

## Omaruru pastor suspended for alleged homosexuality

Contributed by By Toivo Ndjebela  
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THE pastor of Lutheran's Alfa Omega Congregation at Omaruru, Reverend Jermaine Tjongarero, was suspended last week over his alleged homosexual activities, contrary to the principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In a letter dated January 15, Deputy Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), Reverend Paul Kisting informed Tjongarero of his suspension, pending an investigation.

&ldquo;Please note that you are suspended from the employment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia with immediate effect, pending the outcome of an investigation with regard to allegations of misconduct.

&ldquo;An investigation will be conducted to ascertain the bona fide (ness) of all allegations levelled against you,&rdquo; wrote Kisting in Tjongarero's suspension letter.

Kisting did not reveal the alleged misconduct or specific charges against Tjongarero, but Informanté has it on good authority that the suspension stems from Tjongarero's sexual preference.

It is alleged Tjongarero has been involved in a series of intimate homosexual affairs, which go against the provisions of the church at which he is a pastor. The alleged infidelities have been going on in Omaruru for some time, but ELCRN's head office failed to take action as they had inadequate evidence to prove that Tjongarero is in fact gay. Recently however, a worshipper of his congregation allegedly caught Tjongarero with his pants down, reportedly having sex with a young male member of the church choir.

Sources say the two were caught in the act and that the choir member, ashamed of his deeds, allegedly confessed to clergymen of the church. Such revelations reached the head office in Windhoek, ultimately leading to Tjongarero's suspension last week.

Contacted for comment, Kisting refused to reveal the charges against Tjongarero. He was also unable to confirm or deny allegations that Tjongarero's suspension stemmed from his alleged homosexuality.

Kisting was however quick to point out that homosexuality was against the provisions of the Lutheran church.

&ldquo;Homosexuals are God-given creatures but are not allowed in our church,&rdquo; he said.

Kisting confirmed that the church council would set up a committee to deal with Tjongarero's alleged misconduct.

A meeting was held end of last week to discuss Tjongarero's fate and set a date for his disciplinary hearing.

Attempts to get comment from Tjongarero proved futile as he refused to speak to Informanté. - ToivoN@tgi.na