

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ANGOLAN EXPERIENCE

Reconciliation in the Republic of Angola is an urgent issue as regards lasting peace, since we know that Angola has been involved in 27 years of conflict and civil war. Now that peace has come through the Luena memorandum of understanding signed by both the government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, "*Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola*" (UNITA), on 4 April 2002 and now that there is free circulation through all Angola, people who had been forced to flee their towns, cities and villages by civil war are seeking their lost family members. Angolans are relieved that the war is over but at the same time there are mixed feelings. The conditions in which the civil war left the country devastated created frustration and sorrow for the majority of Angolan citizens, under the harsh poverty which is its outcome. Shall we be quiet? Or shall we stand before God and the state to deal with the past for the sake of the people and to foster good management for a better future? It is clear that all Angolans should contribute to the future, which begins now in darkness and despair with respect to the Cabinda Province. We believe that 2002 is the departure point which raises many questions about the future. This section will deal with these kinds of questions and make suggestions for the future. Two events make the year 2002 special for Angola. First, the death of Jonas Savimbi, on 22 February 2002 which came one century after the death of Mutu Kevela from the same province as Savimbi, as Henderson records:

On April 23, 1902, Mutu Kevela departed from Bailundo to mobilize the Umbundu...Mutu Kevela had been killed at Chipindo in the environs of Bailundo, August 4, 1902, but he was the hero who emerged from the conflict between Portuguese and Angolans (1979: 110).

Savimbi's death drew international attention insofar as it brought an immediate ceasefire and internal dialogue without international observers' interventions.

The second event, which also placed the world's spotlight on Angola, was the solar eclipse in December 2002, which brought many scientists to Angola for the first time. This chapter will discuss the following points: Angola and its struggle for independence, Conflict and civil war and the Luena memorandum toward future national reconciliation. As the *Economist News* observed: "These old enemies meet without apparent rancour; reconciliation seems possible" (2005:2). We wish to make sure that continuing reconciliation among Angolans becomes a reality. The conclusion will focus on implications which should empower the people, along with the government, to rebuild the country and share its resources fairly. To make an effective contribution to Angolan history we collected information from many books and articles and administered a questionnaire and interview to church leaders in Luanda, the capital city. As with the TRC, in the case of Angola each author has definite objectives and different interpretations. Some, like Dr. P.K. Huibregtse, defended the Portuguese policies as fair and right, arguing that there was no exploitation but that it was the outsiders' influence which forced the blacks to rebel against the Portuguese, and contended that Angola and the other Portuguese colonies should be regarded as provinces of Portugal. In his own words:

It will make no difference, because white and black are equal. They do not say in Angola: Whites are superior, or blacks are superior. That is no problem, as there are really only Angolese [sic]...We are living in an era in which the political lie is in demand. It is a lie to say that the circumstances in Angola are an insult to human dignity...The Portuguese overseas provinces are frontier posts in the defence of the west. Whoever abandons these posts must eventually abandon himself (1975: 10/1).

We have considered all these books even though some of them contain shocking material. As Huibregtse said, we are living in an era in which the political lie is considered as truth (ibid). We appreciated some books and articles like the "Angola" article in *Africa Today* edited and published by Uwechue Raph et al (1996), *Angola: Five Centuries of Conflict* written by Henderson Lawrence W. (1979), *The Peaceful Face of Angola: Biography of a Peace Process (1991 to 2002)* by Comerford Michael G. (2005), and *After Angola The War Over Southern Africa The Role of the Big Powers* by Legum Colin (1976) and others in which we found valuable information for this thesis. The present experience of peace in Angola brought about much speculation. We thought it would be worthwhile to interview the churches' leaders, as those who are in contact with people, to tell us what they know about the past 27 years of civil war and what people's expectations are for the amazing and spontaneous peace that emerged.

Should we Angolans say that we are now a rainbow nation? Or are we in danger when people are still in trauma and thinking about the unjust conditions in which the civil war left us? How to ensure a solid future

for Angola? Such questions and answers will not be understood unless we first consider the colonial history of Angola.

#### 4.1. Colonization and Slave Trade

Angola is one of the southern African countries; to the north it borders the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to the east Zambia and to the south Namibia. Its neighbouring countries exercise not only linguistic influences (French and English) but also religious and political ideologies. Lawrence W. Henderson wrote: "Angola occupied a strategic position in changing southern Africa; it is also a focal point for current West-East interactions" (*Op.cit.*: 6). Angola is Portuguese-speaking but French and English are both languages which are influential within Luanda. Most people in the northern, western and eastern parts speak French while in the southern part most people speak English, but Portuguese is the educational language everywhere in Angola. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola mutually influence each other strongly. Angola through Cabinda province also shares a border with Congo Brazzaville in the north. Angola was for a long time a Roman Catholic country, before it became secular as the *Angola Constitution* declared in article eight ([www.angop](http://www.angop) 2005:2). Rego Silva quoted by Lawrence W. Henderson shows how the Roman Catholic church has been influential since colonial times (*Op.cit.*: 146). Furthermore Lawrence W. Henderson describes the Catholic influence within the country:

Angolans ... recognized clearly the close tie between Church and the state. Catholic certificates of baptism and marriage were legal, which greatly facilitated life in the extremely bureaucratic society created by Portuguese colonialism, whereas Angolans married in the Protestant churches were still registered officially as 'single' and their children as well 'illegitimate.' Local Catholic catechists were paid by the government and enjoyed other perquisites such as exemption of taxes and contract labor. The discrimination between Catholic and Protestant was crucial for a majority of Angolans because they lived in religiously defined communities. (*Ibid*: 146/7).

Angola is divided into eighteen provinces from Cabinda to Cunene. Its population is estimated at 15,490,000; cf. Pelissier Rene (2006:51) where the Ovimbundu are the largest ethnic group with 37%, followed by mixtures of urban groups at 35.7%, Kimbundu estimated at 25% and a minority of Bakongo 13% [this adds up to 110%]; Roman Catholics are the majority, estimated at 62%, and Protestants and other religions comprise a minority of 32%. Portuguese as we said above is the language of education, while other Bantu and African languages are used in the common social life (cf. The *World Almanac & Book of Fact*, in the section of *Nations of the World* 2006:1; [www.theworldfactbook.com](http://www.theworldfactbook.com)). The following map of Angola is from the same source:



Angola has a long history. It maintained diplomatic relations with the Portuguese after the Diego Cao discovery: they had reached the coast of Angola, becoming friendly with the King of Kongo, Nzinga Nkuvu, who ruled in Mbanza Kongo as his capital city, later called Sao Salvador by the Portuguese. *The Background Notes on Countries of the World: "Republic of Angola"*, informs us:

In 1482, when the Portuguese first landed in what is now northern Angola, they encouraged the Kingdom of Kongo, which stretched from modern Gabon in the north to the Kwanza River in the South. Mbanza Kongo, the capital, had a population of

50,000 people. South of this kingdom were various important states, of which the Kingdom of Ndongo, ruled by the Ngola (king), was most significant. Modern Angola derives its name from the king of Ndongo (2005: 1 [www.EBSCOhost](http://www.EBSCOhost)).

It should be understood that other kingdoms were dependent on the Kingdom of Kongo (Dos Santos Jose & Pailler Jean 2000: 27). When the missionaries arrived they regarded the whole of Angola as their territory.

Here one should read Raph Uwechue et al who refer to the missionaries' arrival in Angola:

Portuguese missionaries arrived in 1491 and Manikongo Nzinga-a-Cuum [sic], his senior chiefs and their families embraced Christianity. The next king, Affonso I of Kongo also became a Christian. He exchanged ambassadors with King Manuel I and then King Joao III of Portugal and welcomed Portuguese missionaries, traders and artisans (1996: 262).

When and why did diplomatic relations end? The Portuguese were clever: after exploring the whole country they discovered many valuable activities, including the slave trade, and they wished to conquer it. Therefore, they used military forces to overturn the Kongo Kingdom and corrupted the chief of the kingdom of Ndongo so that they could take control over Angola. Raph Uwechue et al confirm this: "In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Ngola prospered from illicit slave trading with the Portuguese. But after a quarrel between the two parties, the Portuguese attempted military conquest in 1575, the year that Luanda was founded" (opcit: 262).

King Affonso did not concur with the Portuguese devoting themselves to the slave trade. Meanwhile King Ngola-a-Nzinga of Ndongo Kingdom whose capital was Mbanza Kabassa "prospered from the illicit slave trading" said Uwechue Raph et al (Ibid). But this illicit trading led to a quarrel, which caused the Portuguese to use military forces to take control over the Kingdom of Ndongo first and subsequently after 75 years of war the whole of Angola. Raph Uwechue et al record the legacy of Angolan kingdoms that had resisted the Portuguese sporadically (ibid: 262):

In 1680, after resisting a challenge from the Dutch, who occupied the Portuguese settlements in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal's control over Angola covered only half dozen forts in the lower Kwanza Valley and Benguela and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Kingdom of Kongo began a steady decline in which the influence of the Catholic mission almost vanished.

But conquest was not yet complete. Conflict between various kingdoms and the Portuguese became intense during the dawning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, firstly with the kingdom of Congo in Alvaro Buta's revolt 1913 – 15; with the Dembo part of Kimbundu people, Ngola's kingdom. The revolt of Mutu Kavela above inserts in this section with Ovimbundu in 1902 had been considered as one of "greatest African resistance" this ended with the rulers Mandume in 1915 and this resistance went in all over the kingdom until 1920 see Raph Uwechue et al (op. cit: 262). Bridgland reveals the relationship of some of the leaders of that revolt to Savimbi's family in the person of Sakaita, grandfather of Savimbi: "Loth's father and Jonas' grandfather, Sakaita Savimbi, was a traditional chief who had been stripped of his power and much of his lands by the colonisers because he had fought in the Bailundo uprising of 1902" (1986:26). The effective control over Angola by the Portuguese should be dated to 1920, as Lawrence W. Henderson confirms (1979: 68): this brought about many changes in the Angolans' life. With the intention of sweeping away all blacks, the Portuguese policy of miscegenation was established for a new race called mestizos, of which they were proud, saying: "God created the whites and the blacks, and the Portuguese created the mestizo" (ibid: 70). Lawrence W. Henderson, quoting Gerald, recorded that: "In 1846 there were almost 11 white men for every white woman in Angola. By 1920 that had dropped to 187 to 100 as had the frequency of the miscegenation" (ibid: 70). Coloureds or Mestizos in Angola enjoyed special privileges and status, not only because of their skin and relationship with the Portuguese but also, importantly, they were the most assimilated race. Angolan Kingdoms resisted miscegenation. But *mestizos* are scattered everywhere in Angola. The mestizos as well as the trade in slaves should be held as fundamental reasons which impeded the first evangelism in the Congo kingdom. The Portuguese abused black women, not even marrying them, those as well whose husbands were away for long periods in the forced labour of coffee and sugar-cane plantations, after the slave trade had been abolished. This notorious history gave Angola an important place as a centre of the slave trade (Lawrence W. Henderson op.cit.: 74).

Fred Brindgland records that slaves were baptised before crossing the Atlantic in chains: “on the wharfs at Luanda as late as 1870, there could be seen a marble chair in which the bishop had baptized” (1986:1). This situation of slavery and the burden of colonization led to the first resistance against Christianity, as recorded by Groves (1954:245) and Lawrence W. Henderson (Op. cit: 81). The first work was carried out by Franciscans (Martin 1975:5); the Capuchins arrived later during the early decline of the first wave of evangelism and in 1717 they withdrew completely (Martin 1975: 11).

The situation of Christianity’s failure within the Kingdom of Congo should not be confused with other secular activities in the Angolan kingdoms. Although the Portuguese missions failed in this Kingdom, they were still operating in other kingdoms, for instance, that of Ngola (Lawrence W. Henderson: *ibid*: 81). The Portuguese created tensions between kingdoms, as Henderson records:

Tension between the kingdoms of Kongo and Ngola increased because of the competition for profits from the slave trade. The Portuguese presence in the Kongo stimulated the demand for slaves and the favorite campaigning ground of the Kongolese was among the populous Kimbundu, South of the Dande River. The Kimbundu not only were victims of trade, but also profited from it by their role as intermediaries in furnishing slaves to the north and selling slaves through the illegal port of Luanda (*ibid*: 81/2).

The trade in slaves thus not only benefited the Portuguese but also the other kingdoms, which the Portuguese manipulated. The history of Angola as we remarked above is the key to understanding Angola as an important nation in African and world history. According to Lawrence W. Henderson, “the total number of slaves landed in Americas from all parts of Africa is estimated at about 10 million. Angola would seem to have been the largest supplier of slaves in the world. Perhaps 30 percent of the slaves in the trade for the whole period of three centuries came from Angola” (*ibid*: 94).

This is merely a brief Angolan history. How guilty we feel when we are writing this section since we are descendants of those who sold our brother and sister Angolans and other Africans. It will be important that a reconciliation ministry should think not only in terms of the local context but should go beyond the Angolan context to reach, if possible, those who are our

descendants, our brothers sold by our ancestors, with the gospel of forgiveness. When the slave trade was abolished the Portuguese launched a new policy of forced labour (*ntonga*), which led to the later campaigns of liberation movements for an independent Angola. To this we now move.

## 4.2. The Struggle for Independence

The question of *ntonga* (forced labour) represented a Portuguese strategy to maintain control over their subjects whose education was very limited. Taxes and beating with "*mbala matodi*", a piece of wood with nails, were used to punish those who refused to obey instructions. As evidence of this Fred Bridgland recorded:

A missionary nurse who approached the Portuguese district administrators wrote: 'we heard the sounds of blows and screaming. We passed into the building and through an open door saw an African lying on the floor being beaten by a *cipaio* (African policeman). The administrator sat behind his desk watching.' Onlookers explained that the reason for beating was that the man, a village chief, had been unable to collect enough men for contract labour (opcit:24).

The Bengela railway, constructed between 1903 and about 1923 according to Uwechue Raph et al (opcit: 263), should be seen in the context of forced labour. Not long thereafter free settlers were encouraged to move to Angola, as Raph Uwechue et al confirm: "In 1945 the Portuguese government initiated measures designed to encourage its excess population to emigrate to Angola. In 1951 Angola was considered a part of Portugal and in 1952 the settlement projects known as *colonatos* began" (opcit: 263).

Huambo became known as *nova Lisboa* (new Lisbon) since so many Portuguese settled there (Uwechue Raph et al.) but they were also found everywhere in Angola. As regards the Angolan natives in that period of harsh labour, many began to flee to the neighbouring countries. There some "natives" received higher education and they began to consider how to liberate the country from Portugues in the country as favoured citizens the force of liberation came from Angolans in other countries.

Three liberation movements are known in the history of Angolan independence: The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). A brief background of each movement will be helpful. We are aware of other, smaller, Angolan movements for the liberation of Angola, like the Union for the Populations of Angola (UPA) and the Association for the Natives of Angola (ANANGOLA) movements. They will not be forgotten in this chapter but will be explored by means of the main liberation movements. And particular attention will be given to the Cabindian political party, *Frente de Libertacao do Enclave de Cabinda* (FLEC) or the Front for Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave, as one of the Angolan movements who still hope to withdraw Cabinda from Angola as an independent state. We do not pretend to write all the details of Angolan history but are simply offering a clear understanding of Angola for the purposes of a future lasting peace. But the case of Cabinda, which now threatens Angolan peace, will keep our attention for a while. For the *Angola Constitution* article five said: "The Republic of Angola shall be a unitary and indivisible state whose inviolable and inalienable territory shall be that defined by the present geographical limits of Angola, and any attempt at separatism or dismemberment of its territory shall be vigorously combated" (2005:2) [www.angop](http://www.angop)

Instead of beginning with the MPLA, which was created first among the liberation movements, we have followed an alphabetical order.

#### 4.2.1. The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA)

The Frente Nacional pela Liberacao de Angola (FNLA) has its basic pattern within the *Uniao das populacoes de Angola* (UPA), founded in July 1957 as the Union for the Northern Populations of Angola (UPNA), which changed its name in 1961 after the founding of MPLA in 1956. Raph Uwechue et al inform us that it was founded by amongst others, Manuel Barros Necaca and his nephew, Holden Roberto, who later became its leader: in December 1958 the UPNA, which had been regarded as a Bakongo party, changed its name to Uniao das Populacoes de Angola (UPA) (*op. cit.*: 263).

The FNLA vision was limited in the beginning to that ethnic group of the Bakongo, but fortunately after one year changed its vision to encompass "all Africans originally from Angola,

without discriminations to sex, age, ethnic origin or domicile” (Uwechue, *ibid*). According to Duncan Clarke, Holden Roberto became militant as a result of his contact with other new young African leaders:

In Accra [in December 1958], Roberto established relationship with several other young luminaries of the nationalist firmament, including Patrice Lumumba, Kenneth Kaunda, Tom Mboya and Frantz Fanon. Already by now he was beginning to consider the use of revolutionary violence, should Portugal remain obdurate (2000:47).

For Zegeye Abebe, Dixon et al, “When the MPLA was cosmopolitan, socialist and integrated, the UPA (which would change its name once again ... in 1961) was provincial, entrepreneurial, anticommunist and ethnically homogenous” (1999: 6). [www.EBSCOhost](http://www.EBSCOhost).

It is necessary to comment that a political party or even a local church which has a vision for reconciliation should deal with the issue of gathering all people, and not concentrate its efforts on one ethnic group. This political and military party really fought for the liberation of Angola, as we will see below. It had its main office in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), sustained by the United States of America. Zegeye, Abebe, Dixon et al confirm that “Zairian forces supporting the FNLA, though better trained and more disciplined than Roberto’s, were not of the same calibre as the SADF(South African Defence Force) and could not have carried on the fight without US support” (*ibid*: 13). [www.EBSCOhost](http://www.EBSCOhost)

The first conflict was against the Portuguese in the time of the UPA, when many hundreds of Portuguese settlers were brutally killed (Legum 1976: 18) but later the FNLA as well as MPLA entered the struggle. In 1962 the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE = Governo Revolucionario de Angola no Exilio) for the liberation of Angola was set up, as Raph Uwechue et al record, “under Holden Roberto as Prime Minister and Emmanuel Kunzika, leader of the PDA, as first Vice-premier. Dr. Neto was elected president of the MPLA at the movement’s first national conference in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) in December 1962” (*op. cit*: 264).

The FNLA as well as the MPLA had various factions but we will not consider these. The composition of the GRAE shows how influential Holden Roberto was; not only in the GRAE because he was also elected as president of the “*Conselho Supremo de Liberacao de Angola*”

(Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola) (CSLA) when certain African presidents tried to unify the FNLA and MPLA in 1972. Teca describes Holden Roberto as “the oldest politician within the liberation struggle” (1997: 25). Interaction between FNLA and MPLA is recorded by Raph Uwechue et al: “On December 13, 1972, [sic] formed a Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola (CSLA), under the auspices of the OAU. Holden Roberto was made president of the CSLA, with Dr. Neto as vice-president” (op.cit: 265).

This is a brief background of the FNLA, which will be completed by a discussion of the internal civil war. It is obvious that FNLA had a positive impact on African leaders. Today FNLA deals with many administrative problems although it continues to affirm its existence in Angola and Holden Roberto is still president, although he is being challenged by young leaders whose ambition is to take control over the party. With the dawning of a democratic mood in Angola, the FNLA maintained its proud record as a liberating movement. The Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos maintains a good if not intimate relationship with the FNLA and its founder leader. In peaceful coexistence with the government, FNLA with its elites considers itself as an opposition political party. With this overview of the FNLA we turn to the MPLA background.

#### 4.2.2. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)

According to Raph Uwechue et al, in December 1956 a new organization, the MPLA, was formed (op.cit.: 263). It fused many other movements, namely the Association of the natives of Angola (ANANGOLA), the first Angolan league formed after 1913; the Communist Political Party founded in October 1956, and the African Political Party for the Liberation of Angola or Partido de Luta dos Africanos de Angola (PLAA). The MPLA maintained a wide vision, that of incorporating all Angolans for the freedom of the whole country: Zegeye, Abebe, Dixon et al remark that “The MPLA was inclusive from the beginning as it consisted of whites mestizos and assimilados, the latter largely of Kimbundu origin” (Op.cit.: 4-5). [www.EBSCOhost](http://www.EBSCOhost)

Confusion with the MPLA is found in some sources regarding the name of *Partido da Luta dos Africanos de Angola* (Party of African Combatants in Angola) which some abbreviate as “PLAA” and others as “PLUA”. MPLA had a long history because of its cosmopolitan and inclusive vision. Dr. Agostinho Neto after his return from Portugal became chairman of the MPLA, becoming well-known as a reformer of the political party (Zegeye et al ibid: 6). With courage

and enthusiasm he worked hard to liberate Angola from the Portuguese policies, which led to his first arrest in June 1960 (Raph Uwechue et al op.cit: 264). This event led to the first revolts in Luanda and elsewhere against the Portuguese because not only Dr. Neto but also other Angolans were frequently arrested and abused by the Portuguese who responded with harsh violence and killed many people. Zegeye et al record that:

After Neto's arrest in June 1960, there was an incident of unnamed protesters being gunned down by the police, but the first real armed uprising was among Kimbundu cotton farmers in Malange province about 400 miles South-east of Luanda. Peasants attacked Portuguese livestock and property as a result of falling cotton prices, but abstained from attacking settlers. The Portuguese response was brutal, killing some 7,000 Africans as a result. The Luanda uprising of February 1961 captured the world attention as hundreds of Africans attacked the city's prison with knives and clubs trying to free militants about to be deported (op. cit: 6-7).

As Lawrence W. Henderson wrote, confirming what Raph Uwechue et al said above: "Dr Agostinho Neto was elected president of the MPLA at the first National Conference held in Leopoldville in December 1962" (Op. cit.: 165): this first conference gave birth to the new structure of the GRAE. Dr. Agostinho Neto's history of imprisonment looks quite like Mandela's history in South Africa, from prison to the presidency of South Africa. Dr. Neto's imprisonment caused him to be famous among all Angolans as our first president. It is his experience of prison which led him to Congo for his own security. Duncan Clarke confirms his heroic status (op.cit.: 51).

It is also important to recall the strong links of the MPLA with many intellectuals in the capital city and other urban centres (Legum op.cit.: 10). This is the key to the success of the MPLA's strategy. The next movement to be discussed is UNITA.

#### **4.2.3. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)**

Jonas Savimbi founded the *Uniao Nacional pela Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) a decade after the MPLA and FNLA had already become active in the struggle for Angolan freedom, where he was a member of the FNLA. Jonas Savimbi saw the weakness of both

movements and developed a new ideology to create his own political party, withdrawing from the FNLA where he had held an important strategic position in the Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE) and within the party as General Secretary. Duncan Clarke writes:

In October 1965, he persuaded President Kaunda to invite Roberto and Neto to Lusaka for discussions on a common front. They declined. In March 1966 Savimbi crossed the border into Angola to gather with 67 others at Muangai in Moxico district. This was the culmination of months of preparations, culminating between 5 and 25 March in the establishment of the *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) (op. cit: 53).

Jonas Savimbi held his followers' attention in the meeting he held when UNITA was founded. Lawrence W. Henderson reports Savimbi's words:

Only the Angola [sic] people within the country is capable of freeing itself from foreign domination...the MPLA only includes representatives of the Kimbundus [sic]. GRAE only contains Kikongos [sic]. These two parties together still leave outside the political struggle more than half of the population...It is necessary that a new political formation representing other Angola forces should be constituted (opcit: 207).

Hence he founded UNITA; he only devoted his attention to some particular individuals and some Angolans, the Ovimbudu majority. The FNLA whose activities were more intense in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the diaspora was criticized by Savimbi for not being able to liberate Angola from colonial forces. He also criticized MPLA for its pro-communist ideology and for having whites within its members. Another important event, which should be kept in mind, is his disappointment at not really being accepted by African and European leaders. However he noticed that the two strong military movements were antagonists and attempted to play the game of reconciling them through the Zambian president. His position as foreign minister in the GRAE gave him the opening to be in contact with other world leaders since he enjoyed a close relationship with Roberto with whom he travelled to the United Nations General Assembly in 1962 (Clarke op. cit: 51). And meeting some Angolan students in the diaspora influenced the *Uniao Nacional dos Estudantes Angolanos* (UNEA = National Union of Angolan Students) there whose members were already disappointed by the MPLA's and FNLA's mutual destruction (Lawrence W. Henderson op. cit.: 206).

Jonas Savimbi was intelligent and could see the window of opportunity. We also appreciate his initiative in initially inviting the powerful parties, intending to end the Angolan civil war. Unfortunately the situation worsened. The United States stranglehold on UNITA began in 1979 after Neto's death: "Savimbi gained most publicity on his trip with his allegation that 1,300 Angolan schoolchildren had been sent to Cuba without their parents' approval" (Bridgland: 287/8): this followed his appeal to the US to fight against the Soviet Union. From this background we shall move to the independence struggle which ended in the destruction of ourselves and the infrastructure.

#### 4.2.4. Independence and Civil war

The civil war preceded independence and continued for three decades after its proclamation on 11 November 1975, waged simultaneously by the three main political parties in three different places: MPLA in Luanda, FNLA in Kinshasa and UNITA in Huambo. Lawrence W. Henderson describes this as follows:

When the MPLA declared the independence of the People's Republic of Angola (PRA) in Luanda on November 11, 1975, the excluded parties, FNLA and UNITA, made separate declarations of independence, then formed a coalition government of the Democratic People's Republic of Angola (DPRA) with its capital in Huambo (*op. cit.*: 23).

Tony Hodges records that the "*OAU Resolution on the Situation in Angola 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Kampala, Uganda, 28 July – 1 August 1975*" (1976:65) had a positive impact and reveals efforts at conciliation among the liberation movements but unfortunately there was no willingness to become one movement. As Raph Uwechue et al report, formal talks between the Portuguese Government and the three liberation movements on the establishment of a provisional government opened in Alvor in Algarve in southern Portugal on January 10 1975. The FNLA delegation was led by Roberto, Dr Neto led the MPLA and Dr Savimbi headed UNITA (*Op. cit.*: 268).

The Alvor agreement should be considered as pressure by blacks on the Portuguese who wished to maintain their domination. As Zegeye Abebe, Dixon et al observed, on 15 January the delegates signed an agreement (opcit: 9). The Alvor agreement shows the strategy of the Portuguese in first trying to unite all the three main liberation movements in the transitional government. Here all three leaders were co-presidents and candidates for the democratic election which would end the transitional government, which included the Portuguese. Henderson and Raph Uwechue et al provide the names of members of the transitional Government (op. cit: 245 & 268) from which it is evident that though the Portuguese did not seem to have many portfolios the strategic ministries were in their hands: the Economy, Transport; Communications; Public Functions or Public Works, Housing and Urbanization. They did not even consider training a black person to take over, but on the contrary took advantage. Hence amongst our national leaders the Alvor agreement, which should have helped to enhance peace, unfortunately created even more hostilities and division than peace and unity. The FNLA and MPLA's electoral campaigns mutually denigrated each other (Raph Uwechue et al, op. cit: 269).

Dr. Neto strategically arrived first in Luanda: when he was arrested the people revolted against the Portuguese. He was optimistic about his own victory. The FNLA leader, Holden Roberto, warned against the dangers of 'people's power'. He said that this led to a people's dictatorship and that the population of Angola, which is Christian, actively rejected Communism (ibid: 269).

In its efforts to penetrate the interior of Angola FNLA clashed with the MPLA which was broking, with the Portuguese, all access to Angola for exiled politicians. The FNLA was often subject to attack by the MPLA who alleged it was "a group of gangsters, of xenophobes, of racists, and ... anthropophagi" (Teca, op.cit.: 27). Violence erupted when the FNLA prevented the MPLA from entering Luanda. As Zegeye, Abebe, Dixon et al recorded, "the real opening salvo of the savage war between the FNLA and MPLA occurred in Caxito" (Op. cit: 10).

The transitional government survived only a month because of the fighting between the MPLA and FNLA. which cost 20,000 Angolan lives in the capital alone (Colin Legum op. cit: 13).

The question is: why could FNLA not peacefully negotiate this since the movements were all recognized as leaders of the future independent Angola? The executive director of the Inter Ecclesial Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA), Daniel Ntoni Nzinga, in his critical analysis

of all such agreements, indicated that the Alvor agreement represented the frustrated birth of the Angolan Nation because peace was mixed with violence; the Alvor agreement was the elusive rebirth of the nation where peace without justice had been shared by a shadow of agreement and Lusaka was another failed opportunity, where democrats were themselves injured (Luanda 2006).

We will return to this document; we also have to view the MPLA faction as causing a serious problem among liberation movements. Chipenda's MPLA faction, which affiliated itself to FNLA, should be taken into account as one of the weaknesses of Angolan politics, together with Portuguese manipulation (Daniel Ntoni Nzinga 2006:4). In addition the Cabinda enclave issue arose also at the same time; all these events created tension between the two powerful armed political parties. According to Raph Uwechue et al:

On February 13 1975, forces of the three liberation movements and the Portuguese armies occupied the offices in Luanda of the breakaway ' Eastern Revolt' faction of the MPLA, led by Chipenda. The occupation followed a shoot-out between members of the faction and the official MPLA... Chipenda announced in Kinshasa that he had merged the military with FNLA. The Cabinda Liberation Front (FLEC), headed by Luis Ranque Franque, announced in Kinshasa on February 22 1975 that it would welcome negotiation leading to separate independence from Portugal for the enclave (op. cit: 269)

In all these events the circular conflicts FNLA – MPLA, MPLA – UNITA and the FLEC issue in Cabinda are evident. The latter, after weak and exclusive negotiations, led to the new memorandum signed in the province of Namibe on 01 August 2006, which is being contested by FLEC. Colin Legum records the tension between the MPLA, the FNLA and their allies:

Understandably suspicious of Mobutu's aims, the MPLA began to stockpile arms; these began to reach them from Russia and Yugoslavia from before March 1975...Neto at once charged FNLA with ignoring the provisions of the Nakuru Agreement, while FNLA reacted by accusing MPLA (with complete justification) of seeking arms from Russia and recruiting the former Katangese gendarmerie (op. cit: 14).

The severity of the MPLA – FNLA tension caused the OAU to seek how to reconcile both groups; the FNLA at that period was the most influential party as they had already formed the Council Supreme for the Liberation of Angola (CSLA) while the Soviet Union did not at all agree with the OAU concerning the fact that the Chinese and Koreans were in favour of FNLA, so the Soviet Union challenged the OAU by defending the case of MPLA (Colin Legum *ibid*: 17).

With Soviet support and sophisticated arms as well as the presence of the Cubans recruited by the Soviet Union, the MPLA no longer needed to consider reconciliation. Colin Legum describes the result:

In June the barely viable political situation collapsed entirely, leaving the country in two armed camps. Responsibility for this further deterioration – and about this there can be no reasonable doubt – belongs to MPLA, which deliberately extended the struggle between itself and what it saw as Zaire's proxy, FNLA, to include armed attacks on UNITA as well. (*Op. cit*: 14).

In the early struggle among the Angolan liberation movements South Africa was not involved, only the Cuban mercenaries on behalf of Russia, the MPLA's supporters, and the Chinese and Zairean FNLA supporters. But when UNITA was included in the conflict by the MPLA who attacked its offices, UNITA and FNLA agreed to contact the apartheid regime of the South Africa as Colin Legum confirms: "It was at this stage – July 1975 that Holden authorized Daniel Chipenda to go to Namibia for talks with the SA chief of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) to enlist the republic's military force" (*ibid*: 14). The situation immediately worsened, leading to destruction of infra-structure, economy and people; as Savimbi quoted by Legum said: "when elephants battle, grass suffers" (*ibid*: 15). We, the Angolans, were like that grass and we suffered in many terrible ways. For instance, see Raph Uwechue et al (*op. cit*: 270) or Comerford's view: "Experts estimate [*sic*] that there are over ten million landmines in Angola – just about one for every citizen" (2005: 18) and the economy was destroyed.

There were mutual allegations, a lack of mutual acceptance and each movement justified itself. The struggle between MPLA and UNITA saw three agreements which characterised that period of civil war: The Bicesse peace accords, 24-25 April 1990; the Lusaka Protocol in 1994, and the Luena Memorandum on 4 April 2002. Why in spite of three agreements did the struggle continue until 2002? The Bicesse accords succeeded in leading to the democratic election in

1992, the result of which was contested by Jonas Savimbi. The triumphalism of the MPLA did not help matters. As Comerford reveals, the MPLA gained victory in the National Assembly with 53.7% of voters against UNITA who gained 34% of the votes while other parties obtained 12%; in the presidential election 49.6% voted for president Jose Eduardo dos Santos against Jonas Malheiro Savimbi with 40.1% (Comerford op. cit: 10). Further:

For Anstee (1996:534), 'the winner take all' concept [was not] helpful in consolidating the smooth transition to democratic government'. Efforts had been made to secure a role for losers of the elections during the Bicesse negotiations but 'neither of the combatants wanted to hear of it; each was bent on nothing less than total victory' (1996:534). Opposition parties had in fact argued for a period of transition to normalise political life in the country. (Comerford, Ibid: 13).

The first accord was the Portuguese Government's initiative but this time, the United Nations played an important role. It is important to say that really our history was not in secure hands and we were pushed here and there by 'helpers' without taking a firm stand ourselves. As Michael G. Comerford records:

Talks initially took place in Namibe, a coastal town in southern Angola, then in Addis Ababa, before they broke down completely in Abidjan. With the appointment of the new UN Special Representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, new peace talks in Lusaka lasting over a year finally bore fruit in the November 1994 Lusaka Protocol (ibid: 15).

The Lusaka Protocol led the country during the period of the establishment of the *Governo da Unidade e Reconciliação Nacional* (GURN = United Government for the National Reconciliation) in 1996. Both agreements, it seems, did not fail in themselves, but only because there was a lack of trust and discipline to understand and apply the documents. Alioune Blondin Beye became in Angola and Africa an important figure, being an excellent mediator: unfortunately his blood was shed for the cause of Angola. Michael G Comerford confirms this: "Beye showed remarkable tolerance in his dealings with both sides, and worked tirelessly to foster trust and understanding... However, his untimely death in a plane crash in the Abidjan on 26 June 1998 hastened the resumption of military conflict" (op. cit: 16).

On 11 November 1998, in an ecumenical service which was graced by the presence of the president of the republic and distinguished embassies and international figures, Alioune Blondin Beye was remembered. Fernando Octavio, chairman of the Evangelical Alliance in Angola, commented on Beye's death that it was a loss not only to Angola but rather to the international community (sermon 1998).

A retrospective view of Angolan history reveals that the Angolan civil war was one between the world's political ideologies and most powerful nations. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s alliance with Portugal played a certain role in Angolan history since it seems that it provoked Russian intervention. Jakkie Cilliers used the term proxy for describing the civil war in Angola:

What had started as off as a liberation war against Portuguese colonialism during the sixties, gained many of the characteristics of a proxy war between the former Soviet Union and Cuba on the one side and the United States in an uncomfortable alliance with apartheid South Africa on the other (2000: 1; see also Michael G. Comerford op. cit: 10).

Hence it is accurate to say that the Angolan conflict was a miniature "world' war" as the *Background Notes on Countries of the World* confirms: "the MPLA's importation of Cuban troops in November effectively internationalized the conflict" (2005: 4) [www.EBSCOhost](http://www.EBSCOhost). Angolans were scattered everywhere in the world as refugees, Raph Uwechue et al estimated approximately 806,000 Angolan refugees: about 5,000 refugees in Zambia, about 800,000 in Zaire and about 1,600 in the South (op. cit: 274). Many cease-fire agreements between the three liberation movements took place but were ineffective. GURN was a sound initiative but unfortunately the UNITA leader was not totally convinced. Eventually after many processes of peace and dialogue among Angolans led by church leaders and international intervention, and after the death of many people, came the Luena memorandum. Michael G. Comerford points out:

The death of Jonas Savimbi on 22 February 2002 transformed the political landscape of Angola and created new possibilities for peace. Events moved quickly in the weeks following his death. A ceasefire came into effect at midnight on 13 March as part of a fifteen-point peace plan announced by Government. This plan dealt with issues such

as the demilitarisation of UNITA and its reconstitution as a legitimate political party, a general amnesty to promote national reconciliation, the extension of state administration over the whole country, the approval of a new constitution and voter registration prior to holding elections, and the promotion of tolerance and forgiveness. On 4 April 2002 the Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Luena by the government's armed forces, known as FAA (*Forças Armadas Angolanas*), and UNITA's military leadership. (Op. cit: 17).

It is very important to notice how the long-awaited event seemed to be a *kairos* moment, a time of opportunity. Daniel Ntoni Nzinga in his critical analysis of the agreement called it: "Peace and dignity (Luena): Courage of common hope" (opcit: 2006:1). Here lies our concern in undertaking a comparative study of the TRC and the peace created in Angola through the Luena Memorandum. There are many resemblances in spite of some divergences. The concern of the research is to establish how amnesty could be offered mutually. It is now time to clean the house. It is important to compare the death of Dr. Agostinho Neto to that of Jonas Savimbi since both opened new opportunities in Angolan history. The first president's death should be seen as one of the events which accelerated the civil war, yet violence on the other hand led to liberty. The death of Savimbi should also be regarded as an important event for peace in Angola but on the other hand led to many people being suspicious about the future. The present research revealed that the death of the first Angolan president, Dr Agostinho Neto, should be seen as a new departure and new escalating of civil war in the Angolan history because the Marxist-Leninist ideology "adopted in October 1976" (Marek Garzdecki 2006: 52) would have wiped out Christianity within Angola within fifty years (Schubert quoted by Comerford 2005:23). Why did death visit Neto? Raph Uwechue et al explain that he "died of cancer on September 10 1979 in the USSR where he had gone to receive specialist treatment. The funeral, which took place on September 17, President Neto's 57<sup>th</sup> birthday, was attended by the presidents of many African and East European countries and by delegations from Cuba, Portugal and African Liberation movements" (ibid: 280).

For deeply thinking Christians cancer seems not to have been the only reason for his death. Did God want to take him from the scene? they asked. Be that as it may, we have to say that the newly independent country was really affected by his death. It gave freedom to Christians to continue their prophetic and socio-political mission. Before his death, Bibles had been

burned publicly, Christians were in danger when performing their duties and many religious persons fled the country.

We cannot underestimate Neto's love and endeavour for Angola: his death needed further investigation, as Bridgland remarked: "Savimbi himself speculated that Neto had been killed on the operating table"; even the MPLA was sufficiently disturbed to set up a commission of inquiry (op. cit: 282). Such a commission would be a work of the national reconciliation process. At the same time political opposition parties thought it was time to take power. Hence violence increased. After Neto's death, fortunately the MPLA government was recognized as the Angolan government by the OAU and many other countries (Jose E. Dos Santos & Jean Pailler 2000:71). He was younger than both Holden and Jonas Savimbi. The Government under Dos Santos' leadership opposed FNLA by undertaking bold strategies, as had Neto, in building relationships with the leaders of African countries, which led to the decline of the FNLA. When Holden was expelled from Congo and refugees departed into Angola FNLA military activity decreased. Raph Uwechue et al inform one that "In July 1980 Mobutu and dos Santos noted with satisfaction the progress in repatriation of refugees and improvement in security on their joint border.... Zaire and Angola exchanged ambassadors in January 1981" (opcit: 281).

Holden Roberto and his political party have been reconciled with MPLA and with all Angolans, but UNITA walked on its own path, which caused much damage to the country. Let us discuss the role of the churches during the three decades of civil war; and the mediation they promoted between UNITA and the Government.

### **4.3. The Role of the Churches during the Civil War**

The churches in Angola, as the voice of the voiceless, played an important double role during the three decades, both an evil one and, as the mystic body of Christ in their divine nature, the churches awakened to and combated evil and their members become some of the victims of the civil war. How had the churches been used to serve as an instrument to sustain the evil in Angola? And how were they awakened? Such questions led us to consult documents and the findings of the interviews helped us. Michael G. Comerford offered a key observation on the role of the churches in Angola:

A number of important works examined the role of the churches prior to the signing of the Bicesse Accords. The most significant of these is Schubert (2000), but others include Grenfell (1998), Henderson (1978, 1990) and Péclard (1998). These have outlined the relationship between the nationalist parties and the three main Protestant churches, and the relationship of the colonial power to the Catholic Church. The three main Protestant Churches, namely Methodist, Baptist and Congregationalist, were birthing places for the three main nationalist parties, namely MPLA, FNLA and UNITA respectively. (Op. cit: 22).

Research revealed that Savimbi in his struggle kidnapped and victimized pastors and priests, but Brindgland witnesses to what he heard from Savimbi: "I also find time to visit our Protestants and Catholics churches in the bush. We have many ministers and priests with us" (op. cit.: 286). With this clear observation in mind we sent a questionnaire to church leaders in Angola, wishing to know: Did the churches suffer during the civil war? What happened? Were the churches involved in the civil war; if so how? Did the churches contribute to resolving the conflict? Do the churches need reconciliation? Did the Luena Memorandum lead to national reconciliation? If so, how, and if not what should be done to lead the nation into national reconciliation? We had the opportunity to visit these leaders during a period of two weeks.

We have already said something about the Catholic Church in colonial times (see Lawrence W. Henderson and Michael G. Comerford above). But we have to consider the actual effect of the role this Church played regarding peace in Angola for which Archbishop Zacharias Kamwenho was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace. The formation of the inter-ecclesial committee for peace in Angola (COIEPA) gave a new force to the ecumenical struggle against the civil war in Angola even though the government considered this structure as a stumbling-block. Michael G. Comerford made the observation that: "within Angola, ironically, COIEPA remained relatively unknown" (op. cit.: 56): this raises the question, unknown to whom? COIEPA stays an important ecumenical sodality for the Church of Christ in Angola. It is true that some leaders feel COIEPA should close its doors because the civil war is over and it is no longer necessary to maintain such a structure. But this view does not hold for those who think that the churches should help to achieve the national reconciliation seen as the goal for the future.

It is now important to see how the churches turned from the negative actions of influencing and sustaining the war, to the struggle with a new ecumenical vision which inspires fear in those for whom it is a dangerous structure. Were the churches aware of their negative impact during the civil war? This question will be answered in the particular case of each church. We shall discuss the main organizations of the churches: CICA and AEA Protestant councils of churches in Angola; the Roman Catholic Church in Angola; and of independent churches, instead of denominations, which calls for some explanations in particular cases.

#### 4.3.1. The Roman Catholic Church

On the two occasions we visited leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Luanda we could not really sit and talk for many reasons, but they suggested a dialogue with the retired Bishop Dom Marcos, who enlightened us, and documents we were given also helped to summarize what follows. It is important to record that the Roman Catholic Church was the first to be implanted in Angola in the 15<sup>th</sup> century but that the first Christians were swept away. LaTourette wrote: "The area embraced in Angola had been the scene of some of the most spectacularly successful of the Roman Catholic missions of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (1970:398). Groves, referred to above, recorded that in 1491 the king of Kongo had received the missionaries and been baptized (1954:245), which indicates the long history of this Church in Angola. David L. Edwards recorded: "In Congo the first Christian king was baptized by Portuguese in 1471 and the last beheaded by them in 1665" (1997:534). The Capuchins are held to have been the first Roman Catholic missionaries as Groves and LaTourette record. Henderson refers to the decline of Christian missions: "By 1615 most of the traces of Christian life disappeared" (op. cit: 81).

A second wave of evangelisation saw many mission-stations being founded from 1874 until 2006. This evangelisation went hand in hand with colonization: the church as a sinful community demonstrated its weakness by cooperating with the state, discriminating instead of showing love. In so doing the church hurt God and closed its ears and eyes, not to hear and see what God wanted for Angola and its inhabitants. Roman Catholicism was instituted as the "state religion" (as mentioned above by Henderson (op. cit: 146). As the second power of the country after the state it enjoyed many privileges, such as wielding authority over the basics of the national education system. The Catholic Church played an influential role in the colonial period, "civilizing" Angolans by means of education and being partisan towards the slave trade.

According to Lawrence W. Henderson Catholics had a double mission: to spread Catholic Christianity and Portuguese nationalism (op. cit.: 112). As Angola was a Catholic country, Protestants and independent churches could only penetrate it with many difficulties. As Lawrence W. Henderson wrote: "Portuguese colonial officials feared the denationalizing influence of these protestant foreign missions, which seemed more affluent than the Catholic missions" (Ibid: 113).

When the liberation movements arose and Portuguese dynasty declined the Roman Catholics still possessed privileges but experienced disappointment when the MPLA opted for Leninism, abhorring religion and destroying its infra-structures, killing members; then the Roman Catholics took a stand and challenged the state. It is an old institution and with great influence due to its numbers, 75% of the 12,127,071 of the population, according to recent statistics in *The future begins now* (2000:19). According to *the Background* document (2002:3) Catholics played an important role for the voiceless and helped all the nation to reach the position where it is today. However, are there some facts which show that Catholics suffered from the civil war? How did they act to resolve conflict during this war? One may answer in the affirmative. During the colonial period the Catholic Church was a partner of the Portuguese police; the same was the case with the churches and the national liberation movements. Michael G. Comerford reveals that the Methodists supported MPLA but he and Mateus add that "some of the Protestant churches were not involved in the independence struggle while many Catholics supported the MPLA, FNLA and GRAE" (op. cit.: 22). How could the same Church be divided by supporting two political parties? It should be understood that the Catholics stemmed from two different countries: those from Congo supported the FNLA and GRAE while the Catholics in Angola, Luanda in particular, supported the MPLA's policy in the beginning but as things changed they also suffered and began to oppose the MPLA. The Protestants in the Conselho de Igrejas Cristas em Angola (CICA = Council of Christian Churches in Angola) and the Alliance of Evangelicals in Angola (AEA) were too timid to pronounce such statements on behalf of the suffering people, most of whom were members; the Catholic Church first took the risk of challenging the state. Schubert quoted by Comerford confirms this:

This is especially relevant in the case of AEA which had seen political involvement as a betrayal of its Christian mission, and it was rare for either AEA or CICA during the post-independent period to Bicesse to make public pronouncements on peace (2000:157, 207). Church-based public sphere discourse came primarily from CEAST during those

years, and CEAST, through the Africanisation of its leadership, had significantly transformed itself from its collaborator image (Schubert 2000:130) (2005:27).

Churches should normally be ready to proclaim the gospel of freedom which Christ asked us to proclaim. But this was not always the case in Angola until the churches themselves began to suffer. If the Roman Catholics had not lost their cathedral in Kuito and members and privileges they might have continued with their assimilating mission without exhibiting compassion for people (Comerford, *ibid*: 29).

Eventually the “Pro-Peace” occasion, one of CEAST’s events for peace in Angola held in 2000, took place, echoed in Comerford’s comments: he wrote that it brought together representatives of the Angolan government and many other role-players, creating space for political, civil and religious actors to discuss peace collectively (CEAST [Episcopal Conference of Angola and Sao Tome] 2001c). The congress resolutions called for a spirit of democracy (No. 1); greater tolerance (No. 2); human rights education as part of the school curriculum (No. 6); action against landmines (No. 7); a ceasefire (No. 8) as a first step towards peace and the establishment of some form of permanent dialogue between ‘the most representative levels of civil society, such as the churches, political parties and other institutions’ (No. 9). (Op. cit: 57/8).

Seeking how to achieve peace in Angola, CEAST’s position against the “criminal war” in Angola emphasized its divergence from the Angolan government. Comerford confirms that this “raises serious questions about how CEAST viewed the state, and its understanding of the legitimate use of force by nation states” (*ibid*:51).

Common marches were organized as were ecumenical services and all kinds of actions to call attention to the government as well as to UNITA. Comerford wrote: “At different stages in the Angola conflict various churches made offers to mediate. The earliest such offer in the literature came from CEAST (1986:131) in February 1986, but fell on deaf ears” (*ibid*: 60). It is important to remember how God wants the church to be present in all sectors of humanity. The socio-political context is not a reserved domain where church leaders cannot enter. If they do not they are betraying the Lord’s command, of setting free the captives and taking care of his flock. The present Catholic commitment to socio-political issues should be understood as good patriotism and nationalism encouraging citizens’ engagement. Their Radio Ecclesia in Luanda, called *radio confianca* (trustworthy radio), is one such structure (Bishop Dom Marcos, Luanda

11- 09 - 2006). Before we close this section it is important to see how church leaders made contact with the Government and the opposition so as to foster peace. According to Comerford, after Gbadolite, Becesse, Lusaka, and before the Luena agreements the churches generally advised political actors. When the elections in 1992 led to systematic ethnic killing in Luanda the Catholics reacted. The situation was summarised by Comerford:

Thousands of people were killed across the country, and there was much destruction of national infrastructure (CEAST 1993:301). The majority of those killed in Luanda were Ovimbundu people suspected of being UNITA sympathisers. A second wave of violence swept Luanda in February 1993, directed against the Bakongo people from northern Angola, many of whom had previously lived in the DRC (CEAST 1993:301). The attacks were triggered by rumours that the DRC was involved in the war on the side of UNITA, which brought suspicion to bear on Bakongo people living in Luanda (2005: 39).

This was the Angolan prelude to Rwanda's genocide. Here the churches were not implicated but to some degree their members were. Many guns were carried by the civil population in Luanda for self-defence. The Catholics condemned such behaviour and condemned the media which were used (and are still being deployed) as an instrument of division (Comerford 2005:43). Angolans today insult each other by the pejoratives '*langa-lang*' (insult to Angolans returning from DRC, considered as false Angolans) and '*chungura*' (an epithet applied to those who consider themselves as genuine Angolans). We will return to this issue in the next chapter. Of note here is the correspondence between Savimbi and the Catholics, quoted by Comerford:

I write...about the great challenge for peace (through dialogue). I also write to actively encourage you to participate in this difficult task which the present moment bestows on us...We would like to see COIEPA and Pro Pace initiative to move forward. We believe they have an historical and relevant role to offer the Angolan people, providing incentives for reconciliation (Savimbi 2001).

Comerford noted that Savimbi wished for the churches' support "but did not request church mediation" (op.cit: 60); furthermore Comerford reveals the Catholic response to Savimbi:

In the name of Christ and of the suffering Angolan people, we ask the president and the leader of UNITA to meet in a neutral place with the view to dialogue on the ending of war and the future of the nation. The Church gladly offers its help in finding a convenient location, as well as competent and acceptable facilitation for such dialogue (CEAST 2001a) (Ibid: 2005:61).

It is interesting to see how the Roman Catholics' role altered, to a prophetic and socio-political one. We now consider the Protestants.

#### 4.3.2. The Protestant Churches

If in colonial times the Roman Catholic Church was the privileged church, during the growth of nationalism and liberation the Protestant churches involved themselves in the political sector. Two facts demonstrate this: firstly, all the political parties' leaders were Protestants. FNLA's leader Roberto is a member of the Baptists and was not only supported by them but also by all Protestant churches; e.g. the Reformed Church and others stemming from Congo were his principal supporters. Rev. Rui Nafilo, the leader of *Igreja Evangelica Basptista de Angola* (IEBA= Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola) informed me of this during our interview (13-09-2006). President Agustino Neto was "the son of a Methodist pastor and studied medicine with a scholarship from the Methodist Church" according to Henderson (op. cit.: 221) while Jonas Savimbi was the son of a catechist in the Protestant Congregational Church (Henderson ibid: 205). Fred Bridgland reports Savimbi as saying: "Religion is part of my life. It is something I was brought up with, so I cannot do away with it: 'my father was a Protestant Pastor" (op. cit: 286). The second fact is that many members of the churches were promoted to positions of responsibility in various political parties. Henderson confirms that the Rev. Domingos da Silvas, a Methodist minister, was vice-president of the MPLA, and Deolinda Rodrigues de Almeida, a cousin of Neto and also a Methodist Crusade scholar, held several important posts in the party (Ibid: 222).

Worship in that time offered urgent intercession for the liberation of Angola by the political parties with which the churches were linked. I remember my own experience within the Baptist Church in Congo where the Association of Angolan Christians (ASCA) was formed. We sang for the liberation of Angola, weeping when singing in Kikongo: "*Mwamu Nsi a Kinzenza*

*Tuzungininanga*” (Here in the foreign land we are wandering). Details regarding FNLA were well known because our brothers were there as fighters for the nation. Public meetings were held so that we were well informed though I have never been a member of a particular political party. In Luanda Rev. Chipesse recognized that Savimbi was a son of the Congregational denomination and that some of its leaders were Unita’s partisans. In his opinion churches cannot be understood as being apolitical; on the contrary they should be active in politics (14-09-2006). We shall show that the Angolan civil war was partly a consequence of the failure of Protestant education. However we are encouraged by the Protestant education solidly entrenched in Nelson Mandela as it should be revealed that he is a Methodist (Tony Stone 2006:1 in *Dimension* volume 36 No. 11).

The present section will explore how Protestantism shifted its stance on political issues, to assist in resolving the political tensions between the government and Unita. We shall not give more attention to denominationalism as such. Here we look at the councils of churches, CICA and AEA, where the Protestants are a diversified body yet harmoniously work together. As background it is important to remember that the Protestant mission comprised the second wave of African Evangelisation from 1878 (Douglas L. Wheeler 1972:72).

According to Henderson: “By 1920, nine Protestant Mission societies based in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany had established thirty-five mission stations all across Angola” (op. cit.: 113). From these stemmed the Protestant modalities or local churches such as the Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Mennonite, Reformed, Presbyterian and others. The Baptist mission appears to have been the first in 1878 (LaTourette 1970:398) followed by the Methodist mission established in 1884 – 1885 (Nolan 1974: 109), its founding being motivated by the appointment of William Taylor as the African Bishop; he visited Luanda in 1885 (cf. also LaTourette op. cit.: 398). The Congregational church arrived from Canada in 1886 (ibid: 398).

The churches’ conference, ‘Edica’, in 1995, organized by CICA and AEA, in which political leaders and diplomatic delegates took part, is a good example of Protestantism searching for peace in Angola and being politically engaged. Comerford’s comment on Edica outlined four shifts in Protestant policy. Firstly, encouraging members to be involved in any political party if its resolutions do not compromise their faith. Secondly, the Christian leaders could not establish political parties but would influence the political parties where their members should

be active members. We remember Reverend Chipesse's remark that churches cannot be regarded as apolitical (Luanda, 14/09/06). Thirdly, Protestants took note of the political parties' statements, acknowledging that Christians and their leaders should influence their parties' opinions. And fourthly, the churches are not by any means political parties but rather have to transcend them (Comerford 2005:47). Even before Edica, AEA and CICA had submitted their opinion in favour of democratisation in 1990 during the third MPLA congress (Ibid: 27). Let us consider the councils of Protestants churches' interventions in the Angolan civil war.

#### 4.3.2.1 Evangelical Alliance in Angola (AEA)

The Evangelical Alliance has a long history within Angola. This second branch of Protestantism comprises some churches whose basic stance is to remain separate from all other Christians whom they consider as syncretistic if they are not orthodox. They are conservative, are influenced by western theology and are linked to the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). In the case of the Angolan Evangelicals, in spite of their point of view concerning social and political engagement in the Angolan context, they were forced to become involved, because as we said above the civil war did not spare any sector of social life. Their intervention in the social and political sphere was a shift in policy which some members considered as a betrayal of their conviction of faith. Yet God allows some circumstances just to force us to react according to his will. It is amazing to see and hear the AEA's political pronouncements. We have already referred to the ecumenical service in 1998 where Octavio Fernando preached on giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's (Matt. 22: 21). As a response to political attacks on the Christian's engagement in the socio-politic context he said: "What has Caesar that does not belong to God when himself [Caesar] is in God's hands?" (Octavio's sermon 1998).

The dawning democratisation in Angola offered an opportunity to Protestants to express their opinion as patriotic democrats regarding the better management of the future. Yet in public issues where Angolans now have freedom to express their opinion as long as they respect others, some leaders with long experience of the status quo are still not speaking out about abuses. Comerford pointed out that for the AEA (1991:2) the change to multiparty democracy required the involvement of every Angolan to promote reconciliation (ibid: 32). When the civil war escalated after the 1992 election the churches drew the political leaders' attention to the

need for dialogue. The former knew that after the election result Angola might again be in trouble and AEA encouraged the political parties to adopt a reconciliatory posture after the election (Comerford *ibid*: 33).

As noted above, the Evangelical Alliance in Angola condemned the intolerant language in the media (Comerford *op.cit*: 35). The new leader of the Alliance was delighted about the present research on national reconciliation but unfortunately could not be interviewed for he was already on his way to Lubango.

#### 4.3.2.2. The Christian Council of Churches of Angola (CICA)

The Council of Christian Churches is an ecumenical institution founded in 1977 (CEDER 2004) which is the most influential Protestant council of churches in Angola, linked with the World Council of Churches (WCC). With its ecumenical wing incorporating all Christian churches, even some independent churches, this inclusion seems questionable to some evangelicals. According to Comerford CICA perceived two dimensions to the civil war in Angola: external and internal, and saw three main reasons why the war was being sustained: externally, the involvement of foreigners as in the case of South Africa. CICA desired Namibia's independence, which would cut off the South African support of Unita, and requested the neighbouring countries to put an end to the policy of militarisation and destabilisation in the Angolan territory (*op.cit*: 29). Internally, CICA pointed to the lack of unity among Angolans, the consequence of the colonial strategy of "divide and rule" and ethnocentric evangelism. In Comerford's words:

CICA was specially critical of the manner in which foreign missionaries conducted evangelisation, standing that it reinforced ethnic and tribal divides. ... Baptists worked among the Bakongo, Methodists among Ambundu, Presbyterians and Congregationalists among the Ovimbundu, Lutherans among Kwanhama, and Pentecostals and Evangelicals among others (*op. cit*: 30).

CICA requested demilitarisation as the "cornerstone" of democratisation, the formation of a single army and a free and fair election (*ibid*: 35). I interviewed Rev. Luis Ngimbi who showed me that CICA is really a voice of the voiceless, as the documents he gave me reveal. For

instance in the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee the minutes record approval of the negotiations between the government and the Cabindian Forum to reduce the conflict in that province. However, the government was urged to seek to include within the dialogue the voices of all parties in order to constitute an inclusive and extensive solution (CICA in Luanda, 6 to 7 September 2006).

It is valuable to see how a paradigm shift in Angolan Protestantism is taking place, with theologians perceiving that the political sphere is not reserved for some particular class. Rev. Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga quoted by Comerford sharply denounced the unfair suffering of Angolan people:

only those who carry weapons and kill...are seen as wise in Angolan society. Whoever refuses to use firepower is viewed as stupid and refused the right of participation in decision-making ...This expression of a culture of violence, which maintains the political agenda inherited from colonialism is regrettable, and has never served the true interests of this nation (Op. cit: 49).

For Emilio de Carvalho the curriculum in theology training has to include political skills so that theologians do not fear to express their opinions in the political arena. Comerford observes that: "A new theology of engagement was being called for in the churches, which considered politics as a arena of Christian activity" (ibid: 47). It is noteworthy to hear a Methodist bishop (de Carvalho) saying this, for the reasons mentioned above. When we talked, the impression de Carvalho gave of the actual situation is that national reconciliation is the duty of the politicians (Luanda, 11 September 2006). For the ex-general secretary of CICA, Rev. Chipesse, quoted by Comerford: "It is within the parliamentary democracy that ethnic problems created generally by colonialism in Africa and Angola in particular, are and should be debated and resolved, because by any other means war will continue to enrich the weapons manufacturers, and producers of emergency food rations, of the already wealthy nations" (ibid: 46).

As well as discussing how CICA acted, it is necessary to observe briefly the Mennonite intervention for peace in Angola, as one of CICA's members. In 1998 the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in collaboration with Mennonite churches held an important conference for peace and the mediation of conflict. In 2000, the Brethren Mennonite Biblical School of Mission

in Angola (Instituto Biblico e de Missiologia em Angola (IBMA) held a colloquium in CEFOCA with the theme Peace and Mission; many church leaders participated as well in 2001 in the 'Centre d'accueil' Kimbanguiste (Guest house) where many leaders including those of political parties also took pace. And in 2003, MCC offered important training as regards a culture of non-violence to peace facilitators in the local communities. The Mennonites considered that permanent peace should be seen in the daily interaction of people.

### 4.3.3. Independent Churches and Other Communities of Faith

The emergence of Independent Churches is an important fact in many African countries such as Angola. In this section the focus will be on the *Tokuists*, the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ founded by the Prophet Simon Toko. Tokuists are similar to the Kimbanguists, which challenged colonialists in the DRC, who could not at all understand the phenomena of "African prophetism" in the person of the "*ngunza*" or prophet. The history of Simao Toko should be understood in terms of that of Kimpa Vita' (known as Dona Beatrice) in 1706, who challenged the colonialists with her traditional spirituality. According to Alfredo Margarido:

Dona Beatrice was a prophetess who tried to discover in the land of the Congo places and symbols homologous to those of Christianity. She transformed the natural and cultural elements of the Congo into Christian elements, for only Christianity could make possible the restoration of a united political power of which the Kongoleses dreamed – a dream and myth that persists today in messianic and prophetic Kongoleses (1972:34)

As regards the Kimbanguists, Alfredo confirms: "Simon Kimbangu stands out among all existing or preceding prophets, for he was the first person since Dona Beatrice to possess strong charismatic command over the people" (op. cit: 37). Many remember what happened to the followers of Simao Toko who challenged the Portuguese army by their faith without fear of death. Many messianic or prophetic movements challenged the Portuguese but that of Dona Beatrice, in 1706, which brought about the complete decline of the first civilizing mission in Sao Salvador (Martin 1975:17), was the most important movement. The Tokoist movement later had the same impact (Alfredo Margarido op. cit: 38).

For this reason the Portuguese arrested the prophet Simao Goncalves Toko on July 17, 1963, imprisoning and exiling him on the Azores, planning to eliminate him by means of an airplane crash, but the plot failed according to Simao Fernando Quibeta (nd: 50). The prophet was so courageous that he went into the bush where people had fled, encouraging them to come back home and pray to the Lord for peace (Quibeta *ibid*: 47). Returning to Angola in 1974, he encouraged his followers to hope in the Lord for a peaceful Angolan independence but he was suspected as a political partisan of one of the liberation movements. He uttered declarations such as this in the Quibeta report (nd: 55/6): "If you do not reconcile and construct the country with peace and harmony, your war will cause death, pain and highest material destruction..." (My translation)

His followers were often persecuted and Simon Fernando Quibeta reveals that he had been arrested at least 15 times in Angola apart from his imprisonment in the Democratic Republic of Congo and by the Portuguese (nd: 56). Today Tokoists in Angola are influential in all sectors of social life and members of CICA. And the *União das Populações de Angola* (UPA)= Angola Population Union) were encouraged by Tokoists who refused "*ntonga*" in 1957 (Afredo *op. cit.*: 50). Tokoists played a significant political role in Angolan history. Our meeting with Rev. Simao Zola revealed that Simao Toko is regarded as still alive though he died in 1982. When they were worshipping on 25 December a voice said to them: "I, Simon Toko never will die again; of course my body might be in the tomb underground but my voice will be among you till the Lord Jesus will come" (18 September 2006). Since that time, confirmed Mr Mpanda Makwenda, the presence of the prophet has been incarnated in Afonse Nunes, the actual spiritual leader (18 September 2006). The church strongly holds to the reading of the Bible and believes in the traditional faith. We are simply reporting what we heard and read on behalf of the Tokoists. We are not making any theological statement: we respect what others believe and trust that through the Holy Spirit we shall discern the truth.

#### 4.3.4. Other Independent Churches and Faith Communities

There are many other such churches in Angola but their intervention in the Angolan civil war was similar since they held conferences and public meetings and participated in Edica. We met with some of the Charismatic churches which are willingly participating in national reconciliation. One of their respected leaders is Nsingi Patricio who has much influence in

Luanda, often organizing meetings dealing with political issues. On the national anniversary of independence his church organized a celebration inviting Angolans to take part as well as many others from elsewhere (Nsingi's e-mail received 3/11/2006). In their meetings they are not ashamed to exhibit the national flag as is evident from Nsingi's e-mail. They are hopeful that God is creating something new in Angola. But sound training is needed for the effective exercising of their ministry.

We do not know whether the Muslims in Angola influenced or were involved in the civil war as their presence in Angola is still small but since some Angolans are being converted to Islam the results should be evident within ten years, more or less. They are experiencing conflict and division; hence we were not able to contact them in Luanda during the short time we were there. But their growth is surprising Christians: about five mosques could be numbered in Luanda. Buddhists and Hindus are present in Angola but it is estimated that they comprise only about 0,1 percent of the population.

#### 4.3.5. Traditional Faith

Traditional religions today draw much attention in Africa since they are emerging so strongly as to displace Christianity and Islam. Mbiti offers us insight into Africans: "from the top leaders of our nations to the beggars in the streets, religion plays a role in their lives" (1975: 33). The section discusses some aspects of traditional faith which influence the life of Christians and other Angolans. Mbala Vita Lusunzi revealed to some missionaries in training that the Angolan culture presents a challenge for the pastor in this century. His own example cites a blessing for welfare in the church by the pastor, while in opposition his father performed another ritual according to the traditional faith (Luanda 16/09/06). The belief in ancestors has not been supplanted in the lives of Angolans: even when they are Christ's followers they still carry out practices and rites according to their traditional faith. Healing, the birth of twins in the family and death still require Christians to consult traditional mediums. We cannot blame them for this but we need to understand such beliefs so that we can contextualize the gospel. The Tata Nlongi theology and the *Nkuu* (traditional dialogue) in the tribe of Kongo and the *Ondjango* (traditional place for community discussion) in the context of the Kimbundu tribe should be seen as efforts to contextualize the gospel. Traditional faiths in the context of civil war played a role: some believers, the Soba, died in it. Many Angolans can testify to receiving great protection from

traditional authorities in the areas where the civil war between MPLA and UNITA was at its worst. Reverend Luzembo Segueira's experience told us how when members and pastors visiting churches in the provinces of Uige and Malange were arrested and accused as spies it was the traditional authority who defended his case and set him free (Luanda, 11/09/06). Barrett's statistics seem to reflect low growth, numbering Christians as 46.4%, Muslims 40.3 % and traditional religion only 11.9% (1999: 26). Compare this with Mbiti: in 1984 Christians numbered 234 million, about 45%, Muslims 211 million, about 41%, traditional or African religion 63 million, about 12% (1991:33). We might conclude that traditional Religion is growing, though slowly. In the case of the Angolan Bushmen we have specific Mumuila who still carefully preserve their traditions: our preoccupation in the future needs to be how we as Christians could reach that tribe with the reconciliatory gospel in their context. When President Dos Santos spoke about studies in national culture (*Jornal de Angola*, 13 September 2006) the Mumuila tribe should not be excluded: they are part of Angolan culture (Dos Santos & Pailler Jean 2000:41). Antonio de Almeida describes them in terms of Bushmen: Kwankhala, Sekele, Zama or Kwengo and the Kwadi (1965: vii/ix). Sculptures and other forms of the arts in Angola witness explicitly to the traditional religions. Traditional faith in all Angola tells many stories of successful healing and answers to social questions. Hence traditional religion in Angola needs the attention of all Christian Anthropologists.

#### 4.4. Angola Today

The case of Angola in some respects seems to be similar to the South African experience. Angolan whites are not silenced or/and reduced to nothing: they are working peacefully with the government and playing an important role in the Angolan economy. The Angolan situation is not really one of tension between white and black but it is rooted in its pre-colonial history where division among blacks themselves was sown in the ecclesiology of colonial missions (Luis Ngimbi, referred to above). Our concern is mutual exclusion or non-acceptance among Angolans. The "*Langa-langá*", Angolans returning from exile, have not been easily integrated into society. The "*Shungura*" are Angolans who consider themselves as genuine by the fact that they speak Portuguese well, considered as criteria of integration or of Angolan identity, a fact that places those returning from exile in jeopardy. Education in Angola faces a major task in this context. When the local languages are introduced into the curriculum Portuguese is not dropped: there is no resistance to it as to Afrikaans in South Africa. The poverty which harms

the majority in a country with many mineral resources is the real evil which we Angolans have to face together as one people.

Many issues of present conflict, such as the gap between the rich and the poor, have been mentioned above. It is time to sit around the table to see how we have destroyed our own country and consider how to re-build it. This section will deal with these questions and discuss the role of the churches and communities of faith in the reconstruction of Angola. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will be considered to see if it could be helpful for Angolans to see our past and organize the future. The section looks at the reality of Angola today, so the leaders whom we interviewed have their opinions recorded in this section. COIEPA reports which identify the questions and problems of the nation will enjoy special attention. In our short time in Luanda we really tried to find answers to our questions and our findings follow.

#### 4.4.1. Prejudice

The pejorative "*langa-langa*" is clearly reflected in Angolan music as a major cultural vehicle: Alidjuma, one of the young musicians, repeatedly sings it. We were told that it took its roots from the liberation movements at the time when FNLA were discriminated against as anthropophagi, as mentioned by Teca and attested to by most of the leaders we interviewed in Luanda. His Master's thesis in theology in the section entitled "Psycho-Relational Consequences" argues that the segregationist language among Angolans impedes peaceful cohabitation (op. cit.: 80) (my rendering). Pejorative terms such as "*Langa-langa*" and "*Shungura*" in Angola in general and Luanda in particular reflect the culture of violence inherited by the liberation movements. Today in Luanda the division between these two groups is obvious. In the Rock Center, the big market in Luanda, for instance, it is easy to spot "*Langa*" shops as well as "*Shungura*" Shops. Church leaders are of the view that this gap among Angolans needs correction. Rev. Kiawoza argues that we must recognize their skills but also that many negative behaviours arrived in Angola with the returning refugees, much more amongst those from DRC, but as we are constructing the new Angola we need to correct such segregation among Angolans; he felt that its impact was already decreasing (at Luanda on 8-09-2006). Rev. Malungu Antonio, the leader of *Igreja Evangelica Reformada em Angola* (IERA = Evangelical Reformed Church in Angola) concurred. Even on public transport in Luanda both groups discriminate against each other. Only a few of the churches are heterogeneous: the majority still follow the missionaries' style of evangelisation, which specialised in regrouping

tribes or forming ethno-centric churches. It is clear that the “*Langa-Langa*” find themselves marginalized and are not enjoying all the rights of other Angolans. Speaking for the Inter-Mennonite Committee its Executive Secretary, Noé Alberto José, noted that these pejoratives are included among the harmful issues inherited from the civil war, which are the focus of the vision for the re-building of the country where the Mennonites are concerned (Luanda, 12-09-2006). According to Rev. Dilubanza Manuel the church as a prophetic voice has to identify errors without fear (13-09-2006). Hence it is time for the church to correct these, even if imperfectly.

#### 4.4.2. Education

Education today in Angola involves not only changes at the higher levels but also a new curriculum into which the local languages are to be introduced by request. There is a problem in educating children in some rural areas because of lack of well trained human resources. It is already being debated whether to adopt the UNESCO programme of the primary school, from grades 1 to 6 instead of 1 to 4 as in Angola. And for the high school, grades 7 to 12 instead of 7 to 9 and 10 to 12. We inherited from the civil war invalids and orphans who are on the streets begging to survive: these groups of Angolans are not only forgotten but also discriminated against and they do not have easy access to paying the high fees of private and state schools.

Churches, since the democratisation of the country, are again in a position to look at education. Teca reveals that a law in 1975 confiscated all schools, centres of training and their properties from the churches, nationalised teaching and made it exclusively over to the state (op. cit.: 51): law 4/75 of 9 December 1975, articles 2 and 6 (ibid: 50/1). Today churches have much to do in this sector. Some already have high schools, even universities, where they also need to strive for quality education.

#### 4.4.3 Election

Angola is today awaiting the presidential election, which should normally have been held in 2006. Luis Ngimbi, CICA's general secretary, has indicated that CICA is ready to contribute to the next election. In his communication in the media Luis Ngimbi said that the next election should not fail as the last did (2006) [www.angop](http://www.angop). It is important that this time people be taught about elections and the morality required of a good citizen before and after them. We believe

that in this time it is also important to pray to God who knows how to guide the country in this crucial time. Elections not only in Angola but also in most of Africa are a frightening time where political power allows the military forces to impose their will and silence people who should, of their own free will, be able to vote for whomever they want. A time in which other small political parties are easily corrupted by the powerful political parties and assassination of those who seem to threaten the most popular candidate of the party. Rev. Daniel Ntoni Nzinga records that in the 31 years since Angola's independence only one election has been held. And believes that the errors committed in 1992 may occur again (2006:1). Churches as a strong voice within civil society should clearly express their opinion. CICA in the 51<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee held at Luanda appealed a) to the churches' leaders to be involved within the process; b) to Angolans to register, showing political maturity and the exercise of moral citizenship; c) to the Government, to continue to conduct the process with safeguards, to organize consultations in order to achieve consensus between many political actors if it is necessary (2006),

On this issue the Catholic University concurred with the COIEPA Executive Secretary, Dr. Daniel Ntoni Nzinga, who emphasized the necessity of knowing the laws and regulations that manage the process of peace, with a particular attention to elections as a new and essential phase of the process in the resolution and prevention of conflict (2006:5). Churches seem to be in accord and are ready to take part but at the same time appear not to be optimistic regarding what will happen after the election, knowing that there is still an obscure zone where they are waiting for the state to be open on the issue. Meanwhile the churches really have to work at encouraging the president Jose Eduardo dos Santos, acclaimed as a great African figure who led in time of war, to retire and make way for the new young leaders who could by God's grace lead Angola: "Reactions to Mr Dos Santos's announcement [to retire] have been cautiously enthusiastic" wrote the author of "Dos Santos will Just Go" (*Economist* 2005:1) [www.EBSCOHOST](http://www.EBSCOHOST).

#### 4.4.4 Economy

Angola is one of the African countries where the economy is growing fastest, according to Dr. Adewale Banjo to whom we referred in the first chapter of this thesis. See also the World Fact Book (2006: 8).

But paradoxically, this is one of the issues which most threaten the Angolan poor. We cannot understand why the majority of people are still poor and the elite minority rich. Jakkie Cilliers & Christian Dietrich in their Book *Angola's War Economy* show how the civil war benefited the guerrillas, as a time of getting and selling Angolan riches. Meanwhile, the people were trampled by the poverty which we still suffer. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos recognised this in his discourse to the HIV/AIDS Committee meeting on 27 November 2003 (2003:3) [www.angop.com](http://www.angop.com), which he considers as one coin with two faces that cannot be separated. Jakkie Cilliers & Christian Dietrich observed:

War allows a lack of accountability that would not be possible in peacetime... Because the government budget is not unified or transparent on payment for arms there are substantial discrepancies between government estimates of defence spending and independent estimates. (2000: 8-9).

To this we have to add what James T. Lawrence pointed out, that: "At least 20 percent of the national budget or 11percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) was dedicated to defense during the year, while an estimated 50 percent of the state expenditures were not reflected in the official budget" (2004:1)

Further he indicates that wealth continued to be concentrated in the hands of a small elite who often used government positions for massive personal enrichment, and corruption continued to be a common practice at all levels (ibid: 1). Angola also is present in the list of the most corrupt countries of the world (see Dr Adewale Banjo's remark in the first chapter of this thesis). In this respect COIEPA revealed in its report for 2002 what was termed "Angolagate": the Angolan Government's level of corruption in the management of public goods (2002:8). See also the article by Madsen (*CorpWatch*, May 17 2002, [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)). Garztecki Marek described the controversy surrounding the management of government petroleum accounts and presents lists of banks around the world where these funds were found (2006: 58). To this finding add that of Hughes John in his article on "Economy":

Noting that little action had been taken to promote financial transparency, the report lamented Angola's continuing macroeconomic instability, poor fiscal management, stalled structural reforms and failure to tackle poverty. It also noted that 31% of the

total government spending, representing 14.7% of GDP, was still occurring outside the state budget (2006: 61).

All these increase the misery of the poor. The poverty of most Angolans stems from a lack of good will by the governing class: we should in the name of the Lord ask them to be kind to a suffering people. It is not good to remember the past negatively but we have to remember that Angolan resources were shared by powerful political parties and by those who bore firearms.

#### 4.4.5 Human Rights

The question of human rights violations in Angola today represents a scar since people are still subject to oppression and unlawful treatment. James T. Lawrence pointed out that security forces committed serious human rights abuses (ibid: 1) and all the powerful parties allege human rights abuses by these forces. What is painful in Lawrence's allegations is that their members murdered people, were responsible for disappearances, and tortured, beat, raped victims (ibid: 2) yet the government does not prosecute those abusers. Luanda today is an insecure city of crimes and weapons. James T Lawrence noted that after the Luena memorandum human rights abuses lessened but that the rights of workers are problematic and discrimination and violence against women are common (ibid: 2).

People sometimes rely on the security forces but not all: some of them are cruel and regard the civil population as their foes. There is no sector of civil society which is not in potential danger when criticising the government or saying something about suffering. But we must do so; otherwise our government will continue to think that what has been done is sufficient when in reality our basic rights are being abused, as Lawrence confirms regarding the Government's attitude towards workers' rights (ibid: 2). The Luena memorandum announced amnesty to offenders but was silent about victims. It is important to say that the Government will do well if the opportunity is given to the nation to sit together and evaluate the past, not to assign blame but to see how we have been damaged and offer forgiveness as South Africans did in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). If we do not adopt all aspects of the TRC at least we need to look at it as a model for the reconstruction of our country; for instance when we consider the internal displacement of the population and the emergency programme of return (Gomes & Imogen 2003:13).

These urgent resettlements did not offer any possibilities to those resettled and in addition their present conditions mean that they are still victims in a new position: we still are a traumatized people. For instance, landmines constitute a security and political issue which needs eradication. Research reveals that Angolans are continually concerned about this destructive weapon: in 1995 an Angolan living in the United Kingdom suggested the landmine firms be held responsible for the Angolan situation (Rae, McGrath 1995:117). Landmines still kill and injure people as well as animals in Angola.

All the matters above must be taken seriously but the Cabinda issue today is the most perilous one in the recent Angolan peace. We shall now turn there and see what could be done to ensure a lasting peace in Angola.

#### **4.4.6 The Case of Cabinda**

The case of Cabinda, which geographically is a separate territory, calls attention to the boundaries negotiated in the colonial era where the cases of Cabinda and lower Congo were determined by the Belgians of the Republic of Congo. Congo and Cabinda were not originally separate; both were integral parts of Angola. Cabinda's geographical location caused some Cabindians to fight for their own independence, which led to the creation of the Enclave of Cabinda Liberation Front (FLEC). Raph Uwechue et al recorded that FLEC, headed by Luis Ranque Franque, announced in Kinshasa on February 22 1975 that it would welcome negotiations leading to separate independence from Portugal for the enclave (op. cit.: 269).

Since that time no-one has regarded this as a serious issue until FLEC became a guerrilla movement launching sporadic attacks (Anderson G. Lawrence, op. cit.: 24) exactly as UNITA. In the conference held in Nakuru, Kenya from 16 to June 21, 1975 it was reaffirmed that Cabinda was an integral and inseparable part of Angola (*Africa Today*, ibid: 270). I concur with Comerford who pointed out that despite the conflict in the province since 1975, neither the Bicesse Accords nor the Lusaka protocol addressed FLEC's issues with the Angolan state in any way (op.cit.: 4). Instead of marginalizing the FLEC's guerrillas it would have been wise for them to be part of the decision-makers. And as CICA in its resolutions often called the government to a sincere dialogue with the FLEC leaders we uphold this view; otherwise perennial fighting will continue. When the actual Memorandum of Cabinda on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006 was signed between the Government and the Cabindian Forum for Dialogue (FCD) according

to [www.Angop.com](http://www.Angop.com), some of the well-known opponents and the main opposition FLEC were not invited. When we arrived in Luanda on 05 September 2006 there was still fighting between the FAA and the guerrillas of FLEC in Cabinda: some villages were fired and people killed. In the 51<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee the church leaders asked the Government to incorporate the FLEC in the dialogue regarding the case of Cabinda (op. cit.). COIEPA also recommended the same in its report. The CICA weekly *Flash of Notices* reported the service for Cabinda on 12 August in Luanda in a sports stadium (2006:1). On 25 August 2006, the FLEC leader, Nzita Henriques Tiago, sent letters to all institutions including diplomats, requesting their presence in this dialogue. This document is included in the appendix.

The "*a Luta continua a victoria e certa*" (the struggle continues, certainly victory will be ours), President Neto's slogan, cannot continue to be useful against ourselves. With such a violent culture a new slogan became very popular in the lives of Angolans, "*vou te matar*" (I will kill you). Hence the issue of Cabinda is an urgent case for a sincere dialogue between the Government and the FLEC's leaders, which should be included in the Angolan Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ATRC): the ATRC or whatever name it is eventually given would do well to call Angolan victims to tell their truth. We have victims who are still weeping but their cries will not be a blessing unless they say publicly "we forgive you". An amnesty, which the Luena memorandum proclaimed would not be negotiated, will be welcome but the commission should study to whom and in which way the amnesty should be offered. Then the Cabinda issue could be investigated by another sub-commission making recommendations towards lasting peace.

#### **4.4.7 An Angolan Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ATRC)**

Looking ahead to this vision of national reconciliation, as it is larger than an individual affair we interviewed various leaders about it. Many told us that such an endeavour is a hazardous one that will not be accepted by the Government. But some were optimistic and encouraged us to record as a witness before God that we gave our advice to the political leaders for the sake of the future of our country. Amongst those whom we asked if we might evaluate the past, about twenty leaders, twelve were against, seven in favour and one abstained. Those who did not agree argued, firstly, that the contexts of South Africa and Angola are very different; secondly, that all belligerents in the civil war are guilty and would not like to expose themselves before

the people they have slain, whose wounds are still fresh; thirdly, churches in the Angolan context are not strong in dealing with political matters; fourthly, the perpetrators of civil war crimes are all in strong positions, wealthy and powerful political authorities; and, finally, the victims are weak and poor and could easily be trampled on, even killed in telling the truth. Such a “TRC” would only be possible if the leading party and parliament suggested it themselves as South Africans did. Those in favour contended: Firstly, we have a prophetic mission to tell the government the truth of they have done against the nation and what they are supposed to do for the welfare of all: Secondly, the commission will not be a trial to hunt them but is intended to heal people from their traumatic experiences; thirdly, the commission will ensure that it grants amnesty to all perpetrators as they have already decreed it for themselves without receiving forgiveness from the people they offended and killed; fourthly, to avoid a repeated experience in the future. For many Angolan leaders national reconciliation has already been achieved. This view is seen in the president’s speech in the *Jornal de Angola*, 13 September 2006 during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on National Culture (2006:3). But we are not yet reconciled: our fighters have only stopped fighting while the causes of conflict and their consequences have not yet been studied. We are partners with God and we have to do the Lord’s work while it is still day.

The Missio-Dei, which is incarnated in this body of Christ, the Church, is a holistic mission. Hence we need to discuss the role of the Churches after the Luena and Cabinda Memorandums.

#### **4.4.8 The Role of the Churches after the Luena and Cabinda Memorandums**

This role should be a noble mission. All Christians have to inspire the other institutions of which we are members. Christ’s ministry of reconciliation will become a reality for other institutions when the churches’ members evidence it in their daily behaviour. The Angolan councils of churches need to display the four faces of Missio-Dei: the Kerugma, Diakonia, Koinonia and Leiturgia. How could these dimensions be visible in the case of Christians in Angola? Who should make them possible and where? Is there a strategy to facilitate this? These questions will be the focus of this section. The section will also consider these following queries: Is it really true that the Luena and Cabinda memorandums guarantee the future of Angola? What about the FLEC guerrillas who are still wanting to be involved in dialogue?

#### 4.4.8.1. The *Kerugma* in Mission

The gospel of Christ which we received obliges us to do the same to others to whom the gospel has not yet been proclaimed. We have mentioned that in the South African experience *kerugma* consists in Christians becoming useful for others, which should also enable Christians to proclaim the same gospel beyond the local interaction between white and black and to reach new mission fields. But in the case of Angola the *kerugma* mission while not omitting these aspects will look at them with a particular emphasis on proclamation. The church should normally be the site where the gospel preached has to do more with transformation. Statistics show that Christians are in the majority but looking at daily behaviour it seems that Christianity is a failure in Angolan society, dividing people instead of uniting them, inspiring hatred instead of love. The word of God should bring about transformation, otherwise those who are not Christians will stay away from Christianity. When our young people, who have inherited the culture of violence today, sing and dance “*vou te matar*” (I will kill you) and in the same rhythm others answer “*mata*” (kill) psychological consequences occur and lead to concrete action along the lines of what they have sung. The artists Dj. Churra & Drolasta in their album “*6 Vozes de Batida 2006*” (six voices frightened) show how they could destroy the mind of their audience and how the culture of war has affected even our music. The church has to teach people to surrender the culture of violence in all its forms. We have to teach that killing is a sin against God (Exodus 20:13) which Christ interpreted: “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother, will be subject to judgement” (Mat. 5:21-22). We will not interpret the scriptures here but there is something important in the way in which our Lord interpreted the death penalty since anger is the means by which people easily start murdering others. This is why we have to recommend Christian churches to teach the verdict of the gospel, which recommends us to love even our enemies. As Christian churches we should understand that we and our political leaders were all wrong and now we must understand that we need to rebuild our country and care for each other. Hence the reconciliation ministry in the Angolan context will consist partly in a mission of psychological care and counselling. This is the *diakonia* mission arena, to which we turn now.

#### 4.4.8.2. The *Diakonia* Mission

In the South African experience *Diakonia* refers to all sectors of social activities or services: it is a holistic, inclusive mission where the churches are requested to be active in all sectors and to train chaplains for them. In the Angolan case in comparison we shall strive to introduce the notion of chaplains in all sectors, so that the churches should be in intense collaboration with the state helping to achieve God's will, as General Alfonse Samuel, who is a Pentecostal minister, said (Luanda, 19-09-2006).

In the same vein we reiterate the wish of Angolan churches to be integrated into all sectors of society: education, health, agriculture, political parties, military and security forces and the economic sector should all have chaplains, pastors trained in the same sector as well as in theology. In such a way the cry of Emilio de Carvalho that we face a dilemma: as politics progressively becomes the most decisive power in our society we participate less (op.cit.) would be answered not only in the political arena but in all the others. Rev. Chioesse remarked that there are some pastors who are chaplains in certain hospitals, but the writer comments that they were not legally appointed by the state and not paid officially for their ministry. Amongst all we interviewed on this issue there was consensus in favour of having chaplains working in diverse sectors of social life in Angola. The innovation in this issue would be having a chaplain economist working with financial institutions. As regards our mineral resources and the foreign experts who are working in collaboration with the Government, as long as the sector does not have church counsellors morality may decrease and corruption increase and untruth or deceit continue (see the "*Jornal de Angola*" newspaper, May 31, 2006). For instance the diamonds in the Lunda area and elsewhere in Angola, or oil reserves, should be well exploited for the welfare of all Angolans. *Diakonia* mission as a holistic one should speak truth here. Church leaders should negotiate with political leaders on behalf of the suffering governed people. Churches should encourage and collaborate with some international movements such as the International Red Cross which in Angola, according to Arao Martin, had helped in returning and reintegrating 37 persons separated from their families in the civil war (2006)([www.jornaldeangola.com](http://www.jornaldeangola.com)). Here if the churches have military chaplains they could perform such activities more easily but this is not the case, though the Angolan Army and security forces really need the word of God.

We have to appreciate the effort of the ministry of Exterior Relations which appointed COIEPA to be part of the commission created by the United Nations to control small arms and of the International Conference concerning the great lakes, where COIEPA's wish is that such cooperation between state and churches shall continue (2005:27).

Health is an important sector: we recall the president's words to the opening committee meeting dealing with the pandemic of HIV/AIDS where he remarked that It is important to prepare professional teams offering psycho-social counselling, advising patients how much they need their family members ([www.angop.com](http://www.angop.com) 2003). It would be even better to have chaplains recognized by the government helping those suffering from HIV/AIDS. This is why we think that a transforming *diakonia* mission should not avoid interaction between church and state. It is really important to recognize the difference between the state and the church but not to create an absolute separation. Both institutions are God's instruments for the world.

While the Angolan Government is constructing the new site for the National University, Protestants are seeking funds from the World Council of Churches to build their own University as the Catholics have. This is not the best way to achieve a democratic state. We suggest that Christians seek how to have their ecumenical faculty of theology within the national University, where all the intellectuals of the country could meet and advise the nation's leaders. Likewise, the churches have to look at the children in the public places and to create centres for their social reintegration. On International Children's Day at the Centre of Malembo in Luanda, Angolan children exhibited painted cards to show how marginalized they are and how they lack support for their school fees (Jornal de Angola 2006) ([www.jornaldeangola.com](http://www.jornaldeangola.com)).

We think that for Angolan Christians it is time to be working with the state. We have to encourage CICA for example to continue appealing to the state regarding issues which are ambiguous: Cabinda for instance. Its meeting and conference held in Luanda denominated "Os desafios da Paz" (the challenges for Peace) with the theme of Nehemiah 2: 16 -18 expressed many great ideas for permanent peace in Angola, such as in the case of Cabinda (my notes 2001). But there is another aspect of the *missio-Dei* on which the churches should focus.

#### 4.4.8.3. The *Koinonia* Mission

This mission deals with fellowship: in the South African experience we noted that fellowship is very weak between black and white Christians. We recommended the unity of Christians in common actions. In the case of Angola we do not really experience a black/white tension as in the past. Collaboration does not provoke hostilities any longer. The only gap is that between black and black in the mutual exclusion of *Langa*, an Angolan returning from exile, and *shungura*, the so-called genuine Angolan, which connotes “quiet and ignorant”, as discussed above. In this section the fellowship of Angolans, especially churches’ members, Christians and other communities of faith will be discussed as potentially filling this gap and making sure that both groups consider themselves Angolans without discriminating against each other since we are all children of God. This recommendation indicates that the weak interaction observed among Angolan churches should be resolved in fellowship and unity so that the world according to our Lord’s prayer will believe that we are commissioned by him. We shall say something about the Mennonite fellowship initiative in creating a new sodality to consolidate the unity of their members and lead projects together as one Mennonite family in Angola (Cima 2003). The *Koinonia* mission has to find its first echoes within the churches. The Mennonite initiative is to be encouraged for all denominations in Angola, where segregation is strong. The Mennonite Brethren (*Igreja Evangelica dos Irmaos Menonitas em Angola* (IEIMA) where I am a servant did great things by reconciling with dissident brothers. And why should the councils of churches not be united to form only one council? The case of the council of churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a good example: they avoided segregation so as to constitute one body, the Church of Christ in Congo. The *Koinonia* mission should also look at our partnership with other communities of faith and find ways to cooperate.

#### 4.4.8.4. The *Leiturgia* Mission

*Leiturgia* concerns the worship service, and celebration for the glory of God. As we know, the worship of God is the first of God’s commands. In the context of South Africa we argued that worship should go beyond the denominational context to reach the national and achieve the ecumenical context. The Angolan context should be similar. We have to add that in the Angolan context, November 11 of each year would be an important day when all the nation gathers before God to hear God’s word, adoring him for what he has done for us and

remembering how he leads us from being the slaves of the colonialists to liberation. Since Easter which we celebrate every year has its meaning in the larger context of the independence of Israel from Egypt, it would not be inappropriate if Christians were to celebrate their independence day by still glorifying God who did such a marvellous action. Such worship should be inclusive not exclusive: a leading service would have to incorporate all religions to worship God freely as people of one God. In such worship what kind of liturgy would fit all religions? Which kind of ceremonial could be helpful for all Angola to feel accommodated? Here it would be wise to bring in traditional ceremonies held for reconciliation like the “*odjango*” from Kimbundu tradition and “*nku*” from Kikongo tradition, as both will be good practices for reconciliation. When people gather to worship the Lord of heaven the entire nation should be present for such a ceremony of national reconciliation, which could begin as a confessional service with church ministers offering prayers of confession, followed by the president of the republic, traditional leaders and other leaders of civil society; then the word of God could be preached to explain how horrible it is to be a nation under God’s wrath and that God’s love is great enough to welcome us when we recognize that we have sinned against Him and against our fellows and foreigners. The president’s speech could follow or could precede the word of God. Then might come a time of reconciliation, an act in which all the people hold hands and lift them up to the Lord. Leaders representing all people, provinces and traditions could hold the hands of the president of the republic in silence and one of the ministers appointed for each religious group could pray for the peace and prosperity of the nation. In closing the service, the president of the republic could say something to the nation or might give thanks to the people for the trust and confidence invested in him for peace. Finally, the national anthem could be sung after which people could leave peacefully. A worship committee would organize all the formalities. Teca’s suggestion on the liturgy (1997:140) could be such a committee’s point of departure.

#### **4.4.9. Other Communities of Faith in Promoting Reconciliation**

The Angolan society is, like South Africa, a complex society. But the South African society is broader than the Angolan one. In such an environment where all religions of the world are represented, the ecumenical mood would help to maintain a lasting peace. Christian leaders have to be active in accepting other religions as possessing God’s conviction, which they believe is right, to serve the world as God’s servants. Thus ecumenical encounter and dialogue

would be helpful for peaceful coexistence. In the South African context we looked at the Christian-Muslim encounter and how it would be possible. Professor Meiring of the University of Pretoria every year takes students in the department of Religious Science and Missiology to observe the Muslims and other religions: most of these students have testified that Muslims have a very deep sense of worship and it is interesting to see how deeply they submit to God as well as to each other without a sense of being rich or poor: before God we are all equal, testified Lentikile (May 2006). In this respect we will ask the leaders of CICA, AEA and CEAST, the founding councils of COIEPA, to consider how Muslims in Angola should be contacted and interested in an ecumenical encounter and encourage them to take part in the reconstruction of the wounded Angola. If we are willing to rebuild Angola, the TRC revealed the experience of religious groups' involvement in the apartheid policy and their determination to do away with it all together: "As involved and implicated as they were in the past, South Africa's religious communities also represented important sites of transformation" (TRC Vol. 1999:59). We cannot leave any religious groups out in the national effort at reconciliation. The National Institute of Religious Affairs (INAR) should also inspire us to meet every religious entity in Angola. Churches in South Africa confessed their guilt: the TRC's report volume four reveals: "The Apostolic Faith Mission confessed to preaching that opposition to apartheid was communist-inspired and aimed at the downfall of Christianity. Other churches admitted to propagating state theology indirectly" (op. cit: 70). What churches in Angola were not guilty of supporting the civil war? Were only the political parties guilty of Angola's destruction? Where did those who destroyed Angola come from and who taught them, as we know that they were church members? The creation of a national commission for permanent ecumenical dialogue would be helpful. All religions need to be in contact so that together we perceive matters in our socio-political and religious context for the welfare of all Angolans. We have to reassure them that we trust them as God's people and that they are welcome to share with other believers their faith in God and to say how they would contribute for the future of Angola. Such an effort would glorify the Lord who created us in his own image and put us in the same land.

#### 4.4.10. Conclusion

The Angolan experience is similar to the South African experience in that both countries suffered over many years and had terrible experiences. The South African experience ended in 1994 and led to the creation of the TRC; the Angolan has its departure point on April 4, 2002. Our great expectation is to convince the national leaders of the necessity for an evaluation of the past by creating an Angolan Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ATRC), which many supported. But those who do not agree need to feel free to state their view, as long as we agree that the past should be investigated. As many do not know Angolan history, we examined the larger context, which brought us to the Luena Memorandum and now to Cabinda. After slavery the liberation movements represented an awakening of the Angolan conscience. The MPLA was followed by the FNLA, the first powerful movement with significant army forces based in the DRC, while UNITA emerged as a new liberation movement to correct what the founder leader saw as the tribal legacy of the previous movements; but instead of being united these three liberation movements entered into more than three failed Agreements. We discussed the role of the churches, both positive and negative, and the various Accords. UNITA's leader Jonas Malheiro Savimbi was killed on February 22, 2002 and on April 4, 2002 the Government and UNITA signed the Luena Memorandum. We enquired what the role of the churches should be now and suggested that the churches should feel proud of being God's instrument to fulfil the *Missio-Dei* in its four facets: *Kerugma*, *Diakonia*, *Koinonia* and *Leiturgia*. We suggested the creation of an Angolan Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ATRC). Christian churches and other communities of faith need to take opportunities to ensure God's will in the world. We are convinced that the South African experience will help Angola. If the TRC commissioners headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu were to be invited to Angola we believe they would not refuse to assist us in determining how to do things in our context. It is also obvious to say that in terms of the report of the TRC, evaluating the past in the case of Angola in general and the linkage between UNITA and the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in particular, is a related issue (1998:18,24). If the South African military who had negative experience of both countries could sit together with the Angolan military and assist our country (as recorded in "*Jornal de Angola*" on May 31, 2006 [www.jornaldeangola.com](http://www.jornaldeangola.com)) why should the churches' leaders not sit with South African commissioners in a workshop to see how we Angolans should evaluate the past and the future which are beginning now? Especially since the Cabindan storm still poses a risk.