

**FROM CIVIL WAR TO DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTION  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ANGOLA (IELA)  
TOWARDS RECONCILIATION, PEACE, RECONSTRUCTION AND  
DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE OVAWAMBO COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN  
ANGOLA**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a theological and practical challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (IELA) on the issue of social development after the civil war, especially in the Cunene Province among the Ovawambo community.

The thesis briefly examines the history of the Angolan civil war, and of the IELA. It notes the key development concerns facing the Ovawambo community.

The focus of the thesis is centres on three themes namely: reconciliation and peace; reconstruction; and sustainable development strategies.

The thesis argues that it is the responsibility of the IELA in the first place through its ministry of reconciliation to contribute to rebuilding the nation that has been destroyed by the civil war. In the second place it argues that since much of the social frame works have been changed due to civil war, a reconstruction approach is needed. In the last place, it argues that IELA should contribute fully to providing fruitful strategies for the sustainable development for the better life of the future generation.



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Summary statement of the proposal**

This thesis examines the current social situation in the Ovawambo community of Southern Angola, and identifies ways in which the IELA<sup>1</sup> can make a contribution towards reconciliation, peace, reconstruction and development. The research questions I am dealing with are: How can the Ovawambo community be restored again? How can the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (IELA) serve its responsibility to reconcile, reconstruct and develop this community?

#### **1.2 Outline and description of the title**

The Angolan people, right after independence from the Portuguese colonial power in 1975, found themselves involved in a civil war. The origin of the war arose from these questions: from which ethnic group should the leader of the independent Angola come? Should he come from the minority Mbundu ethnic group, which is situated in and around Luanda, or from the Ovimbundu, the majority ethnic group that is situated in the central part of the country?

When Agostinho Neto, from the Mbundu ethnic group, became the first Angolan president, Jonas Savimbi from the Ovimbundu tribe was not happy about it. With the support of his ethnic group, he started the civil war.

The result of this civil war was the destruction and corruption of the whole country in all aspects. For example, the alienation of the people in the name of tribalism and ethnicism. Throughout the period of the war the spirit of living and working together with the aim of constructing the country has been lost. The spirit of hostility between tribes has been amplified.

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<sup>1</sup> IELA represents Igreja Evangélica Luterana de Angola (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola)



The fear and distrust within the people of Angola grew wider. As a result of informers, people have lost trust in one another. People killed each other, which resulted in many widows, widowers and orphans. Many people became disabled, having lost some parts of their bodies and this has led many into poverty. Moral value was lost and people behaved like animals. For example, young people no longer have respect for their parents and any other adults. Family value is also lost. The cultural support for the abuse of women was also made worse by the civil war. Robbery, smuggling, nepotism and dishonest practices have increased.

Because of the poverty and hunger caused by the war, the Angolan people tend to depend on outside assistance. This tendency has caused a loss of the spirit of self-reliance, self-dependence and self-confidence, especially in urban areas.

Another serious problem caused by the civil war is the low standard of education. In the rural areas, people continue in their traditional customs and ways of living; cutting down trees and killing wild animals. Clearly, education and training, for both young and old, is needed if the balance between people and the earth is to be maintained.

In the light of these social problems, the aim of this project is to find new ways of reconciling people who were separated by the civil war, and changing the bad ways of living which were caused by the war. This will pave the way towards sustainable development in the new Angola.

### **1.3 Motivation for this study**

I am a pastor in the IELA, a church working amongst the Ovawambo community. Coming from this community that has been harmed by the civil war, and that took so long to come to an end, I am faced with the questions: How can this community be restored again? How can my church serve to renew, heal, and develop this community? With the help of Theology and Development Programme, and its modules such as People, Power and Faith; Making of a Redemptive Community; and Current Issues in Theology and Development, as well as other programmes such as Ministerial Studies and Industrial Mission, I have become concerned about this problem. I have acknowledged that the Church has a responsibility of bringing about a change in

situations like that in Angola, especially in the Ovawambo community. Because of these reasons, I feel that as a member of the church and of the community at large I must do something. I must go out to my people, sit down and talk, and later write something which can be a contribution to the movements of renewing and developing my country especially among the Ovawambo people.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

My hypothesis is that the IELA has an important and vital contribution to the social development of the Ovawambo community. I believe that the first thing that could be done to attain this objective is the attempt to unite people, which I call – the action of reconciliation. The second thing is to build a strong foundation and this I call – structural change. The third and the last point is to put on the table different suggestions as to the areas in which the church can contribute in wider social development.

#### **1.5 Limitations**

This project is focused on the Ovawambo community that is situated in the Southern part of Angola in Cunene province. Ovawambo people are divided into six tribes: Ovakwanyama, Ovambadja, Ovavale, Ovandombodola, Ovaunda and Ovakafima. Though it was important to say more about this topic in relation to the whole country, Angola, I limit myself to Cunene province for good reasons. Firstly, I did not have the financial means to enable me to travel to all parts of the province or country – in order to conduct interviews. Secondly, most of the issues, which I want to tackle, such as deforestation, overgrazing and wild life violation, are found in the Cunene province. Furthermore, though there are other denominational churches in Cunene province, my focus will be on the IELA.

## **1.6. Methodology**

### **1.6.1. Practical means**

As noted, this project is aimed at the Ovawambo community, therefore, group discussions among different people as well as individual interviews were conducted. Different people in urban and rural areas were interviewed. Church ministers, church members, politicians, (especially for knowing the current political, economic and development situation in the region) were interviewed. Interviews were formulated according to the context, such as life stories and life styles. Some of the focus points were: the importance of tradition and culture, theology of creation, planting of trees, protection of wild life, the importance of local production, the gender issue, poverty, health and sanitation, better education and skills upgrading. My own experience has played an important role. Materials from these interviews were collected in the form of transcriptions. The outcome of these interviews and discussions tell us how people think and want to deal with these issues.

### **1.6.2. Theoretical frameworks**

There are different written theories that I use to approach my work, but my main written source is David Korten, especially his theories of *Development as Social Transformation*, *People-Centered Development Vision*, and *Sustainable Development Vision*.

### **1.6.3. Scholars**

David Korten, in his book titled, *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Voluntary Action and Global Agenda*, states clearly that the past centuries have failed to lead to just development especially in the Third World as it was expected. The main problem was that the focus point of development was on economic growth, which was focused on material things only. This vision forgot to include the vision of the development of people and their environment. This is what Korten called an exclusive approach, which is against the inclusive approach.



Korten calls for an awakening of values and opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where the focus point will be on people. He calls this people-centered development and a sustainable development vision.<sup>2</sup> To this end, Korten promotes an agenda for social transformation where reconciliation and structural change will be a means for healing the failures of the past centuries.

In this thesis I will dialogue with Korten and study how inclusive development could be realised in Angola especially in Cunene province where Ovawambo people are living.

Michael Taylor, in his book titled *Not Angels but Agencies: The ecumenical Response to Poverty, A Primer*, has pointed out the need for establishing peace between God and people (verticalism) and between people and people (horizontalism). At the same time he also points to the need for structural change to dismantle the structures which dehumanize people, especially in the so-called Third World.

In this study I will dialogue with Taylor when I will discuss the question of reconciliation as well as of reconstruction.

Musa W. Dube, in her article entitled *Woman, What Have I to do With You?* identifies that what Africans need is a new reconstruction, which is totally different from what was imposed on them by the colonialism. According to Dube, reconstruction is a new way of life in peace, development and freedom. This new reconstruction includes focusing on gender, race, class, nationality, religion, mentality, spirituality, human resources and the environment.<sup>3</sup>

Here I will dialogue with Dube when I will deal with question of reconstruction of the new Angola especially among the Ovawambo community.

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<sup>2</sup> Korten, D. C. *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1990) pp. 163 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Dube, M. W. " 'Woman, What Have I to do with You?' A post-colonial Feminist Theological Reflection on the Role of Christianity in Development Peace and Reconstruction in Africa." In Phiri, I, K. and Cox J (ed.). *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction*. (Nairobi: AACC, 1996), p 244 ff.

Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania after its independence, in his book entitled, *Freedom and Development (Uhuru na Maendeleo)*, explained clearly that in Africa we need to think that development demands social change. At the same time in the development process, the supremacy of the people should be the focus point, not material things only. According to Nyerere, freedom in Africa will be achieved if it is working with socialism, which brings all people together in unity and co-operation, instead of the capitalism system.<sup>4</sup>

In this thesis, I will dialogue with Nyerere when I discuss the point of a people-centered vision, as well as of education and training, which I think will be a good example to Ovawambo community as well as to the whole Angola at large.

Marthinus L. Daneel, in his article entitled, *African Christianity and Environmental Reform*, gives a good example of how the African Independent Church in Zimbabwe is trying to reform the environment. There, according to Daneel, the Church is engaged in developing a theology of creation, for the liberation of creation or of lost land, afforestation, wildlife conservation, water resource protection, socio-economic healing, socio-political healing and others. According to Daneel, it is the task of the Church to contribute towards social development to make all people aware, Church members and others. That is why he stresses that: "The church is the keeper of creation".<sup>5</sup>

I will dialogue with Daneel when I discuss the question of sustainable development and the theology of creation in my context.

Different women theologians have explained how African women have many questions, which need to be answered theologically as well as sociologically.

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<sup>4</sup> Nyerere, J. M. *Freedom and Development: A Selection from Writings and Speeches*. (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 126 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Daneel, L. "African Christianity and Environment Reformation: Zimbabwean Case Study" in Phiri, I. R. A. and Cox, J. I. (ed.). *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction: Southern Africa Perspectives*. (Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, 1996), pp. 214ff.

Some of the questions have to do with malnutrition,<sup>6</sup> clean water, especially in rural areas,<sup>7</sup> bride price,<sup>8</sup> and lack of education.<sup>9</sup>

In this thesis I will dialogue with these women theologians when I discuss the question of gender issues in the Ovawambo community as well as with the question of social change in this society.

Desmond M. Tutu, the former Archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa, in his book entitled, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, indicates some important points in the process of reconciliation and forgiveness, such as forgiveness is a resurrection, a new life, a new beginning, a new hope.<sup>10</sup> According to Tutu, forgiveness in the reconciliation process is a risk and not a cheap way, it requires truth and it is not forgetting but it is an avoiding of repeating the same mistakes.<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Tutu has experienced the truth and the pain of reconciliation and forgiveness in the time of transition in South Africa during its independence. Tutu experienced also how difficult it is to put in action the reality of reconciliation and forgiveness in Rwanda, Ireland, Israel and Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

Here in this thesis I will think and dialogue with Bishop Tutu within the context of Angola where forgiveness and reconciliation should be considered as the key response to the question of alienation, which has been caused by the civil war.

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<sup>6</sup> Kinyange, P. "Factors Contributing to Malnutrition in Urban Areas": in Besha, Ruth (ed.) *African Women: Our Burdens and Struggle*. (Johannesburg: Institutions for African Alternatives, 1994), p. 62

<sup>7</sup> Ngowi, O. N. "Water, Women's Health and Development": in Besha, Ruth (ed.), p. 66

<sup>8</sup> Al-Barwani, N. "How Marriage Customs Affect Women's Progress in Zanzibar", in Besha, Ruth (ed.), p. 41

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43

<sup>10</sup> Tutu, D. M. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. (London: Rider Publications, 1999), p. 207

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 219

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 216



### 1.7. Outline of topic and chapters divisions

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the general introduction and it introduces the direction of the whole thesis, as well as noting some key scholars who have helped shape the theoretical focus of the thesis.

Chapter two deals with the historical background to the area of my research. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part concerns the Society, where I will analyze the following items: the strata of the people; geography; ecology; civil war- its roots and its end; demilitarization; and resettlement. The second part concerns the Church, where I will outline the History of the IELA and the present situation of the IELA.

Chapter three deals with the significance of reconciliation. In this chapter I engage with the biblical understanding of reconciliation, Korten and Taylor's views of *reconciliation and demilitarization*, the perspective of Tutu concerning *No Future Without Forgiveness*, and Ovawambo traditional rituals and symbols as a means of reconciliation. This will be in dialogue with the contextual situation in Angola, gained through my fieldwork.

Chapter four deals with the question of a framework for reconstruction. In this chapter, I will reflect on the theory of Korten concerning development as social transformation and people centered vision, Dube's view about *Development, Peace and Reconstruction* and the ideas of Nyerere about social change and *Adult Education*. This will be in dialogue with the contextual situation in Angola, gained through my fieldwork.

Chapter five deals with the challenge of sustainable development. In this chapter I will reflect on the theory of Korten about the *Just, Sustainable and Inclusive Society*, which corresponds to Dube's view about the voice of African women and also the perspective of Daneel about *Sustainable Development and the Theology of Creation*. This will be in dialogue with the contextual situation in Angola, through my fieldwork.

Chapter six presents an agenda for the IELA. In this chapter I will draw together the key issues of chapters 2 to 5 and map out a strategy for the contribution of the IELA towards *Reconciliation, Peace, Reconstruction and Development* (RPRD) among the Ovawambo community.

In conclusion, I will draw together what I have discussed throughout the dissertation.



Angolan Map showing the provinces

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1. The task of this chapter**

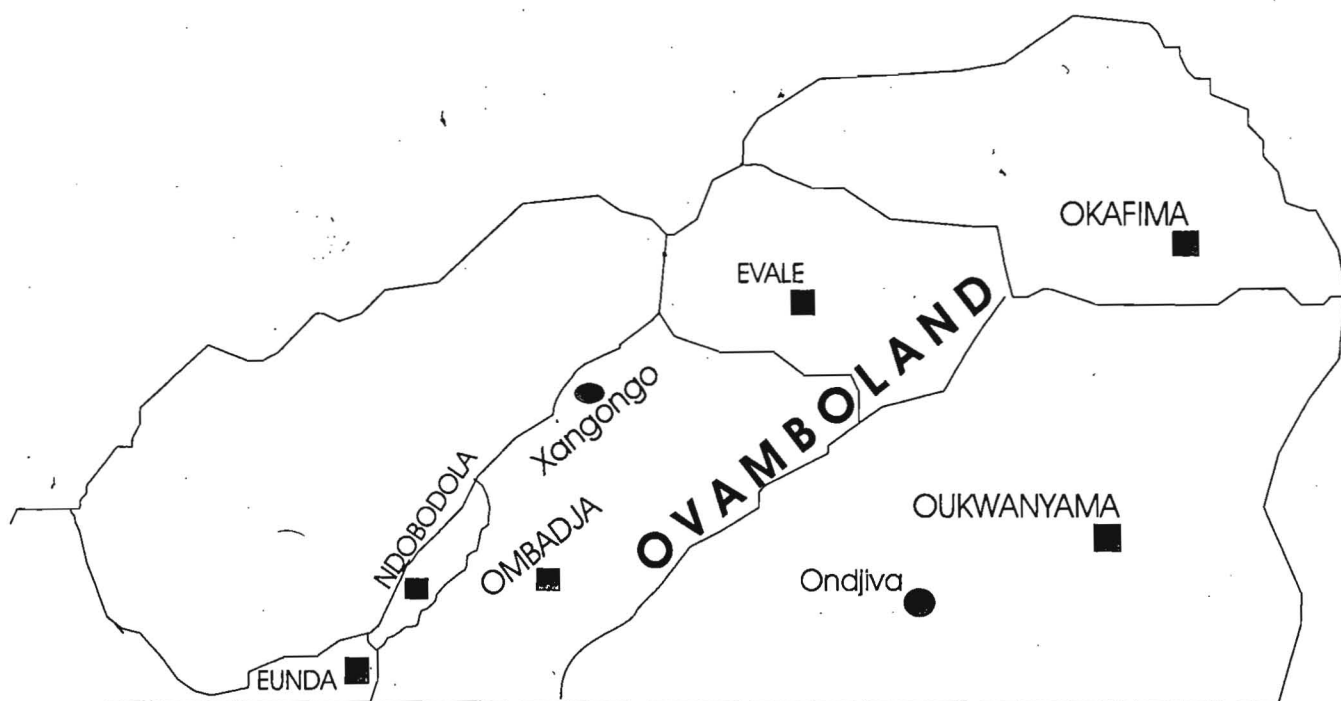
This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part explains the area of the research, such as the location of the Cunene province in Angola where Ovamboland is located, the main economic activities found there and the position of the environment. At the same time it explains the origin of the Ovawambo people and the composition of the Ovawambo tribal groups. It is also the task of this chapter to describe the origin of the civil war in Angola, its impact on the society as well as its end.

The second part of this chapter provides a history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola, *Igreja Evangélica Luterana de Angola* (IELA), from the first Rheinisch missionaries, through the indigenous missionaries until its independence. This part explains how these European missionaries' theology and culture, together with colonial power, have influenced the ministry of the present IELA. This part also examines the present situation of the IELA including its plans for involvement in social development programmes. At the end of this section, there will be a note of how the ethnicity problem is to be found within the IELA itself.

#### **2.2. PART I: THE COMMUNITY**

##### **2.2.1. Geographical Location**

Angola has eighteen administrative provinces. In the North there are: Cabinda, Zaire, Uíge, Luanda, Bengo, Kwanza Norte, Kwanza Sul, Malanje, Lunda Norte, and Lunda Sul. In the Central area there are: Benguela, Huambo, Bié, and Moxico. In the South there are: Huila, Namibe, Kuando Kubango, and Cunene. Ovamboland, which is the focus point of this study, is located in the Cunene province.



*Nambla*

### **Tribal Divisions of Ovamboland**



### **2.2.2. The Cunene Province**

The Cunene province is in the Southern part of the country, and it borders with Huila province in the North, Kuando Kubango province in the East, Namibe province in the West, and the Republic of Namibia in the South. The area is 86,968 sq.km. It is between 15° 10 and 17° 24 Northern and Southern latitude, and between 13° 17 and 17° 23 Western and Eastern longitude. Its estimated population is about 255 000. Its capital is Ondjiva.<sup>13</sup> There are six city councils (Municípios): Kwanyama, Ombadja, Cuvelai, Curoca, Cahama, and Namakunde.

Its rainfall, which is irregular, does not exceed 600mm per year, the wettest times being November, December, February, March, and April. The average temperature is about 23c.<sup>14</sup>

### **2.2.3. Ovamboland**

Ovamboland is bounded in the South by the Republic of Namibia, in the East by the Kuando Kubango province, in the North and in the West by the Cunene River. Ovamboland is divided into six tribal territories namely: Oukwanyama, Ombadja, Evale, Ndombodola, Eunda, and Okafima.

The entire Ovamboland is a large plain without mountains or hill. The land is divided into savannas or riverbeds and thick bushes or forests. In the savannas there are not many trees, and their importance lies in keeping water during the summer seasons and for producing grasses for animals and for covering shelters or huts according to the Ovawambo tradition.

The thick bushes or forests are important for the life of wild animals and for pasturing the cattle. Some of the parts of the thick bushes are good enough for cultivation due to their fertilized soil for crops. From these forests, Ovawambo people build their houses

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<sup>13</sup> . <http://www.geohive.com/cd/ao.php>

<sup>14</sup> . <http://209.183.172/referenc/provinces.html>

and fence their lands with branches of trees and thorny shrubs every year. Tönjes notes the following:

It has already been mentioned that the entire Ovamboland, which includes Uukwanyama, is one large plain. The *oyana* (sig. *oshana*)- large but very shallow riverbeds with tress, shrubs and tall grass that run through the region make up the great part of the tribal areas. Whereas the soil in the region is generally of a sandy nature, it is loamy in the *oyana* and along the banks. Some of these riverbeds can be as wide as 300-500m. In the north of the tribal area, *oyana* give way to *omilola* (sing. *omulola*), which are considerably smaller than the *oyana*. In all probability, the entire tribal area of the Kwanyama was once a wooden area, which was gradually cleared and turned into arable land as the population increased. Even today, there are smaller, though not significant forests in the interior. The banks of the *oyana* are almost entirely covered with trees and shrubs. Beside them, one finds the larger and smaller gardens of the people; these often reach down almost the bank of the riverbeds.<sup>15</sup>

## **2.2.4. The main economic activities in Ovamboland**

### **2.2.4.1. Agriculture**

The Ovawambo people are engaged in agriculture. The main agricultural activities in Ovamboland are two types of corn known as massango and massambala, beans, different kinds of pumpkins or gourds and watermelons. Because of poverty, the lack of agricultural development and drought, often the harvest is poor. When people do produce grains, is only for family consumption. In other words, the grain that people produce from their poor farms, is not enough for commercial purpose.

### **2.2.4.2. Minerals**

Even before the colonial era, the inhabitants who lived in the Southern part of the country, especially in Ovamboland, used to produce their equipment such knives, axes, machetes, arrows, swords, hoes, and others from iron, which they produced from *oshimanya* the place in the Eastern part of Oukwanyama. According to the new exploration, it found that in Ovamboland there is a lot of iron, which has not yet been worked in terms of new technology.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Tönjes, H. *Ovamboland. Country People Mission With Particular Reference to the Largest Tribe, The Kwanyama*. (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1996), p. 6

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68

#### **2.2.4.3. Livestock**

The Ovawambo people are also involved in raising livestock such as cattle and goats. Therefore, they produce also milk and meat, but only for domestic consumption and not for commercial or export purposes.

Because of drought, poverty and the lack of farming knowledge much of the livestock in Ovamboland dies from hunger every year. One of the causes of hunger for these animals is overgrazing, because there is not enough fields for pasturing due to the overpopulation of the Ovawambo people.<sup>17</sup>

#### **2.2.4.4. Fruit**

Ovamboland is rich in different types of fruit such as fan palm fruit *eendunga*, figs *eenghwiyu*, marula fruit *eengongo*, monkey guava fruit *eenyandi*, bird plum fruit *eembe*, the wild orange fruit *omauni*,<sup>18</sup> and others. Thus far, none of these fruit have been grown in a commercial manner.

#### **2.2.4.5. Craft manufacture**

Apart from the above activities, there are a number of specialized crafts that are produced by few people traditionally. These include iron working, pottery (especially by women), and production of various plaited, woven items, woodcarving, and basketwork from fan palm leaves.<sup>19</sup>

#### **2.2.4.6. The fauna of the territory**

Domestic animals are common in Ovamboland. In every house you will find a dog or dogs as keepers and guarders of the house, as well as to help in hunting. Chickens are

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<sup>17</sup> Tönjes, H. *Ovamboland. Country People Mission, With Particular Reference to the Largest Tribe, The Kwanyama*. (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1996), p. 6

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6, 8

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67



there for meat only, rather than for eggs or for commercial selling. Pigs also are common in Ovamboland.<sup>20</sup>

In Ovamboland there were a lot of wild animals including both carnivores and herbivores, but most of them have disappeared as a result of being killed by people, or having fled to other parts of the country. Many of the birds also have disappeared in the same manner.

### 2.2.5. The Ovawambo people

The Ovawambo people belong to the Bantu family.<sup>21</sup> Some legends say that they emigrated from the great lakes region in central Africa together with the Herero people.

Hahn comments:

According to the existing tradition as to their origin, they, in common with Herero, are descended from Nangombe ya Mangundu. Nangombe, it is said, came from East together with his brother Kantu. At the great Omomborombonga tree in the Ondonga area the two brothers separated, Kantu leading the Herero onwards in search of pastures for their herds, while Nangombe with his followers settled on the fertile plains of the present Ovambo territory.<sup>22</sup>

There is common saying about the origin of the proper name *Ovawambo* that it was named by the Herero people from the demonstrative pronoun *those* (ombo) or *those people* (ovantu mbo).

Ovamboland came into being before the existing artificial border, which divided Angola and Namibia, was settled. Thus, the present border between Angola and Namibia has divided Ovamboland and the Ovawambo people. Some of the Ovawambo people of Namibia who live in the Northern part of Namibia and the Ovawambo people of Angola who live in the Southern part of Angola belong to the same tribe. They speak the same dialect, have the same culture, the same tradition and the same origin, such as

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<sup>20</sup> Tönjes, H. *Ovamboland. Country People Mission, With Particular Reference to the Largest Tribe, The Kwanyama*. (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1996), p. 26

<sup>21</sup> Möller, P. *Journey in Africa Through Angola, [Ovampoland] and Damaraland*. (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1974), p. 121

<sup>22</sup> Hahn, C.H.L. and Vedder, H. *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*. (London: Frank Cass Ltd. 1966), p.1-2

Ovakwanyama and Ovaunda. Tönjes testifies: “The existing border has divided the Kwanyama into two sections, and the great part of this people lives in Portuguese Angola”.<sup>23</sup> Nambala says: “Portugal and Germany split these people in 1890, with the result that two thirds of the Aakwanyama live in Angola and the third live in Namibia”.<sup>24</sup>

The Ovawambo people to whom I refer in this study however, are those who live inside Angola and consist of six tribes: Ovakwanyama, Ovambadja, Ovavale, Ovandombodola, Ovaunda and Ovakafima. Each of these tribes has its own dialect, customs, traditions, arts and way of life, but not too different from each other.

#### **2.2.6. Civil war, its start and its end**

In 1956, Angolans from different tribes and mixed-race mestizos founded the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, *Movimento Popular Libertação de Angola* (MPLA). Its leadership fled to neighbouring countries after a Portuguese crackdown on the movement in 1961. The MPLA’s guerrilla fighters undertook incursions from the Congo into the enclave of Cabinda and from Zambia into eastern Angola. Agostinho Neto, the son of a Mbundu Methodist pastor, was a president of the MPLA from 1962 to 1979. Although this movement at the outset was not Marxist before independence, it received its military and diplomatic support from the Soviet Union.

In 1962, a group of Bakongo nationalists formed the National Front for Liberation of Angola, *Front Nationale Libertação de Angola* (FNLA). Holden Roberto was a leader of FNLA, and operated from bases in Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.) Both the United States and China gave some help to the FNLA but, weakened by internal strife, the FNLA was never able to get any popular support outside of the Bakongo community.

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<sup>23</sup> Tönjes, H. *Ovamboland. Country People Mission, With Particular Reference to the Largest Tribe, The Kwanyama*. (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1996), p. 5

<sup>24</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (USA: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994), p.28

In 1966, a split within the FNLA led to the formation of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola *União Nacional de Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA). Jonas Malheiro Savimbi was the leader of UNITA, a member of the country's huge Ovimbundu tribe. He was the FNLA's foreign minister until 1964. Savimbi, who had almost no external support, focused his energy on building a political base among the Ovimbundu, Angola's largest ethnic group. Neither the MPLA nor the FNLA had any support from the Ovimbundu at that time.

In 1974, a group of young Portuguese colonels overthrew the government of Portugal. This paved the way for hastily granted independence to its colonies. Following negotiations in Portugal, Angola's three main opposition parties agreed to establish a transitional government in January 1975. Within two months, however, the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA were fighting each other and the country was well on its way to being divided into zones controlled by rival political groups according to their ethnic background.

The superpowers were quickly drawn into the conflict, which became a flash point for the Cold War. The United States supported the FNLA and UNITA. The Soviet Union supported the MPLA. At the same time South Africa saw Angola as the front-line between itself and militant black nationalism. Angola bordered Namibia, which at the time was a South African colony. South Africa supported UNITA in the south.

Despite the hostilities, Portugal granted Angola its independence on November 11, 1975. It transferred sovereignty neither to the transitional authority nor to one of the independence movements, but rather to the Angolan people.

The MPLA, which controlled Luanda, immediately proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola. Agostinho Neto became the first president.

South Africa backed a FNLA and UNITA offensive against the new government under the leadership of MPLA. South Africa troops pushed into north. The MPLA called for and received military assistance from Cuba.

In 1976, South Africa withdrew its troops from Angola, when it became clear that the United States was not going to militarily oppose the Cuban presence in Angola. This



allowed the MPLA to extend its control throughout Angola. Nevertheless, it faced resistance from the defeated movements, which reverted to guerrilla warfare.<sup>25</sup>

From its origins in 1975, the civil war raged through the country until the death of Savimbi in 2002. Many people died as a consequence of the conflict. Some of them fled from their original homes into neighbouring countries as refugees while others became displaced people in the country. There was no sign of development during the time of civil war. Poverty, hunger and different diseases including malaria and AIDS also contributed to the death of many of Angolans. Several negotiations were made between the factions under the United Nations (UN), with the aim of ending this civil war, but all were in vain.

In May 1991, however, the MPLA and UNITA signed an agreement, called the "Bicesse Accord" in Portugal, which paved the way for an election. In 1992, UNITA rejected the election's results and started again with war. At the end of October 1993, new peace talks began again in Lusaka, Zambia. Here the Angolan government and UNITA agreed to accept the general framework of the 1991 Bicesse Peace Accord. The agreement included the re-establishment of the 1991 –cease-fire. Ultimately, the government of Angola and UNITA signed the Lusaka Protocol on November 20, 1994. However, all talks and agreements were only on paper, nothing was put in action.

The Inter-denominational Committee for Peace in Angola *Comité Eclesiástico para a Paz em Angola* (COIEPA)<sup>26</sup> welcomed the cease-fire signed with the UNITA rebel movement.

COIEPA has been a Christian Aid partner since the beginning of 2001. It was founded in 1999 by the Council of Christian Churches in Angola the Council of Evangelical Churches of Angola the Evangelical Alliance of Angola and the Episcopal Conference of Angola and Sao Tome. It is the first time both the Catholic and Protestant Churches have come together in such a formal and important forum. COIEPA is an advocate for peace through negotiation and is seen as a key player in the peace negotiations in Angola.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This shortened history of the beginning of civil war in Angola is based on the page of Reference Center with some additional remarks from my own experience. To see the whole history see: <http://209.183.193.172/reference/history/tour9.html>

<sup>26</sup> This information is taken from Internet [www.christianaid.com](http://www.christianaid.com)

<sup>27</sup> Internet; [www.christianaid.com](http://www.christianaid.com)

With the end of Cold War, the Angolan civil war was animated by global business through buying oil from the government and diamonds from UNITA.

In February 22, 2002, the leader of UNITA, Jonas Malheiro Savimbi, was killed in the battle field by the Angolan Armed Forces, *Força Armadas de Angola* (FAA).<sup>28</sup> The death of Jonas Malheiro Savimbi was also the end of civil war in Angola.

### **2.2.7. Demilitarisation and Resettlement**

The death of the leader of the UNITA rebels, Jonas Malheiro Savimbi has led to a new page in the history of Angolan independence. This is the task of bringing back displaced people to their respective places and the refugees from foreign countries. At the same time those who were engaging in military service in both parties, MPLA and UNITA, have to be demilitarized and join civilian life. Jeffrey says:

...four million people - almost a third of Angola's population – have been displaced by the conflict... More than 400 000 of the displaced are living in camps... Many of these people are barely living... In addition to those displaced internally, some 470 000 Angolan refugees live outside the country, mostly in Zambia, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo... By June, 84 000 UNITA troops, along with a quarter – million family members, had moved into 34 demobilization camps around the country. Some 5 000 of the former combatants will be absorbed into the country's military and police; the remainder will supposedly return to civilian life.<sup>29</sup>

From the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the report on the humanitarian situation in Angola in connection to Cunene Province says:

FAA officials have agreed to open the road to Cafima to facilitate the transfer of the family reception areas from Yonde to Cafima. UN Agencies have provided 30MTs of food for distribution at Yonde and 30MTs for families arriving in Cafima. Partners are also drilling water holes and conducting the mining activities to prepare for the opening of new family reception areas.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.angolapress-angop.ao/noticia.asp?ID=103984> p. 1

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.wfn.org/2002/07/msgo00227.html> p. 1,2

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/9ca65951ee22658ec125663300408599/3756114eeaza> p. 1



## 2.2.8. The Impact of Civil War

The former Prime Minister of Angola, Marcolino Moco, discussed the impact of the war as follows:

Our independence was proclaimed in the midst of cannon and machine-gun fire. Since that date, November 11, 1975, Angola never enjoyed peace... Therefore, we went through twenty years of war... the results of these long wars can only be a great human tragedy... I should say that the war in Angola left deep scars in the innermost recesses of each family. It robbed thousands of lives, destroyed thousands of families, separated others, created jealousy and grief, it opened wounds in the souls of Angolans and will take much time to heal.<sup>31</sup>

As noted above, my own observation confirms that the impact of this civil war on Angolans was the destruction and corruption of human lives, spiritually, psychologically, morally, physically, materially, and mentally. For example, the division of people from each other, in the name of tribalism and ethnicity was worsened by this civil war. The spirit of living together and working together with different tribes and ethnic groups has been lost. Before the civil war, there were good relationships within the Ovawambo people, for instance. People were free to settle in the territory of other ethnic groups and were welcomed. They were free to take leadership and other activities in the midst of other ethnic groups. But, since the beginning of the civil war, all this has been lost.

When it comes to the question of the election of a leader in the society or in the church, the first question always is; to which ethnic group does he or she belong? At the same time the wish for power over other ethnic groups is playing an important role among the Ovawambo people.

Because the civil war in Angola took such a long time, the generation that has been born since 1974 does not know peace and the relationships which were there before the civil war. They grew up in the situation of war, and have raised their own children in the same situation. The fear and the distrust between ethnic groups in Ovamboland has grown wider and wider, in all areas of lives such as religious life, political life, and social life.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.209.183.193.172/referenc/interviews/mrmocco.html> p. 1-2

During the civil war, moral values were lost and people now are behaving like animals. For example, the younger generation no longer has respect for their parents. Family values no longer exist as before. The oppression of women in the name of culture and tradition was made worse by the civil war. Traditionally, women have no right to choose whom they want to marry, the choice is always in the hands of men or of the parents. During the civil war, some women were married by force.

During the period of civil war, robbery was a daily problem. The stealing of cattle and then selling them in Namibia was a great disturbance among the Ovawambo people. Many times cattle were taken by force and the owners were left killed.

Along with the harmed relationships between Ovawambo people, there are other signs of the impact of civil war on social infrastructure such as the destruction of town buildings, roads, school buildings in towns as well as in rural areas, hospitals, clinics, and other means of communication. For example, at the present time, in the areas where the civil war had a great effect, there are no public schools, no clinics or health posts. In the towns where public hospitals are functioning, there are no medicines, as a result of corruption and sabotaging.

In the colonial period, in Ovamboland there were many Portuguese companies and traders who did their business in Ovamboland especially in towns such as Ondjiva and Xangongo and in other small towns. When civil war started in the Cunene Province, all traders fled from the territory. Thus today most of the Ovawambo people especially in the rural areas, depend on Namibia for all their needs such as selling their cattle, grain, goats, pigs, chickens, and to buy at least basic provision such as soap, clothes, blankets, and salt. Those who stayed in the towns are depending mostly on external humanitarian assistance. This created the loss of the spirit of self-reliance, self-dependence, and self-confidence.

A further problem caused by the civil war in Ovamboland is the contamination of land by landmines and ammunitions. Landmines are laid down in unmarked places, and many people have been injured and killed by them.

## **2.3. PART II: THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ANGOLA (IELA)**

### **2.3.1. Outline of the history of IELA**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola has its origin in the time when the present artificial border between Namibia and Angola was not yet established.

The first Finnish missionaries arrived in Namibia in the Ondonga territory in July 1870. Later they realised that they could not work in all the territory. As there were no other missionaries who were ready to join them from Finland, they asked the Rheinisch Mission Society in German to send missionaries to work in the Oukwanyama area. The first two German missionaries August Wulforth and Meisenholl arrived in the Oukwanyama territory on September 4, 1891, where they were given a friendly welcomed by Ueyulu ya Hedimbi the king of Oukwanyama in Ondjiva.<sup>32</sup> Other colleagues from Germany such as Ickler, Stahlhut, Hahnefeld, Nyhoff, Sckär, Gimpel, and Welsch, later joined these two German missionaries. During the career of these missionaries, four mission stations or congregations were established. Wulforth and Meisenholl established Ondjiva as a congregation in 1891. Omupanda congregation was established 1892 by Wulforth. Ickler established Namakunde congregation in 1900. Welsch established Omatemba congregation in June 1907.<sup>33</sup>

After 24 years of Rheinisch mission work in Oukwanyama, from 1891 to 1915, their mission stations were well established. Then the Portuguese decided to overthrow the kingdoms of the southern part of Angola such as Ombadja's Kingdom and Oukwanyama's Kingdom. Because the battle between the Ovakwanyama and the Portuguese was very bitter, German troops from German South West Africa (now Namibia) joined the Portuguese's troops and defeated Mandume ya Ndemufayo, the powerful last king of Oukwanyama.

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<sup>32</sup> Tönjes, H. *Ovamboland. Country People Mission, With Particular Reference to the Largest Tribe, The Kwanyama*. (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1996), p. 224

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 224-234



When Mandume was defeated in 1915, the German missionaries left their four mission stations and went back to Germany. Most of the Christians who were baptized by the German missionaries moved from Angola to Namibia, and established Omafo congregations, which later became Engela congregation. Those who remained behind in Angola either joined the Roman Catholic Church, or renounced Christianity. This was a dark time for the Lutherans in Angola, for between 1915 to 1932 the activities of Lutherans in Angola were stopped. A group of Angolans went to Namibia to learn more about Christianity, and were baptized in the Lutheran Church in Namibia. In 1933 they decided to bring back Lutheranism to their respective territories. Among these indigenous missionaries were: “Martin Hepeni Ndjebela, Filippus Shikwendule Kamati, Aaron Nghiishililwa, Andreas Nghiwete, Josef Mbinga, Wilhelm Londeinge, Lukas Namalemo, Absalom Nangonya, Andreas Shafombabi, Tobias Haihonya, and Josef Puleni.”<sup>34</sup>

By this time the Roman Catholic Church was well established in Ovamboland and it occupied Omupanda, the former Rheinisch mission station in 1925.<sup>35</sup> Historically, the Roman Catholic Church was a State Church, or the mouthpiece of the state. For this reason, it did not want other church denominations to do mission work in the colony of their state and the Lutheran Church suffered persecution. For example, in 1933 one of the indigenous missionaries, Filippus Shikwendule Kamati, was killed in prison by the Portuguese authorities because of the false information given by one of the white Roman Catholic priests. Nambala says:

“Before his death, Kamati wrote a letter to the Christians at Engela congregation.

Ondjiva  
30 June, 1933

To the beloved in Christ who live in the Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ at Engela, I greet you in the Lord.

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<sup>34</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (USA: Lutheran Quarterly. 1994), p. 89

<sup>35</sup> I heard this from old pastor Lukas Dama long before. He was one of the pastors who were ordained in 1942. Rev Dama originally was born in Angola, though he became a pastor in Okalongo one of the Lutheran congregations in Namibia.

Rejoice for my imprisonment in Jesus as I myself do rejoice for it. I have discussed with the official at Ondjiva, but I could not convince him. I was, therefore, detained because a Catholic wrote four letters to the same official.

Filippus Kamati.<sup>36</sup>

Again in the same year, Martin Ndjebela was also beaten by the Portuguese officials in Xangongo and was sent back to Namibia. He later returned and preached the gospel in Angola until his natural death.

After the Second World War, things began to settle down for the Church. In 1956, another indigenous missionary, from the Lutheran Church in Namibia, Rev. Simson Ndatipo, who originally was also born in Angola in Ombadja, came to Angola and established a new congregation, Namayaka, in Oukwanyama territory, northern-east of Ondjiva.

In 1963 another indigenous pastor Noa Ndeutapo from Namibia, also a native of Angola, came to Angola and established a new congregation, Shangalala, in Ombadja. Under the leadership of Ndeutapo, many congregations were established in different parts of Ovamboland and many church workers, pastors and evangelists from Angola were trained in Namibia and came back to join him. During his ministry, the Lutheran movement in Cunene became an official mission field of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). At the same time the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) took on the responsibility to assist this new mission field financially. FELM also began to send Finnish missionaries (or personnel) to Angola to work in Ovamboland.

In 1991, the mission field of ELCIN in Angola received its independence and became the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola, *Igreja Evangélica Luterana de Angola* (IELA). The IELA was registered by the Government of Angola in 1996. At present time the IELA is not only ministering among the Ovawambo community in Cunene province, but it also has congregations in some of the provinces such as Huila, Huambo, Luanda, and Cabinda. At the same time it is serving among other tribes in

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<sup>36</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (USA: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994), p. 89

Cunene province such as Humbes, Dhimbias, Himbas, Hakavonas, Mulondos, Handas, Chokwes, Hingas, and Nkwankwas.

At the time of writing this thesis, IELA has 31 congregations, with about 25, 000 members. Nineteen (19) congregations are in the Cunene province and another twelve (12) congregations are in other provinces. The IELA and its congregations are dependent on external assistance due to the poverty that is caused by underdevelopment and the impact of the civil war.

### **2.3.2. The influence of European Missionaries on the theology of IELA**

The IELA took the same pattern of ELCIN in almost all activities. This pattern followed after the pattern and the aim of doing mission work of the Rheinisch missionaries and of the Finnish missionaries. It is clear that all European missionaries were aiming at civilizing the Africans. Berinyuu stated that:

Evidence to support this attitude in missionaries includes the famous Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge lectures, where he said; "I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity." Missionaries came with a high degree of confidence in the supremacy of Christianity and the European social and economic order. Their attitude became insensitivity towards indigenous culture. "The colonialists and missionaries agree on the objective of spreading civilization".<sup>37</sup>

The big question facing IELA from its independence is the relationship between proclamation and the life of the church.<sup>38</sup> Another question is the relationship between African religious life and Christianity.<sup>39</sup> In order to destroy the traditions and the beliefs of the Ovawambo people, the Finnish missionaries taught them that these are pagan and had no resemblance to the message of Christianity. Through this approach, they won many of the first Christians, especially the first pastors. Through them, the missionaries succeeded in making some Ovawambo people dismiss the cults and the rituals of their culture and tradition.

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<sup>37</sup> Berinyuu, A. A. "The Encounter of Western Christianity on Civilization, and Islam on Gunaian Culture: Implication for the Ministry of Pastoral Care and Counselling". *Africa Theological Journal*, vol. 17 (2) (Tanzania: Usa River, 1988), p. 141-142

<sup>38</sup> Löytty, Seppo. *The Ovambo Sermon: Study of the Preaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church in South West Africa*. (Tampere: Tampereen Keshuspaino, 1971), p.13

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12



Furthermore, some of the Mission directors criticized the interpretation of the Gospel by liberation theology and the Social Gospel Movements.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the ministry of IELA has been greatly influenced by the revivalist movement, which stressed the salvation of the souls only.

Because of this influence, the emphasis of IELA's ministry according to its ministers or pastors is the "ministration of the sacrament and care for the souls"<sup>41</sup> only. In other words, the care of souls became the focus of IELA.

At the present time, due to these influences, most of the IELA's pastors as well as other members have the impression that the task and the responsibility of the church in this world has only to do with spiritual matters, that is, the salvation of the souls only. Development programmes, on the other hand are seen to be the responsibility of the government, states and of non-religious organizations. Some Christians, including some church ministers even go so far as to believe that social development in itself has nothing to do with the will of God, rather, it is the will of human beings who always want to create problems in the name of social development. For me this understanding has its roots from the vision of previous centuries, where development was understood in terms of economic growth only.

From my own experience, I also believe that the understanding of the wellbeing of the environment is not in the heart of IELA's teaching. Without doubt, this is the outcome of a lack of a theology of creation in the teaching of IELA. I have never heard a sermon from our church leaders or from an ordinary pastor showing the need for protection of creation, for instance.

One further point which needs to be mentioned here, is the influence of European missionaries on the approach of individualism. In their teaching, they emphasised that

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid. P.21*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid. p. 31*

Christ is a personal Saviour for each believer.<sup>42</sup> For me, personal salvation is not wrong in itself, but the way of finding one person, as a saved one from the unsaved community is a problematic. This teaching leads to the point of not considering the sin of the community, but only individual sin and personal sin. At the same time it excludes the redemption of the community or of the environment. Walker comments:

In individualism the individual is isolated for attention as a being whose needs can be fulfilled irrespective of the situation in which he or she is found. Its effect is to abstract people from their social environment, to foster the idea that people can be little islands of well-being in the midst of the ill of the world.<sup>43</sup>

It is clear, then, that the theology which the IELA has inherited, is not adequate for the challenge of post civil-war reconstruction in Angola. There are some signs of social concern, however, as we shall now see.

### **2.3.3. Present situation of social ministries of the IELA**

Although as we have seen that the IELA concentrates too much on spiritual matters, it can be mentioned here that at present it has started, to a limited extent, in development related works in order to improve the lives of the people in the communities. The project it is involved in is a Primary Health Care Programme. This programme has its roots in the clinic in Shangalala, which is staffed both by Finnish nurses seconded by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), and by Angolan nurses seconded by the Government. The Primary Health Care Programme also includes a mobile vaccination clinic, which regularly visits 33 vaccination posts in the community. Each post also has a trained village health assistant. This Health Programme is financed mainly by the Finnish Government via FELM. Some medicines are received from the Angolan Government and the vaccines mainly from UNICEF via the Ministry of Health.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Löyty, Seppo. *The Ovambo Sermon: Study of the Preaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church in South West Africa*. (Tampere: Tampereen Keshupaino. 1971), p. 26

<sup>43</sup> Walker, D.S. *Challenging Evangelicalism: Prophetic Witness and Theological Renewal*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), p.178

<sup>44</sup> This information is recorded in the Document called: "Consultation on LWF Involvement in Cunene Province, Angola November 29 to 30, 1999 Ondjiva, Angola," p. 13



In February 5, 1999 IELA addressed a letter to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, inviting the LWF Department for World Service (DWS)...“to help the situation especially in the following fields: primary health care promotion; water and sanitation programme; agriculture projects... to be implemented by LWF in co-operation with IELA.”<sup>45</sup>

In November 29 to 30, 1999, there was a consultation as a follow up of the letter of February 5, 1999, between IELA and LWF, which was attended by the Department for Mission and Development (DMD), the Department of World Service (DWS), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), and the Government of Cunene Province.

In this consultation, the LWF agreed to assist the requested programmes, namely, Water and Sanitation programmes, Health Care Programmes, Education Programmes, Food Security and Food Production Programmes, and the Programme for helping the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In addition to above mentioned programmes, LWF/DMD was requested to assist IELA in strengthening its mission outreach in areas such as communications equipment, transport, and travel costs, to support IELA and its congregations in their efforts to become self-supporting, including support for agricultural and other income generating projects.<sup>46</sup>

At present, there are some new programmes, which have been implemented according to the above agreements. IELA is busy constructing Shangalala High College, which will admit students from grade 9-12. At Cuvelai, IELA started an agricultural project, where new ways of increasing food production through training, improvement of seeds, new and better tools and mechanized farming methods are offered. With regard to the internally displaced persons, the IELA with LWF assistance, has distributed tools, seeds, blankets, food and other items among them, especially at Cuvelai areas.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>46</sup> Consultation Document, of November 29 to 30, 1999, in Ondjiva. p. 5.

#### **2.3.4. IELA and ethnicity problem**

While it sounds strange and shameful to mention ethnicity we must recognize that this is a problem that is also playing a role in IELA and is affecting its ministry. No doubt, the question of who will be in power, as occurred at the independence of Angola, and which was the root of civil war, is also the same question which has emerged since the independence of IELA. The basic questions around the problem of ethnicity in IELA are: From which tribe should the leaders of IELA come from? In which tribal area will IELA build its headquarters? There are countless other examples of this matter. However, behind these questions is the wish of the Ovawambo themselves to have power over other tribes. The wish of having power over others is influenced by the secular order of the day. In other words, the IELA is influenced by the secular order of its society where it is serving.

One thing which strengthens the spirit of ethnicity and tribalism in the IELA is the will and the desire among the church workers to work only among the people of the same tribe.

A further cause of ethnic conflict in the IELA is the feeling of inferiority held by some of the tribes and the feeling of superiority of other tribes. For example, the minority tribes experience the feeling of inferiority in relation to the majority tribes. At the same time, the majority tribes provoke the feeling of superiority over the minority.

Besides the feeling of superiority and inferiority between some tribes in Ovamboland, there is a further problem, which provokes ethnic conflicts, namely, the written language of one tribe for example, Oshikwanyama and unwritten language for example Oshimbada of another tribe.

#### **2.4. Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter we have examined what Ovamboland is all about, its location, its natural resources, and its inhabitants. The story of the origin of the Ovawambo people told us

that they should behave as one who lives at peace with his brother or sister, because they originated from one ancestor. We have learned that ethnicity and tribalism is one of the causes of conflicts, which was stimulated and worsened by civil war. The conflict of the civil war also leads to the destruction of indigenous tradition and culture, and the destruction of the environment and nature. We have also learned how the IELA is suffering the consequences of ethnicity and tribalism, though it is trying to be involved in social development. The next chapter will suggest how to bring the Ovawambo people together as well as their environment through the ministry of reconciliation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

#### 3.1. The task of this chapter

In the previous chapter I explained about the enmity amongst the Ovawambo, which was caused by the civil war and other factors. This situation raises the need for the re-establishment of peace through reconciliation. In this chapter I will clarify how this reconciliation process could attain peace. In the beginning I will show how God reconciled and made peace with the world in Jesus Christ as it is recorded in the Scriptures. Korten and Taylor also contribute to the debate about reconciliation and peace in terms of social transformation for both human beings and the rest of creation. This chapter will also touch the linkage between reconciliation and forgiveness, because reconciliation cannot be attained without forgiveness. There will be some elements from Ovawambo traditions and culture in the form of rituals and symbols in the process of reconciliation. The aim of focusing on traditional symbols in the reconciliation process is to challenge IELA to incorporate them into its ministry of reconciliation, which can help the Ovawambo people because those rituals and symbols speak the language of the people.

#### 3.2. Biblical understanding of reconciliation and peace

##### 3.2.1. Reconciliation

According to *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, reconciliation in Greek *katallagé* means the work of putting together two parties, (Matt.5: 24; Luk. 12: 58) or reconciliation between wife and husband (I Cor. 7: 11). Basically, the root meaning of reconciliation in the New Testament is "a new relationship between God and humanity effected by Christ's redemptive work (Rom. 5: 10-11; 11: 15; II Cor. 5: 17-20; Eph. 2: 16; Col. 1: 20,22)."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Achtemeier, P.J. (ed.) *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. (HarperSanFancisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), p. 856



According to Paul's understanding, the initiator of reconciliation is God "who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (II Cor. 5: 18). Therefore, reconciliation initiated by human beings is, "weak, ungodly and sinful"<sup>48</sup> (Rom. 5: 6-8; Eph. 2: 12). The work of reconciliation does not wait until the enmity between the two parties is restored, but it starts while the two parties are still in conflict. "It was precisely when we were enemies that God reconciled us to himself"<sup>49</sup> (Rom. 5: 10). When human beings are reconciled to God, the result is "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1) and peace with one another (Eph. 2: 14). The work of reconciliation through Christ does not only affect the relationship between human beings and God, and between human beings themselves, but it affects also the whole world or the whole creation (II Cor. 5: 19; Rom. 11: 15).

Although God is always the initiator of reconciliation, human beings are invited to take part through, "ministry of reconciliation by inviting others to take part in God's reconciliation" (II Cor 5: 18-20).

### 3.2.2. Peace

In the Hebrew Language, *Shalom* (peace) means the well being of the wholeness around human being. In the Old Testament, the words *peace* and *security* mean the same thing (II King. 20: 19; Ps. 122: 7). According to Deut. 23: 6 and Ezra 9: 12, peace and prosperity also refers to the same thing. In Esther 9: 30 and Zech. 8: 16, 19, peace is associated with truth. In Ps 85: 10 and Isa. 60: 17, peace and righteousness are used in parallel. In Biblical terms, peace is a gift from God (Lev. 26: 6). The Old Testament shows that there was a time when false prophets were talking about peace where there was no peace, (Jer. 6: 14; 8: 11; Ezek. 13: 10, 16).

In the New Testament, peace is understood as a blessing from God, and Christians have to pass it to others (Matt. 10: 12; Luk. 10: 5, 6). Peace means the absence of war or strife, which affects individuals and nations, (Luk. 11: 21; 14: 32; Rev. 6: 4).

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews says that Christians should strive for peace (12: 14). This therefore, means that there are situations which can warrant a struggle for

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 856

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p. 766

peace when all other peaceful attempts will have failed. However, I do not think that all wars in the name of peace are just.

According to Jesus' teaching, peace must be sought through love. For he commands us to not resist evil, but to love our enemies. (Matt. 5: 38-48; Luk. 6: 27- 36).

### 3.3. Korten and Taylor's view of reconciliation

Korten speaks about the agenda for social transformation by pointing to an urgent need for reconciliation in most of the countries of this world, which have experienced conflicts and civil wars.

The main problem in the world today is conflict, and the greatest need is reconciliation in these conflicts. There is no greater contributor to human suffering and no more significant barrier to effective development than the violent conflicts that are tearing apart communities and societies throughout the world in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, India, Laos, Palestine, El Salvador, South Africa, Angola, Chad, the Philippines and others.<sup>50</sup>

Pointing directly to the problem of civil war, which ends up in destruction and hatred, he still emphasizes that the only solution to this problem is through a process of reconciliation.

...war between nations has been rare. It has been replaced by war between people who share a common nationality... In the prevailing climate of fear and tension military budgets continue to grow, individual citizens build up personal arsenals in the name of protecting themselves and their families, and national armies are turned by governments against their own citizens...The underlying tensions themselves must be resolved through reconciliation, not repression, through forgiveness, not gunfire.<sup>51</sup>

Taylor confirms this view of Korten. According to Taylor, reconciliation is the strong relationship between God and human beings, this is called the *vertical* relationship, which in turn will lead to a strong relationship between people, including their environment and the rest of creation, and this is called the *horizontal* relationship.

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<sup>50</sup> Korten, D. C. *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (Connecticut: Kumarian Press. 1993), p. 164

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 164

Taylor discussed this point of reconciliation when he was dealing with the question of *holism*. He thinks that in order to reach the goal of relationship, there must be full service in terms of diakonia to the whole “humanity, world, society, and history”<sup>52</sup> in relation to God. He clarifies his point by quoting an Orthodox theologian, Alexandros Papaderos who states that:

In the context of the church’s liturgical understanding of humanity, world, society and history, any division between verticalism and horizontalism is not merely absurd but actually heretical... Although we repudiate today the frequent misuse of diakonia as a means of proselytizing, it is impossible to detect a divorce between witness and service in the history of the church... Being the service of the whole human being and of the whole humankind and of the creation, diakonia involves a definite commitment to *social justice and liberation* yet at the same time respect for the divine commission to Christians to be messengers of *reconciliation* and sober insistence on the eschatological dimension of salvation.<sup>53</sup>

Reconciliation through the service of diakonia aims at bringing about a strong relationship in society by changing all structures of injustice and oppression as well as of poverty, hunger, and conflicts. Taylor by quoting the *Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service* (CICARWS) world consultation in Larnaca says:

Diakonia is seen as a part of the global mission of the church: koinonia, diakonia, kerygma and martyria [that is, fellowship, service, preaching and witness] belonging together... Diakonia is service to the whole of the human being, to all of humanity and to the whole of creation and means engagement for reconciliation, social justice and liberation.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, in this perspective, Korten speaks about reconciliation in terms of transformation of society from fear and violence.

This leads me to think that theologically, transformation from war, poverty, corruption, fear, hatred, hunger, and diseases is salvific action. In this sense, reconciliation and salvation are the same thing. That being said, then, the result is justice, peace, liberation and freedom, which is the new life. Transformation, therefore, in this sense is to be understood as the reign of the Kingdom of God, where all people are living in peace, harmony and justice with equal access to resources.

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<sup>52</sup> Taylor, M. *Not Angels but Agencies: The Ecumenical Response to Poverty A primer*. (London: SCM, 1995), p. 24

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24



Reconciliation as salvific action cannot be understood as applicable to human beings only, but also to creation in its entirety. According to the main theory of Korten, reconciliation is therefore, an inclusive process, as opposed to exclusive. To this end, Johnson wrote: "... Nor is salvation limited only to human beings, although we tend to focus on ourselves. The whole of this groaning creation is destined to receive reconciliation and shalom through Jesus Christ".<sup>55</sup>

Taylor speaks about the maintenance of peace by using the terms *vertical* and *horizontal*, which indicate a good and strong relationship between God and human beings and between people in relation to their environment. Theologically, this means peace, *shalom* or strong relationships amongst humanity. In other words, it means, social justice and freedom for creation, which includes human beings, animals, and the rest of creation.

The concept of reconciliation is often applied where there is a broken relationship. In this perspective, reconciliation is understood as a healing process. I, therefore, can theologically safely say that reconciliation means the beginning of new life that is healed life.

Following the above argument, if reconciliation is a beginning of a new healed life, then it can also be understood as saving action from a deadly condition. Therefore, once again, I think that reconciliation and salvific action are the same. Gutiérrez supports this view when he says: "Struggle against misery and exploitation and to build a just society is already to be part of the saving action, which is moving towards its complete fulfillment".<sup>56</sup>

It is also clear that when that transformation, according to Korten, and the doctrine of vertical and horizontal in the process of reconciliation, according to Taylor, succeeded in bringing about new life in the society, theologically it could also be expressed as a sign of resurrection from the horrors of poverty, hunger, war and the like.

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<sup>55</sup> Johnson, E. *Who Do You Say that I Am? Introducing Contemporary Christology*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. 1997), p.70

<sup>56</sup> Gutiérrez, G. *A Theology of liberation. History, Politics and Salvation*. (New York: SCM Press, 1971) p. 159



The process of reconciliation can be understood in terms of individual reconciliation and communal or social reconciliation. Schreiter says:

...social reconciliation is not the same as individual reconciliation. Nonetheless, for social reconciliation to be successful, there must be reconciled individualism...Individual reconciliation helps nurture and strengthen social reconciliation, but social reconciliation cannot be reduced to individual reconciliation...social reconciliation is deeply concerned with morality. The principal moral claim in the process is justice.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.4. Reconciliation and forgiveness

Forgiveness in the teaching of Jesus has double meaning. Firstly, forgiveness has no limit. "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times? Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven". (Matt. 18: 21-22) *RSV*. Secondly, God forgives people's sin in the same way they forgive others. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 5: 14-15) *RSV*. This double meaning is well expressed when Jesus gave to his disciples power to forgive sins. It means then that the practice of forgiveness should be done continually. The victim, in the biblical teaching, is the initiator of the forgiveness. Jesus and Stephen asked God to forgive their opponents. However, forgiveness in the process of reconciliation demands the involvement of both the victim and the victimiser.

We are reminded of the words of Bishop Tutu: "It is ultimately in our own best interest that we become forgiving, repentant, reconciling and reconciled people, because without forgiveness, without reconciliation we have no future".<sup>58</sup>

Meaningful reconciliation and forgiveness demands the wonderful change of both sides, the wrong doer and the victim. Reconciliation becomes meaningful if both sides see the need for peace and reconciliation through forgiveness. Schreiter comments:

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<sup>57</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 111,112

<sup>58</sup> Tutu, Desmond M. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. (London: Rider Press,1999), p. 127

“Reconciliation begins with the healing of the victims by God’s grace. They, in turn, work healing in oppressors through forgiveness, which speaks repentance”.<sup>59</sup>

In the reconciliation process, both sides need to move towards each other, not only one side. Schreiter confirms this by saying that: “How do you seek reconciliation with someone who does not think he has done anything wrong?”<sup>60</sup>

According to Schreiter, true reconciliation and forgiveness should be initiated between those who are in the context, not by those who are outside the context. “This is so because all too often there are quick and superficial calls for reconciliation, often by those who stand outside the cycle of the violence and suffering”.<sup>61</sup> The point here is that the need for a true reconciliation and forgiveness is a true response from the bottom of the hearts of both sides full of inner deeper convictions. Therefore, superficial forces in the process of reconciliation can fail because they lack this part of the process.

Schreiter goes on to say that it is always difficult to accept the call for reconciliation and forgiveness if it is initiated by the wrong doer. His point is that: “Sometimes, too, the call for reconciliation comes from those who have been the oppressors or the perpetrators of violence, in the hope that they will be spared punishment”.<sup>62</sup> It seems that Schreiter followed the instruction of Jesus when he said: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matt. 5: 23-24) *RSV*. In this respect, the victim is the right person to call for reconciliation and has the first voice to declare and pass the word of forgiveness to his or her opponent, not the offender or an outsider.

Schreiter continues to clarify his point by saying that forgiveness must be done by the victims, because the wrong doers cannot forgive themselves.<sup>63</sup> Tutu also goes in the same direction when he mentions that in reconciliation and forgiveness it is always

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<sup>59</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *Reconciliation, Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. (New York: Orbis Book, 1992) p. viii

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12

<sup>63</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), p. 20

difficult for the wrong doers to agree that I or we are wrong. It is difficult to say “I am sorry”.<sup>64</sup> Here lies the reality of the fact that reconciliation and forgiveness is a risk. Tutu says: “...when you embark on the business of asking for and giving forgiveness, you are taking risk”.<sup>65</sup> The risk in the process of reconciliation and forgiveness gets its truth in the redemptive work through Christ according to Paul’s theology, which bears three symbols: death, cross, and blood.<sup>66</sup> That is why Farisani argues that forgiveness and reconciliation is not an easy and cheap task, it requires sacrifice.<sup>67</sup>

One of the difficult tasks in the process of reconciliation and forgiveness is, as Tutu raised that forgiveness is not forgetting, but it asks not to repeat the same mistake.<sup>68</sup> Schreiter confirms the ideas by saying that forgiveness is not forgetting rather it is a process of healing the memories. “For it is not only a matter of healing memories and receiving forgiveness, it is also about changing the structure in the society that provoked, promoted, and sustained violence”.<sup>69</sup> Tutu once more comes with the same approach when he says: “...the only way to do this is to go beyond retributive justice to restorative justice, to move on to forgiveness, because without it there is no future”.<sup>70</sup> But to bring a change in terms of the reconstruction the society is not an easy task, it requires enough time. “Such construction does not happen immediately...Rather, the process is painful slow and always difficult”.<sup>71</sup>

The aim of changing the structure of society, helps us to remember that it is not only necessary to change the institutional structures, but the people of the societies themselves also need to be changed. “...it is also that the experience of violence and suffering has changed us irrevocably. We are not the same people we were, and so any return is not a return; it is coming into a new place.”<sup>72</sup> For example, during the civil war in Angola, violence was a daily activity, so this made people love violence even in

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<sup>64</sup> Tutu, D. M *No future Without Forgiveness*. (London: Rider Publications, 1999), p. 218

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 46

<sup>67</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra- Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction in the (South) African Context*. (Pietermaritzburg: Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, 2002), p. 261

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p. 219

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 209

<sup>71</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), p. 1

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p11



time of peace. “The violence of those times is burned into memory repressed perhaps, but surely able to come to the surface once again to haunt and horrify the present.”<sup>73</sup>

The requirements of forgiveness in the process of reconciliation should be handled skillfully if it is to achieve the desired goals. According to Schreiter, there are wrong types of reconciliations, which need to be avoided. One of them is a hasty reconciliation.<sup>74</sup> This type of reconciliation forces people to forget the history of suffering and violence. “To trivialize and ignore memory is to trivialize and ignore human identity, and to trivialize and ignore human identity is to trivialize and ignore human dignity... By forgetting the suffering, the victim is forgotten and the causes of sufferings are never uncovered and confronted.”<sup>75</sup> This means that the causes of the problems and conflicts must always be addressed, if not they will remain and continue to threaten people. According to my understanding, people who preach peace, where there is no peace are included in this group, simply because they do not consider the causes of the conflicts as the issues to be tackled as the requirement of reconciliation and forgiveness. To this end, Farisani affirms that reconciliation is a restoration of the broken and violated relationships among the people. It will be done if hatred, fear, guilt, division and revenge are absorbed into reconciliation and forgiveness.<sup>76</sup> Theologically, if someone reaches the stage of forgiving or reconciling with his or her brother or sister, he or she is regarded as one who has been resurrected from the tomb of hatred, fear, guilt, division, ethnicity, tribalism, and revenge. He or she starts “ a new life, a new beginning, and a new hope”.<sup>77</sup>

One thing must be said in connection with the situation between victim and the wrong doer is that there is a difference between forgiveness and repentance. Repentance comes from the wrong doer, but forgiveness comes from the victim, while reconciliation is the reaction of both. On the other hand, reconciliation and forgiveness

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<sup>73</sup> . *Ibid* p. 11

<sup>74</sup> . *Ibid* p. 18

<sup>75</sup> . *Ibid* p. 19

<sup>76</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra-Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction in the (South) African Context*, Ph.D. Thesis (Pietermaritzburg: Unpublished, 2002), p. 261

<sup>77</sup> Tutu, D. M. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. (London: Rider Press, 1999), p. 207



are not things people can own by their own merit, or things that can be gained through technical means or skills, rather, these are gifts from God bearing a spiritual nature.<sup>78</sup>

### **3.5. Ovawambo's traditional rituals and symbols in reconciliation and peace restoration**

Before I explain the significance of rituals and symbols in the process of reconciliation, I would like to define the meaning of *rituals* and *symbols* and why they are so important in the context of Ovawambo people.

#### **Rituals**

According to *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* "ritual is a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order".<sup>79</sup> The *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* says: "Ritual acts are to be interpreted in the context of belief: they mean what the actors say they mean... We should think of rituals as a language in a quite literal sense... In short, to understand the word ritual we must take note of the user's background and prejudices".<sup>80</sup>

#### **Symbols**

According to Turner, *symbol* is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context".<sup>81</sup> *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, defines symbol as "an act, sound, or object having cultural significance and the capacity to excite or objectify a response... a visible sign of something invisible... an object or act representing something".<sup>82</sup>

Like other nations in the world, and especially Africans, the Ovawambo people also have their own rituals and symbols. The meaning of the rituals and symbols always

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<sup>78</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), p. 26

<sup>79</sup> Pearsall, J. (ed.) *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), p. 1603

<sup>80</sup> Sills, D. L. (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13-14, (London: Collier-Macmillan Publishers, 1972), p. 521, 524, 525

<sup>81</sup> Turner, V. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 19

<sup>82</sup> *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Massachusetts: Webster INC Publishers. 1990), 1195

remains the same. According to Turner, rituals apply to a “form of religious behaviour associated with social transition”.<sup>83</sup> For the Ovawambo, the use of rituals and symbols is regarded as a means of controlling the social life of the whole community and in some cases of a particular tribe or clan. Thus, to the Ovawambo people, religious and secular welfare are the same thing: religious life cannot be separated from normal social activities. Nambala says: “Religion and politics are not separable in the Namibian tradition. Very often a king or a chief has been both a religious and a political leader.”<sup>84</sup> That is why amongst the Ovawambo from birth to their death, their whole life is covered by different rites and symbols that explain or give value to their religious and daily activities. Therefore, to a purely Omuwambo person, life without traditional rituals and symbols is empty.

The idea behind the traditional rituals and symbols of Ovawambo people, is the belief in mystical power, which is carried by particular rites and symbols. The belief in mystical power is still strong in the Ovawambo people even among those who are Christians. So in the Ovawambo tradition there are different types of rituals and symbols, which are meant to mature their belief and way of life.

When we come to the question of rituals and symbols in connection with reconciliation, we have to remember that the act of reconciliation touches both the visible and the invisible world. Rituals of reconciliation bring a good relationship between people as well as with the spiritual world. For example, in the case of conflict between two tribes, families or clans, according to the Ovawambo tradition, there would be a ritual whereby reconciliation is sought and the relationship rebuilt again.

Ovawambo ritual acts contain many rich symbols. Some of which are very difficult to define. This was one of the reasons why the early missionaries did not support any of the Ovawambo symbols and rituals to be practiced in the church.

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<sup>83</sup> Turner, p. 95

<sup>84</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (UAS: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994), p. 143

### 3.6. Case study I: Individual Reconciliation

#### Murder

Traditionally, murder is a great crime among the Ovawambo people. The murderer is regarded as an unclean person who has *outoni*<sup>85</sup>. According to the Ovawambo tradition, there are two main ways through which a person can be regarded as a murderer. Firstly, one can act as an individual in killing a person, for instance, in a quarrel between the two. Secondly, a person can be a murderer in a collective sense, for example, when engaging in military service or in raids where there is evidence that he or she belongs to a group which killed common enemies. Traditionally, both cases were regarded as people who needed cleansing from *outoni*, and this was done through a purification rite. Such a purification frees the offender from psychological imprisonment. It also enables one to rejoin the society with a free conscience. In the past, there were no physical prisons, but there was a psychological prison. The latter was applied when a person was excluded from all normal life activities. Before he or she underwent a purification ceremony, where he or she has to complete all rituals assigned to all murderers, he or she will be psychologically isolated from the rest of the world. At this stage, his or her life was also in danger, lacking security. He or she has to be well protected against the clan of the victim who seeks revenge.

This kind of disciplining the murderer according to the Ovawambo tradition and culture is also seen as appeasing the spiritual world. Ancestors also do not have a good relationship with the murderer before his or her purification ceremony.

The crime of murder by an individual incriminated the whole family and at times the entire community. Life in Africa is lived in community. Joy and sorrow affects not only the perpetrator, but also all those related to him or her.

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<sup>85</sup> "Outoni" is a condition of being defiled or impure hands of a murderer as a consequence of shedding blood by killing people.



### 3.7. Case study II: Social reconciliation

#### Conflict between two tribes

It was common in the distant past for the Ovawambo tribes to wage wars or raids against each other. Their aims were to capture cattle and other valuables as well as people as slaves. Usually, after such episodes the chiefs or the kings of these tribes would arrange a day for peace making through reconciliation ceremonies. Constant hostility between two tribes, especially if they were neighbours, was not permitted. During reconciliation ceremonies certain rituals have to be performed to bring about lasting peace between the two neighbouring tribes. The following is an example of the ritual ceremony of reconciliation performed between the Ovandonga tribe and Ovakwanyama tribe in 1884.<sup>86</sup>

History recounts that there was a bitter war between the Ovandonga and Ovakwanyama. “This war was named *Iita yevululula*, which means the big war, because this war was fought with more guns than before, and it was the last one between the Ovandonga and Ovakwanyama.”<sup>87</sup>

Rev. Shinana<sup>88</sup> told me about this war. He said that the king of the Oukwanyama that time was Ueyulu yaHedimbi and the king of Ondonga was Kambonde kaMpingana. Some Ovandonga people came to Oukwanyama territory in secret and took a number of cattle, which were at pasturing in an *ohambo*<sup>89</sup> in a deep forest in the eastern part of the territory called *Oshimholo*. When the Ovakwanyama, who were at their homes heard of this event of theft, they gathered and decided to follow their cattle into the Ondonga territory. When they arrived in Ondonga, they killed many people: children, babies, women and other innocent people. The reason for this was to challenge all the Ovandonga people to engage in war. Fortunately, the king of Ondonga, Kambonde stopped this war by himself. He did this by asking the Ovakwanyama to make peace, as he was the man who liked peace instead of conflict. They met at the border of these

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<sup>86</sup> Lehtonen, L. *Okambo kehistori. Ostanda 2.* (Oniipa: ELOC Press, 1979), p. 26

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27

<sup>88</sup> Rev. Natanael Shinana is a pastor in ELCIN who is known as a historian.

<sup>89</sup> “Ohambo” means a kraal of cattle made in thorny shrubs in the forest where cattle are kept during night.



territories at a place called *Ondobe yOmhumba*. They slaughtered a black cow, which the two tribes ate together. All of them trod on *oshandja* (the innards from the stomach of the cow) with bare feet and made peace between themselves. They distributed among themselves the *omhumba*<sup>90</sup> of this cow as a sign of peace between the Ovandonga and Ovakwanyama. This was the reconciliation ritual ceremony between the Ovandonga and Ovakwanyama. In this ceremony, the important ritual symbol was the *omhumba* of the cow. Because the *omhumba* is the sign of carrying the right for inheritance as in the case of nephews or nieces, in this case, this *omhumba* gave rights to possess peace as an important wealth. What happened at the border of these two tribes therefore symbolised for the following generations the possession of peace, which had been established by their ancestors. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between Ovandonga and Ovakwanyama up to today.

### **3.8. The need for reconciliation after the civil war**

As has been indicated above, whether from a biblical point of view, the approach of Korten and Taylor as well as of the Ovawambo's understanding of reconciliation and restoration of peace traditionally, we need now to establish a strong foundation whereupon reconciliation and restoration of peace could be based.

First of all, the IELA could contribute by organising the people of the territory to let them know that it is their right to participate in peace making at all levels. To this end, the former Minister of Justice in South Africa Mr. Dullah Omar offered the same view when he said:

There is a commitment to break from the past, to heal the wounds of the past, to forgive but not to forget and to build a future based on respect for human rights... It is the right of each and every citizen... We must embark upon the journey from the past, through our transition and into a new future.<sup>91</sup>

Secondly, it will be better if the IELA could approach the members of the Commission of Reconciliation in Cunene province to share its views on the process of reconciliation

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<sup>90</sup>. "Omhumba" is the part from the stomach of the cow, which is very important according to Ovawambo tradition. This part of cow normally if the cow is slaughtered in the house, belongs to the nephews and nieces of the father because they are his inheritors and inheritresses of his possession when he dies according to the matrilineal order.

<sup>91</sup> Justice in Transition. *Truth & Reconciliation Commission*. (Cape Town: Justice in Transition Publishers, 1994), p.6

and how it could be put into practice. In this regard, the IELA could show that there is great need among the Ovawambo people for the reparation of the victims of civil war. For example, there are a lot of people who lost their beloved ones, properties, houses, lands, cattle, and others goods. This will work if the Commission of Reconciliation could adopt the amnesty and indemnity programmes to facilitate the work of reconciliation and peace restoration. A good example is what Omar suggested that:

There will be three specialised committees operating under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one dealing with amnesty as required by the Constitution (including indemnity); one dealing with Violations of Human Rights and one to deal with the issue of reparation for the victims.<sup>92</sup>

Thirdly, it will be good if the Churches and the Government of Cunene province could organise a special National Reconciliation Day, where public reconciliation, forgiveness and peace restoration will be announced in the presence of all the people. In this very day, the traditional national reconciliation rites and symbols could be performed in a well-prepared ceremony according to the need and context.

Fourthly, it will be good for individuals who were engaged in war to undergo purification rites in order to be accepted back into the community. The IELA could give an example by starting with its members in their congregations if it agrees to empower the traditional culture of the Ovawambo people, which could facilitate the process of reconciliation.

### **3.9. Suggestions for incorporating rituals**

I am convinced that the time has come for IELA to review its ministry, especially among the Ovawambo people. The best way to do this would be to start to analyze and study the role and the value of the tradition and culture and people's relationship with their tradition and culture. Further, the leaders of IELA, the indigenous pastors, must understand and agree that the tradition and culture of the Ovawambo people, are the gifts from God, given to them from the time of the creation of the world. Bishop Dwane states that:

Let us begin with our belief that God created the world and us human beings in it, and saw that it was good. What this means in practice is that there is basic

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7

goodness in the important human values which African people hold, and which we ourselves as African Christians embrace to some extent... Arising out of those values are the traditional ceremonies observed at certain times.<sup>93</sup>

In other words, they must believe that God can speak to the Ovawambo people through their own way of life such as culture and tradition. They have to recognise that not only western culture and rituals are related to Christian morality, and imposed as the true norm of Christian life. The observation of traditional rites and festivals should not be regarded as means of justification, but as fitting the life-style of the indigenous societies. The following should be taken into consideration.

IELA should accept the way the Ovawambo people conduct their ritual of reconciliation in its Constitutions and Regulations. For example, in the case of murder, the relevant rites should be performed in the presence of the whole congregation. Instead of using the medicine men or women, the pastor in the parish must take the responsibility. This is because the pastors are entrusted by virtue of their training to perform the act of reconciliation. We believe in the words of Jesus Christ himself, when he said to his disciples: "I will give you the key of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" Matt. 16: 19) *RSV*. The Church believes that pastors or priests have been given power by Christ to perform the ministry of reconciliation. They should use this power in the language of the people, namely their traditional rituals. If the pastors or priests are ashamed to do this, let the medicine men or women who are members of the congregation perform these rites in the presence of the whole congregation, where family members are being reconciled among themselves and with God. Dwane once more said:

God in Christ tells us that we need not to be ashamed of ourselves and our traditional culture because we are the work of his hands. Instead we ought to be proud and thankful and not to take ourselves for granted as other people have done to us, but should receive ourselves and our condition as given by Him.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>. Dwane, S. *Issues in South African Theological Debate*. (Braamfontein: Skottaville Publishers, 1989), p.31-32

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32



If the ritual ceremony needs to be modified, as indeed it should be, that will be acceptable, but the main symbols must be there, carrying the message of reconciliation in a traditional manner.

### **3.10. The summary of the chapter**

This chapter noted through the scriptures how the work of reconciliation is very costly and difficult. It is costly and difficult because it causes the death and the bloodshed of Jesus Christ the Son of God. It clarified that Christ left the task of reconciliation as the responsibility of his Church. Korten and Taylor offered the notion of reconciliation between human beings and creation as a whole. In this chapter I said that reconciliation has its meaning in the process of forgiveness. I have also suggested that the traditional reconciliation rites of the Ovawambo people are useful and can be performed by IELA in its reconciliation ministry. If people have been united through the ministry of reconciliation, they can work together and they can reconstruct what was damaged during the civil war and by other factors in their societies. The next chapter will show how reconciled people are able to reconstruct their destructed societies.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. THE FRAMEWORK OF RECONSTRUCTION

#### 4.1. The task of this chapter

In chapter three I have explained how it is possible for the reconciled community to try to rebuild and reconstruct a new society after a long time of struggling for peace and reconciliation. It is the task of this chapter to clarify the need for reconstruction where there was destruction as well as to show how this could be done. This chapter will refer to the destruction of the Ovawambo society due to the civil war and other causes such as colonialism and mission enterprises. This chapter starts with giving some examples of reconstruction from a biblical point of view, and from the history of Christian theology. There are areas where destruction is prevailing and reconstruction is needed to apply, such as theology, personal consciousness, cultural, ecclesiastical, socio-economic, and HIV/AIDS crisis.

#### 4.2. Definition

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, "reconstruction means to construct again; re-establishment; re-assemble; and re-organize."<sup>95</sup>

Farisani defines reconstruction as a concept meant to restore the existing orders and values, which were misinterpreted, wrongly viewed or destroyed.<sup>96</sup>

Mugambi defines it this way:

The terms construction and reconstruction belong to engineering vocabulary. An engineer constructs a complex according to specifications in the available designs. Sometimes modifications are made to the design, in order to ensure that the complex will perform the function for which it is intended. Reconstruction is done when an existing complex becomes dysfunctional, for whatever reason,

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<sup>95</sup> Webster, A. M. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Massachusetts: Webster INC. Publishers, 1990), p. 984

<sup>96</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra-Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction in the (South) African Context. Ph.D. Thesis*. (Pietermaritzburg: Unpublished, 2002), p. 98

and the user still requires to use it. New specifications may be made in the new design, while some aspects of the old complex are retained in the new.<sup>97</sup>

Reconstruction, therefore, is the action of re-organizing and re-establishing what already exists. It is not the creation of something completely new, but it is a way of renovating dysfunctional or disfigured existing things.

#### **4.3. Biblical understanding of reconstruction**

Reconstruction or the concept of restoration is well known in biblical history. In the Bible there are a lot of stories about the reconstruction of broken societies. For example, when the Israelites returned from exile in Egypt, they started to restore the shrines of their ancestor Abraham.<sup>98</sup> King Josiah restored the law when Judah had “deteriorated into idolatry and corruption”.<sup>99</sup> The brother of Maccabee restored and rededicated the temple after it was “desecrated by European invaders”.<sup>100</sup> “The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5 – 7) can also be considered as the most basic of all reconstructive theological texts in the synoptic gospels”.<sup>101</sup>

#### **4.4. The concept of reconstruction in Christian Theology**

During the colonial domination by Europeans in Africa, and the dictatorial regimes in Latin America, the spirit of liberation from those powers started to blow amongst the oppressed. This was done through the enlightenment and empowerment of some theologians who started to do theology according to the contextual needs of the people. Some of the leading theologians in the Theology of Liberation in Latin America are: Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff, Hugo Assman, J. L. Segundo, E. Dussel, and others.<sup>102</sup> Later, Theology of Liberation was also adopted in African Christian Theology.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: Easter Educational Publishers, 1995), p. 12

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32

<sup>103</sup> Getui, M. N. *Theological Method & Aspects of Worship in African Christianity*. (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), p.32

During the struggle for liberation, not only the Theology of Liberation was a concept in African Christian Theology, but there was also another concept namely, *Inculturation Theology*. In light of this, Mugambi says: “In the recent past, *liberation* and *inculturation* have been taken as the most basic concepts for innovative African Christian Theology”.<sup>104</sup> The concept of liberation was more popular among the Protestants theologians, while the concept of inculturation was more popular among the Catholic theologians.<sup>105</sup>

The Theology of Liberation has its roots from the Old Testament, when God through Moses liberated the Israelites from the oppression of Egypt. Mugambi says: “*Liberation* as a theme for Christian theological reflection has been derived from the Exodus narrative in the Old Testament... As victims of oppression, they identify themselves with Israelites”.<sup>106</sup>

Most African countries, which were under colonial rule got their liberation through a struggle. The colonial impact as well as the struggle for freedom left Africa damaged at different levels. After the liberation and freedom, there is need for a new theme in Christian Theology, which corresponds with the present situation in Africa.

The theme of reconstruction is a new concept in Christian Theology, which corresponds and fits well “in the New World Order”.<sup>107</sup> This concept is not only useful in theology or in a religious context, but it fits in all areas such as sociology, economics, and the political context.<sup>108</sup>

After the independence of the African continent, reconstruction theology has to be developed. Normally, in the end of conflicts and wars, reconstruction theology has to be applied in order to repair all that was damaged during the struggle for freedom. Mugambi puts it correctly when he argues that:

...we need shift paradigms from the Post - Exodus to Post- Exile imagery, with reconstruction as the resulting theological axiom... The 21<sup>st</sup> century should be a

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<sup>104</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers. 1995), p. 2

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2



century of reconstruction in Africa, building on old foundations, which, though strong, may have to be renovated.<sup>109</sup>

Likewise in Europe, during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a stage where new concepts were needed in order to respond to the needs of the day. Renaissance and Reformation concepts were applied, on which Renaissance was a concept used in secular circles, while Reformation was used in ecclesial circles.<sup>110</sup>

Though Korten did not use the same concept of reconstruction, it seems to me that his concept of Development as a method for *Social Transformation and People-Centered vision* is aiming at the same reconstruction concept. Although the concept of transformation and the concept of reconstruction are different in their connotation, their contents are the same, that is to develop a new vision in a new world order. This is so because in the process of reconstruction, there are some stages where transformation is applied to achieve its object. Korten clarifies this point by saying:

The critical development issue for the 1990s is not growth. It is transformation. Our collective future depends on achieving a transformation of our institutions, our technology, our values, and our behavior consistent with our ecological and social reality. This transformation must address three basic needs of our global society... Justice... Sustainability... and Inclusiveness.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995), p. 5

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5

<sup>111</sup> Korten, D. C. (Connecticut: Kumariana Press, 1990), p. 4



#### 4.5. Some basic levels in the process of reconstruction

Farisani picks up five levels as the frameworks of the reconstruction process which are: theological reconstruction... personal reconstruction... cultural reconstruction... ecclesiastical reconstruction... and socio-political reconstruction.<sup>112</sup>

It is true that in a context such as that of Angola, events from the colonial period, the time of the plantation of Christianity, and the conflict of civil war, the above mentioned levels have been shaken. Restoration, therefore, is needed in terms of reconstruction if a balance between the past and present is to be maintained.

##### 4.5.1. Theology of reconstruction

As it was in the time of the struggle for liberation, the emphasis of the theology of liberation was *No* to all unjust systems. So in the time for the struggle for reconstruction, the emphasis of a theology of reconstruction should be *Yes* to all just systems and to sustainable development, which seeks to respond to the needs of Africans and their environment. But the *No* of the theology of liberation must continue in the era of reconstruction theology where unjust systems still prevail.<sup>113</sup>

According to Villa-Vicencio, the theology of reconstruction has to do with nation building to shape the character of the society, not to destroy it.<sup>114</sup> Farisani expresses that reconstruction theology should be a contextual theology through social analysis. It must create programmes of social renewal.<sup>115</sup>

In the context of hatred and hostility, a theology of reconstruction must develop love of others and equality. It must seek inter-faith dialogue, such as African traditional faith as well as at other denominational levels.

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<sup>112</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra-Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction in the (South) African Context. Ph.D. Thesis.* (Pietermaritzburg: Unpublished, 2002), p. 99-108

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* p. 64, 65

<sup>114</sup> Villa-Vicencio, C. *A Theology of Reconstruction Nation –building and Human Rights.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.39, 40

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66, 67

Villa-Vicencio expresses the view that the theology of reconstruction must be produced from the ordinary people, not from the hierarchy. It must also include the culture of the people in order to avoid ignoring the true history of the people.<sup>116</sup> The theology of reconstruction believes that sin must be understood as a condition where individual as well as community is separated from God, from other human beings, and from the natural world or environment.<sup>117</sup>

The theology of reconstruction believes in communal interests, rather than in individual interests. Because of this fact, it interprets Luke 15: 3-7 according to the eastern view, which sees the incompleteness of 99 sheep because of one sheep which was lost, rather than the western view which focuses on the importance of the individual sheep which was lost.<sup>118</sup>

The theology of reconstruction believes that God is fully involved in the life and household management of his people. That is why Villa-Vicencio states that: "The church is, however, theologically obliged not to merely minister to the victims of poverty and deprivation, but to redress the causes of this situation".<sup>119</sup>

People-centered development vision is against the notion of regarding workers as commodities in the industrial places.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, the theology of reconstruction must oppose the unjust distribution of economic systems. Villa-Vicencio says: "Social and economic structures do shape the character and attitudes of people".<sup>121</sup> For this reason, the theology of reconstruction demands an "economic transformation"<sup>122</sup> in the society. A theology of reconstruction also demands that "no one benefits at the expense of anyone else"<sup>123</sup> whether secularly or in the church.

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47, 49

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162

<sup>118</sup> Villa-Vicencio, C. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation – building and Human Rights*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 165, 166

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p. 207

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* p. 223

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* p. 227

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p. 234

What we have experienced in relation to IELA's theology is different from what the theology of reconstruction is demanding. During the civil war as well as the past influences of western missionary theology and the impact of colonial power, IELA's theology was a silent theology, which was lacking a concern for social justice. IELA's theologians during the civil war, released theological statements like this:

Don't worry when people of Angola are suffering today. We will be free from this suffering and violence of war when we get to heaven. We are suffering like our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered a lot in this world, but he never claimed anything about it.<sup>124</sup>

To support their statements, they refer to scriptures like Isaiah who said: "He was oppressed, and was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (53: 7) *RSV*.

Despite the theology of silence, which was initiated by fear, IELA also followed western theology, which teaches people not to value material needs, because what is important is spiritual needs. In short, IELA needs to review its theology, which will be contextual to the new world order.

#### **4.5.2. Personal reconstruction**

Personal reconstruction is a very sensitive concept. To deal with this concept, one has to be careful not to be misunderstood by his or her audience. The problem lies with the term *personal*, on the different approach of understanding the personal status by Africans and Westerners. Personal status is less valuable to Africans as compared to people from the West. In Africa: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye bantu*, which means "a person depends on other persons to be a person."<sup>125</sup> Therefore, personal reconstruction in the African context has to be treated with special care if it is to achieve anything.

For example, Walker comments:

One aspect of evangelical individualism is seen in the common view that spiritual change inevitably produces social change. Here the assumption is that if there could be a revival of evangelical religion and multitudes of people were

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<sup>124</sup> This is one of the statements released by some theologians in IELA during civil war through speeches and sermons.

<sup>125</sup> Hulley, L. L. K. & Pato, L. *Archbishop Tutu: Prophetic Witness in South Africa*. (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996), p. 99-100



born again this of itself would bring about the renewal of the society and the removal of injustice.<sup>126</sup>

It is clear that Walker in his study of this concept opposes the view of the Western missionaries who emphasised individualism in their evangelisation. Thus he continues:

In the Western evangelical theology society is too often seen merely as the aggregate of individuals. People exist essentially as individuals and society tends to become merely an extension of this. Thus the biblical view which strongly emphasizes the community as a whole is denied. According to biblical doctrine, the person is truly human only as a member of group. The value expressed in the African concept of *ubuntu* provides a view of society more in keeping with the biblical vision. This conveys the idea that "a person is a person by means of other people".<sup>127</sup>

Evangelising the individuals with the intention of changing the society does not work, Walker quoted one of the church leaders in India saying:

One of the barriers for evangelical among us is that we are one of the most corrupt states in India. 80% of us are Christians, yet corruption is rife... We have separated Spiritual transformation from transformation in society. We have separated off individual from the community. We believe that if we have got spiritual transformation, all other transformation of relationship will automatically follow, and it just does not work.<sup>128</sup>

Mugambi has a different view from that of Walker. For, Mugambi says: "In Christian theology it has traditionally been maintained that the starting point in social reconstruction is the individual."<sup>129</sup> Quoting some revivalist hymn writers, Mugambi concludes: "These hymns are reminders that the key to social transformation is appropriate disposition of the individual members of the community converted, especially its leaders."<sup>130</sup>

Like Mugambi, I am convinced that personal reconstruction is needed especially in the contexts where civil war hampered so much. This should not be on the basis of the individualism of Western understanding, with its benefit for the particular person, but it

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<sup>126</sup> Walker, D. S. *Challenging Evangelicalism: Prophetic Witness and Theological Renewal*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), p. 181,182

<sup>127</sup> Walker, D. S. *Challenging Evangelicalism: Prophetic Witness and Theological Renewal*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), p. 180

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* p.182

<sup>129</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995), p. 15

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16



should be based on the African understanding of personal reconstruction, which includes his or her closest relatives for the benefit of the community. For example, a thief disturbs the whole community. If such a person undergoes counseling for personal reconstruction, he or she has to be joined by his or her family, such will also benefit the whole community. As has been recognized in African Christian Theology that the individual reconciliation and social reconciliation are needed, so personal reconstruction and social reconstruction are needed too.

In Ovawambo community, there are some people who need personal reconstruction, due to the condition of civil war, which has changed the behaviour and morals of most people. Civil war caused a lot of poverty and as a result many young boys, for instance, were involved in robbery and stealing. That is why I say that personal rehabilitation is needed in this regard.

#### **4.5.3. Cultural reconstruction**

Culture is the backbone of every nation in the whole world. A nation is known as strong or weak by its culture. Every nation has the right to feel proud of its culture and traditional way of life. If a nation loses its culture, people regard it as standing and basing its way of life in the air. Mugambi argues that: "Culture is the cumulative product of people's activities in all aspects of life, in their endeavor to cope with their social and natural environment".<sup>131</sup> It means then that the whole essence of existence, especially of the Africans is a cultural phenomenon. Mugambi adds that: "Its components include politics, economic, ethics, aesthetics, and religion".<sup>132</sup>

With the advent of western civilization in Africa, Africa finds itself under serious damage in terms of its culture. Even the missionaries did not recognise and respect the value of African culture. Mugambi argues that: "There is nothing good in a missionary enterprise which robs people of their culture, religious and moral integrity... In Africa,

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<sup>131</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995), p. 16

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16

Christianity has been used for too long to destroy the cultural and religious foundations of African people”.<sup>133</sup>

In the countries where civil war was experienced such as Angola, people fled from their respective places and became refugees or displaced people. Then they started losing the value of their own culture. For these reasons, cultural reconstruction is needed if the identity, dignity, rights, and values of Angolan people are to be maintained.

According to Farisani, the cultural heritage must be revived and renewed because culture cannot defile the message of the Gospel.<sup>134</sup> Even so, among Africans themselves, there are still some who have been won over by the Western missionaries, who believe that the Gospel cannot cope with the African culture. They believe that the Gospel message fits well in the Western culture. Mugambi also grapples with this view:

Some Christians find the Gospel to be totally discontinuous with culture... Other Christians consider the Gospel to be totally identifiable with culture... The appreciation of the Gospel as a challenge to every culture, will mean that no person has any reason to posit his or her own culture as superior to other. Each culture has its strengths and weaknesses, but qualitative comparisons have no ethical justification.<sup>135</sup>

Some people tend to say that since African narratives of their traditions and cultures are not written, therefore, they are not important. Western cultures are written, therefore are important. Schreiter says: “Memory is the principal repository of our identity.”<sup>136</sup>

Some colonizers, in their system of colonizing, such as the Portuguese, made some Angolans to hate their mother tongue. That is why up to now in Angola most of the educated people do not know how to write their vernacular languages, and even their children do not know how to speak their mother tongue. In view of this, Dube refers to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o when she points out that:

... the African educational system remains in line with its colonialist aims of developing a people who are furthest removed from themselves... In his request for reconstruction of development, he recommends the use of African language

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<sup>133</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995), p. xiv

<sup>134</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra-Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction*, Ph.D. Thesis. (Pietermaritzburg: Unpublished, 2002), p. 100, 102

<sup>135</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers. 1995), p. 42

<sup>136</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *Reconciliation, Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 38

for instruction in schools. This recommendation is made on the understanding that language is not only a tool for communication, but it is also a carrier for their culture and history.<sup>137</sup>

In the Ovawambo context, for example, there are cultures and traditional entities which need to be reconstructed and renovated such as the veneration of ancestors, initiation rites or rites of passage, reconciliation rites, and healing rites. But there are some cultures and traditional practices, which need to be rejected because they are not carrying justice and love in them, such as the oppression of women, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and others.

#### **4.5.4. Ecclesiastical reconstruction**

In general, there are two areas in which the church in Africa needs to be reconstructed. The first area is the influential power of western civilization at the time of the plantation of Christianity in Africa. The second area is the impact of civil war and conflicts in Africa in the name of ethnicity and tribalism. In many cases, the church in Africa is forced to conform itself to the above influences. Therefore, if a particular denominational church in a given area, such as IELA in Angola, finds itself in the position of being influenced by the so called Christian civilization, by political civilization, and by the power of conflicts, then what is needed in this situation is a church reconstruction process.

Farisani points to the fact that the reconstruction of the church in the country helps the reconstruction of the whole society. This is so because its members belong to the same society. In other words, the church is the mirror of the society at large.<sup>138</sup>

On the question of the areas in which the church needs to be reconstructed, Mugambi shows certain areas such as: “management structure, financial policies, pastoral care,

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<sup>137</sup> Dube, M. W. “Women, What Have I to do with You?” A post-colonial Feminist Theological Reflection on the Role of Christianity in Development Peace and Reconstruction in Africa.” In Phiri, I Ross, K. and Cox J (eds.) *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction*. (Nairobi: AACC, 1996), p. 24 6

<sup>138</sup> Farisani, E. B. *The Use of Ezra-Nehemiah in A Quest for A Theology of Renewal, Transformation, and Reconstruction in the (south) African Context. Ph.D. Thesis*. (Pietermaritzburg: Unpublished, 2002), p. 105



human resources development, research, family education, service and witness”<sup>139</sup>, while Farisani added “doctrinal teaching, social rehabilitation, ethical direction, and ritual celebration”.<sup>140</sup>

Instead of using the term *church reconstruction*, Nambala used a different concept, namely *indigenization of the church*.<sup>141</sup> With this concept, Nambala means that the church should take into cognisance the people it will be ministering to. Nambala is referring to some African churches which are still conforming themselves to the western churches where their missionaries came from. To this end Nambala says: “...the missionaries tried to make carbon copies their churches of origin. They wanted African churches to be like the ones in their countries both in shape and in structure”.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, for Nambala, “the indigenous church is when that church is self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. A fourth which could also be added is self-criticizing.”<sup>143</sup>

Nürnberg points to the weakness of the church, which needs to be changed-

such as ...a) a spiritualised concept of salvation which neglects social concern, b) a traditionist orientation which looks backward into the past rather than forward into the future, c) an inflexible orthodoxy which spiritualises human needs and offers a stereotyped spiritual recipe, d) a hierarchal often authoritarian leadership structure, e) a lack of social analytical skills, f) a tendency to withdraw into cozy and homogeneous ingroups which shun challenges and conflicts, g) an atmosphere which does not attract the youth, the men in their prime, or leading intellectuals.<sup>144</sup>

In the case of the IELA, it is clear that it needs to be reconstructed from its imitation of other churches such as ELCIN’s Constitution and Regulations, and its imitation of the European culture and tradition. It needs to consider its tendency of relying on external financial assistance. Instead, it could be fully involved in economic development in order to create resources for its financial support. At the same time, the IELA can also

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<sup>139</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995), p. 17

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* 105

<sup>141</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (USA: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994), p. 144

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* p. 145

<sup>143</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (USA: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994), p. 145

<sup>144</sup> Nürnberg, K. *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution: Managing the approaching crisis*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), p. 372



consider its problem of ethnicity, which according to my view is the greatest stumbling block in its ministry. If the IELA starts to reshape its ethnic problem it will pave way for reconciliation and the reconstruction of the whole community. In addition to this, since the IELA is a young church, it needs to consider its training of its church ministers in terms of human resources development in order to cope well with its pastoral care, doctrinal teaching, ethical and moral directions.

#### **4.5.5. Socio-economic reconstruction**

Socio-economic structures are all factors related to the social and economic order.

##### **4.5.5.1. Social reconstruction**

In societies such as Ovamboland, where the conflicts of the civil war have taken such a long time, different areas in these societies have been shaken, so restoration and reconstruction should be applied if the normal way of life in such societies is to be regained. There is need for reconstruction in the following aspects of society and life: racism, sexism, gender inequality, ethnicity, tribalism, human rights, equality, democracy, ecology and environmental hazards, education, health care, security, and others. Besides all these I have mentioned, there are also other social problems among the Ovawambo people, which need to be taken into consideration in terms of reconstruction such as: poverty, hunger, homelessness, the elderly, orphaned, illiterate, deaf, blind, unemployment, corruption, violence against women and children, HIV/AIDS pandemic, crimes, and others.

##### **4.5.5.2. Economic reconstruction**

The word *economy* is derived from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which are two words put together, *oikos* means house, and *nomos* means the law or the management. Villa-Vicencio says: "Economy means literally 'the law or the management of the household'".<sup>145</sup> According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, economy

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<sup>145</sup> Villa-Vicencio, C. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation building and Human Rights*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 204, 205

means “the structure of economic life in a country, area or period... an economic system”.<sup>146</sup>

Villa-Vicencio gives a theological understanding of economy by saying that: “Theologically this means not the modern household or nuclear family, but ‘public household’”.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, theologically the meaning of household implies the meaning of the “household of God, which is a household of justice”.<sup>148</sup>

#### **4.5.5.3. Economic system of Angola**

When MPLA took over the Angolan government in 1975, it embraced the communist economic system and changed its name to MPLA- Workers’ Party- *Partido do Trabalho MPLA-PT*. This means that all members of MPLA’s government are the workers for the benefit of the government, not for the individual. Agostinho Neto, the president wanted to create a homogenous disciplined party along the lines of the Soviet model.

The political changes in both the Soviet Union and South Africa dramatically altered the situation in Angola at the end of 1980s. The Soviet Union became increasingly reluctant to fund the MPLA war effort. At the same time, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe undermined the MPLA’s Marxist ideology.

The MPLA recognized that it needed to revise its political thinking, including the economic system. In 1990, the Central Committee of MPLA renounced Marxism-Leninism in favour of democratic socialism and a mixed economy. New legislation also stated that the economy would be based on the co-existence of diverse forms of property.<sup>149</sup> “The government has already started taking measures to allow the private sectors to play an active role in areas where the public sectors play a dominant role”.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Webster, M. *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, (Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster INC. Publishers, 1990), 395

<sup>147</sup> Villa-Vicencio, C. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation building and Human Rights*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.205

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* 205

<sup>149</sup> All the ideas above have been taken from the Internet

<http://209.183.193.172/reference/history/tour4.html>

<sup>150</sup> <http://209.183.193.172/business/b-fri.9.htm>

When the economic system was changed in Angola, this paved a way for capitalists to flow into Angola to establish their private companies for their own benefit, not for the benefit of Angolans. For example, the American oil companies, such as Chevron, Exxon, Amoco and Mobil are well established in Angola and are exploiting Angola's oil in a cheap way.

The point is that since the economic system in Angola has been changed from communism to capitalism, the Angolans realised the big differences. Of course, those in top political leadership are enjoying and benefiting from the new system, not the ordinary people as such.

The question of the big gap between the rich and poor people in Angola which needs to be changed, has to do with how to tackle the injustice of capitalism in the distribution of Angolan resources. This gap is widened by globalization as the mouth-piece of capitalism, which IELA has to oppose because it is against the will of God. The church in order to oppose the economic system, has to base its arguments on the question of justice and truthfulness of the system.

#### **4.5.5.4. Economic transformation strategies in Ovamboland**

Since the majority of the Ovawambo people are staying in the rural areas, it is the task of the IELA to contribute to their economic development. Following the view of Korten about the good start of the improvement of the economic situation in different contexts, there should be different steps or strategies to achieve the aims of this improvement. These steps should be a preparation to reform rural infrastructures, land, and agriculture.<sup>151</sup> Korten proposed that the first thing should be to educate people in rural areas so that they may have the proper skills in economics, stewardship, management, and accountability.<sup>152</sup> The economic standard in Ovamboland is too low due to the educational backwardness of the people. I think it is the responsibility of IELA to train people in different management skills for economic and agricultural development. At

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<sup>151</sup> Korten, D. C. *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumariana Press, 1990), p. 78,79

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78



present, according to my observation the Ovawambo people are still using primitive methods of agriculture. It is important to introduce modern methods of doing agriculture. There is also need to try a variety of crops.<sup>153</sup> Since the Ovawambo people are also pastoralists, they still use the old system of raising livestock. New ways of raising domestic animals are needed, such as protecting animals against diseases. The IELA should ask for assistance from the LWF and other international financial agencies to start and establish projects, which can lead to sustainable growth for the improvement of the economy of the Ovawambo.

#### **4.6. From civil war to war against HIV/AIDS**

While Angolans are trying to reconstruct social life for future prosperity, which was destroyed by civil war, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is destroying society through killing people.

##### **4.6.1. Definition**

HIV is an abbreviation of *human immunodeficiency virus*<sup>154</sup>, which destroys the immune system of the human body. While AIDS is also an abbreviation for *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*, which defines “a condition of acquired immunological deficiency associated with infection of the cells of the immune system by retrovirus”.<sup>155</sup> In other words, if the immune system has been destroyed in the body, then the consequence is the syndrome of signs and symptoms of different diseases, which leads to the death of the infected person. AIDS, therefore, is the fruit of the development of HIV. Without HIV there is no AIDS.

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75

<sup>154</sup> *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster INC. Publishers, 1990), p. 573

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6



## **4.6.2. The impact of HIV/AIDS among the Ovawambo community**

### **4.6.2.1 The spreading of HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS is spreading alarmingly amongst the Ovawambo, because of questionable sexual behaviour and drug abuse. Some cultural practices also contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS through such things as polygamy. In addition to this poverty, lack of information, lack of access to contraceptives, disorganization, commercial sex, commercial labour or business, dislocation, and refugees contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

## **4.6.3. The information dimension**

### **4.6.3.1. Treatment**

There is a great need for information among the Ovawambo people about the way AIDS is spreading, and for statistics on HIV/AIDS deaths. People need to be informed that according to medical experts, up to now there is no cure for AIDS. However, there is a possibility of prolonging the life of the infected through such things as spiritual counseling, which gives the patient psychological and emotional help, and good nutrition. Presently, there are some drugs, such as Nevirapine, AZT, and 3TC, which could only delay the spread of the HIV virus in the human body. However, it is difficult to access to these drugs, especially for poor communities such as the Ovawambo.

### **4.6.3.2. Prevention against HIV/AIDS**

In Angola, especially among the Ovawambo, there is a need for educating and informing all people about the need to fight against AIDS. The Red Cross of Cunene province provides important information about the control of the spread of AIDS. It has a group of trained people who are ready to give such information to the people of

Cunene province. It requests other institutions to join it in this important campaign.<sup>156</sup> I think this is an opportunity for IELA to work together with the Red Cross of Cunene to spread relevant information among the Ovawambo.

This task should include information on the value and the importance of having one sexual partner, the possibility of abstinence from sexual life, the avoidance of pregnancy of infected mothers, drug abuse, anal intercourse, awareness of infected blood, and the use of condoms where necessary.

However, the attempt of preventing the spread of AIDS with condoms and other contraceptives is not the best solution. The best solution is the behaviour of people.

Since human beings are created with a free will, they should make right decisions in accordance with their free will in all things around their lives. Human decisions have an impact on the spread and control of AIDS. If not, millions and millions of people in this world will die unnecessarily of the AIDS pandemic. In other words, human beings themselves have the right to choose ways of behaviour according to their free will, whether it is right or wrong. I believe that God cannot force anybody by his divine power to get rid of AIDS, unless human beings can use their own free will, which they have got from God. We cannot, therefore, say that the spread and suffering from AIDS is a natural phenomenon, rather, it depends on the free will of human kind.

#### **4.6.3.3. Caring for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS**

People need to be informed that those who are living with AIDS must be treated with love and be accepted as God's people. They need to be treated well physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. The church should find and new different ways of how to handle the infected and affected people especially through counseling. The church can learn from other institutions, such as hospitals and clinics, where people with AIDS are treated with love, and tender care. The church must create new and

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<sup>156</sup> The information about the campaign of Red Cross for informing the community to fight against AIDS, I heard from the Coordinator of Red Cross in Ondjiva Mr. Antonio Hipewambedi (Kawayaya) on February 3, 2003 in his office during the research time.

different sources of information and materials to support people living with AIDS. The church should also request the government for financial support for AIDS projects. People living with AIDS should be given balanced diets.

The process of caring for people living with AIDS should include pastoral counseling on the level of pre- and post- HIV/AIDS counseling. In other words, it is the responsibility of church members to be fully involved in this regard. This procedure of caring should also be based on social acceptance, family based care, and community based care.

There is also a great need in every particular community and institute to establish committees as support groups, which would be:

composed of the pastor, a doctor or a nurse, a social worker, a representative of the youth, and a person who is HIV positive. The task of these committees is to identify cases, draw up action plans in cooperation with the wider community, establish an AIDS Support Group for each case, based on the extended family and the community as a whole, and act as resource persons for seminars and awareness campaigns.<sup>157</sup>

#### **4.6.4. Theological dimensions**

Theologically it is not wise to take AIDS as a punishment from God as some theologians tend to think and to say. Perhaps HIV/AIDS is a disease to prove that those who believe and keep God's commandments will be saved. At times suffering could be there just to prove the power of God. A good example is the story of the man who was born blind (John 9:1-7) that it was so "that the work of God be made manifest in him" (verse 3) *RSV*. Possibly AIDS has been allowed by God to lead all humanity to true repentance and strengthen their faith.

Theologically, the impact of AIDS on humanity, could be seen in the light of the consequences of sin, because AIDS is a consequence of sin. For this reason, AIDS is not regarded as an individual sin, but it is a social sin. AIDS can be compared with

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<sup>157</sup> This information is taken from "The Church and AIDS" Proposed Programme for the Lutheran and Moravian Churches in South Africa to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis. (Pretoria: 2000, Unpublished, 2000), p. 1

original sin as it infected the first individual person and its consequences infected and affected all humanity. So in the same manner all humanity are affected if not infected with AIDS.

#### **4.7. Summary of the chapter**

I have highlighted in this chapter that in the history of Israel, according to the Old Testament stories, after struggling for freedom or after the destruction of society by any forces, in the end, there was always reconstruction of all that was destroyed. Historically, reconstruction always included all areas where injustice prevailed as well as in all institutions. In this study, certain areas were mentioned where reconstruction is needed such as theological, personal, cultural, ecclesiastical, socio-economic, and HIV/AIDS issues. This brings me to the point that whatever people want to do for sustainable development, the possibility is always there. Therefore, in the following chapter I will deal with the need for sustainable development.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1. The task of this chapter

In chapter four I have showed that people can only think of development projects if all that was destroyed or destructed by civil war could be restored or reconstructed. The task of this chapter is to suggest areas where sustainable development can be done among the Ovawambo community. I will also suggest areas where IELA could contribute both theologically and practically. In this chapter I will discuss about underdevelopment in terms of both material and human resources, food security as well as the earth crisis. These have been worsened by the civil war. This has created a new problem that is the dependency syndrome. People now want to depend upon foreign assistance, even on those things they can do for themselves. In this chapter I will also look at the oppressive tendencies of culture and tradition especially against women under the guise of gender roles.

##### 5.1.1. Definition

*Sustainable Development* means the strategy and promotion of development for the common future of humanity and the whole creation at large. The UN Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as a “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs”.<sup>158</sup>

#### 5.2. The earth crisis

The earth crisis is the threatening of the earth, which is caused by human beings under the name of economic growth-centered development. The signs of the earth crisis are all the causes of destruction in creation such as global warming that threatens the earth's zone layer, desertification through the destruction of plants and trees from the

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<sup>158</sup> Quoted in NECCSA, R. (ed) *The Land is Crying for Justice: A discussion document on Christianity and Environment Justice in South Africa*. (EFSA: Unpublished, 2002), p. 10

earth, population-growth, which has been caused by not choosing the size of family, pollution of air caused by industries, which causes different kinds of diseases to people, animals and plants; destruction of natural resources; destruction of different species from the earth; degradation of the environment with wastes, erosion, acid, such as nuclear products.<sup>159</sup>

In relation to the Cunene province, I believe that there are lots of signs of the earth crisis as a result of global warming. Although at the present time in Cunene province there is no industrial development, which normally produces air pollution, I believe that the Cunene province cannot be excluded from the threat of global warming. Therefore, the problem of droughts, which occur regularly, is one of the signs of global warming. This causes hunger and threatens food security especially among the Ovawambo people. The population-growth in Ovamboland is beginning to reach a high degree because of big uncontrolled families. Destruction of wild-animals and the desertification of the environment are further signs of the earth crisis in Ovamboland.

### **5.2.1. The relationship between Ovawambo people and creation**

According to most African creation myths, there is always a strong relationship between human beings and other creatures. For example, according to the myths of creation among the Ovawambo people, the first human beings were created from the *Omumborombonga* tree. Nambala says: “Omumborombonga tree is also known in the Herero legends of origin and connected to the Ovawambo”.<sup>160</sup> For this reason, oral tradition told us that when a person decided to cut down a tree he or she must have a strong reason for that. The first thing he or she has to do is to ask for permission from the ancestors and from the tree itself. People normally used such words as, “My ancestors and all the world spirits do not be angry with me as I cut down this tree. I want to cut down this tree for the purpose of...” or “my beloved tree, do not be angry with me as I cut you down, I have a need of... from you”.<sup>161</sup> Therefore, in the past, as

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<sup>159</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. x-xi

<sup>160</sup> Nambala, S. *History of the Church in Namibia*. (U.S.A: Lutheran Quarterly, 1994) p.29

<sup>161</sup> This is the story from oral tradition, which I heard from some of the elders.

we were told, there was a strong belief that to harm a tree without any reason causes the anger of the ancestors and of creation itself.

Among the Ovawambo people, it was strongly believed that the life of animals was very precious. Nobody has right to it for nothing. For example, in the past, we were told that if a person decided to slaughter an ox, it was obligatory to first invite the clan elders and tell them the reason for slaughtering it. If the reason was not satisfactory to them, then they would not allow one to slaughter his or her own beast. In other words, the life of animals was so precious such that slaughtering them was a community issue. Because of this, I agree with Mbiti when he wrote:

This is fundamental, for it means that man lives in a religious universe. Both that world and practically all his activities in it are seen and experienced through a religious understanding and meaning. Names of people have religious meaning in them; rocks and boulders are not just empty objects, but religious objects; the sound of the drum speaks the religious language... There are countless examples of this kind. The point here is that for Africans, the whole of existence is a religious phenomenon; the man is a deeply religious being living in religious universe.<sup>162</sup>

Therefore, for Africans, especially among the Ovawambo people, traditionally all creatures, including human beings, are one. Their origin is the same. The same Supreme Being, *Kalunga*<sup>163</sup> created all of them. They believe in the community of all creatures in the same creation. Daneel confirms the same opinion when he says:

A new brother – and sisterhood beyond the traditional ecclesial constraints had started to evolve, that between Creator – God, earthkeeping humanity and trees, plants and wildlife. A new myth, arising from the common, holistic subconscious of Africa, blended with Christian perception of a realised, observable salvation for all creation in the here and now, had started emerge.<sup>164</sup>

The Ovawambo's belief in the community of all creation was destroyed and abolished by the first western missionaries because they associated this with idolatry and paganism. Moreover, western civilization and colonialism consolidated and supported missionary thoughts and beliefs. Poverty, hunger, underdevelopment and over-population also contributed to the destruction of creation especially through

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<sup>162</sup> Mbiti, J. S. *African religious and Philosophy*. (New York: 1969) p. 15

<sup>163</sup> *Kalunga* is God in Oshiwambo language.

<sup>164</sup> Daneel, M. L. "African Christianity and Environment Reform: Zimbabwean Case Study" in Phiri I.A. Ross K. A and Cox J. L. (eds.,) *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction: Southern Perspectives* (Nairobi: All African Conference of Churches, 1996) p. 220



deforestation and the destruction of wild-animals in Ovamboland. People had no option even if this destruction of nature could have been against their belief.

### **5.3. The response of the Church on earth crisis**

#### **5.3.1. The place of human beings in creation**

When God created human beings he put them in the garden of Eden to work on it and keep it. “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it” (Gen. 2: 15) RSV. The attitude of human beings towards creation nowadays is contradicting the command of God. Instead of protecting it and keeping it, they destroy it. The responsibility, which was given to human beings, was to bring about the welfare of the garden, which in turn will be to their benefit. But what we see now as the responsibility of human beings in creation is to harm it and harm themselves in the name of development. Daneel states that: “For too often ‘development’ carries the connotation of *human progress*, the assumption being that humanity has priority and power over all else in creation, that humans have the *right* to exploit the environment.”<sup>165</sup> At the same time, it becomes clear that humans misunderstood the authority, which was given to them by God to dominate creation and all in it. “Then God said: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’” (Gen. 1: 26) RSV. Daneel comments on this idea by saying: “It mistook the Christian sentiment of human ‘rulership’ over creation for arbitrary, exploitive control, instead of interpreting stewardship as altruistic service of creation”.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Daneel, M. L. “African Christianity and Environment Reform: Zimbabwean Case Study” in Phiri, I. A. Ross K. A. and Cox J. L. (eds.) *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction: Southern Perspectives* (Nairobi: All African Conference of Churches, 2006) p. 214

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* 214



### 5.3.2. Theology of creation

The church in Africa, especially the IELA should develop a theology of creation where the value of nature and of all creatures has to be respected. I think it is not wrong if the church develops some African views on creation, as Africans believe in the sanctity of all creation, and put them into practice in the teaching of the church and its liturgy. Good examples have been given already by African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe, where a theology of creation has been developed and practiced. By doing so, they emphasize the following themes: clothing the earth or creation liberation, war of the tree, finding of the lost land, and earthkeeper's struggle. They have focused on afforestation, the bank investment for the coming generation, wildlife conservation, and the protection of water resources, riverbank cultivation. They also practice what they call healing the earth against hazards of deforestation, overgrazed, overpopulated environment, faith healing hospital, guerrillas militant field strategies.<sup>167</sup>

The African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe have stressed the ecological healing ministry, environment hospital, and the confession of sin against creatures. "Confession of ecological sin- a sign of commitment to environment reform".<sup>168</sup> Because they believe that the church is the keeper of creation, it has the authority to excommunicate in terms of disciplining everyone who sins deliberately against creation. They have developed a sacrament of planting-eucharist. This sacrament includes the main themes: the ecumenism of humans and creatures, environmental stewardship, theology of environment (such as the earth is the body of Christ) and contextualization.<sup>169</sup>

Therefore, the theology of creation is the theology of redemption of the earth from the crisis of disaster as has been well argued by Rasmussen that "no one can separate creation and redemption from the earth... both creation and redemption are matters of earth."<sup>170</sup> In other words, the work of redemption is for the whole creation including all

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<sup>167</sup> Daneel, M. L. "African Christianity and Environment Reform: Zimbabwean Case Study" in Phiri I. A. Ross K. A. and Cox J. L. (eds.) *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction: Southern Perspectives* (Nairobi: All African Conference Of Churches, 1996) p. 214, 215, 216, 218

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* 226

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* 223

<sup>170</sup> Rasmussen, L. L. *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996) p.18

creatures not only human beings. "... the work of God committed to its fullest possible flourishing, nothing less than its redemption in toto."<sup>171</sup>

Following my discussion above, I strongly think that the aim of the church mission and development programme is the same thing. Ddungu gives a good example on this point: "Any one who improves the quality and quantity of food, water, fuel, shelter, environment, plants, and so forth, is fulfilling his or her God-given creative mission. Whoever does opposite, does harm to human life, and, therefore, goes against divine will".<sup>172</sup>

In this respect, it is vital for the IELA to consider an old Ovawambo's understanding of the creation and its value. In my view, it is necessary to include some of the elements of the Ovawambo's belief in IELA's theology, such as the fear of destroying nature, which can cause the anger of God and of the ancestors. The belief that nature is there to help human beings in case of need, and human beings are obliged to take care of it can be revived.

### **5.3.3. The teaching of the Church**

Under this heading, I would like to indicate what the Church of Christ in this world should teach its members about the importance of earth and its crisis. By doing so, it will fulfill its task as true light of this world and true salt of this earth. In other words, the church members through the teaching of the church would be true examples to those outside it, by doing justice to creation. I would like to support the NECCSA statement, which says:

We commit ourselves to revisiting every aspect of Christian life in the light of the challenges posed by environmental destruction. We have to foster an ecological form of liturgy, spirituality, pastoral care, healing, mission, education, discipleship, and stewardship of land, particularly church land. We

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* 11

<sup>172</sup> Ddungu, A. K. "Environmental protection: Church responsibility" in Agbasiere, Joseph T. and Zabajungu B. K. (eds.) *Church Contribution to Integral Development*. (Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1989) p.240

have to help address numerous environmental issues at a personal, community, national, and macro-economic level.<sup>173</sup>

Field comments on the teaching of the Church and says:

As part of the earth community it longs for the liberation of creation... In worship the congregation is empowered and transformed for service in the world. From worship the congregation is scattered into the world to participate in God's mission to transform and heal the broken creation.<sup>174</sup>

The Church should teach its members to care for creation in Sunday schools, in sermons, in confirmation classes, in women, men, youth groups, and put policies in its regulations and constitutions. The Church has to emphasize that the earth belongs to God, and it is given to human beings to work, keep, and protect. The Church has to explain the meaning of the concept of dominion over creatures that it does not mean that people have the right to do what they want; rather it means to do the will of God the Creator, by seeking mutuality, equality, and justice. NECCSA comments:

The vision that the earth belongs to God has important *ecological* dimension. It calls for a sustainable community of all living beings. This implies the need for a healthy eco-system. It also requires a new vision of the place of humanity within the rest of nature. The relationship between humanity and nature cannot be one of domination and exploitation. Instead, a new vision of mutual enhancement, respect and equality is called for... The Christian vision is that the origin, life, and dignity of the earth is in God's hands.<sup>175</sup>

One good example is given by Rasmussen who says: "Thus what we do for the earth, we do for ourselves".<sup>176</sup>

My hope is that IELA will soon join the campaign of saving the earth from the crisis of exploitation and degradation of the environment. I will give some proposals in the following chapter where I will draw an agenda for IELA, on how to go about this proposal.

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<sup>173</sup> *The land is crying for justice: A discussion document on Christianity and Environmental Justice in South Africa.* (EFSA: 2002) p. 17

<sup>174</sup> Field, D. N. "The Gospel, The Church and The Earth: Reflections on an Ecological Ecclesiology" in *The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 111 (November 2001) pp. 74, 76, 77

<sup>175</sup> Koegelenberg, p. 15, 16

<sup>176</sup> Rasmussen, L. L. *Earth Community, Earth Ethics.* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996) p. 346



## 5.4. People Centered vision

The people-centered vision is the concept which is used mostly by Korten, when he was trying to answer the question of what the real meaning of development is, especially in the context of developing countries. This is in light of the general understanding of development in terms of economic growth with disregard for environmental degradation. That is why Korten offers us a vision, which puts people in the centre of development and their environments. Korten clarifies his point by saying:

Our obsession with development as growth in the consumption of material goods must give way to a new vision of how to define human progress... More specially, it calls for a new development vision that leads to a just, sustainable and inclusive improvement in human well-being. The growth-centered development vision that has prevailed during the past four decades has failed to meet this test...The critical elements of an alternative people-centered development and a supporting equity-led sustainable growth strategy are outlined.<sup>177</sup>

I do not think that Korten's theory about *people-centered vision* means that people are the only *center of creation* in terms of "created order as being there for the benefit of humans only".<sup>178</sup> If his theory means so, then no one should blame human beings when they do what pleases them with creation, whether what they do is right or wrong, because they are the center of creation. But I think what Korten is trying to explain with *people-centered vision* is that people were neglected, especially those of the underdeveloped world or of what are the so called Third World countries. Instead of developing people in underdeveloped areas, in terms of sustainable development including their environments, western countries focused on economic-growth from the natural resources of these countries for the benefit of their home countries, not for the benefit of the underdevelopment countries.

Therefore, for me, the *people-centered vision development* has the same meaning as *human resources development*, where the requirement is to open the eyes of the underdeveloped people through adequate education and skills training where necessary. Mugambi expresses the need for human resources development by saying: "The key to

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<sup>177</sup> Korten, D. *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (Connecticut: Kumariana Press, 1990) p. 6, 10

<sup>178</sup> *The land is crying for justice: A discussion document on Christianity and Environmental Justice in South Africa*. (EFSA: 2002) p. 13



Africa's economic, social and industrial transformation is educational reform. Education is here defined in very broad terms- transfer and modification of knowledge, experience, skills, and attitudes".<sup>179</sup> Nyerere confirmed this point by saying: "Every one of us, through improving his own education, can begin to make improvements in his own life – and therefore, in the lives of us all. Through educating ourselves more, each one of us can help to make our country stronger, and our children's lives better."<sup>180</sup>

It is the task of the church to contribute to people-centered development by establishing centers where there will be human resources development. The church can educate people from childhood in the kindergartens, primary education, secondary education, professional and vocational training.<sup>181</sup> The focus point always in this education and training is to let people understand themselves and their environment, so that the vision of sustainable development may be known by all.

In the context of Angola, I will come back to this point when I will be dealing with the agenda for IELA in the next chapter.

## **5.5. Social welfare**

The word *welfare* means the service or receiving of public welfare benefits for social groups. But in many cases, only some people in the same society receive the service of welfare. For example, people in rural areas are often excluded from the benefit of welfare service, but those who are in urban areas often benefit.

### **5.5.1. Clean water and sanitation**

Many people in the rural areas, especially in Ovamboland which is prone to droughts, either do not have clean water or do not have water at all. This area, unfortunately, seems to be neglected by social welfare organisations including the church. From the

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<sup>179</sup> Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1995) p. 224

<sup>180</sup> Nyerere, Julius M. *Freedom and Development: A Selection from Writings and Speeches* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 140

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* p. 224

day they settled in Ovamboland, up to today they are still drinking and using unclean water taken directly from savannas, lakes, and rivers. This results in diseases such as cholera and dysentery as well as different kinds of worms such as amoebas. This however, rarely affects urban dwellers.

In rural areas as well as in towns in Ovamboland, most people are still using the so-called *African toilet*. This means that people relieve themselves in the bush. When it rains, all the sewerage is collected from those bushes to the savannas, rivers, and lakes, where people get water for domestic use. Some people drink such water unboiled and this leads to water borne diseases.

Therefore, clean water supply and sanitation networks or projects are needed in Ovamboland. Also bore holes and projects for making clean water from rivers and lakes are needed very soon in Ovamboland.

This is the task of the church to protect the physical health of the nation, not only to feed people with spiritual food and water. That is why Nyerere said:

I am suggesting that, unless we participate actively in the rebellion against those social structures and economic organizations, which condemn men to poverty, humiliation and degradation, then the Church will become irrelevant to man and the Christian religion will degenerate into a lot of superstitions accepted by the fearful... For man live in society. He becomes meaningful to himself and his fellows only as a member of that society. Therefore, to talk of the development of man, and to work for the development of man, must mean the development also of that kind of society, which services man, which enhances his well-being, and preserves his dignity.<sup>182</sup>

### **5.5.2. Food security**

It is true that war and hunger always go hand in hand. It is the same situation in Angola. Civil war in Angola enhanced hunger among the Ovawambo people, especially those who are living in urban areas. Cases of children mortality because of malnutrition have been reported from many places. Among the internal displaced people, reports say that hunger is killing people. Because of the shortage of rain in the Cunene province, for several years, most of the local farmers now produce inadequate corn from their farms.

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<sup>182</sup> Nyerere, Julius. M. *Freedom and Development: A Selection from Writings and Speeches*. (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 215, 216

Because of this situation, most of the Angolans depend on the external food assistance in order to survive.

The special Report on Food Supply in Angola says that:

The number of people in urgent need of food assistance is estimated at 1.4 million. WFP plans to assist 1.24 million people, including IDPs with insufficient or no access to land, the families of UNITA soldiers, the vulnerable population in previously inaccessible areas and refugees returning to Angola. The remaining needy population needs to be supported by other humanitarian agencies.<sup>183</sup>

Presently, in Angola, there are a lot of international agencies or humanitarian organizations which are claiming that their presence in the country is to help the people of Angola who suffered a lot during the civil war. Their aim is to assist Angolans in the name of long-term development programmes, as well as in urgent needs. But in reality, behind these sayings, there is another aim, which is to do business in the name of assistance. The Special Report on Food Supply in Angola confirms this point by saying: "Cereal import requirements for 2002/03 are estimated at 725 000 tonnes, of which 504 000 tonnes are expected as commercial imports and 221 000 tonnes as emergency food aid".<sup>184</sup>

According to my understanding, the meaning of food security implies two main issues. Firstly, healthy or nutritional food that contains enough vitamins and minerals. Secondly, abundant foods, which is enough even to be a source of economic revenue in the country. But in the case of the African continent, which is faced by the problem of poverty this paves the way for GM food from the West. In other words, food security in Africa is in danger. It is in danger in three ways, namely: human health risks; environmental degradation; and economic crisis. Madava explains the feeling of the conference of Bonn by saying: "Participants agreed that the food security situation in most developing countries is worsened also by the arrival of multinational seed companies armed with patenting rights on genetically modified seeds that cannot be reused".<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y7072e/y7072e00.htm> p. 1,2

<sup>184</sup> *pp. 1*

<sup>185</sup> Madava, T. "GM food companies undermine food security".  
<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/za/archive/2001sep/features/27sep.africa.html> p. 1



On the point of human health risks as well as of the environmental hazards, Madava gives the ideas of the conference that:

This technology compels the small- holder farmers to buy seed every season and spray particular types of chemicals. The shifts from the traditional practice of farming to new methods have left the farmers in developing countries vulnerable. It has also worsened the food insecurity situation of most developing countries that are then forced to import food.<sup>186</sup>

The lack of income growth in Africa also prevents “sustainable food security for all”.<sup>187</sup> The lack of access to economic equality resources in Africa such as unemployment, education, training, land reform, lead to food insecurity for all in Africa.

Vint had an interesting response when he asked: “Who benefits from the World Food Programme – US corporations or the poor?” He said: “If the World Food Programme were serious about ending hunger then most of its \$ 1 billion expenditure per year would go to help the world’s poorest farmers and landless peasants to obtain their own land and grow their own food”.<sup>188</sup>

The cause of hunger in Africa is not only the shortage of the food caused by over-population as many people tend to say, or by civil wars, or droughts, but most of all, I think that it caused by inequality of distribution of economic resources. And this is the case in Angola. Bruce confirms this point by saying: “The economist [Amartya] Sen has shown that it is not inefficient agricultural technology, but income inequality, unequal ownership and access to land distribution failure”.<sup>189</sup>

Food security in Africa, therefore, will only achieve its aim if Africans have been empowered to feed themselves. Kneen offers the same view that:

...the control of seed, and thus control of the foundation of the global food supply for humanity, will be in the hands of one or a few large corporations. It

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<sup>186</sup> <http://www.mg.co.za/mg/za/archice/2001.se/features/27sp.sfrica=html> pp. 1

<sup>187</sup> Madava, T. “GM food companies undermine food security”

<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/za/archice/2001sep/features/27sp.africa=html> p. 1

<sup>188</sup> Vint, R. Who benefits from the World Food Programme – US corporations or poor?

<http://www.connectotel.com/gmfood/gf100902.text>

<sup>189</sup> Bruce, D. and Ann (eds.). *Engineering Genesis: The Ethics of Genetic Engineering in Non-Human Species*. (London: Earthscan, 1999) p. 241

will end the ability of the majority of the world's people to feed themselves and will make them dependent on corporate seed suppliers.<sup>190</sup>

The problem of food security in connection with Cunene province is based on three main points, namely: the problem of depending on external assistance, which creates the spirit of self-denial and laziness; the tendency of the international agencies of giving food assistance but not ready to give an opportunity to the poor to create a means to feed themselves; and the possibility of a way forward in terms of creating new means for the Ovawambo people to feed themselves.

On the point of self-denial and laziness according to my own observation, it is clear that most people especially from rural areas are moving to towns where this food is mostly distributed and do not want to work with their own hands to get food. The other thing is that the international community is not willing to give enough opportunities to the poor to feed themselves, because many international agencies are gaining more in terms of doing business as I have already indicated. I think this is a good opportunity for the IELA to involve itself fully in planning the programmes of agriculture to develop the Ovawambo people to start to feed themselves instead of depending always on donations.

## **5.6. Gender and development**

### **5.6.1. Definition**

Gender, grammatically, is a division of masculine, feminine and neuter or physically. Gender is a condition or status of being male or female.<sup>191</sup>

### **5.6.2. Gender in Ovawambo culture and tradition**

I think that cultures and traditions are gifts from God. Cultures and traditions are signs and symbols of the identity of each nation. Unfortunately, people have a tendency of

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<sup>190</sup> Kneen, B. *Farmageddon: Food and Culture of Biotechnology*. (Columbia: New Society Publishers, 1999) p. 42

<sup>191</sup> Procter, P. *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. (British: Cambridge University Press. 2000) p. 586

misusing the gifts from God. For example, fruits from trees are gifts from God, given to people to feed them in a proper way. But some people produce drugs and alcohol from fruits to destroy their bodies. In other words, there are many African cultures and traditions, which are being misused. Instead of bringing peace and order in the community, they become oppressive and discriminative tools.

Gender injustice is one of the oppressive tools among the Ovawambo people. The social order of Ovawambo people is constructed and shaped according to gender. This order and shape leads into sharp gender based divisions of labour. For example, cooking, rearing children, bringing water from the well or elsewhere, bringing firewood from the forest, washing and ironing, cleaning the house, and working in the garden or field are the responsibilities of women. Pasturing cattle, building houses, fencing gardens or fields, war, hunting, digging wells, and blacksmith are the responsibilities of men.

This division of labour among the Ovawambo was made according to physical abilities, which in a way has some truth in it, especially in rural areas. Different taboos and prohibitions were performed to confirm this order of division of labour. Children are socialised according to these gender roles. For example, boys are taught that the kitchen is a place for girls and mothers. If a boy likes to stay in kitchen it is said that he will become a coward. Girls are taught that if they dislike cooking or working in the garden they will be called lazy women, and they will not be married.

But in some cases, the responsibilities of women according to gender are too much and heavier than of men. In other words, this division of labour does not correspond with the will of God and cannot enhance development. Mpumlwana says that:

It was when I got married that I suddenly felt awkward about some of the accepted roles that married women were expected to play at home. Somewhere at the back of my mind I hated washing, cooking, ironing, cleaning the house, and so on, whilst my husband didn't see it as his role to help. I hated my new role, but I thought there must be something wrong with me because other wives seemed content with the status quo.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Mpumlwana, T. "My Perspective on Women and Their Role in Church and Society in Ackerman D. Draper J. A. and Mashinini E. (eds.). *Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991) p. 383



If the division of labour among the Ovawambo is based on culture and tradition then I am convinced that there is a misuse of the gift of God. Because if some duties cause women to suffer while men relax, then there is no love and concern for each other. Change and reform must be undertaken. Mpumlwana comments: "Once people exploit, discriminate against and deprive women of their God-given status, in the name of culture, I begin to have problem as a Christian woman. I begin to have problems once men and husbands sexually abuse women in the name of culture".<sup>193</sup> Bam says: "So the plain truth is that, although culture is important, it can also be reformed".<sup>194</sup> In fact culture is dynamic, it is neither static nor monolithic, so change for the better will be acceptable.

### **5.6.3. Gender, leadership and discipleship**

Leadership is one of the sensitive issues in relation to gender in the Ovawambo society both in the church as well as in the political order. For example in IELA, women according to the Constitution and Regulations, are allowed to be ordained in church ministry. But in society they are recognized but not accepted as church ministers. In politics, few women are given an opportunity to take part in leadership. In general, Ovawambo society is dominated by patriarchal system. Therefore, this system is a stumbling block in the way of development and lively Christianity. Dube confirms this point that: "And, what do I have to do with Christianity, if the maleness of Jesus has been to justify my exclusion from church leadership".<sup>195</sup>

There is a strong belief among Christians in IELA, both men and women, that since among the twelve disciples of Jesus there were no women, it means that there must be always a difference between male-discipleship and female-discipleship. However the truth is that all who believe in Jesus, both male and female, are equal before God in their discipleship status. They are all children of God. Both are invited to serve him

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* p. 383

<sup>194</sup> Bam, B. "Seizing the Moment: Women and the New South Africa" in Ackerman D. Draper J. A. and Mashinini, E. (eds.). *Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. 1991) p. 367

<sup>195</sup> Dube, M. W. "Woman, What Have I to do with You? " A post-colonial Feminist Theological Reflection on the Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction in Africa" in Phiri, I. Ross, K. and Cox, J. (eds.). *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction*. (Nairobi: AACC, 1996) p.250

### **5.7.1. Human resources, local resources and sustainable development towards self-reliance**

Following the theory of Korten about people-centered vision, it is logical to think that if we think about development among the Ovawambo people, we first have to think about the development of human resources before we think about the development of economic resources.

To develop Ovawambo people does not necessarily mean to change Ovawambo by making them different people. But this means to develop the same people, what they have, and where they are. This is how I understand human resource development. Therefore, human resources development among the Ovawambo people means to bring them to the position of other people in the world in terms of capabilities and skills, which will make them competitive in knowledge, wealth, spiritual health, physical health, and so on. "Human resources development refers to the provision of education and training for people lacking particular competencies, or supplementing existing capabilities with market-related skills".<sup>201</sup>

I think that human development and community building have the same meaning or the same aim. Therefore, I agree with Kretzmann and Mcknight when they explain that to build a local community, there are different non-economic institutions, which are relevant in this regard. The non-economic institutions include: churches; schools; police departments; libraries; parks; human service agencies; and hospitals.<sup>202</sup>

Talking about economic development among the Ovawambo people, it is vital to think that it is the task of IELA to contribute to the human resources development and community building towards economic self reliance of Ovawambo people according to their local economic resources, especially agricultural productions, livestock, art and craft, as well as fruits of the territory. Nürnberger says: "Agricultural production should be boosted not only by introducing imported fertilisers, machinery and fuel, but by

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<sup>201</sup> Cock, J. and McKenzie, P. *From Defence to Development: Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa*. (Ottawa: IDRC Publications, 1998) p. 210

<sup>202</sup> Kretzmann, J. and Mcknight, J. *Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path towards Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets*. (Chicago: ACT Publications, 1993), p. 277

allowing realistic food prices to generate the incentive to utilise existing agricultural potentials and develop the productivity of local methods and tools.”<sup>203</sup>

All the local economic resources among the Ovawambo community should be developed and their prices should also be raised in order to satisfy the needs of local people. It is not just for foreigners who visit Ovamboland and buy at low prices things such as basket tools or wooden tools, which are produced by poor people and sell them in their countries or to museum places at higher prices. Nürnberger comments:

To achieve agricultural self-sufficiency, local food prices may not be lowered artificially for the benefit of urbanites and at the expense of peasants. This was a common mistake made by Third World governments, especially in Africa. The result was rapid urbanisation and the collapse of rural productions.<sup>204</sup>

What I want to say is that development of the economy should be understood or be accepted if it is there for the needs of the people. If the economy is there, but not to satisfy the needs of the people, that economic growth is nothing. Korten points out to what he means as policy preference values of the *people-centered vision will commonly*:

- Seek economic diversification at all levels of the economy, beginning with the rural household, to reduce dependence and vulnerability to the market shocks that result from excessive specialization.
- Give priority in allowing local resources to the production of foods and service to meet the basic needs of the local population. The goal is to create a national and ultimately an international economy comprised of the interlinking self-reliant local economic units that have a degree of insulation from the shocks of national and international systems and a stake in conserving their local environmental resources.
- Give priority to the mobilization of local resources, saving and social energy. Avoiding dependency creating debt financing, particularly foreign debt.
- Give high priority to investments in education that build the capacity of people to take charge of their own lives, communities and resources, and to participate in local, national and global decision process.
- Encourage an acceptance of shared responsibility for well-being of all community members and a reverence for the connection between people and nature.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Nürnberger, K. *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution: Managing the Approaching Crisis*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999) p. 403

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* 403

<sup>205</sup> Korten, D. *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1990) p. 69, 70



## **5.8. Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter I have discussed the new vision that creation must be protected instead of being destroyed. Secondly, I have considered the fact that the new understanding of development that the emphases should not be on economic growth but on human resources development or a people centered vision. Thirdly, is the problem of food security where people need to be developed to feed themselves instead of depending on donations. Fourthly, I have pointed to the problem of gender, which is empowered by culture and tradition, which hinders development among the Ovawambo people as well as in Africa as a whole. Fifthly, I have explained the need for developing local economic resources as well as of human resources. In order to contribute fully to sustainable development, IELA has to develop a relevant theological point of view, such as a theology of creation, practical projects, and the voice of the church in the middle of the struggle for development.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. AN AGENDA FOR IELA

#### 6.1. The task of this chapter

The task of this last chapter is to take all the key issues from chapter two to chapter five and to draw an agenda for IELA and to show how and where IELA could contribute to reconciliation and peace, to reconstruction and to sustainable development.

#### 6.2. Reconciliation process

The Church as the Body of Christ in this world is the means whereby God through Jesus Christ transmits his work of reconciliation to the world through its ministry of reconciliation. However, in order for the Church to be a true means of God's work of reconciliation, it must first be a reconciled body. In other words, Christians who form this Body of Christ, the Church, should manifest the reality of reconciliation. They have to show that they are being reconciled with God through the work of redemption of Christ. If not, the demand of the Sermon of Jesus on the mount, which says: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 13-14) *RSV* is not manifested. On the other hand, if the Church fails to manifest the work of reconciliation, it will be like a blind person who leads another blind person, who later fall into a hole (Luk. 6: 39), or it will be like the Scribes and Pharisees who appeared like "white-washed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matt. 23: 27) *RSV*.

IELA is part of the Body of Christ in Angola, and is expected through its ministry of reconciliation to transmit God's reconciliation work to the people of Angola, who are being separated by civil war, and by other causes such as tribalism and ethnicity. The following remarks are what I see could be the IELA's agenda for reconciliation process:

- IELA should accept as its responsibility to carry the message of the God of peace and reconciliation to people who need and long for it.

- IELA has to remember that the ministry of reconciliation “is more spiritual than a strategy”.<sup>206</sup>
- Peace between human beings and the rest of creation should be taught and I think that it should be considered as one of the major subjects in the teaching and theology of the church. Restoration of the environment is a sign of reconciliation and peace between humanity and nature.
- Reconciliation is process which cannot be achieved overnight, the church has to be patient.
- Crimes committed during the civil war must be public ally confessed, so that anger can be transformed to forgiveness. In this way, wrong doers and victims must be taught to move towards each other.
- Individual and social reconciliation ceremonies can be applied, if possible, traditionally. The traditional language of rites and symbols can easily be understood by people and this can be use to facilitate reconciliation.
- Old stories amongst Ovawambo tribes, which are known to provoke either inferiority or superiority feeling, must be spoken openly, so that the wounds caused by the stories can be healed. In this case, if it is necessary social reconciliation ceremonies can be performed traditionally.
- The language of minority tribes must be written, beginning with the translation of the Bible unto those languages. This means that all languages of tribes in Ovamboland must be respected equally without any form of manipulative discrimination. .
- IELA should remember not to contribute to the spirit of division in society, instead, it should be a mirror of the society.
- IELA will have to exercise unity within itself, which will pave the way for the unity of the whole society. “Reconciliation within the church can be as necessary as reconciliation within the larger society... Indeed, a church can regain some of its legitimacy by seeking reconciliation within itself as a model for what will be needed in the larger society”.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The ministry of Reconciliation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1992) p.70

<sup>207</sup> Schreiter, R. J. *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), pp. 67



### **6.3. Reconstruction process**

In the context of Angola, from the struggle for independence from colonialism up to the civil war, many structures have been changed, damaged or destroyed. This time all institutions in Angola should be engaging in the process of reconstructing the country. Some of the basic structures which need to be reconstructed are: theology, personal consciousness, social values such as cultures and morals, ecclesiastical institution, socio-economical structure, environment, and HIV/AIDS crisis.

IELA as member of Angolan institutions has a full right by the grace of God to contribute to nation building and reconstruction. In order to contribute to national reconstruction, IELA has to take the following into consideration:

- IELA has to review and contextualise its theology to the needs and questions of the day. Contextual theology in Angola should be a reconstruction theology, because reconstruction is the main theme.
- IELA has to be involved fully in all social transformation activities as a sign of reconstruction, such as: technological information, moral and common behavioural values, ecological sustenance, justice and order in society, and social analysis.
- Due to bad individual consciousness caused by the conflicts of civil war, individual reconstruction must be applied. Rehabilitation centers must be erected where necessary.
- IELA should support and promote people's cultures and traditions, which promote their identity and dignity, such as mother tongue, rites of passage, reconciliation rites, and healing rites. Cultures and traditions, which dehumanise people or contradict the Gospel message, must be rejected such as: witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and others.
- IELA has to reshape its structures in terms of management. It should try to be self-supporting and self-propagating instead of dependent on foreign assistance and influence.
- The reshaping and reconstruction of IELA will help the reconstruction of the whole society.
- IELA has to study and analyse carefully the economic structure of Angola in order to be able to give its views where possible.

- IELA, as the voice of the people, has to openly castigate the injustice in the distribution of wealth in the country, which creates a big gap between the rich and the poor.
- IELA should speak loudly that the causes of poverty in Angola are such as: unemployment, the inflation of prices due to the low value of the Angolan currency, capitalism with its privatisation, and exploitation through globalization.
- The involvement of IELA in agricultural development programmes such as developing farm-workers up to the level of commercial and management must be encouraged.
- IELA should promote and share adequate information about HIV/AIDS, especially about the causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as possible preventive measures.
- IELA should promote the idea of the establishment of Support Groups for people with AIDS in each congregation.
- IELA should work with government and NGOs such as the Red Cross in sourcing financial support as well as in information campaigns.
- IELA has to “recognise the linkage between AIDS and poverty, and advocate measures to promote just sustainable development.”<sup>208</sup>
- There is need for IELA to create means to support families taking care of AIDS orphans.
- It will be wise for IELA to promote pastoral care and counseling for those infected and affected by AIDS.

#### **6.4. Sustainable development process**

Ovamboland is one of Angola’s communities which has suffered a lot in terms of sustainable development. This suffering can easily be seen at different levels such as environmental degradation, social disturbance such as gender injustice, deprivation of local economical resources, and the backwardness of human resources.

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<sup>208</sup> WCC. The impact of HIV/AIDS and the Churches’ Response: A statement adopted by the WCC Central Committee on the basis of the WCC Consultative Group on AIDS Study Process. (Geneva: WCC, 1996,) p. 161

There are different roots for underdevelopment, which have resulted in degradation and backwardness in Ovamboland such as poverty, colonialism and Christian mission approaches as well as civil war.

Therefore, in order to contribute to sustainable development, IELA should concentrate on the following:

- Developing a theology of creation, where it has to explain and teach about the value of nature and all creatures according to the will of God. In this theology, the place of human beings in creation must be expressed clearly that it has to do with stewardship instead of domination by destruction. God should be seen as the owner of creation, who still wants to see the goodness and beauty of creation as it was in the first days of creation (Gen. 1: 10b, 12b, 18b, 21b, 25b).
- Ovawambo's view of creation can be included in the theology of creation.
- Establishment of tree planting projects and works together with the Ministry of Environment and Nature Conservation to apply rules and policies of nature conservation.
- Teaching its members and others that to depend on external assistant is a new form of colonialism. People should learn to support and feed themselves.
- Teaching society that the gender order according to Ovawambo tradition, especially the patriarchal system, is bad culture, as it causes oppression and the deprivation of women. Because it contradicts the will of God, it must be rejected and abolished. The system of bride price should be rejected.
- Involvement in human resource development by establishing such things as kindergartens, centers for vocational training including traditional skills such as arts, agriculture, animal breeding, blacksmith, basketry, weaving, and dressmaking.



## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to say that the aim of this study was to challenge the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola to take part in development after a long civil war. However, logically, it is impossible to just jump into development programmes in the situation like that of Angola. Something must be done before that. It is because during the conflict, many things have been changed into negative issues. This is clearly explained by the concept of *civil war*, which means that the war is a conflict between opposing groups in the same country. One of the signs of the possibility of a civil war is tribalism. This was one of signs in Angola's civil war especially amongst Ovawambo people. Ethnic groups will be trying to control each other. Other than killing people, war leads to the destruction of moral values, infrastructure, and the economy of the country. Civil war creates the spirit of hatred, anger, separation, revenge, fear of each other, distrust of each other and so on. Unfortunately on the other hand war, and poverty always go hand in hand. In Angola during the civil war, many progressive activities were stopped, because people were concentrating on the war. Education, health care, economic resources, social life, infrastructure, agricultural activities, and environmental care, all came to a stand still. Therefore, when civil war is over, what is needed in the first place, is to unite people at all levels for instance, religiously, politically, and socially through national reconciliation, personal reconciliation, and institutional reconciliation. Reconciliation and forgiveness have to go hand in hand. It is because without forgiveness there is no reconciliation. It is logical that when the peace and the reconciliation are well established, the next step is to establish strong social frameworks where sustainable development could take place.

While the Angolan government and other institutions in the country are busy reconstructing all that was damaged during the past conflicts, IELA is challenged by this study to contribute fully to sustainable development. The special challenge to IELA is directed to Cunene province among the Ovawambo community.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Introduction**

This section has three appendices. The first one contains interviews with IELA's leaders and the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Ondjiva diocese.

The second contains interviews with IELA members in Ondjiva congregation.

The third one contains interviews with one of the politicians, the Director of Red Cross in Cunene Province, and with the Director of Education in Cunene Province.

## APPENDIX I

### A). Interview with IELA leaders

This interview took place in the office of the president of the IELA in the Shangalala in January 31, 20023, from 15.00 p.m. to 17.00 p.m. The participants in this interview were the president of the IELA Rev. Titus Namunyekwa, the former Director of the Shangalala Institute Rev. Erastus Nande, and the former presiding pastor in Shangalala congregation Rev. Absalom Haikokola. The language used in the interview was Oshikwanyama. Since the interview was a group interviews, their responses will also be reflecting group responses. Therefore, the interviewer in all appendices will be known as *Author*, and the interviewed in this appendix will be known as *Leaders*. This is a summary of responses to the key questions.

Author: What are the plans of the IELA so as to contribute to the reconciliation and the reconstruction process?

Leaders: On the process of reconciliation the IELA has a plan for it and we have already started with it by preaching, teaching all our church members to accept each others and to forgive each other for the past conflicts. On the issue of reconstruction, we do it by educating people and by preventing diseases with a programme of vaccination. Presently, we are also engaged in agricultural programmes and there is a plan for supplying clean water.

Author: How is IELA dealing with the problem of tribalism and ethnicity in general as well as within itself?

Leaders: There is a positive progress on the issue. Intermarriage between different tribes is one good sign.

Author: Has the IELA started thinking about the protection of ecology theologically?



- Leaders: People are speaking about it, though not often.
- Author: Up to which stage is the IELA dealing with the question of African identity as well as the gender issue theologically?
- Leaders: All the cultures and the traditions should be supported and confirmed if they are corresponding to the message of the Gospel. If not, they must be rejected.
- Author: How is the IELA dealing with the question of poverty and economic crisis in the society?
- Leaders: It is true that the nation is in poverty, but the main problem is that it is not well informed or developed on how to use its local product in order to create enough income.
- Author: Is there any specific programme or project for fighting against AIDS in the IELA?
- Leaders: Currently, the IELA is busy establishing a project for fighting against AIDS. There is a plan even to get equipment for use in information campaigns in the whole community. The information will mainly be on prevention of infection as well as on how to care for both the infected and affected.

## **B). Interview with the Roman Catholic Bishop**

The interview with Bishop Fernando Kevanhu took place in his house in Ondjiva in February 2003, from 19.00 p.m. to 22.00 p.m. The medium used during the interview was Oshikwanyama. This is a summary of the response to the key question.

- Author: Bishop, how do you see the process of reconciliation since this is one of the main issues after the civil war?

Bishop: We started dealing with the question of reconciliation before the end of the civil war. In 1999 we asked all the parties which were fighting to reconcile. We did this through the commission of COIEPA. But presently, we give thanks to God, because people have started to accept each other and are still in the process of accepting each other. There is a positive indication on this matter.

## APPENDIX II

### Interview with the church members in Ondjiva congregation

I was lucky to interview 165 church members after the Sunday service in February 2, 2003. The language used was Oshikwanyama. Since the interview was made with the whole group, I will not mention their names. Therefore, the interviewees will be referred to as *members*. This is a summary of the answers to the key questions.

Author: As Christian members, what do you expect the church to do on the issue of reconciliation?

Members: We believe that the church has the key to reconciliation, forgiveness and for the pacification of the spirits.

Author: As individual members, what is the community expecting from each one of us as a contribution to reconciliation and reconstruction?

Members: Each and every one has to accept the differences in opinions and ideas, since we are to accept people who have different backgrounds. This will facilitate the process of reconciliation. On the issue of reconstruction, each and every person is expected to bring change in Christian and social life.

Author: As members of the community, what are we expecting our government to do for us in this time of peace?

Members: We want our government to establish enough schools for all. We want our hospitals to function properly. We want vaccination programmes to reach all people especially in rural areas. We want all our clinics and health posts to work properly. We want our government to offer us access to communication systems, such as telephones, especially cell phones in Cunene Province. We want our government to do more



projects and programmes to fight against the AIDS pandemic. We want our government to take into consideration aged people.

Author: What other changes do we expect to happen especially on culture and the traditional way of life?

Members: We want a great change on the issue of women. Women must be respected and given equal responsibilities with their male counterparts both in the church and in the society at large.

## APPENDIX III

### A). Interview with one politician

The interview with one politician who did not want his name to be disclosed took place in February 3, 2003. Therefore, the interviewee will be known as *Politician*. The language used was Oshikwanyama. This is a summary of responses to the questions.

Author: From the government side, is there any programme for national reconciliation or personal reconciliation?

Politician: Yes, there is a commission under the leadership of Prime Minister Fernando Piedade (Nando). This commission is composed of members from different provinces. Its task is to offer information about reconciliation through radio, TV and newspapers. The main objective of this commission is to pacify the spirits of the people individually and nationally. It works together with churches and with other NGOs in the whole country.

Author: What about the programme of Demilitarisation and Resettlement?

Politician: There is a strong plan for this, but at this moment there is a great need of money, food, clothes, and other materials. External applications for aid have been made and Namibia is the only country so far which has given its support.

Author: What other priority programmes in terms of the reconstruction process do you have?

Politician: The first thing the government wants to do is to reconstruct roads and bridges to facilitate transportation and communication. The second is to provide people with agricultural equipment. The third thing is upgrading the education level of all people. Fourth in the line is the health and sanitation programme including water supply and energy.

Author: How concerned is the government about ecological issues?

Politician: This is a major concern for the government, but nothing yet has been implemented.

Author: What other plans does the government have for reconstruction and development in general?

Politician: There are many plans for the reconstruction of the country as well as for development in general, but all are still on the table.

**B). Interview with the Director of the Red Cross in Cunene Province**

This interview took place in the office of the Director of the Red Cross in Cunene Province Mr. Antonio Hipewambedi (Kawaya) in February 3, 2003 from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. The language used was Oshikwanyama. This is a summary of his response to the key questions.

Author: What is the Red Cross in Cunene Province doing at this moment after the civil war?

Antonio: We have two main projects. The first is the project of demining where we are working together with the demining agency *Mines Advisory Group* (MAG). The second is the project of AIDS. In the project of AIDS, we have enough materials but we lack people who can help in this project. It will be better if the IELA could work with us in this regard. At this moment we have only 60 trained people who are ready to give information against AIDS to the community, but this number is not enough.

### C). Interview with the Director of Education in Cunene Province

This interview with Dr. Pedro Tongeni took place in his house in February 5, 2003, from 8.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. The language used during this interview was Oshikwanyama. This is a summary of the responses to the key questions.

Author: Dr. Tongeni, as Director of Education in this Province, how do you understand the process of reconciliation and reconstruction?

Dr. Tongeni: For me reconciliation and reconstruction processes touch very much the education programme. It is because, if reconciliation and reconstruction are to be maintained, people need to know what is going on in all levels in the community. People need to know all the orders and policies in connection with reconciliation and reconstruction. People need to know morals and ethics to be followed. People need to know that their cultures and traditional way of life are very important including the value of their traditional leaders. People need to know that the colonial power had destroyed their identity and dignity through the system of *assimilado* (assimilated). People need to know that reconciliation has to do with democracy in terms of *human rights*. I am saying this because many times the state or the churches take over the rights of the people. People need to know that the state or the church is there for them. All these need to be clarified under the umbrella of the education programme.

Author: According to your opinion, what do you think should be the priority in the development process?

Dr. Tongeni: According to my opinion, development must start with people. People must be in the centre of the development programmes, because people are the heart of the church and of the government. Therefore, development means to educate all the people in the community. This has to do with their identity, means, their culture, tradition, and belief. Then, the next is to fight for the well-being and goodness of all people in the community. The good example on this point is an incredible



development of Japan, China, Korea, and other Asian countries. That is why America is surprised for their developments. It is because they educated their people in all aspects such as rights, identities, and dignities according to their contexts.

Author: What are the plans for the education department in the coming years?

Dr. Tongeni: Our department has accepted a plan, which we call in Portuguese *Plano Educação para Todos ate 2015* means (educational plan for all until 2015). It means, by 2015 all the children in our province will have enough schools. In this plan are included the following sub-plans: enough trained teachers; quality education; capacity education; and literacy education. The NGOs, churches, and the civil societies are invited to take part in this plan.

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