

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION
OF AAWAMBO (NAMIBIA) TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN BEREAVEMENT
TO MODERN PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING**

BY

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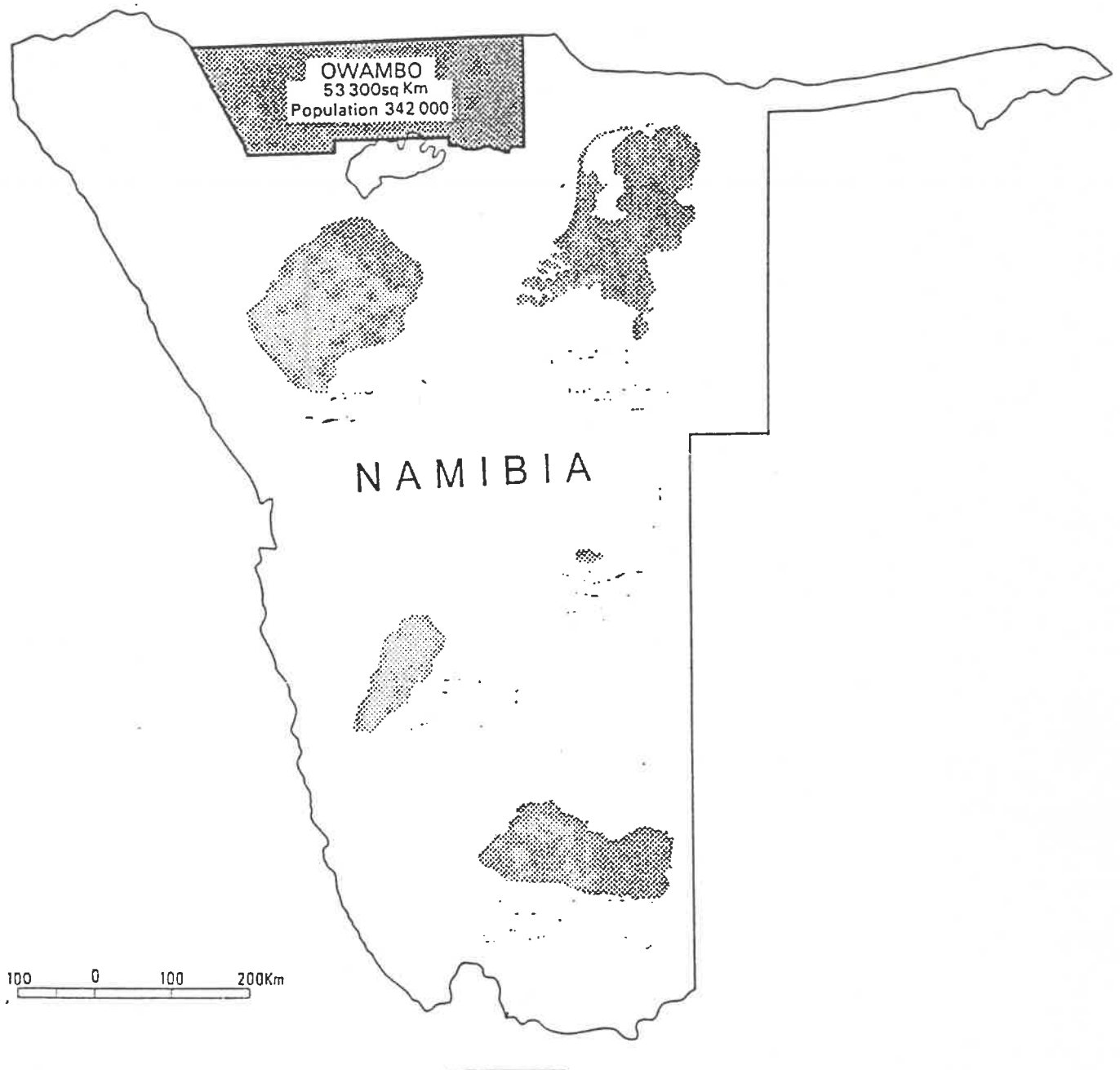
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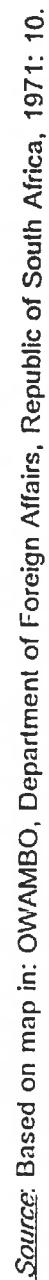
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MAP 1: NAMIBIA AND OWAMBO



Source: Based on map in: OWAMBO, Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 1971: 2.

(ii)



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, represents my own original work.

This work has not been presented to any other university for the purpose of a high degree.



VILI-HEIKKI SHIVUTE

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to explore whether the African caring practices in bereavement are applicable to modern care and counselling. It is intended to be a contribution towards the Christian pastoral care and counselling, with a reference to Aawambo people in northern Namibia.

After the first chapter, which provides a methodological framework for the entire study, the study proceeds with an investigation of contemporary Aawambo Christians' experiences of bereavement, and seven African cases of family mourning and 20 interviewees as example. This was the focus of the second chapter, while the third chapter is a brief survey of five classical contributions to bereavement. These are the views of Kübler-Ross, Erich Lindemann, Clinebell, Spiegel and Switzer, among others, as the prominent classical contributors to crisis counselling and especially in bereavement. These western theories were compared with Aawambo literature in the form of a dialogical model, in order to develop the contextual grief in pastoral care and counselling.

The results of this study indicate that there are some positive correlation between western theories and Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement, though not verified. The interview collection and discernment of findings have yielded some support to the hypotheses of potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement. An expanded research with a larger sample is recommended for reproduction of this study. It should be done in a cross-cultural perspective - both among Africans, Europeans and western missionaries.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Identification of the problem

The problem to be explored in this study is whether the African caring practices in bereavement are applicable to Christian pastoral care and counselling. Our reference group will be Aawambo people in northern Namibia.

It seems as if some of the African traditional caring practices of the bereaved which do not negate the basic principles of the Christian faith can be used in pastoral care and counselling. This seems wise in order to counsel people effectively within their cultural context. To clarify this, when Christianity was brought to Africa by missionaries, it came under the umbrella of the European culture. It has already been observed that the Bible was interpreted through their language, history, culture, economical, gender and political status, in order to highlight their own perception of reality (West, 1991: 35-36).

The type of pastoral care and counselling during the missionary era was called spiritual care. Löytty (1971) who was the lecturer at Elim Theological Seminary in 1963, reported that missionary work was above all the work of spreading the Gospel and bringing people to know Christ (Löytty, 1971: 21). Hardly any mention is made of the challenge of understanding Africans within their cultural context.

The mission director of the Finnish Mission Society for the years 1914-1934, Matti Tarkkanen (1862-1938) likewise stressed the proclamation of the Gospel as the most important form of missionary work. Victor Alho (1878-1963) served for 30 years as principal of the Finnish Owamboland Mission. He was a teacher and tutor

of Ovambo pastors and constituted a separate source of influence. His conception of the Bible has been said to be soundly fundamentalistic. This fundamentalistic view was shared also by Erkki Lehto (1884-1950) who had served for 30 years as the principal of the Teacher Seminary at Oniipa but was more flexible than that of Alho. Löytty said that many Ovambo pastors continue to remember him as their model in preaching (1971: 24), but not in counselling. Kalle Petäjä (1881-1964), served also for 29 years, acting as a teacher to the pastors. His view of the Bible has also been called soundly fundamentalistic. He was a "winner of souls" (Löytty, 1971: 21-24).

One can see here that since the Finns were both the teachers and the organizers of church life, it is to be expected that the fruits of the work reflect their model. As a result, preaching and spiritual addresses based on the Bible texts were the most important duties of an Ovambo pastor's office (Löytty, 1971: 24).

It was and still is a tradition that, whenever a Christian pays a visit to the bereaved persons, he/she has to make a point that he/she has to select a certain hymn which is to be sung together with those who are around, or reads a text and prays, or does both of these. Sometimes, the repetition of this practice by many visitors is monotonous and tiresome to the bereaved persons. Jackson reminds us that the bereaved may want to talk about what he/she is doing to deal with his/her changed feelings. He/she may want to verbalise his/her feelings of guilt. He/she may want to discuss how he/she should think and feel about the deceased in the time ahead, (Jackson, 1957: 157).

From time to time the Christian community should come, of course, to pay a visit to the bereaved persons just to talk with them. If we really listen carefully and attentively we will know when to remain silent, what to say and how to say it.

Missionaries crushed African culture regarding it as evil, without being sensitive to the fact that they brought Christianity to Africans through their own culture. People did not throw away their culture but rather covered it and started to live lives of double standards which continues to this day. Such lives are obstacles in the role of the church in counselling, since the Christian faith always interacts with the culture of a particular community.

Contrary to this approach, it seems appropriate that each culture must accept the identity and validity of the other. In this process each culture should recognise its own limitations.

As a critique, care should be taken against African traditional practices which are alien to sound Christian faith, for example, the belief that nobody can just die without being bewitched. A specific example is the belief that "the cooing of turtle dove, heard close to a headman's kraal [sic] at midnight, is considered a bad omen as the headman or a near relative will soon be 'cooed' over by mourners" (Hahn, 1966: 7). These types of beliefs need to be pruned. One can agree with Mbiti who takes the position that Jesus Christ has come to fulfil and not to destroy African culture. However, not everything in African culture can be usefully brought into the life of the Christian and the church. He suggests that beliefs that relate to the concepts of God, spirits, human life, death and the hereafter, seem to be relevant to our Christian faith (1978: 275). But this needs to be systematically explored.

The present writer would agree with Mbiti that there is no divine form of culture which is fully suitable for all people at all times. Every form of culture has its impurities - because of human sinfulness. Therefore every culture setting has a right to evolve its own form or expression of Christianity (Mbiti, 1978: 273).

Cultural imperialism, as Mbiti puts it:

... must terminate first, in order to allow indigenous culture to relate more effectively to the gospel, on its own terms and without pressure from outside. With humility and gratitude let us borrow and learn from the cultures, but let us not become their cultural slaves" (1978: 276).

Having identified the problem in missionary approaches in general, it is necessary to identify the motivation and the purpose of this study in particular, specifically as it relates to pastoral care and counselling of the bereaved in an African context.

1.2 Motivation and aim of investigation

During the researcher's ten years experience in parishes, he was constantly challenged to explore the behaviour of the bereaved, by observing them during death and funerals. He became aware of his lack of skills in facilitating the restoration of bereaved persons to useful and meaningful living. It seems that the same skills are lacking on the side of those who have come to console the bereaved.

One can notice that parishioners are in a cross-cultural conflict. It is this problem which many former missionaries did not know, or neglected, when they brought the gospel to Africa. People did accept the gospel without any question, in spite of the fact that whatever they did concerning their cultural rituals and symbols was regarded by missionaries as evil or pagan.

Aawambo are still practising some of the bereavement caring practices, sometimes in secret and sometimes in public. One can detect that people are still ambivalent about this, because they were not allowed to practise such rituals by former missionaries.

The researcher's curiosity increased his interest in bereavement in order to find out what is really taking place among grief-stricken people. How do people react and why? What do they do during burial and after funerals? Why do they do what they do?

Since I begin to concentrate on this study of pastoral care and counselling, I decided to focus on Aawambo of northern Namibia. Therefore the purpose of this study was to collect data about Aawambo traditional caring practices in bereavement and further to identify the potential to bring "good grief" (Westberg, 1971). It is to discuss in particular the much neglected problems and caring of the bereaved. Caring practices on bereavement have been and still are a problem of humankind. Among Ovambo people traditionally death was seen as taboo, thus they fear it until today. Nobody has the courage to talk about death.

As a result, the researcher decided to embark upon this investigation within the corpus of theological thought in order to try to understand as well, the meaning behind symbols and symbolic actions connected with death, funerals and grief among Aawambo.

The few books which have been written on traditional Aawambo caring practices came from traders, explorers, hunters and missionaries. They contain limited information. Although one welcomes such sources of information, one is aware that their understanding of Aawambo culture and religion was insufficient, because Aawambo were and still are a very reserved people, especially when it comes to foreigners. Missionaries, traders, hunters and explorers wrote what they saw from afar and what they had recorded from oral tradition, but not what they had experienced themselves. Andersson witnesses to this when he says that he and others had insufficient knowledge of Oshiwambo (Ovambo language). Aawambo are "shy to reveal" their secrets to foreigners, as pointed out above (Andersson, 1969:

234). Aarni is in full agreement with Andersson, stating that "nobody is willing to reveal what their grandmothers once told them" (1982: 9). This is also my personal experience that Aawambo, by nature, don't like to reveal their secrets to strangers. They are always careful about what they have to say and what not to say, and to whom. In many cases myths and ceremonies which are holy, are kept secret, from non-members of the particular circle. When asked questions people do not give the correct answers. There was also the problem of the explorers and missionaries not having an intimate understanding of the language of the people and their patterns of behaviour. So, Aawambo were neither shy, as Andersson says, nor pagan, as Aarni concluded. It seems that they were just reserved and careful in their dealings with foreigners because they take time to become used to outsiders.

It becomes clear, then, that Aawambo are only open enough to those who learn their language and culture, get involved in their day-to-day life's activities and respect them as human beings; but they have to go with a person a long way before they really put their trust in him/her. Therefore it is suitable for Aawambo themselves to start to investigate their own traditional caring practices among their people. They will be open enough and reveal the basic traditional caring practices of their forefathers. There are still many people who can remember and know their traditional practices.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Thesis outline

This study focuses on specific aspects like:

- (a) Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved;
- (b) Investigation of contemporary Aawambo Christian experiences of bereavement;

- (c) The summary of western theories of bereavement concerning the new meaning in a cross-cultural perspective;
- (d) The dialogical model in developing contextual pastoral care and counselling of grief;
- (e) Recommendations as to the challenge to Africans.

1.3.2 Participant observer and interview methodology

This research is an attempt to make people aware of death as a reality, to help them care for the bereaved in their grief, and to communicate the redemptive love of God to others primarily at the point of their need in concrete human situations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia will be a case study for this research work. The researcher's own experience and knowledge as participant observer will also be integrated into the material. Primary material comes from the data of field interviews among Aawambo.

1.4 Clarification of basic terms

It is essential for our discussion that in this section we clarify the meaning of basic terms used in this study:

(a) African

According to Mazrui, the term *muntu* is an indigenous African word meaning 'person'. Sometimes it means 'men' [sic] in the collective sense of humankind. It is the theme of humanism in African philosophical and political experience, complexing a main translation in perception across the centuries (1986: 295).

Paul Bohannan asserts that the widespread notion of Africans is that they are a race of Black people, characterised by dark skin. They are equated with blackness, the polar opposite of whiteness, or European origin (1971: 7).

"The Bantu-speaking people extend over most of the continent south of the Equator" (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1968: 59). They include the Lozi, the Herero, the Ovambo and the Zulu. These people originated from central and southern Africa. It is noted that throughout the vast region occupied by Bantu-speaking people, remnants of earlier pre-Bantu populations survive. The best example of these are the Pygmies of the Congo, the San (Bushmen) of the Kalahari Desert and the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) of Namibia and South Africa. Everywhere, as they expanded, Bantu cultivators did so at the cost of these earlier societies, gripping and incorporating them into Bantu culture. Many historians also confirm that historically the Bantu-speaking people have originated from Central Africa. The Africans now in the southern part of Africa had left Central Africa some centuries ago.

(b) Aawambo

"The Ovambo people include seven tribal groups: the Kwanyama, Ndonga, Kwambi, Ngandjela, Mbalantu, Kwaluudhi and Kolonkadhi-Eunda" (Horrel, 1967: 12). The languages of these people belong to the Bantu family and are inter-intelligible. Only the Ndonga and Kwanyama languages have been developed into a written form. "These people are established tillers and herdsmen, divided into broad kinship groups, based on the matrilineal system"; (Horrell, 1967: 13). They are living in an extended family. These people live on the far-northern part of Namibia, close to the Angolan border.

The following quotation from Williams has been included in full because of the complexity of the sources used:

Many writers who have written about Owambo people have made several attempts to clarify the etymology of their name. The name was first recorded by Galton (1851) and Andersson (1861). Schinz (1891) believed that the word 'Owambo' was of Herero origin; he explained that the stem of the word was not *-mbo*, but *-jamba*, which means rich, and he strongly believed that the name Owambo evolved from the word *Aayamba*. Hugo Hahn held that the stem of the word, *-mbo*, should be explained in connection with the word *gumbo* (homestead) and he believed that it was this word that differentiated the Owambo homestead from the "Bushmen" village ... Loeb (1962) connected it with cattle-posts (*oohambo*). Bruwer, (1966), and Estermann (1976), following Schinz and Lehmann, claimed that the name was of Herero origin. None of these explanations have thrown sufficient light on the etymology and historic origin of the name (Williams, 1991: 53-54).

There is a need for a proper investigation of the name 'Owambo'. Oral tradition, according to Williams, is perhaps the best source on how these people were named. According to the traditions of all Owambo ethnic- and cultural-related communities, there must be always a name-giver. It seems natural to agree that the Owambo were given this name either by their neighbours or by the people whom they found in the region where they came to settle (1991: 55).

The original name of these people could be '*Ovambo*' (meaning they belong to that place); '*Ovombo*' (there they are); '*Ovawambo*' (good people); '*Ovawambu*' (people of Wambu, also spelled out *Huambu*, *Huambo*, *Hambo*, *Vanambos* or *Ova-Uambo*); or '*Aayamba*' (that rich people). Williams strongly advocates:

... that the name evolved from all these terms as related to the root of the word 'Wambu'. This hypothesis is supported by the ethnic and cultural, as well as the linguistic, relationship between the Ovimbundu - related people that occupied the area of Wambu - and the Owambo (1991: 56).

Williams leaves this most challenging task to linguistic archaeologists in order to give us with evidence on the length of time that had elapsed after these languages separated (1991: 56).

On the other hand, Williams cannot deny the claim that Owambo people were known at one time as Aayamba. It seems that the name was given to them by *Aakwankala* (Bushmen) who were the old occupants of the area. This theory could be correct because until today the Bushmen still refer to Aawambo by the name Aayamba (1991: 56). The present writer however, is of the opinion that the question of the date of the Bushmen's arrival in Ovamboland also needs to be researched.

According to local traditional stories, the Ovambo people regard themselves from time immemorial, as a people who originated in Central Africa. They even used to say, for example: "*Otwa za kokule kevi lyomatale*" ("We are from very far, from the country of lakes").

Then they believe that they are descended from a common ancestor, Mangundu, who had two sons, Nangombe and Kadhu. The two sons emigrated southwards from those lakes. The two separated at the great *omumborombonga* tree. Kadhu became the Herero ancestor, and Nangombe the Ovambo's ancestor (Smith, 1966: 135-155). However, this belief regarding their ancestry needs further research in order to be verified.

(c) Culture

Vanhoozer is of the opinion that culture is the "objectification, the expression in words and the works of the 'spirit' of a particular people who inhabit a particular time and place." It is an effort of the person spirit to articulate itself by structuring and embodying values and conviction into actual forms. Thus culture is the process whereby pattern and meaning are given to matter through freedom. Culture, in its broadest sense, refers to the "world of human meaning" (1973: 6). A culture articulates the total of what a group of people value.

According to Brandwein culture means all the ways of thinking and acting that belong to a particular group of people. It is a way of life. He says that a culture is there when a person is born. At least every baby begins at birth to learn the culture into which he/she has been born (1970: 4).

Herskovits sees culture made up essentially of individual reactions to, and variations from a traditionally standardised pattern and of course, no culture can ever be understood unless special attention is paid to this range of individual manifestations (1958: 21).

Nida asserts that culture is all learned behaviour which is socially acquired; for example, material and non-material attributes which are passed on from one generation to another. It is a way of behaving, thinking, and reacting, but one does not see culture, one sees manifestations of culture in particular objects and actions (1954: 28-29).

According to the above four definitions one can identify that all are pointing to a common values of any group of people, namely; thinking, acting, individual manifestations and way of life. All these are transmittable from one

generation to another. There is no culture apart from society, but when speaking of the life of human groups, we often use the words 'culture' and 'society' in the same breath.

(d) Tradition

Tradition means "passing beliefs or customs from one generation to the next, especially without writing" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*).

(e) Caring ✓

Care, according to de Jongh van Arkel "takes place when people truly listen to each other; where they feel of each other; where they understand what the troubled person is going through; where they comfort, encourage, cheer up and try to support and help others." (1991: 98). Caring is the way to show feeling care to those who are in need of help from society. To care for can also mean 'like' or 'love' - to show love to others practically (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*).

(f) Bereavement

One can say grief is "the complex interaction of affective, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses to the loss of a person, place, thing, activity, status, bodily organ with whom a person has identified, who has become a significant part of an individual's own self" (Switzer, 1990: 472).

Grollman asserts that one becomes a mourner because of the death of one of one's close relatives like, father, mother, husband, wife, son or daughter, brother or sister, including half-brother and half-sister (1990: 476).

(g) Pastoral care and counselling

These two terms have to do with the restoration of courage and self-worth. As a result, growth will take place within individuals and their bond with each other (Clinebell, 1984: 26). "Pastoral care is the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community, throughout the life cycle" (Clinebell, 1984: 26). In other words, it is the whole perspective of the whole church.

Clinebell says further that pastoral counselling is one dimension of pastoral care. It is the utilization of different kinds of healing (therapeutic) methods to assist people handle their problems and crises more growthfully, in order to experience healing of their brokenness. Pastoral counselling is a reparative duty called for when the growth of humans is seriously endangered or obstructed by critical situations.

Meiburg defines 'care' in a narrow sense as being 'care of souls' which is a specific strand of pastoral care tradition. He describes it as '*seelsorge*' originated from the Reformation and particularly prominent in Lutheran pastoral theology. Pastors gave first concern to visit the sick, the dying and prisoners (1990: 122).

Patton sees pastoral counselling as a particular sub-type of the larger ministerial work of pastoral care (1990: 850). Here Patton is in full agreement with Clinebell. In this regard Patton is referring to the "ministerial oversight

of the total area or group for which one is responsible, such as a parish" (1990: 850). This stress upon a relationship to the religious community by a representative person separates pastoral counselling both from religious counselling in general, and from certain kinds of non-spiritual psychotherapy.

From the above definitions it is quite clear that pastoral care is the study and practice of the caring aspect of the church through the function of her pastors as well as of all Christians in the congregations. In pastoral counselling the counsellor explores with the counsellee the conflicting motives on an intrapsychic and interpersonal level. Counselling is basically ministering to individuals (McNeill, 1951: 163ff).

From this introduction, let us review the literature pertaining to Africans with specific reference to Aawambo in northern Namibia, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Aawambo practices in bereavement

2.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter the present writer will focus on three main aspects: Aawambo practices in bereavement; an investigation of contemporary Aawambo Christians' experiences of bereavement, and seven African cases of family mourning as examples. However, according to African culture, the whole life of a human being is a religious phenomenon, thus one cannot discuss death without discussing religious belief and practices. Hence life incorporates death and, without death and dying, life is incomplete. It is only in the face of death that it is meaningful to act. Since we are going to deal with bereavement, one cannot do it without touching the idea about death and death in general. But since the burial of a king among Aawambo was so special, the death of a king will be treated as a separate sub-section on its own. Rituals related to the funeral will also be addressed.

In the field work section we will explore the views of Aawambo themselves concerning the potential contribution of caring practices in bereavement to modern pastoral care and counselling. The two sample groups consisted of ten pastors and ten lay people. Ten questions were set out which were used during interview time, but this was done orally, with only a few answering the questions in writing.

After conducting the interview, we will try to reflect on seven African cases of family mourning using the researcher's own experience as participant observer. With this knowledge we will find out whether the data collection will match those cases of the experience of mourning. Our main aim is to try to find out whether we can establish

the role of the whole redemptive community in caring for the bereaved according to African context.

This chapter will be rounded off with the summary in which the main ideas are manifested.


2.1.2 Religious beliefs and practices

It seems practical to start with this topic because to an African, religion is a way of life. If we want to understand the attitude of death we must understand the attitude of life. We have to live in the face of death. According to Pobee *et al.* quoting Mbiti: "for Africans it [i.e. religion] is an ontological phenomenon; it pertains to the question of existence and being (1988: 134)." Pobee says further that:

... for Africans life is most meaningfully explained in a religious framework of existence, though the society is not thereby sacralist. In religion *homo Africanus* seeks answers - answers to questions concerning human destiny, the demands of morality, discipline, and the evils of injustice, suffering, and death.

Since death is a part and parcel of life, one cannot speak about bereavement without speaking of religious belief.

When we talk about religious belief, Aawambo believe in a Supreme Being known as Kalunga. He is the creator, endowed with the highest authority and power over the whole of creation, including the spiritual beings in the supernatural realm. However, Kalunga is involved with the everyday lives of human beings who are believed to be very restricted and consequently no active worship is directed at him. Kalunga can also be called *Pamba* or *Nampongo*, the all-knowedgeable, the all-intelligent being. (Aarni, 1982: 70; Hahn, 1927: 6 and Möller 1974: 133).



"Hence when questioned about the origin of Kalunga, the invariable reply is '*Kalunga Ka Nangombe*', which means 'the God of Nangombe'" (Hahn, 1927: 6). To Kalunga are ascribed all the good and bad which may fall upon people. When there is famine or plague in a country, it is the hand of God. Where there is plenty of rain and good harvest, it is a sign that Kalunga has not forgotten them (Möller, 1974: 133).

Aawambo knew God even before Christianity was brought to them. When a person is seriously ill and there is no hope at all, Ovambos can say: "*Okalunga ta talwa ashike*, which means, "We look just at God".

According to Estermann, the old heathens used to have a kind of trustworthiness in God. When they speak about something which is true, they liked to make an oath that it is the truth, by God "*Osili sa Kalunga*". Somebody who was poor, sick and neglected could call oneself a person of God (1976: 182).

Again, if a person escaped from danger, he/she assigned himself/herself to God, i.e. from the bite of a snake; a person would say: "I would have been bitten if God was not present." There are many proverbs which refer to God. To mention just one: "*Onkugo yepongo oKalunga he yi tondoka*". It means: "the lamentation of a poor person for help gets through to heavens" (Estermann 1976: 183). The point here is that to Aawambo the whole of existence is a religious phenomenon; a person is a deeply religious being living in a religious universe. Failure to realise and appreciate this starting point has led missionaries, anthropologists, colonial administrators and other foreign writers on Aawambo religions to misunderstand not only the religions as such, but the people themselves.

Hahn stresses that various prohibitions are noted. For example, it is important to have a feast just prior to the harvesting of crops. "This feast is known as *oshipe* and

is one which is held yearly by every heathen family in Ovamboland" (Hahn 1966: 3). When the corn is ripe the first wife of the house daily collects a few of the ripest ears of corn until she has a basket full. The corn is stamped, the porridge is made. When the meal is ready, the head of the household collects all his wives and children, including married sons and daughters. They come together round the dish which also includes berries and other first ripe *veld-kos* or crops. The head gives out a small portion to each of the members present by saying: "Eat of the rich harvest which is waiting to be reaped" (1966: 3). The ceremony is made very simple and is over in a short time. Then the sons and daughters who are married are sent back to their homes to celebrate their own *oshipe* (first fruit). In the olden days this custom took place as a practice throughout Ovamboland. It was prohibited to reap and eat new crops before this ceremony was carried out. This was because such negligence would show greed and thus the tribe would die of hunger (Hahn 1966: 3).

There was another religious practice - after the initiation of girls, the old woman who was in charge of the ceremony conducted a prayer as follows:

God of *Nangombe* give them offspring;
 May they find a handsome husband;
 One for every worth, woman;
 May he love her all his life;
 May he stay with her all her life;
 May he embrace her many times;
 May he have children only with her;
 May she have a fine big son;
 Or if she wishes a healthy daughter;
 May her kitchen be full of children.

(Knappert 1981: 159)

Knappert states that people say that God (Kalunga) is like the grandfather of all people. He cares for the poor and gives rain even to the evil ones. God will not leave you even if your mother does. When God (Kalunga) gives, so just accept it with open hands (1981: 158).

Muthithi (ancestor) is God's (Kalunga's) son, he is like God. *Muthithi* never becomes old, he cannot die and gives all people good things. Aawambo have many prayers. Some are traditional, some are new and fresh, some common, and some are very poetic which they speak to God (Kalunga) in times of need or in thanksgiving (1981: 158).

This idea coincides with the Christian faith that people pray to God when they are asking for something or are in a difficult situation. They also thank God for what he has done for them. It seems therefore true that both the non-Christians and the Christians have a belief in God who hears their prayers albeit calling Him in different names. Both these groups called God 'Kalunga'. This seems to be confirmed by Matthew 21: 22; Psalms 50: 15, Ephesians 4: 6 and Psalms 132: 15.

Just as the Israelites addressed 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', in the same manner Aawambo talk about Kalunga as the God of *Nangombe* and *Amangundu*, the two first men he created. Knappert says that "Kalunga will gently touch the forehead of those whom he has chosen to speak his word, to warn their people of famine, drought or other disasters" (1981: 157).

In this regard God (Kalunga) communicates through events and situations of all kinds. The providence of God is also one of his communications. Hence, in Aawambo traditional world view, just as in that of the whole African or Bantu speaking people, the wellbeing of a person is intimately connected with the wellbeing of the total creation.

Since there is no life without death, we shall concentrate on the origin and concept of death in the following section.

2.1.3 Concept of death

It appears that traditionally Aawambo have no information about the origin of death. Though Aawambo do not tell us the origin of death, they know that death is at hand. "Death, whatever may be its origin, is considered an ineluctable fatality" (Estermann 1976: 84). A well known riddle reflects this clearly:

'Ekwiyu lya taalela kOndonga'; 'Aantu ayehe okuusi ya taalela'.

This means: 'A large fig tree tilts toward *Ndonga* direction (toward the south).' The answer will be: All people are facing death. In other words, everyone has to die (Kuusi 1974: 60).

When death occurs, the person who is at home starts wailing in a high-pitched voice. This is called *oosa tadhi lili*. Everyone who is around repeats in a wailing tone, now higher and lower. News of death spreads very quickly to the surrounding houses, acquaintances and relatives of the dead. The degree of relationship with the deceased can be ascertained in the following phrases: 'Oh! My mother', 'Oh! My father' or 'Oh! My son'. One who is not related to the deceased would exclaim: '*Eefya dii! Eefya dii!*' which literally means: 'Cases of death are an evil thing!' or 'What a sad thing it is to die!' (Estermann 1976: 85).

According to Aarni the Ovambo also believed then in the living-dead as the living, watchful and powerful members of the family (1982: 70ff). On this point Malan is also in full agreement with Aarni (1980: 91). It is believed that in the Ovambo's conceptual world, death is looked upon merely as a change of condition. When a person dies, he/she is deemed to have reached the final phase of the "rites de

passage" as living-dead (Aarni 1982: 71). The dead were termed *aathithi* (spirit) (Aarni 1982: 71; Hahn 1927: 8).

Death was seen as taboo, thus they feared it. Aawambo's knowledge of life after death was very limited just because of fear. To them, *omwenyo lumwe*. This means, life is lived, but only once (Haapanen 1958: 118).

Traditionally it was believed that death meant the change to a new condition. The washing of the corpse symbolised the washing away of death. This was done in order to prepare it for a new life in its last rite of passage (Aarni 1982: 71). Aarni observes:

The deceased had only one place to go to, to the realm of death. Only those who had been killed by another person had no place with Kalunga (God) because the spirits of the unburied person were restless (1982: 72).

It was believed that when Kalunga called a person it was time for him/her to die (Knappert 1981: 157). That is why Aawambo consider the following riddles: "*Otali tuka ngaa lyo tali lambele*". This means, "It is a fact of life that some people are being born, while others are dying". Again, "*She ku pe Muthithi taamba*: meaning "What God has given accept it with open hands" (Loeb 1951: 331).

It is not only clear from these expressions that Aawambo see death as an instrument in God's hands, but also that it has become part of human history that must be accepted.

In his book, *Namibia Land and Peoples, Myths and Fables*, Knappert coins it in this proverb: "No man [sic] buries himself [sic]" (We must accept help sometimes), (1981: 195).

In the Ovambo tradition the burial procedure was decided with great care - otherwise the dead would not reach the world of the dead. This was a new stage meant for the living-dead. In order that the spirits should be at peace, it was important that the deceased were satisfied with their burial and that their successors had buried their dead according to their tradition (Aarni 1982: 72).

Aawambo had a general rule to bury their dead within the boundary of their homestead, Estermann (1976: 85-86), Hahn (1927: 33) and Loeb (1962: 260) (see Appendix A). The headmen and the master of the house are buried in the cattle kraal, their wives in "the vicinity of the area set apart for the stamping of corn", or in the area of their huts. Grown up boys are buried near the sleeping hut belonging to them, but smaller boys in the enclosure for the calves. Girls are buried in the locality of the area separated for the stamping of corn (Loeb 1962: 260).

Before house owners were buried, their bodies were wrapped in the ox hides, preferably black, which were slaughtered just after the death. It was the custom to have the end of the pestle protruding from the grave some 10 to 15 cm, the corral and the ox hide representing the Hamitic item and the pestle representing the farming element (Estermann 1976: 85).

During this time of mourning and burial the women do away with their ornaments, "ceasing for some time to wear the bead belt" (1982: 42). They also refrain from smearing themselves with an ointment called *olukula* (red ochre) and from bathing. It is not the tradition among the Aawambo on the occasion of a death or burial to rub the face with lotion. The general rule of burying the dead within the boundaries of the homestead is also the practice among Aawambo (Aarni 1982: 42).

The reason behind this practice of burial, it is believed, is that death has replaced life in the deceased, however, the life after death should be the same as on earth.

People should be buried near their properties so that they can be in touch with every day life activities.

There is room for thorough research on this burial practice in order to find the basic roots and pros and cons.

Aawambo did not wait long before they bury their dead. It was obvious that the burial was done on the same day that person died because there were no mortuaries with refrigerators or facilities as are available today. The corpse was wrapped in the hide of an ox, preferably black, slaughtered for the mourning feast. The colour black is associated with nobility, wealth and royalty, whereas white is associated with poverty.

Aawambo did not have cemeteries (Estermann 1976: 85; Loeb, 1962: 260). Some tribes such as Aakwambi used to throw their dead in the forest or on the field. They did not bury their dead.

The fact that the dead among Aandonga and Aakwanyama were buried within the bounds of the homesteads is because the deceased were associated with their normal responsibilities in everyday life. This reflects on the belief of Aawambo that life after death is more or less a continuation of life before death. It was also normal practice that the dead were buried with objects meant to be of service to them in their new life. Such objects could be, for example, stamping sticks, straw, corn, smoking pipes, bows, walking sticks, and seeds (Aarni 1982: 421). This indicated a strong belief in life after death (Loeb 1962: 261).

The dead were buried with the face pointing toward the east which is associated with fortune. According to tradition, it was also believed that ancestors (*aathithi*)

were in the east, though there were some also in the west. The former were regarded as the givers of fortune, while the latter, the givers of bad luck.

Since the traditional funeral rituals of the king among Aawambo is quite different from that of common people, we shall discuss them separately.

2.1.4 Death of a king

2.1.4.1 Ritual acts before and during burials

After the death of a king, the news was announced by the elders and spreads promptly throughout the whole tribe (Hahn 1927: 14; Loeb 1962). However, the news of the death is not spread and announced immediately but only after the chief counsellors have finished organizing who will be the follower of the deceased one.

The burial should be on the second day after the announcement of the death. Many tribesmen attend this funeral. According to Loeb, the death of a king was kept secret for four days. During that interim, while he was reported "sick", the chief counsellors chose his successor (1962: 61).

After the death of a king, the person who is to succeed him is immediately summoned by the elders of the tribe and taken into the kraal [sic] of the departed ruler outside which a gathering of the whole tribe takes place (Hahn 1966: 14).

He is told by the senior member of the elders that the king has passed away. He is then informed that he will follow him and that the tribe will accept him since this was the custom and traditional practice of that time.

A number of brave men go quickly and with their knobkerries strike the ground at the new king's feet and shout, "*Kala u na omwenyo*", meaning "Our Chief, you have come to remain with a long life." (Hahn, 1966: 15).

Food is now supplied and all who are present are invited to partake of the meat of the deceased king's oxen. What is interesting on this occasion and which is a good example of caring is that it is *oshidhila* (taboo) to drink beer on this occasion. Beer cannot be used because the tribe is still in sorrow for their late king and the new ruler has not yet accepted chieftainship in his own house. This example of not using beer seems good to use on our mourning occasions. However, among the Aakwanyama tribe beer was used (Loeb 1962: 261).

The king was buried in this manner. A black ox was slaughtered and the corpse of the king was wrapped up in the still blood-stained skin and carried to the cattle kraal. It was placed on the surface in a sitting position. It was not buried in the ground because it would have been an insult to a ruler to place him under the earth of a country of which he was the king and father.

The body was held up in a sitting position. The weighty wooden poles, which varied in length from 5 to 10 feet, were "planted in a circle round it in such a manner as to incline towards and meet in the centre at the top" (Hahn 1966: 15). This design formed the grave (*ompampa*) (see Appendix B plate 1 and 2); (Hiltunen 1993: 77). The burial ceremony takes only very little time.

2.1.4.2 Rituals and symbolic acts after burials

Two grave-keepers were appointed to watch over the tomb. An important function was the feeding of the spirit of the departed. The food was taken to the grave (*ompampa*) and scattered over it in small quantities by the nobleman and his

helpers in a kneeling position, saying: "*Tate, otwa lile onyama, otwe ku etele*". This means: "Father, we were eating meat and brought some for you" (Hahn, 1966). When the poles of *ompampa* became old or fell down, the ruling king had to slaughter an ox, have the fallen or renewed stakes smeared with its blood so as to give them new life and have them replaced (Hiltunen 1993: 77-78; Hahn 1927: 15).

The period of mourning lasted from four to six days. The house of the deceased king became packed daily with many people who have come to pay their last respects to their king. From early in the morning until after sunrise and again from late in the afternoon until after darkness has set in, "the older tribesmen parade slowly and solemnly in stooping attitudes, shouldering their walking sticks, round the *ompampa*" (grave) (Hahn, 1927: 15). They shout in sorrowful tones, "*omo e li, omo e li?*" - this means, "Is he there, is he there?" to which the women and young people, kneeling near the grave and moving their bodies backwards and forwards, answer, in long drawn out wailing, "*kemo, kemo!*", meaning, "No, he is not there, no he is not there!" This is the style of mourning in order to release their grief and to show condolences to the family of the deceased. Anyone who has witnessed such mourning will never forget the wailing and sorrowful expressions of the mourners (Hahn 1927: 15).

The mourners remain in the house from six to ten days. It is only during the mourning occasion that a king's house is overrun by ordinary people of all classes. Even the members of the ruling family can mix freely with common people in order to share sorrow.

Mourning for the reigning king lasted for weeks and was compulsory for the whole tribal population, who made it a rule to have a rest (*ongondji*) once a king died. The duration was one month or more (Estermann, 1976: 87; Loeb, 1962: 62). This was suitable during that time when there was no professional work but in today's times

the days for resting (*ongondji*) can be minimized to a few days, and is no longer obligatory.

It is common in life that where there is death there is always fear, followed by symbols, rituals and practices after death. Henceforth let us find out what type of practices occur after death and why these practices are carried out. Our focus will be on common people.

2.1.5 Death and burial of common people

2.1.5.1 Fear of death and symbolic acts

After the death of a father or husband the wives continue living in his house for several months, especially if it is summer or winter and it is compulsory to cultivate the fields once again. They have to carry on with their work until the harvest time has passed. It was then a rule that they could therefore be married again, but before remarriage, would have to be purified by a medicine man to obtain special herbs of death, or they could go back to their relatives (Estermann 1976: 86; Loeb 1962: 259).

There were categories of the deceased who were not buried: those publicly condemned as practitioners of witchcraft, those who died during the mourning period of a king, those who committed suicide, those who died of disease, and those who died of hunger (Hahn 1927: 33; Loeb 1962: 260). In some tribes of Owambo those in the first categories were thrown into the rivers, but the distrusted and undernourished were left on the field where death cut them down. This practice cannot be justified since there is no caring in it, only rejection.

When somebody dies, things were turned upside down. If the corpse of a person had to be removed from the room where he/she had died, it must not go through the

normal entrance but another entrance should be made (Loeb 1962: 161). The whole hut as such should never be used again. The normal entrance of the house is closed and a new entrance is made, because it is believed that the dead cannot share the same entrance with the living. It is an omen, otherwise people will be affected by death. If the deceased was a wife, a new sleeping hut and a new kitchen should be built for any future wife. In the case of a husband, the whole house has to be reshaped and become a small house for a woman. It can even be moved from the original place to a new one.

If a person dies somewhere outside the house, when they bring the corpse into the house, it must not be transported along the footpaths of the living. It must also enter the house through a new entrance. It is through this gateway that the corpse must enter and exit (Loeb 1962: 161). Mourners also have to use the new entrance. The reason behind this practice is that the living may be caught up by death if they use the normal entrance. When the corpse is brought into the house from outside all the people should leave the house and stand outside until the corpse has entered the house. It is taboo for the corpse to be brought in while people are inside the house. Such practice is still used today by Aawambo. The reason is still that the living may be affected by death if they are found inside the house. But there is no evidence in this that people will die. It is only that they are afraid of the outcome of death, hence the careful avoidance of the taboo.

2.1.5.2 Care for the deceased

Immediately after a person had passed away the body was stripped, washed, and rubbed with *olukula* (red ochre) (Estermann 1976: 85; Loeb 1962: 161). This was done in order to prepare it for a new life in its last rite of passage. By washing the corpse, it was also believed that death was thus washed off the corpse, so that it was not transported to the new life where the deceased is going (Aarni 1982: 71).

It seems that Aawambo have tried their best to prepare their corpses and to console the bereaved. The weakness was only their fear of death which caused them to do some worthless practices in order to prevent death. Of course they were children of their time. Notwithstanding even today the corpse is still prepared for funerals, though according to modern ways, but the concern and sympathy are just the same.

We need to share the grief of our fellow people. The bereaved will only find restoration through our empathy, affirmation and encouragement through our support. Our sensitivity will help us to restore bereaved persons to useful living. In bereavement we need to perceive reality reflected by mourners in their mourning lamentations and their cultural experiences.

Having said this, we now turn to the language of mourning which is different from everyday common language.

2.1.5.3 The language of mourning including taboos

Communication is an act of transmitting a message, a process by which meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols.

In connection with death, funerals and objects used during and after the mourning period, Aawambo use a special language which indicates that things are no longer normal. They use euphemism, and they use phrases which are not pleasant.

(a) The language to express sympathy

When somebody has died (*okwa sa*) Aawambo change the word into euphemism in order to avoid normal use of the terms. Here are some examples which the researcher has heard people using:

- *Ke ko we* = He/she is no more.
- *Okwa hulitha* = He/she has completed.
- *Nima okwa tauluka omulonga* = So and so has crossed the river.
- *Nima okwe li denga po* = So and so fell down.
- *Okwe tu thiga po* = He/she has left us.
- *Okwa tetekela* = He/she has preceded us.
- *Okwa mana oondjenda* = He/she knocked off.
- *Aka vululukwa* = He/she has gone for a rest.

When one scrutinizes carefully these euphemisms used above, one could agree with Aarni when she says that the Aawambo believed in the living-dead as the living, watchful and powerful members of the family. There was a continuity after death which could not be broken. Death is looked upon merely as change of condition. The land of death usually meant a continuation of life on earth (1982: 70-71).

To die means that one is still alive where he/she has gone and has just left his/her people behind. That is why at the graveside the living would say: "*Oombidhi nadho omelila ngaa dhi II*", which means, "We are also behind, following you".

When someone dies the first indication given to inform others, especially the neighbours, is to wail at the top of one's voice. Those who will come to see what has happened will not use the normal greetings but will be in silence and have a seat. After this silence they will ask: "Are you not getting on well?" One will answer, "We are not well, so and so has left us". The neighbours continue by saying, "Is it that what has happened, what can we do? It is said that what *Muthithi* (God) has given you, accept it". One can see that death is never mentioned because it is a taboo. Aawambo fear death, but when it occurs they accept it.

This is confirmed by Hasheela who says that what is going to bite you will not pass you by. This means that one cannot postpone a danger or the day of one's death (1986: 97).

When it comes to greetings after death, they take on a different form before the deceased is buried. The usual "*mwa lala poo!* or *mu uhala poo!* or *mwa tokelwa poo!*" formulas are replaced by "*mwe shi uvu koo?*", meaning: "Have you heard about it?" They will answer, "Yes, we have heard it".

Traditionally people do not shake hands, the shaking of hands was introduced by missionaries.

(b) The symbolic language and taboos

The following section is a reflection on pastoral experiences of the writer's ten years in parishes in Owambo. This will also include the language of mourning. There is no specific literature on this topic.

Those who come to the house of the deceased go straight to where the mourners are gathering, especially near the deceased's sleeping hut. Silence reigns in the home or, if they have to speak, it is done in low voices.

Those who arrive for the first time start to wail when they come near to the home. The mourners at the home answer them by wailing as well. After they have seated themselves they will stop wailing and silence reigns, accompanied by positive non-verbal communications - hmm, hmm.

Aawambo believe that if one does not weep during this period, one is happy with another person's death. Crying is one of the most obvious symbols of

communication in order to feel with the bereaved. Weeping is contagious, it is a catalyst for encouraging one another to cry.

When the owner of a house has died, his or her belongings change by naming them. In *Oshiwambo* we say *egumbo* for a house, but if the owner died it is called *oshigumbo*, *oonguyo* (clothes) become *iiguyo*, kitchen (*elugo*) becomes *oshilugo*, traditional drink (*ontaku*) becomes *Oshintaku* and meat (*onyama*) becomes *oshinyama*. The prefix *oshi* indicates something bad. In other words, things have lost their value.

During mourning days people in most cases use signs and non-verbal communication. It is obligatory that quarrels do not take place during mourning time.

In most cases the bereaved like to tell stories of how the deceased behaved during his/her life and how death came and the cause of it. The mourners have to listen attentively. They do this in order to bear with the bereaved. They want to show him/her that they are available. This helps the bereaved to release their emotions and tensions.

All these symbolic actions in communication show that people do care for one another even though at the time they are in fear of death.

According to Hiltunen, the language of mourning includes taboos which are a sort of negative magic. "While good magic tells people to do some things, taboos tell them not to do other things, thus they are opposite ways of attaining a desired result" (1993: 35). For example, when people leave for their house they do not tell anybody that they are leaving, except if they are really close friends to the relatives of the departed. They try always to avoid death. It was believed that death was

transferrable from one person to another. Sometimes those who are departing just say, "*Otwa pita mo*", if they want to say a word. This means, "We departed".

During mourning time when you are given something you do not say thank you. But the question is, could we really avoid death? It is there already and beyond our control.

Among Aakwanyama there are so-called professional wailers. These people were consulted by those who were going to mourn to go with them for wailing purposes. They did so in order to show a concern for the bereaved.

Those who come to console the bereaved have to cry, mentioning the ascribed status of the bereaved. If he/she was the first-born, they have to say: "*Woo!* [exclamatory word in *Oshiwambo*] our first born!" or "My grandmother!" or "Why my son! Why my son!" the mentioning of the ascribed status of the deceased is to put oneself in the place of the bereaved - to feel his/her grief. All the abovementioned practices are done in a mood of sympathy. But of course human beings exist in a network of relationships. Thus caring for the bereaved is and should be an act of love, a concern for social responsibility. Pastoral care in grief is a Christian community ministry.

Since we have talked about the language of mourning, it is also worthwhile to reflect on what types of proverbs are used by Aawambo during the time of bereavement in relation to death.

2.1.5.4 Proverbs of bereavement

In his book *Omishe di dule eyovi*, Hasheela describes a number of proverbs on the area of grief, those which can be pronounced to the bereaved as well as to the

mourners (1986: 4ff). These proverbs are used to console people or to reflect the caring aspects upon the bereaved and proverbs are still used today among Aawambo. An example is:

- *Eenghali/omakali olufo: mongula oove = Dimbulukwa kutja mukweni ngeenge e li moudjuu nena otaku ke uya yo efiku to kala yo moudjuu. Eenghali oshiima hashi eta oluhodi shi dule oinima aishe. Hekeleka vakweni momaluhodi.*

This means:

"Mourning comes in turns: tomorrow it will be you" =
Remember while your friend may be in trouble today, the day will come when you will be in trouble too.

(Hasheela 1986: 4)

Mourning is something bringing more grief than anything. It is necessary to comfort your friends when they are in grief.

It is a fact that nobody can console himself/herself, we need to take care of one another in life. Nobody is an island to himself/herself.

More examples are:

- *(Oshiima) eshi sha lya ina yamukweni inashi kuta = Mukweni ngeenge a filwa mu etela onghenda shaashi naave otashi dulika u filwe. Lungama oshiponga sha hangele mukweni.*

Something which killed your friend's mother is not satisfied -

If your fellow-person's (family) is struck by death, show sorrow for him/her because yours may also be struck by death. Take care of the dangers which have befallen others.

Kalunga ite ku etha nga nyoko = Ekwatha lyaakuluntu oli na oongamba.

God does not leave you like your mother = Help and care from God are unending. Help from a parent has a boundary (is confined).

- *Nima okwa ka shaama nowishi = Nima okwa fya nokwa pakwa*

X went with the moccabee's nest = X died and is buried.

(Moccabees live underground where they make sweet honey. They do not sting people (Hasheela, 1986: 44).

- *Nima okwa nyonauka ko = Nima okwa fya*

This is a euphemism:

X is ruined [destroyed] = X is dead.

Shinyoko shii, ongeenge ina fya = ngeenge a fi wa mona oixuua.

Call your mother nicknames while she is alive, when she dies you will have difficulties = When your mother is alive you may see her as the one who treated you badly but when she is dead you realise that to be without your mother is very painful.

- *Ondjugo ya kolongwa ihayi ilala = Eso lyoye ngele lya thiki ku na mpo to li henukile.*

A room being plastered cannot be slept in by itself = When the time of your death comes, you cannot avoid it. It is possible that you have been the cause of the accident that has befallen you.

(Hasheela 1986: 44-101)

Likewise Haapanen gives us other proverbs of bereavement:

- *Onkugo yi na omusi, ihayi galuka = Oshiponga sha ziminwa ku Kalunga, ihashi keelelwa.*

Where there is a wail there is no return = The danger which is allowed by God, cannot be avoided.

- *Shaa to kombo to lala = Uuyuni kau shi wetu aluhe.*

So, sweep and sleep = The world is not ours for ever.

- *Sha li mukweni sha yi, ngula ya nofu ongoye tashi ile po = Eso tali ku ile po wo nofu.*

That which ate your companion has gone, the next time it will come to fetch you = Death will come to fetch you next time.

- *Siku lyoye, siku lyamukweni = Mukweni sho e na oluhodhi nena, ngula olwoye.*

The day is yours, the day of your colleague = As your colleague is having sorrow today, tomorrow is yours.

- *Silo lyoye iha kondwa = Omuntu okwa pewa omasiku ga yalulwa, nge ga pu ko, ito ga kondo we.*

You don't pass over your day of death = A person's days are numbered, if they come to an end you don't extend them any more.

- *Uuyuni tau tsu kondongolondongo = Uuyuni otau hulu.*

The world will come to the upshot = The world will come to an end.

(1958: 158ff)

One can see here that Aawambo talk about death with caution and a softening of the words. Why? Death is something sensitive. But Aawambo know and believe that God (Kalunga) has motherly attributes; on the other hand He is thought of as male. Loeb points out in similar manner that, if many wives have abandoned their husbands in a certain area, the husbands are comforted by this proverb: "The wife of Kalunga she [also] ran away" (1951: 330).

Estermann says that there is a more general prayer which is used in all dangers: "*Kalunga, Pamba*, help us! Help us to have good fortune! Help us today and tomorrow!" Aawambo did pray to God, through ancestors, in all circumstances. He was seen as all knowledgeable and one who cares for them. From the above reported proverbs one realises that among Aawambo a person is a person through other persons. It is therefore impossible for an African to be healthy unless he/she belongs to a healthy community. Secondly, death is a reality and nobody can avoid it. Life incorporates death and, without death and dying, life is incomplete (1976: 184).

It is clear that where there is death there is a burial, but where there is a funeral there are also rituals related to funerals.

2.1.5.5 Mourning lament recited at the graveside

Loeb describes a number of songs recited by women over the grave of a dead male relative. Every death was ascribed to God (Kalunga). If a person has passed away people say "*Kalunga (God) ailapu omunu waye*" [sic] which means "God took his/her life [soul]". Initially deaths were at the same time assigned to slighted ancestors (*aathithi*), and to the abuses of witches (1951: 321).

As an example the following song is recited by women over the grave: every woman rehearses one line, but many more lines, in addition to those given here, may come after as feelings dictate. The mourners weep and sing over and over again - "Oh, my mother", or "Oh, my father!" according to ascribed status and relationship of the dead (Loeb, 1951: 321).

- *Ando ha nena!* = Would it were not today!
- *Kalunga owa ithana mbala!* = Kalunga, you have called too soon.
- *Mu pa omeya, okwa ya inaa lya* = Give him/her water, he/she has left without food.
- *Tema, ina sa uutalala* = Make a fire, he/she must not die of cold.
- *Tu longekidhileni ehala* = Prepare a place for us.
- *Inga tu ku adha* = In a little while we shall join you.
- *Kunda ongundu!* = Give greetings to the crowd!
- *Tu li hangeni* = Farewell, until we meet again.

(Loeb 1951: 321)

The researcher also remembers some laments heard while he was serving in parishes:

- *Ombidhi omelila yi li* = I am also after you.
- *Ngele kwa luudha ongame* = If you see something dark it is me.
- *Isaagela kuume* = Be courageous my friend.
- *Oshike kaana ka meme?* = Why my mother's child?.
- *Egulula osheelo ndi pite!* = Open the gate so that I may enter!.
- *Ohwi ikundu Kuume!* = Greet yourself, friend!

One can realise that most of the lamentations are directed to the deceased. Why? It should be borne in mind that for an African life continues even after death. This seems to agree with the teaching of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. On the other hand death is feared among the Ovambos. But at the same time death in their life assumes a more portentous role than birth.

It seems reasonable to agree with Raum when he says that "The African view of life in the other world is that it is another phase of life". The entrance into it is achieved through death. Life after death is just a continuation to another world (1969: 59-66).

Aawambo believe that there is a land where there are people without belts - i.e. naked. It is where one day they will meet. Thus they say, "pass greetings to the crowd."

Vedder remarks that traditionally it was believed that Kalunga, who is high and divine, revealed himself at several places. He appeared as an old man in shabby clothing. It was told of him that he was holding "two baskets on his arms, in one of these he carried happiness and in the other misfortune". He handed out the

contents of these baskets according to a person's conduct and according to his (Kalunga's) own wishes (1966: 67).

From the abovementioned idea Loeb considers it necessary to agree with the following religious proverbs:

Kalunga iha kwatelwa ta tenge oto mu tompakanitha = God
needs no help when he is cutting, you bend his way.
Kalunga fulenge! = God blow on me!

She ku pe Pamba, tambula nomaoko avalu = That given by
God, take with two hands (1951: 330-331).

It is also believed that a cry for help of a poor or a stranger only God will help
(*Onkugo yepongo oKalunga he yi tondoka*)

(Haapanen 1958: 148).

2.1.6 Rituals related to the funeral

Burial customs and ceremonials differ a little among Aawambo. In the early years in Ondonga district after the death of a king no person was allowed to be buried until such time as the king's grave (*ompampa*) had been washed clean by rains.

To have disturbed the ground in the deceased rulers' area for burial purposes before rain had fallen would not only have annoyed the spirit but would also have been a sign of disrespect (*ondhino*) to the dead king (Hahn, 1927: 33)

In Aakwanyama, the king was buried in the grave in his cattle kraal. In both Aandonga and Aakwanyama tribes, the king or chief was buried with one slave girl,

to be of service to him in the new world, to tend his pipe, and the fire. A slave is a person who was captured during war against another tribe (Loeb, 1962: 161f).

Further observation concerning the practices of the Aakwanyama and Aandonga on the death of a king are appropriate; a young girl was placed alive on the skin, and the king's head was laid on her lap. The skin was drawn over the king and the young girl, and earth was piled up on the grave (Loeb, 1962: 62; Andersson, 1969: 75).

Some people who were eligible for being buried with the king did escape their fate, but it was apparently a great honour to be appointed for such a royal service. The corpse was rubbed with butter and red ochre and decorated with black beads, the sign of mourning. A small drum was beaten in a rapid staccato that could be heard far away announced the death. Messengers also were despatched over the country (Loeb, 1962: 61).

As it was said earlier, the dead do not share entrances or pathways with the living. When someone died the entrances to the house are closed and a new one is made especially during the time of mourning. According to Aarni the way to the grave has to take "the straightest way through the kraal" (sic) (1982: 42). Funeral processions should not go through other people's fields, especially via their houses. Anyone who does not obey such customs will cause a bad omen - *ota hunu*, which may bring death. When they returned from the burial, Aawambo wash their hands at that special entrance. This was done to wash death off. They have then to share the meat which is prepared for all the people who have come - it is meat only. It is not necessary to eat to one's satisfaction while there is sorrow.

The official mourning used to start after the burial. The funeral day can be counted as the first day of the mourning period. For an adult, the mourning period is four days, for the youth two, for the child one; (Estermann, 1976: 855). This period is well known as a seat (*omutumba*). This is because during such period no work was done except the preparation of meals for the bereaved by the neighbours. Even in the neighbouring houses no work was done. People have to feel with the death-stricken people in order to carry the burden together.

During that period of mourning people do not sleep inside the huts but outside, probably because these cannot accommodate them all. Secondly, people cannot sleep in the bedrooms in the normal way as they used to sleep. Things are not normal any more.

Estermann says that when death occurs, people directly affected promptly start to utter piercing cries and wails, which are heard far away (1976: 84). Such cries and wailing were not only an expression of sorrow but also a call upon the surrounding community to be aware of the sad news. Anyone who hears this wailing would leave everything and hasten in order to see what has happened. This first rush of people is called *oshitondoka* which literally means 'to run'. Those who were absent during the funeral and the mourning period have to make it a point that they must pay a visit to the bereaved. This special visit after such a period is called *omupendu*, meaning to 'say good morning' but in the true sense of the word is sharing grief.

Those who come to the house of the deceased bring food as an aid but they do not eat much, just a little bit. More often the bereaved fast on the day of somebody's death. The following day he/she may just have a small quantity. Such food, which is brought, is handed to anybody, and is put down where those in serving people will see and take it.

As was said earlier, the bereaved would always like to tell stories about their deceased, especially his/her death - how it has taken place. Ashipala says that most of the listeners used to think that it is not good that the bereaved tell such stories and many listen to them with patience because they do not want to ignore them. But Ashipala affirms the value of this practice:

But to tell the story is not just to inform the people about the issue, on the contrary, it is something to calm down their grief. By telling the story they release their sorrow out of their hearts. For this reason it is good to let them cry or tell stories, even though we may feel impatient. People need to know that crying in caring is not dangerous, but it helps a person to refrain from depression. Thus in psychoanalysis there is a bitterness of cry, but the end result will be an abundance of joy (1972: 58).

This seems true, a person who does not deal with his/her own feelings cannot be successful in dealing with the feelings of others. The impact of ministry to other people should reflect our insights into one's own self. This is an area where one can grow.

At the end of the mourning period, all the fires are put out and the ashes thrown away in the bushes in the field. This indicates that the mourning feast has reached an end. The meaning behind the throwing away of the ashes is not clear. This can be left for further research. All people gather together outside the house near the entrance and an announcement is made by one of the neighbours, preferably an old man. The focus is mainly on whether there is any person who has owed the deceased or the deceased owed him/her. This is done so that things should be known in public and nobody will come later and give trouble to the bereaved with something which was not revealed in public during the announcement. If the

deceased was a wife, it is here where some of the orphans can be inherited by the husband's brothers. If the deceased was a husband, the orphans can be inherited by his brothers also. This is done if the remaining spouse cannot afford to bring up all the children if they are all still young.

After this, many friends and relatives will then return to their own homes. This will be after four days. But neighbours will continue to come and pay a visit and talk. Even though people have returned to their homes, a few relatives have to remain for moral support to the bereaved for perhaps two weeks or a month. This is done to help the bereaved in the process of restoring healthy living. This is how people used to care for one another in times of affliction. Caring practices were used long ago even before Christianity was brought to Africa.

On this basis of Aawambo practices in bereavement as it is reflected in the literature, it seems more essential to listen to the views of contemporary Aawambo Christian experiences of bereavement. This will help us to compare the two faces in an attempt to find agreement or differences. Thus, the following section will focus on field work.

2.2 Investigation of contemporary experiences of bereavement among Aawambo Christians (field research)

2.2.1 Aim of field research

The previous section on literature review from Aawambo context (2.1) has shown, according to the researcher's view, that it seems as if there are some positive practices in bereavement which could be used as a contribution to modern pastoral care and counselling. These traditional caring practices could be integrated for cross-cultural perspectives and richness in caring for the grief-stricken.

It has been observed in the introduction (1.2) that the shortage of literature in this area of study has challenged the researcher to embark on field research. This was done in order to accumulate more information from contemporary Aawambo themselves.

For this purpose, the researcher developed interview questions in order to explore specific aspects. These ten interview questions will fall under interview data collection (2.2.5) with the sub-heading 'Research Questions'.

The researcher, therefore, was not interested in imaginary impressions but in what was taking place in the actual situation. He wants to utilize what people themselves say. This is a non-scheduled unstructured interview to give an accurate account of the characteristics of a particular phenomenon or situation in the researcher's community.

2.2.2 Methodology of fieldwork

The fieldwork methods are participant observer and interviews. The researcher had ten research questions at hand while he was interviewing people. On some occasions he was a participant observer as well.

The participant observer and interview methods are used because the researcher seeks to explore tradition and contemporary practices in a concrete way, not relying on impressions or imagination. He wants to utilize what people say, bearing in mind that words can carry much weight and depth, and to exploit that as far as possible. In order to observe with responsibility one needs a structure or plan.

2.2.2.1 Subjects and sampling

Twenty people were interviewed consisting of ten African pastors and ten African lay people. They were not chosen for comparison purposes but for the balance of information. Pastors are the shepherds of lay people and other professionals, who officiate at funerals, and care for and counsel the bereaved. They are also the ones who have been most influenced by Western theology and Christianity. On the other hand, lay people are always in a conflict of cross-cultural caring practices. Sometimes they hide some of the practices from the pastors. They can also give some ideas of the potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practice in bereavement to a Christian caring system. The two sample groups (pastors and lay people) of subjects are therefore compared individually, and controlled for the following variables: male, female, age, married, widow, widowers, and educational level.

(a) Pastors

The parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the northern part of Namibia, especially in Owambo, were used as the resource for drawing the pastors as subjects. Parish pastors, as well as those who work in offices, were contacted personally for the purpose of explaining about the study, and the aim of the interview was discussed. This preceded the interview. Since the parishes are far from one another, the researcher had to travel many kilometres in order to contact the pastors. For some pastors, appointments were made while for others they were not made.

(b) Lay people

The researcher travelled from house to house for the lay subjects. Some lay people were found in their employment. The interview was done orally

because some of them could not write. The questions were at hand. Some of the people interviewed were open enough but some were a bit reserved.

2.2.3 Instruments

(a) Interview

An open-scheduled, unstructured interview was made for personal data and information on the experiences of pastors and lay people for the potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement.

(b) Unstructured research questions (Appendix C)

Ten questions were set out on separate paper which was used during interview time, but this was done orally. Only two answered the questions by writing. The whole interview was done in the vernacular, on each occasion. This was done because of the time factor and because some of the subjects among the lay people could not write properly.

(c) Observation

During this field work, the interviewer was a participant observer in two families who had experienced the loss of a child, one in each family. I paid a special visit before the funerals took place, and I conducted a sermonette in each. In both families the bereaved were telling stories about the deceased children. One could observe that some of the bereaved reacted emotionally and they were sensitive to their experience. Fear was realised in the faces of surviving children. These events took place in two different parishes.

The researcher has also observed how people behaved at a funeral of a certain widow. One could experience the reign of silence. Here the researcher was just observing and did not even talk to people. There was a spirit of fear since this woman was a victim of AIDS, and many people knew this. She was ill for quite a long time. She left her young family alone in their home.

In one home, a young lady had passed away. When the researcher paid a visit the following morning he met with the neighbours who had come to console the family. This was what we call an first rush of the people (*oshitondoka*).

Some of these neighbours came with beer. When we were entering the house we were singing a hymn while they were carrying their two little containers of beer. Here I decided to keep quiet but one woman from our group, after we had sat down, quoted some verses from the Bible in order to console the mourners. One of the neighbours was already under the influence of liquor. Others did not listen to the woman, they were making conversation among themselves. The bereaved children were also making a noise while they were listening to a programme over a radio. One realised that there was no spirit or feelings of grief amongst the adults at all, much of the noise was caused by the consumption of liquor.

The interviewer has paid special visits also to three families in his home parish. These visits were done after the funerals and it was already after one or two months. According to Aawambo tradition, the necessity to pay a special visit (*omupendu*) cannot expire. It can be done even after a year if one was not present during the mourning period, including the funeral. When I visited these families, we shared some incidents concerning the deceased's suffering and death. They did appreciate such a visit. One could realise that sorrow was still reflected in their

attitudes and words. Two of the families had lost a son/daughter, one in each family. The third family had lost a husband and father in a car accident.

2.2.4 Discussion of instruments used in the study

The interview focuses on the local perspective of African Christians' experience of bereavement in comparison with Western influences on caring practices in grief. The content of the interview mainly addresses issues relating to the grief-stricken people according to age level characteristics (both male and female). The issues are on the area of grief, specifically pertaining to comforting the bereaved persons before Christianity came. It was also questioned whether the traditional caring practices in bereavement show a weakening in the Christian faith.

All these characteristics are the basis of the research questions consisting of ten items.

2.2.5 Interview data collection

The data collection was conducted by the researcher in verbatim transcripts. This was conducted with pastors and lay people. Each subject was initially visited at his/her home or at his/her work place for the purpose of requesting his/her participation in the study. The time spent extending an invitation and explaining the purpose of the study to the prospective subject was \pm twenty minutes with each person. Most subjects preferred to be seen at home after work. Each interview lasted for an hour because it was done orally. The questions were translated into the vernacular because most of the respondents could not understand English.

An account of seven families described in (c) is the record of the researcher's observation of events as a participant observer. Thus in this case the researcher was not interviewing anybody and was not posing questions in order to collect

precise information. These were cases in addition to the actual interviews where questions were put to the subjects.

The following aspects will be the actual interview data collection, as it was conducted among 20 people. This was conducted according to the order of the list of research questions. Thus this will be the survey, the number of answers to the same question by different people.

2.2.5.1 Did Aawambo comfort the bereaved before Christianity came to Africa?

According to Question 1, as stated above, all respondents have answered that Aawambo did comfort the bereaved before Christianity came to Africa.

2.2.5.2 Why did they do so?

Aawambo did so to affiliate together. They did so to comfort, encourage, to share the grief and to be closer to one another. Fear of death drew them together. They helped one another. If one did not go to comfort the other, he/she might put a grudge upon him/her. People need one another in difficult times. It seems as if natural laws coincide with Christian principles. Some respondents said that it was done for social life, while others said God gave people knowledge to be aware of one another. If one person is sick, all members are sick.

2.2.5.3 What are Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved that you know?

Respondents said that Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved are: Relatives go to stay with the bereaved. When going there they take food, water and firewood as help for the bereaved. They make a sitting (*omutumba*) and do not

allow the bereaved to do anything except to be served. Children are taken care of. The bereaved are told to accept what Kalunga (God) has given them. Wailing together was a special comfort, even today. After the burial they stay there for two days for a youth, four days for an adult and one full day for a child. They tell stories about the deceased. After the burial, the bereaved are given a child or a grown up person to stay with them. The bereaved were taken to healers for purification, especially if the grief was acute. Youth and children were not allowed to look at corpses otherwise they will become mentally ill. The bereaved were allowed to have some rest at their relatives' or friends' or at a king's house. The caring of the corpse and the digging of the grave are also regarded as caring practices. Neighbours and friends used to come and spend a night or evening with the bereaved. There is also a special visit (*omupendu*) paid to the bereaved after the burial by those who were not present for the burial. This is just to go and see the survivors for some hours in order to share their grief. There is a special language used during mourning period, e.g. euphemism and proverbs. Some say that Kalunga (God) will console the person special care can also be given after the burial to those who are not having normal grief.

2.2.5.4 Can you, as Christians, use such methods to comfort bereaved and mourners?

Many of the interviewees responded positively to Question 4. Some said that some of the traditional methods are enriched by Christianity. Others are good but not all are useful. One respondent said that they are not really helpful. To wail is an indication that the survivor is really hurt by such a loss. Some respondents opted for verses from the Bible and hymns. There was a strong remark that consoling of the bereaved is disturbed by those who become intoxicated.

2.2.5.5 If Yes, do they help them? Why?

Many interviewees do agree that they do help, because they are enlightened by the Gospel. Methods of comforting are helpful for consoling. People shared the grief and the bereaved will remember them even after the funeral. The bereaved are released from their depression. Paying visits strengthen and encourage the bereaved. Many respondents remarked that special visits after the funeral (*omupendu*) are very helpful. Some stressed also the importance of staying overnight with the bereaved. People are encouraged to listen attentively to the stories told by the bereaved. The non-verbal communication, e.g. 'hmm!' is a comforting remark. The interviewees reminded us to pay attention to allocation of time for comforting, otherwise the bereaved will become weary. They also say that people come to the bereaved in order to accept the will of God (Pamba) together with the survivors and to prevent them from loneliness. Respondents said that many bereaved get through their stages of grief because they were helped by those who have previous experience of grief.

2.2.5.6 How were the following people comforted in their grief:

(a) widows; (b) widowers; (c) youth and children; (d) the aged?

(a) Widows

In the first place, widows were comforted like other bereaved. They were given a child or a grown-up person to stay with them. Relatives could look for somebody from the side of her husband who could remarry her. Widows were comforted by other women who are closer to them, said the respondents. They should be cared for, for up to six months or a year. Many respondents reported that there is a problem among widows because relatives of their husbands used to inherit all properties.

(b) Widowers

According to the information the present writer acquired, widowers used to be consoled by other men. They were also given children or adult people to stay with them. Since widowers used to have many wives, even though they have lost a wife, other wives could console them. On top of that, they were free to look for other wives on the side of the deceased wife's relatives.

(c) Youth and children

The respondents said that youth and children were inherited by relatives. During the mourning days they were sent to the neighbours to stay with other youth and children. They were not allowed to look at corpses, otherwise they would become mentally ill. Relatives invited them to their homes to have rest for some days. Headmen could come to visit them or invite them to their homes for a rest. Among the youth and children there was a fear of death. Some respondents asserted that the youth and children were sometimes neglected - there was no specific consolation for them. If they dreamed about the deceased they were given some herbs to calm them down.

(d) The aged

The respondents said that the aged in most cases are courageous. This information was given by most of the interviewees. They were given children or grandchildren, especially after the funeral, to stay with them. The aged could also be given to their first-born or last-born, especially women, to stay with them. Sometimes they were sent to their relatives for support and care. These people, said the respondents, were consoled by other aged people. There is also a tendency to forget them during the mourning period. It is assumed that they can restore easily to useful living.

2.2.5.7 How can we console the bereaved whose deceased have committed suicide?

Many respondents reflected that the question was difficult. Some said that in the past, committing suicide was rare because it was regarded as a bad omen. It was said that a suicidal crisis is a temptation amongst people. Thus it should be left to God's hand alone. On the other hand, it should be explained to the survivors that maybe the deceased was having something which he/she was worried about and did not reveal it. People should be encouraged to accept it as it is. However, we need to be amazed at such an event and we have to try to avoid it at all costs. Some suggested that sermons, hymns and exhortations do help. Pastors should go to the house of the bereaved every week to pray and encourage them. One respondent said that the life of a human being is costly and it is only God who can take it away.

It was suggested by some respondents that these type of bereaved persons need special care and counselling.

The respondents said that after the funeral, counsellors should make a special investigation about what was the cause of committing suicide. In most cases the survivors are left with guilt feelings. They may think that they are the cause.

2.2.5.8 Do you think that these traditional caring practices cause a weakening of people's Christian faith?

Most of the interviewees asserted that traditional caring practices cannot weaken people's Christian faith. The Gospel, according to them, enlightens them. They are helping people to achieve the fruits of faith if they are practised by the light of Christianity. People are encouraged to dig deep into faith. They also promote genuine Christianity. They are supportive for caring, in times of death and grief.

However, respondents said that one should be selective. However, one respondent stated that traditional caring practices do weaken people's Christian faith, but he did not give the reason.

2.2.5.9 Are Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved applicable to pastoral care and counselling?

In response to Question 9, many respondents stated that one should be selective because some traditional caring practices are good while others are bad. A few respondents said most are applicable to pastoral care and counselling, while some asserted that only those which are good are applicable.

2.2.5.10 What are the current methods of pastoral care and counselling used in your church for counselling the bereaved?

This last question, according to respondents, raised many answers in which one could find some criticism. The current methods were given as follows: people use sermons, hymns, exhortations, practical help, e.g. giving aid of food, water, firewood,; neighbours stay overnight with the bereaved and the sitting (*omutumba*).

Besides hymns, sermons, exhortation and practical help, people go to pay a visit to the house of the bereaved. It was suggested that bereaved are polluted people, they cannot stay alone, they need support, otherwise they will die or become mentally ill. Some interviewees said that today some people go to the house of the bereaved to enjoy food and liquor. Respondents also observed some that consolation is disrupted by the use of liquor during the mourning period. Some things which are done by younger pastors can raise doubt among Christians. These things have to do with radicalism of younger pastors and that they are not sympathetic enough. Thirdly, there is a weakness concerning Christian education. In other words, there is a need for teaching Christian principles in parishes,

especially with reference to bringing up of children in Christian homes, e.g., dissipating the false teachings that a man does not cry or mourn, that showing grief it is an indication of cowardice and that he can show his grief only by the firing of a gun.

2.2.6 Discernment of findings

2.2.6.1 Bereavement before Christianity

The present researcher's observation is that all people who were interviewed have reported that Aawambo used to comfort their bereaved before Christianity was brought to Namibia. When supporting the bereaved in their grief, they think that one day they also will be bereaved and need to be served. That is why they do not allow the bereaved to be alone. Seven out of 20 respondents have used this proverb: "*Mukweni mu uvila ta li*" = *Dhimbulukwa mukweni ngele e li muudhigu*. This means, "One cannot go to a friend's banquet even though one has heard about it" = It is necessary to comfort your friends when they are in grief. Thus this proverb is always used to remind people to remember one another in sorrow, because mourning comes in turns; tomorrow it will be you.

Even after the burial a small group of relatives and friends remain for moral support. Neighbours also come time and again to stay with the bereaved. Thus in this report all the respondents have advocated that even today people are using traditional practices in bereavement. Christianity has just illuminated the use of the methods. This positive response is reflected in Questions 1 and 2.

2.2.6.2 Traditional caring practices known

With regard to Question 3, although all respondents have given different answers, and in most cases they have much in common. Both have reflected the aid of food,

and relatives going to stay with the bereaved in order to protect them from loneliness. They make a sitting (*omutumba*) from two to four days, depending on the age level of the deceased. Wailing is regarded as a comforting method, thus wailing is contagious. They share a meal after the burial. Even after burial a fair number of relatives remained with the bereaved and other people will continue paying visits. These seem to be positive practices in order to walk with the bereaved in all their stages of grief until they get through.

2.2.6.3 Possibility of using traditional practices by Christianity

Thirteen interviewees in the present study reported that even Christians are using such traditional practices. It is only that some are useful and some are not. One can realise here that we need only to sort out the essential comforting methods from the traditional and match them with the European tested methods of comforting the bereaved. Using alcoholic drinks during mourning period is not supported.

2.2.6.4 Whether the traditional practices help people

Twelve respondents in this study reported that the traditional caring practices do help the mourners very much because they are done in the context of their environment. They are of the opinion that mourners are released from their depression and the coming together of the neighbours and friends have a weight in caring aspects. It was stressed that many bereaved reach their restoration to useful living by means of this redemptive community.

2.2.6.5 Bereavement according to status and age level

According to many answers given by interviewees, it shows that the bereaved are comforted according to age level characteristics and status. It seems that there is a need to develop a positive Christian teaching which counteracts the traditional

inheritance of property by men only. Men should also be taught to regard women as human beings equal to them. Wrong teaching from childhood that a man should not cry should be discouraged. Men should be taught to mourn with other mourners. Youth and children need special care and need to be released from fear of death because there is a hope for a new life for the future. Inheritance of children by relatives should be discouraged, unless both parents have passed away, it is only then that children can be taken away by relatives. The aged should also be regarded as equal human beings to other people. The fact that we live, is because we live today. An old person's day is today and that of young people or children is also today. Therefore all are on the same level in life as people. Youth and children were prohibited to look at the corpse and did not attend the burial. Their consolation seem to be poor. The present writer observed that widowers were consoled more than widows.

2.2.6.6 Suicidal crisis

Regarding suicidal crisis in this research, eight respondents out of 20 have reported that this case is very difficult. Nobody has the courage to attempt to console the bereaved in the case of suicide, nevertheless it is done.

Some have reflected that in the traditional society of the past, committing suicide was uncommon. People are warned to avoid committing suicide at all costs. It seems reasonable to agree that a suicidal crisis is a dilemma to all mourners because they do not know where to put the blame. Sometimes they think that they themselves could be the cause of another committing suicide - nobody knows. On the other hand, it was also regarded as taboo.

2.2.6.7 Weakening of people's Christian faith is not experienced

The majority of respondents in this study reported that they would not consider that traditional practices necessarily weaken people's Christian faith, but by using these practices in bereavement mourners would be strengthened and comforted. It seems wise to agree with some respondents that one needs to sort out genuinely which practices can promote Christian faith. But, the present writer suggests that it seems that there are some which can be used, even though a careful scrutiny is necessary. It is only those which do not negate the Christian faith which can be included into pastoral care and counselling of the bereaved.

2.2.6.8 Application of Aawambo traditional practices

Eight people out of 20 reminded the Church to be selective because not all practices are applicable to the Christian faith. In all spheres of life one needs to be selective since life includes a lot of impurities. Some feel that these traditional caring practices can be applied in the parishes. Further research is needed with broader subjects on this aspect.

2.2.6.9 Current methods of pastoral care and counselling

On this item all respondents have reported many current methods used in the church. Some are traditional among Christians while others are western methods. The main emphasis of many interviewees is on penitential classes and individual counselling methods, but the majority have strongly stressed that individual counselling should be primary. Secondly, one can realise that Christians are in a cross-cultural conflict. This has resulted in a common feeling among Christians that the current methods are just a routine. We need to review our counselling methods among Aawambo people.

This does not mean that all current methods are wrong, but they were imposed upon the people while they were being discouraged to use Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement without making a thorough analysis with the help of Aawambo themselves. There is a feeling that the current methods should be combined with those traditional practices which have potential to contribute to pastoral care and counselling, that is, those practices which do not negate the basic tenets of the Christian faith.

2.2.7 Conclusion

What is realised is the cross-cultural conflict among Aawambo concerning bereavement methods. There is a great need for reevaluation of Christian caring methods. One can see that there is a need for a paradigm shift to contextualization. We need to combine western models which are suitable in the African context with traditional African models which do not negate the Christian faith in order that people should be cared for and counselled according to their context.

Having reflected on contemporary Aawambo Christian experiences of bereavement, it is necessary to make a summary of what has been said in Chapter 2 in order to round off our exploration which includes literature review and the field research. By doing this we can discover the differences and the common grounds.

2.3 Summary

The few books which we have about Aawambo, came from traders, explorers, hunters, missionaries and their children. Although we welcome such sources of information, we are aware that their understanding of the Aawambo culture and religion was to a certain extent limited. Among Aawambo death news spreads very quickly to the surrounding houses and relatives. This death news is always followed by a rush and then the sitting in order to be with the bereaved. The mourning period

was a community concern which should be shared by the community. Throughout the mourning period all people were bound to use: the language of mourning including taboos; symbolic actions and proverbs of bereavement; mourning lament, rituals and rituals related to funerals. These were used in order to indicate that life is not more normal.

Apart from sharing the grief, Aawambo give also aid of food to the bereaved. After the funeral, a few relatives, friends and neighbours remain to carry on with the survivors. The mourning period ends after one year or two, when the bereaved feel then that life has come to normal.

Secondly, the results of the data analysis has shown that the majority of the respondents have supported the idea that some of Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement can make a contribution to modern pastoral care and counselling. Seventy-five percent of the respondents in this study reported that the traditional caring practices do help the mourners very much, because they are done in the context of their environment.

In order to have a balance in our exploration the researcher has made an attempt to include seven African family cases of mourning as examples. In all seven cases the researcher has realized that in any grief situation, pastors and all other caregivers need to understand first the social context in which people live. The Christian faith must be in dialogue with the realities of the human situation, because faith is something which should be shared with others.

The bereaved will only find restoration through our empathy, affirmation and encouragement to explore past interactions and gain insight. With adequate support he/she may choose to make some changes that will enable him/her to emerge from his/her experience with a new relatedness to life.

Since we are exploring Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement in connection with modern pastoral care and counselling, it is sensible to review in short the Western theories of bereavement, thus the following chapter will focus on a summary of western literature review. Here we will concentrate on five authors' views on bereavement.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW (WESTERN THEORIES)

3.1 A brief survey of five classical contributions to bereavement

In this section we are going to discuss in the first place how death is viewed on the basis of psycho-psychiatric perspectives. Our concentration will be on the terminally ill patients and survivors, their reaction to their doctors, nurses, chaplains, social workers and family members in the face of death. Secondly, we highlight the symptoms of natural grief. We will chiefly review the works of Kübler-Ross and Erich Lindemann. Another aspect we shall look at, is what practical theologians say concerning those who are grief-stricken. These views will be pastoral-psychological. Clinebell, Spiegel and Switzer will be our main focus.

These five authors have been chosen among others as the prominent classical contributors to crisis counselling and especially in bereavement. They have also taken broadly phenomenological perspectives which explore the different age level characteristics and in different situations. But their primary interests are in the bereavement experience as part of a broader experience.

In the course of discussion, other theorists will also be used in order to dialogue with other writings so as to give supporting ideas from other authors.

3.1.1 Psycho-psychiatric perspective

3.1.1.1 Erich Lindemann

Erich Lindemann was the first to introduce systematised ideas of stages of grief, and he described the grief process in an article entitled 'Symptomatology and management of acute grief'. He showed the significance of helping the bereaved to face up to the battle of working through their sorrows (Westberg, 1971: 7-8).

According to Lindemann, there are physical symptoms which are present in normal grief: somatic disturbances, lasting from twenty minutes to an hour; tightness of the throat, suffocating and shortness of breath; need for breathing; an empty feeling in the abdomen; shortage of power in the muscles; colds; shakes and intense subjective distress described as tension, loneliness or mental pain (Lindemann, 1965: 14).

Such feelings are generally hastened by receiving sympathy from visitors. These symptoms do not occur in all people, but when they come, they are all in the area of natural grief.

Such feeling lead to the following consequences:

1. Acute grief is a definite syndrome with psychological and somatic symptomatology.
2. It may appear at once, or be delayed, exaggerated, or apparently absent.
3. It may involve distortions that are variations of conclusions.

4. It is possible to restore the abnormal to the normal through a therapeutic process (Lindemann, 1965: 15).

Lindemann classified also the manifestations concerning distorted reactions as follows:

1. Over-activity without a sense of loss;
2. the acquisition of symptoms belonging to the last illness of the deceased;
3. a recognized medical disease;
5. furious hostility against specific persons;
6. resembling schizophrenic symptoms;
7. a lasting loss of patterns of social interaction;
8. detrimental to his [sic] own social and economic existence;
and
9. agitated depression with tension (Lindemann, 1965: 15-17).

It is remarkable that agitated depression of this sort represents only a small fraction of the pictures of grief in our series. Lindemann reminds people to be available to the bereaved persons in order to help if everything breaks down (1965: 16-17).

3.1.1.2 Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

While Lindemann concerns himself with the symptoms of normal and acute grief, Kübler-Ross calls upon human beings to make an effort to contemplate their own

death and to help others to familiarise themselves with such thoughts. She has discovered that "in the preparatory grief there is no or little need for words". It is much more a feeling which can be equally expressed and is often done better with a "touch of a hand, a stroking of the hair or just a silent sitting together". She wants people to face death with equanimity (1969: 13).

Kübler-Ross argues that if one cannot face death with calmness, one cannot be of assistance to patients. She conducted a seminar where she included doctors, nurses, chaplains, theological students and terminally ill patients whom they interviewed. She remarks that when the death of one of the patients occurs in a hospital, the hospital staff are enraged, angry and are in despair. There is a negligence of the family members and their children (1969: 177).

Kübler-Ross encourages us to let the relatives talk, cry, or scream if necessary, but we need to be available. They need friends, doctors, nurses or a chaplain. Kübler-Ross suggests that there should be more emergency rooms in hospitals and clinics where families and staff could be accommodated for comforting of relatives (1981: 180).

For Kübler-Ross, it is meaningful to share the feelings of any relative, child or adult before the event of death and to allow him/her to work through his/her feelings. In this regard they are helped to take a great step towards acceptance without guilt (1969: 180).

What Kübler-Ross observed was: some terminally ill patients have preached to the participants in the seminar, telling them about their faith in God and their readiness to accept God's will while fear was written all over their faces (1969: 259). The patients stressed that they needed assistance in working through their different stages in order to die in peace and dignity.

Kübler-Ross and the participants in the seminar have learned that death is not a problem to a patient but dying is feared owing to the accompanying sense of hopelessness, unprotectedness and loneliness (1969).

Although people fear dying, Kübler-Ross sees death as reminding us of the limits of our time. "Whatever the reason, individuals who have been fortunate enough to share in the death of someone who understood its meaning, seem better able to live and grow because of their experience" (1969: 117). According to her, facing death means facing the ultimate question of the meaning of life.

In her book, *Living with death and dying*, Kübler-Ross, as quoted by Eliot, suggests parent care; the total involvement in the care of a child who is dying. In this case parents will learn when to panic and when not to panic. They are also helped by each other. The experience also helps the whole family to comprehend what children's illness and treatment entail, and how to cope with the daily struggles as well as the possibility of children's eventual death (Eliot, 1981: 98-99).

We are reminded also by Kübler-Ross, quoted by Furth, that we need to be aware of drawing and pictures made by dying children. These drawings express remarkable acknowledgements and emotions that can alert us to unmet needs or assure us of the child's inner peace. These drawings can allow children the freedom to diagnose themselves and leave to others to give the psychological support to minimise any fear or confusion that they may feel (Furth, 1981: 66).

Drawings are applicable to both adults and children. By analyzing drawings one needs professional training as well as personal preparation. "One can realize that one can heal the spirit even when we cannot heal the body". To understand pictorial language will assist in opening the door to wholeness (Furth, 1981: 94).

Kübler-Ross has confirmed, through her interviews with dying children, that:

Parents can share their time and love with their dying children and this will help them to resist falling into the pit of self-pity. They can talk to them, if it helps them. Share with them their progress and show that they 'can handle the windstorms of life', because the death of children often is 'the teacher of unconditional love'. The unconditional love does not need claims or expectations, 'needs not even a physical presence' (Kübler-Ross, 1983: 8-9).

Besides parental-children sharing during death, "children who have been allowed to participate in the death of a grandparent or relative at a young age are usually better prepared later in life when a parent or a sibling becomes terminally ill" Kübler-Ross, 1983: 77). It was also observed that after the death of a child, the world seems to stand still, and it is at this moment that the parents need help from friends for the daily tasks of living. During the affliction process of accepting the loss of a child, some parents can find consolation in the positive caring their children contributed while they were living. They can feel proud of their last achievements (Kübler-Ross, 1983: 179).

It is only the compassionate friends who act as a self-help group for bereaved parents and siblings, who communicate empathy, and give support at a time when most other people do not know what to say.

Kübler-Ross leaves us with a pertinent question that, if we cannot face death without calmness, how can we be of assistance to our patients? She proposes that death should be regarded as a part of our own personal life. Thus the more she studies human beings in the face of death, the more understanding she acquires about life and its conclusive secrets (1969: 31ff).

Apart from the psycho-psychiatric perspective, ministers and priests stand in a unique position among professionals in their opportunities to serve persons in many ways. They are entrusted with a charge, thus they speak and act on the authority of the Master who sent them. Also, grief sufferers turn to the pastors when they are stricken by the death of a loved one.

3.1.2 Pastoral-psychological perspective

3.1.2.1 Howard Clinebell

Clinebell stresses that the loss of someone who has been an important part of one's world of meanings and satisfactions is a psychological cutting off (1984: 220). The help needed for healing the grief wounds are:

Ministry of caring and availability, practical aid and spiritual consolation. There should be attentive listening to encourage full catharsis. A ministry of crisis care and counselling, facilitating reality testing and help in the difficulties of reconstructing one's life. There should be a ministry of facilitating spiritual growth, and enabling the outreach of other people (Clinebell, 1984: 221).

Clinebell states that physical touch and the aid of food symbolise the non-verbal means of communicating caring and sustenance. The sharing of the meal after the funeral confirms the persistence of life, no matter that there is a loss. This sharing of a meal indicates the harmonious community, pointing to continuity. Thus the aim of the funeral is to facilitate the emotional release of sorrowful feelings. This caring support of the family should be carried out during the weeks and months after the funeral (Clinebell 1982: 222-223).

When the expression of grief is blocked, the minister should encourage the bereaved to communicate their emotions about the deceased. This should be pursued until these feelings are coped with and talked through. Clinebell feels that:

The grief wound must heal from the inside. Healing cannot be forced, but the counselling relationship can help promote the process. If pathological grief symptoms persist after several months, in spite of the minister's efforts, referral to a competent psychotherapist is imperative. The longer grief work is delayed, the more painful and costly to a person's mental and spiritual health, the grief will be, and the more psycho-therapeutic skills will be required for healing (1984: 227).

Clinebell posits that in order for a congregation to minister more effectively to the bereaved, its members should be informed through sermons and education programmes about the nature and significance of grief work and friends. A lay-caring team should be carefully chosen to bear much of the burden of supportive caring of people with natural grief. Our congregations should be trained to become healing communities on their own (1984: 227).

A pastor has to set up and lead (or co-lead) a grief healing group periodically. Such a group is both an efficient way of deepening the grief ministry of a congregation and a means of beginning the training of a lay crisis and grief team. Participating in such a group can help one both finish one's own grief work and learn to help other grieving persons (Clinebell, 1984: 228).

Oates is also in full agreement with the idea of a grief healing group in congregations (1976: 73).

Apart from setting up and leading a grief healing group, Clinebell has reported that in suicidal crises and grief, the pastor is reminded to play his/her role by taking into consideration aspects like, "recognising suicidal person; giving emergency help until a referral is made; persisting pastoral care and counselling of the person and the suicidal behaviour within the individual and in the family system; helping the family deal with the destructive consequences of an incomplete or a completed suicide (1984: 235).

It is necessary for those who have experienced a suicide in the family to have continuous pastoral counselling. Persevering, continuous pastoral consideration should be carried out in order to lower their defenses and step-by-step to open up to the assistance they seriously need. Another possibility is that they could join the grief group experience which could be of great help (Clinebell, 1984: 238).

We turn now to Spiegel who has also contributed a lot concerning grief work and he has also made an attempt to give some views on how grieving children should be helped.

3.1.2.2 Yorick Spiegel

Yorick Spiegel is very interested in all sorts of group dynamics and group cure. He says that the story of the process of dying and death is the most obvious starting point in conversations of giving significant therapy. He asserts that the enquiry about the circumstances of death, the history of the life time shared, and the immediate future can have cathartic effects (1977: 158). According to Spiegel, the doctor's aim in passing on the death notice should be to act in order to prevent a general emotional breakdown in the family (1977: 135).

Spiegel wants people to take great concern with children who are neglected easily. Children should have events explained to them in order to prevent them from fantastic ideas. Children from nine years of age should also attend the funeral service in order to convince themselves of the reality of death (1977: 156). Another aspect that needs consideration is that a difficult financial situation might arise until social security comes through. In any case, the conversation should be confined to the immediate future (Spiegel, 1977: 158).

Spiegel considers the pastor as the leader of funeral rituals. He/she has to share the leading function with certain social, fraternal groups. If the pastor managed to gain the trust and confidence of the grief-stricken persons during the phase of depression and loneliness, then the way is paved for helpful ministry later on. The pastor should spend time with someone when things become hard (Spiegel, 1977: 142). The question of time is supported by Brister who says that a pastor can only take time into account if he/she keeps three motifs in mind, *viz.* the servant motif, the shepherd motif, and the sonship motif (1964: 29-36). The shepherd is God and those who serve God's people as under-shepherds are called by Him (Ezekiel: 34: 2-10).

According to Spiegel, counselling with the bereaved starts when, in the sermon and within groups in the congregation, the issue of death and mourning is discussed. At the time of the conversations with the bereaved it is necessary to take into account the stage of grief the mourner is going through. By talking less, the minister is enabled to be more attentive to his/her environment, how intense the sorrow reactions of individual members are, and how they differ from one another. The mode of speaking and behaving by the bereaved gives indirect indications as to how death was accepted (1977: 154).

Counselling is not only concerned with the most grief-stricken persons, but must also include other family members concerned. The family should be helped to express themselves. The pastor should gain the confidence of the mourner and his/her openness and willingness for further discussion. "In certain cases, if talking is difficult for the bereaved, prayer can become an important means of communication" (Spiegel, 1977: 160).

Spiegel says that the Gospel message at the funeral is to deepen the Christian's understanding of Christian faith. In sharing the good news there is an engagement in the process of teaching about people's faith. I agree with Spiegel that the message offered at the funeral is the hope that there is life after death to those who have passed away with faith in Christ. The common answer for death is the resurrection.

As Spiegel points out, the ministry of the church cannot end at the grave because God is not only a God of the dead but also a God of the living. Thus the minister as well as the Christians need to pay a visit to the bereaved as care-giving agents (1977: 165). At this point, Oates recommends that the written message - often in a hand-written letter - is another medium suitable for the bereaved. The telephone is also advisable to extend condolences and casual talk. Yet the bereaved also need everyday companionship, when they can forget their loss. It seems, however, that where it is possible, personal visits are more appropriate (1976: 60f).

It seems to me that it is only when a person feels protected, that he/she will start to be aware that he/she is lovable and belongs to someone, *viz.*, a family or a group. In this way humans learn to love and realise their identity as valuable human beings.

Let us then consider closely the last theorist as a crisis counsellor who is very much concerned with the grief sufferer in any concrete situation.

3.1.2.3 David Switzer

David Switzer is a crisis counsellor who sees the minister as the only professional who combines social expectations, occupational freedom and vocational training. He regards bereaved people as having permitted him to be their pastor and counsellor and that they have played an important part in his spiritual growth. A counsellor is important in the life of the majority of people in a society, especially at times of sorrow.

Like Spiegel, Switzer observed that the grief sufferer needs, firstly, to be released from negative emotions, hostility, guilt and fear (Switzer, 1974: 150). In his opinion, there is firstly, a need for catharsis, and secondly, for affirmation of self. There is often a tendency to blame and depreciate oneself, which needs to be confronted. Switzer sees the third need as being the breaking of ties with the deceased, which is not as harsh as it perhaps sounds. This does not mean to persuade him/her to forget the deceased person or to stop loving that person, but rather a transformation of the act of love (1974: 150).

It seems here that the counsellor can establish a durable and meaningful relationship of love and trust whereby the person feels accepted as a unique human being.

Switzer has then reported that the pattern in which the connection is expressed indicates that there are many emotions involved in our close bonds with one another, and that is love. The loss of the bereaved is also the loss of one's own

self. There is a grief which can be called existential anxiety (1974: 149). There are at least four ways which condition the dynamics of the grief reactions:

- personality structure of the individual;
- social factors;
- significance of the deceased in the life structure of the individual, and
- by the value system of the individual (Switzer, 1974: 149-153).

Switzer sees the other person as the major value in any person's life. The separation from the person causes a sense of threat to the self, for

... in the ordinary course of daily life we have devised in our society ways of depersonalizing death and separating ourselves from it. But when someone emotionally close to us dies, these social defenses break down. This death has reference to our own lives (Switzer, 1974: 149).

As a result it raises many questions. That is why, when death occurs, the bereaved tend to ask questions like: "Why? Why did it happen to them? Why did God allow that?" There are answers and there are no answers. The questioning helps one to vent one's grief and anger and will, in time bring one to a stage when it loses its sting.

Switzer (1974) thus suggests that a counsellor must have a clear understanding of the dynamic of grief itself. The counsellor at the same time must be equipped with some knowledge of procedures that will enable him/her to make use of his/her relationship with the grief sufferer in the most restoring way (1974: 150).

It seems sensible to agree that a counsellor must have faith in his/her caring, because he/she is not only a person, but he/she is always commissioned by God with a charge.

Switzer reports that the rediscovering of meaning brings with it the reduction of anxiety, in this instance, the healing of grief, since it was the loss of meaning which contributed to the rise of anxiety in the first place (1974: 174).

Besides the pastor, Switzer (1974) affirms that lay people should also be trained in grief counselling and assigned to pay visits to persons or families time and again, throughout the grief period. It is suggested that children should be given special attention in a family where there has been a loss. This attention should be paid to children both within the family as well as when they are alone. (Switzer, 1974: 159-161).

Switzer wants us also to take into account the suicidal crisis. The minister as well as the community is called to intervene in this crucial crisis. According to Switzer, "all persons who think about committing suicide are ambivalent". They have a desire to commit suicide, but on the other hand, "they want to cry for the help they need" so that they can be rescued from their perceived despairing circumstances (1974: 207). It is then the responsibility of pastors to present themselves to the congregation and community. "Pastors should respond to people in pastoral discussions in ways that are invitational to bringing such suicidal thoughts and feelings into the open" (Switzer, 1974: 244).

In conclusion, the pastor's own faith and the power of the Gospel itself, as it is shared in helping relationships, can be a convincing power which can heal the broken hearts (Switzer, 1974: 244). In all crisis counselling and care in bereavement, our silent availability makes us able to walk together with the

bereaved person in the presence of God. God becomes a third partner in silent communication.

Having reviewed these Western theories in outline, they will be discussed in the following chapter on the dialogical model in developing contextual and cross-cultural grief, pastoral care and counselling.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIALOGICAL MODEL IN DEVELOPING CONTEXTUAL GRIEF IN PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING

4.1 A comparison of practices in western theories and Aawambo literature

In discussing western theories and Aawambo literature, we need to consider cross-cultural dynamics. Pastoral care and counselling to Aawambo people was an attempt to address the Christian message to a different cultural context. The counsellor needs, therefore, to understand the dynamics of culture as well as the need for new forms of interpretation. It is this problem which most former missionaries seem unable to handle when they brought the gospel to Namibia. Thus, in the following sections, the researcher would like to reflect first on the differences between western theories and Aawambo literature, and secondly, we have to find out what they have in common. This will put us in a better position to be aware of whether it is possible for each to learn from the other. On the abovementioned points, it is very important in our church to attempt to understand the role of the church in Namibia from a cross-cultural perspective.

4.1.1 Differences between western theories and Aawambo literature

In this section the researcher will only point out some major differences because it is not the aim to explore these differences, but to pull together the main positive aspects which there are in common. Secondly, it is also necessary to identify the potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practices with the aim of enriching caring practices in bereavement to modern pastoral care and counselling.

"Lindemann is the first to suggest a clear psychological theory of grief manifestations" (1965: 14-17). Westberg, in quoting Lindemann's identification, affirmed that "ten stages which should be understood to be the normal process through which most people must go as they face up to their loss" (1971: 9). Likewise Switzer (1974: 153), Oates (1976: 37-41), Kreis and Pattie (1969: 14-52), Jackson (1985: 146) and Kander (1990: 177-179) assert some stages of grief refer to ten stages as they are recorded by Lindemann. Aawambo literature does not reflect on the stages of grief but Aawambo know that it takes a long time for the survivors to recover. Thus, after the funeral a few relatives have to remain for moral support of the bereaved persons, for perhaps two to four weeks. In the case of the widower or the widow, he/she is given a child or adult to stay with him/her. This was observed by the researcher in Namibia. Another indication is that a widow must wear her black mourning beads until she marries again. A widower also wears black beads for a time (Loeb, 1962: 259). Those who were absent from the funeral and during the mourning period have to make a point of paying a visit to the bereaved. This special visit is called *omupendu*, meaning to greet the bereaved and share the grief.

After the death news, Spiegel suggests that the funeral director should be immediately informed and later the minister (1977: 138). Warren says that the pastor must pay a visit to the mourners before and after the service and during the service itself (1988: 93). Unlike the western custom, Estermann says that among Aawambo, when death occurs, people at home promptly start to wail, which is heard far away. This was an expression of sorrow as well as calling upon the surrounding community to be aware of the sad news. Anyone who hears this wailing leaves everything and hastens to the house of the mourners (1976: 85). This first rush is called *oshitondoka*. Loeb also supports this idea with an addition that "relatives put on their best attire, arm themselves fully and hasten to join in the lamentations" (1962: 259).

Oden expresses that the right of burial gives consolation to the bereaved through sermons and prayer. For "it provides a community context of support amid loss. It offers a witness to the trustworthiness of God and to the hope of the resurrection" (1983: 308). On the other hand, Jackson sees the funeral as the encouragement of the healthful mourning process by stressing painful reality; at the same time it makes it possible to vent true feelings and acknowledge group support (1971: 32). While Oden and Jackson stress the above points, Aarni points out that, in order for the spirits to be at peace, it was important that the deceased were satisfied with their burial and that their successors had buried their dead in accordance with tradition (1982: 72). Loeb describes a number of songs recited by women over the grave of a dead male relative. Among Aawambo, every death was ascribed to God (Kalunga). Initially, deaths were at the same time assigned to slighted ancestors (*aathithi*), and to the abuses of witches (1951: 321).

Kreis and Pattie reflect that western mourners stay alone in aloneness in their homes. The tragedy is that none of them could talk of their needs because nobody is available to talk to. Furthermore, friends want to see them before they are ready and when they are ready, they have gone back to their homes (1969: 74). Positively, Hahn and Estermann remark that mourning for adults among Aawambo last four days while for a youth two days, and for an infant just one day or half a day. During mourning time, it is binding to renew the wailing twice a day, early in the morning and at dawn. After the burial most people return to their houses but a group of some relatives and neighbours remain for a further two to four weeks (1927: 13-16; 1976: 85-87).

On this point, a white informant (Mrs I.S., 1994) told me that according to their culture, the funeral is the culmination of the consoling process. After the day of the funeral, they go to their houses and do not think any more of the survivors. She was impressed by what she herself experienced with Africans. She said that to her

surprise Africans make a feast after the funeral where all the participants in the funeral share the meal, especially meat. On top of that, after the funeral some people will remain longer with the survivors. She very much supported this practice.

According to Oates, there is a diversity of communication by means of casual contact on the street or the shopping centre, after a death - meeting, written messages, phone calls or personal visits to those who are grieving (1976: 61). On this point, Kreis and Pattie call one to realise that this diversity of communication is not enough (1969: 122). According to them, as soon as one hears that one's friend is in grief, the following should be done:

Get to him/her as quickly as you can. Do not ask him/her what you can do, ask a member of his/her family. Once there, be alert. Does he/she need someone to answer the phone; someone to make calls; send wires; brew coffee, or just sit beside him? Offer a physical contact, especially to a woman. Hold her hand, and if, when you greet her, she clings, do not be afraid even if you are a happily married man. To her, in shock, you are just a comforting shoulder, no more. Usually in early grief a person acts out of habit much as he did before the death. Therefore, if he/she wants to talk, no matter what the subject, listen (Kreis and Pattie, 1969: 122).

In favour of Kreis' idea, Hasheela, in his work *Omishe di dule eyovi*, coins this proverb of bereavement:

- *Eenghali/omakali olufo: mongula oove = Dimbulukwa kut ja mukweni ngeenge e li moudjuu nena otaku ke uya yo efiku to kala yo moudjuu. Eenghali oshiima hashi eta oluhodi shi dule oinima aishe. Hekeleka vakweni momaluhodi.*

This means:

Mourning comes in turns: tomorrow it will be you = Remember while your friend may be in trouble today, the day will come when you will be in trouble too (1986: 4).

In order to care for one another effectively and to use the time wisely, it seems practical to agree with D'Arcy who says that the friendship network in grief is necessary (1990: 21-22). She says further that "friends are a sign of the order of daily life" (1990: 22), they are the connection. This life-link is the gift that the availability of friends offer. The present writer concurs that African life is very much dominated by the dynamic of culture and its impact on the life of the people.

Since western theories and Aawambo literature have something in common, let us explore this in the following section. This is done in order to take into account the cross-cultural perspective.

4.1.2 Similarities between Aawambo literature and western theories in bereavement

It would seem that we may safely assume that caring of the bereaved is a worldwide phenomenon. But in practice there are slight differences because of different human cultures and backgrounds. Thus the similarities which will be discussed should be understood according to the context of the people and the way they perceive the reality of separation and grief. Different authors may have a different understanding or approach on the same point even though the aim may be the same.

As a caring community we need to understand first the social context in which the bereaved live. How do they perceive death as a reality and how does it affect them intellectually, emotionally and religiously. We need to develop our potential as a contribution to modern pastoral care and counselling. As Africans, we should not become slaves of European models in bereavement. Henceforth, our methods of caring for one another should be a two-way traffic, a sort of give-and-take. The western person should understand the African culture and the African should also understand the western culture, then they can learn from and understand each other. Cultural dynamics should be taken seriously into account.

According to Loeb (1962), Aarni (1982), Estermann (1976), Hahn (1927) and Knappert (1981), among Aawambo news of a death spreads very quickly to the surrounding houses and relatives. In western theories, Oates (1976), Kübler-Ross (1969) and Kreis and Pattie (1969) offered the same notion but specifically in connection with the pastor and the relatives. While Hahn (1927), Estermann (1976) and Hasheela (1986) observed the mutual care of sharing the burying among Aawambo, likewise Oden (1983) and Westberg (1971) remarked the same activity among western people, but it seems Aawambo have more practical things to do. Maybe this is because death is feared although when it comes they accept it (Aarni, 1982: 71; Loeb, 1962: 261; Ashipala, 1972: 58). Western theorists point to the same fear of death which is universal, even if we think that "we have mastered it on many levels" (Westberg, 1971: 32; Warren, 1988: 135). As a result, among Aawambo burial procedure is decided with care, *viz.* washing of the corpse, rubbing him/her with fat and red-ochre; wrapping the body with an ox hide; mourning songs and laments at the grave-side and a prayer addressed to the deceased (Hahn, 1927: 13-15; Hiltunen, 1993: 78; Estermann, 1976: 85-87; Loeb, 1962: 261-262). Burial procedure is also decided with care in the west (Spiegel, 1977: 150; Clinebell, 1984: 222; Kreis and Pattie, 1969: 158; Jackson, 1985: 222). These observations seem to be in accord with Kübler-Ross, that human beings have not basically changed

with regard to the fear of death, but what has changed is a human being's way of coping and dealing with death (1969: 5).

Most Aawambo and western theorists, if not all, believe that there is life after death (Vedder, 1966: 75; Hiltunen, 1993: 34; Hasheela, 1986: 44; Loeb, 1962: 261; Knappert 1981: 157 [on Aawambo]; Bauman, 1991: 43; Switzer, 1974; Winter, 1991: 142-143; [western]). The difference is only in the philosophy of their religious code, cult, creed and community structure. This idea or belief is supported by the view that, if a person died the survivors accept that God (Kalunga) has numbered his/her days, he/she accepts his will. This is from both Aawambo and Western culture (Knappert, 1981: 157; Vedder, 1966: 76; Loeb, 1951: 321; Wills, 1981: 139; Westberg, 1971: 51; Kreis and Pattie, 1969: 65).

The following authors suggest that it would seem more acceptable to use the language of faith in the sense of understanding the bereaved persons' world-view in the concrete situation. There should be the language of mourning (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Ozrovec, 1991; Kander, 1990; Howard, 1980; [western], Ashipala, 1972; Hasheela, 1986; Haapanen, 1958; Knappert, 1981; [on Aawambo]). This view of a need to use the language of mourning is supported by Kreis and Pattie [western], as they have reflected below:

A widower expressed his sense of abandonment in this way:
Everyone meant well. They came to see me. The women kissed me on the cheek and whispered, "I'm so sorry." The men shook my hand and said, "If there is anything I can do to help, just let me know". And then they sat around talking about the weather, even politics. They talked around me and at me, but not with me. It was a nightmare (1969: 125).

This writer agrees with Kreis and Pattie that "a griever needs friends who are willing to be involved" (1969: 127). One needs to learn to feel with others. The bereaved should feel that a person is available and will listen attentively to what he/she says. Listen to her/his stories about the deceased, repeated many times.

Loeb and Westberg [western], observed that bereaved persons still continue to wear some symbol of grieving (1969: 2; 1971: 42). This seems good in order that the bereaved may identify with others. This will help people to cope with the bereaved and help to communicate with them and not slow down the process of restoration. Some people will also help them to facilitate recovery.

Hahn and Loeb [on Aawambo], and Warren and Exley [western], highlight that latecomers visit the grave, if they did not attend the funeral. This is done in order to help them believe that the deceased has really passed away. This will calm down their doubt and sorrow a little bit. This visit will help them later to recover. Among Aawambo, this will be also an opportunity to wail at the grave side. In a positive way it will help them to release their depression.

Both the western theorists and Aawambo literature state that sharing the meal after the funeral affirms the continuance of life even though there is a loss (Clinebell, 1984; Wills, 1981; Spiegel, 1977; [western]; Estermann, 1976; Hahn, 1927; Aarni, 1982; [Aawambo]). The difference is that Aawambo share only meat of a slaughtered ox. After this sharing, the official mourning period starts because the funeral is over. This is the first day of the mourning, known as *omutumba* - the sitting. During this period of four days, no work is done other than the preparation of meals. It is at this time that relatives who are close to the deceased should not do anything but be served by others. But western people, after the sharing of the meal, go back to their homes. Apart from sharing, Aawambo give also aid in the

form of corn meal, firewood and water to the grief-stricken people. They do this to support one another in times of affliction, an indication of showing empathy.

In any grief situation, ministers and all other people are called to remember post-funeral calls, to double back and make repeated visits to the bereaved. It should be done for as long as a month to six months after the death (Wiersbe and Wiersbe, 1985: 73-74; Spiegel, 1977: 165; [western]).

These differences and similarities of western and Aawambo customary practices as stated earlier, challenge us to a critical evaluation. This seems necessary for the challenge of the cross-cultural context and holistic concepts of ministry in the African context in caring for one another.

This section has brought us to the point where we can narrow down our theological reflection for the overview of the study as the challenge to the community.

4.1.3 Theological reflection of the African context

It was stated in the introductory chapter that the type of pastoral care and counselling which was used by the former missionaries was called spiritual care and hymnology. The main emphasis was the proclamation of the Gospel and bringing people to know Christ (Löytty, 1971: 21). This was the same yardstick used to console the bereaved. In spite of this deductive model which was used to impose European ideas upon Africans, Aawambo did not throw away their traditional practices. The "name African as used here is broad and liberal. It includes all those people who call this sub-continent home" (Msomi, 1993: 4). According to Becker, as quoted by Msomi, pastoral care and counselling is a discipline which always comes nearest the culture of a person. Thus one needs very seriously to take into account the African context. Pastoral care and counselling, in the African context,

should be rooted in biblical and theological traditions, as well as in African psychology, psychiatry, world-view and religious thought (Masamba, 1985: 27).

In the African context we have seen how Aawambo still stick to their cultural practices in bereavement. The major aspects found in the literature review coincide with the major aspects found in the collecting of the data. The dialogical model which was used is more holistic and suitable for our context. It has opened up an open dialogue because there is information given. This dialogue has taken place between Christian theology and the context of the people. Traditional views should be taken seriously. We do not need to impose our world-view on others, but we have to try to find out where a person is. In the African context we strongly retain the Bible and theology.

According to the investigation, many subjects have revealed that the western pastoral care and counselling of the bereaved pays little attention to a person's cultural and social environment, which is not addressed. The lack of social, political, and economic structures could be overlooked in counselling the bereaved. But in the context of African culture, the whole community reflect an image of servanthood towards one another. Of course, this is good in order to build the community of believers.

I have presented the similarities in the relevance of paradigm integration as an attempt to be honest to the African context. We must know the needs and potentials of people in bereavement. In bereavement there is the need for unconditional acceptance between person and person. The social responsibilities should be encouraged since in African culture, a person is a person through other persons.

As de Jongh van Arkel puts it, "sustaining is the key word to the caring" practice in mutual care (1991: 103). This mutual care is commissioned in Galatians 6 and

Romans 15, to bear one another's burdens and powerlessness. Likewise Msomi asserts that the "model of care and reflection points to the importance of mutual care ... Pastoral care is taken away from the hands of a few specialists. Instead it becomes a community of believers' mutual task" (1993: 15).

Although we stress mutual care towards one another in times of grief as Africans used to do in their communal life, care must be taken not merely to act on a humanitarian basis, but out of Christian love.

Death is a part of God's plan for our life. Acceptance of it in faith is a sign of Christian maturity. To turn away from God is to bear one's cross of sorrow and pain alone and without the support of others and God.

When one speaks about turning away from God, a suicidal crisis comes always into my mind. It is becoming now a tradition that pastors, during funeral services, bless the deceased in front of the altar in the church. But there is nothing in the church's constitution concerning this practice. In the 'order book' of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, it is only written that a pastor throws the soil three times in the grave while he/she pronounces the words that the deceased comes from the soil, he/she has to go back into the soil and Jesus Christ will raise him/her on the last day (1988: 94).

A person who has committed suicide will also be blessed in front of the altar. This practice has caused conflict, firstly in the minds of some pastors who officiate at the funerals. Secondly, it causes doubt in the minds of some members of the audience. The crucial question is this: Why should it be done in front of the altar, when those who are under church discipline and not absolved are not allowed to take part in any Christian activities in front of the altar? A person who has killed another person and is not yet absolved cannot participate in Christian activities in front of the altar,

while one who has committed suicide is blessed in front of the altar. It would appear that this practice has no contribution in bereavement. On top of that, it hurts people who are not yet absolved. It leaves pastors and some Christians with doubts concerning the abuse of the altar. It seems better to bless the corpse at the graveyard. There is no biblical or theological reason for it to be done in front of the altar. If the funeral service is to be conducted in the church, care should be taken that the blessing of the deceased should not take place in front of the altar. The majority of Christians have a wrong impression that blessing the deceased in front of the altar is an indication that the deceased is worthy to enter into heaven. To avoid this attitude it seems wise to cease this tradition, so as to avoid putting Christians' faith in ambiguity. If it is stopped, it will not harm anyone. Then all the deceased will be blessed either at the graveyard or, if it is in the church, at a place other than at the altar.

Death among Aawambo was feared even though they believed that there is life after death, but the resurrection of the dead was unknown. There was no Christian teaching about this in traditional Aawambo society. Henceforth, Spiegel wants to teach us that there is life after death, "whereby it has to be testified that with death, the decision regarding the dual opportunity existing after death has been made. The doctrine of the resurrection is the central theme" (1977: 162). On this basis, during each funeral, a pastor always reads the word of hope for the future as it is recorded in John 11: 25-26. This is the word promising the resurrection of the dead and hope for the new life for those passing away but abiding in faith (ELCIN, 1988: 96).

Thus life on earth loses its meaning if a Christian does not think about the fulfilment of life after death. Secondly, one cannot facilitate growth in others if one does not know one's own identity. Our role as a redemptive community should be that faith must play a major role in any sensitive emotional reaction, in any kind of grief. Our sensitivity will help us to restore bereaved persons to useful living.

It is only through another's pain and sorrow that we rediscover both God and our fellow human beings. Through the loss of someone you loved, you will learn to live closer to those who yet remain (Kander, 1990: 162-163). We need creative dialogue as we share the grief with others. This dialogue is significant for it establishes the ground of mutuality in religious communication. We need to relate to the people with whom we share affliction in the sense of understanding their world-view or their ethos. Thus the way people perceive reality reflects their cultural experience, even in sorrow. Hence our theology should be in dialogue with the realities of human situations.

From this dialogical model in developing contextual care, we now move on to the conclusion and recommendations for future research. In this section we will round off our research work with concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Overview of the study

The overall aim of this present study was to determine the potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement to modern pastoral care and counselling. The sample of the study constituted a group of ten African pastors and a group of ten African lay people from the African Lutheran Church in Owambo rural areas. These two groups were used as a control group in this research.

The theoretical issues relating to Aawambo practices in bereavement and their discussions were addressed. Issues relating to funerals, for example, religious belief and practices, rituals and symbolic acts before and after funerals, fear of death, the language of mourning including taboos and rituals related to the funeral and attributional styles were also examined. Some of the traditional caring practices are acceptable to be used in caring for the bereaved, but selection is needed. A summary of western theories of bereavement was presented. The differences and similarities between western theories and Aawambo literature were discussed. This was done as the dialogical model in developing contextual grief pastoral care and counselling. Lastly, a theological reflection was made in order to point at the resurrection of the body as the Christian hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Even though few books have been written on traditional caring practices, one realises that our findings in this study have shown some positive responses. It is through literature and field research that we come to know that there are some

caring practices relevant to people's context. Thus the topic has been addressed, though we need further research on a wider scale.

5.2 Recommendations for potential caring aspects and for future research in bereavement

5.2.1 Aawambo potential caring aspects in bereavement

As it has been remarked in this text in Chapters 2 and 4, it seems wise to identify those practices which seem to have potential to contribute to modern pastoral care and counselling. This will give us a situation where western people and African people can learn from one another - a platform of give and take.

- (a) Terminally ill patients need relatives at hand as they may have something to say before they pass away. Even during the time of dying, relatives should be allowed to support the dying person in order for him/her to die with dignity.
- (b) Pastors, doctors, nurses and social workers should learn to use the mourning language whenever they break the death news. They should also teach the community how to do it.
- (c) When death occurs it should be spread promptly to the surrounding community, but it must be done with caution.
- (d) Mourners should be allowed to wail at their utmost in order to release their depressions and tensions. Weeping is contagious, it is a catalyst. Unless we mourn we are torn inwardly.

- (e) There should be the immediate reaction of the neighbours and relatives in joining the bereaved. This immediate rush (*oshitondoka*) is done to join the lamentation. The Apostle Paul tells us, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12: 15). Hasheela remarks, "mourning comes in turns; tomorrow it will be you" (1986: 4).
- (f) Neighbours should continue coming to stay with the bereaved people even after the funeral. They do this for catharsis and diaconal purposes. Any manual activities should be done by them together with other Christians. They bring food and other essentials as mutual support. Alcoholic drinks should not be brought to the house of deceased. People should refrain from using these drinks because it is the time for mourning. Tasks are given to some members to welcome mourners. This is a good example of the redemptive community. Murray Janson supports this idea by saying: "The church is in fact the body of Christ, and each member is indispensable to the whole: there can be no division in the body, and all its members should take equal care of one another (1 Cor. 12: 26)" (1984: 101). This method of taking care of the bereaved spiritually as well as physically is recommended by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia in Article 63 of its constitution (ELCIN, 1988: 45).
- (g) Men should also mourn openly. At present they have a tendency to hide their feelings, because of incorrect cultural wrong teaching that men should not cry as if they are cowards. Ashipala encourages men to mourn (1972: 57).
- (h) In the whole process of grief, with mutual care, we are bound to use the language of mourning, *viz.* euphemism, proverbs, sighs, prayers.

- (i) Sharing of the grave digging by neighbours, community involvement and carrying the casket has a great caring aspect and consolation. Silence should reign during the funeral session except where it is necessary to speak or to sing (cf. Matt. 7: 12).
- (j) Wearing the black mourning beads by a widow until her remarriage is a good identification of mourning. Likewise a widower can also wear black beads for a time. This identification is purely African. People should not only be bound to use black clothes and black tags. They should feel free to use either one of the two types or both. This will help other people to carry the bereaved through their grief period.
- (k) The mourning period should consist of three or four days for an adult, two days for a youth and one full day for an infant, as is stated by Hahn (1927), Loeb (1962) and Estermann (1976), or it can be left to the relatives to decide on their own. A funeral can take place the second day after the death. However, it seems it is therapeutic to acknowledge the bereaved's current feeling and to help them to be themselves and to feel as they need to feel. These days should be counted as from the date of death up to the date of the funeral. After the funeral only a few members can remain but special visits (*omupendu*) should carry on up to a year.
- (l) Orphans should not be inherited any more except where both parents have passed away. Children must stay with their father or with their mother. This is wise in order to be consoled together and affiliated with each other. Where it is possible there should be negotiation among relatives so that the widower should remarry from amongst the relatives of the deceased, and *vice versa*. This is done in order to find somebody to carry on with the upbringing of the children. They may then feel as though they were getting a new father or mother who resembles the deceased one. This will be a real

comfort to the children. But the final decision should be left in the hands of the widow or widower as a free choice.

- (m) The custom of relatives, neighbours or friends remaining for two to four weeks after the burial is far better for restoration than post-funeral phone calls, written messages, casual contacts on the street or the shopping centre, or after meetings. The latter (phone calls and others) should be regarded as the secondary attempt and the former the primary or the priority. It seems also good for a widow/widower to be given an adult from amongst the relatives, not a child any more, to stay with him/her until he/she remarries, or for two to three years. This line of thought is supported by Exley, who says: "Healthy grief may require several months (even as much as two years or more) to complete its work, but it is not static" (1991: 56). Thus bereaved persons need helpers at hand for moral support.
- (n) The Christian community should avoid at all cost making the funeral day into a festive day where people come to enjoy food and beer. Sharing a meal after the funeral, especially meat, is just an indication that we are together and will continue to be together. That is why Aawambo do not eat this meal to their satisfaction. It is only nowadays that people have lost sight of the purpose of the meal, and some come just to eat and drink. We need to go back to the basic roots. Even if there is no food people should come to share the grief.
- (o) *Omupendu*, means a special visit to the bereaved people because one has neither attended the burial, nor seen them since the occurrence of death. This is done with the aim of sharing the grief with the survivors. Women as well as men take gifts for the survivors. Kuusi coined this riddle in connection with this visit:

Nda tsu okasila, ndu uka mpeya naampe (mpe-hui)? It means: I ground a little flour by going back and forth (- and am going there)? Answer: *Oto ka pendula*, meaning: you are going to greet the mourners (1974: 54).

If one has not done that one always feels guilty. One does not even want to meet the survivor somewhere else before one pays him/her a special visit at his/her home. This is done especially by neighbours, relatives, fellow workers and friends. Jesus went also to Martha and Mary in the hour of their grief. He went there to understand their situation and to share their feelings (Exley, 1991: 76; Ozrovec, 1991: 25). The researcher encourages people to use this method of going to see the bereaved at their home before the funeral and again paying them a special visit (*omupendu*), rather than just attending the funeral when they are not aware of whether the bereaved are available because of the acuteness of the pain of loss.

- (p) Lastly, as the redemptive community, we should also make an effort to invite the grief-stricken people to come and stay with us for a week or two after the funeral.

5.2.2 Recommendations for future research methodology

- (a) The researcher has realised that a further exploration is needed on a larger scale in rural as well as in urban areas. It should be done in a cross-cultural perspective - both among Africans, Europeans and western missionaries. The small sample size used in this research limits the results to a large degree. Results of the present study need to be verified by using a larger sample.

- (b) Questions should be expanded to questionnaires and many people should answer by writing. It seems that the present questions which were answered orally resulted in answers which tended to be more influenced by face-to-face communication.
- (c) We need a literature review based on a theological pastoral approach, especially on bereavement among Africans.
- (d) Research done among widows and widowers within the Namibian context would be an enriching contribution in the field of bereavement.

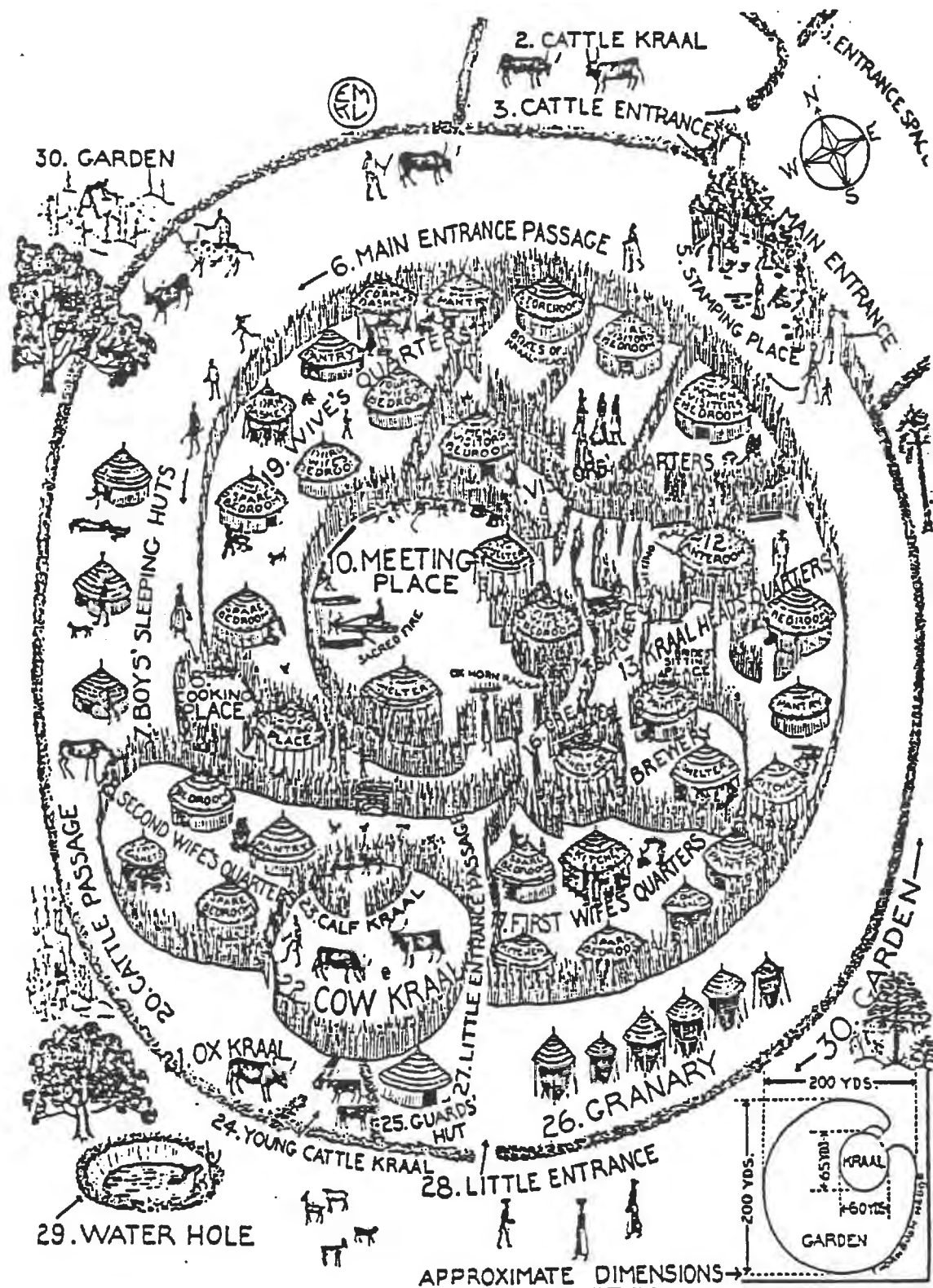
5.2.3 Concluding remarks

The findings of this study have shown some positive results even though they are not verified. The interview collection and discernment of findings have yielded some support to the hypotheses of potential contribution of Aawambo traditional practices in bereavement. This result was offered by contemporary Aawambo Christians' experiences of bereavement. An expanded research with a larger sample would be recommended for reproduction of this study, which would create greater potential for significance in the study results.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

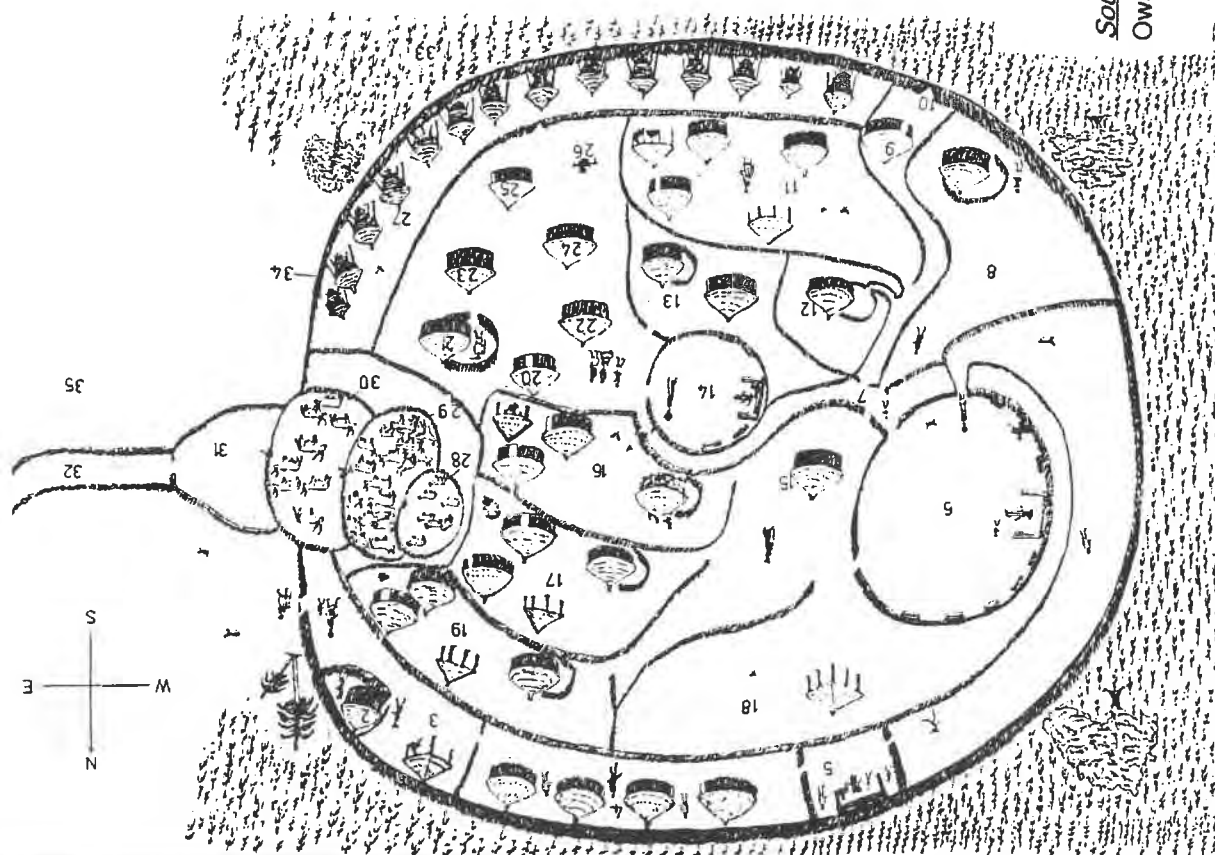
THE OWAMBO HOMESTEAD



Cartograph of a typical Kuanyama home. Based on the ground plan of a home built by natives for the 1935 exhibition at Windhoek, South West Africa, and also on photographs and field notes.

Source: Loeb, E.M., 1951. *Kwanyama Ambo Folklore: Anthropological Records*, Vol. 13, No. 4 Berkeley: 336.

THE OWAMBO HOMESTEAD (AANDONGA)



1. Main entrance (eelo)
2. Pounding place (oshini)
3. Passage-yard (ehale)
4. Sleeping huts for boys (omitata dhaamati)
5. Drawing place for social evenings (oshinyanga shohungi)
6. Main drawing place (oshinyanga oshinene)
7. Corridor (omukala)
8. Sleeping huts for girls (oondunda dhaakadhona)
9. Hut for storing hoes (ondunda yomatemo)
10. Back entrance (okanto)
11. Kitchen of the last wife (elugo lyo mukulukadhi gwa hugunina)
12. Sleeping hut for the last wife (ondjugo yo mukulukadhi gwa hugunina)
13. Place for guests (ehala lyaayenda)
14. Drawing place where the whole family spend an evening (oshinyanga sha mutyakemo)
15. Hut where people can take shelter on rainy days (ondunda yomuzimbi)
16. Kitchen of the third wife (elugo lyomukulukadhi go pokati)
17. Kitchen of the first wife (elugo lyomukulukadhi go kelombe)
18. Kitchen place reserved for the only son, the youngest or the most preferred son, who remains home after married to form part of the extended family and look after the parents (okalugwena)
19. Kitchen of the second wife (elugo lyomukulukadhi omutiyaali)
20. Hut for Owambo beer and also palm and marula wines (ondunda yomalovu)
21. The husband's sleeping hut (ondunda yomusamane)
22. Hut where the husband spends his days when resting (ondunda ya mutyakemo)
23. Armoury (ondunda yomatati)
24. Storage (ondunda yiiketha)
25. Hut for milk calabashes, milking pails and other milking necessities (ondunda yondjupa)
26. Churning frame (oshihikilo)
27. Granary (esizi)
28. Calf-pen (okagunda kuutana)
29. Milking pen (oshitemagunda)
30. Enclosure for non-milking cows (oshihale)
31. Ox-pen (ohambo)
32. Pen entrance (olwaanda)
33. Cultivated field (opya)
34. Palisaded surrounding (ongandjo)
35. Field (elundu)

APPENDIX B

AN EXAMPLE OF THE KING'S GRAVE (OMPAMPA)

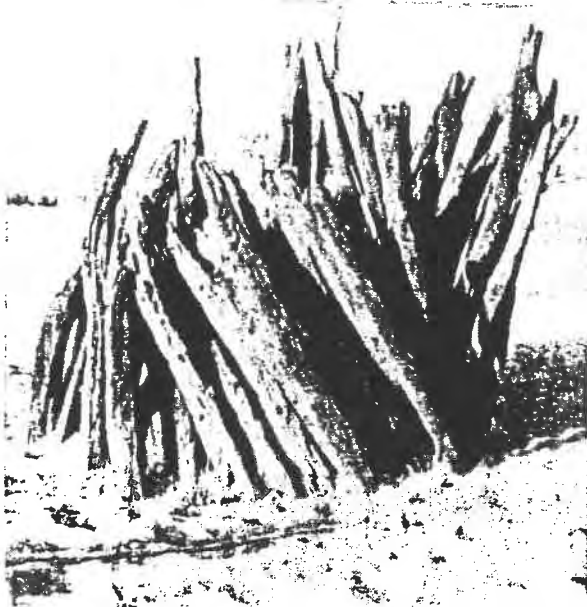


Plate 1: Princess Namupala gwaAmutenya's "ompampa". She is a sister to King Nangolo. In the field of senior chief, Karl Israel, Omulondo, Ontananga, 15 km south east of Ondangwa.

Picture SVVN/7/8/1992.

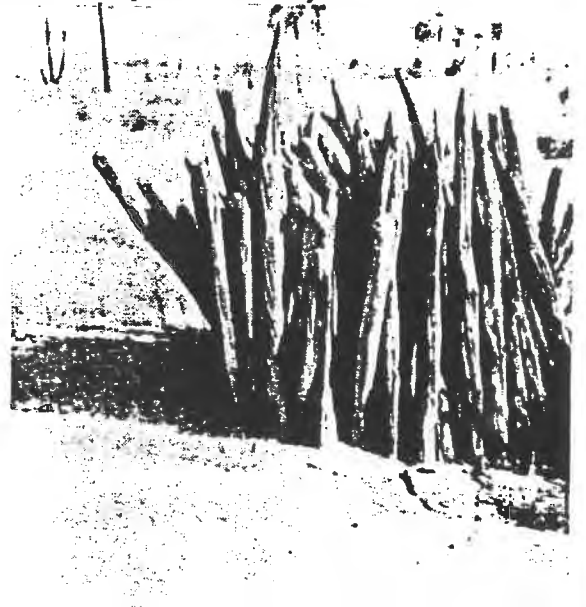


Plate 2: Princess Namupala gwaNangombe's "ompampa" at Ontananga, 15 km south east of Ondangwa. Namupala is the mother to King Kambonde and King Nehale sons of Mpingana. The poles are still 2 meters high.

Picture SVVN/17/7/1992.

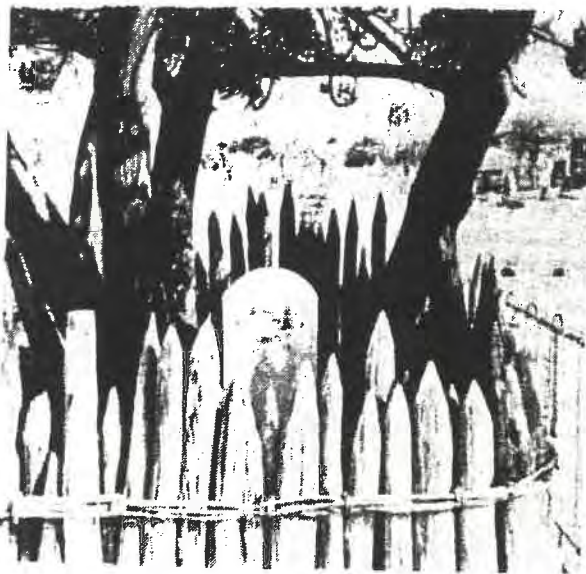


Plate 3: The grave of King Nambala (Martin Elifas) Kadhikwa (1894-1/8/1943) at Olukonda Lutheran parish graveyard, 7 km south of Ondangwa. A semi - "ompampa" as one can see. He was a Christian.

Picture SVVN/20/7/1992.



Plate 4: The grave of Kambonde (Eino-Johannes) Sheepo Namene 1908 - 23/9/1960) at Olukonda Lutheran parish graveyard, 7 km south of Ondangwa. (Omukwaniilwa = king).

Picture SVVN/20/7/1992.

Source: Nambala, S.V.V., 1992. King Nangolo's death from a historiographic perspective within the interlocation of African context: 1. A mini thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Namibia.

APPENDIX C**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

(Translation from Aawambo language)

1. Did Aawambo comfort the bereaved before Christianity came to Africa?
2. Why did they do so?
3. What are Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved that you know?
4. Can you, as Christians, use such methods to comfort bereaved and mourners?
5. If YES, do they help them? Why?
6. How were the following people comforted in their grief?
 - (a) widows
 - (b) widowers
 - (c) youth and children
 - (d) the aged
7. How can we console the bereaved whose deceased have committed suicide?
8. Do you think that these traditional caring practices cause a weakening of people's Christian faith?
9. Are Aawambo traditional caring practices of the bereaved applicable to pastoral care and counselling?
10. What are the current methods of pastoral care and counselling used in your church for counselling the bereaved?

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