



Quicuco School

Photo courtesy of B. J. Kohler, RH, February 15, 1968, p. 17 and Quarterly Review, Southern European Division, March 1968, pp. 6, 7.

## Quicuco Mission

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B.A. (Montemorelos University, Mexico), serves as the Publishing, Spirit of Prophecy and Communication director for the Southwest Angola Union Mission since 2015. He previously worked as a district pastor and assistant lecturer at Huambo Theological Seminary. He is now studying for a Master of Arts in Biblical-Theological Studies (MABTS) at the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya. Pastor Sawambo also worked as a journalist for the "Folha8" independent newspaper in Angola.

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Quicuco Mission is one of the pioneering Seventh-day Adventist mission stations in southern Angola.

### Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Area

Quicuco Mission (also known as Quilengues Mission) is 400 miles from Bongo Mission, and is situated on a 15,000 acres of land that was bought in 1930 (possibly 1931) by W. H. Anderson.<sup>1</sup> It is located in Huila Province, in the southern part of Angola, approximately 172 kilometers from the city of Lubango, where the headquarters of the South Association Mission of Seventh-day Adventists are situated. It is 42 kilometers from the municipality of Quilengues.

In 1951 Quilengues was a small, single-street town, the seat of government administration for the southern section of Angola.<sup>2</sup> The mission site used to be an old agricultural property and was privately owned by the Portuguese Colonial Agricultural Bank, of Lisbon, Portugal. The region surrounding Quicuco Mission “boasts of tropical vegetation, palms, thick bush, prolific banana trees, and opportunities for cultivating fine oranges, tangerines, papayas, strawberries, potatoes, sugar cane, and a multitude of vegetables.”<sup>3</sup>

The pioneers of Seventh-day Adventist work in Angola advocated “not confining activities in only one restricted sector of Angola.” At that time, the law did not provide for the purchase of property by the mission on behalf of the organization. Thus the Quicuco Mission site was acquired by the Seventh-day Adventist Church on behalf of Thomas R. Huxtable, an Adventist missionary, who resided at and was director of Bongo Mission at the time.<sup>4</sup> The invoice produced for the purchase of the property was given in Benguela on February 7, 1933, to Pastor W. H. Anderson, president of the Atlantic Union Mission, who at the time was also holding the position of treasurer for the same organization. This center became instrumental for the advancement of the gospel in the southern region of Angola, where are found the following tribes: Muchilengues, Muhumbes, Muhanyas, Mucubais, Mumuílas, and others.<sup>5</sup>

In 1941, two African teachers were sent to the mission station to begin work. The way was hard. One teacher was withdrawn while the other one continued to labor. After four years of apparently fruitless labor, he moved on to another village, Mussange. He remained there for four more years before moving on to another area. The places vacated by the teacher were filled by other recruits. After nine years of work there was still no single convert won in the Quilengues district. In 1949 two boys and three girls were sent to Bongo Mission Training School to receive Christian education, although they were not yet baptized. It was hoped that this would yield positive results.<sup>6</sup> By 1950, there were 51 prospective students ready to form a school.

## Organizational History of Quicuco Mission

In 1952, José and Mariana de Sá, Portuguese natives of the Madeira Islands, both nursing graduates of Emmanuel Missionary College, were sent to open the Quicuco Mission station, on a property acquired in 1931.<sup>7</sup> Sá was also an architect, and his training was a great help in the mission building program. This marked the beginning of Adventist work among the Quilengues tribe.

In his construction work, de Sá used to cut his own timber and prepare it in his sawmill on the mission station. He made his own cement blocks and bricks. Two residential houses, a church, and various other buildings were

constructed, and on November 27, 1957, a dispensary opened. The school became a model school, with properly equipped classrooms. An extension of Bongo Hospital, the dispensary was operated by two experienced nurses, Mariana de Sá and Eva Zunder, from Germany.

The dispensary had an operating room, a pharmacy, and one ward for men and another for women, each with seven beds. It was regularly visited by Dr. Roy Parsons from Bongo Mission Hospital, who attended to patients during the day and conducted surgeries.<sup>8</sup>

The first Adventist church among the Quilengues was organized in 1958 with 136 members. In the early 1960s, a school building with more than four classrooms was erected. Each student received upon admission into the school a white uniform, to be worn while attending classes.<sup>9</sup>

In 1962, while José de Sá was building a dining room and working on a roof, he fell off and became paralyzed from the waist down. He was taken to Bongo Hospital for treatment, where he recovered but remained permanently crippled. After that he returned to Quicuco Mission Station to continue his work. Although crippled in both legs, de Sá supervised everything using a motorized tricycle.<sup>10</sup> He also continued to conduct meetings and preach the message of the soon coming Saviour. He also performed hundreds of circumcisions on the Europeans and natives. He was a man of courage and vision, an example of what God can do when someone has passion for souls and wants to help in the finishing of the work.<sup>11</sup>

In 1967, the school farm harvest report recorded the following quantities: 90 tons of bananas, 26 tons of papayas, 50 tons of avocados, 50 tons of oranges, 20 tons of mangoes, four tons of nips, cabbages, pineapples, peas, 17,000 onions, 7,000 heads of lettuce, 12,000 pieces of sugar cane, and sunflower seed, strawberries, rice, and tomatoes. Many acres of land are under cultivation, and the income from agriculture supports not only the mission but also many outstations.<sup>12</sup>

By 1973, about 250 elementary school students attended the boarding school. The medical center was running under Mariana de Sá's supervision. The orchard had 1,000 citrus trees, 400 mango trees, 180 avocado trees, and cotton, corn, and wheat crops. These agricultural products were sold outside to keep the institution in excellent financial condition.<sup>13</sup> José da Sá was director of Quicuco Mission until 1975, when Angola gained its liberation from Portugal, which also marked the beginning of the long civil war that ended in 2002. After suffering significant damage during the civil war, the mission closed, and remained so until recently.

## Reopening of the Quicuco Mission School and Medical Centre

In 2009, part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering was designated for Southwestern Angola Union to assist with the rebuilding of the mission.<sup>14</sup> The mission school was later reopened. Currently there are about 600 students from the first to ninth grade,<sup>15</sup> under the guidance of 10 teachers. However, the school is being run by the Angolan state.

Regarding farming, a summary of the harvest records the following quantities in carloads: 12 carloads of tangerine; one (1) carload of lemon; 285.25 bunches of bananas; 208 carloads of maize; 163.5 carloads of tomatoes; and 39 carloads of cabbage. From the sale of farming produce, the Quicucu Mission administration received an income of 5,472,313.00 Angolan Kwanzas.<sup>16</sup> Regarding agricultural work, the local pastor reported that the Quicucu Mission produces citrus fruits, tubers, cherries, sugar cane, avocados, and lettuce.

Another facility that was reopened is the Mission Medical Centre. It has 25 beds, and is under the administration of two health technicians due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The hospital team is composed of a nurse and an analyst (who does clinical analyses). From January to November 2020 the staff attended about 36 people. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola has developed plans for continuing to rebuild Quicucu Mission.

## List of Directors/Principals

José Estevão (1952-1954 ); Belchior Sacupula (1954-1956); Zeferino Cussivila (1956-1972); Tadeu Cassessa (1960-1963); Zeferino Cussivila and Lázaro Alberto (1964-1970); Pedro Balança de Freitas (1971-1972); Paulino Dias (1972-1973); David Siria (1976-1978); José Estevão and Isaac Vertino (1979-1985); Alfredo Cunha (1985-1989); Mário Fernando (1988-1993); João Segunda (2002-2007)<sup>7</sup>

## List of Medical Centre Superintendent or Nursing Staff

José de Sá and Mariana Diogo de Sá (1952-1975); Fonseca Tchingueia (1962-1999); Dina Daniel (1969-1994); Rosalina Agostinho (1975-1977); Maria Chingueia Agostinho (1977-1999); André Paulino (1984-2015); Abel Alfredo (1986-1992); Bernarda António (1986-1992); Amélia Tuacuame Segunda (2002-2006);<sup>48</sup> André Paulino (2007-); Manuel Nãla Catinda (1986-2019)<sup>9</sup>

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2. Bernard Sparrow, "Quilengues," *Youth's Instructor*, August 7, 1951, 14.
3. *Ibid.*, 16.
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5. *Ibid.*, 138.
6. Bernard E. Sparrow, "Retreat or Advance in Southern Angola?" *ARH*, September 21, 1950, 16.
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10. B. J. Kohler, "The Miracle of Quicuco, Angola," *Southern European Division Quarterly Review*, March 1968, 6.
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15. Ismar Banda, interview by the author, Lubango, Angola, March 9, 2021.

16. Ismar da Silva Banda, *Summary of the Harvest Report in Quicucu Mission Station*, May 11, 2021.

17. João Segunda, interview by the author, Huambo, July 15, 2001.

18. João Andrade Segunda, interviewed by the author, Huambo, July 15, 2021.

19. The South Angola Mission leadership (Francisco Loth; José Tyndongo Djimbo; Ismar banda) and some retirees of the mission. Interviewed by the author, Lubango, May 5, 2021.

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