter debate to resolve differences or to bring inconsistencies to light. The point is that prophetic ministries are like a

baby born: the new life is there, but it is often only brought out into the world with much pain. The struggle for truth is never just another simple matter and it is never a fulfilled task (Isaak 2000: 4). The Church should remain a watchdog and should see that society is guided by truth and justice. As described in the New Testament, the salvation Jesus brings entails liberation from all forms of oppression-sin, death, illness, the demons-whether these take shape in an individual's life or appear as cosmic "principalities and powers" that work various forms of oppression: spiritual, economic, ecological, political, cultural, and so on. The Church of Jesus Christ is called itself to be a society where the justice and mercy of God rule; this is an aspect of its witness, a witness that becomes especially visible as the Church's concern for the justice and mercy of God "spills out" into the world beyond the Church (Isaak in Koegelenberg 1992:123).

There are challenges and social issues facing the Church in society today such as: retrogressed moral values, national imbalance in economic sharing, corruption, poverty, unemployment, orphans and vulnerable children, urbanisation, and an increasing number of crimes committed on daily basis. There is also dehumanization that occurs in slums and informal settlements. How have religious communities in general and Christians in particular allowed themselves to become so dehumanized that they can go to sleep peacefully despite the hundreds of people around them who live and suffer in the shanty towns of their areas; where they do the ministry of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments? Not only is the slum dehumanizing to the people who dwell there, but also our failure to respond to the slums is an indictment of the Church. As Christians, our love for a just God should cause us to act when we see the crushed spirit of slum dwellers. How can Christians be content with a Church in which the very heart of the Christian faith and calling is ignored?

The above left the researcher with many questions about the holistic ministry of Jesus Christ in connection with the poor and neglected in society, especially the slum dwellers of his time. Being the Church today at the start of the third millennium (21st century) should fill us with fear or dread. The challenge for the Church is to discern the signs of the times and to look ahead without being confused by cheap modern slogans, but to stand for the truth that never ends (Isaak 2000: 4). Hughes & Bennet (1998: 44) explain the power of hope in the coming Kingdom as one that transforms our present realities in dispensing meaning and purpose for all:

> Much of the suffering and poverty in the world is a consequence of the people seeking meaning and purpose some where else-in wealth, power or pleasure. For the poor, having no future is reflected in

hopelessness about the present. Finding hope in Christ and the future establishment of his Kingdom transforms everything. Those who once made wealth, power or pleasure their aim now seek justice and use their resources to bless their neighbour. The poor, whose life was drenched in blackness, see light at the end of the tunnel and even their present material circumstances begin to change for the better in this glow.

According to Hughes & Bennet (1998: 44), the hope in the coming Kingdom makes a powerful contribution to holistic development. Hope may therefore be one of the keys to the challenges of the church's involvement in people's socio-economic development. "The church leadership as well as the membership should be consciencous and enlightened in order to understand the forces at work. The analysis should start where the people are, by looking at the existential problems like inflation, the lack of employment, poverty, and the economic decline. This should be followed a questioning of the economic policies that shaped the situation. An especially important matter is the distribution of wealth. The existence of poverty is already a challenge to the church, but an unequal distribution of wealth and great contrasts between the rich and the poor gives rise to a main emphasis in the ministry of the church"(Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 78). Therefore, a new rooting for the meaning of human development after the transition to multi-party democracy and independence in 1990 (Buys &Nambala 2003: 410), is being sought in Namibia.

Such a search to transform Namibia into a civil society has to do with questions like: what action is needed to guarantee a society based on mutual respect, care, gentleness, cordiality and conviviality? The researcher is of the opinion that, a nation building and multi-party democracy can only be established if we have human development based on a culture of conviviality. Without such a culture of conviviality there will be no reconciliation between the rich and the poor, educated and illiterate. Thus it is worth to connect the theme of reconciliation and nation building to the issue of human development.

The task of rebuilding the Church and country began in earnest with the independence of Namibia in 1990. The Church faces many challenges in Namibia now. Since the country's independence, the Church has the responsibility of educating people and helping them to understand what freedom means. Freedom does not mean that everyone is free to do what he/she wants; rather, it means responsibility and hard work. Namibia is free, but the celebrations are now over. It is time to work. It now the time for the Church to inform the nation, that everyone is expected to improve his/her living standard, including better education, better jobs, housing, etc (Isaak 1992: 119; Nashihanga 1993: 89; Buys & Nambala

2003: 383). It is clear that, therefore, the Church has an important role to play as it goes about its mission and proclamation of the Good News to the people in a free country. In order for the Church to and fulfil its mission, it needs to understand the context in which its people live. It should not only pay attention to the spiritual life of the people, but also to their social life (holistic approach). The Church in this context is carrying out its prophetic voice to remind all political groups and parties to unite and strive to realise the common goal of self-determination.

In many ways the Church has been disappointed by opportunistic political groups which became additional stumbling blocks in the route to freedom. However, the Church has not given up. It still reminds us that the future of Namibia can only be ensured if all work together as one people determined to be free. The search for justice cannot be ignored, because each era has its main issues pertaining to justice. There is something like a *"kairos"* (an appointed time) for everything (Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 147).

The church must concentrate on pressing issues that face people at a particular (context) time. In post-independent Namibia the Church has to face other socio-economic challenges and concerns. Today Namibians are poor, because the poor (have nots) are heavily exploited by the rich land owners (the haves), especially in the urban areas. Their poverty caused the Church to be financially weak and to depend heavily on support from sister Churches abroad. Who are the poor and oppressed in today's post-independent Namibia? They are the marginalised ones of the society (those without land, HIV/AIDS pandemic infected, orphans and vulnerable children, street and homeless people, slum dwellers, prostitutes, the under-employed, the maimed, the women who are victims of domestic violence and the descendants of slave communities) and the majority are blacks. All these are the heavy burdens we bear and pastoral counselling from Jesus while we are walking with him will be most appreciated (Aarflot 1988: 94-98; Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 147; Isaak 1997: 88-89; 2000: 3; Du Pisani *et al* 2010: 134).

Namibia needs a Church that is the conscience of the Government, political leaders and the business sector, and that fights for the empowerment of the weak. Namibia needs a Church which will, in a positive and constructive way and in critical solidarity; cooperate with the Government and the private business sector in the process of nation-building. It needs a Church which will endeavour always to read the signs of the times correctly, and face the demands and challenges of the new millennium and communicate with those in political or

business power, by means of praise or admonition, without apologising to anybody: "So says the Lord to Namibia"!(Isaak 2000: 14; Kameeta 2006: 101). The Church should play her very important role of being a voice of the voiceless such as the poor and the neglected ones of the society. The researcher is of the opinion that the Church should continue her mission of never being aloof from the day to day issues affecting her members and the society as a whole.

The post-independent era (1991-2010) is still a time of hardship and the reconstructing society. Today we have a Namibia divided into two parts: there is a prosperous Namibia for the few who are well connected and the impoverished Namibia for the majority of the citizens. This injustice of dividing people in an independent and democratic Namibia is not conducive for peace and political stability. People cannot have peace when they are denied opportunities to earn and live a decent life, fundamental human rights, shelter, food and sanitation. Looking to the context, it is important for the Church to be constant, and faithful to its mission. As Word and Sacrament continue to be integral parts of the Church, a neutral stand in the face of injustice will remain evil itself. Indeed, it could be said that, in the first two decades of Independence, the Church might have failed to reassess and review its public and prophetic role of being in context, and did not seek to make itself relevant in the day-to-day life of society. We need a spirituality that is able to integrate the role of faith, prayer and the mystery of the Church's sacramental life with a God-willed struggle for reconciliation, justice and peace. Whatever the concepts, if Church and Christianity, are separated, the two become the objects of caricature. For when the Church refuses to assume responsibility for its socio-political context, it ceases to nurture the community of faith (Isaak 2000: 112-113).

The challenge is that the Church in Namibia will continue to be a prophetic voice on behalf of the voiceless and the oppressed in all situations. Today the Church is slow to address the socio-economic problems and the plight of our urban poor. The Church hasmostly ignored this call from our urban communities. Villa-Vicencio (1992: 42) comments that, "As a participant in the national-building process it will, however, continue to be the task of the Church to look critically and yet to make positive proposals concerning reconstruction at the level of constitutionalism and law-making for nations in transition." The Church is witnessing to the fullness of life and liberation which is found in being sons and daughters of the Creator in a community sustained by the One who is the bread of life. Living this life for the world is what it means to be 'doing mission" in Christ's way. The community of believers which is the Church encounters God in fellowship of administering of sacraments such as

breaking the bread and sharing the communion cup; as it encounters God incarnate very specially in those in pain. God is in the hungry, cold and naked; God is in the poor and in those in prison (Lewin 1987: 292). In any political situation, the most important task of the Church is simply to be the church for others. Isaak (2000: 14) writes:

> The Church is always the Church in the world, as every other human community is in the world. However, it is in the world for this purpose: to be a sign of the love of God in Christ Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served (Mark 10: 45). If the Church fails to turn in service toward the neighbour, it fails to be in mission. In the same way in which Jesus came to bring liberty to the captive, sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed, food for the hungry, health to the sick (Luke 4: 16-190), so the Church is called to do likewise.

While the Church was actively engaged during the apartheid era, many believe that it has failed in its role as a social conscience after independence. The Church has a prophetic voice in society and should make this voice heard. It is the task of Church to remind the State about the hungry people living in adequate conditions with insufficient access to education, health care, and the right to access to land (land tenure and ownership), economic justice and many basic necessities for a decent living. But at the same time the Church in an independent Namibia should resist the temptation to accept places of power. The Church should rather continue to promote the ethos of service to the poor and those who are still voiceless, because of the lack of education. Kritzinger *et al* (1994: 146) writes:

> The ministry of the Christian church is "wholistic". Its mission is to bring *the entire* gospel (the whole truth) to *all* the people in *the entire* world, and to teach them to obey all of God's commandments (Matthew 28). The good news should everywhere be heard against the background of the bad news society. The ministry of justice goes against all injustice, in whatever form, and in whatever circles, not necessarily in spectacular programmes, but everywhere where Christians live, speak and do what is right.

If the church ignores its social and political-*Sitz im Leben*- its situation in the life of mankind-then it is forsaking the cross of its lord and is turning into the illusionary church, occupied merely with itself (Moltmann 1993: 342; Maggay 1994: 58-59). But then the church will have to orientate itself with regard to its calling and role in the public sphere in relation to politics, economics, global forces, poverty, health, employment and all other relative issues stemming from the public tide (August 2005: xiii). How far has the Church in Namibia been successful in maintaining critical prophetic ministry in the independent Namibia? The Church in Namibia today is failing to address the alarming problems of the urban communities, that is why we are reminded of the gruesome reality how big a challenge the Church is facing.

Since the Church has the ability to combine both continuity with the past, projecting the present into the future and bringing the future into the present, it therefore provides a credible environment to face the challenges of the new millennium. The pertinent question to address is therefore; what does it really mean to be the Church in this new millennium? What, then, should be the call upon the Church? What should the Church be doing? Our sincere hope is that the Church in Namibia particularly the ELCIN, can gain wisdom and be taught by the context to better assess the socio-economic challenges faced by her members of this (21st century) new millennium. The position of the Church in a free and independent Namibia should be to advocate on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. At this present time, the Church should make sure that all people are included in the community's development.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The system in which the church was organized was based on the context in which people were working and earning cash (resources) to maintain themselves and their families. Economic exploitation was enhanced with the advent of colonial rule. People lost their former properties and were denied new ones; they were also denied access to the land. At the same time, more and more people became Christians and were required to give at least a tenth from that with which they were not even able to buy bread for themselves. Namibians became victims of the structures both within and outside the church.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is overwhelmingly the biggest and most influential church in Namibia. It is an example of a Christian church, which has traditionally had a strong and recognised position nationwide. In the past the ELCIN initiated and was involved in many activities in society especially through its development project programme. The church has made a major contribution to the liberation struggle and the country's development; because her role was central due to the geographical and ethnical background and strong links with the ruling party, SWAPO, during the long and painful struggle for independence. This role as a development agency gained momentum again, when Namibia became independent in 1990 and many foreign agencies were willing to donate money for its development, even though most of them cut off their supports. The ELCIN continued to serve its members and the population of the country spiritually as well as socially. There are many activities within the church, but the church suffers from lack of

theological discussion and debates, hence the inability to articulate its response to the current challenges and affairs, such as: secularization and the emergence of pluralistic society. The challenge is the contextualisation of the teaching of the church and reforming its activities without compromising the Christian witness.

In this ever-changing world, the church must be the agency of the kingdom and catalyst for societal transformation is the church. The church must embrace its commitments to the Great Commission in a demonstrative way. The local church must be equipped to handle the numerous missiological challenges that are presented in this post-independent society. The mission of the Church, therefore, is to pray for the wisdom to know when to be prophetic in its critique of the State-recognising that at times the most loyal service we can offer the State is critical cooperation, while at other times it may be more appropriate for us to offer critique or voice our protest. The ELCIN needs to learn what it means, theologically and in practice, to address the problems of the political economy, housing, education, health care and a host of related issues. The Church is called upon to enter into dialogue with society and Government so that we can all cooperate in order that everyone enjoys basic human rights, freedom, justice and reconciliation. If the church in Namibia is to succeed, it needs to be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. It is also necessary to apply and simplify the gospel message within the Namibian context. Some of pressing issues that are confronting the church and society will be discussed in depth in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ONDANGWA AND OSHAKATI INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA

4. 1 INRODUCTION

In this chapter the contextual (situational) analysis of informal settlements (shanties) of the two northern Namibia towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati is dealt with. The analysis is the result of empirical (participatory) research conducted over a period of a month (15 November to 15 December 2010) in the relevant communities. Selener 's (1998: 17) definition: "Participatory research is a process through which members of an oppressed group or community identify a problem, collect and analyze information, and act upon the problem in order to find solutions and to promote social and political transformation." The practical theology methodology that is suggested by Hendriks (2004: 34) was the basis of the methodology in this research. This methodology takes cognisance of the fact that theology is about showing good insight and making good judgements, which take place in the congregation of the faithful. This insight then, leads to the involvement of the faithful in church and society. This involvement is a response (praxis) to the presence of the triune and missional God *(Missio Dei)* who interacts with the faithful through the Bible and tradition in a particular given context that beckons the faithful to the future. The empirical research method (technique) involving the use of a questionnaire and interview was used in the process of data collection. This method is focussed on gathering empirical information.

This chapter will consist of the following: research purpose and objectives, growth of the Namibian urban population, a brief historical description of the northern Namibian regions and towns, the government's efforts to address urban challenges and problems, the ELCIN ministry's approach to urban ministry as well as research findings (demographic profiles and socio-economic features of those households [and their members] which were selected during the sample survey) and on data that were (gathered) collected. All these will contribute the sources of reference in fulfilling this task and attempting to obtain an appropriate response to the research hypothesis. These sources will be of great benefit because the research argument focuses on daily human needs and introduces people's concerns and experiences. When

development is referred to, this encompasses people's interests, feelings, ideas, values, culture, and dignity. Therefore, everyone should benefit from it.

4. 2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A number of goals arise out of the empirical (participatory) research in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati. These will give direction to the study. The goals are to:

- Gain an understanding of the many socio-economic challenges (problems) faced by Namibian Aawambo-speaking people of northern Namibia living in the abovementioned communities, and determining the role of the churches in meeting these social challenges.

- Gain perceptions from the informal inhabitants in the area concerned (Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements) about their daily way of life and survival mechanism.

- Investigate whether the local church's understanding and awareness of these social challenges are congruent with that of its mission task and ecclesial identity of being a public church in the context.

- Assess the role of the churches in meeting various social challenges, including the national HIV/AIDS crisis, the unemployment problem, and the needs of the youth, care for orphans and vulnerable children, and many other issues.

- Ascertain if the ELCIN is playing its part in dealing with various national concerns and explore how the ELCIN can better position itself in addressing these concerns.

- Evaluate whether the churches (different denominations) are making effective use of available networks and external structures to play out their roles.

4. 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section refers back to chapter 1, section 1.9. In the study proposal set forward in 1.9, the following were listed: area of research, sampling and data collection method. The methodology used to test the relevance of this framework and the nature of poverty in Ondangwa and Oshakati is largely quantitative with semi-structured interviews, with guideline questions.

The research study was conducted within the ethical boundaries of the University of Stellenbosch's Research Ethics Committee, Division for Research Development. The research proposal was submitted to the Ethical Committee and was approved.

Empirical research methods and techniques were used in the process of doing this research. Initially, though the observation of participants, ethnographic strategies were instituted, with interpretive data analysis to objectively asses the participants lived experiences. Systematic enquiry, through the process of interviewing the participants, was the primary source for extracting information and data collection (De Vos *et al* 1998: 299).

To accomplish the objectives of the study, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions was developed. Copies of these questionnaires were taken by the researcher to the 10 targeted informal settlements throughout the northern part of Namibia during the research time in the months of November and December 2010. The questionnaires were designed to be used during personal interviews with the Namibian Aawambo-speaking people of northern Namibia who live in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati and and during interview with clergymen (pastors) from different denominations (ELCIN, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Apostolic Faith Mission, Methodist, Church of England in Namibia, Dutch Reformed and others) that serve in the area concerned **(Figures1 and 3**).

Van der Ven (2004: 159) sees the heart of discussions (dialogue) as hermeneutical-communicative in nature as he addresses this issue as a practical –theological question in his study by probing, 'How can pastoral workers offer, within the Christian faith, aid to people who are confronted with irreversible, existential suffering...[such as one might see with poverty and unemployment]?' One explanation offered for this phenomenon provides the function of religion not trying to do away with life's problems but rather serving as an avenue towards their elucidation. The questionnaires developed in English were designed to be read in *"Oshiwambo" (a vernacular language of the interviewed population)* to the interviewees (target population) by the researcher. The respondents were to respond in *"Oshiwambo"* and the researcher recorded the responses in English on the form. Some visits to informal (communities) settlements, and congregation offices of different denominations were made in order to facilitate these personal interviews.

4. 3. 1 Direct Observation

Direct observation, as research method, is generally used to collect data in the category of human behaviour, social interaction; and observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature (Mouton 1996: 142; Søgaard 1996: 18, 106). This method was used to collect data during the research study conducted in Ondangwa and Oshakati towns' informal settlements in Oshana region, northern Namibia. By means of this method, data about the category of human behaviour, social interaction, including observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature were gathered. It is a useful information-gathering tool for understanding (community) societal dynamics such as: socio-economic issues, daily life survival mechanism, employment, and household composition, housing conditions (including water supply and sanitation), health, literacy and education. The method brought the researcher in touch with all of what it means to be part of a community (society): its smells, physical impressions, sounds, sights, and emotional sensations. These informed the researcher about the essence of a community of people with different ethnic dialects (Carroll *et al* 1989: 83; Mouton 1996: 142). This method is based on the technique of the unstructured questionnaire, group interviews, in-depth interviews and observations. Direct observation, as a research tool, enabled the researcher to crosscheck the respondents' responses during semi-structured interviews. Another important research tool used in this study was conducting personal interviews with relevant key informants such as informal settlement inhabitants and clergy. Interview discourses were the standpoint and sharing experience.

4. 3. 2 Participatory Research: Semi-structured Interwiewing

Because use was made of empirical or participatory action through the course of this research, efforts were made to elicit participant accounts of meaning, experience and perceptions, which will necessarily involve identifying the individuals for interviews. Dialogue is a key notion in collective research techniques and participatory research in general, given that participation is perceived in terms of "continuous dialogue" (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 327). As Reason & Bradbury (2001: 81) state: in participatory research, people who share problems in common decide what problem to tackle, and directly get involved in research and social change activities. The reason for this emphasis on popular participation is that participatory research is a social practice that helps marginalized people to attain a

degree of emancipation as autonomous and responsible members of the society. So, participatory research must lead to action research in solving whatever problem might be identified.

The research paradigm for this study was primarily the quantitative mode of inquiry, using a quantitative survey based on a sampling of the informal settlements population to ascertain overall attitudes and beliefs regarding the socio-economic challenges especially in relationship to the local church. Interviewing was another method used for community study in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati. This method was used in order to correct the inadequacies of observation. The method proved to be an effective method for information gathering. Different age groups of people including: informal inhabitants and church (officials) ministers from different denominations took part in the personal interviewing process. This was a powerful process due to these different types of participatory research such as, individual (personal) and key informant interviews (Theis & Grady 1991: 52-53; Søgaard 1996: 103). Through these types of participatory research and discussions time, respondents were free to share perceptions regarding their understanding of socio-economic situation. As a result, data was gathered on the norms and status of ministry procedures and the implementation of church's response to the social challenges faced by the informal settlements inhabitants in the abovementioned two town of northern Namibia.

4. 3. 3 A Literature Study

Extensive collections of records, documents, and library collections were assessed. These also include census data, demographic data, life statistics, and newspaper reports (Carroll *et al* 1989: 84; Mouton 1996: 142). This method is also called content analysis (Van der Ven 2004: 128). Through this process of research, documents were consulted at the ELCIN Eastern and Western diocesan offices, ELCIN archive (Auala ELCIN Community Library and Nakambale Museum), National Planning Commission, Oshana Regional Council Office, and Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Councils. Church periodicals (Omukwetu newspaper) were also consulted. In addition, various books on different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas were also researched. Archival documents analysis was used in the seven sampled ELCIN (congregations) Parishes' original registers (Onguta, Oshitayi, Oniipa and in Ondangwa Town, as well as: Gloria Dei, Oshakati ELCIN Parish, and Ongwediva in Oshakati Town). By means of this method the congregation's history, processes, towns'

demographic data and resources were uncovered. The method also worked well as it included evaluation through historical and symbolic interactional research methods (Mouton 1996: 142, Van der Ven 2004: 128).

4. 3. 4 Analysis of Valuable Information

Mouton (2001: 164-165) states that the use of valuable information (secondary data) helps to give a more accurate generalised picture of the context and its problems, and therefore increases the validity of the data. The analysis of valuable information, as a research tool, was used in the process of analysing the situations in the shantytowns (informal settlements) and slums of Ondangwa and Oshakati Towns. The analysis was the result of the empirical (research) study conducted in the concerned communities. In order to create richer data, demographic data (Namibian Population and housing Census 2001) and in parts (1991 Housing and Population Census) compiled by Central Bureau of Statistics /National Planning Commission **(Tables 1, 3 and 5)** are utilised to build a picture of the socio-economic challenges facing the abovementioned areas being studied. Various community documents (Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia [SDFN 2007] and Community Land Information Programme [CLIP 2009] and newspaper reports on aspects of these dimensions between 2007 and 2009 are utilised. The Literature and documentary reports by Ondangwa and Oshakati town councils (Town profiles) were analysed. Such reports included health, economic, and census documents of the two towns and the researched communities as well as documents of other development agencies dealing with situations of people in squatter (informal) settlements. The ELCIN eastern and western diocesan documents and theological literature were among the researched materials. The research studies (empirical studies) involve field visits (realities) in which the process was carried out by means of participatory research perception and quantitative methods (Van der Ven 2004: 128, Hendriks 2004: 217, Babbie & Mouton 2004: 296).

4. 3. 5 Field Study (Area of Research)

In order to obtain an overall view of the status of social challenges faced by the informal inhabitants of Ondangwa and Oshakati, unstructured questionnaire was administered to randomly selected households in late November to late December 2010. In the first phase of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with informal inhabitants in the areas

concerned (Ondangwa and Oshakati). This form of interviewing employs guidelines which contain "questions and themes that are important to the research" (De Vos 1998: 299). The questionnaire was used to collect information on: demographic, socio-economic, educational profiles, and migratory characteristics of the household members. In sampling, the researcher chose a subset from a larger group to represent the whole group. That is why in each informal settlement; five men and five women were randomly selected for personal interview. The approach was semi-structured interviewing which was followed by focused group discussions, depending on the sensitive nature of the issues being discussed. The Elim Deanery Pastors' one day meeting concluded the interviewing process. The people in the informal settlement areas come from a variety of backgrounds, but some general traits can be discerned, because there is a clustering of people from the same geographical areas and ethno-linguistic groups. The selected target population for interviews were Namibian Aawambo-speaking people from the seven kingdoms of Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi and Ombalantu **(Figure1).** The reason for sampling this ethnic group, is that they are the majority in northern Namibia and they constitute 45% of Namibia's population. A total number of 100 respondents were interviewed comprising of 50 in Ondangwa and 50 in Oshakati. In Ondangwa the sample was selected from five informal settlement areas: Onguta, Ondiyala, Omakulukuma, Uupopo-Uumbenge and Omahenene, while in Oshakati the sample was selected from five areas: Oneshila, Okandjengedi North, Evululuko, Oshoopala and Uupindi.

The sampling in both Ondangwa and Oshakati was concentrated on those informal communities that are usually poor, under privileged, or socially and economically exploited and oppressed. After choosing a locality at a town, the researcher carries out the first interview in the house that is to be found at the entry (starting) point of the location. The next was at the centre and the last to the very end of the area. Participation in the study was free and on a voluntary basis and confidentiality was well kept. In cases where the occupiers of a chosen house refused to cooperate, then the next house on the same side was tried. The informed consent form together with identical questionnaires written in English, but translated in people's vernacular 'Oshiwambo' was used, because most of those who were interviewed are English illiterate. The respondents were requested to be open and free and they were also assured that their responses will be entirely confidential to the researcher and their names would not be identifiable in the final report.

4. 3. 6 Problems with the Field Study

The main problem encountered in Ondangwa was the refusal of some household members to cooperate with the researcher since they were not convinced of the real aims of the study. When some of them learnt that the researcher was a church minister of the Lutheran Church, who is busy studying theology on a postgraduate level, they were hesitant to participate, because they realise that the church, especially the local congregations does not care for them in a holistic way they expected. There were only prayers and revival services once or twice a month. Nevertheless, the researcher managed to cover the total number of locations and interviewee.

The level of this problem was reduced in Oshakati by a radio announcement from the Town Council Chief Executive Officer carried by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC Oshiwambo Service) explaining the reason for the research study. However, another problem that was peculiar to Oshakati was that some of the researched were not happy with voluntary participation on the interview without receiving any compensation. However, they finally agreed to participate, and their participation makes the study a success.

4. 3. 7 Data Analysis

At the end of each day of conducting research, all questionnaires were checked for completeness, clarity and consistency in the way the replies were recorded. An analysis of the data was done by manual tabulation. The analyses were based on counting the number of respondents within a selected area. The research study was successful in the fact that, in the process, the researcher was able to:

- Appreciate the survival strategies that the urban poor have put in place in order for them to face daily urban challenges
- Assess the actual successes and challenges of the local urban poor for the purpose of developing a ministry ethos to address urban issues in an appropriate and adequate way.
- Determine the impact that government provision services delivery has in addressing the urban poverty challenges facing the urban poor.
- Asses whether the church in the urban area is (serving) practising a holistic ministry approach in its attempts to address the needs of the inhabitants.

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- Enable urban pastors to share day-to-day ministry achievements and challenges being experienced, with a view to formulating new ideal intervention strategies and models for urban work.

- Understand whether the church and government departments (role players) as well as, faith-based and non-governmental organisations are working jointly in addressing the needs (plights) of the urban poor.

4. 4 THE GROWTH OF NAMIBIAN URBAN POPULATION

Namibia is exceptionally rich in cultures and languages. English is the official language but vernaculars are used widely. There are 10 other major language groups spoken in Namibia with 25 local dialects (Oshiwambo 9, Caprivians 4, San 4, Khoekhoe 3, Kavango 3, Otjiherero 2). The population of Namibia stands at 1, 830, 330 (2001 Census) but the latest estimates put the figure at 2 millions. While the majority of people still live in the rural areas, the number of people living in the urban areas has increased dramatically over the past 70 years. In 1936 only 10 percent of the population lived in urban areas. By 2001 this figure had increased to 28 percent or approximately 512,000 people, but the latest figures indicate that 33 percent are urban population. A variety of key population indicators with development implications are depicted in the table below.

Table 1: Namibia Population and Housing Census 2001

Population information categories	2001	1991
Population size	1,830,330	1,409,920
Growth rate	2.6%	3.10%
% in urban areas	33	28
Age Composition: Under 5yrs	13%	16%
5 - 14 yrs	26%	26%
15 - 59 yrs	52%	51%
60+ yrs	7%	7%
Private Household size	5.1	5.2
Heads of Households %		
Females	45%	39%
Males	55%	61%

Literacy rate 15+ years		81%	76%
Education 15+ years			
	Never attended school	15%	26%
	Currently at school	34%	19%
	Left school	45%	55%
Labour Force (15+ years)			
	Employed	69%	81%
	Unemployed	31%	19%
Main Source of Income%			
	Farming	28%	
	Wages & Salaries	41%	
	Pensions	11%	
	Business	9%	
	Cash remittance	6%	
Fertility			
	Children per woman	4.1	6.1
Mortality			
Infant Mortality (per 1000 births)			
	Females	49	
	Males	55	
Life Expectancy at Birth (yrs)			
	Females	50	63
	Males	48	59
Orphan hood (under 15 yrs as %)			
	Orphaned by mother	4%	
	Orphaned by father	9%	
	Orphaned by both	1%	

Source: 2001 Population & Housing Census

Due to the colonial policy of apartheid, urban areas have historically been located in the central parts of the country with the north functioning as a rural labour reserve area. While the principal towns of Windhoek and Walvis Bay still attract the largest number of migrants, the urbanisation rate in the north has increased substantially since independence to the current

rate of 7.5%. There are considerable differences in the size of urban centres in Namibia, however. Windhoek is by far the largest urban centre housing 39% of the urban population in 2001, followed by Walvis Bay (7.2%), Rundu (6.1%), Oshakati (4.7%) and Ondangwa (1.8%) (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 14). The rate of urbanisation in Namibia is increasing very fast and as such it causes a lot of challenges to the country. In Namibia, most of the people move to urban (areas) centres. They understand that cities offer better prospects and more opportunities for improving their family's income. Young men and women are attracted by city life, because they think that they will find better jobs (employment), better medical treatment, recreation places, lodging houses and rooms for renting. The shortage of basic commodities in the rural areas encourages people to migrate to towns which are sources of these commodities. Some people move from rural areas in order to join their families in towns. In some cases, rural parents send their children to schools in towns thinking that urban educational standards are higher than those in rural areas. The rural-urban migration challenges facing the Namibia society, government, and churches do not have easy solutions. It seems that, these challenges increase daily and the problem seems more difficult to overcome each day. Namibians who live in cities face the challenges of inadequate housing and a lack of employment to generate an income. As a result, most people depend on piece-work, working once or twice a week. Even when they find such temporary jobs, they cannot negotiate their wages. It is always reported that the requirement for employments are very high and that most people living in informal settlements are unskilled casual labourers. The remuneration they receive from casual jobs is not even enough for a day's meal to feed their families.

The rapid increase in the development of informal settlements after independence resulted mostly in unplanned development, with the minimum of the services. Establishment of new settlements combined with freedom of movement, allowed and inspired many people, especially young people, both men and women to rush to urban centres in search of work (job) or for mire adventures. The result of such care free movement is the absence employment and basic needs such as food and accommodation. The most important attribute to note here, is the fact that the Oshana Region of northern Namibian comprises the highest urban population of the four northern regions, with urbanites making up 31% of the population. Most of the Local and Regional Authorities, as well as the National Government, have insufficient information about communities living in informal settlements and backyards

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(Community Land Information Program [CLIP]-Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia March 2009; Pomuti *et al* 2005: viii).

According to the Community Land Information Programme (CLIP) -Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia and Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDF) Report of 2007, it is recorded that after independence in 1990, the country was subdivided into 13 political regions, with 123 urban areas, 15 municipalities, 15 towns, 50 settlement areas, 15 village councils, 239 informal settlements, an estimated 134,884 households and 540, 219 people in urban areas.

Table 2: Namibia: Regional Summary Report of Informal Settlements 2007

Region	Number of urban areas	Municipality	Towns	Villages	Settlement areas	Not declared settlement areas	Informal settlements	Number of Households	Population
Caprivi	6	0	1	0	4	1	11	6,563	24,498
Erongo	8	5	0	1	2	0	14	4,826	24,511
Hardap	16	1	1	6	5	3	24	7,109	31,867
Karas	12	2	1	1	8	0	20	7,722	26,676
Kavango	5	0	2	0	1	2	20	15,223	85,318
Khomas	4	1	0	0	1	2	32	25,428	118,467
Kunene	11	1	2	1	3	1	13	3,248	15,880
Ohangwena	16	0	2	1	3	0	12	4,400	9,370
Omaheke	9	1	0	1	6	1	18	5,792	14,990
Omusati	8	0	2	2	4	0	14	2,057	7,203
Oshana	5	0	3	0	2	0	22	25,278	68,280
Oshikoto	6	1	0	0	4	1	9	6,944	24,080
Otjozondjupa	17	3	1	2	7	4	30	20,294	89,079
Total	**123**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**50**	**15**	**239**	**134,884**	**540,219**

Source: Community Land Information Programme (CLIP) - Profile of Informal Settlements

in Namibia 2007

The estimates from the profiling information indicate that up to 40% of the urban population in Namibian today live in informal settlements, with unemployment being a major problem particularly in the north which indicates a significant challenge facing urban development (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 14). Another major concern is the sanitation, while most of the settlements have access to clean water through communal taps, 33% of the estimated households use the "bush" or "open air" as toilets, while half of the informal settlements indicated that they have toilets. A further 43% of the households with communal or individual toilets in their settlements also indicate that people use the bush. Although all these infrastructures (facilities) are not available to inhabitants within their informal settlements, most of them could access to schools, clinics, and police stations within 5-10 kilometre distances (Community Land Information Programme [CLIP]-Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia Report of 2007).

4. 4. 1 Owamboland: Northern Namibia

"Owamboland", the former homeland of the Aawambo people, covers 53 300 km^2 and is situated in the northern part of Namibia between the Etosha National park and the Angolan border. The border between Namibia and Angola was established in 1890, dividing the Aawambo, especially the Aakwanyama into two. Two thirds of Aakwanyama live in Angola and one third live in Namibia (Du Pisani 1986: 8; Nambala 1994: 28), which makes up about 35% of the 700 000 of Aawambo who lived in Namibia, and the Aandonga comprises 30% of the Namibian population of 1, 820, 916 (1.8m). The narrow strip of northern Namibia along the Angolan border, in which nearly one half of the country's population live, was the worst affected territory during the long liberation struggle. The war further distorted the economic structure of these Owambo and Kavango regions, which had already been marginalised throughout the colonial domination, first by Germany and, after the First World War, by South Africa. The borderline drawn between the "native reserves" and the vast territories controlled by the formerly ruling white population has until today effectively prevented trade from North to South, while there was no restriction on the import of goods in the opposite direction (Miettinen 2005: 35).

After Namibia 's independence in 1990, the northern Namibia (Owamboland) was divided into the districts of Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto post Namibian independence and is nowadays known as the "Four O's Region". The major towns that exist in these regions are Outapi in the Omusati Region, Oshakati in the Oshana Region, Tsumeb in the Oshikoto Region, and Eenhana in the Ohangwena Region (See Table 3). According to its historical, geographical and structural overview of the northern Namibian region (Owamboland), its borders reached as far as the Okavango through the bushveld *("erundu")* of Oshimholo, and in the West, to the Kunene River [Kaokoland] (Hangula 1993: 4; Munyika 2004: 143-144). More than half of the entire population, almost a million people, live here on just 6% of the Namibian territory. The Aawambo settled on a fertile grassy plain suitable for farming. As agriculturalists (mostly *"omahangu"*pearl millet, *"iilyalyaka"* red sorghum and maize, in addition to which some vegetables such as beans, pumpkins and melons are grown) and pastoralist [keeping cattle and goats] (still largely the case today), they supplemented their subsistence economy with hunting, fishing and gathering wild foods. Today they are increasingly a trading nation (Hangula 1993: 5; Peltola 2002: 50; Miettinen 2005: 37).

The former Owamboland region was defined during the German colonial period in 1884-1915, and was one of the "homelands" founded during South African rule. It is still, in ethnical terms, relatively homogenous: in 2001, inter-intelligible Oshiwambo dialects were spoken by 93-97 percent of the population of the Ohangwena, Omusati, and Oshana regions and by 87 percent of the population of the Oshikoto region. The Aawambo is the largest ethnic group, and they constitute 49.8% of Namibia's population. Certainly the largest and probably the most prominent/dominant group of people in Namibia, the Aawambo concentrated in the northern border of the country (Hangula 1993: 6; Central Bureau of Statistics 2003; Buys &Nambala 2003: xxiii). The landscape is flat, monotonous and dotted with settlements. Mopane, Marula and Wild Fig trees turn up occasionally between the fields and the kraals and one can also find Makalani palm trees here (symbol of the Owambo area). The whole territory consists of a vast, sandy plain, which forms part of the Kalahari Basin. A network of shallow watercourses called *oshanas (pans/infertile basins that fill with water in the rainy season)* keeps the water that flows from neighbouring Angola. After heavy rains in the region, many little lakes and ponds form. The water comes from the Cuvelai River reaching from the north in Angola to the Etosha Pan. *Oshanas* cannot keep water for any length of time and therefore most of the time Owamboland is a dry area. The eastern part of

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Owamboland forms part of the northern Kalahari woodland (Hangula 1993: 16; Peltola 2002: 49; Miettinen 2005: 35-36).

Owamboland was the human resources reservoir par excellence for the economy of the *"Kolonialgesellschaft"* and later the Mandated Territory of South West Africa, but it was itself not considered an economic area where cash earnings could be made. Apart from a small number of South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) shops and the traditional subsistence economy consisting of livestock rearing and seasonal crop farming, there were no productive units or any macro-economic infrastructure in the area during the period prior to the implementation of the recommendations of the *"Ondendaal Plan"* (Bantustan Policy). Thus, the first time Owamboland began to be considered as a potential economic area was with the plans to introduce the Homelands Policy into the Mandated Territory of South Africa. This means, in practical terms, that Owamboland only began to be a labour and cash-earning area in the 1960s, at the time when the construction work of the Owamboland Canal started. This was the first time that Owambo labourers began to sell their labour to private and government agencies in their area of origin. Private agencies such as Eduard Zimmer Constructors, which were contracted by Water Affairs, were among the first employers in Owamboland (Du Pisani 1989: 19; Hangula 1993: 7). It has been mentioned that, prior to the *"Ondendaal Plan",* Owamboland had no formal economic structure, and it was government departments, such as: Water Affairs, Roads, Transport and Communication, Health, and Education, that were able to start operating in Owambo right away (Hangula 1993: 20; Miettinen 2005: 35).

During the colonial era and the time of Namibia's war of liberation struggle from 1966 to 1989, Owamboland was the most densely populated rural areas of Namibia in the northern Bantustan. Thousands of people used to be settled in informal squatter communities around the two main urban Centres in the north, Ondangwa (Oluno) and Oshakati (Erundu). Urban areas were segregated in the way that Whites live in the central and suburban areas while black people were forced to live in crowded townships on the outskirts (Du Pisani 1989: 21; Hangula 1993).

The Aawambo people have always played an active role in politics. In the sixties and seventies, Owamboland became the scene of severe fighting between SWAPO and the South African army. The Aawambo bore the brunt of Namibia's independence struggle and thousands of lives were lost. Since independence, the government has endeavoured to settle

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industry in the north, create jobs and improve the poor infrastructure. Pre-independence, tourists totally ignored the area but now, tourism is beginning to emerge (Du Pisani 1989: 69-70). The main route through Owamboland is the National Road B1 which is paved all the way from Windhoek to Ondangwa and out to Oshakati. The Oshikango border crossing to Santa Clara in Angola, 60 km north of Ondangwa, is open and carries frequent cross-border truck traffic. However, crossing sheep and cattle can pose quite a hazard when driving. Coming from the south, the B1 first leads to Ondangwa, a typical African village with roadside restaurants, cool drink shops in shacks and a lively market. The biggest town in Owamboland is Oshakati, 35 km north of Ondangwa. This town is still authentically African, with a huge open market on the Main Road.

Table 3: Census Indicators for Namibia and the Northern Regions, 2001 Census

Census Indicator	Namibia	Ohangwena	Omusati	Oshana	Oshikoto
Population Size	1 830 330	228 384	228 842	161 916	161 007
Female	942 572	124 828	126 368	87 958	84 620
Male	887 721	103 556	102 473	73 957	76 387
Growth Rate	2.6	2.4	1.5	1.8	2.2
% urban pop.	33	1	1	31	9
% rural pop.	67	99	99	69	91
Sex Ratio (males per 100	94	83	81	84	90
Area (km^2)	824 116	10 703	26 573	8 653	38 653
Age Composition, %					
Under 5 years	13	15	13	12	14
5 - 14 years	26	33	31	28	29
15 - 59 years	52	41	45	53	47
60+ years	7	9	9	7	8
Private Households					
Number	346 455	35 958	38 202	29 557	28 419
Average Size	5.1	6.3	5.9	5.4	5.6
Head of Household, %					
Female	45	60	62	54	50
Male	55	40	38	46	50
Literacy Rate, 15+ years, %	81	79	83	89	83
Labour Force, 15+ years, %					
In labour force	54	43	37	49	39
Employed	69	64	64	59	55
Unemployed	31	36	36	41	45
Outside labour force	39	53	59	45	56
Student	35	35	32	44	34
Homemaker	43	41	49	37	45
Retired, too old, etc	22	24	19	19	21
Housing Conditions, %					
Households with:					
Safe water	87	78	83	93	88
No toilet facility	69	89	83	49	70

Electricity for lighting	32	4	4	19	15
Access to radio	80	72	75	84	79
Wood/charcoal for cooking	62	94	93	66	84
Main Source of Income, %					
Farming	28	52	46	36	56
Wages & salaries	41	13	16	32	20
Cash remittance	6	5	6	5	3
Business, non-farming	9	8	8	13	6
Pension	11	20	22	12	11
Fertility (average number of	4.1	5.3	4.9	3.7	4.6
Mortality					
infant deaths per 1000 live					
Females	49	56	32	41	58
Males	55	56	46	46	61
Life expectancy at birth, years					
Females	50	45	50	48	50
Males	48	43	46	46	50

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census, National Report, Basic Analysis with Highlits

4. 4. 2 An Overview of Oshana Region

North-Central Namibia is still a mostly-rural region, in which subsistence agriculture and communal land-ownership are practised. Agriculture as a means of living is often supplemented, however, by other income strategies, including the labour migration of (mostly) male family members. There are also centres of rapid urban growth, the most important of these being the Ondangwa, Oshakati and Ongwediva Complex. The Oshana Region being one of the four administrative regions in the North-Central regions ("Four O Region": Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Omusati Regions). The Region is one of the smallest in land size with a size of 5291km^2 (Second Delimitation Commission 1998), and a population of about 161 977 people. The Oshana region is located in the centre of the North Central Regions, with the total population of 778 857 people which can be translated as 42% of the total country's population (2001 National Housing and Population Census). The Oshana Region is the most densely populated in the north-central regions with a population of 161 916 people in the smallest (8653 km^2) of Namibia's thirteen regions, with a population density of over 18 people per km^2 in contrast to the overall Namibian population density of only 2.2 people per km^2. The highest population density of the region can be found at the northern parts of the region, mainly concentrated around towns of Ondangwa, Ongwediva and Oshakati.

The name Oshana lends itself well to this region as it describes the most prominent landscape feature in the area, namely; the shallow seasonally inundated depressions which underpin the local agro ecological system. Although communications are hindered during the rainy season, the fish breed in the rivers and swamps (*"oshanas")* are an important source of dietary protein (Miettinen 2005: 36; Oshana Regional Profile 2006: 4). The Oshana region is bordered by Ohangwena region in the north, Oshikoto in the east, Kunene in the south, and the Omusati region in the west, making it one of the only three regions (with Khomas and Oshikoto) without either a coastline or foreign border. A portion of the Etosha National Park, inclusive of the Okaukuejo Rest Camp falls within the southern part of Oshana Region (Community Land Information Programme Report of January 2007).

This section is a discussion of the historical background of the area, relying on Hangula (1993) and Pomuti *et al* (2005), and includes historical information and case studies which are accounts on the new towns and semi-urban settlements that were established after Namibia's independence in 1990. There is unabated upsurge in rural-urban migration. In Oshakati which is the biggest town in northern Namibia with the population of 50 000 people, there are new arrivals each month and presently 70% of its inhabitants are living in the informal settlements (Ingwafa 2008: 8). The majority of these new comers are unemployed, poor, illiterate, and unskilled labourers. The uncontrolled level of migration from rural settlements to urban centres is threatening to overwhelm sewerage and other valuable facilities in towns, including basic services such as: water, electricity, roads and housing. If not checked urgently, this continuing influx will create a plethora of problems which must be addressed by government authorities if a crisis is to be avoided and slum urbanisation, the scourge of so many developing countries, is to overcome.

Very little literature exists on the informal settlements of Ongwediva, Ondangwa and Oshakati towns, and there is a clear need for more research in this regard. The 2001 Population and Housing Census fail to make any mention of these informal settlements, and the information that does exist mainly comprises newspaper clippings. Nevertheless, based on the few sources that were found to have substantial information on these three towns's informal settlements, a brief overview of these areas can be provided. According to Community Land Information Programme (CLIP) - Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia Report of 2007, the Oshana region comprises of five urban areas: three towns (Ongwediva, Ondangwa and Oshakati), two settlement areas (Eheke and Uukwangula) and

twenty two informal settlements *(4 in Ongwediva, 5 in Ondangwa and 11 in Oshakati)* with a total estimated number of 35 828 household and 118 659 people. See the table below:

Table 4: Oshana Region Urban Population 2007

Town		Settlement		Informal settlement	number of house holds	Estimated population
Ongwediva			1	Sky	60	250
			2	Mukwanambwa	30	100
			3	Omahenene	99	534
			4	Mandume	66	250
				Sub-Total	**255**	**1,134**
Ondangwa			1	Onguta	2,000	4,500
			2	Uupopo-uumbenge	3,500	10,000
			3	Ondiiyala	380	600
			4	Omakulukuma	260	900
			5	Omahenene	450	500
				Sub-Total	**6,590**	**16,500**
	1	Eheke			10	70
Oshakati			1	Sky	650	4,500
			2	Oneshila	9,767	16,000
			3	Evululuko	5,920	21,000
			4	Kalaula	36	105
			5	Oshimbangu	130	150
			6	Ompumbu	320	1,800
			7	Eemwandi	800	1,600
			8	Oshoopala	3,800	24,000
			9	Okandjengedi-	1,000	7,000

				South		
			10	Okandjengedi-North	2,000	9,000
			11	Uupindi	4,500	15,000
				Sub-Total	**28,923**	**100,155**
	1	Uukwangula			50	800
				Total	**35,828**	**118,659**

Source: Community Land Information Programme (CLIP) - Profile of Informal

Settlements in Namibia 2007

4. 4. 3 A demographic and socio-economic profile of the Oshana Region

In this section the demographic and socio-economic features of those households (and their members) which were selected during the sample survey **(See Tables 5)** will be examined. Six relevant issues will be addressed: trends in household size, gender of household-head, age and sex profiles of the different populations, educational profiles, trends in employment and unemployment; and trends in household income. According to the 2001 Census *(2001 Census, Oshana Region, Basic Analysis with Highlights),* as indicated on table 5, the population in private households constitutes close to 98% of the total enumerated population. Population in institutions is about two percent of the total population. About 68 percent of the population is found in households with a size of 6 or more persons. About 12% of households are made up of one person, while the population in these households makes up to 2 percent of the total household population in the region. Over 40 percent of the households have over 6 or more persons, but their population, as noted above, is about 68 percent. Both figures indicated in tables 3 and 4 are very important as they provide clues as to the burden faced by the head/breadwinner of each household, by stating the number of people per household. These figures indicate that in the case of over 40% of households, which we have seen are predominantly headed by women, the house hold head has to provide for 6 or more people within the household. While the main source of income in the Oshana Region (as seen in Table 5) is farming (36%), whereby many members of the household can take part in income-generating activity, it should also be noted the unemployment rate in this region is a whopping 41%.

The Oshana Region of northern Namibia has briefly been discussed. The country is rapidly being urbanized. The situation is similar in other countries on the continent. Sandbrook (1982: 21) comments on urban poverty in Africa, "Perhaps the most concrete manifestation of this poverty is the inadequacy of housing and the associated environmental and sanitary services". On another note Sandbrook (1982: 24) further comments "To be poor in urban Africa is thus to live in overcrowded and inadequate dwellings and to confront peculiar health hazards and the possibility of raising malnourished, and therefore mentally and physically stunted, children." This phenomenon presents a great challenge to the poor urban residents in terms of survival strategies. With 68% of the population living in households of 6 or more people, it is the support of income-generating projects by the ELCIN department of Diakonia and Social Services that are critical in alleviating the impact of poverty in this region. Overall, with regards to the demographic and socio-economic profile, the main areas of which the ELCIN should take note is the scope of young population, which will need to be empowered economically in order to support themselves and their families; as well as the higher percentage of women living in this area.

In the next section (sub-topics) the demographic profile of the Oshana Region, will be compared to that of the national figures/averages according to 2001 census, with various important subjects for discussion highlighted. Recommendations for the ELCIN Department of Diakonia and Social Services with regards to the census indicator under discussion will made.

Table 5: Census Indicators for Namibia and the Oshana Region, 2001

Census Indicator	Namibia	Oshana
Population Size	1 830 330	161 916
Female	942 572	87 958
Male	887 721	73 957
Growth Rate	2.6	1.8
% urban pop.	33	31
% rural pop.	67	69
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	94	84

Area (km^2)	824 116	8 653
Age Composition, %		
Under 5 years	13	12
5 - 14 years	26	28
15 - 59 years	52	53
60+ years	7	7
Private Households		
Number	346 455	29 557
Average Size	5.1	5.4
Head of Household, %		
Female	45	54
Male	55	46
Literacy Rate, 15+ years, %	81	89
Labour Force, 15+ years, %		
In labour force	54	49
Employed	69	59
Unemployed	31	41
Outside labour force	39	45
Student	35	44
Homemaker	43	37
Retired, too old, etc	22	19
Housing Conditions, %		
Households with:		
Safe water	87	93
No toilet facility	69	49
Electricity for lighting	32	19
Access to radio	80	84
Wood/charcoal for cooking	62	66
Main Source of Income, %		
Farming	28	36
Wages & salaries	41	32
Cash remittance	6	5
Business, non-farming	9	13

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Pension	11	12
Fertility (average number of children per woman)	4.1	3.7
Mortality *infant deaths per 1000 live births* Females Males	 49 55	 41 46
Life expectancy at birth, years Females Males	 50 48	 48 46

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census, National Report, Basic Analysis with Highlights

Table 6: Urban Household Population by sex and relationship to head of household,

Relation to Head	Number			Percent		
	Total	*Female*	*Male*	*Total*	*Female*	*Male*
Head	11349	5725	5624	24.1	21.9	26.8
Spouse	3455	2762	693	7.3	10.6	3.3
Son/Daughter of Head/Spouse	12851	6782	6069	27.2	25.9	28.9
Son/Daughter in law of Head/Spouse	833	485	348	1.8	1.9	1.7
Grandchild of Head/Spouse	2475	1293	1182	5.2	4.9	5.6
Parent of head/spouse	243	163	80	0.5	0.6	0.4
Other relative of head/spouse	12062	6786	5276	25.6	25.9	25.1
Domestic Worker, non-relative	463	399	64	1.0	1.5	0.3
Other non-relative	3367	1733	1634	7.1	6.6	7.8
Not stated	85	40	45	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	47183	26168	21015	100	100	100

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census, National Report, Basic Analysis with Highlights

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Table 7: Population aged 15 years and above, who left school, by sex and educational attainment, Oshana Region, 2001 Census

Educational Attainment	Number			Percent		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Incomplete Primary School	20 064	10 928	9 136	30.5	28.5	33.2
Primary School	27 402	17 004	10 398	41.6	44.4	37.7
Secondary School	11 799	6 878	4 921	17.9	18.0	17.9
University	984	548	436	1.5	1.4	1.6
Technical training after Sec. School	1 522	831	691	2.3	2.2	2.5
Teachers training	1 208	749	459	1.8	2.0	1.7
Not stated	2 864	1 346	1 518	4.3	3.5	5.5
Total	65 843	38 284	27 559	100	100	100

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census, National Report, Basic Analysis with Highlights

4. 4. 3. 1 Population Structure

The proportion of females is higher than that of males, with an overall sex ratio of 84 males per 100 females. With a higher unemployment rate for women in the area (44% unemployed females, 37% unemployed males), this calls for programming that is focused on women in the area, especially with regards to income-generating projects. This point is further supported by the fact that 54% of households are headed by women, and only 46% are headed by males-almost the complete opposite of the national trend.

4. 4. 3. 2 Age Composition

The Oshana Region (and all of Namibia in general) has a very large young population, with 40% being under the age of 14. For programming that will have long-term positive effects, ELCIN Department of Diakonia and Social Services should consider childhood education projects that focus on these age groups, to prepare children to face the challenging demands of high school, and eventually, of the workforce.

4. 4. 3. 3 Growth Rates

While the growth rate is to be shown to be 1.8% for the whole region, it is be important to look at the growth rate in different areas, and whether the area is urban or rural. As will be seen in the following sub-topic, Oshakati, the largest city in the Oshana Region, is growing at a rate of 6% per annum. Given this high rate, and the low average rate, it can be deduced that migration into the urban areas is increasing, whilst the population in rural areas is decreasing.

4. 4. 3. 4 Housing Conditions

Housing conditions stand close in line with the national average, though this still leaves much to be desired, with 49% of households not having a toilet facility, 81% having no electricity for lighting, and 66% having to use wood/charcoal for cooking. While health hazards are posed based on these figures, it is also clear that the region is made up of a predominantly rural population. Unfortunately, no date exists for these indicators in the more urban areas or the informal settlements associated with these areas. However, in each area in which the ELCIN Department of Diakonia and Social Services immerses itself, it is important to understand the health hazards that arise from the housing conditions.

4. 4. 3.5 Life Expectancy

As seen in table 5, the life expectancy at birth is below 50 years old for both males (46) and females (48). This low age for life expectancy can be associated with the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, an issue affecting the entire region. With such a low life expectancy, not only do we see an increased number of orphans growing up without their parents, but we also see a shrinking population for economic dependency, despite a growing overall population. The need for quality orphan care structures and projects for youth employment/self-sustenance therefore becomes an important aspect of which the ELCIN Department of Diakonia and Social Services should note, and implementing programmes with long-term benefits to a predominantly and growing young population. Moreover, when we place this low life expectancy hand-in-hand with the fertility rates, we see that on average, a woman in the Oshana Region has around 5 children. Coupling this with a terribly low life expectancy, we see the orphan crisis can potentially be much worse than it already is.

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4. 4. 3.6 Education

With such a large young population, it is important to observe the level of educational attainment for people living in the two towns (Ondangwa and Oshakati), as this could potentially provide clues as to the prospective future earnings of members of the population. According to Table 5, an average of 8.5% of the population has never attended school, 16.5% are currently in school, and 72.5% have left school. Unfortunately, no information exists at the town council level with regards to educational attainment at the time of leaving school.

4. 4. 3.7 Employment and Unemployment

According to table 5, the Oshana Region has an extremely high unemployment rate of 40.3%. For those indicated as employed in Ondangwa and Oshakati Towns, unlike with the regional trend, the main source of income was cited as wages and salaries, pointing to the more urban setup of Oshakati area. In Oshakati Town, wages and salaries were followed by non-farming business as the second major source of income, and then by farming. In Ondangwa the opposite was true, with wages and salaries being followed by farming and then by business as main sources of income. The relatively high percentage for non-farming business as a source of income points to a greater level of entrepreneurship in these two towns, to meet survival needs in a growing urban space. As in the regional discussion, women are disproportionately affected by unemployment, with a space of close to 10% between female and male unemployment in both towns. Detailed information on underemployment and the informal economy does not exist at town council level, but due to the greater urban trend in this region, a greater proportion of informal economy enterprises might be set up in these towns, with a greater level of entrepreneurial activity. Another effect of the high unemployment rate, and the continuing search for employment, has been the vast migration of people into the Oshana regional towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati in search of jobs, resulting in the creation of informal settlements.

4. 4. 3.8 Household Composition

As on the regional level, households are predominantly headed by women, with 52% of female-headed households and 48% male-headed households in both Ondangwa and Oshakati Towns. Table 6 provides a further indication of the relation of the people in

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household to the head of household in the Oshana Region. As can be seen above in table 6, a large number of single parents, female-headed households exist across the Region as well as a high number of grandparent-headed households. All the above considerations should be viewed for programme implementation by the ELCIN and other Role-Players such as: the Namibian government, Faith based organisations (FBOs), and NGOs with the recurring point of skills training for income-generation being an important highlight in alleviating the high unemployment rate, securing a steady source of income in households with orphans, improving the living standard of the people in the area, and bettering the situation for those who finds themselves in the building informal settlements within Ondangwa and Oshakati towns.

4. 3. 9 Economic Involvement/Survival Trends

As per table 5, the main sources of household income for households in the Oshana region, the predominant source of income is farming (36%), followed by wages and salaries (32%), which are then followed by non-farming businesses (13%). With Oshakati, Ongwediva and Ondangwa being the urban towns in this region, the high percentage of people relying on wages and salaries as a main source of income can be explained. However it is not clear from the census information, whether the informal economy is at all includes the following: farming (32%), wages & salaries (32%), cash remittance (5%), business, non-farming (15%), and pension (12%). According to the Labour Statistics Bulletin of 2005, quoting the Namibian Informal Economy Survey of 2001, there were 9862 operators in the informal economy of the Oshana Region at the time of the survey, the majority of which were owned women *(according to national figures).* The total number of people employed in the informal economy for the Oshana Region came to 13 747 (9 862 operators, and 3 885 workers). Most of the activities in the informal sector had no fixed locations like business premises, followed by operations taking place from a structure attached/outside the house of the operator. The exact type of business being conducted was not stated in the survey, but it was indicated that 72.6% of these informal economy operators depended on the enterprise for subsistence.

With regards to how much is earned by informal economy operators, the survey shows that 1.4% earned less than N$50 per month, 39.6% earned between N$50-200, 37.7% earned between N$201-400, 11.4% earned between N$401-600, 5% earned between N$601-800, and the remaining operators earned between N$800-N$1600 per month. Given these low monthly

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earnings, especially when considering an average household size of more than five people, it is not surprising that over 22% (2 173 of 9 862 operators) of the operators in the informal economy were also working in the informal economy (Labour Statistics Bulletin, 2005). These trends hint at the issue of underemployment, which "exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to specified norms or a possible alternative employment, account being taken of the person's willingness and abilities to perform". An underemployed person is defined by the National Labour Force Survey of 2000 as follows: "A person is regarded as underemployed if and when a person in employment did not attain his/her 'full employment' level in relation to the duration or productivity of work. Alternatively a person is regarded to be underemployed when the duration or productivity of the work done is below the full employment level. A person is regarded as underemployed if that persons' job does not utilize his/her skills fully or the person is not fully occupied for the maximum number of hours during the working day." The fact that 22% of the operators in the informal economy also have jobs in the formal economy makes it clear that the main source of income for a number of families fails to meet the needs of the household, hence the need for seeking alternative sources of income. Needless to say, this underemployment may also be explained by the problematic definition of employment, which regards employed persons as "those aged 15 years or more who worked for pay, profit or family gain for at least one hour during a seven-day period before the interview or who did not work during that period but had a job or business to go back to" (National Labour Force Survey, 2000).

The trends in employment, underemployment and unemployment are important aspects to be considered by the ELCIN diakonia and social services department, as each of these factors will determine the livelihood of the people, and the economic activities in which they engage for their survival. In the next section (sub-topics) the towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati will be considered in greater depth, followed by an overview of the informal settlements that exist in these growing peri-urban towns.

4. 4. 4 Ondangwa and Oshakati: A brief historical background of the two commercial centres in Northern Namibia

In many ways, the Bible is an urban book; because existence of cities is recorded are the very first biblical texts, especially in the book of Genesis. The world of Moses, David, Daniel, Jesus, and Paul, for example, was an urban world, dominated by its cities. Jerusalem, Rome,

Alexandria, Corinth, Susa, Babylon, Nineveh, and Ephesus feature prominently in Scripture, and the cities were the main centres for mission work (Linthicum 1991: 21; Green 2003: 21). From their establishment, the above mentioned northern Namibian towns, Ondangwa and Oshakati, were used as centres of assembly for the contract labour system that was employing contract labourers from the north to go and work in the mines and farms in the southern part of the country (Wood 1988: 534). Over half of the Namibian population live in the northern region of the country where Ondangwa and Oshakati are the commercial centres in the area. Although this economical centre grows, a large part of the population is unemployed and especially young and middle-aged men go to the mines and urban areas of central and west Namibia to search for work. This migration finds its origin in the forced contract labour during the South-African occupation which lasted up to 1989. These two commercial centres of northern Namibia: Ondangwa and Oshakati together form the second largest population concentration in Namibia after Windhoek, but lack basic infrastructures and most of the services and facilities normally found in urban areas of this size. The post-independence boom in this area continues at an alarming rate (Hangula 1993: 2).

The fact that the North Central Region was the primary area of the war between South African Defence Force (SADF) and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), created racial dislocation but also economic opportunities which led to the rapid growth particularly of Ondangwa and Oshakati. However, because of the war, development was skewed and artificial and could not be maintained after the withdrawal of the armed forces. In 1988, 22% of the population were employed by the armed forces. The withdrawal of South Africa at independence of Namibia in 1990 had immediate consequences for employment, income and social conditions. At independence, the majority of people who were associated with the SADF left or lost their jobs and thousands of unemployed SWAPO freedom fighters and exiles moved in from the regions or from exile and settled in the Ondangwa and Oshakati nexus (Hangula 1993). The commercial sector remained skewed towards the supply of liquor to the soldiers. In the informal settlement areas, the transitional period was characterized by poverty and social instability. People had no jobs, and the informal sector had no customers. In 1990, 20% of all enterprises were liquor outlets (Pomuti 1994). Today the number of liquor vendors might even have increased as the sale of homebrewed *(omalovu giilya and otombo brews: all made of wheat and millet)* and bottled beer is the major source of income for women in informal settlements.

The current socio-economic landscape in northern Namibia; Ondangwa and Oshakati (the oldest settlement areas of the North-Central Regions of Namibia, in the former homeland of Owamboland) is the outcome of political, ecological, demographic and economic factors that individually and collectively shaped patterns of socio-economic welfare found in the area today. In brief and general terms, pre-colonial Owambo was characterised by a low level of material production and assumption, often negatively affected by multi-year droughts, epidemic stock disease or other causes related to the dry and arid natural environment in the region (Miettinen 2005: 37; Oshana Regional Profile 2006: 5). At the same time, Owambo society had strong kinship mechanism of wealth redistribution and social security. Structural impoverishment perpetuated over life times or generations was thus mainly restricted to small numbers of war-captives and slaves and to dependent ethnic minorities attached to more powerful clan families (Hangula 1993).

The arrival of European travellers, traders and missionaries in the 18th century began to destabilize the political and social integration in the Owambo communities. German colonisation of south and central Namibia (1884-1904) introduced wage labour and forced migration, and missionaries had a considerable impact on social relations and family organisation. However, it was the onset of South African rule from 1920 that had the most dramatic impact on the socio-economic conditions in Owambo. They soon established effective control over the Owambo largely by utilising the traditional political structure of kings, chiefs and headmen, and through the homeland policy. Their direct influence was particularly related to the system of contract labour migration and what came to be known as "Bantu education" (Hangula 1993: 4; Nambala 1994: 48-50). Until the mid-1960s, changes in political and economic conditions and socio-cultural adaptation took place within a rural setting based on small extended villages, agro-pastoral production, and the matrilineal system of kinship. There were no urban areas in Owambo, and the urban experience was reserved for labour migrants returning to their home region for short periods of every two years and, later, once a year (Hangula 1993: 7, 15; Pomuti *et al* 2005: 15-17).

4. 4. 4. 1 Ondangwa: Profile of a Peri-Urban Town

Ondangwa is situated in northern Namibia about 540 km north of Windhoek, the capital. Ondangwa's history goes back to the beginning of the last century (20th century) as a Lutheran mission station, which was established in 1902. The Finnish missionaries have been

in and around Ondangwa since then. Later on the central offices of the *Owambo Native Commissioner* were based in Ondangwa (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 37; Miettinen 2005: 49). The first public institutions in the town were: the Lutheran Congregation (1890), Lutheran Printing Press (1901), Elementary School (1903) and Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital (Finnish Lutheran Medical Services (1908) about 5km out of town. The first development activities in this area were introduced by the Finnish Missionaries and were: health and educational institutions with the training aiming to train local populace in crafts like bricklaying and carpentry (Lehtonen 1999: 40, 84). This means that the Finnish missionaries were able to integrate themselves in the rural areas without much difficulty. This approach, as mentioned in chapter 3, is strategic in mission work as it emphasises a holistic propagation of salvation. This method was known as the "Comprehensive Approach", or "Multiple Approach", containing elements of evangelism, education, medicine, industry and literacy (Nambala 1994: 85).

According to the ELCIN Statistics, the former Owamboland congregations (within the two Episcopal dioceses: Eastern and Western) had 703, 893 members at the end of 2009. Approximately 71% of the 780, 000 inhabitants of the Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto regions were therefore members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia/ELCIN (ELCIN 2009). However, towns were perceived to be comfortable places reflecting the western way of life that the missionaries had renounced (Shorter 1991: 64), and where they probably felt guilty about living. Since missionaries established the first congregations in rural areas, it was inevitable that the models of Christian ministry reflected the characteristics of the rural environment. As there were no cities at the time, urban missions were of little concern. A rural theology evolved and became a major reason why the church still finds it difficult to work in the cities of Africa. Shorter (1991: 59) comments:

> It is by no means a problem of the African, or missionary, church only. Christianity as a whole has inherited a predilection for the rural areas and a legacy of anti-urban attitudes and images (1991: 59).

Ondangwa *("Ondongo")* means *"the end of Ondonga area" (Ondonga is one of the kingdoms of Owamboland).* The town has a historical background concerning contract labourers, because of being an important transit point for Aawambo contract workers going to/or coming from the copper-and lead-mining town of Tsumeb, 274 km southeast or the diamond mines at Oranjemund. The task of recruiting labour for the mines and other industries was given by government concession to the South West African Native Labour Association [SWANLA] (Winter 1977: 95; Du Pisani 1986: 210; Miettinen 2005: 106).

Ondangwa is one of the three towns in Oshana Region and is located in the centre of the 4 regions in the north (Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena and Omusati) formerly known as Owamboland. It is the second-largest northern Namibian town and is known for its large number of warehouses. The main attraction in the area is *Lake Ekuma/Oponono,* a large wetland fed by the *Cuvelai oshanas* (underground river channels). Also worthwhile visiting is the Nakambale House, which was built in the late 1870s by Finnish Missionary Martti Rautanen *(nicknamed by Aawambo Speaking People as Nakambalekanene),* and is believed to be the oldest building in the whole northern Namibia (Miettinen 2005: 36). Due to its central location, the town was also later used by the South African Army as their Army Administrative Centres, hence the only Airport in the whole northern part of the country can be found in Ondangwa Town (Wood 1988: 523). The total surface area for Ondangwa is 5323, 1765 Hectares. Ondangwa town was proclaimed in 1997, and became an autonomous town council in 1998. According to Population and Housing Census 2001, the town had a population of 10,900 (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 10). But the latest statistics (2010) indicates that, the total population for Ondangwa is 45 694, which is 20% of the total population of the Oshana Region (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 10; Ondangwa Town Profile 2010).

Since independence, the government has set up an industry in the north, to create jobs and improve the poor infrastructure by initiating three institutions for vocational skills training for young people in building maintenance, sewing, cooking, and (Information) Internet Technology. The following are the services delivery by the Ondangwa town council: water, electricity, and urban land provision, sewerage, water drainage, and sanitation, fire brigade, housing and road networks, parks and sporting facilities. Other services such as education and health still fall under the central government (Ondangwa Town Profile 2010). The population of the Ondangwa town started to expand in the early 1970s when the war between South Africa and SWAPO liberation movement escalated. There was a huge influx of people from rural areas. About 40% of the town's population live in informal settlements. Currently there are nine (9) well established informal settlements. These are: Omwandi, Uupopo, Onguta, Omashaka, Omakulukuma, Omahenene, Ondiiyala, Heka and Okangwena (Community Land Information Programme [CLIP] 2009; Ondangwa Town Profile 2010). The type of dwellings found currently in the informal settlements has changed from predominantly iron shacks before independence to a combination of iron shacks and brick houses after independence. The number of brick houses has increased since independence, with older settlements having more and younger ones less. Most informal settlements in

Ondangwa are managed by Informal Settlement Committees on a voluntary basis. These committees act as a link between the communities and the local authority.

4. 4. 4. 2 Oshakati: Profile of a Peri-Urban Town

Oshakati is a town in the Oshana Region, northern Namibia Communal areas (Owamboland) where over 60% of Namibian population lives. It serves as the regional Capital and was officially founded in July 1966 (Hangula 1993: 20). It is the country 's second –largest city situated in the North Central Region, some 713 km West of Windhoek the capital of Namibia, and approximately 297 km North West of Tsumeb on the B1 national road to Ruacana Waterfalls and the Angolan border. Oshakati is considered to be the second largest city (by population) in Namibia. It contains two electoral constituencies of Oshakati East and West. In Oshiwambo, the language of the Aawambo of northern Namibia, the town's name *'Oshakati'* means *"that which is in between"*. The total area surface of Oshakati is 61 square kilometres with a population of 50 0000 inhabitants (Oshakati Town Profile 2010: 4). Since its founding in 1954, Oshakati has played the role of being the economic capital of the north.

Throughout the Bible, cities and towns represent much more than the aggregate of people within them. Urban institutions such as: law courts (Mt. 5: 25), banking (Lk.19: 23), absentee landlords (Mk. 12: 1-12), centurion leaders (Mt. 8: 5), urban tax collectors (Mt. 9: 10; Lk. 5: 27) were to be found in city settings (Green 2003: 21). In compliance with the recommendations of the Ondendaal Commission, several institutions of public character were put up in Oshakati between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. Among the first to go up were: the Water Affairs Branch *(The date is not available),* Post Office (1964), the Oshakati Intermediate Hospital (July 1966), Police Station (1968), the Radio Station *("Radio Owambo" which is today known as the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation/NBC* 1969), and Oshakati Secondary School (1973). The Baptist Church was opened in 1968, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa in 1970, the Seventh Day Adventists in 1972, followed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in 1973, and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in 1975 (Tötemeyer 1978: 25, 49). The town grew rapidly throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Large military structures, an organized open market, a meat processing plant and several smaller factories were established. Most of these investments were made by the para-statal Bantu Investment Corporation. A few local businessmen were also given loans to enable them to establish their own business units (Hangula 1993: 20). Being established in

1966, the town was partly used as a base for operations by the South Africa's economic intervention in the northern "homelands" and partly as a base to fight the SWAPO liberation movement that had been established in 1959 and enjoyed increasing support among Aawambo Namibian speaking of northern Namibia during the South African Border War and Namibian War of Independence (Hangula 1993). In February 19, 1988, a bomb blast occurred in Oshakati at the First National Bank, killing 27 innocent people and badly injuring nearly 30 others, a most of which were nurses and teachers. Up to the time of writing, no one has ever been officially convicted of the bombing and the issue was dropped upon independence in 1990 in favour of National Reconciliation (Oshakati Town Profile 2010: 17).

From the beginning, Oshakati has always attracted many people due to its educational and medical facilities as well as its position as the main economic and communication centre in the former homeland of Owambo. Oshakati has not only become the political capital of Owambo, but also the economic centre for the development and welfare of the whole region. It has been mentioned that, prior to the *"Ondendaal Plan"* (Bantustan Policies), Owamboland had no formal economic infrastructure, and it was government departments, such as: Water Affairs, Roads, Transport and Communications, Health, and Education, that were able to start operating in Owambo right away (Hangula 1993: 20). The development of Oshakati first and foremost implies employment opportunities for those migrating to the town. Many local people were employed by the South West African Defence Force (SADF) and South West African Territorial Forces (SWATF), but there were also formal employment opportunities in construction work, in factories, in trade, as maids and watchmen etc (Wood 1988: 523, 533). Most of these establishments were located in the expanding informal settlement areas on each side of the formal town. The formal town was divided into a white town (Oshakati East) and a black township (Oshakati West), with the white section being separated from the rest by an intricate system of roads, fences and barbed wire. Due to the apartheid policy and war situation there was a strict separation between urban Oshakati and its rural Owambo hinterland, and Oshakati for all purposes became a fortified town. By 1985 Oshakati had a population of 15 000 people, and at independence in 1990 the population stood at 25 000 (Hangula 1993).

After Namibia's independence in 1990, Oshakati became the capital of the Oshana Region and was proclaimed as a town in 1995 under the Local Authorities Act. The major attraction of Oshakati as the name implies in Oshiwambo, is its favourable, central location as far as the

northern region is concerned and and the fact that it plays a very important role for business in the northern part of Namibia (Ingwafa 2008: 4). Oshakati is positioned at the centre of the four northern regions: Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Kunene Region. Oshakati is situated in the *Cuvelai delta* from Southern Angola and then converges into the Etosha Salt Pan (Miettinen 2005: 36). The Town is also located favourably in terms of its national and regional situation near the border of Angola and it is linked to the existing trade a route with Namibia's neighbouring, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries (Ingwafa 2008: 5). Though still severely affected by a number of structural economic and political problems, Oshakati has, after Namibia's independence, slowly regained its role as the main urban centre in the north. The basis for this expansion is primarily related to enhanced South African economic investment (establishing shopping centres as well as manufacturing industries), and to Angolan economic interests (involved in both formal and informal trade with goods ranging from canned fish to diamonds).

The increasing commercial importance of Oshakati also seems to have led to stronger government involvement in the town. The Oshakati Town Council itself has embarked on a number of projects for the town. Services delivery remains a priority and Council is working flat out with such bodies as the Namibian Department of Water Affairs (Namwater) and Premier Electric to provide water and electricity to the town residents. Urban institutions such as the Civic centre, Law court and Magistrate Office, Social Security Commission, National Broadcasting Cooperation (NBC), the Northern campus of the University of Namibia, Bank of Namibia and Commercial Bank Branches, Government departments, a Referral Hospital which caters for patients form Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and partly Oshikoto and Kunene Regions; Shopping centres, Industries such as: Namibia Breweries and Meat Company are situated in Oshakati Town. The Town has adopted the Government's investment policy, that allow different investors to come and invest in Oshakati. Oshakati being the commercial centre in the north, it has been worked hard and continues to work tiredly to meet the demands of its inhabitants (Ingwafa 2008: 5; Oshakati Town Profile 2010).

The ceasing of military operations after independence removed the main obstacles for people to move into the towns from the surrounding rural areas. Many people settled in informal settlements or shanties in the outskirts of the urban centres. In Oshakati, for instance, more than 35 000 people lived outside the formal urban boundaries in 1993, mainly in shanties on

state-owned land. In addition, the informal sector grew rapidly. The increasing number of the Aawambo in the wage work opened opportunities for informal tradesmen and women selling goods ranging from traditional foodstuffs to second hand clothing, and for lodging places, tailors, barbers, hairdressers, and prostitutes. The rapidly growing informal settlements on the outskirts of the northern towns are generally associated with deforestation, increased waste management problems, crime, poverty, limited access to adequate sanitation and the spread of water-borne diseases. Hence, in recent years, several town councils in the north have surveyed large plots of land where they will re-locate squatters (Pendleton *et al* 1993; Pomuti, *et al* 1994; 2005: 22). Like Windhoek, there is also a high degree of urbanized population living in informal settlements in the centres of the northern communal areas. With the exception of Ongwediva, all northern towns have between half and three quarters of the inhabitants accommodated at their margins without proper services and infrastructure **(Table 4).**

The current population of Oshakati according to Ingwafa (2008: 8) should be around 50 000. Approximately 60% of these people are living in "informal" settlement areas on land for which they have no tenure rights and which are insufficiently serviced. Backyard shacks are also common feature in the low-income areas. The informal settlements are characterised by a high level of informal economic activities and the absence of proper sanitation and access to social services (Hangula 1993: 23; Pomuti *et al* 2005: 36). The current eleven (11) informal settlements that exist in Oshakati town are: Sky, Oneshila, Evululuko, Kalaula, Oshimbangu, Ompumbu, Eemwandi, Oshoopala, Okandjengedi-South, Okandjengedi-North, and Uupindi (Table 4; Hangula 1993: 2). The political and economic context within which the shanty-dwellers find themselves is thus currently characterized by improved economic opportunities, but also by a considerable increase in the population and hence more competition for employment, housing and services. More over, the status of the informal settlement areas is still unresolved. While the Oshakati Town Council accepts them as a "fact of life", they still describe the population in the areas as "squatters" and are reluctant to plan and develop physical structures and urban services (Hangula 1993).

According to the 2001 Census *(2001 Census, Oshana Region, Basic Analysis with Highlights)*, the population is young with 67% being between 15 and 30 years of age and about 27% of households is 6.1, and the households are composed of a nuclear unit (one or two parents with children) living together with extended family members, distant relatives

and non-relatives. The unemployment problem in Oshakati is severe, with the adult population either depending on informal employment (33%) or being completely unemployed (31%). Only 20% are formally employed, often in menial low-paid jobs. The most common forms of informal employment are small scale trading and hawking. Urban poverty continues to be a challenge in Oshakati as there are many unemployed people who migrate from rural areas to town searching for employment, but to no avail. The employment rate is higher among men (29%) than among women (11%). Most of the unemployed urban poor in Oshakati cannot pay for house rental. As a result, the majority of the people are forced to live in slums, shanties and squatter areas.

The informal settlements are characterized by poor housing facilities and inadequate physical infrastructure. The housing situation is another cause of concern for the town. Many houses in the formal areas are also overcrowded with 64% of the households in the informal settlement areas living in corrugated iron shacks in the periphery of formal settlement area, while most of the few bricks houses are in poor condition. Some of the shelters made from the easiest obtainable material were put up quickly around formal Oshakati. In addition, overcrowding and lack of cleanliness are the major health hazards leading people requiring attention from Oshakati Intermediate Hospital. The most common water source is communal water taps, but people fetch water from the canal of the *Cuvelai* delta. There is also inadequate sanitation with over two thirds (2/3) of the population in these settlements using the 'bush toilets' (Hangula 1993: 23; Pomuti *et al* 2005: 36).

Since the beginning of 2008, the town has experiencing torrential rains and repeated floods (Oshakati Town Profile 2010: 18). The urban-rural links remain an important part of people's survival strategy. As many as 73% of the population maintain parts of their households in the rural areas 88% have access to land and cultivate, and 33% own cattle. According to Central Statistics Office (CSO, 1994), about 2% of Namibia's urban dwellers get their main source of income from subsistence farming. The importance attached to the rural areas is part of the explanation for the lack of investment in housing and infrastructures in the urban settlements (Community Land Information Program [CLIP]-Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia March 2009). In general, it is noted that poverty is disproportionately found among rural people, female-headed households, youths, the elderly, and disabled; and recent migrants into marginalised urban areas.

4. 5 COMMUNITY ANALYISIS OF SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY INHABITANTS OF ONDANGWA AND OSHAKATI INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

At a general level, development may be defined as the improvement of the life chances and living conditions of residents in a given community, particularly with regard to the poor of that community (Koegelenberg 1992: 17-18). More concretely, within contemporary Namibian towns, the major developmental issues are becoming clear: housing and land requirements, education and job creation, health and the form of the development process itself have been identified as among the most urgent. Looking at the scope of poverty in urban areas, it becomes clear that urban bias is a self-perpetuating process. Northern Namibian towns are surrounded by squatter settlements and collections of shacks made of recovered waste materials. According to Community Land Information Programme (CLIP)-Profile of Informal Settlements in Namibia Report of March 2009, it has been stated that, "The structure owners within the settlements have no legal form of land security that enables the household to benefit from the commercial house loans. Where measures of formalisation have taken place, especially in the northern regions, people have constructed houses through the government's Building Together Programme and the poor peoples fund (*Twahangana* Fund) of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN). Oshakati in the Oshana Region is an example of a town where the Town Council is keeping a register of the occupants following an upgrading programme in the town".

The increasing number of people culminates in an increasing number of houses in the city causing congestion and overcrowding. This combined with improper disposal of sanitation, results in the contamination of surface water and contributes to outbreaks of water-borne diseases. Hangula (1993: 2) states "One striking thing about Ondangwa and Oshakati townships is congestion of houses the majority of which are of poor quality. These townships are the largest squatter areas in the northern part of Namibia (formerly known as *Owamboland*). The structures in the informal settlements are mostly constructed from corrugated iron, and traditional building materials."

As mentioned in the profiles of Ondangwa and Oshakati towns, due to the high and rapid rate of flocking (coming) into these communities, there is a lack of quality housing, high unemployment rates, high incidence of violence, an increase in HIV/AIDS, and poor education. Many people from rural areas came to settle in Ondangwa and Oshakati, looking for a better life and seeking employment. There are formal houses in these communities, but

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because of the high influx of people into the townships there are also many informal houses (shacks). Most of these are in a poor condition. Those people that live in the shacks do not have water and ablutions. They have to share one tap and toilet in the street. This is the consequence of poverty which has a severe negative effect on the community. It is obvious that poverty is taking its toll on the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati in many ways.

Eddie Bruwer (1997: 45) stated that poverty has never been a private affair; the community is involved. This is exactly what is happening in these communities where the people of Ondangwa and Oshakati are suffering from the effects of poverty. People earn a low income; some are seasonal workers; while others have to sell liquor, fruits, etc to provide their families with something to eat. Swanepoel & De Beer (2008: 2) state that poverty is a relative term because it can either describe the situation of an individual or a family, or it can describe a whole community or society. Swanepoel & De Beer gives a broader overview of poverty which suits this research (study) concerning the situation of Ondangwa and Oshakati. They describe the concept "relative poverty" thus:

> Relative poverty refers to people whose basic needs are met, but who in terms of their social environment, still experience some disadvantages. In other words, while managing to survive, some people are materially disadvantaged compared with others living in the same community or society (2006: 3).

This is what is happening in the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati, where some people experience poverty more profoundly than others. Due to the fact that people are suffering, young people use drugs, drinking alcohol heavily, drop out of school at an early age, and become involved in crimes. Young school girls fall pregnant. The only pastime for the youth of Ondangwa and Oshakati is to use alcohol and indulge themselves in unprotected sex.

Many scholars give almost the same definition to poverty, for example Stenger & Ratti (eds.) (2002: 10), who define poverty as the inability to meet basic needs. They also mention that poverty is associated with characteristics such as: lack of land, unemployment, the inability to provide food for oneself and family, the lack of decent houses, inadequate education, and poor health. These are the basic needs for the person to live. August (1999: 15; 2010: 2) states that basic needs are "those things that an individual must have in order to survive as a human being" (Burkey 1996: 31). He goes further by saying that basic needs are divided into two categories (1999: 15; 2010: 2):

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- First, they include certain minimum requirements for a family or private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing as well as certain household equipment.

- Secondly, they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health, and educational facilities.

Burkey (1996: 3) expands the list of basic individual needs to include those of community. He defined them as sexual regeneration, a system of communication (language), a belief and educational system for cultural security, a political system defining leadership and decision making, and systems of work and recreation for maintaining well being among sufficient numbers to maintain the community. Most of these basic needs mentioned above are also a major problem faced by the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati.

4. 5.1 Research Findings: Information from Respondents

A research (participatory observation) study undertaken in Ondangwa and Oshakati Informal Settlements, northern Namibia, in the months of November and December 2010, found the following characteristics, among others: with such a large population, an average 15.5% of population have no education (never attend school) at all, 27.5% are currently in school, and 78.5% have left school. "The population in private households constitutes close to 98% of the total enumerated population. About two percent of the total population are in institutions. About 68 percent of the population is to be found in households with an average size of 6 or more persons" (2001 Census, Oshana Regions, Basic Analysis with Highlights). During the time of personal interviews conducted during the research study time indicated above, it was noted that, over 40% of the households, which the researcher saw are predominantly headed by women who are single parents, and the household head has to provide for 6 or more people within that household. Housing conditions are close with the national average, though this still leaves much to be desired, with 59% of households not having a toilet facility, 89% having no electricity for lighting, and 76% having to use wood/charcoal for cooking. While health hazards are posed based on these figures, it is also clear that the region is made up of a predominantly rural population. Unfortunately, no date exists for these indicators in the more urban areas or the informal settlements associated with these areas. Both Ondangwa and Oshakati are having an extremely high unemployment rate of 40.3%.

Although women made up a larger proportion of the economically active population, they are disproportionately affected by unemployment, with a percentage gap of 6.9% between sexes. It is therefore critical to note that people, especially women might turn to risky behaviours such as prostitution and crime for survival.
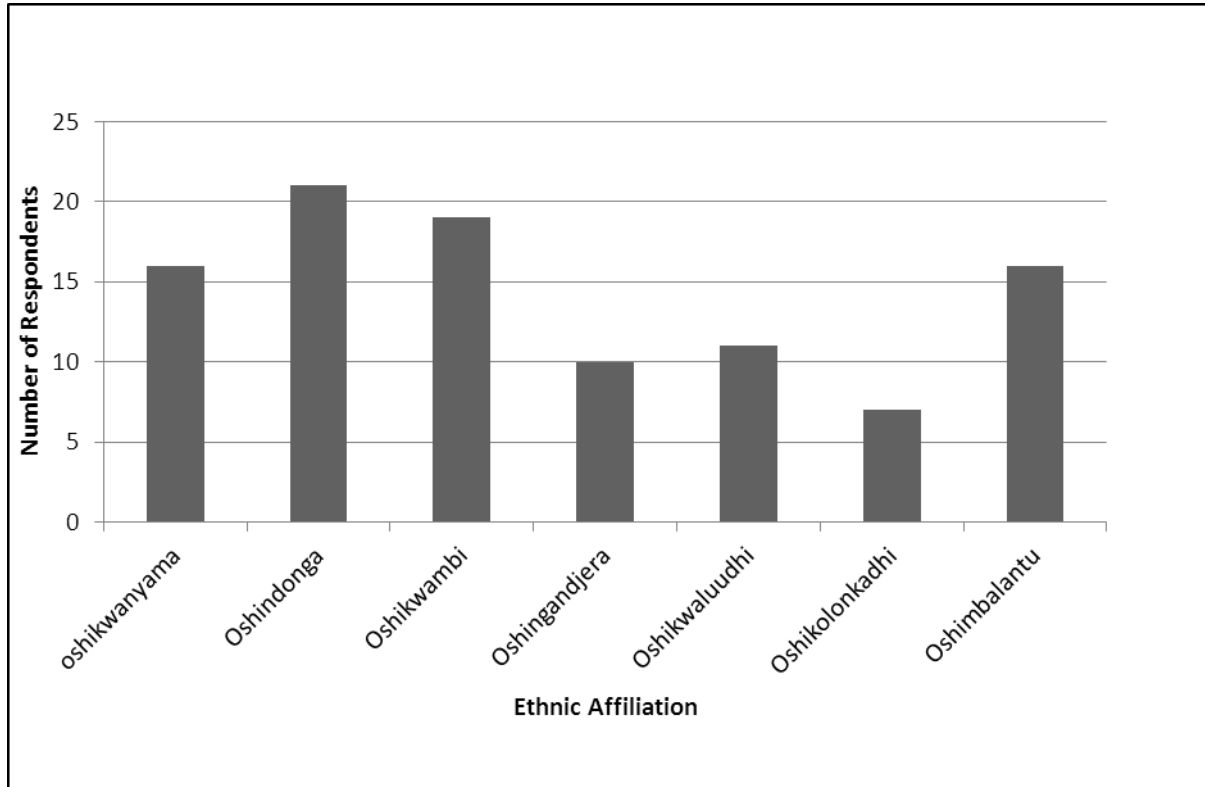
Figure 1: Number of Respondents per Ethnic Affiliation
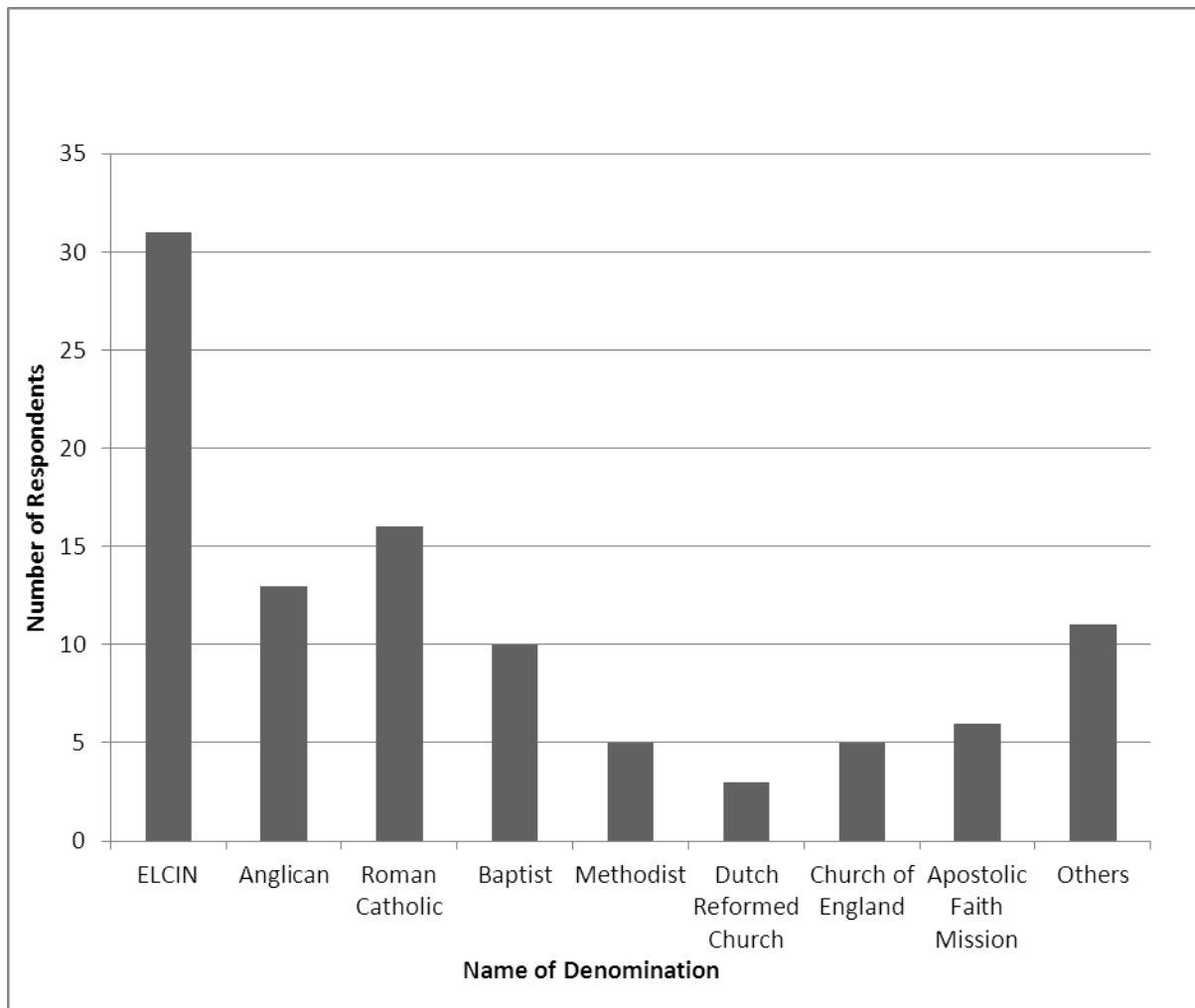
Figure 2: Number of Respondents (Informal Inhabitants) Per Denomination

4. 5.2 The Target Population (Informal Settlements Inhabitants)

This study is a report of a research study designed to address the development significance of the ELCIN in response to the socio-economic challenges faced by the Aawambo (Namibian) Speaking people living in the Ondangwa and Oshakati Informal Settlements in northern part of the country today. Given the complexity and scope of the subject, it was decided to restrict the study to the Oshana Region of northern Namibia in the former homeland of 'Owamboland' and to select five informal settlement areas (squatter camps) in Ondangwa and the other five in Oshakati Townships within which a sample survey and a series of groups interviews were conducted. These areas were Uupopo-Uumbenge, Onguta, Omahenene, Ondiiyala, and Omakulukuma in Ondangwa, as well as: Oneshila, Evululuko, Oshoopala, Uupindi, and Okandjengedi in Oshakati **(See Table 4).** Six of the most relevant

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issues were addressed namely trends in household size, gender of household-head (an equal total number of people of both genders was randomly selected for interview in order to maintain balance), age and sex profiles of different populations, educational profiles, trends in employment and unemployment; and trends in household income. In order to gather information, the following questions were asked:

- For how long have you been living in this informal settlement?

- How many individuals live in your household?

- Do you have water, electricity and flushing toilet in your dwelling?

- What is the highest grade of schooling have you achieved?

- What are the most pressing problems that you experience, because of staying in the informal shacks?

- What are some of the socio-economic challenges faced by the community where you live?

- What, if anything, do you think the church should do more to help you in your situation?

The research proves that the Church faces a number of social challenges, with the most pressing of these being HIV/AIDS (with a national prevalence rate of 19.7%), alcohol and substance abuse, orphans and vulnerable children (over 147 000 of whom have been registered), poverty (with 56% of the population living below the US$2 a day poverty line), and unemployment (with a national rate of 33%, and which may exceed 60% when coupled with underemployment). About 53% of the respondents thought that, the abovementioned problems identified by them should be solved by government, or by local community and government. It was concluded that, urbanisation (rural to urban migration), unemployment, land tenure and ownership, housing and other problems all have a significant impact on the Ondangwa and Oshakati population. In addition it is stated that unless the rate of migration to these two townships is checked soon, the problem areas are sure to increase. Thus instead of charity we should address the meaning of human life in a society of conviviality, because the crisis that we are all suffering as it relates to human development is structural in nature and concerns the basis of our system of life together. Alcohol abuse, unemployment and to a lesser extent HIV/AIDS/illness were seen as the main problems for all the informal

settlements inhabitants consulted. Other problems included physical violence, teenage pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, non-payment of children maintenance, children abuse, rape, sodomy, drugs (substance) abuse and lesser problems. It is evident that many of the problems can be linked to the high unemployment rate, e.g. alcohol and drugs abuse, poverty, domestic violence, and crimes such as; rape, robbery, theft and vandalism.

4.5.2.1 Social Relations of Poverty

The concept of *vulnerability* is not synonymous with poverty, but means defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risk, shocks and stress. It is linked to tangible assets such as a lack of wages, savings, housing and domestic equipments. Less attention has been given to importance of *social relations and networks* between the poor and the less poor, more specifically (Hangula 1993; Pomuti 2005).

The quantitative data presented above point in the direction of a shanty population characterized by problems of unemployment, low income, high expenditures on food as well as non-food items, limited access to basic services and poor housing conditions. The existing situation has resulted in poor health conditions and nutritional problems particularly for children. At the same time, the data reveal that there are significant differences in the socio-economic situation of individuals and households both between and within the informal settlements. The perception of inhabitants in 'urban informal settlements' of Ondangwa and Oshakati towns is that people without municipal plots are regarded as 'very poor'. Poverty is translated as *uuthigona/oluhepo*, in Oshindonga, one of the seven Oshiwambo dialects. *Uuthigona/oluhepo,* according to participants, refers to "the lack of basic needs such as: electricity, clinics, communication systems, employment, flushing toilets, (water and sanitation), cash, clothes, financial assistance, money to pay school fees, clinic fees, hunger/lack of food, absence of police services to enforce the law, and the absence of employment opportunities for both youth and adults." Poverty means a state of having little in all matters of life. In urban informal settlements, people have no job (employment) opportunities, many children are malnourished, and most people are not included in decision-making on matters that concern their lives. The poorest sections of the population experience difficulties in making ends meet both in their daily lives, and in times of special need. They are normally not in a position to buy sufficient food, clothing, fuel, schoolbooks and other basic necessities, or to pay for expenses related to medical care, indemnities and important

socio-cultural events such as births, weddings and funerals. In fact, comparing income, number of household members and prices for goods and services, many families in the shanty-areas in Ondangwa and Oshakati are not in a position to survive as a social unit at all.

The importance of social relations is immediately evident in the informal settlements. In the morning many people leave the shanty areas to meet people at work-places, in the informal market of *Omatala (open market),* in the hospitals, in schools, or in the Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Council. Others leave the areas simply to seek occasional work and to see if other "good things" may happen from incidental encounters. Regarding those who remain, men sit in groups in front of shacks talking and drinking *otombo* brew. Women cook food together for own consumption or *okapana (a term used to designate all kinds of food fried or cooked in the street),* and watch the children others. In both informal settlements *cuca* shops (shebeens), where 'something' is sold, is the basis of income generation. Poor old men walk from dwelling to dwelling asking for food or other items. And people from other places, revealed as such by their behaviour, clothing or way of speaking, discuss their relationships not only with rural areas but also with regions and countries further away.

"In Namibia, two official measures of income poverty: extreme and overall poverty are in use. Both are defined using a food share ration whereby households are considered "poor' when more than 60 percent of their total consumption expenditure is devoted to food. Household with a food share of over 80 percent are considered "severely poor" (Human Development Report 2007: 9). On an individual level, poor people are ashamed to be photographed and be seen as severe undernourished skeletal-looking bodies; faces with protruding stomachs; thin breast-feeding mothers. The faces of poverty are rarely passive victims. They cannot be passive and survive. The poor of the world are always engaged in active struggles. The daily struggle for livelihood involves creatively using whatever options are available. The very fact that people are poor means that they have to stumble under a burden. To put it differently, they have to labour through many dangers, toils and snares. That is to say, poverty causes pain almost like a mother in labour-pain.

Box 1

A man in his fifties, formerly worked for the South African Defence Force (SADF). Stayed in the informal settlement for 16 years cohabiting with one woman and having seven children. They have now been separated for the past five years. He lives alone in a shack, poverty stricken with no emplyment for six years. His shack was under water because of 2008/2009 heavy rains and floods. His preoccupation is that he will not be able to go back to his village of origin and re-unite with relatives and friends.

Box 2

A single man in the mid-forties has lived in the informal settlement for ten years. Having been employed as a security guard for nearly eight years, but he is sometimes being in contact with other girlfriends. At the same time he is cohabiting with a certain lady and are having six children. The low paid-salary he receives from the security guard company does not cover all the cost.

Box 3

A 56 years old man, speaking about the spread of HIV/AIDS says, "To get something to eat, to wear or to wash with, one has to have money to do so. Most of the people who live in informal settlements, moved here in search of jobs, but when they can't find any, some women find men to give them money in exchange for a one night-stand or a relationship. These people end up dumping each other and so it [the virus] passes on...this is how HIV/AIDS in our settlements mostly spreads".

Box 4

A young single mother with 4 children aged from 1 to 6 years. All of her children have different fathers. Has lived in a recently built shack for seven years. Makes a living by selling *okapana*. Sometimes she has financial problems supporting her children. Speaking about the challenge of HIV/AIDS in relation to poverty, she says "In order to get some money you need just to engage yourself in unprotected sexual behaviour. What can I do? I have no one to support me so I have to do it for myself". Concerning the Church in their local area, she says "The Church does not do anything apart from prayers. Prayers do not feed your stomach".

The average length of time in the informal settlements (Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements) for most migrants in this study is from seven to sixteen years. The majority of migrants live in the informal communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati townships. Given the significant familial ties, migrants have both in their rural place of origin as well as in the urban area; it is not surprisingly that most migrants, especially when they first arrive in Ondangwa and Oshakati, stay with family members (Pomuti *et al* 2005: 14). In fact, there is a vast array of extended familial relations living in the same house. Only three migrants in this study live alone. There are various types of relatives that migrants live with including uncles, cousins, brothers-in-law, siblings, children, spouse or partners, and even "neighbours from the same rural area" (village). In most cases, a relative, often an uncle or cousin owns the house in which migrants stays.

About one half of the interviewed live in informal houses (shacks) that are often made of corrugated iron (metal sheeting), wood, plastics, bricks or any combination thereof, while some of them even live in shebeens (informal drinking establishments). The data on Ondangwa and Oshakati population indicates that 70% of people live in sub-standard housing /informal settlements (Hangula 1993: 23; Pomuti et al 2005: 14) and that the majority of those in this study live informal housing. The data indicate that recent migrants are far more likely than other residents to live in informal housing. Several migrants live in metal shacks they built themselves and so do not pay rent, but living in a metal shack is the least expensive type of housing because usually there is also no electricity or running water that needs to be paid, as is the case when living in formal housing. These migrants do not pay rental fess, but pay the municipality for the land where these shacks are situated. Overcrowding also seems to be an attribute of the informal settlements dwellers (inhabitant) in Ondangwa and Oshakati's experience. The average number of rooms for dwellings (shacks) that dwellers

live in is between two to three rooms per dwelling, however, there is also an average of five to seven people living in each of these dwellings. As far as living in sub-standard structures, most of the informal dwellers do not have potable water and toilets inside their dwellings. Frequently, they get water from communal taps that are used by hundreds of people from the same community.

Box 5

A 39-year old man who lives in a three room metal and wood shack cohabiting with a certain lady and are having five children, says that they do not have running water in the dwelling. He doubts whether the water they are using is healthy as the place around the water is dirty. The tap is very far and they still have to pay

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Toilets found in the informal communities are generally municipality-provided communal flush or pit-latrine toilets, as well as residents' make-shift toilets of cardboard, paper or plastic. Most of the informal housing areas do not even have communal toilets. People must use bush at night when it is dark and dangerous.

Box 6

A 33-year old man who lives alone in a metal shack complains: I use the bush [to the toilet], because the quality of these common toilet is very bad and it smells all the time. It is not really healthy to use and it is better to use the bush, but it is too dangerous to use the bush during the night because you can be bitten by snakes

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In Ondangwa and Oshakati informal communities/settlements where people live, inhabitants (dwellers) experience a wide range of social and economic challenges that affects their lives. Many health issues (such as: poor sanitation facilities, polluted water flowing into the streets, offensive odours due to the bush being used as a toilet and rubbish lying around) are repeatedly identified as problems.

Box 7

A 26-year old woman lives in shack. She has cohabited with a man for seven years and has four children. She says that you find dirty water running in the streets. You don't know where this water comes from. I blame the municipality people because they don't visit this area.

People who live in the informal settlements also express their concern for a range of social challenges experienced in their local communities. These problems include alcohol abuse and selling alcohol late into the night, which in turn leads to fighting and loud noise throughout the night. Crimes such as theft and house break-ins are also challenges to their communities.

Box 8

A 36-year old man complains: There are too many people drinking and sometimes they end up fighting. Crimes such as theft and housebreakings are also one of the worst problems in our communities, because you cannot go far without telling someone to take care of your house/dwelling.

Unemployment is also one of the most difficult challenges. It is no surprise that the mushrooming of informal settlements countrywide has also become a new social challenge within itself, with urbanization being the result of a search for better living standard.

Box 9

A 32 year old man who works in a garage, says, "We have a high number of young people roaming the streets without jobs. One of the reasons why local people don't have jobs is that investors come here and build their huge businesses, but they don't employ local people. They bring their workers with them. At all those shops, the only local people you will see are the security guards".

4.5.3 Secondary Sources (Interview with Clergies)

The total numbers of 38 pastors from different denominations serving in Ondangwa and Oshakati were interviewed (13 from ELCIN, 4 RCC, 3 Anglican, 2 Baptist, 3 DRC, 2 Church of England, 2 Methodist, 2 AFM, and 7 from [others] Pentecostals). It has been noted that ELCIN, RCC, Anglican and AFMS run HIV/AIDS Programmes focussing on awareness raising, counselling and home based care givers as a way of addressing key social challenges faced by the community. Only the RCC and the DRC run soup kitchens for OVC. Other churches, like Pentecostals said that they just focus on preaching and nothing else, because they understand that people's sins are the causes of all bad things in human 's lives such as: alcohol abuse, adultery, prostitution, and all these will result in death. All those clergy who

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were interviewed shared their concerns about the future of the informal inhabitants. These include an increasing number of shacks with poor living standards, more alcoholics and prostitutes, an increasing number of vulnerable children wandering in streets without going to school, increasing number of HIV/AIDS infections which will result in a huge number of orphans and vulnerable children, an increase in poor sanitation, and more negligence from those who are in power (government) because they regard these people as: useless, drunkards, lazy and being always engaged in sexual immorality.
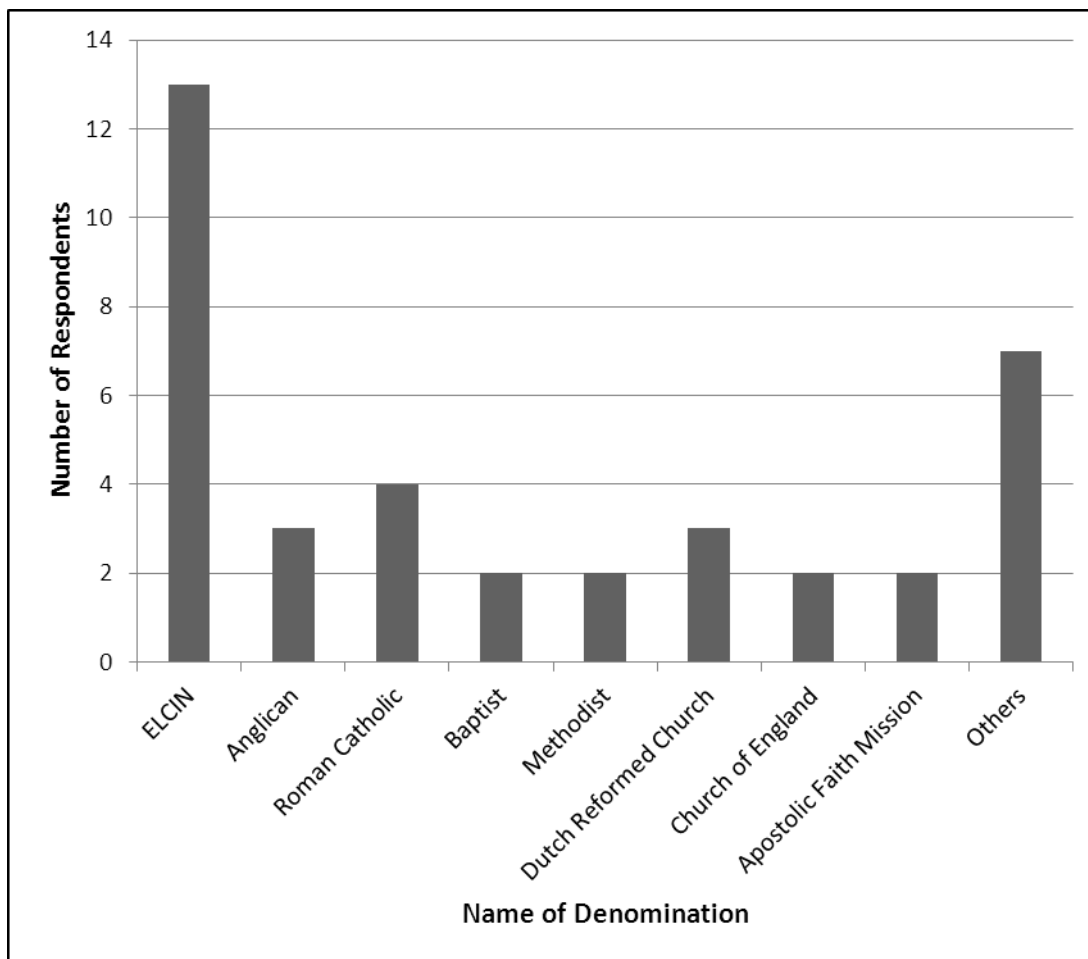
Figure 3: Number of Clergies (Respondents) by Denomination in Ondangwa and Oshakati

The last step of the research was the conducting of interviews with clergy from different denominations serving in Ondangwa and Oshakati townships. Conclusions are made and recommendations are drawn and will be appear in the last chapter of this study (dissertation). The main objectives of interviewing the clergy were: to determine whether they understand the socio-economic context where their church members live; to determine ecclesiology and

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basic relevant theological constructs and to determine congregational identity and involvement with regard to social issues. Information gathered from the secondary sources was used to formulate the following questions:

- Could you name the five key social challenges (problems) faced by the community of Ondangwa/Oshakati Informal Settlements?

- Which social-economic feature in this community has the greatest impact on the majority of the residents?

- Does this have an impact on your congregation? If so, how?

- Which do you consider the five most important tasks for the church which is located in the urban area (i.e. worship, evangelism and outreach, diaconal ministry, social justice, etc)?

- What do you consider to be the mission/most important task of the church?

- Describe your understanding of the "whole" gospel of the kingdom of God.

- Do you consider evangelism more important than social outreach/actions? Why or why not?

- Do you believe that it is part of the church's mission (commission) to address poverty and other socio-economic challenges?

- What do you believe is the church's role in addressing poverty?

- Is your congregation involved in addressing some of the key challenges faced by this community? If so, which one and how?

- Does your church partner with other community role-players, government or congregations in the area (i.e. NGOs, schools, police, clinic, community organizations) in addressing the social challenges in Ondangwa/Oshakati?

- Why or why not does your church partner with other congregations and role-players in the community?

- Share additional thoughts or/concerns that you might have about the future of the northern Namibian informal inhabitants

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While busy with the study in Oshakati town, nearly approaching the last day of conducting research, the researcher had the opportunity to visit the Elim Deanery Pastors one day meeting at Oshakati Lutheran Parish. This deanery consists of seven parishes (congregations) including that of Oshakati. The other six are situated about 5 to 15 kilometres outside of Oshakati town mainly in the Uukwambi (Kingdom) Tribal area. Both pastors indicated that some of their members live in Oshakati's formal and informal settlements. They also confirm that those who are living in the informal settlements are faced with many socio-economic challenges such as: unemployment, poverty, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS. They admitted to concern about the increasing number of informal settlement, but did not propose some ways of how to minister holistically to these people. These comments from the clergy show that, at present the ministry in the ELCIN is more concerned with spiritual matters and lacks capacity to address socio-economic issues.

Here are some comments made by the clergy serving in Ondagwa and Oshakati townships:

- The church is commissioned to preach the gospel, baptise and teach God's words in this world full of evils, such as theft, criminal acts and domestic violence against women and children.

- Urban ministry is differ form rural ministry, because in urban areas they work 24 hours a day.

- Pentecostalism is yet another challenge because some people leave (desert) the mainline churches like ELCIN and join others.

- New charismatic teachings pose a problem to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) because they are encouraged to believe in prayers and not in medication from the hospitals.

- There is no mutual cooperation and effective networking among the churches themselves in addressing social challenges, because most of the time the Pentecostals and Charismatic churches preach against the mainline churches.

- There is much poverty in the towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati, particularly among squatters and those who live in shantytowns. This is due to the high rate of unemployment and high inflation rate in the country. As a result, people indulge in several malpractices as a means of survival

- Prostitution is one of the practices resulting from poverty. In their fight for survival many people, particularly young Christian girls, turn to prostitution which leads to the more serious challenge of HIV/AIDS. Many able-bodied Christians die prematurely every day. As most Christians who die are young, they leave their children without parental care. As a result, the number of orphans is increasing daily.

- Concerning congregations involvement in addressing poverty, most of the clergy said that it is the government's duty to address the socio-economic challenges like poverty, unemployment and basic service delivery because during the election campaign the politicians used to make some promises. The people are tired for empty promises in a free and independent country.

- The churches do not cooperate much among themselves nor with other role-players in the community so much, because some of differences in doctrine (teaching), beliefs and values in approaching societal issues.

Pastor/Box 1

The most pressing social needs in the community are care of the sick and dying; helping orphans and single-parent families; unemployment, and crimes. Deaths caused by HIV/AIDS have affected three out of every five families. All these have an impact on our congregation because they decrease our membership. Unemployment causes contributions to the church s' main fund to drop.

Pastor /Box 2

The situation of young widows in their 20s, and 30s, caused by HIV and AIDS deaths. Unemployment is a challenge, because many whom now live on streets are severely addicted to alcohol, dagga and other drugs. The church should have a public witness because the kingdom of God includes the public sphere of life and because church members are faced by many socio-economic challenges to society.

Pastor/ Box 3

My concern for the future of the informal inhabitants is based on how they lose self-identity. This is visible in many of the people who are unemployed and therefore driven to alcoholism. This is a difficult situation and it leads many people to lose sight for their future. Perhaps I am not wrong in sayinf that most of the informal settlement inhabitants are HIV positive. It is pathetic to see unemployed boys and girls living together and producing children. These children will face life without food, clothes, shelter and other means of sustenance.

4. 5. 3.1 The Church Practice in the City: The Role of the Church in the City

Urbanization is Africa's new missionary challenge for this century. The Christian task in Africa is the mission of the continent, which is in the process of rapid urbanization. If the Church delays its adaptation to the urban context, it will forsake her strategic mission of being a light of the world. The church is facing great challenges today, with poverty being just one of many issues it faces today. Swanepoel & De Beers (2006: 2) quote the following words in their abstract: "Poverty is like heat; you cannot see it, you can only feel it; so to know poverty you have to go through it." Observation analysis is used in this study (4.3.1) to share the feelings knowledge and experience of poverty which takes place in the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati. The researcher fully agrees with Swanepoel & De Beers; in order to talk and to know poverty you have to experience and go through it on a personal level. If the church works together with community development leaders and other institutions, community development can be a successful and effective tool in reaching the marginalised in the community.

History suggests that, Christianity has been primarily been an urban oriented faith (Harper 1999) because God is already active in the city (Ps.46: 5; 127:2), God calls his church to play a servant role by serving the poor and the neglected of society who live there. It is, therefore, a particular biblical strategy that, the church must have to live out the gospel and take part in the development of her communities. The church's response to the social challenges comes from its deepest theological convictions about the nature of creation, the unshakeable fidelity of God's love, the nature of the body of Christ's identity and the reality of Christian responsibility towards one another (Gal. 6: 2). Therefore, being the church in the city means locating in and among the poor.

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During his earthly ministry, Jesus instructed (sent) His twelve disciples to go into villages and towns to preach the message about the coming kingdom of God (Mt. 10: 1-14). Bakke (1987: 68) states that, "If we want an urban theology showing God's love for cities, we can look at the Bible's 1,100 years of Jerusalem's history. It is the city Jesus weeps over (Lk. 19: 41) and prays for (Mt. 23: 37), and the New Testament ends with a vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21". Jesus preached the gospel, and performed wonders (miracles) of healing and cured the sick in villages and cities, but we learn that when he came near the cities of Korazin and Bethsaida, in which most of his miracles had been performed, he began to denounce woe (cried) unto them (Mt. 11: 20-21). At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus rides on a donkey into Jerusalem (Mt. 21: 1-11); parodying the pomp of triumphal Roman processions to which the imperial Cities were so accustomed (Green 2003: 21).

A city is the locus of decisions and crises and these affect its residents directly or indirectly. The church must recognize this challenge, and then shape the ministry direction strategies accordingly. Greenway (1986: 61) notes "Interdependence of people, communities, functions, structures for power and action is the inescapable characteristics of metropolitan life." The church should also recognize the secular character of the city. Such an approach enables the church to implement a relevant ministry for the city s' residents.

In Northern Namibia, there are many churches available but diffused throughout the towns in many ways. Greenway (1986: 62) states that, "In some situations religion is reviving in the city and is more diversified than ever. But religion has no centrality in the metropolis. The dynamic centres are specifically secular and are little affected by religion, at least in any direct or tangible way." Therefore, the church is expected to ask itself seriously what is to be the mode, or modes, of its presence in cities. In almost every setting (context), the church is a potential power figure and is able to "connect" with diverse agencies (role players), constituencies and interests. Self-critical awareness of existing networks and their opportunities and limitations, is essential to the church's understanding of her influence in the community (Carroll *et al* 1989: 74-75). The church must also recognize that in the towns, the needs, problems, and opportunities are diverse and complex. As such, the church should try to develop multiple approaches for ministry. Greenway (1986: 63) further comments that, "They [problems] range from superstitions, fanatical types of religion to religionless existence; from nihilistic, destructive, and criminal modes of life to lofty ethical idealism; from desperate squalor and poverty to the most extravagant affluence; from slum to suburb;

from hovel to high-rise. Diversity and complexity that defy description are the marks of metropolitan society." The last recognition is the fact that the city is worth saving. The city's informal settlements will not be saved until the church really wants to save them.

The urban congregations are faced with the huge challenge to save the town. The congregations in northern Namibian towns' informal settlements (Ondangwa and Oshakati) have acknowledged the importance of saving individuals in the towns. The fact that the city's individuals cannot be saved unless something is done to save the city itself, is not understood. Greenway (1986: 64) further advises that, "The problem is that our concept of salvation has been almost exclusively other-worldly in its orientation. We have aimed to get people to heaven, with all too little interest in liberating them from earthly hells. What is more, we have been very selective in our decisions as to whom we should try to save." Myers (2003: 200) echoes this and says that, "If we are to heal a broken world and communicate the good news in the midst of the bad, we must find dramatic new ways of practising faith and spirituality and enable people to practise a spirituality that addresses the tragic places where life is split asunder."

The task of the urban church in northern Namibian urban communities is not only the proclamation of the Word, but also the performing of deeds and actions as a process to implement the proclamation. What the church's practice in the city requires being truly effective, is not allowing itself to be overwhelmed by the city's evil. The church must take delight in the people surrounding it and in each other in the community of faith. Linthicum (1991: 165) states that, "The church is called to be a cheer leader to the city. It is also called to name all that is evil and dark about the city, and particularly to confront the city's systems and structures when they act in exploitive and oppressive ways." Bradbury (1989: 117) echoes that, "The church in the inner city can provide a community of healing and human growth. As its congregation struggles corporately with prayer, the tradition of faith and its own difficulties and human conflict…The church is able to lead people from alienation to reconciliation and from despair to hope." In the same vein, Harper (1999: 298-299) writes:

> To have a vital Christian witness, urban congregations must go beyond acts of charity. They must go beyond the need to feel good about giving. What is most valuable is attractive partnership between oppressed people seeking to change the conditions of injustice, and other people who are willing to join in a common effort so that equity can be established. The most important gift urban churches can give is the creations of relationships within which people of different backgrounds can learn to trust, respect, and work together. The creation of such a community is the foundation for the development of the church and the neighbourhood.

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As Bosch (1991: 130) notes "... Metropolises [were] the main centres as far as communication, culture, commerce, politics, and religions are concerned." Paul focussed on the cities as part of a strategy to spread the Gospel to an entire region. From the strategic centre, Paul hoped that the Gospel would be carried easily into the surrounding countryside and towns. The church is therefore expected to have a holistic vision of ministry in order to focus on both rural and urban sectors. It is our conviction that God's presence to the world in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ is continued in and through the life and ministry of local congregations as well as other expression of church (Carroll *et al* 1989: 18). The Church must assert its social relevance by working for a holistic evangelical mission which is contextual, transformative and empowering. Our mission as Christians is to be pure self-gift in the face of suffering, pain and despair. The service of the Church must be concrete in the real and specific places, like informal settlements surrounding Ondangwa and Oshakati townships of northern Namibia, where these "other" are suffering and we need to respond. Such sufferings include the experience of poverty, being despised, enduring injustice or having one's life threatened by HIV/AIDS and other calamities.

4 .6 CONCLUSION

The urbanisation of poverty is one of the most dramatic developments on the African continent, yielding contrasting images of affluent residential and business districts and utter misery in sprawling shantytowns or slums. The disadvantaged groups in urban Africa are really struggling to survive. Namibia has one of Africa's highest urban growth rates, taking thousands of women, men and children to towns in search of a better life. The large majority of these end up in poverty-stricken informal settlements in urban areas. The current service delivery approach of the government has left out informal settlements and has instead focussed on improving and expanding service in formal areas. This situation has detrimental effects on the poor. In this study the challenge of pro-poor service delivery in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati is examined. Local government institutions find themselves in between the central government and their own population, and the informal settlement population with hitherto unfulfilled expectations for basic services in the form of housing, water, electricity and sanitation. In particular, it is argued that urgent attention should be paid to the development.

Urbanisation in northern Namibia is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the nature of social relations and networks in towns is both directly and indirectly influenced by similar relations in rural areas. The majority of the population in Ondangwa and Oshakati town's informal settlements are first generation urbanites and maintain relations with rural areas, and traditional rural culture (values, beliefs, knowledge) is one of several cultural flows that influence the survival strategies of the urban poor. A proper understanding of urban relations of poverty thus necessitates an analysis of rural areas and their links with urban populations.

Poverty is an immense challenge that all Namibians need to address today. People across the nation are all facing this challenge because it affects everyone, whether poor or rich, black or white, living in town or urban informal communities. This crisis needs to be taken into serious consideration, especially in currently-disadvantaged urban so-called informal (settlements) communities where most of the blacks are living.

In the next chapter (chapter 5), we shall be looking at the empirical survey that was carried out to establish how the inhabitants of informal settlements have been affected by socio-economic challenges and the role of the church leadership in meeting these needs will be defined.

CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH IN THE
NAMIBIAN CONTEXT

5. 1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 introduced a brief historical background of the ELCIN and its role in society was
given, followed by a more specific contextual analysis of the socio-economic context of both
broader Namibia and the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati in chapter 4.

In chapter 5 an analysis will be done of how the ELCIN understands these challenges,
according to her constitution, and the current action or inaction based on this understanding
of its missional calling and civic position. However, it is unfortunately a challenge largely
brought about by deliberate racist policies of the past, which led to and interacted with a high
degree of inequality. To confront these socio-economic challenges in contemporary Namibia,
we firstly need to be aware of the nature and extent of these challenges in contemporary
Namibia and the effect of these challenges on the communities being studied. In the
preceding chapter (chapter 4) the background of the socio-economic problems facing
Namibia within the context where the ELCIN operates was described, and various social
factors that essentially impact people in the communities in which the Church works, were
highlighted. The aim of the empirical survey was to gain a through understanding on the
many socio-economic challenges (problems) faced by Namibian Aawambo-speaking of
northern Namibia living in in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati, to
determine the role of the churches in meeting these social challenges.

This chapter will be a discussion of what the stated role of the Church is, and why the Church
is in such an important position to serve communities effectively with regard to the socio-
economic challenges facing the nation. The topic of this study is, The Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and poverty, with specific reference to semi-urban communities
in northern Namibia. The significance of this research is to contribute positively towards a
clearer understanding of priority areas on which the Church needs to focus in order to
become more relevant in addressing the concerns of Namibian society. The Church,
particularly the ELCIN given its predominant following, is in a pivotal position to be at the
forefront of effecting such a change.

Namibia today is facing many social and welfare problems which are the direct issues facing the churches as well. Three of these are very prominent: poverty, unemployment, and HIV/AIDS. Social and welfare problems in our communities related to unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS really need serious attention. With churches being among of the biggest and most influential non-governmental organizations in the country, churches have a pivotal role to play in order to help curb social and welfare problems in the community. The government's interest in churches as NGO's is based on their organizational infrastructure, human resources and their credibility amongst people (Koegelenberg 1995).

In this chapter the social challenges that are currently facing the Church will be investigated and these will be placed in the national context. In this chapter, the specific socio-economic challenges arising out of the area of Ondangwa and Oshakati will be analysed with references to the dimensions of poverty identified. Demographic information (2001 National Housing and Population Census), and interviews with the target population (informal settlements inhabitants) and secondary sources (clergy) are used to inform this analysis of the area. Such analysis of the social context will enable the researcher to define the nature of poverty in these communities. This will enable the researcher, in the final chapter, to analyse the extent and appropriateness of the approach of the Church in this area to the challenge of poverty.

5. 2 SURVERY PARTICIPANTS (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA)

The study was conducted in the five largest shanty-areas in Ondangwa and in another five in Oshakati in the Oshana Region, northern Namibia (the former homeland of Owamboland). A total number of 100 respondents were interviewed comprising 50 in Ondangwa and 50 in Oshakati. In order to source information on the social challenges facing the Church, identical questionnaires consisting of qualitative and quantitative questions written in English, but translated into the people's vernacular "Oshiwambo" language were used for the entire population. The information is based on data from informal inhabitants (man and women) who live in the informal settlements around the two abovementioned towns of northern Namibia. The informants represent a variety of ages (from 20 to 59 years old) and ethnic groups (Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi and Ombalantu). Perceptions were obtained from (target population) informal inhabitants and (secondary sources) clergy from different denominations in Ondangwa and Oshakati townships.

The demographic data in this study cover information on marital status, age group, ethnic affiliation, religion/denominational affiliation, income status per head of household, household members (number of dependants/people living in household) and the level of education (Questions 1-3). The study reveals that the majority of respondents are single and some are cohabiting, a trend that indicates that households in the communities studied is single-headed households. It was found that most households consists more young people dependants than adults. It is clear that most of the respondents are migrants from rural areas that migrated to urban areas seeking for employment as it is a general trend in most informal settlements around the globe. The average of length of time in Ondangwa and Oshakati for most migrants in this study is fifteen years. The majority of migrants live in informal settlements. It was interesting to note that when answering to the questionnaires several respondents felt that it was difficult to choose the most challenging socio-economic problem in their community as all were regarded as equally important. The findings reveal that unemployment status of household heads is high and it is rated at 90%. About 13% of household heads were reported to have formal employment, 28% informal employment, while 59% have other forms of getting income. This means that there is a high unemployment rate in the informal settlements studied. Nearly half of the household heads were reported to earn between N$300-1000 a month, and this implies that the majority of the respondents live in absolute poverty. The study reveals that 43% of the respondents have no education at all, 46% primary education, while 11% received Junior Secondary education.

It was observed that most of the houses in the informal settlements are made of poor quality (corrugated iron sheet). This appears to be the general pattern all the world over. It was also observed that 10% of the respondents live in bricks house, while 90% live in corrugated iron sheets (shacks). 80% of the houses are characterised as poor housing. Over 80% of the respondents reported having no water at their plots; only approximately 20% of respondents reported having water. Further investigation/research can be done to determine the link between corrugated iron shacks and water services (Questions 6-7). The water shortage in the informal settlements studied indicates that there is a poor hygiene/sanitation condition. Approximately 100% of the respondents indicated to have no electricity at their property/plots. The lack of electricity at most of these houses in the informal settlements studied, indicates that school going children face problems when it comes to their learning process and in particular when they need to do their homework at home.

Residents face serious problems with food storage as there is no electricity. It is possible that there could be ways in which the inhabitants could make moneymaking money, but due to the lack of electricity, they cannot do so. The majority of respondents, over 90% reported that they have access to ablution facilities *(access to ablution facilities indicated in this study meant that these facilities are shared).* About 100% of the respondents have no toilet facilities (flushing toilet) at their plots; therefore some people suffer from diseases like diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid. This happens because only few families have pit latrines toilets whereas the majority had none. The absence of toilet facilities at these informal houses raises a great concern and can contribute to poor public health in the towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati.

The floods of 2008 and 2010 also added to the suffering because families lost their belongings. Many people in the area studied (Ondangwa and Oshakati) now feel hopeless. The poor urban communities also face the terrible plight of poor access to employment opportunities, housing (better housing), and inadequate access to land that they can use for resettlement. Our country has the twin features of highly developed communities on the one hand and extremely deprived and disadvantaged communities on the other.

Table 8: Age of Respondents

Age range	Number
10 – 19	0
20- 29	23
30 -39	24
40 - 49	39
50 -59	14
60 -69	0

Table 9: Marital Status of Respondents

Martial Status	Ondangwa		Oshakati	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Single	7	12	6	10
Married	5	3	3	2

Divorced	2	1	1	0
Separated	5	2	2	4
cohabiting	6	7	13	9

Table 10: Level of education of Respondents

Level of education	Ondangwa	Oshakati
No education	23	20
Grade 1 - 4	14	18
Grade 5 - 7	5	9
Grade 8 - 10	8	3
Grade 11 - 12	0	0
Other	0	0

Table 11: Duration stay in the location

Years in present location	Male	Female
≤ 7	14	10
8 12	10	12
> 12 17	25	29

5.2.1 The household

The most immediate social entity for people in the shanty-areas is the household *(egumbo)*. The 'classical" definition of a household is a social and economic unit whose members are related by marriage or blood, living under the same roof, pooling economic resources and "eating from the same pot". However, very few households in the shanty-areas of Ondangwa and Oshakati adhere to this definition, and they differ significantly both in size, composition and social stability. Based on the answers to Question 5, there is much overcrowding with more than one family to a shack. This is because of high rents and shortage of housing. This

overcrowding has effects on health, particularly the rate of tuberculosis and gastroenteritis. Given the significant familial ties migrants have both in their rural place of origin as well as in the urban area, it is not surprisingly that most migrants, especially when they first arrive in Ondangwa and Oshakati, stay with family members. In fact, there is a vast array of extended familial relations living in the same house. There are various types of relatives that migrants live with including uncles, cousins, brothers-in-law, siblings, children, spouses or partners, and even neighbours from the rural area (village). The average household size ranges from 3 to 8 persons (members). Moreover, households typically consist of a small nuclear core, with extended family and non-relatives members. Many of these stay in the household for limited periods of time, and a distant-and non-relatives are normally expected to contribute to the household economy or eat elsewhere. The instability of the households represented in the table (table 9) above, is indicated by the fact that the majority of respondents in the shanty - areas are single while others are cohabiting without any legal status, and only few are married in church or at the magistrate.

Many of the urban poor in Northern Namibia live in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, where many households are headed by women. Households thus differ considerably as regards the extent to which they function as a coherent social and economic unit. Comparing the five social categories (single, married, divorced, separated, and cohabiting) stated in the table above, employed men tend to have relatively large dwellings and large household units. Formal employment implies a higher and steady income, and is found both in government and in the private sector. The size of the household is not solely a result of having a stable nuclear family and many children. There is also a considerable pressure on such households to take in relatives as well as non-relatives who need a place to stay. Unemployed men will normally be in a very different situation. Without a fixed income to build larger dwellings and support a family, their household units tend to be smaller and more unstable. There are fewer members outside the core nuclear unit, both due to limited means and space and because unemployed men are less likely to have additional cohabitants. Female headed households generally have a lower family income than male headed households, and tend to live in small dwellings (shacks) and have smaller household units. They also have fewer relatives or non-relatives living with them than male-headed households do.

In sum, the household remains an important social unit, but is under considerable pressure. It tends to be smallest and most unstable among the poorest sections of the shanty population. However, while poor male-headed households tend to break up and leave men single for periods before they enter new cohabitant ships, poor female headed households maintain a core unit of mother and children. For the richer and larger household units, the main problem is to relate to the pressure for sharing resources with relatives and non-relatives moving into the dwelling unit.

Poverty is an evil of the most devastating proportions. Those who are born into it are unlikely to ever really escape. The anxieties that arise from the constant struggle resources and the mental exhaustion that never allows the mind to rest makes poverty the greatest enemy of all.

Imaginative interventions are now more urgent than ever before. These interventions should focus on the family households themselves. Although there are still many traditional families, there is nevertheless a noticeable acceleration towards more and more one-parent headed households. There are physical needs and psychological needs to be met. There is isolation to overcome and hope to be rekindled. What institution is better placed than the Church to urgently take up the challenge?

5. 2. 2 Employment and cash resources

Table 12: Source of income

Source of income	Ondangwa	Oshakati
Formal employment	5	8
Informal employment	17	11
Pensions	0	0
Others	28	31

The answers to questions 10 & 11 indicate that, without any doubt, unemployment is the greatest problem in Namibia, especially in disadvantaged communities. However, all informants have one thing in common: they are all in the lower socio-economic strata of society. Without any income, there is no food and people may resort to crime in order to meet their basic needs. Given Namibia's post-colonial economic structure with a base in mainly natural resources exploitation and an underdeveloped industrial sector, the prospects for

formal wage employment are limited in Namibia. Because of these unequal distributions the majority of respondents stated that "there are at least two Namibias." One Namibia consists of the white population and the emerging post-independence black elite group. They live mostly in urban areas and enjoy the incomes and amenities of the Western European country. The majority of the black population mostly urban informal inhabitants live in abject poverty. In addition, this same post-colonial structure means that migrants do not have the education and skills training for jobs they find in urban areas. Although some migrants are able to secure low paying, low status formal employment such as domestic workers or taxi drivers, these afford them only a marginal ability to support themselves. Most of the people who migrate from rural areas to urban areas with the aspiration of finding formal employment are, solely disappointed. In an effort to mitigate the effects of unemployment and urban poverty, many of them turn to the informal sector.

The absence of employment and the means to satisfy basic needs such as: food, proper shelters, clothes and other used or known life supportive systems, accord unemployed masses too much free time for ill-use such as: alcohol and drugs abuse, prostitution, criminal and violent acts, robbery, stock-and other property theft, shoplifting and house breaking for survival purposes. Urban settings become a place of retrogression and dissolution, instead of being a haven and anchorage for progression and development. Men do a variety of manual jobs, usually on an ad hoc basis. The main income-earning option available for unemployed men in occasional and poorly paid work such as cleaning yards for people in the formal town, unloading trucks from South Africa and loading trucks going to Angola, getting hold of and reselling cheap imported items such as watches and perfumes, or do poorly paid agricultural work for farmers in the vicinity of Ondangwa and Oshakati.

At the same time, however, the urban setting and the informal economy represent opportunities that women do not have in the rural areas. Women in urban areas can (and often do) own their own dwellings and plots, which (despite the general insecurity of tenure in urban shanty-towns) distinguishes them significantly from rural women. Furthermore, participation in the formal economy implies an income that may be small, but nevertheless puts women in a relatively independent position. Women are most commonly involved in the production and sale of local brew *(otombo or epwaka)* or "fast food" *(okapana)* from fish and meat, either in the shanty town itself or in markets in the formal town. Some are also involved in trade with second hand clothing, baskets, traditional medicine, fresh fish, wild

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nuts and berries or agricultural products. Many young people are jobless; some of them only do part-time jobs just to put something on the table. The common source of living for many in the community is to sell liquor and run shebeens (illegal bars). These establishments are unsafe for customers, and the owners are at risk of being arrested by the police due to the illegal nature of their business. The social and economic structures of Namibia collude to keep migrants out of formal wage employment, forcing them into menial jobs and perpetuating a system of exploitation by the owners of the means of production.

The answers to Question 13 indicate that one of the government's responsibilities is to create employment for the people. This is critical for people's happiness and for them to be able to meet their basic needs. The unemployment rate in Oshana Region is at 40.3% (Chapter 4), and the major employing industries are: Private and Public Services, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Agriculture and Small Scale Traders. The majority of urban dwellers who cannot find employment in the formal sector seek livelihoods in informal economy. Women, children, young people, the elderly, and those with disabilities, and recent migrants into marginalised urban areas disproportionately bear the greatest burden of poverty.

Unemployment is one on the increase in Namibia's cities. The rate is extremely high, and like poverty, is a factor that increases the extent of some of the other social problems and may be a cause and/or result of poverty. As a direct consequence of the influx from rural areas, the northern Namibian townships expanded. As a result, the urban poor are forced to live in the unplanned squatter and slums areas, because they cannot meet the cost of house rentals.

Major causes of poverty have been identified as relatively low economic growth during the Namibian pre-independence decade, population growth as well as rising unemployment. People are struggling with inadequate incomes caused by low wages, also by unemployment and robbery particularly on pay day. In the urban areas, poverty is directly linked to wage-earning activities, while in the rural areas it is linked to agriculture and environmental factors. In the process of analysing government services provision entities, it has been established that, like other governments on the continent, the Namibian Government continues to face challenges in addressing the effects of urbanisation. The delivery of a provision services is not strategic enough to alleviate the extent of the urban-dwellers' suffering.

The government should consider relieving the present overcrowding through providing soft loans for the purchase of building materials. The loans will help the urban poor to construct

the houses. It is further hoped that a noticeable difference will be evident if the urban poor are allowed to participate in both planning and implementing local development endeavours at all levels. For this to happen, local authority laws and regulations need to be examined and those that hinder the participation of the urban poor in legitimate activities should be revised. Another important area requiring government support is the encouragement of informal small-scale businesses by way of setting up a credit system, which would be available to, and suitable for disadvantaged groups. As we all know, the Namibian government has made some provision to address poverty. Those provisions are: the aged have access to social pensions, mothers can access the child support grant, and local government has some resources available to assist households like drought relief distribution. However, a lot still needs to be done in the area of poverty eradication. The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, needy and marginalised.

5. 3 KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Table 13: Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Ondangwa and Oshakati Informal Inhabitants

Challenges	Frequency
Poverty (Poor living standard)	100
Unemployment	100
HIV & AIDS	100
Basic needs and service delivery (clean water, electricity and housing)	96
Inadequate sanitation	90
Orphans and vulnerable children	84
Natural Disasters (floods)	82
Increasing number of informal settlements (overcrowding)	70
Land Tenure and Ownership	70
Street children	64
Alcohol and drug abuse	60
High incidence of crime	56

Based on the findings of a questionnaire that was distributed to inhabitants of five selected informal settlements in Ondangwa and five selected informal settlements Oshakati townships

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(chapter 4) the researcher sought to gain insight into the way in which the church is currently conducting its mission work, and to find where it falls short in meeting this objective. It is important to note the place of Namibia's history in the problems that she faces today. Apartheid caused the disenfranchisement of many, whether through education, employment, living standard, wealth creation opportunities, and so on, thereby playing a huge role in the abject poverty experienced by many today. It is also imperative to pay attention to the economic effects of HIV/AIDS by looking at the drop in life expectancy. With this sharp decrease, it is clear that while the number of economically dependent members of society continues to increase, the portion of the population on whom they are economically dependent is decreasing, with life expectancy falls as 48 years of age.

It is also stated that, "Although classified as a lower middle income country, Namibia, due to legacies of its colonial and apartheid history, has one of the most unequal distributions of income and wealth in the world, with the situation of the bulk of its population more similar to that of their counterparts in Least Developed Countries. Redressing this tremendous inequality and improving the status of the large majority of the population in a legal and orderly manner is feasible only in the medium and long-term, which will require substantial resources. The country also faces a number of other economic and social challenges, including poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, inadequate economic growth, high levels of unemployment, inadequate capacity, and low levels of industrialisation, which also require additional resources"(Republic of Namibia, 2007. *National Planning Commission. An Analysis of the Economic Challenges of Namibia and How the Donor Community Should Assist.* Country Paper for the International Conference on Development Cooperation with Middle Income Countries (MICs), Midrid, Spain. March 2007).

What is the first image that comes to mind when one ponders questions such as: "What are the major social problems amongst our communities in modern day Namibia?" Is it a picture of unemployed people standing alongside roads and at traffic lights in our cities and towns begging for money or somebody to give them a job? Is it the picture of the little baby one have saw on the eight o'clock news born with HIV/AIDS and who is now dying as a result of this, or maybe the horrific stories of sexual and violent crimes committed against children, women and even babies? Namibia today is facing many social and welfare problems. Three of these are very prominent: poverty, unemployment, and HIV/AIDS. Social and welfare

problems in our communities related to unemployment, poverty and HIV/AIDS really need serious attention.

Poverty is a complex phenomenon because there are many ways of measuring and defining poverty, and a vast array of interactions between causes and effect. These remain problems that need to be addressed urgently. These all are scenes and stories that affect one emotionally.

Although Namibia has now been independent for more than two decades (1990-2010), it continues to be faced with significant challenges. The harshest of these is the massive poverty which is the daily experience of the majority of its citizens and is a challenge that we faced then and continue to face now in post-independent Namibia. Large numbers of people are unemployed and many who find work are in low-wage and low-skill jobs. Significant numbers cannot find employment because of poor or no education and training. Also they live in parts of the country that have little attraction for investors and human resource practitioners. Maybe one does not think of such negative events only, but positive thoughts do not make these disappear or become less real.

Churches elicit the highest degree of trust amongst all NGO's, among people in Namibia. Churches have a long history of caring for those in need through social services institutions, educational networks, refugee services and the like. Such services continue to be an integral part of the mission of the church and they reflect God's unconditional love for his creation. The Church played a prominent role in social life in the past, that is why it was good to be associated with the church at that time; but today in a free and independent Namibia, the Church is quiet. The Namibian church is challenged to be on the forefront when it comes to issues which are fundamental to real life, for instance economic, political and social issues. The church should become a fully active participant in helping to solve the socio-economic problems that affect the Namibian society so deeply such as poverty. Christian Welfare Organizations like the ELCIN's Diakonia and Social Services (Ministry) are committed to working amongst the rural poor. Within the new situation in the context of the post-independent Namibian society with a heightening HIV/AIDS prevalence, a large number of orphans and vulnerable children, an increasing alcohol and drugs use rate, gross disparities between the rich and the poor, a rising number of informal settlements, and so many more problems are challenging the Church to put more emphasis on diakonia and being committed to working against poverty and marginalisation. Access to housing is inadequate and urban

service delivery such as: water, electricity, sewage and waste disposal represent severe problems. Informal settlement dwellers are vulnerable to eviction, especially if they live in so-called impermanent houses such as iron shacks or traditional houses. The formalisation of informal settlements forces poorer residents into other informal areas. It is also important to note that although the above mentioned factors pose the greatest challenges to society (answers to Question 8 put to the informal inhabitants and Question 1 put to the clergy), we need to understand that all the other factors also pose themselves as challenges for the church, and should not be ignored at all. In fact, for each informal settlement, each problem will pose itself as a unique challenge, and will thus have to be approached in a systematic way as well. Many of these issues are clearly cross-cutting, affecting and impacting each of the other challenges. The issues that do not fall among the most pressing concerns stated above should therefore also be taken seriously, as they often features as a result of the issues listed

5. 3. 1 Poverty (poor living standard)

The poor form a majority of the world's population. In vast areas poverty is expanding rather than shrinking. In disadvantaged communities there is also an alarming amount of poverty which is often hidden from those in the mainstream of life. Most households in the informal settlements lack organizational structures that would permit them to address or seize opportunities that require collective action. As individual households, they lack the connections that would bring them much of the information that can lead to better skills, to more productive activities, to public services, to better health, to technical improvements of their housing and generally to participation in decisions affecting their lives. Many people do not have their own transport and have to use public transport like taxis to get to hospitals, shopping centers, etc. Some people do not have money for this (taxis) and normally walk into town.

Table 14: Type of dwellings visited by researcher

Type	Ondangwa	Oshakati
Brick house	11	14
Iron shack	39	36
Water supply access for household		
Piped water in dwelling	0	0

Piped water on site	13	20
Public tap	37	28
Canal	0	2
Fuel for lighting		
Electricity direct from authority	3	5
Electricity from other	0	0
Gas	0	0
Paraffin	16	25
Candles	31	20
Type of toilet		
Flushing toilet	0	0
Pit latrine	50	50

Poverty and exclusion are rising challenges in all African countries, Namibia included. The poverty situation in Namibia is extremely disturbing. Since Namibia's independence in 1990, poverty has been one of the development challenges. It has many dimension encompassing income/expenditure/consumption, low human development, social exclusion, ill being, lack of capacity and function, relative deprivation, vulnerability, uncertain livelihoods and lack of means to meet the basic needs. Rapid urbanisation in Namibia has occurred largely as a result of high rates of population growth, drought, and a decline in the ability of the land to support growing populations. Poverty is a universal reality of Namibia and can be found both at the urban and rural levels. But the rural Namibians, typically, have access to land to raise crops and herd their animals, which is not available to urban dwellers. There are, however, also similarities. Approximately 40% of the Namibian population lives in poverty, especially those who are in the informal settlements, with unemployment being a major problem, particularly in the north. The current national unemployment rate is estimated to be 31%. The highest unemployment rate is found among young people in urban areas, notably women. The majority of urban dwellers who cannot find employment in the formal sector seek livelihoods in the informal sector. Poverty is not only a matter of lacking funds; it also refers to a lack of participation and often results in social exclusion.

While several measures and policies have been set in place to tackle the issue of poverty, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy of 1998, Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, and so on, huge efforts on the part of the government and all stakeholders (including the church) still need to take place in order to combat this problem. In this country of only 2 million, approximately 35% are estimated to be living below the poverty line of US$1 a day, with a total of 56% living below US$2 a day. Moreover, the majority (over 60%) of the population living in rural areas, which further limits their access to services and facilities that may alleviate their plight to some degree. The most serious challenge to democracy in Namibian Society today is the level of inequality and the fact that this inequality coincides so neatly with the cleavage between blacks and whites. Even though the homeland policy (system) has formally given away to provincial geographic arrangements, this has done little to alter the highly skewed ownership of and access to land property. The answers to Questions 6 &.7 states that urban migration breeds poverty and the consequent social erosion, promoting the gap between rich and poor. Such a scenario favours human exploitation and unjust working conditions. Although the poor maintain the city by providing services for the city's wealthier population, they are not accorded equal rights with the city's rich. As people move from the country (rural areas) into the cities and towns, they continue to practice a rural traditional life-style of living together as an extended family. They build shacks and brew traditional beer in their tiny places. Due to poverty, the urban poor resort to running small-scale businesses along the roads; their profits are minimal and they live "hand-to-mouth."

Since Namibia's independence in 1990, the mushrooming of shantytowns and informal settlements around cities and towns has occurred. Many people in the communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati live in informal housing (shacks). The poor are cramped tightly into small shack in shanty towns. There is no overall plan and dwellings are built as and when space permits. Houses of poor quality and good quality are founded side by side. There are huge numbers of unofficial small shacks put up to accommodate the growing numbers of migrating labourers, and these unofficial camps have no infrastructures. Most of the informal shacks are made out of metal, wood, plastic or any combination thereof, some of which leak during rainy and windy weather, and they are in poor condition. People use firewood as their main fuel. Most houses have no electricity, sanitation, or fresh water supply, while a few others do.

The challenge is that, in dealing with urban housing, there are three issues that surface: adequacy, distribution, and safety. The Church in Namibia, particularly the ELCIN, should be concerned with the shantytowns and slums situation of the surrounding communities by including a housing agenda on the annual plans. It is helpful to encourage the rich to visit the nearby slums to feel and see the circumstances in which the poor people are living. The dearth of municipal services in these areas in the areas of water and sanitation, roads development, electricity provision, etc, thus compromising the health of the people residing in these areas.

In assessing the poverty issue, it is also important to take note of the gross disparities between the rich and the poor. Despite Namibia having one of the higher GDP per capita among its Sub-Saharan counterparts, it also has one of the most unequal distributions of income and wealth in the world, with a Gin co-efficient of 0.66. This is well emphasized in the analysis on the economic challenges facing the country, in which the National Planning Commission (2007) states: "Reducing inequality in income distribution is one of the major and most difficult challenges facing Namibia, where over 60% of the national income is captured by the richest 10% (or less) of the population. In fact, the present state of the remaining 90% of the population of Namibia is comparable to their counterparts in the African Last Developed Countries…The high level of concentration of income and wealth has been inherited from the colonial pat and is deep-rooted; with a large majority of Namibians marginalized in all aspects of their life. The very high degree of inequality is detrimental to sustained and equitable economic growth, poverty reduction and social cohesion." It is also important to note in the context of this study, that poverty is indeed a big factor in determining the extent to which people are affected by some of the other challenges highlighted in the questionnaire, and by the respondents. For example, street children often come from homes where they are living in poverty, and are in some cases even sent to the streets to look for money by their parents/caretakers. This may also result in children dropping out school (e.g. because they do not have the means to support their presence in school, or because it is more beneficial to the family for the child to be working or begging for money), causing a continuous cycle of poverty for that family. In some families, children (particularly orphans and vulnerable children) have to go to school without having breakfast, without putting shoes on and without warm clothes even during windy or cold days (Answers to Question8).

It is true that in many African countries, Namibia included, countries' wealth (economy) is very inequitably distributed. The Namibian economy is characterized by gross structural imbalances. Corruption has permeated the entire Namibian society to the extent that every one is a part of it either by involvement or by being a victim. Many political leaders in Namibia such as elected regional governors, towns and constituency councilors have amassed greater power to the extent that the people they lead have become like their property while the national resources could be termed as their personal kiosks. Corruption destroys our good social, ethical, and moral standards and values. Some of these standards are: trust, honesty, faith, integrity of our calling, and good image of a person/institution, reputation and our respectable standing in society. About two thirds of all Namibians live below the poverty line. Namibia has the highest levels of poverty and the highest incidence of income inequality in the world.

Other indicators of poverty include the non-unavailability of clean water, low literacy rates, poor housing, low consumption of energy, and poor school enrolment. The urban poor in the cities and towns of Namibia also struggle with regard to energy and power. The urban poor use firewood, for cooking as well as paraffin and candles for lighting. In the unplanned areas where the urban poor dwell, they often experience a number of mishaps. Due to their need for power, the urban poor tend to interfere with electric cables. As a result, electric cables can be found on the roads, which is unsafe for children and the residents of the community. In most cases they connect power illegally and without proper knowledge of handling electric cables, which results in various disasters. As indicated, paraffin and candles are the most common source of lighting for the poor. Due to overcrowding and a lack of housing space, paraffin is frequently handled carelessly, causing accidents in which children invariably end up as victims. Due to the proximity of shacks, when one catches alight, many other homes suffer the same fate and are destroyed. People lose their possessions and sometimes even their loved ones. It is very painful to see people suffering like this whilst community leaders, those in power in local municipalities, are cheating community members by not delivering proper and quality services to the people. Both Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Councils, like other new local governments, do not have capability to cater for the needs of the fast growing population of urban poor. They misuse funds, use cheap materials for the construction of infrastructures such as roads and houses, hire cheap, inexperienced contractors to build those houses, and eventually share what little is left over. Community leaders are greedy, selfish and corrupt. They do not meet people's needs. All these point to the fact that Namibia is

becoming ensnared in a culture of poverty. Another concern is that growing poverty is leading to increased loss of political freedom and national dignity

The most important single cause of Namibia's social and economic problems is certainly bad government. Poor political leadership is guaranteed to keep a poor country poor and to turn a progressive nation into a retrogressive one. Due to the complexity of Namibia's problems this sentiment could be welcomed by some people and questioned by others. This disparity is obvious everywhere in Namibia-especially between rural and urban populations, between white and blue collar workers, between women and men in equal employment etc. Other indicators of poverty include the unavailability of clean water and sanitation, low literacy rates, poor housing, low consumption of energy, and poor school enrolment. All these point to the fact that Namibia is becoming ensnared in a culture of poverty. Another concern is that, growing poverty is leading to increased loss of political freedom and national dignity.

Poverty has been linked to HIV/AIDS vulnerability in a variety of ways. In addition to a lower immune-response system due to nutritional deprivation, many people living in extreme poverty exhibit a 'paralysis of poverty' whereby people have a fatalistic approach to little and thus consider HIV preventative measures futile. This sense of powerlessness leads people to forgo health promoting behaviours, and instead, immediate economic necessity becomes an overriding concern. For families living in extreme poverty, it is difficult to think of protecting oneself from HIV infection when immediate economic needs such as food and shelter must be met. The poor are in no-win situation: they are particularly vulnerable to inflation; but anti-inflationary policies aimed at reducing demand will hit the poor hardest through their effects on employment.

Ongoing public health initiatives and a functional public health system are in place, resulting in high levels of awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Both intermediate hospitals and their affiliated clinics in the Ondangwa and Oshakati townships of northern Namibia; provide medical services to the people in those areas, including treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. Regarding the hospitals and clinics, it has been reported that sexually transmitted diseases appear to afflict mostly young people in their teens and twenties. The patients are always advised to practice safe sex, as well as to come with their partners; rather than alone, for treatment. Nevertheless, even people with high levels of knowledge about HIV/AIDS often engage in high-risk sexual behaviours, emphasizing that information is just one determinant in the complex process of bringing about behaviour change. In addition, poverty,

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work, migrancy, mobility, and inequitable gender relations have been highlighted as critical factors in the rapid increase in HIV prevalence rates in Namibia. The poor of the earth present a multiple challenge to the mission of the Church today. Indeed, the absence of the Church among the poor in their immediate surroundings is a sign of its betrayal of the gospel.

5. 3. 2 Basic needs and service delivery

The answers to Question 9 indicate that due to unemployment, low income, unhealthy habits, and lack of adequate housing, people's health can be severely affected. People who do not have gainful employment or who earn low wages often do not have the funds to seek health care. Those who live in the shacks in the community, have to use one water tap (sometimes two taps are located on each street) and the environment is not healthy. They cannot afford healthy and fresh food, and due to living in poor sanitary conditions and unhealthy environment, their lives are affected. Another major concern is the sanitation situation. While most settlements have access to clean water through communal taps, most of the informal settlements inhabitants indicated that they have no toilets that is why some household use bush' or "open air" as toilets Again, many people living in the squatter camp area will share one toilet which is located alongside the streets in the communities. Everybody has to share one or two toilets in each street. Because of poverty in the community, people have many different diseases, like HIV/AIDS, diabetes, high blood pressure, and so forth.

Urban migration does not seem to slow down, taking hundreds of thousands of women, men, youth and children to towns in search of a better life. The large majority of these end up in poverty-stricken informal settlements' pathetic conditions in urban areas. During the research study conducted in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, it has noticed that these communities are characterised by many faces of poverty such as: squalid shanties are pressed together in precarious balance. The majority of houses are made of zincs, bricks and corrugated irons. There are few private toilets in the form of pit latrines where others share, but some use bush instead. These settlements have mainly communal services, such as water standpipes and ablution blocks shared by groups of households. The numbers of the water taps are not high enough and population is high; that is why there is always long queue and why some fetch water from the canals. Sanitary facilities are particularly lacking or badly maintained, roads drainage are sub-standard and streetlights are few and far between, while in some of the informal settlements there are no streetlights or electricity at all. There are only a

handful of taps with running water to serve the whole area, and there are no proper sewage facilities. Refuse and garbage are seldom collected where the urban poor live and, as a result, these areas propagate disease, epidemics and infections of all kinds.

Most households in the "formal" areas of both Ondangwa and Oshakati towns possess individual service connections for water supply and sewerage. In this situation it is remarkable that community representatives in the empirical research study from the informal settlements in the area where this study was conducted indicated in their answers to Question 13, that their top prioritised needs were as follows: 1) provision of land, 2) sound relations between Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Councils and the communities, 3) water supply-hereby giving very high priority to issue of good governance based on popular participation.

It is very painful to see people suffering like this whilst our community leaders, those in power in local municipalities, are cheating community members by not delivering proper and quality services to the people. Community leaders are greedy, selfish, and corrupt. They do not meet people s' needs.

Urbanisation does not substitute a new modern culture for the old traditional one. People still use candles, gas, paraffin, and firewood. Public institutions such as schools, churches, hospitals (clinics), police stations and shopping centres are far away from the informal inhabitants. Most households in the informal settlements lack organisational structures that would permit them to address problems or seize opportunities that require collective actions. As individual households, they lack the connections that would bring them much of the information that provides access to better skills, to more productive activities, to public services, to better health, to technical improvements of their housing and generally to participation in decisions affecting their lives. Such challenges moreover should not be allowed to conceal the fact that these processes need to take place at the level of personal and family development, for it is at this level that changes must eventually take root and spread. In short, a holistic approach to development is called for. Organised religion is a neglected factor in relation to development. Human values, aspirations and world view shape the development-related practices and groups which carry the actual burden of economic upliftment. That is, religion can serve directly as a vehicle (catalyst) for development initiatives, and indirectly in determining the form of social practices and institutions that underpin such initiatives. The economic environment of contemporary African communities is a grim one, known to be burdened with skyrocketing unemployment, broken families and

social disintegration. The current drought ravaging the subcontinent exacerbates this grim environment. Local-level church institutions have stood against these dislocating influences on individuals, families and communities.

5. 3. 3 Increasing number of informal settlements

It has been reported that an explosive rate of urbanisation, due to the migration of people from rural areas to towns and cities in Namibia in search of employment and better economic conditions, has been taking place since political independence in 1990. Independence also brought along a space for free mobility. One can easily traverse from one corner of the country to the other without the hindrances of the past. Though many of the migrants are unable to get jobs, they prefer to live as squatters in and around towns, leading to the emergence and phenomenal growth of shanties and informal settlements in almost all cities and towns in Namibia viz. Windhoek, Ondangwa, Oshakati, WalvisBay, Swakopmund, Rundu and Katima Mulilo. This has resulted in the rapid growth of numerous informal settlements and backyard shacks.

Namibia is rapidly being urbanized and most of the urban poor are living in informal settlements, which indicate a significant challenge facing urban development. The answers to Question 8 indicate that establishment of new settlements combined with freedom of movements, allowed and inspired many people, especially young people, both women and men, to rush to urban centres in search of work or for mire adventures. The result of such care free movements is lack of food and accommodations, meeting new friends either for good or bad, no proper education for their children, no proper health care, no church services, the increasing of cultural shocks and learning of new survival mechanisms. The mushrooming of shanty towns and informal settlements *("uumbashu")* around cities and towns became common. The causes of the housing problem are the growing poverty, largely due to the unfavourable macro-economic environment and other causes, such as limited employment opportunities and low levels of production. However, the rapid amassing of people in towns and cities can have tremendous impact and managing the urban environment sustainably has become a major global challenge.

The high rate of urbanization in African countries in general, and in Namibia in particular, poses a continued challenge to the church. The uncontrolled level of migration from rural settlements to the urban centres is threatening to overwhelm sewerage and other vulnerable

facilities in towns, including basic services such as; water, electricity, road, and housing. Most who are forced to live in informal settlements are migrants from rural areas attracted to the urban life by an expectation of a better way of life. This has not happened, of course, and there is widespread disillusionment. People experience even worse conditions than what they did when living in the rural areas. In order to survive, some people, especially women engaged themselves in sexual risky behaviours and against this background; HIV/AIDS flourishes and has already claimed many lives. In Namibia, rapidly growing informal settlements on the outskirts of towns are generally associated with localised deforestation, increasing waste management problems, increasing crime, poverty, limited access to adequate sanitation and isolated incidents associated with the spread of communicable, water-borne diseases. There is also the growing problem of unemployment.

The Church in Namibia generally teaches and preaches to a poor and hungry society of people who are living a life full of socio-economic challenges (problems) and longing for a better life. It works among those who need land for resettlement in a free society and those in need of employment. Those social conditions are a major factor in the kind of society we see around crimes and to migratie into towns because they long for a better life. Many of the people who migrated from rural areas to towns are to be found in pathetic condition and living in corrugated-iron shacks and shanties built from carton boxes or plastic. This is a difficult situation (context) which has led many people to lose sight of their future. In the process of trying to find solutions for poverty and unemployment, the Church should find ways and means of joining hands with other agents in order to help communities who are in desperate need of food and shelter. In this way the Church will be able to share the gospel message with communities. Poverty and hunger have become the most burning issues for Churches to handle.

5. 3. 4 The problem of unemployment

Answers to Question 8 indicate that poverty is the most pressing issue in Namibia. It is at the heart of all the important problems such as: social, spiritual or moral. Unemployment is both a cause and result of the poverty situation in which people find themselves. It is a cause, since without a job a person has no income and cannot pay for proper housing, food, medical care, and education for him/herself and his/her children. It is a result because poor health caused by an unbalanced diet, poor housing and lack of appropriate education (all on account of

property) prevents a person from finding and keeping gainful employment. Unemployment is in many instances also the result of isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability and powerlessness. "Unemployment in Namibia's urban areas currently estimated at 31.5%; and about 37% of women and 27% of men in the labour force are unemployed" (Namibia Vision 2030: 170). In its ministry and approach to the urban context and the needs of urbanized people, the church has to redefine its role and methods and adapt its ministry to a new and changing situation (context). Every new generation is trapped anew in a vicious circle of chronic community poverty and crime which is perpetuated from generation to generation, often through gangsters. The ill health of poor people is a result of their poverty situation and poverty can also lead them being drawn into a vicious circle of violence. With the advent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poor people are being drawn into a new and appalling vicious circle of sexual promiscuity, sexual violence, AIDS and poverty. There is great controversy about whether AIDS is the result of the HIV virus or of poverty. Whatever the case may be, the poor are more vulnerable and most likely to be affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and its consequences. When poverty in Namibia is contextualised in the historical framework of systemic exploitation, and when the vulnerability of the poor to the AIDS pandemic is considered, it comes clear that urgent comprehensive redistributive measures aimed at alleviating poverty are essential. The real vulnerability of the poor is exposed in the case of violent crimes during which bodily harm is inflicted, thus disrupting their already tenuous social fabric even further. Most of these crimes are committed within households, and are seldom reported. Women and children are abused, neglected and exploited. Women are often the victims of cruel violent crimes that undermine not only their dignity but their ability to earn money.

Poverty and underdevelopment can be caused by population growth increase, bad governance, and colonialism. Poverty and unemployment are amongst the greatest challenges facing Namibians today.

The Namibian population is only 2 million people. Out of this population 40% is under the age of 15, 55% is of the working group 15-64 years old, and 5% is over 65 years of age. This means that less than 55% of the population that can be considered for employment as some of them are disabled and not fit employment. Yet, it is pathetic to note that the unemployment rate is 31%, higher for females (35.9%) than for male (26.8%). Unemployment is remarkably high among the youth; 40.4% for those aged 15-19; and 46.9% for those 20-24 years of age

(2001 National Housing and Population Census). Is the reason for this disparity perhaps due to lack of job opportunities or is it perhaps due to lack of money? Neither of the two options can be explained logically. One of the major reasons for this disparity is that, there is an imbalance in national economic distribution. The unemployment rate in Namibia is extremely high, and like poverty, is a factor that increases the occurrence of the other social problems and may be a cause and/or result of poverty. According to National Planning Commission (2007:10), "The current labour market situation in Namibia is characterised by people willing and able to work, but cannot find jobs. According to the 2004 Namibian Labour Force Survey, the overall unemployment rate in 2004 rose to 36.7% from 33.0% in 2000. The unemployment rate among youth (15 to 24 year olds) is much higher at about 60%, which is one of the highest in Africa. About two-thirds of the unemployed are in the most productive age group of 16-45 years; and more than half the labour force is unskilled and un-or semi-educated, which is as a result of the history of the country, as the unemployed tend to be primarily the previously disadvantages Africans." This description of the gravity of the unemployment problem in Namibia as stated by National Planning Commission, providides a clear indication of just how serious the situation is, and makes it clear that unemployment continues to remain a serious problem that can often inhibit people from progressing in their lives. For Namibia's small population (2 million people), the unemployment figures presented above are extremely high, and vary from region to region with some areas having an unemployment rate upwards of 40%.

Underemployment in itself is also an issue in this regard, with the national definition of employment leaving much to be desired, as it looks solely at whether a person has worked one hour over the course of a week. Hence, the unemployment rate can be quite deceiving, and therefore it is important to take into consideration those who may not be earning enough to provide themselves. Underemployment therefore goes hand-in-hand with poverty. In fact, according to a report by the Namibia Economic Society (2007), the unemployment rate, when combined with underemployment, could well exceed 60%. In addition, there is a high dependence (30%) on the agricultural sector as a source of employment, despite the fact that it only contributes less than 5% to GDP, illustrating a mismatch between 'the sectoral shares of employment and their contribution to GDP (National Planning Commission 2007). Few social actors beyond government, the religious community, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) pay attention to the quality of life of rural communities. With a high rate of unemployment in areas outside the major cities, it is no surprise that the mushrooming

of informal settlements countrywide has also become a new social challenge within itself, with urbanisation being the result of a search for a better living standard.

5. 3. 5 The challenge of HIV/AIDS

Today, HIV/AIDS has become a global (worldwide) social, economic and even a theological concern. It affects people from all kinds of backgrounds. This pandemic is one of the worst tragedies to have befallen humankind in the 21st century (UNAIDS Report 2010). Like all southern African communities, Namibia is in the epicentre of the current HIV/AIDS epidemic. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has claimed many lives of people and orphaned many children in Namibia. The Namibia Vision 2030 Report (2004) states, "The HIV/AIDS epidemic is likely to severely retard Namibia's achievement of its development goals and objectives...and affect the country's ability to provide health, education and other services, and impoverish individuals at the household level."

The first case of HIV/AIDS in Namibia was detected in 1986. Numerous attempts have been made by the government to mitigate the impact as well as the spread of the infection but still Namibia has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, and the epidemic is affecting every aspect of Namibian society. HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in Namibia. Life expectancy has dropped from 60 to 42 years of age in one decade. It is estimated by the National Planning Commission that by the year 2020; 20% of the GDP will be needed to cover the direct and indirect costs of HIV/AIDS (National Planning Commission 2001).

The HIV/AIDS is affects every aspect of Namibian society, and affects all individuals, families and communities, who are the fundamental building blocks of social and economic development. These impacts include, among others, a reduction in the population growth rate, alternations to the demographic structure of the population, economic losses through a reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as broader societal change as the nation comes to terms with its losses, and the need to care for the infected and affected (Answers to Questions 2&3 by Clergy). Answers to Question 8 indicate that the socio-economic impacts of HIV/AIDS in Namibia are therefore likely to be severe. There is a dynamic interaction between HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence. This is because of the number of deaths, because those who are dying are in the productive or working age groups, and because these are workers and civil servants serving the community. Paralleling these national impacts are

severe impacts on households and extended families. When answering to Questions 3&12, clergy stated that food security is being undermined, breadwinners are dying, and household coping strategies are under unprecedented strain. This has posed a threat to economic progress and human development by attacking the most economically productive age group and reversing gains in life expectancy and child survival.

The increasing burden on health budgets has stretched national and community resources to the limit, leaving no room for complacency or pretence about the magnitude of the problem. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to ravage our region and has reversed all development indexes, and thus promoting poverty, the oppression of women, and a shocking abuse of children. It is also exacerbating shortages of skilled workers in certain sectors, such as education and health. Poverty and HIV/AIDS have become interrelated problems in Namibia and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. This means that the poverty situation has contributed to the rise of HIV/AIDS and, on the other hand, HIV/AIDS has promoted the intensity of poverty in Namibia.

There seems to be a close connection between freedom, work and general mobility, rural-urban migration and HIV transmission because of an increase in sexual partners. Migrants display this behaviour because of being out of the reach of their families and friends, and because they use more alcohol. Some of the migrants often have considerable amounts of money to spend on commercial sex and that puts them at high risk of contacting HIV/AIDS. At Namibian shebeens, prostitution is practised openly and has to a certain extent become the norm of the day for destitute women who need money. The inter-relationship between HIV/AIDS and migration is not a simplistic model of social mobility leading to sexual risk-taking behaviour, but encompasses social and economic structural inequalities, fragmented social networks and significant rural and urban linkages. The relocation of police and militaries and the migration of many young men from rural to urban areas have affected the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poverty too is affecting the numbers, people indulgence in risky behaviour for economic reasons, and do not take precautions because of a fatalistic attitude. Illiterate people are also less informed about HIV/AIDS than the rest of the population.

Although these causes mentioned above, migration and poverty, probably do play a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS, the increasingly quick spread cannot be explained solely by them. Cultural beliefs, practices and traditions must be challenged wherever they lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Trying to understand the situation of HIV/AIDS, we are faced with questions

about the reasons for the existence of the disease and suffering, and of sin and evil in God's creation. Regarding HIV/AIDS transmission, respondents regularly pointed to the existence of polygamous affairs in north central Namibia, before and during the formal marriage. For many men, a relationship with only one woman would have a negative connotation and would be associated with poverty, a low status and weak masculinity. A female variant of multiple partner relationships is rising in Namibia now and many women search for boyfriends or sexual partners that bring in income and goods. Especially young women and single mothers trade sex for money and gifts as it is stated in chapter4 (4.5.2.1). For teenage girls, a relationship with a so-called sugar daddy is a way to overcome their limited material lifestyle. This increasing sexual self determination can increase the risk of being infected by HIV/AIDS. In the love relations men are often thought to support the woman financially with money and goods, and to take care of the children. Because of these gifts, the man has sexual access to the woman. Men often engage in sexual relationships with multiple women and promise to take care of them all, while mostly cannot keep their promises. In many of these love relationships, men and women have unprotected sex. The researcher claims that according to discussions with respondents in focus groups, condoms are not popular among the poor and marginalised ones who live in poverty situations in the informal settlements. For some of the informal inhabitants with low education it is their understanding that; condom decrease the fun, they break and disappear in the body of the woman, they decrease the fertility of the women and they are often associated with a lack of trust.

For many men it is not possible to marry because they do not have enough money that is why most of the time they practise unprotected sex with prostitutes for sexual satisfactions. Because sexuality is often seen as the domain of the male, many males feel the need to prove themselves as experienced, active and fertile and they should be in charge of the sexual atmosphere. That is why women are often presumed to be uninterested, passive and innocent. Many women have trouble protecting themselves against HIV/AIDS infection because many men are against condoms use and often respond violently to the request of a woman to use a condom.

Any focus on Namibia's socio-economic challenges cannot neglect to look at the AIDS pandemic that is affecting millions of men, women, boys and girls. Namibian women especially those who are living in informal settlements are among the most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS among all countries of the world.

Together with the silence on HIV/AIDS, came a culture of perpetual silence on the wide array of issues facing Namibians-from their repatriation just prior to and after Independence, to the present day debates on income and inequality and on issues such as poverty and unemployment. HIV/AIDS cannot simply be equated to an individual lack of morality, because many innocent children are born with HIV; some parents contracted the HIV virus through caring for others and handling them without protective measures such as gloves; and many faithful partners are infected by their unfaithful partners. The reasons for this are linked to the earlier recognition of women as the most poor and thus most vulnerable in Namibia.

Namibia is rich in diversity with 13 different ethnic groups and half of the population speaking *"Oshiwambo" (a vernacular language spoken in the northern part of the country).* Namibia gained its independence in 1990 after more than a century of colonial rule, first by Germany and then by South Africa. Currently, rural and urban lifestyles coexist. Why is the infection rate of HIV/AIDS so frighteningly high in Namibia? It has taken on pandemic proportions. Namibia is one of the countries that are most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Various campaigns have been launched to create awareness in communities about HIV and AIDS. The message has been translated into the indigenous languages of the country and various audio-visuals means have been to get the information across. The Zero Sentinel Surveillance Survey carried out in 2010, indicates that the infection rate in the country is 18.8% of the total population (National HIV Sentinel Survey 2010). This is indeed a grave challenge facing the nation as a whole, as well as impacting the smaller units of the communities, families and individuals.
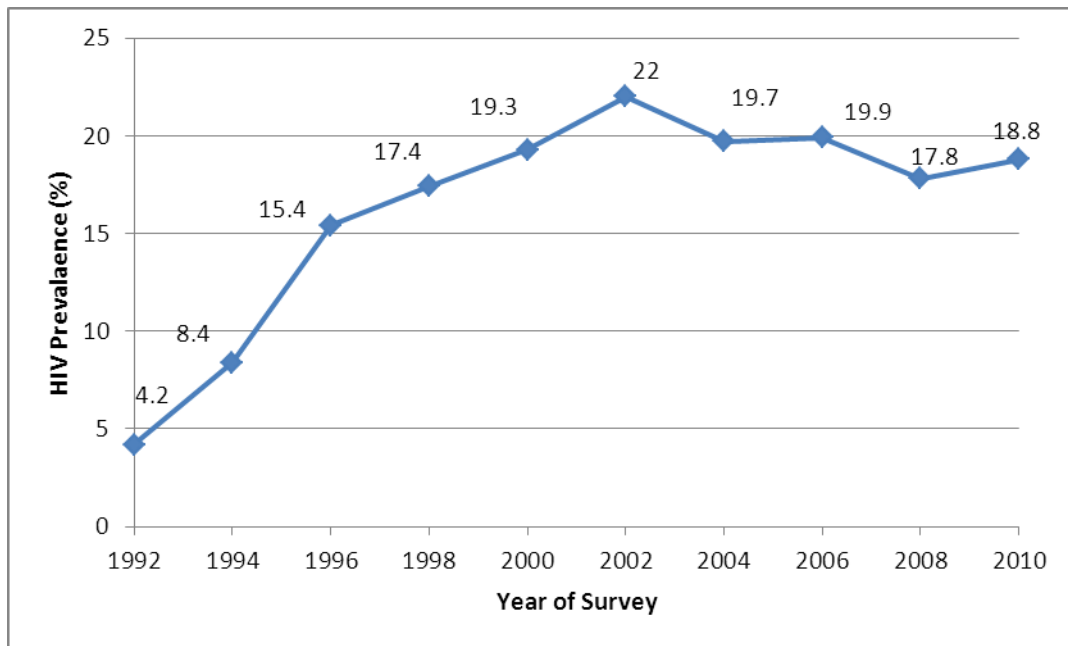
Figure 4: HIV prevalence Rate in Pregnant Women in Namibia, biannual surveys 1992-2010

Source: MOHSS 2010

Despite strides in improving the lives and well-being of Namibia's citizens, many of these gains have already been undermined by HIV infection and AIDS related illness and death, and this is likely to worsen over the next decade. In recent years, deaths have accelerated in the most productive age group, 15-49, while child mortality rates have stopped decreasing... The estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS in 2008/2009 was 174,000, 13,000 of which were children (Republic of Namibia: Ministry of Health and Social Services 2007: 10). The accelerated number of deaths in the 15-49 age groups also means a higher incidence of younger orphans being left behind, with a gap in the productive age being created, and leaving a large number of economically dependent children on their own, or in the care of extended family networks. The prevalence rate by age group for the most economically productive sector of the population is shown in the figure below:

Table 15: HIV prevalence rate by age group and year of survey

Age group	Year								
	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
15-19	6	11	12	12	11	10	10.2	5.1	6.6
20-24	11	18	20	20	22	18	16.4	14	12.5

25-29	9	17	22	25	28	26	26.9	23.8	22.8
30-34	9	18	19	21	27	24	29.5	27.2	29.6
35-39	3	8	12	15	21	24	24.1	26	29.7
40-44	1	12	14	9	16	12	16.9	17.7	26.4
45-49	12	1	13	8	12	13	9.1	13.8	25.8

Source: MOHSS 2010
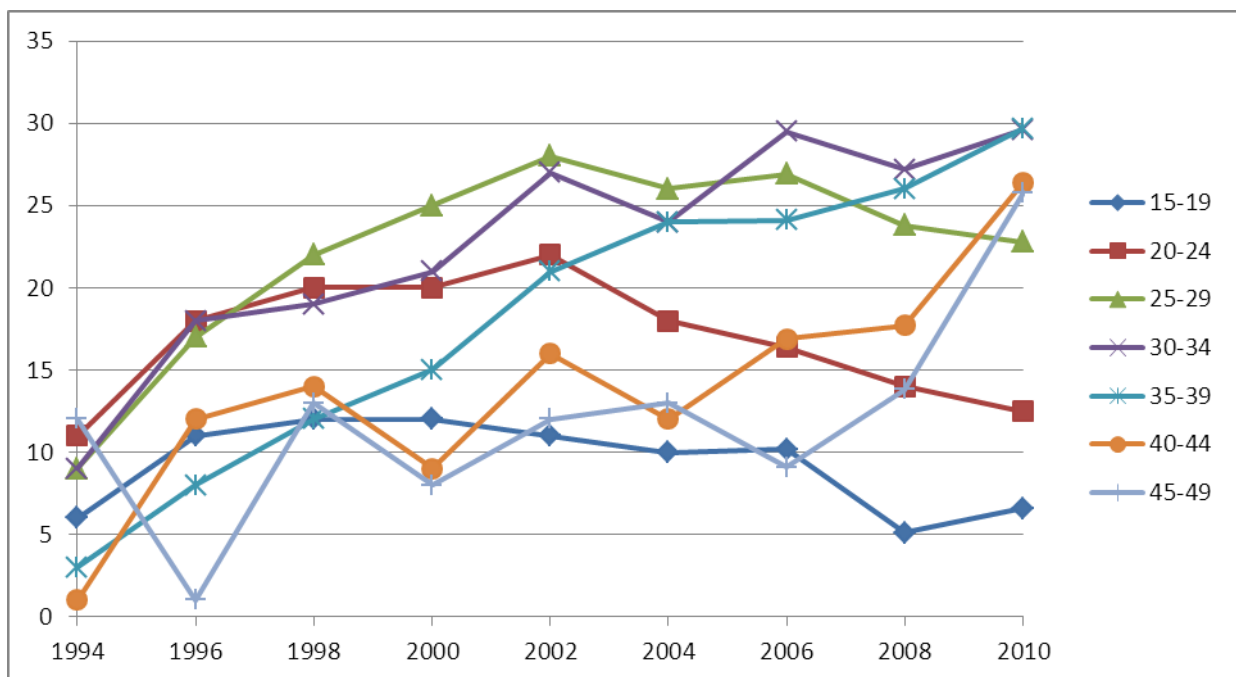
Figure 5: Trends in HIV Prevalence by age group and by year of survey

Source: MOHSS 2010

The negative impact of HIV/AIDS on health and longevity is a major factor contributing to a reduction in the population growth rate from 3.1% per annum to 2.6%. Although the rate of new HIV infection is slowing down, there are now more positive people falling ill and dying, leaving behind a rising number of orphans (estimated at about 120, 000). The roll out of anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment and the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) have begun to register some successes but access to the treatment has not yet reached all those who need it due to lack of sufficient resources and personnel (Republic of Namibia: National Planning Commission 2007).

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The HIV and AIDS have shifted the productive burden increasingly to those who are least able to shoulder it-the young and the old (adult). AIDS impacts the affected families, because it has already and will continue to alter the very social fabric by adding to women's already over-burdened domestic responsibilities, the care of AIDS patients and children orphaned by AIDS. The impacts of HIV/AIDS are more acute for some households, such as female headed households since they are poorer than others, and landless or resource poor households, who have few options to fall back on. Not only households but also communities are affected by HIV/AIDS. As adults get sick and die, children will need to be taken care of. In many cases, the burden will fall on grandparents and other community members. It is important to note here that the church needs to come into active play in this regard, and this presents an important opportunity for networks to be created with government agencies that are working to alleviate the burdens posed by HIV/AIDS, whether it be through home-based care services, counselling, the administration of ARV treatment, the identification of families in need of assistance, and so on.

Although most of the churches tolerate the use of condoms (for those who are not married) in Namibia, various Church leaders and their communities are very much against the national health campaigns for the use of condoms. However, in churches we have often found it difficult to speak appropriately of sexuality as a gift from God, but have rather related it to sin in many ways. The existence of HIV/AIDS can reinforce this attitude on the one hand, since it links sexuality with disease and consequently with death. On the other hand, the existence of HIV/AIDS could be an "opportunity" of liberating us from such an attitude. Due to the prevailing silence, we have also often failed to clearly name and renounce the different forms of sexual violence that exist around us. This has left many victims on their own and has reinforced the atmosphere of taboo and silence. We have to look for ways to overcome this. The HIV/AIDS crisis challenges us to strive urgently for a better understanding of human sexuality, to identify harmful taboos or destructive cultural traditions and to search for appropriate ways of communicating about sexuality in the church and world-wide. The church is living with HIV/AIDS; there are many living with HIV/AIDS in our midst. We must break the culture of silence that overlooks this painful reality in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 26). The Church in its role as 'shepherd' of God's flock, must address herself to the situation by alleviating suffering and enabling the realisation of God's Kingdom. The church must administer healing that will restore harmony in the lives of individuals, communities and the environment. In Luke 4: 18, Jesus declared his mission of preaching the good news to

the poor, proclaiming freedom to the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and releasing the oppressed. The mission of the Church is to minister to HIV/AIDS victims with love, compassion and care. In ELCIN parishes, most ministers use sacraments, especially the Holy Communion, as a spiritual healing to the HIV/AIDS infected and affected. The Church as the Body of Christ should continue to heal the HIV/AIDS infected and affected family members through its prayers, words, hymns, affirmations, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

As the Church faces daunting and challenging situations today, we need to look into the past in order to sharpen our vision for the new millennium. The power of the Gospel is therefore rooted in its ability to address issues in a holistic way; to address not only the actions and morality of individuals, but also the systems, structures and institutions which create the environment in which people exist. Jesus' ministry, which is called unto us into the Church, seeks to transform persons to live as responsible moral beings, who love God with all their hearts and their fellow human beings as themselves. It is about creating an equitable and just community where people are united by the love of God and one another. In such environment people are able to develop their full potential. The life of the Church therefore has to be measured in the context of how it is revealing the presence of God in our world and lives, in being a healer, liberator, a sign of hope, and a channel of Grace. The church in Namibia and, indeed, in the entire Sub-Saharan African Region cannot afford to hide its head in the sand anymore, because the impact of HIV/AIDS is being felt at all levels of society. This impact has posed a threat to economic progress and human development by attacking the most economically productive age group and reversing gains in life expectancy and child survival. Urban congregations of Ondangwa and Oshakati in Northern Namibia are also struggling with this challenge, as middle-aged people with potential are dying, and left their children without anyone to care for them.

The Church, by its very nature as the body of Christ, calls its members to become healing communities. Despite the extent and complexity of the problems raised by HIV/AIDS, the Church can make an effective witness towards those affected. HIV/AIDS is a national disaster, and cannot be managed without mobilizing all the sectors within a nation. The biggest challenge to the Church in this respect is to promote ecumenical response to the scourge of HIV/AIDS which is the greatest threat to abundant life in contemporary Namibia. Basically, the Church's response to the challenge of HIV/AIDS comes from its theological convictions about the nature of creation, the unshakable fidelity of God's love, and the nature

of the body of Christ and the reality of Christian hope. The Church in Namibia needs to make HIV prevention (education and awareness raising) a matter of compelling priority. Churches need to provide theological space for this reality, so as to approach it personally, liturgically, biblically and materially to enable the Church the respond sensitively and to undermine the stigma. Human sexuality and sexual sin should be subjected to theological evaluation. The Churches have long played an important role in providing Christian counselling, preaching, health education and diaconal or development services, and in meeting social crises in communities. Today, HIV/AIDS demands that we, as Churches, acknowledge this unprecedented pandemic.

HIV/AIDS is a family disease: it is spread from men to women, women to men, men to men, women to women, and mothers to children. It affects married people, their children, and young unmarried people. It is its impact on the family that makes HIV/AIDS so deadly. At the same time, unfounded fears should be removed by education and information, so that understanding and compassion can grow. It is ignorance, silence, deception, blame, and denial-especially on the subject of sex-which are themselves extremely dangerous viruses in this context. One great challenge to the Church is to promote discussion on sexual relationships, especially among the youth, in ways which not only engage the values of the Church but realistically protect people against HIV/AIDS. The Church's commitment to sex education, discussion and counselling must reflect these realities if it is to make a fully responsible contribution to stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition the Church, with all its members, is called to the ministry of caring.

For the Churches it is difficult to find common ground on the issue of prevention. Therefore, as governments and other agents are trying to educate African people on HIV/AIDS prevention methods (measures), the Church also should play its major role of being a healing and caring community for those who are already infected and affected. This means promoting the acceptance of people with HIV/AIDS, fighting against discrimination, and developing programmes which address the needs of those living with the disease. Each community will develop its own approach, one which fits its own circumstances.

The impact and devastation caused by HIV infection has had major effects on the life and mission of the Church, as well as the social and economic life of people in Namibia. The HIV/AIDS pandemic presents a new mission frontier which calls for new reflections in the face of new realities and new questions. It calls for the breaking up of silence over human

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sexuality, the challenges of secular attitudes to sex and sexuality, the having of sex wholly beautiful and a welcome gift and how it could be managed positively is a very significant aspect of our personalities and humanity. HIV/AIDS has become a pressing issue claiming many lives in Namibia, and we, as churches, should acknowledge this unprecedented pandemic. This means promoting the acceptance of people with HIV/AIDS, fighting against discrimination, and developing programmes which address the needs of those living with the disease. Therefore, as governments and other agents try to educate Namibian people on how to cope with AIDS by using condoms to protect themselves from the killer disease, the church too, should present Christ who is able to change people's morals thus protecting them from AIDS-by committing their lives to the saviour. If mission is redefined to be broad enough, there are more opportunities for the church to witness for Christ today in Namibia than ever. Thus, the Church will fulfil its calling of being in the context in the presence of the worshipping communities as signs of hope, justice and a new fellowship; through its holistically engagements in the life of the community.

5. 3. 6 The presence of orphans and vulnerable children

The HIV/AIDS epidemic spread quickly during the last decade affecting African countries south of the Sahara the most severely. One of the most disturbing consequences of HIV/AIDS is its impact on children. Answers to Question 8 indicates that the HIV/AIDS pandemic profoundly affects families and communities, not only resulting in the loss of labour and assets, but also affecting socio-cultural skills while placing almost unprecedented stress on community and extended family networks. One of the most serous consequences of the pandemic is the increase in the number of orphans. The number of orphans in the world today is almost unbelievably large. All are not as a result of AIDS, but the proportion of children who have been orphaned by AIDS is increasing, while the proportions who have been orphaned by other causes are decreasing. Features of the orphans' situation are that the orphans crisis and challenge is already with us, that the orphans are young, and that being an orphan is not an event but an enduring state or condition that lasts throughout the years of a child 's life and accompanies the child into adulthood. Many people are dying prematurely. As a result, the number of orphans is rising fast especially in urban areas. Relatives of the deceased parents care for some orphans but, in this event, the relatives find it difficult to cope with the enlarged family and concomitant responsibilities. It has been reported that, sometimes step-parents are violent towards orphans, or neglect them in favour of their

biological children. In consequence, many orphans leave homes; wandering around the streets and markets, begging.

The vulnerability of children is compounded by many factors, including unemployment, poverty and food security, HIV/AIDS and all forms of violence and abuse. The situation is even worse when there are no relatives of the deceased to care for the orphans. In such instances, old grandparents, who lack support, assume the responsibilities of caring for the orphans. These factors place a burden on the extended family structures and service providers in the context of the scattered nature of the rural and urban population. Caring for the orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia is one of the most pressing social concerns the country is faced with.

Another of the major cross-cutting issues facing the development sector in Namibia is the rapidly rising number of young people. Particularly in less well resourced areas, young people are growing up without much adult guidance. Parents frequently work hours that are physically demanding while older siblings care for the younger children and attend to household duties. Teenagers will frequently bond into gangs and support groups and go in search of excitement and adventure. For some crime will become attractive, for others drinking and drugs will help them forget frustrations. Young people are in need of guidance of the right kind, and respond well to caring mentors and adults who listen to them and try to help them in practical ways.

The streets of Ondangwa and Oshakati townships in Oshana Region, northern Namibia are filled with school drop outs. The men frequently wander the streets in groups looking for work; the women are often trapped at home with domestic responsibilities. As the days turn into years, bad habits form, and where there was once a young person eager to make a contribution and build a career-there is now desperation, anger, and poverty. Training institutions that offer courses to early school leavers are relatively few. There are quite a number of small private, service providers who offer computer courses, secretarial training, and accountancy courses etc. Most of these tend to be expensive and lack formal accreditation since Namibia is still in the process of finalizing criteria for different sectors under the Namibian Qualifications Authority. Since independence in 1990, the Namibian government has established up an industry in the Oshana Region of northern Namibia, to create job opportunities and improve the poor infrastructure. Rössing Foundation, Katutura Youth Enterprise (KAYEC) Trust (an NGO), and the Community Skills Development

Centres (COSDEC) sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation. These three vocational skills schools training programmes offer training to out-of-school youth irrespective of school qualifications. They train young people in building maintenance, sewing, cooking, and Internet (Information and Technology). The ELCIN department of Diakonia and Social Services could play a vital role in this context by providing/creating programmes or projects that would encourage the youth to stay in school, through after-school projects to improve the pass rates at every grade level, and skills training workshops to encourage entrepreneurial activity after leaving school. In a context such as ours in Northern Namibia, where a large number of school-leavers roam the streets without employment, the church is of course not in a position to provide employment, but it must try to help people to be able to help themselves.

There are hungry children begging and scavenging for food, and malnutrition because mothers are unemployed. Some streets are littered with fast food outlets which do little to bring the bread of physical nourishment to the locals, and their physical condition almost mirrors the despair of their surrounding urban environment. A lack of money, the high cost of living in Ondangwa and Oshakati urban areas, unemployment and a lack of food are most challenging issues faced by informal settlements inhabitants. Some children that are supposed to be in educational grade one or two are vulnerable and have no means of attending day schools, instead feed themselves with unhealthy littered food down in the streets of the informal settlements. Further more answers to Question 8 further indicate that, orphans and vulnerable children are always hungry and cannot study properly. To feed a large family both parents have to seek employment, then the children are not cared for properly.

It is difficult to estimate the number of children living in Namibian streets, because many of them are unattached to any family at all. Some of the children are 'latch-key kids' who roam on the streets during the day and occasionally trying to steal money form old people, but are careful to maintain contact with their families. There are also some children who call themselves as 'working children' because of being in the streets while carrying out their work. They spend their time out on the streets of Ondangwa and Oshakati begging for money, shining shoes, washing car windows, and selling newspapers, magazines, airtimes, sweets and cigarettes. These children hang around in streets and receive a street education. They begin to smoke, use drugs, get involved in gangsters' warfare and become sexually active at early age. In Northern Namibia, both boys and girls live on streets. Generally

speaking, however, girls are more sheltered than boys. The boy/girl ratio of street children may be as high as nine to one. Girls are considered more 'useful', stay at home while boys are stronger and less susceptible to a life of threat on the street. Most street children are not abandoned by their families; instead they leave home to escape hunger and poverty; but now they have no future in their current environment.

Orphans and vulnerable children pose an enormous challenge to society, and this has been enormously compounded by the effects of HIV/AIDS pandemic, which claims thousands of lives, particularly of young people between the ages of 24 and 40, leaving many thousands of orphans at the mercy of extended family networks, or they find themselves in child-headed households.

Lack of stability in family life is the main reason for losing a child to the streets. In the streets they meet others who have come from the same difficult backgrounds. Visible to many tourists in Ondangwa and Oshakati, are the many poor children who roam the streets looking for a way to earn money. Many of these children work for their parents and return home at the end of the day, while others live on the streets and spend what they make on food.

Many parents did not have money to send their children to other places for schooling, whilst other learners had to discontinue their studies before grade ten (10) and seek jobs to help their families. Many want to study further but there have no money to do so. Those who are in power-political and community leaders-in the community often misuse the rights of the people, thinking that since most people are less educated they do not know their rights. Sharing the love of Christ with these children should be part of any solution provided by the Church, Government and other NGOs such as Social Welfare Organisations. The church is in a good position in addressing the plight of OVC, in the sense that in addition to being able to identify children with special needs based on their family situation, the church is also able to render spiritual support, which is an important element in the overall psychosocial development of the child. Feeding schemes run by members of the congregation, support groups, counselling of parents-particularly single parents with many children, income-generating projects for older orphans and/or for extended family members caring for OVC, support of grandparent/child-headed households, etc, are also areas in which the church could possibly render its support.

5. 3. 7 Land tenure and ownership

Colonialism has introduced a state of landlessness in Namibia, because the owners of the land were evicted by the colonists and confined into reserves. The current main economic problem is that land is in the hands of only a few members of the Namibian society. Land ownership in Namibia can be divided into two categories: commercial and communal lands. An individual person can only own land in commercial area. And this is beyond most people's reach. Banks do not lend money to people without collateral. Some people who may qualify for bank loans sometimes do not know how and where to apply. The communal land, which seems to be easily available, is too small in size in comparison to the population and its needs. Even today a good portion of the land is still in the hands of the minority, a so-called "private property", because when town councils formalise informal settlements, residents who cannot afford the price of plots and/or cannot afford connection to services, are forced to settle in other informal areas. The prevailing situation in Namibia is that in cities and towns most people do not have the right of access to land. Some people occupied sites near the places which would soon be proclaimed towns. Those living in un-proclaimed settlements are not enjoying the benefits of those who live in cities and towns. They too are concerned about their right to equal services. The rapid increase in the development of informal settlements after Namibian independence resulted mostly in unplanned development, with the minimum of the services. Some areas were created for relocation and feature more regular layouts. In certain areas the local authorities also lease the land to households to erect temporary structures. Underdeveloped land within a local authority's area of jurisdiction, unless it is legally alienated, belongs to the local authority. Land for residential purposes cannot be sold by the authorities unless it has been subdivided, proclaimed and fully serviced. The autonomous authorities develop land on cost recovery principles and the high development costs are not affordable to the majority of households living in informal settlements and structures. Local authorities are therefore unable to develop sufficient and affordable residential plots for low income households who turn to informal settings as an alternative. This means that a large proportion of Namibian households in urban areas have no security of tenure.

In answer to Question 9 respondents state that factors which influence the vulnerability of residents of the informal settlements include limited land for constructing houses, lack of basic services and the exploitation of people mainly because they are less educated, have few

skills and can at best only provide unskilled labour. Land is mostly used for household purposes and to a lesser extent for both household and business purposes. Informal settlement dwellers are particularly vulnerable to eviction if they live in so-called 'impermanent houses' such as iron shack or combination of mud-brick/iron sheet houses. Persons who have been thus affected will not be compensated for their apparent loss of security of tenure. Since the mid 1990ies, informal settlements have been organized around by elected Community Development Committee (CDC)-which is independent community structures with no formal say in respect of the Ondangwa and Oshakati Town Councils (OTC). Most residents of Ondangwa and Oshakati are settled in "informal" settlement areas on land for which they have no tenure rights and which are insufficiently serviced. Environmental stressors such as flooding cause great havoc in the lives of urban residents. Both the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati experienced severe flood in the period from 2008 to 2010. The major reasons for this natural phenomenon include: the current human settlements in flood plains in towns which reduces the space available for easy-water run-off as well as the current landscaping and sub-division of the land into building sites, which also block easy water flow. The frequency, magnitude and the intensity of floods and natural disasters in Namibia are well-known. Both Ondangwa and Oshakati town councils with their stakeholders need to look for a permanent solution to the flooding problem. The floods occur seasonally and should be anticipated. From the analytical point of view and under normal circumstances, people who are displaced by natural hazards such as floods, also suffer losses of other kinds.

The same land, which is found today in the hands of the few, the rich commercial farmers, government, kings, chiefs, headmen, and municipalities, was created by God with the purpose to serve and benefit every human being. However those who live in the urban areas have no land because it belongs to the municipalities and the community members have to pay monthly rental fees. In the first instance the land belongs to God and to no one else. God has appointed the government the guardian of the land so that it can be distributed fairly and given to everyone. Justice needs to be done on the issue of land distribution so that all those who are in authority can understand that it is better to be honest and poor than to be dishonest and rich.

The poor can be given access to land in a number of ways, some of which are redistribution, land tenure reform and settlement schemes. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"

(Ps. 24: 1; 1 Cor. 10: 26). It was God himself who said: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev. 25: 23). The Church has a major role to play on the land issue through the process of social justice, reconciliation, peace and local economic recovery. To restore is to bring back what was taken from its proper owners. The Church can assist to facilitate the acts that are aiming for the return of land to the owners. The theology of the poor is that God is the defender of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the oppressed and those who cannot defend themselves. These kinds of people enjoy God's vindication because God's eye is always on them (Prov. 23: 10-11). We also recognise then that land, being such a sensitive issue, is the basis of many injustices of the past and present, emanating from conquest, colonialism and apartheid including socio-economic injustices meted out to the majority by the privileged and powerful minority. These injustices pervaded the entirety of Namibian society.

The unjust distribution of land still continues in our societies today. The story of Nabot's vineyard (1Kings 21) assures that both the poor and the rich have a rights to the land. But there are still some people who have no access to the land in the Namibian society, although their country has now been free and independent for more than two decades. Christians and churches are always challenged to involve themselves in the struggles for social, economic and political emancipation. The church in its prophetic task must make its voice heard and join forces with those that challenge the structures which breed social injustices, degradation and poverty. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. Therefore, I think it is the responsibility of the Church to challenge the government of the day to acquire such land and give it back to the people but should be done through peaceful negotiation with the landowners. This will help to prevent the situation in which the rich continue to become richer and the poor poorer. The main task of the Church is to defend the poor; this is why it needs to raise up its prophetic voice and address the problems of people who do not have access to land.

5.3.8 Alcohol and Drug Abuse

With the inflow of relatively cheap commodities from South the supermarkets, stores and small peri-urban and village shops in the Northern parts of Namibia have been equipped with basic necessities but also with consumer goods and drinks which have had a corrupting

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impact on the economy. Imported liquor and soft drinks are sufficiently cheap for wide consumption so that a littering of small tins and bottles form an eyesore everywhere along the main roads.

Answers to Question 8 shows that Alcohol and drug abuse poses a serious threat to the social fabric of Namibian society, and as with other challenges posed in this chapter (5.3), further affects and is affected by the burden of poverty, unemployment, orphans and vulnerable children, and so on. According to the informants (respondents), alcohol abuse in Namibia is wreaking havoc in the country. Alcohol abuse is high for those migrants who drink, because many of them drink on a daily basis whether or not they have money. With such a high alcohol consumption among the informal settlements who already live in poverty, it comes as no surprise that this issue finds itself high on the list of social challenges that the church and the Namibian society are faced with. Moreover, it is important to understand the link between alcohol and drug abuse and the level of crime in the country, the impact of HIV/AIDS, the impact on OVC, the problems that this may pose for households, and the list goes on. According to informants, the following revelations were made about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse in the society where they live as follows: most of the adults are alcohol drinkers; about half of the households in the informal settlements spend more money on alcohol than on food (basic commodities); about 90% of violent crimes in Namibian urban areas are alcohol/drug related; half of rape cases are most alcohol related; and some relationships end because of alcohol. All these findings are extremely telling of how big a challenge alcohol and drug abuse poses in Namibian society, and it is clearly an issue that the church needs to face head-on through its counselling services, the changing of mind-sets, its focus on rehabilitation, and its understanding and communication of the impact that alcohol can have on the family, community, and society as a whole.

Violence against women and children is a multi-faceted feature of Namibian society. Targeting men is especially important in the prevention of violence and abuse against women and children. Gender issues should always also include boys and men. They too are in need of 'empowermnet'. Social pressures often lead to risky sexual behaviour, especially peer pressure. Men often play dominant sexual roles within and outside marriage. For young men, being able to talk about problems, including sexuality concerns, and to obtain support are important steps to avoiding risk. Presenting adult models of responsible and ethical male behaviour towards women in their communities can also influence younger men profoundly.

5.4 MINISTRY IN A NEW ERA AND CONTEXT

Ministry in Northern Namibia originated in a rural setting with a rural ethos. In rural Namibia, people depend largely on Agriculture (farming). They do not need conventional employment and are generally able to produce their own food, mostly from *omahangu* (millet). The Namibian Aawambo-Speaking people of Northern Namibia by tradition have a mixed economy based on conservative livestock rearing and crop production. The Aawambo crops consist mainly of *omahangu* (millet), sorghum, beans and melons. *Omahangu* is the staple food, and crops are almost exclusively reserved for the consumption of the producers. Only in exceptional cases does *omahangu* and sorghum become an exchange or trade commodity. Owambo livestock consist mostly of cattle and goats. Although cattle and goats were used as exchange goods, in some cases they were also used to supplement the diet. In addition, they [Aawambo] live a communal lifestyle; they share commodities with each other, and those who do not have food are cared for in the process. The ministerial ethos that works for rural populations is totally inadequate to face the present realities of booming city life and its circumstances, which find people trying to survive in slum areas and shanty townships (informal settlements) surrounding cities. Because the rural context differs from its urban counterpart, tools for the ministry must also be different.

Urbanization is accompanied by a number of negative implications, such as: secularisation, disorientation, poverty, and pollution. People come from all over the country to urban concentrations and remain strangers. They live as individualists with little concern for neighbours. Survival trends and mechanism in urban centres depend on employment, but unemployment is high. The Church is therefore expected to address the physical as well as the spiritual needs of people. The current ministerial theory of the ELCIN was developed in rural Northern Namibia taking into account rural circumstances. This theory, now, is inadequate to face modern urban challenges; a holistic approach is needed for ministry. This approach of ministry addresses the needs of both the word and the world, and is able to confront the urban challenges that the ELCIN faces. It is also enables the ELCIN to do holistic ministry, taking into account (consideration) the spiritual and physical need of people as an indivisible reality of life.

The relationship between church and community was explored by a question (Question 3 for clergy). It was hoped that the answers would show whether clergy believed the socio-

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economic challenges identified affected the members of congregations. In this way, it could possibly be 'measured' to what degree community was regarded as a separate entity. The answer was an overwhelming 'yes', with most reflecting on the effects of these challenges on participation in church life. Issues such as domestic and substance abuse, poverty, unemployment and illiteracy were all identified as affecting members. Low self-image, troubled family life and the inability to provide daily basic needs for family members are all cited as affecting congregants.

The churches need to open the eyes of their members to the socio-economic conditions that promote the spread of HIV/AIDS. In the Namibian context many socio-economic conditions contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. The churches must become aware of these conditions and also reflect on what they can do long-term through awareness raising and advocacy to help effect change. The consequences of colonialism as there are destruction of culture and family structures, uprootedness, migrant labour, ignorance and poverty, crowding all contributes enormously to the spread of HIV/AIDS. These "structural sins" need to be acknowledged. There is a danger of blaming the spread in Southern Africa and Namibia in particular, mainly on black promiscuity. This is beside the point. Open sexual relationships are not confined to any ethnic group. But because of the socio-economic environment there is, and will be, unequal and unfair suffering. The poor and the women will suffer more.

According to answers given to Question 12, there is a great need for the Namibian churches to redefine their mission for the purpose of effective witness for Christ. Based on the research findings and especially on perceptions from the interviewed clergy (chapter 4), it is high this time that the Church broadens its focus to new tremendous implication for evangelistic strategies. Proclamation by word and deed of the good news of the kingdom has to express the essential and inescapable task of the church's mission.

The Namibian nation is sliding into a whole range of crises: political and socio-economic, and those involving hunger and poverty. There is a great need for a model of mission that will be able to address political systems and structures that are impoverishing the Namibian people, causing untold suffering to them, and thus ushering in political instability, social strife and crimes. Christians should challenge greed autocratic political leaders who embezzle public funds and misuse (mismanage) the economy of their countries. Christian mission in Namibia should realize that despite all the crises which Namibia is facing today, the church still has the power, the capacity and the capability of influencing political leaders for Christ

through the power of the Holy Spirit, thus affecting decision-making for peace, stability and prosperity in the country. The present Namibian context should help the church by determining where the emphasis of mission has to be laid. The urban congregations in northern Namibia should consider advocating for the cause of the poor in the cities. Diakonia or Christian service to those in need is understood to be "a shared ministry to serve God's suffering people, in the poorest, and in those in need"-is part and parcel of the Church's mission, obligation, and Constitution. And to achieve the desired impact in "demonstrating Christian Love"-as is called for in the ELCIN Constitution (Article IV of the Constitution and Regulations of the ELCIN)-a more active, dynamic and participatory framework for diakonia is necessary. It is important that the church communicate its message on a more regular basis to the public, particularly where it has programmes or events in the interest of the general public, or a message that needs to be portrayed to the public concerning goings-on in the church, or in the country as a whole. The importance of public relations, not only to the congregants of the ELCIN parishes, but to the public at large, is an important element that should not be understated. Moreover, the church should not be afraid to make statements in response to national events (answer to Question 13), and social problems (e.g. HIV/AIDS, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Crime, etc). In this regard, proposals will be made in the next chapter of paths that ELCIN should follow, and in fact, of an awakening of the church in its t response to the problems of society.

5. 5 ELCIN'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO THESE CHALLENGES

Based on answers given by respondents (informal inhabitants) to Question 12 make it clear that, in the process of trying to find solutions for poverty and unemployment, the Church should find ways and means of joining hands with other agents in order to help communities who are in desperate need of food and shelter. In this way the Church will be able to share the gospel message to communities. Poverty and hunger have become the most burning issues for churches to handle. According to some church leaders (clergy) who were questioned on making effective use of available networks and external structures to address the nation's problems in post-independent Namibia, it was stated that there is no such a platform at all (answers to Questions 10 & 11 of clergy). Churches in all communities, but also in urban communities, tend to work in great isolation. Barriers exist between churches on the basis of language, class, culture, race, denomination and tradition. These barriers become walls of separation behind which we hide from each other. This affects our witness seriously, raises

question marks about our integrity, and hurts the effectiveness of our ministry in the urban communities significantly. It will be clearly indicated that by striking vital synergies with external programmes/sources, a number of networking opportunities that will enhance the capacity of the ELCIN's ministry approach can be created. It is clear that there are several possible areas and entities with which different denominations can network and create synergies that will strengthen social ministries among the vulnerable and neglected of society. One of the ways in which the local church's relationship with the community could be evaluated is through the extent of partnership with both community role players and within its own ranks regarding community issues.

As the largest church body in Namibia, with a membership of 703 893 (ELCIN Statistics 2009), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is in a pivotal position to play a fundamental role in society. Its potential strength at the grassroots level in addressing the basic needs of the Namibian people can not be over emphasized, and it is only appropriate to see this body as a prominent grassroots organisation. With a large network of different denominations (faith-based organisations), NGOs, government institutions, hospitals/clinics/etc, municipalities and social workers, ELCIN has the potential to make extensive contributions to tackling the social challenges facing the nation, and this role is indeed an important one. In order to ensure that development benefits the poor, the involvement of Churches and NGOs in the development process is critical. The government cannot adequately implement sustainable development because it operates according to non-voluntary principles, which creates a tension between the material and economic powers versus the moral power and voluntary principles of society. Churches and NGOs are strategic institutions to implement sustainable development, because the two are overlapping civil society institutions, both are voluntary and they have a high moral profile. It is obvious that the church is regarded as a powerful role player in communities such as Ondangwa and Oshakati.

However, in order for the church to address the socio-economic needs of the community, the church's relationship with its community and awareness of its challenges are essential in understanding the levels of community involvement. Clergy of local congregations interviewed were accutely aware of the community's socio-economic challenges, with the top five challenges being poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, crimes and substance abuse (Questions 1-2). These findings were irrespective of denominational affiliation.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is not an island disconnected from everything: we live in an ecumenical relationship with sister Churches and other Church institutions. We live and work in the particular socio-political and economic realities of Namibia. Whatever we do and say in our church, will have an effect, inside and outside, good or bad. It is, therefore, extremely important to know that we are not isolated from other people and realities; neither are our witness and our service. The key to creating effective networks, however, is to ensure that smart partnerships are created, whereby both parties (i.e. the church and the networking party) have something to give and/or to gain from their relationship. Given the close relationship that the church is able to have with its members, as well as its overall reach, the church is in a position to work as a good source of information on community needs for its stakeholders, as well as to disseminate information to congregants on programmes in the community, that are in line with the philosophy of the church. The church is also able to effectively identify congregants who may need assistance from some of the social welfare organisations with which it is networking, and to ensure that such assistance is rendered accordingly. Moreover, with its wide spread across the country, and with its regional, continental and international faith networks and sister churches, the Church is in a prime position to create sustainable and valuable networks with local organisations that will also be able to gain from a relationship with the Church. Several organisations could serve as potential partners in a variety of aspects, including training, skills training, information sharing, development methodologies, and reaching the people at the grassroots level in the most effective manner.

In addition to networking with organisations, government, and businesses within the country, ELCIN should also look beyond our borders to establish linkages with churches that are implementing community development programmes (diakonia and social ministries) in their own communities, as a means to sharing experiences on their diaconal ministries approaches. Such linkages will possibly allow for exchange programmes to be carried out for the sharing of skills and training opportunities, and may also provide for insights into potential funding sources for community-based development projects. We do have to make sure that our urban congregations do not become inward-looking; but will often need to find other voluntary organisations (associations) and clubs around our locality which are eager to network with the non-governmental organisations such as church that share a common concern for the people living in their neighbourhoods.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Namibia is faced with a number of social challenges that continue to hinder the progress of the country from a national level, right down to the individual level. The situation in urban Namibia is threatening human life, as people face trauma and stresses. The people of God live in socio-economic situations. So, the healthier the economy, the better are opportunities for Christians faith communities, therefore the church must help to improve the economic situation. The proposed remedy to this crisis is community development and empowerment. As God's steward, the church must study the causes of these social (socio-economic) challenges with an aim of improving them. The church is expected not to be taught by the communities, but to take a lead in solving problems which are confronting humanity. In doing community (holistic) development and empowerment, the church envisages to provide services that are aimed at improving the economic welfare of people, eradicating hunger, poverty and diseases and defending human rights in order that peace and justice can reign. The interdependence of the church and community role-players cannot be over emphasised, even in socio-economic matters. The church will therefore do well in strengthening (empowering) communities, because they will strengthen it in return, and enable it to carry out its calling and mission to care for the whole person.

The information provided in the preceding chapter (chapter 4) makes it clear that there is a great deal of work to be done in the informal settlements, not only by the municipality, but also by the Church and all social and Non-Governmental Organisations in Namibia. First and foremost, poverty and unemployment are important issues that need to be dealt with. Not only do these factors drive people to migrate to the urban areas, where they end up living in informal settlements such as those of Ondangwa and Oshakati and others, but they also limit the living conditions of these people, placing them in conditions in which their health and wellness are compromised. Addressing the issues of poverty and unemployment at all levels is therefore imperative, starting with education and training, skills building and development, and programmes that will help to achieve sustainable income sources. Not only will this create improved economic survival opportunities for people in the settlements, thus allowing them to improve their quality of life, but if implemented on a wider level, this may also prevent new migrants from falling into a poverty trap that forces them to live in these ever-growing areas.

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Another important issue to note is the large number of people living in the informal settlements, and along with that, the plight of the young population residing in these areas. As seen in the section on HIV/AIDS and migration, it is clear that the ELCIN is faced with multiple tasks, including HIV/AIDS awareness raising programmes, home-based care giving, the creation of projects that provide sustainable income for families in which the breadwinner may be in the late stages of HIV/AIDS and unable to work, and so on.

The housing conditions of the people living in the informal settlements is closely tied to health, and while it is the role of government/municipality to ensure adequate housing conditions, water provision, sanitation services, etc, it is important that communities speak up when these services are not being adequately provided, and their surroundings are being used as dumping grounds. The ELCIN and other church bodies or FBOs can play an important role here, by gaining a comprehensive understanding of what the critical needs of the people are, and advocating with them for these needs to be met. Moreover, it would also serve the ELCIN well to come up with ways in which it can creatively address some of the problems faced by households in the informal communities of Ondangwa and Oshakati, such as better housing, inadequate lightning, improved energy sources, and community action in ensuring the cleanliness and/or maintenance of sanitation facilities provided, to name but a few.

However, in this chapter it was shown that the work of NGOs needs to extend beyond these points to include issues like housing, unemployment, survival mechanism, health, and so on. The church must be innovative and missiological, giving away its best and serving the community. The ELCIN diaconal and social services department is therefore has a very important role to play, particularly as a community activities implementation body of the church, in ensuring that the living conditions of people are improved at all levels. The Church in Namibia, especially the ELCIN is the light of the world through its words and it has a role to play. If something which causes suffering occurs, the community comes to the Church for help. For example, during the struggle for Namibia's liberation, the community came to Church hoping that its prophetic voice, "a voice for the voiceless" would change the situation. Much later on, independence was achieved. The role of the church in a community faced by many socio-economic challenges, especially one that is facing poverty, severe suffering (HIV/AIDS), unemployment etc, is crucial.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION IN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA: TOWARDS A CONSTRUCTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN)

6. 1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the good news of the gospel is linked with work (social action) in the community. Churches and Christians are challenged to understand and learn from those in need; and how they (Christians and Churches) can bring about positive changes in society. As the Church faces daunting and challenging situations today, we need to look into the past in order to sharpen our vision for the new millennium. The power of the gospel is therefore rooted in its ability to address issues in a holistic way; to address not the actions and morarilty of individuals, but also the systems, structures and institutions which create the environment in which people exist. According to August (1999: 33), "Serving the poor in our midst is a biblical command. Being involved in (community development) serving the poor is not an option in terms of Christian doctrine, but it is a biblical injuction. For the Church, to serve Christ is to serve the poor." The biblical goal of a just society can be achieved only through a biblical gospel and a biblical strategy. Development is one of the Church activities that can put this concern into practice. The role of the Church is to co-operate with God's dynamic activity and be instruments of His work. From the findings recorded in chapter 4, it is obvious that we live in critical time in which the "least among us" (Lk. 9: 48) are growing in numbers daily at a frightening rate. We can no longer see pain and suffering as something that takes place "over there" in another part of the world, but we now hear cries of our own people, especially those in our urban centers neighbourhoods (Bakke 1997: 13-14).

This chapter is aiming to look at the incarnational approach which must have to be anointed with the attitude of a servant, with love and humility, with ability to be one with the people, to hear them and help them to discern God's will in their contextual situation (Hendriks 2004: 217). Compassion as a task, together with witnessing, incarnational diakonia, prophetic living and transformational initiatives are part of the Church's missional tasks today. "It is both our motive for helping the poor and a point of departure for what a biblical understanding of transformational means: right and just relationships" (Myers 2003: 35). It is crucial for the ELCIN to develop a diaconal ministry approach that seeks empowerment and transformation

of urban dwellers in the informal settlement settings. The Church's involvement with (preferential option for) the poor and the neglected of society needs to be considered as a must and not an (elective) option in her social and diaconal ministry. This chapter proposes that if the Churches (different denominations) partnering together with community development leaders and other institutions (role players), community development can be a successful and effective tool in reaching the marginalised in the community.

6. 2 THE CHURCH AS A SERVANT OF THE KINGDOM

The actions of Jesus show forth the horizon of the coming world of *shalom*-peace, justice, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Guder 1998: 105). The example of Jesus Christ as recorded in the gospel is clear. Throughout his earthly ministry we see the heart-beat of his action: compassionate response to human need (Nicholls 1986: 170). Thus, the life and character of Jesus are the normative for the Church to emulate. The Church lives in the world as a human enterprise, but it is also a called and redeemed people of God who are created by the Spirit to live as a missionary community. The Church as a caring community is rooted in God's care for human beings and called to live with a new horizon and with the impulse to respond to the whole range of need in humanity and in creation. Thus, the Church represents the reign of God by its deeds; it is the servant of God's passion for life of the world (Lewin 1987: 155). Whether at local, national or global level, the Church is called to serve the people within its community. Community development should therefore be on the priority list of both the Church and the larger society.

Mission is essentially living the lump of God's creation, the human community. In ELCIN's daily texts book called *"Ohapu yEsiku/Ondjalulamasiku",* there is one particular Sunday in July every year with a theme *"Otwa tumwa nuuyuni"* which literally means *"Sent into the World."* In other words, the Church, particularly the ELCIN announces the coming of the Kingdom of God and, as such, it has an obligation to fulfil. Bosch (1978: 222) notes "The Church is not the world, for the Kingdom has already begun to manifest itself in her. And as yet she is not the Kingdom, as the Kingdom is acknowledged and realised in her only partially and imperfectly." What Bosch alludes to here is very important because it clarifies that, in the northern Namibian urban centres, living witnesses of God are already present in the form of local churches of different denominations that are busy proclaiming the Gospel. Through these local churches, God is at work bringing his Kingdom to the people. As a

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result, the transformational development process to address the plight of the poor is already under way, but at present the ministry of the Church lacks the capacity to address the socio-economic issues. However, it is necessary to train the Church personnel to implement holistic development that empowers the poor. Myers (2003: 126) advises "Our goal must be to help the Church be what it is intended to be, not to judge it or to relegate it to the transformational development sidelines. Everyone is in need of transformation-the poor, the Church, and ourselves. We are all on a journey" What, in essence, Myers is saying here is that God is already present in the form of the local churches.

The role of the Church should be seen in the light of its particular cultural context as well as in the light of the universal gospel message. The Church as a servant of the Kingdom has the mandate to proclaim the fellowship of all believers. Bruwer (1997: 60) comments "In the kingdom of God the poor are the participants. They do not merely receive justice and goodwill from the powerful and the rich, but are also donors in their own right and participate in decision-making. Beggars become choosers". The Church, as the servant of the Kingdom, is duty bound to take the cross seriously, knowing that where the cross is not taken seriously, no community can afford to take the poor seriously. Bruwer (1997: 61) notes "In the deepest sense the death of Christ was necessary for the reassessment of the position of value of the poor…The Church is a community gathering around the table of the Lord. There we are reminded of the service, not of a king, but of the Lamb of God to humankind." In a similar manner, the churches in northern Namibian urban centres should seek to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich through Gospel proclamation and projects to address the needs of the poor. This is crucial, as all of them are heirs to the Kingdom. It is the responsibility of the Church to evangelize, disciple, and nurture people in the Kingdom. The demarcation between "faith" and "works" disappears, because a living faith is faith at work. Evangelism and service are related aspects of the total witness of the gospel (Sider 1999: 158-159).

By proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas, the ELCIN will be well positioned to combat the evil, which results into social injustices. The main objective of proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed is to address both the physical and spiritual needs of people, each person being an indivisible reality. Greenway (1986: 99) states, "The Gospel needs to be particularized to meet each one's needs. City people must be reached where they are...with their history, their race, their family connections, their religions, and the degree to which they already know the gospel..." This teaches us that the Church should not only

preach the Gospel, but also heal people's minds. What the Church should know, I suppose, is that the forms of healing differ because of the circumstances. But even if they differ according to the areas of operations, the divine concern remains the same. Preaching the Gospel is the first aspect of the Great Commission: "Go and proclaim the Gospel" (Mt. 28: 18-20).

The participatory research conducted in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements (Chapter 4) revealed that all the congregations do proclaim the Gospel be it at Sunday's services, revival meetings *("omauvithopapudhulo")* in streets and open markets, Bible study group meetings, wedding and funeral services, and any other events, and/or situations necessitating Gospel proclamation. This is good. The ELCIN congregation in Ondangwa is also responsible for conducting Sunday worship services to students who reside in two local Senior Secondary Schools: Andimba Toivo yaToivo (formerly known as Oluno) and Nangolo, while the local hospital at Onandjokwe Lutheran Medical Services has a fulltime ELCIN chaplain who is responsible for all spiritual services to the hospitalised patients. The ELCIN congregation is doing the same at the two Senior Secondary Schools in the area of Oshakati Township: Oshakati and Iipumbu, while the local Intermediate hospital in the area is served by a fulltime ELCIN chaplain. All these services help the recipients (members) to understand that the ministry of the Church and ELCIN in particular is to preach the good news of salvation to all people. Bakke (1987: 145) contends, "Good preaching and liturgy meet many needs, and funerals and weddings can provide opportunities for care and support. Churches need thoughtful, well-established procedures for their major public rites so that the newest or the poorest members can understand their theological significance."

Preaching is not a recent development; it, in fact, goes back to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ which was also basically a preaching ministry. Jesus underscored the pivotal aspect of preaching when he inaugurated his ministry and he emphasised the need to address the plight of the poor. Linthicum (1991: 181) affirms, "That he would select a passage on which to begin his ministry that stressed preaching Good News to the poor, freedom for the prisoner, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for captive, as well as proclaiming the Year of Jubilee (Lk. 4: 16-20) shows his priorities." In the acts of preaching, the saving power of these facts becomes a present reality to the hearer. The role of the church is mandated to carry out as it ministers to the poor in Word and deed, guided by Christian love, to enable the poor to lead a better life (Pieterse 2001: 111). Therefore, any urban Church, which does not focus

on both realities, preaching and practical help, will not be able to address the challenges of urban poverty in an amicable manner.

When it is faithful to the life of Jesus, the Church is a radically distinctive socio-historical community in the world. Christ had compassion for the poor and marginalised: He reached them; He took care of them; and He loved them (Bonhoeffer 1998: 10). The Church in its mission should practise its incarnation ministry: to reach people; to listen to them; to give them hope and to love; and care for them. Therefore, the ELCIN can care for the whole person and his/her surrounding (society) community. The Church as the servant of God should play a vital role in the renewal of cities and towns in Namibia. Our cities need enduring improvement. Since Namibia gained its independence in 1990, there has been a growing need for deep changes in the social, economic and political order. Isaak (in Koegelenberg 1992: 123) states:

> The challenge of the 1990s is to develop an integrated form of life as a necessary component of sustained long-term economic growth, aiming at bringing people to their full potential. At the very least, people should be able to educate themselves, live long and healthy lives and possess the resources necessary for attaining a decent standard of living.

The role of the Church in the public life of the community should make a huge difference, more than other organisations do. The Church as the servant of the kingdom of God should play a vital role in the renewal of urban communities in Namibia. Our urban informal communities need enduring improvement.

6. 3 THE CHURCH IN CONTEXT: MISSION AS HOLISTIC AND CONTEXTUAL PRAXIS

In order to restore today's Church to its biblical mission of holistic development, we must carefully consider that one of the marks of a post modern society is the quest for "community." Mission as proclamation, service or diakonia, and advocacy must be carried out under the sign of the cross to strengthen solidarity and hope. Following Christ in the way of resurrection, the Church, witnessing to the gospel through word, presence, and deed, does not let political and social oppression and economic exclusion have the last word (Lewin 1987: 284, 289). The Church is called to take part in this work of God-bringing life, restoring life. The Church is the most important institution in the community; therefore, its mission should be visible in the community through solidarity of Church with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised ones of society (Bosch 1991: 137). It is the intention and purpose of this

researcher to come to the point of understanding of Church (faith community), as people called by God. It is with this in mind as outlined in Article 4 of the Constitution and Regulations the ELCIN, that the task of the Church is "to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ through holding divine worship services, administering the sacraments, pastoral counselling, educating the youth, demonstrating Christian love through deeds, and by doing mission and diaconal work." The purpose of mentioning this in the constitution is to reach the poor. In this regard, August (1999: 29; 2010: 43) makes it clear that the church as an integral part of God's new creation embodies the holistic meaning of the Biblical message, viz. that salvation is not only spiritual –it is not only changes people's lives, it changes people' relationships and living conditions, it alters structures, in fact, changes the world. Theologically the Church is engaged in the struggle against sin and evil embedded in immorality, poverty, injustice, suffering, crime and violence because of its eschatological perspective of the new creation.

The Namibian churches have a special responsibility to fill the growing moral vacuum with the wholesome morality of the Bible and effectively transmit Biblical values by both word and deed. This calls for a Church that is more deeply reflective and godlier. It requires a Church leadership that is better trained theologically, more broadly educated and more concerned to bring the light and the requirements of the gospel to bear fully on every aspect of life: spiritual, social, economic, political, intellectual and moral. Although it is of paramount importance for the Church to continuously minister to the marginalised, it is exactly because of its concern and divine calling that it is of strategic importance for it also to engage the (dehumanising) powers (Walter Wink) on the macro-environmental level. The Church locally, denominationally and ecumenically needs to discern and resist these forces of domination in the world for the sake of the quality of human life (August 2009: 22-23). Church leaders need to speak out on issues related to injustices done by those who have political authority.

6.3.1 Proclamation and Service: the Whole Gospel of the Kingdom

Scripture speaks of creation and human life in a holistic manner, because it reflects God's concerns for meeting both physical and social needs. Spiritual and physical dimensions of Jesus' earthly ministry are inseparable, this is why Christian action, should be a holistic one in terms of its function. The gospel message is an inseparable mix of life, deed, word, and sign. Life, word, and deeds are signs of the living presence of Jesus who is greater than we

are (Bosch 1991: 117). The authenticity and validity of the witness of the Christian Church is tested by its proclamation. Our life and deeds make our words intelligible; our words help people understand our life and deeds (Myers 2003: 134). The Gospel, and the love of God, is about incarnation and transformation. Jesus 'early ministry had both political and social element (concern). His words explained his works, and his works dramatised his words. Both were expressions of his compassion for people, and both should be ours. Both also issue from the lordship of Jesus, for he sends us out into the communities both to preach and to serve. If we proclaim the good news (gospel) of God's love, we must manifest his love in caring for the needy. Everyone, regardless of where their gospel journeys start, is entitled to encounter the whole of the Gospel in time. All of us need to know the Jesus who is word, deed, and sign, the Christ who is the kingdom walking in sandals among us. The church of Christ witness to the kingdom that has to come. This suggests that, development efforts cannot be separated from the Christian life of faith, witness, and vocation; that is why it is important to equip Christian leaders (Church officials) with skills related to community development and holistic ministry, because most of the time we are inclined to preach to people and address their "spiritual needs" only. The gospel which is holistic is the one that has no dichotomy in itself between faith and works (social actions). If we want the gospel to offers hope to the world, we must flesh out a living witness to that reality. A Gospel that proclaims only one side, the spiritual, or the physical/social, is narrow, impotent and disobedient. The demarcation between "faith" and "works" disappears, because a living faith is faith at work (Sider 1999: 71; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 305).

The mission of our Lord Jesus Christ was a whole gospel to the whole person in his/her whole context, because he never dichotomised people, or made a distinction between spiritual and social, or put the emphasis in his mission on one aspect at the expense of the other. These two aspects of mission (spiritual and social) were as important as the other as far as the vision and the goal of Christ's mission were concerned. For this reason Jesus came not only as one who preached but also as one who served *(diakonos).* He demonstrated the fact that the gracious love of God is not segmental but identifies with the whole person in his/her whole situation (August 2010: 45-46). God's goal in His mission is His messianic kingdom which does not only address the spiritual and moral needs of the human being, but his/her material, physical, social, cultural and political needs as well (Ellison (1974:17; Verkuyl 1978: 211). Mission is directed towards the kingdom of God. In essence, mission is about the demonstration of God's unconditional and selfless love to all people. The missionary task is

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as "coherent, broad and deep as the need and exigencies of human life". This includes the church's missionary engagement in respect of the realities of injustice, oppression, poverty, and violence. Human needs are physical, spiritual, emotional and abstract. The slogan, "the whole church brings the whole gospel to the whole world" is certainly applicable (Bosch 1991: 10).

As God's steward, the Church must study the causes of social problems with an aim of improving. In order to ameliorate the poverty situation, the Church and other social organisations can establish community based programmes that target the poor and illiterate, by training them in a variety of skills and tasks. Training can be both practical as well as basic training in producing quotations, writing tenders, procedures, baking, marketing (entrepreneurship skills) as well as principles of business survival (Chambers 1997: 11). All these factors are extremely important, in order that they respond positively to the need for creating sustainable provision in the long run and to alleviate overall poverty. The Church was initiated and the world moved by actions, the actions of the first apostles and disciples who were following the way of their Master and Saviour. Churches and Christians who want to be an effective witness must preach and live the "whole" Gospel. August (2005: 290) notes "Congregations want to hear from their ministers where they stand with regard to addressing public issues in sermons, prayers, liturgies, Bible studies, public worship services, in house visitations, at ministers 'associations etc. The Church leaders should have integrity when it comes to public issues." For the Church, as a social institution, to emulate the Kingdom of God, it will have to embody within its own structures the values it preaches; because preaching alone will not be enough. The gospel cannot be good news if the witnesses are incapable of discerning the real issues and concerns that matter to the marginalised. Newbigin (1999: 132) comments:

> The preaching is meaningless without the healings. They are the true explanation of what is happening, but if nothing is happening, no explanation is called for and the words are empty words. They do not answer any real questions. They can be brushed aside as mere talk. They are only meaningful in the context of the might of works.

Proclamation loses its integrity when it is broadcast wholesale without dealing with persons individually in their real-life situations (Cheyne 1996: 68). The Church's message of salvation must have also implies a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination. The church's mission is to be the body of people which,

through the grace of God, participate in the initiatives which God takes in the world (Morisy (1997: 2). Bosch (1991: 389) writes:

> If mission is God's mission (Missio Dei) and has its origin in the heart of God-there is mission only because God loves people-God's love of people has been shown to be holistic. That mission is God's mission is an essential corrective to an understanding of mission in soteriological, cultural, salvation historical or even ecclesiastical categories as expansion of the church or a particular denomination.

I find it helpful to picture the gospel message as a pyramid. The top of the pyramid is being with Jesus' living in and with the living Lord. The relationship gives life to all that lies below it. Each of the concerns of the pyramid is one dimension of the gospel: preaching or the Gospel-as-word, healing or the gospel-as-deed, casting out, or the gospel-as-sign. Gospel-as-word includes teaching, preaching, and doing theology. Gospel-as-deed means working for the physical, social, and physiological well of the world that God created. Gospel-as- sign means praying for signs and wonders, those things that only God can do, as well as the church serving as a living sign of a kingdom that is and has not yet fully come. If we break the pyramid into pieces, it no longer is a pyramid, just as a dog cut into parts no longer is a dog. For the gospel to be the gospel, all three aspects have to be present because they are inseparable. The gospel cannot be good news if the witnesses are incapable of discerning the real issues and concerns that matter to the marginalised. "As the was the case in Jesus' own ministry, those in pain are to be liberated, the poor cared for, the outcasts and rejected brought home, and all sinners offered forgiveness and salvation" (Bosch 1991: 118). By proclaiming the sovereign authority of our just God, the church challenges and warns those who exploit the poor (Perkins 1994: 47). The gospel is the visible demonstration and manifestation of God's love in the world. "The Church as the agent of Jesus should be a community in which pain and suffering can be brought to rest" (Perkins 1993: 45).

The big question is, "How do we affirm the dignity of people, motivate them, and help them take up responsibility for their own lives"? Perkins (1995: 21) states, "The gospel, rightly understood, is holistic. It responds to people as whole people; it does not single out spiritual or just physical needs and speak to those. Holistic Community Development begins with people transformed by the love of God, who then respond to God's call to share the gospel with others through evangelism, social action, economic development, and justice". By preaching the whole Gospel of the kingdom, the Church's task must be to take care of its people and locate them in a situation(context) where they can respond in a responsible way to the preaching of the Gospel. It is our duty as the church to locate people in an economic

setting that makes the hearing of the gospel possible. It must be clear to the church's ministry of proclamation the gospel that; social action is not an option, but it must be done if the Gospel is to be heard. Social action and evangelism goes together, that is why the church must be both a herald (foretell) and a sign (deed), by serving as a context in which the saving power of God is made visible (Verkuyl 1978: 212). The Church's witness to the Good News of the kingdom demands that the church to be visibly present in all areas of human life in order that the gospel is wholly preached and people are enabled to respond adequately to the prophetic demands of the Gospel. The Social Gospel emphasized Christian obligation to respond to physical need and oppression, the priority of social action and the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth now through human efforts.

Based on the findings in chapter 4, it can be seen that the Church in the cities pay much attention to witness by word (proclamation and evangelism), and considered it to be more important and above service (witness by deed or social action). David Bosch (1980: 221) says, however, this distinction is a false distinction, for "God's word is a ringing deed and his deed is a visible and tangible word". Both *kerugma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (Service) stand side-by-side in a tensive relationship in which these are not mutually exclusive of one another. 'The Church is the church only when it exists for others.' Nicholls (1986: 171) comments, "The church of Jesus Christ all over the world is under obligation to respond to human need with Christ-like compassion. This takes the Church out of its comfortable environment, and places it in the market places, on the highways and by-ways, in ghettos, in prison cells, in refugee camps, in rural as well as in urban centres-wherever people are (cf. Lewin 1987: 284)."

For Gospel advancement is critical to ensure that essentially there are effective communities in Ondangwa and Oshakati. Urban people, by nature, are mobile and therefore not static as a community responsible foe caring for the needs of others. The holistic approach emphasises the importance of mutual communality where a person is no longer a stranger, but a citizen. Universally, the quest for modernity has done great damage by destroying the community, which is the backbone of morality. Mead (1996: 53) notes "There congregations can still be a focus in which the whole life of the whole neighbourhood is celebrated and offered to God in the community of faith." In great occasions of worship, urban congregations in Ondangwa and Oshakati have the ability to be communities. The pastors through preaching and leading worship can bring the gift of community to incredibly diverse groups. Mead (1996: 54)

comments "For the most part, however, urban congregations have to seek ways in which the congregation can support the development of human community in the larger society."

The contemporary community of faith that seeks to live true to the Biblical model will similarly be a community adapting its institutional structures to its central confessions and missions (Hanson 1987:468). The Church stands in the vortex of God's eternal purposes and human needs. If the Church has 'eyes to see and ears to hear', then, it will see its strategy for accomplishing its mission becoming clear as it reflects upon the activities of God-through-Christ, as God seeks to achieve His mission in the world-and by looking deeply into human needs which reside in her environment (Bakke 1978: 92). Ellison (1974: 135) notes, "In its concern for ministering to the whole persons, the urban, church must not overlook its responsibility to face people directly with their spiritual destiny."

It is our understanding that the fulfilment of the Great Commission requires that we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, plant and nurture churches, apply the principles of Christ's kingdom in all areas of community life (compassion, justice, stewardship), and seek to reclaim the whole cosmos (soil, water, air, minerals) from the control of Satan and his kingdom. To that end we will proclaim the gospel of Christ 's kingdom in words and deeds, accept suffering and if needs be persecution, in order that Christ's name be known, his Lordship over all of life acknowledged, and the love, truth, and righteousness of his kingdom spread everywhere. In all that we do we will seek to gather a saved people, the church, and motivate and equip its members to be agents of transformation in terms of truth, love and justice in tangible ways in their communities and nations. The proclamation of the message of Jesus requires the Church to engage in action to promote justice at the social level (both institutional and structural) and not simply at the level of the individual (Swart 2001: 18). To achieve this goal, the Church has to initiate development projects aimed at family health, housing and educational problems, which will result in a self reliant society. We need a holistic view of people because God's redeeming work does not separate individuals from the social system of which they are a part (Wink 1992: 300). Samuel & Sugden (1987: 222- 223) advise, "We must be concerned for the whole persons in their biological and physical, social and economic development. The Church must educate its members to hold to the precepts of respect, justice and human dignity and to beware of seeing the individual as a mere object, case study, or experimental material."

A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems. The congregational setting can therefore serve to strengthen their members through Christian education initiatives. Sunday school, the youth ministry and women's/men's fellowships are all opportunities for holistic life skills education. Through educational ministry, the Church can help the people concerned to acquire the broad mind and ability to investigate their environment with a view to discerning the problems therein. As a matter of fact, education is part and parcel of community development. It incites self confidence and advancement of the people (August 2009: 228). To succeed therefore, the Church has to organise training, community outreach and awareness raising. Concern for the whole person can happen when our ministries care about a person's soul and body; because people are not isolated hermits but rather spiritual-physical beings who live in communities. The Church must preach a full Gospel that allows no separation (dichotomy) between the spiritual and physical needs of humanity. So many other needs too cry out for our attention at this time such as; socio-economic, cultural, political, and socio-psychological needs-all caused by unjust structures of power in this world.

6. 3. 2 The Church called for Local Communities

The Church of God is in the world for others. God is at work in the historical process, that the purpose of His mission, the *'Missio Dei',* is the establishment of shalom in the sense of social harmony, and that this shalom (which it suggested was identical with the kingdom of God) is exemplified in the emancipation of coloured races, the concern for the humanization of industrial relations, various attempts at rural development, the quest for business and professional ethics, and the concern for intellectual honesty and integrity (Cheyne 1996: 8-9; Guder 1998: 11-12). The term "Mission" according to David Bosch (1991: 1) "presupposes a sender, a person or persons sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent, and an assignment." With this view the Church has been given a task to do in this world, and it has to go beyond its limit. It is the mission of God *(Missio Dei),* sending the Church to do God's work, to whicch it has been assigned. Bosch (1991: 10) states that, "...it is God's revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embrace both the Church and the world, and in which the Church is privileged to participate."

Christ suggested that the following aspects of mission should be considered in every church's ministry. These aspects are: feeding the hungry, refreshing the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, and caring for the sick and the prisoner (Mt. 25: 42-45). From this we understand that the mission of the church is to alleviate human needs that plague the body or crush the human spirit. These needs are more or less unique to every community (Jacobsen 2001: 13). Pieterse (2001: 112) argues that the Christian church is the church for the poor, the church that exists in poor communities. Therefore, the Church is imitating the Lord Jesus Christ, and is the Church *of* the poor and *for* the poor.

The Church is called to proclaim the words of hope and comfort of the gospel, by its work of compassion and mercy (Lk 4: 18-19). God calls Christians and the Church of Christ to be actively involved in the world we live in and to respond to the needs of all God's people. In order for the church to be relevant, it must maintain its prophetic voice within community (society). Central to development is awareness raising (Newbigin 1999: 118). People must be made aware of their situations. Education (nurturing) is the means to this end. The researcher is of the opinion that, nothing other than the community of God's people (Church) is capable of affirming the dignity of the people and enabling them to meet their own needs. It is practically impossible to do effective holistic ministry apart from the local Church. A nurturing community of faith can best provide the thrusts of evangelism, discipleship, spiritual accountability, and relationships by which disciples grow in their walk with God.

One of the problems we come across today is that the Church is not involving itself in the development of the communities as the missionaries did in the past. The history of the missionary movement is replete with stories of outstanding jungle doctors and educators, men and women who have planted the flag of Christ firmly in many lands by bringing wholeness and light spiritually and physically. Wherever the gospel was preached, it was closely followed by a mission hospital or a school, familiar landmarks of the expansion of the cause of Christ. Besides setting up and staffing schools, hospitals and clinics, missionaries introduced improved methods of agriculture. They were involved in countless things that today we would call "community development (Maggay 1994: 63-64). From a very early stage, during the missionaries' era, it has been recorded that, the inhabitants were helped to erect simple structures for each family and were taught to respect the neighbour's property. With Christian education (teaching) in the centre of the community's life, they (inhabitants) were trained to read and to write, to garden and herd their livestock properly, as well as to

protect the interest of the common good. Thus, skills-training was an integral component of empowering the people (August 2005: 270). The researcher fully agrees with Maggay and August that this was also true within the ELCIN during the Finnish missionary era, missionary schools focussed on industrial education and taught different skills such washing, cooking, sewing and cleaning (cf. Nambala 1994: 85; Buys & Nambala 2003: 243). Maggay (1994: 64) comments "In our days, Mother Teresa stands as a symbol of Christianity's compassionate particularly-the focused commitment to the needs of individual men and women and not just some abstract mass or class of humankind. In her work among the dying in the streets of Calcutta, we see incarnate once again the Christ who once walked the streets of Galilee and healed the sick and the infirm."

A passion to empower the poor is indispensable. The Church's ministry in Namibia's post-independent context needs to show a special concern for the needy and neglected (oppressed) ones of society like it did during the time for liberation struggle from 1966-1989. The Church should not only preach the spiritual message alone but it should also participate in human development.

Julius Oladipo (2001: 220) in Bowers (2005) identifies the church's institutional stability, regular and predictable decision-making systems, moral order, value base of concern for the poor and culture of volunteerism as "ideal features of the church that give it an advantageous position in working for sustainable development". A church that is concerned about the wellbeing of all people recognises that physical health and social well-being are necessary pre-conditions to the complete fulfilment of humanity's personal and social responsibilities in this world (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 240). It is obvious that the Church is regarded as a powerful role player in communities such as those of Ondangwa and Oshakati.

However, in order for the Church to address the socio-economic needs of the community, the Church's relationship with its community and awareness of its challenge are essential in understanding the levels and character of community involvement. Ammerman (1997: 346) states "Congregations are a part of a community's institutional infrastructure, a part of the structures and connections that make social life possible." Clergy of local congregations interviewed (Chapter 4) were accurately aware of the community's socio-economic challenges and understand their mission as one of going out and reaching the communities where there are people who are in need, both physically and spiritually. Jesus' words: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Mark 2: 17), indicates

unmistakably the orientation of his ministry. The clergy understand that it is their pastoral task (responsibility) to walk in Jesus' footsteps, He that was described as "the great physician". In the same vein Clinebell (1996: 47) notes "Jesus' critics probably felt that he spent a disproportionate amount of his time with the burdened, the disturbed and the sick. His parable of the shepherd who left the ninety-nine to help the one lost sheep showed his concern for the individual in need."

The people (informal inhabitants) who completed questionnaires (chapter 4) cited unemployment as the most prominent challenge, followed by poverty, basic needs and service delivery, inadequate sanitation as well land tenure and ownership. It was interesting to note that in response to the questionnaires several respondents felt that it was difficult to choose the most challenging socio-economic problem in their community as all were regarded as equally important. From the research findings and especially the perceptions of the interviewed clergy (chapter 4), it can be seen that it is high this time that the Church broadens its past focus on spiritual development. This is a one- sided implementation of ministry. "If the gospel message is to be understood and interpreted into meaningful expressions of the life of Christ, it must be free to deal not only with the spiritual reality of eternal life, but also with the finite physical realities of poverty, ignorance, disease, political oppression, exploitation, guilt, and despair" (Cheyne 1996: 14). Theological factors in particular, such as "spiritualised concept of salvation" and "an inflexible orthodoxy which spiritualises human need and offers stereotyped spiritual recipes", are identified among the weaknesses the Church has to overcome in acting as an effective vehicle for community development amongst the poor and marginalised ones of the society (Nürnberger 1999: 372).

It has been recorded that in many squatter communities and urban informal settlements today, the Church is less visible to bear witness to Christ in Word and deed to those who lived there in poor and marginal situations. These faces of abject poverty invite the Church and Christian Organizations to involve themselves in concrete social services such as; feeding scheme programmes, health care, education, water and sanitation facilities, and ways of increasing food production and income. It is the researcher's opinion that "Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas" in today's world, the ELCIN will be well positioned to combat the evil, which results into social injustices. The objective is to address both the physical and spiritual needs of people, each being an indivisible reality. Therefore, any urban church, which does not focus on both realities, will not be able to address the challenges of urban

poverty in an amicable manner. There is a need for a total ministry that includes proclamation of the Gospel and people's physical needs. God created us to be integrated beings and has bestowed a variety of gifts on believers. Ellison (1974: 217) comments, "The scriptural concept of the Body of Christ bears directly on this question of poverty and need. The Body of Christ (Church) must also be responsible for its (her) members' spiritual and social welfare." What is required here is for the Church to be a catalyst and/vehicle (means) for community development in response to God's common vision for the 21st century. Kritzinger *et al* (1994: 36) notes, "The Christian mission is a comprehensive ministry with various dimensions which can be distinguished, but never separated. We believe, therefore, that the goal of mission can only be accomplished through a holistic approach."

As those five thousands hungry men of the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 14: 13-21, Mk 6: 30-44, Lk 6: 10-17) who listened to the teaching of Jesus were fed by him with bread and fish, so, too, the hungry and poverty stricken members of our congregations need not only to listen to the spiritual message (our sermons), but should also be provided with physical support (cf. Lewin 1987: 154). Words may be secondary; the most important element of mission is for Christians to embody the presence of Christ through their lives in a particular setting or through particular actions. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 207) state:

> The earliest Christians were challenged as individuals to perform deeds of mercy as opportunities arose. Biblical texts cited in support of this include James 2: 14-17: "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

We should insist that the right belief *(orthodoxy)* and the right action *(orthopraxis)* belong together. According to the epistle of James, faith or the right belief *(orthodoxy)* without works or the right action *(orthopraxis)* is useless and unauthentic. Therefore, the churches (faith communities) are called upon to reconcile their different perspectives on the relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis (Isaak 1997: 25). Rakoczy (1992: 44) notes that, "Spirituality is not vacuum-packed but actualized, experienced, discovered in particular circumstances and places. A person's spirituality is not entirely private but has social ramifications." As such, the physical needs of the person are equally important as the spiritual. Holistic ministry theology opposes all thoughts that compartmentalise (dichotomise) the spiritual and physical, and that shrink the concerns of the church to the private and needs of its members. Yamamori *et al* (1996: 159) confirm:

> Holistic ministry should of course incorporate both spiritual and material results...increased food production, better infrastructure, loving health care, spiritually transformed lives; church planted; income generated from new businesses, trained church and community leadership, and behavioural and cultural changes.

In this situation, the Church needs to adapt to the urban setting by implementing the holistic approach as ministry theory to address the dynamics of the informal settlements. In commenting on the vocation of the Church in the towns of Africa, Shorter (1991: 138) states that, "Besides helping to effect a change of heart, therefore, the church has to effect a change in human living conditions, in sanitation, hygiene, health care and provision of building materials." As a community of faith, the church today can respond to the contemporary challenges faced by its (her) people as an agent (catalyst) of development in the world dedicated not to the partial plans for humanity of different nations or interest groups, but to the universal plan for peace wedded with justice intended by the God of all the nations and people (Campolo 2000: 161). It has been reported that, the Church becomes only a place where certain things such as, worship, preaching, prayers, and tithing take place, but are not looked upon as a group which God has called into existence to do something. Any Gospel that proclaims only one side; the spiritual, or the physical/social, is narrow, impotent and disobedient. A holistic approach that was taken by Jesus during his earthly ministry focused on the human being as an indivisible entity, as well as the total being of which body and soul form a unity out of the diversity (cf. Bonhoeffer 1995: 248-249).

The marks of the Church need to be placed decisively within the framework of the Church's mission. The Church has to take into consideration the socio-economic challenges that are faced by its members and needs to extend her social diaconal ministry to the residents of informal settlements by providing various services such as; preaching, schooling, and social care.

The primary aim of the Church is not only to preach the gospel of Christ to the people of God, but it is also to bring people close to God, no matter in what situation (context) they are to be found. Whether they are found in alienation from or in confusion about God or in growing commitment to God, the Church has to seek them out and try to bring them to a deeper relationship with their Lord, and this is done through preaching the word of God (Nelumbu1994: 6). However, all is not well with Gospel proclamation. There are some difficulties that hinder effective proclamation. Since the world is now a global village, the

northern Namibian urban congregations of Ondangwa and Oshakati are also faced with challenges similar to those affecting Gospel proclamation in other parts of the world. The mission of the Church is to open its doors and invite pain and suffering in; because Jesus did not absorb pain from a distance and neither can the Church. Maggay (1994: 21) states that "The '*ecclesia visibilis*' is God's people making the presence of the kingdom of felt in all areas of life, the leaven which permeates all of human activity. It is the church in academia (education), the church in health and social services (diaconal social ministry), the church in politics (prophetic ministry), and the church in the market-place (economic justice)". In order for the Church to fulfil tasks of its practice in the urban communities, it must position itself to be concerned about the following areas: health care (water and sanitation), housing (accommodation) and relocation (living among the people), just to mention a few.

6. 3. 2. 1 Health Care (Water and Sanitation)

The poor usually suffer from basic economic needs and they are deprived of material goods necessary to live with dignity. Pieterse (2001: 30) uses a definition that is commonly accepted by researchers that poverty is "the inability of individuals, households, or entire communities to command resources to satisfy a socially acceptable standard of living." The poor health situation described in chapter 5, section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 receives further attention in this section. The poor people are cramped tightly into small makeshift shacks in shanty towns. Their houses have no electricity, sanitation, or fresh water supply. There are only a handful taps with running water to serve the whole area, and there are no proper sewage facilities. Inadequate refuse removal, contaminated water and expired foods can lead to air and waterborne diseases because some streets which are littered with fast food outlets which do little to bring the bread of physical nourishment to the locals. The physical condition of their surroundings mirrors the despair of the inhabitants.

The health situation in informal settlements surrounding the Ondangwa and Oshakati Townships of northern Namibia is hygienically extremely poor. The environmental care is pathetic, most poor people use contaminated water flowing from the nearly Cuvelai delta from the Southern Angola and then converges into the Etosha Pan. This, in addition to sewage disposal, is the main source of illness. Inadequate sanitation and lack of safe water for drinking and cooking create an environment conducive to the spread of infectious and parasitic diseases, and are therefore associated with improper environmental health. "There is

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much sickness and diseases due to poor and dangerous working conditions together with new and returning diseases like AIDS and TB, hit and affect those who are already vulnerable to financial hardship and poor housing conditions" (Green 2003: 104). The Church must be concerned about the stress of the city life, which is a major contributor to both psychological and physical breakdown. Linthicum (1991: 166) notes "Heath care in the city, therefore, means more than adequate medical care for all; it also means dealing with the variegated stress of the city and with the environmental issues. The Bible indicates that such concern needs to be part of the work of the church in the city."

6. 3. 2. 2 Housing (Accommodation)

The issue of housing is one of the major challenges, not only in African countries, but also in the pivotal cities of the world. Linthicum (1991: 167) comments:

> Even in a country as wealthy as the United States, homelessness has become an epidemic as urban dwellers become accustomed to the bag-ladies and gate-dwellers and the people sleeping in the doorways, the parks, and on the sidewalks throughout over U.S. cities. God is displeased with such inequality and expects his people to work for adequate housing for all the people.

The challenge is that, in dealing with urban housing, there are three issues that surface: adequacy, distribution, and safety. The Church in Namibia, particularly the ELCIN, should be concerned with the shantytowns and slums situation of the surrounding communities by including a housing agenda on the annual plans. It is helpful to encourage the rich to visit the nearby slums to feel and see the circumstances in which the poor people are living. Linthicum (1991: 167) notes "It is a shock to enter into a squatter settlement of the third world city; these settlements elected overnight by the people migrating to the city; cling tenuously to the sides of steep hills or over precipices...their houses built of cardboards, packing crates, metal sheets, and mud-bricks."

Colonialism led to a state of landlessness in Namibia. The owners of the land were evicted by the colonists and confined into reserves. In the cities, towns and mine areas, there are many Namibians in search of employment and cash wage. After Namibia's independence (1990) many Namibians are to be found everywhere in the country searching for jobs, especially in the south and central part of the country (Munyika 2005: 5). Many of them are found in pathetic conditions of shanties built from carton boxes or plastic. However, their future is uncertain because they do not know when they are going to be evicted from where they are

due to municipality regulations. It is indeed a situation of people without access to land of their own.

6. 3. 2. 3 Relocation: living in the Community

God has placed the Church in the city. In fact, God was in the city before the city came into existence. On this basis, therefore, the city is a massive investment made both by God and by humanity. Humanity provides for the stewardship of the city regarding the political, economic, social, and material, through the systems and structures of the city. Linthicum (1991: 177) affirms "Just as a city depends upon the prayers of the Church for its welfare, so too, the city depends upon the church's faithful stewardship."

The issue here is that most of the people are not aware of that the Church cares for the spirituality of the city. Most of the time, the Church prays behind the scenes for the goodwill and peace of the city, to make it holy and acceptable before God. Linthicum (1991: 177) notes "That is why the Church involves itself in health care, housing, economic development and advocacy of the poor-for, whether addressed or ignored, all those profoundly affect the depth of spirituality of the city, for good or ill." In addition, City ministers need to remember that God positioned the Church strategically to care for the poor. This is seen clearly in the Jesus 'ministry agenda of which we read in Luke 4. Shorter (1991: 140) comments "Certainly, the Church can help the poor to understand the causes of their poverty, can appeal to the conscience of the affluent, and can spearhead the Christian rebellion against poverty and injustice… Christians can, for example, create their own justice and peace committees to monitor the daily harassments and abuses inflicted on them. Above all, the Church can help new town dwellers to capitalise their creative talents, build on the positive urban value of self-determination, and make good their right to urbanize themselves." Perkins (1995: 29) states "The principle for Christian community development is that our efforts have to build up the family unity if we envision our communities as places where we are to experience some of God's provisions in paradise." This means that we have by all means to deal with the high rate of unemployment in our societies, especially in urban informal areas. Christian community development needs to put more emphasis on helping people to help themselves to get out of poverty. Our main efforts must be to develop people and lead them to the point where they can use their God-given skills and abilities in satisfying work that also can benefit the whole community at large. Community by its nature requires small groups of individuals

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who bear one another's burdens in such a way that they will model reconciliation to one another. Urban ministry in shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

6. 3. 3 A Caring Community and Ministry: congregational development Activities

Jesus shared food and fellowship with all, especially those who were isolated from the good life. He restored people's spirits and gave them a feeling of value. This led to a change in the people themselves. This, too, is what the Church should be like. However, while proclaiming the Gospel which should result in the breaking down of fences, dispelling of fear, and freeing of people from hopelessness, we have instead often stressed doctrines and not offered practical solutions (Isaak 1997: 89). The proclamation of the message of Jesus requires the Church to engage in action to promote justice at all the social levels (both institutional and structural) and not simply at the level of the individual (Swart 2001: 18). To achieve this goal, the Church has to initiate development projects aimed at family health, housing and educational problems, which will result in a self reliant society. "We need a holistic view of people, because God's redeeming work does not separate individuals from the social systems of which they are a part. No arrangements of social cooperation, in which power controls power and anarchy is tamed, will produce human beings free from the lust of power" (Wink 1986: 76). Acts of rescue and mercy such as, social and economic liberation for the imprisoned, the oppressed, the errant, or the accident-prone are part of diaconal responsibilities (holistic ministry).

It is high time that the Church broadens its past focus on spiritual development. This is a one-sided implementation of ministry. The Church must also be concerned with the physical situation of the congregants and the development of the church at large. It is hereby recommended that the Church should seriously begin to also manage development activities with a view to assisting poor congregants. Handouts are not enough to meet the needs of the growing numbers of needy people. Sider (1999: 20) notes "Changing oppressive social structures to bring dignity, health, freedom, and economic well-being to people is enormously important." In commenting on the importance of servicing urban basic communities, Shorter (1991: 104) notes, "...it is clear that urban basic communities probably require more care, attention and maintenance than rural basic communities. However, they should not depend

wholly on the visits of a priest or member of the pastoral team in order to function properly, to solve their problems, or to replace leaders."

In Ondangwa and Oshakati, most people live in slums, yet are members of the congregations. Here one might raise the question of what the Church is doing in order to assist this group of people. Shorter (1991: 139) notes "A major goal for the Church in the town is to convince people that resources should be husbanded, safely exploited, and fairly shared…besides helping to effect a change of heart, therefore, the Church has to effect a change in human living conditions, in sanitation, hygiene, health care and the provision of building materials." If the urban congregation does not defend the cause (plight) of the urban poor, then it will be difficult for the Church to implement Christian witness to the disadvantaged group living in shantytowns. It will be hard for people to believe in a God who does nothing to change their predicament. Shorter (1991: 77) comments:

> The Church in the city tries to improve conditions through socio-economic liberation and change. People from the squatter self-help areas must be helped to acquire a share in the urban services to which they are entitled and which only a minority of town dwellers enjoy. This is a question of justice, especially since many squatters are integrated into the city's large scale, formal work sector.

6. 3. 4 Economic Imbalances versus Unemployment

In development debates, positive moral and ethical foundations are considered as necessary bases for economic success. It is further reflected that an exclusive focus on political and economic priorities at the cost of psycho-cultural transformation is wrong. Ramogale in Coetzee *et al* (2001: 485) conclude "The failure of African countries to create successful economies and political stability is evidence that current value systems are flawed." In dealing with poverty; first of all, deeper questions have to be asked. This concerns issues such as; why are people suffering or poor, what are the causes behind their state? This is where the problem of poverty and unemployment leads to questions concerning the role of power structures, or of economic or political systems. This often leads into a sensitive area where the church may find itself in conflict with those in power and those who have vested interests in the status quo. Nevertheless, in fulfilling its diaconal and prophetic mission, it is appropriate for the church to address such structural issues in whatever ways would be appropriate and effective. Any system that impoverishes communities stands under the judgement of God and is subjected to the Biblical demand of justice. Sider (1993: 46) states:

> The church is central in any Christian programme, as a model of what society ought to be like, a catalyst for achieving that goal, and the goal of God's redemptive work in society in Christ. To achieve this end the church should engage in educating its members in issues of justice, making the poor aware of their rights, working with the poor in projects where the poor have maximum participation, and sharing in partnership with the world-wide church to achieve these ends.

When poverty in Namibia is contextualised in the historical framework of systemic exploitation, and when the vulnerability of the poor to the AIDS pandemic is considered, it becomes clear that urgent comprehensive redistributive measures aimed at alleviating poverty are essential. Terreblanche (2002: 44) notes "The real vulnerability of the poor is exposed in the case of violent crimes during which bodily harm is inflicted, thus disrupting their already tenuous social fabric even further. Most of these crimes are committed within households, and are seldom reported especially when women and children are abused, neglected and exploited. Women are often the victims of cruel violent crimes that undermine not only their dignity but their ability to earn money". "Christians must be realistic about the effects of the fall on God's world. The fall also led to abusive relationships between humans. Much of the poverty in the contemporary world results from a selfish failure to redistribute wealth on the side of the rich. Instead, they continue to get richer while the poor get poorer" (Hughes &Bennett 1998: 285).

The Namibian economy is characterized by gross structural imbalances which indicate that the country has high levels of poverty and the highest incidence of income inequality in the world. Socio-economic empowerment has not changed, because about two thirds of all Namibians live below the poverty line. Namibia's gap between the rich and the poor is the worst in the world. In fact this gap has widened after independence. Yet, there seems to be blindness on the part of the leaders towards those who live in abject poverty. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer (Munyika 2005: 4-5; Haarmann 2005: 3, 31-32). Some people feel that capitalism should be blamed for poverty in Namibia. Poor political leadership is guaranteed to keep a poor country poor and to turn a progressive nation into a retrogressive one. Due to the complexity of Namibia's problems this sentiment could be welcomed by some people and questioned by others.

If one evaluates the present situation in Namibia objectively and critically in the light of its crises, one will agree with Nambala (2003: 8-10), that "there is an imbalance in National economic distribution. In spite the fact that, all people have the same basic human needs: food, water, shelter and security; in Namibia there are those who get a bigger cake share than

necessary. 5% of the population used 65% of the national economy, whereas 95% grabble for the rest 35%. There are people, including government officials; receiving over N$ 50 000.00 per month despite the large number of unemployed. For an example, municipality executives are getting exorbitant salaries and immeasurable fringe benefits while cutting off water to, and bulldozing shanties *("uumbashu")* of the poor town dwellers (informal settlements) as they cannot afford the water bills or decent housing. Government officials and civil servants cannot be excluded from the circle of beneficiaries at the expense of the poor. The *haves* try to utilize what they have, and the *have-nots* try to use any means to get what they are lacking". The crisis in Namibia and Southern Africa derives from the crises specific to colonialism and apartheid. The ethos of colonialism, that is its practices and the meaning that is given to it, the forms of relationships that consecrated and gave rise to the rest of the social classes, shows itself incapable of solving problems related to any civil society and has been rejected because it was a system of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Thus, in Namibia today we find ourselves at the end of the era of colonialism and apartheid (1989) and at the beginning of a new era (1990).

The very first positive thing that happened in Namibia was the attainment of independence on 21 March 1990. It happened in a manner that could only fill everyone's heart with joy, after a protracted civil war. The notorious system of apartheid was enforced in Namibia, together with the violent oppression of any form of political resistance. The war of independence was fought largely in the northern part of Namibia, on the border with Angola, where most of SWAPO, the liberation movement s' camps were based. The celebration of Namibia's political independence came at a time when the whole world was changing from an attitude of war to one of peace. Namibia represented this hope for all citizens of the world (Buys & Nambala 2003: 409). Development is people first for it sets out from where people are (Burkey 1996: 23; Chambers 1997: 14, 210-220). Namibian independence challenges the churches and society to be involved in development instead of relief work. From time to time, those of us under the influence of western colonialism and religion regarded poverty as a spiritual blessing (Isaak in Keogelenberg 1992: 119). In the words of David Bosch (1991: 489), the mission activities of the Church are done in boldly humility, "not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure salespersons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Jesus".

Being the voice of the voiceless is not something new, especially in Namibian history. During the time of the liberation struggle, the church leaders were the voice of the voiceless, denouncing the apartheid system as evil. During this period, so many people died as a result of crimes committed on a daily basis and others are living in a neglected situation characterized by poverty and unemployment. To be the voice of the voiceless, means speaking out against injustices and sinful policies, taking action to witness to our faith and providing support for survivors by working to establish a justice that heals, that is a formidable advocacy which is urgently needed (Isaak 1997: 24). It has been reported that, since independence of Namibia in 1990 the churches have been very subdued and silent, in the face of serious human rights abuses by the liberation movement, SWAPO, and the ever-growing gap between the new elite of 'haves' and the growing masses of 'have-nots'. The church of God has to fulfill its mission, i.e. its prophetic role. The question as to the role of the church is timely for us as Namibians. The church in Namibia is called to a healing prophetic praxis; one which calls the broader Namibia to embrace 'the other' based on a theological understanding of the Kingdom of God as that which brings good news to people and speaks of justice, love, peace and wholeness, "of the flourishing of righteousness and *shalom.* Being the Church today in this world means to be a church with a prophetic voice, which includes, amongst others, the political-cum-prophetic voice and the economic-cum prophetic voice. These roles often require conflict, mutual reprimand and bitter debate to resolve differences or to bring inconsistencies to light (Isaak 2000: 4).

6. 3.5 Advocacy for the poor and Economic development: the Church s' Advocacy Role

In the Holy Scriptures, we see how God's concern for justice for the poor and oppressed was demonstrated powerfully in Jesus Christ. Peace and restoration are two aspects of the fullness of the blessings that God intends for his people (cf. Sider 1997). The most powerful example of God's concern for justice is found in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus Christ, the Son of God who was the anointed servant of the Lord, started his ministry by preaching the good news to the poor and announcing release of captives (Lk. 4: 16-19). During his earthly ministry, Jesus represented the oppressed of all history by forgiving sins on their behalf and claiming that he would also one day judge the world on behalf of the oppressed of all history (Christian 1999: 147). The God of the Bible is first and foremost the God of liberation who leads the people out of every kind of bondage, spiritual, political, social and economic. God's justice begins with the liberation of his people and will be fulfilled in the liberation of all people. Therefore,

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as Christians, we should be passionately committed to enabling the poor to experience the blessings of the earth and to opposing their destructive exploitation. As described in the New Testament, the salvation Jesus brings entails liberation from all forms of oppression: sin, death, illness, and the demons; whether these take shape in an individual's life or appear as cosmic "principalities and powers" that work various forms of oppression: spiritual, economic, ecological, political, cultural, and so on. The Church of Jesus Christ is called itself to be a society where the justice and mercy of God rule; this is an aspect of its witness, a witness that becomes especially visible as the Church's concern for the justice and mercy of God "spills out" into the world beyond the Church (Hughes &Bennett 1998: 307; Nessan 1999: 114).

In fact, God expects all of us, especially of his servants to preach and live the message of justice. For Christians, Scripture can provide a common ground for approach to justice. Justice cannot be synonymous to Scriptural approach, but neither can it ignore Scripture. It is important that Scripture is interpreted through the eyes of both the oppressor and the oppressed (Hall 1990: 167). Hanson (1987:507) states "The advocacy of peace and justice is not a simple challenge. The Church (Community of Faith) has to be guided in its vocation of opposing all injustices and speaking out on behalf of the oppressed, the hungry, the sick, and the poor." In doing community ministry and mission, the Church must also aim at fighting about justice to society, by eliminating economic, social and political injustices. "The simultaneity of: creation, fall, and redemptions means that God at once and the same time uphold a given political or economic system, since some system is required to support human life; condemns that system insofar as it is destructive to full human actualization; and presses for its transformation into a more humane order. Conservatives: stress the first; revolutionaries: the second; reformers: the third. The Christian is expected to hold together all three" (Wink 1986: 67).

The urban people are poor because of inter alia, marginalisation and oppression. There is a negative aspect from the side of those who are in government authority towards people who live in such a pathetic condition in the informal settlements. "Sometimes the government regarded those people as useless, drunkards, lazy, and being always engaged in sexual immorality" (Burkey 1996: 3). Thus, in most cases, the inhabitants of the informal settlements are to a large extent excluded from urban services. Shorter (1991: 138 and Green 2003: 104) note "Badly, politicians often pay attention to the poor only when they need their

votes. In order to address these problems, the Church must advocate for the urban poor. Linthicum (1991: 169) states "Integral to God's commitment to the poor is Yahweh's assumption that the chief defenders of the poor must be God's prophets, apostles, and people. It is a primary task of the church in the city to be the advocate and champion for the poor." Power and powerlessness are very real categories within vulnerable communities such as Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, which not only experience the results of being caught up in a downward interrelated cycle of poverty, but must live with the legacy of apartheid. These structures of systems have indeed taken on a character of their own and evidence a distorted reality of God's intended *shalom* for these communities (cf 2.3). The roots of powerlessness are broken and unjust relationships. The fruits of powerlessness are "the loss of dignity and pride, the loss of hope, turning to drug, alcohol or escapist religion families in disarray, and violent crimes as desperate reactions to life without the power to pursue dreams and aspirations" (Jacobsen 2001: 39).

Perkins (1995: 218) states "Christian community development is about ministry in the overlooked and forgotten communities of our land, the throwaway places, neglected and discarded by the powers that be. God's word calls us to fully invest our lives and resources in them". Development that is transformational calls the church to engage the 'powers that be'- civic, political and economic authorities-prophetically (Bowers 2005: 222). The Church cannot and must not do any less. By the power of the Gospel the rich must be liberated from their greed, selfishness, pride and self-satisfaction while the poor must be liberated from their poverty, ignorance and hopelessness. The Gospel calls for fairness, justice and equity (Nicholls 1986: 169; Gunderson 1997: 56-57). The church, however, is called to be the 'church with others'-to journey with the marginalised, oppressed and suffering. Prophetic speaking and acting must be done on the basis that these are part of communicating the message of the gospel and are not an additional task (Bowers 2005: 222-223).

True justice is the church ensuring that men everywhere are treated equally, and that God's law can be freely applied. Where there is not the freedom to apply the laws of God freely, injustice will prevail. The message of Justice needs to address the issues of wealth, economy and resources such as land distribution so that all those who are in authority can understand that it is better to be honest and poor than to be dishonest and rich. It is the Church's responsibility to witness for economic justice and to remain a champion for the voiceless and all marginalized ones of the society (August 2005: 31). In the political arena the church

(community of faith) represents a prophetic perspective that opposes every form of injustice and oppression, and proclaims the alternative order of universal justice, equality, and peace (Hanson 1987: 515). More than any other social issues, reconciliation in Namibian society must deal with the right to land, the right to have a home (shelter), the right to work (employment), and the non-violation of basic human rights. These are the challenges we are facing today. In this regard, the researcher is of the opinion that, as a way of combating the economic injustice, the ELCIN needs a deliberate policy to accelerate the development process in Namibia. The church has to stress the importance of poverty and economic inequality as fundamental obstacles to reconciliation. The importance of development initiatives and advocacy regarding economic justice cannot be over-emphasised. Ministry of justice *(dikaioma)* can be also a part of the Church's prophetic ministry and its aims encompass the whole of life (social, political and economic). The ministry of justice goes against all injustices (Kritzinger *et al* 1994: 146; Nessan 1999: 114).

The Church in its prophetic task must have to move herself on the forces and movements that challenge the structures which breed social injustices, degradation and poverty. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. "We need a holistic view of people, because God's redeeming work does not separate individuals from the social system of which they are a part. No arrangements of social cooperation, in which power controls power and anarchy is tamed, will produce human beings free from the lust of power" (Wink 1986: 76).

As the political and socio-economic realities invade into Namibian society, there should be an awareness of this change. Mechanisms to cope with and shape the change should be devised with God's wisdom, in order to guide the flock in the right direction and help them to avoid wrong alliances. The mission approach should be enriched with a full knowledge of all the issues in the community. Like other patriotic citizens, Christians should be educated and trained on issues concerning why the Church of Jesus Christ exists on earth: what the Church's' role in the society is, and how it should address existential issues that affects the society. At the same time the Namibian society is faced with major question of justice. Therefore, as believers in Christ, the Son of God who loves justice; it is important to create the awareness that, in accordance with the Scriptures (Bible) the church should speak without speak without any fear against injustices that exist in the society (Isaak 2000: 4, 14). The

Church should never forget that justice belongs to God and may not be left to the arbitrariness or discretion of politicians. The Church should stand up without any fear and openly and firmly affirm its rejection of all forms of social injustices in Namibia. To be obedient to God and His son who reject greed, requires that we profess an economic system based on justice for all, compassion for every one and co-responsibility. The prophetic voice is challenging the Christian community to become deeply involved in the struggle for a total liberation which includes the economic, social, political and cultural levels of life. All of our ministries as the Church need to be ministries of healing and reconciliation. There can be no health in the body of Christ (Church) and no peace on the earth without justice. Social ministry needs to include advocacy for justice.

The Church can address economic issues through seminars and workshop in order to create awareness raising for community members to analyse both historically and structurally the economics, politics and culture of Namibia. Namibia requires the whole of the gospel offered in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, not selections of it based on fallible human priorities or merely on what agrees with our inclinations or prejudices. The urban congregations in northern Namibia should consider advocating for the cause of the poor in the urban (cities) settings.

6.3.6 Siding with (preferential option for) the poor

The gap between the rich and the poor widens as the standard of living of the rich minority steadily increases. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 218) comment "There is a saying in Haiti: 'When God made the world he did a good job, but he forgot one thing-to distribute the wealth evenly." The Church follows her master in identifying with Jesus' concerns, Jesus' interests and Jesus' lifestyle with the poor, the weak and the oppressed in society over against the rich and the strong (Sider 1993: 46). The Church must focus on implementing justice and freedom to all people in the communities. The ordinary people must be enabled and empowered in order that they can participate at all levels of decision-making. This will give them an opportunity to transform their communities. The Church must also create special opportunities to expose the 'comfortable' to the harsh realities of poverty and suffering. The suffering of the poor is not limited to material needs alone, but their lives are also characterized by dependency and oppression. They have little opportunity to make their own decisions to shape their lives. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 219) warn "When we speak of

poverty we are not dealing primarily with conditions of scarcity but rather with fundamental questions of power, control, and distribution." The cause of injustice in our society is selfishness, greed and other sins. Therefore, there is a need to fight against and overcome the sins of the world. The emphasis of Christians on charity and welfare always are directed towards the victims of social injustice or poverty. They also view external salvation as part of the total liberation of humans in their spiritual, social, economic and political needs.

Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990 and has enjoyed two decades of her independence. The country is officially designated as a multi-party republic. It is against this background that, the task of the Church in an independent and democratic state is to learn when to say "No" by remaining vigilant to the dangers of political power, namely its ability to serve its own interests rather than the common good. In short, the prophetic struggle against injustice must continue. In any political situation, the task of the Church is simply to tell the truth and side with (preferential option for) the poor and neglected (marginalised) ones of the society. In other words, the Church accepts the role of an active agent in the reconstruction of the nation while bearing witness to values that are transcendent and critical of any misuse of power or patriotism (Buys & Nambala 2003: 409-410). The Namibian government has invited the Church, who is in search of the poorest and has one of the most strategic infrastructures in society, to collaborate with it in the areas of social welfare, health and re-enforcement of the moral fibre of the nation in a people-centred and integrated development approach. However, to do so, the Church will have to orient itself with regard to its calling and role in the public sphere in relation to politics, economics, global forces, poverty, health, employment and all other relevant issues stemming from the public tide (Isaak 1997: 27).

The challenge in this section 6.3.6 as stated in the hypothesis of this study (1.5) is: How far has the Church been successful in maintaining critical prophetic ministry in the independent Namibia? Therefore, a new rooting for the meaning of human development after the transition to multi-party democracy and independence is being sought in Namibia. Such a search to transform Namibia into a civil society has to do with questions like: What action is needed to guarantee a society based on mutual respect, care, gentleness, cordiality and conviviality? Without such a culture of conviviality there will be no reconciliation between whites and blacks, between rich and poor, between educated and illiterate. Thus, it is worthwhile to connect the theme of reconciliation and nation building to the issue of human

development. The poor are poor because they are oppressed by social systems that keep them poor for the benefit of the rich. In defining the rich in relation to oppression, (Bosch 1991: 99) notes "The rich are primarily those who are greedy and who exploit the poor, who are so bent on making money that they do not even allow themselves a time to accept an invitation to a banquet (Lk. 14: 18ff), who do not even notice the Lazarus at their gate (cf. Hall 1990: 160)." It is the researcher's opinion that, the poor need justice and help in finding their voice and place in economic and political systems. The poor, like the rich, all have fallen short on the glory of God (Rom 3: 23). And all are in need of God's redemption given in Jesus Christ. All are lost and require God's forgiveness through repentance. Therefore, with this in mind, the poor need to be empowered through a holistic transformational ministry that addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of people as it is indivisible.

Within this context of being independent now for 20 years (1990-2010), the issue is: what model should we develop that will promote the values we so often miss, including hospitality, cordiality, solidarity, a sense of respect for the sacredness of God and of natural things, especially life? While the mission of Jesus is a universal one (1Tim. 2: 4), it is also true that Jesus shows a special concern for "people in pain" (Lk. 4: 18-19) with his mission of being in solidarity (siding) with the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed ones of the society (Nessan 1999: 115). The power of the Gospel is therefore rooted in its ability to address issues in a holistic way; because preaching and practising the biblical truth goes together with sharing God's compassion for justice for the poor (Dunne 1969: 6; Lewin 1987: 286-287). The Church has to stress the importance of poverty and economic inequality as fundamental obstacles to development. These challenges must be seen as opportunities for the church's effective witness. The importance of development initiatives and advocacy regarding economic justice can not be over-emphasised. As we have seen in the research findings stated in chapter 4, it seems that there is a great need for the Namibian church, the ELCIN in particular, to redefine its urban mission approach for the purposes of effective witness for Christ in word and deed. The researcher agrees with Bosch (1980: 227) when he states "We have to determine the church's missionary involvement in the world more accurately, what is the nature and the scope of mission?''

Namibia is sliding into a whole range of crises: political and socio-economic, poverty and unemployment. There is a great need for a model of mission that will be able to address political systems and structures that are impoverishing the Namibian people and then causing

untold suffering to them; thus ushering in political instability, social strife, and the committing of crimes on a daily basis all over the country. Christians should unite in challenging greedy autocratic political leaders who embezzle public funds and mismanage the economy of their countries (cf. Pieterse 2001: 32). The church in Namibia should realize that, despite all the crises which the country is facing today, the church still has the power, the capacity and the capability of influencing political leaders for Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, thus affecting decision making for peace, stability and prosperity in society. The present Namibian context should help the church to determine where the emphasis of holistic mission has to be laid. The circumstances, which exist in the whole country, should be a guide of how to present the gospel of Christ effectively (Bosch 1980: 229).

The central responsibility of the Church is to seek God's will of righteousness and peace in this world, that is why the Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized. This entails critically analyzing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation. Although the historical life of Jesus took place in the past, the church must have to live in continuity with his (Jesus) life and work (Bosch 1991: 87). In its ministry of advocacy and prophetic witness the Church points to the Kingdom, which cannot be tied to any earthly kingdom because it is the presence of God among us and our sense of that presence in everything we do and say. It is in this divine presence that we shall do what we can until justice is achieved in this land among the neglected and marginalised of society, such as; the poor and the oppressed. In liberation theologies, the crucial question is not whether God exists but whose side the living God is on (Bosch 1991: 439). Based on this understanding that the living God is on the side of the poor, liberation theologian activist begin with a preferential option and political engagement in the issues for the poor. The option is recognition that God loves the poor and that we will encounter the Lord through encounters with the poor (Gutierrez 1988: 33; 140).

This preferential option for the poor is expressed in many and various ways, but the primary thrust is that it is not a mere dialogue with the poor, but actually "adopting the place of the poor" (Christian 1999: 47). In black theology this option implies that the "gospel, by the very definition of its liberation character, *excludes* those who stand outside the social existence of the poor" (Cone 1997: 79). The theology of the poor is that God is the defender of the poor, the widow, the orphans (fatherless), the oppressed and those who cannot defend themselves. This kind of person enjoys God's vindication because God's eye is always on them. This

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makes it clear that God despises the ill treatment of the weaker members of society and therefore in spite of the ricch will not enjoyed the fruits of their endeavours because they have acquired their mansions, their fields, their land by unjust means (Prov. 23: 10-11). Gillan (1998: 18) notes "The Church is challenged by the message of its own gospel: that God wills abundance of life for all people and that He intends the earth to be a garden and a home for His human family. And this message is a message of transformation". Samuel & Sugden (1987: 222-223) states, "The mission of the church is thus threefold: first, to plead the cause of the poor, defending the weak and helping the helpless (Prov. 22: 22; Ps. 12: 5; 10: 17-18); second, to stand for equality and social justice (Prov. 14: 21; Ps. 41: 1); and third, to institute structures that will create a just and more equitable distribution of wealth (Lev. 25: 28)".

The church cannot choose to play it safe by adopting policies of neutrality. It must not ally itself with the powerful when the well-being of the poor is at stake. The church should take practical steps such as: siding with the poor instead of those forces in the society that create oppression, dehumanization, marginalisation, capitalism, and poverty. The church should consequently attempt to root out the injustices in all sectors of life through direct confrontation with the centres of worldly power. Ignorance may be another ally of those seeking to maintain the imbalance between the rich and the poor. The church must educate the masses on the spirit of love. The church must try to create structural changes in society by following the policies of social justice. When people share their experiences, they are motivated to contribute a fair share to the social effort. Samuel & Sugden (1987: 223) warn, "... So the church is not to join the existing status quo. Its mission is to be always on the move, to get people serving, to act as a prophet in the midst of an unjust society. It is always to be in the breach, defending the rights of the oppressed". The church must take her mandate very seriously to bring the Gospel of spiritual and social reconciliation to transcend social barriers-racial, economic, linguistic, cultural, sexual and age-in order to meet the challenge. This faithful witness may involve Christian themselves in suffering for the sake of the Gospel. In my view, in order that the Church might preach with integrity and reach people, it should concern itself with their daily life. It should do its work like a social worker. By this I mean that the Church has to help people to improve their living (conditions) standards. All social injustice issues must be addressed. That is part of what it means to be a responsible Christian Church. In order to help people to improve their living standards, care must be taken. The Church must do its part in seeking to improve conditions through socio-economic-

liberation and change. People must become aware of the ways in which they are exploited by the upper class, the wealthy, the powerful, and officials who misuse their authority.

The task of the church is to support the poor by advocating better economic situation, and to join with the poor in addressing the forces that are exploiting their community. Linthicum (1991: 25) notes "The church's place in such organizing is to join with the poor to take responsible action to identify and deal with the forces that are destroying that community." In order for people to gain power, they need to go through a process of conscientisation which makes them aware of their situation in terms of the prevailing social, economic and political relationships in which they find themselves (Burkey 1996: 55). Coetzee *et al* (2001: 472) comment "Conscientisation describes the process whereby poor and oppressed become politically and socially aware that their living conditions are not 'natural' but are a result of exploitative policies implemented by the state and their country's elites." Central to this concept is active participation in educational social organisations in conjunction with others, to enable the oppressed people to actively change or lessen the power of the elites.

Speaking of a 'preferential option for the poor' implies a commitment to resisting oppression, injustice, and exploitation. It is a choice not to serve the interests of the powerful and the wealthy, but rather to take the side of those who are vulnerable among us (August 2010: 106). A central part of our mission of representing a just God is to work for justice. "Mission is essentially living the Christian life with Jesus, in solidarity with humanity. Mission is the task of leaving the lump of God's creation, the human community" (Lewin 1987: 155). "Two Old Testament concepts: the Sabbath and the Jubilee are important in understanding justice. In Exodus 20: 9, it says; 'six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord.' In Leviticus 25, the description of the Sabbath and the year of Jubilee, gives a through explanation of right relationships between rich and poor that God expects from his people" (Perkins 1994: 127-128).

Current Africa, Namibia included, is a changing continent with growing needs. Some parts of the continent, especially in the urban informal settlements (communities), are inhabited by people who are desperately poor. Hence, there is the feeling of being marginalised and oppressed. The great challenge to those who have the vision and burden of touching others with God's love is the need to be aware that the need for external life to many people in Africa, the desire for eternal life somehow seem to overlap and almost coincides with other pressing issues of their lives. The poor must have the Word of God proclaimed to them not in

words only but also see it in acts (actions) of mercy and justice. A society is judged by how it treats its poor (Buys & Nambala 2003: 412). The Church, particularly the ELCIN has to practice diakonia, helping the needy and the poor to better their unhappy lives. As the confessing Church, we must not just confess publicly, but rather, practice what is confessed. Salvation must be understood vertically and horizontally also with respect to basic human needs such as education, food, healthy, shelter, security and safety. "For the church in Namibia, to be able to counteract those challenges, its holistic mission today should be reformulated in order to present Christ, as Emmanuel, God with His people. Holistic mission has to be redefined in order to find its realisation in God's incarnational work and redemption, which are orientated towards humanity and the whole creation.

The whole range of socio-economic challenges facing Namibia should be addressed, because development is a concern for social justice. Development aims to transform the socio-economic situation. For example, how can the church be silent when 5% of Namibians earn N$50 000.00 per month, while 40% earn N$ 7,000.00, and55% earn only N$ 900.00? Thus development involves social analysis, asking questions like: "Who benefits from a mixed economy? And how disproportionate is this benefits? The Church should not only not shy away from addressing issues concerning bad management of the economy which is very inequitably distributed (economic imbalance), but also of political structures, which have contributed much to the crises and suffering in Namibia 's present day" (Isaak in Koegelenberg 1992: 119-121).

The Church's prophetic witness means critical solidarity with the poor and critical participation for transformation as a way forward. We look forward to the mission and prophetic witness of the Churches being shaped by critical reflection, telling the truth because the real is to be expressed in words and actions, participation and service in society for the sake of peace, justice, forgiveness, and building reconciled and healing communities. Jesus calls the church to stand up for justice, to speak the truth, to feed the hungry, provide water for the thirsty, accompany and heal the sick, make peace with people who offend us, release prisoners, proclaim freedom from the bondage of sin, and to care for the earth and its inhabitants. It is the moral obligation of the church and Christian organizations to identify and stand with the suffering, the poor and the oppressed (Myers 2003: 126-127).

To engage in mission is to seek to serve and the primary task of the Church towards the poor is to be their advocate (Linthicum 1991: 173). The church's message of salvation implies also

a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination. The Church's involvement with (preferential option for) the poor and the neglected ones of the society needs to be considered as a must and not an (elective) option in her social and diaconal ministry. Change of the structures which cause poverty is often not accomplished. Poor people remain in dependent situations and do not really participate in society. The challenge is: Which approaches should be taken in combating poverty and exclusion? Are there new perspectives to empower human beings who are marginalised? Which innovations are necessary within diaconal and civil society in order to meet future challenges? (cf. 1.6). It is the major task of Christian community development to address the physical needs of the poor and the neglected of society. The thrust is to reach the whole person, body and spirit. People's wellbeing depends on both spiritual and material factors. These, together, form the wholeness of life and cannot be separated without negative effects. The church has a critical role to play in ensuring that the voices of the poor reverberate in the halls of public policy.

6. 3. 7 Equipping the church leadership (saints) for witness in socio-economic issues: capacity building

The desperate conditions that face the poor call for a revolution in the church's attempts to find a solution. "The church is obliged by the demands of the biblical tradition, but also by the exigencies of political reality, consciously to live at the nexus of powerlessness and power. Even when located 'on the side' of rulers and in ministering to a government that seeks to promote social justice, it is to do so in solidarity with those who suffer most in society" (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 30). Social ministry that includes an emphasis on changing social circumstances and structures (rather than changing people themselves), must have to be guided by biblical teachings on justice and liberation, and by narratives such as Nehemiah 's rebuilding of Jerusalem (Bakke 1997: 44-45). The question arises as to what the response as Christians will be to the troubles of the poor and the (inner cities) urban communities today. "The church undertakes its prophetic ministry today when it makes public pronouncements concerning the meaning of current events, contemporary relationships, and social systems, in their positive or negative connection to the purposes and activity of God" (Alston 2002: 128). Monsma *et al* (1991: 15-16) echoes:

> "The church must speak prophetically, to its society, proclaiming the norms of the Kingdom with
> respect to poverty and calling for actions to remove poverty and its causes. The church should call
> governments and institutions, to just actions in accordance with their callings from God. However the

church should do this in humility, confessing its own sins in this regard and generally should not as an institution endorses specific legislation, political parties or candidates, or socio-economic-political systems".

According to the Bible, as God's stewards, human beings are accountable to God and fellow creatures (human beings). "In particular, the commandment to love God and neighbor by no means limits the neighbor to one's fellow Christians" (Hall 1990: 47).

How are God's stewards to deal with the problems posed by the use and abusive of power? Jesus' special concern for the poor extended to all the marginalised, the weak, and the socially ostracized. In contrast to his contemporaries, Jesus demonstrated a special interest in the disabled, children, tax-collectors, drunkards, prostitutes, lepers and Samaritans. "The entire ministry of Jesus and his relationships with all these and other marginalised people witness, in Luke's writings, to Jesus' practice of boundary-breaking compassion, which the church is called to emulate" (Bosch 1991: 86). The way we treat the poor can be a way of announcing that a different spirit is at work in the community. "Our involvement with strangers is not only through charity, but also through economic and political actions. Justice must be characterising the government's laws and policies toward the poor" (Samuel & Sugden 1987: 261). Should the Church get involved in the questions of social justice? Yes, because the true Church is the one that is biased in favor of the powerless, and one that is in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. "The church which is faithful to the prophetic biblical vision can never allow itself to become trapped within the limits of what the dominant forces of any society insists is realistically possible" (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 30).

For clergy, equipping/empowering them mean not only to preach the good news, but also helping them to gain power and to have control over decisions, and to have a better quality of ones' life. Empowering of clergy for witnessing in socio-economic issues is an awakening process; a process of producing a sense of self-confidence to fight inequalities and leads to the improvement of the living standards of the poor and disadvantaged ones of the society.

The results of research conducted in Ondangwa and Oshakati towns of northern Namibia as indicated in chapter 4, revealed congregational issues requiring the church's urgent attention. The issues comprised: a high rate of unemployment leading to poverty, the scourge of HIV/AIDS, prostitution, cohabitation, and domestic violence, just to mention but a few. If the church is to make any impact, it must position itself anew to address these problems. The

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Namibian churches according to my observation often reacted helplessly with ignorance, silence and shame or they were restrictive, judgemental, and sometimes cynical without adequate knowledge about the real issues, challenges, struggles and pain of the people. We urgently need to change this behaviour. In order to combat HIV/AIDS we need to deepen and correct our insights on biblical teaching concerning sexuality and educate our members likewise. The implementation of congregational care in Ondangwa and Oshakati congregations is vital and very rewarding. Ministers are faced with many challenges in the urban context. Louw (1998: 351) narrates "However it does help if pastors have a particular structural framework which enables them to fulfil their pastoral functions more purposefully." These situations require redefining the pastoral care approach in terms of the complexities and problems facing post-modern society. The area on which to focus should concern meeting the secular person's need for intimacy, spiritual needs, humanity and the quest for meaning. The urban people are currently suffering intensely. This leads to their frustration and loss of hope. In such a circumstance, people look to the minister and church leaders to initiate hope and faith in God's promises. Louw (1998: 305) comments "They [the ministers] must be able to interpret life's issues in the light of the Word of God and the Word of God in the light of life issues. This task faces pastoral care with the challenge of biblical counselling and application of God's promise to problematic situations." The urban church, which does not identify itself with human suffering, is biblically out of touch with life's realities. Intense pain creates the impression that God is absent.

Equipping clergy for witnessing in socio-economic issues is the task of the Church and this is backed by Scriptures. Ellison (1974: 115) notes that, "It is clear from the Scriptures that the church has a special mission of proclamation and service to the poor and the oppressed. This concern is evident throughout the Bible, but particularly in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels... It is in the cities that the poor and the oppressed are found in the greatest concentration." As we have noted from Ellison's comments, the Bible is well oriented to cities. The quantity and intensity of modern industrialised urban problems they may be different from those in the cities of olden biblical times. Nevertheless, the issues affecting the underprivileged in the disadvantaged communities continue to exist. Ellison (1974: 115) states:

> Early Christianity was in many ways an urban phenomenon. Under Paul's leadership Christianity took its first roots in the great urban centres of the Roman Empire. Paul's epistles reveal that the world with which he dealt had striking parallels to our own in terms of pluralism, breakdown of morality and established patterns of life, scepticism, syncretism, and the like.

The urban congregations in Namibia require a team of well equipped (trained) clergy and laity that will apply themselves in urban settings that are being victimised by evil, besides involving themselves in church services and personal evangelism. The Church now finds herself confronted with community needs and social challenges, and church leaders need to be equipped with community development efforts. To be in Christ's commission for love and care for one another, the church in Namibia needs to trace its footsteps back in history, where its fore fathers/mothers took a stand to dedicate themselves to their call, not to keep silent about any violation of human dignity. August (2005: 286) comments:

> To be engaged in social ministry means to be devoted to soup kitchen (food pantries), homeless shelters, or campaigns to generate money for worthy causes. These issues were central to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25: 34-40. However, the work of mercy is considerably limited if done without regard to systemic injustice. The Church has to understand and educate its members about systemic causes of poverty if it wants to challenge and transform poverty.

Equipping the saints for witnessing in socio-economic issues will assist the clergy to exercise love and passion to all the needy persons in the city as they execute the mission to communicate in ways that speak to them. Equipping clergy for advocacy is an essential process, not option, because it enables them to identify sufficiently with the urban poor to understand their needs. It is encouraging to realize that we are not alone in this difficult task of advocacy for the poor. Jesus has already gone ahead of us, as our model. Ellison (1974: 17) affirms, "Christ himself took the first huge step of making God's love concrete. He took spiritual experience out of the abstract realms of philosophy and religious form and made it real 'Phil. 2: 5-8'. He did not just speak. He acted sacrificially ... We who are called Christians must be willing to incarnate Christ". In order to be an adequate public Church, the ELCIN had to harness the potential of its clergy by training them, equipping them for justice ministries, which would provide the Church with the much-neglected public ministry.

6. 3. 8 Networking and Partnership: strategy of Christian Community Development within the Namibian Context

A large majority of Namibian population are (church members) Christians. Over 90 percent of the population belong to one or other of the Christian denominations that are member churches of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), of which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and her sister Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) are the largest. These two Churches grew out of the Finnish

and Rhenish Missionary Societies respectively, but were constituted and become autonomous in 1954 and 1957. The Roman Catholic (RCC) and Anglican Churches have a sizeable following. There are small minorities that belong to the Baptist, Methodist, and Dutch Reformed (DRC) churches. In addition to these old established churches there are a number of other more recently denominations, such as the Seventh day Adventists and (Charismatic Churches) Pentecostals (Katjavivi *et al* 1989: 14-15; Du Pisani 1989: 52; 2010: 106; ELCIN 1996: 5). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) which is the largest and most predominant in the northern part of the country is also has many members living in the informal Settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati. Moltmann (1979: 21) argues that "the renewal of the church finally depends upon what happens at grass root level." The government; the people; business, labour, and religious institutions need to work interactively to bring about a fundamental change in the existing patterns of social and economic relations (Koegelenberg 1995: 116).

In this study (dissertation) the focus was on the influence of the public church in the locale of Ondangwa and Oshakati townships. It must be noted, however, that in this study (dissertation), the concept of 'local church' does not merely referred to local congregations, but have in addition referred to the use of the 'church as ecumenical body' and to the 'church as believers in their societal involvement with voluntary organisations' in the locality of Ondangwa and Oshakati (Dulles 1991: 140; August 2003: 28; 2009: 23). The term 'local church' therefore refers to all of the aforementioned configurations of church in the light of this study and its aims. The church's role as worshipping community draws people into its celebration of the sacraments and proclamation of Word and provides space and place both for the expression of pain by those suffering from oppression, marginalisation or any form of suffering within these contexts. It often provides acceptance as a loving and committed community in which people can participate in. Jacobsen (2001: 23) notes:

> Congregational-based community organizing has its roots in the organizing principles first forged by Alimsky in the Black of the Yards neighbourhood of Chicago in the 1930's. The assumption was that poverty was a result of the poor people's inability to manage their matters properly. It is to this effect that Alimsky formulated congregational-based organizing to enable the poor to take charge of their own situation. He [Alimsky] concluded that the problem was not with the people in the community but rather with outsiders who profited from and abused the community.

Another emerging community organizing similar to congregational-based community organizing is called *Gamaliel Foundation.* Formed in 1986, Gamaliel's network includes

forty-five organisations in fifteen states and three organizations in South Africa. The network has this distinction: It is one of the few networks with an organised and staffed national clergy caucus. The Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus (GNCC) has a structure of elected officers and regional representatives who meet quarterly to plan annual theological training for clergy...to facilitate network expansion, and to deepen judicatory relationship (Jacobsen 2001: 25-26). The holistic approach to ministry has developed effective congregational-based advocacy ministries to allow urban congregations in northern Namibia to address urban poverty challenges adequately. To explain *"advocacy ministries",* the researcher refers to Dudley's definition of the term: ministries that seek systematic solutions to problems, not simply individual solutions. The advocacy ministry is conclusive in nature and covers a large spectrum of the problem. Advocacy is using both love plus power to seek justice in society (Dudley 2002: 55). The ELCIN congregations in Ondangwa and Oshakati towns do not have advocacy ministries as yet. Therefore, the urban congregations in these two northern Namibian towns are challenged to implement advocacy ministry to ensure effective ministry in their towns. Most church leaders refrain from advocating the needs of the oppressed even though they see the rich victimizing the urban poor. In larger cities, the congregational-based model takes the shape of metropolitan organizing. Congregational-based community organizing needs to draw on Scripture and faith as a means of creating the vision and moral mandate needed to overcome the many obstacles to the metropolitan organizing (Jacobsen 2001: 72).

The congregational-based community model fits well with a holistic approach to the ministry. More importantly, the effort to involve churches in advocating for the poor is crucial. This is the right direction to encourage ordinary people to work for the transformation of all human realities rather than spirituality only. The members of urban congregations in Ondangwa and Oshakati can lead better lives if the leadership help the Christians to liberate themselves through the implementation of advocacy ministries. It has been recorded that during the time of Namibian liberation struggle, the ELCIN and other mainline Churches (Denominations) through the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) sided with the poor and oppressed, but in this post-independent era; for two decades now, the Church leadership has been quiet and never been orientated or trained to empower the poor to develop an advocacy based approach. Local congregations are further identified by August (2003: 29) as often helping to form the "moral fabric of the local environment" by helping to conscientise their members with regard to issues of social justice. However, congregations often cannot afford to act

alone if their voice is to be heard and sustainable action taken. The configuration of the church as denomination is often the most common form of public witness as it is often the "denomination which officially and in public, takes a stand around moral issues of common interest" (August 2003: 29).

While belonging to different confessional and denominational groups, churches in a particular area or locality may however often be a more effective and holistic witness to community if they are organised across denominational lines and confessions as an ecumenical body. Such co-operation may prove more effective in terms of public witness, as it has the ability to render a strong united voice and action with regards to issues that affect the community. Local ecumenical bodies such as: Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), Churches United against HIV/AIDS (CUAHA), and Church Alliance for Orphans (CAFO), all assist in helping the Church to give a stronger more effective witness. The pooling of resources through such bodies often means that they are "available to exercise a more influential role in context" (cf. August 2003: 28). This work in partnership may further extend to the church as believers operating in partnership with voluntary organisations. This configuration of the church is particularly relevant within a context of increasing poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS.

August (2003: 29) notes that "faith communities and individual believers are constantly challenged to form partnerships in a plural society with other groups to combat social evils." In this way, the Christian faith community in a particular locality, through its members and "irrespective of denomination or confession, engages with society by means of involvement in activist groups concerned about political, social, moral or ecological issues". Finally, individual believers in their daily life environment often play an unrecognised role in living as salt and light in their everyday reality as citizens in contact with various political, economic, and social structures. Fowler (1991: 158) identifies this in terms of 'vocation' and notes that within the context of congregations those that seek to be public church "constantly seek to maintain a balance between *koinonia*, a warm, supportive fellowship of solidarity within the community, and *diakonia,* the personal and collective vocations that address and keep the systems and structures of society." The church must have to pay particular attention to the last two configurations of the church and motivate their members to "get involved in civil initiatives, actions and movements that strive for the interest and values of society in accordance with biblical evangelical convictions" (August 2003: 30).

Denominations and different faiths should not divide the ministers. All the churches must develop plans together in order to resolve the issue of different faiths amicably. Instead, co-operation should be promoted amongst the ministers for improved implementation of ministry activities. The researcher is of the opinion that, a holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems. The concept of building alliances is based on two premises, to bear one another's burdens and to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep with those who weep. Basically, Christian unity is a given fact derived from a common belief in Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Disunity and division among churches is in contradiction to the very nature of the *Church.* The Church in Christ is called to be *One.* The priestly prayer of Jesus that says, "May they be one" (Jn. 17: 21) and his command to love, which he gave to his disciples in the New Testament (Jn. 15: 17), should also apply to city ministers (Nessan 1999: 101).

The ecumenical movement is essentially an expression of conviction, a matter of faith derived from biblical and theological authority. The differences between denominational traditions and teachings (doctrine) that are to be found in Ondangwa and Oshakati should not divide the ministers. The ELCIN must develop plans to resolve the issue amicably. To this end; in order to promote the spirit of ecumenism among different denominations that are to be found doing ministry in the northern Namibian towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati at this time, co-operation should be promoted amongst church ministers and laity for improved implementation of ministry activities. Shorter (1991: 182) notes "The great value of the urban phenomenon is the experience of unity-in-diversity, of appreciating others in their difference, learning to receive from, and share with other." Ministry in the city is effective if ministers of different churches (denominations) work together as a team. This is crucial because, in the city, churches of different faiths are closer to each other than in the rural areas. Shorter (1991: 125) comments "Ecumenical reluctance in the African town may be a symptom of the urban privatization of religion. Worse still, it may contribute to the growth of a secular attitude and a conviction that religion is irrelevant to the city's problems." As the situation is getting worse everyday in Ondangwa and Oshakati, the church and especially the local parishes (congregations) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) together with other denominations, and other social bodies needs to take up an initiative aimed at necessary services (social services) in order to improve the living standards and status of those living in informal settlements. Bakke (1997: 66-67) notes:

> Churches are both signs of and a witness to God's creative and redemptive agendas. We need the urban evangelist, the pastor and urban community developers as partners. None should assume their calling more spiritual or more significant than the other. Every gift belongs to the urban mission of the church.

The church should also recognize the secular character of the city. Such an approach enables the church to implement a relevant ministry for the city s' residents. In Northern Namibia, there are many churches available but diffused throughout the towns in many ways. Therefore, the church is expected to seriously ask itself what is to be the mode, or modes, of its presence in cities. Carroll *et al* (1989: 74-75) states, "In all almost every (setting) context the church is a potential power figure and is able to "connect" with diverse agencies, (role players), constituencies and interests. Self-critical awareness of existing networks and their opportunities and limitations, is essential to the church's understanding of her influence in the community". Strong ecumenical relationships between urban congregations can be a source of great support and a seed-bed for new creativity and ideas. If urban churches are to make the desired impact in the towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati today, they should begin to work as a team. This is so because one church alone can never be expected to arrest all the effects of urbanization. A teamwork and effective networking (Exodus 18: 14, 17-18, 24-25) between different denominations in response to socio-economic challenges through holistic development and community based projects, advocacy, and HIV/AIDS awareness raising can be encouraged, as Dulles states that, all the churches' services are rendered to the only one God paradoxically to be identified with the word of any man who purports to proclaim it. Christian churches need to be together for the purpose of service to the world. It is only doctrines which divide us, but service unites and the only way to unity is none other than Christ, who is the way par excellence (Dulles 1991: 153-154; Conn 1997: 166).

It should also be emphasized that, the local churches have to start accepting these socio-economic challenges faced by people who are living in informal settlements and need to extend their social diaconal ministries to these informal (settlers) inhabitants by providing various ministries such as: preaching, skills and vocational (job) training, income generating projects, educational enhancements (schooling), and other social care such as; shelters for the homeless, support for single parents, orphans care (orphanages) and home based care for HIV/AIDS patients as well as other charitable works (Nessan 1999: 113). In order to accomplish the holistic aspect of ministry, pastors and leaders must be networkers. The Church ministers in Namibian cities ought to build networks with the rich, the powerful and

those with influence. Through this process, the plight of the poor will be addressed and funds gathered to initiate development activities leading to transforming the lives of people. In the process of trying to find solutions for poverty and unemployment, the Church should find ways and means of joining hands with other agents in order to help communities who are in desperate need of food and shelter. In this way the Church will be able to share the gospel message with communities and use the gifts of the people in the community and get them involved in every development projects that is aiming at social, economic, and political engagements.

The Church is the community with a difference because it operates out of love. The Church was first loved and "love" becomes the business principle. The world does not know how to love, because it is not the body of Christ. Bosch (1978: 222) notes "The world has no faith to confess. It can neither pray nor believe. It cannot enter into a personal relationship with God." Since the Church operates on the basis of love, there needs to be a noted mutuality amongst (churches) denominations. Networking is building and maintaining contacts, which enables people in that network to carry out the ministry more effectively to, and with, the exploited, and with the church in a given location. Linthicum (1991: 198) defines "Networking is the intentional and systematic visiting of the people in a community by the pastor and church people to lead to that community's organising of itself to cope with its most substantive problems." Tonna (1978: 158) echoes the importance of network in urban ministry as he notes "Urban mission, accordingly, will consist in establishing relationships where they did not exist before (generic mission) and in transforming already existent relationships into relationships of evangelisation ..."

After Nehemiah lived in pain and grief, he started building networks with people in authority. Nehemiah provides a good example of this in the way he gained governmental (the chiefs, kings, community leaders, local [regional] governors and councilors), religious and community support for the construction of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-3). In a way he was building the foundation upon which his entire ministry in Jerusalem would rest. The king allowed him to go to Jerusalem and as per his request. Linthicum (1991: 197) notes "So it was that Nehemiah shared with the king his burden and the king responded to Nehemiah's pain. The response was to approve Nehemiah's request." Nehemiah also got the support of the queen, the governors, the keeper of the king's forest, and strategic army and cavalry officers. If we read the book of Nehemiah, we can learn much to improve our own work

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strategy to obtain better results (Bakke 1997: 109-110). The way we do development can be a source of witness. The government, church and other organizations should be part of people's struggles (Korten 1990: 135).

The stresses of urbanization and industrialization require joint coordinated efforts for development. Greenway (1986: 63) notes that, "No single pattern of witness and ministry will be adequate to the challenge of the modern metropolis. The hope lies in a diversity of approaches that, under the sovereign grace of the spirit, will be held together in basic unity and mutual complementariness." Ellison (1974: 169) echoes:

> Facing the broad problems of our cities requires resources beyond those of a single evangelical congregation. The collectivization of efforts is required among evangelical churches and group of churches. This development is seen in its embryonic stage in the Book of Acts. Paul's collection of money from churches in Greece and Turkey for the needful saints was in effect collectivization of social concern within the church of Christ.

In order to respond to the physical needs of the urban dwellers (inhabitants), we need totally coordinated church-based programmes. Ecumenical alliance is not a new or recent concept, because its importance was recognised and implemented by New Testament people. Ellison (1974: 90) affirms: "Following the New Testament pattern, they meet together often (nearly every day) to talk about their problems, to encourage each other, to share what they discover about God, and to pray ... They like each other enough to give each other a sense of security, which makes them more able to face bad things about themselves, to change, and act on the awareness." We share a common world, a common history, a common humanity, and certain common psychological, social, cultural, political and economic dynamics. For the desired goal to be achieved, it is required that the churches in Namibia to join hands with others and pool their resources if ever the task of presenting the whole gospel to the whole person by the whole church and to the whole world; will have impact in northern Namibian communities. Partnership between different churches (denominations), Non-Governmental and Faith-based Organisations is an imperative and not an option. The researcher proposes that the strategy of Christian community development is about networking and strategic partnerships. Elliston (1974: 210) narrates:

> To talk of urban alliances is in no sense to suggest that we abolish the local church. As a body it may have a unique ministry as well as providing spiritual support to its members. It is doubtful that any one church will have sufficient resources for the many and complex needs around it. Individuals from several evangelical churches working together may be able to face a specific need for which those from one church could not Marshall enough manpower or interest.

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Alliances could be formed in cooperative efforts in sub-regions of the city, an alliance at regional and at the national level. The church can take encouragement from current times, as we now have a model for collective action in the medical, agricultural, communication, literature, and educational programmes. Ecumenical alliance is the key to addressing the needs of the total human being not only for spiritual needs. A new partnership (ecumenical) initiatives is needed so that we can work together to solve the socio-economic problems that are facing our people (cf. 5.5). Bediako (in Myesrs 1999: 127) comments "Working toward a relationship of mutual spiritual accountability with local Churches is part of what it means to be holistic in taking both the gospel and the context seriously." As Churches operate on love, the poor also have the right to be *in* the ministering circle, and not be ministered *to* all the time. What is needed now is not critical solidarity with political parties but *critical solidarity* with the poor and *critical participation* in the ongoing process of building a more democratic society through involvement at local, regional, national and global levels. It is not enough to "think globally and act locally". Today we have to think and act locally and globally (Isaak 2000. 81).

6. 4 MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: TRANSFORMATION, RECONCILIATION, AND EMPOWERMENT

In this section the focus is on three dimensions of mission in context: transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment. These dimensions of mission are reflected in God's mission as creator redeemer, and sanctifier and are enhanced in the missiological understanding of the threefold way of Christ: the way of incarnation, the way of the cross, and the way of resurrection. These mission dimensions permeate all mission endeavours (e.g., proclamation, service, advocacy for justice, interfaith dialogue, and care/integrity of creation) and provide criteria with which the church judges its faithfulness in mission before Christ, who has sent it into the world. The mission of the church is holistic because proclamation, diakonia (social ministry) and prophetic presence in society (advocacy) belong intrinsically together (LWF 2004: 32). The Trinity is a communion in mission, empowering and accompanying the One who is sent, the Beloved, to impact the world with transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. The way of incarnation is a way of transformation and reconciliation. The way of the cross is a way of reconciliation and empowerment. The way of resurrection is a way of transformation and empowerment (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 298-306; Bevans & Schroeder 2004).

"Given the nation-building task of the church, however, it is also its responsibility to heal and restore as a contribution to national unity" (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 44). As the Namibian church participates in God's mission, empowered by the Word and led by the Spirit in the way of Christ, it engages faithfully and purposefully with the challenging contexts of the twenty-first century. Engaging prayerfully with the challenges of its context, the church, following the hermeneutical spiral, needs to deepen continuously its theological reflection on the different aspects and dimensions of mission. A continued theological reflection on the praxis of mission and on overarching missiological themes strengthens the church in carrying out its contextual mission.

6. 4. 1 Transformation

Transformation is a part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to God self and to its rightful purpose and relationships. God intends that social structures should reflect and promote justice, sharing, and free participation for the well-being of all (cf. August 2010: 22). Transformation is a new strategy for development. It is intended to enable people to develop their human potential fully, and is based on the principles of peace, justice and love manifested in the community of God. "The goals of transformation are to promote: life-sustenance, equity, justice, dignity, self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, ecological soundness, hope and spiritual transformation" (ELCA-DGM 2000: 9).

Transformation involves both material and spiritual changes in the belief that progress is difficult to achieve and maintain without the transformation of the individual. It is assumed that industrialized countries need transformation to free themselves from a secular, materialistic condition marked by violence, economic subjugation, greed and the devastation of nature. The developing nations need to be transformed from the subhuman conditions of poverty, premature death, oppression, disease, civil war, fear and the destruction of natural resources. Transformation intends to bring about changes in the divided world so that all can live together in harmony, with peace, justice, love, economic security and the capacity to meet human needs. It envisions a world where every person can live within a community of justice. The scriptures speak of transformation as an ongoing process of total reorientation of life with all its aspirations, ideologies, structures, and values. As Christians we refer to the story of the creation in Genesis, and affirm the fact that "when God looked at the whole creation, He saw that it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). God created human beings to continue

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this work to fill the earth and subdue it; to cultivate it and take care of it. But this wonderful world was made miserable for millions by human greed, selfishness and cruelty (Nürnberger 1999: 85-86). Transformation is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life, and adherence to that which affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone and which promotes peace and justice in society.

Living with expectation in the "already and not yet" of God's redemption, the church must guard itself from a triumphalistic view of transformation and instead should accept it in faith with its ambiguities and uncertainties.

Transformation is at heart of Christian revelation, a deep faith as we look around at the pain and suffering in the world. Christ's ministry was transformational too, because he served people holistically, by announcing that the kingdom was at hand, with good news for the poor, liberty for prisoners, sight for the blind, and freedom for the oppressed (Lk. 4: 16-18). We as Christian church ought to work with people in building a future based on social justice. We as church are in the world and we form part of the disadvantaged community. As Christians we must be concerned with all political, social and economic problems of this community. August (2010: 22) states, "The purpose of justification is the transformation of humans into subjects who do justice and who liberate the truth that is being captured by structures of injustices. The idea of transformation is not an alternate development plan but is a Christian framework for looking at human social change". Burkey (1996: 43) comments "Development involves in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society." Understanding development in this way, allows people to participate in the process of making changes towards transforming their communities. These changes come from within individuals and groups of people within the community itself. Through the participation of ordinary people, the people's culture is then integrated to allow human transformation. The church's mission as transformation encompasses individuals, structures, and relations in societies. The goal of transformation is to seek to "repel the evil social structures that exist in the present cosmos and to institute through the mission of the church the values of the kingdom of God over and against the values of the principalities and powers of this world" (Bragg 1987: 39). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who reveals the will of God, the church has been sent into the world as a means of God's transformation. To be the voice of the ostracized and the neglected of society, such as the poor and the hungry in Namibia today, the church must

retain its role of being a watch-dog, monitoring the decisions and policies made by the government, in order that the Namibian economy is utilized for a well-being of those people on the margin of life, and for a better future with a healthy society.

To be in Christ's commission for love and care for one another, the church in Namibia needs to trace its footsteps back in history, where its forefathers/ mothers took a stand to dedicate themselves to their call, not to keep silent regarding any violation of human dignity (Buys & Nambala 2003:411). By this notion of the voice of the voiceless, it is meant to speak on behalf of others. Most of the time people outside feel that their cries are not heard or listened to. Probably some fear to speak about their situations and others cannot even begin to speak about, or to publish articles on social issues.

The Church must have to accept the ministry of healing and transformation of the society where poverty, oppression and enmity powers are exists. The aim should be the "Shalom" for the wholeness of the community as embodied for us by the Son of Man (Nessan 1999: 116; August 2010: 39). If any Christian mission does not concern itself with the people in their context, it does not really resemble the true character of Christ's mission and is accordingly doomed to become a mere religion without a real impact on society. Development is a process of social transformation which leads to social change and progress. It is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. The biblical message of transformation must begin in the individual and spread also to encompass the transformation of all society and creation. From a theological point of view, transformation calls the faith community to the transformation of both individuals and social structures and that allows us to move toward increasing harmony with God, fellow human beings, environment and ourselves; because all of us need to be transformed, reconciled and empowered (Myers 2003: 65). It is through holistic ministry (community based development) that, the ELCIN can concretely engaged with the poor who are scattered in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati, and nurture the experiential basis for a transformative public witness. To bring transformation in the community, the church should become the voice of the very poor and must be their guardian during the formulation and the implementation of a new economic dispensation.

6. 4. 2 Reconciliation

For Christians, reconciliation is God's merciful gift grounded in the message that God reconciled the world in Jesus Christ. Christian faith also focuses on healing relationships and discovering the vocation. The process of healing relationships has a number of aspects: relationship with God, your fellowman, oneself, and the community. But when a healing relationship with God is the primary concern of spiritual development, then other areas will simply fall in place. Myers (2003: 118) notes "The central relationship in need of restoration is one's relationship with the triune God, the God of the Bible. The good news is that God desires this restoration and has already taken the steps necessary for this relationship to be restored." If people seek God, many other good things will follow and become possible. If they do not, the horizons of change are more limited and difficult. When people are at peace with one another, then it means adding the ministry of reconciliation to the transformation agenda. Myers (2003: 119) comments "... the beginning of reconciliation and hence the path to justice and peace is the embrace of the other, in spite of all that the other has done. There can be no justice without the will to embrace. This call transcends the issue of who is right or wrong, who is righteous or unrighteous."

Christian faith development is the organic relationship of life, deed, word, and this creates the interesting ability for the process to be customer-centred. This paves the way for witnessing with whichever part of the Gospel message relates most closely to the needs of those to be witnessed to. As a result, a holistic understanding of the Gospel begins with life, a life that is then lived out by deed, word and song. Myers (2003: 213) comments: "Any Christian understanding of transformation must find expression for all elements of the Gospel message-life, deed, word, and sign-each in God's time. Everyone needs to encounter and engage the Gospel message in its wholeness. To stop short is to truncate the Gospel".

Restoring a biblical holistic mission to the Church will entail that the Church be a missional congregation which has the capacity to offer people a sense of belonging and to invite them on a journey toward the God who redeems, love, heals, and reconciles. Guder (1998) attest that missional communities welcome and nurture the richness and particular perspectives, backgrounds, and gifts, yet always embracing God's reconciling unity. Reconciliation is a work of God. God reconciled sinners to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. They become children of God and peacemakers in this world. They are sent out into this troubled world to

proclaim the Good News which has the power to change our lives and reconcile us with God and one another. The church in mission participates in God's reconciling as God God's ambassador, beseeching people on behalf of Christ to be reconciled with God. Coutre & Miller-McLemore (2003: 124) states "Scripture clearly states that one of the aims of God's mission is reconciliation: "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself...and entrusting to us the message of reconciliatio*n" (2Cor. 5: 19). This is a foundational aspect of reconciliation: restoring the relationship between God and human beings (Perkins 1999: 37, 43).

While we must preach the Gospel of reconciliation, we must first work for justice, since there can never be real reconciliation and peace without justice. The church must demonstrate in its entire life that Christ has broken the wall that separates us from having common life with other brothers and sisters. Every person should be able to fully participate in the life of the church regardless of status. By means of proclamation and witness through Christian living and diakonia, individuals are brought to repentance and faith and rejoice in being accepted into God's communion of the "sent". The grace of this unmerited and unhoped-for reconciliation makes it possible to extend reconciliation to all other human relations: within a family, with other groups, in society, and between nations (Nessan 1999:112-113).

As people of God equipped for mission, the Church is called to participate in God's reconciling mission, beseeching people on behalf of Christ to be reconciled with God and one another. Reconciliation first of all refers to God's action, through which human beings have their relation to God restored. At the same time, restoration implies being transformed and empowered for the ministry of reconciliation. The concept of "diakonia" (service) or development clearly reminds us that the diakonia of Jesus, his way of unconditional presence among the poor, his prophetic defence of the excluded, his acts of healing, and last but not least, his announcement of forgiveness and new life under the promise of a new age to come, is the way for the Church to follow in its mission of reconciliation (Cheyne 1996: 6; Hughes & Bennett 1998: 233).

As an ambassador of reconciliation, a peacemaker, the church's mission tasks include mediation, restoration of peaceful coexistence, and the building and sustaining of relations. To assume this responsibility for reconciliation, the church takes its inspiration from Christ's threefold way: the way of incarnation, the way of the cross, and the way of resurrection. Walking the way of the cross, the church takes upon itself the pains of victims and the

arrogance of perpetrators in order to make room for peace and reconciliation. To convince perpetrators to own up to their wrongdoing and commit to a restoration of justice is a very difficult task. In situations of violence and oppression, victims are not allowed to tell their stories, and real reconciliation cannot take place if the truth about the past is not revealed. It is in line with the Christian concept of reconciliation that it never takes people back to where they were before. Reconciliation is more than the removal of suffering for the victim and conversion for the oppressor. Reconciliation takes people to a new place; it empowers them for renewed relations and responsibilities (Kameeta 2006: 108-109).

However, God's reconciling power is made perfect through the vulnerability or foolishness of the mission of the church. Christ sends his Church into the world to participate in his ministry of reconciliation and liberation, and membership in these diverse communities forces many pressing human concerns into the centre of Christian fellowship. The Church should take the needs, worries and hopes of its surrounding culture seriously; these can become the concern of the whole Christian fellowship. The central truth of Christianity, to which all of us are committed, is that the God of the Bible, out of sheer love and grace has intervened in this fallen, fractured and suffering world, and through Jesus Christ His Son has redeemed lost sinners and reconciles them to Himself through the gospel; and by His spirit He is establishing a new order in the world (Perkins 1999: 32-33). The church's mission of reconciliation extends also to the international sphere. In the twenty-first century many countries are still living with the legacy of previous centuries' oppression and injustice. The Christian community-the church-is called to be, and *can* be, is a place of reconciliation, where trust between persons is being learned, where those who are "many" may begin nonetheless to act as "one body" (Hall 1990: 219).

Countries that struggled under colonialism are now suffering from a poverty-inducing neo-liberal economy driven by economic globalization. Such death-dealing structures and systems should not have the last word in a world where God has broken the finality of death. The mission of the church, in the way of resurrection, is to make liberation and reconciliation possible for both the oppressed and the oppressors (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 255). Liberation and reconciliation have to go together. Liberation without due consideration of eventual reconciliation is self-defeating; reconciliation without liberation is unrealistic and ideological. Reconciliation and liberation require the implementation of restorative justice at the national and international levels, to allow victims of oppression and injustice to regain their human

dignity (Isaak 2000: 101-109). Through this liberating reconciliation and reconciling liberation the church initiates a process of transformation, anticipating the final reconciliation of all things in God's eschatological reign. "Reconciliation is not merely a spiritual affair and does not only concern the salvation of souls, but is rather a transformation of the entire human situation in all its aspects; a situation in which both sin (as a state of fundamental alienation or absence of sister-or brotherhood) and its consequences (such as injustice, oppression, poverty and misery) are overcome" (Koegelenberg 1992: 118). Bevans & Schroeder (2004: 393) states "The witness and proclamation to victims of injustice and violence that reconciliation is a possibility and that it is thoroughly God's work are actions that take real courage. The church's proclamation of reconciliation is a proclamation of the *centrality of Jesus Christ,* in whom the world was reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5: 17-19)".

The fact that we were created to live in *shalom*-that is peace, wholeness, prosperity, justice, harmony and general well being, calls the church to address the contextual challenges it faces (Nessan 1999: 116). As ministers of God, the ELCIN officials are called to act as ministers of reconciliation between humanity and God, with others, nature and themselves. Nessan (1999: 114) further states that; "The church is called to minister to the spiritual, social, environmental and psychological needs of communities within which it resides". In recognising that being ministers of reconciliation involves participating in addressing the various needs of their community, the church may begin to see the need to involve herself (itself) in community initiatives. In the light of this biblical truth on reconciliation, social and politico-economic reconciliation cannot proceed when racism, dividing walls of hostility and hatred are still found among Christian communities in Namibian society. To understand the biblical view of reconciliation, we must see it in relation to the challenge that all old orders must die in order for the new life to be born-a life of justice for all.

6. 4. 3 Empowerment

As a theological concept, empowerment refers to the biblical understanding of creation that every human being is created in the image of God, with capacities and abilities, independent of their apparent social situation (cf. Hall 1990). There is a clear relationship between poverty and powerlessness in different contexts. It has been reported that poor people lack the power to influence a locative decisions in their favour. In many cases they are less organised than other groups in society. It is, therefore, difficult for them to speak with a strong voice in order

that governments and other people who control resources can heed their demands and respond more positively to their problems (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 133).

Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate, negotiate, influence, control, and holds accountable the institutions that affect their lives. Babbie & Mouton (2001: 322), state that; "Empowerment implies the acquisition of power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed, and exploited groups-the grassroots people and for their authentic organisations and movements." The people need to be given an awareness of their situation so that they can be self determined and take action within the context of their own development needs. "The process of empowerment has a number of interrelated dimensions. It denotes a political process of democratising decision-making in society. Through democracy, poor people have the power to elect representatives who will act on their behalf" (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 133).

Empowerment is viewed as the process that makes power available to communities in order for them to use it for the manipulation of access to and the use of resources in terms of achieving certain development goals. Empowerment increases community members' energy, motivation, coping and problem solving ability (August 2010: 11). Empowerment is defined by Wilson & Ramphele (1989: 262) as the central tenant of genuine development work. Typically, the poor are often politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially marginalised and neglected. The participation of the people themselves in their own development is both an essential part of human growth and a process whereby the people themselves become aware of and understand their problems and the social reality within which they live in order to affect lasting change themselves at grass roots level. This empowers the people to identify and act upon their own needs and priorities rather than those imposed from outside (i.e. by organisations or governments). One of the key components is self-reliance and a maximum contribution from those in the community in terms of human, material and financial resources relative to their ability. External agents must be seen not as doing for or giving to, but as enabling people by working alongside them. Ultimate responsibility belongs to the community (Burkey 1996: 48).

In community development, the poor are empowered by strengthening their capacity to engage in development through educational and skills-building programmes. The poor need to be empowered through holistic transformational ministry that addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of people, which are indivisible. Linthicum (1991: 38) comments "If

people can be empowered to work cooperatively, to work as a single unit, then they will be able to take responsibility for the life of that community and consequently, to participate fully in the life of that city". "Empowerment does not mean that power is handed down or given to people. People have power. To empower means to enable people to increase the power they have by joining hands. It is an act of skill and confidence-building, and development through cooperation, sharing and mutual learning" (Koegelenberg 1995: 181). Korten (1990: 218) states:

> A people-centred development seeks to broaden political participation, building from a base of strong people's organisations and participatory local government. It seeks the opportunity for people to obtain a secure livelihood based on the intensive, yet sustainable, use of renewable resources. It builds from the values and cultures of the people. Political and economic democracies are its cornerstone.

Empowerment, according to Burkey (1993: 39), "is a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative and tolerant of others through becoming aware of his/her shortcomings, as well as his/her potential for positive change." Empowerment on issues such as physical, spiritual, social, political, cultural, and economic well-being through a participatory, integrated process of empowerment and self-reliance needs to be considered. August (1999: 26; 2010: 11) states "Empowerment must therefore enable people to express and assert what development means to them; otherwise, social development in terms of the manipulation of resources cannot take place." It is the researcher's understanding that people's empowerment is needed in those vulnerable areas such as the shantytowns of Ondangwa and Oshakati Informal settlements by fostering and encouraging self-reliance in order that people can exercise their rights to determine their own future. According to Friedman, Empowerment of the poor means that the poor must take part in the provisioning of and be responsible for their own needs. "To become more self-reliant in the provisioning of their own needs, the poor must first acquire the means to do so. Empowerment includes an emphasis on local decision making, local self-reliance, participatory democracy, and social learning. It also pursues the transcendent goals of inclusive democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality, and sustainability" (Friedman 1992: 66, 164).

Empowering people to meet their own needs is an important element for community developers in Christian Community Development. "Empowerment increases community members' energy, motivation, coping and problem-solving skills, decision-making power, self-esteem, self-sufficiency and self-determination" (Hendriks 2004: 219). People's

empowerment is a process fed by information, knowledge and experience, that brings them confidence in their own abilities (De Beer & Swanepoel 2004: 26-27). Through its service and diaconal ministries, the church provides help for the immediate needs of people in distress (e.g., refugees, displaced persons, victims of natural disasters). However, the church is called to go beyond a "hand out" or charity ministry to a mission of empowerment. Without empowerment, genuine community participation becomes ineffective. For participation to be meaningful, all the different aspects of empowerment (political, economic and institutional) must be present. De Beer & Swanepoel (2000: 135) state:

> Human-centred development requires that the people whose lives are affected must have the power to influence the process of development, and participate fully in determining their own needs. Human development recognises the interrelationship between the social, political and economic goals of development.

The church must seek ways to assist those in need, regardless of their origin or creed, to regain their human dignity by asserting control over their own lives. For the missional church, "those in need" refers not only to the materially, economically, and socially deprived, but also to those with emotional, relational, mental, and spiritual needs. People who suffer from different manic-depressive syndromes, such as confused identity, low self-esteem, depression, and other psychosocial illness, require the attention and presence of the church in much the same way as the economically and socially marginalized and oppressed. De Beer & Swanepoel (1997: 6-7) state:

> Participation is the natural result of empowerment. It is not a means to an end-it is the objective of development. Empowerment entails more than having the power to make decisions. It demands the knowledge and understanding the knowledge and understanding to make the correct decisions.

Empowerment is one of building blocks of development. It is all about the expansion of freedom of choice and action. Linthicum (1991: 38) comments "If people can be empowered to work cooperatively, to work as a single unit, then they will be able to take responsibility for the life of that community".

The process of empowerment requires that the organiser begin with him-/herself before organising others. This is what Nehemiah did. When he heard the devastating news about Jerusalem, he wept and grieved. Linthicum (1991: 195) comments "First, Nehemiah wept! He allowed his heart to be broken by the things, which break the heart of God. He did not try to avoid the pain nor dismiss his grief as he went about his daily tasks in Susa. Instead, he gave himself permission to live into that pain (felt vulnerable just like the people) and to feel

it to the very core of his being." This implies that the church minister must put himself in the shoes of the urban poor and have passion with their situation. This can only be done through understanding and studying the predicament of the poor. It is crucial for the ELCIN to develop diaconal ministry approaches that seek empowerment and transformation of urban dwellers in the informal settlement settings.

There are various possible ways in which such community poverty can be countered at this level. These include the introduction of community development projects such as training communities on small-scale business. Informal settlements training centres could be established for the purposes of imparting skills (skills training) to the communities such as: bricks making, carpentry, masonry, mechanics, sewing, and bread making. Funds could be established to assist those who receive the training by providing them with capital in the form of small loans to start small businesses in their communities under guidance and supervision. These projects can help to uplift the economy of the communities and encourage people to work hard, thus becoming self-reliant, breaking the chains of dependence syndrome which is one of the greatest enemies of community development. Monsma *et al* (1991: 16) state "The diaconal service of the church is important both because of the direct aid it can give to those within and outside of the church, and because the verbal proclamation of the Kingdom of God will be less forceful without the visible reflection of the Kingdom in the diaconal service of the church. With respect to poverty, there are certain areas in which the church is called to work in diaconal service such as: by meeting the immediate needs of the poor for food, shelter, medical care and other necessities as well as in helping the poor to be able to provide for their own needs in the future, for example by helping them to obtain skills and employment". Hall (1990: 183) agrees when he comments "As the Christian mission seeks to uproot poverty and unemployment in the community it will be of profound importance to realise that giving someone a cooked fish is a good thing, but teaching him/her to get a hook so that he/she can fish for him/herself is much better, because it will have long lasting results and that person can help others also on how to fish for themselves."

Empowerment does not mean giving people facilities that were previously denied or were not available to them, or giving those skills that they lacked. In its purest form, empowerment means the acquisition of power and the ability to give effect to it (Yamamori *et al* 1996: 136-137; De Beer & Swanepoel 1997: 7). In order to empower our people we need a people-centred development that seeks to return control over resources to the people and their

communities to be used in meeting their own needs. This creates incentives for the responsible stewardship of resources that is essential to sustainability (Korten 1990: 218). Above everything, Bruwer (1997: 66)'s view is of crucial importance. He notes that self-reliance is the way out of dependence. Dependency becomes a life pattern. In such a situation it is necessary to break out of the cage. For that reason, challenging, motivating and empowering the community is the key for any community development. This approach will establish in the community the spirit of self-reliance, the guiding star towards an independent existence.

The full participation (people-centred development) of community members in its activities cannot happen without leadership. "People-centred development places substantial value on local initiative and diversity. It thus favours self-organizing systems developed around human- scale organizational units and self-reliant communities" (Korten 1984: 300). Involving people in social development is a crucial tool for an empowering process, because people feel and believe their efforts are able to drive the development process. Ellison (1974: 135) comments "Unless we are able to identify sufficiently with people to understand their needs and to communicate in forms that speak to them, I am afraid the Gospel will fall on deaf ears." In the holistic model, participation of local people is crucial. Such an approach brings about valuable benefits to people. The benefits cannot be achieved if people are denied the opportunities of participation in the process. In order for a community to participate in determining its basic needs, the motivation of people is essential. Community motivation leads to the sharing of responsibilities, which gives the community a sense of ownership. Another importance of people-centred development (empowerment) is that it works *with* the people, not *for* the people. Through their participation, people gain confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to identify problems and to find solutions in order to improve their own lives. When people are self-reliant, they able to do transformational development (Burkey 1996: 50).

Poverty and unemployment have become the most burning (pressing) issues for churches to handle. A shift in emphasis from word to deed and dogma to action has to take place. Helping people to realise that they have within themselves capacity to understand and change their situation is not easy. It is a process that goes more slowly but it has more lasting results when people are given the opportunity to work out their own ideas and feelings (Hughes & Bennett 1998: 206-207). A community can only exist if the members depend upon themselves. These

people are to be helped to carry their own load, and to achieve things in their own way. They need to be helped to discover their human image and their responsibility. Burkey (1996: 51) affirms "No government and no development agency is ever going to develop a rural region; it can only be done by the people themselves perhaps with the assistance of government and other developmental agents." The Church can assume its local mission only through proclamation, ministry among and with the poor, and focussing that ministry on empowerment.

Traditionally, the church carries out her tasks through its proclamation, presence, prayer and practice. The Church must carry out these four areas in such a way that the powerless and the marginalised people are supported and motivated to take charge of their situation. If this mission approach could be established and embarked on, it will transform northern Namibian communities uplifting their economical standards, thereby eradicating poverty and unemployment. For example; Uupopo-Uumbenge, Onguta, Omahenene, Ondiiyala, Omakulukuma, Oneshila, Okandjengedi, Evululuko, Oshoopala, and Uupindi which are informal communities (settlements) in Ondangwa and Oshakati Townships, would benefit from this kind of holistic mission approach because people there live in an abject situation of poverty. Therefore, the words of Bosch (1980: 227-229) become appropriate for the present situation of Namibia. "Christian mission should have a total view of the Biblical concept: *Marturea* (Witness), through *Kerugma* (Proclamation), *Koinonia* (Fellowship), and *Diakonia* (Service)." Verkuyl (1978: 406) is in agreement with Bosch when he identifies the totality of the Biblical concept of mission in terms of four basic aspects: proclamation of the Good News, *diakonia* within Kingdom perspective, the promotion of messianic community, and the advancement of justice. August (2010: 106) admits that "The church has to understand and educate its members the systemic causes of human misery (e.g. poverty) if it wants to challenge and transform human suffering." The church is to transform and empower the people and the church must work with the people in building a future based on social justice. This comprehensive mission approach would be ideal for the Namibian context, which has become complex.

6. 5   MINISTERING EFFECTIVELY: THE FELT NEED CONCEPT

Missional theology is a key concept used in this work (study). The question to be dealt with in this section (6.5) is: How are we to practise missional theology and using the felt need concept?

The Church in all its expressions needs to further define "the place" in which its role in God's mission is to occur. The area in which the Church finds itself thus becomes a space where some people are nurtured by being part of the Church itself. This study aims to expolore whether the ELCIN is acting as an effective agent and/or catalyst for community development in addressing the socio-economic needs of the Namibian Aawambo-speaking people living in Ondangwa and Oshakati informal settlements, Oshana Region northern Namibia. In Namibia where 95 percent of its citizens belong to various Christian faith communities, the product of this research is expected to be a useful resource to create awareness of how the Church can become more constructive in exercising its prophetic and advocacy role to bring positive change in society. It is the reasearcher's opinion that the Church has the task to improve people's lives in both rural and urban settings. Practical theology refers to a way of doing theology that incorporates the context of people. Ammerman *et al* (1998: 25) notes that practical theology begins, therefore, by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlated that situation with the faith and beliefs of the congregation. Doing ministry as Ammerman defines; it requires empowering local faith communities to discern the will of God in their situations. The starting point of how we can do theology of community development is about God's love to (the world) human beings and God's concern for meeting the physical and social needs. In meeting these human needs, the Church has its primary agenda not the conversion of beneficiaries, but solely the provision of whatever type is needed.

The basic theological argument of this study is that the Church as a community-based organization needs to reconstruct and analyse its role as a theological and sociological reality in society, and play a pivotal role of being an effective vehicle for holistic development amongst the marginalised and neglected of society. The objective of this study is to establish how a local church and the church as a transformational agent help fight against poverty and what role a church can play within a community. In projecting the Church as an effective

agent and/or catalyst to bring the change (social transformation) to those people living in the communities, provides the importance of Practical Theology and Missiology, in this study.

The researcher believes that the way we define and practise theology should be as methodology. It is a practical, communal, holistic and contextual missiological perspective. Its purpose is to discern God's will and to faithfully participate in *Missio Dei*. In attempting to flesh out the *Missio Dei*, Bosch (1991: 390) says that in its new image, mission is not primarily an activity of the church but an attribute to God. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love. Roxburgh (2006: 12) says missional activity expresses that God's mission is that which shapes and defines all that the Church is and does, as opposed to the expectation that the Church should be the ultimate self-help group for meeting people's own (felt) needs and finding fulfilment in their individual lives. He goes on to say that the focus of the mission must be upon placing the God who has encountered people in Jesus Christ back in the centre of their communities of faith that shape and give meaning to people's lives. The researcher refers to Bosch's (1991: 412) definition of the term mission:

> Mission denotes the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair, and lostness as Jesus defined his mission according to Luke 4: 18ff ... It embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to Godforsakeness ... Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate.

This definition of mission focuses on people subject to social, economic, and political conditions in this world. There is, therefore, a convergence between liberating individuals and peoples in history and proclaiming the final coming of God's rule. According to this perspective the church is the people of God in world-occurrence and the community of people for the world. The basic theological argument in this work (study), then, is that the starting point of how we do community development is about God-the triune God and His mission. Bosch (1991: 389) states that, "If mission is God's mission (Missio Dei) and has its origin in the heart of God-there is mission only because God loves people-God's love of people has been shown to be holistic. That mission is God's mission, is an essential corrective to an understanding of mission in soteriological, cultural, salvation, historical or even ecclesiastical categories (as the expansion of the church or a particular denomination)".

Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman (1994: 4) all agree that mission is not primary the activity of men and women but that mission is God's work. Guder (1998: 5) also agrees with this idea of

the Trinitarian point of entry and says our theology of the church necessarily shifts all the accents in our ecclesiology. He goes on to say that this leads us to see the church as the instrument of God's mission.

In respect of the term 'missional', the researcher agrees with Guder (1998: 11) that we emphasise the essential nature and vocation of the Church as God's called and sent people. The missional theology is biblical, historical, contextual, eschatological and practical. As Guder (1998: 12) puts it, the basic function of all theology is to equip the Church for its calling. If that calling is fundamentally missional, then what we understand and teach about the church will shape God's people for their faithful witness in particular places. According to David Bosch (1991: 113-117), the church's mission must be grounded in the contextual realities of specific people, as they define their felt needs. By beginning with the people's felt needs, it is possible to establish a relationship and trust, which then enable the church to move to deeper issues of development. God urges congregations into action as agents of evangelism and social transformation. Problems arise and, indeed, continue arising because the people, responsible for directing the congregational paths, have done so without a sensitive understanding of the congregation's inner life and resources, or the possibilities, as well as the limits placed on congregations by the context in which God has called it into being (Carroll *et al* 1989: 7).

Jesus is the primary model of incarnation, because he became as a human and lived among people, showing them what God is like. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten form the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1: 14). From his baptism to his temptation, Jesus demonstrated that his mission was to embody the reign of God through living under its authority. "For a Jew, the Samaritans were the outcasts, the throwaways of society much like the ghetto dwellers of today. When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the Well, he knows her immediate (felt) need is for water form the Well, and he does not ignore this need in order to meet her deeper need for eternal life" (Perkins 1994: 33). "In the same manner, we as the Church are called to 'dwell' among the people and identify as deeply as we can without benefit of the cultural or social or educational baggage which usually accompanies us on our journey towards solidarity with the poor" (Maggay 1994: 66). Churches are guilty of being open only on Sunday mornings and being almost irrelevant to felt needs of people around them. The Church is less visible in towns than in rural areas, and finds it harder to make headway against the materialism implied by

modernisation (Shorter 1991: 142). The Church is to be the people of action-those who call the city's structures and systems to accountability, who defend those oppressed and exploited by those systems, and minister to those who are deceived and who do not benefit from the city's principalities (Linthicum 1991: 144). It is, therefore, a particular biblical strategy that, the church must follow to live out the gospel and take part in the development of her communities. Living out the gospel means desiring for one's neighbour and neighbour's family that, which one desires for one's self and family. Living out the gospel means bettering the quality of other people's lives spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally as one betters one's own. Living out the gospel means sharing in the suffering and pain of others. Swart (2001: 18) comments "The proclamation of the good news must be rooted in practical actions which presuppose the existence of poverty and indeed tends inevitably to create poverty."

Bosch (1991: 399) claims: "We stand in need of an interpretation of salvation, which operates within a *comprehensive* Christological framework, which makes the *totus Christus*-his incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection, and parousia-indispensable for church and theology. All these Christological elements taken together constitute the praxis of Jesus, the one who both inaugurated salvation and provided us with a model to emulate." The incarnation tells us that Christ became man, not so that we may become divine, but so that we may become more truly human. In the same way, we as the Church can do things to the people not to be like us but to reach a stage of being able to help themselves and out of poverty. Following Christ in the way of incarnation, the church enters deep into contexts, identifying itself fully with the plight of the victims of injustice, exploitation, and exclusion (Morisy 1997: 7). In other words, the cry of the poor is that poverty and wealth are not fossilized topics but occasions where we meet various faces of God. Such faces invite the churches and governments to assist the thirsty and hungry, to provide water and food for themselves, offering one's accommodation facilities to refugees, assisting the naked to dress themselves, building hospitals and clinics to cater for the sick, to providing education for all, and empowering prison chaplains who visit prisoners on behalf of all Christians (Mat. 25: 31-45). The parable of the Last Judgement directs us to a charity based personalism and compassion. The hungry must be fed and the homeless must be sheltered, because the works of mercy were central to the teaching of Jesus (Jacobsen 2001: 18).

The incarnational model of Jesus' ministry remains an important metaphor for ministry in the urban community. It challenges us to develop ministries that will flesh out the gospel at places of great pain and suffering; it calls us to be in solidarity with the urban community, its people and their struggles; it also calls us to insert (relocate) ourselves as Jesus did, which might include sacrifice. Harvie Conn (1982: 14) writes: "The supreme revelation of the Father's will is the Son, Jesus Christ. God did not shout his message down from heaven or from across the Jordan River. He entered our sphere, our environment, and our cosmos. The Logos of God became flesh." Jesus relocated. He became one of us. He did not commute back and forth from heaven. Similarly, the most effective messenger of the gospel to the poor will also live among the poor that God has called the person to.

A key phrase to understand relocation is incarnational ministry. By relocating, a person will understand most clearly the real problems facing the poor; and then he or she may begin to look for real solutions (Conn 1997:181). Relocation is a personal challenge that involves putting ourselves in threatening situations, such as entering into areas that have been abandoned by others. We have to relocate ourselves and spend our lives with the neglected societies, because God's call for relocation involves a conversion of our hearts to a specific community. For example, if a person ministering in a poor community has children, one can be sure that person will do whatever possible to ensure that the children in the community get a good education. Because Jesus goes directly to the people; loves and affirms them, so we to need to do the same by relocating ourselves, following his good example to go and reach the poor, oppressed and neglected of society. The challenge faced by the church is to respond to its members' needs. How does the parable of the Good Samaritan apply in our lives today? Perkins (1999: 17-18) states, "The great question is, How do we affirm the dignity of people, motivate them, and help them take responsibility for their own lives"? By beginning with people's felt needs we can establish a relationship and a trust, which then enables us to move on to deeper issues of development.

This idea of beginning with people's felt needs is called the felt need concept. It is summed up in a Chinese poem:

Go to the people

Live with them

Learn from them

Love them

> Start with what they know
> Build on what they have:
> But of the best leaders
> When their task is done
> The people will remark:
> "We have done it ourselves!"
>
> (James Yen)

Felt needs are different from person to person and context (place to place), and in order to do holistic ministry effectively we need to discover and identify these needs. Perkins (1993: 33) notes "By discovering people s' felt needs for ourselves and making their needs our own, we can begin to help bring about real, lasting change in our urban communities".

There are two major strands of community development that are prevalent today, the first being needs-based. This is development based on the needs in poor communities. The other is asset-based community development that focuses on the assets of a community and builds upon them.

The primary goal of holistic development aims at enabling society or individuals to ascertain the need, to solve the root cause of poverty, ignorance, diseases, injustices, and other problems facing society. Community development seeks to address the felt needs of the people. It is the people themselves who must define their needs and not the government or any other development agency. This means that a government or a non-governmental organisation that wants to be effective in its development efforts must engage in dialogue with the intended beneficiaries to determine their needs (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 127).

The felt-need concept is only a tool for the beginning of development. It enables listening to the people and giving them hope for life-changing solutions. The focus should then quickly move to seeing the great potential that is in their community. Working with the poor requires an attitude of trust. The poor need to be trusted as being responsible for their thoughts and actions. When they feel that they are honoured and given self-esteem, they become free to think, act and relate to each other responsibly. Burkey (1996: 130) notes:

> Poor people know they are poor, sick, etc., but often they do not want to confront the situation. Many of them think the problems they face are their individual problems and they can do nothing to change the situation. By getting the people to look at their problems collectively we help them see the commonality of their problems and to understand the structures, which are oppressing them.

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To work with the poor is to empower the poor, as Stumme (1991: 20) contends "The Church will need to learn to work with the poor so that their lives may be lived above despair, their human dignity is affirmed, and their fuller participation in the benefits and obligations in society can be encouraged." We as the church are embody (emulate) Christ by doing what He did and what He continues to do through us: declare-using both words and deeds-that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords who is bringing in a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace. And the church needs to do this where Jesus did it, among the blind, the lame, the sick and outcast, and the poor. The Gospel should be understood as an invitation to full (holistic) salvation with regard to all domains of societal life. Christ's incarnational message to human beings implies that humanity should acknowledge his presence and his power in the midst of their crises and their struggles for survival.

The church as a society of hope should present a message that includes the full scope of God's salvation, and does not limit it to the hereafter only. The Biblical incarnational model of mission is a call to service that involves witnessing to the wonder of the greatness of God's love, grace and mercy among the nations.

In view of the current situation in Northern Namibia, it is easy to agree with Verkuyl (1978: 406): "If salvation is as wide as the many problems and perils which plague human existence, then the missionary task is also much broader than we traditionally imagined." Bosch emphasises: "If we take the incarnation seriously, the word has to became flesh and dwell in every new context." In the wonder of Christ's holistic approach to mission, Bosch further notes: "What amazes one again and again is the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission. It embraces the poor and the rich, the oppressed and the oppressor, both sinners and the devoted. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups" (Bosh 1991: 21-28).

Many people in Namibia would agree with Verkuyl's sentiment "Missiologists need not to be ashamed about becoming involved in massive efforts to aid programs and projects for churches in developing countries. In fact, they are ashamed if they fail to become involved" (Verkuyl 1978: 407). Therefore, for the ELCIN's holistic mission in Namibia to make an impact for the kingdom of God, it needs to be redefined (reconstructed) in order to find its basis in Christ's incarnational model of mission. Then, it will be able to face the enormous challenges, which Namibian society is encountering.

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6.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter some theological reflections on attempts to meet basic human needs in concrete local development (contexts) situations were discussed. A missional ecclesiology is contextual. All ecclesiology is developed within a particular context. There is but one way to be the Church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting. The aim with this study is to help the church to bridge the gap between what happens on Sundays and what happens everyday so that the church can respond to human need. This was stated in the problem statement (1.3).

A missional theology can be practised, in order to equip the church for its calling (Guder 1998: 11-12). The outlining of some socio-economic challenges (critical issues) facing the ELCIN and the Namibian society at large (as described in chapter 5) reminds us of the words of the prophet Micah 6: 8, who says: "do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God"(Jacobsen 2001: 38-49). These words are echoed in the Letter of James 2: 14-17: "What good is it, sisters and brothers, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a sister or brother is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (August 2010: 46). The question is whether Church leaders, the laity, pastors and theologians still hold on to this biblical vision and prophetic tradition, or whether we are trapped in the notion of "political correctness." Put differently, do we still do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God today?

The present socio-economic challenges in post-independent Namibia demands that the Church should at all times speak the truth as it is informed by our faith, or, more particularly, by a prophetic ministry that is rooted in the struggle of local congregations and grass-root communities with the major social issues confronting them. Being engaged in such prophetic ministry means to face conflict, mutual reprimands and bitter debate to resolve differences and bring inconsistencies to light. The struggle for truth, practising theology, implementing justice, loving kindness and walking with God is never a simple matter; it is never a fulfilled task. At the heart of being incarnational lies the concept of simply loving people like Jesus loved them. The missional church understands that Christians are to follow the example of Jesus. Jesus came to be physically being with us and to reach us with the Father's love. He was out among the people, and socialized with those of whom the religious leaders of his day

would have nothing to do with them, especially the poor, the marginalised and ostracised of society.

The missional church is an assembly of Christ's follower's that understands that they must penetrate the culture with their presence. Jesus did not retreat from culture, but penetrated it. The bible teaches that the mission of the Church includes both proclamation of the gospel and the demonstration of its relevance by working for community development and social change. The Church is called to work for that justice in society which God wills, and to help people enjoy the fullness of life which is God's purpose for all people.

In order to engage in social change and model the relationships it commends for society, the Church must exhibit total dependence on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit of God. The missional church sees its mission as the same as the Lord's. The purpose in this chapter is to show how the church as a messenger of hope can play a role in community based development. Mission belongs to God and the church is called to participate in God's mission. By its very nature, the church is missional, profoundly marked by God's grace and the good news that gives hope and future for all humanity. The Church's role in society and its involvement in community development flow out of Christ's command to love our neighbour. The church, in its service with and for others, is a witness to this care. Just as Christ brought good news to the world, the church also carries out this message through witness, service, action, and advocacy. According to August (1999: 1; 2010: viii), the church is a central institution and location of especially the marginalised and vulnerable ones of the society. It therefore stands in a priviledged position when it comes to the development of the marginalised and the restoration and healing of the community. Therefore the church should address the issue of poverty theologically to the people of God and restore their hope and human dignity.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who reveals the will of God, the Church has been sent into the world as a means of God's transformation. To be the voice of the ostracised and the neglected of the society such as the poor and the hungry in Namibia today, the Church must retain its role of being a watch-dog, monitoring the decisions and policies made by the government, in order that the Namibian economy is utilised for a well-being of those people on the margin of life, and for a better future with a healthy society. To be in Christ's commission for love and care for one another, the Church in Namibia needs to trace back its

footsteps back in history, where its forefathers/mothers took a stand to dedicate themselves to their call, not to keep silent to any violation of human dignity.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a summary of the arguments of this study and recommendations are made to the ELCIN. The main aim of this study was to explore how the ELCIN can better position itself in response to the social challenges faced by Namibian Aawambo–speaking people living in northern Namibian urban informal settlements. The focus of the investigation was on whether the local church's understanding and awareness of these social challenges are congruent with that of its mission task and ecclesial identity of being a public church. In the problem statement of this study it was stated that, one of the features of urban informal communities anywhere is that, various forms of social injustice are more clearly evidence in them than in rural areas. The hypothesis of this study is that the church, given its context, has to act according to the challenges and needs of that context.

The church's kerygmatic function in disadvantaged communities needs to be redefined, because urban areas are generally considered to be places of demoralising social conditions, social dislocation and human misery. The church's task in such areas is one in which it participates in Christ's reconciling function of helping people to realise the full possibilities for human life. The main argument of this study is that, the church in Namibia in all situations will continue to be a voice onbehalf of the voiceless, the marginalised and the oppressed of society.

Chapter one covers the introduction to the whole study. The motivation of the research, the background, the aim of the study and the objectives are explored in full. The theoretical framework of the whole thesis is the biblical images of the Church and its identity as both a theological and as a sociological reality in its relation to one another in society. Research design, research methodology and social location, which are the driving forces behind this study, are discussed. The chapter's outline in which all chapters and their contents are summarised is given. Limitations are made known and research ethics as provided by the University of Stellenbosch, are described.

7.2   CHAPTRER TWO

The concepts of theological perspectives and the role of the Church in the community are discussed. The Church by its very nature as the body of Christ is called to become a caring community. This community must adapt its institutional structures to its central confessions and missions. The Church, as a utopian community, is not *of* the world; but as a servant people of God, it is *in* the world. Therefore, Christians as citizens cannot avoid involvement in the political, economic and moral challenges facing their communities. Theologically, a call to be in service for others is the spirit working with God's world in terms of our gifts and contexts. The mission that was given to the church by Jesus Christ calls for infiltration of all segments of the society, starting with the poor, with holistic ministry in which there is no dichotomy between evangelism and social transformation. Mission is more than just the conscious communication of the gospel, just as a person is more than just a soul; that is why it must encompasses and addresses the whole of life, soul and body. The church is the most important institution in the community; therefore, its pivotal role and mission should be visible in the community. The church itself is the community of people who are called by God to be His people, in different times and places.

7.3 CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter we looked at the origin of and developments leading to the formation of the ELCIN in 1954. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) grew out of the work which the Finnish missionaries from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) started in 1870, among the Aawambo and Kavango Speaking People, in the North-Central Namibia of what later (1884) became to be known as "German South West Africa". In 1954, the independent Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOC), later (1984) known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), was established. Several institutions relating to education and promotion of health care, printing press, public library, museum, rehabilitation centres and vestment were established very early in the history of ELCIN, because of the church's commitment to caring for people in a holistic way. In 1991 the Church demarcated into two Episcopal dioceses, Eastern and Western which stretch from the very North to the South of the country.

The ELCIN played a significant role in the resistance against the South African apartheid regime and in the struggle for liberation and independence. In a post-independent Namibia, the ELCIN is also challenged to side with the poor, the needy and the marginalised of society

as it did in the past during the time for liberation struggle. In this situation the Church needs to reconstruct her role of being a caring and serving community to those who for one reason or another fall outside the formal service and support systems and the main stream development in society. The Church suffers from lack of theological discussion and debates, hence the inability to articulate its response to the current challenges and affairs, such as poverty, unemployment, national imbalance in economic sharing, secularisation and the emergence of a pluralistic society. The challenge is the contextualisation of the teaching of the Church and reforming its activities without compromising the Christian witness. The historical analysis of the ELCIN helped to establish how it contributed to the public discourse within the Namibian context during the war of liberation when the church played the vital role of being a voice of the voiceless. As various programmes have been started by government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to create jobs, the church too also needs to be involved in nation building, creating jobs, and encouraging self-employment among the people.

7.4   CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter the research findings (empirical survey/research and data collection) regarding the contextual analysis of the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati are discussed. An empirical study on the societal challenges faced by the informal inhabitants of Ondangwa and Oshakati townships is reported on. This was conducted in order to examine the validity of the research study's hypotheses and motivation. The study entailed an examination of possible influences that force people into such a poverty situation. This examination comprises an analysis of data (findings). The responses of the researched (individuals interviewed) were helpful for an understanding of the current congregational challenges and ministry opportunities in the urban areas.

Urban growth is more than a sociological reality because the mushrooming and expansion of informal settlements is a major problem in many cities and towns of the developing world. Namibia is not an exemption to this phenomenon. In Namibia, thousands of families from the poor section of the population live in unplanned squatter settlements without any form of security of tenure. These informal settlements are typically characterised by lack of basic infrastructures, lack of development and poor living conditions. Urbanization, indeed, is Namibia's missionary reality for the 21st century. Namibia is rapidly being urbanized through a process of mushrooming city (town) development.

This chapter comprises: research aims and objectives, the population growth data of urban areas, a brief historical description of northern Namibia's four regions and their major towns in the former homeland of Owamboland, the government's efforts to address urban challenges and problems, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia's (ELCIN) ministry approach to urban ministry, and a brief description of the two northern Namibian towns of Ondangwa and Oshakati. The church had to act according to the challenges and needs of that context. In order to establish how it can contribute in a particular context, the ELCIN is evaluated according to a reasonable, contemporary social contextual analysis. The research study reveals that the Church, Faith-Based Organizations (FBO), Non-Governmental Organizations and the Government work independently of each other. In this way the validity of the hypothesis of the study namely that "teamwork and effective networking between different denominations and organizations in response to socio-economic challenges can be encouraged", is confirmed.

7.5 CHAPTER FIVE

In this chapter we heard about how Namibia is faced with a number of social challenges that continue to hinder the progress of the country from the national level, right down to the individual level. Detailed information on the household characteristics of residents is provided as well as information about citizens' access to services, including electricity, sanitation, water and social amenities such as health services and schools. The main objective in this chapter is to identify sustainable approaches to the delivery of basic services in the form of housing, water, electricity, and sanitation for the poor informal settlements in the urban areas of Ondangwa and Oshakati. The current service delivery approach of the government has left out informal settlements and has instead focused on improving and expanding services in formal areas. Limited attention is currently given to alternative approaches to service delivery to informal settlement dwellers. This situation has detrimental effects on the poor. The problem of unemployment in Ondangwa and affects the ability of community members to escape from poverty and women are often the chief breadwinners in these communities. The effects of unemployment are frustration and anxiety, which often leads to liquor and drugs abuse, factors that remain evident in a community where illegal sale of liquor and drug dealing are widespread.

There is a strong correlation between poverty (poor living standard) and HIV/AIDS. A high unemployment rate has led to many people not being able to afford their own housing and

therefore becoming backyard dwellers. Children are particularly vulnerable to overcrowding and the lack of the recreational facilities that can contribute to their mental and physical problems.

The situation in urban Namibia is threatening human life, as people are facing trauma and stresses. The urban poor are human just like the affluent, and God also created them in his image. Therefore, they should be accepted as fellow human beings. This is the key to understanding Christian views of the poor.

The urban poor are experiencing high rates of unemployment and informal economies have been viewed as one of the coping strategies of the poor in urban Namibia. The political and socio-economic conditions, which prevail in Namibia, are a major hindrance for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This led to the vocation of the churches in the city. The biggest challenge to the church as a faith and witnessing community is that we must be prepared to be tested by the Gospel which we proclaim. The Church in Namibia generally teaches and preaches to a poor and hungry society. It works among those who need land for their resettlement in the free society and those in need of employment. Those social conditions are a major factor in the kind of society in which we find ourselves today. Those are the conditions which force the society into committing crimes (gangsters), substance abuse and migration into the towns, because of longing for a better life. Since Namibia achieved its independence in 1990, many Church members can be found in urban informal settlements all over the country. Many of them are to be found in pathetic conditions, living in shanties built from carton boxes or plastic materials. This is a difficult situation which has led many people to lose sight of their future.

Namibia has a high rate of urbanisation, and the push and pull factors that have supported this urbanisation are difficult to counter. Urban areas tend to attract job seekers in numbers well beyond the number of jobs being created. The northern part of Namibia is rapidly being urbanised and the situation is similar in other countries on the continent. The post independence boom in these towns continues at an alarming rate. A socio-economic environment of poverty (poor living conditions), unemployment, vulnerability and sickness such as HIV/AIDS all disadvantage children and youth before they begin their education and often leads to high school dropout rates and vulnerability to gangsters. The need for quality orphan-care structures and projects for youth employment (self sustenance) therefore becomes an important aspect of which note should be taken. As the situation is getting worse

everyday in our local communities, it is the responsibility of the local church (congregation) together with other social bodies, to take up an initiatives aimed at necessary services (social ministry) in order to improve people's lives and living standard.

7.6 CHAPTER SIX

This chapter serves as a guide of what the ELCIN ought to be in redefining her social advocacy role for the poor and economic development in responding to the socio-economic challenges faced by northern Namibian urban communities.

The Christian faith affirms that God cares about this world and fullness of life for all people. The mission that was given to the church is more than just the conscious communication of the gospel, just as a person is more than just a soul. Mission encompasses and addresses the whole of life, soul and body. Therefore, the missionary task will also include aspects of service in day to day life. Whatever view of mission is consciously or unconsciously adhered to, in practice the activities of missionaries usually included much more than preaching. The history of missions provides ample proof of the fact that; the communication of the gospel usually had to be in word and deed. Most modern medical services, schools and many other essential enterprises can trace their beginning to the work of missionaries responding to the felt needs of a particular situation (context).

The Church's commitment to action in the world involves struggle in society. Struggle arises out of Christian understanding of the world which is in rebellion against God although it is loved by him. In each situation struggle is involved in moving society from what it is to what it ought to be. The church is called to name all that is evil and dark about the city, and particularly to confront urban systems and structures when they act in exploitative and oppressive ways. The empowerment of people in development at the grassroots level is crucial to overcoming oppression and exploitation. In order to minimize poverty situation, the church and other social organizations can establish some community based programmes targeting the poor and illiterate and training them in a variety of skills and tasks. Training can be both practical as well as basic training. They can be taught producing quotations, writing tenders, following procedures, baking, marketing (entrepreneurship skills) as well as principles of business survival. All these factors are extremely important, in order that they can respond to the need for creating a sustainable provision in the long run, and in alleviating overall poverty. The Church, particularly the Evangelical Lutheran in Church in Namibia (ELCIN), has a responsibility to foster and encourage self-reliance, in order that people can

exercise their rights to determine their own future, rights which include sovereignty over natural resources, land, production and distribution. It is argued in this study, based on an analysis of the Church as a Community called by God that the Church as a Community-based organisation is essentially best served in effecting social change by orientating itself according to the people-centred participatory development approach.

7.7   RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section comprises recommendations for the ELCIN in areas experiencing the kind of socio-economic challenges faced by disadvantaged communities such as the informal settlements in Ondangwa and Oshakati. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) has the task as outlined in Article IV of her Constitution and Regulations is "to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ through holding divine worship services, administering the sacraments, pastoral counselling, educating the youth, demonstrating Christian love through deeds, and by doing mission and diaconal (development) work". It is essential to note that demonstrating Christian love through deeds in essence embodies the last two points of doing mission and diaconal (development) work, and makes up a significant portion of the role of the church in society. Needless to say, however, given the many social issues that exist within the social fabric of Namibian society, fulfilling the role of mission and diaconal work can be a difficult one, but is imperative nonetheless. The church had a vital positive role to play in the Namibian society. This role is seen as being somehow greatly neglected in the post-independent Namibian context (3. 8).

The researcher is of the opinion that the starting place for the church to engage in this social responsibility is to make the necessary connection between theology and community (society). Without connecting points being identified, the church in the Namibian context of social transformation and nation building could have a very hard time asserting itself as a positive force in society. The Church has the capacity to offer people a sense of belonging and to invite them on a journey toward the God who redeems, loves, heals, and reconciles (6.4.1-6.4.3). Guder poignantly reminds the church today:

> The life of the Church *is* its witness. The witness of the Church *is* life. The question of authentic witness is the question of authentic community (1998: 182).

The task of the urban church in northern Namibian urban communities is not only the proclamation of the Word, but also the deeds and actions as a process to implement the proclamation. What the church's practice in the city requires being truly effective, is not to

allow itself to be overwhelmed by the city's evil. The church must take delight in the people surrounding it and in each other in the community of faith.

In addition to urbanization and its socio-economic effects, there is the impact of global capitalism (globalisation) and secularisation, as well as a shift in religious inclination and orientation. The impact of secularisation is of particular concern to the church. Shorter (1991: 142) warns: "The church is less visible in towns than in the rural areas, and finds it harder to make headway against the materialism implied by modernization."

The rural ministry ethos poses a problem for doing theology of community development in the urban centres. Its rural background prevents the ELCIN from developing an effective and faithful urban ministry that addresses the city's problems amicably as stated in the research question of this study (1. 4). The researcher agrees fully with David Bosch (1980: 227) when he states "We have to determine the church's missionary involvement in the world more accurately. What are the nature and the scope of mission?" For the missionary activity of the church *(Missio ecclesiae),* this then has important consequences and leads to a separation in definition of 'mission' and 'missions'. Our missionary activity (missions) cannot be linked as identical to the *Missio Dei* (mission) as "our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God. The Church stand in the service of God's turning to the world" (Schmitz in Bosch 1991: 131). The *Missio Dei,* then, does not exclude the *Missio ecclesiae* (the mission of the church). Kritzinger (1994: 42) *et al* articulates the relationship between the two in simple terms:

> The Triune God, Father-Son-Spirit, invites the Church, us, to be His co-workers on earth. The Senior Partner invites a host of junior partner to join Him in His venture. The *Missio Dei* avails itself of the *Missio ecclesiae*, the mission of the Church. Mission, one might argue, is the reason for the existence of the Church.

With regard to the Church's participation and engagement in missions, Bosch (1991: 243-244) emphasises that, "In our time God's yes to the world reveals itself to a large extent in the Church's missionary engagement in respect of the realities of injustice, oppression, poverty, discrimination and violence". These realities are the missiological challenges on which this study is focussed. This is because of the significantly high levels of poverty and violence in particular found in the informal settlements of Ondangwa and Oshakati of northern Namibia, as described in the motivation (1.6). The understanding of the local

congregations, of the nature of the mission of the church, and the close relationship between a conception of sin and salvation to its mission, will also be looked at.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is the largest church in Namibia and, therefore, she has also been deeply affected by the on-going changes of social structures and economical development. Poverty, urbanisation, increasing ill-being around cities, and deteriorating social and health problems, particularly HIV/AIDS, and their consequences are remarkable challenges also for the ELCIN (3.4.3). If the church understood the situation and the historical opportunities and possibilities, it could be in a position to push forward crucial change of the society. If on the other hand, the church does not understand the situation, it will lose the historical and unique momentum to influence the development, which may turn, if left to run its course, to be extremely destructive for the whole nation. This study calls on all leaders, including church leaders, to be positive force in the community addressing stigma and discrimination and encouraging love and tolerance and compassion.

Furthermore, the same phenomena are also found elsewhere, which means that the church and the whole Namibian society could be seen as positive examples in a wider context, especially in southern Africa. The redesigning (recon-structuring) process of the northern Namibian urban ministry will enable the church (ELCIN) to be a people "of the way". This means that although sinful, the church is a people of the way, a moral community. This implies recognition that human beings are earthen vessels with their quirks and drastic shortcomings. The Church is called to heal and reconcile broken human relationships and to be God's instrument in the reconciliation of human division and hatred (cf. 2Cor. 5: 18-21). It is also called, together with all people of goodwill, to care for the integrity of creation in addressing the abuse and destruction of God's creation, and to participate in God's healing of broken relationships between creation and humanity (cf. Hall 1990; Nürnberger 1999). In short, the Church has the freedom to witness, the moral necessity of expressing its inner convictions, even when they run counter to political expediency. Today, we need to debate these issues because when it happens that the Church becomes politicized Church (or conflation of religion and politics) or when our faith becomes privatized business (separation of religion and politics) then the price is too high to pay. To avoid separation or conflation of religion and politics, the researcher in this study proposes critical participation of transformation as part of the Church's prophetic witness and service. Rasmussen (1993: 137) affirms that in spite of their short comings, the people of the way are a community of the

Gospel and of moral formation and conviction. Resignation is the least helpful of all responses to acculturation and fragmentation. The term *"Christians of the way"* was first used during the early church, which designated the followers of Jesus Christ. Rasmussen (1993: 138) states "…with the name the Jesus people wore before the early onlookers in Antioch tagged them 'Christians' for ever. Before they were Christians they were '*the people of the way'''*.

The Church is called to be a moral community. The moral life itself, for Israel and Jesus, was to witness to this way in a particular pattern of community living, in the instruction and training required for this discipleship and in continuous remembering, retelling, and the sacramental redaction of the formative events by the people of the way themselves. The urban congregations of Ondangwa and Oshakati, northern Namibia; should see themselves as people of the way. This is the Christian image, which refers both to the path itself and the manner of travel. Furthermore, urban congregations must seek to walk in "the way", as *"people of the way",* which involves a moral style so intimately related to the destination itself that to wander from the way is also to miss the goal. For this to happen, the church must focus on Jesus and the particular way He incarnated the way of God with his community. A people on the way are a community for society renewal in the following two ways: Firstly, in the development of community-creating religion and among lower socio-economic classes, among other marginalized groups and among those disaffected from the ranks of the socially privileged. What binds people together here is an urgent sense of clear human need linked to energy, clear conviction and direction. Secondly, in the conceptual and ritual envisioning of inherited traditions in times of deep, bewildering, and sometimes frightening, dangerous change. I believe that the following are some of areas that should be given serious attention in the urban centres:

- In our cities and towns, more attention should be paid to the poor and neglected of society. There is a need for social diaconal ministry to help those in need, especially the poor, the sick (HIV/AIDS) and the vulnerable ones of the society. The Church needs to think through how it might expand its social diaconal ministry within the urban disadvantaged communities. Another issue to which, I believe, the Church needs to pay attention is that of loneliness. When we look at our people in cities we find that the marginalized ones: the poor, orphans and vulnerable children, are often cut off from human and spiritual community. Many of them do not have anyone to

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look after and help them. They need the healing and counseling of the Church. Thus, the Church needs to set up programmes for training people to look after the poor, orphans and vulnerable children, and others that cannot help themselves.

- The increasing number of cohabiting persons (cohabitants) and single parents in our society especially in urban communities are another group of hurting people that need healing and counselling from the Church. The Church has to thinks of ways of how to help these people, especially the female-headed households. There is an urgent need for the Church in its mission to take seriously the frontier of urbanization. The faith community needs to find its way into the patterns of life and thoughts which are characteristic of urban settings. The Church needs to meet the millions of uprooted people with the gospel and meaningful service. The poorest and the weakest of the most societies are in the slums of the urban communities.

- The relevance of holistic ministry is very high. Being the church in context, it is important for the church to be constant and faithful to its mission. The church in Africa, and in Namibia, in particular, needs to adapt to the context of globalized life and circumstances in which people try to survive in slums and shantytowns. The needs of the African cities are urgent, and the time is *now*. The goal of Christian community development in an ecclesiastical setting should be the healing and empowering of communities, because development is a process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future in order to realise the full potential of life that God has made possible. The Christian church must be an important (facilitator) catalyst for social development and change. The church should deal with both symptoms of poverty and the source of poverty. The church should transform structures that perpetuate suffering in urban informal communities. The church cannot abandon the cities without abandoning its call to be faithful church.

- The prophetic voice of the church that addresses injustice on the macro-level and confronts the powers that be with their responsibility will always be an essential part of her diaconal task. It is the task of the church to call the government and other institutions to do just actions in accordance with the calling from God. We must embark on this uncharted journey with courage, knowledge, determination, celebration, and faith. This must be an urgent concern for the church. The same concern which caused the church to write the Pastoral Letter, pointing out the

shortcomings of the political order during colonialism (1971), should also cause the Namibian church to address the needs of the urban poor which are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. It is of paramount importance for the church to continuously minister to the marginalised, it is exactly because of its concern and divine calling that it is of strategic importance for it to also to engage the (dehumanising) the powers (Walter Wink 1986) on the macro-environmental level. The church locally, denominationally and ecumenically needs to discern and resist these forces of domination in the world for the sake of the quality of human life.

- The church has a pivotal positive role to play in the Namibian society. This role was seen as being somehow greatly neglected in a post-independent Namibian context. Many Namibian feel that, religious communities, CCN member Churches and various other Churches have neglected their prophetic role of being the barometer of the conscience of the people. Instead of having frank, candid talks with the Government on, particularly, economic justice, sufficient pensions for senior citizens, or the right of access to the land; the attitude of Church leadership has been to keep out the State's way so as to allow it to make itself feel at home in its new house. Such approaches have detracted from the Churches' ability to act prophetically under a majority-rule Government. Indeed, it could be said that, in the post-independent context, the Church might have failed to reassess and review its public and prophetic role, and did not seek to make itself relevant in the day-to-day life of the entire society (Isaak 2000: 112). The church in partnership with God is responsible for destroying any form of wickedness, unrighteousness and oppression-socio-economic, cultural or political-powers of the devil. We are Christians called to follow our Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim his gospel in the midst of a complex and powerful economy (Isaak 1997: 25). This reality poses both opportunities and responsibilities for the Lutheran Church and other churches in Namibia. Our faith calls us to measure this economy, not only by what it produces, but also by how it affects human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of justice in our land. Economic life raises important social and moral questions for each of us and for society as a whole. Like family life, economic life is one of the chief areas where we live out our faith, love our neighbour, confront temptation, fulfil God's creative design, and achieve our

holiness. Our economic activity in factory field, office, or shop; always has good or bad consequences. It brings us into co-operation with others or sets us at odds with them. The social teaching of the Church encourages us to preach the message of Christ in such a way that the light of the Gospel will shine on all activities of the faithful. In this case we are trying to look at economic life through the eyes of faith, and using traditional Church teaching and Evangelization.

- The Church in Namibia needs to involve herself in what is necessary for people today. The Church in Namibia played a major (great) role during the colonial period. It consistently confronted all the inhuman practises perpetrated against the Namibian people. It suffered for the sake of the oppressed people. It identified itself with suffering people, condemned apartheid and prayed for the independence of the country.

About 90 percent of Namibians are Christians. This means that when Namibians suffered during the colonial period, the Church suffered too. When they rejoice, the Church rejoices. Although Namibia has become a free and independent country, the Church is still expected to be a prophetic voice even as it was in the past, to challenge and confront injustices which might otherwise go unnoticed. It must defend the truth, but to do this, it must be faithful to the Gospel. The Gospel must be the final judge regarding what Christians should or should not do. The future makes history when it first becomes today.

What the Church does it has to be based on the context (contemporary and historical nature of events). To better assess the future, we have to recall past events and then analyse the present in view of the future. Namibia can be called a Christian country because the majority of its people are Christians. For more than a century these people were oppressed by foreign governments and their surrogates (Nambala 1994: 165-169). The Church in Namibia might recognise the authenticity of the ruling party but the Church cannot always endorsee everything the present government does; that is why the Church needs to rise up its prophetic voice to all evils that may arise at this time, because it believes in a God of justice. The Namibian church in mission today is facing a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before the independence of Namibia in 1990. This in itself calls for a new understanding of holistic mission. Today in Namibia, we live in a period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies and one that is, to a large extent, still amorphous and opaque (Isaak 1997: 26; Kameeta 2006: 102-105). A time of paradigm

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(change) shift is by nature a time of crisis. In the light of a fundamentally new situation and precisely in order to remain faithful to the true nature of mission, mission must be understood and undertaken in an imaginatively new manner today. This is the moment when the Christian church with its Christian mission may once again, humbly but resolutely, presents the vision of the reign of God, not as a pie in the sky, but as an eschatological reality which casts its rays, however opaque, into the dismal present, illuminates it, and confers meaning on it (Bosch 1991: 362-366).

In the judgement of this study, the Church is failing because the Church it is suffering from an identity crisis. It acts as if it is a politicised Church, and presents Christianity as a privatised Christian faith. From a theological point of view, however, it should be stated that the Church and Christianity cannot be politicised or privatised. The church should clearly take the side of the poor and vulnerable of society, not because the poor will always be right but because they are most likely to be taken advantage of and are unprotected against those who would exploit them. The church should make the poor aware of their rights and dignity as human beings, informed both by her own understanding of the dignity of man, and by the rights enshrined in national and international declarations, which spell out justice in society. The church should work for change in the political and economic systems, so that there is room for the poor both to attain and exercise their legitimate rights.

The researcher is of the opinion that the starting place for the Church to engage in this social responsibility is to make the necessary connection between theology and community development. Without connecting points being indentified in this study, the Church in the Namibian context of social transformation and nation building could have a very hard time asserting itself as a positive force in society. So, the critical reflections (review) of the Church in this study are made from a personal point of view; and because of concern for the need for social relevance and the credibility of the Church in the Namibian social context of today. The challenge for the Church is to discern the signs of the times and to look ahead without being taken in by cheap modern slogans, but to stand for the truth that never ends. Being the Church today in this world means to be a Church with a prophetic voice, which includes, amongst others, the political-cum-prophetic voice and the economic-cum-prophetic voice. These roles often require that there conflict, mutual reprimand and bitter debate in order to resolve differences or to bring inconsistencies to light. Namibia needs a Church that is the conscience of the Government, political leaders and the business sector, and that fights for the

empowerment of the weak. Namibia needs a Church which will, in a positive and constructive way and in critical solidarity, cooperate with the government and the private business sector in the process of nation-building. It needs a Church which will endeavour always to read the signs of the times correctly, and face the demands and challenges of the new millennium and tell those in political or business power, in praise or admonition, without apologising to anybody: So says the Lord to Namibia!(Isaak 2000: 4-5, 13-15; Kameeta 2006: 101).

The hypothesis of this study is an attempt to refocus the church's ministry on the needs of the urban poor (1.5). This hypothesis emphasised the need to develop new skills and knowledge through informal educational experiences in which the poor actively participate as subjects, instead of remaining passive objects. In order to implement these hypotheses and research questions, the church must develop community participation through the process of: developing principles of self-reliant approaches, conscientisation, partnering with the poor in all stages of development and a process of replicating biblical examples such as Nehemiah1-3. It is a great challenge for the church to work together with community development leaders (role players), and other institutions to bring about community development as a successful and effective tool in reaching the marginalised and the underprivileged in the community. It is clear from the argument stated (5.5) that the involvement of the church in local activities, especially in the Ondangwa and Oshakati communities, is essential. The Church must seek to side (preferential option for) with the poor, as was stated in the problem statement of this study (1.3). If the church delays in adapting to the urban context, where ideologies are changing constantly, she will forsake her strategic position of being a foreign body in the world, where the old and new overlap in her, rendering her too early for heaven and too late for the earth (Bosch 1978: 22). This central position is a gracious opportunity for holistic proclamation of the Bible message. The church should always remember that it is her responsibility to give direction to the world, recognizing clearly that as a Christian community, guided by the Holy Spirit, she becomes a guideline for decision-making. At the same time, she needs to be aware that without the religious element, life is like an engine running without oil-it seizes up; and when religion falls apart or dies, not only do people suffer meaninglessly, but civilization crumbles.

It is recorded that, due to a high level of unemployment, the urban poor struggle to meet their daily needs of life (1.2; 5.2.2). As a solution, economic development is the viable direction to

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minimize the unemployment challenge. Linthicum (1991: 169) states that "In one way or another, the church must become involved in economic development-the creation of jobs, the organizing of people to create community industries and trades, job re-training, economic self determination…Though the strategies and action plans should differ from city to city, the essential principles are the same." The urban people are poor because of; *inter alia,* marginalization and oppression. In order to address these problems, the Church must advocate for the urban poor. Linthicum (1991: 173) states "Integral to God's commitment to the poor is Yahweh's assumption that the chief defenders of the poor must be God's prophets, apostles, and people. It is a primary task of the church in the city to be the advocate and champion for those who are poor." If the church is to cope successfully with new family patterns, it must seek to work in partnership with the poor, the deserted, divorced, widowhood, and the abandoned.

The theological claim that the earth is God's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps. 24: 1) calls God's people to face honestly the systemic structures that violate oppressed communities, that create and sustain the pain of the body's world, and to stand with tenacity against the forces of destruction, and for transformation. God has placed the church in the city. In fact, God was in the city before the city came into existence (Ps. 46: 5). On this basis, therefore, the city is a massive investment made both by God and by humanity. Humanity provides for the stewardship of the city regarding the political, economic, social, and material, through the systems and structures of the city. Linthicum (1991: 177) affirms "Just as a city depends upon the prayers of the Church for its welfare, so too, the city depends upon the Church's faithful stewardship." The issue here is that most of the people are not aware that the Church cares for the spirituality of the city. Most of the times, the church prays behind the scenes for the goodwill and place of the city, to make it holy and acceptable before God.

The Church is given by Christ a mandate of sharing in his mission of compassion to the crowds, "because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt. 9: 35-36). For Matthew, the church exists to identify with needy people (all people). In responding to this mission, Christians experience their own healing and real life. The main question for disciples today is, where can we participate in Jesus' divine compassion for the needy "crowds"? What scenes today stir our gut feeling of compassion? Where do we see people hungering for meaning and values? How can we help people connect their daily public lives

to their personal and communal faith? How can we minister in these desperate worlds? What bridges can we build? When Jesus saw the needy crowds, he was moved with compassion. The Greek word translated "compassion" implies a visceral response to the plight of others, allowing one to connect with their pain. If identification with others' pain leads to concrete action on their behalf, then Christians are drawn into Christ's compassion for the needy crowds. Linthicum (1991: 177) notes "That is why the church involves itself in health care, housing, economic development, and advocacy of the poor, because, whether addressed or ignored, all those profoundly affect the depth of spirituality of the city, for good or for ill." Perkins (1995: 29) states "The principle for Christian community development is that our efforts have to build up the family unity if we envision our communities as places where we are to experience some of God's provisions in paradise." This means that we have by all means to deal with the high rate of unemployment in our societies, especially in urban areas. Christian community development needs to put more emphasis on helping people to help themselves to put poverty behind them. Our main efforts must be to develop people and lead them to the point of using God-given skills and abilities in satisfying work that also can benefit the whole community at large. Community by its very nature, requires small groups of individuals who bear one another's burdens in a way that they will model reconciliation to one another. Urban ministry in shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents can be empowered to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry (6.4.3).

The starting point for the church to practice its mission in community is to build and develop strong and effective relationships with other organisations, institutions and businesses in the local community (5.5). The church should help those who fee hopeless to regain their hope; and to help those who feel dehumanised to realise that they are made in the image of God. And it should help those who are poor and marginalised to realise their position and true value in the community. Churches need to seek social transformation through ecumenical and coalitional organisations and networks. In their public role, churches should both cultivate and represent the broadest expressions of distinctive Christian witness and support and work with non-Christian groups who share a similar social vision. Ecumenical alliances do not mean that churches will cease to be what they used to be in terms of doctrinal differences, far from that. The issue at heart here is unity in diversity as stated in the purpose of this study (1.7; 6.3.8).

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The ministers in Namibian urban communities ought to build networks with the rich, the powerful and those with influence. Through this process, the plight of the poor will be mobilized and funds gathered to initiate development activities leading to transforming the lives of people. However, the disadvantaged groups should plan and implement their development. Holistic development includes a whole range of self-help programmes such as: education, setting up of health and social welfare committees, building infrastructures, development of ideas, etc. Very importantly, community development has to do with how to improve the living conditions of people, both in rural and urban areas. The church and other social organizations can establish some community based programmes targeting the poor and illiterate, and training them in a variety of skills and tasks. Training can be both practical as well as basic training in producing quotations, writing tenders, procedures, baking, marketing (entrepreneurship skills) as well as principles of business survival (6.3.3). All these factors are extremely important, in order that they can respond to the need for creating a sustainable provision in the long run, and alleviating overall poverty. This enterprise can succeed and have a great impact on the witness of the church in Namibia.

But the current national situation calls for unity among the churches because the task is too heavy and enormous, therefore the individual denominations may not have sufficient resources to accomplish the task. This must be done in respect of steps towards empowering people to assume a status of partnership with churches, governments and other agencies. The doctrinal differences or traditions, will continue to exist, but churches will agree to mission, responding to the Great Commission- "Go and make disciples, teach them to keep god's commandments" (6.3.8; 6.5). In order to do this, the Church is required to do unusual business, to which end the holistic model has re-designed the ethos and approaches in order to appropriate quality ministry. The developed theory seeks to address this challenge. Facing the broad problems of our cities (towns) requires resources beyond those of single evangelical congregation. A collective effort by all churches and groups is required. This process is seen in its embryonic stage in the Book of Acts. Paul's collection of money from churches in Greece and Turkey for the needful saints was, in effect, a collectivization of social concern within the church of Christ (2.4; 2.5.1.3). Modern cities are the centres of both great power and utter powerlessness, of absolute poverty and corrupt wealth. The Church makes its home in the midst of such power and wealth, vulnerability and poverty.

Applying Jesus' healing balm to all the needs of real persons is the only way to be faithful to our Lord. If the Church in Namibia today, particularly the ELCIN would obey Jesus' commission in John 20: 21, we would experience explosive church growth and sweeping social transformation (2.7.3; 6.2). "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," Jesus commanded. Our Lord cared about the whole person in community, and so should we. When we share the whole Gospel with the whole person to all areas and aspects of life, God works miracles (wonders) in the lives of the poor, broken, and hopeless. Individuals are remade, and societies are transformed (6.3.1).

This study challenge the ELCIN's Diakonia and Social Services Department with the aim to live out the gospel message of service to God's people and all creation. The study proposes that the core of this department's ministry must be taken from Luke 4: 18-19 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of the sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."* Just as Jesus was brought into this world to free us from suffering, bondage of death, so we too, as the Church are sent forth to bring the good news and uplift those who are in bondage to the shackles of poverty and oppression in our disadvantaged communities today. The foundation of Diakonia is the call to minister and care for the needs of humanity and God's creation, as a whole. The purpose of Diakonia is inextricably linked to the gospel, through the cross, to serve the needs of god's people. As a programme, Diakonia needs to be developed into the ELCIN's voice of action against injustice, through community-based social development, advocacy (promotion of advocacy), and awareness raising (outreach), as well as the alleviation of suffering and poverty. The model developed for ministry enables the church to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity. It views the cross of Jesus Christ as a transformational point where spirituality and development meet for the re-orientation of the human heart. Doing practical theology today is unusual business. The holistic model is the effort to enable us to move from life to faith and then back to life. Practical theology demands that the point of inception is to describe the situation of the congregation, and then correlate that situation with the faith and belief of the congregation by focusing on God and his world (1.8). This situation creates and prepares an opportunity for a holistic hermeneutical practical approach to urban ministry.

In this study (dissertation), ways in which the Church may recover (redefine/reconstruct) a biblical holistic concept of Christian mission and community development are discussed

ways in which the Church may recover its wholeness and efficacy and live up to its global objectives. Scholars agree that in order to accomplish this task, the Church must be willing to take an integrative approach whereby its concern is for the whole individual within the whole society. For the Church to be able to deal realistically with the socio-economic challenges of the Namibian context, it must renew and redefine itself so that its very existence will incorporate within itself and its mission the questions and concerns of the Namibian context today.

7.8   CONCLUSION

The main argument of this research as stated in the hypothesis, is that from its very beginning, Christian mission has been holistic, modelled by the example of the mission of Jesus, who preached the Word, cared for the needy, and defended the excluded. It is presupposed in this study that, although the ELCIN, since it became autonomous in 1954; has a long history of doing mission and diaconal work according to her Constitution, it has been recorded that, the Church is more and more lacking in capacity to meet the challenges and needs of the Namibian post-independent society and subsequently cannot effect social transformation, yet it undoubtedly has the potential.

The Church faces the challenge of serving the world, whilst not separating itself from the world (diaconal challenge). And the church as a broader spectrum is the strongest and most influential institution and Faith-Based Organisation (FBO) within society, which has a role to play (ecumenical challenge). As it was argued in this study, poverty is the issue most people face in their daily lives. Because of this, some people feel useless, dehumanised, and hopeless, and they accept their situation the way it is-they think it has to be like this. The Namibian churches in urban communities such as Ondangwa and Oshakati, surely face many challenges in a post-independent context as they seek to understand their role in the *Missio Dei*. It is clear, however, that the ELCIN indeed has a pivotal role to play in acting as an agent (catalyst) of community development.

A theological framework of a constructive understanding of mission and community development has therefore been proposed as a holistic framework, which addressess this challenge. The Church is a called out community, which needs to take seriously the effects of the Fall on both individuals and social structures as it journeys with the oppressed, marginalised and the poor and assists in building communities of change. The Church as the

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people and representatives of God should address these issues theologically and should introduce Christian values in dealing with these issues. Our problem in Namibia today is not one of mere socio-economic stagnation but also includes attitudes, views and perceptions that are denying our people access to the benefits of modern culture which has become the engine of development today. The challenge is: how can the church in Namibia initiate a process of radical transformation that can make us affirm our humanity in the light of the Christ event which alone can give us the power to become active participants in the processes that are shaping our world. The faith of the Church can be the basis for hope of Namibian peoples. Our understanding of holistic mission therefore includes the dimensions of proclamation, service or diakonia, prophetic mission and advocacy. The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by social advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalized. This entails critically analyzing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation.

The Church in Namibia, especially the ELCIN is the light of the world through its words, and it has a role to play. If something which causes suffering to the society happens, the community comes to the Church for help. For example, during the struggle for Namibia's liberation, the community came to the Church hoping that its prophetic voice of being "a voice for the voiceless" would change the situation. Much later on, independence was achieved. The role of the Church in a community faced by many socio-economic challenges, especially one that is facing poverty, severe suffering (HIV/AIDS), unemployment etc, is crucial. In a situation such as in the post-independent Namibian context, we need to have a vision for the kingdom of God, and every once in a while we get a foretaste of what that means. I believe it means furthering the Kingdom on earth.

The guiding word is 'shalom' in the widest sense of the word, meaning right relationships between God and people, people and people, and people and creation. The Church, in its service with and for others, is a witness to this care (Pieterse 2001: 111). Just as Christ brought good news to the world, the church also carries out this message through witness, service, action, and advocacy. This service of the Church becomes concrete in real and specific places, like the informal settlements surrounding Namibian urban communities, where these "others" are suffering and we respond. In the face of the suffering poor, the church should see the suffering Christ for the poor. We need a spirituality that is able to integrate the role of faith, prayer and the mystery of the Church's sacramental life with a

God-willed struggle for reconciliation, justice and peace. Whenever the concepts, Church and Christianity, are separated, the two become the objects of caricature. For when the Church refuses to assume responsibility for its socio-political context, it ceases to nurture the community of faith.

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APPENDICES

1   Open Letter to His Honour the Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa

> Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church,
>
> Private Bag 2018, Ondangwa, Owamboland

The Church Boards:

> Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA (Rhenish Mission Church) P.O. Box 5069, Windhoek

Windhoek, 30 June 1971

His Honour,

The Prime Minister,

Mr. B. J. Vorster

Pretoria

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 this opportunity of informing your Honour of the opinion of the Church Boards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA and the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church which represents the majority of the indigenous population of South West Africa.

We believe that South Africa in its attempt to develop South West Africa has failed to take cognizance of Human Rights as declared by UNO 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 unity. 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 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?

(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 (Sections 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 the Sections 23 and 25 of Human Rights.

The Church Boards' urgent wish is that in terms of the declarations of the world Court and in cooperation with UNO, of which South Africa is a member, your government will seek a peaceful solution to the problems of our land an d 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 Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church

Moderator Pastor P. Gowaseb
Chairman of the Church Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA (Rhenish Mission Church)

DIAGRAMS

DIAGRAM 1

STRUCTURE OF THE ELCIN ADMINISTRATION (1954 – 1991)

```
                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │  Main Head Office     │
                    │  Moderator/Bishop     │
                    └──────────┬───────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────┴───────────┐
                    │   Church Synod        │
                    └──────────┬───────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────┴───────────┐
                    │   Church Council      │
                    └──┬────────────────┬───┘
                       │                │
        ┌──────────────┴───┐       ┌────┴───────────────┐
        │ Kavango Deanery   │       │ Ondonga Deanery    │
        │ Dean              │       │ Dean               │
        └──────────┬────────┘       └────────┬───────────┘
                   │                          │
        ┌──────────┴────────┐       ┌─────────┴──────────┐
        │ Parish            │       │ Parish             │
        │ Pastor, Evangelist,│      │ Pastor, Evangelist,│
        │ Deacon, Lay       │       │ Deacon, Lay        │
        │ Preachers. Parish │       │ Preachers, Parish  │
        └──────────┬────────┘       └─────────┬──────────┘
                   │                          │
        ┌──────────┴────────┐       ┌─────────┴──────────┐
        │ Oukwanyama        │       │ Uuninginino Deanery│
        │ Deanery           │       │ Dean               │
        └──────────┬────────┘       └─────────┬──────────┘
                   │                          │
        ┌──────────┴────────┐       ┌─────────┴──────────┐
        │ Parish            │       │ Parish             │
        │ Pastor, Evangelist,│      │ Pastor, Evangelist,│
        │ Deacon, Lay       │       │ Deacon, Lay        │
        │ Preachers, Parish │       │ Preachers, Parish  │
        └───────────────────┘       └────────────────────┘
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DIAGRAM 2

ELCIN STRUCTURE (SINCE 1992)

```
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │     Church      │
                        │     Synod       │
                        └─────────────────┘
                                 │
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │     Church      │
                        │     Council     │
                        └─────────────────┘
                                 │
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │    National     │
                        │   Head Office   │
                        └─────────────────┘
                                 │
        ┌────────────────────────┴────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│     Eastern     │                              │     Western     │
│ Diocesan Synod  │                              │ Diocesan Synod  │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│ Diocesan Council│                              │ Diocesan Council│
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│    Diocesan     │                              │    Diocesan     │
│   Head Office   │                              │   Head Office   │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│ Deanery Meeting │                              │ Deanery Meeting │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│  Parish General │                              │  Parish General │
│     Meeting     │                              │     Meeting     │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│  Parish Council │                              │  Parish Council │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│   Parish Co-    │                              │   Parish Co-    │
│ workers General │                              │ workers General │
│     Meeting     │                              │     Meeting     │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
```

DIAGRAM 3

THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURE OF THE ELCIN (1992 – 2010)

```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │  Main Head Office   │
                          │  Presiding Bishop   │
                          │  General Secretary  │
                          └─────────────────────┘
```

| Finance and Development Secretary | Administrative Secretary | Education and Training Secretary |

Eastern Diocese
Bishop
Executive Secretary

| Finance Director | Divisions Directors |

Western Diocese
Bishop
Executive Secretary

| Finance Director | Divisions Directors |

Dean Rundu Deanery
Dean Kongo Deanery
Dean Oumbangalanhu Deanery
Dean Oshigambo

Dean Windhoek Deanery
Dean Omuthiya Deanery
Dean Epembe Deanery
Dean Omandongo
Dean Auala Deanery

Dean Engela Deanery
Dean Ongwediva
Dean Okambebe
Dean Elim Deanery

Dean Onaanda Deanery
Dean Okahao Deanery
Dean Tshandi Deanery
Dean Nakayale Deanery
Dean Swakopmund

Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes | Pastors Parishes

DIAGRAM 4

Organogram of the ELCIN

Composition
- Presiding Bishop (Part time)
- General Secretary
- Finance & Administration Secretary
- Education & Information Services Secretary
- Mission & Congregational Ministries Secretary
- Diakonia &Social Services Secretary

ELCIN Main Head Office

Tasks
- To coordinate the work of the whole church.
- To develop the church organization
- To represent the whole church nationally, and internationally

Composition
- Diocesan Bishop
- Executive Secretary
- Finance Director
- Divisions Directors (Part time)

Diocesan Office

Tasks
- To develop administration and management in deaneries and parishes
- To develop financial management of parishes
- To conduct staff trainings at all levels in the diocese
- To coordinate and develop Christian education work in the Diocese
- To coordinate and promote mission and evangelisation work in the Diocese
- To coordinate and promote social and diaconal work in the Diocese

Composition
- Dean (Part time)
- Social and Diaconal work, Mission and Evangelism, Children, Youth, Women, Men and Music Directors (Part time)

Deanery level

Tasks
- To give support to all parishes staff
- To coordinate and develop Christians education work in the Deanery
- To coordinate and develop diaconal and social work in the Deanery
- To promote Mission and Evangelism work

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Parish Parish Council	**Parish** Parish Council	**Parish** Parish Council	**Parish** Parish Council

Composition
- Pastor
- Deacon
- Parish Secretary
- Parish Elders
- Lay Preachers
- Divisions Directors
- Volunteers

Tasks
- To promote growing of Christian way of life among church members
- Planting visions and dreams of hope, peace and justice in the community
- Celebrating together the holy sacraments of baptism and Eucharist
- Relating to one another as a community of faith and Christ
- Caring for the poor and the neglected ones of the society
- To increase the understanding of stewardship and financial self-reliance
- To ensure that the ELCIN is fulfilling its calling to preach God's word to the community
- To ensure that everything in the parish level is done according to ELCIN Constitution

THE ODENDAAL PLAN DIVISION OF NAMIBIA

Map 4

Map 3

African 'homelands'

Areas reserved for whites

Game reserves and other
government areas

1 Kaokoland
2 Ovambo
3 Kavango
4 East Caprivi
5 Damaraland

6 Bushmanland
7 Hereroland
8 Rehoboth
9 Tswanaland
10 Namaland

Sources: Map 3: Susanna Smith, Namibia

Map 4: Gerhard Totemeyer, Namibia: Old and New

Map 2: NAMIBIA c.1880 - 1915

Kunene River

A N G O L A

→ CAPRIVI

O V A M B O L A N D

Okavango River

Elim
Okahao
Olukonda
Oniipa
Omandongo
OVAMBO
SAN
KAVANGO

KAOKOVELD

HEREO

TOPNAARS
Sesfontein

Etosha
SAN

Tsumeb
Grootfontein

Otjitambi
DAMARA
Otavi

SWARTBOOIS
Fransfontein
Outjo

DAMARA

NAMIB

Okanjande

Okombahe
HERERO
Waterberg
SAN

Cape Cross

Omaruru
H E R E R O L A N D
Epukiro

DESERT

Karibib
Okahandja

Otjimbingwa

Windhoek
AFRIKANERS
Gobabis

Swakopmund
Walvis Bay
TOPNAARS

GEI-/KHAUAN

BECHUANALAND

ATLANTIC

Rehoboth
Hornkranz BASTERS
Naosanabis
Leonardville

Hoachanas

!KOWESIN

ROOI NASIE

FRANSMANN

Gochas

SAN
Grootfontein
Gibeon

OCEAN

/HEI-/KHAUAN
Berseba
//HANOBEN

Koes

Bethanie
Aus
!AMAN
Keetmanshoop
TSEIB
Aroab
Hazuur
Rietfon

Angra Pequena
(Lüderitz)
Halifax Island
Long Island

BONDELSWARTS
Ukamas
Kalkfontein

Warmbad
AFRIKANERS
Orange River

iii
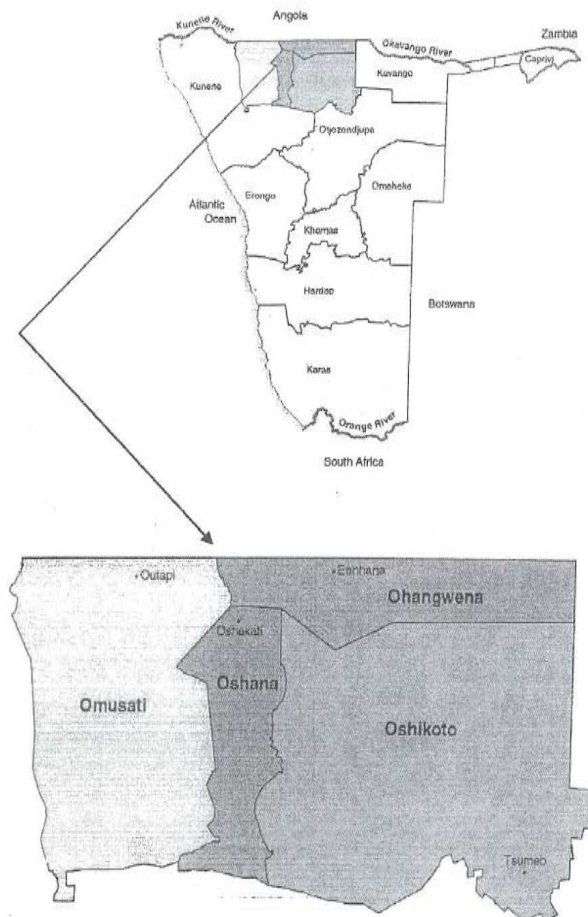
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Map 5: ELCIN CONGREGATIONS AND MISSION STATIONS IN ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA

Source: ELCIN Archives

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Figure 1: Map of Namibia and the Northern Regions, Ministry of Environment and Tourism

QUESTIONNAIRES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1: SQUATTER CAMPS/INFORMAL INHABITANTS

1. What is your age?   **Gender:** Male / Female ; **Ethnicity/Ethno-linguistic:**

   Religion/Denomination:

   Marital status: Single, Married, Living together, Divorced, Separated, Widowed

2. What is the highest grade of schooling have you achieved?

3. For how long have you been living in this informal settlement?

4. Are you employed? YES / NO.

   If no, how do you survive financially?

5. How many individuals living in your household?

   Start with household head, followed by all adults, then children.

6. Do you have water and electricity in the dwelling? YES / NO

7. What kind of toilet do people in your household use?

8. What are some of the socio-economic challenges faced by the community where you live?

9. What are most pressing problems that you experience, because of staying in the informal settlement shacks?

10. If you do not have enough to eat in the house, what do you do?

    Where do you turn?

11. 1 How often does such a situation occur?

12. What, if anything, do you think the church should do more to help you in your situation?

13. Do you have any specific suggestion on what the church and government should do about the following?

    a) Poverty
    b) Fighting injustice and corruption
    c) HIV and AIDS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2: CLERGY

1. Could you please mention five key socio-economic challenges/problems faced by the informal communities of Ondangwa / Oshakati?

2. Which socio-economic feature in this community has the greatest impact on the majority of the residents?

3. Does this have an impact on your congregation? If so, how?

4. Which do you consider the most five important tasks (mission) for the church which is located in the urban area (i.e. worship, evangelism and outreach, diaconal ministry, social justice etc)?

5. Describe your understanding of the "whole" gospel of the kingdom.

6. Do you consider evangelism more important than social outreach / action? Why or Why not?

7. Do you believe that it is part of the church's commission to address poverty and other socio-economic challenges?

8. What do you believe is the church's role in addressing poverty?

9. Is your congregation involved in addressing some of the key challenges faced by this community? If so, which ones?

10. Does your church collaborate with other community-role players, government or local congregations [church denominations] in the area (i.e. NGO's, schools, police, clinic, community organizations) in addressing the social challenges in (your community) Ondangwa / Oshakati?

11. Why or Why not does your church collaborate with other congregations / denominations and role-players in the community?

12. In the space below, please share additional thoughts or concerns that you might have about the future of the northern Namibian informal inhabitants.

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL

Tel: 065-220441/220927

Fax: 065-221432

Email: chkashuupulwa@oshanarc.gov.na /
kmnlitenge@oshanarc.gov.na

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P/Bag 5543

Oshakati, Namibia

Our Ref:...

Your Ref:..

Enquiries: *Hon. C.H. Kashuupulwa*

2nd August 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LETTER OF PERMISSION

The Office of the Governor of Oshana Region presents compliments to the Office of the Division for Research Development of Stellenbosch University. At the same time, this office is hereby acknowledging the receipt of the letter dated 01 August 2010 from Rev. Gideon Niitenge, Student No. 15727564-2009 that aims to conduct his research work on Redefining the role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia [ELCIN] in Community Development in Oshakati, Oshana Region, Republic of Namibia.

It is against this background that Oshana Regional Government hereby confirms Rev. Gideon Niitenge to conduct his research work in Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia that is scheduled between the 15th November and the 15th December 2010.

Kindly, accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours faithfully

Hon. Clemens H. Kashuupulwa
Governor: Oshana Region

OSHAKATI TOWN COUNCIL

906 Sam Nujoma Road
Private Bag 5530
OSHAKATI
Namibia

Tel: +264 65 229500
Fax: +264 65 220435

03 August 2010

Enquiries: Ms A. Ingwafa

Division of Research Development
Stellenbosch University
South Africa

To whom it may concern

## REQUEST TO DO RESEARCH IN OSHAKATI TOWN – DATA COLLECTION

We refer to the above:

This letter serves to confirm that Oshakati Town Council allowed Reverend Gideon Niitenge, Student Number 15727564-2009, to carry-out his research on Social Challenges in Oshakati Town informal settlements on the 15th November 2010 to 15th December 2010.

Please feel free to contact our office for any information you may need.

Yours sincerely

O. Shilunga
Acting Chief Executive Office

0 3 AUG 2010
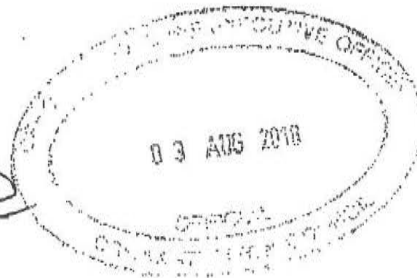
All correspondences should be addressed to the office of the Chief Executive officer

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ONDANGWA TOWN COUNCIL

Private Bag 2032 Ondangwa Tel [065] 240101 ext 101 Fax [065] 240453
E-mail admin@ondangwatown.com

Enquiries: Martin Elago

5 August 2010

The Division for Research Development
Stellenbosch University

RE: LETTER OF PERMISSION – REVEREND GIDEON NIITENGE

This note serves to grant permission to Reverend Gideon Niitenge, student number 15727564, to conduct his research in Ondangwa Town during the period 15 November to 16 December 2010 in partial fulfillment of his doctoral studies.

We hope that you will find the above in order. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Ondangwa Town Council
Private Bag 2032

0 5 AUG 2010
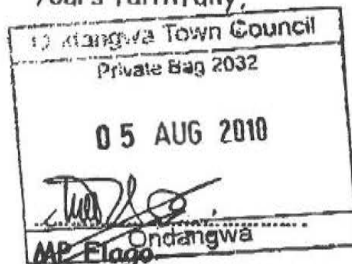
Ondangwa

MP Elago
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN)

ELCIN Head Office Private Bag 2018, Ondangwa, Namibia
Tel: +264-65-240241 or +264-65-240242 Fax: +264-65-240472
Email: gen.sec@elcin.org.na

August 3, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LETTER OF PERMISSION

The Head Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) is hereby informing the Office of the Division for Research Development of Stellenbosch University, that Rev. Gideon Niitenge, student no 15727564-2009 aims to conduct his research work on **Redefining the Role of the ELCIN in Community Development.** The area of his Research study will be done in the two respective dioceses of the ELCIN (Eastern and Western Diocese). Rev Niitenge will be conducting his interview to the Clergies of the following parishes: Oniipa, Onguta and Oshitayi (in Ondangwa Town area/Eastern Diocese), as well that of Ongwediva, Gloria Dei and Oshakati Lutheran Parish in Oshakati Town area/ Western Diocese). Apart from ELCIN Clergies, he will also be interviewing other clergies from different denominations that are to be found in Ondangwa and Oshakati Towns. The anticipated time of conducting his research study is scheduled as from 15th November to 15th December 2010.

I trust that these are the relevant information so far I can give to you. Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

May the Almighty God bless you so richely.

Rev Eliakim Shaanika
Secretary General: ELCIN

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UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

22 September 2010

Tel.: 021 - 808-9183
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 353/2010

Rev G Niitenge
Department of Practical Theology & Missiology
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

MAILED and E-MAILED

Dear Rev G Niitenge

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *The church in context: redefining the role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (Elcin) in community based development,* has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.
4. The researcher/s implements the suggestions made by the mentioned by the Research Ethics Committee (Human Research) in order to reduce any ethical risks which may arise during the research.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MR SF ENGELBRECHT
Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Non-Health)

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Typical scene of the informal settlements of Ondangwa shanties

(Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge November 2010)

View of Ondangwa informal settlements
(Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge November 2010)

A woman at Omakulukuma informal settlement in Ondangwa shanties participating in selling basic food (Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge November 2010)

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Typical scene of the informal settlements of Oshakati shanties
(Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge December 2010)

View of Oshakati informal settlements
(Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge December 2010)

A young boy at Oshoopala informal settlement in Oshakati shanties participating in selling fruits and cooked food (Photo taken by Gideon Niitenge December 2010)