

# Central Mission, Mozambique

---

## ANTÓNIO V. WAYA

António V. Waya, M.A. (IPT, Paris, France), serves as director of the Museum of Cultures at Licungo University in Mozambique. He previously served as a New Testament lecturer at Mozambique Adventist Seminary in Beira from 1997-2011. He also served as a senior pastor during the same period. Waya earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theology at the Adventist University in France from 1992 – 1997. He has published articles in *Adventist Review* and *Signs of Times*.

---

Central Mission is a subsidiary Church administrative unit of the Mozambique Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Territory: Manica, Sofala, and Tete Provinces in Mozambique.

Statistics (June 30, 2022): Churches, 115; membership, 95,865; population, 7,747,950.<sup>1</sup>

## The Origins and Development of the Work

According to data collected from denominational magazines, Adventism penetrated the central part of the country from the Adventist missions that existed in the British colonies on the western border of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The Angonilands is considered the gateway of the Adventist Message in the Central Mission region. The Matandani Mission, through its satellite school stations along the border with Tete and later the Njolomole mission (now Lake View), had a great influence in the implantation of the Adventist Message in the Central Mission region.

## Adventism Enters Angonilands

Christopher Robinson and Samuel M. Konigsmacher, American missionary workers who founded the Matandani Adventist Mission, undertook an important three-week journey on horses through the Angonilands in search of a place to set up the Adventist Mission. Notes published on December 18, 1911, in *South African Missionary* state that the “mental, spiritual and moral propaganda” of Adventism through the Malawi missions in Angonia was officially authorised by the High Commissioner of Lourenço Marques: "In reply to your dispatch nr. 230, of August 21st last, His Excellency, the High Commissioner desired me to inform you that he has complied with your request, by authorising the Seventh-day Adventists Mission to traverse the region of Angonia, in the district of Tete, in the work of mental, spiritual, and moral propaganda. Instructions to this effect have been sent to the Governor there."<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later, the *African Division Outlook* magazine published a brief note about a couple from Portuguese East Africa (presumably from the Angoniland) studying at the Matandani Adventist Mission Station:

We have also here at Matandani a native from Portuguese East Africa who came with his wife and asked that he might stay here and attend school. Mr. Hurlow explained that he would have to find work to supply himself and wife with food, etc., and that wages were not high, but the man said that in spite of everything he could stay. He wants to be a Christian and give up the old life. We want him to become a well-trained worker, and then return to his people over the border in Portuguese East Africa. Being a Catholic country, it is very difficult to enter there, but this is a good beginning, and our hearts are hopeful for future success in the near future.<sup>3</sup>

In the first two decades of the 20th century, there were many examples of lay people from the interior of the Portuguese Central Africa moving to the British colonies, where Adventist missions were established, in search of the present truth. This lay movement brought to the region, an important presence of Adventist believers, especially in Tete.<sup>4</sup> In 1927, the Tete Station Mission located near the Malawian district of Dedza, was formally established due to the strong presence of Adventists in Nzewe, Lidwo, Chinvano, and Chileka. This Station constitutes the first historical heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mozambique.

Although the Adventist message entered through Angonia, it was from Beira District (today Manica and Sofala provinces) that it spread out to Manica, Tete, Sofala, and Inhambane provinces since the 1950s.

The religious geography of the District registered few Catholic missions. Among the foreign religious missions were the Greek Orthodox community - founded in the city of Beira in 1909 - the American Mission Board, the actual United Church of Christ in Mozambique (ICUM), with a church centre in Mussorize and another in the city of Beira,<sup>5</sup> the Free and United Methodist Church, the African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke and the Zion Christian Church, should be noted. Sociologically, the foreign congregations in this district were mostly tribal and nationalistic in character. The Va-tswas mostly attended the Methodist Church. The Va-ndau dominated the American Mission Board church and Zion Christian Church, and the Va-senas dominated Johane Maranke's African Apostolic community. The Roman Catholic Church was the most predominant, accommodating non-indigenous populations located in major towns and cities. This ethnic distribution among religions in the Beira district helped cement tribal segregations within society.

## Adventism Enters Beira District

The Adventist Message in Beira District arrived in the 1950s through The Voice of Prophecy lessons from South Africa, which were sent to Daniel Harawa by one of his friends. Daniel pioneered the Adventist Mission in this district.<sup>6</sup> Harawa and his wife, Ernestina, were baptized by Ernest P. Mansell, in 1951, in Manga, in the presence of dozens of their neighbors. The distribution of the evangelical literature he frequently received from the Voice of Prophecy was the main tool of his witnessing. His first converts were Bernardino Pene Mabote and Lucas Fazenda Waya, both baptized in 1956 by Manuel Lourinho, a local missionary. His next convert, Muare Bande, was baptized by Abílio Thungululu, a local missionary, on December 12, 1959.

The atmosphere in the Beira District between Catholicism and the foreign missions was quite tense. Daniel Harawa and the small Adventist community in Beira were, from the beginning, under constant surveillance by Police of Investigation and Defence of the State (PIDE-GS). Consequently, his persistence in distributing Christian literature led to his imprisonment for a few days without formal accusations.

In 1955, Harawa received a call from the South-East Africa Union Mission to work as a translator for the Voice of Prophecy Bible School. He was asked to translate lessons from English into Tumbuku, his native language. He accepted the call and joined the Adventist Missions in Malawi from 1957 until 1974. Upon his return to Malawi, the Adventist community in Beira was under the leadership of Abílio Thungululu. The group was consolidated with the 1959 arrival of Andissone Yule and Luís Serrote, two young Pathfinders from Milange. In the early 1960s, they were joined by Caetano Nunes Anacleto, Armando Munharo, Albino Nharrime, and Bernardo Faife Muabsa. However, later the presence of Abílio Thungululu in Beira by no means improved the relations between the Adventist Missions and the Portuguese colonial authorities because of his suspected ties with the nationalist political groups and ensuing arrests.<sup>7</sup>

According to one author, the bishop of Beira, O. Sebastião Soares de Resende, with about 45 priests and missionaries from all the missions of the diocese, after a meeting held between October 12 and 18, 1953, based on a document they drew up, considered the Seventh-day Adventists as a subversive movement alongside Zionism and Jehovah's Witnesses. In this document, it was recommended to the government of the Colony of Mozambique, among many measures: "[...] (c) to ban the followers of the Protestant sects of Zionism, Seventh Day Adventists and Watch Tower who nourish subversive ideas; d) not to admit Protestant and Mohammedan natives to the service of the State, in public offices; [...] p) to prohibit in any way and absolutely the building of mosques in all regions of the Province."<sup>8</sup>

These intimidatory measures halted the wave of adherence of the faithful to other religious groups and reflected a climate of religious intolerance experienced in the colony and in the diocese of Beira in particular, where all activities of the foreign Missions were limited and placed under constant surveillance. By their teachings, these groups were regarded, especially by the regime's colonial thinkers on religious matters, as an affront to the Portuguese nation and, above all, to Catholicism. As a consequence, the congregation of 40 members formed since the 1950s dissolved, but two generous, loyal, and high-minded women remained secretly professing the faith: Sister Domingas, of Indo-Portuguese origin, and Muare Bande, a native of Ndau ethnicity. Thanks to them, the light of the Adventist Message continued to shine among the natives of the district through the social assistance ministry, following the example of Dorcas, the Tabitha (Acts 9:36). It was through the clandestine care of the Muare Bande that the Adventist Missions could preserve the only church property that was located in Manga, one of the suburbs of Beira City.

## Adventism Enters Chemba District

The Adventist message reached Chemba District through the testimony of Lucas Fazenda Waya who, after his baptism in 1956, returned to Chibvulibvuli, his home village, to develop his commercial activities. There he tried unsuccessfully to witness the gospel to the members of his kinship. The vicissitudes of life led him to move to the village of Ndaluzza, which is 20 kilometres to the southwest of Chemba village. For every product sold in his shop, Lucas Fazenda Waya included an evangelical leaflet. Apart from this technique, Lucas Waya used pictures (Picture Rolls) to testify his faith.

As a result of Waya's intense and untiring testimony, seven souls were baptized on September 25, 1965. These were Alberto Bulande and his wife Roteria Ranquene, Jose Bulande and his wife Joana Alfanega, Francisco Cherene and his wife Falece Oliveira, and Wilson Almeida, all from Nhaphande. The baptism was carried out by Alberto Narciso Nunes in the Sangadzi River, one of the important affluences of the Zambezi River. In 1966, the other members who were baptized included Mariano Conde Zeca Meja, Luna Meja Xavier, Albano Meja Zambo, Paulino Bulande and his wife Assinate Cabudula Macane, Rosario Vasco Waya, Xavier Candeadu Dique, Jairose Cabudula Saimone, Domingos Bainate, Armando Bainate, and Linda Luis.

To give a new impetus to the small Adventist community in the Beira District, Alberto Narciso and Maria Rosa Nunes arrived from Munguluni Mission in 1965. With them, the relationship between the Adventist missions and the local authorities changed considerably. The presence of these missionaries, it was believed, would allow the achievement of the civilization goals advocated by the Portuguese colonial authorities. Since 1965, the Adventist community officially restarted its worship activities in the city. With the Nunes', evangelistic groups were formed, Sabbath School was introduced, and 30 Bible lessons for the doctrinal preparation of baptism candidates were held. Since 1968, the Adventist Message was spread through radio-evangelism on Radio Aero Clube da Beira. Leonel Impuanha Celestino (1943-2021) was the first native evangelical speaker to spread the gospel through the airwaves.

To expand the Adventist missions in the Beira District, Alberto Narciso Nunes commissioned two native lay missionaries in 1966: Rosário Vasco Waya (1943-2004) to Xavier (Chemba), and Caetano Nunes Anacleto (1929-2020) to the Moatize District. In 1968, Jeremias Adolfo Mabote (1937- ) was sent to the Búzi District. The implantation of the Adventist Church among the Sena, Nyungwes, and Ndau was assured.

## Adventism Enters Vandau Region

According to oral tradition, Emmanuel Peter Ndhlovu pioneered the Adventist faith among the Vandau of Chibabava. The Vandau constitute a Shona population substratum geographically located north of Inhambane and south of the Manica and Sofala provinces. The Vandau region is characterized by a mainly migrant population known as the "Ma-John-John". Going to South Africa represents the greatest aspiration of any Ndau man. To understand this, we only have to resort to the much-vaunted saying: "Mwanangu, yhai ulebhe upinde Jhone"-- that is, "Eat, my son, and grow up to go to Johannesburg (South Africa)". Thus, many men of working age

left their families early to go to South Africa in search of better living conditions.

Ndhlovu had his first contact with the Adventist Message in 1957 in South Africa. He was previously a member of Zion Christian Church (ZCC), where he held the position of mangamery, the second most important position in this sect after the bishop. Ndhlovu therefore had great influence among his co-religionists. The lessons transmitted in Zulu by The Voice of Prophecy were the only source of his biblical instruction. Emmanuel Peter Ndhlovu first witnessed to Mubango Noah Muchanga and Moses Simango in 1963, his co-religionists who also had migrated to South Africa, who became the first converts of Adventism in the Chibabava region.

According to oral information, the first contacts between the community of Chibabava and the Adventist communities in Beira city date back to 1966 as a result of information provided by Titos Simangs. This link continued until the celebration of the first baptism in the region of Nhango (Chibabava) on March 13, 1973, where Mubango Noé Muchanga, Sozinho Sithole, Elias Tivane, Augusto Mithisse, Daniel Muchanga, Obed Simango, Zacarias Matangue Mugadui, Samuel Moiana, and their respective wives were baptized. Peter Ndhlovu was baptized in 1974 by Daniel Magalakakla in Thabango Location in Welkom, South Africa. From the list of those baptized, two relevant facts emerge: 1) The first converts in Chibabava share strong kinship ties and religious affinities, and 2) The most respected of the Mugadui, Simango, Muchanga, Sithole, Moiana, and Tivane clans are represented here.

The widespread practice of polygamy in this part of the district hindered the rapid expansion of Adventism and the accession of new believers from this ethnic group. Among those who were deprived of baptism in 1973 were Moisés Simango and José João Mugadui (commonly known as Muzengalenga), who received the testimony of Emmanuel Peter Ndhlovu in 1963 and 1966 respectively. Due to the obligations of his tribe's customary law, Muzengalenga remained attached to his two wives until his death on March 20, 2010. This problem of polygamy among these people caused the emergence of some local independent movements since the year 2000, such as the Second Coming Adventists.

## Adventism in the Nharóngwè and Chimoio Areas

The first members in Búzi appeared in the Nharóngwè area thanks to the hard work of Jeremias Mabote, a native Bible worker sent especially to that region, in March 1968, by Alberto Narciso Nunes. Having arrived in Nharóngwè, Jeremias Mabote identified himself as a biblical Sabbath observer and was welcomed by David Massona, one of the leaders of Saint Luke Apostolic Church (Madjekenshen). The hospitality of David Massona was related to the doctrinal affinities that the Saint Luke Apostolic Church shares with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In fact, the two shared common points confused them: 1) the observation of the Sabbath, the Biblical seventh day, in their worship and 2) the emphasis given to the Spirit of Prophecy. The Spirit of Prophecy, as professed by Adventists, was initially erroneously associated with the prophetism practiced by the leaders of the Saint Luke Apostolic Church. Like Zionism, the prophetism of the Saint Luke Apostolic Church highlighted the

role of the leader of the congregation who conceived visions and dreams as means of heavenly communication; It gave primacy to healings as the essence of religion and that any sickness was interpreted as the result of demonic possession, which only the leader could cast out by imposition of hands and the use of hydrotherapy. Before long, however, the differences between the two groups were discovered, a fact that precipitated a split between Mabote and Massona. Jeremiah Mabote continued to teach the Advent message to Nharóngwe communities until the first baptismal ceremony was held in 1969.

The penetration of missionary work in the town of Vila Pery (Chimoio) started in 1953, with the project of the construction of a mission station financed by part of the missionary offerings of the Thirteenth Sabbath in the fourth quarter of 1955. For this purpose, the General Conference, through the Southern European Division, acquired a portion of land in Matsinho (Gondola) of 2500 acres--that is, 1,250,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This plot was located 21 kilometres from the city of Chimoio, a region dominated by the Shona ethnic group, a sub-group Tewe. In addition to serving as an evangelistic center, this station also served as an important agrarian center, aimed at producing food in order to improve the diet of the natives, the Portuguese and other residents of that city. The national resistance struggle (1976-1992) made it difficult to access that region, so the land was temporarily abandoned, and missionary activities were limited to the city of Chimoio. This temporary abandonment allowed the Mozambican government to occupy the land and build a monument to the Zimbabwean heroes in memory of Jossiah Tongogara.

Between 1976-1992, Mozambique faced a civil war that opposed the government by the Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (RENAMO) and the provinces of Tete, Manica, and Sofala were the most severely affected. In addition to the destruction of economic and social infrastructure, the region suffered heavy human losses and forced emigrations. Many moved either to urban areas or abroad where Adventism is strongly represented. Elsewhere, the largest concentration of Adventist refugees was located in the Republic of Malawi, where more than 5,000 Adventists, including pastors and workers, had gone. Many concentration centers were established in Nsanje (in southern Malawi), in Mulanje, and Dedza (in central Malawi). The refugee centers located in the central district of Dedza hosted refugees from Tsangano, Angonia, and Macanga. Rosario V. Waya (1943-2004) led the Adventist communities while Fernando José Tualho (1944- ) and Daniel Alface led the Adventist communities in Nsanje, Tengane, Nyamitutu, Chibvuli, Chang'ambica, and Chipho districts, composed mostly of refugees from Mutarara, Maringue, Caia, and Chemba.

On October 4, 1992, the government and RENAMO signed the General Peace Agreements (AGP), putting an end to the 16 years the population suffered. With the end of the civil war, the free circulation of goods and people throughout the country was restored, allowing thousands of Mozambicans who had fled to neighboring countries to return to their home regions. The return of the refugees spurred the expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Organizational History of the Central Mission

The Central Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized on August 8, 1972, when the Mozambique Union Mission was formed. It was instituted to coordinate the work in the Manica, Tete, and Sofala provinces which cover a cumulative area of 230,403 square kilometers. Its central offices were located in the city of Beira in the basement of the Ponta-Gea Adventist Church. At the time of its formation, the Adventist communities of Beira City (Ponta-Gêa and Manga) and Xavier (Chemba) were part of this Mission and had an overall membership of only 193 baptised members. The transfer of the headquarters office from Eduardo Mondlane Avenue to the current building located in Correia De Brito Street No. 1589 took place in 1984 after the acquisition of a new office building, purchased from the State Administration of Real Estate (APIE).

Forty-five years after independence, the Central Mission had 859 organized churches and groups. The Church continues to be mostly implanted in rural areas. Of its total members, 60.9 percent are female and 70 percent are young.

## Institutions

The establishment of schools and a dispensary in the Central Mission dates back to the early 1970s. The Thirteenth Sabbath School Mission Offering of 1972 helped to build a health center and four classrooms to help the native population to learn the principles of health and elementary reading and writing. The building infrastructures were inaugurated in September 1974 by C. L. Powers, president of the Euro-Africa Division, in the presence of local health agents and the new leaders of the country. The new education center was initially known as the Mozambique Educational Seminary Centre. This educational center introduced a new phase of educating and training native Adventist workers. Presently there are six Adventist schools--namely, Manga Adventist School, Ellen G. White School, Chamba Adventist College, Ponta Gea Adventist School Chimoio Adventist School, Tete Adventist School, and one denominational university – Adventist University of Mozambique, plus the Beira Health Centre in the territory of the Central Mission.

## List of Presidents

Alberto Narciso Nunes (1973-1976), Guilherme Magalhães (1978), Guilherme M. Pena (1979), José Mario Chemane (1980-1988), Lucas Nhacavala (1988-1994), Alfredo Cubula (1994-1997), Victor Rosario Niconde (1998); Jacob Jotamo Chilundo (1999-2005), Ranito Paulino Chinge (2006-2010), José Zacarias Tivane (2010-2015), Domingos D. Luís Tomo (2015-present).

---

### SOURCES

Hurlow, A. J. "Baptism at Neno, Nyasaland." *African Division Outlook*, July 15, 1921.



Konigsmacher, S. M. "Matandane Mission, British Central Africa." *ARH*, December 26, 1912.

Mansell, E. P. "Daniel Digs His Grave." *ARH*, October 25, 1951.

Neves, Joel das. "A American Board Mission e os desafios do protestantismo em Manica e Sofala (Moçambique), ca. 1900-1950." In *Lusotopie*, 1998: 335-343.

Olson, A. V. "Witnessing Under Difficulties in Nyasaland." *ARH*, May 15, 1958.

Pereira, Rui M. "A 'Missão Etnográfica de Moçambique'. A codificação dos 'usos e costumes indígenas' no direito colonial português. Notas de Investigação." *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, accessed August 2015 at <http://cea.revues.org/1628>.

Porter, R. C., ed. "Notes." *South African Missionary*, December 18, 1911.

Powers, C. L. "Newly Organized Union Has Great Potential." *ARH*, January 25, 1973.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Statistical Report of Seventh-Day Adventist Conferences, Missions and Institutions through the World. Washington D. C., General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists.

<http://www.adventiststatistics.org/fieldsearch.asp?search=Mozambique+Union>

Way, António V. "Mozambique." *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, February 7, 2021. Accessed March 22, 2023. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=BD2D&highlight=Mozambique>

---

## NOTES

1. "Central Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2023), <https://adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=13800>.

2. R. C. Porter ed., "Notes," *South African Missionary*, December 18, 1911, 4.

3. A. J. Hurlow, "Baptism at Neno, Nyasaland," *African Division Outlook*, July 15, 1921, 7.

4. *The African Division Outlook*, July 15, 1926; *The African Division Outlook*, September 15, 1927; *The African Division Outlook*, July 25, 1929.

5. Joel das Neves, "A American Board Mission e os desafios do protestantismo em Manica e Sofala (Moçambique), ca. 1900-1950," *Lusotopie* 1998, 335-343.

6. Daniel worked as a translator at Allen Wack & Shepherd, Ltd., shipping and transit agents, Marine and Fire Insurance, and at one of the important airline agencies, agents for Vacuum Oil Company of South Africa PTY, Ltd.



7. In 1962, Abilio Thungululu was arrested for a few weeks by the PIDE-GS on suspicion of having links with the Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), a nationalist political group which claimed the independence of Manica and Sofala. At that time Thugululu was no longer an Adventist worker. All the following sources are in Portuguese and available at the National Archives of Torre do Tombo, Alvalade, Portugal: Arquivos Nacionais/Torre de Tombo, Arquivos da PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, Processo 2844/62-SR, "Abílio Tungulugo" (NT: 3223 [p.12] Pide-LM à Pide-Lisboa, ofício confidencial nº2122/63, 1.8.63). In 1964, Thungululu was again arrested for suspected links with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) (De acordo com [p.4-6] PIDE, Informação nº449-SC/CI (2), secreto, 24/5/66 [5] (...), o Abilio Tungululo esteve em contato com a Frelimo na Tanzânia [p.1-3] documento sem referência e nem data menciona entre os membros da Frelimo no Malawi. [p.2] Abilio Tungululo – Militante. Residente na povoação Chicuapa, regedoria Chicumbo, Mlange.
8. Rui M. Pereira, "A 'Missão Etnográfica de Moçambique'. A codificação dos 'usos e costumes indígenas' no direito colonial português. Notas de Investigação," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, accessed August 2015 at <http://cea.revues.org/1628> .
- 

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000