

**SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY STAVANGER (MHS)**

**Participation in Partnership: A Study of Contemporary Partnership in Mission, as Understood by and Practised in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, North Western Diocese**

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This paper, though it comes under the name of single author, in real sense, is a product of many different people. It is impossible to mention them all or to thank each one sufficiently. I would like therefore to collectively acknowledge with deep appreciation all their support to enhance this work.

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## ABSTRACT

The ELCT/NWD is tirelessly engaged in mission so that that all people may ultimately know and believe in God. God the owner of mission calls the church to participate in it. With misconception some people have been thinking that it is the church with its hierarchical structures and mission and mission agencies own mission.

The conviction is that participation of partnership is worthy in *missio Dei*. For that reason this research was done in order to find the facts on how the established Christian partnership participates in *missio Dei*.

*The study deal with the Participation in Partnership: A Study of Contemporary Partnership in Mission, as Understood by and Practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, North Western Diocese.* Also deal with the Biblical and foundations of Christian partnership. Further the thesis comes up with Christian partnership in praxis and showing its involvement in contemporary mission challenges.

There are reflections on Christian partnership participating in *mission Dei*. There is a discussion on the particularity of Christian partnership mainly because of its foundation in the Bible. Christian partnership is both local and global in scope; and it involves both the clergy and laity in participating in mission. Christian partnership interactions which breed involvement and interdependence remind all Christians that the Church should be a moving out servant. The opportunities found in Christian partnership make this relationship deserve credibility *missio Dei*

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AACC – All Africa Conference of Churches

ACP – Aids Control Program

AW - Auxiliary Worker in the Parish

CCT – Christian Council of Tanzania

CMS – Church Missionary Society

DKMG (NWD) – Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi

Eds – Editors

ELCA – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCT – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

ELCT/NWD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – North Western Diocese

HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency  
Syndrome

HUYAWA – Human ya Watoto (Service to Children)

IMC – International Mission Council

KEMPS – Kibeta English Medium Primary School

LIRO – Lutheran, Islam and Roman

LUCCEA – Lutheran Communion in South Africa

LWF/OCS – Lutheran World Federation/Office for Communication Services

M- Male

MNYS – Metropolitan New York Synod

MOSS – Missenye Orphans Scholarship Scheme

MUCO – Makumira University College

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

NT- New Testament

NWD – North Western Diocese

NWD/MNYS – North Western Diocese – Metropolitan New York Synod

OAU – Organization of African Unity

REA – Ruhija Evangelical Academy

Rev – Reverend (Pastor)

Transl – Translator

Tsh – Tanzania shilling

UEM – United Evangelical Mission

UMAKA – Umoja wa Mathehebu Kagera (The united Religion in Kagera Region)

USA – United State of America

VEM – Vereinigte Evangelische Mission or Vereinte Evangelische Mission

VIPs – Very Important Persons

WCC – World Council of Churches

WMC – World Mission Conference

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem and Aim of Thesis

The mission work which later resulted in the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) began in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was carried out by expatriate missionaries from several countries as well as native Tanzanian Christians. The ELCT is a nation-wide, independent church now comprised of 20 dioceses, with a membership of more than 2.5 million. The aim of the (ELCT) is “to enable people to know Jesus Christ and gain eternal life.”<sup>1</sup> In order to achieve this aim the ELCT has kept up its relationships with a number of overseas churches and missionary societies and in recent decades engaged in so-called *partnership in mission*, whereby it carries out its work together with overseas partners in areas such as evangelistic outreach, teaching, and socio-diaconal ministries.

In Tanzania the question often emerges why the so-called mission parishes have remained for a long time in need of support for their growth.<sup>2</sup> How can foreign mission and inner mission operate appropriately and satisfactorily? Further, there has also been some anxiety about how missionary ventures of the church should continue. The importance of this issue was aptly taken by Buehlmann, as a participant at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) assembly: “[t]he white man’s building in Africa has two domes, colonialism and the missions. The first of these have collapsed but not the second – it has survived. The question is, should it continue to survive and if so, in what way?”<sup>3</sup> Niwagila<sup>4</sup> found the same question so important that he quotes it too. This has been to me a point departure for series of rise important question like: If Vähäkangas<sup>5</sup> attests that in inter-church relationships mutual enabling has been a permanent feature of Christian life can there be something discovered from partnership enriching by participation in mission Dei?. Therefore: (1) Is it possible that partnership participation in God’s mission (*missio*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.elct.org/> (14-05-2008).

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Julius Mulokozi 26.03.2001, Kashozi parish and Amos Miaka 14.02.2003 Kashenye parish

<sup>3</sup> Walbert Buehlmann. *Missions on Trial*. N.Y. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979: 16.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Partnership in Participation – A theological Quest”. in Eila Helandaer and Wilson Niwagila, *Partnership and Power: A Quest for Reconstruction in Mission*, 77-139. Makumira Publications Seven. Erlangen: Verlag der.-Luth. Mission Earlangen, 1996a): 77.

<sup>5</sup> Mika Vähäkangas. Partnership as an Ideal in the Inter Church Cooperation,” in the *Role of Mission in Future of Lutheran Theology*, ed. Viggo Mortensen. Occasional Papers no.6. Center for Multireligious Studies, University of Aarhus, 2003: 163.



*Dei*) in Tanzania can enrich both (or all) parties involved in such partnership? (2) How and in what ways is it possible to work in God's "garden" in a spirit of equality, forgiveness, openness, tolerance and mutual trust? (3) What are the possible limits for participating in *missio Dei* – is it when only one of the parties is enriched through the partnership cooperation? (4) How can the Church address effectively its present challenges in mission work through partnership projects? (5) And, finally, how do those who are engaged in partnership projects motivate and understand their participation in relation to God's mission (*missio Dei*), and what is the nature of projects which they see relevantly fulfilling this motivation for partnership in mission?

It is impossible to address all these and related questions within the scope of one master thesis project. I will therefore concentrate on the last question, namely: *How is partnership in mission understood and carried out in the ELCT, and why are partnership projects defined as participation in God's mission?* It is also not possible to address this question to the ELCT as a whole. I therefore find it necessary to limit the project to one diocese, and I have chosen the North Western Diocese (NWD), to which I myself belong and have worked for five years as the parish pastor. At present partnerships exist at different levels in the NWD: (i) in congregations / parishes, (ii) institutions, (iii) districts and (iv) at the Diocesan level. More partnership are still being desired by church adherents. Here again more questions arise: How are Christians in this Diocese participating in *missio Dei* through the Christian partnership relationship? Is not true that the foundation of Christian Partnership is in the Triune God? My conviction is that Christian partnership play a role in the mission of this Triune God, namely God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Sprit who discharges the Church, congregations and all servants to his work in the ELCT/NWD. I wish to address my main research question to relevant persons at all these levels. Hence my aim is to gather relevant information from people who are engaged in organizing and running partnership projects at each of these four levels.

There are previous research in this field includes the presentation of particularly relevant material on this topic. The researcher find neither theologian nor one among the laity who has done research with an articulation on the "Participation in Partnership: A Study of Contemporary Partnership in Mission, as Understood by and Practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of

Tanzania, North Western Diocese.” The fact that little has been written is not to deny the fruits and contributions of the partnership to spiritual and material growth among Christian of the North Western Diocese. If I were to be asked why little has been written on these partnerships I would answer: First that people in the area of NWD have not yet developed the habit of documenting their history and events by writing. They are people still in the in the age of passing their history and events down from one generation to the next orally. Secondly, there is a tendency of taking partnership for granted. People feel and thinking that partnership is part of their life and that not learn how to look for a partner. Therefore some people tend not to bother much about documenting partnership issues.

Some theologian like Kabalimu<sup>6</sup> and Byalugaba<sup>7</sup> did their research, when partnership had to take root. Both wrote on the development of Christian Mission on the participation of the ELCT-North Western Diocese in Mission of God but they kept silent about Christian partnership. None of them went into detailed understanding of its implication to *mission Dei*. In addition Byalugaba’s research seems to portray mission as being only of crossing geographical borders. Niwagila<sup>8</sup> did a good work by writing much about North Western Diocese but he has only a five page sub-chapter on Christian Partnership, which is more historical than missiological oriented. Mutembei<sup>9</sup> the first General Secretary of the ELCT/NWD in his book titled *Kristo au Wamara (Jesus or idol)* published in 1993 does not accentuate partnership. Lwakatale did research on partnership but only on how partnership has been impacted by the concept of *Omukago (friendship)*. Research is important especially in this Contemporary Partnership in Mission which is full of challenge facing the Church. This research indents to fill the gap which has not been touched by previous researchers in focusing on “Participation in Partnership: A Study of Contemporary Partnership in Mission, as Understood by and Practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, North Western Diocese,”

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<sup>6</sup> Israel Kabalimu, “The Development of the Christian mission among the Bahaya of Maruku in North Western Diocese.” Diploma paper, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1980: 4-43.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Byarugaba, “Participation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania/ North Western Diocese in the Mission of God.” BD research paper, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1996: 6-52

<sup>8</sup> Wilson B. Niwagila. From *the Catacomb to a Self-governing Church*. Hamburg: Verlagan der Lottbeck, 1991: 425-429.

<sup>9</sup> Mutembei, Richard. *Kiristo au Wamara (Jesus or Idol)*. Bukoba: North Western Diocese Publisher, 1993:1-272

At each level, therefore, I wish to examine motives, goals and insights which participants in Christian partnership projects see as related to the *missio Dei* concept. The practices, values, and characteristics of Christian Partnership will be examined and evaluated according to the Willigen re-discovery and understanding of *missio Dei* as well as in light of recent missiological statements pertaining to *partnership in mission*. For instance, partners interactions in reading the Bible, theologizing, relating each other as young and old people, communicating as a rich and poor, and as strong or weak in faith were analyzed.

I also intend to include another – the fifth – group of informants, consisting of (v) expatriate missionaries, non-Christians (Muslims), and non-Lutheran Christians who are either engaged in or benefit from the partnership projects. These I was interviewed with a view to identifying their understanding of and role in Christian partnership.

The aim of thesis is to research how contemporary partnership in Christian mission is understood by and practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), North Western Diocese. Eyes were not shut on the shortcomings detected in the course of this study. It was my delight to know if this Christian Partnership entertains ecumenism, and equally opens doors for women, men, youth and children to participate in God's mission. In doing this I was able to find how this Partnership promotes the process of participating in contemporary partnership in Christian mission. The researcher's hope is that partnership bears parity for all people in participating in *missio Dei*.

## **1.2 Scope and Limitations**

This study will be carried out within the discipline of Missiology, as *partnership in mission* and *missio Dei* are central concepts in missiology and missiological reflection, as well as for the understanding of the concept *missional church*. As already stated, partnership in mission will be

studied within the ELCT/NWD.<sup>10</sup> I aim at gathering information from informants on the four following levels in the NWD:

(i) In the North B district, this established partnership in 1986 with the district of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany.

(ii) In the Ruhija Evangelical Academy (REA), this established partnership in 1967 with the Herborn district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany.

(iii) In the Kanisa kuu (Cathedral), this established partnership in 2000 with the Saint Peter's Parish Lutheran Church of New York, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (USA).

(iv) In the North Western Diocese, this established partnership in 1991 with the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (USA).

These four partnerships represent other partnerships respectively, from the so called mission parishes; on congregational, parish, institutional, district and diocesan level. These four were chosen because they are active in partnership communications and give the real picture of partnership operations in the NWD.

The researcher's eyes were wide open on Christian partnerships involving international partners because they have the flavor of both local and global Church. These partnerships signify the universality of salvation and the indivisibility of the reign of God. This focus was on what was done and what is being done within the North Western Diocese in collaboration with these international partners.

Since there are also expatriate missionaries, as well as non-Christians (Muslims), and non-Lutheran Christians who are engaged in or benefit from the partnership projects some of these were also interviewed with a view to mapping their understanding of and role in Christian partnership / *udugu* (in Swahili).

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix two is showing the location of the ELCT/NWD

### 1.3 Methodological Approaches and Use of Sources

The thesis will base its research on a combination of literature study, study of relevant ELCT church documents and correspondence pertaining to partnership and mission, and qualitative interviews with some 32 informants. The literature study is needed in order to establish a theologically adequate definition of the main concepts addressed in the thesis, namely *missio Dei*, *partnership in mission*, and *missional church*. The study of relevant ELCT church documents and correspondence aims at identifying the official views of the ELCT and its partners with regard to the understanding and practice of partnership in mission. Published and unpublished material will be obtained from the ELCT headquarters and the libraries of the School of Mission and Theology (MHS) and Makumira University College (MUCO) Tanzania. Finally, the aim of the field work is to gather information from and map the understanding of and experiences of partnership in mission among informants who are engaged in partnership projects or benefit from these.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.4 Definition of Terms

**Christian partnership** is a term applied to relationships between Christian partners characterized by reciprocal, mutual cooperation for the achievement of their specific goal. The partnership is bilateral and is entered freely but under well established Christian terms. In partnership there is witnessing to God, serving one another in love and humility, and offering to another the unique talents endowed to Christians. Such partnership may comprise of Christian partnership between national groups as well as partnership between national churches and

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<sup>11</sup>When this material has been gathered in interviews, documented by tape recordings, it has been transcribed, presented and analyzed with a view to understanding how theories and practices of partnership in mission relate to current missiological understanding of the concepts partnership in mission, *missio Dei*, and missional church. Except for the identity of employed workers in the church the identity of other informants will not be disclosed. Hence the project aims at anonymization of the other informants, and their identity will only be known by myself. During the project period the audio tape recordings will be kept in a locked room, accessible only to myself. Likewise electronic transcripts will be made on my personal computer, be accessible only to myself, will be stored on a USB-pen, and kept in a locked room accessible only to myself. By the end of the project period (June 15, 2009) the entire interview (audio tape) recordings and (electronic) transcripts will be deleted / destroyed

churches overseas. In this project the focus will be on partnership carried out in Tanzania between the ELCT and its overseas church partners.

**Missio Dei** is the Latin term used in classical doctrine of God's mission means "the sending "and *Dei* means by through God. Mission of God by and through him. *Missio Dei* denote "God's self revelation as the One who loves the world, God involvement I and within the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in the church is privileged to participate."<sup>12</sup>

**Participation** is the term used to mean commitment to proclamation, service, repentance and fellowship.<sup>13</sup>

The term mission will be used in this thesis because the first theological effort in defining what is mission is first done under the concept of the Latin term *missio Dei*. Therefore, the term *missio Dei* carried the notion of the beginning of good understanding of mission. This is what makes the Willingen Conference 1952 famous since the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>. *Missio Dei* and (mission singular) may also be used interchangeably.

**Missions:** Davies' definition of missions, which the researcher is of the same opinion, states that mission are "particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs of participation in *missio Dei*,"<sup>15</sup> They are missionary ventures of the church born out of God's inspiration. Therefore, the researcher recognizes all missions, activities ventured by the church according to the will of God as visible signs of participating in *missio Dei*.

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<sup>12</sup> David J. Bosch. *Transformation Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. N.Y. Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1991: 10.

<sup>13</sup> Eila Helander. "A Sociological Approach to Partnership Relations within the Context of Missions" in Eila Helander and Wilson Niwagila, *Partnership and Power: A Quest for Reconstruction in Mission*, 16-76. Makumira Publication 7. Erlangen: Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission Erlangen, 1996: 49.

<sup>14</sup> Tormod Engelsen. "The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in Europe Churches and Missiology", in *International Review of Mission* vol. XCII no. 367, 481 -495. 2003: 482.

<sup>15</sup> W. D. Davies. *Worship and Mission*. London: SM Press, 1966: 33.

**Mission parishes:** According to this study “mission parishes”<sup>16</sup> are the not yet self-reliant parishes. These can neither support themselves sufficiently in finance nor in personnel. They need support in their budgets and programs

### 1.5 Structure of Thesis

“Partnership in mission” appears in the title of this thesis project and will be the main focus of my thesis. I will first explore how the term has been understood and is presently understood theologically. This will be done in order to clarify its relation to two other concepts, namely “*missio Dei*” and “missional church”. Based on this theological investigation I wish to study how partnership in mission (*udugu*) is understood and practiced by four groups of people who are engaged in or experience the effects of such partnership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese, as well as some expatriate missionaries, non-Lutheran Tanzanian Christians, and non-Christian (Muslim) Tanzanians who either are engaged in and / or benefit from partnership projects. The aim is to identify among all my informants how they define *udugu* / *partnership* and their roles therein, and what they see as the benefits or negative sides of such partnership.

In the following chapters the researcher wants to lay foundation in missiological perspective as a principle investigation on partnership in *missio Dei* and to use as motivation founding. The first chapter is the introduction of thesis: Statement of the Problem, purpose, delimitations, sources and methodological considerations, definitions and structure of the thesis. Chapter two is partnership in mission: Missiological perspectives and related concept. Partnership in mission as identified and experienced in the ELCT North Western Diocese: Presentation of findings in interviews found in third chapter. Chapter four deal at the understanding and practice of partnership in mission in the ELCT North Western Diocese. Reflection on contemporary partnership mission in the ELCT North Western Diocese found in chapter five. Both chapters

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<sup>16</sup> The use this term “mission parishes” is officially and known in ELCT but it conceals and misleads the meaning of mission. In the real sense all parishes all over the world are mission parishes. All parishes are fields for mission work.

four and five bear the presentation and discussion on field results. Chapter six is conclusion and some remarks.

## **2.0 THE CONCEPTS OF PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIOLOGICAL PASPECTIVE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the biblical and theological foundations for a Christian understanding of partnership in missions. On this basis I will explain the idea of partnership and ideal forms of partnership within Christian missions

*Firstly*, regarding the biblical foundations of partnership I include three concepts, namely (1) God's creation of man and woman in his own image, (2) the "I and You" relationship, and (3) *koinonia* as a pertinent expression of Christian life together as a basis for partnership in human life and Christian missions (2.2).

*Secondly*, regarding the theological foundations of partnership I will focus on partnership in a threefold understanding, and on God's re-establishment of divine-human relationship (2.3). These two foundations are important because partnership may develop according to God's intention.

*Thirdly*, I will make use of what I have established in 2.2 and 2.3 to give an account of partnership as such, and of models of partnership between the ELCT and its western partners (2.4).

## **2.2 Three Biblical Foundations for Partnership in Human Life and Christian Mission**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The ideas of partnership and concepts or expressions relevant to partnership are found in a number of biblical texts. I have chosen three such concepts. It is necessary to explain these if one wishes to have a biblical understanding of Christian relationships and how these may be used as basis for developing partnership. I have chosen to focus on three concepts because I consider them to be the most fundamental for Christians understanding of partnership. The reasons why I



find these three to be fundamental are the following they are reflecting equal worth and dignity of the partners.

### **2.2.1 God's Creation of Man and Woman in His Own Image, and to be Part of His Creative Work**

God himself took the initiative to create man and woman in his own image, to be like him and resemble him (Gen 1:26-31). Also they were created with the purpose of working together with him in his creation (1:28). The two chief points articulated by Niwagila<sup>17</sup> on God's concern point to partnership in this story of man's creation and therefore deserve our attention.

First, the expression "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1:26) is in plural and shows that God was not alone. There was a heavenly host. In Old Testament Exegesis and Christian dogmatic this heavenly host has been taken to mean the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. [Footnote here for reference to literature!] By this triune God man and woman were created in order to show their love and loyalty. But in the continuous creation the triune God involved the human beings to participate (1:28). This statement does not only reveal that the image of God into which man and woman were created is an image which implies community and togetherness. As the Trinity is together in the act of creation, so human beings participate with them in the continued task of creation and stewardship which God bestows on human beings. Thus in his work God wishes human beings to participate in his creation by procreation, by keeping and maintaining his entire creation, and by keeping peace and justice. Hence human life is meant to be a life in partnership with God, by full participation in God's Creation, and by obediently following God's instructions. Hence man and woman are accountable both to God and to each other, as we for instance see in the story of the fall (Gen 3) and the story about Cain and Abel (Gen 4, 1-15). This combination of partnership and accountability not only lies at the basis of human co-creation and human stewardship of creation in general. We must also understand it as lying as a foundation for Christian life as it is lived out in faith, worship and service to others.

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<sup>17</sup> Niwagila 1996a, 94.

### 2.2.2 The “I and You” Relationship as a Basis for Understanding Christian Partnership

We have noted the intimate relationship between the persons of the Godhead in the story of Creation, their common work in creation and continued creation, and human participation in the work of God. And we have seen the accountability of human beings to God in their participation in God’s continuous creation. Further, we have observed that the creation stories (including Gen 2) presuppose that there exists an “I and You” relationship not only in the Godhead but also between God and human beings. This must be kept in mind when we read how the New Testament views the divine-human relationship and partnership.

According to the Gospel of John Jesus told his disciples that he was not going to leave them desolate after his ascension. The Holy Spirit was to come upon them. On that day they were to understand “that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you.” (Jn14:20). Here we see both the intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father, and between the disciples and Jesus. In Jesus’ prayer we also learn of the “I and you” partnership relation. Jesus prayed that all believers be one just as he and the Father are one, and that they were to enjoy the same relationship as he enjoyed with the Father: “I in them and thou in me...” (Jn 17:23).

As for Jn 17:23 arguments can be raised in regard to how the use of the pronoun ‘you’ is to be understood. Is its reference to God or to human beings? According to Buber,<sup>18</sup> and as we find in older translations of the fourth Gospel, which makes use of “Thou”, the pronoun “Thou” immediately brings to mind God, but “you” is used more as to a friend. However, in contemporary English one uses *you* instead of Thou. Nevertheless, from the “I and Thou” ( I for Jesus and *Thou* for God), as used in the (older translations of) the fourth Gospel, we learn the following: (i) that there is genuine, direct and intimate relationship, and (ii) that “you” with small “y” means that human beings are associated in the relationship which exists in “I and Thou”. Further, (iii) that the relationship between human beings has its origin in the “I and Thou” relationship. Buber’s<sup>19</sup> essential concern is to show the importance of the intimate relationship to God with relation to one’s fellow human beings. In analogy with the divine-human relationship expressed in creation we must therefore see the relationship which Christ established in his church. The fellowship of all believers is at the same time an intimate relationship with the triune

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<sup>18</sup>Martin Buber, (Buber differentiates the two: the German *du* which is used for personal friends to mean *you*, and *Thou* which is used to mean *You* – God). 1970, 14-28

<sup>19</sup> Buber 1970, 171.

God. This concern is therefore something one must strive to understand and put into practice within Christian partnership. The mission which Jesus calls his followers to be part of, as it is expressed in Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16,14-18, Luke 24,44-49, and John 20,21, is a participation in God's mission to save humankind, which Jesus was sent to effectuate. In this mission the church and its members enjoy not only a fellowship between themselves but also an intimate relation with the triune God.

Hence, the partnership which is sought in Christian mission is built on the 'I and you' relationship as we have seen it in the fourth Gospel. The divine relationship ('I and Thou') associates the divine-human relationship ('I and you'). This relationship carries the qualities of bridging the denominational and cultural differences so as to establish new relationship. It has qualities of readiness to listen and dialogue. The "and Thou" incarnated in "you" seeks to make the secular "you" holy, just as the "I and Thou" are holy. There is no closer relationship than what is expressed in the "I and you" relationship, since it presupposes divine participation in the continued mission of God carried out by human beings. This also means that it has to be emulated by Christian partners. Jesus also added that through such a relationship, which is permeated by love, the world may understand that the Father has sent him (Jn13:35), thus revealing the mission of the church as God's ongoing mission.

### **2.2.3 Koinonia: The Life of Christian Partners**

Warren<sup>20</sup> is convinced that the Greek word *koinonia* usually has some flavor of intimate fellowship or partnership. He also insists that basically *koinonia* means having a share and stands for participation. We shall briefly look at some biblical passages in which the word *koinonia* appears, and which refer to life of the Christian partners.

- (i) In Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13 we see the partnership of Christians being made explicit in the taking of collections for the needy. Local churches following this pattern and doing like think globally in the mission of God. They recognize the weaknesses of others not only in their home congregations but also outside their congregational borders.

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<sup>20</sup> Max Warren. *Partnership*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1955: 48.

- (ii) In 1 Corinthians 1:9 the faithful God in Christ is calling Christians into his *koinonia*. Our fellowship with Christ is based on the understanding of and determined by being called; we belong to him until his second coming.
- (iii) In I Corinthians 10:16 all Christian believers are regarded as participants in the cup of blessing. In the Holy Communion they are in *koinonia* – the divine partnership. The partakers are made conscious of their togetherness. They identify themselves with their Lord and with one another by recognizing what the death of Christ means to them.<sup>21</sup> It is both a vertical and a horizontal relationship. This was also understood by the first believers (Acts 2:41-42; 4:32-32). Sharing the Holy Communion is both an act of worship in Christian life but also a basis for ministry of the believers in the world.<sup>22</sup> In line with this *diatonic* in the Orthodox Church is understood to be ‘the liturgy after the liturgy’.
- (iv) 2 Corinthians 13:14 shows that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ comes and manifests the love of God to us, and the power of the Holy Spirit binds us in fellowship – in partnership. Being in this fellowship is participating in the Holy Spirit who empowers Christian partners in the *missio Dei*.
- (v) Galatians 2:9 and Philippians 1:5 both emphasize on partnership in the sharing of the Good News. All Christians are called, and at the same time commissioned to proclaim Good News to others. This is possible because they all preach one Gospel, one baptism and one faith in Jesus Christ the Savior.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, partnership can be interpreted as the communion in the service of the Good News.

## 2.3 Theological Foundations of Partnership in Mission

### 2.3.1 Partnership in a Threefold Understanding

In our day-to-day life Christian partnership is significant not only because it is convenient and desired for our social life but also because this partnership bears in itself the creative and redemptive purpose of God. This is the reason Warren<sup>24</sup> has a threefold understanding of

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<sup>21</sup>Samuel Oyinloye Abogunrin. *Fist letter of Paul to the Corinthians*. Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1988: 106-107.

<sup>22</sup>Kilgallen 1987, 89.

<sup>23</sup>Luther 1963, 104.

<sup>24</sup>Max Warren. *Partnership*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1955: 35.

partnership. First, partnership is taken as an idea related to the very nature of God. God as Trinitarian ONE is a partner. Second, partnership has always much to do with God's relationship with humankind in general. God seeks man to be his partner. Third, partnership indicates the genuine relationship between human beings and their fellow human beings. The true partnership between one Christian and the other originates from God himself, and in this partnership they are called to serve the other, be he or she a Christian or not.

### **2.3.2 God's Re- establishment of Relationship**

God's intension of re-establishing the broken relationship, the partnership, is seen soon after the fall (Gen.3). His intentions are seen in connection with his choice of Abraham to become a blessing for the many (Gen 12) and by choosing Israel to be a holy people and a kingly priesthood, whereby Israel were called to a holy life, and to bring God's blessing to everyone (Ex 19:6). His zeal became definite in his becoming flesh and dwelling among his people (Jn 1:1-18; Phil. 2:1-11). The incarnation brought man into a new age of fellowship and a new awareness of his relationship to God and to the entire creation. By his dwelling among people, Christians have become a holy people and a kingly priesthood (1 Pet 2:5.9f). They have been given a new life style to follow: humility, humbleness and obedience. It is the humility, humble and obedience of God in Christ that makes the Church great. The greatness of the virtue of love and partnership and the purpose of the incarnation was to win back the relationship in which people are called to witness and to serve.<sup>25</sup> Partnership is grounded in this relationship, re-established as it was by God through Christ.

The Theology of the Cross opens up a new understanding of realistic partnership. In this partnership we experience a reconciled Christian community practicing justice and exercising love. No matter whom or from where, which tribe or nation, our equality in this theology is that all of us come together at the cross to receive the forgiveness of sins. We cannot go to the cross divided, we need to go as people who share the Good News.

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<sup>25</sup> Niwagila 1996a.97.

## 2.4 The Idea and Forms of Partnership

### 2.4.1 How is the Idea of Partnership to be Understood

In seeking the foundation of Christian partnership it is necessary to consider the basic meaning of the word “partner” first. Warren<sup>26</sup> is of the opinion that the word *partner* appears to have originated in an old Anglo-French legal term, *parcener*, which denoted coheirship. The idea which is drawn quickly from this concept of *parcener* is that there is someone who is giving something to others which has to be jointly inherited by them. Coheirs are neither the source nor the original owners of all that they have. It is in this sense that Paul likens Christians with children of God who are fellow heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

Niwagila<sup>27</sup> has a succinct explanation of the word partnership, namely that it derives from the Latin words *pars* (noun) and *partiri* (verb), the latter meaning sharing something with somebody, and that in the Middle Age the Latin word *partitionarius* meant participant. He goes on to suggest that beside in business affairs the word has been used by some groups of Christians to mean the intimate relationship they basically seek. It neither means gaining material profits from each other nor do they need to work together as competitors but the way as Christians are committed to enabling one another. The danger of seeking profit, and working as competitors, both breed superiority complexes.

The Revised Standard Version Bible translates *koinonia* as partnership (Philippians 1:5). There are some theologians who prefer using the terms *koinonia* and companionship to partnership.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, some theologians like Bishop Buberwa and Hamurungi use the terms companionship and partnership interchangeably although they know their denotative and connotative difference in meaning.<sup>29</sup> The use of the term companionship by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) can be seen, for instance in The Division for Global Mission’s campaign which was launched in 1990 to establish partnership with other churches around the world. The campaign was named the Companion Synods Program.<sup>30</sup> Close to this the

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<sup>26</sup> Warren 1955, 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Niwagila 1996a, 82-83.

<sup>28</sup> Niwagila 1996a, 87-91.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Bishop Buberwa, 31.7.2008, Bukoba; Jonathan Hamurungi, 29.7.2008 REA

<sup>30</sup> Helander 1996 1996, 25.

official covenant<sup>31</sup> which was made between the (ELCT) NWD and the Metropolitan New York Synod has the heading: Companion Covenant. It is attested that the term ‘companion’ is mostly used by Americans (USA) and ‘partnership’ by Europeans.<sup>32</sup>

During my interview with Niwagila he was critical about Bishop Buthelezi who advocates the term *koinonia* to be used instead of partnership. Niwagila is of the opinion that *koinonia* is the *result* of partnership, meaning that *koinonia* grows out of partnership. Therefore, according to Niwagila, and unlike Buthelezi, *koinonia* cannot be used in place of partnership. I do not find, however, that the two contradict each other. Rather I see that what is meant that, there is no partnership without *koinonia*, and that *koinonia* is life experienced within partnership. The two are both needed in order to give an adequate expression of what it means when we talk of engaging in mission together. As we have already seen above, the New Testament holds that the Christian church is a *koinonia* – a fellowship of believers. In carrying out God’s mission the Christian believers partake in a partnership, and in this partnership experience what *koinonia* means, namely a partnership and community with the triune God and with one another in his service.

Inspired by good intentions in partnership there have been some voices, like that of Mote, which call for naming this relationship participation [in God’s mission] instead of partnership.<sup>33</sup> Mote prefers the term participation to partnership simply because organizational structures of partnership have been overweighed by Westerners. To this I respond: Can only a change of the name ‘partnership’ to that of ‘participation’ correct organizational structures? I think it has more to do with one’s attitudes when entering and carrying out partnership. As also Vähäkangas puts it: [P]artnership and participation seem to point the same direction; without participation there cannot be partnership. Participation, in turn, expects that there are parties.<sup>34</sup> I agree with Niwagila that biblically partnership is laid out from the beginning of the Bible, when God created man and woman in his own image (Gen 1, 2); further, that companionship is seen

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<sup>31</sup> The covenant was signed in agreement by the Bishops of the churches as it is seen in Appendix One.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Dr Anthea Bethge 29.7.2008

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Dr Niwagila, 26.7.2008

<sup>34</sup> Vähäkangas 2003, 167.

between the travelers on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-29); and finally, that participation is only one necessary ingredient in the mutually influencing pair of partnership and companionship.

From the biblical point view I do not find any shortcomings in using the term partnership. Normally, some difficulties between partners are caused by human weakness such as partners not being fully involved or not transparent, in seeking self interests, in inferiority or superiority complexes. Additionally one may find that there might be no commitment in accountability that is responsibility and liability to each other. There might be also be other shortcomings, problems and mistakes in the carrying out of partnership but all these can be solved and corrected without a necessity to change the name of the relationship – partnership.

Misunderstandings may also arise from partners' different cultural behaviors and understanding of some aspects in partnering. The following elaboration on how partners give each other gifts will make this point clear: To many people in the area of NWD public exposure of what someone has received as a gift from his or her partner is regarded as a humiliation or a crime. For many Westerners exposing what one has been given as a gift is a sign of gratitude. Today, a few Christians with Western influence in the NWD have emulated that habit of exposing what is given as a gift. Even in these matters solving problems among Christian partners does not call for a new term for describing their relationship but demands searching for a good understanding of a partner's customs and culture so as not to destroy partnering and the partnership itself. Hence the key lies in how one understands and interprets the nature of partnership.

A good example of how a better understanding can promote the true nature of a concept can be found in the new understanding of term "mission" developed at the IMC conference at Willingen-Germany in 1952. The correct understanding of mission did not call for the replacement of the term itself but for a redefinition of what it means, such as it was re-discovered by the conference.

Vähäkängas also holds this view, namely that for the idea itself there is no need for creating a new word other than 'partnership', because partnership is a term which already has a basic meaning which can serve the enterprise well, and because it is already used world-widely in



interchurch work.<sup>35</sup> Thus the contributions to interpreting the term theologically that already have been given do not require a replacement of the word partnership. Rather the need is to understand what is needed in partnership. The more Christians live together as partners the more ways are revealed to them of how to live a better life in partnership than before.

#### **2.4.2 Models of Partnership with Westerner Partners in Tanzania**

The Dioceses within ELCT – the NWD being one of them – have experienced three models of partnership. Neither of these are economical or business oriented. The main agents participating in this partnership are the ELCT and the Western Church and Mission agencies. Helander with Niwagila describe these three models as follows:<sup>36</sup>

- (i) *Non- Western church working with Western churches through mission agencies.* In this model mission agencies act as the go-between on a bilateral basis. This partnership model has its roots in the history of the foreign missionary work in the ELCT. For example, it was the Bethel mission, a German missionary organization, which first operated in the areas of ELCT/NWD. The Bethel at home had neither its own parishes nor districts with parishes and districts in the NWD. This means that Christians in the parishes of Germany knew each other through the Bethel mission, which served as an agent. In this relationship model Christians in the ELCT/NWD reckoned the Bethel missionaries as masters and themselves as people who only worked for them. The best relationship which is now sought in the Christian partnership, however, is to work (together) *with*; not to work *for*, such as may be found in a children-father relationship, where children are both dependent on and work for the father. The problem of this model was that it carries the image of paternalism.

*Mission agencies changed from the idea of ownership into the idea of sharing.* The idea here was to work together on agreed policy and organization. The weakness in this model was seen to be in its coordination. Mission agencies understood their role as giving service to a particular church instead of serving together with it. This model bred a donor-

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<sup>35</sup> Vahakangas 2003, 166.

<sup>36</sup> Helander 1996, 12-14.

recipient mentality, which is an enemy of independence, interdependence and self-reliance.

(iii) *The third model is fully developed partnership.* In this model the established relationship between churches does not involve the consultation of mission agencies. Churches contact each other directly. In NWD direct partnership contact has been made not only at the diocesan level but also at congregation, parish and district level. Matters pertaining to partnership *per se* in the NWD congregations, parish and districts do not operate through any mission organization.

The commencing of these models partnerships seemed to be a problem to the leadership of Diocese. This was partly because some of the so called influential people in the partnerships tended to think and act as if the partnership in their parishes was directed and governed by themselves. Most of the so called influential people are ones who were closely involved in the first decisions of initiating partnerships or who were the first delegated to go to their partners abroad.<sup>37</sup> The remedy to this was the initiation of partnership committees and the General Secretary's intervention.

On other side some administrations in high authority positions were afraid that the establishment of partnership in the congregations, parishes, institutions and districts could diminish their authority. Some partner parishes, for example, that received considerable amounts of money and their material things direct from their affluent partner ran their offices and set their own plans as self-sufficient parishes. They did not see the need for having any authorities above themselves.<sup>38</sup> Later these partnerships were positively understood and accepted for what they were, and still are of a great help not only in carrying out church administration and also in making the work easier in the implementation of church programs.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Rev. Isaac Nsibu 25.7.2008

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Rev. Isaac Nsibu 25.7.2008

### 2.4.3 Partnership in Form of Exchange

From the North Western Diocese perspective partnership has been developed by four different models. For identifying the first two models I have borrowed Helander's<sup>39</sup> terms of classification.

*The first* is the “Balanced Reciprocity Partnership.” In this model partners exchange what they have materially. The equality and respect in the partnership depends on the flow of material things between them. As a result a partner who gives less lessens his or respect.

*The second* is the “Generalized Reciprocity Partnership”. In this model the exchange of resources is not as important as the feeling of belonging together – the interdependence. How good is it to have such a partnership? Material things given to or received from a fellow partner are not tabled for discussion otherwise it is an offence and a humiliation to the receiver.<sup>40</sup> When material things are given or received and are brought up for discussion then it is neither for displaying one's weakness nor strength. Rather its nature is that that the weak and the strong need each other as they participate in the *missio Dei* – rich and poor alike. These partners can be described as being both rich and poor. They are rich because they have each other, but they are poor because they need each other.

*The third* is the “Shield or Protect Partnership.” Partners in this model seek protection. The idea is that a partner anticipates one time to be found in trouble or conflict with his adversaries. For this reason one enters into partnership as a shield in time of harm.

*The fourth* model is partnership understood in the concept of *Omukago* (*friendships*). Rev. Lwakatale explained that *udugu*/ partnership is easy to use by the people in North Western Diocese. They use the word ‘*Omukago*’ (*friendships*) in the language of the people in Luhaya. He clarified that *Omukago* (*friendships*) is a traditional brother/sisterhood practiced in the area of North Western Diocese, where it is highly respected. He confirmed that such an *Omukago* (*friendships*) can be entered by all: women, men, children, poor or rich regardless of their

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<sup>39</sup> Helander's 1996, 66-68.

<sup>40</sup>Lwakatale, Phinias, Pastor, 15.7.2008

faiths.<sup>41</sup>

Rev, Lwankomezi insist on partnership according to the *Omukago (friendships)* concept for several reasons: Friends maintain their individuality yet each friend shares in the life of the others. They love, respect and tell the truth to one another. Their relationship is accepted by their family members, neighbors and the whole community. Friends do not enter *Omukago (friendships)* on a material basis but based on love. This model in *Omukago (friendships)* concept will help the understanding of the partnership in Mission in the ELCT/NWD (4.2), because is linked in the language of people (Luhaya) in the area of ELCT/NWD.

## 2.5 Intermediate conclusion

As we have seen above God himself has made it possible for all human beings to found relationships. In these relationships partnerships may develop. If partnerships are to be developed according to God's intention they must be of a nature which reflects that all human beings are equally created in the image of God. Thus human partnerships should reflect the equal worth and dignity of the partners. Hence in relationships as well as in partnerships mutual accountability is important. The "I" stands responsible to a "You", and vice versa. In analogy with creation the church is established as a fellowship of believers who are linked to one another and to God. Thus Christians, as followers of Jesus, are equally involved in a "I and You" relationship, involving partnership, since God himself seeks man and woman to be his partners in carrying out his mission. Thus true partnership between one Christian and another originates from God himself. As long as God's love and salvation has no boundaries it is meant to be for all people. In communicating salvation and in serving other people Christians are therefore partaking in God's mission. They are accountable to him and to one another for how they behave, interact and work.

We have also seen how the idea of Christian partnership has been understood in the context of Tanzania and has been carried out through different models. Not all these models reflect the equal worth of the partners. Hence it is important to develop a model or models of partnership which reflect this common worth. In the NWS of the ELCT I have identified four models which

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<sup>41</sup> Lwakatale , Phinias, Pastor, 15.7.2008

are in operation. In the following I shall further investigate how these models operate and are understood by people in different contexts who are affected by them.

### **3.0 PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION AS IDENTIFIED AND EXPERIENCED IN NWD**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In order to understand how partnership in mission is understood and experienced in the ELCT/NWD it is necessary first to explain how it first started and since developed. Then I will relate how it is organized and works presently, thus presenting the nature of partnership in the ELCT/NWD

#### **3.2 The Beginning of Partnership and Development in ELCT/NWD**

Christian partnership began in the 1970s when the desire for direct personal involvement and interaction with people of other cultures and countries grew. There was a feeling that concerning “[c]ontacts between churches established only through WCC, the LWF or mission agencies, one runs the risk that the members of local congregations do not receive sufficient information or any token of the life of congregation within various sister churches.”<sup>42</sup> Direct contacts with partners were accelerated by advanced technology, which made communication simple.<sup>43</sup> For instance, from the post office in Bukoba, a town located in the NWD a person could easily make a call to a friend abroad and tell him what is happening in his home congregation. Another example is that a flight between NWD and Europe which used to take three days could be made in ten hours only.<sup>44</sup> The formal way of making contacts between the NWD and Christians of other churches broad through mission societies or agencies had begun to be outdated.

The initiation of partnership relationships began by personal connections to a partner parish or church through people who came to NWD as missionaries or visitors. Contacts were also made through NWD Christians who had come back from their studies or official visits abroad. It is in this way the partnership between the parishes of Butainamwa and Ryds (Linköping-Sweden) was started said Emanuel Kahigwa who had been in Sweden for a year.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> ELCT/NWD- Memo Regarding Friendship Relations between the Congregations of the Church of Sweden and those of Afro-Asia Sister Church, 30.6.1971.

<sup>43</sup> Helander 1996, 14-15.

<sup>44</sup> Kabyemela 26.6.2008

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Emanuel Kahigwa, pastor 7.7.2008.

When the request for forming a partnership was put before the congregants it was accepted but with different interests and expectations. Some Christians looked forward to enriching one another spiritually. Others focused on economical and financial or project aid matters. The Diocesan partnership committee was against building partnership on a financial basis since this would kill the self-reliant spirit among Christians.<sup>46</sup> The first Diocesan partnership committee, which was made up by six members held its first meeting on March the 10th 1973. Its chairperson was Rev. Christian Lutahakana and the General Secretary of the Diocese was one of its member's<sup>47</sup> committee council.

Some congregants' interests were in reviving and maintaining contact with foreign missionaries abroad, from whom they had received the Good News.<sup>48</sup> Many others hoped to have a share of the affluence of West, and some hoped for a chance to travel abroad.<sup>49</sup> This was experienced in a testimony by a person at an evangelism open-air meeting.<sup>50</sup> Also it was emphasized by an evangelist in a fellowship meeting in the North B district of the ELCT/NWD who stood up giving testimony and witnessing to Christ including a thanksgiving to God for himself being of the delegates to visit Germany.<sup>51</sup>

When Western Christian took the initiative of asking for a partnership with the NWD, the leadership of the Diocese reacted seeking a possible partner district or parish. This is how the partnership between how the North B district and the District of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg of the Evangelical Lutheran church of Germany was founded in 1986.<sup>52</sup> The selection of a district or parish to have a partner from overseas was done carefully by seeking advices and involving committees in the respective parishes, institutions and districts. Nsibu says that it was a time for the concerned committees to deliberate on questions like: On what or whom are we building our

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<sup>46</sup> KKKT/DKMG-Kamati ya Urafiki wa sharika na Sharika katika Sharika za DMS, CSM, VEM na Sharika za Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi, 10.3.1973, Bukoba. (ELCT/NWD-Friendship committee of the Parishes and the Parishes of the DMS, CSM, VEM and the Parishes of the ELCT/NWD 10.3. 1973 Bukoba.)

<sup>47</sup> KKKT/DKMG-Kamati ya Urafiki wa sharika na Sharika katika Sharika za DMS, CSM, VEM na Sharika za Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi, 10.3.1973, Bukoba. (ELCT/NWD-Friendship committee of the Parishes and the Parishes of the DMS, CSM, VEM and the Parishes of the ELCT/NWD 10.3. 1973 Bukoba.)

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Naomi Kanyonyi 7.7.2008

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Jason Kagisa 4.7.2008

<sup>50</sup> Testimony from Julius Mulokozi 15.7.2008

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Wilson Wilberd 24. 7.2008

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Christian Sindano 5.7.2008

Partnership? What are we seeking to achieve in Partnership? Will the differences in our so called people of the two thirds World, traditions and culture allow sincere partnership to grow?<sup>53</sup> As a result of these deliberations there were formulated some clear goals on behalf of the congregation

The five goals in the four examples of partnership I have concentrated on can be summed up as follows: (i) *to awaken and enrich each other spiritually*. Revival and fellowship groups were especially of the idea that there should be enough time for reading the Bible, praying together, giving testimonies and witnessing to Christ with their partners. People were optimistic in this goal hoping that all Europeans were spiritual and pious people because the first foreign missionaries to bring the Gospel to the present NWD and who came from Europe. (ii) *To do mission work as a response to the great Commission (Mt.28:16-26)*. This goal was formulated by European visitors who came to the NWD, crying because their young people at home neglected going to churches. As a result churches in Europe had continually been left with people of mature years only. This was a challenge to partners in the NWD who must first look after their own young people in the church, and if possible go to their fellow partners for mission work. (iii) *To experience the worldwide Church*. The awareness of the church as a universal Catholic takes roots in this way. (iv) *To have more profound understanding of Western culture*. This embraced all the good things people in the NWD attributed to Western religion and culture. What they found attractive were such things spirituality, good education, literature, punctuality, marriage, neatness, language and the courage that made them willing to make long journeys to Africa.<sup>54</sup> (iv) *To raise prophetic voice on economical issues*. The Christians in NWD who grow and sell coffee to consumers were optimistic that through their partners they could influence the coffee traders at the world market so that their coffee could get a good price. (iv) *To enrich each other educationally*. This goal is particularly sought by institutions, and its implementation is normally through visits whereby some take part in academic activities in sister institutions.

Despite of all the goals mentioned above, when my interviewees, both theologians and non-theologians were asked, ‘why do you partner?’ the quick answers they gave me can be

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Isaac Nsibu 25.7.2008

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Mtungi 25. 7. 2008



summarized in the following statement: To share the Good News because we all belong to one Christ who saved us. In Isaac Nsibu's report the biblical text of (1 Cor. 12:1-12) put these goals together: "To grow together in God's grace that we may enrich each other according to our spiritual gifts".<sup>55</sup> This text on spiritual gifts uses an imagery which expresses growth through interdependence, which is always one of the healthy characteristics of partnership.

In my interviews I found that the term or name to be used when referring to partnership as a special form of Christian relationship was not brought before congregants or parishioners for discussion. For that reason Christians as individuals or in small circles were heard using both a Kiswahili term *Urafiki* and the Luhaya term *Obutahi*, both terms meaning 'friendship.' The term *partnership* was only known and used by those who could speak English but did not bother themselves about what the term means theologically. Definitions of partnership were therefore only given in sermons, during visits and in greetings at partnership occasions.

Although the term for this kind of relationship was not thematically and officially discussed at grass roots (congregations) level, it is impressive that partnership activities went on and are still vibrantly continuing today. As years went on and the partnership showed both success and challenges the indigenous Christians of the NWD started confidently to translate this partnership relationship as *Omukago (friendship)*. Later, as a consequence of this, the term *Omukago (friendship)* was introduced by Nsibu in the Diocesan partnership committee as a correct term for this partnership to be used in the Luhaya vernacular language.<sup>56</sup> The term was also accepted and used in the Partnership Agreement between REA (Ruhija Evangelical Academy) and Herbon which was signed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 1996.<sup>57</sup>

### **3.3 Structural Order of Partnership Committees**

#### **3.3.1 In-district Partnership Committees**

In-district partnership committees are formed in congregations, parishes and districts who have partnership relationships. Committee members in the congregation are chosen by a

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<sup>55</sup> KKKT/DKMG- Kamati ya Urafiki, 1-2.9.1989, Bukoba

<sup>56</sup> ELCT/NWD Partnership Committee, 12-13.8. 1993, Bukoba

<sup>57</sup> REA-Herbon Partnership Agreement, 21.7.1996.

congregational meeting; members of parish partnership committee are proposed by the parish committee but approved by the parish general meeting. The district council proposes names for the district partnership committee to the district general meeting for approval. These committees are expected to meet every four months.

Some parishes and districts which find it expensive to hold constitutional meeting and partnership committee meeting separately hold them in an extended manner. It means that the constitutional committee convenes together with the district partnership committee having one agenda which includes items pertaining to both committees. In some other parishes and districts there are constitutional committees which deal with all partnership matters. Nevertheless, the directives and advices from the leadership of the Diocese have always been that chairpersons of partnership committees should be laypersons, not clergy.<sup>58</sup> The reason behind this is that clergy are not permanent congregants. They are often transferred from one parish to another.

Institutions have their own partnership committees involving both students and the staff.<sup>59</sup> Institutions together send one representative and each district sends a representative to the Diocesan partnership committee. The partnership committees are not merely constitutional but very active also. The Diocesan General Assembly received the new constitution, with numerous amendments. But the constitution has no reference to any partnership committee exists on all level of the church nerveless such Diocese<sup>60</sup>, as can be seen from the following;

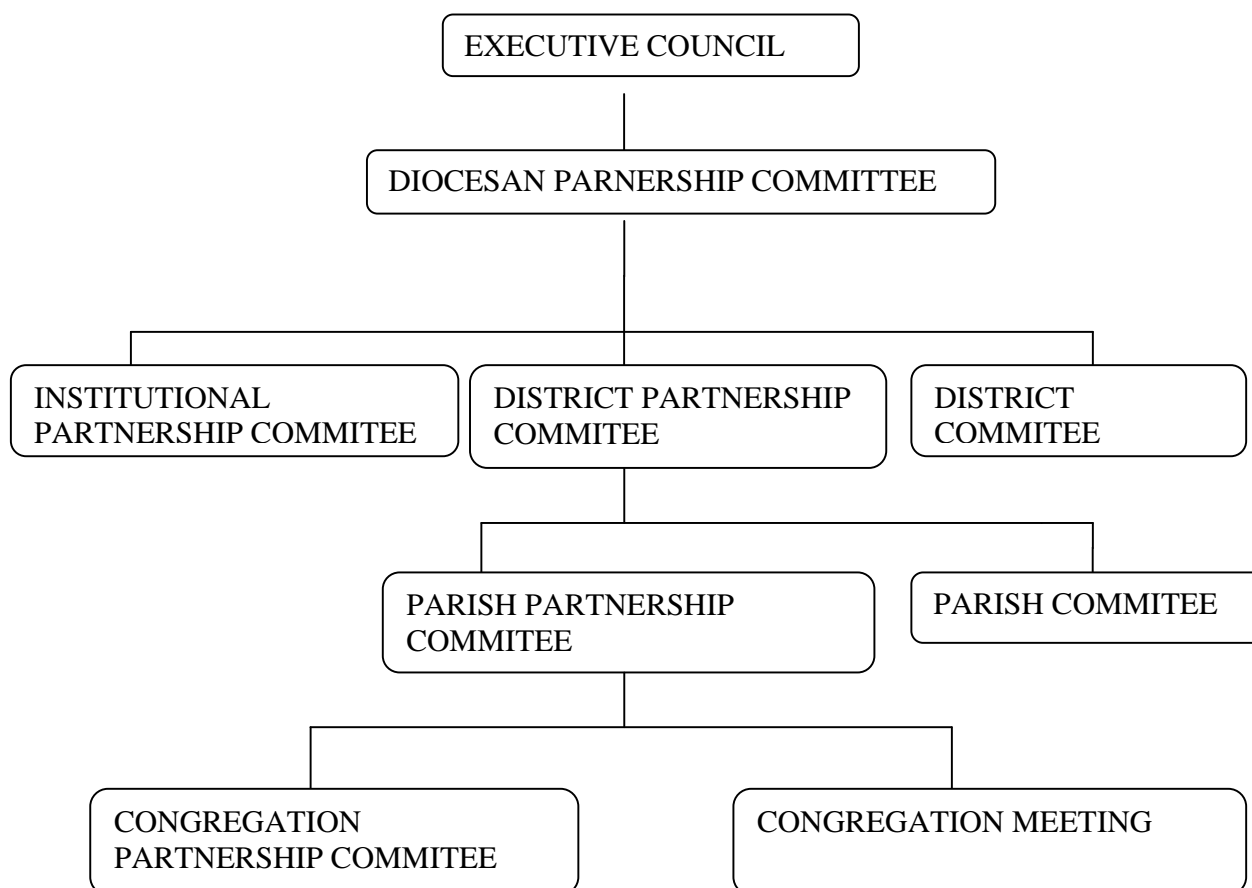
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<sup>58</sup> Conversation with Godwin Lwezaua, General secretary of ELCT/NWD 20.7.2008

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Amos Lwankomezi 20.7.2008

<sup>60</sup> KKKT/DKMG- Ripoti ya Askofu Agost 2002- Julai 2004 kwa Mkutano Mkuu wa Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi, 27.7-1.8.2004, Ntoma. (ELCT/NWD-Bishop report August 2002- July 2004 to the General meeting of the North Western Diocese, 27.7.1.8.2004, Ntoma).

### Partnership Committees in the Diocese Structure



#### 3.3.2 The Diocesan Partnership Committees

The Diocesan partnership committee is composed of the following members: General Secretary as chairperson, the Diocesan Treasurer, nine chairpersons from nine district partnership committees, one woman as a representative from all the institutions of the Diocese, and one woman who represents women in the Synod Council. The committee has six main functions:-

- i) To receive and discuss partnership reports in the Diocese.
- ii) To give advices in matters of partnership relations.
- iii) To supervise and give guidelines in matters of partnership
- iv) To encourage partnership committees in the parishes and districts to hold their meetings regularly.
- v) To find ways for implementation of resolutions made.

vi) To make sure that communication between partners are maintained.<sup>61</sup>

The Executive Council works as partnership committee because it is the organ which deals with all partnership issues between ELCT/NWD and the Metropolitan New York Synod (MNYS). It has also the final say on some partnership matters arising from the Diocesan partnership committee. The council has to be informed of the in-coming delegation and must some times give consent to the out-going delegations. An example is the delegates who were chosen from Bwagura parish congregation for the Essen-Kettwig visitation in 2003 and who were censured by the council.<sup>62</sup> As a result the Bwagura congregation had to make a new selection. The council is also responsible in more serious cases, like terrifying events experienced by partner guests such as illness and robbery. Such cases and events are reported to this council for immediate measures. The advantage with this organ is that it has members with horizontal experiences in partnership relationship who give substantial advices to partnership committees in the Diocese.

Still it has to be insisted that partnership committees at the Diocesan level are not there to control and give command to partners. They are there to give advices and directions. However the danger of these bodies is that of them becoming like controllers and commandants of the partnerships. The risk is them of quenching the Spirit working among partners. On the other side partner congregations and parishes should not operate as independent entities since this may run the risk of ignoring the body, meaning the Diocese. Therefore the structure enables partners to understand that they are operating within the ELCT/NWD.

### **3.4 Partnership Visitations: Missionary Vibrancy in NWD**

The first and foremost way of keeping partnership alive is regular friendly encounter. Regular face encounter plays a more important role than any other method in making partnership appear true. Individuals and groups either on unofficial visits or as a part of official visitation increase the sense of belonging together and concern for others. Through these regular visitations between partners mission work in the NWD has been vibrant.

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<sup>61</sup> KKKT/DKMG- Kamati ya Udugu, 10.6.2004, Bukoba. ( ELCT/NWD-The Partnership Committee, 10.6.2004, Bukoba).

<sup>62</sup> KKKT/DKMG- Halmashauri Kuu, 24-25.3.2004, Bukob. (ELCT/NWD-Executive Council, 24-25.3. 2004, Bukoba)

### 3.4.1 Out-Going and In-Coming Delegations

During the time of preparations for delegation visits letter, emails and faxes between partners are sent more frequently than any other times. Telephones are much more preferred than any other way of communication although they are expensive. Today, mobile phone communication can be done even from remote trading centers and villages. If the inviting partners are within the NWD no more needs to be known besides the number of delegates, days of stay and the responsibilities they will have to carry during their stay. These are very important because they enable the inviting partners to make arrangement for accommodation, budget for food and transport, and places to be visited as for evangelical open-air meetings and concerts. Proclaiming the Word of God, through sermons or songs, is the dominating aspect for the out-going delegations duties. Pastors or preachers emphasize that partners are called to be partners in giving witness to Christ and service to one another. Christian Sindano says that the service they give has to be given in humility, in love and obedience according to talents endowed to them by the Holy Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

The parishioners of North B district have developed the habit of coming together in order to get know the things that are to be done, concerning parishioner issues to be discussed and gifts to be taken by their out-going delegations. If the out-going delegation is to sing, make concerts and play games, they need to rehearsal then before all the congregants one or two weeks before the visitation. Deliberations are also made on the Bible texts which are to be preached on. This is usually the time making corrections, additions, approval and comments on what will enrich their partners holistically. The congregants do this soon after Sunday church services under the guidance of (theologians) pastors and evangelists. The delegation is officially sent out in the so called “send-off worship service”.<sup>64</sup>

According to Rev. Christian Sindano delegates from districts to Europe are chosen in turns according to the number of parishes within the district. The North B district which has four parishes may help to clarify this practice. In the year 2006 it received an invitation to send four delegates to the district of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg the Evangelical Lutheran Church of

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<sup>63</sup> Example of such sermons are kept in Rev. Christian Sandino’s Sermons Notebook 2008

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Julius Mulokozi, 25.7.2008

Germany. These four delegates were chosen from four parishes. An invitation from the partner in the district of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg (Germany) normally comes after every two years.<sup>65</sup> The two year period also applies to the delegation coming from Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg (Germany) to the ELCT/NWD North B district. From the beginning, the criteria for choosing delegates have mainly been as follows: The person chosen to be a delegate is to be

- i) A Christian who is active in partnership activities.
- ii) A Christian who is not under Church discipline, meaning a person whose Christian life is beyond reproach.
- iii) A Christian who is well informed of his district history and known some of the NWD church history.
- iv) A Christian who can express himself in English.

The last criterion is not very much insisted on today especially for some out-going delegations to Germany where English is not the language used in communication with delegates. The reason is that in Germany there are some Tanzanians and Germans who speak Luhaya and Kiswahili languages. These are of a great help in giving translations during the visitations.

Names of the chosen delegates from parishes are then sent to the central church office. The district pastor consulting his committee makes arrangements to make the delegation ready for the visitation. Preparations include applying for passports and visas, getting acquainted with the partner's culture and deliberating on themes which are to be tabled during the visitation. Today, most of these themes reflect challenges which are met when by the partners participating in the *missio Dei*. When partners from abroad come ELCT/NWD all costs paid by hosts from ELCT/NWD.

Mugisha Mugyabuso tells that, preparation for the in-coming delegation involves many individual groups, congregations and parishes. Many individuals and families, women and youth groups, congregations and parishes like to be visited by partner guests. Traditionally, invitation of such beloved partners by the indigenous Christians of the NWD involves a lot of things and

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with Re. Christian Sindano 5.7.2008

activities. It includes singing, which is introduced and ended by short and long prayers and dancing.<sup>66</sup>

As a rule partner delegates do not live in hotels as tourists but in different families of the congregation and parishes. Host families for the delegates take this responsibility voluntarily. Partner guests are received in a very hospitable and exceptional way. He who has superficially experienced and witnessed such an event even says, that they are received like kings. Mugisha comments on that exceptional reception: “We do not receive them exceptionally because they are ‘big’ people but we do want them feel home and free. We do not enter into partnership with them so that they may ‘taste’ our difficulties. Still we do not want to conceal how and what we are.”<sup>67</sup> According to Mugisha this should be for them only be a testimony and proof that (i) in spite of all our weaknesses we depend on God. God’s grace is sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness (2Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13), (ii) and that partners differ in ability and talents. They are partners in diversity who need each other when participating in *missio Dei*, (iii) and that Christians with different needs who are still partnering are a proof that God is ONE.

The committee responsible for the preparations makes sure that the schedule for the visitation is available, and that congregants are well informed about the program and their in-coming partners.<sup>68</sup>

Severe undesirable cases experienced by guest partners are immediately reported to the General Secretary of the ELCT/NWD to deal with. My informants recounted two occasions by which the General Secretary’s intervention was needed. In one of their Guest from abroad in secret took too much of local intoxicants so that he lay half dead. His problem was solved by a physician after many worries.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> According to the conversation with Mugisha Mugyabuso 25.7.2008, short and long prayers before and /or after this or some events e.g. at waking up in the morning, before breakfast, journey, lunch, dinner and before going to bed. To show respect and honor the host slaughters a domestic animal or a hen for the guest to eat, since eating and drinking together plays an important part in such invitations

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Kyoma Kamulali 29.7.2008

<sup>68</sup> Preparations include planning places to be visited, people who are to give sermons, the vehicles for transport, changing of dwellings to different hosts’ homes, date for making evaluations with in-coming delegation, confirmation of appointment with church and governmental departments, as well as with Non - Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and with Very Important People (VIPs).

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Amos Lwankomezi 20.7.2008.

The significance of what I have attempted to show here is: structural and handling the matter involves Christians of all level to participate and create transparency which are communicated as well. Also there is an emphasize on corrective responsibility for partnership mission.

### **3.4.2 Active Participants in Partnership**

Active Participants in partnership can be put into two groups. *The first group involves those who keep regular contacts.* These include those who have participated in out-going delegations, who have been hosts of visiting delegates in their homes and who keep regular contacts with those they accommodated. Among of these are also persons who directly receive or have received aid money and material aid) from partners as well as those who have relatives and friends in the partner churches abroad and some church employees. Parish pastors and district pastors are important persons in maintaining the partnership. In the exercise of transferring parish pastors, parish partnerships have some times become dormant, if not dead, because those who were newly transferred had no interest in partnerships. Partnership needs pastors who are active and quick in communicating with partners by letters, faxes, e-mails, telephone calls so as to give updated reports. Poor communication and late or poor reporting were earlier condemned by partners as caused for deterioration of partnership.<sup>70</sup>

*The second group are those who have been hosts of guests but with irregular contacts.* The reason here is not the language problem but that they do have the skills of writing and therefore do not engage in regular communication. Some people who belong to this group are blamed for not attending church services regularly. As a result they are not acquainted with partnership announcements made regularly in their churches. Politicians and government officials fall under this group too. They have been abroad but never on church trips; additionally there are the helpers at special partnership events. These help in cooking, cleaning, translating, entertainment and in driving guests during their visitation. Interestingly such helpers are not Lutheran

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<sup>70</sup> KKKT/DKMG- Kamati ya Urafiki 12-13.8.1993, Bukoba.



Christians only. But those who belong to other denominations and people of other faiths do find themselves at home in a community of partner Christians witnessing to Christ.<sup>71</sup>

The importance of what I have tried to present is; participating in partnership by keeping on communicating and that updated report are strengthening the partnerships. Also the awareness on corresponding within the partners makes the partnerships stronger.

### **3.4.3 Non Verbal Expressions in Partnership**

The non-verbal expressions here I refer to are those which are experienced among partners when they enjoy being guests in home. Most of these expressions are automatically and overtly seen when love and joy are understood inspite of lacking abilities in verbal communication and body language is used by both the hosting family and the guest(s). The spoken language vanishes and the body language is spontaneously and promptly used. These expressions may come in different ways as in hugging, keeping eyes open, arms akimbo or with a wide open mouth, and making different gestures. All the above mentioned expressions are said to be commonly known and used in NWD area as sign of love and joy depending on the context in which they are applied.<sup>72</sup>

Gestures are widely known but have to be carefully interpreted and understood by partners who come from different cultures. Gestures are for postural choices and are determined mainly by but cultural differences. For example, for “come here” Germans keep the palm of the hand up while the indigenous people of NWD keep the palm down. Germans and Americans keep the palm down when expressing either ‘hallo’ or ‘good bye’<sup>73</sup> When I was a schoolboy I was told that to Europeans sticking out one’s tongue mean contempt. Unlike Europeans, among the indigenous people of NWD sticking out one’s tongue indicates admiration or appreciation.

There are also expressions through touching. To Western people kissing (on the cheek) is used for greetings and farewell but to many Africans of the NWD kissing, either on cheek or mouth, are expressions of people who have fallen in love. Men who walk hand in hand is to some

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Willison Jeremiah 26.6. 2008

<sup>72</sup> Conversation with Emmanuelina Byalugaba 30.7.2008

<sup>73</sup> Conversation with Dr. Anthea Bethge 29.7.2008

Europeans regarded as and may be strange reckoned as homosexual behavior' but to people in the NWD, however, it implies nothing more than friendship<sup>74</sup> Among partners all these physical expressions are sincere, born of out surpassing love and joy. Partners who have reached this stage of self expression without words have really entered into an authentic partnership. Non-verbal expression reveals intimacy and the inner-self of partners towards one another. Partners at this stage can participate together in *missio Dei* amicably.

### 3.5 Receiving and Giving in Partnership

What does the NWD Partnership receive and give? And how do partners give and receive? The answers to these two questions help to show mutuality among partners. There is no Christian Partner who can claim to have nothing to give to his fellow partner. All Christians who are giving are doing so only because they have first received something from God. According to the Bible God is the sole giver and the owner of all things that people possess (Ps 24:1; 50:12; 1Cor 10:26).

I posed a question to the congregants of Kyaka parish in North B district respectively, soon after Sunday services: What have you ever given to your partners? The answer was quick and clear: nothing. Still in making conversation with them I came to know that they had preached the word of God and had given witnesses to Christ when they visited their partners. More than that I noticed that when their partners visited them they had given them material things like mats, chicken, sugarcanes, groundnuts, milk, grain, fruits and vegetables but they did not remember to mention these items. When I asked them why they had not mentioned the material things they had given to their partners I received spontaneous answers from them. "We had forgotten what we gave them; but everybody has them; they are found everywhere; we deserved no thanks for that."<sup>75</sup>

Their giving reminds me the of what Jesus said about the righteous at the judgment. The righteous will be praised for giving him (Jesus) food and drink when he was hungry and thirsty, for welcoming him, for being close to him and visiting him but. But they will answer do not

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with Rev.Alice Kabigumila 25.7.2008

<sup>75</sup> Conversation with congregants at Kyaka parish in North B district on 27.7.2008

remember to have given you anything, when did we see you Lord (Mt 25:25:34 - 40)? In the same spirit should the partner learn how to 'give'. Righteous partners do not remember what they give because they do not give expecting something in return. Giving should come out of love. As for Partners from abroad there are also some things worth mentioning. According to Bishop Buberwa, visitors (exchange) of the clergy and others also exchange gifts, talents, support each other in social service and projects. Sharing the gospel together and supporting each other result in human resource capacity building.<sup>76</sup>

According to the general secretary of ELCT/NWD Godwin Lwezaula, another privilege of the ELCT/NWD church members is that they are chosen to fill different positions, for example in the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). Lwezaula himself is currently serving at the UEM Finance Committee; in the years 1998-2005, Rev Dr. Wilson Niwagila served as the UEM Secretary of Mission and Evangelism, and in 2005 Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki was chosen General Secretary of the UEM.<sup>77</sup>

According to Lwiza, treasurer of the NWD, there are also some example of economical activities which were done in the partnership, namely the establishment of centers and buildings. For example; in the Kaskazini B district, Vs Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg from Germany enabled the building of

(i) District center comprising of-District pastor house and office

-Duplex staff house

(ii) Missenye Orphans Scholarship Scheme (MOSS) center comprising of

-Workshop of carpentry

-Classes of Tailoring

-Offices

-Field officers houses

Also the Metropolitan New York Synod Vs ELCT-NWD enabled to build the Boy dormitory of KEMPS (Kibeta English medium pre school and dining hall, and part of the contribution to the

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Bishop Elisa Buberwa-NWD, 31.7.2008

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Godwin Lwezaula-General Secretary-NWD, 20.7.2008

Bukoba Lutheran secondary school girls' dormitory.

During the Draught relief was given during the season March to October 2006. The Partners United Evangelical Mission, Pletternberg, Hesse and Nassau contributed Euro 3,349,7, equivalent to Tanzania shilling 50,902,903 to support the affected areas in North B district, (Missenye), in Western district Biharamulo, as well as in Southern A and Central districts. 101 tons of maize were distributed.

Social aspects- Poor Patients Funds Northern B district Vs Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg (Germany).  
-Bugango and Missenye Dispensary 2.5 millions are contributed from partners for Poor Patients Funds yearly.<sup>78</sup>

The question which deserves an emphasis here is: How should Christians give? The image of the many gifts, as members of one body, brought to light by Paul, is a good frame of reference in the Bible (Rom.12 and 1 Cor, 12). It determines a proper pattern of relationship in which all members are needed and equally useful for partners. Awareness of this many result in a willingness to enrich each other by their endowed spiritual and material gifts in the partners joint participation in *missio Dei*. They exercise their gift, some in one way, and some in another. In this way partners many mobilize themselves for voluntary collection of money for a special purpose for their fellow partners. Only to point out that the “haves” must not give with the attitude of paternalism. One of the syndromes of paternalism is “the financier syndrome by which money is given only if the sender can control its use. Or the sender gives in such a way that it keeps the recipient totally dependent on him.<sup>79</sup> Paternalism in mission is like a virus destroying the spirit of participation in *missio Dei* where the ideal is that we share as sisters and brothers, not as the “haves” and the “have notes”, since all rely on one another.

It is also important to know that both receiving and giving is an act of obedience since all people are basically receivers of God's gifts. Therefore, the genuine receiving is the receiving from God himself and the genuine giving is the giving that enables in the building of God's kingdom. The

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Jaston Rwiza, Treasurer- NWD, 20.7.2008

<sup>79</sup> Van Engen 2001,25.

worth of what partners give each other is not built on much, how many, how big or little but on how lovingly and genuinely it has been given.

The decisive factor in collection and giving is always the attitude of thanksgiving, thanking God for what he has graciously and lovingly done in Christ. God did not spare his only Son but he gave him to humankind for perpetual life. (Jn 3:16). He suffered for us. Genuine giving involves the whole person, not only what he has or owns. I therefore appreciate the practice of partners who, when they give aid (from that mobilized and collected at home) do at the same time plan for the visit whereby both the partner giver and partner receiver share their concern physically-face to face. This helps one avoid the problem which Nissen describes as follows: One of the problems in the aid given by the rich to the poor is precisely that the rich make a contribution without sharing in the suffering of those who receive.<sup>80</sup> Christian partners do not have to give their estates only but their hearts too.

A step further along this line is the awareness of the partners give each other is it to be understood as a donation, a grant, or a loan? Mugambi although talking on economic relations, disqualifies all those three terms because the first two show no reciprocity, and the latter seeks returns.<sup>81</sup> Thus what Mugambi states also fits in this context of partnership relations. He defines gift as valuable for the following reasons:

It is so valuable that no value can be attributed to it. A gift is not given to enemies. It is not to strangers. It is not given to outsiders. A gift is given to someone who has become a part of me, a part of my family, and a part of my intimate community. A gift cannot be valued in monetary or material terms. It is valued in sentimental terms. The giver does not expect anything in return. Not even appreciation...The person who receives a gift is a companion – a person with whom I share bread...<sup>82</sup>

What partners give each other, be material or money are gifts. They are more based on feelings rather than on touchable values. Not even are they to known as rewards but as gifts because he who deserves a reward has the right to make claims for it.

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<sup>80</sup> Johannes Nissen. "Prophetic Diakonia: Biblical Perspective and Present Challenges", in *The Role of Mission in the Future of Lutheran Theology*, ed. Viggo Mortensen. Occasional Papers no.6. Center for Multireligious Studies, University of Aarhus, 2003, 145.

<sup>81</sup> Mugambi 2003, 182-183.

<sup>82</sup> Mugambi 2003, 183.

### 3.6 Cultural Perspective Proverbs and Idioms on Partnership

It was very striking that most of my interviewees who expressed themselves in vernacular gave either proverbs or idioms in Luhaya to reveal characteristics of Christian Partnership in my interview I collected more than eighteen proverbs and idioms but only eight of them deserve in this chapter. Each of them contributes culturally to understanding important aspects the nature of partnership in general and Christian partnership specifically. 1. *Abagenda babili baijukanyia* meaning people who walk two by two are able to correct, encourage and remind each other. This proverb reminds Christians on how Jesus sent his disciple out to participate in his mission. Jesus sent his disciples in pair. He sent them two by two after he had given them authority over unclean spirits, casting out demons which needed encouragement, and power to preach that men should repent (Mk 6:7-13). He also sent two disciples to find a colt. If any one was to ask them, “Why are you untying it?” they were to remind each other on the correct answer Jesus had told them, “The Lord has need of it” (Lk 19:28-34). Christian partnership has a “two by two” concept. The “two by two” concept leads life bearing the qualities of correcting, encouraging and reminding each other of what Jesus needs Christian to be like.

2. *Abagonjanganyia batwekangana omushunga*. This means those who love one another help each other even in minor matters. The idea behind this idiom is commitment, involvement and ability. Such a spirit is to rule among partners Commitment, involved and liable partners give themselves to each other. Each of the parties is available and ready to give service to the other.

3. *Abagonjanganyia bela-pe*. This can literally be translated as “those who love one another are as white as snow. This means that partners who are “white as snow” are blameless between themselves, and before others their behaviors are beyond reproach. In Christian interpretation they are like a tree planted along a stream of water whose leaves are always green and does not stop giving fruits in its seasons (Ps 1:3). Through the behaviors and relationship of partners in “white as snow” life without reproach, unbelievers can be free drawn to Jesus Christ. Partners leading this kind of life manifest who the disciple of Jesus Christ (see Jn 13: 34, 35)

4. *Akana katagenda kati mae achumba*-This means that “a child who stays and eats food at home always says that mother is the best cook”. What this child knows as good food in life is only the food its mother cooks. One may feel sorry for this child. Had this child visited other homes it would have known that there is also other good or even better food and that cookery is in one place than in another. This proverb can also be used with regard to the experiencing church: A partner who knows only his local church has little knowledge of the church universal. Partners bring experience and challenges to each other, and thus their churches and faith grow.

5. *Ekiha ngonzi*. This means that charity is a matter of the heart and not of the pocket. What is given is love not richness. Partners do not give because they own something or because they are rich but because they have love. They have the spirit of giving. There are many rich people who do not give but those who do not have much have dared to give from the little they have. One may recall the widow whom Jesus saw putting more into the treasury than many other rich people (Lk 21:1-4). The Corinthian church is another good example of people who gave according to their means- from what they had (2Cor.8:3). Even a severe test of affliction did not stop them from giving cheerfully and freely.

6. *Engalo ibili kunabishanyia* is literally translated as: “two hands wash one another.” Partners need each other’s help for “cleanliness” or purity in their discipleship. They will be clean and rich because they have one another. By this proverb neither dependency nor independency is encouraged but interdependency

7. *Obuzaike kagulu*. This means that visits make partnership come alive. With this proverb my interviewees obviously wanted to show the importance of regular visits between partners. It reminds us that the church to be a moving-out servant-church so as to make witnessing, preaching, serving and participation something real. For partner’s face to face meetings plays a more significant role than mere correspondence by letters and telephone calls.

8. *Agoinago nigoshekesa can* literally be translated as: “the teeth you have in your mouth are the teeth seen in laughing.” In other words: depend on what you have regardless of its quality or quantity. The idiom reminds us how Christians are differently gifted by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12)

but that they all belong to one body. Partners are reminded to use their different talents endowed to them when participating in *missio Dei*.

The consequence of proverbs in partnerships is developed into every day life of people in the area of ELCT/NWD. Each of the partnerships stands together and testifies the truth of knowing the charity. These examples serve the purpose of emphasizing the value of partnership

### **3.7 Challenges for Partnership in Mission**

Partnership in *missio Dei* Makes people engages in a journey. It knows of the needs of God's people and what God in Christ and the Holy Spirit has intended them to be. In this journey there are challenge be dealt with. Some of these challenges are seen the themes and items appearing on the agendas of partnership committees. I will highlight by mention three of these.

One challenge mentioned in agenda is "am I poor or rich?" The point was not on defining what poverty and richness. Rather it was regardless their situation, whether poor or rich, ought to give witness and testimony on how God has been good to them. After all, Christians learn from the Corinthians that being poor or with afflictions cannot be a reason for not giving aid and witness to Christ (2 Cor 8- 9).<sup>83</sup>

Another challenge was "HIV/AIDS and Its Prevention." It came up as result of the general condemnation or stigmatization of victims. The committee insisted on diaconal work, visiting and counseling the victims and giving them hope. They found hat the fact that God loves them, meant that their life on earth is still meaningful. They emphasized that HIV/AIDS is neither a curse nor a punishment from God, for God is always compassionate to his children. The LWF Consultation, in connection to God's compassion, states that, "God is God of love who does not afflict his beloved children as a curse or punishment. Therefore AIDS cannot be considered a curse or a punishment."<sup>84</sup> Beside visiting and counseling victims the partnership in North B district has initiated District Diaconal Fund (DDF)<sup>85</sup> from which the HIV/AIDS victims' costs

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<sup>83</sup> <sup>83</sup> Interview with Rev.Alice Kabigumila 25.7.2008

<sup>84</sup> LWF Documentation 1988,8.

<sup>85</sup> The District Diaconal Fund Committee file in the North B District of the ELCT/NWD



for treatment are met. Christians of other denominations and other faiths are also served and treated from this fund. This shows a true journeying with people for it shows rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (cf. Rom 12:15; 2Cor 12:26).

Some challenges, however, are not dealt with. Thus, in the course of my research, I found that the leadership of the Diocese does not want to have the issues regarding the use of condoms and the status of homosexuals on its agenda. Still these are underground prevailing issues, especially among the youths. It might be that the Diocese abstained from rising the issue has so as to protect of some “weak” Christians. It is my opinion that these two issues ought to be on the agenda. The weak Christians will also grow strong. The Diocese should make and put clear its own stands and declare them openly before the church adherents. Therefore there is no way of escaping them, since even the ELCT/NWD overseas partners at all the levels already have them as burning issues in their churches. Yet this has to be done orderly in due time and with wisdom from God.

### **3.8 “Hurdle race” in Partnership**

Christian partnership has full of praise for her fruits in the whole NWD but deny people tend to difficulties and weaknesses. This I refer to as a “hurdle race “would be hypocrisy” which gives no chance for partners’ self examination. Hurdles in this process of participating in *missio Dei* can be put as follows:

(i) Choosing the delegates for partnership visitations. Most important here is the choosing of members for out-going delegations to partners abroad. The motives and expectations in partnership shows that many Christian partners hope for a chance to travel abroad and for sharing the affluence of the West. Many of them think of getting large amounts of money and precious things from the West. The expectations cause big campaigns and sometimes cause hatred and less confidence among members of partnership committees when they receive invitations from abroad. There have been several accusations against some partnership

committee members of favoritism,<sup>86</sup> which need a separate research if they are to be proven right or wrong.

(ii) Speeches unveil poverty and affluence. Some speeches delivered by the ELCT/NWD partners overt reveal of their poverty than their riches.<sup>87</sup> Partners in ELCT/NWD however should understand that they are not poor, but that they do not have everything but still are also on material things. And some, with good faith, dare to say that money is not the problem but how to use it. I witnessed one delegate making such an address: In our country almost every family owns a car, children do not know what hunger is because cupboards and refrigerators are all the time full of food and drink; every child goes to school because fees is not an issue, and church buildings are big and beautiful,”<sup>88</sup> and the like. This might be benevolent truth communicated by the addresser but often results in a problematic interpretation on the addressees. Such a speech does not only arouse the feelings of superiority and inferiority complexes but also create a spirit of dependence to the addressees. Partners should learn how to value equally what God has given them, whether spiritual gifts or material resources; they have to be proud of them and use them for building the body of Christ.

(iii) Sharing spiritual gifts for material exchange. “In the two third World Christians are spiritually rich, Sunday services are well attended, active and happy,” This is a common statement which is also supported by a Germany lady who pointed to Sunday services which are lively.<sup>89</sup> Being should not only mean clapping hands and singing loudly emotional songs in church services. Lively should be understood and seen in a total life of Christians. It is how they feel, act and live as Christians. It is how they are involved and find a “place” both in their local and global church. It is their participation in *missio Dei*. The danger which must be avoided is that partners think that they go to the NWD partners for spiritual gifts and that from the West partners come with material things. Partnership should not be understood for such an exchange. Partners should learn to give material things to each other with a spiritual meaning, and vice versa.

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with X he didn't want his name to be mentioned. 27.7. 2008

<sup>87</sup> KKT/DKMG- Kamati ya Urafiki, 1-2 september, 1989, Bukoba.

<sup>8888</sup> Observation from one of the visitations I took part in, this was 2008. It is a secret.

<sup>89</sup> Conversation with Anthea Bethge 29.7.2008

### **3.9 Intermediate Conclusion**

This chapter has been focusing on the partnership in mission as identified and experienced in ELCT/NWD. We have seen that seeking partnership began with personal connections to the overseas partner parish or church through the people who came to NWD as missionaries or visitors. The aspiration of partnership is obvious to stimulate and enrich each other spiritually, to do mission work as response to the great commission (Mt. 28:16-26), and also to experience worldwide church and to know and learn more from partners for example cultural aspects, idioms, sayings with challenges are met and hidden.

## 4.0 HOW UNDERSTANDING OF PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION IS PRACTICE IN THE ELCT/NWD

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter I am going to explain how understanding of partnership in mission is practice in the ELCT/NWD. In this understanding I will focus on how partnership can extend in different ways such as respect each other according to their culture, tolerate each other, learn and sharing each other faith, help each other, sharing straggles, challenges and new possibilities of building people of God.

### 4.2 The Understanding of Partnership in Mission in the ELCT/NWD

People in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese (ELCT/NWD) have understood partnership as *missio Dei* by their use the word ‘*Omukago (friendship)*’ in the language of the Luhaya people, in that area. Lwakatale clarified that such partnership *Omukago (friendship)*, a traditional brotherhood or (sister) hood practiced in the area of North Western Diocese is highly respected, He also confirmed that *Omukago (friendship)* can be entered by all: women, men, children, poor or rich regardless of their faiths.<sup>90</sup> Lwankomezi concurred to Lwakatale by clarified that friendship or brother (sister) hood “*udugu* in Swahili or *Omukago* in Luhaya” is the right word to explain the understanding of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD.<sup>91</sup>

Partners in the ELCT/NWD as friends maintain their individuality yet each friend shares in the life of the others. They love, respect and tell the truth to one another. Their relationship is accepted by their family members, neighbors and the whole community. Friends do not enter *Omukago* on material basis but on love. Christian partnership has been impacted by the concept of *Omukago*. This is why indigenous adherent in the NWD/NWD call this Christian partnership Mission *Omukago*<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Rev. Phinias Lwakatale 15.7.2008

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Rev. Lemmy Lwankomezi 21.7.2008

<sup>92</sup> ELCT/NWD Partnership Committee, 12-13.8.1993, Bukoba

The understanding of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD is known at the grassroots (congregations and parishes). A missionary from Germany persisted on the understanding of partnership mission in the ELCT/NWD as a way to promote the process of understanding through explanations and to give information to both sides”.<sup>93</sup> Conversation and plans of keeping this relationship are done freely, informally and involve all genders, the young and the old. Moreover, when matters concerning partnership are officially brought to the congregation meetings the languages (Luhaya and Swahili) used there are known to many Christians. This means that the decisions made are really made and understood by many. Further, such formal meetings do not need the representation of people with a lot of records and minutes on table. The real partnership is not found in records and minutes (diplomatic) but among the laity at grassroots. My argument is not that partnership minutes should not exist, but rather that real partnership is founded in its praxis by the people at the grassroots level.

Also the understanding of partnership mission in the ELCT/NWD enables partners to tolerate each other. Mugisha said that, “We have different cultures, world view, sexual orientation and life styles. No tolerance, no partnership. Tolerance must not go to an extent of being self destructive- emotionally, socially and spiritually. We could tolerate each other but remain who we are.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore the members of delegation which visited the NWD from the district of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg in the Lutheran Church of Germany, said, “We could tolerate each other and growing love which drives the will to understand better and better but remain with our culture.”<sup>95</sup> During the interview with some of informants from the NWD/NWD they came up with the concrete idea which supports the idea expressed by the delegation visiting in the NWD from Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg (Germany). They said that, “we accept each other as we are, our differences are exploited constructively. What one partner has belongs to the other as we enrich each other.”<sup>96</sup>

In conversation of concerning the understanding of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD,

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with Anthea Bethe 29.7.2008

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Mugisha Mgyabuso 25.7.2008

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Jessica, Constantine and Rosemarie members of delegation visited NWD from Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg in the Lutheran church-Germany 25.7.2008

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Amos Lwankomezi and Wilson Jeremiah 26.6. 2008

one of the informants said,<sup>97</sup> “The intercultural sharing is vital for making the core of Christian belief (more) viable.” Through my own observation I was very impressed to see that, through understanding of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD, congregants were able to value other cultures and to know that their world view is quite different so they were avoiding the problem of feeling their culture as superior compared to that of their visitors (partners).

#### **4.2.1 The Understanding of Partnership in the ELCT/NWD and its Relation to the Current Missiological Perspective of the ELCT**

We need to see the understanding of partnership Mission in the ELCT/NWD in light of current missiological one of the visitors in a delegation from district Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg Germany said that, “Partnership in the ELCT/NWD is characterized by the trustful relationship between friends. The partners in the ELCT/NWD take care of meeting each other, of establishing contact, and sharing each others’ faith. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1Peter, 4, 10).”<sup>98</sup> Another visitor in the delegation from district Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg -Germany said that, “Today we are partners; that means we are all giving and receiving. There is no church that has nothing to give - as small as the church may be. And there is no church that needs nothing-as big and rich as the church may be. We need each other.”<sup>99</sup> As I observed partners in the ELCT/NWD reflecting on the word of God and his love, I really realized that, love is the feeling that joins two souls and bring two human beings together, and love is the language of partners’ hearts used to speak to one another. Through the research in fact I understand that God is the source of all of our love. Loving God and loving other people are so interrelated that we cannot have one without the other (1 John 4.19-21). Today partners in the ELCT/NWD enjoy each other because of love rooted and linked in the word of God.

Although-as we have seen already partnership in the ELCT/ NWD is organized and structured well and given transparency in the church structures it is not carried by organizational or constitutional structures with rule and commands. Partnership in the ELCT/NWD is rather

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Wilson Wilberd 24.4.2006

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Rosemarie Wach 25.7.2008

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Pantel Constantine 25.7.2008

moving by love, involvement, commitment and intimacy. The good interpersonal example is seen by Jesus Christ when he went to lonely places to pray to his Father as his partner (Lk 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1 and 22:41). He had interpersonal relationship with the Father - a relationship which can not be found in organizational structures. The ELCT/NWD understood this fact, so that partnership issues are not included in the Diocesan constitution.<sup>100</sup> Free and interpersonal contact is critical for they give more chance to openness, transparency and self-criticism. In interpersonal relations partners can easily talk, pray and worship together. Partnerships in the ELCT/NWD grow together in God's grace in that we may enrich each other according to our spiritual gifts (1Cor. 12:1-12). The Apostle Paul, emphasizing the spiritual gifts said that, Christian love is the greatest and most essential of the spiritual gifts (1Cor. 13, 13). Even faith is worthless without love (1Cor. 13:1-3).

The mission work as a response to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20)<sup>101</sup> takes root from situations of openness and interdependence.<sup>102</sup> One of the congregants in the Kanisa kuu (Cathedral) in the ELCT/NWD who had been corresponding with one of his friends from Saint Peter's Parish Lutheran Church of New York, Evangelical Lutheran church in America showed me some mails from his friend in America, Some sentences struck me as actually testifying the link of interdependence, such as, "My heart is empty without you". And, "My eyes are blind without your eyes to see". Through the conversation with the congregant from Kanisa kuu (cathedral)<sup>103</sup> I came to comprehend that these sentences have connection with their mutual love in partnership.

### **4.3 The Practice of Partnership in Mission in the ELCT/NWD**

Based on the understanding of Partnership Mission in the ELCT/NWD - as we have seen above, congregants in ELCT/NWD may practise partnership in mission. One of my informants told me

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<sup>100</sup> The constitutional draft which was read before the General Assembly at Ntoma, 27.7-1.8 2004, kept silent on partnership issues

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Rev Isaac Nsibu 25.7.2008

<sup>102</sup> Russel 1981, 31.

<sup>103</sup> Conversation with Amos Lwankomezi 20.7.008

that, “my task in the partnership is through praying for each other, visiting, hosting and give respect when I meet with our partners.”<sup>104</sup>

The practice of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD is impressive, Partners are able to pray for witness and encourage one another as both bodies seek to serve Christ in different localities. The power to witness to Christ is evident among partners. When the witness is done by and with partners its effects are noticeable. The visitation in 2008 at North B district in the ELCT/NWD from the district Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg of the Lutheran Church in Germany is worth mentioning because of its missionary success. Wilberd and Julius had the following to say concerning that success:

At the beginning the congregants of North B district of The ELCT/NWD hesitated to accommodate their partners from Germany Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg district of the Lutheran Church in their thatched house they call *mishonge*. Their imaginations were that their partners cannot sleep in those houses because they come from the decent houses. Later, when they entered their *mishonge* to stay with them closely it's when many partners in North B district were spiritually touched. Families understood the advantages of Jesus Christ the Savior to be the Lord in their family life. There were prayers and Bible study in the home whereby husband, wives, children and some neighbors participated. Men and women came to themselves that Mr. John Bilikwija received Christ to be the Lord in his life, and he was reconciled with his wife who was separated from him for several months. Not only that couple but also Mr. Nicolaus and Mrs Aulelia Pesha saw the importance of their marriage to be solemnized.<sup>105</sup>

This success made the families of Mr. John Bilikwija and Mr. Nicolaus and Mrs Aulelia Pesha in North B district of ELCT/NWD to live a life with Jesus Christ as their Lord.

Partners also are able to learn more about one another, as friends, partners and fellow members of the one body of Christ. In interviews three of my informants said, “We learn many things like cooking different types of foods like *matoke* (*prepared from banana plantations*) which is the main food in the ELCT/NWD area. Also people from ELCT/NWD learn how to bake different cakes from friends through partnership and share challenges and their struggle also to have friends.”<sup>106</sup> Moreover they are capable of sharing struggles, challenges, joy and new possibilities for the mutual building of the people of God. Partners are competent to provide opportunities for

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<sup>104</sup> Interview with Rev. Remmy Lwankomezi 21.7.2008

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Mulokozi Julius and Wilson Wilberd 24.4. 2008

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Kyoma, Kagisa and Emmanuelina 29.7.2008



the mutual exchange of lay people, clergy and judicatory staff. They are able to sincerely know one another as friends and Christians and to expand the understanding so as to realize that the body of Christ has no geographical boundaries, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or socio-economic status and that it seeks mutuality among partners.

Naomi, when dealing with the practice of partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD emphasized that, the task of partnership is to offer the church members in the NWD an experience of doing mission in a worldwide Church. The awareness of one Catholic or Universal Church in this way takes roots, as well as revealing more about Western culture. This embraced all the good things people in the NWD attributed to Western religion and culture. These included things like spirituality, good education, literature, punctuality, marriage, neatness, language and courage that made them willing to make long journeys to Africa.<sup>107</sup>

#### **4.3.1 The Practice of Partnership in the ELCT/NWD in Relation to the Current Missiological Perspective of the ELCT and its partners**

In looking the practice of partnership in the ELCT/NWD in relation to the current missiological perspective of the ELCT and its partners, good results are seen because in partnership there is already an established acceptance, confidence and transperence between them. This puts them in a state of being ready to listen to each other. Partners in the ELCT/NWD have cultivated the habit of listening to one another which makes them find it easier to be loyal to listening to the Word of God. Listening is a gift that cultivates patience and appreciation and teaches one to believe and change (cf Rom 10:14-15). The gift of listening paves the way for conversation and dialogue in which asking for the sake of understanding is foundational.

Partners in the ELCT/NWD have witnessed to each other and have spoken as honest friends. They no longer regard each other as strangers. They speak and witness each other's needs weaknesses and strength. Witnessing to Christ by partners in the ELCT/NWD facilitates and accelerates the need of self-examination as well as the sense and readiness of making

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with Naomi Kanyonyi 7.7.2008

corrections, and thus results in transformation in by participating in contemporary partnership in mission.

When looking into the relation in current missiological with the practice of partnership in the ELCT/NWD I think we need to bear in mind that, one of the neat things about Christ's body (the assembly of believers, the church) is that, it is designed to help and be helped by its very members. Remember, Biblically Christians are described both as a *body* and a *family* (1Cor. 12:12-15). If your body and family are functioning correctly, pain is felt and taken care of

This same kind of care is also what God intends for a church—"God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:24-26). If Christians cared for one another then, also partners in the ELCT/NWD should be in the same category, In the New Testaments we find that Christian were able to care for each other's physical needs (Acts 9:36, 39), financial needs (Acts 4:32-35), emotional needs (Romans 12:15), and spiritual needs (Ephesians 4:12). My investigation shows that the ELCT/NWD congregations engaged in partnership reflect similar care.

When emphasizing financial needs it is important to note that it was crucial for the LCS that financial assistance was to be given. LCS Working Agreement 3.1.1., as quoted by Kristian Due, will be remembered for its emphasis "with ultimate aim of the ELCT unit to become self-supporting"<sup>108</sup> This also seem to be the main thought understanding the whole context of Christian care, including partners in the ELCT/NWD.

Also as investigator I hope in looking into the practice of partnership in the ELCT/NWD in the relation to the current missiological perspective of the ELCT, we need to keep in mind that, the mission of God has no boundaries or no limit to one denomination or some groups, It is for all people; partners in the ELCT/NWD need to help each other and to share straggles, challenges, joy and new possibilities for the mutual building up of the people of God. Partners in the

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<sup>108</sup> Kristian Due. (*The ELCT and the Transformation Process of its Partnership Structure*) Swedish Missiological Themes, Vol. 96, No. 4. 2008, 383.

ELCT/NWD should have attentively consider each other's trials, difficulties, and weaknesses; feel for each other, and excite each other to an increase of love to God and man; and as proof of it, to be fruitful in good works.

In reality, this is just another way of saying, as Jesus did, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you"(John 15:12). Such love manifests itself, not only in feeling for others in their troubles, but also in edifying and encouraging each other to do what is godly. In this way, partners in the ELCT/NWD share burdens and good things, therefore Christians in partnership should believe that Jesus died for all people.

#### **4.4 Intermediate Conclusion**

As we have seen above how understanding of partnership in mission is practice in the ELCT/NWD is understood through 'Omukago'. This is a traditional brotherhood (sister) hood practiced in the area of ELCT/NWD. It reflects that lovely each other is important in partnership mission in the ELCT/NWD. In this understanding partnership can extend in different ways as through respect for one other in the context of their culture, by tolerating each other, learning each others faith and sharing each other faith, helps each other, sharing struggles, challenges and new possibilities of building the people of God.

Partnership in ELCT/NWD has its basis in the word of God and his love. Love, as we have seen, is both the feeling and commitment that joins two or more souls together and brings two or more humans together and is the languages of the partners' hearts when they speak to one another. Since love is rooted on and linked to the word of God people today are enjoying each other, is relationship from that point they are able to pray both for witnessing together and encouraging each other.

## **5.0 THE REFLECTION ON CONTEMPORARY PARTNERSHIP MISSION IN THE ELCT/NWD**

### **5.1 Introduction**

There are many kinds of secular partnerships which people enter. Many partnerships are sought for profit fame. Some others are entered just for socialization. The partnership that Christians in the ELCT/NWD enjoy, share some of the value blessing of other types of partnership. In other regards it is unique particular and different from other partnerships. Its uniqueness will be further explained in the following points.

### **5.2 Local and Global Mission**

The reflection on contemporary partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD, will focus on whether partners participate both locally and global with an awareness of the presence of the needy with partners outside their congregational borders. By needy in this context I refer to people who are refugees, orphans, widows, sick, poor, suffer from hunger, are marginalized, weak in faith, have lapsed in Christianity or those who do not believe in God. Partners in the ELCT/NWD are known to show great show mutual respect, solidarity and are concerned with the needy in different ways.

The Kanisa kuu parish (Cathedral parish) of the ELCT/NWD in its partnership relations with Saint Peter's Parish (Lutheran Church of New York, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) has been running a project of making and building energy saver stoves (*majiko sanifu*). By this project people have profited in their cooking by using less expensive fire wood. Some families who normally would use kerosene and electricity in cooking have been able to save some money for their children's school fees.<sup>109</sup> Not only so, also stove makers earn money for their living when they sell them. Energy saver stoves are sold at a reasonable price so that common people can afford to buy them. Another example is that of women at Bukoba Cathedral parish who run a project whereby handcrafted domestic material are made and sold. Profits from this project that

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with Mjuni Byabato a retired Church officer, 30.7. 2008

is assisted by the partners in St.Peters parish (New York) are distributed to women and the needy.<sup>110</sup> The distribution of the profit is done according to the criteria set by the women's group (Bethania) itself.

Through American teachers sent by the partner Synod of Metropolitan New York (MNYS) to work at Kibeta English Medium Primary School (KEMPS) the ELCT/ NWD has learnt and see how partnership manifests itself in a global mission.<sup>111</sup> If they were to think of their local church only they would not have sent teachers to ELCT/NWD. I think Engstrom was right when he wrote that the idea of seeking partnership is to make Jesus Christ's mission more clearly become a global encounter.<sup>112</sup>

Local and global mission is not only seen in the exchange between partners but depict global mission too. In the intercessions, for instance, the East district, the West district and the Cathedral parish of the ELCT/NWD<sup>113</sup> proposed the following to be prayed for at home and abroad: (i) to pray for HIV/AIDS victims and that God may grant curative means, (ii) to pray for (the people affected by) civil wars in the great-lake countries, (iii) to pray for the lonely aged people in both old people's homes and private homes; that sons and daughters should spare time to visit and attend their parents who are in their mature years, (iv) to pray for the abolition of tourist prostitution and drug addiction, (v) to pray for mission work here and abroad to be done obediently and be effective to those who have not yet believed in God, and (vi) to pray for the homeless especially refugees and street children. Partnership life is living locally but thinking globally at the same time.

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<sup>110</sup> Interview with Naomi Kanyonyi 7.7.2008

<sup>111</sup> The MNYS sends two teachers to KEMPS every four years. KEMPS has now Gayle Kliever and Bethany Hirsch from MNYS

<sup>112</sup> Engstrom John to Bishop Samson Mushemba (a retired bishop in ELCT/NWD), 11.5.1991. Letter in the ELCT/NWD-Partnership file.

<sup>113</sup> ELCT/NWD - East district, Jarida la Udugu 1991-2008. File in East district office, Ibula;  
 ELCT/NWD - Western district, Jarida la Udugu 1981-2008. File in West district office, Kitahya;  
 ELCT/NWD - Cathedral parish, Jarida la Udugu 2002-2008. File in Cathedral parish office, Bukoba.

Christians in partnership cross the frontiers of their local church walls to share their faith with others. The point here is not that *missio Dei* should be reduced to Christian partnership, rather that through Christian partnership the *missio Dei* is expressed as well as understood if one is to participate in it appropriately.

Being in mission, both locally and globally as Christian partnership does needs “the sense of people for others... The Christian community does not exist for itself but for witness and service beyond its own membership... thinking beyond the immediate geographical areas, a congregation must reach out in love and service and witness,”<sup>114</sup> To be both local and global implies an ever-widening circle of mission opportunities and challenges, since Christian partnership is both local and global in scope.

### 5.3 The Priest hood of All Believers

When the congregant at North B district of The ELCT/NWD wanted to send delegates to their partners in Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg-Germany they did not look for clergy or an evangelist first. In the same way the same way the parishioners at Cathedral parish of the ELCT/NWD chose its delegates to visit Saint Peter’s Parish Lutheran Church of New York (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)<sup>115</sup> In the formative stage of establishing partnership delegations were mainly composed of the clergy. Voices from the North B district, Cathedral parish and from the students at REA were heard criticizing the mentality of thinking was reflected in that only the clergy would have the right to proclaim the Word of God among partners.<sup>116</sup> On this issue Lwakatale, a member of the Diocesan partnership Committee, had this to say: “Nowadays, the out-going and in-coming delegations involve both clergy and laity depending on the themes to be discussed during the visitation. If more themes are on theological issues then more clergy and theologians will be needed, but if they are on general Christian life the laity has chance”.<sup>117</sup> Lwankomezi puts it clear that the life and ministry of the congregations, and thus in the mission of God the clergy are not the key players – although also the clergy are God’s gifts to the

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<sup>114</sup> Bauer 1987,5.

<sup>115</sup> Interview Kyoma Kamulali, 29.7.2008

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Jonathan Hamurungi (Director of REA), Jason Kagisa and Mugisha Mgyabuso 29.7.2008,

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Phinias Lwakatale, 15.7.2008

Church. They are not there to dominate God's people (1 Peter 5:3).<sup>118</sup> This is because witnessing and proclaiming the Word of God is the right of every baptized Christian. All stand in direct relationship with God. They are free to propagate the Gospel. By including both lay and ordained in the delegations of the Synod the church affirms that it need both the witness of the ordained (cf. Augsburg confession, Art.5) and the lay persons.

Arguing for the "Priesthood of All Believers" Luther based himself on 1Peter 2:1-10, that all Christian believers have an equal right in the priesthood. This priesthood of all is a holy and spiritual one according to the Scripture and in the eyes of God.<sup>119</sup> I do not think that at this point Luther was denying the importance of our visible church priests but that priests have to be spiritual, whether they are lay or ordained.

Jesus preached the gospel and taught all people. He prayed for all people on the cross. He also sacrificed himself for all people which is the most esteemed function of the priest office. Because of all that Luther says that all believers "have the authority, the command, and the obligation to preach, to come before God, to pray for one another... Nevertheless, no one should undertake to preach or to declare the Word of God unless he is a priest."<sup>120</sup> If God through Jesus Christ made the new covenant with all his people then all laity and clergy have equal rights to participate in this "Priesthood of All Believers." Proclaiming the Word of God is no longer understood to be the task of the clergy only and neither is the title of 'missionary' for Whites only, nor for people who live in the so called 'mission stations'.

Christian partners in ELCT/NWD are by virtue of baptism and by spiritual power participants in this priesthood of all believers. Therefore they are on the right track when they to proclaim and witness to one another how they have been brought out of darkness to a marvelous life. In 2001 I myself witnessed how an un-confirmed delegate from Saint Peter's Parish Lutheran Church of New York (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) was so touched by life and testimonies in the Cathedral parish of the ELCT/NWD, that he later let himself be prepared for confirmation.

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Lemmy Lwankomezi 21.7.2008

<sup>119</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: The Catholic Epistles*. Vol. 30 Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967.

<sup>120</sup> Luther 1967, 54

This event shows that partners are not only proclaiming the World but also inviting other people to come in so that they may also participate in *missio Dei*, both as receiver and contributors. At the same time Christian partners will share the benefits of having an ordained ministry. The role of these priests is to equip them and to make sure that the Word of God and sacraments are well administered.

## **5.4 Partnership as Characterized by Constant Interaction**

### **5.4.1 Interaction for common Ends**

In Christian partnership there should be no self-seeking profits and returns. Partners do also make visits but are not regular tourists. What ends then do the Christians in ELCT/NWD want to achieve in their partnership? I find that their aim is not merely visits, programs, aid and gifts. Christian partners interact cooperatively with the will of working together for the common end of reaching those who have not yet heard, believed and confessed that Jesus Christ is the Lord (cf. Rom 10:9-15) as well as building up in the faith those who have (Eph 4:11-12).

The habit of a host family inviting neighbors when they receive quest partners, irrespective of their denomination and faiths, to come for talks and jokes, to eat and drink, walk and work, sing and pray together has to be maintained. These interactions among partners serve a common purpose. However, when Christian partners make witness to Christ, as they interact with people of other faiths have to bear in mind what Niedner says:

We do not first say to those others that they are condemned, while we are saved. We say only what we know of our sins...and we name our hope for their remission in Christ. An other public talk that would distinguish insiders from outsiders, especially if it involves some judgments against no-Christians, most likely represents a form of self-justification and may also trample awkwardly in the preserves of God's secrets<sup>121</sup>

The understanding and practice of non coercion may result in winning many for Jesus Christ who died to save all (Mk.10:45). The emphasis is on John 17: 20-21 that all people may be one, just as Jesus and Father are one, so should his people be one in order to make the world believe.

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<sup>121</sup> Frederick A. Niedner. Lutheran Theology of Election and Predestination as a Model for Witness and Mission in A Pluralistic World", in *the Role of Mission in the Future of Lutheran Theology*, ed. Viggo Mortensen. Occasional Papers no. Center fro Multireligious Studies, University of Aarhus, 109-127.



Christ's will is that world should be reconciled to him. Christ's love compels Christians to mission-to tell others in our localities and abroad the marvelous love he continues show for humankind. Thus Christ's love also works through partnership in calling the world to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:14).

I also found that there is a widening and extension of partnership. The warmth and influences from the already established partnership extend to other partnership foundations and some times to letting in more partners. The following are partnerships which have resulted from the already established partnership: The partnership between the Cathedral parish of the ELCT/NWD and St. Peter –MNYS parish has enable Kashura parish (ELCT/NWD) to enter into partnership with the Jerusalem parish of the Lutheran church in Nairobi Kenya. The partnership between North B District and the Church district of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg in Germany has enable Kaibanja parish (ELCT/NWD) to enter into partnership with Arboga parish, Sweden.<sup>122</sup>

The common ends- the ultimate aim in these partnership interaction is that all people may be saved.

#### **5.4.2 Interaction in Diversity**

There is diversity within partnership. Partnership is not an expression of uniformity. Partners have attitudes and qualities which make them unique and in one way or another different from their other partners. So long as partners are different in culture and traditions, environment and history, as well as talents, they will always differ. The body metaphor portrayed by Paul (1Cor 12:14-26) demonstrates this. Despite differences all partners belong to one body- that is Jesus Christ.

A partner therefore ought to try his best to sit where his other partner sits, meaning to recognize and accept the gifts, behaviors, characters, practices, grieves and joy of the other and how all these determine the premises of his being different from him. Sitting where the other partner sits has to be done carefully without compromising the Word of God or betraying and watering away Christian witness.

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<sup>122</sup> Interview with Godwin Lwezaua 20.7.2008.

From the cultural point of view Mugisha and Lwankomezi had the following to say: Partners from the West and some part of Africa would not find this to admire. The task of fetching water from the river and peeling banana is a task traditionally assigned to female while collecting and chopping fire wood is the responsibility of males. This kind of division of labor gives each gender a private chance, without men's interruption to discuss their own issues which are for the betterment of both their social and spiritual life. Western partners neither may probably nor understand why in this division of labor women work separately from men. It is because in their developed countries cooking is done by electricity and they have tap of water. It is also bad mannered for a child, whether in church or at home, to keep sitting on a chair while an adult keeps on standing or sitting down on the floor. Western partners would not find this an issue for sitting on a chair is also children's right even before their adults.<sup>123</sup>

My understanding, however, is that Western partners would not find a child keep sitting on the chair an issue, since a well educated child stands up and gives the chair to the adult. Kagisa made a remark too: "It is un-imaginable therefore, unusual for an indigenous female in the area of ELCT/NWD to whistle. To Western women whistling may mean to show how much they are emancipated."<sup>124</sup>

Several partners from abroad wonder when hear they of polygamous marriages in the ELCT/NWD and in Africa at large. But had they known the reasons for these marriages they wouldn't be quite so shocked. Many Africans are born and grown up in such marriages for the following reason: To have enough descendants who can give a strong possible assurance of immortality, to lessen divorce in case of the problem of childlessness, spacing of children, abstinence during breast feeding, new home for widows and unmarried women, and to lessen prostitution and unfaithfulness, especially on the side of husband.<sup>125</sup>

Among the NWD Christians, just as it is in many other Dioceses of the ELCT, Marriage is an affair of the whole extended family. It involves all members, not only the husband and wife, a thing which makes divorce and separation not easy in African context<sup>126</sup> My question is therefore can polygamy sincerely be seen as lacking blessings? This is a critical issue because there are

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with Mugisha Mgyabuso and Amos Lwnkomezi, 25.7.008

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Jason Kagisa 5.7.2008

<sup>125</sup> Mbiti 1969, 142-143, Haselbarth 1976, 73-75.

<sup>126</sup> Mbiti 1969, 145.

several good partners and even some clergy who are born in polygamous marriages. Are all these born out of sin, so that they have to regret, repent or abandon their professions? The point here is not to advocate for polygamy but to keep those who are born in polygamous marriages on the safe side: They are not illegitimate children and they have all rights in church.

Besides having partners from churches abroad with different traditions, there are denominations such as Pentecostals, Anglicans, Orthodox, Methodists, Roman Catholic and Moravians in the area of the NWD. Some partners and Christians of these denominations drink bear and honor statues in church a practice which is against Lutheran teachings in the ELCT/NWD. In spite of having all these partners and denominations Lutherans of the NWD have not lost their identity in their own teachings, worship and service to people, but nevertheless maintain partnership relations.

The relations and interactions taking place among denominations have no intention of converting members of other denominations to the Lutheran. Rather they show in partnership relations that Christians are growing towards ones another in diversity. Partners who interact still preserve their identity but enrich each other. Interactions in diversity enable: (i) partners to look at each other critically for the sake of making corrections; (ii) partners to be helped to enhance the spirit of self-examination for transformation if necessary; (iii) the partners to recognize one another's identity and promote respect between partners, as well as learning how God wants to speak to them in their respective identities; (iv) the awareness of interdependence – needing each other because he who identifies himself is reminded of being with the other; (v) the image of intimacy among members of God's family; and (vi) increase of the desire to seek similarities. Similarities spring from God whom partners share in diversity. In John 14:26; 17: 20-21 Jesus manifests the *perichoretic* interaction of the Trinity in his ministry. In these verses we see the difference and similarity among the three Persons of Trinity, and still these are not three Trinities or three Gods. This has to be the pattern and principal for Jesus Christ's followers in participating in his mission.

### 5.4.3 Interaction as Interdependence

The church has to agree that it lives in the age of network with others. It is the age of information technology. The programs, agreements and appointments it makes do not only involve church organizations but also governmental departments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Factories<sup>127</sup> and the like. In Christian partnership relationships, for example in the partnership between, North B district and the Church District of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg (Germany), between Ruhija Evangelical Academy (REA) and the Herborn district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, and between Bukoba Cathedral parish and St. Peter's. In all these of these partnerships, partners send information to each other by internet and by the magazine called "The intersection." Such communication tools are appreciable for mission work in this age of network.

Reissner was right about his fifth step in the partners' dance in mission when he wrote that "[n]etworks tend to keep close to the ground and are found on the ideal of interdependent relationships. We live in the age of networks. We need to image how these networks can further the work of mission."<sup>128</sup> The Christian partnership in the ELCT/NWD has to make the full use of these communication tools so as to strengthen relationship and expand alliances letting in more people to participate in the *missio Dei* to.

Interdependence is not only helpful in networking, which has made the world a global village, but also in one's self-identification. Again and again we read about Jesus identifying himself in relationship to the Father. Jesus says his work, judgment, honor, word, authority and glory are of the Father (Jn 5: 17-47). Jesus teaches Christians to identify themselves in relation to other believers; this means both inside and outside the Diocese.

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<sup>127</sup> Many guests from abroad want to visit Tanganyika Instant Coffee Company (TANICA), The only factory which processes coffee in Bukoba. The appointment has to be made three weeks before the visit.

<sup>128</sup> Reissner 2001,9.

#### 5.4.4 Interaction as Involvement

Involving is a commitment of oneself to other person in trust. Partners' involvement extends to all people within their (partner's) vicinity, persons on their doorsteps, and the needy in their periphery, both in spiritual and material needs. "A Christian partnership which opens its eyes and involves itself in making life be suitable for people is an authentic partnership,"<sup>129</sup> commented an old Roman Catholic lady. The lady was speaking from her experience because in 2001 the partnership delegates attended her Muslim brother's funeral. The delegate had a time for them and in the end they gave the bereaved family some material things and money to support them. Delegates were both partner guest and hosts, "What does this mean to us, the Roman Catholic Christians and Muslim?" the same old lady added in a question. What she indicated was that 'involvement' was clearly revealed in Christian partnership.

The above mentioned experiences are real examples from some individuals. But there is more examples depicting partners' involvement and concern in the community at large. In the district of South A, North B and West there are dispensaries which are built or get support under Christian partnership projects. To mention a few of the achievements these dispensaries have lessened the problems of sick children and women in labor dying on the way while walking or being carried to distant hospitals. The south B district bought an *emilembe* (boat) not only for business purposes but also for transporting sick people from the islands, where there are no dispensaries, to the mainland dispensaries for treatment.<sup>130</sup> One of the reasons which made North B district buy a Land Cruiser car was to be available to the sick. North B district also runs Missenyé Orphans Scholarship Scheme (MOSS) through which all orphans from all religions are cared for.<sup>131</sup>

A question can be asked: What has NWD Partners given to their partners abroad? Are they only receivers? No, they are not. The gifts they received are extended to other needy receivers. This is seen by the Cathedral parish of the NWD partner which received from St. Peter –MNYS parish a

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<sup>129</sup> Interview Emmanuelina Byalugaba, 30.7.2008

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Phinias Lwakatale 15.7.2008

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Christian Sindano 5.7. 2008

gift of food, money and clothes for the Rwandese refugees.<sup>132</sup> The North B district sometimes receives gifts from the District of Lüdenscheid – Plettenberg in Germany but passes them on to *Kitengule jail* (owned of by the government of Tanzania). In that way the gift was extended to others. In my opinion that partners should keep on giving aid and service no-discriminatory to all people. In this way partners, who are supposed to be, will remain light and salt of the world so as to give God glory (Mt 5: 13-16). They have to know that it is little and small salt that makes food in large quality be preserved and salty. What salt and light have in common is the ability to penetrate and at the same time remain distinct.

What I refer to as ‘Partnership Interactions as Involvement’ can equally be termed as incarnational growth. Incarnational growth is,

the degree of involvement of community of faith in the life and problems of her social environment, i.e. her participation in the affliction of her world, her prophetic, intercessory, and liberating action on behalf of the weak and destitute; the intensity of her preaching to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed (Lk 4:18-21).<sup>133</sup>

Faith is to incarnate in to people’s lives. The fruits of faith have to be seen and found among people. James says faith by itself, faith with sympathy only, faith without works is dead (Jas 2:14). Just as I have pointed before: This is also the true journeying with people for it shows rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Rom 12:15; 2Cor 12:26). What is needed is faith with commitment, and thus involvement.

Partners involving themselves in the lives of their sisters and brothers by caring is a sign of loving God whom they have never seen (cf Jn 4:20). Involvement seen in interactions contains the quality of being concerned by, with, for and on the side of the needy. The intercession included in the Pentecost liturgies sent to partners in the exchange do also reveal how partners are committed and involved in each other’s concern. They have no more the feelings that a problem of their partners, who live thousand kilometers from them, is not of their concern. They bear in mind and faith a common ecumenical slogan “In One Boat”. If the boat leaks at the front part even those who have seats at the back of the boat should regard it as their concern too. Involvement, to partners who interact, makes them feel more bound as partners, and thus grow

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<sup>132</sup> Interview with Lemmy Lwankomezzi 21.7.2008

<sup>133</sup> Van Engen 2001,30.

together spiritually. Warren knew this when he recommended involvement as one of the factors which constitutes partnership.<sup>134</sup> Genuine involvement is born out of partnership interactions.

## **5.5 Credibility of Participation in Contemporary Mission in the ELCT/NWD**

### **5.5.1 A Token of Friendship**

Interactions and visits made by partners to Christians of other denominations and people of other faith is a token of friendship. This practice helps to answer the question: Where do evangelical Lutherans in the NWD stand in relation to seeking relations with other Christians and people of other living faiths? Partners do not regard them as people who have gone astray or mainly as people who are perishing. They are people of God with whom partners ought to seek relation. The Christian partnership has a hand of friendship in three ways:

(i) The working together of partners who come from different churches and different ethnic backgrounds gives ecumenical insights and impulses. When partners from abroad come to NWD they share their experience and insights on ecumenical bodies and worldwide churches, as well as how they work together and relate to each other at home. They also show interest in knowing what is done in NWD in relation to other denominations as well as religions. In so doing their hosts find themselves in the need of searching and knowing about such bodies and religious relationships at different levels.

At the Tanzanian national level there is the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT). In Africa there are bodies like Lutheran Communion in Central and East Africa (LUCCEA), Lutheran Communion in South Africa (LUCSA) and Lutheran Communion in West Africa (LUCWA) working with All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). The LWF<sup>135</sup> has stated that the set-ups of these bodies are for sharpening each others understanding of faith, ministry, life and Mission. Worldwide the World Council of Churches ((WCC) has a similar function.

Working together as friends in unity facilitates the participation in mission. Because Christian partnership influences and practices penetrate to grassroots these bodies of the churches have

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<sup>134</sup> Warren 1955, 12

<sup>135</sup> *LWF To day* 2004,8.

been introduced to common people in villages and their local congregations.”It is through partnership interactions that I came to know that there are national bodies of churches working together,”<sup>136</sup> a young lady said amazingly. Member churches of these bodies retain their identity but this should not weaken the partnership and interactions and interpenetrations. They should rather presuppose that partners give room for each other’s identity.

(ii) A long side the planting of ecumenical ideas and finding visible expressions of church unity at grassroots mutual visits have developed between some clergy of the NWD and the Roman Catholic Church. The visit programs of the in-coming delegations do some times include visiting the Roman Catholic projects, parishes and / or priests.<sup>137</sup> The relation and friendship established during these visits do not end there but continue. It is in this context that Sindano expressed his hope: “It is my hope that hatred and contempt which has prevailed for a long time, especially between Lutheran and Roman Catholic clergy gradually will come to an end; and respect and friend will reign.”<sup>138</sup> Problems between these two churches arise especially from the issue of interchurch marriage, namely as to where or how the couple should be wedded and were their offspring should be baptized. Christian partnership will then be of good use making two sides cooperate as they participate together in *missio Dei*.

(iii) The Union of Religions (UMAKA) in Bukoba region Lutheran, Islamic and Roman Catholic (LIRO) organizations and was founded in order to create a harmonious atmosphere between denominations and religions.<sup>139</sup> Unfortunately, this organization operates with rather few religious leaders. The resolutions and how they are implemented are mostly known only among its committee members. Fortunately, through conversations and informal among dialogue during partnership visits, some people have come to understand what UMAKA is. UMAKA is now preparing a unit syllabus for primary school religious education in Bukoba region.<sup>140</sup> “UMAKA is not on our Muslim agenda but through Christian partnership visits I have known that religions in our region see the need of working together in friendship,”<sup>141</sup> commented a Muslim man

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Kahigwa 7.7.2008

<sup>137</sup> ELCT/NWD-North B district visit program 2004 and ELCT/NWD- Cathedral program 2006.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Christian SINDANO 7.7.2008

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Issac Nsibu 25.7.2008

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Isaac Nsibu 25.7.2008

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Ayub Hamis 21.7.008



When REA decides to include the topic “Islam and Christianity in African and Europe communities” in its partnership discourses this is also a token of friendship. Friendship creates trust and receives trust. Friends feel happy about the other’s success, achievements, development and growth. A hand of friendship seeks conversation, communication and relationship for the sake of growing together when participating together in *missio Dei*.

### 5.5.2 Chance in Partnership

The Partnership offer multiple opportunities or chances. I will thematize nine: ‘Two-by- two’ *concept*: Participation in mission as partners gives opportunities and advantages which are here termed as chances. The philosophical meaning found in the proverb *abagenda babili baijukanyia*, meaning “people who walk two by two” is able to correct, encourage and remind partners of the chances one has when participating in *missio Dei* together. There is the advantage of two partners reminding each other of what God, through the Bible, wants his people to do and share. Where there are mistakes corrections can be done as well as give encouragement when there is despair. Both reflect a witness to Christ of the wonderful things he does.

In partnership Christians are no longer partners left alone in the world of fear and loneliness, which are otherwise detrimental to a community. I share the opinion of Donfried that loneliness and insecurity magnify fragmentations in the community: crisis in marriages and economy cause people to become worried about their future; crisis of corruption in political, governmental and corporate structures that seem to make all attempts at proclaiming God’s justice useless.<sup>142</sup> Partners in a two-by-two concept overcome loneliness. Partners feel the oneness, togetherness and thus strength to stand up for Jesus in participating in *missio Dei*.

*Win for Christ*: Love, concern, involvement, respect and mutuality, which are the qualities of Christian partnership, has enabled people in partnership to win other people for Christ. The lapsed and non-believers can be won for the Church. This is vividly seen, especially by good attendance of people in partnership Sundays and normal Sunday services especially with partner guests or when partner issues are on the agenda. Prayers and Bible reading at home with partners

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<sup>142</sup> Donfried 1979,6.

are also well attended. The point here is not in the propagation to a number of people on behalf of Christianity, but the quality of life of those who are and become Christians. Through listening to the Word of God, preached and witnessed by partners, more people can believe (Rom 10:14-15)

*Parishes for the people:* Through partnerships Christians have developed the attitude of helping and serving people within and beyond their local congregations and parishes. This attitude of partners in congregations and parishes, who give service to all the needy, has made parishes become likened to a garage where vehicles are taken for repair, likened with a hospital where the sick go for treatment, and likened with filling petrol station where cars are taken for refuel. They have become places for healing people mentally, physically and spiritually. Such partner congregations and parishes are always free with open doors to let in all whom God loves. Through such aid and services rendered to various people partners manifest why the church exists. Bonhoeffer, as quoted by Bosch, will be remembered for his emphasis that “[t]he church is the church only when it exist for others... The church must share in secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving,”<sup>143</sup> Parishes are a place for all people to run to and to find rescue, care and healing.

*One church, one Lord:* Because partners come from different churches partnership makes these churches become visibly one Church with one Lord, as the body of Christ. This church is built up by participants through the exercise of their different gifts (1 Cor 12) to each other. This makes the message proclaimed by partners be received by hearers as the Word coming one Lord – the owner of mission. In this way ecumenism and the sprit of working together are also introduced at grassroots.

*The unequal be equal:* In partnership there is no competition, neither seeking return nor fame. The green lights of overcoming and eradicating inferiority and superiority complexes been timed on. Confidence is being built. This kind of relationship will continue to be called a gift from God for its not easy for two differently (materially) talented people to accept each other equally. Bauerochse has seen this when he says that “have” and “have-nots” both have a possibility of

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<sup>143</sup> Bosch 1991, 373.

coming together as equals that “[a]t first glance, even in interchurch relations the gap between rich and poor makes a partnership encounter of equals sharing equal together impossible. But by consciously initiating jointing learning processes, the partners accept each other on an equal footing and thereby both enrich each other and yet can look at each other critically.”<sup>144</sup> On that point Amos Lwankomezi (a congregant from Cathedral of the ELCT/NWD) confessed:

“At the binging of our partnership with St. Peter –MNYS parish I felt inferior to them. I felt like a man having completely nothing to offer them. But after some years of our partnership interactions things changed. What I am and that what God gave me suffer to offer our partners. Even telling the hoe Jesus saved me in more valid and valued testimony thinking of giving them money and food- things they actually have than I.”<sup>145</sup>

To attest this he also referred me to Paul’s testimony (Phil 3:1-14), which found to surpass money and food alone. Paul testifies that his knowing Christian was more worth than all the gains. Basically, Lwankomezi wants partners and thus all Christians to share’ what they are’ first before they think of sharing their material wealth.

*Iconoclasm:* Christian partnership entertains iconoclasm, a term I borrowed from Reissner who defines it as a way of seeing things in a correct way, and different from before.<sup>146</sup> A Biblical example which fits here is Acts 10:9-16. Peter, before, held that some reptiles, animals and birds were unclean for human consumption. But after his vision at Cornelius’ housetop he came to know that God had created all clean – none is to be disrespected. Although neither men nor women are to be compared with the creatures Peter saw in his vision, there is a lesson of seeing things in a new way. Many Christians in NWD were not ready to accept the ordination of women. It was thought that women were unclean and that it was unbiblical to ordain them for the ministry. But by seeing and learning about women ministries through partnership interactions they came to understand things differently from before: women are clean for the ministry.<sup>147</sup>

*Mission in area of life:* The in-coming delegations take part in various activities in various areas of human life. When they are at home with their hosts, for example, they participate in fetching water from rivers, prepare and cook food, and fetch weed in the gardens. Collectively they play

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<sup>144</sup> Bauerochse 2001,113.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Amos Lwankomezi 20.7.2008

<sup>146</sup> Reissner 200,8.

<sup>147</sup> Pastor Carol Fryer, a women pastor from St. Peter’s parish of MNYS in USA, was the fist to officiate the Holy Communion in the NWD. St. Peter’s has a partnership with Bukoba Cathedral parish of the ELCT/NWD.

games, sing and dance, attend ceremonies and weddings as well as funerals. They visit school, youth and women groups, ferry harbors, and hospitals and participate in different projects that are initiated according to partnership agreements. They travel from one place to another with their hosts and different drivers. And during these excursions different themes come up in their conversations. This is to say that proclaiming and witnessing to Christ is done in Christian partnership extends to many people: cooks, gardeners, players, children, women, brides and bridegrooms, the bereaved, students and teachers, doctors, laborers and drivers. Mission work done by Christian partners is not confined to church buildings and to Sundays. Many Christians use these chances to the fullest advantage as they participate in *missio Dei*.

*Friend for God:* The Good News Bible puts 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 in simple English as follows: “All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. Our message is that God was making all humankind his friends through Christ.” God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. Christians have the task of making other God’s friends too. They do not make friends for themselves but for God in order that they may also ultimately be redeemed.

*Life of prayer and reading the Bible:* In explaining preparations for the out-going and in-coming delegation I showed how prayers are regularly done before and after partnership gatherings or activities during the visitations. This is a sign of dependency on God the owner of mission. Life of prayer is very important for all Christians. For that there is reason convinced to say: more prayer more power, less prayer less power; no prayer no power. Praying is communicating with God, and prayer is a power for entering into a new thing or action through worship.

Therefore preparation for the in-coming and out-going delegations also among Christians do increase the habit of and desire for reading the Bible by themselves. When they have read and understood the Bible texts Christians discuss them both in their homes, among family members, and in their villages before intensive deliberations on Sunday preparations. The faith born out of reading the Bible is well shared among congregants. The more Christian partnership grows, the

more the life of prayer, and the desire to read the Bible will be promoted in homes, groups and in the church.

### **5.6 Intermediate conclusion**

In this chapter I have endeavored to on the contemporary partnership in mission in the ELCT/NWD. I have attempted to use informants as references as well as identifying some theological themes that emerge with regard to contemporary partnership mission in the ELCT/NWD. I have noted that partners in the ELCT/NWD show the mutual respect, solidarity and concern with the needy in different ways. It is very impressive to see Christians in partnership cross the border of their local church walls to share their faith with others. This points out that it is clearly understood that in Christian partnership interaction for common end there are no self- seeking profits and return.

In this section it becomes clear that there is interaction, as well as involvement that is very important on the reflection on contemporary partnership mission in the ELCT/NWD, also that is commitment of oneself to another person. Partners involving themselves to their sister and brother is a sign of loving God, also participation in mission as partner gives opportunities and advantages which are termed as chances.

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of my thesis has been to investigate how contemporary partnership in Christian mission is understood by and practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), North Western Diocese. The research has shown that partnership in Christian mission in the ELCT/NWD has been practiced both inside and outside its parishes, districts, and as well as extending to the union of religions (UMAKA) in Bukoba region. Also partnership in Christian mission in ELCT/NWD has kept up its relationship with a number of overseas churches whereby it carries out its work together with overseas partners in areas such as evangelical outreach, teaching and social-diaconal ministries.

In the practice of Christian partnership in mission there is a manifestation and recognition that God is the owner of both mission and Church. Christian partners are only given the privilege of participating in his mission. God's plan in his mission is to bring salvation to his people, and his plan did not come haphazardly. Right from the fall of man God planned and promised to save him by bruising the enemy's head (Gen 3:15). God the Father sent the Son to redeem the world, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to teach and sanctify people. Later, the Triune God sent the Church from the world into the world to participate in his mission. This sending of the church, which was first stressed by Karl Barth in 1932, shows how the Triune God by nature missionary. The third movement of the Triune God sending the Church to participate in his mission was in depth discussed and re-discovered by the International Mission Council (IMC), which held its meeting in 1952 at Willingen in Germany after the IMC re-discovery that not the Church but God is the owner of mission, and the term *missio Dei* was created. Christians are showing successful participation in *missio Dei* especially when they relate to each other as partners and give a visible expression of the Church's unity.

The concept of partnership was worldwide awakened in 1970s when the desire for direct personal involvement and interactions with people of other cultures and other churches grew. Although in the former years of partnership congregants and parishioners entered Christian partnership with different interests and expectations, their foremost objective was to enrich each other spiritually. They wanted to be in partnership of sharing the Good News (Phil 1: 5).

As to the ELCT/NWD characteristics and influences of partnership are penetrating and showing affects at grassroots. Partners' interactions breed a missionary vibrancy since they involve most Christians and are extended to people of other faiths. Visits are made and humanitarian services are given to all people impartially. Partners show their involvement and commitment in other persons by trust. In this way Christian partnership makes the church a moving out servant, to the churches of others and thus remains a light and salt of the world.

A genuine receiving and giving among partners in mission springs from the understanding that they are all needy receivers and rich givers simultaneously. They need obedience in giving because the sole giver is God. Therefore, what partners give each other deserves to be called gifts. Material things given to each other are not material things *per se*. They are material things but also given a spiritual meaning. This is why partners share first "who they are," not "what they have." Sharing first "who they are" gives room to mutuality, respect, obedience and interdependence.

Themes on the Christian partnership's agenda attest to partner's concern in contemporary mission challenges. Partners engage themselves in seeking God's justice when they advocate rights for women and children; endeavor to serve and care the needy and the marginalized especially the HIV/AIDS victims, orphans and widows.

The primary factor for partners to be good participants in *missio Dei* is in the understanding of the biblical and theological bases of partnership. Based on these they get to understand the particularity of Christian partnership, and that it is different from other worldly partnership relations. First and foremost, its foundations and grounds are in the Bible. It does not spring into existence from human initiatives alone. That is why Christian partnership holds promises of equality and mutual involvement as partners participate in *missio Dei*.

The participation of Christian partners in *missio Dei* is vivid both in the partners' local settings and worldwide. Being both local and global widens the chance of accepting partners internationally. Obedience reigns in partnership because the message that partners share is God himself who is the sender as well. In other words its could be said that partnership begins with

the recognition that the source of fellowship is in the common obedience to the Word of God. Obedience to the Word of involves proclaiming and inviting others to take part in it. This is a good and divine task for all believers: both clergy and laity.

The Gospel shared by partners is also the message of reconciliation. The message permeates homes to the extent of making the separated spouses come to forgive each other and come together as reconciled couples and families. The motivation of spreading the Gospel has its source in the belief that partners are gifted and given the secret of the Gospel that brings salvation to all people ( Mt 28:18-20; Lk 14:23; Jn:16; Rom 1:16).

Saying of the regular prayers, reading the Bible, giving testimonies, using polite language and asking for forgiveness are the outer signs born from partners' faith in striving for holiness and deepening faith. Interactions taking place among partners have enhanced the striving together for the common end of building up the faith of those who have (Eph 4:12) as well as reaching those who have not yet believed. Partnership has a witnessing and proclaiming pattern which consists in reaching out to bring others into fellowship in the Gospel.

The age in which the Church lives today is an age of information technology and network. Christian partners in the North Western Diocese (NWD) have increasingly been buying computers and laptops for internet purpose; they have bought radio calls and mobile phones for communication and work hard to buy cars for transport. These communication tools are used in participating in the *missio Dei*. Communication tools do also increase the sense and awareness of interdependence. Interdependence and seeking relationships are experienced in partnership and teach Christians to define themselves in relation with others – not against them. Partners defining themselves in relation with others give strength to the established ecumenical bodies like CCT, AACC, WCC and UMAKA.

There are advantages of participating in the *missio Dei* as partners. I have identified nine interreligious. The first is seen in the 'two by two' concept in which Christian partners remind each other of what God wants them to do. Second is for winning more people for Jesus Christ who died for all people. When some people see how Christian partners behave in relation to



others they get attracted and are persuaded to seek Christian faith. The third advantage is very much connected to the second. Christian partnership has a service pattern. The attitude of partners in serving and caring for all the needy have made congregators and parishes become welcoming spaces for people. Places where people of all faiths can seek help. Fourth, partners coming from different churches and backgrounds but proclaiming the same message, portray one worldwide Church with one Lord. Fifth, Partners make the (materially) unequal, because material wealth in partnership is not the basic factor. The basic factor is sharing first “what they are” and second, of ‘what they have.’ Six, in spiritual and theological preparations for the outgoing and in-coming delegations the core of the committed in *missio Dei* are equipped and expanded. More people are equipped to start witnessing about the Good News. Seventh, through partnership interactions partners are able to learn from each other and find possibilities of seeing things in a correct way different from before – the iconoclasm. This can lead to such things as, for example, accepting women in the ordained ministry. Eight, Christian partnership aims at making other to become God’s friends too. Through Christ all humankind enjoy to be under the realm of God as a friend. Nine, Christian, partners’ regularization of prayer and Bible studies both in homes and in groups promote the life of prayers and the desire for reading the Bible for themselves. Participants in *missio Dei* are lead to a worshipping life which is also experienced and strived for in Christian partnership.

I have also found partnership is basically practiced by congregants at grassroots level. Therefore partnership should be made by partnership committees, and not by some few individuals or some church leaders. Nevertheless, church leaders should be ready to guide and give advices in partnership affairs. This can be done through partnership seminars, workshops and meetings. Visits, exchange program of personnel, projects enhancing interdependence, transparency and making evaluations of the partnership work should be maintained. Communication tools like e-mail and faxes should be used at their fullest advantage in this age of information technology.

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## COMPANION COVENANT

*between*

*North Western Diocese*  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)

*and*

*Metropolitan New York Synod*  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)



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### Mission

*We join together, hand in hand, as we worship the same Christ, study the same Scriptures and commit our lives to the same God who has created all of us, from different parts of the world, in God's divine image.*

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### Purpose

*We join in this Covenant, Diocese and Synod, to:*

- ✦ Pray for, witness to and encourage one another as both bodies seek to serve Christ in our localities.
- ✦ Learn more about one another, as friends, partners and fellow members of the one body of Christ.
- ✦ Share our struggles, challenges, joys and new possibilities for the mutual upbuilding of the People of God.
- ✦ Provide opportunities for mutual exchange of lay people, clergy and judicatory staff in order for us to sincerely know one another as friends and Christians.
- ✦ Expand our understanding that the body of Christ has no geographical boundaries, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or socio-economic status and seeks mutuality among partners.

*This Covenant is signed*

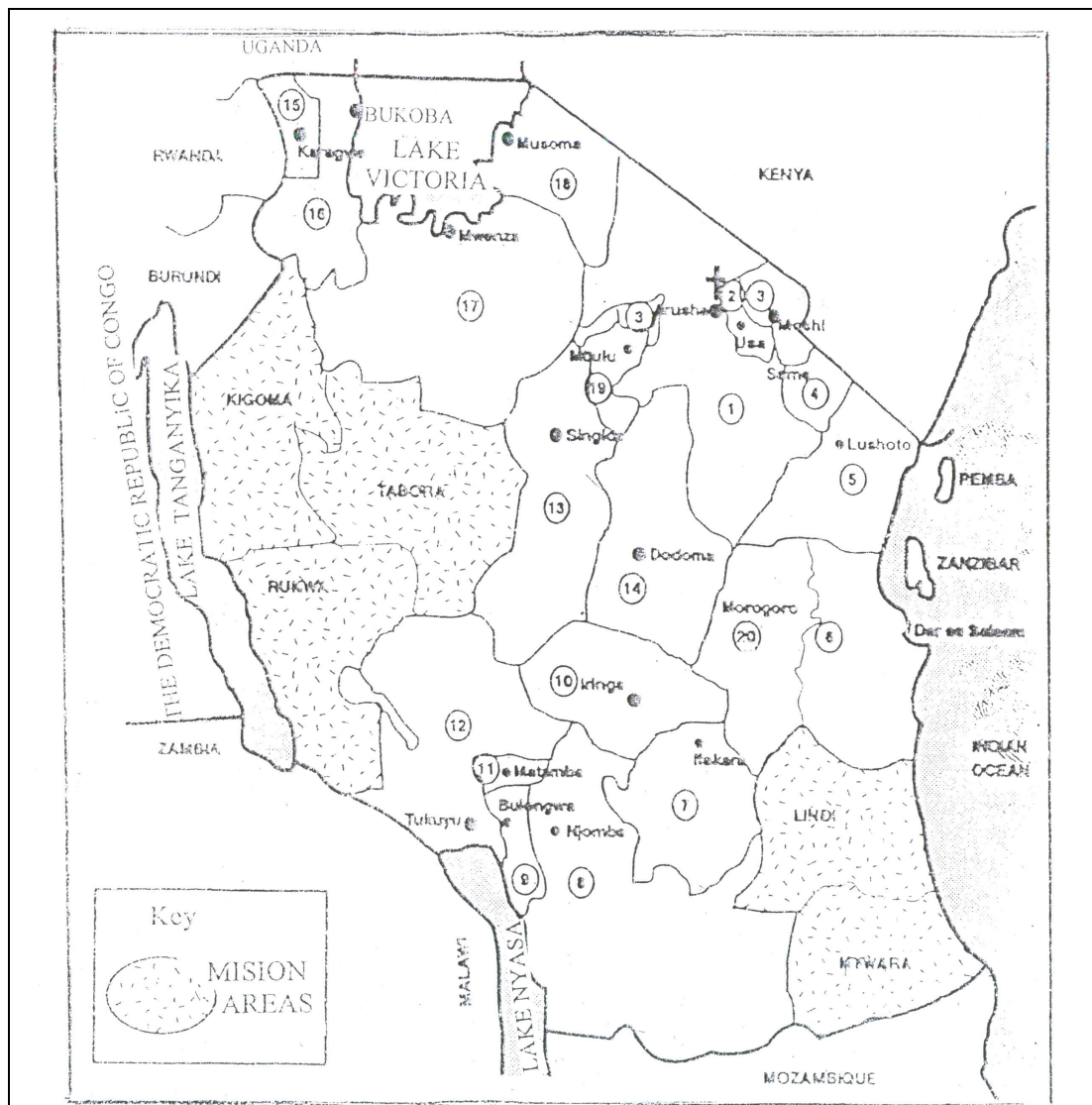
*in agreement by:*

*The Rt. Rev. Samson Mushiamba, Bishop*  
North Western Diocese  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

Palm Sunday, April 5, 1998  
Psalm 133:1

*The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, Bishop*  
Metropolitan New York Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Source: The Office of General Secretary of ELCT/NWD, 2008.**



A LIST OF ELCT DIOCESES

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Diocese in Arusha Region (DA)     | 11. South Central Diocese (SCD)          |
| 2. Meru Diocese (MD)                 | 12. Konde Diocese (KD)                   |
| 3. Northern Diocese (ND)             | 13. Central Diocese (CD)                 |
| 4. Pare Diocese (PD)                 | 14. Dodoma Diocese (DOD)                 |
| 5. North Eastern Diocese (NED)       | 15. Karagwe Diocese (KARD)               |
| 6. Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD) | 16. North Western Diocese (NWD)          |
| 7. Ulanga-Kilombero Diocese (UKD)    | 17. East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELVD) |
| 8. Southern Diocese (SD)             | 18. Mara Diocese (MAD)                   |
| 9. South Western Diocese (SWD)       | 19. Mbulu Diocese (MD)                   |
| 10. Iringa Diocese (ID)              | 20. Morogoro Diocese (MOD)               |

Source: KKKT- Kalenda 2008. Arusha: Kanisa la Kinjili la Kilutheri Tanzani (ELCT). (Translation and additions on map by the researcher)