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Introduction

Against the thought that the world, the own country or church and the own life might remain as it is, Bishop em. Dr. Z. Kameeta encourages on various occasions men and women to take up the challenges and work for a better future.

For Kameeta the political sphere, social life, the request for human rights and equal opportunities is part and parcel of God's world and needs to be confronted, reflected and encouraged by the word of God. The world and human kind is God's creation and so human beings got creative and innovative power as Kameeta has emphasized several times.

In this booklet essays, reflections, word of greetings, devotions and speeches are collected that are telling the story how to translate this conviction into the reality in Namibia, in Africa and in the world. Texts often clearly directed to a specific event or situation are evident and clear examples how faith and commitment changes the perception and the facts of one's life and reality.

May this collection might be a source of encouragement to strive for a better tomorrow. Carried by the impulse Kameeta formulated in his sermon at the Lutheran World Federation's celebration of 500 years Reformation in Windhoek in May 2017:

“Dear sisters and brothers ... let us go out from here with this liberating TRUTH, our Lord Jesus CHRIST – to be reformed and reformers, renewed and renewing, liberated and liberating and to live lives in which people see and experience grace, love, justice, unity and peace.”

(cf. text p. 139)

Acknowledgements

A person who was and is involved in various offices in church, church and mission organisations, in politics and as theologian and pastor in all spheres of life has written contributions, sometimes only drafted some and had not time to categorise and publish them, but they were collected in boxes.

Great thanks to Zephania Kameeta for opening the boxes and files and offering them for publication in a booklet that mainly should be online accessible, so that people independent from the availability of bookshops can be inspired by it.

The whole idea to publish the collection of papers would have been in vain without the great financial support of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW) as well as of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR). The common mission history, the solidarity in the struggle against apartheid and for the Independence of Namibia and the manifold cooperation after Independence have shaped the strong partnership between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and the EKvW and EKiR. As a “Grenzgänger” and at the same time deeply rooted in Namibia Bishop Dr. Z. Kameeta is one key figures in the ecumenical interaction since many years. So both churches gladly supported this project.

Special thanks for the preface to Dr. Ulrich Möller (EKvW), a long standing companion and friend of Z. Kameeta – United Evangelical Mission brought the two together and it is the mission of both to be part of God’s mission and global community striving for justice, peace, reconciliation and the integrity of the creation in faith, work and action.

And another great thanks for the second preface to Dr. Frank Chikane, united with Z. Kameeta in the struggle of those days against apartheid and now united in the attempt to transform society and church to be people centred and with vision for God’s future.

Many thanks to the Luther-Verlag, to Matthias Schreiber and Bernd Becker supporting the idea and facilitating in within the publishing house and to Hans-Christoph Möhler, who was editing all the texts with lots of patience.

While teaching theology at the United theological College in Zimbabwe I have realised that texts of Zephania Kameeta are touching the reality of pastors and theological students and encouraging them to be innovative in the own biblical, social and political reflection.

Similar experiences I wish all the readers of this book.

Ute Hedrich

Foreword Ulrich Möller

In the year 2000 Zephania Kameeta was Pastor of a remote congregation in the Southern part of Namibia, when the General Assembly of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) – Communion of Churches in three Continents – elected him to become its first African Moderator. This was not by chance. He had gone back to the roots of his struggle *to make a difference in people's life* where it had begun: as pastor of his church, as inspiring liberation theologian, always at the side of the oppressed and downtrodden. In the deepest oppression of Apartheid, he had given voice to the voiceless by claiming God as a God of liberation and fullness of life for all. Always ready to pay the price for his prophetic witness, Zephania Kameeta had become a beacon of hope – not only in Namibia, but worldwide.

After liberation, Dr. Kameeta became the first Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia. He was deeply convinced: after breaking the chains of oppression and injustice, now Nation building in the new Republic of Namibia, building a society of freedom, inclusiveness and justice for all, needed as much his commitment as overcoming Apartheid.

After ten years of outstanding public service, Rev Kameeta again followed his pastoral calling. Again, he was a blessing to the church, inspiring

for all who had the privilege to experience his charisma. First in his local congregation, then as Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. Worldwide as Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation and as Moderator of the UEM-Communion of Churches in Africa, Asia and Germany.

Since the year 2000, I had the privilege of working closely together with him. First for eight years as Vice-Moderator during Dr Kameeta's UEM-leadership. Since then until now in different stages of his struggle to make a difference in people's life. He did, indeed. As UEM-Leader, his passion for justice, reconciliation and unity made a difference in developing the spirit of serving leadership within this communion of churches. As Bishop, Kameeta challenged the Namibian government as well as the IMF in his famous fight for an unconditional *Basic Income Grant* for all. He trusted the impoverished people of Otjivero together to make a difference in their life. He proved that the poor, if empowered as a community, are able to take life into their own hands for the better of all. His vision of a Basic Income Grant as empowerment tool of development inspired people in all continents. Bishop Kameeta stood for this vision in front of the United Nations General Assembly.

After his retirement as Bishop, there was still no retirement in sight. The newly elected President of Namibia called him, again to cross border between church and state in order to make a difference in people's life, this time as Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare Development. Again, Zephania Kameeta worked hard for the implementation of his vision of poverty eradication and social development nationwide. Very much aware of the interconnectedness of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), he now initiates and coordinates an ambitious inter-ministerial governmental "Blue Print on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty eradication for Justice and Human Dignity". Its preamble starts by the "imperative to recognize that each and everyone has a role to play to reduce and eradicate poverty and ending hunger and destitution. People should therefore be central to poverty eradication efforts because they experience poverty and can also provide the solutions." It claims that the Government should have the responsibility to eradicate poverty because it has the power

to initiate structural changes to law, programs and policies that are essential for a successful poverty eradication strategy. In addition, the Government can reallocate the resources of society more equitably through its regulatory and taxing powers and increase its funding of social programs. The commitment to action starts with the basic sentence: “People are calling for social justice and human dignity.”

It is a special joy again to work together with Minister Kameeta, now on the field of implementing this strategy by providing renewable energy to remote communities off the national grid. To prepare clean energy hubs as power-grids for sustainable economic and social development of disadvantaged communities. His vision always goes beyond what other people are able to see or imagine.

What is the secret of Zephania Kameetas special charisma, whether serving in the Church or in State and Society?

To me it is his faith-grounded radical love for vulnerable people. At their side, his passionate love asks: How can we *with* the people, who are suffering, empower them to live out their God given dignity? Therefore as a pastor and prophet, he always is political. Also, vice versa: as a public servant and Minister he never stops being pastoral and prophetic. In both spheres, he gives witness to God’s costly grace. In both spheres, he empowers people to claim their dignity and paves the way that all may have life in fullness.

This book is a true treasure. Zephania Kameeta’s essays, speeches and reflections on biblical, political and social issues give witness to the transformative power of passionate love at the side of the poor. May all who read it, feel empowered to start their own bold steps on the stony road to justice and freedom, or – if they have become tired on their way – to regain new hope, courage and strength to walk the walk.

Oberkirchenrat Rev Dr Ulrich Moeller

Foreword Frank Chikane

My work with the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) in South Africa from the early 1980s created opportunities for me to know Bishop Zephania Kameeta as a bold and prophetic servant of the Lord, an outstanding liberation theologian, and a leader of considerable reputation internationally.

His rendition of Psalm 23 became for me a hallmark of his theological understanding of a God of liberation who gives hope to the people on the underside of society – oppressed, exploited and brutalized! A God who lets people see a ‘country of justice and peace’ in a grossly unjust and violent world without peace. A God who strengthens the weak and downtrodden and gives them courage not to be afraid. For this God is with them.

His role in the World Council of Churches (WCC) Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) brought him even closer to us and to the global struggle against racism and racial discrimination which was found also within the churches and church organisations. His commitment to eradicate poverty in Namibia as the Minister for Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare in a liberated country speaks for itself, that the past accompanies the future which requires another liberation struggle to free the people of the legacy of racism, slavery, colonialism, oppression and exploitation.

In his theological work and witness; in his suffering and victimization by the powers which were linked with the Apartheid system in South Africa, he inspired my generation which was following on his footsteps. As we reflected and developed theological perspectives about doing theology in a conflict and violent situation in South Africa we took leaf from him and many liberation theologians globally.

Our work in the ICT ultimately led to the development and publication of the document known as ‘The Kairos Document’ which did not only ruffle feathers within the Apartheid Government but also among church leaders. The document further inspired the production of similar documents among historically Evangelicals and Pentecostals in South Africa, as well as its international version, entitled the ‘Road to Damascus’. This was followed

by the development and publications of similar Kairos Documents in many parts of the world, the latest being 'Kairos Palestine'.

I believe that the publication of the work of Bishop Kameeta, including his sermons, testimonies, written works, experiences, and his words of wisdom will inspire more people, particularly Christians who are struggling with similar situation. His roles as a religious leader and a politician who has kept his integrity speaks volumes.

I commend the book to all those who will lay hands on it. May they be inspired as we were by it to take on unjust systems in the world.

Rev Frank Chikane