

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND
THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA:
WALKING TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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BY
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In these recent years some of us, especially the youth, have been wondering about God – does God want us to pray, just to pray one day after another with no answers? We tell our people, ‘you must have faith, you must be patient. One day this God in whom you believe will deliver you.’ That’s why Namibia’s Independence is a remarkable type of event. It creates hope. It makes our people realize that, in fact, our God **is** alive!

Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary, South Africa Council of Churches
Celebrating Namibia’s Independence
Namibia Newsletter, Spring 1990

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I. Introduction - A Seminarian's Experience at Ephesians Lutheran Church, Katutura, Namibia and Why it Matters

On the morning of Sunday, 20 January 2013, I was one of three students from Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, who followed their January-Term professor, the Reverend Dr. Ann Fritschel, into Ephesians Lutheran Church, Katutura, Namibia, for worship. We arrived a half-hour late to worship, due to some miscommunication, and entered into a packed sanctuary where we quietly took spots standing at the back. Quiet though our entrance was, we were altogether easily spotted as the only whites in the room. And strange for me as that feeling was, it was expanded greatly when an usher approached us and insisted, while the service continued, that we follow him down the center aisle to be seated in the third row where space had suddenly been made for us. So much for an inconspicuous entry!

The Sunday we attended Ephesians Lutheran also happened to be a nominating Sunday for the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), a position that Wartburg Theological Seminary honorary graduate, Zephania Kameeta, D.D., currently held. In the midst of counting ballots for this nomination process, we were asked by the lay-person leading the service to introduce ourselves. As Dr. Fritschel introduced our group and explained that she was our professor and that we were students traveling in Namibia to learn about the church and culture, there was a polite amount of interest from the congregation. When she mentioned that we were from Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, United States, there was an audible murmur that swept through the assembly. Wartburg Theological Seminary was a place that people recognized.

After worship, many members of the congregation stopped to greet us. A few knew something specific about Wartburg Theological Seminary or knew of a pastor or friend who had attended the seminary. All knew the name of the seminary in rural Midwest, U.S.A.

This was to be the first of many experiences in which I encountered Namibians who knew about Wartburg Theological Seminary. It was then that I began to realize just how much the relationships between the students and faculty of a seminary in Iowa and the people of this south-western African country really mattered.

Stories like this one are common in the history of relationships between Wartburg Theological Seminary and the people of Namibia. Personal connections between students, pastors, professors and families, in the U.S.A. and Namibia, are what make this partnership so interesting and meaningful, and are what have sustained the relationship even now, decades after Namibia's independence.

Out of these relationships built upon stories grew a network of people who were passionate about Namibia and the people there. This vast network, made up of people who shared stories and fashioned relationships around the world, formed the base for what was truly an international struggle for independence in Namibia. Those who became involved in the independence movement did so out of a deep care for the people of Namibia, stemming from the firm grounding that was, and is, based in relationships, walking together, and sharing stories.

This thesis will take the reader through the history of Namibia, focusing on the role that relationships with people and organizations outside of Namibia played in the struggle for independence. It explores historical connections among Wartburg Theological Seminary, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies, and organizations around the world, and the people of Namibia. In addition to the looking at the history of Namibia and the relationships that existed prior to independence, this thesis pays attention to post-independence relationships, focusing on the ELCA model of accompaniment and examples of its implementation.

It is the author's hope that this thesis is more than just a historical reflection on the topic of Namibia and the independence movement. It is intended to be more than a

summary of information found. Yes, this thesis takes a historical look at the relationships built between Namibia, Wartburg Theological Seminary, and some the many other agencies and organizations who took part in the independence movement. However, it is the lessons learned from these relationships that are most important. It is important that we continue to, and, perhaps, more effectively, pull from and incorporate the lessons learned from the shared mission history that this thesis explores. At the end of this work a summary of conclusions will be drawn about implications for continued involvement, not just with the people of Namibia, but, with our partners in ministry around the world as we walk together in solidarity.

II. Background - Namibia: A Brief History¹

Namibia was first settled by tribes of the San, Damara, and Nama people, whose descendants still live in the country today. These tribes maintained a nomadic, bushmen culture, living much the same as their Stone Age ancestors for centuries.² It wasn't until 1485 that the first European, the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão, came upon the shores of Western Namibia while looking for a sea route to India.³ The rocky, unfriendly coast of Namibia, which would come to be called Skeleton Coast, did not endear itself to the explorer and he did not stay. The ensuing 400 years would involve numerous changes in land between tribes through war and trade. As more and different peoples migrated or were pushed south into Namibia, tensions would continue to mount. Into this complex array of politics the first long-term European settlers arrived, in 1805, as representatives of the London Missionary Society.

In 1842, after nearly 40 years of successful missionary work by members of the London Missionary Society, responsibility for the Namibian missionary field was handed over to the German Rhenish Mission Society.⁴ This society began the first Christian community 20 years later, in 1863. Success in the mission field was something to be celebrated by these German missionaries. However, they faced a major struggle in their

¹ I am indebted to the work of several graduates of Wartburg Theological Seminary, who came before me and whose initial, trail-blazing work, utilizing primary materials available in the Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary, provided the impetus to my own work. I have built upon their work in continuing to catalog and research the materials in the Namibia Archives. In particular, I wish to direct the reader towards the work of Dena M. Stinson, "Prisoners of Hope: The Struggle for Namibian Independence, the Church, and the Gospel" (master's thesis, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 2010), and Katherine Chullino, "Manifesto and Mission: The Historical Convergence of Mission in the American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Churches in Namibia in the 1970s" (master's thesis, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 2012).

² Roy J. Enquist, *Namibia: Land of Tears, Land of Promise* (Susquehanna University Press, 1990), 20.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

position as German citizens working closely with the Namibian people, while also representing the ever-increasing population of colonizing Germans moving into the territory. The missionaries were faced with the conundrum that though colonization was helpful in bringing Christianity and civilization into the area, the political and economic interests of the colonists was often detrimental to the local population.⁵ However, those interests would win out and Namibia would remain a German colony until the outbreak of World War One.

In 1914, British-led South African forces invaded Namibia, and by July of 1915 the Germans surrendered control of the country, at which time an interim military government was placed in control of Namibia. Though there was initially hope that this transfer of power would bring freedom to Namibia, that was not to be. Instead, in 1919, the League of Nations named Namibia a mandate territory and placed Namibia under the authority of South Africa as a “sacred trust of civilization,” judging Namibians not yet ready to govern themselves.⁶ South Africa would prove unwilling to give up this control, however, and, in 1946, refused to recognize the United Nations’ claim of responsibility for Namibia as successor to the League of Nations.⁷ After gaining independence from Great Britain, in 1948, the Union of South Africa rejected all involvement of the United Nations in governing Namibia. They continued to exercise control over Namibia and, in 1963, announced a plan for the permanent imposition of apartheid on the country.⁸ In the case of South Africa’s rule over Namibia, the system of apartheid referred to the “official

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

and systematic segregation (of people)...based on race.”⁹ Apartheid, at its core, means “apartness”,¹⁰ and this official policy of racial separation would lead to action from the international community.

⁹ Dena Stinson, *Prisoners of Hope*, 7.

¹⁰ Prexy Nesbit, *Apartheid In Our Living Rooms: U.S. Foreign Policy and South Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Political Research Associates, 1986), 2.

III. Partners in the Struggle for Independence

A. Wartburg Theological Seminary: “Where Learning Leads to Mission”

As South Africa’s government continued to flex its authority over the people of Namibia, it was met with resistance from a number of individuals and organizations within Namibia. One of the largest organizations in Namibia was the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), which began as a national liberation movement in 1960,¹¹ and was recognized as the official voice of the Namibian people by the United Nations, in 1972. In addition, several church bodies in Namibia were active in calling for a halt to South African rule.¹²

As Namibia continued in its struggle for independence, it became clear that partners outside of the country would play a major role in the movement. Namibians at home and abroad connected with people and organizations around the world, telling the story of their country and her people. It was through stories like this that a Lutheran seminary in the heart of the United States began its relationship with Namibia. The connection would turn out to be of great benefit for both the seminary community and their friends from Namibia, and have far-reaching effects even to today.

It all started, in 1971, when Abisai and Selma Shejavalis came to Wartburg Theological Seminary. The seven years the Shejavalis stayed at Wartburg Theological Seminary were a tipping point in the life of the seminary community. Abisai and Selma shared their stories about life in the not-yet-independent Namibia under the rule of South

¹¹ The South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) would later become a political party, following Namibia’s independence in 1990. Since independence, SWAPO has been the governing party in Namibia.

¹² Deborah May, director. *You Have Struck A Rock*, South Africa, 1981, Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Africa and apartheid.¹³ Members of the Wartburg Theological Seminary community were struck by the horrors facing the people of Namibia as they gathered around conversation with the Shejavalis. They heard first-hand about the violence and bloodshed facing the Shejavali's family and friends back home. Knowledge of the realities facing Namibians, combined with the relationships being formed in the sharing of stories during this time, would lead to action from the community at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Though the UN was involved in the situation between Namibia and South Africa,¹⁴ many people around the world were unaware of the situation unfolding in these southern African nations. Indeed, in the U.S.A, involvement with the South African government was a net degree of support, lending further credence to the policies being implemented by South Africa. After the arrival of the Shejavali family, in 1971, and continuing through the turn of the century, there was at least one Namibian student, often accompanied by their spouse and family, on campus at Wartburg Theological Seminary.¹⁵ The continued presence of Namibians at Wartburg Theological Seminary began to erase that gap in knowledge that existed for the members of the seminary community. As more Namibian students and their families came to campus, relations continued to blossom. Relationships built between students from the United States and their brothers and sisters from Namibia would go far in changing the attitudes of

¹³ William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb Jr., editors. "South Africa Is Next to Namibia":The Lutheran Connection, excerpt from *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc. 2007), 177-178.

¹⁴ In 1946, the UN attempted to exercise authority in Namibia based on League of Nations agreements, South Africa refused to recognize the UN as successor to those agreements.

¹⁵ Namibian students who returned to Namibia to serve as pastors of Lutheran churches in Namibia: Dr. Abisai Shjavali, 1978; Rev. Engelhard !Noabeb, 1982; Rev. Zedekiah Mujoro, 1984, Rev. Emma Mujoro, 1984; Rev. Jonathan Hevita, 1986; Rev. Julius Mtuleni, 1987; Rev. Petrus Van Zyl, 1989; Rev. Mathews Kapolo, 1991; Rev. Titus Mbango, 1997; Rev. Daniel Ndemuweda, 1999; Rev. Andries Vilander, 1999; Rev. Gideon Nitenge, 2001.

individuals, congregations, and the church in the U.S. Lutheran colleges¹⁶ and seminaries across the country welcomed Namibian students and their families, and awareness of the trials facing Namibia spread into the wider ecumenical and political sphere.

The relationships that formed between Namibians students and their families and the community at Wartburg Theological Seminary would have far-reaching effects. One of the most important effects was the creation of the Namibia Concerns Committee. This committee, made up of students, spouses, faculty, and staff, came together out of the seminary's Global Concerns Committee, and this group of volunteers worked persistently on behalf of their Namibian sisters and brothers, raising awareness and responsibility. Solveig Kjeseth, spouse of Professor Peter Kjeseth and one of the founding members of the committee, describes it this way:

[T]here were about seven of us who were a Namibia Concerns Committee. Yeah, and that was the beginning of it. And Selma Shejavali, she and Susan Burchfield and I started just going out to any women's group, high school, or church to tell the story about Namibia. That just slowly, slowly, slowly began. The global mission events that the church had every summer were a big source of building the network.¹⁷

The group sought to raise awareness of the plight of the Namibian people in as many places as they could. Members of the committee traveled and spoke at an ever-widening circle of congregations, drawing attention to the cause. Colleges and seminaries, synod assemblies, camps, youth groups, and community events all became platforms from which the message went out. As the group continued to travel and speak,

¹⁶ See, David L Miller, "A long way from Namibia." *The Lutheran*. March 1, 1989, which examines the life of Namibian students at Dana College, an ELCA college in Blair, Nebraska.

¹⁷ Written transcript of a Skype interview with Peter and Solveig Kjeseth by Katherine Chullino, January 2012. Appendix IV. in, *Manifesto and Mission*, by Katherine Chullino.

more and more people became aware of the situation facing the Namibian people, and the Namibia Concerns Committee continued to grow.

Throughout this time, atrocities continued in and around Namibia, which spurred increased involvement in the Namibia Concerns Committee, and in the political sphere around the United States, as more attention was given to Namibia. One of the major events that led to such an increase was the Cassinga Massacre, which occurred on May 4, 1978.¹⁸ Public outcry over this bombing galvanized the Namibia Concerns Network. Then, in August 1978, a second wave of involvement followed news of an attack on Abisai and Selma Shejavali.

Within 24 hours of getting to their home in Namibia [from Wartburg Theological Seminary], 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 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.¹⁹

¹⁸ This bombing of a South West Africa People’s Republic (SWAPO) refugee camp and military base, across the Namibia’s northern border in Angola, killed 624 people and wounded 611 more, many of whom were women and children. While the attack was considered a great success by South Africa, political consequences for the apartheid government were high. After details of the attack were published, worldwide outrage ensued. The United Nations condemned the attack as an armed invasion into Angola. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cassinga, accessed 8 April 2015.

¹⁹ Katherine J. Chullino. *Manifesto and Mission*, (Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, 2012) Written transcript of a Skype interview with Peter and Solveig Kjeseth by Katherine Chullino, January 2012. Appendix IV.

Soon after this the Shejavalis got word back to their friends at Wartburg Theological Seminary about what had happened and the Namibia Concerns Committee leapt into action. Calls immediately went out to everyone who had been involved with the committee, and still more to all of the students who had been at Wartburg Theological Seminary during the six years that the Shejavalis were on campus. The results were immediate and far-reaching, and so began the network of students, faculty, alumni and many others who were passionate about Namibia from all over the United States.

In less than ten years, the Namibia Concerns Committee nurtured the growth of a thriving grassroots network of people in the U.S.A., advocating on behalf of Namibia. In 1980, the American Lutheran Church's national convention approved a statement denouncing apartheid, and shortly, thereafter, both the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America divested from South Africa. As knowledge of Namibia and the plight of her people spread to various places, churches, institutions, and organizations, so, too, did interest in the work of the Namibia Concerns Committee. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, annually, approximately 50 students would graduate and another 50 would be sent out on internship. Each of these students had heard the stories of Namibia first-hand from their fellow Namibian students, and they were impacted by the continued work of the Namibia Concerns Committee on the seminary campus. This steady stream of Namibia-informed individuals, along with their families, spread the stories they had heard to the congregations and communities to which they were sent.²⁰

²⁰ In fact, packets of information were sent out with Wartburg Theological Seminary interns and graduates with guidance on how they could continue to advocate for Namibia and remain connected to the Namibia

By 1984, Namibia Concerns at Wartburg Theological Seminary had a mailing list of over 4,500 individuals and congregations, and had grown too big for the volunteer group to handle. So, on April 19, 1984, the Namibia Concerns Executive Committee voted to proceed with plans to re-organize and form a non-profit corporation called National Namibia Concerns. Citing both the increasing demands on time and resources from their regional networks and the impending move of Namibia Concerns Committee, coordinators at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Peter and Solveig Kjeseth, who were moving to Denver, Colorado, during the summer of 1984, the committee at Wartburg Theological Seminary decided that expansion to a non-profit corporation would best fit the needs of the organizations future.²¹

On 14 May 1984, the Articles of Incorporation for National Namibia Concerns were signed and the organization began its work,²² becoming what would be later recognized as the only grassroots organization in the United States which was engaged in education, advocacy, and support solely for Namibia's freedom. As the group continued its work, many organizations, both in the United States and abroad, sent letters of support to the organization, reminding members of National Namibia Concerns that they were being prayed for, and encouraging financial support to the group. The Rev. Kleopas Dumeni, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA/Namibia and Secretary of

Concerns Committee and its successor, National Namibia Concerns. These packets were assembled by Ilah Weiblen, Coordinator of Namibia Concerns at Wartburg Theological Seminary and spouse of seminary President, William Weiblen.

Letters and packets of information on Namibia for graduates and interns from Ilah Weiblen, Namibia Coordinator. Dubuque, Iowa: Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File # XIV INT 100-21.M. Here, I note that this is the pattern of reference that I have used throughout this thesis in relation to use of materials from the Namibia Archives.

²¹ Letters and supporting documents from Namibia Concerns at Wartburg Theological Seminary, April 24, 1984, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.II.A.

²² See Appendix I. "Articles of Incorporation of National Namibia Concerns," Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.II.A.

the Council of Churches in Namibia, called for support of the new National Namibia Concerns on behalf of his church and the Council of Churches in Namibia, representing Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, African American Episcopalians, and Lutherans. He cited the tireless work of the members of National Namibia Concerns and hailed them as strong advocates of Namibian independence who had the trust of the Namibian people.²³ Additionally, the World Council of Churches sent their support of the work of National Namibia Concerns. Executive Secretary Jean Sindab, PhD, encouraged financial support for National Namibia Concerns due to its members' constant willingness to lobby elected officials on behalf of Namibia the numerous education projects and conferences the organization sponsored.²⁴ Both the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and their successor, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), continued to support the work of National Namibia Concerns, citing National Namibia Concerns as a national network with close ties to the people of Namibia, and lifting up the work of its members advocating for peace and justice in Namibia. The Division for World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation of the LCA and its successor in the ELCA, the Division for Global Mission, contributed annually to the budget of National Namibia Concerns.

Over the years, National Namibia Concerns would be involved in many arenas of support for Namibia. Of the many tasks credited to this group of people were:

- The production of literature and materials for congregations, groups and conferences

²³ Letter from Rev. Kleopas Dumeni, Bishop of the ELOC, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.II.B.

²⁴ Letters of Endorsement for National Namibia Concerns, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.II.B.

- Maintaining and managing a speakers bureau for church and educational institutions
- Continuous nurturing of advocacy networks
- Administrating material aid projects, including sending English textbooks to Namibian schools, funding educational efforts in Namibia, and funding scholarships for Namibian students in the U.S.

These and many more were the tasks of this dedicated group, both at Wartburg Theological Seminary and around the country. The network of people working for Namibia was truly a national network. At one point, over 6,200 people received the *Namibia Newsletter*,²⁵ the quarterly mailing of National Namibia Concerns, which highlighted messages from church leaders in Namibia as well as brought awareness of developments in the continued efforts towards independence; and informed network members of how they could further be involved in advocacy. Members shared the story of Namibia and the people's fight towards independence at conferences and in small groups around the country, often bringing with them posters²⁶ and videos,²⁷ as well as up-to-date stories about progress regarding the fight for independence in Namibia and the continued advocacy work happening in the U.S.A.

²⁵ *Namibian Newsletter*, 1978-1990 Collection, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.III.A.

²⁶ Collection of Posters from Namibia Independence Movement, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, Box 9.

²⁷ Several films were sent out from the National Namibia Concerns office in Denver, CO, and their office at Wartburg Theological Seminary through the continued work of the Namibia Concerns Committee, coordinated by Ilah Weiblen. Two such videos are accessible in the National Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary. "You Have Struck A Rock" was produced in 1981 by director Deborah May. It commemorates the special contribution of South African women to the success of the anti-apartheid struggle, a movement that flourished in the 1950s and 1960s. It takes its name from the South African proverb, "When you have touched a woman, you have struck a rock" and includes words from many leaders of this movement telling their stories of the struggle against apartheid. The second film in the archives is called "Free Namibia" which was produced by the United Nations in 1978. The film focuses on the impact of white settler colonialism on Namibia, and documents the genocide of the Namibian people. "Free Namibia" (1978) is available to watch online.

One of the most important and effective tasks of this group's advocacy efforts came through their lobbying of elected officials. The united voices of these thousands of people calling and writing senators and representatives from around the nation made Namibia an issue that the United States government could not ignore. In this effort, National Namibia Concerns and the Namibia Concerns Committee at Wartburg Theological Seminary played an important role. A phone was always available in the Namibia Concerns office with information provided on how to go about contacting your representatives and which bills were coming up that impacted the efforts in Namibia. Issues ranged from direct support to South Africa, to the war in Angola, to how and where resources would be distributed to people in Namibia. In addition to information about contacting legislators in the United States, a steady stream of support was sent to the people of Namibia and the work of the churches there through letters and gifts. Namibia network members were encouraged to write to Bishops Kleopas Dumeni, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, and Hendrik Frederik, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia, and Dr. Abisai Shejavali, executive secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, among others, to remind the people of Namibia that they were not alone in this struggle for freedom.²⁸ This continued connection between the people of

²⁸ Several examples of letters informing Namibia network members in the United States of upcoming legislative action can be found in the Namibia Archives at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Of particular importance were numerous bills related to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a political party in Angola which the U.S.A and South Africa supported, and which was detrimental for Namibia. Instead, the Namibia Namibian Concerns urged support for bills like HR 3690, which prohibited United States aid to groups seeking to overthrow the Angolan government. Additionally, the committee urged members to support many bills directly related to Namibia's resources, like HR 2589, The Namibian Natural Resources Protection Act, which made illegal the extraction or importation of Namibia's raw materials by the United States, and prohibited the exploitation of Namibia's natural resources by South Africa. This was particularly important in that it also addressed the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa and their exploitation of Namibia's resources, an issue addressed by the United Nations Council for Namibia's Decree No. 1. Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.M.

Namibia and their supporters in the United States was vital to the efforts in both places. The relationships built through years of Namibian students and their families sharing their stories in the United States was a firm foundation upon which these networks of mutual support grew and flourished through the fight for Namibian independence.

Of course, it was not just Wartburg Theological Seminary at work on behalf of the Namibian people. Many others, individuals and organizations around the world, would throw their support behind this struggling country in southern Africa. One of these organizations was the Namibia Support Committee which began, in 1969, as the Friends of Namibia in London, United Kingdom. The work of this committee was, in many ways, similar to that of National Namibia Concerns in the United States. The aim of the Namibia Support Committee was to raise public awareness of the many problems facing Namibia and her people. In solidarity with the people of Namibia, the Namibia Support Committee in the United Kingdom organized meetings and lobbied parliament on behalf of Namibia. This national organization was supported by a large network of localized Namibia Support Groups, whose members were active in communities raising awareness and campaigning for Namibian independence. After the United Nations declared the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) the authentic representative of the Namibian people, in 1971, the Namibia Support Committee began to participate in more direct aid to the Namibian people, including arranging transport of supplies to SWAPO camps in Angola and Zambia. When word reached the organization that Namibian minerals, particularly uranium, were being traded in Britain via South Africa, the network successfully carried out the Campaign Against Namibian Uranium Contracts, halting the

trade and bringing national and international attention to the stripping of natural resources from Namibia by outside countries.²⁹

The Namibia Support Committee disbanded in 1993, three years after Namibian independence was achieved. In 1997, the committee was reorganized as the Friends of Namibia, an organization that continues to share information between the people of Namibia and supporters in the United Kingdom. It oversees sister-city relationships, such as the one between Chesterfield, UK, and Tsumeb, Namibia, schools and churches in both countries, and it provides oversight for several charitable trusts.³⁰ The importance of these continued relationships cannot be overstated. The persisting conversations and support that occur between Namibia and groups around the world are a reminder of the rewards reaped from dedicated partners working together to take a stand against injustice.

B. Worldwide Support

Of major importance to the worldwide movement on behalf of Namibia was the Lutheran World Federation's 1977 general session in Dar-es-Salaam. There the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) declared South Africa's official governmental policy of apartheid "a *status confessionis*"; that is, in apartheid, the confession of Christ is at stake as apartheid compromises the integrity of the gospel. LWF stated,

²⁹ Information accessed online at africanactivist.msu.edu. Michigan State University houses a large archive of information related to Namibia and the independence movement, including many documents related to Namibia support organizations that developed around the world. Though accessed online, the archive information for the Namibian Support Committee is housed at the University of Oxford, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, Oxford, United Kingdom.

³⁰ More information about the Friends of Namibia can be found at their website: www.friendsofnamibia.org (accessed 1 April 2015)

Under normal circumstances Christians may have different opinions in political questions. However, political and social systems may become so perverted and oppressive that it is consistent with the confession to reject them and work for changes. We especially appeal to our white member churches in southern Africa to recognize that the situation in southern Africa constitutes a status confessionis. This means that, on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity of the church, churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system.³¹

The Lutheran World Federation³² saw South Africa's policy of apartheid as one of racial division and discrimination. For the LWF, communion was not rightly administered if the church was divided by race. Therefore, apartheid put the church's sacramental integrity at stake. The church rejected any system or policy that implemented such division and specifically opposed its implementation in Namibia. This declaration had far-reaching impact on the future of Namibia and the role of the church in that movement. Declaring the system of apartheid in southern Africa "a *status confessionis*" immediately lent support to the work of the Namibian Lutheran churches, and the churches in South Africa, in their efforts to promote unity in southern Africa. In addition, this condemnation from an international Lutheran body would cause churches around the world, including many in the U.S.A., to take a closer look at the situation in Namibia.

³¹ Arne Sovik, ed. *In Christ- A New Community: The Proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, June 13-25, 1977* (Geneva, Switzerland, The Lutheran World Federation, 1977), 179-180.

³² The World Communion of Reformed Churches adopted similar language rejecting apartheid in 1986 with the implementation of the Belhar Confession. Originally coming from the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, this confession rejects "any doctrine which, in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and colour and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ." (accessed on 1 April 2015 at <http://wrc.ch/belhar-confession/>)

Eventually, many of these churches would choose to divest from South Africa as a way to show their support for the independence movement in Namibia.³³

Another major event in the worldwide struggle for Namibian independence happened the following year. On September 29, 1978, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 435.

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 385 (1976) of 30 January 1976 and 431 (1978) and 432 (1978) of 27 July 1978,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 431 (1978) and his explanatory statement made in the Security Council on 29 September 1978 (S/ 12869),

Taking note of the relevant communications from the Government of South Africa to the Secretary-General,

Taking note also of the letter dated 8 September 1978 from the President of the South West Africa People's Organization to the Secretary-General,

Reaffirming the legal responsibility of the United Nations over Namibia,

1. Approves the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the proposal for a settlement of the **Namibian** situation and his explanatory statement;
2. Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of **South Africa's** illegal administration from **Namibia** and the transfer of power to the people of **Namibia** with the assistance of the United Nations in accordance with Security Council resolution 385 (1976);
3. Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transition Assistance Group in accordance with the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council in paragraph 1 of its resolution 431 (1978), namely, to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations;

³³ Dena Stinson, *Prisoners of Hope*.

4. Welcomes the preparedness of the South West Africa People's Organization to co-operate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from its President of 8 September 1978;

5. Calls upon **South Africa** forthwith to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;

6. Declares that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal administration in **Namibia** in relation to the electoral process, including unilateral registration of voters, or transfer of power, in contravention of resolutions 385 (1976), 431 (1978) and the present resolution, are null and void;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council not later than 23 October 1978 on the implementation of the present resolution.

Adopted at the 2087th meeting by 12 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)³⁴

This resolution called for a cease-fire between South Africa and Namibia, and it implemented plans for UN-supervised elections in the then South-African-controlled Namibia. In addition, UN Resolution 435 established the United Nations Transition Assistance Group which would, eventually, oversee the election in Namibia and manage the South African military withdraw.³⁵ UN Resolution 435³⁶ came as a result of the work

³⁴ United Nations Security Council. Resolution 435 (1978) of 29 September 1978 (accessed 1 April 2015 at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/435\(1978\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/435(1978)))

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_435 (accessed 2 April 2015)

³⁶ The United Nations Security Council passed a total of four resolutions on Namibia, in 1978. In addition to Resolution 435, they adopted Resolution 431, which called for the Secretary-General to "appoint a Special Representative for Namibia in order to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations, Resolution 432, regarding the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity of Namibia with particular attention being given to Walvis Bay and its reintegration into Namibia proper, and Resolution 439 which reaffirmed the legal responsibility of the United Nations over Namibia, expressed concern over and condemned the Government of South Africa's decision to proceed with unilateral elections in Namibia against prior decisions of the United Nations, and called upon the Government of South Africa to both immediately cancel its planned election in Namibia and begin to cooperate with the Security Council in implementing

of the United Nations Council for Namibia. This council was created, in 1967, by an act of the UN General Assembly, following South Africa's refusal to give up control of Namibia. As was noted earlier in this thesis,³⁷ Namibia had been given to the Government of South Africa in trust by the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, following World War II. During the tenure of the League of Nations, South Africa made several attempts to incorporate Namibia as a fifth province, all of which were refused. After the succession of the League of Nations by the United Nations, South Africa again requested that Namibia be incorporated as a fifth province and was again denied. At this point, the Government of South Africa claimed that the United Nations was not, in fact, the successor to the League of Nations, and, therefore, South Africa was not answerable to any action of the United Nations.³⁸ Thus began several decades of argument between the United Nations and South Africa over the proper administration of Namibia.³⁹ The UN Council for Namibia was established to administer Namibia until independence,⁴⁰ but this became a time period much longer than anyone had anticipated. Due to a wide

Namibian independence, all while warning of further action by the United Nations if action were not soon taken. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/431,432,435,439\(1978\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/431,432,435,439(1978))

³⁷ See page 5 of this thesis for more discussion on this history.

³⁸ Carl J. Hellberg, *A voice of the voiceless: The involvement of the Lutheran World Federation in Southern Africa 1947-1977* (Skeab/Verbum, 1979), 23.

³⁹ In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that Namibia be placed in the Trusteeship System along with six other African Territories once held under the League of Nations Mandate System. South Africa refused this request and, in 1949, ceased all reports on Namibia to the United Nations, claiming that the Mandate to do so had lapsed after the demise of the League of Nations. In 1950, the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa continued to have international obligations to the Territory Mandate, but South Africa refused to accept the court's ruling. In 1966 the General Assembly declared that South Africa had failed in its obligations to Namibia and placed Namibia under the direct responsibility of the United Nations and, in 1967, established the United Nations Council for South West Africa, changed to 'Namibia', in 1968, which South Africa, again, refused to accept. This pattern continued through several more decades until Namibian independence. *UN Council for Namibia Documents*, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #VII UN 403 A1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

variety of international politics and complications in the global community, Namibian independence would be delayed by several decades.⁴¹

While the international community continued to argue over the fate of Namibia, the hardships that faced the people there would continue to inspire and energize support groups around the world. The crisis facing Namibia never faded from the minds of her supporters and they continued to work towards peace, justice, and independence for their sisters and brothers in Namibia.

C. A New Church: The ELCA and Continued Mission

During those decades of waiting for Namibian independence, new developments in the Lutheran church in the United States occurred. Several independent Lutheran church bodies in the United States

...sent greetings to the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa and the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Southwest Africa/Namibia, in which they expressed unabated solidarity with those churches in the struggle for freedom and opposition to apartheid (ELCA 87.2.50.)⁴²

The combination of these three denominations, the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches,

⁴¹ Perhaps one of the most interesting of these issues involves the Cuban military in Angola, Namibia's neighbor to the north. In 1975 communist Cuba invaded Angola. South Africa claimed they were at risk and asked for aid. Of particular concern for organizations like National Namibia Concerns was the United States' funding of South African troops to, in theory, stem the flow of communism into southern Africa, but which would directly fund the South African government and was viewed as supporting the system of apartheid. The entire controversy is explained in great detail by Prexy Nesbitt in his book, *Apartheid In Our Living Rooms: U.S. Foreign Policy and South Africa* (Midwest Research, 1986).

⁴² *Report: Commission for Church in Society*. 1 Namibia Emphasis (Agenda X.C.I; AGENDA Exhibit S-1), ELCA Church Council Minutes p.63, April 9-11, 1988. (accessed at the ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL.)

brought with it many connections to Namibia. As such, it was not surprising that early on the newly formed ELCA became involved with the now very mature independence movement in the United States. In April 1988, the ELCA Church Council passed a resolution regarding Namibia:

VOTED: To affirm the action taken by the board of the Commission for Church in Society, and to encourage all members of the ELCA to pray for their brothers and sisters in Namibia and to become active advocates on their behalf;
To declare work for justice in Namibia to be a continuing churchwide emphasis; and
To request the Commission for Church in Society to provide a report on this effort to the Church Council at its November 1988 meeting.⁴³

In addition, the ELCA Church Council affirmed the action of the Constituting Convention which echoed previous policies⁴⁴ of predecessor bodies regarding investment in South Africa. Specifically, it was voted,

That the Church Council strongly affirm the action of the ELCA constituting convention to “work tirelessly to see that none of our ELCA Pension Funds will be invested in companies doing business in South Africa (ELCA 87.2.50);” and
That the social investment screen relating to South Africa divestment proposed by the Advisory Committee on the Church’s Corporate Responsibility found in [AGENDA] Exhibit S-7 be transmitted as advice to the Board of Pensions; and
That the Board of Pensions be requested to share its divestment strategy and projected timeline for complete divestment with the Church Council at its next meeting.⁴⁵

⁴³ ELCA Church Council Minutes, April 9-11, 1988, pages 66-68. (accessed at the ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL.) See Appendix II for full resolution.

⁴⁴ For example, the American Lutheran Church contributed annually to the budget of National Namibia Concerns through the Division for World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation, while also advocating for Namibia through their own networks. See letter from Dr. Mark Thomsen, Director of the Division for World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation of the American Lutheran Church, July 7, 1987, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.II.B.

⁴⁵ Excerpts from: ELCA Church Council April 9-11, 1988, minutes page 70. See Appendix III. for full resolution.

The sanctions against South Africa reflected the work of each of the predecessor bodies through the 1980s as part of their goal to eliminate apartheid and restore the political and civil rights to all citizens of South Africa and Namibia. In a concerted effort, reflecting continued commitment towards Namibia's freedom and independence, the board of the Division for Global Mission of the ELCA went on record as supporting "comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa, with the aim of pressuring the government of South Africa to negotiate with recognized African leadership."⁴⁶

Though these actions were taken by the newly formed church less than two years prior to Namibia's independence, it was, nevertheless, important that the church make these decisions in order to continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Namibia. The support that these actions provided continued to fuel the work of organizations like National Namibia Concerns. The actions of the constituting convention and later Church Council and committees continued to give hope and lend support to the tired and struggling churches in South Africa and SWA/Namibia. Bishop Dumeni's words no doubt were ringing through people's ears throughout the discussion:

We are in a sea of tears here, we are crying and now the tears have become a river...and we need someone to rescue us.⁴⁷

Certainly, the actions of these American Lutherans were not going to rescue the Namibian people. What they did do was recognize the decades of journey that had been

⁴⁶ It should be noted that at its October 1993 meeting, the Division for Global Mission of the ELCA voted to suspend sanctions against the Republic of South Africa and urged investors to invest in South Africa in a responsible way. The board celebrated the moves by South Africa toward a democratic state and acknowledged the calls from the council of churches in South Africa to cease the economic sanctions towards the country. (ELCA Board of the Division for Global Mission, minutes page 32, October 1993) (accessed at ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL).

⁴⁷ From a speech by Bishop Kleopas Dueni, during the funeral of the Oshakati bomb blast victims, which included his Daughter, Anna Dumeni, on 27 February 1988. As reported by *Dateline: Namibia*. Issue No. 1, June 1988.

made between the Lutheran church in the U.S.A. and the people of Namibia and serve as a reminder that the journey was not done yet. The relationships built between American Lutherans and their Namibian sisters and brothers would continue to guide the advocacy work of the churches in the U.S.A. in the years to come. As Namibia moved closer to independence, the work of National Namibia Concerns and the national church bodies did not lose its fervor. Efforts across the network would continue to grow and thrive, fueled by relationships that had been built up over years of mutual learning and growth.

IV. Freedom, Accompaniment, and Transition

A. Independence: Like A Torch In The Night

Long though the wait was, independence did come to Namibia. National Namibia Concerns' *Namibia Newsletter* described the scene of March 21, 1990:

All over the country, Namibians gathered in the night at the regional independence ceremonies to lower the South African flag at midnight and to raise the beautiful new flag of the Republic of Namibia. It was an electric moment in the Windhoek Stadium as thousands of Namibians who had gathered in their capital city shouted "down, down, down" as the South African flag was lowered at 17 minutes past midnight. As the Namibian flag was raised cheers rose, tears flowed and women's voices trilled with the traditional and distinctive sound of celebration. An athlete carrying a flaming torch entered the stadium and ran to light a huge freedom flame. A spectacular fireworks display lit up the night sky, completing a grand evening of speeches and traditional music and dancing, witnessed by heads of state and dignitaries representing most of the world's countries.⁴⁸

The day of Namibia's independence was one celebrated around the world. After decades of fighting between militaries and governments, Namibia was finally free. South Africa's official policy of apartheid had been defeated and Namibia now had the chance to move forward into a new era of her history. In the days immediately following, Namibia's independence was recognized in the closing remarks by Pastor Daniel Olson, program director for West Africa and Southern Africa for the Division for Global Mission, at the March 1990 meeting of the ELCA Division for Global Mission:

"A stereotypical image of the African Church:

"a lorry...filled to over-capacity. People hanging on and hanging out, singing, drumming, praying.

⁴⁸ "Namibia's Freedom Shines like a torch in the night," *Namibia Newsletter* (Denver, Colorado, Spring 1990), Volume 13, No. 1.

“rains and lack of road equipment have caused a political and economic road of deep mud in the rutted red soil.

“breakdown!

“another image of Africa: Nelson Mandela, dignified, moved, joyful emerging from the gates of Vorster prison.

“breakthrough rather than breakdown.

“Ted Koppel: Mr. Mandela, we have heard of the great friendship that has developed during three years with your jailor. It was reported you embraced as you left. What did you say to your jailor?

“The weathered and wise old man said: ‘I was sorry to leave him behind’

“breakthrough to a new reality...but some are left behind.

“we celebrate breakthrough...and we pray we are not among those left behind.

“A new flag flies in Namibia. Not breakdown, but breakthrough.

“Through the rugged mountains of Ethiopia, convoys of trucks move through the war zone in corridors of tranquility, a space of hospitality - - a breakthrough.

“We celebrate with prayers of thanksgiving with brothers and sisters in Africa...a continent often plagued with breakdowns...these images of breakthrough!”⁴⁹

On a continent often personified by breakdowns, these breakthroughs are to be celebrated. Around the world people were beginning to notice the breakthroughs of Africa, and the global independence movement for Namibia was one of the many success stories in the making for Africa. Further grassroots movements in Namibia would continue to spur international interests in the years to come. As Namibia lived into independence, after 1990, international partners continued to walk with their friends in Namibia, building upon decades of relationships that had formed during the independence movement.

⁴⁹ ELCA Board of the Division for Global Mission, March 22-24, 1990. Minutes, page 11. (accessed at ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL).

B. Walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality

In a report on South Africa in 1989, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni spoke of the relationship that existed between Namibia and her partners in the United States saying,

In partnership we [Namibians] have things to give. We do not only want to have a receiving hand, but a giving hand as well.⁵⁰

This attitude towards interdependence and mutuality is at the heart of the relationship between Wartburg Theological Seminary and her partners in Namibia. Early on, there was a recognition of the importance of coming to the table as equals. The relationship that developed at Wartburg Theological Seminary between Namibian students, starting with the Shejavalis, and extending for decades, and those from the U.S.A. was one of equals. Each person learned from the other and was enriched by that interaction, leading to a further sharing of stories and continued building of relationships, even after students left Wartburg Theological Seminary. This relationship building sent active and interested graduates out into places of ministry, and had an impact on the wider church's future ministry ventures.

As the ELCA entered into the 1990s, it was clear that global mission would be formative to the young church's identity. In preparation for the future of mission between the ELCA and people around the world, several documents were assembled to help guide the church through principles and policy statements. The Divisions of Outreach and Global Mission contributed heavily to this process, including providing several guiding principles that the church would consider when developing future programs:

⁵⁰ Report from South Africa, Exhibit L, page 15, Meeting of the ELCA Division for Global Mission, March 9-11, 1989.

Evangelical. The mission of God through the ELCA is to place as its first priority, from which all other principles follow, the proclamation of the saving gospel of God in Jesus Christ which through the work of the Holy Spirit calls persons to repentance, faith and life.

Cruciform. Mission outreach is to follow the theology of the cross, the model of the suffering servant, and to operate in a spirit of humility, servanthood, and love. We are called to self-sacrificial love and action (beyond giving out of self-interest or merely out of our abundance or surplus) and to show solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering (for we, too, are poor in spirit, oppressed by sin, and share in the suffering of the human condition).

Contextual. Mission outreach is to respect and utilize the cultural and institutional values of the country, region, or area involved.

Inclusive. Mission outreach is to include in decision making and implementation persons from all conditions and categories. Mission is to “cross the boundaries” of race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, ideology, etc. in order to witness to the unity we have in Christ.

Empowering. Mission outreach is to enable people involved to achieve a sense of identity, worth, and potential so as to become self-directing and, if possible, self-supporting or self-reliant. Primarily, such empowerment comes from spiritual renewal, the creation of a sense of community, and Eucharistic worship at the foot of the cross.

Holistic. Mission outreach is to address the whole gospel message to the whole person in the whole community involved in the situation. Such proclamation, service, and advocacy must work together to maintain the integrity of the community and the mission of the church.

Leadership Development. Mission outreach is to provide for the early identification of and training of appropriate local leadership; for the periodic evaluation of leadership performant (by appropriate persons or agencies); and for the renewal of leadership resources by spiritual retreat, additional study or training, and orderly rotation of personnel.

Interdependent. Mission outreach is to recognize the mutual dependence of participating groups; the need for periodic interchange of persons, information, ideas, and reactions among participants; and the transitional stages through which projects proceed.

Ecumenical. Mission outreach is to be sensitive to the ecumenical dimensions of the situation, the opportunities to work together in joint action, and the manifestations of the unity of the church “so that the world may believe.”

Resource Appraisal. Mission outreach is to provide realistic estimates of the human and monetary resources; feasible alternative for the recruitment of human resources and the raising of monetary resources; and frequent re-evaluation of resource needs as projects move through transitional stages.⁵¹

These ten guiding principles would form the basis for what would become the defining aspects of the ELCA Model of Accompaniment, and, eventually, be incorporated into the five Accompaniment Values of the ELCA:

Mutuality. In accompaniment, we work to build up our capacities to proclaim and live out the Gospel of Christ. We work to recognize that all of us have gifts to offer to God’s mission, and to value gifts of all, while caring for one another’s needs. Mutuality is built upon giving and receiving trust as we grow together.

1 Cor. 12: 12, 24-26. We are one body, with many members, all interdependent upon one another in joy and suffering. How does this interdependence affect the way in which we relate to one another in Christ’s reconciling mission?

Inclusivity. God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation, yet we know that all communities exclude someone. In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention. For those who experience exclusion, as well as for those who are “inside,” it takes great effort and courage to continue to attempt to build relationships across boundaries. Inclusivity requires self-reflection and honesty about our own communities and relationships.

Luke 10:25. Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, the one excluded, who has compassion on the other who has been injured. How does exclusion and inclusion affect our relationships and our communities as we engage in God’s mission?

Vulnerability. Vulnerability and Empowerment taken together are an important key to accompaniment in God’s mission. In our culture, vulnerability often seems to be weakness, but Jesus shows us that vulnerability – openness to relationship, giving up power – is God’s way of redemption. We enter God’s mission through vulnerability, just as Jesus became vulnerable to us and with us.

⁵¹ *Call to Mission in the '90s for the ELCA*, A Division of Outreach/Division of Global Mission (DO/DGM) Contribution, pages 6-7, 1989. (accessed at the ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL).

Empowerment. As we accompany one another, we struggle to recognize and name power as it affects our relationships. When we recognize that relationships have asymmetries of power, and struggle to balance and correct those asymmetries, we are working to Empower ourselves and one another. Learning to let go of power – to become Vulnerable – is an act of empowerment, as is recognizing and standing up to power that hobbles people in their walk through life.

2 Cor 12:9. The power of God is made perfect in weakness. What does this mean for us as we engage in God’s mission through relationship?

Sustainability. Often we imagine our relationships as simple and self-sustaining. In fact, relationships are complex, and connected to other relationships and commitments, and require much attention over time to sustain. The Accompaniment Value of Sustainability means that we recognize that any given relationship will require an intentional commitment of attention and time to build up all those who are involved. In a mission project context, sustainability means embedding the project or work in the community as a whole, so that the project doesn’t depend only on one or two people, and can continue over time.

Luke 10:1; John 15:15, 20:21. The Gospels are full of Jesus’ work in creating a sustainable community of disciples, with leaders empowered to carry on his reconciling mission. How can we learn from Jesus’ commitment to teach, walk with, and give responsibility to his disciples?⁵²

The ELCA’s Global Mission unit defines accompaniment as “walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality.”⁵³ The development of this language comes out of many years of work between congregations and synods in the United States and their partner churches abroad. These relationships were not always easy and not always beneficial. Many old and persistent issues as well as new challenges continued to confront the relationships being built, as evidenced by this report to the Board of the Division for Global Mission in 14 March 1997:

⁵² *Accompaniment*, from the 2013 ELCA Global Mission Gathering. (accessed 13 March 2015 at [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_\(full\).pdf?_ga=1.208563095.482629586.1384439852](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_(full).pdf?_ga=1.208563095.482629586.1384439852))

⁵³ *Culture and Accompaniment*, an ELCA guiding document. (accessed 13 March 2015 at [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Culture_And_Accompany_\(full\).pdf?_ga=1.197558826.482629586.1384439852](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Culture_And_Accompany_(full).pdf?_ga=1.197558826.482629586.1384439852))

1. The continuing high degree of dependency of churches of the South. Several ELCA participants in the Conference of International Black Lutherans held in Zimbabwe in December '96 were distressed to discover the degree of African churches' dependence on the North in relation to theology, liturgy, music, church structure, and funding. This is a serious challenge to a partnership of respect and mutuality, especially in light of growing gaps of poverty and plenty – economically, socially, and in communication capabilities. Many African church leaders feel their people are still objects of mission, rather than subjects in the shared *Missio Dei*.

There is a prevalent mind set that a hierarchy rather than equality of cultures exists, in which the gifts of some cultures are devalued, particularly those less technologically developed. How can we address this feeling of superiority within ourselves and among our people? How can we live out the absolute of Christ while avoiding the arrogance of mission?⁵⁴

Such issues in the mission model of congregations have existed for centuries. It is the hope that by placing emphasis on accompaniment models of relating to international partners, that some of the old models, which tend to devalue the other, would cease. In moving forward with this model of accompaniment, the ELCA built into its churchwide expressions ways in which the church in the U.S.A could effectively, and appropriately, engage with the church around the world.

C. Implementing Accompaniment and Companion Models

Following the merger of the three predecessor bodies the Division for Global Mission of the ELCA recommended

That the board of the Division for Global Mission approve the basic concept of a Companion Churches Program (Exhibit M)⁵⁵ and request staff of the Division for Global Mission to create models and

⁵⁴ Report of the Area Program Director for English-Speaking West Africa and Southern Africa to the Board of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 14-16 March 1997, Exhibit K, page 1.

⁵⁵ See Appendix IV.

experimental/pilot programs during 1989, with progress reports and proposals for further implementation to be reviewed at 1989 meetings of the board.⁵⁶

Through a companion churches initiative, the ELCA's Division for Global Mission (DGM) will facilitate interchurch partnerships of interdependence, communication, and visitation between ELCA synods and Lutheran churches around the world.⁵⁷

This program laid the groundwork for future partnerships between the ELCA and its congregations and synods to build relationships with other Lutheran congregations and church bodies around the world.⁵⁸

By October of 1988, the Director for Mission Education reported to the Board of the Division for Global Mission that already eight ELCA synods had requested to participate in the companion churches program.⁵⁹ Two of those synods had specifically requested to partner with the churches in Namibia including the Northeast Iowa Synod where Wartburg Theological Seminary is located.

In 1990, the Northeast Iowa Synod⁶⁰ formally began its companion relationship with the churches in Namibia. Over the last 25 years, the relationship has continued to grow and thrive. The network of pastors and laypeople who oversee the relationships between congregations here in Northeastern Iowa and their partners abroad are intentional about their incorporation of the ELCA's Accompaniment Values.

⁵⁶ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Board of the Division for Global Mission, Supplementary Agenda, March 18-20, 1988, page 2.

⁵⁷ *Companion Churches Proposal*, from the Board for Global Mission, March 18-20, 1988.

⁵⁸ See Appendix IV "Companion Churches Proposal" page 1, for a list of objectives.

⁵⁹ Report of the Director for Mission Education to the Board of the Division for Global Mission, ELCA, October 14-15, 1988.

⁶⁰ This is one example of the many companion relationships that exist throughout the ELCA. A complete list of current companion relationships may be accessed here: <http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Mission/Companion-Synod-Relationships>

The purpose of the companion synod relationship is to strengthen one another for life and mission within the body of Christ. The Companion Synod – Namibia relationship offers us the privilege of mutually participating in the life of another church through prayer, study, communication, and exchange of pastors, leaders, visitors, and resources. It opens our eyes to the global challenge that Christ offers us today.⁶¹

As this relationship moved into the 2000s, the connections made between Namibian students in the United States in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s continued to draw members of the Northeast Iowa Synod's Namibia Network into relationship with their sisters and brothers in Namibia. In May of 2012, three members of the network visited Namibia to take part in an official consultation with the three Lutheran church bodies in Namibia and the other three ELCA synods with companion relationships in Namibia, the Southwestern Washington, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synods. The consultation between these seven partners included prayer, bible study, worship, and conversations regarding the ways in which each of the members could continue to support one another in the future. In 2006, the synod began a Visiting Pastor program which invited congregations in Northeastern Iowa to host pastors from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia. These visits renewed the long history between the churches in Namibia and those in Northeastern Iowa, as well as serving to open new lines of dialogue between pastors, youth groups, and congregations.⁶² As the synod and its partners in Namibia look to the future, plans to host Namibia high school students within the synod during the summer of 2015 are at work. The relationships built over forty-plus years continue to

⁶¹ Information and quotes from the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA. (accessed 12 March 2015 at <http://www.neiasynod.org/ministries/companion-synod-namibia/>)

⁶² *Companionship Namibia*, a newsletter of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA. (accessed 12 March 2015 at <http://www.neiasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CompanionshipNamibia-3-2012.pdf>)

bear fruit into future generations of Christians as these partnerships evolve into new ways of being the body of Christ.

D. The Seminary Connection

One such place where the accompaniment model was both formed and sustained is Wartburg Theological Seminary. Throughout the nearly 50-year history of relationships between the people of Namibia and Wartburg Theological Seminary, much was shared. Built upon stories that led to action, those relationships sustained a movement that went on to change the world. Not only for the citizens of a now-independent Namibia, but also for the thousands of people in the United States who heard their story and were moved to action. The fight for Namibia's independence still impacts people today through the work of pastors and laypeople who dedicated themselves to the cause of independence, and were forever changed by that experience. When people choose to engage one another in authentic relationships, everyone's lives are changed.

This life-changing attitude is at the core of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's model of accompaniment. Relationships that are rooted in accompaniment promote "the values of mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment, and sustainability."⁶³ Out of the relationships built in the 1970s and 1980s with students from Namibia came the companion seminary program at Warburg Theological Seminary. The Division for Global Mission reported, in 1994, that

⁶³ Definition of accompaniment from the ELCA website. (accessed 3 April 2015 at <http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Mission/Companion-Synod-Relationships>)

Wartburg Seminary has initiated a companionship with the Paulinum Seminary, building on its long relationship with Namibia. Several staff persons from Wartburg will visit Paulinum in the coming months. Programs of student and faculty exchanges are envisioned.⁶⁴

Twenty-three years after Abasai and Selma Shejavali first came to Wartburg Theological Seminary, six years after the founding of the ELCA, and three years after Namibia's independence, the partnership between Wartburg Theological Seminary and the Lutheran church in Namibia would begin a new venture. This intentional cooperation between the two seminaries would open up even more avenues of learning and exchange between our two churches and would serve to further strengthen the relationship. In the years following Namibia's independence, after the disbanding of National Namibia Concerns, this companion relationship between seminary and seminary would continue to serve as a bridge between the people of Namibia and their passionate supporters in the United States.

One of the ways in which the connection is sustained is through biennial trips made by students and faculty from Wartburg Theological Seminary to Namibia, as one option for January-term coursework, to meet the cross-cultural requirement. Groups that travel to Namibia are able to experience first-hand the impact that the church, and in particular, Wartburg Theological Seminary, had on Namibia. The January-term in Namibia introduces students to the history of Namibia, looking at missionary movements, the development of Christianity, colonization, and the fight for independence that took nearly a century to achieve. It is more than just learning about a history, however. The work done by students and faculty, while traveling and meeting with graduates and their

⁶⁴ Report of the LAfic Cluster to the board of the DGM/ELCA, English Speaking West Africa and Southern Africa, October 21-23, 1994, page 5. (accessed at the ELCA Archives, Elk Grove Village, IL).

families and members of the church who have never been to Wartburg Theological Seminary, reaffirms those relationships that were built years ago. Stories are shared and mutual learning continues to happen, just as it once did in classrooms and over meals.

Of course, one of the most tangible reminders of Wartburg Theological Seminary's history with Namibia is the Namibia Archives. This vast array of material includes books and movies, music, newspaper articles from the United States, Namibia and around the world, pictures, including many from the renowned Namibia photo-journalist, John Liebenberg, paintings, and artifacts that have come to the collection as gifts from students and travelers to Namibia. The archives also contain a detailed account of the development of the Namibia Concerns Committee at Wartburg Theological Seminary, as well as the formation of National Namibia Concerns. Scattered throughout the documents in the archives is an array of stories from students, faculty, and other supporters of the Namibia independence movement, both from Namibians and those who heard their stories and were moved to respond here in the United States. It is a collection that depicts the true horrors of unimaginable struggles, deep loss, and sorrow, while at the same time tracing through the years a story of a friendship that blossomed into a movement that joined the efforts of thousands of people around the world seeking change for Namibia.

E. Independence: Celebration and Transition

When independence came to Namibia on 21 March 1990, people around the world celebrated. Brought together by a sense of responsibility and a deep love for the country

of Namibia and her people, they celebrated years of partnership and accompaniment that had brought them to this one point for which so many had long hoped and prayed. Words of congratulations and encouragement for the future poured in from people in countries around the world as Namibians gathered to raise their new flag and celebrate the dawning of their new, independent, nation. Rev. Lowell Almen, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, sent greetings on behalf of the whole ELCA:

Your morning of joy has come and is shared by our sisters and brothers throughout the world. We go on from this morning mindful of what is ahead. The ELCA will not forget Namibia. Yes, the goal of freedom has been achieved here; but we shall not forget. We shall continue walking forward with you. We will continue through the scholarship program that includes some 50 students in Namibia studying in colleges of our church. We shall not forget the concerns related to the need for economic development. We shall not forget to remind our government that the kind of generosity that has been appropriately shown to countries in the north must also be shown to countries in the south.⁶⁵

Almen echoed many of the sentiments of the Namibian people regarding their independence. Celebration and joy, yes, but, also, important was continued support and solidarity with this young country which had many struggles still ahead. Dr. Abisai Shejavali, Executive Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, spoke to American Lutherans in the weeks following independence,

You helped this nation to be born. Now please walk with us as we learn to take our first steps.⁶⁶

Similar requests came in from other leaders in the church in Namibia as they recognized the need for continued support from their international partners.

⁶⁵ Rev. Lowell Almen's address to Namibia on the event of their Independence, 21 March 1990. *Namibia Newsletter*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1990, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.III.A.

⁶⁶ Minutes of National Namibia Concerns Board Meetings, 1990, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT-100-21.II.D.

In the United States, however, it was becoming difficult to sustain this partnership that, for so long, had been deeply rooted in the lives of individuals and congregations around the country. With independence in Namibia being a major goal for National Namibia Concerns, the celebrations and joy that came on 21 March 1990 also brought an immediate end of funding from most of the organizations sources, including the United Nations Council for Namibia. During the summer of 1990, the decision was made that National Namibia Concerns would close, an announcement that was met with dismay from the organization's friends in Namibia.

Please don't abandon us now. You have helped bring the birth of this nation. Now, like a toddler, we must learn to walk. Please walk with us until we are steady on our feet.⁶⁷

The words from Dr. Shejavali reiterated the calls that he, and many others, had made immediately following independence. So, National Namibia Concerns, recognizing the continued need for support to the churches and people of Namibia, that apartheid was still very much a reality in South Africa, and knowing that the continued use of the established networks would provide the most success in moving forward, it was decided that National Namibia Concerns would not close, but rather restructure and focus on all of southern Africa, continuing to work as advocates for justice and peace in the entire region.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Namibia Newsletter*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Winter, 1990, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Namibia Archives, File #XIV INT 100-21.III.A.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

V. Conclusion: Summary of Implications for the Future

As was said in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis was to do more than present a historical summary of events. There are many things that can be learned from the history of Namibia's independence movement, and the actions of those people and organizations who took part in it. Indeed, from that learning, there are many things that can be applied to mission and ministry today and as we look towards future practices.

At the core of the Namibia independence movement, and the continuing work, are relationships. Importantly, these relationships are built on a foundation of listening and mutual sharing, followed by checking in, continuing the practice of listening, and effectively making adjustments. The power of this movement in the U.S.A was in the sharing of stories and experiences, both by Namibians, and their companions. As members of the Namibia network went out to churches and organizations, they continued to share stories, engage in conversation, and encourage involvement. It was more than just a letter writing campaign, though this certainly happened, or simply phone calls to government officials, though this, too, was encouraged. Instead, the thrust of this movement was active engagement, face to face, with people of all backgrounds and ideologies, building relationships that prompted involvement and sustained the effort.

Through this face-to-face engagement came the formation of people that became the basis of a movement. At Wartburg Theological Seminary, this formation came in day in and day out engagement with Namibian students, their spouses, and families. The work of Namibia Concerns on campus, and the intentional way in which this community of people learns and grows together, assisted in the development of leaders ready to engage

in the conversation as they were sent out into public life during internship and after graduation. Additionally, the network fostered continued engagement with the stories of Namibia, and provided a consistent supply of up-to-date information on the progress of the movement.

This steady supply of new information meant that the movement was never allowed to become stagnant, an important part of its success. The work of National Namibia Concerns, the regional networks, and the many individuals who made up the network, kept interest going and made sure that Namibia didn't become a lost issue in the realm of old news. Conferences and speaking engagements, poster, movies, and the newsletter provided opportunities for people to plug-in with the larger network of Namibia supporters. Relationships built with the people of Namibia were important, but just as important for the sustaining of the movement were the relationships built between network members in the U.S.A.

In addition to the local and national networks and their work, much can be learned from the way that the international community engaged with the Namibia movement. It cannot be underestimated the value of the work of two organizations in particular: the United Nations and the Lutheran World Federation. The involvement of the United Nations spurred the involvement of the international community at a national level. The decrees and committee reports gave traction to the grassroots movements in individual countries as they worked towards reform of practices by individual governments. In a similar way, the work of the Lutheran World Federation brought international attention to the situation in Namibia to the church. The declaration of apartheid as “a *status confessionis*” spurred the movement within the Lutheran church, as well as the

ecumenical community. It is appropriate for us to consider, yet, today, where the application of these, and other, international bodies, might spur further conversation and action on behalf of those who continue to live in oppression, under similar systems of apartheid.

As we consider how individuals, congregations, synods, and national and international expressions of the church might learn from this exploration of Namibia's history, it is clear that there is much yet to learn. In the Namibia Archives of Wartburg Theological Seminary, and within the memories of the thousands of Namibia network members, there is a wealth of information that cannot be lost of the annals of history. As this seminary, and the church (ELCA and the wider ecumenical community), continues to prepare leaders, it is vital that we continue to mine the depths of this collection. January-term courses and this thesis program are an excellent first step in making sure that the historical connection Namibia is not lost. However, the greatest gift of these archives is not in what we can learn about the past, but rather, how we can learn to work together into the future, not just in Namibia, but in other contexts and settings, both global and local, where people long for justice and freedom. Thus, we strive to make connections and build relationships, walking together in solidarity and witness in the name of the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

VI. Postscript: Celebrating 25 years of Namibian Independence

On 20 March 2015, the Wartburg Theological Seminary community celebrated its history of relationships with Namibia, in anticipation of the upcoming 25th Anniversary of Independence in Namibia, on 21 March 2015. In Loehe Chapel that morning, these words were spoken:

Today we remember and celebrate with the people of the Republic of Namibia their 25th Anniversary of Independence! Wartburg Theological Seminary began their relationship with the people of Namibia in 1971 when Abisai and Selma Shejavali came to our campus from their then-occupied home in Namibia to study. Their stories, and those of dozens more Namibian students, inspired the students and faculty here at Wartburg to take an active role in advocating for Namibian independence. The Namibia Concerns Committee, which started here at Wartburg and grew into a nation-wide network of individuals and congregations, sent out guest speakers, newsletters, and other publications to people across the United States, bringing awareness to the plight of the Namibian people. Nearly two decades after the first Namibian came to Wartburg, and through the work of thousands of people representing congregations, seminaries, churchwide bodies and other organizations around the world, on March 21, 1990, independence finally came to Namibia. Today we celebrate that independence, and continue to pray for our sisters and brothers in Namibia, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia. We also give thanks for over 40 years of relationships between the people of Namibia and Wartburg Seminary.⁶⁹

Then, just as this community did, in 1971, when Abisai and Selma Shejavali first came to campus, we gathered to share stories. Different stories, on this side of independence, but stories that continue to sustain this long and wonderful relationship between us.

⁶⁹ This commemoration was written by the author of this thesis, after conversation with Professor Winston D. Persaud, using information from the study of materials housed in the Namibia Archives of Wartburg Theological Seminary. I am grateful to Shannon E. Johnson, MA Diaconal Student, for her reading of this commemoration in Loehe Chapel, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 20 March 2015.

VII. Appendices

Appendix I. Articles of Incorporation of National Namibia Concerns

File #XIV. INT 100-21.II.A. Namibia Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary,

Dubuque, Iowa

X
COPY

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
NATIONAL NAMIBIA CONCERNS

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

We, the undersigned, acting as incorporators of a corporation under the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act, Iowa Code Chapter 504A (1983), adopt the following Articles of Incorporation for such corporation:

Article I

The name of the corporation is NATIONAL NAMIBIA CONCERNS.

Article II

The period of its duration is perpetual.

Article III

The corporation is organized for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and will carry on the following activities in furtherance thereof:

- (a) To promote education and consciousness raising concerning human injustice in Namibia and South Africa;
- (b) To raise funds for:
 - 1. Supporting educational programs for Namibians (in Namibia and outside Namibia);
 - 2. Education and advocacy programs related to Namibia and South Africa;
 - 3. Various kinds of material aid to individuals and institutions in Namibia and South Africa; and
 - 4. Underwriting the work of National Namibia Concerns in the United States.

Rec. #
File # XIV INT 100-21.II.A.

National Namibia Concerns
ARCHIVES
Wartburg Seminary

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payment and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propoganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statement) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law); or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making for provisions of payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Iowa District Court of the County in which the principal office of the corporation is then located exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations as said Board of Directors shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Article IV

The address of the initial registered office of the corporation in the County of Dubuque is: 333 Wartburg Place, in the City of Dubuque, County of Dubuque and the name of its initial registered agent at such address is: May Burt Persaud.

Article V

The business of the corporation shall be conducted by a Board of Directors consisting of not more than twenty-five (25) and not less than five (5) directors, each director having one vote. The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors of the corporation is three (3), and the names and

addresses of the persons who are to serve as directors until the first annual meeting or until their successors are elected and shall qualify are:

Peter L. Kjeseth	333 Wartburg Place Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Susan Graves	2355 Simpson Dubuque, Iowa 52001
J. Elizabeth Liggett	333 Wartburg Place Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Article VI

The name and address of each incorporator is:

Daniel N. Heath	333 Wartburg Place Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Maurice W. Wick	1599 Bluff No. 5 Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Solveig Kjeseth	1387 Tomahawk Drive Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Article VII

The corporation shall not have a corporate seal.

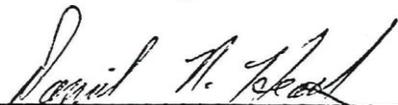
Article VIII

This corporation shall have no capital stock and shall issue no capital stock.

Article IX

The directors and officers of the corporation and their private property shall not be liable in any manner for corporate debts, obligations, undertakings or liabilities; and the directors and officers shall not be personally liable for any claim based upon an act or omission of such person or persons performed in the reasonable discharge of their lawful corporate duties.

Dated this 14th day of May, 1984.



Daniel Heath

Maurice W. Wick
Maurice W. Wick

Solveig Kjeseth
Solveig Kjeseth

STATE OF IOWA)
) ss:
COUNTY OF DUBUQUE)

On this 14th day of May, A.D., 1984, before me, the undersigned, a notary public in and for said County and State, personally appeared Daniel Heath, Maurice W. Wick and Solveig Kjeseth, to me known to be the persons named in and who executed the within and foregoing Articles of Incorporation, and acknowledged that they executed the same as their voluntary act and deed.

 **BRIAN J. KANE**
08-12-85

Brian J. Kane
Notary Public in and for the
State of Iowa

Appendix II. Report of the Commission for Church in Society, ELCA Church
Council Minutes, April 9-11, 1988, pages 66-68.

Accessed at the ELCA Archives

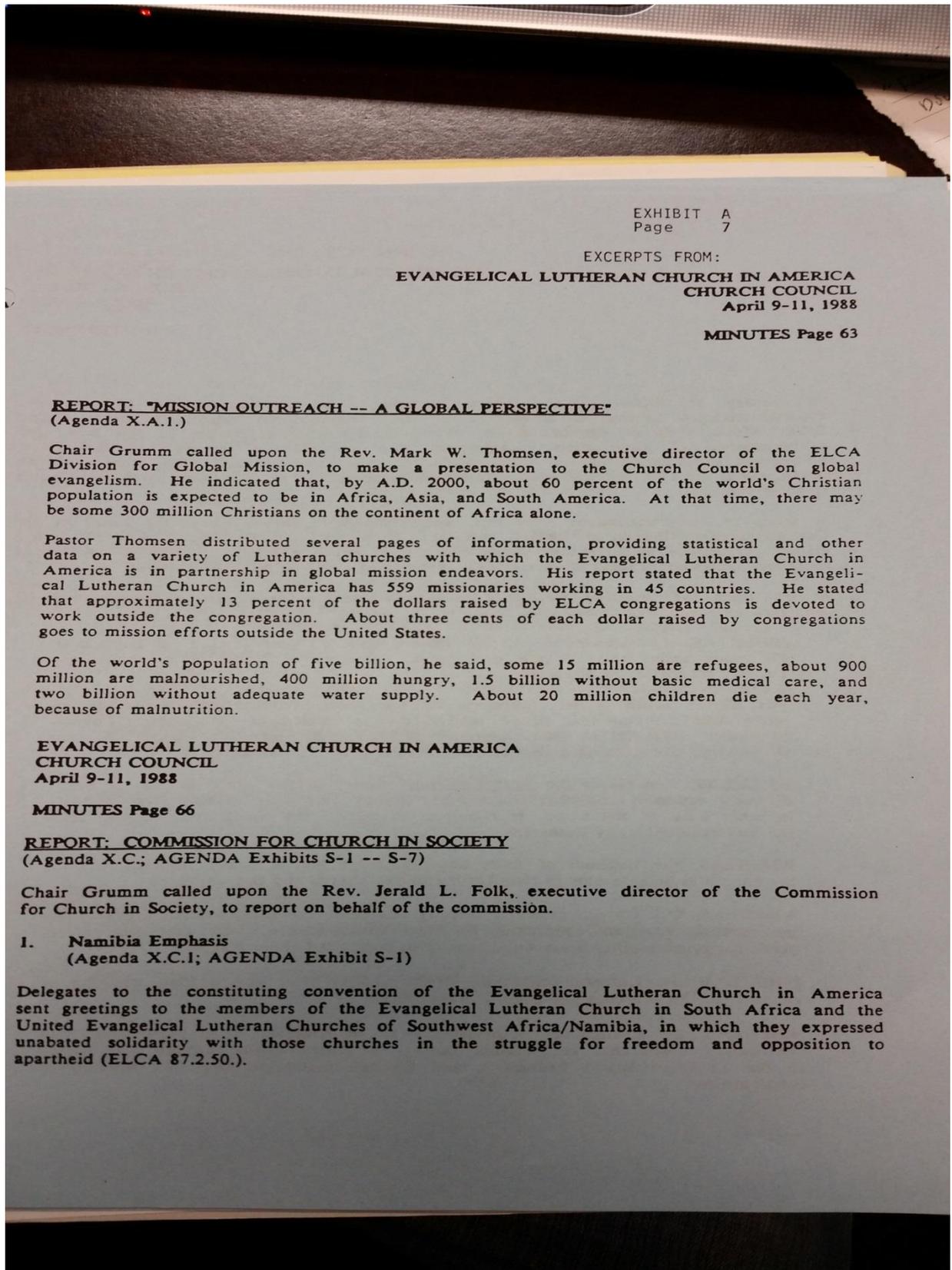


EXHIBIT A
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EXCERPTS FROM:

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 9-11, 1988**

MINUTES Page 63

REPORT: "MISSION OUTREACH -- A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE"
(Agenda X.A.1.)

Chair Grumm called upon the Rev. Mark W. Thomsen, executive director of the ELCA Division for Global Mission, to make a presentation to the Church Council on global evangelism. He indicated that, by A.D. 2000, about 60 percent of the world's Christian population is expected to be in Africa, Asia, and South America. At that time, there may be some 300 million Christians on the continent of Africa alone.

Pastor Thomsen distributed several pages of information, providing statistical and other data on a variety of Lutheran churches with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in partnership in global mission endeavors. His report stated that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has 559 missionaries working in 45 countries. He stated that approximately 13 percent of the dollars raised by ELCA congregations is devoted to work outside the congregation. About three cents of each dollar raised by congregations goes to mission efforts outside the United States.

Of the world's population of five billion, he said, some 15 million are refugees, about 900 million are malnourished, 400 million hungry, 1.5 billion without basic medical care, and two billion without adequate water supply. About 20 million children die each year, because of malnutrition.

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 9-11, 1988**

MINUTES Page 66

REPORT: COMMISSION FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY
(Agenda X.C.; AGENDA Exhibits S-1 -- S-7)

Chair Grumm called upon the Rev. Jerald L. Folk, executive director of the Commission for Church in Society, to report on behalf of the commission.

1. Namibia Emphasis
(Agenda X.C.1; AGENDA Exhibit S-1)

Delegates to the constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sent greetings to the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa and the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Southwest Africa/Namibia, in which they expressed unabated solidarity with those churches in the struggle for freedom and opposition to apartheid (ELCA 87.2.50.).

EXHIBIT A

EXHIBIT A
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EXCERPTS FROM:

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 9-11, 1988

MINUTES Page 67

In January, the Office of the Bishop convened a one-day consultation that involved representatives of several churchwide units with responsibilities relating to Namibia and South Africa, staff of the predecessor church bodies with experience in this area, and representatives of grass roots organizations who are actively involved in this issue. Subsequent coordination of the work of ELCA units internally and with other Lutheran organizations working on this issue will be the responsibility of the Commission for Church in Society.

A series of recommendations from this consultation were forwarded to the board of the Commission for Church in Society, including a request that the Church Council declare efforts for justice and freedom on behalf of Namibia a churchwide priority. A list of those recommendations was distributed to council members as AGENDA Exhibit S-1.

At its March 1988 meeting, the board of the Commission for Church in Society took the following action:

WHEREAS, the suffering of the Namibian people has been intense for more than 100 years under colonial rule, first under Germany and now under the illegal military occupation of South Africa;

WHEREAS, South Africa continues its war, illegal occupation, and reign of terror over the Namibian people, and refuses to implement UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978), the internationally accepted plan for South African withdrawal, UN supervised elections, and independence for Namibia;

WHEREAS, Namibia is the most Lutheran country in the world outside of Scandinavian countries and that while other groups may bear primary responsibility in other areas of the world, in Namibia the rest of the world must depend upon the leadership taken by Lutherans;

WHEREAS, the blackout of news about Namibia lays a heavy responsibility on the church to bring events in Namibia before the church and the world;

WHEREAS, U.S. foreign policy is directly related to the independence for Namibia by creating external conditions for that independence, and that this places particular responsibility upon Americans to be concerned about Namibia;

WHEREAS, the Lutheran churches in the U.S.A. have had a long tradition of support for the churches and people of Namibia;

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in partnership with the Lutheran churches in Namibia through a shared faith, through membership in the Lutheran World Federation and through many personal and institutional relationships;

EXCERPTS FROM:
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
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WHEREAS, the delegates of the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have assured the churches of Namibia of our church's prayers and solidarity with the Namibians in their struggle for freedom with justice and of our unqualified opposition to the illegal occupation and oppression by South Africa of Namibia;

WHEREAS, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni of Namibia has said "We are in a sea of tears here, we are crying and now the tears have become a river . . . and we need someone to rescue us;" therefore, be it

Resolved that the Commission for Church in Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommend that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America declare Namibia as a continuing churchwide emphasis.

VOTED:
CC88.4.40

To affirm the action taken by the board of the Commission for Church in Society, and encourage all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to pray for their sisters and brothers in Namibia and to become active advocates on their behalf;

To declare work for justice in Namibia to be a continuing churchwide emphasis; and

To request the Commission for Church in Society to provide a report on this effort to the Church Council at its November 1988 meeting.

During discussion, it was noted that a similar situation of injustice exists in Central America. A consultation is currently being planned with emphases parallel to those for Namibia.

**REPORT: ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
THE CHURCH'S CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

(Agenda X.C.6.; AGENDA Exhibit S-7; MINUTES Exhibit J; see also, South Africa Sanctions, page 68)

Chair Grumm called upon William E. Diehl, a member of the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Responsibility, to report on behalf of the committee.

Appendix III. Investment Criteria: South Africa Divestment. ELCA Church

Council minutes April 9-11, 1988. p 69-73.

EXHIBIT A
Page 6

EXHIBIT A
Page 10

EXCERPTS FROM:
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
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MINUTES Page 69

1. Investment Criteria; South Africa Divestment
(Agenda X.C.6; AGENDA Exhibit S-7; MINUTES Exhibits J)

ELCA continuing resolution 16.41.A87.i., authorizes the Commission for Church in Society to

facilitate the formation of an Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Social Responsibility, which will include representatives from the Board of Pensions, the Church Council, and other units of this church and, which will give counsel and advice to all appropriate units of this church on corporate social responsibility.

In addition, ELCA continuing resolution 16.51.C87.b., provides that:

The Committee on Investments of the Board of Pensions shall receive advice and counsel from the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Social Responsibility formed by the Commission for Church in Society and within the context of fiduciary responsibility make appropriate recommendations to the Board.

Subsequent to the January 1988 meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Social Responsibility, staff of the Commission for Church in Society forwarded to churchwide units the committee's assessment of a number of shareholder resolutions initiated by other groups and made a recommendation for continuation of shareholder actions initiated by the Lutheran Church in America through its Board of Pensions. At its February 1988 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council reviewed the work of the advisory committee and voted:

That the criteria to be developed by the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Social Responsibility for the Social Purpose and other funds of the Board of Pensions be reviewed by the Church Council prior to recommendation of such criteria to the ELCA Board of Pensions (EC88.2.4).

The advisory committee met for a second time on March 29 and received a briefing on fiduciary responsibility from legal counsel that provided the context for the committee's work to develop investment "screens" for recommendation to the Board of Pensions and other churchwide units. The following screens were discussed at that meeting: South Africa Divestment, Harmful Products, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and "positive" screens for community development and other socially responsible practices. While further refinement is needed for a number of these screens, the advisory committee recommended immediate implementation of the screen relating to South Africa, distributed to council members as AGENDA Exhibit S-7 (MINUTES Exhibit J).

The advisory committee recommended that the following action be approved:

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**Moved,
Seconded:**

That the Church Council strongly affirm the action of the ELCA constituting convention to "work tirelessly to see that none of our ELCA Pension Funds will be invested in companies doing business in South Africa" (ELCA 87.2.50); and

That the social investment screen relating to South Africa divestment proposed by the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Responsibility found in [AGENDA] Exhibit S-7 be transmitted to the Board of Pensions; and

That the Board of Pensions be requested to share its divestment strategy and projected timeline for complete divestment with the Church Council at its next meeting.

It was noted that achievement of full divestment during 1988 would affect approximately 20 percent of the investment portfolio of the Board of Pensions, and could possibly endanger the security of the portfolio.

The following amendment was proposed, but later withdrawn:

That paragraph two be omitted; and that paragraph three become a new second paragraph.

**Moved,
Seconded:**

To add the words, *as advice*, after the word, "transmitted," in the second paragraph.

**Amendment
carried.**

**VOTED:
CC88.4.41**

That the Church Council strongly affirm the action of the ELCA constituting convention to "work tirelessly to see that none of our ELCA Pension Funds will be invested in companies doing business in South Africa (ELCA 87.2.50);" and

That the social investment screen relating to South Africa divestment proposed by the Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Responsibility found in [AGENDA] Exhibit S-7 be transmitted as advice to the Board of Pensions; and

That the Board of Pensions be requested to share its divestment strategy and projected timeline for complete divestment with the Church Council at its next meeting.

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SOUTH AFRICA SANCTIONS

(Agenda X.C.2; AGENDA Exhibit S-2; see also, Report: Board of Pensions, pages 49, 57, and Report: Advisory Committee on the Church's Corporate Responsibility, page 65)

Chair Grumm called upon the Rev. Mark W. Thomsen, executive director of the Division for Global Mission, to present a resolution on behalf of the division's board. He reviewed the recommendation of the board, which had been distributed as AGENDA Exhibit S-2.

Since the early 1980s the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches have advocated for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa as a means for bringing to an end the system of apartheid and restoring civil and political rights to all citizens of South Africa and Namibia.

The Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also took an action expressing "unqualified opposition to the apartheid system in South Africa and the illegal occupation and oppression by South Africa of Namibia" (ELCA 87.2.50).

At its March meeting, the following action was taken by the board of the Division for Global Mission:

Whereas, the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) sent a message of support to Lutheran churches in Southern Africa; and

Whereas, the government of South Africa has recently banned seventeen (17) peoples organizations, prohibited many activities of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and restricted a number of leaders; and

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Whereas, this action has clearly demonstrated that the South African government has chosen to eliminate all channels of non-violent action and protest; and

Whereas, this action has been strongly condemned by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Episcopal Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA); and

Whereas, the SACC and other organizations have repeatedly called for the imposition of comprehensive sanctions in order to bring the government of South Africa to the negotiating table; and

Whereas, the leaders of South African churches, meeting in Johannesburg on February 25, 1988, have called upon the international community--especially South Africa's major trading partners--"to isolate the government of South Africa to force it off the awful path of instability and bloodshed it has chosen;" and

Whereas, the United States Senate and the House of Representatives are presently considering comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa; it is, therefore,

VOTED: That the board of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America goes on record as supporting comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa, with the aim of pressuring the government of South Africa to negotiate with recognized African leadership; and

That staff of the Division for Global Mission be instructed to coordinate further efforts in this area with the Commission for Church in Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

According to the ELCA governing documents, the Church Council is to approve all policies of units which have implications for other units and for synods, congregations, agencies and institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA 16.31.26). The board of the Division for Global Mission, therefore, requested affirmation of the action taken by the board of the Division for Global Missions.

During discussion, a suggestion was made that it may be prudent to approve the resolution as an action of the Church Council, but not as policy set by the Churchwide Assembly. An editorial change was requested that the words, *at its April 9-11, 1988, meeting*, be inserted in the first Resolve.

EXHIBIT A

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VOTED:
CC88.4.42

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a deep and abiding commitment to the ending of apartheid and to independence for Namibia;

WHEREAS, the government of South Africa has recently banned seventeen peoples organizations, prohibited many activities of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and restricted a number of leaders; and

WHEREAS, this action has clearly demonstrated that the South African government has chosen to eliminate the existing channels of non-violent action and protest; and

WHEREAS, this action has been strongly condemned by the South African Council of Churches and the Episcopal Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa; and

WHEREAS, the South African Council of Churches and other organizations have repeatedly called for the imposition of comprehensive sanctions in order to bring the government of South Africa to the negotiating table; and

WHEREAS, the leaders of South African churches, meeting in Johannesburg on February 25, 1988, have called upon the international community--especially South Africa's major trading partners--"to isolate the government of South Africa to force it off the awful path of instability and bloodshed it has chosen;" and

WHEREAS, the United States Senate and the House of Representatives are presently considering comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa;

Resolved, That the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its April 9-11, 1988, meeting affirm its support for comprehensive and mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa as a means for moving the government of South Africa to negotiate with recognized African leadership; and be it further

Resolved, that the bishop of this church communicate this position to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress of the United States of America, the South African government, and the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Appendix IV. Companion Churches Proposal – Board for Global Mission, March
18-20, 1988.

Accessed in the ELCA Archives

Exhibit M

COMPANION CHURCHES PROPOSAL

Board for Global Mission
March 18-20, 1988

General Description

Through a companion churches initiative, the ELCA's Division for Global Mission (DGM) will facilitate interchurch partnerships of interdependence, communication, and visitation between ELCA synods and Lutheran churches around the world.

Rationale

As members of the Body of Christ living in a multitude of settings around the world, we are a global community of faith. We are interdependent in understanding our identity, in experiencing the love of God in Christ Jesus, and in carrying out our individual and mutual callings to God's mission.

In international relationships and global mission programs, we as members of the ELCA often have perceived ourselves primarily as givers rather than receivers. We have not seen ourselves in interdependent relationships with brothers and sisters around the world, but have often assumed a dominant role in these relationships. There is a growing awareness that we need to be recipients of the dynamic faith witness of other members of the global Christian family. We confess that our vitality of faith and our credibility in discipleship depends on this witness of others to us.

As members of an affluent church in an affluent society and as citizens of an economically and politically powerful nation, we often find ourselves in bondage to materialism and tempted by political and economic power. Through dialogue and interaction with Christians around the world, we have the possibility of seeing the world with new eyes and hearing God's truth spoken anew to us. We need mentors who will guide us as we seek to be faithful in our mission callings.

Therefore, we wish to enter into a dialogue with members and leaders of overseas churches in order to determine how we might develop programs for achieving relationships which foster interdependence and mutual sharing of witness.

Objectives

The program will seek to enable members of companion synods/churches to:

1. be renewed and regenerated by the faith witness of Christians of another land and culture;
2. deepen their experience of being both givers and receivers of encouragement, witness, and prayer support;
3. be strengthened and challenged in their mission callings;
4. be informed of the life and mission of the church outside their own country.

Implementation

1. DGM secretaries make contacts with overseas Lutheran churches to enter into a dialogue concerning participation in a companion churches program; communications will encourage the churches to indicate their expectations, goals, and contributions to the program.
2. DGM mission education team dialogues with ELCA synod representatives concerning participation in a companion churches program, encouraging the synods to indicate their expectations, needs, goals, and contributions to the program.
3. DGM area secretaries consult with international church regarding suggested pairing with an ELCA synod; DGM mission education team consults with synod to suggest a pairing with an international church.
4. Synod identifies a decision-making group which a) explores the possibilities; b) identifies expectations/goals; c) appoints steering committee, educators, and hosts; d) prepares budget proposals; e) recommends adoption and implementation by the synod.
5. DGM mission education team prepares educational/promotional materials including input/information from overseas churches.
6. Initial correspondence between companion synod/church.
7. DGM mission education team conducts workshops for synod committee/educators/hosts.
8. Publicity/interpretation/education activities conducted by synod program leadership throughout the synod.
9. **CORRESPONDENCE** between synod/church companions. This may include such items as:
 - o sharing of official information such as reports, materials, minutes, documents
 - o sharing of stories, items of human interest, news
 - o sharing of prayer lists, requests
 - o sharing of photos, recordings, artifacts, worship materials
10. **EXCHANGE VISITS** between synod/church companions. Exchanges will normally be by individuals or very small groups who can immerse themselves within the life of the other church, listen and speak/share. If a group travels, care will be taken to disperse the group in order that it lose its "group identity" and become immersed within the community of host church. Persons who visit will normally be expected to engage in interpretation/education responsibilities upon returning home.
11. Action/advocacy efforts by synod where appropriate.
12. Ongoing evaluation and reporting will be facilitated by DGM.

Budget

1. DGM Commitments: workshop(s) for synod committee, educators, and hosts
 educational/interpretive resources
 small initial grant for exchange visits
2. Synod Commitments synod committee expense
 educational activities
 exchange visits
 publicity, administrative expense

Cooperation with other ELCA Ministries. DGM and synods should invite participation and input from other ELCA units and programs such as Outreach, Multicultural Ministries, Women of the ELCA, youth organization.

Guidelines for Financial Commitments

Basic Principle: Financial and material exchanges should not be part of the program.

1. Funding provided from synod and its members in relationship to this program will normally be channeled solely for the support of the program. This might include:
 - a. educational activities, workshops, materials
 - b. exchange visits (travel, food, lodging, incidentals)
 - c. administrative costs (committee; printing, postage, telephone, publicity)
2. ELCA synods and companion churches and their members shall follow funding procedures and financial relationships established by DGM and the international churches. Extra funding generated as a result of the program will be channeled into the regular ELCA benevolence process. This includes missionary sponsorships and approved projects for designated giving.
3. Care should be taken to avoid fundraising activities or requests which are outside the established budgets. Suggestions or requests for new projects shall follow the regular procedures of the DGM-ELCA budgeting process.
4. Education toward understanding these principles of stewardship and church relationships shall be a part of the regular education and orientation activities of the program.
5. The program plans of synods should not expect financial commitments from the overseas partners.

A Possible Time Line

1. implement the program in 1989 on a "pilot" basis with the pairing of two to three ELCA synods and overseas churches;
2. conduct evaluation, refinement, and preparation of the program in 1989;
3. initiate the program in 1990 with up to 20 ELCA synods and overseas churches and up to 20 additional pairings each subsequent year;

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