Decades of Deceit,  
A Year For Action

On October 27, 1966, the United Nations formally revoked South Africa's legal right to rule Namibia, a decision greeted with joy among a people dispossessed and brutalized by decades of colonial domination and racial oppression.

But in 1986, Namibians marked the twentieth anniversary of that historic decision still caught in the iron grip of South Africa's occupation. Over the course of those two decades perhaps 16,000 Namibians have been killed in the anti-colonial war. Countless others have been tortured, injured or imprisoned by the white government. An additional 80,000 Namibians—a staggering figure for a country of fewer than two million people—have been driven into neighboring countries by the South African army and now huddle in refugee camps in constant fear of South African attack.

Yet responsibility for the long years of death and suffering in Namibia is not South Africa's alone. Much of it lies with us. For the past 20 years, Democratic and Republican administrations alike, while professing to support Namibian independence, have prevented the United Nations from imposing the kinds of economic and political sanctions on South Africa needed to achieve that goal.

Instead, the United States has openly connived with Pretoria on ways to evade implementation of the West's own blueprint for Namibian independence—Security Council Resolution 435. We should remember that it was America, and not South Africa, that first linked Namibia's freedom to the unrelated issue of Cuban troops stationed in neighboring Angola.

And in 1986, our nation went from connivance to complicity with South Africa by providing arms and money to anti-government Angolan terrorists supplied and supported from occupied Namibia. Ours has been a deceitful policy, a wrong policy, and a failed policy. It is time for a change.

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For too many Namibians 1986 was another year of sorrow, suffering, and bitter disappointment under South Africa's colonial occupation. Namibian mothers buried too many of their children last year—victims of the desperate poverty and savage racial violence that has afflicted this country during seven decades of South African rule. Too many Namibian fathers searched vainly for jobs in an economy wrecked by colonial mismanagement and greed. Too many young people surrendered to despair, seeking solace and sustenance in alcohol, drugs, and crime. Too many years of "negotiations" between South Africa and its Western allies have failed to produce an end to foreign domination.

But 1986 was also a year of unprecedented resistance by the Namibian people. Under the banner of the territory's Christian churches, the opponents of apartheid and colonialism launched major new challenges to South Africa's illegal occupation through the courts and on the streets.

The most important of these was the "Ai-Gams" movement, which started on April 30, 1986. On that day representatives of the country's Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, and Methodist churches met with the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO and nine other political groups at Ai-Gams ("Hot Springs" in the Nama language, the original name for the place the Europeans called Windhoek) at the invitation of the Council of Churches in Namibia to discuss the state of the nation and the prospects for change.

The resulting Ai-Gams Declaration called on Namibians of every faith, tribe, and color to demonstrate their rejection of South African rule. Namibian mothers buried too many of their children last year—victims of the desperate poverty and savage racial violence that has afflicted this country during seven decades of South African rule. Too many Namibian fathers searched vainly for jobs in an economy wrecked by colonial mismanagement and greed. Too many young people surrendered to despair, seeking solace and sustenance in alcohol, drugs, and crime. Too many years of "negotiations" between South Africa and its Western allies have failed to produce an end to foreign domination.

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Namibian Lutherans Seek Unity in '92

The three established Lutheran churches in Namibia, meeting in Windhoek from October 29-31, 1986, have decided to continue their 14-year quest for one Lutheran church in the South African-occupied territory.

In sessions marked by lively debate, delegates from the 360,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), the 190,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA/Namibia (ELC), and the 12,000-member German Evangelical Lutheran Church accepted a draft constitution for review and possible acceptance. Should each of the three churches endorse the draft, they would merge and form a new, united Lutheran body in 1992.

The forum for the churches' decision was a synod meeting of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (UELCSWA), a federation established in 1972 to foster greater cooperation among Lutherans in the territory. The outgoing president of UELCSWA, Bishop Hendrik Frederik of the ELC, challenged the meeting by stating that the UELCSWA's history had been limited to 14 years of "fruitless" reports. "There are 14 years left until the end of this century," he said. "Could UELCSWA bear fruit in this period?" Bishop Frederik also confronted the white German church on its unwillingness to support the ELC and the ELCIN in statements and actions against South Africa's appointed "interim government" in the territory.

Indeed, support for South Africa's apartheid policies among white Lutherans in Namibia has been the major obstacle to progress in the long-stalled cooperation talks. The German church, with the same number of votes in the federation as each of the larger African churches, has refused to join with their fellow Lutherans in condemnation of South Africa's bloody and illegal occupation of the disputed United Nations Trust Territory.

In September, a group of 13 Black Lutheran pastors wrote to the synod after a meeting with clergy from the German church, demanding that merger talks be postponed for five years because of "fundamental theological differences on crucial faith issues."

This motion was not accepted by the synod, but it reflected the skepticism felt by many Black Christians about the wisdom of moving toward one church with the German Lutherans. According to Bishop Frederik, the white "Christian brothers and sisters who said they understood my suffering and sorrow change their attitudes the next moment." Bishop Frederik urged the meeting to consider carefully the Kairos Document and the Ai Gams Declaration, two powerful statements from Black Christians that proclaim the necessity for Christian resistance and action in the South African and Namibian context.

Despite Black reservations, the synod voted to continue merger talks, expressed its "solidarity with the cry as contained in the Kairos Document" and strongly recommended its use in congregations to "stimulate discussions." The synod also voted to "strongly support the action of three Namibian bishops concerning the lifting of the curfew in the northern part of the country."

The synod elected Landesprobst Willfried Blank of the German church as UELCSWA president, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, of the ELCIN as vice president and Pastor Henog Kamho of the ELC as chairman. Their terms of office will last three years. One delegate at the meeting said that Landesprobst Blank, who won the presidency by a single vote over Bishop Dumeni, should view his election as a challenge to the German church "to change its attitudes and prove that it truly wants to be a part of a new Namibian church." The German Evangelical Lutheran Church will meet in May to consider the unity constitution.

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Since then, tens of thousands of Namibians have risked their lives to peacefully protest South Africa's denial of their rights. The largest such rally occurred in Windhoek's segregated black township, Katutura, on July 27, when between 15,000 and 25,000 people gathered for SWAPO's first public rally in five years. It was a massive show of support for the movement by Katutura's 100,000 residents, and they heard speaker after speaker call for the resignation of the territory's South African-appointed interim government, an end to America's "linkage" policy, and the immediate implementation of Resolution 425.

The Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, a leader of Namibia's African Methodist Episcopal Church and vice president of SWAPO, told the crowd that the United States and Britain "should know that the people of Namibia are demanding sanctions" against their South African occupiers. The crowd thundered back, "Yes, sanctions now!"

But SWAPO foreign affairs spokesman Nico Bessinger reminded the gathering that the United States and Britain had broken past promises of independence for Namibia, and that freedom would only come from their efforts. "The price of freedom can be very high," he warned, "and require great sacrifices."

Several weeks later, over 8,000 people marked the 20th anniversary of the beginning of SWAPO's anti-colonial war with songs and speeches in support of the liberation movement and the independence struggle.

Yet the demonstrations have not been confined to the capital. Over 2,000 people marched under the Ai-Gams banner in the northern mining town of Tsumeb in July, while 1,000 Ai-Gams supporters met at the drought-stricken farm village of Karasburg in the south. During 1986, Namibians organized numerous Ai-Gams marches, rallies and protests in every part of the country. Such actions served to dispel South African claims that the Namibian people support the quelling of liberation movements and that South African troops are to stay.

The year also saw new challenges to South Africa's repressive laws in the courts. In October, lawyers for eight Namibians accused of crimes under South Africa's sweeping "Terrorism Act" successfully challenged a provision of the law that requires defendants to prove their innocence. (In the United States a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty by the government.) Defense attorneys argued that the law violated the fair trial guarantees provided in the interim government's "Bill of Fundamental Rights" enacted in 1985 to win public support for the South African-appointed regime.

A few weeks later, the leaders of Namibia's three largest Christian churches, Lutheran Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, Catholic Bishop Bonifatius Haushiku and Anglican Bishop James Kauluma made a similar challenge to the harsh dusk-to-dawn curfew in force over much of northern Namibia. In arguments before an all-white, five-judge panel, they charged that the curfew violated the rights of free assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of association and movement—rights supposedly guaranteed by the interim government. The bishops also
submitted 200 sworn affidavits from residents of the curfew zone detailing the hardships suffered by over half of Namibia's population under the curfew edict.

Although the bishops' case was eventually dismissed by the white judges, the suit forced lawyers for the interim government to admit that the bill of rights "cannot be relied upon by the ordinary citizen."

Yet even in defeat, the bishops achieved an important goal. Namibians understand that South Africa, which routinely violates the human rights of its own Black majority, will never allow the courts to interfere with its brutal occupation policies. But by exposing the bankruptcy of the interim government and the emptiness of the bill of rights, the churches have deprived South Africa of a valuable propaganda weapon in the West and strengthened their peoples' claim to independence.

Much the same can be said of the Aigams movement. Namibian church and political leaders know that peaceful protest alone cannot dislodge a ruthless occupation army. But they hope that the unity of purpose and determination displayed by such actions will finally persuade the United States to end its linkage policy and put real pressure on South Africa to withdraw.

In a way, the growth of a strong protest movement in Namibia—one led largely by the church—is a protest against the empty words of the West. Thousands of Namibians deliberately risked their lives last year to remind us that they are still not free. They have pledged to continue their perilous witness until we remember their suffering, and act to end it.
Namibian Courts Powerless On Human Rights

On September 12, South Africa's State President, P.W. Botha, intervened to prevent the legality of the South African Terrorism Act from being tested in a Namibian court. It was the second time in as many months that the South African government has halted a trial related to human rights abuses in Namibia. The Terrorism Act, a cornerstone of Pretoria's illegal occupation of the United Nations Trust Territory, allows for the indefinite detention of prisoners without charge, or access to lawyers or family. Detainees are often beaten and tortured during interrogation.

In July, President Botha instructed his allies in Namibia's nominally self-governing "interim government" to stop the trial of four white soldiers accused of murdering a Black man, Frans Uatopa, in November 1985. That action, taken in "the national interest," was denounced as a "rape of justice" by the normally cautious—and mostly white—Windhoek Bar Council, and prompted the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace to remark that "the interim government has clearly recognized and publicly confessed its role as a South African puppet."

The latest intervention came in a major political trial of eight men, including alleged insurgents of the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO, who were charged with violations of the Terrorism Act. Lawyers for the accused planned to argue that key provisions of the act conflicted with the "Bill of Fundamental Rights" introduced by the interim government last year in an effort to gain public support for the South Africa-sponsored administration.

Since its introduction in June 1985, human rights, church, and political activists have used the freedoms supposedly guaranteed by the bill of rights to challenge a range of repressive laws and acts. But in the face of growing resistance by the Namibian people in recent months, Pretoria has increasingly abandoned the facade of constitutional law and resorted to the draconian measures contained in the Terrorism Act and other security legislation to enforce its illegal writ.

Ironically, the bill of rights was first introduced to bolster the image of Pretoria's allies in the interim government. But by declaring that in Namibia "no court of law shall be competent to inquire into or pronounce upon the validity of any act of the South African parliament," the South African government further eroded what little credibility was left to the pro-South Africa groupings in the interim government. Their credibility suffered another blow when it was revealed that the interim government itself had requested the South African intervention.

The ruling does not exempt proclamations made by South Africa's colonial magistrate, the Administrator General, or laws passed by the interim government. But the harshest security laws—the Internal Security Act, the Defence Act, and the Riotous Assemblies Act as well as the Terrorism Act—are now immune to judicial scrutiny and challenge.

And, although legal action against the Administrator General and the interim government will continue, South African manipulation of Namibia's legal system seems certain to strengthen the widely-held belief that basic human rights and liberties can only come with an end to South African rule and genuine independence.

It is extremely difficult to monitor politically motivated arrests and detentions in Namibia. Under South Africa's sweeping security laws, virtually any Black Namibian may be arrested and held indefinitely without recourse to the courts. Some, like Teofelus Shidjua, a Lutheran church member from the village of Onandoba, have been held for over two years without being charged with a crime and without ever appearing before a court of law. The South African army and police are not required to report the names of persons held in South African prisons nor the number of people being detained. Efforts by Namibia's Christian churches, legal groups and human rights organizations to keep track of detentions have been severely hampered by the ban on travel in the north, where most human rights abuses occur, and by intimidation of witnesses and the press by the South African government.

Nevertheless, from sources in the churches, the press and the government it is possible to confirm that the following persons were in detention as of June 1986. The actual number of detainees in South Africa-occupied Namibia is probably far higher.

Updated List of Persons Held in Detention Without Charge in Namibia as of June, 1986:

- Nathaniel Amkugo, mechanic; Erwin Fimafiku; Tobias l lime; teacher; Gabriel Ithete; Joseph Jabala; Ismael Kafuia, school principal; Charles Lutokwa; Luka Matengu; Benjamin Namke; Rev. Tomas Ndiwakalunga, pastor; Kondjeni Neghede; Wilbard Nehale; Fililemon Newayu; "Mr." Ntonda (first name unknown); Jacob Pendukeni, businessman; Teofelus Shidjua; Henok Shifeta; Erasmus Shimkongo, teacher; John Shiluwa, mine worker; Gerhard Shimwefeni, teacher; Daniel Shimwefeni; Albert Simon; Moses Tiramba; Gabriel Xaveria.

Persons Charged With Political Offenses as of June, 1986:

- Martin Akuenda, builder; Mathews Gabriel; Andreas Heita; Sagaria Namwande; Johannes Nangolo, builder; Petrus Nangombe, teacher; Salom Paulus; Andreas Tongeni.

Persons Convicted of Political Offenses as of May, 1986:

- Frans Angula, laborer; Norbert Ankome, laborer; Desiderius Ankome, teacher; Kashulu Vilho, teacher; Bernidinus Shimkongo, school principal; Elikan Shoome; Erastus Uutoni, mine worker.

ON JUSTICE:
AN ADDRESS BY DR. ABISAI SHEJAVALI

On July 13, 1986, the secretary general of the ecumenical Council of Churches in Namibia, Dr. Abisai Shejavali, delivered a sermon on justice at a public meeting in Arandis. His address offers insight into the witness being made each day by Namibian Christians in that occupied land. And it may offer insight as well into South Africa's desire to expel Dr. Shejavali and silence the voice of the church.

Today I want to speak to you about justice from the biblical point of view. In the Bible we find many witnesses that God, the Almighty and our Creator, wants us, His people, to do justice. Justice in itself implies doing what is right and good in the eyes of God. It means treating all people equally, irrespective of race, color or sex, as creatures of God in accordance with His will.

The ruler should safeguard and protect the rights of all. The poor should be protected from being exploited by the rich. In fact there is not a single accommodation or provision in the Bible where oppression, exploitation, ill-treatment are justified.

But today we see and witness that some people are occupied with this evil of oppressing and exploiting others. The evils of apartheid have prevailed in this country for a long time. And I am sorry to say that the church has not made it clear to you that apartheid is heresy; it is sin. To demand of people to call you "baas" [master] is sin. To create separate Black locations and homelands is evil. Because of apartheid we now have poor people, uneducated people, unskilled people in their own fatherland, Namibia. There are sufferings and inhuman conditions in this country caused by apartheid. The present situation of injustice in this country is an evil in the eyes of God.

It is time that we Namibians stand as one and reject this system of oppression. We must reject all ways in which we are treated as things. You are not a thing because you are Black. You are a human being; you are somebody!

God entrusted Moses with a tough struggle of liberating the Israelites from the yoke of the Egyptians. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with this instruction: "Let my people go." It was necessary for God to intervene, because the Egyptians oppressed and exploited the Israelites.

This is exactly what is going on here in Namibia. In the light of the Bible, what is meted out against the Namibians is against the will of God. Today, as a Namibian, you witness acts of brutality, torture, acts of aggression, oppression and exploitation under a system introduced by intruders from a foreign country.

Today, we Namibians witness the imposition of masters over us by the racist regime south of the border, to rule us without our say. We witness Namibians made foreigners in their own land, Namibians killed, raped, abducted, detained without trial, the disappearance of detainees in police custody, "suicide" while in police cells, the destruction of property, intimidation when grievances are made against the South African army or agents, frustration in legal matters, unemployment, poverty, hunger, and the recruitment of Namibians to be killers of their fellow Namibians.

Namibians today witness how fellow Namibians are roasted by the South African forces. For example: Titus Paulus of Amuteya, Ondonga, who was treated in Onandjokwe Hospital, and Amuteya, Ondonga, who was treated in Oshakati Hospital. To roast a human being! This is a big crime which has been committed against Namibians.

We cannot go on like this. We must reject this whole system and its evils. Moses stood up and spoke against these evils. Today we are asking the South African government to let the Namibians be free. Let Namibia be independent. Let justice and peace be restored and enjoyed by all the people in this country. Let the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 unconditionally be implemented…

Let us understand that justice is the moral standard by which God measures our human conduct. Let the riches of this country be distributed justly. Let those who work get equal salaries. Let the riches of this country be equally shared and enjoyed by all Namibians. Those who act according to the will of God are just in the eyes of God, and those who fear God will be helped to do justice.

It is a shame that in wealthy Namibia, Namibians in Katutura [Windhoek's Black ghetto] and in the so-called tribal reserves of Damaraland, Ovamboland, Kavango and elsewhere, are suffering from hunger. They have no shelter, no money to enable them to have adequate services and a better education.

I want you to know that the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) is earnestly committed to the struggle for peace and justice. We in the CCN are motivated by the Word of God as revealed in the Bible.

We want peace and justice to prevail in this country now. I categorically demand an end to killings, detention without trial and the abolition of all the draconian rules and laws in Namibia. We want and demand their end in this country with immediate effect. We demand that the South African occupation forces leave this country immediately. We demand the unconditional implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435. We demand that the ceasefire between South Africa and SWAPO be signed immediately.

Namibians are being killed especially in the north of our country. We demand an end to the genocide of our people.

We are tired of living under evil traditions perpetuated in this country against the will of God. We demand with a loud voice: South Africa, "Let our people go";
South Africa, Let the rule of justice be installed in this country;
South Africa, Let Namibia be free, let her be independent!
15-Year-Old Boy Tortured in Namibia

Portus Blasius, a fifteen-year-old schoolboy from Onhemba village in northern Namibia, suffered severe facial burns after soldiers from South Africa's occupation army forced his face against the exhaust pipe of an army vehicle. The young man told The Namibian newspaper that on June 6, 1986, about a dozen South African Defense Force soldiers arrived at a local “cuca shop” or tavern, and ordered him to open it. When Blasius explained that the owner was away and he himself had no keys, the soldiers grabbed him and swung him into the army truck.

“They took me to an unknown place, where they accused me of being a 'stupid little SWAPO' (the South West Africa Peoples Organization is waging a guerrilla war of independence against South Africa's colonial army) and asked me about SWAPO fighters. Some soldiers started to beat me while others, pulling my hair, held my face against the exhaust pipe.”

“Although I was screaming very loudly, those merciless white devils did not care—and even left me there in the bush with much pain,” Blasius recalled.

He managed to walk to a nearby house, but finding no one there, finally staggered to the home of a local businessman, John Andjamba. Andjamba rushed the injured student to the hospital and later reported the incident to the police and to Peter Kalangula, head of the South African-created tribal administration.

A spokesman for the South African army, speaking in the territorial capital, Windhoek, declined to comment on the incident, saying only that “a board of inquiry” would investigate the charges. Such investigations rarely result in prosecutions as, under South African colonial law, its troops are indemnified against legal action for “good faith” counter-insurgency operations. South African State President P.W. Botha recently halted the trial of four white soldiers accused of murdering a Namibian man, Franz Uatopa, on national security grounds.

Children Tortured, Village Terrorized by South African Army

An Anglican priest has reported that South African Defense Force soldiers terrorized the northern Namibian village of Okathitu on October 8, 1986, torturing children, assaulting and intimidating village residents at gunpoint, and stealing church money and private automobiles.

Father Andreas Iyambo, parish priest of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Okathitu, said that several South African army trucks arrived at the village on the afternoon of the eighth, near a dam where a group of children was swimming. At the sight of the soldiers, many of the children fled, but about eight youngsters failed to escape. The soldiers, among tens of thousands of South African troops illegally occupying the United Nations Trust Territory, took the children, between the ages of 14 and 16, to a nearby “cuca shop,” or tavern, and “interrogated” them with electric shocks.

But it was only in the early evening that Father Iyambo became aware of the army presence in Okathitu. He was resting in his home after attending a confirmation service with Anglican Bishop James Kauluma in the nearby town of Ruacana when two South African army vehicles approached. As he was dressing, a group of soldiers burst in and held the priest at gunpoint while others ransacked the house. They told Iyambo they were searching for “terrorists” (the government’s term for anti-colonial guerrilla fighters loyal to SWAPO, the Namibian liberation movement), and for the children who eluded them at the dam. During the course of their search, the troops discovered and removed over 2,000 rand (about $900) belonging to the church’s building fund.

Father Iyambo told a group of visiting attorneys that eight soldiers were involved in the search of his home, while others took up positions in other parts of the village. Of these eight, three were Africans and five were white, although most of the white troops had “painted themselves black,” a common practice among white soldiers operating in the northern war zone. As the soldiers left his home to return to the village, Father Iyambo recalled, “I stood outside the house and I could hear people crying.”

But the reign of terror had just begun. Throughout the evening the soldiers assaulted the villagers and plundered their belongings. Andreas Shikongo and his 17-year-old daughter, parishioners of Good Shepherd church, were both subjected to electric shocks over the course of the night. “They tortured ‘Tate’ Shikongo for a long time and he was crying,” the priest continued. “It was very terrible, people were everywhere screaming. Wherever you lived you just heard noise and people crying.”

It was 11 p.m. before the soldiers finally left Okathitu, taking with them an automobile and a truck. “But,” said Father Iyambo, “people could not sleep.”

On the following day, Iyambo went to Ruacana to report the incident to the police (who are part of South Africa’s occupation force) and to the visiting legal delegation. But on the next night, October 10, the South African army returned to Okathitu and again tortured and assaulted its residents. The villagers suspect the troops came from either the Ongandjera or Omahanene military bases, and have provided the authorities with the registration number of one of the army vehicles used during the attacks. But so far there has been no official reaction from military authorities, and the local police “are continuing their investigation.”

“This is only one instance of what is happening all the time to the people in the north of Namibia,” Father Iyambo noted. “Normally these things are not reported and nobody knows.”
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Fortunately, changing our government's attitude towards Namibia is very much on the Lutheran agenda for 1987. In addition to ongoing inter-Lutheran education, advocacy, and material aid efforts for Namibia, the ALC has declared 1987 a year for special focus on Namibia. This is an important initiative, one that deserves the support of everyone concerned about the endless violence and injustice inflicted on our Namibian brothers and sisters. In March, the three Lutheran churches will host a national three-day conference at Gustavus Adolphus College near Minneapolis to explore new ways to support Namibians in their struggle for justice. Let each of us join in these efforts to free Namibia. Together we can help make 1987 the year of Namibian liberation.

To find out more about the Free Namibia Emphasis for 1987, contact:
National Namibia Concerns
860 Emerson Place
Denver, Colorado 80218
(303) 830-2774

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A “Resurrected Church” in Namibia

A “resurrected” church in the heart of the Namibian war zone has opened its doors once again after repeated acts of desecration by the South African army. In early September, the Anglican Church of the Holy Spirit in Oshandi, northern Ovamboland, only eight miles from the Angolan border, held a special thanksgiving service to mark the event. Over 2,000 people, including the country’s leading Anglican, Bishop James Kauluma, attended the event.

Originally Holy Spirit church was left open on one side because of the hot climate. But over the years South African soldiers fighting SWAPO guerrillas used it for camping, cooking and toilet purposes. It became derelict, unfit for worship.

At the service of thanksgiving, Canon Lazaraus Haukongo preached on the “resurrected life.” The church, he said, had risen out of the ruins and destruction of war.

The new building, with four stone walls and a roof, was rebuilt by the local people themselves. “They were no longer dependent on the missionaries,” says Rev. Roger Key, personal assistant to the bishop. “They took the initiative and covered the expenses. Although there is a fear that the church may be terrorized again, they have the courage to build in the midst of war.” The parishioners now plan to build a house for the parish priest, Rev. Lazarus Hiwilepo.

The church is near the “no-go area” declared by South Africa, from which all residents have been cleared to give the army a “free-fire” zone along Namibia’s border with Angola. One of the congregants at the thanksgiving service was the Rev. Stephen Shimbole, formerly parish priest of St. Luke’s, in the border town of Epinga. Together with some members of his parish, he moved to Angola several years ago to escape intimidation by the South African armed forces. Father Shimbole rode on horseback from his new parish, called Epinga-across-the-border, to attend the service. It is a treacherous journey, and both he and his wife have been assaulted by South African soldiers in the course of these crossings. Yet, as the resurrection of Holy Spirit church demonstrates, faith and hope remain strong in the face of racism, repression and war.

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Advocacy Aids

Back issues of Dateline: Namibia may be ordered free of charge by writing Dateline: Namibia, 231 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016; or phoning (212) 696-6841. The film “A Cry for Freedom” is available from LCA synod libraries or through the Augsburg Publishing House audiovisual departments. Other resources on Namibia are available from Lutheran World Ministries, 360 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010, and National Namibia Concerns, 860 Emerson Place, Denver CO 80218.

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Psalm 126
When the day comes on which our victory will shine like a torch in the night, it will be like a dream. We will laugh and sing for joy. Then the other nations will say about us, "The Lord did great things for them." Indeed, he is doing great things for us; that is why we are happy in our suffering.

Lord, break the chains of humiliation and death, just as on the glorious morning when you were raised. Let those who weep as they sow the seeds of justice and freedom, gather the harvest of peace and reconciliation.

Those who weep as they go out as instruments of your love will come back singing with joy, as they will witness the disappearance of hate and the manifestation of your love in your world.

Psalm 133
How wonderful it is, how pleasant, to be healed of the corrosive disease of racism and separation; and to live as God's people together in harmony. The Spirit of the Lord will then fill the hearts and the minds of all the people. Nobody will be judged any more on the basis of race or colour; but all will be ruled with justice and integrity.

The war will end and the people together will rebuild the country. There will be no reference to the colour of the skin, for all will be regarded as the people of God, the people he created in his image. And this will be the beginning of what the Lord has promised—the life that never ends.

*Excerpted from Why, O Lord?, Psalms and Sermons from Namibia by the Rev. Zephania Kameeta. Why O Lord is available for $3.95 from Fortress Press, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129.

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