

# The Ministry of Reconciliation. A Comparative study of the role of the churches in promoting reconciliation in South Africa and Angola.

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## Epigraphy

When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion,  
We were like men who dreamed.  
Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
Our tongues with songs of joy.  
Then it was said among the nations,  
"The Lord has done great things for them."  
The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy!  
Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
Like streams in Negev.  
Those who sow in tears will reap with  
songs of joy. He who goes out weeping,  
carrying seed to sow,  
will turn with songs of joy, carrying  
sheaves with him.

**Psalms 126**

## Dedication

To the leaders of all Christian churches and faith communities in Angola; the ministry of reconciliation is an urgent and noble mission toward which we are called to serve God. This thesis indicates where opportunities for reconciliation exist in this country and suggests when and how to exercise this ministry.

To the Angolan and South African governments, leaders of political parties, academics, students, African and other researchers and all who are concerned with reconciliation, human rights and peace in Africa.

To you, *Igreja Evangelica dos Irmãos Menonitas em Angola* (IEIMA), my field of ministry and my partner in this project; and Mennonite Brethren Mission and Service International (MBMSI): your financial and moral support made this doctoral project possible. But it will nevertheless be wasted if we cannot tangibly work for the reconciliation of Angola and elsewhere in the world.

To you my lovely wife, Lunfwnkenda Carolina and my children Munzambi Ntemo, Muntukalendi Nzash, Luzayisa Kisungu, Kamisa Ebenezer and Luzala Rachel who have suffered so much owing to my long absence from the family: your care of and love towards me have strengthened me to work hard with the aim of seeing you again and sharing the warmth of the family fellowship. It was not easy for you, Carolina, to bear alone the responsibility of caring for our children but you did so in order to support me to complete this major academic task. I remember how hard it was when fire broke out in the house and you burnt your feet, experiencing stress and sorrow and being alone in the hospital bed.

To all of you, I dedicate this thesis.

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## Summary

The researcher acknowledges that the church in Africa is growing fast; accepting its role of proclaiming the gospel, and that the ministry of reconciliation is still needed in all spheres of life and institutions in Africa, including the churches. After twenty-seven years of civil war, reconciliation in Angola becomes an imperative for the churches and faith communities as regards the healing of a wounded and victimized population.

Being in the middle of Africa, Angola was during these troubled years of civil war as disturbing an issue for all Africa as were the thirty-four years of the apartheid policy in South Africa. In both countries dramatic changes took place and people experienced a new era of their histories, posing new challenges that churches need to face boldly. The Luena memorandum did not lead the country into national reconciliation or into the needed process of healing. Hence the present study, focusing on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), aims to offer a comparative study of the South African and Angolan experience so that a ministry of reconciliation might be developed for Angola.

The researcher firstly endeavoured to define these key terms: Mission, Church, Leadership, and the ministry of reconciliation in which the biblical perspective indicates that reconciliation is an inclusive and imperative ministry, being itself part and parcel of the *mission Dei*. The study looked all Africa as a continent in need of reconciliation because Africa has become a field of various tensions, including political; sociological, economical, cultural, religious, and ideological ones, and in particular the poverty, HIV/Aids that threaten Africa today.

In spite of many criticisms levelled against the TRC, the process of truth and reconciliation did play a role in the country, to put South Africa on the road to national healing and nation building. Drawing from the South African experience the people of Angola, after drawing up their Luenda Memorandum, need to follow suit. The study indicates that the Luena memorandum, as well as the Cabinda memorandum, are catalytic events, which call for an all-inclusive effort of all Angolans in a structure like the TRC, for people to tell their stories so as to achieve repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. The role of the churches in both countries varied during and after apartheid as well

as the civil war. Churches were often used as instruments of oppression instead of being the light; fortunately the time arrived when the churches awoke and stood against apartheid and civil war. The churches need to rediscover their mission – comprising the dimensions of *kerugma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leiturgia* – to play their part in society, both in South Africa and Angola.

The study reflects on the ministry of reconciliation in Angola from a theological and practical perspective. Theologically, reconciliation is viewed as soteriological, christological, pneumatological, historical and missiological: these perspectives are interconnected and include a number of practical dimensions, inter alia cultural, sociological, economical, and political. Particular attention is accorded to the cultural dimension where *ubuntu* (humanness) and *tata nlongi* (teacher-catechist) are compared as examples of contextual theologies, necessary for the ministry of reconciliation in South Africa and Angola.

The conclusion offers recommendations to the society and the state, to the churches and communities of faith, adding a specific recommendation to the Mennonite churches regarding their world-wide endeavours for peace and non-violence over the world and pointing out that in Angola the Mennonites need to be more active in this field. Areas for further research, in future, are noted at the end of the thesis.

## KEY TERMS

Church

Diakonia Mission

Forgiveness and Peace

Kerugma Mission

Koinonia Mission

Leadership

Leiturgia Mission

Mission

Reconciliation requests Truth and Justice

Reconciliation has Theological and Practical Perspectives



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## Epilogue

When the Lord brought \***peace into Angola**,

We were like men who dreamed.

Our mouths were filled with laughter,

Our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,

"The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us,

and we are filled with joy!

Restore (**Cabinda**) our fortunes, O Lord,

Like streams in **Cunene**.

Those who sow in tears will reap with  
songs of joy. He who goes out weeping,

carrying seed to sow,

will turn with songs of joy, carrying

sheaves with him.

## Psalms 126