

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MANIFESTO AND MISSION:  
THE HISTORICAL CONVERGENCE OF MISSION  
IN THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH AND  
LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA IN THE 1970s

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## **BACKGROUND AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Prior to the spring of 2011, I had limited knowledge of the little nuggets of gold one might find in the tiny basement room in which the Namibia Archives are kept at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. That spring, I was approached by Winston Persaud and asked to consider researching, archiving, and writing a thesis during my senior year as a Master of Divinity student. In accepting the challenge of writing this thesis, I have learned how these archives might teach my generation about the connectedness of mission and lay movements in the Church.

The objective of this project is threefold. The first purpose is to archive and catalogue the contents of dozens of boxes stored in the Namibian Archives. Most of these boxes came from the files of Ilah Weiblen, Peter and Solveig Kjeseth, and from Yale University. Some of the boxes and folders simply appeared as gifts from members of Namibia Concerns. The second purpose is to research and write about these materials in order to preserve the history of Namibian independence and the mission of Namibia Concerns. The third purpose was personal: to learn about and share the mission of the Church as conveyed through the documents in a box simply known as "Box #6."

When I first opened Box #6, I was entirely unsure of how it dealt with Namibia. The contents were from Peter Kjeseth. The files detailed events in the American Lutheran Church in the 1970s and, in great depth, documented the actions of a group called the Commission for the Third Century. A few folders gave indication that this Commission was aware that Apartheid existed in Namibia and

was displayed in the actions of South Africa. During January Term of 2012, I spent three weeks dwelling in the Namibia Archives. I also spoke with individuals and read hundreds of pages of letters, articles, and notes that Peter had kept in this box like a time capsule. In this time, I came to see that the American Lutheran Church formed a mission through this Commission which would lead to Namibia Concerns. This particular thesis is supported by the Center for Global Theologies. The work and scope of the CGT has preserved the Namibia Archives through this thesis project. Thanks be to God for the CGT support in this endeavor.

Thanks be to God for these people in preparation of this thesis: *Dr. Samuel Giere*, for reading this thesis, being a conversation partner in it, for exposing my potential and helping me come closer to it; *Dr. Winston Persaud*, for reading this thesis and for empowering me to learn more in it; *Dr. Peter Kjeseth*, for compiling and keeping his records of the Third Century and for his correspondence during the writing of this thesis; *Solveig Kjeseth*, for her work on Namibia Concerns and for her correspondence during the writing of this thesis; *Ilah Weiblen*, for starting the archiving project which led to this thesis; *Rebecca Ninke*, for her advocacy with Namibia Concerns and for sharing her story; *Susan Ebertz*, for aiding in research and archiving; *Karen Lull*, for aiding in archiving; *Erica Cunningham and Sarah Pedelty*, for proof-reading; and, *my husband, my family, and friends*, who supported me and discussed this project for months.

## INTRODUCTION

The 1970s were years characterized by growing awareness in the world. This was particularly so for people in The American Lutheran Church (ALC)<sup>1</sup> and for people of Lutheran churches in Namibia. To honor the beginning of United States' third century of existence the ALC developed a *Manifesto* rooted in their freedom as Christians and citizens of the US and their call to mission. The United States was celebrating their freedom while 8,000 miles across the world, people in Namibia were searching for freedom.

For years, these two causes had little to do with one another. However, in fostering the religious and political freedom, the mission of the churches grew together. In response to injustices in Namibia, church leaders across the world called for political freedom out of their freedom in Christ. The position and history of the ALC during the 1970s can be read alongside the situation of Lutherans in Namibia in the 1970s. The growing freedoms and beliefs of the ALC during this time paved a road on which its mission would later converge with the Namibian mission for freedom. The stories of these nations, churches, and peoples characterize a time and form to a model by which manifesto became mission.

The documents, resources, and stories studied here birthed a mission which changed the way people participate in the church and world. The mission which evolved and influenced this paper was the result of continuously expanding horizons. The concept of "horizon" originates with Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer's argument is that one's consciousness is developed historically. That is,

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<sup>1</sup> The American Lutheran Church was one of the three church bodies which would merge in 1987 to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

one's awareness of and ability to view a situation is dependent upon history, known and unknown. The horizon refers to the field of view one is capable of seeing which can be narrowed or expanded.<sup>2</sup> The documents studied here indicate that the horizon of the ALC expanded as the ALC sought to extend the mission of Christ in the United States and the world. As a result, this material can lead to an expansion of current horizons.

These documents witness to the deeply rooted Protestant mission of making the gospel known to all people. They show the church's change from a mission which was manifest in building churches and conversion by colonialism into a mission aligned with this description which came about years after and apart from these documents, "Mission is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the church's effort to extend itself."<sup>3</sup> The ALC mission in the 1970s transitioned from extending the church to select parts of the world, toward extending the freedom given in Christ to all.

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<sup>2</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 300-306.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: a Vision For the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 82.

## **PART 1: The American Lutheran Church in the Third Century**

### ***The American Lutheran Church in the 1970s***

The American Lutheran Church in the 1970s existed in a nation where skepticism and change became norms for citizens. National policies, conflicts, and morals greatly influenced the scope of ministry that ALC pursued and for which they fought. Lutheran denominations printed newsletters, press releases, and social statements as they experienced change in their world. The following aspects of United States history per the files of Peter Kjeseth, stored at Wartburg Theological Seminary, paint a picture of the North American context in which the American Lutheran Church (ALC) was during this time.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1970s American people's trust in their government was tested in what has become known as, "Watergate." The issue of trusting political leaders was questioned by the members and leaders of ALC. The scandal of Watergate occurred in the early 1970s when evidence appeared that some of Richard Nixon's campaign money (\$25,000) for an upcoming election was put in the account of a man involved in "bugging" offices of the Democratic National Committee, which was housed at the Watergate hotel.<sup>5</sup> These events called into question the authority of the office of President of the United States of America. A 1973 edition of the *Bill of Rights Journal*, which was found in Peter Kjeseth's materials, examines the power of the President to gather intelligence against domestic enemies as he would international

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<sup>4</sup> The historical events discussed here do not include in depth discussion of the Vietnam War only because it is almost unmentioned in the files researched. This section seeks to paint a picture of TALC in relation to national government in the 1970s, little was found in regard to TALC and Vietnam in this specific project.

<sup>5</sup> "Watergate: Brief Timeline of Events," Watergate.info, <http://www.watergate.info/chronology/brief.shtml> (accessed February 3, 2012). (accessed February 3, 2012).

enemies.<sup>6</sup> The journal describes the actions of the judicial system in response to evidence of President Nixon's involvement in the use of electronic surveillance without court authorization as "dirty tricks."<sup>7</sup> These tactics and the demise of Nixon's presidency affected the nation and specific individuals belonging to the ALC.

Also, found in the files of Peter Kjeseth was a song of lament written in the 1970s. Specifically, the poem describes one man's reaction to the fall of a presidency and the loss of faith in the greatness of a President who had succumbed to "*arrogance of power.*" The poet writes:

*How is the Nixon demise like Greek  
tragedy? And yet not quite?  
I feel the horror of the fall  
I do not feel purged.  
My heart can weep for Pat at the bedside of a man  
Broken in every respect.  
But something in me cannot find nobility in the suffering  
("he was merely tough, never strong...)  
It was hybris  
(but it was also banality)  
It was his greatness, competing to win, struggling up  
against great odds  
(but it was also meanness of spirit)  
It was the arrogance of power  
(but it was also the stealth of someone insecure  
unsure, even tenuous)  
It was the hard political game  
(but it was also simple, stupid cheating and dishonesty)<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup>F. Solowey, "The Perversion of the Grand Jury," *Bill of Rights Journal* (December 1973): 31-34. Found in Peter Kjeseth's files: Box 6, Folder 11, ID 196, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Box 6, Folder 8, ID 140, Namibia Archives. Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. After examining many of Peter Kjeseth's notes and other handwritten material, I am certain that this poem was written in his handwriting. In a conversation I held in January 2012, Peter Kjeseth could not recall writing the poem (the poem would have been written approximately 30 years before). As of February 2012, I



The poem, however, also represents a sentiment that many Americans likely held: *disappointment in their elected President*.

Watergate did not go unnoticed by the Lutheran church bodies either. In January 1974, the Lutheran World Federation News Service<sup>9</sup> published the following sentiments in their publication, Information,

The “tragedy of Watergate” is the strongest stimulus citizens of the United States have received toward defining the purposes of the nation, according to the president of the Lutheran Church in America. Dr. Robert J. Marshall...underscored that...”the American people may now learn not to be nonchalant about public ethics in the future...we are now entering a period when the need of (religion) is felt again.”<sup>10</sup>

Marshall was from a different Lutheran church body from the ALC, but his sentiments were prophetic for the ALC. The concern Watergate caused amongst Lutherans in the United States had the power to provoke action and awareness in the Lutheran churches in the country.

For some time, even before Watergate, the Lutheran churches in the United States were privy to a liaison between their church bodies and the national government. As Robert VanDeusen left his role as the Lutheran liaison a few years after the Watergate scandal and entered retirement, he also left these words,

When the churches are silent on an important moral issue, they leave the impression that the questions involved are not urgent or relevant...When the churches...speak out on a policy question which

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have found no indication of another author. The poem, regardless of authorship, conveys at least one person’s feelings of the time.

<sup>9</sup> The Lutheran World Federation News Service included the ALC and its sister church body, the Lutheran Church in America.

<sup>10</sup> Lutheran World Federation, Watergate Seen Stimulus to Defining U.S. Purpose, *Information*, January 8, 1974. Found in: Box 6, Folder 11, ID 206, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

involves basic human values; they are listened to and become part of the democratic decision-making process.<sup>11</sup>

VanDeusen's role is evidence that Lutherans cared about policies. The Lutheran churches were so involved that they utilized a liaison to inform them and take their concerns as Christians to Washington. VanDeusen's words, however, seem prophetic as he calls churches to stand and speak for moral issues—whether those correspond to the values of a policy or not.<sup>12</sup> VanDeusen provokes both the political activist and content middle-class, persons to recall their roles in the church and world. This was not a call for only a few individuals to become human rights activists; this was a call for churches, individuals, and institutions to speak out together as the body of Christ for the whole of humanity. Alongside VanDeusen's stance, there existed an awareness that the ALC was at risk in becoming a state church.<sup>13</sup> That is to say, that the ALC was at risk of merely supporting whatever values and morals society and government supported. During this time the ALC was forced to consider its place in society.

Other documents in Peter Kjeseth's files indicate that the ALC would not allow the church to accept the government's every decision without serious

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<sup>11</sup> Modean, Erik W. Dr. Van Deusen Retires; Lutheran Expert for 30 Years on Public Affairs, *News Bureau Lutheran Council in the USA*, June 11, 1975, 2. Found in: Box 6, Folder 3, ID 45, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 3. VanDeusen, also says, "We deal with issues according to whether they are believed to be right or wrong as reflected in the statements of the church bodies, not on how popular or unpopular the issues may be." His comments in this interview prompt the Lutheran church to act because—either by abstention or by action the church and her morals affect a policy.

<sup>13</sup> Box 6, Folder 6, ID 99, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is the notes of the Governor's Commission on the Third Century, held at Governor Arthur Link's home in North Dakota on February 5, 1974. This group is separate from the Commission on the Third Century group from the ALC, but is associated with it (Arthur Link was in both). The part referenced is an experience of an attendee of the meeting: "Recently, non-U.S. churchmen concluded, after observation, that the A.L.C. was in danger of being a 'state church'—a church that seconds the values of the society."

theological reflection. His newspaper clippings found in Box #6 show that the ALC was inevitably involved in government proceedings after an incident at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The event became known as 'Wounded Knee.' The events following Wounded Knee called Lutherans to speak out and act out. The ALC had differentiated itself from the United States government by fostering advocacy for human rights and pastoral rights against the pressure of government. On February, 27, 1973, a 71-day occupation began as people of the American Indian Movement protested corruption in the Tribal Council. The American Indian Movement began in 1968 because of improper representation of American Indians in governing bodies. The occupation was a response to dissatisfaction of members with their president, Richard Wilson, whom they accused of misusing funds and authority. Predicting an uprising, United States Marshalls were sent days before the uprising began; eventually, they were joined by FBI agents and armored vehicles. Both sides (The American Indian Movement as well as Richard Wilson—with his support from the United States government) engaged in gunfire which resulted in three deaths.<sup>14</sup>

The ALC was involved in this incident through Dr. Paul Boe, an ALC pastor. Boe had been asked to counsel people at Wounded Knee by the American Indian Movement leader Clyde Bellecourt. Boe agreed. He counseled, listened, and was a friend to the protesters at Wounded Knee.<sup>15</sup> This gave Boe privileged knowledge of which protesters were armed; this was knowledge that the United States

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<sup>14</sup> *New World Encyclopedia* "Wounded Knee, South Dakota," s.v. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Wounded\\_Knee\\_Massacre#Wounded\\_Knee\\_Incident.2C\\_1973](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Wounded_Knee_Massacre#Wounded_Knee_Incident.2C_1973) (accessed February 4, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Box 6, Folder11, ID 219, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. "Ex-Iowa Minister Faces Jail on Contempt Charge," by Chuck Offenberger. This document is a newspaper clipping. The name and date of the newspaper and edition are unavailable.

government wanted. A moral issue arose as to whether the pastor was obligated to give information to his country, or, to keep confidence in his pastoral role. Boe was called to testify in front of a Grand Jury. He refused to give the Grand Jury information learned in his pastoral role at Wounded Knee. A memorandum and a letter were sent by the ALC to its pastors in December 1973 stating the position of the ALC on the responsibility of clergy to keep confidence regarding information passed on in a pastoral role. The letter, also in Kjeseth's files, asserted that the ALC and its policies supported Boe and his decisions before the Federal Grand Jury.<sup>16</sup> The ALC took a stand for individuals and groups seeking pastoral care in the statement of ALC President David Preus:

The laws of this nation and its states are important. We do not treat them casually or disrespectfully. The proper exercise of our ministry is also a serious matter. Where there are laws which threaten the effectiveness of that ministry, they must be challenged, not to defy the law but to seek to change the law to permit a dutiful compliance which does not violate conscience or trust.<sup>17</sup>

Preus' statement, the ALC's statement, is a sign of in-breaking counter-cultural movements in the name of ministry. Watergate and Wounded Knee are evidence of corruption and disappointment in the United States during the 1970s. The ALC, and other church bodies, were called out of such a situation to uphold the laws and government of the nation and states as far as the trust in and the conscience of the minister are not compromised. A statement was made to the United States and citizens by Boe's response to people in need of the ministry during a difficult time

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<sup>16</sup> Box 6, Folder 11, ID 219, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a letter from The American Lutheran Church which was sent to pastors. In general it outlines how church leaders should speak about the situation of Paul Boe and pastoral rights.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

and in the ALC's support of Boe's actions. The statement was not about the United States government's role in the affairs and governance of Native Americans, the statement was not about fair or unfair elections among people—though, from it, certain assumptions could be made by an individual as to where Boe or the ALC might have stood on these issues. The statement was about the freedom of the church to provide pastoral care to people who need it, and the freedom of a pastor to maintain freedom and trust.

The intersection of the church and public policy was affected, and sometimes provoked, by very public blows to the conscience and trust of the American people. These issues resulted from Watergate and Wounded Knee as well as other happenings with international relations in Vietnam and with communism. Amidst growing suspicions and fears, there were also causes for celebration during this decade. 1976 marked the bi-centennial anniversary of the United States. This was a cause for movement in the major Lutheran church bodies in the United States. In December of 1973, the ALC, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) convened for the Lutheran Consultation on the Observance of Our Nation's Bicentennial.<sup>18</sup> Here, the Lutheran churches shared plans for commissioning groups to prepare studies on moral responsibility and their churches roles in celebrating freedom and the accomplishments fostered by freedom. "The committee encouraged that the bicentennial theme should focus

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<sup>18</sup> Box 6, Folder 7, ID 115, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a memorandum concerning the meeting of three major Lutheran church bodies in the United States. The meeting called each of the church bodies to reflect on what the church's role was in celebration of the bi-centennial of the United States. The goal was to call attention to the future, rather than to dwell in the past.

on the 'third century' rather than just a glance backward at the past two centuries."<sup>19</sup> This focus did not forget that there are scars of oppression and corruption in United States history, but allowed for progression and freedom.

### ***The Commission on the Third Century and the Manifesto for the Third Century***

As early as 1972, the ALC had begun to consider its mission for the Third Century as a church which exists in a country where its members are given freedom of religion, and speech, and are charged to confront wrongdoings. The ALC, at the Sixth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, in 1972, made these resolutions to act as God's Church in such a nation:

WHEREAS, The 1972 General Convention has committed itself to mission in and for the world; and

WHEREAS, The challenges of the general president and the vice-president have called this church to live out that commitment in bold new ways; and

WHEREAS, In 1976 the United States of America will observe two hundred years of existence as an independent republic; and

WHEREAS, In these observances American history, tradition, ideals, and character will be restated, glorified, and otherwise celebrated; and

WHEREAS, The Christian community in the United States has a unique responsibility to share in the American experiences and to serve as prophet to the nation; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That The American Lutheran Church through its general president create a Commission on the Third Century to prepare a manifesto on the "American Dream" as seen in light of the gospel; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the congregations and units of this church, in cooperation with the Commission on the Third Century, be encouraged to study and articulate their own statements on national purpose in the light of the gospel; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the statement of the Commission on the Third Century be submitted to the President of the United States and his response sought for the 1976 General Convention.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

This resolution was the result of a deep-seeded and growing sense of freedom, “The freedom which Christ gives,” which the ALC wanted to emphasize as primary a mark of the church.<sup>21</sup> The ALC presented a rationale for this resolution which was resonant with Martin Luther’s theological base in *The Freedom of a Christian*. Luther states that, “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”<sup>22</sup> The resolution which the ALC accepted insists that the people of the ALC are free to be God’s and, “With this freedom...We can serve with boldness, with openness, with readiness, without fear. A Christian can live in any age and in any generation and face any task. That is what it means to live by the gospel...”<sup>23</sup> With that freedom, a group of pastors, professors, and lay leaders in the ALC was formed to begin drafting a document which would reflect the dream for the people of The American Lutheran Church.

The group was called *The Commission for the Third Century* and involved: Alvin Rogness, Robert Anderson, Larry Barrientos, Ray Belcher, Chet Hansen, Mary Henry, Kenneth Julin, Peter Kjeseth, Arthur Link, E.W. Mueller, Cal Olson, Albert Quie, Richard Salzmann, A.C. Schumacher, Dale Skaalure, T.R. Speigner, Evelyn Streng, and Grit Youngquist. The group began meeting in 1973 and met regularly through 1976, most frequently at the Spring Hill Conference Center in Wayzata, MN. The group began drafting their *Manifesto* by first engaging in discussion of what the

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<sup>20</sup> Box 6, Folder 4, ID 73, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary. This document is a collection of reports on and suggestions for the Manifesto.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings (w/ CD-ROM)*, 2nd ed. Timothy Lull. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 393.

<sup>23</sup> ID 73.

American Dream was for themselves and their congregations. They continued with drafting multiple drafts before taking a draft to the ALC and her congregations for study and revision prior to July 4, 1976.<sup>24</sup>

Notes detailing the dream which members of the Commission researched were attached to a memorandum from Carl Reuss who served as a secretary for the Commission.<sup>25</sup> In reading this document, Evelyn Streng appears passionate about the dream as it pertained to Christians in the United States as well as Christians in the United States who are for God's people in the whole world. Streng's argument for the American Dream was that it must make people, "need to think of self in relation to others."<sup>26</sup> Her argument was consistent with the changing dream of young Americans whose values were becoming markedly different than the values of their parents and grandparents. Lynn Curtis, in notes on a retreat of the Commission for the Third Century, reported that the American Dream for young people was interdependence between people and nations; meanwhile older Americans valued independence from relying on other people in respect to one's personal life and independence as a nation from relying on other nations.<sup>27</sup> Richard Reu Salzmänn identified with the Commission that it was President Nixon's goal to be independent and the ambition of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for national

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<sup>24</sup> For further discussion of the process which TALC and the Commission used, see Part 3 and Appendices I and II.

<sup>25</sup> Box 6, Folder 5, ID 87, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a memorandum from Carl Reuss to the rest of the Commission for the Third Century.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Box 6, Folder 6, ID 100, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a copy of notes from Lynn Curtis taken during a retreat, which I believe to be the second meeting of the Commission of the Third Century.



interdependence.<sup>28</sup> Interdependence fell in line with the theology of this Commission of Lutherans which promoted a gospel in which freedom, grace, and peace belonged to all humanity and the proclamation thereof was dependent on the welfare and interactions with the world as a whole. The gravity of making such a statement appears in the Commission notes. Albert Quie is noted with claiming, “Kissinger keeps the bombs from going off. Our [Christian] responsibility is to bring peace to mankind. I don’t have the fear of the bomb. God comes [with us]—Christ with us.”<sup>29</sup> This interdependence of which the Commission members speak was not necessarily “safe” for individuals or countries; the threat of a global thermonuclear war was real. Quie’s statement is one which puts faith in something other than a political office or officer. His faith is in God whose every element of creation continues to exist because of interdependence with another. This interdependence is ideal; it is not the sort of interdependence in which people are compromised, but one in which people serve one another. These statements about interdependence were counter-cultural to the American Dream of older Americans who were living as children of the Depression who were instilled with the values of ‘pulling oneself up by one’s bootstraps,’ and self-sufficiency. The Commission erred on the side of *The Freedom of a Christian*, which the ALC so emphatically described in their resolution to form the Commission, and drafted their *Manifesto* according to the relationship of peace between God’s people everywhere; peace even at the cost of self-sufficiency.

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<sup>28</sup> Box 6, Folder 6, ID 97, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a copy of notes from the second meeting of the Commission for the Third Century.

<sup>29</sup> ID 97.

Independence and interdependence were not the only socio-political factors in the *Manifesto*. In his personal notes considering these things, Peter Kjeseth was undeniably aware of many social facets in need of reform as he wrote, “We must challenge economic systems built on the basis of class, geography, sex, or race.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the Commission dealt with the guilt of the nation’s past of racism, classism, and power struggles. Initial drafts of the *Manifesto* were heavy laden with remorse and repentance for the nation’s sins which compromised neighbors within these economic systems as well as other parts of society. The final draft of the *Manifesto* names these:

...WE DECLARE that our loyalty to Jesus Christ takes precedence over any other loyalty. For us, the dream of the gospel comes before the American dream...WE REPENT for the ways we have strayed from this first loyalty...occasions when we have faltered in the struggle for justice liberation and peace...the times we have uncritically accepted the manipulation of economic, social, political, and religious power...for our extravagant consumption while other members of this human family suffer...<sup>31</sup>

Amidst conversations, T.R. Speigner declared that it was the call of Christians to, “Go tell the Good News to all mankind.”<sup>32</sup> This Good News was not only for those who had not heard, but those who needed to hear again. The final draft of the *Manifesto* maintained emphasis on responsibility but looked with greater hope to the freedom which would be declared for all:

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<sup>30</sup> Box 6, Folder 8, ID 131, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This reference is from the second page of notes of this document. The document is a compilation of notes from a subgroup of the Commission for the Third Century.

<sup>31</sup> Box 6, Folder 9, ID 155, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This is a copy of the *Manifesto*.

<sup>32</sup> Box 6, Folder 5, ID 89, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is notes on the Commission. T.R. Speigner was one of the Commission members.

We acknowledge that God's wrath is real and terrible. He has judged our nation. He will continue to judge us. Yet we know that God's final word is love, his ultimate will for all people is unity and peace...<sup>33</sup>

The entire *Manifesto* was written under the notion that God's love is for all people regardless of all those things which had historically separated God's people in the United States of America—race, class, gender, etc. The *Manifesto* emphasized freedom not based on individualism or isolation; but in freedom from sins—individual and institutional—to act for this freedom—religious, political, etc.—for all. This meant that after three years of debate and drafting, after the loss of trust in government officials and politicians in Watergate, after a struggle to keep the holiness of pastoral care at Wounded Knee, and in the wake of the Third Century of the United States of America, the ALC made a commitment to not defer its judgment and power to any state or national government. The ALC was committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and his saving action which offers the power of freedom to the world. This *Manifesto* gave a theological backbone to issues of social justice which would be born in the coming decades.

A draft of the *Manifesto* was made public in newspapers, the yearbook for the ALC, congregation newsletters, and worship bulletins. With this draft a request was sent for congregations and individuals to study the *Manifesto* and to return comments to the ALC between Thanksgiving 1975 until July 4, 1976.<sup>34</sup> As with any document which calls people to action, this document stirred up concern amongst people of the ALC. One man's response was filled with fear of communism; he

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<sup>33</sup> ID 155.

<sup>34</sup> Box 6, Folder 12, ID 221, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a booklet which the Commission sent to ALC congregations for study of the Manifesto. See Appendix II for a copy of the document.

implied that the *Manifesto's* suggestion of sharing in the human condition across societal and national boundaries would result in communism.<sup>35</sup> Another took issue with the *Manifesto's* charge of extravagant consumption, "I think it is wrong to associate disloyalty to Christ with extravagant consumption."<sup>36</sup> The Commission for the Third Century set out to write a *Manifesto* which called people out of their comfortable, middle-class, American lives and into living as people who see their own sins from which they are freed in Christ.<sup>37</sup> The change one must make to live as such is not necessarily so comfortable; the stark realization that one might be disloyal to Christ because of one's own extravagant consumption is a stark realization of the law.<sup>38</sup> These are among the few responses in which the ALC members seem to have prematurely responded in fear of something different, but should not be disregarded. Communism was a legitimate fear for many middle-and upper-aged Americans during this time; it was a threat to their independent ideals. Both living interdependently and without extravagant consumption would have meant drastic alterations to the American Dream in lieu of living for the sake of all people.

There was positive response to the *Manifesto*, too. Sharon Buhr saw the *Manifesto* as something which "[M]ight be the starting point to acquaint all

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<sup>35</sup> Box 6, Folder 4, ID 70, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This refers to a letter written to the Commission by Mr. Bell from a small town in South-Eastern Wisconsin.

<sup>36</sup> Box 6, Folder 4, ID 85, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document is a letter written by a Mr. Bein to the Bishop Schumacher regarding Bein's disapproval of the *Manifesto*.

<sup>37</sup> I must acknowledge that these individuals are likely people who lived during the Depression. Whether they are this or not, their awareness, or lack thereof, of the consumption of Americans is not to be taken as a reflection of their personal characters. It simply shows that the American people, or some of them, were quite unaware that the Gospel, as presented in the *Manifesto*, calls them out of every comfort of their lifestyle and into advocacy for and life with their neighbors at the risk of those comforts.

<sup>38</sup> Law is used here in reference to the Lutheran concept in which law causes one to see one's own sin.

Christians as to the question about Christian responsibility both nationally and globally.”<sup>39</sup> Buhr saw the goal of the *Manifesto* to be a heightened awareness, knowledge, and commitment to mission. Each response to the *Manifesto* was based largely on one’s own lifestyle. Sharon Buhr, at the time she wrote this letter, was a missionary in South Africa. Living in such a place, Buhr would have seen things other ALC members in the United States could not see. She was likely aware of and witness to Apartheid, racism, and the struggle for freedom outside of the United States. Her perspective was one which witnessed both the distrust of governments amongst United States citizens, and which was enlightened by living in a different culture. It was the hope with which Buhr writes, the hope with which the *Manifesto* was written, the hope that faith would compel people to act, which would call the attention of the ALC to atrocities done to fellow human beings, their Christian brothers and sisters, in Namibia a few years later. A news clipping summarizes the *Manifesto* in this way:

As written, the manifesto is hardly remarkable; it is basically a statement of activist Christianity. But the implications in it are intriguing....The ALC manifesto promises to involve the church in social systems and structures with which the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man are, if not united, at least partners... On the whole, the manifesto is a revolutionary document; revolutionary in the narrow sense in that it restates the classic Christian position that in a crunch Christians will "obey God rather than man," and revolutionary in a religious sense in that it rejects the traditional Lutheran aversion to messing in politics. The manifesto is a draft and not a policy statement of the church.<sup>40</sup>

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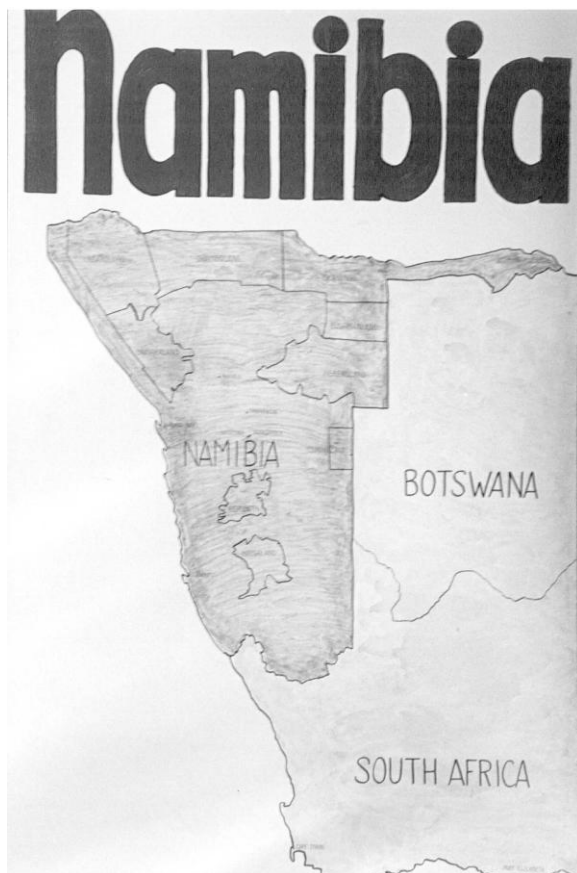
<sup>39</sup> ID 70. This reference is to another letter in the responses to the Manifesto. It is attached to the response from Mr. Bell. Because they are together, Ms. Buhr’s letter stands out as one much more aligned with the Manifesto and social gospel.

<sup>40</sup>William Wineke, ALC Drafts Manifesto 'to Reshape the Nation', *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 10, 1975. Found in: Box 6, Folder 12, ID 230, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

The *Manifesto* did not give any new or radical message to the American Lutherans. It stated that because of the Gospel Christians are called to participate in the structures of government and economy. Christians are especially called, when a neighbor's freedom is oppressed or at risk of compromise.

## PART 2: The Lutheran Churches in Namibia in the 1970s

In the 1970's the ALC was working on the *Manifesto*, Lutherans in the United States became suspicious of their president, the ALC advocated for pastoral rights, and Lutherans sat in fear of communism and others protected their extravagant consumption. While all of that went on in the United States, the people of Namibia struggled for their independence under Apartheid. Rooted in the cause for freedom were two Lutheran church bodies, the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church (ELOK)<sup>41</sup> and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELK), who were freed in Christ, just as the Lutherans in America. To understand the Lutheran churches in Namibia in the 1970s, one must have a basic understanding of their history.



This image is a copy of a poster found in the Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

The map shows the location of Namibia in relation to South Africa.

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<sup>41</sup> This is now the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Namibia (ELCIN).

### ***History of Lutheran Mission in Namibia***

In the late 1800's both German and Finnish Lutheran missionaries moved to Namibia as their governments colonized along coasts in Namibia (earlier missionaries had come from the London Missionary Society).<sup>42</sup> Immigrant pastors worked mostly near centers of trade to aid in colonization and to get a footing in Namibia.<sup>43</sup> The early situation of the Lutheran church in Namibia during German colonization is one that many look on with remorse today:

Generally accepting that their work would be assisted by and successful under the formal sanction of colonial rule, the missionaries welcomed and contributed to its advent...While Germans conducted their war of extermination (1904-7) against the Namibian people, the German Lutheran church hierarchies did very little to stop them.<sup>44</sup>

This extermination is evidence of early racism. This racism was later perpetuated by other groups. The German Lutheran church did little to oppose the German governmental policies which perpetuated racial inequality. Instead, the church built hospitals and schools. These fostered growth in the church as Namibians found hope in the gospel and in services of the church, even when the church leaders' inaction perpetuated discrimination in society.<sup>45</sup> This growth is attributed to the fact that Namibians were not allowed to participate in the colonized country except in churches.<sup>46</sup> Namibians took ownership in their churches and, in some denominations, split from the colonial church bodies creating new churches.

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<sup>42</sup> Peter Katjavivi, Per Frostin, and Kaire Mbuende, eds., *Church and Liberation in Namibia* (Winchester, Mass: Pluto Press (1989), 4.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 8.



Namibians who became and remained members in the Lutheran church continued to encounter inequality in the church. In the 1950s, it became evident that there was a substantial difference in the living arrangements for white pastors and black pastors in Namibia.<sup>47</sup> This inequality permeated the church and other factions of the Namibian society. In 1950, the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa could govern Namibia. Under South Africa, Namibia and her people—Christian or not—were exploited and oppressed. South Africa took control of Namibia's natural resources, paid black workers in mines considerably less than white workers, and prevented change from their system of Apartheid—one which gave preference and privilege to European descendents in Africa while taking advantage of native Africans—by any means. In the church, this was manifest even amongst clergy where wage disparities between the races ranged from 2.23 to 3.5 times higher for white clergy than black clergy.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, in 1971, leaders of the ELK and ELOK issued a letter to the prime minister of South Africa taking a stand against South African rule of Namibians.<sup>49</sup> Christians in Namibia formed ecumenical unions against Apartheid throughout the 1970s; the ultimate formation was called the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 10. "As a pupil during his stay in the 1950s in both Okhandja and Windhoek, the author has a vivid recollection of how African priests, some of them quite old, and including the more prominent ones, used to struggle to maintain themselves while they performed their duties as pastors. Many would walk a journey of several miles a day, while their white counterparts, some quite young, were housed in modern houses and had all sorts of facilities and amenities, including transport, at their disposal."

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 10. "...figures for wages in 1969: Africans received from R20 to R90, the top rate per month, while whites earned from R70 to R200."

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 13.

formed in 1977.<sup>50</sup> The involvement of the Church was not without notice by South Africa. Soon, South Africa challenged the churches by denying visas and permits to pastors as well as visits from Lutheran clergy from other countries.<sup>51</sup> South Africa perpetuated wage disparity between ethnicities and attempted to prevent the meeting of minds which would work to eliminate such disparities in the Namibian church and society. By the 1970s, Lutheran mission in Namibia had changed from the early colonial mission of German and Finnish Lutherans converting Namibians to Christianity to a mission in which the Namibian church and people worked in light of the gospel to become free people. This change began as Namibian seminary students heard, for the first time, the Gospel as message which proclaimed freedom and accountability.

In 1971, a group of seminarians in Namibia heard the news of the decision of the International Court of Justice that South African rule in Namibia was overturned and that the continued occupation of Namibia by South Africa was illegal.<sup>52</sup> Their study of Romans 13 that day took on a new meaning. Zephania Kameeta, a seminarian in Namibia at that time, recalled studying Romans 13:3<sup>53</sup> that day and asking with his classmates:

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 14, "It was originally made up of the following churches: African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME); Anglican Diocese of Namibia; Evangelical Lutheran Church in SW/Namibia (ELC); Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia; Methodist Church; and Roman Catholic Church (RCC)."

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Zephania Kameeta, *Why o Lord?: Psalms and Sermons from Namibia* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986), vii.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. for reference, the verse is translated in this text as: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God..." The verse had been used to support the rule of South Africa over Namibia. The verse, in this seminary classroom, was used to look at the situation in Namibia and to question the punishment of those who did good (the Namibian people who worked for justice) and reward those who did wrong (those who exploited the land and people).

What's the responsibility of the church in this kind of situation? Has the church anything to say? Should the church only be concerned about what is to come? Or should the church be the first-taste of the kingdom of God? Should the church keep quiet in view of the suffering of the people, in the view of the injustice?<sup>54</sup>

The questions were answered as students became pastors with voices proclaiming a message in which all people were subject to God. Kameeta went on from seminary to preach among the Namibian people. These apparent answers to these questions are found in Kameeta's preaching. Kameeta preached to people in a neo-colonial society, people who suffered the effects of a system which was rooted in racial inequality and disadvantage from early on. He called Africa a "suffering continent;"<sup>55</sup> it was a place filled with sorrow. He gave reason for the situation there:

This tragic phenomenon arises when the oppressed of yesterday—after their victory—become today's oppressors. They forget that the struggle for liberation doesn't end with the day of independence. Instead of serving and giving their lives to redeem the people, they want to be served and worship, and even take the lives of their people, so that they can live in luxury.<sup>56</sup>

In the same sermon in which he spoke these words, Kameeta outlined the differences in the lives of Mr. Smith, an English immigrant, and Mr. Zwane, a local. There are harsh differences in their lives in Namibia.<sup>57</sup> He preached, not against people, "but against the wicked 'Super Powers' of this dark age..." which allowed for inequality between the white South Africans and black Namibians. He preached a gospel in which, "It is Jesus the Liberator whose voice speaks with urgency to

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 8. For example Smith and his family had free housing until he could find his family a home while Zwane lived in a hostel and needed special permission for family his family to visit.

'Christian' Southern Africa."<sup>58</sup> This liberation theology named sin as a characteristic of, not only individuals, but, "also clearly to be discerned in the history of communities...a destructive reality within the structures and systems of our community."<sup>59</sup>

This leader of the Lutheran church was one voice among many who spoke to this effect, "It is the calling of the church to be involved in this struggle. Everyone who calls himself or herself a Christian is called to this struggle."<sup>60</sup> With the Lutheran Churches in South Africa, he proclaimed, "Jesus Christ is the liberator of the whole humanity. In him there is no discrimination. It is blasphemous for South Africa to claim that it is a Christian country while it deprives the black people of their God-given freedom and dignity..."<sup>61</sup>



Solveig Kjeseth, Rev. Zephania Kameeta, and Rev. Ed May taken in front of a Namibia Concerns Display. This photo is found in the Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 13.

There were interesting parallels in the leadership of the ALC and Namibian Lutheran churches in the 1970s. Both American Lutherans and Namibian Lutherans recognized needs in their respective countries to lament and change different political injustices in the name of Christ. Both American Lutherans and Namibian Lutherans would struggle with rights of clergy. While these parallels existed, there was one grave difference: American Lutherans were free to make the *Manifesto* and to work peaceably against the very injustices which were happening against the churches and among the people of Namibia. American Lutherans were religiously and politically free to advocate whereas Namibians were not.

Where were the people whose very existence sprouted from the basic human rights to life and liberty? Where were the people of the United States of America, in this time? Where were the Lutherans whose *Manifesto* proclaimed interdependence and freedom in Christ? What are the struggles of the Namibian people against Apartheid? Where were the rest of the Christians in the world who were, according to Kameeta, called to this struggle?

### ***The American Lutheran Church's Awareness of Apartheid in Namibia***

American awareness of Apartheid in Namibia was varied. Kameeta made a general and accurate statement that, "While the world is being told that the monster of Apartheid is dead, it is roaming like a hungry lion and devours the children of Africa."<sup>62</sup> We know that some Americans knew about Apartheid because of relationships with the United Nations (UN). It seems that most available knowledge

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<sup>62</sup> Kameeta, 7.

of Apartheid in Namibia was likely informational. In 1945, the General Assembly called states administering mandated territories to put those territories under International Trusteeship System, only South Africa refused to do so. In 1967, the UN Council for Namibia was established after South Africa failed to fulfill obligations under a previously made mandate with the League of Nations to administer the territory. South Africa failed in allowing maximum participation of the people in government. In 1971, the UN Security council deemed that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was illegal.<sup>63</sup>

There is suggestion that the Namibian struggle for freedom was on the minds and hearts of the Commission for the Third Century as they created the *Manifesto*. There are a few prominent pieces regarding issues in Namibia in Peter Kjeseth's materials on the Third Century. In Kjeseth's records from the Commission for Our Nation's Third Century is an excerpt from the World Council of Churches. It contains information on US involvement in Namibia which linked American companies to South African operations on Namibian soil.<sup>64</sup> The list is large enough to spark concern that the US was supporting South Africa's policy of Apartheid, that is, the US was supporting racism and oppression of a nation. The document quotes a statement printed in Namibia News<sup>65</sup> from SWAPO.<sup>66</sup> The quote explained that

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<sup>63</sup> *The United Nations Council For Namibia: A Summary of Twenty Years of Effort by the Council For Namibia On Behalf of Namibian Independence* (New York: United Nations, 1987), 4-5.

<sup>64</sup> Box 6, Folder 11, ID 202, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document does not have enough information to find outside of this box. It is obviously from the World Council of Churches. Companies named were: The Tsumeb Corporation, Newmont Mining Company, American Metal Climax, Inc., US Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Nord Resources, Navarro Exploration Company, Phelps Dodge, Brilund Mines-Etosha Petroleum, Anglo-American Corporations/J.P. Morgan and Company, Fifth Avenue Fashion, Tidal Diamonds, Getty Oil Company.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

Namibia's natural resources were being exhausted while Namibians did not receive profits because of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and because South Africa was administered under Apartheid.<sup>67</sup> The document concluded:

1. *US companies give direct support to the South African government in Namibia by the taxes they pay.*
2. *US companies in Namibia strengthen the economy of South Africa by injecting large amounts of capital and developing significant sources of foreign exchange earnings.*
3. *US companies in Namibia operate in areas strategically vital to the continuation of white domination by force...*
4. *US economic involvement in Namibia serves to legitimize the illegal South African government, and inevitably brings about a closer integration of the South African economy with those of the West. One result of this is interdependence [which] is the increased willingness of western governments to come to the economic and military regimes against the legitimate demands of the people.*
5. *Finally, because US interests in Namibia are heavily concentrated in the extractive industries the problem is particularly urgent, since resources are being rapidly depleted and the profits are not renewable.*<sup>68</sup>

These conclusions, made by the World Council of Churches, display an interdependence which is much different than the interdependence which the Commission for the Third Century (of the ALC) envisioned. The type of interdependence painted in the fourth conclusion above is one in which people and institutions were growing interdependent at the expense of the lives of people who struggled for miniscule wages. Americans supported Apartheid. They did so by passively purchasing goods from companies which used resources from Namibia

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<sup>66</sup> SWAPO refers to the South West African Peoples Organization which supported freedom Namibian freedom from South Africa. The group originated in northern Namibia (Ovamboland) and sought to unite the people of Namibia. It was supported by individuals and church bodies. For more history on this see: <http://www.swapoparty.org/history.html>, or, Sam Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered: The Autobiography of Sam Nujoma - My Life in SWAPO and My Participation in the Liberation Struggle of Namibia* (Panaf Books, 2001).

<sup>67</sup> ID 202.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

which were illegally controlled by South African rule under which Namibians were paid severely low wages and given little to no rights as workers or people. Whether by lack of awareness or by ignorance, the American people supported Apartheid because the American economy had become dependent on prices of natural resource offered by the South African economy.

Another document in Peter Kjeseth's file indicates that American churches were prompting other groups to confront issues of Apartheid in the 1970s. A copy of an article written by John G. Simon shows that Yale University took concerted effort to stand against the support of Apartheid.<sup>69</sup> Yale asked General Electric, IBM, and Caterpillar each to provide information on their operations with South Africa. Phillips Petroleum and American Metal Climax were asked to discontinue all operations in Namibia. Other requests were made for better and healthier relations between workers, companies and shareholders. The proposals "were submitted on behalf of six Protestant denominations and the National Council of Churches."<sup>70</sup>

The existence of these documents in Kjeseth's file indicate that at least one member of the Commission was aware of Namibia's situation during the formation of the *Manifesto*. Discussion notes prove that the Commission was in discussion about such subjects. In one meeting, T.R. Speigner, an African-American professor and an ALC pastor in the southern US, is noted saying that the case of South Africa might be a place where the gospel can be an "instrument changing new hearts and

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<sup>69</sup> John G. Simon, "Yale's First Year as a 'Socially Responsible' Stockholder," *Yale Alumni Magazine* (February 1974), 17-23. Found in: ID 212 Folder 11, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 19.



minds.”<sup>71</sup> Leaders in the church, in the ALC, knew the gospel to be an instrument of change. Leaders in the church saw a need for political and economic advocacy against Apartheid and moved one of the US’s most respected universities to act against Apartheid and for human rights. The next step, for the ALC, would be taking these ideals written in the hearts of leaders and in the *Manifesto* and empowering the general public to emerge from the comfort of not-knowing—not-knowing the scale to which Americans contributed to depletion of the world’s resources at the expense of lives. Commission member Larry Barrientos began discussion at a meeting of the Commission with a rather convicting question, “How many Americans consider themselves a part of the world...we don’t view ourselves as part of America—we think we’re the whole thing.”<sup>72</sup>

In the mid- to late-1970s, at Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) in Dubuque, Iowa, the answer to Barrientos’ question began to change. Abisai and Selma Shejavali and their family moved from Namibia to Dubuque in 1972. The Shejavali story, the story of Namibia, soon became a story from which the community at WTS could not differentiate itself. The story spread throughout Dubuque area ALC congregations and became known in ALC congregations and synods throughout the United States. The ideals of the *Manifesto*, which had time to sit on the minds of individuals and congregations in the ALC, were challenged by the existence of Apartheid in Namibia.

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<sup>71</sup> ID 97.

<sup>72</sup> ID 97.



This is a photo of the baptism of Kandiwapa (Kandi) Shejavali in 1974 at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Front Row (left to right): Selma Shejavali, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, Ilah Weiblen (holding Kandiwapa), President William Weiblen, Abisai Shejavali (student).

Back Row (left to right): James (Jim) Shimota and Lenore Shimota (Advocacy for Namibia couple), Mary Ann Bergan, Willis (Bill) Bergan (student).

This photo is found in the Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

## ***Namibia Concerns***

With the arrival of the Shejavalis family in the 1970s, WTS began to learn about the struggles of Christian leaders who proclaimed Christian freedom and sought independence for Namibia. During their time at WTS, the family made connections with students, faculty, and staff. As part of the WTS Global Concerns Committee,<sup>73</sup> a sub-committee called the Namibia Concerns Committee was formed. This initial committee was made up of seven individuals. Selma Shejavalis (Abisai's wife), Solveig Kjeseth (spouse of professor Peter Kjeseth), and Susan Birchfield (WTS student) would travel locally on behalf of the committee to speak to women's groups, high schools, and congregations about concerns in Namibia.

Two incidents in 1978 caused great concern for the committee. The first was the Cassinga Massacre which occurred in March of 1978 when South Africa attacked a refugee camp which Angola had permitted Namibians to use. The second happened after the Shejavalis returned to Namibia after six and a half years of living at WTS. Solveig Kjeseth recalled in an interview this personal incident which captured the attention of the Namibia Concerns Committee:

The second big push was when the Shejavalis returned to Namibia that summer, 1978, about August. Within 24 hours of getting to their home in Namibia, the security people took Abisai away in a pickup truck. And the next morning they came and got Selma and took her, and left the two little girls who just two weeks earlier had been riding their tricycles around the quadrangle at Wartburg. They could not speak to their grandparents, they did not know the Oshiwambo language. The next day, Bishop Dumeni, hearing that Abisai had been taken then Selma, drove all night to the place where the little girls were. He got back to the grandparents homestead just in time to see the soldiers come and take the two little girls—they were terrified of

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<sup>73</sup> A committee of students, spouses, faculty and staff designed to raise global awareness and responsibility.

course. Then the older, who was eight, said, 'Our parents don't let us ride with strangers.' Then Bishop Dumeni said, 'If the girls must go, I will take them in my car.' And, one of the soldiers started to get in the car and Dumeni said, 'I never let anyone with a gun in my car.' And then the soldiers put their gun up to his head. It had to be traumatic for those little kidlets. They were released—the whole family—later that day after the girls were taken. It was an effort to scare them. When Susan Birchfield and I sent out the report about this incident, that's when it really got the attention.<sup>74</sup>

Solveig and Susan sent news of this incident to congregations and every student who had been at WTS during the Shejavali time there. Solveig and Peter Kjeseth claim that these classes of students are the “absolutely enduring core of Wartburg people...those people who have a personal experience of the Shejavali and later other Namibians...”<sup>75</sup> “Always, we could count on Wartburg grads, no matter. Because for the next 29 years, there was always a Namibian student, or family on campus.”<sup>76</sup> This core of a committee was strongly led by Solveig Kjeseth and Ilah Weiblen, whose husband was Wartburg Theological Seminary president William Weiblen.

In 1982, Solveig Kjeseth wrote a paper which was presented at the International Seminar on the Role of Transnational Corporation in Namibia. Her paper outlined the purposes of the Namibia Fund and the Namibia Newsletter which the Namibia Concerns Committee began in 1978. Solveig used the story of the Shejavali family to share the necessity of such a fund and newsletter. The paper did not hide the sins of the South African Apartheid. Along with the story of the

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<sup>74</sup> Solveig and Peter Kjeseth, interview by Katherine Chullino, Windows Media Audio File recorded January 2012, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. See Appendix IV for text.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. The classes of students would have included students who were at Wartburg Theological Seminary from the Shejavali's arrival in 1972 through those who would have been first year students when Abisai graduated in 1978. This would mean the WTS classes of 1972-1981 knew the Shejavali family.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Shejavali family's arrests, the story of Abisai's foster-family was shared. His foster father, a pastor, had been beaten; his foster mother blinded and raped. Solveig wrote, "Through their [the Shejavali's] presence we learned, in a personal way, about the tragic situation in Namibia, about the struggle for freedom, and about the suffering of black Namibians."<sup>77</sup>

The initial purpose of the Namibia Concerns Committee was to support Wartburg Theological Seminary students and their families. Upon returning to Namibia, the families suffered from assassination, arrests (even the arrests of children), beatings, and rape. Furthermore, a fund was established "to make clear, in a tangible way that we are 'standing with' our sisters and brothers in Namibia."<sup>78</sup> A secondary purpose of the fund and of the *Namibia Newsletter*<sup>79</sup> was to inform people—specifically, but not exclusively, Lutherans—of the situation and suffering of the Namibian people.

Information abounded. During summers, Namibia Concerns Committee members would network at Global Mission events in the ALC. The stories of Namibian families in the WTS community appealed to the hearts of the people; the newfound awareness of needs prompted action. Namibia Concerns grew for years. Namibia Concerns continued to grow after the ALC merged with other Lutheran bodies to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988. Synod assemblies in the ALC and ELCA ensured that Namibia was put on the hearts and

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<sup>77</sup> Solveig Kjeseth, "The Namibia Concerns Committee---Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa", n.d., Document No. NS-22, African Activist Archive, <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-B49-84-al.sff.document.acoa000219.pdf> (accessed October 1, 2011), 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>79</sup> This was a newsletter which the Namibia Concerns Committee researched, wrote, and sent to supporters.

minds of American Lutherans. Throughout the late 1980s, Namibia Concerns held information booths at synod assemblies. Rebecca Ninke's connection to Namibia began at one of those assemblies and reflects the magnitude of Namibia Concerns effects on Lutherans:

When I was a high school kid in South Dakota, I was the chair for my synods board for youth ministry. In 1989, I went to the assembly; there was a huge contingency from Namibia. I had a drive for social ministry. Really people didn't talk about Apartheid that much, I remember finding out what it was and that it was going on, and I was like, "What?!" I wore a Namibia shirt around our small town. I started writing letters to representatives and got involved. Then I went to Gustavus [Adolphus] and it was a depository for Namibia students. Lots of them were getting political-science degrees. When they got here a lot of people didn't know what was going on in their country.<sup>80</sup>

Ninke went on to study at WTS (1994-98) and participated in an exchange with the Namibian church before finishing her Master of Divinity in 1998 and becoming a pastor. Hers is just one of nearly 11,000 stories of individuals who learned about Namibia's struggle under Apartheid and, in response, advocated for freedom. Eventually, the group of seven advocates in small-town Iowa would become a network of 11,000 people across the United States before Namibia would gain independence.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Rebecca Ninke, interview by Katherine Chullino, January 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Solveig Kjeseth, interview January 2012.

### **PART 3: The Convergence of Manifesto and Mission**

The Namibia Concerns Committee is a prime example of where manifesto and mission meet. The 1970s were a pivotal time for the American Lutheran Church. The national celebration of the nation's third century of independence became a cause for the people of ALC to consider what their freedoms—political and religious—meant in a worldwide context. The ALC's Commission for the Third Century took into great consideration both the concerns of American Lutherans and concerns of the world in the writing of the *Manifesto*. The *Manifesto* produced by the Commission was specific enough to call people to action and broad enough to let people define when action ought to be taken. The ideals set forth in the *Manifesto* were ones which called people out of their comfort zones and into the lives of God's people in the most severe and uncomfortable places. At the time the people of the ALC were called to witness that there was Apartheid in Namibia, they were already affected by the ideals of the *Manifesto*. The horizon, the view which the ALC saw at that time when Apartheid became evident, was shaped and made vast by the *Manifesto*. The emerging ideals from the *Manifesto* allowed for committees within the church structure, like the Namibia Concerns Committee, to evolve when people become aware of the needs of the world. This provided fertile ground for the growth of a model of mission at both institutional and grassroots levels.

## ***A Strategy for Lay Mission***

The model for mission which we see at work in the ALC during the 1970s has institutional components and grassroots components which require both clergy and lay leadership. In Peter Kjeseth's files on the Third Century, are copies of letters between Peter Kjeseth and Richard Reu Salzmänn. These letters suggest that in 1972 Salzmänn wrote an article on a new strategy for lay ministry. Salzmänn's work was based in his observations and study of American society and his conclusion was this: "[S]ince personal life is so completely bound up with the structures of society, it seems that to minister to persons in this age means to act on the structures which affect persons."<sup>82</sup> People were bound up with structures which were under question. Kjeseth's files show a preoccupation with the US presidency in Watergate, the status of an ordained pastor in the case of Paul Boe, as well as the social structures of economics and industry associated with Apartheid in Namibia. Salzmänn's observation that people were concerned with and act on those structures and situations which affect them was foundational for figuring out how people might become involved in ministry.

Salzmänn's vision was this:

*What I believe can be thought of is the beginning of a process whereby within the Church structures a new ministry is developed through lay people to the institutions of the society—lay people enabled by the pastors and the full resources of the Church structures to effect change within the faltering institutions of this land.<sup>83</sup>*

Salzmänn believed this process required three elements:

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<sup>82</sup> Richard Salzmänn, "Strategy For Lay Ministry in a New Time" *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 (1972): 144.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 147.



- a. a fresh look at the theological underpinnings which make the Christian responsibility to the world unavoidably clear;
- b. out of this, a change in understanding (consciousness) by individual Christians, clergy and lay;
- c. an expansion and revision of the purposes and uses of the Church structures to bring about the empowerment of lay people.<sup>84</sup>

These elements were intended to build mission based in theology, involving both clergy and laity, and changing the consciousness of all Christians. Salzmänn's dream was one which would expand the horizon of the purpose of Church. Whether intentional or not, the ALC mimicked Salzmänn's elements in their creation of the Commission for the Third Century, *Manifesto* for Our Nation's Third Century, and in eventual advocacy groups like Namibia Concerns.<sup>85</sup>

This new strategy was implemented in the ALC for lay mission and began from the top of the power structure of the ALC. The ALC president asked the ALC assembly to form a Commission for the Third Century. The ALC renewed the longstanding belief that Christians are freed in Christ and still servants in Christ for Christians in their time. The ALC outlined this freedom in a four page resolution in their 1972 assembly.<sup>86</sup> The Commission transformed the resolution into a two page *Manifesto*. The ALC began the Commission with *a fresh look at theology*. As discussed in Part 1, the ALC did not make a new theological discovery about the freedom humankind has in Christ. The ALC and Commission reiterated a concept from the Reformation through Luther's treatise on *The Freedom of a Christian*. The

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 147.

<sup>85</sup> Box 6, Folder 3, ID 52, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. This document suggests that it is likely that the Commission indeed used Salzmänn's approach to mission. This document includes correspondence between Peter Kjeseth and Richard Reu Salzmänn which includes Salzmänn's article.

<sup>86</sup> ID 73.

concept is inherent in Lutheran theology. The concept was one that many Lutherans, and others, have read and rewritten for their contexts. Timothy Lull recounted the concept in his compilation of Luther's works. Lull wrote in his introduction to Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian*, he writes,

The first question of ethics for Luther is not... 'What is to be done?' but rather 'Why do we do what we do?' The woman or man who knows the grace of God in Jesus Christ is set free to act on the basis of responding love and the real needs of the neighbor.<sup>87</sup>

The *Manifesto* was the ALC's statement on why Lutherans should act for love and justice. The situation of the US during the 1970s was such that citizens were remembering their freedoms. The *Manifesto* was a *fresh look at the theological underpinnings* on Lutheran freedom for ALC members in the 1970s. The formation of the *Manifesto* was perfectly aligned with Salzmann's first element because of its application of an old theological underpinning to a contemporary climate.

This renewed statement of the *Manifesto* prompted *a change in understanding* began amongst Christians. This change was fostered by the ALC and Commission's desire to educate and inspire individuals into action. In a letter from the Commission to the ALC Executive Committee of the Church Council, the Commission asserted,

That the process of study, discovery and formulation is an exciting one, worthy of duplication at the grass-roots level...we propose that the period beginning Thanksgiving, 1975 through at least July 4, 1976 be designated as a time when local efforts be made to study the American Dream in the light of the Gospel...<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Timothy Lull in, Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings (w/ CD-ROM)*, 2nd ed. Ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress - eBooks Account, 2005), 386.

<sup>88</sup> Box 6, Folder 8, ID 134, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

Such study allowed the people to see the ideals of the *Manifesto*. Furthermore, the materials which the Commission and ALC provided allowed for congregations, individuals, and groups to transform the *Manifesto* and Christian freedom into their own ideals. Because the *Manifesto* was not a policy, there was fluidity in how it could be read and interpreted by congregations and individuals. The ALC and Commission were intentional about gathering the responses of congregations and lay member of the church. Their strategy to disperse materials included a guide for study and forming a *Manifesto* with one's own congregation or religious group.<sup>89</sup> Members of the committee were made available to worship with congregations and lead them in study of the *Manifesto*. Such efforts allowed for congregations to *expand and revise* the ideals of the *Manifesto* for their contexts, *empowering the laity* for a mission which was consistent with Lutheran tradition, their political freedoms, and their passions.

### ***Theological and Practical Mission***

The formation of the Commission was highly institutional and top-down. The presidents<sup>90</sup> of the ALC and Church Council had hand-picked individuals from the ALC to formulate the *Manifesto*. The individuals on the Commission engaged others in the church in conversation. The ideas in the *Manifesto* are, therefore, a hybrid of ideas from administrators and leaders and lay members of the church. Following Salzmann's elements, the *Manifesto* is inherently theologically based and began in the upper decks of the ALC hierarchy. This mission could have easily risked misuse

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<sup>89</sup> ID 221. See Appendix II.

<sup>90</sup> Between 1972 and 1973 the ALC presidency transitioned from Kent Knutson to David Preus.

of a hierarchy. However, instead of directing congregations and individuals to follow the *Manifesto* and blindly accept it as their own, the Commission called for them to engage in conversation. The *Manifesto* provided an immeasurable horizon for mission because the theology was only a base for practical mission for the context of Lutherans in the 1970s. Within the scope of possible mission was the future group known as Namibia Concerns.

The *Manifesto* became a mission when its ideals were tested. Until a thought (manifesto, creed, statement, or dream) is put to test, it is merely words. In a critique of the *Manifesto*, a pastor from Detroit, Kurt Borows, sent a copy of an article from the Conference on Inner City Ministry which responded to the *Manifesto* to the Commission. The article read, "We would caution, however, that words alone will not bring those goals to the fruition of which the *Manifesto* speaks...[we] would urge the American Lutheran Church to pledge itself to action."<sup>91</sup> The goal of the *Manifesto* was to make a statement by which American Lutherans could assert their freedom and dreams. The *Manifesto* became a call to live into those dreams. When the ALC Americans became increasingly aware of the plight of Namibians, their American Lutheran way of living in light of the dream was tested. Leaders in the Church (not only the ALC) advocated for American institutions and individuals to hold high standards for shareholders in companies which were associated with South Africa and the exploitation Namibians. The dreams and goals of the *Manifesto* became mission for individuals and groups within the church. Because the ideals of the *Manifesto*, which were the renewed freedoms of Lutherans, were challenged by

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<sup>91</sup> ID 73.

the plight of Namibians, a mission resulted. This mission entailed observable elements which were vital to the formation and continuation of the Namibia Concerns group. The following observations are the result of this study on the Commission, the *Manifesto*, and Namibia Concerns.

### **1. Mission begins with theological basis for the Church's activity in the world.**

"Mission is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the church's effort to extend itself."<sup>92</sup> When the ALC formed the Commission, the ALC established the purpose of their *Manifesto*, not as a policy, but as a statement on the Christian's freedom in Christ. Their purpose was not like the purpose of missions past, such as those which converted individuals for the sake of colonization. Their purpose was clearly for God's mission, "We pledge our involvement in the social systems and structures so that they become more faithful to God's will for his world."<sup>93</sup> This theology left the particularities of mission (what happened, where it happened, who was served, who served, etc.) open for the Christian in whichever context.

### **2. Mission involves the gifts of clergy and laity.**

The mission which the ALC established in the *Manifesto* was one which used the theological concepts of grace and freedom to empower laity to live with and for their neighbors in the US and abroad. The Commission was comprised of religious educators, pastors, and lay leaders who were students, teachers, businesspeople, lawmakers, and retirees. The *Manifesto* was made available to ALC congregations

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<sup>92</sup> Guder, 82.

<sup>93</sup> ID 86. This is Part V of the *Manifesto*. See Appendix I.

and groups who were charged to study the *Manifesto*, make suggestions to the Commission, and reformulate the *Manifesto* for their congregations.

### **3. Mission requires communication and organization.**

The nature of this project is evidence that mission does not happen without communication. The *Manifesto* was written during meetings of the Commission, but it would have no content if it were not for outside communication. From the writing of letters and scheduling of meetings to the impromptu note-taking during conversations outside of meetings, communication was more than talking with one another. Communication meant that committee members were in dialogue with one another and their peers outside of the Commission. Communication meant that this dialogue was documented in either notes or recordings. Peter Kjeseth's box of notes on the Third Century illustrate the varied communications necessary for beginning mission and creating awareness for the necessity of mission.

### **4. Mission requires education and proclamation.**

As evidenced by responses to the *Manifesto* and by American awareness, or lack thereof, of the situation of Namibians, *mission does not happen without awareness of need*. The ideals of national interdependence and justice characteristic of the *Manifesto* were in play during the 1970s in the ALC amongst pastoral leaders and church administrators. The novelty of Yale University's requirements for stockholders implies that Americans had been unaware of global and economic injustices. The requirements for companies and stockholders were the result of raised awareness of the companies they worked with were engaged in ethically wrong treatment of workers and people. The power of awareness, of education, is

that people learn when things are wrong and are then able to change the world. The *Manifesto* called Lutherans to become aware of the world in which they lived and to live in that world according to the Gospel which was for all humankind. The *Manifesto* gave theological reasons for ALC members to engage in the world in which they lived. This page was opened in Peter Kjeseth's Commission notes:

It must be abundantly clear to all that this action...is yet another indication that there is no acceptance of the true difference of opinion and opposition in the present system even if this is on the basis of Christian beliefs...No one is safe or can experience any security in South Africa if his opposition to the nationalist government is meaningful and relevant. The Gospel is always a threat to an insecure state and to people ruling through violence and living in fear -- Christ was crucified because he challenged a reign of force by the transforming love of God.<sup>94</sup>

The proclamation of such a Gospel was coupled with making the ALC aware of Apartheid. The convergence of the ALC's ideals in the *Manifesto* and the Namibian's need for independence happened because of education. Abisai Shejavali came to Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, to be educated in a Lutheran understanding of God's work and mission for the world so that he could proclaim the Gospel in Namibia. The Shejavali family taught a small seminary campus about the existence of Apartheid in South Africa. This ultimately led congregations, who were thinking about freedom in Christ, into acting out against Apartheid because of their freedom in Christ. Lastly,

## **5. Mission is malleable.**

The core of mission should always be rooted in God's mission for the world. The goal of the ALC when writing the *Manifesto* was to integrate the Gospel with the

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<sup>94</sup> Box 6, Folder 11, ID 206, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

American dream. The *Manifesto* reiterated a classic theme of Lutheran theology which provokes mission based in one's own freedom. That mission is malleable. The *Manifesto* ended up redefining the traditional American dream fixed in individualism and independence to a dream in which all of God's people live in the world together, relying on God and being accountable to one another. Furthermore, the writers of the *Manifesto* left room for individuals and congregations to hone the *Manifesto* for their communities. The *Manifesto* maintained a prophetic nature which opened the horizon for future advocacy based on issues which might arise.

These observations of mission in the ALC, Salzmann's strategy for lay mission, and the stories of the ALC and Namibian churches in the 1970s serve as a reminder of the mission to which all Christians are called because of the freedom which God has granted to serve brothers and sisters of all nations. Each of these observations can be implemented in current mission. The reason for mission, the ideals *Manifesto*, is the same now as it was in the 1970s. In different words and among different groups, the mission of the ELCA is the same as that of the ALC in the 1970s. The current ELCA welcome page online proclaims to readers, "Because of Jesus' love, we are freed to serve our neighbors in love."<sup>95</sup> The theological reason for mission is that *God loves and frees the world*. Mission is called for when that proclamation of God's love and freedom is prevented. That mission is for clergy and laity. That mission requires effective communication—whether that communication is hand-written letters, emails, or TV commercials. That mission requires that the church train leaders to work within the congregation walls and outside of the walls.

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<sup>95</sup> "Who We Are: Welcome to the ELCA." Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (accessed March 31, 2012).



That mission requires malleability, the ability to change how the proclamation is made according to the changing world.

## CONCLUSION

The *Manifesto* did not become the ALC's only mission. In fact, nearly forty years after it was written, the church hardly remembers that it was written. The *Manifesto* laid ground for future mission. The *Manifesto* urged awareness among people who were freed and given gifts to serve in the world. We see in the case of Namibia Concerns that when ALC members became aware of injustices, they were moved from manifesto, from their creeds, theologies, and beliefs, to mission. This mission began long before ALC members knew the name of Namibia, before they began the *Manifesto*, before there was a Church. This mission began when humankind fell to sin and God redeemed and freed humankind.

The church today might not remember when, where, or why the *Manifesto* was written, or that it paved a way for future mission. However, the ideals and theology remain in the church. In an interview, Peter Kjeseth shared how he sees the *Manifesto* alive in the ELCA today, "I would say, one of those things which came through the *Manifesto* was the seed planted that...[led to]...what I think is the very correct decision on gay and lesbian ordination. There's a trajectory there that somebody is going to explain someday."<sup>96</sup> The *Manifesto* was a call for those writing it and those reading it. These people lived according to the words of Robert VanDeusen, "We deal with issues according to whether they are believed to be right

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<sup>96</sup> Peter Kjeseth, interview January 2012.

or wrong as reflected in the statements of the church bodies, not on how popular or unpopular the issues may be.”<sup>97</sup> This mindset fostered growth from the little seeds the *Manifesto* planted. The church grew.

Today, the ELCA makes social statements, acts for justice, and seeks awareness of neighbors’ situations. We live into that mission which comes from the Gospel. We hear the proclamation through people of the past: pastors and prophets, bishops, advocates, politicians, committee members, and more. These people, for their moment in time, revived for the church the call to share in freedom. Box #6 sits in the basement at Wartburg Theological Seminary. It is filled with the hope of people who worked with and against norms and policies in order to share the freedom they had in Christ with the rest of the world.

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<sup>97</sup> Box 6, Folder 3, ID 45, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

## **Appendix I: Manifesto for Our Nation's Third Century with Worship Order**

*ID 86, Box 6, Folder 4, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.*

This appendix includes a copy of the final draft *Manifesto* which was written by the Commission on the Third Century which was formed under the direction of the American Lutheran Church in 1972. In addition, document ID 86 included a worship order which is part of this appendix as well.

This document outlines only some of the conversations held by the Commission. Those conversations were stripped down to the basic concepts of Christian freedom and the call to action—politically, economically, socially, etc.—rooted in that freedom. Because this document was written for the empowerment of American Lutherans during their national bi-centennial celebration, it is characterized by both Lutheran and American historical notions of freedom. This document was mailed to congregations in the American Lutheran Church alongside informational and study materials (see Appendix II).

Additionally, the order of worship in this appendix shows the emphasis on the celebration of the nation. The songs used in the service show the ALCs thankfulness for freedom both religiously and politically. This would have been significant because of the confessional and convicting nature of the *Manifesto* because it uplifts the positive aspects of history which gave the ALC and her people freedom to write such a *Manifesto* and to legally act for the people and situations outlined in the *Manifesto*.

# **MANIFESTO\***

## **FOR OUR NATION'S THIRD CENTURY**

*(A commentary on the "American Dream" in the light of the Gospel)*

GRATEFUL TO GOD for his blessings to our country, we, the members of The American Lutheran Church, join in celebrating the Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

I

WE DECLARE that our loyalty to Jesus Christ takes precedence over any other loyalty. For us, the dream of the gospel comes before the American dream.

We further declare our unshakable conviction that through allegiance to Christ and his vision for the human community we can serve our country most profoundly and exercise the privilege of United States citizenship most effectively.

II

WE REPENT for the ways we have strayed from this first loyalty:

- For the occasions when we have faltered in the struggle for justice, liberation, and peace;
- For the times we have uncritically accepted the manipulation of economic, social, political, and religious power;
- For our extravagant consumption while other members of the human family suffer hunger and need.

We acknowledge that God's wrath is real and terrible. He has judged our nation. He will continue to judge us. Yet we know that God's final word is love, his ultimate will for all people is unity and peace.

III

As we begin our nation's Third Century, WE DECLARE ANEW OUR INTENT TO LIVE AS CHRISTIAN PEOPLE WHO ARE FREE:

- Free from guilt for our sins and mistakes because we confess them and accept God's forgiving grace;
- Free to face and deal with the tragic consequences of our national errors because God is ever involved with us;
- Free to embrace the future with hope because we trust in the promises of God.

\* Adopted by the Commission on the Third Century, The American Lutheran Church, April 26-27, 1975, in response to GC.72.10.205 "to prepare a manifesto on the 'American Dream' as seen in the light of the gospel." Transmitted as a working document for use throughout the Church. Responses to this draft should be sent to Dr. Carl F. Reuss, Commission on the Third Century, 422 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis, Minn. 55415, not later than July 14, 1976.



#### IV

**OUT OF THIS FREEDOM WE DREAM OF A NATION WHOSE POLICIES AND LIFE WILL DECLARE TO ALL:**

- *We celebrate our interdependence*, because the life and destiny of each person and each nation are tied to the whole of God's universe.
- *We cherish all of nature* as God's created handiwork, entrusted to our care and keeping.
- *We respect each person* and affirm that every human being has infinite worth.
- *We rejoice in the diversity among persons* which enriches and strengthens our communities.
- *We condemn racism, sexism, and other forms of exploitation* which fragment the human family.
- *We affirm the family* as it unites persons in bonds of mutual love and service.
- *We require that all structures of society* be shaped to serve genuine human needs.
- *We view science and technology as means* to a more abundant life for all, rather than as ends in themselves.
- *We seek peaceable means* for settling disputes among nations, groups, and individuals, and condemn actions and policies which provoke violence.
- *We strive to end world hunger and population pressures.*
- *We welcome the continued separation of church and state* but deny the separation of religion from life.

#### V

**ACCEPTING THESE AS TRUTHS, we commit ourselves to shape and to share in a new American dream that will balance**

- Individual initiative with social conscience
- Private enterprise with public duty
- Competition with cooperation
- Ambition with compassion
- Pride with humility
- National survival with service to the world
- Human knowledge with spiritual wisdom.

**We pledge our involvement in the social systems and structures so that they become more faithful to God's will for his world.**

#### VI

**THUS WE SEIZE WITH JOY** the challenge of reshaping our nation in its Third Century. We will join forces with the powerless, the poor, the lonely, the exploited, the deprived, and the rejected. We will resist any governmental, social, economic, or ideological force which would blunt justice or demean persons. We will work with any movement, party, or institution which will help us to respect all, care for all, and aim at freedom for all.

**THUS COMMITTED,** we look to Jesus Christ for direction. Jesus and the Prophets give us the vision of a world made new for a life of social justice and mercy, of reconciliation and peace, of promise and fulfillment. The Spirit gives us the power to do the deeds that faith-active-in-love finds to do. Our hope is in God.

**AND SO, AS PILGRIM PEOPLE OF GOD WE STEP BOLDLY AND FIRMLY INTO THE THIRD CENTURY.**

**BICENTENNIAL WORSHIP SERVICE**  
 Provided By The Churches Of Blanchardville  
 Sunday, June 20, 1976 11:00 A.M. Second Sunday After Pentecost

Lord of the nations, guide our people by your Spirit to go forward in justice and freedom. Give us what outward prosperity may be your will, but above all things give us faith in you, that our nation may bring glory to your Name and blessings to mankind; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRELUDE	"My Country, Tis Of Thee"	Arranged By Smith
INVOCATION AND PRAYER	(Congregation Rise)	
HYMN:	"Praise God" (Words Below)	
THE SCRIPTURES:	Jeremiah 29:4-14	
	"O Beautiful For Spacious Skies"	United Choir Joined By Congregation
		On The Last Two Verses
	Romans 13:1-10	
	"Creator Spirit"	United Choir
THE HOLY GOSPEL:	Mark 12:13-17	
GREETINGS		
HYMN:	"O God, Our Help" (Words On Back Of Sheet)	
MESSAGE:	Dr. Peter L. Kjeseth, Professor At Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa	
ANTHEM:	"God Of Our Fathers"	United Choir
PRAYER		
DEPARTING HYMN:	"Now Thank We All Our God" (Words On Back Of Sheet)	
BENEDICTION		
POSTLUDE	"A Flourish Of Trumpets"	Arranged By Smith
	Depart in peace to worship the Lord in all you do!	

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Organist: Mrs. David Schober  
Choir Director: Mrs. Malcolm Disrud  
Organ Furnished By The Dennis Novinski's  
Participating Congregations:  
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church -- Father Bernard Kurz, Pastor  
United Methodist Church -- The Rev. Logan Holder, Minister  
Trinity Lutheran Church -- The Rev. Martin E. Dreyer, Pastor  
Blanchardville Lutheran and York Memorial Lutheran Churches --  
The Rev. Wayne L. Henderson, Pastor

We wish to express our deepest thanks to Dr. Kjeseth who was on The American Lutheran Church's Commission to prepare the "Manifesto For Our Nation's Third Century". This is a preliminary draft and responses are solicited.

Thank you, choir members and everyone joining together to make this service a worship experience uniting us before God as we stand on the threshold of a new century.

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**PRAISE GOD**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES

(First Two Verses Sung By United Choir; Congregation Joins In On Verses 3 and 4)

- VERSE 1     O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties Above the fruited plain!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea.
- VERSE 2     O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness!  
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.
- VERSE 3     O beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved, And mercy more than life!  
America! America! May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness, And every gain divine.
- VERSE 4     O beautiful for patriot dream That sees, beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

O GOD, OUR HELP

- VERSE 1     O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home:
- VERSE 2     Under the shadow of thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is thine arm alone, And our defence is sure.
- VERSE 3     Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting thou art God, To endless years the same.
- VERSE 4     A thousand ages in thy sight Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night Before the rising sun.
- VERSE 5     Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Bears all its sons away;  
They fly forgotten, as a dream Dies at the opening day.
- VERSE 6     O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Be thou our guide while troubles last, And our eternal home. Amen.

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

- VERSE 1     Now thank we all our God With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done, In whom his world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms, Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love, And still is ours today.
- VERSE 2     O may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in his grace, And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills In this world and the next.
- VERSE 3     All praise and thanks to God The Father now be given,  
The Son, and him who reigns With them in highest heaven;  
The one eternal God, Whom earth and heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now, And shall be evermore. Amen.