Chapter Seven

Iberians and African Clergy in Southern Africa

Paul H. Gundani

INTRODUCTION

"The mission in Congo was the first considerable Christian mission in Africa since the days of the early Church, and the first at any time south of the Sahara with any certainty of history. Yet it has disappeared... It seems just to have faded out." 201

This statement is equally true for Angola, Mozambique and the Mutapa kingdom, in today's modern Zimbabwe. While Portuguese geographers tended to regard the Congo kingdom and Angola as part of West Africa, we argue that our understanding of modern African geography would place it in southern Africa by virtue of it having become part of modern Angola. In as much as Angola forms part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) we accord it the southern African status that it deserves just like Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In this chapter we examine the role and impact of African clergy towards the evangelisation of southern Africa during the Iberian era. For purposes of historical clarity we focus on the period beginning from 1491, when the first group of Portuguese missionaries arrived at Mbanza Kongo, and ending in the 1850s when a new wave of missionary activity began.

Missionary historiography has tended to focus on the efforts by European missionaries at the expense of the agency of African clergy who became co-workers in God’s vineyard. For purposes of historical balance, no one can gainsay the fact that African clergy, however few they may have been during the period under study, merit more scholarly attention.

than they have received hitherto. There are problems, however, that we encounter, when we deal with this historical period. The first one has to do with the sources at the disposal of the historian.

As Sigbert Axelson observes, “Practically all historical research on sub-Saharan Africa is seriously hampered by the lack of original sources.”202 The records that are available, however, are generally provided by non-African sources, that is, by European and Arab visitors to the sub-continent, who came as explorers, conquerors and missionaries. As such, sources are laden with ideological biases and prejudices that were common during the times of the writers.

I. FACTORS BEHIND THE SHORTAGE OF MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

According to Eric Axelson, some of the key factors that explain the limited impact of Christianity in southern Africa include the vitality of traditional culture and the shortage of clergy.203 The latter, was in itself a symptom of many factors that we consider below. Firstly, it is important to understand that the jurisdiction granted to the Portuguese government through the padroado was too vast and beyond the capacity of its human resources. It covered lands extending from Brazil to the Far East. Little wonder that the vocations in Portugal alone could not be adequate to supply missionaries to the new world. Secondly, the shortage of clergy was also linked to the Portuguese tendency to avoid the interior, which was associated with disease, insecurity and an inclement weather. Sao Salvador, the old Mbanza Kongo, was notorious for its high mortality for missionaries. It should be understood that the causes and cures of tropical diseases were not understood before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This situation deterred Portuguese clergy and caused the bishop and the small contingent of missionaries under him to relocate to Angola. Thirdly, the mission to Africa was very poorly conceived both by the Portuguese state and by Rome. By virtue of the padroado, the Portuguese state insisted on recruiting only Portuguese citizens for mission in the areas under its jurisdiction. In spite of the changes brought about by Rome in 1622, when all foreign missions were theoretically put under the jurisdiction of the

202 S. AXELSON, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo. From the Old Congo Kingdom to the Congo Independent State with special reference tot the Swedish Missionaries in the 1880’s and 1890’s* (Uppsala: Gunnessons, 1970), 18.
203 AXELSON, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, p. 73.
Propaganda Fide, the Council for the Propagation of Faith in the Vatican, the Portuguese state continued to put restrictions on the recruitment and travel of non-Portuguese missionaries who wanted to work in Africa. Although Iberian Catholicism survived for as long as it did before fading away due to the support of the Portuguese government, the support was not enough to ensure continuity because of the shortage of missionary vocations. As A. Hastings avers, “the shortage of priests was acute almost from the beginning.”

II. POLICY AND POLITICS

SURROUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRICAN CLERGY

In an attempt to improve the shortage of priests, especially for the Kongo kingdom, the Portuguese government approved of the idea of training native priests by the early sixteenth century. This explains why many relatives of the king were sent for education and training at seminaries and universities such as Coimbra in Portugal. The positive attitude of the state regarding the training of an African was supported by Rome in 1518 when a papal Brief was promulgated, “authorizing the royal chaplain at Lisbon to ordain “Ethiopians, Indians and Africans, who might reach the moral and educational standards required for the priesthood.” The authorities in Lisbon pursued the idea of developing a native clergy in Angola after the conquest, occupation and pacification of the Angolan coastal regions in 1575.

Such policies were not necessarily followed by Church authorities.

Invariably, missionary authorities in Africa scorned and scoffed at the policies from Lisbon and Rome. For instance, Bishop Francisco de Vilanova (1590-1602) reversed a policy to send African students to Coimbra in Portugal. He argued that it was “a waste of money to educate mulattoes and Negroes for the priesthood. In his view, it was better to send out to West Africa poor white clergy, who had no benefices or livings in Portugal, and to educate white orphan boys for the priesthood at the

---

seminary in Coimbra.” The Jesuits in Angola adopted their own policy on the development of an African clergy. They opted for the training of an African clergy in Africa arguing that it would be cheaper for the crown and more convenient for the trainees. Hence they set up a college at Sao Salvador that functioned from 1625 to 1669. They also established a college at Luanda which functioned for a longer time than the one at Sao Salvador. Both were, however, dependent on the endowments of a wealthy ex-slave trader, Gasper Alvares, who joined the order as a lay brother after a shattering sexual experience. The African clergy trained at these colleges were, however, to lower ranks of priesthood, and therefore did not become members of the order.

The situation in Mozambique and Mutapa kingdom was worse off than that in the Kongo and Angola. Although authorities in Lisbon suggested in 1694 and again in 1761 that efforts should be made to develop an indigenous clergy, for over three centuries, not a single clergyman was ordained in the two countries. Efforts to have a seminary set up were resisted by both state and church authorities in Mozambique. It was only in 1875 that a seminary was opened on the Mozambique Island, but was closed two years later for lack of students. Only a few Africans from the Mutapa kingdom “were ordained at Goa or in Portugal in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they worked in Portuguese India and did not return to the land of their birth.” As a result, the Mutapa kingdom and Mozambique were ministered by a small group of white Jesuit and Dominican priests, supported by either mestizos or more commonly, Goanese secular clergy. As Philippe Denis rightly observes, the Dominican friars, who dominated the whole period under study in the Mutapa kingdom and in Mozambique, were not inclined to accept indigenous clergy too hastily. Overall, the irony, however, was that, “in many places and for long periods the formation of a responsible native clergy was opposed by those missionaries who should have been in favour of it....”

In the process of training an indigenous clergy, the missionaries invariably favoured and promoted members of royal blood. While this was
generally practised in the whole region, one finds it particularly true of the Kongo and Mutapa kingdoms.

III. CASE STUDIES OF AFRICAN CLERGY

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. The Kongo Kingdom

The coronation of Afonso Nzinga as king of Kongo in 1506 ushered a new era in the planting of Christianity in the kingdom. Afonso persistently made pleas for more priests and teachers from Portugal with an idea of making his kingdom a leading African Christian state. His plans were to make Mbanza Kongo an episcopal see. Apart from having Portuguese missionaries, he also developed a clear plan for the indigenisation of the Church. He wanted to see “sons of the soil” evangelizing their own people. According to Sigbert Axelson, such a vision could only be understood as “an attempt ... to create a national and rather independent church administration, headed by Congolese....”212 In an attempt to accomplish this vision, King Afonso made many attempts to develop a Congolese priesthood. He even tried to set up a college at Sao Salvador to educate and prepare Congolese priests. He was not successful, however, mainly because he “lacked a group of permanently committed and competent priests to run it.”213

After failing to set up a college in the Kongo, Afonso decided to send out a number of young men to Lisbon to be educated and ordained. This effort was also in the main a failure due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the concept of celibacy was not easy to accept considering the world view and culture from which the students came. Secondly, when the students went to Portugal, they found themselves attracted to alternative careers. In most cases, they remained in Portugal after completing their courses. Thirdly, a good number of the students suffered from ill-health which interfered with their studies. Hence, they returned home before completing their studies. Learning in Latin compounded to the problems that Congolese students encountered while they were in Portugal. All in all, however, whilst a steady trickle of noble Congolese youth were trained at St. John the Evangelist, popularly known as Santo Eloi, in Portugal, only a small number went back to the Kongo.

212 AXELSON, Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo, p. 68.
Later in 1624, Jesuits opened a seminary in Sao Salvador, where a number of black and mestizo Congolese were ordained. Unfortunately, by this time Christianity in the Kongo was already on the decline. According to James Duffy, “By 1615 most traces of Christian life had disappeared...”214 From the Kongo kingdom, two clerics stand out, for detailed narration as case studies. They are bishop Henrique Nzinga and Fr Manuel Roboredo.

**a. Bishop Henrique Nzinga (c1495?-1530)**

Henrique Nzinga was son to King Afonso Nzinga. Henrique was the most famous of those priests who were trained in Portugal. This is mainly because he was the first and last African bishop in the Kongo kingdom. He was a veritable symbol of his father’s commitment to see an indigenous church grow in the Kongo kingdom.

The date of birth of Henrique is not known with certainty. However, from his life story one can deduce that he was born about 1496/7. Afonso sent Henrique to Portugal to be educated and trained for priesthood in 1508. Since King Afonso was himself fluent in Portuguese and committed to the technical development of his kingdom, it is highly probable that he contracted teachers to teach Henrique from a tender age. That he could send Henrique to Portugal when he was just about twelve may be evidence that he had prepared him for advanced studies. Henrique lived and studied theology under the canons of St. John the Evangelist in Lisbon.

In 1518 Henrique was ordained to priesthood. Because of his fluency in Latin, he became a member of the embassy for the Kongo kingdom in Rome. According to Hastings, Henrique “apparently studied well and made an excellent impression so that the King of Portugal proposed that he be made a bishop.”215 There is evidence to the effect that King Manuel’s suggestion to Pope Leo X caused much controversy in Rome.216 The controversy had a racist dimension to it as the question centred on whether it was acceptable or not to have a “Negro” appointed bishop. Many considered this possibility out of the ordinary. There was another question hanging in the balance though, which had to do with Henrique’s age. In Roman Catholicism, the canonical age for one to be bishop is 25. Apparently, Fr Henrique Nzinga was below that age. This issue is reflected in the communications between King Manuel I of Portugal and the Pope.

---

216 AXELSON, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, p. 64.
Ultimately, however, the Pope agreed to appoint him as titular bishop of Utica, and Vicar Apostolic of the Kongo, but was only consecrated in 1521 when it was assumed that he had attained the age of twenty-five. According to James Duffy, bishop Henrique was auxiliary to the bishop of Madeira and received instructions through Sao Tome.217

Henrique returned home in the Kongo soon after his consecration in 1521. Little is known about the kind of work that he did back home, and how he worked with Portuguese missionaries there. From 1526 he was continually ill, and later died in 1530. In Boxer’s view, Bishop Henrique had “become too acclimatized during his long stay in Portugal, since he complained in 1526 that he had been unwell ever since his return to Africa and would like to return to Portugal.”218

Ostensibly, Bishop Henrique Nzinga’s contribution to and impact on Christianity in Kongo was negligible. Perhaps James Duffy evaluation of his work best summarizes his role in the evangelisation of Kongo when he says, “... His role in the evangelization of his people was insignificant. Constrained by his father from leaving the capital, he was a witness to the laxity and selfishness of the white clergy, whose scorn he suffered ... He died a useless product of Afonso’s vanity and two nations’ aborted hopes.”219

It should be noted, however, that during the episcopacy of Henrique, King Afonso persistently sent various young nephews and cousins for training in Portugal. His hope was that possibly “two or three would likewise be consecrated bishops, as the Kongo was too vast for one prelate to supervise adequately.”220

b. Fr Manuel Roboredo (1665+)

Emmanuel Roboredo was a Mestizo cousin of kings Garcia and Antonio I. He was one of the priests who were educated in the Jesuit seminary at Sao Salvador. He was ordained in 1637 as a secular priest. He became canon of the cathedral of Sao Salvador and confessor of King Antonio I. His ministry in Sao Salvador was of exceptional influence.

In 1653, Fr Roboredo joined the order of Capuchins, an Italian order that joined the mission in the Kongo kingdom during the seventeenth century. He had played a critical role in welcoming the order to Sao Salvador in 1645. Since then he had served them as an interpreter. He also

217 DUFFY, Portuguese Africa, p. 18.
219 DUFFY, Portuguese Africa, p. 18.
instructed the capuchin in the local languages. Fr Roboredo was proficient in many African and European languages. Upon joining the order he adopted the name Francisco de Sao Salvador. This was the practice in the Roman Catholic Church for hundreds of years up to the Second Vatican Council (1972-1965). His conferees, however, called him Francesco Conghese.

Fr Roboredo was a skilful teacher and catechist, and was instrumental in the transformation of the religious climate in Sao Salvador of the 1650s. As a result he became one of the most popular confessors in Sao Salvador. His success generated jealousy from his colleagues. Fortunately, the Jesuits, with whom he had worked so well, came to his defence.

In the 1660s Fr Roboredo became royal chaplain and adviser of king Antonio I. The latter ranks high on the list of kings who wanted to see Kongo become independent of Portuguese influence. His attempts to stake the interests of the Kongo against Portugal sparked a war that resulted in defeat at the hands of his enemies. Fr Roboredo was, however, being drawn into the war against the king in 1665/6. Although Antonio I did not take advice from him, Fr Roboredo remained faithful to the king. He paid the price of loyalty as he died at the side of Antonio on the battlefield. The battle of Ambuila was the defining moment in the history of relations between the Kongo kingdom and Portugal.

Fr Manuel Roboredo clearly deserves much merit for his sterling contribution to his country and to the church in the Kongo. His commitment and service to his people was of rare quality. Surely, as S. Axelson avers, Fr Roboredo “deserves much merit amidst all the European missionaries, who usually attract greater interest in the history of the Church than their Congolese brothers.”

2. The Mutapa Kingdom

In the Mutapa kingdom there were two dominant religious orders, the Jesuits and Dominican friars. Nothing much developed in the kingdom by way of developing an African clergy. Thus the presence of the Jesuits and Dominicans, since 1560 and 1610 respectively, did not leave a mark in the kingdom. Although Dominicans established churches at Portugese feiras (markets) such as Masapa, Dambarare, Ruhanje, Bukutu and a few other

---

221 AXELSON, Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo, p. 122.
222 AXELSON, Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo, p. 121.
places during the seventeenth century, 223 "there is nothing to suggest the growth of what could possibly be called a Church beyond small groups of Portuguese traders and settlers, their mestizo children, and the slaves that obeyed them." 224 In terms of the development of an African clergy, those who became priests were trained in Goa. Evidence suggests that those who trained to become priests came from the royal family. It seems that there were three Mutapa princes who became Dominican friars. They include Diogo and Philippe, the sons of Pedro Mhande Mavhura, who reigned briefly in the 1690s, and Miguel Kapararidze. The two brothers "preferred a marginalised life in a foreign land to a return home...." 225 The most celebrated of the Shona friars is Miguel Kapararidze.

a. Miguel Kapararidze (c.1515-1670)

Little is known about Miguel’s Shona name. We do know, however, that he was the eldest son of Nyambo Domingos Kapararidze, who was emperor of the Mutapa Empire from c1624 to 1629 and from c1631 to 1632. Documents by Portuguese writers and by the Dominicans do not say. It is also difficult to calculate the age and date of his birth because the Shona society was then non-literate. Miguel was a young boy when his father was defeated by Mhande Mavhura in May 1629. The Portuguese took him prisoner, possibly in an attempt to groom him for the Mutapa throne. He was handed over to the Governor of Mozambique, who, in turn, entrusted him to the viceroy of India. The latter gave him the name Miguel. Later Miguel was taken to Goa where he was to be educated by the Dominicans.

It is not clear how many years Miguel spent in the Dominican convent at Goa. However, in 1630 the Vicar General of the Dominican order sent him to Portugal where he was placed in another Dominican institution. It was here that he was baptized. After three years in Portugal, he received a Dominican habit and a Dominican name, Miguel da Presentacao. Following this, Miguel was recommended to Cardinal Barberini, the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith by the collector of Portugal, Lorenzo Tramallo. Scholars are of the opinion that Miguel traveled to Rome possibly because of the intervention of the Portuguese royal administration. Denis argues that this "black African Dominican friar

of the eastern parts”, was accepted into the Dominican order at barely 15 years. The reason for this, he argues, could have been his royal status on which Portugal wanted to capitalize. Just as in the case of Henrique Nzinga, the Portuguese administration always saw political gain in interacting with Miguel. Thus, it is perfectly understandable why, throughout his stay in Portugal, Miguel was officially the protégé of the King of Portugal. It was not only the Portuguese Administration that saw gain in Miguel. Mudenge argues that the Dominicans also tried to use him “to promote the interests of their order at Rome and Lisbon.” After ordination, he was sent back to the priory of Basaim in India.

The ageing of Mutapa Mavhura created an opportunity for the Portuguese king to express his opinion on the successor. In 1560, the king of Portugal suggested that Miguel should return to the kingdom in order to be crowned emperor. Miguel turned down the offer arguing that he preferred to stay in India. Up to the time of his death in 1670 Miguel stayed in the Santa Barbara priory in Goa. He taught theology, and later became Vicar of Santa Barbara parish. “In 1670 the master general of the Dominican Order, Thomas Rocaberti, awarded him the title of Master in Theology.”

There is evidence that Fr Miguel was a victim of racism in Goa. To substantiate this point Mudenge writes: “It appears that in 1664 one Fr Miguel da Presentacao, vicar of the parish of the convent of Santa Barbara, was a member of the group of rebel revolutionary priests who demanded far-reaching changes at the Convent of Santa Barbara, including the temporary closure of the Convent and dismissal of students.” This story is confirmed by Denis who refers to an internal conflict which caused Miguel to act in common cause with a group of twenty-three religious who requested the temporary closure of the priory.

That racism existed in the Dominican priory at Goa is confirmed by Miguel’s contemporary, Fr Antonio Ardizone Spinola, an Italian Theatine priest, who knew him well in the 1640s. He wrote, “Although he is a model priest, leading a very exemplary life, saying mass daily, yet not even the

226 Denis, The Dominican Friars, p. 32.
227 Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 259.
228 Denis, The Dominican Friars, p. 33.
229 Denis, The Dominican Friars, p. 33.
231 Denis, The Dominican Friars, p. 33.
habit which he wears secures him any consideration there, just because he has a black face. If I had not seen it, I would not have believed it."

Like many African clergy who were trained in Portugal or Goa, Fr Miguel never went back to the Mutapa kingdom to serve his people. This was not because he was not given a chance: he was accorded one but he turned it down. Although he may not have wanted to be the leader of the Mutapa Empire, possibly because he felt that he was not prepared, he could have taken the chance to go back home to minister to his people. About him Adrian Hastings says: "He at least moved fully into Christian History, but he had also moved quite out of Zimbabwean history." It is not true, however that Fr Miguel moved out of Zimbabwean history if one considers the way he is celebrated by Mudenge, who portrays him as an icon of Zimbabwean intellectual prowess and a doyen of academic excellence. In an attempt to re-insert him in Zimbabwean historiography, Mudenge wants him to be understood as a model Zimbabwean who went abroad and became known for his industriousness and academic leadership. The exaggeration that he makes of the award of the Master of Theology is meant to put across this sole point. It is only Mudenge, and not other scholars who make the claim that the Master of Theology that he was awarded is "equivalent to today’s doctorate in divinity."

Furthermore, he writes: "Dom Miguel, priest, prince, professor, heir to the imperial throne of the Mutapas and the first to receive a doctorate degree in any field of study, died in Goa at the Convent of Santa Barbara sometime after 1670." It is not only Mudenge who writes about him appreciatively. P. Denis, a Dominican brother and Church historian says that the Dominicans "had cause for rejoicing" because of Miguel’s "extraordinary career."

3. Mozambique

From the sixteenth century right up to the nineteenth century Portuguese missionaries in Mozambique made minimal contact with the interior. Substantial contact with the black African population was only made in isolated areas lying behind the coastline from Sofala to Quelimane during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For the rest, argues Hastings,

232 BOXER, The Church Militant, p. 11.
234 MUDENGE, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 260.
235 MUDENGE, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 261.
236 DENIS, The Dominican Friars, p. 31.
Portuguese missionaries were dealing with a coastal people, Arab or Swahili. Dominican and Jesuit missionaries dominated the Mozambican mission field. The Dominican order established their first permanent house on the island of Mozambique in 1577. Their last Portuguese friar died in 1837. Their work in the Zambezi region was at best erratic and unfruitful. Similarly, the Jesuits, who had been to Mozambique since 1559, had several stations along the Zambezi. After a long but unrewarding stay in the area, they finally conceded that their work among the Bantu was not successful. In such a mission field it would be too much to expect a thriving program for the development of an African clergy. The best that the Jesuits did was to establish a seminary at Sena for children of Portuguese and the sons of chiefs. Nothing much was yielded for the latter group. There is, however, one native cleric that we will profile in this section. He is Fr Luiz de Espirito Santo.

**a. Luiz de Espirito Santo**

Mudenge calls Fr Luiz de Espirito Santo, “a native of Mozambique.” This may be read as implying that he was a black priest. Eric Axelson seems to confirm this thinking by the suggestion that Fr Espirito Santo was “probably a scion of the royal house.” By this one would assume that he was a member of the royal house of one of the Mozambican chieflaincies. He should have been one of the few African priests of Mozambique sent by the Dominican order to train in either Portugal or Goa.

According to Denis, Fr Espirito Santo was well versed with the customs of his people and contributed significantly to the Dominican order. He was trusted by the Portuguese Administration. He could well have been a chaplain of Portuguese soldiers on their military forays. This may explain the way he died in the Mutapa kingdom, where he was a captive of Emperor Kapararidze. In the 1620s he became deeply entangled in the politics of succession within the Mutapa kingdom. In a tussle for power between Mhande Mavhura and Nyambo Kapararidze, Fr Espirito Santo naturally favoured Mavhura, the Portuguese lackey. He thus helped in the defeat of Kapararidze in 1628. His friendship with Mavhura resulted in

---

238 DENIS, *The Dominican Friars*, p. ix.
him winning the Mutapa to Christianity. He christened Mhande Mavhura Dom Filipe. Fr Espirito Santo, had “hope of great consequences” out of his relationship with Mavhura.\textsuperscript{244} He apparently read too much from the victory of Mavhura over Kapararidze. Mudenge says this about it:

"Fr Luiz thought that the victory of the anti-Kapararidze alliance was achieved in part through the intercession of our Lady of the Rosary. With this victory, the Mavhura forces entered the Zimbabwe where a victory mass was celebrated and a little church, dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary was built."\textsuperscript{245}

In 1631 Kapararidze began a counter-offensive, which restored his power, albeit for a short period of time. Fr Luiz de Espirito Santo was captured in one of the bloodiest military encounters between Mavhura and his Portuguese supporters and Kapararidze with his Moslem supporters. In a rather comical scene before he departed this world, Fr Luiz was asked to do Kapararidze homage, instead he “made a long harangue declaring his loyalty to Mavhura, the Portuguese crown and Jesus Christ, the ‘King of Kings’."\textsuperscript{246}

Furthermore:

"He likened Kapararidze with Lucifer and threatened him with hell-fire, ‘the horrible lake’ where he would burn ‘for all eternity as miserable fuel to the inextinguishable fire! Return,’ cried the good friar, ‘return to reason, now that God counsels thee by my voice, and bend thy knee before the True Lord, rather than expect me to bend to thee.’ Tired of what must have sounded as the rantings of a crazy but politically dangerous friar, Kapararidze ordered him put to death. He was tied to a tree-trunk and killed with assegais."\textsuperscript{247}

We know almost nothing about his work of evangelisation inside Mozambique. Thus it is difficult to evaluate what exactly Denis means when he says that Fr Luiz Espirito Santo contributed significantly to the work of the Dominicans. It is unfortunate that fellow Dominicans like Fr

\textsuperscript{244} Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 225.  
\textsuperscript{245} Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 257.  
\textsuperscript{246} Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, p. 261.  
\textsuperscript{247} Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, pp. 261-262.
Catharina saw him as a “martyr”. As Mudenge rightly argues, “... it would appear more likely that the good friar went to face his Creator to answer some serious charges about his role in the spilling of so much innocent blood in those wars.”

4. Angola

Portuguese interest in Angola was first manifested in 1519. In 1526, the paramount of the Ngola people was converted. By 1570, the Portuguese began the conquest of Angola. They finally established an European-controlled port in Luanda. Immediately thereafter, the Jesuits relocated to Luanda. In spite of the long period that missionaries spent in Angola there was little to show for it after nearly three hundred years of toil. Hastings’ evaluation sounds apt when he says:

“The history of the Church in Angola is depressingly lifeless, even though with time it became relatively considerable in size, because it remained so emphatically a colonial religion, present as part of a foreign establishment without almost any of the signs of indigenous vitality one can detect in the Kongo.”

Clearly, to think that such a mode of Christianity would produce a vibrant African clergy would be to expect too much. However, there were a few African priests who were trained at the seminary in Sao Tome. This seminary was a victim of regular temporary closures, because of lack of vocations and due to poor management. The persistent efforts to establish and maintain an indigenous clergy were mainly unsuccessful. For this reason, we will only give a brief history of one African priest from Angola.

a. Francisco das Necessitades

Little is known about Fr Francisco except the passing references that one comes across from missionary sources. There are no details as to where he was trained. However, he is one of the few African priests who remained in Angola in the 1840s, when white missionaries left Angola. In a

248 Mudenge, A Political History of Munhumutapa, pp. 261-262.
period of 18 months that he visited the northern part of Angola, he is said to have baptized 100,000 people.\textsuperscript{252}

IV. OVERALL EVALUATION

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN CLERGY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Boxer makes an appropriate comment on the development of an indigenous clergy during the Portuguese era when he says, "However desirable the development of an indigenous clergy may have been in theory, in practice such a clergy took a long time to develop in most countries outside Europe, and in some regions it never existed to any significant degree until very recent years."\textsuperscript{253} This was definitely true for southern Africa, and there are many reasons for that. Firstly, in most cases there was poor co-ordination between Portugal and the missionary administration in Africa and in Goa. Secondly, white members of religious orders resisted efforts to train an African clergy. This explains some of the cases of racism that we referred to. Thirdly, poor planning and lack of resources accounted for the poor results. Fourthly, there was no clear-cut policy on the purpose of training an African clergy. Many who were trained in Portugal and Goa decided to work there and never returned to Africa to serve their people. This happened more often with the Dominican order than others. Fifthly, we should accept the point that there were limited vocations in southern Africa, due to the fact that Christianity there was very thinly spread. A corollary to this situation was the practice by most missionaries to resort to royal families as the constituency for recruiting an African clergy. Unfortunately, even this strategy failed to work out.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the difficulties faced by Iberian missionaries during the era under study, it is worth noting that the contribution of a few African clergy to African Christianity needs re-telling. Although sources are scant, and the Portuguese names conceal the identity of most African clergy that were trained, surely, it is worth while to learn about these few Africans who committed themselves to serving the Christian God, whether they managed to return to Africa or not. These few characters, that we managed to say

\textsuperscript{252} AXELSON, \textit{Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{253} BOXER, \textit{The Church Militant}, p. 2.
something about, and many more whose knowledge we lack, are part of the complex history of African Christianity.