

ANGOLA

**"THE OLD HAS PASSED AWAY,
BEHOLD, THE NEW HAS COME"**

2 Corinthians 5:17

"During the past sixteen years we spent our time calling our brothers "the people on the other side". We hope now that with our brothers we can find a way to make Angola smile again and to see those people who have left their homes and their fields return to the places where they were born."

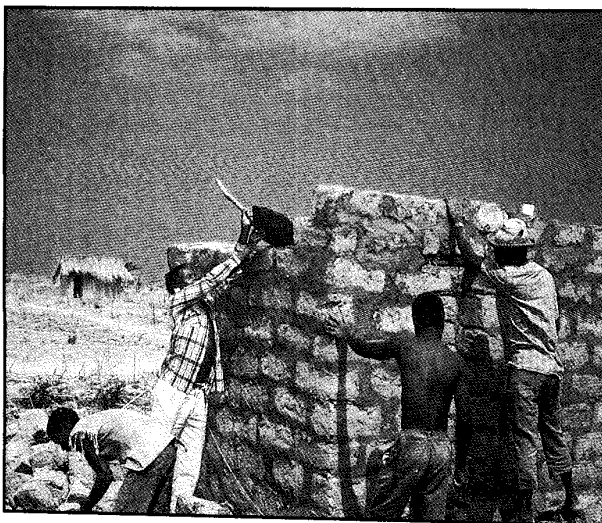
Ricardo Epalanga
Evangelical Congregational Church
of Angola in Jamba

"...the war that has ended deepened our differences. The war divided families and peoples...From May 31, 1991 we need to leave malice aside as well as hypocrisy, egoism and like the newborn seek the pure milk of peace, reconciliation and justice."

Augusto Chippesse
Secretary General
Angolan Council of
Evangelical Churches

PEACE AT LAST

The May 31, 1991 Angolan Peace Accord brings



COURTESY OF MARY SPECK/UNDP
DISPLACED FAMILIES ARE RETURNING TO THEIR VILLAGES AND REBUILDING THEIR HOMES - HOUSING SHORTAGES WILL BE A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO OVERCOME

an opportunity for open dialogue between divided peoples. There is now a chance for a nation with vast potential in human and natural resources to move forward. This moment of Kairos (opportunity) presents many challenges.

Sixteen years of civil war (which followed a decade and a half of armed struggle for independence from Portugal) have left approximately 300,000 to 500,000 Angolans dead, another 2 million displaced, 70,000 amputees and 45,000 orphaned children. Worse, large portions of the country's agricultural lands have been abandoned or destroyed resulting in food shortages that may threaten the lives of as many as 2 million Angolans. During the last three months of 1991 food prices increased from 4 to 10 times their October values. Additionally, there are more than 200,000 soldiers to demobilize in an economy with few jobs.

LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM AND CIVIL WAR

For nearly 500 years Angolans felt the presence of Portuguese colonialism. The local population was treated as a reserve labor pool. Thousands of Angolans were exported to the West Indies



COURTESY OF MARY SPECK/UNDP
24 YEAR-OLD ANTONIO GABRIEL HAS SPENT HALF HIS LIFE AS A SOLDIER - THERE ARE 200,000 LIKE HIM WHO NEED TO FIND CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT

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and Brazil to work as slaves on the sugar and coffee plantations of other Portuguese and European colonies. Most of this slave labor came from coastal and central areas of the country.

At the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference the European powers moved to adopt the policy of "effective occupation" toward Africa. This meant that any European power which claimed and physically occupied any African land would retain "sovereignty" over it. In the ensuing "Scramble for Africa" the Portuguese moved quickly to gain control of the interior land east of the Angolan coast. By the late 19th century, Portugal had control of all modern-day Angola.

After the Fascist Estado Novo dictatorship of Salazar came to power in 1928, brutal Portuguese domestic policies were extended to the colonies Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Angola (Brazil became independent in 1822). Greater centralization of power, extensive police surveillance and repression of the local population and labor force controls, enforced by penal sanctions, became the norm. Little money was spent on education for fear that Angolans might become critical of their oppression. The population was still seen by local authorities as a reserve labor pool with strict limitations on its salaries and movement.

After World War II, Portugal encouraged thousands of its poor white peasants to emigrate to Angola. Joint ventures with multi-national firms from South Africa, Belgium, Britain and the United States were encouraged to foster investment in oil extraction, iron making and diamonds. The area became more "developed" but most of the wealth went to the "home" country and Angola's 350,000 immigrant whites. The land's six million blacks were left out of the picture.

Angolans had always resisted their European invaders but with little success. However, **in the early 1960s an organized guerrilla movement emerged in response to continuing Portuguese human rights abuses and exploitative labor practices which resulted in subhuman treatment of workers.** From 1961 to 1975 Angola was in a guerrilla war. In 1974 the Portuguese army, demoralized and tired of its colonial war, revolted against Salazar's successor, Caetano. The 1974 soldier's revolution in Portugal led to the eventual abandonment of their colony in 1975.

The legacy of 492 years of colonial rule was a largely ill-fed and illiterate population. The war of independence had damaged much of the country and left thousands of people dead. The people were ill-prepared for self-government.

Many people believe the Portuguese abandoned Angola in 1975. Not only were people neglected in terms of human development but once the Portuguese decided to leave their colony they did not help the emerging nation. Little was done to establish peace commissions, arrange for elections and a transitional authority, training of civil servants, etc. Into this void, stepped the two superpowers and their allies to impose their East-West struggles onto domestic Angolan politics which already evidenced strong ethnic differences.

The long struggle for freedom was not followed by peace. The "New Angola" that every Angolan wanted, did not come. Three guerrilla movements had fought for independence. The two strongest which emerged out of the independence war were the Movimento Popular pela Libertação de Angola (MPLA - Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and the Uniao Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola (UNITA - Union for the Total Independence of Angola). These two forces could not agree on the future of the country. Thus, a civil war was fought from 1975 until 1991.

The MPLA, which controlled urban areas, was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Since it controlled the capital and cities, the MPLA was recognized by most countries as the government of Angola. It espoused a socialist philosophy. Perhaps more importantly, it was led by urban intellectuals and segments of the Kimbundu population. UNITA which controlled the southern and central rural areas, was backed by the United States and South Africa. It adopted a western oriented capitalist philosophy and was close to the central Ovimbundu people.

Many observers believe that domestic ideological differences were not originally significant between the two groups. In order to secure outside assistance both sides adopted philosophies similar to those of their international supporters.

The United States and South Africa had long been politically and economically involved in Angola. In 1975 they became involved in military operations. South Africa saw any independent black state near its border as a threat to its apartheid system. The United States believed that socialist governments were a threat to its cozy relationships with regional dictators such as Mobutu in neighboring Zaire, as well as its access to minerals. Cuba's ties to the MPLA went back to the 1960s and its leaders believed that they were defending a "people's revolution." The Soviet Union bankrolled the Cuban operation in order to

gain greater influence and prestige in Africa. During the conflict large-scale human rights abuses were common on both sides.

Neither side was able to win a decisive victory. In 1988, the South African army was defeated at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. As a result of this military defeat, South Africa decided to alter its approach to the region. South Africa adopted a two track strategy - negotiations coupled to a gradual military scale-down. This eventually led to Namibia's independence in the south and contributed to peace negotiations in Angola. Also, helping the peace process were changes occurring around the world as the former Soviet Union broke up and the Cold War ended.



COURTESY OF MARY SPECK/UNDP
THE WAR IS OVER BUT A COMMON SIGHT REMAINS - WOMEN CARRYING THE LOAD; HERE THEY COLLECT FOOD AID IN HUAMBO WHERE SHORTAGES ARE ACUTE

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN ANGOLA

The Christian church arrived in Angola with the Portuguese. The church of Portugal was Catholic and via a Concordat with the state it became the official church of Angola. The Protestant churches were often persecuted by the colonial authorities.

The historic partner of the United Church of Christ (UCC), Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Canada is the Igreja Evangelica Congregacional da Angola (IECA - Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola). The term evangelical in Angola signifies Protestant. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the forerunner of the UCC's United Church Board for World Ministries (UCBWM), first began work in Angola in 1880. The



COURTESY OF JIM KIRKWOOD
EMOTIONAL REUNION - PASTORS LONG SEPARATED BETWEEN JAMBA AND HUAMBO COME TOGETHER AT DECEMBER 1991 MEETING

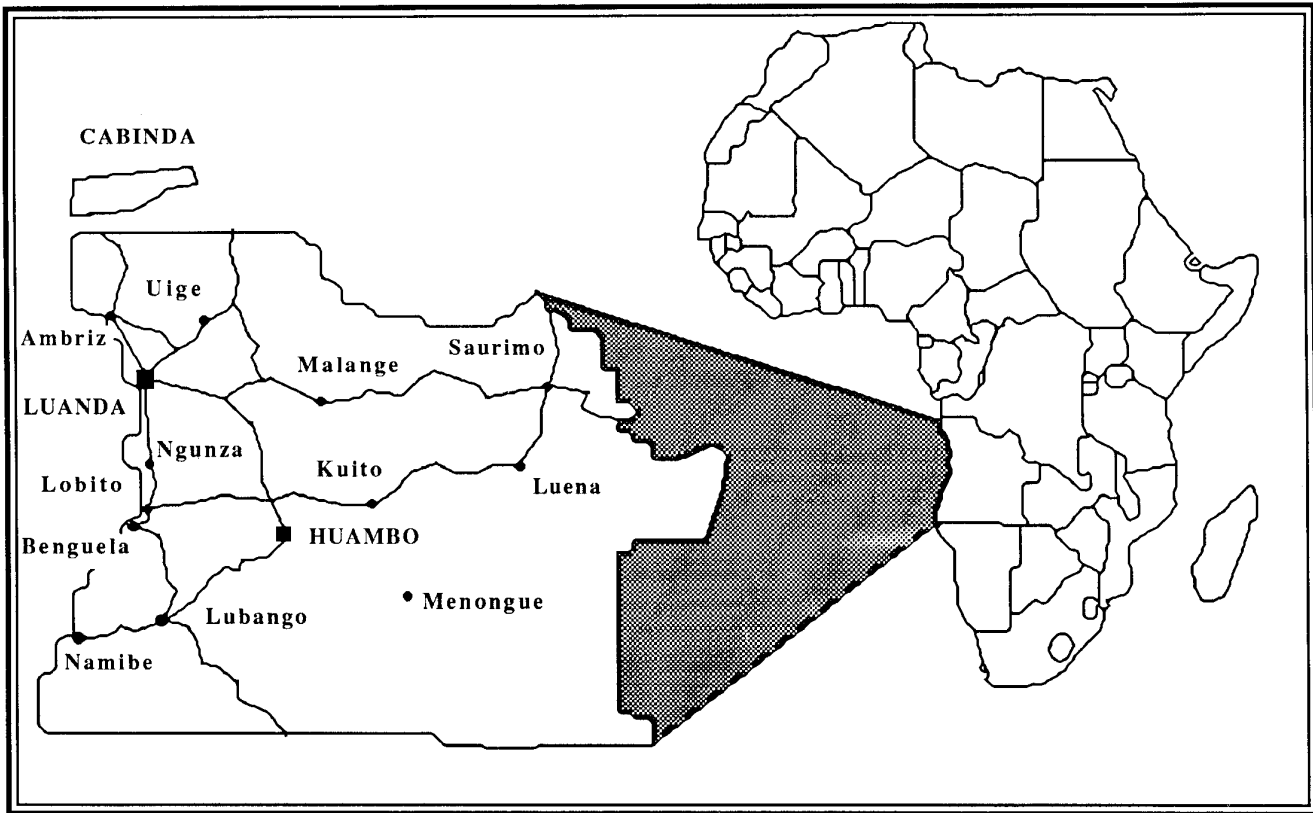
United Church of Canada sent its first missionary, via the ABCFM, in 1886. The Disciples of Christ, via the Joint Africa Ministry with the UCBWM, have been a partner of IECA since 1988.

Until the 1970s, North American missionaries were involved in education, evangelization, medical work and in teaching at seminaries and in eight mission stations - the largest of which was the Dondi mission station.

When the war of independence got "hot" in the late 1960s, many missionaries had to leave Angola. The last one left in the early 1970s after the North American churches denounced Portuguese colonial rule. The colonial authorities reacted by revoking their visa privileges.

The civil war, fought from 1975 to 1991, resulted in a divided people - divided across institutional, regional and ethnic lines. The civil war spread to the Huambo area and many pastors of the IECA fled south to Jamba, where the UNITA was based. Some pastors stayed in Huambo. The war destroyed not only much of Huambo but also the mission stations. Dondi, for example, which once had a school, a leprosarium and hospital is a mere shell today.

Through all of the turmoil one of the strengths of the church as a whole is that in spite of the severe suffering of its people, it has remained an important force in communities - providing relief, education and spiritual comfort and guidance.



ANGOLA IN NUMBERS

WHERE:	S.W. Africa
POPULATION:	9.5. million (Est. 1988)
CAPITAL:	Luanda
SIZE:	1,246,700 sq. km.
LARGEST ETHNIC GROUPS:	KiKongo (13%); Kimbundu (25%); Ovimbundu (40%)
MAIN PRODUCTS:	Coffee, oil, diamonds, copper, and rich farm soil
MAJOR EXPORT MARKETS:	USA (60%); BELGIUM (8%); NETHERLANDS (51%) Growing countertrade (barter) with Brazil and former Soviet Union
MAIN CITIES:	Luanda, Huambo, Lobito, Malange, Lubango
INFANT MORTALITY:	150 per 1,000 births
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	46 years
RURAL POPULATION:	74%

For many people the church has been a stabilizing influence and has helped the faith of its members to remain strong. Pastors have aged and suffered but have remained steadfast. During the conflict the church grew from a central Angolan church to one with roots in the south and north of the country.

Today many members are lost and scattered. Much destabilization has taken place. Buildings are gone and supplies and materials are minimal. However, the church has a new opportunity to reunite, rebuild and reconstruct its life. From recent visits and reports it is apparent that the whole church is working toward being a reconciling, moderating and stabilizing influence on Angolan society. In December 1991, 32 delegates from Jamba and Huambo met in Huambo for four days. In the final declaration, the delegates said that as of now "we are all one." (paraphrased from John 17:21). This year 1992 the IECA will probably have a new name.

An important aspect of the UCBWM, Disciples of Christ, and UC Canada partnership in Angola is ecumenical, through our involvement with our partner, the Conselho Angolano das Igrejas Evangelicas (CAIE - Angolan Council of Evangelical Churches). This body of Protestant churches works in unity and speak prophetically, influencing development and vision for all. IECA is a member.

THE PEACE - HOPE AND CHALLENGE

In rebuilding Angola any future government will have to work within a regionally, culturally and ethnically divided nation that suffers from inadequate social, political and economic infrastructures. Room for maneuver will be dictated by these realities.

Angolan churches **will determine what mission work will mean in a "New Angola."** How will the new church relate to the state? How will IECA and CAIE speak prophetically for justice? These are questions that will be debated over the next years. No one has the answers right now. Our partners are working hard at strategies for mission in the "New Angola." It is a time for healing and understanding.

North American church bodies can continue to play the role of facilitator and advocate for social justice. A facilitator to bring the two churches together again via support for meetings, joint projects and joint leadership activities. We can advocate to support the democratic process and national reconciliation. What do we mean by this? There are several nascent political and civic

actors on the Angolan scene already organizing for the September 1992 elections. This bodes well for a future pluralistic society.

The United States Congress last year voted to restrict the President's policy of aiding UNITA by limiting U.S. government assistance to the Angolan group to humanitarian aid. The bill in which Congress acted to have a more non-partisan approach to Angola was vetoed by the President. The President continues to support UNITA covertly via the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Many people suspect that this assistance includes the provision military items. Our advocacy will promote the Congress' efforts to take a non-partisan approach to Angola. This means supporting all efforts aimed at developing democracy, tolerance and dialogue. The partisan approach by the President of a North American government, can only foster the seeds of future conflict and bitterness on the part of those who will feel they "lost out" because of continued "outside" meddling.

The Angolan government is not accustomed to tolerating democratic opposition and UNITA is not accustomed to internal dissent. We need to educate our congregations about these realities and advocate that our government allow a natural process of change and reconciliation to unfold amongst Angolans. Support should be provided to activities that foster dialogue amongst all social and political actors - support for a process of coming together rather than support for one group over another.

Economic development will be another issue of concern. The country has vast wealth in untapped oil, diamond, and copper reserves, along with fertile agricultural lands. But already many people are asking, who will control these resources? The De Beers mining giant of South Africa, the Odebrecht construction company of Brazil and the Exxon Oil conglomerate of the United States are exploiting these resources. Moreover, several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have their own plans for Angola. Where will the Angolan people fit into the picture? How can the needs of the two million displaced and the 200,000 armed soldiers facing unemployment be answered? Will there be a focus on rural as well as urban assistance?

ENGAGING IN MISSION TOGETHER

A primary concern of all is the long work toward reconstruction. The relocation of displaced people, health care, rural and self support, the

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re-development of agriculture, education, housing and economic development are at the forefront of immediate needs. It is all of this which will engage the church in time, effort, expertise and resources. Projects planned and carried out by our partners need to enable the humanization of reconstruction. Our concern is with the enablement of new life for people.

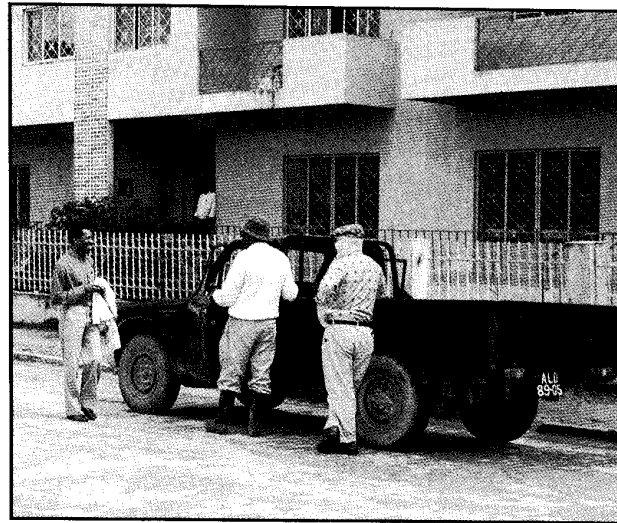
The kinds of efforts that the Disciples of Christ, United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ support include the following:

- a) Extension services in agriculture, seed banks, cooperatives, small businesses and housing.
- b) The use of South to South expertise and experience, possibly from Brazil. The Dos Santos family, from the Congregational Church in Brazil, for example, is already involved in theological teaching at Emanuel Seminary.
- c) Support for learning institutions such as Emanuel Seminary.
- d) Efforts to secure funding for the reconstruction of damaged mission stations.
- e) Support for the rehabilitation of some of the estimated 70,000 amputees in Angola.
- f) Funding of election monitors.
- g) Advocacy for human rights and even-handedness on the part of our governments. This will include advocating that the United States government, as a gesture of good will, recognize the state of Angola prior to elections in September 1992.
- h) Special consideration of projects which will aid the development of leadership among women and youth.

Continued solidarity with the Evangelical Church and its ecumenical partners is essential. New



COURTESY OF MAGGIE MURRAY-LEE/UNICEF
CHILDREN WILL BE THE FUTURE OF ANGOLA - FINDING HOMES, SCHOOLS AND, EVENTUALLY, EMPLOYMENT FOR THEM WILL BE A MAJOR PRIORITY



COURTESY OF JIM KIRKWOOD
EMANUEL SEMINARY WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE JOINT MINISTRY IN AFRICA AND THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

opportunities for exchange of persons to Angola and to the U.S. hold wonderful new possibilities for growth for all of us.

Ultimately, the decisions in the building of a new Angola will be in the hands of our partners and the people of Angola.

"If all Angolans believe that the moment has arrived to work toward saving the children of the land, peace will be the result of this preoccupation and peace within a nation signifies the conviction of all who live in this country that they must work toward a common future."

Jose Chipenda,
Secretary General
All Africa Conference of Churches

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