



Cuale Dispensary, 1959.

Photo courtesy of Alexandro Justino.

## Cuale Mission (1934–1983)

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Cuale Mission was a pioneering mission station of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the northern region of the Republic of Angola. Cuale Mission was situated about 630 kilometers from Luanda, the capital city of the Republic of Angola, and operated from 1934 to 1983.

### Origin of the Adventist Work at Cuale Mission

In 1925, William H. Anderson came to Saurimo, the Lunda South province's capital, to obtain the necessary government documents for the piece of land obtained for Luz Mission. Anderson was a leading pioneer of Adventist mission to the indigenous peoples of southern Africa.<sup>1</sup> While waiting for the documents, he visited for the first time the tribe of the Gingas, in Malange province, where he found a strategic place in Cuale, in Calandula Municipality, for a new mission, which would later be named the Adventist Mission of Cuale.<sup>2</sup>

When Anderson arrived in the Cuale area, he was received by the region's chief called Linha. Initially, Chief Linha was cautious of Anderson. However, he decided to grant a piece of land to Anderson to establish the Adventist

mission in Cuale, because he had heard that Kessua region had benefited greatly from the presence of the Methodist missionaries, who established their mission work there in 1885.<sup>3</sup>

In 1929, Anderson sought permission from the Angolan government to open a new Adventist mission station in Cuale that would serve the northern part of Angola.<sup>4</sup> Although permission was granted that same year, it was difficult to proceed with the project due to the prevailing world-wide financial depression. Anderson placed Malaquias Pambassangue as a worker, guaranteeing the missionary presence on the site. However, the Adventist Church had to find ways to build the mission station soon, because the Portuguese law stipulated that the grant would lapse if the land remained unoccupied after five years. So, in 1934, Elder C. W. Curtis, Dr. R. B. Parsons and E. A. Buckley obtained the funds and the government's permission to start building. Evangelistic work was started among the Linha, Kissanga and Ngangi villages. In the same year, 1934, the mission was fully opened, under the guidance of Pastor E. Buckley, from the United States of America, as the first worker.<sup>5</sup>

## Establishment of Cuale Mission

In 1934, E. A. Buckley opened work among the Kimbundu, a hitherto-unreached tribe in the northern parts of Cuale. The work among the Kimbundu grew rapidly. In 1937, C.W. Curtis, president of the Union Mission in Angola, presented the following report:

At the beginning of 1934 we opened the new station, which is known as Cuale Mission. We are struggling for lack of sufficient workers. We haven't been able to have a European family there most of the time. We have just placed one of our Portuguese families (Jeronimo Falcao) there among this tribe of the Gingas and we hope that our contact in this region can be maintained without interruption from now on.<sup>6</sup>

In 1938, the first camp meeting was held at Cuale Mission. There was no candidate ready for baptism then, but a group was being prepared for baptism during the following year.<sup>7</sup> In 1945, the following workers were appointed to Cuale: Pedro Balança de Freitas, Joel Catimba, and Paulo Epalanga. Later, Pastors Dinis Capiñala, Antonio Ulombe, Andre Sanduva, Aurelio Muhunga, Domingos Paulo, Francisco da Silva Caxinla, Elias Samukanda and Paulino Dias, among others, came to Cuale.<sup>8</sup>

By 1949, during the administrative leadership of Elder O. U. Giddings, Cuale Mission had six out-schools and a dispensary. At the end of that year's camp meetings, over five hundred people were baptized. Sister Stevenson relied only on prayer when extracting teeth of the local patients during the camp meetings, because she had no medication to give her patients to deaden their pain.<sup>9</sup> A schoolhouse funded by the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering overflow was completed in 1953, while the hospital building was inaugurated in 1962.<sup>10</sup>

Lourenco da Costa and Gomes Noe were the first students who began their pastoral training in Cuale. After Cuale, they went to Bongo to complete their studies and graduated in theology in 1949. In the following years, the following people graduated in theology: Paulo Artur, Jose Noe, Joao Francisco, Gouveia Mesaque, Agostinho

Jorge, Joaquim Manuel, Xico Kissanga, Silva Henriques, and Bartolomeu Panzo.<sup>11</sup>

The Adventist Church had gained strong influence and wide acceptance in the region. Many Adventist workers from Bongo evangelized the area that was first entered by Roman Catholic missionaries who had established their mission work in the region.<sup>12</sup>

An Adventist school was opened in 1953 with Pastor Ataide Candeias as its first director. Cuale Dispensary was inaugurated in 1962 without a permanent medical director. A new church building was dedicated in 1963 under the leadership of Pastor Carlos Esteves.<sup>13</sup>

At the General Conference session held in San Francisco in 1950, the Angola Union Mission was transferred to the Southern European Division. The Angola Union Mission was divided into six mission fields, of which Ovimbundu had by far the largest membership.

The period of missionary administration for Cuale Mission came to an end in 1974 during the leadership of Pastor Carlos Esteves.<sup>14</sup> Angola gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. By the second part of 1975, the last Portuguese missionary had left the mission due to political pressures in the region and the decline of the Portuguese colonial power in the empire's overseas provinces. The administration of Cuale Mission was assumed by the indigenous leadership starting with Pastor Manuel Cordeiro. Cuale Mission continued to serve as the headquarters of the work in Cabinda, Cuanza Norte, Malange, Uige, and Zaire provinces until 1982 when the North Association Mission was organized with headquarters in Luanda, the capital city of Angola. From 1983, during the leadership of Pastor Bartolomeu Panzo, Cuale Mission reverted to district status which it maintains to this day.

Like many other mission stations in Angola, Cuale Mission station was affected by the long civil war resulting in the closure of the school and the dispensary due to the destruction of infrastructure. After the civil war in 2002, the church building and a few mission residential houses were rehabilitated. In 2013, the North Association Mission, under the leadership of Pastor Daniel Cem, renovated the dispensary. Beds, mattresses, and a limited stock of medicines were supplied by the provincial administration of Malange Province. Although an official opening ceremony was conducted by the provincial deputy governor in July 2013, the medical center remains closed due to lack of electricity, water, and trained personnel to run it.

## List of Directors/Presidents

E. A. Buckley (1934-1936); 1937 (No Director); J. Falcao (1938); J. Esteves (1939); 1940 (No Director); O. U. Giddings (1941-1942); 1943-1945 (No Director); A. J. Rodrigues (1946); O. U. Giddings (1947-1950); A. M. Candeias (1951-1956); J. A. Esteves (1957); E. Moretti (1958-1959); C. A. Esteves (1960-1974); Manuel Cordeiro (1975); Domingos Suquina (1976-1978); Celestino Mendes (1979); Domingos Suquina (1980-1981); Bartolomeu Panzo (1982-1983).

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## NOTES

1. Ron Reese and Douglas Morgan, "Anderson, William Harrison (1870-1950)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, August 19, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=18VP&highlight=Anderson>.
2. Alexandro Justino, *Pregoeiros da Verdade Presente: Historia da Igreja Adventista do Setimo Dia em Angola (1924-2004)*. Relgraphica, Portugal: 2007, 132.
3. Ibid., 133.
4. E. A. Buckley, "Angola's Latest Mission Station," *Southern African Division Outlook*, October 15, 1934, 3-4.
5. Justino, 135.
6. Ibid.
7. L. L. Moffitt, "The Angola Camp-meetings," *Southern African Division Outlook*, November 1, 1938, 3.
8. Isaac Paulo, *Guidos Por Deus: A Obra Medica e Missionaria Adventista em Angola os Parsons e a Missao do Bongo*, Portugal: 2013, 212.
9. E. L. Cardey, "Camp-meetings in the Angola Union," *Southern African Division Outlook*, October 15, 1949, 5.

10. Justino, 136.

11. Paulo, 212.

12. Ibid.

13. "Factos e Imagens da Presenca da Igreja Adventista do Setimo Dia em Angola, 75 Aniversario," [n.d.], 7.

14. Paulo, 202.

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