“IN THE IMAGE OF GOD”: A GLOBAL HISTORY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL MISSION MOVEMENT IN ANGOLA, 1879 – 1975

by

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This dissertation provides a social, political, and global history of the Congregational mission movement in Angola. Around the world, Protestant American missions provided the non-western world with their first introduction to the US. And yet, the history of Protestant missionaries has not been fully integrated into histories about US relations with the world. Set between 1879 and 1975, “In the image of God” argues that America’s direct engagement in African affairs did not begin in the 1960s, as many studies assume, but nearly eighty years earlier, when Protestant missionaries first arrived in Angola intent on making direct political and social contacts with Africans. The fruits borne from this engagement not only altered the course of Angolan history but have affected the US’s official relations with the region into the post-cold war era.

Despite good intentions, Congregational missionaries’ relations with Angolans were paternalistic. My study exposes how these mission relations would eventually influence post-World War II discussions about universal human rights. When
missionaries arrived in Angola in 1879, they expected Angolans to conform to their idea of a proper western Christian lifestyle. By the middle of the twentieth-century, this relationship had changed and Angolans were in control of the shape and message of the Congregational Church, ultimately using mission connections to organize anti-colonial resistance. Congregational missionaries willfully ignored the signs that their congregants had transformed the missions’ original message and made it their own. When concerns about safety compelled most missionaries to leave Angola in the late 1960s, they were unable to disengage from Angolan politics. Instead, they seized upon the language of liberation and human rights to justify the continuation of their own colonialist relations with Angola.

Using research conducted in Angola, South Africa, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United States, I offer a cautionary tale about the complexities of US relations in the world. My dissertation not only exposes the various forces at play during the US's emergence as a world power over the course of the 20th century, but raises important questions about the impact of this legacy on today's humanitarian projects.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation began in 2002 at the Archives of the University of Cape Town. While there, I learned about America’s military engagement in Angola in the 1980s. Within a couple years of this initial trip to South Africa, I found myself in Luanda set on learning more about the history of Congregational missionaries in Angola. If I had any doubts about the importance of Protestant missions, in general, to the history of Angola, and the US’s relations with the country, those thoughts were instant quelled when I began speaking with my hotel shuttle driver. It was—and remains—unusual to travel to Angola unattached to a multinational business, nongovernmental organization, or foreign government. My driver was curious: who was this American woman and why was she in Angola alone? Picking cautious words, for everything remains political in Angola, I explained that I was in there to research the history of American Protestant missionaries. He smiled and said, “Os Protestantes Americanos, sim. A eles devemos nossa independência!” To them we owe our independence. To say I was shocked would be an understatement. I was surprised he knew about the Protestants and even more surprised that, after the United States government helped to perpetuate Angola’s long civil war in the 1980s, there could remain any goodwill towards the United States. I asked him if he was a Protestant. He was Catholic but in the same breath he explained that all Angolans know that the Protestants “mundaram a mentalidade dos Angolanos”—changed the mentality of Angolans. His words were exciting for it began to dawn on me that Angolans were more involved in the history I was researching than I could have imagined. My biggest surprise, however, was yet to come. Unbeknownst to me, this
conversation was not a singular event but one of many such discussions I would have throughout my travels in Angola and an indication of the importance of Protestant mission history to the history of US relations with Africa.

As with any large research project, particularly one conducted in a variety of nations and in multiple languages, the list of individuals to whom I am grateful is long. My dissertation advisors, Michael Adas and Temma Kaplan, were eternally patient with my wanderings, both physical and intellectual. Through multiple drafts and incarnations, they both remained steadfast in their support for my vision but unwavering in their insistence that it become ever more focused. Their endless editing, discussion, and careful nudging allowed this dissertation to become a reality. I am also grateful to the other members of my dissertation committee, Paul Clemens, Susan Carruthers, David Foglesong, and Mahmood Mamdani. Each individually offered me guidance and support essential to the dissertation’s completion.

This dissertation would never have materialized without the generous support of a number of institutions. Rutgers University provided me with two years of fellowship, travel and writing grants, and flexible TA schedules. The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations provided me with important seed money towards my first trip to Angola. The Fundação Luso-Americana para a Desenvolvimento allowed me to complete my research at the Portuguese National Archives, and a generous grant from the Fundação Gulbenkian supported me for the first six months that I began writing. Finally, an Africanist Doctoral Fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars offered me the incredible opportunity and resources of the Center. With their
help, I was able to access important unopened archives in Washington DC and form professional contacts that continue to serve me.

Archivists and librarians are a historian’s best friends and I was fortunate to interact with some of the best. Rosa Cruz e Silva is the reason Angola has a national archive. Her tireless work to maintain the archives with limited resources is an inspiration for all researchers. She is also the reason I and many others have been able to receive coveted visas to enter Angola. I am indebted to her and her staff. The archivists at the Torre do Tombo patiently answered all my questions, helped me with translations I was unsure of, and assisted in tracking down misplaced files that I insisted on seeing. Neels Muller at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs Archives let me pull and photograph hundreds of files over several weeks despite the mess. Archivists at the United Nations Archive and the League of Nations Archive helped me track down obscure documents. The National Security Archive gave me access to folders and information not open to the general public. Harry Miller at the Wisconsin Historical Society graciously sent me multiple mailings to France with information that led to the Ross Report chapter. Finally, William Minter opened up his home to me and provided me with his personal papers that proved key to writing about the World Council of Churches. These individuals are just a sampling of the numerous individuals who helped me along the way and to whom I am grateful.

More than archives, this dissertation has relied on the generosity of Angolans and former missionaries who trusted me with their stories. In particular, I would like to thank the Burgess family. In 2007, you met an unknown historian asking to come along as you ventured back into an emotional reunion with Angola. Without your hospitality, I would
never have been able to see the missions or interview the individuals who came to reunite with you. George Burgess, who greeted me at the airport with his Rotary Club hat, provided me with insight, information, and friendship. My encounter with the Burgesses would have never occurred, however, without the help of Luís Samacumbi and the entire staff at IECA. Luís’s energy, talent, and humility are an inspiration. Onezimo Nunda was the best tour guide anyone could ask for. He allowed me to see things, meet people, and go to places beyond my wildest expectations. With the blessing of Luís and Onezimo, Angolans opened up their homes and hearts to me in ways that would have been impossible had I been on my own. Augusto Chipsesse opened up his office to me for an afternoon to tell me incredible stories of his own journeys. José Chipenda patiently answered repeated questions and offered support through frequent emails. Finally, to those Angolans who shared their lives with me, your stories and perseverance in the face of untold hardship not only helped me to image this project but have provided me with inspiration in my daily life.

The networks of colleagues and friends who provided moral support, intellectual conversation, and many good laughs are as international as this project. In Portugal, Todd and Juliana Cleveland were the first people that suggested I go to Huambo. Endless nights at their apartment remain one of my fondest memories of my time there. Moira Forjaz provided a home to relax and unwind. Jorge Varanda and Joana Neves have always showed me the best places to get illegal Chinese food and the best caipirinhas in Lisbon. Virginie Tallio and Inge Ruigrok are the best cohorts anyone could hope for in both Angola and Lisbon. In South Africa, Michael Clements and Stewart Bailey were the best friends, support, and tour guides anyone could ask for. They, and their large cohort
of friends, made what is generally a lonely existence, a fantastic adventure. In Angola, Marissa Moorman graciously helped me to find lodging and introduced me to her good friend Helena Serra who ensured that I was never hungry and always had some place to go dancing on Friday nights. The staff and guests at Casa Soleme were my family away from home and also my lifesavers when I was sick. I hope one day to pay forward everything you did for me. Finally, in the United States, my cohort of graduate school friends: Kris Alexanderson, Pam Epstein, Lauren Waxman, Andy Daily, and Justin Hart. To my Bocca babes who covered shifts and made me forget my dissertation woes: Beth, Carm, Ali, Erinn, and Aubrie. Thanks also to Michael Clements who graciously read and edited all the final drafts from the comfort of Lubumbashi, Congo. Brooks Marmon was an excellent research assistant at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Joan Meisel, my grandmother, ensured that I never went hungry and provided needed conversation, coffee, and support. To Elena Glasberg, who coached me through the last year of writing this dissertation. I cannot even fathom being here without your help. Finally, to Molly Warsh, my partner in crime, who read and edited every single chapter (or should I say every single thing I’ve ever written). To her I owe my firstborn.

Long ago, my parents, Bo and Lisa Burlingham, taught me to constantly ask questions of all that was around me and look deeper into all that I took for granted. These lessons form the basis of my unending interest in history. Their unwavering support for all that I do, even when I choose the craziest places to visit or pick the hardest tasks to complete, is my foundation.

And finally, to Matthew Knightly, my husband and best friend. Despite sleepless nights and long absences (both physical and emotional) you have remained my
unquestioning cheering section. Your emotional support, friendship, home-cooked meals, conversation, and incredible sense of humor provided me with the stamina to finish. This dissertation is dedicated to you.
DEDICATION

To Matt
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Map of Angola, Congregational Missions, and the Benguela Railroad
INTRODUCTION: FROM MISSIONS TO GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1975, the United States Consulate in Luanda sent a cable to the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, about the current state of politics in Angola. Similar to other global powers vying for dominance in southern Africa, the US was surveying which Angolan political party might prove a suitable cold war ally. The US government was particularly interested in the movements of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and Daniel Chipenda, a factional leader of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA). Both men came from the central highlands region of Angola and were members of the Umbundu ethnic group. Their ability to lead hinged on the support they received from the Umbundu’s most important social and political institution, the Congregational Church. Savimbi and Chipenda had known each other since they were children because they were raised in the Congregational Church and, during the first decades of the century, their fathers had been classmates in the missions’ schools. At first glance, it may seem too coincidental that two leaders of important anti-colonial organizations were raised in American missions. In truth, however, most of Angola’s political leadership had been educated in Protestant mission schools. Indeed, during the twentieth century, the Protestant churches in Angola, and the Congregational Church in particular, became central nodes of resistance to colonial rule.1

The histories of Savimbi and Chipenda, as well as countless other anti-colonial activists, indicate the centrality of Congregational missions to both the history of Angola and the history of the United States’ interaction with the world. While not ignoring the religious component of missionary work, “In the Image of God” provides a social, political, and global history of the Congregational missionary movement in Angola. This dissertation is about the unpredictable synthesis of American ideas abroad and the ways in which these ideas, and the individuals involved in their export, formed a core component of the experience of the US in the world.

Congregational missionaries were one of many groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries hoping to help remake the world in the United States’ image. Missionaries sought to export the unique blend of technological advancement and religious piety that made the United States a supposedly utopian society. However, the model that Congregational missionaries used to recreate this ideal society came directly

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2 A note on terms: In 1957, ninety percent of the Congregational Churches in the United States merged with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches to form the United Church of Christ. In order to maintain the clarity of the dissertation’s narrative, I have chosen to continue referring to the churches and missionaries in Angola as Congregational and Congregationalist, respectively, after this 1957 merger. Further, the merger did not alter missionizing tactics in Angola and the existing Angolan church continues to be called the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola.
from a part of the United States that, in the late nineteenth-century, was the antithesis of ideal: the American South. Thus, missionaries, including black missionaries who sought to escape the paternalism of America, instead wound up recreating schools and social institutions embedded in paternalistic social and political ideologies. Missionaries would cling to these paternalisms even as they claimed to be working to counter the repressions of the Portuguese colonial state. Nevertheless, by the second decade of the twentieth-century, a new generation of mission-educated Angolans would informally cede control of missions' outreach, messages, and future. Through their work, these Angolan Protestants would help to shape the Congregational Church into an Angolan institution.

My project makes three principle contributions: first, I connect nineteenth-century American race relations with the impulse for and pattern of missions in Angola and explains how this model was adapted by Angolan actors to become a powerful and influential anti-colonial institution. Second, I provide an alternate history of the rise of American power in the twentieth-century by exposing how Congregational missionaries in Angola were central actors in the defining global debates related to questions of empire and colonialism. Finally, I reveal how the United States’ missionary history, and by extension the history of American race relations, were central to the formation of late twentieth-century human rights discourses.

The primary formulation of this project began in relation to an ongoing series of articles in *Diplomatic History* about the way religion and religious organizations might be more thoroughly included in the history of US foreign relations. Within this debate,
some historians have argued that religion can be used in much the same way as gender and race: as a framing device to understand the actions and intentions of US foreign policy makers.\(^4\) Other scholars, notably Patricia Hill, disagree with this approach, arguing that US foreign relations cannot be “religioned.” Rather, she argues that there is more promise in using religion and religious networks, so-called transnational networks, as a way of understanding the relationship between religion and politics, or policy making, in the United States and its relations with the world. Hill points to a collection of essays edited by Susanne Rudolph and James Piscatori that explore the ways in which religion, and religious associations, form transnational civil societies which have challenged traditional boundaries of the modern nation state.\(^5\) My project builds on the work of Rudolph and Piscatori by analyzing the networks created by and in which Congregational missions in Angola were entangled. Indeed, at the heart of my research is an interest in the role played by missions, missionaries, and Protestant Angolans as conduits between local discussions and geopolitical ones. I demonstrate not only the extraordinary human entanglements involved in mission relations but also the complexities of the era involved in the decline of the European empire and the ascendance of the United States as a global super power. Unbeknownst to them,


missionaries were caught up in these global processes and their story forms a part of
these larger narratives.

In addition to contributing to these Diplomatic History discussions, I use the
history of the Congregational mission in Angola to stitch together previously disparate
literatures and historical arguments. I am strongly influenced by new scholarship
interested in internationalizing the study of the United States in the world through
renewed emphasis on foreign archives and other international primary source materials.6
Integrating these globalized perspectives into the study of US history helps the researcher
to understand not only how the rest of the world has been reflected in American history,
but also how the American experience has been reflected in the history of other nations.7
Indeed, through this process I have come to understand how the history of American
Congregational missions in Angola is as much a part of the American experience as it is a

6 See for example: Greg Grandin, The Last Colonial Massacre : Latin America in the Cold War (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 2004); Matthew James Connelly, A Diplomatic Revolution : Algeria's Fight
for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press,
2002); Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of
Anticolonial Nationalism (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jeremi Suri, "The Rise and
Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960 - 1975," The American Historical Review 114, no. 1 (2009),
Harvard University Press, 2003); 355.; Susan L. Carruthers, Cold War Captives : Imprisonment, Escape,
and Brainwashing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

7 This is particularly evident in the early history of the Congregational missions in Angola and ties in with
important literatures that connect African-American history to US foreign relations: Brenda Gayle
Plummer, Rising Wind : Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960 (Chapel Hill, NC:
University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Penny M. Von Eschen, Race Against Empire : Black Americans
and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); James H. Meriwether,
Proudly we can be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961 (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of
North Carolina Press, 2002); Thomas Borstelmann, Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle : The United States and
Southern Africa in the Early Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Mary L. Dudziak,
Press, 2000). This literature, in turn, relates to studies about advances in American science and technology
and US foreign relations: Michael Adas, Dominance by Design : Technological Imperatives and America's
Civilizing Mission (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); John M. Jordan,
Machine-Age Ideology : Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911-1939 (Chapel Hill: University
of North Carolina Press, 1994); Ivan Musicant, Empire by Default : The Spanish-American War and the
Dawn of the American Century, 1st ed. (New York: H. Holt, 1998); Emily S. Rosenberg and Eric Foner,
Spreading the American Dream : American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945, 1st ed. (New
York: Hill and Wang, 1982).
crucial component for understanding African colonial history. Missionary structures profoundly shaped Portuguese colonialism and Portugal’s international relations. For, while missionaries were not official representatives of the United States, their actions weighed heavily on the Portuguese government, ultimately influencing its official relations with the United States. The influence of these relations would prove especially important during the cold war when American reliance on the Portuguese Azorian islands as an air force refueling stop was at its peak.

The story of the Congregational Church in Angola provides an excellent case for observing the spread and synthesis of American culture and ideas abroad. The missions’ unique tactics for working with Angolans were developed in the United States and adapted to Angola with great success. A common misconception about Protestant missionary work, in general, is that all churches functioned similarly abroad.


9 There is little existing scholarly literature about this process in Angola. For a discussion of the application of US missionizing tactics in other parts of Africa see: Eunjin Park, "Black and White American Methodist Missionaries in Liberia, 1820-1875" (PhD Diss, Columbia University), ; Mary Ciambaka Mwiandi, "The Jeanes School in Kenya: The Role of Jeanes Teachers and their Wives in "Social Transformation" of Rural Colonial Kenya, 1925-1961" (PhD diss, Michigan State University).
contrary, each denomination had its own tactics. The Congregational Church, unlike other Protestant denominations, was focused primarily on delivering social services to Angolans before evangelization. Founded in the late nineteenth-century, Congregational missions used schools and missionizing techniques that were originally developed among freedmen and women in the American South after the Civil War. In Angola, Congregational missions sought principally to convert the Africans who occupied the lowest rung of the colonial hierarchy, indígenas (literally: natives), whom the Portuguese considered primitive and incapable of absorbing the values of Western civilization. Missions’ focus on so-called indígenas and missionaries’ belief that they were assisting in the creation of Angolan citizens put the missions on a collision course with the colonial government. Under Portuguese rule, most rural Angolans were denied state social services and were governed according to Portuguese-sanctioned “tribal” or “ethnic” law administered through state-appointed tribal-chiefs (Sobas). The Congregational missionaries reached out directly to these African villagers, thus circumventing the colonial system and undermining Portuguese administrative plans. Yet, well into the twentieth-century, Congregational missionaries were unable, or unwilling, to recognize their own colonial relationship with Angolans or hand over control of the missions to Angolans. Indeed, missionaries in ability to disengage from Angolan politics would ultimately lead them into the same type of paternalistic relationship with Angolans that they believed the missions were helping Angolans to escape.

The social work emphasis of the Congregational missions helps to account for both the broad appeal that it had among Angolans, who were denied such services from
the colonial state, and the animosity from the Portuguese, who became threatened by the missions’ mass appeal.10 The disagreements between Protestant missions and the colonial government would have a far reaching impact on diplomatic relations between Portugal and the United States, particularly when missionaries would make their concerns about Portuguese colonialism internationally known.

The history of Protestant missionaries in Angola actually encompasses three main denominations: Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational. My concern with the Congregational Church in this project is rooted in both the fact that its networks of mission outstations and schools were the most extensive and because it offered the highest levels of schooling and medical treatment for Angolans. In addition, the Congregational Church holds a particularly unique place in American history as both one of the oldest churches in the United States and, in the late 19th century, one of the wealthiest missionary organizations with the largest number of foreign missionaries.

Although few Portuguese or Angolans chose to acknowledge it, the so-called “American Church,” as the Congregational Church became known, was, in fact, an alliance between the US Congregational Church and the United Church of Canada. Until the 1910s Canadian missionaries were sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in entering Angola and they used the ABCFM’s

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missionizing tactics, but once in country they opened their own mission stations. After the 1910s American and Canadian missionaries combined mission stations and served together.

The existence of Canadian missionaries, and the colonial government’s decision to ignore their different nationalities, is not insignificant. Indeed, the confusion of nationality is indicative of the complexities of this history. Throughout their time in Angola, missionaries maintained that they were representatives of Christ and not their national homes. Therefore, whether they were American or Canadian mattered little to the missionaries’ quest to bring education, health services, and Christ to the people of Angola. However, as the Portuguese sought to define themselves and stand among other European nations in the twentieth century, nationality or national belonging meant everything. As the United States rose to become a superpower, Portugal held so-called American missions responsible for any policy that it perceived to be anti-Portuguese, even though many missionaries were Canadian and there was little direct contact between the American Congregational Church and the US government. The missionaries’ denial of their national origins assisted in this blame game and allowed Portugal a vehicle to air its grievances, even if the colonial power’s accusations were false.11

For Angola, the long-term consequences of Congregational missionaries were messy and unexpected. While their work provided Angolans with much needed health

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11 The Portuguese government’s denial of Canadian nationals would be an interesting project for an historian of Canadian foreign relations. I am aware of the existence and importance of these Canadian nationals to the history of the Congregational Church in Angola. However, because this is a history of US foreign relations, this project deals mostly with the significance and implications to US history of Portugal’s blanketing of missions and missionaries as American as well as the American antecedents to mission structure and missionizing approach that were used by all missionaries, regardless of nationality. For more on Canadian missionaries, specifically, see: Paul Byam, "New Wine in a very Old Bottle: Canadian Protestant Missionaries as Facilitators of Development in Central Angola, 1886-1961" (PhD, University of Ottowa).
services and access to agricultural knowledge that allowed a modicum of self-sufficiency, divisions among Angola's Protestant missions contributed to the development of distinct ethnic nationalisms that would afflict Angolan politics long into the post-WWII period.\textsuperscript{12}

Further, the missionaries' staunch commitment to their work and the Angolan people would unexpectedly lead them into a codependent relationship with Portugal that helped prolong Portuguese colonialism. Most Congregational missionaries were unwilling, or unable, to acknowledge the fundamental contradiction between their message of freedom and individual rights with the history of missionary cooperation with Portuguese colonialism and their own imperialistic relations with Angolan Protestants.

The impact of the Congregational missions, however, extends beyond the borders of Angola. When Congregational missionaries left Angola in the late 1960s, they were unwilling to break their ties to Angola. In search of a new guise, missionaries turned to global church organizations that were at the forefront of formulating the new human rights language. Former Congregational missionaries inserted Angola into these conversations. As a result, they imbued nascent human rights debates with many of the Angolan Congregational Church’s unresolved contradictions, extending the story of the missionary movement into the next century.

Much of the existing scholarship on the history of human rights focuses primarily on the relationship between European colonialism and the development of human rights language without significant attention to American missionary organizations.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Linda Heywood and a number of other scholars have written extensively about the relationship between Protestant church divisions and ethnic nationalism. See: Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present}.

Moreover, much of the literature that does explore the relationship between American missionary organizations and human rights conveys, at best, an abstract understanding of the complexities inherent in the American missionary movement. Missions and mission relations were conflicted and confusing. Protestant missionaries rarely considered the larger implications of their work beyond their belief in the need to bring Christ, education, and healthcare to Angolans. This dissertation reintroduces the relevance of American missionary history towards understanding human rights dialogue today.

The first chapter of my dissertation, “‘A peculiar claim on American Christians’: The Founding of the Congregational Church in Angola, 1879 – 1920” lays the groundwork for understanding the history and shape of the Congregational missionary movement in Angola. Missionaries arrived in Angola in 1880 with a commitment to help create a free citizenry. Yet, they were uninformed about existing conditions in the central highlands, where Congregational missionaries established themselves. This chapter explains how missionaries inadvertently helped to undermine Umbundu kingdoms fighting to retain their independence against the Portuguese colonial government. It also explores how Congregational missions benefited from the growth of the colonial system even while missionaries worked to ameliorate its worst abuses.

University of New York Press, 2007); Lynn Avery Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007). Many histories of European colonialism addresses related human rights issues in the body of their texts. Where relevant, these studies are referred to throughout the dissertation. 14 In their short article about the relationship between missions and contemporary non-governmental organization, Firoze Manji and Carl O’Coill discuss American missionary organizations. However, they do not examine how these organizations differed from their European equivalents nor American missions interacted differently with colonial governments with which they were not nationally affiliated. Firoze Manji and Carl O’Coill, "The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)* 78, no. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 567-583.
Chapters 2 and 3 focus on how the Congregational Church became part of the social and political fabric of Angola in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Chapter 2, “‘Precisely like the people I have been with all my life’: Black Congregational Missionaries in Central Angola,” considers the role played by black American Congregational missionaries in shaping the future of the Church in Angola. It examines how these missionaries successfully expanded the reach and appeal of the Congregational Church among Angolans by applying their own experiences in the American South as recipients of mission education and adapting their missionizing style to be more receptive to existing Angolan beliefs and practices. Chapter 3, “Transnational Action in a National World: Congregational Missionaries and the Ross Report to the Temporary Slavery Commission of the League of Nations,” explores missionary participation in a report that was critical of Portuguese labor practices. It reveals how the report’s fallout in Angola helped spur Angolans’ use of Congregational missions to create a nationalist movement outside the control of the colonial government and behind the backs of Congregational missionaries.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to an examination of the era after World War II when various forces transformed Angola’s social and political environment. These forces—the cold war, the ascendency of the United States as a global superpower, the reassertion of Portuguese development in Angola, and the decolonization movements which swept Africa in the 1960s—had a profound impact in Angola particularly in areas where American Protestant missions had been established. Chapter 4, “‘From the Freeland of Angola’: Global Politics, Waning Missionary Power, and Angolan Anti-Colonialism in the Post-War Era,” tracks the unraveling of the foreign missionary
enterprise as it was eclipsed by a powerful Angolan-run Congregational Church. It explores how official diplomatic relations between Portugal and the United States became enmeshed in misunderstandings about the power of foreign missionaries in Angola and their ability to control the growing anti-colonial movement. Chapter 5, “No Longer at Home in Angola: Congregational Missionaries, the World Council of Churches, and the Perpetuation of an Unexamined Past” examines the involvement of former Congregational missionaries in discussions about the limits of national sovereignty in relation to the moral obligation of world citizens to protect human rights. It reveals how missionaries’ participation and shaping of these discussions and resultant policies were influenced by their own experiences in Angola. Driven by an overwhelming desire to remain involved in Angola, these activist missionaries were unable, or unwilling, to acknowledge that the missionary era was over. Thus, former Congregational missionaries imbued key human rights discussions with their own uninterrogated colonialisms. As a result of missionaries’ actions at the World Council of Churches, the Congregational mission movement in Angola would continue to influence non-governmental global human rights policy discussions well into post-cold war era.
CHAPTER ONE:
“A PECULIAR CLAIM ON AMERICAN CHRISTIANS”: THE FOUNDING OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ANGOLA, 1879 – 1920

In 1879, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the missionary body of the Congregational Church, assembled to decide on a new site in central Africa. At the gathering, board members asked Secretary John O. Means to study where the Church might send American missionaries. When the group met six months later, Angola was at the top of his list. Means’ activism in the anti-slavery movement influenced his decision to favor Angola as the new mission field. He became interested in African society when, as a college student, he served on the US Brig *Dolphin* charged with patrolling the West African coast looking for illegal slave ships.\(^{15}\) Means argued that Angola was suitable not only for logistical reasons but because of the “peculiar claim [Angola had] on American Christians because we supported slavery.”\(^{16}\) Means and other board members were aware that, in the years leading up to the Civil War, the ABCFM had refused to denounce slavery.\(^{17}\) In light of this history, Means’s use of the word “peculiar” to justify the mission location undoubtedly resonated with the ABCFM audience. Since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, American defenders of slavery had euphemistically referred to American slavery as the “peculiar institution” as a means to distinguish it from other, supposedly, harsher slave societies.\(^{18}\) By employing the language of slavery to justify the future mission, Means indicated strongly both how American slavery shaped the desire for an Angola mission and how the new mission site

\(^{15}\) Tucker, *Drums in the Darkness*, 57.

\(^{16}\) Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents*, 52.

\(^{17}\) These divisions are discussed in detail in chapter 2. For more see: Clara Merritt DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching on: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association, 1861-1877* (New York: Garland Pub., 1995), 401.

might allow the organization to atone for its complicity in the trade. In seeking to rid themselves of the guilt of slavery, however, Means and the ABCFM closed their eyes to the realities of Angola.

The missionaries’ belief that the mission would undo the evils of slavery overrode any realistic consideration of how the mission would interact with Angolans and the effects their activity would have on Umbundu society. The first Congregational missionaries arrived in Angola in 1880, and quickly set about building missions, schools, and churches among the Umbundu ethnic group in Angola’s populous central highlands. The ABCFM believed that the Congregational mission would play a part in creating a free and equitable society in central Africa. But when they arrived in Angola in 1880, the missionaries were unprepared and unaware of the conditions on the ground. The central highlands was the scene of a complex power struggle between the region’s Umbundu kingdoms and the Portuguese colonial government, and also between the Portuguese and competing European colonial powers.

The Congregational missionaries’ disregard for the political and social realities of Angola unintentionally led the mission to become deeply entrenched in the region’s power struggles. The missionaries’ desire to help Umbundus, in actuality, would undermine Umbundu society, thus inadvertently contributing to the kingdom’s decline and helping the Portuguese government to colonize the region. Moreover, Congregational missions benefited from the destruction of Umbundu kingdoms. The greater the disintegration of traditional kingdoms and the stronger the Portuguese state, the more that Angolans began to turn to the Congregational missions as a means to escape colonialisms’ worst abuses. The success of the Congregational missions,
therefore, was at least partially reliant on the very practices and ideals missionaries’
claimed to oppose. Ironically, while helping the spread of colonialism, the missions’
strong presence in the highlands simultaneously was undermining Portuguese claims that
it fully occupied the region, a key requirement in Portugal’s ability to maintain the colony
after the 1885 Conference of Berlin. The complex and interwoven relations that would
result from these early experiences would affect mission relations with the colonial state
and Angolans for decades to come.

The Congregational Church’s organization and its specific approach to mission
work came out of a precise moment in American history. From its founding in 1806, the
ABCFM struggled over how to differentiate between its Christian obligation to
evangelize and its idealized belief in the obligation to propagate American society and
culture. Nationalistic pride led missionaries of the era to think of the great destiny of
the US in terms of the service they could offer the world. Their desire was to spread the
religious and cultural mixture that they believed had made the United States a great
nation and offer “proof of American idealism and reassurance about the special place of
the United States in the World.” In the first few decades of the 1800s, however, a
number of critics began to question the tight correlation between Protestant American
evergulism and the desire to provide social services to many. Church leaders and mission
boards refocused mission strategy to place greater emphasis on evangelization alone.

19 Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions,* 44.
20 As quoted in Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia"
since 1881,* 6. For related discussion see: Charles W. Forman, "A History of Foreign Mission Theory in
America," in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective: Papers Presented at the Fourth Annual
Meeting of the American Society of Missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois,
Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions,* 57.; Adas,
*Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission,* 542.
Senior Secretary Rufus Anderson pioneered this new thinking. He advocated mission stations and schools that were “indigenized” and taught in local languages. He ordered ABCFM missionaries to train local pastors and make churches self-sustaining. There was a danger, Anderson warned, that Americans identified Christianity …with blessing of education, industry, civil liberty, family government, social order, the means of a respectable livelihood, and a well-ordered community. Hence our idea of piety…and our idea of the propagation of the gospel are closed in the social and doctrinal forms that we mistakenly associate with the Gospel itself.

Rather than advocating these cultural ideas, and having “farmers and mechanics” sent to the mission field, “a simpler, cheaper, more effectual means of civilizing the savage,” advocated Anderson, “was the gospel alone.”

Mission boards began to turn away from Anderson’s “Christ, not Culture” argument during the second half of the nineteenth century. Many boards were especially hostile to Anderson’s constraints on education and his argument that trade or craft-based education was outside the missionary’s obligation. The renewed link between evangelization and social work helped to endorse the layman’s role in the mission.

Culture and Christ were again one. Leaders of this new movement argued,

The value of medical, educational, literary, and other forms of missionary activity, is measured by the extent to which they prepare the way for the Gospel message, promote its acceptance, manifest its spirit and benefits, multiply points of contact with human souls and increase the number and efficiency of those who preach Christ.

The ABCFM’s decision to open a mission field in West Africa occurred within the context of the organization’s renewed commitment to reconnect evangelization and social service. This commitment, in turn, was related to the nineteenth century domestic climate in the United States, which was in the midst of enormous industrial change. The

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22 Ibid, 91 and 102.
23 Ibid, 120.
The last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the spread of railroads across the United States, the creation of huge factory towns, the rise of large industrial cities, and, in general, a move away from the small farm-based societies that had defined the US during the first half of the century. The growth of America’s cities was accompanied by huge waves of immigrants entering the country. Many Americans felt a sense of unease at the arrival of so many immigrants. Concern that the United States’ doors were too wide open led to a series of exclusionary immigration laws meant to temper the waves of new comers. For those immigrants already in the US, the ABCFM and Congregational Churches were strongly committed to mitigating some of the abuses of industrialized society by helping ameliorate the dreadful social conditions of many immigrant families. Towards this end, they were active throughout the northern United States as social reformers in the settlement house movement. The commitment to social works fused

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seamlessly with the organization’s conviction that their proven ability to help new Americans could be extended overseas.\textsuperscript{25}

The ABCFM’s work in the southern United States after the Civil War among freedmen and women, more than its work in the North, convinced the organization’s leaders that it had a special talent for working with people of African decent. The organization’s relationship with slavery, however, was complicated. In 1845, the church came under attack by abolitionists for their tolerance of slavery among the American Indians with whom they worked. In an effort to continue their mission work among these groups, ABCFM missionaries chose not to condemn the use of slaves among these Indian groups. Defenders of the missionaries’ position argued, “[a] distinction ought to be made between the character of a system and the character of the persons whose circumstances have implicated them with it.”\textsuperscript{26} Rather, the board argued that their mission was to spread Christianity, not end slavery. Missionaries were guests of the American Indians and if they chose to lecture them about slavery, their ability to convert would be hindered or curtailed.\textsuperscript{27} Abolitionists in the organization vigorously protested such logic and its defense of slavery. They argued that excusing individual responsibility was only an proof of the organization’s faulty values. These abolitionists showed that for decades the ABCFM solicited and accepted funds from slaveholders, sent slaveholders to serve among American Indians, and allowed slave owners to be members of the organization. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison argued, “to desant upon the wrongs of the slave

\textsuperscript{25} For more on this see: Hutchison, \textit{Errand to the World : American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions}, chapter 4.; Adas, \textit{Dominance by Design : Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission}, chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{26} Molly Oshatz, "No Ordinary Sin: Antislavery Protestants and the Discovery of the Social Nature of Morality," \textit{Church History} 79, no. 2 (June, 2010), 342.

\textsuperscript{27} This would be the same defense that missionaries in Angola would offer nearly a hundred years later when their position in Portuguese colonialism was questioned.
system, and yet exonerate supporters of it from reprehension, is to deal in absurdities: we
might preach in this manner until the crack of doom, and never gain a convert." 28 In
1846, when the board solidly refused to condemn slavery, four breakaway missionary
societies joined forces and created the American Missionary Council (AMA). Northern
Congregationalists enthusiastically supported the new abolitionist missionary society and
lashed out at the ABCFM in regional and national papers. Throughout the antebellum
period, the ABCFM continued to contend that it was not pro-slavery but, rather, that it
made a distinction between social and individual sin. Slavery was a societal sin
irreducible to individual culpability.

The antebellum arguments were closely related to the connection Means drew
between American slavery, the ABCFM positions, and the need to open the Angola
mission. The organization had tried to make amends in the Reconstruction period by
helping newly freed men and women. The ABCFM sent so-called “domestic
missionaries” to help the build schools, hospitals, and churches in areas where states had
neither the money nor the interest to help freedmen and women. Despite these gestures,
nearly fifteen years after the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, Means and
others in the ABCFM looked at the American South with mixed emotions. While slavery
had ended, the situation in the South had grown decidedly worse for black Americans.
Many of the victories of the Civil War and Reconstruction were quickly lost in new
sharecropping laws, voter disenfranchisement, and increased violence. 29 The ABCFM
had hoped that its schools and hospitals might mitigate the impact of black American’s

28 Ibid, 351
29 Stewart Emory Tolnay and E. M. Beck, A Festival of Violence : An Analysis of Southern Lynchings,
1882-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Leon F. Litwack, Trouble in Mind : Black
Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Leon F. Litwack, Been in
1979).
declining freedoms. Though the situation in the South continued to worsen, the ABCFM schools were nevertheless able to graduate students who became community leaders. The ABCFM’s relative success in building schools in the South convinced those who directed the effort that their expertise in working with black Americans could be translated to working in Africa.  

When the ABCFM finally agreed that the new mission should be located in Angola, the organization set up a special fund to raise money for its establishment. It initially received £1,000 from a British Baptist philanthropist and, later, a one million dollar legacy from the estate of an American businessman that made the mission possible. With financing for the project secured, the ABCFM began making official plans for the mission. In 1879, three missionaries—Rev. W. W. Bagster of California; Rev. William Henry Saunders, a child of missionaries raised in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka); and Mr. Samuel Taylor Miller, the first black American and graduate of the ABCFM’s Hampton Institute—set out from the United States for Portugal, and then Angola, to begin the new mission. Miller was a Virginian and child of emancipated slaves. In sending him to Angola, the organization hoped that he might be “the first of many of his race who shall go forth for the redemption of that wasted but still opulent continent.”

Although they were enthusiastic about their mission, the new missionaries were misinformed about the specific political and social situation on the ground in Angola. Disembarking in the port city of Benguela on November 13, 1880, they did not receive the warm welcome they expected from the Portuguese. Rather, Portuguese traders and residents greeted them with a mixed reaction, foreshadowing the difficult relations

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30 For similar discussion on how this sentiment fueled missionary interest in Russia see: Foglesong, The American Mission and the "Evil Empire" : The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881, chapter 1.
31 Tucker, Drums in the Darkness, 59.
missionaries would have with the Portuguese government in the years to come. The Portuguese feared that the Americans, like the British before them, were in Angola to establish rival colonies. Others were suspicious of the missionaries’ Protestant faith and, grouping them with the British, announced “Os Ingleses são herejes!” (the English are heretics). Eventually, the Americans found housing and food in Catumbela, a village twelve miles away from the port city of Benguela. In Catumbela, they observed the first signs of the slave trade that had originally led them to Angola: they saw “white paths behind the town which had been the main slave tracks for centuries and were so still, for they lead to the Interior by the shortest and easiest route.” Within a few months of their arrival in Angola, however, the missionaries would learn that while international slave trading was over, an internal forced labor system akin to slavery continued to thrive in Angola and between Angola and Portugal’s other African colonies.

As they made their way into Angola’s interior, the missionaries confronted the complex social and political situation that was unfolding there. Several powerful kingdoms ruled the central highlands and their control over the area was eroding. For hundreds of years, these rulers’ had profited from their involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. It had allowed them to maintain their power and fend off Portuguese control of their lands. Between 1741 and 1828, Portuguese and Brazilian buyers had exported a total nearly 400,000 slaves from the port of Benguela, the same port at which Congregational missionaries arrived. Many of these slaves were purchased from

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32 Ibid, 60.
33 Ibid, 61.
34 There was, in particular, regular traffic between Angola and the cocoa plantations on the island of São Tomé and Príncipe. The involvement of British chocolatier William Cadbury in this traffic became a significant issue in 1908. See Lowell J. Satre, *Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business*, 1st ed. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005), 308.
Africans associated with Umbundu kingdoms. The official end to the legal Atlantic slave trade in the 1830s marked a decline in Umbundu economic power. Although illegal slaving continued into the 1860s, European and American traders’ switched to new commodities such as rubber and ivory. While the Umbundu continued to control the trade routes in and out of Angola’s interior, they needed to purchase the new commodities from other Africans. As a result, Umbundu revenues suffered greatly. In the 1850s, facing diminished profits, the rulers began allowing Portuguese traders access to interior routes that in the past were only accessible to Africans. The Umbundus’ were able to levy a tax on these traders, but the foreigners’ access to the interior meant that the intermediary role of Africans was slowly becoming less essential. Nevertheless, rulers attempted to maintained their trade monopoly by hiring out skilled hunters needed to obtain ivory and caravan organizers and laborers who were essential to the Europeans efforts to bring products from the interior to the port cities for export.

By the 1880s, when the Congregational missionaries first arrived, Umbundu rulers’ power had eroded even further when a large number of Umbundu from non-ruling lineages began to trade directly with foreign merchants, circumventing and undermining ruling lineages’ powers. These non-ruling Umbundu helped organize and lead large caravans of some five hundred to one thousand people that made journeys as far inland as Katanga in the southern Congo. In 1874, a United States consular report estimated that caravans with 3,000 to 5,000 individuals were arriving regularly in Benguela. A number of non-ruling Umbundus would raid these large caravans for slaves that they

35 Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present, 12.
37 Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present, 15.
would then trade for ivory or rubber. These raids, as well as earlier history before the abolition of slavery, helped Umbundu gain the reputation as slave traders as well as recognition of them as the dominant laborers in central Africa.  

Armed only with their Bibles and a commitment to exporting American culture, the missionaries quickly became pawns in the larger battles between the Portuguese colonial regime and the struggling Umbundu rulers. Desperate to maintain power, the Umbundu rulers seized on the Congregational missionaries. Setting out from Catumbela, the missionaries had the interior area of Bié set as the future home of the Congregational mission. However, in order to reach Bié, the caravan had to pass through the powerful Bailundu kingdom that was frequently at odds with its neighbor. The Bailundo ruler forbade the missionaries to travel any further than his kingdom, and convinced them to open their first mission station in his territory. The Umbundu ruler hoped the Congregational missions’ commitment to creating schools and hospitals in tandem with churches would assist the Angolans in their relations with the Portuguese. Seeking negotiating room, the ruling elites in favor of foreign ties used their connections with the Congregational Church as proof of their commitment to expanding trade. Yet, the decision to open up the kingdoms to foreigners backfired when Portuguese traders and government officials exploited the Umbundu rulers’ commitment to foreign ties as a means of taking control of important trading routes.

The Portuguese government’s desire to control the Umbundu trade networks was symptomatic of Europe’s changing interest in Africa. The end of the Atlantic slave trade coincided with European industrialization and the need for materials to feed booming

38 Ibid.
factories. As the century wore on, the race to control central Africa ended in a standoff among the major European colonial powers. At the heart of these debates was a fight for access to the Congo River basin, a series of navigable rivers, which provided the primary means for getting valuable materials from the center of Africa out to ports on the Atlantic. Based on a fifteenth century agreement with the Kingdom of Kongo, Portugal claimed to right to navigate the river basin. In 1883, the French challenged the Portuguese claim to the basin. In an effort to shore-up their power, in 1884 Portugal signed a treaty with Britain, then the world’s largest naval power, which reserved navigation rights on the Congo River to Britain alone in exchange for protection of Portuguese claims to the mouth of the river. Meanwhile, Belgium’s King Léopold II was similarly seeking claims to the Congo River. In 1878, he thinly veiled his commercial and colonial interests in the region by forming the International Congo Society and charged English explorer Henry Morton Stanley to explore the river basin. In 1884, the competition to control central Africa resulted in a conference in Berlin attended by every European country except Switzerland as well as a representative from the United States. One year after the conference, each of the represented nations signed the Treaty of the Congress of Berlin dividing Africa among the European powers and setting new standards for colonial land claims. The Berlin treaty explained that in order for a nation to claim control of an area, it needed to provide it with missionaries, merchants, railroads,

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forts, and buildings. Most of Portugal’s claims to colonial lands in southern Africa did not stand up to these new standards, and Portugal, among all the European powers, stood to lose the most from the new standards. As a result, Portugal found its claims to Angola, Mozambique, and much of central Africa under threat.

At the end of the Berlin Conference, Portugal was in a double bind and, unknown to missionaries, on a direct path towards confrontation with the Congregational Church. On the one hand, in order to maintain its claim on Angola it needed to officially occupy its interior regions, now controlled by the powerful Umbundu kingdoms. On the other hand, according to Article 6 of the General Act signed at the Berlin Conference, Portugal had agreed to both end slavery and,

…without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization.

Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection.

Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to subjects and to foreigners. The free and public exercise of all forms of divine worship, and the right to build edifices for religious purposes, and to organize religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever.

The Congregational missions’ were located directly in the areas that the colonial state needed to occupy in order to maintain its claim on the land. But, the Portuguese government had signed an international treaty swearing not to interfere in the Congregational missions’ work, which was essentially blocking the colony’s spread.

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44 See Chapter VI of the General Act: Any Power which henceforth takes possession of a tract of land on the coasts of the African continent outside of its present possessions, or which, being hitherto without such possessions, shall acquire them, as well as the Power which assumes a Protectorate there, shall accompany the respective act with a notification thereof, addressed to the other Signatory Powers of the present Act, in order to enable them, if need be, to make good any claims of their own; The Signatory Powers of the present Act recognize the obligation to insure the establishment of authority in the regions occupied by them on the coasts of the African continent sufficient to protect existing rights, and, as the case may be, freedom of trade and of transit under the conditions agreed upon.

Though not considered a foe of the colonial government, the Congregational missions posed an obstacle because of their questionable allegiance. Portugal’s main opponent in the so-called Scramble for Africa was the powerful British Empire. Britain was particularly interested in colonizing the lands directly in between Angola and Mozambique. Yet, Portugal also had plans for these interior regions. In 1886, the Portuguese foreign minister drew up a “Rose colored map” (o mapa cor de rose) indicating its claim to all the lands connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean.46 Portugal’s control of these regions, the present day independent countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe, threatened to disrupt Britain’s plans to build a railroad stretching from the South African Cape to Cairo. Portuguese and British negotiations for the land continued for the next four years. In the end, Britain was able to establish its claim to the lands and Portugal suffered another humiliating international defeat.47

Denied their dream of linking Mozambique with Angola, the Portuguese government began aggressively moving into the central highlands. Despite diminished powers, in 1902 the remaining Umbundu kingdoms joined forces for a final stand against the Portuguese. Yet, despite the Umbundu alliance, the Angolans lost the so-called Bailundu War. Their loss to the Portuguese was the official end of the Umbundu kingdoms’ control of the central highlands and the beginning of a new colonial era in Angola.

47 This incident led to the creation of Portugal’s national anthem “A Portugueza.” The original 1890 lyrics read: To arms, to arms! Over land, over sea, to arms, to arms! Fight for the country! Against the British! March!
Despite Portugal’s intention to colonize and settle central Angola, for the first two decades of the twentieth century, the colonial government’s presence in the highlands was weak. Lacking adequate funds for a large-scale colonial project, the Portuguese essentially laid their system of governing over existing Umbundu social structures by appointing village leaders who were loyal to the colonial government. The only significant colonial policy begun during these years was an abusive system of taxation. Appointed village leaders were responsible for collecting hut taxes from every African man and woman. Those who could not pay were forced to perform allotted amounts of labor for state enterprises. These policies as well as others requiring all traders to purchase commercial licenses were essentially designed to ensure a complete end to the centuries’ old Umbundu role in the local economy.

One of Portugal’s largest obstacles in colonizing Angola was convincing Portuguese citizens to settle in Africa. Portuguese disdain for Angola stemmed from many citizens’ view of it as a crime-ridden, dangerous land. Since the sixteenth century, Portugal used Angola and other areas under its control as penal colonies.

50 Ibid., 39
but, Portugal sent to Angola its most violent criminals. Few so-called *degregados* anticipated leaving Angola alive, and those who did rarely chose to return. Portugal ended similar settlement schemes in its other colonies of Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Mozambique by the 1880s, leaving Angola as the sole dumping ground for Portugal’s worst criminals. The system gave Angola a reputation as an unsafe and undesirable backwater of Portuguese colonialism. In an effort to remodel penal colonization in Angola, the colonial government set up a number of agricultural penal settlements in the highlands, within the vicinity of the Congregational missions. All of these settlements were unsuccessful and officials struggled to contain the large number of *degregados* who succeeded in escaping the settlements. The complete failure of the settlements resulted in their closing and the return of the *degregados* to Luanda. As late as 1920, the number of *degregados* entering Angola continued to far outnumber free immigrants.

The Congregational missions benefitted from both the decline of Umbundu kingdoms’ and Portugal’s inability to formally control or settle the highlands. Congregational missionizing tactics, designed to help in the creation of a free citizenry, offered an outlet for Umbundus who were politically, economically, and socially disenfranchised. The mission and outstation structure reflected the missionaries’ commitment to providing Angolans with both religious guidance and social services. It also replicated tactics for attracting converts that were successful in other mission fields. After locating a suitable sites, missionaries first established schools that would serve as

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54 Ibid, 83.
55 Ibid, 87.
community gathering places and, eventually, churches. Once a mission station graduated its first class of pastors, missionaries would assist them in founding substations that would be run entirely by Angolans themselves. Outstation pastors led their own schools and taught standard subjects such as math, history, and theology. They also taught classes on agriculture and hygiene and gave weekly lessons for older adults who were unable to return to school regularly. Outstation students studied for three to four years learning the rudiments of reading and writing in Umbundu, arithmetic, beginning Portuguese, and Bible knowledge.

The best outstation students would eventually go to live at the nearest mission school where, for another three or four years, they would continue their studies. Missionaries expected graduates to eventually establish outstations and churches of their own. In 1909, Congregational missionaries expanded educational opportunities for Angolans by opening the Dondi mission station. ABCFM officials had voted to found an institute “to train approved Christian young men for more adequate service as helpers in Industrial, Education, Medical, and Evangelistic mission work among the Ovimbundu and other tribes.” The boys’ school, the Currie Institute, eventually opened in 1914 with twenty-four students from six different Protestant churches in Angola. Six years after opening, the number of young men at the school tripled. Within two years a girls’ school, the Means School, opened on the mission’s grounds, followed in later years by a theological seminary, the Lutamo Institute. In the decades that followed, the school’s

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56 Lawrence Henderson in his book *The Church in Angola* draws the distinction between Protestant and Catholic educational policies during this period: “The Catholic schools were seminaries founded to stimulate vocations and promote education for the priesthood. The Protestant schools, on the other hand, had as their basic purpose the teaching of reading and writing so that the mass of Christians could read the Scriptures and participate in the life of the local congregations, which were led by lay men and women.” See: Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents*, 137.

57 Umbundu and Ovimbundu are the same ethnic group. As quoted in Ibid., 139

Mean’s School (Dondi) Students – 1960s

Mean’s School Graduates, Dondi

Mean’s School, Dondi
opening, membership at churches served by students from Currie and Means schools increased by over 8,000 people.  

Among the most important developments in these early years of Congregational missionary activity was the effort to transform the Umbundu language into a written script. Committing Umbundu to writing would have important long-term political ramifications. The process of alphabetizing the local language began as soon as missionaries arrived in Angola and was central to the Protestant mission. Missionaries needed to learn Umbundu in order to communicate with the men and women on whom the mission depended. More important, the missionaries knew that their most powerful tool in converting Angolans would be the translation of the Bible and scriptures into the local language. It was also essential in facilitating the growth of schools where before 1921 the primary teaching language was Umbundu. In Zimbabwe and other African settings with large Protestant missionary populations, the alphabetization of languages helped sharpen divisions between ethnic groups that before may have been fluid. While the historic lines of division between Umbundus and Angola’s other ethnic groups, such as the Bakongo and Mbundu, were strong, the codification of Umbundu to writing was an important development in the centering of an Umbundu identity around the mission stations.

60 Missionaries made some attempts to teach Angolans English. However, given the political situation this was quickly curtailed. The British Missionary Society advised its missionaries that they “should not seek to make the people Englishmen.” See: Ibid., 137.
62 For more on this see: Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*, 52.
Through the process of alphabetization and opening of new schools, Umbundus who were active in the Congregational Church were able to use the missions as a means of beginning to repair communities decimated by the colonial wars and Portuguese policies. Indeed, it is unlikely that the Congregational Church would have been as popular as it was among Umbundus without the intermediary role that Protestant Angolans played in the church’s expansion. While the Congregational missionaries maintained some power over the shape and message of mission outstations, in reality, Angolans exercised a strong hand in interpreting the missionaries’ directions. Nevertheless, the churches’ message was decidedly Western in message and took only little interest in Angolan traditions. Some of the skills Umbundus learned at the missions helped to increase agricultural output, thus giving them a modicum of economic independence, and reducing the incidence of disease. However, the missions were also dismissive of local beliefs and traditions. Missionaries sought to convert and colonize Angolans through these more subtle daily routines.63 Angolans who joined the Congregational Church and committed themselves to its growth also agreed to lead a Christian home life. In essence, this meant pledging to maintain monogamous marriage and to stop visiting local healers and diviners. Christian Angolans set up so-called “American villages” located on the outskirts of traditional villages in order to police each other in maintaining their Christian lifestyles. Yet, in setting up these villages, Angolans drew from both the Western Christian ideas they were upholding and Angolan traditions in which village decision making and justice was carried out by village elders. Foreign

63 John and Jean Comaroff’s discussion of the “subtle colonization…of indigenous modes of perception and practice” is particularly relevant to this stage of relations between Congregational missionaries and Angolans. See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa," *American Ethnologist* 13, no. 1 (Feb., 1986), pp. 1-22.
missionaries would occasionally visit the “new” villages to offer medical services or teach new farming techniques. For the most part, however, these outstations and villages remained Angolan zones insofar as their existence was due to the initiative of Angolan Christians. The dependence on Angolan students to spread the church undoubtedly helped the churches’ expansion. Nor were Protestant Angolans powerless in interpreting the missionaries’ directions. Indeed, the Protestant Angolans’ knowledge of local customs allowed them to shape and adapt the Church in subtle ways to the communities’ needs.64

The colonial government had been suspicious of Congregational missionaries’ motives since their arrival in 1880, and this remained unchanged when the government in Lisbon changed in 1910. The new Portuguese First Republic ushered in a number of important administrative changes. Among the reforms most important to the Congregational mission stations was the separation of church and state, which allowed more Congregational missionaries to enter Angola. The Portuguese Republic also renewed its commitment to fully control the colonies. This desire led the government into attempts entice Portuguese citizens to move and settle in Angola. However, like their predecessors, most of these schemes failed miserably.

The separation of church and state that allowed more Congregational missionaries to enter Angola meant a loosening of historically strong ties between the colonial government and the Catholic Church. Congregational missions were able to capitalize on the Catholic Church’s diminished state funding by growing the missions exponentially

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64 This process of adapting the church to local needs would be more overt in the coming years. See Chapter two. The process was occurring in other neighboring colonies as well. Terence Ranger documents the success of Methodist missionaries in Zimbabwe working with the local population to alphabetize the local language. This process also occurred in Angola. See: Ranger, Missionaries, Migrants, and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe.
and increasing the number of foreign mission staff. The missions’ growth, however, also made the relations between the Congregational missions and the colonial government more acute. The arrival of more Congregational missionaries meant that they were able to increase the number schools and Angolan graduates. By the second decade of the twentieth century, there were twenty Congregational missionaries in seven mission stations in the highlands. Nearly 400 outstations were run by Angolan pastors and over 15,000 students studied with the missionaries in day and boarding schools.65

The clear differences between the successes of the Congregational missions and the failures of the Portuguese state further heightened tensions between the mission and the local colonial government. Indeed, the contrast between mission and state undermined Portuguese claims that they were more fit to rule. The success of the Congregational missions offered a counter narrative of Angolan development, one that contrasted with the Portuguese government’s claims about the reforming power of the colonial state.66

The experiences of one missionary, John T. Tucker, exemplify the growing tensions between the Congregational missions and the colonial government during the first decades of the twentieth century. Tucker was part of the second wave of missionaries who arrived in Angola in 1913.67 Like the founding missionaries and others now well established at the missions, he was an ardent anti-slavery activist and appalled

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66 In some ways, this might be described as disrupting the settler story the state was trying to create. See Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in The Invention of Tradition, eds. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
67 Tucker, although British by nationality, was a member of the Canadian Congregational Church. These missionaries worked seamlessly under the organizationally structure of the ABCFM with their American counterparts. Among the Portuguese and Angolans, there was no distinction drawn between Canadian or American Congregational missions or missionaries.
by the conditions under which Angolans lived. The missionaries were vocal in their opposition to the forced labor policies and, as a result, the colonial government kept them under close watch. Within months of Tucker’s arrival in the highlands, the local newspaper, *Jornal de Benguela*, accused him and several other missionaries of meddling in political affairs unrelated to their mission. Only a week after this accusation, Tucker was detained by the colonial government for illegally practicing medicine after he and another missionary saved the life of a dying Angolan man.\(^{68}\)

The colonial administrator’s response to the incident revealed the government’s equal disdain for the lives of the colony’s white inhabitants. When Tucker asked with the colonial administrator what he should do if a white man approached him for life saving help, the administrator replied, “Do? Let him die at your feet!”\(^{69}\) In fact, this was exactly the well-known policy of the colonial government that left white *degregados* to die in squalor in government run facilities.\(^{70}\) The colonial administrator knew, even if he did not express it, that the government could not afford to allow Congregational missionaries to appear more civilized, or organized, than the government. Nor could the government appear to be allowing Protestant Angolans any special privileges, because other Angolans might began to think that joining the Congregational Church could mitigate the government’s abuses. Government intolerance for the missions was spelled out clearly in 1915 when a group of Christian Angolan men and women were arrested returning from Huambo. At the prison, the men were violently beaten and the women were viciously

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\(^{69}\) Ibid.

\(^{70}\) Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality*, 76.
gang raped by the arresting Portuguese officers. While the mission reported the rapes to the Governor of Benguela, there was no reprimand.\textsuperscript{71}

The colonial government also expressed increase anxiety that the Congregational Church’s structures were replacing the Portuguese government’s organization in the highlands. Although missionaries themselves did not acknowledge it, the appearance that Congregational missions were running the highland’s administration, rather than the state, might have had huge implication for Portugal’s claim to the lands. Government officials were especially keen to reprimand any Angola who seemed “confused” about who was in charge. The same year that Tucker reported the rape and arrest of the Protestant Angolans returning from Huambo, he and fellow missionary Dr. Edward Sanders were called to the office of the Governor of Benguela, José Maria Freire. The official reprimanded the missionaries for an incident in which an Angola refused to report to the governor because the mission had organized a communion service. Incensed, the Governor seized one hundred and ten Angolan elders and Protestants and had them sent throughout the colony to perform hard labor. At the meeting, Freire informed the missionaries, “you had better give instructions to your people that when the Governor is around they should not place orders of a simple missionary above that of the authorities.”\textsuperscript{72}

Despite these tensions, the Congregational missions’ relationship with the colonial government was more paradoxical than it was adversarial. Both the colonial state and the Congregational mission worked a cross purposes by simultaneously relying

\textsuperscript{71} Tucker, \textit{A Tucker Treasury: Reminiscences and Stories of Angola, 1883-1958}.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, 172.
and undermining each other. Government offenses brought against missionaries were constant. The Portuguese government suspected the motives of missionaries and were concerned the missions were undermining it. Yet, the Congregational missionaries’ response to arrests and accusations was always to seek reconciliation with the colonial government, on whom they depended for permission to remain in Angola. While Tucker and others strongly disagreed with government restrictions, the missionaries ultimately viewed the Portuguese as partners in their mission to bring religion and social services to Angolans. The colonial government had similarly confused relations with the Congregational missions. While it was concerned with Angolan enthusiasm for the missionaries, the government simultaneously relied on the Congregational missions as the only viable and organized institutions in the geographically vast central highlands.

Not all administrators disliked the Congregational missionaries and missionaries sought out the Portuguese colonial officials and settlers with whom they could collaborate. The task of finding Portuguese allies became difficult, however, when Portugal entered the First World War. Portugal initially attempted to remain neutral in the conflict but was forced into war in 1916 when, complying with a British request, the Portuguese government confiscated all German ships in its harbors. In response, the German government declared war on the Iberian nation. In Angola, Portuguese troops clashed with Germans along the southern border with German West Africa (modern-day Namibia). While the war’s front did not extend further into Angola, Portuguese nationalism did lead to further suspicions of the intent of Protestant missionaries and violence against Protestant Angolans. In 1916, the colonial government seized hundreds of returning Dondi students and sent them to fight on the southern front against the
Germans. Yet, as an example of the incongruous relations between the missions and the colonial government, the Governor of Benguela stayed the night at the mission and was so impressed by its work that he sent the missionaries several precious sacks of wheat and seeds for rice and corn. Nor were all the newspaper journalists enemies of the mission. One journalist editorialized, “What is the secret that these missionaries have that we do not have? They attract, and we repel the native.” Nevertheless, these responses to the mission were not typical. As the Congregational missions expanded throughout the highlands, Portuguese concern with them increased proportionately.

In 1879, when John Means suggested that the ABCFM open its new mission in Angola, he was reflecting on the significance of the mission would have for American Christians. In their enthusiasm to open the Angola mission, however, the ABCFM, Means, and others involved in the mission station gravely underestimated the effect local circumstances would have on the mission. Not unlike the United States, central Africa at the end of the nineteenth century was undergoing enormous transition. When the Berlin Conference ended in 1885 with new rules for European land claims, Portugal stood to lose the most. In an effort to hold on to its remaining lands, Portugal launched a violent offensive to control the populous and fertile central highlands of Angola, where the Congregational Church was busy building schools and missions. These battles would culminate in the 1902 Bailundo War and the Umbundu kingdoms’ final defeat.

Over the next two decades, relations between the Congregational missions, the colonial government, and Protestant Angolans would become increasingly paradoxical.

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73 Ibid, 176.
74 As quoted in ibid, 175.
and complex. The Congregational missions would gain from the advance of the colonial state. Colonial policies destroyed Umbundu villages and the missions were perfectly positioned to fill the power vacuum. At the mission schools Angolans found a means to begin repairing their villages and communities. The Portuguese, meanwhile, both reviled the Congregational missions for the success among the Angolans and depended upon them to provide social organization that the state did not have the means to invest in the highlands.

Congregational missionaries similarly had confused relations with the colonial state and Angolans. While seeking to encourage Angolan autonomy, the missionaries shared the colonial vision of creating a community of industrious and Christian Africans. The missions required Angolans to dress in Western clothes and shunned the traditional healers and doctors as witches practicing evil devil worship. Nevertheless, the Congregational missionaries fought constantly against the brutality of the Portuguese government and its inability to see Angolans as human and in need of the same care as any Portuguese citizen. Indeed, the mixed responses that the Congregational mission received from colonial administrators, simultaneously praising and vilifying the missions, were exemplary of the paradoxical colonial relations between the Portuguese, the missions, and Angolans. These confused relations would continue into the twentieth century becoming more pronounced as Angolan support for the mission grew and Congregational missionaries became more outspoken against Portuguese colonial practices.
In the spring of 1919, Reverend Henry Curtis McDowell and his wife Bessie were honored guests at a gathering in Raleigh, North Carolina of the American Missionary Association (AMA). Chosen from among many qualified candidates, the McDowells were about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime as the founding members of the Galangue mission station, Angola’s first and only black-run and supported Congregational mission. Both natives of Alabama, the Reverend and Mrs. McDowell had traveled through AMA schools founded in the American South to educate and convert freedmen and women following the Civil War. AMA officials and the organization of Black Congregational Churches had high hopes for the Angola mission. Linking domestic concerns with the future mission, they believed it would arouse “the colored churches…to self-consciousness in the determination to render definite service for the redemption of Africa.”75 Within a year of arriving in Angola, the McDowells were joined by Mr. Samuel and Bertha Coles and, in 1931, Dr. Aaron and Willena McMillan. Mr. Coles was a specialist in scientific farming and Dr. McMillan was charged with establishing a hospital and nurse-training program. Bessie McDowell, Bertha Coles, and Willena McMillan would together found the women’s school teaching courses on hygiene, homemaking, and literacy. Upon their arrival, the Galangue missionaries set in motion a series of practices that would become the standard for all Congregational missions in Angola.

The Congregational missions already established in Angola were at the forefront of implementing a skills-based education, originally developed in the United States among former slaves and commonly associated with Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute. The Galangue missions would institute a slightly different, though highly effective, American model that prioritized community involvement in village schools. Using this pedagogy, black missionaries pioneered a system of schooling and missionizing that combined skills-based schooling theories with sensitivity to the needs and worldview of Angolans. Contrary to the conventional view that skills-based education served as a means to restrict autonomy and future growth, when applied to Angola it was successful in attracting the interests of Angolans while helping to build a modicum of independence for them within the colonial system. In turn, Angolans, armed with the tools of scientific farming and the ability to read, became the movers of the Congregational Church and responsible for its spread into areas missionaries had neither the time nor the contacts to reach.

The success and maturation of the Galangue community programs would occur at the same moment that the missionary organizations were rethinking the nature and shape of the American missionary movement. Reverend McDowell’s reforms in Angola presaged recommendations to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and other organizations that missionaries should be more receptive to other world religions and place greater emphasis on creating social good rather than


conversion. These recommendations cohered seamlessly with the Galangue reforms already in place. As a result, saving souls became of secondary importance to the Congregational missions’ ability to provide Angolans with schools, hospitals, and other social work institutions.

This new increased emphasis on social work, however, contained a fundamental paradox because it nurtured two opposing forces by simultaneously encouraging Angolan autonomy and reinforcing Portuguese colonialism. The job of the missionaries, according to this line of thinking, was to pursue a partnership with the colonial government in order to “lead the government” toward its obligation to educate Angolans.78 Rev. McDowell sought to reform colonialism and make the mission an example of its potential to help Angolans become the good citizens that colonialism was supposedly aimed at creating.79 Yet, in encouraging Angolan independence, Rev. McDowell’s approach emphasized close contacts with the colonial government. Earlier missionaries had similarly worked at cross-purposes but Galangue missionaries took the obligation to work with Portuguese officials to new heights in ways that would prove difficult to undo.


All the Galangue missionaries came of age in the United States during a period that historian Rayford Morgan described as the nadir in American racial relations. Following the Civil War and the collapse of Reconstruction, whites worked to reclaim the South and rescind former slaves’ newly won rights. For many black Americans, the church became “the one space truly accessible to the black community…at once being a place of worship, theater, publishing house, school, and lodge”; a virtual “nation within a nation.” Black Americans used the church and its services to reconstruct a life within the destruction of the South. Indeed, the church was a space from which to “uplift the race” and, eventually, demand rights equal to white Americans. It was out of this context that the movement for a black Congregational mission was born.

The presence of the Congregational Church in the South, despite its long identification as a “Northern Church,” actually began prior to the Civil War. In 1847, abolitionists formed the American Missionary Association (AMA) to serve both domestic and foreign missionaries. The AMA was founded when ardent anti-slavery activists left the older ABCFM, which refused to forthrightly denounce slavery, to form their own missionary organization. Despite claims of being inter-denominational, however, from its founding the AMA was composed primarily of Congregational churches and organizations, and by the end of the Civil War the handful of non-Congregational churches that remained in the AMA left to form their own missionary societies.

82 Racial uplift is a term I borrow from Kevin Gaines that was used by contemporary figures. Uplift was both spiritual and social but it involved a host of conflicting ideas, implications, and meanings. See: Kevin Kelly Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 312.
83 For more on the history of the AMA see: DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching on: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association, 1861-1877*, 401.
After the Civil War, the AMA built schools, universities, and provisional housing throughout the South for newly freed slaves. The Congregationalists were interested in attracting freedmen and women to join their church, but they faced stiff competition from the well-established Methodist and Baptist Churches. Recognizing that they would have to take an unconventional approach towards attracting new members, the AMA “felt...that their goal could be attained only through an extensive program of education, which would prepare Freedmen...for responsible membership in Congregational churches...Hence the schools preceded the church and were to function as auxiliaries of the church.” By 1871, there were forty-five black Congregational churches in the South under the care of the AMA, and the success of these institutions and associated in the South encouraged the black Congregational Churches that a similar approach could succeed in Africa.

In fact, much of the initial success of the AMA in the American South was due to its large cash resources. While much of this money went to building schools, the organization’s churches and institutions were known among Southerners for their conservative style. The organization was highly suspicious of the more jubilant churches such as the African Methodist Episcopal and Baptists Churches that were gaining a strong footing among freedmen and women. Rather, as historian David Sehat has indicated, “the AMA was a missionary society committed to inculcating ‘civilization’ in

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84 After the Civil War, the AMA and ABCFM remained separate organizations but later reached a rapprochement and the organizations’ officials would often work together throughout the South.
85 Henderson, Galangue: The Unique Story of a Mission Station in Angola Proposed, Supported and Staffed by Black Americans
86 As qtd in ibid., 8
87 AMA-created colleges remain among the most well known black colleges in the US: Berea College, Atlanta University, Fisk University, Tougaloo College, Dillard College, Talladega College, LeMoyne-Owen College, and with support from the Freedmen’s Bureau, Howard University.
88 In the twenty-five years following the Civil War, the AMA budget totaled almost seven million dollars, an amount that dwarfed all other missionary organizations by several million dollars.
the ‘backward races’ of the South….”89 Conservative Northern Congregational officials were “worried that slave religion was an expression of freed slaves’ ignorance and supposed viciousness that would burgeon in the South with the high birthrates of African Americans.”90 The AMA’s secretary expressed concern that the religious practices of former slaves were “immoral and unchastely.” His fear, and that of others in the organization, was that “black religion did not offer the moral guidance necessary to restrain individual transgression….“91 Others feared that this perceived lack of morality would lead to “collision of races” and was a sign of the “stunted ‘racial development’” of former slaves, making them “unfit for work in a free labor system.”92

As a result, in the view of the AMA, Congregational churches were needed to teach black Americans the “virtues of discipline, moral sobriety, self-control and seriousness of purpose necessary for economic success.”93 In the words of one reformer, for black Americans to succeed in a free-labor system they would need to give up their “surviving Africanisms.”94 This attitude attributed the poverty of black Americans to their own “thriftlessness, laziness, and self-indulgence.”95 Samuel C. Amstrong, former Union general and founder of the freedman’s school Hampton Institute, noted that conversion to Congregational Christianity was the “the starting-point to a better life,” and free-labor was the key to morality because “morality and industry generally go together.”96 Despite the pervasiveness of these views within the conservative confines of

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid, 5
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 7
the Congregational Church and AMA schools, however, the future Galangue missionaries would demonstrate a talent to filter much of what they had been taught with a sensitivity to the needs and worldviews of Angolans. This would prove important in their mission’s appeal to surrounding Angolan villages.

The desire to have a black-run overseas missions in Angola actually grew out of the black Congregational Churches desire for freedom from the oversight of the Northern white church.97 Their wish to “reunite…the African community that had been shattered by the slave trade…[with the] reconciling spirit of the gospel” that ultimately lead to the drive for the mission station.98 Among those most devoted to missionary work in Africa were middle-class black Americans who shared the AMA’s commitment to the ideas of “social uplift.”99 Black Americans’ general interest in an Africa mission “fused evangelical ideals of self-help with political, nation-building aspirations that…elites projected onto the ‘dark continent’ in lieu of political influence and social opportunities at home.”100 Booker T. Washington noted that black Americans who “went through the school of American slavery [were] materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously [the most advanced] black people in any other portion of the globe,” and it was the job of enlightened American blacks to return “to Africa as missionaries to enlighten those who

97 The largest push for black missionaries came in the middle of the nineteenth century when the Methodist Episcopal Church sent black missionaries to work in Liberia. The Congregational Church was slower to incorporate black Americans into the foreign missionary pool, but in the 1880s and 1890s several black missionaries were sent to Rhodesia and Portuguese Africa. By 1890, however, the ABCFM—the main sending body of Congregational foreign missionaries—followed the lead of other white mission societies, and curtailed the recruitment of black missionaries after colonial governments expressed concern that they “would incite discontent among Africans.” Portugal was one of the few colonial nations to allow the establishment of a mission. See: Eunjin Park, “Black and White American Methodist Missionaries in Liberia, 1820-1875” (PhD Diss, Columbia University, 1999); Modupe Lapode, ""A Native Knows a Native": African-American Missionaries' Writings about Angola, 1919-1940," The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History 4, no. 1 (Fall, 2000), 3.
98 Henderson, Galangue: The Unique Story of a Mission Station in Angola Proposed, Supported and Staffed by Black Americans (New York: United Church Board of World Ministries, 1986).
99 Gaines, Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century.
100 Ibid.
remained in the fatherland.”\textsuperscript{101} The missionary experience would also give black Americans, denied social mobility and civil rights at home, the opportunity to prove their own civilization.

Funding for the new mission station came entirely from within the black community. In 1915, three men who had received their education at AMA schools—Rev. H.H. Proctor of the First Congregational Church in Atlanta; Rev. W.L. Cash of the First Congregational Church of Thomasville, Georgia; and William H. Holloway of Columbus, Ohio—sent one hundred dollars to the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions as a nest egg for an African mission, to begin the “experiment in autonomy [by black churches] within the white dominated church.”\textsuperscript{102} Once the necessary funds were raised, the AMA contacted the ABCFM for assistance in establishing the station. Despite the AMA’s past differences with the ABCFM, the organization agreed to manage the mission as long as the black Congregational Churches would assume total financial responsibility for the mission’s functioning.

ABCFM officials decided the best location for the new AMA mission would be Angola. The decision was both practical, for Portugal was one of the few countries that would allow a black-run mission, and logical. Similar to the future Galangue missionaries, the established ABCFM missionaries in Angola had extensive experience in so-called “Negro education.” Missionaries’ success at running their schools not only attracted the ire of the colonial government, but the attention of international philanthropic organizations interested in a global standardization of African education.

\textsuperscript{101} As quoted in ibid, 38.
\textsuperscript{102} Lapode, "A Native Knows a Native": African-American Missionaries' Writings about Angola, 1919-1940.
In 1919 Dr. HS Hollenbeck, of the American Board Mission, and John T. Tucker, one of the longest serving Congregationalist missionaries in Angola, were asked by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, a US based education organization, to help research a new study about the education of Africans in European colonies. The Phelps-Stokes Fund was an advocate for skills-based education among black Americans. The organization considered itself an expert in “Negro education” and sought to advise governments on how that type of pedagogy could be applied to the colonial setting. Tucker and Hollenbeck would “join [the] body of competent educators capable of criticizing constructively the work of well-intentioned but often misdirected mission institutions” that avoided skills-based teachings in favor of classical education in literature, history, and science.103 At the time of the report, Tucker was the principal of the boys’ school at Dondi, the largest of the Congregational missions, and extremely influential in creating mission schools’ curriculum. While in Boston on furlough, Anson Phelps Stokes requested that Tucker join the commission as it traveled through Africa “to ascertain the extent to which education, whether missionary or government, was being adapted to life and to show how its adaptation to the daily needs of a primitive people is the first element of success.”104 The Report, it was hoped, would result

...in the modification of a system which tends to produce a type of native alienated from the life of the people among whom he has to live and to whom he has to be a leader to better conditions of life and health and to quickened moral and spiritual perception. To teach Latin or Greek and omit careful instructions in hygiene, agriculture, and the arts can not (sic) be justified in an educational scheme having the needs of a primitive people in view.105

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103 These classical subjects, of course, were the essentially the same as those being taught to white students. Phelps-Stokes advocated for different education for black students. Congregational missions before and after the arrival of the Galangue missions taught a combination of skills and classical education courses. L. J. Lewis, ed. Phelps-Stokes Reports on Education in Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 4.
105 Ibid.
Tucker and Hollenbeck’s participation in the Phelps-Stokes Report is indicative of the Angola Congregational missions’ centrality to key education debates of the era.

The Phelps-Stokes Report’s main author was Thomas Jesse Jones. Jones was a divisive figure in the United States. Not unlike his contemporary Booker T. Washington, he was at once maligned and loved. Jones began his career as a settlement worker in New York City after which time he left for the South to conduct research into “negro schooling” at the Hampton Institute, the freedman school considered a model of skills-based education. In 1910, the US government contracted him to conduct a survey of schools serving impoverished black American communities. The conclusions of this report were controversial. Using the Hampton Institute as his yardstick, Jones condemned most of the black schools as insufficient and unworthy of US government funds. Yet, many black intellectuals argued that, despite their deficiencies, these struggling schools had inspired and educated thousands of black Americans who would not have received any education had it not been for the poorly funded schools. Thus, while his comments discouraged many black activists, Jones became a popular figure in white circles. Jones’ success in assessing black American schools led to his appointment as Educational Director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. It was from this position as director that Jones turned the interests of the Fund to Africa. His hope, and that of others at Phelps-Stokes, was that the perceived successes of the Hampton Institute could be replicated across the African continent.

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The Report on Education in Africa (the Africa Report) reinforced the divisiveness of Jones’s work. In addition to Tucker and Hollenbeck, Jones gathered a number of education specialists and representatives from colonial governments in southern Africa. The group toured mission and government schools throughout southern Africa. They met with resident missionaries, colonial representatives, and other, mostly white, individuals interested in African education. Similar to the type of education Jones and the Phelps-Stokes Fund supported in the United States, the Africa Report advocated “adoptive education” in the style of Tuskegee-type technical schools, which, like the Hampton Institute, advocated for different kinds of education for black students.108 Many African intellectuals and organizations in the US and Africa disagreed with Jones’s assessment of full-sale support of technical education. Jones responded by repealing Phelps-Stokes’ financial support from the centers critical of his findings.109

The early Congregational mission schools in Angola combined this skills-based pedagogy with evangelism and the need for Angolans to live a Christian lifestyle. Five years after the publication of the Jones Report on Africa, Tucker published a book, *Drums in the Darkness*, looking back at his work in Angola that had begun in 1914. Central to Tucker’s understanding of missionary work in Angola was the need for missionaries to “teach” or show Angolans about the importance of “individual responsibility” of which “tribal life produces little sense.”110 Missionaries agreed with the idea of colonial governments and others that “civilization” must be brought to the

108 Phelps-Stokes Fund was active in other parts of Africa as well, notably in Liberia. For more on this see: David McBride, *Missions for Science: US Technology and Medicine in America’s African World* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002).
109 Among those affected by their criticism of Jones were intellectual and activist Max Yergan and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson article.
“natives” and that they must break from “tribal life,” but Tucker cautioned that “it is a sorry business to take away a man’s God if you do not give him God in exchange.”\textsuperscript{111} In other words, missionaries assisted in breaking Africans’ links to “heathen” beliefs, but understood the great importance of introducing a Christian God in their place. Failure to do so was the force behind the corruption, crime, and promiscuity of so-called “detribalized Africans.” What the Congregational Church offered Africans, then, was a new God and also an important sense of themselves as individuals separate from “old tribal allegiances” and “old-dirty fetish-ridden villages” that prevented African society from developing through such beliefs as the role of long-dead ancestors in the functioning of everyday life.\textsuperscript{112}

As one key step in preparing Angolan society to receive this new Christian God, Reverend McDowell landed in the country in 1919 and began to scout for an “u-evangelized” area for the founding of a Congregational school and mission. Upon hearing of the desire of missionaries to open a new school and mission station, the local “Chief” contacted the nearest Congregational mission to request that the new station be established in his Kingdom. McDowell and the other Congregational missionaries agreed that the area was sufficiently free of other missionary influence and thus well-suited to their endeavor.

McDowell and his missionary colleagues had in fact arrived in Angola at an important historical moment, due in part to the massive changes underway in Angola’s political power structure. In 1910, the ruling Portuguese monarchy was overthrown in

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 161.
Portugal and replaced by a two-chamber parliament and a republican constitution, which introduced significant reforms. Among the most important of these for the Congregational missionaries was a declared separation of church and state as well as an end to government subsidies for the Catholic Church. The liberalization of Portuguese politics was the main contributing factor allowing for the Galangue mission’s founding at a time when no other European power would allow for the establishment of a black-run mission.

One of the new government’s primary objectives was to facilitate Angola’s integration into the colonial economy, as the country had to this point been economically isolated due lack of funds and colonial organization under the Monarchy. Efforts to achieve this goal were especially active in the highlands region, where the Congregational Church operated, and where at the beginning of the twentieth century there was little Portuguese presence. Portugal, however, lacked the necessary funds to undertake large development schemes for the area, which increased tensions between the successful Congregational missions and the colonial government, which hoped it could encourage Portuguese citizens to settled in the highlands and develop the region themselves.

To this end, the colonial government made various, mostly unsuccessful, attempts to encourage Portuguese settlement in the highlands. Struggling to immigrate Portuguese settlers to central Angola, the government convinced a few thousand mostly poor and unskilled Portuguese to move to central Angola in order to start farms. Most had only

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114 Ibid, 3.
minimal education and were described by one observer as “generally poor, ignorant and illiterate and, for these very reasons without any capital to invest in their farms.”

Without capital, many colonos (white agricultural settlers) lived “in total misery” and were forced to beg for food from neighboring Africans. The few colonos who received government assistance were often settled on lands that were deemed unsuitable for agriculture only after the farm had been established. Other colonos used their financial subsidies to hire Africans rather than work the farms themselves. The successful farms and schools of the Congregational missions stood in stark contrast to the government’s failed farms. The Angolans who farmed the mission land were generally able to produce enough food for the mission community with enough remaining to store for less abundant years.

It was in this environment of failed colonial planning that McDowell set about opening what would become one of the Congregational Church’s most successful mission stations. Yet, almost as soon as McDowell settled upon the new mission site, the colonial government issued new schooling laws that would significantly affect Galangue and the other Congregational missions. The Portuguese feared that missionaries were Americanizing Protestant Angolans. In 1921, in an effort to counter this process, José Mendes Ribeiro Norton de Matos, the Overseas High Commissioner of Angola, implemented Decree 77 and forever altered the Protestant mission system in Angola. The Decree required “that Portuguese be spoken in all schools in the colony and that all

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115  Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese : The Myth and the Reality, 98.
teachers pass an examination in Portuguese.” The law was a set-back for all Congregational missionaries who were able to attract Angolans to mission schools precisely because they taught in local languages. Most Angolans did not speak Portuguese, and therefore the sudden change in rules meant Congregational missionaries had to instruct students in a language they did not understand. The government strictly enforced the new law and closed hundreds of mission outstations and arrested teachers and pastors, sending them to the army or to perform forced labor. Further, government officials made it mandatory for every student who passed his school examination to perform contract labor and pay a hut tax, with the goal of forcing Umbundu Protestants to assimilate on Portuguese terms. The result of these new rules was a temporary leveling-off of Protestant converts as it became clear that converting to the Protestant faith could potentially lead to imprisonment, at the very least, and created tensions with colonial authorities, who viewed Angolan membership in the Protestant Church as an anti-Portuguese, and thus an anti-colonial, stance.

The McDowells were undeterred by these new laws, however, and were determined to continue with their mission. In 1922, they set out on a hundred mile trek to the new station. Along their journey an Angolan couple, Kalundul and Birete, volunteered to join the trek as fellow-workers and missionaries to “their own people.”

118 Ibid, 58.
120 A main source of revenue for the colonial government was a tax levied on all Angolan homes. Those who were unable to pay their tax would be forced to perform hard labor for the state. Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present.
121 Henderson, Galangue: The Unique Story of a Mission Station in Angola Proposed, Supported and Staffed by Black Americans.
They were also joined by another Angola Congregational mission graduate, Lote Malheiro Savimbi, who would go on to found hundreds of community churches in villages throughout the central highlands. Both Lote Savimbi and Henry McDowell would identify that initial trek as the time when “a lifelong friendship was born.”

Upon arriving at the new site, McDowell followed the original model of the AMA, also used by other Congregational stations, and built a school in order to attract students and potential converts.

The Galangue missionaries who arrived in Angola in the 1920s were products of AMA and Phelps-Stokes funded schools in the United States. However, their approach to working with Angolans would differ from these institutions and other Congregational missions in Angola in slight, yet important, ways. Once adopted by other missions, the Galangue approach would lead to a ballooning of Angolan involvement in mission schools. Much of Galangue’s success lay with the introduction of a technique that had been implemented in segregated black rural schools throughout the southern United States.

This new approach to instruction had roots in the so-called Jeanes Fund, later known as the Negro Rural School Fund, originated in Virginia at the beginning of the twentieth-century, around the same time that the Phelps-Stokes Fund and other philanthropic organizations were building technical schools for black Americans across the South.

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122 Ibid., 33
123 The money to begin the Jeanes schools came at the behest of Anna Thomas Jeanes, a wealthy Quaker woman living in Philadelphia. In 1900, she inherited her family fortune. Before she died in 1907, Anna Jeanes contacted the principle of the Hampton Institute about her intentions for her fortune. Jeanes’s main concern was that her money be used to assist in the building of rural schools and helping rural communities in the South. The Jeanes Foundation was officially formed in 1908 with a Board of Trustees that included many of the era’s leading names in philanthropy and black American industrial education: Andrew
based educational techniques of the day would help account its success when applied in Angola. At the heart of the technique was a belief in the need to link the rural schools’ improvement with the general welfare of the community. Jeanes teachers were typically young black women. In the American South, school teachers were not only responsible for teaching classes but also organizing community events, home visits, and attending church services in order to remain involved in the community and to maintain the community’s investment in the school. School teachers were trained at special “Jeanes Schools” but, upon arriving in their rural posts, they were given free reign in choosing school curriculum because the Negro Rural School Fund acknowledged that every communities’ needs and desires were unique. Jeanes Teachers were expected first and foremost to respond to the communities they served.\textsuperscript{124} Indeed, much of the success of the Jeanes teachers rested on their freedom, flexibility, and creativity to navigate specific rural social and political settings. Schools were not only for learning, but acted as rural community centers. To this end, and in addition to the education of the community’s children, teachers taught adult classes on sewing, canning, and cooking and helped community members form social clubs for the betterment of the school and community.\textsuperscript{125}

As important as their role was in building schools and communities, Jeanes School teachers in the US also acted as mediators between black and white society.

\textsuperscript{124} Linda Pincham, "A League of Willing Workers: The Impact of Northern Philanthropy, Virginia Estelle Randolph and the Jeanes Teachers in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia," \textit{The Journal of Negro Education} 74, no. 2 (Spring, 2005), 118.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.76
Indeed, this intermediary role would grow to become a key aspect of the Jeanes schools’ success. Teachers worked with white farmers to allow the children of black tenants to go to school; they negotiated with white landowners for school land; mediated petty disputes, and, in general, “strove to bring the power of education to blacks without threatening the white community.”¹²⁶ As experts in rural education and community development, teachers often became the chief liaison for government agencies working on rural development.¹²⁷

All the missionaries at Galangue had some level of experience with the Jeanes programs in the South and implemented in Angola the schooling techniques they knew from this first-hand experience. Jeanes teachers considered themselves to be, above all else, negotiators between white society, which held the reigns of formal power, and black society, which sought greater access to basic social services.¹²⁸ The Galangue missionaries saw a similar intermediary role for themselves between Angolans and the colonial government, and thus sought the support of the Portuguese to build schools and outreach programs to local villages.¹²⁹ Indeed, McDowell believed that a large part of his mission to Angola involved “awakening…the [Portuguese] government to its responsibility in its relationship to its subject as it did in certain States of the South.”¹³⁰ In this way, the mission replicated some of the more controversial aspects of the skills-based pedagogy, namely close collaboration with the ruling classes. The mission found itself in the contradictory position of simultaneously encouraging cooperation with the colonial government while pushing for Angolan autonomy.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 75.
¹²⁷ Ibid, 76.
¹²⁸ Ibid.
¹³⁰ Ibid.
The actual establishment of the mission and school began as soon as the McDowells and Samuel Coles arrived at the new mission site in 1922. It took the missionaries nearly a year to construct the mission buildings and new school structure. Nevertheless, McDowell offered daily informal church services and open-air classes for Angolans interested in the Church. Cole, who was responsible for building the technical school, enlisted the assistance of neighboring Angolans in raising the new mission structures and tilling the field that missionaries would use to grow their own food. The mission formally opened in January 1923, and one month later, there were three hundred people present for Sunday morning worship. The Galangue school opened in October the same year with 23 girls and 60 boys who boarded at the mission.\(^{131}\) Most of the new students came from surrounding villages and substations that were served by the other mission stations.

The growth of the new mission station depended on the work of the Angolan Galangue students. These young men and women would spend the wet season at Galangue and the dry season in villages as teachers. If a village desired to have a school, the village elder would send a representative to the mission station. The elder would then be instructed to return to the village and build a thatched-roofed building large enough to serve as a schoolhouse and, in keeping with the teachings of the Jeanes schools, a community center. The so-called “bush schools” were entirely community supported and the mission expected that the villagers to break up some field for the teacher to grow

\(^{131}\) Henderson, *Galangue: The Unique Story of a Mission Station in Angola Proposed, Supported and Staffed by Black Americans*, 21-23.
his/her own food. Students from the mission schools would fan out across the surrounding region to teach in the schools for the few dry season months after which time they would return to school to continue their studies. Students who excelled at the bush schools were given the opportunity to continue their studies at a number of regional schools that were within walking distance of the nearest six to eight bush schools. These regional schools were also constructed with labor and resources from the surrounding villages. There were usually two teachers and a deacon or deaconess, with theological training from the Dondi mission station. Students paid fees, usually assisted by their village, in the form of wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, or other things that could be used to support the teaching staff. In thin years, the mission station would help subsidize the teachers’ salaries. Most students walked to school although there was the option for those students traveling a great distance to live with a local family. Students who excelled at the regional schools would, in turn, be invited to continue their studies as a boarding student at the mission station.

The growth of the church was not free from Portuguese oversight. After Decree 77 in 1921, the Portuguese government set much of the school curriculum. In classes, students needed to study Portuguese history, geography, and language. These classes were supplemented by agricultural classes, for boys, and home economic classes, for girls. Despite Portuguese surveillance, the mission schools excelled. By 1927, the

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133 Ibid., 33
134 The system of school continued throughout the entire colonial period. In personal interviews with the author, Angolans would often sardonically joke that they could name all the rivers in Portugal but none in Angola.
Galangue mission had the best farm in its region of the highlands. Boarding school students worked the nearly one hundred acres for part of the day with the hope of growing enough to feed both the boys’ and girls’ boarding departments and earn income by selling excess thus making the school self-supporting. Samuel Coles was responsible for industrial education and the mission soon boasted blacksmith, carpentry, shoe and tailor shops that produced axes, hoes, windows, doors, and shoes. The output of these shops was impressive. In one season, the apprentice tailors completed eight hundred garments while the brickyard had an output of three thousand bricks, five hundred roofing tiles and five hundred flooring tiles per day. By the end of 1927, all fourteen mission buildings were covered with student-made tiles.

The juxtaposition of the self-sufficient agricultural and industrial education courses and Portuguese-enforced curriculum provides a useful contrast. The mission was pushing two agendas. On the one hand, Galangue was at the service of the Portuguese colonial state. Like other state-run schools, it was assisting in spreading the cultural colonial hegemony that was key to colonialism’s success. John and Jean Comaroff describe this process as the “subtle colonization…of indigenous modes of perception and practice.” Missionaries continued this colonization of the mind in their industrial education. Yet, this part of the colonization process had the side effect of giving Angolans tools for self-sufficiency in a colonial system that was specifically designed to

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137 Ibid., 24

take away African autonomy. Indeed, the skills-based education, so controversial in the
United States, is what drove many villages to build a school and support village children
to continue their studies in the regional and mission schools.

Over the next few years, the mission continued it steady growth. With the aid of
graduates from related mission stations, Galangue opened its first substations, thus
completing the circuit of schools. As with the bush and regional schools, the substations
were primarily self-sufficient. Church services at these substations were entirely an
Angolan affair. As a rule, McDowell would only appear when requested by the
congregation. Communities, in an elaborate ceremony, chose pastors for these churches,
and other small regional churches. Church and village elders as well as lay church
members would gather to discuss and interview the applicant in a meeting that would
generally last hours. If the community approved, the pastor, usually a man, was invited
to bring his family to the village and church. Often, pastor’s wives were educated at the
mission schools and they would serve as deaconesses to villages. These women were
responsible for the leading weekly women’s meetings and village classes.

The Galangue missionaries’ experiences in Angola as community leaders and
shapers of a Christian mission stood in stark contrast to their experiences as second class
citizens in the United States. Within the Portuguese system, the government treated
black missionaries far better than Angolans and missionaries’ “education and profession
gave them high status” among government officials.139 As foreigners, the government
afforded them more respect in the complex system of race, class, and color formulated by
the Portuguese. However, this respect complicated missionaries’ own belief that they

139 Lapode, "A Native Knows a Native": African-American Missionaries' Writings about Angola, 1919-
1940.
were part of a common “African community” united in the “spirit of the gospel.”

In their new roles as supervisors and heads of missions, McDowell and others often spoke of what they saw as “new freedoms” since having left the United States. Nevertheless, McDowell, who often expressed that he “never felt more at home anywhere,” was often pained to see the people with whom he worked “treated as tho’ [they] were lower than a dog.”

This is not to say that black missionaries did not experience discrimination. In their travels in and out of Angola, it was often a battle to find integrated shipping lines. Black and white missionaries would frequently have to travel on different ships on their way back to the United States. Before entering Angola, all missionaries lived in Portugal for at least a year, and perhaps even longer. While there, new missionaries were expected to learn Portuguese, and medical doctors had to study tropical medicine and acquire proper licensing from the colonial government. When Dr. Aaron McMillan arrived in Lisbon in the 1920s, he and his family had difficulty finding a Portuguese landlord willing to rent a home to a black family. In part through the Portuguese government’s concern with black missionaries, McMillan was forced to remain in Lisbon.

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142 Ibid, 14; Lapode, "A Native Knows a Native": African-American Missionaries' Writings about Angola, 1919-1940
143 Letter from Dr. Childs to Wynn Fairfield, 30 March 1934, ABC 15.1, v. 25, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
for two years while he completed a tropical medicine course and was forced to retake major portions of his medical courses that he had already taken in the United States.\textsuperscript{145}

McDowell’s commitment to shaping the mission, substations, and village schools into community centers coincided with his desire to forge closer relations with the colonial government. Indeed, for McDowell, working with the colonial government was as important to his mission as building churches. At his heart, McDowell believed the colonial promise that the Portuguese were in Angola to create Angolan citizens. The Galangue mission was in Angola to assist in this project. If followed correctly, McDowell asserted that the Galangue missionary strategy was “pregnant with social and economic implications of far-reaching importance.”\textsuperscript{146}

McDowell’s belief that the mission was a conduit between the Portuguese and Angolans put him at odds with both the ABCFM and other Congregational missions. In 1926, in an effort to forge good relations with both Portuguese settlers and the government, McDowell hired a young Portuguese boy to work in the mission station as an extra hand. ABCFM officials expressed concern that Galangue was becoming too cozy with the Portuguese and that such cooperation might shatter the neutrality that the ABCFM and other missionaries had worked hard to maintain.\textsuperscript{147} The central debate revolved around how missionaries saw themselves in Angola—as “neutral” bystanders or forces of change. In response to accusations that Galangue was becoming too involved

\textsuperscript{145} Henderson, \textit{Galangue: The Unique Story of a Mission Station in Angola Proposed, Supported and Staffed by Black Americans.}


with Portuguese settlers and the government, McDowell again turned to his own history and that of the United States, asking,

Should we stand afar off and do something in the corner toward native education, or should we get into the thick of the fray and gradually lead the government—through cooperation—to an appreciation of the real task? Mission schools in the Southern part of the USA adopted the latter course, and before the States knew it a program of education for Negroes was drawn up and they (the States) were committed to it.  

As a rule, the ABCFM instructed missionaries to maintain cordial relations with local administrators and colonial heads, but McDowell took this idea further. Seeking ABCFM approval for Jeanes School assistance, McDowell first presented his ideas to Portuguese authorities in 1926. He proposed bringing the Phelps-Stokes Fund to administer the work while using the mission stations as bases for operations. According to McDowell, the Portuguese officials were “enthusiastic and wanted to know why we could not wholly shift our emphasis” from evangelization and traditional schooling to one based on vocational education. In a letter back to the ABCFM, McDowell again pointed to the success of such programs in the southern US as evidence that it would play “as large a part in the development of this Colony as it has played in the development of the South.” McDowell’s experiences in the South influenced his understanding of how Angolans might best be served. He preferred to take “bold statesmanlike” steps with the Portuguese government than “wait for miraculous deliverance [while] the people are dieing and falling sick.”

More upsetting to the ABCFM and other missionaries, however, was the black missionaries’ insistence that Angolans be included in the hierarchy of the mission station

149 Ibid; This is not an all-together surprising response given that the government that was mostly interested in having rural Angolans work as laborers.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
and outstations. As part of this effort, McDowell and Coles gathered elders from the surrounding villages to meet and discuss their role in the functioning of mission outstations and schools. Together, they agreed that “future funds from outside the church will be turned over en bloc to the elders and all responsibility placed on them for proper use of such funds.” The ABCFM expressed great “anxiety” about the turning over of funds to village groups, but McDowell insisted that it was “an irreducible minimum that a given church ought to have unlimited control of the money etc contributed by its individual members….” McDowell’s insistence on Angolan’s taking over financial responsibility of their churches was ahead of its time. Similar measures were not taken at the other Congregational missions until the late 1960s when the Portuguese government was forcing missionaries to leave. This reticence was a clear indication how wary other missionaries were of giving up their control of the mission stations to Angolans.

Shifting colonial government strategies at the end of the 1920s further complicated McDowell’s overtures to the colonial government. In 1926, a military coup overthrew the unpopular Portuguese First Republic. Over the course of the next five years, Portugal’s central government was in flux as different factions vied for power. Yet, even before the new government was officially instated, the situation on the ground in Angola began to change. In 1926, when the First Republic fell, there were sixty-five Protestant missions of varying denominations in the central highlands. These missions

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dwarfed the Catholic Church’s ten missions that were staffed by forty-two French priests.\textsuperscript{155} The new government taking shape in Portugal forcefully opposed the First Republic’s separation of church and state. By 1930, the government began heavily funding and opening new Catholic missions with such speed that there was not enough staff available to fill them.\textsuperscript{156} With renewed vigor, the new government took steps to forcefully implement the rules of Decree 77 that banned the use of African languages in all mission activities. As the preceding government had done in 1921, colonial police arrested pastors and teachers it suspected were teaching and preaching in Umbundu. Letters back to ABCFM officials spoke of Protestants suffering violent attacks and of official government newspapers “urging [support] for the Catholic missions.”\textsuperscript{157}

The changes in Portugal’s government coincided with global economic disaster as much of the world plunged into depression. The vital donations to Galangue from the southern black Congregational Church’s ceased. In 1931, Bessie and Henry McDowell returned to the United States on furlough and encountered a country radically changed. They had hoped to raise money for the Galangue mission during their trip but upon their arrival they discovered that “conditions in the South [were] worse” than they expected.\textsuperscript{158} The black churches were “losing their property…[and] Negro insurance and banking companies” were unable to provide any assistance. In the North and East, black churches found that they had acquired their properties “when prices were at their peak, and must

\textsuperscript{155} Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present}, 100.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} ABC 15.1, v. 25, Doc 254, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
pay for the properties or loose them in a period of depression.”159 Under similar financial pressure, ABCFM officials ordered missions to cut down on their foreign staff.160

In the face of these changing economic and political times, McDowell began to rethink his mission to Angola and the Galangue approach to working with the local population there. When the McDowells returned from their furlough to Angola they renewed their conviction that for the mission to survive it had to become a truly Angolan space. McDowell argued that missionaries must work with local communities to introduce Angolan traditions into the functioning of the mission. He gathered village elders and pastors to discuss possible changes. Among the most popular ideas was the “dedication of a part of the [new church] site for consecration of seed, planting, and harvesting ceremonies” that would be “adaptations of the native ceremonies.”161 The site would also include a small fire kept in an etambo that would be used “in the ways that fire is used ceremonially.”162 The most successful suggestion, however, was the construction of an onjango in the center of the mission station “to be used for small group meetings, hearing of words, in connection with weddings, dedication of infants etc.”163

This was an idea that would be adopted by all the Congregational missions and outstations. The introduction of the onjango into the mission space cannot be overemphasized. In pre-Portuguese days, the onjango served as the center of village activities and was the location in which communities discussed matters, elders met, and judgments were decided. The decision to incorporate the onjango into the mission

159 Ibid.
160 As a result of diminishing funds, in 1934, Samuel Coles and his family were sent to Liberia to work in a Phelps-Stokes school there.
161 Letter from Dr. McDowell to ABCFM Community, 31 July 1933, ABC 15.1, v. 29, Doc 128, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
structure helped to push what had already begun as a result of fracturing African communities: the meshing of Protestant mission structures with pre-existing village structures.

McDowell’s rethinking of the Congregational mission was not just about structures. Rather, he sought to encourage Angolans to make the western Christian teachings their own and to reflect the Angolan worldview. In his efforts to understand the worldview of the Angolans, McDowell transformed the way the mission related to ideas and beliefs that were previously anathema to the functioning of the Protestant missions in Angola. In letters back to ABCFM officials in the United States, McDowell explained how it “dawned upon” him that unless he “made a conscientious effort” to understand “the Umbundu way of life” his “preaching and contacts” would “likely be superficial and routine.” McDowell believed that he must learn “enough about the Umbundu way of life to discuss intelligently and vitally subjects of real concern—sex, birth, hunger, sickness death, etc.”

The Galangue approach to mission work would profoundly strengthen the appeal and strength of the Congregational Church among Angolans in the highlands. The reorganization of mission structures reinforced the role of the local Protestant Angolan leadership who had received a mission education. In the coming years, these Angolans would oversee the Congregational Church’s exponential growth in this area.

In fact this approach could be seen across the continent, where African Christians were crucial to the adaptation of the church to village life “created by the unsettlement of

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164 Letter from Dr. McDowell to ABCFM Community, 31 July 1933, ABC 15.1, v. 29, Doc 130, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
165 Ibid.
early colonial rule.” Historians Terence Ranger and Adrian Hastings have similarly noted that during the early twentieth century Africans played a critical role in the spread of Christianity in Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Africa. Indeed, Hasting notes that on the West Coast of Africa and in Zimbabwe, Christian churches were multiplying at such a pace “clearly being set by African demands rather than missionary hard work….” In these places where Christianity was spread by Africans arose a “popular Christianity….founded by symbolically sensitive missionaries…and also by their first teacher/evangelist who set up villages of their own, made rain and adopted the plow.”

As the reference to the plow suggests, much of the spread of the Christian Church across southern Africa could be traced to the introduction of new agricultural practices. But at the Galangue mission, these agricultural changes were matched by the desire of black missionaries and Angolans alike that the church should be in the hands of the people it was serving.

These new approaches to mission work were not shared by all Congregational missionaries. At the suggestion that Angolans might begin to shape the structure of mission work and school curriculum, Dr. HS Hollenbeck, who in 1919 had participated in the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s report, insisted that “in their present stage of development and their singular position of isolation from the rest of the world [Angolans] have no background…or world outlook” that could help in their “development.” Hollenbeck agreed that the African Congregational Church should “ultimately…administer their own affairs” but added, “none of us can visualize (sic) the day when it will come about or the

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167 Ibid.  
conditions that might obtain should it ever come about.”170 The dominant view of the white Congregational missions was that “the present program” and standards being used “should be continued for a generation or more, with the probabilities in favor of its being continued much longer.”171

Hollenbeck’s viewpoint was obviously fundamentally at odds with the path taken at Galangue. The difference between Hollenbeck and McDowell was likely not lost on Angolans, for it came at a time when the Portuguese government reinforced legislation that required Angolans to abandon their communities and African traditions and beliefs. The work of most Protestant missions reinforced this government policy by seeking to mold Angolans into western-style citizens. Those who joined the church often felt pressure to leave their “heathen” families and community members and move into “American villages,” Christian villages built alongside traditional ones. If one reverted back to old ways—either by consulting traditional healers, keeping more than one wife, drinking alcohol, or in any way behaving what was perceived as an un-Christian-like manner—he risked expulsion from the American village until he repented.172 Thus when McDowell and the other black missionaries worked to include African traditions in the overall functioning of their churches it was nothing short of a revolutionary change in the mission strategy.

Indeed, McDowell was ahead of his time. In 1932, two years after the McDowell’s returned from furlough and began instituting the new methods, the ABCFM endorsed a report, “Re-Thinking Missions; a Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred

170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
172 Augusto Chipesse (General Secretary of the Council of Christian Churches of Angola), in discussion with author, March 2007.
Years,” that advocated much the same receptivity to different belief systems and cultures. The report was commissioned in 1930 by John D. Rockefeller and led by Harvard Professor William Ernest Hocking. Over the course of two years, Hocking conducted research and visited a number of foreign mission stations in order to assess the American missionary enterprise. In keeping with the internationalist spirit of the post-WWI and League of Nations era, he concluded that American missions had become too hostile towards local religions and customs. In the so-called Layman’s Report, Hocking countered that “spiritual collaboration was to be the objective of missions; they ought not to operate in hostility to other world religions, nor seek to displace them.” Missionaries had committed a “humiliating mistake” in boasting their “unique or superior grasp of religious truth…” Instead missions needed to change from upholding “superiority of Western and Christian institutions” to a “‘permanent’ stance that would recognize the right of all peoples to autonomy and respect and would acknowledge the spiritual vitality and reforming zeal in other world religions.” Reflecting the era’s trust in new professionals, Hocking envisioned missionaries as ambassadors of Christianity. These individuals would have competence in a trade (whether ministerial or medical) as well as be “expert in understanding and relating to the social problems of the host

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175 Hutchison, Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions.
176 As quoted in ibid.
177 Ibid.
country.” Christianity must be reconceived as “a way of life and thinking…not as [the] way alone…” It was not the duty of the Christian missionary “to attack the non-Christian systems of religion” but rather “as a co-worker with the forces within each…religious system which are making for righteousness.” The Report recommended a thinning down of the missionary force to a few individuals who were “attuned to modern social research…so that its members could, if invited to do so, provide mediations in major social or economic controversies.” Missions had to transform themselves from the “temporary work of church planting” to the “permanent function of promoting world understanding and unity on a spiritual level…. “ Above all else, these new missionaries were to “minister to the secular needs of men in the spirit of Christ” through “education and other philanthropic aspects…free from organized responsibility to the work of conscious and direct evangelism…. “ In other words, to “give largely without any preaching” in order to serve Christ through deeds of education and medicine.

In advocating for American technology and social science, Hocking was of course endorsing the very kind of American imperialism he claimed to reject. The idea of cultural sensitivity, however, was new to the mission world and reaction to the Layman’s Report was explosive and divisive. Pearl Buck, writer and former Presbyterian missionary in China, praised the Report as “the only book I have ever read which seems

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180 Ibid.
181 Ibid, 328.
182 Ibid, 326.
183 Ibid.
to me literally true in its every observation and right in its every conclusion.”184 Others, however, thought the report was blasphemous. Robert Speer, a leader in the Presbyterian Church, perhaps put this side of the argument best. He argued that “Christ is still the way, not a way, and there is no goal beyond Him or apart from Him, nor any search for truth that is to be found outside of Him, nor any final truth to be sought by a universal religious quest, except it be sought in Him.”185 The only mission board that came out in full support for the Re-Thinking Missions conclusions and recommendations was the ABCFM.

The importance of McDowell’s reforms, their endorsement in the Layman’s Report, and the support the Report received from the ABCFM extended beyond the mission field. In fact, the Report signaled the advent of a new type of mission. While Congregational missions would remain religious institutions, the increased emphasis on social work meant that while missionaries might be guided by their religious conviction, the success of their secular work as doctors, nurses, and teachers was not tied to the number of converts or souls saved, but bodies healed and educated.

When Bessie and Curtis McDowell set out from Raleigh in 1919, their goal was to help socially and economically uplift Angolans using the same tactics and pedagogies that they had experienced in the American South. Nearly fifteen years later, however, the system they envisioned had achieved unexpected results. By 1932, Curtis McDowell and the other Galangue missionaries had completely reformed the Congregational mission’s approach to working with Angolans. Some of reforms related to the missionaries’

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184 As quoted in Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions.*
185 As quoted in ibid, 170.
experiences with the American Jeanes Schools, as the Galangue missionaries embraced
the Jeanes technique of building schools with community participation. These techniques
combined with skills-based schooling reflected an effort to give back to Angolans some
of the autonomy they had lost under colonialism. Yet, McDowell was not an anti-
colonialist. If anything, he was a believer in the promise of colonialism to uplift
Angolans. In keeping with the Jeanes school pedagogy, McDowell saw the missionaries’
primary task as acting as an intermediary between the colonial government and
Angolans. Despite the success of the Galangue reforms, they embodied a fundamental
contradiction. While simultaneously nurturing Angolan independence, McDowell sought
a closer relationship with the colonial government. This tension between two seemingly
opposite goals had been present since the founding of the missions in the 1880s but
McDowell’s reforms brought the tension to a new level. Missionaries continued to view
the mission as a partner in the colonial project. In the coming years, this desire to work
with the Portuguese government would transform into the missions’ codependence on
colonialism’s survival to justify their presence in Angola.

When a military coup overthrew the First Republic in 1926, hostility towards the
successes of Congregational mission projects increased. The new government strongly
supported the growth of Catholic missions to counter the success and the strength of the
Protestant Churches. With increased attacks on Protestant Angolans and the shuttering of
village schools, Protestant missionaries began to understand that the times and their
relationship to the colonial government were changing. In this new atmosphere,
McDowell began to realize that for the Church to survive it had to be a completely
Angolan space, both physically and spiritually. By turning over the interpretation of
Christian teachings and church ceremonies to Angolans, McDowell forever altered the Congregational Church in Angola. Within a few years, the success of McDowell’s reforms led other missionaries to adapt his techniques. In truth, however, the drivers of these reforms were not missionaries but Protestant Angolans themselves who seized on the independence the Congregational Church offered them to rebuild their communities. The space opened up by McDowell’s reforms and the Layman’s Report would help foster the growth of a new Protestant Angolan elite.
CHAPTER 3:
TRANSNATIONAL ACTION IN A NATIONAL WORLD: CONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARIES
AND THE ROSS REPORT TO THE TEMPORARY SLAVERY COMMISSION OF THE LEAGUE
OF NATIONS

On June 5 1925, nineteen prominent American citizens signed a letter presenting
the Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa to the League of
Nations’ Temporary Slavery Commission. The Commission’s main task was to end
global slavery and had the distinction of being one of the few places in the League that
counted the US government as a participant. Among the Report’s signers were such
important figures as banker and philanthropist George Foster Peabody, suffragist Carrie
Chapman Catt, and former US Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. Together they called
on the League to use its powers to “abolish compulsory labor and other practices that are
an injustice inflicted upon the people” of the Portuguese colonies.186 Using information
gathered through Congregational churches and missions networks, American Sociologist
Edward Ross, the Report’s author, accused the Portuguese government of running a
system of “state requisitioning…and leasing of [native] labor to private parties” that
amounted to slavery.187 Aside from being an embarrassment and affront to the
government of Portugal, the so-called Ross Report was also the first report submitted to
the Commission documenting rampant abuses in territories directly under European
control. All previous reports submitted to the Commission had dealt primarily with semi-
autonomous non-European countries such as China and Abyssinia.188 This new turn in

186 Edward Alsworth Ross, Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa (New York: The
Abbott Press,[1925]).
187 Ibid.
188 J. P. Daughton, "ILO Expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years" (Conference Paper, 2008),
the Commission’s focus and the role of Portugal as its first test case was not lost on the colonial power and added to the general vitriol with which the report was received.

Congregational missionaries were Edward Ross’s primary informants in Angola and were responsible for bringing the labor conditions there to the attention of global anti-slavery activists. In the years that followed its presentation, relations between Protestant churches in Angola and the Portuguese colonial state would decline significantly. The government held the missionaries responsible for misrepresenting labor conditions in Angola and for its public humiliation. They also used the overwhelming American participation in the report as confirmation of their long-held suspicion that Protestant missionaries and churches were representatives of the United States. The government believed that the actions by missionaries and their allies in the anti-slavery world were the policies of the United States played out through a surrogate organization. Portuguese government officials concluded that because the Catholic Church in Angola was an extension of the Portuguese state then the Protestant Church, and in particular the Congregational and Methodist churches, were extensions of the American state. Congregational missions’ direct involvement in the Ross Report confirmed this logic for the Portuguese government.

Although the Report was the result of transnational cooperation, it simultaneously called into question the transnational claims of the organizations and churches involved in its production. The strength of the Report and the powerful effect it had on Portuguese and global politics was due, at least in part, to Portugal’s perception that it had national backing from the United States. The suspicions of the Portuguese were not entirely unfounded. Portuguese officials likely knew that Congregational missionaries modeled
mission schools and educational structures on an American model. Further, it was an open secret that a number of American international projects were, in fact, thinly veiled joint ventures between private groups and the United States government. This was not the case, however, with either the Congregational Church or the Ross Report. Missionaries drew their power from a complex network of non-state actors and not the American government, which had little strategic interest in southern Africa at the time. Missionaries held that their “labors [had] no official or organic connection with the American government.” They maintained that they represented a movement of individuals working beyond state and national allegiances towards a more peaceful world free from the nationalisms that had led global powers into world war.

While the lines connecting missionaries and the organizations they worked with back to the United States government may have been blurred, the aftermath of the Ross Report nevertheless raised the question of whether American organizations, dependent on American funds, could ever be truly transnational. This question was borne out in the long-term effects of the Report. While the Ross Report provided an early example of how the activities of transnational networks could work as powerful counter-balances to state power, the reaction to the Report generated further national differentiation rather than disintegration. In the League of Nations, the Ross Report helped to introduce discussions about forced labor and European colonialism, and the League’s role in monitoring violations of its founding covenant. These discussions eventually led to calls by colonial subjects for their own independence. In Angola, in addition to reaffirming the Congregational Church’s anti-colonial stance, the violent backlash to the Report

succeeded in giving rise to a generation of Protestant Angolan pastors who would be the founders of the anti-colonial movement of the 1960s. In the years following the report, the number of Angolan-run outstations multiplied, giving rise to a strong Angolan-run Congregational Church. This process signaled the start of a power shift in the Congregational missions, from one centered in the halls of the foreign-run mission stations to one located in the hundreds of Angolan villages that were home to local-run churches and outstations. These networks of churches and missionaries eventually played a fundamental role in Angola’s national debate about the definition of Angolan identity.

Neither the IMC, Ross, nor the missionaries intended their work to be used to end Portuguese colonialism. Their commitment was toward peaceful reform of colonialism based on the techniques used at the Protestant missions. The furor generated by the Ross Report demonstrates that the global integration to which missionaries and missionary organizations were so greatly committed did not negate nationalism. Rather, these two seemingly opposite processes were intricately tied to one another. The push and pull of transnationalism and nationalism would affect mission relationships for decades to come.

The individuals responsible for researching and promoting the Ross Report were part of a generation of Americans who witnessed the ravages of World War I. They believed that American science and expertise, combined with the Christian teachings of the Protestant Church could help to unite nations and to build lasting peace. In Angola, the missionaries most active in drawing global attention to existing abusive labor structures were Reverend J. A. Steed, director of the Chissamba mission station, and Reverend William Bell, director of the Bailundo mission station. This station was the
Congregational Church’s oldest mission in Angola. Both Steed and Bell were central to Ross’s investigation and were primary targets in Portugal’s attempts to discredit the Report’s findings. Other missionaries, such as John Tucker, who had participated in the Phelps-Stokes investigation into education in Africa, did not participate in the report’s investigation but nonetheless endorsed its findings, stating, “without any doubt [it] can all be substantiated.”\footnote{Rev. William C. Bell, “Letter from Rev. William C. Bell, American Mission, Bailundo to Rev. Ernest Riggs, Secretary American Board, Boston”, 9 November 1925, ABC 15.1, v. 22, Document 63, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.} As mission directors, these individuals were leaders in the Congregational Church and supporters of its focus on Angolan-driven expansion. Their concern over forced labor stemmed not only from its inhumanity but also from their conviction that it was “a drawback to native development” at the very moment when Africans were “just beginning to throw off their evil habits.”\footnote{“Letter from Rev. William C. Bell, American Mission, Bailundo to Rev. Ernest Riggs, Secretary American Board, Boston” 24 October 1925, ABC 15.1, v. 22, Document 60, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University; “Letter from Rev. Andrew Reid to Mr. McLachlan”, 21 January 1924, Reel 15, Image 531, Edward Alsworth Ross Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.} Missionaries such as Steed, Bell, and Tucker had daily contact with Angolans and were familiar with the tax and labor policies exposed in the Ross Report. As mission directors and leaders, they were responsible for signing work permits that helped Angolans avoid forced labor laws. They also first reported on the abuses of the Portuguese labor system in letters to officials at the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the Congregational Church’s missionary sending body to which all foreign missionaries reported. Throughout 1924, a series of these letter exchanges outlined what missionary Rev. D. A. Hastings called “the highest achievement of corruption and inhumanity.”\footnote{“Report of Interview with Rev. D. A. Hastings of Bailundo, W. Africa, May 29, 1924,” 29 May 1924. Reel 15, Image 668, Edward Alsworth Ross Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.} These letters described a system in which planters
would pay a “substantial bribe” for laborers who were “seized from villages and compelled to work on the plantations” in conditions “worse than [those of] animals,” which rendered them dependent upon “their friends who [were] still free” for food.\(^{193}\) In May of that year, the government made matters worse for Angolans by increasing the hut tax and suspending what little paid work was available.\(^{194}\) As a result, Angolans were compelled to work for the government “for little or nothing.”\(^{195}\)

Missionaries in Angola had a strong ally at the ABCFM. Rev. Ernest Riggs was responsible at ABCFM headquarters for handling missionaries’ concerns and he was no stranger to using the international networks of the Congregational Church to expose abuses. Riggs had served as a missionary in Armenia during the genocide there in 1918. As president of the Congregational Church-run college in Harput, he had worked with his brother, Henry Riggs, to expose the mass killings and rally global outrage over the murder and forced evacuation of Armenians. The Riggs brothers worked unceasingly to convince American Ambassador to Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, to lobby the American government to stop the “campaign of race extermination” against Armenians.\(^{196}\) Given his background, it was unsurprising that Ernest Riggs was also one of the nineteen prominent American citizens who signed the letter presenting the Ross Report to the League of Nations.

\(^{193}\) Ibid.

\(^{194}\) In order to raise money for the colonial state, all African homes were charged a “hut tax.” Many families spent their entire month’s salaries on the tax. Those who were unable to pay had to perform hard labor for the state. For more on these policies see: Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*.

\(^{195}\) “Extracts from letters regarding Africa,” 24 January 1924. Reel 15, Image 768, Edward Alsworth Ross Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

\(^{196}\) As quoted photo insert in Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Awakening to International Human Rights*, 475.
It is likely that Riggs was responsible for first presenting missionary concerns to the International Missionary Council (IMC), thus piquing the Council’s interest in a more thorough analysis. The IMC’s interest in labor conditions in Angola was not surprising given the activities of its various board members and chairman, John R. Mott. From 1915, Mott was the general secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). After the World War I, he led the organization in helping conduct relief operations for prisoners of war in various countries. Mott’s interest in world affairs led to a position in the Wilson administration as an “unofficial adviser…on Russian affairs.” 197 In part through Mott’s leadership, in the 1920s the YMCA “evolved from a Bible carrying group…into a scientific and professionalized cadre stressing regeneration through social engineering.” 198 Similar to the IMC, the YMCA had to defend itself against attacks, particularly from the Chinese, that it was an agent of the US government. In later years, Mott was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for creating “worldwide organizations which have united millions of young people in work for the Christian ideals of peace and tolerance between nations.” 199

Presiding alongside John Mott was A.L. Warnshuis, Ross’s main contact at the IMC. Among other activities, Warnshuis was central to a group of religious leaders active in China during the 1920s and an early supporter of Chinese nationalists lead by Chiang Kai-shek. Warnshuis would also help to oversee a number of IMC investigations related to Protestant churches in India, Mexico, and East Africa.

Despite obvious national bases of support, the IMC, which counted member churches and missions around the world, was part of this inter-war attempt to create a truly transnational church movement. The original idea for the organization came from a 1910 meeting of mission and church leaders in Edinburgh, but the Commission was officially established in 1921. Conceived as a way to link religious organizations globally, by the end of World War I, organization leaders understood that in order to embrace the changing world order, their mandate needed to include more aggressive peace-making efforts. Some in the movement viewed the very founding of the League of Nations as having rested upon the “movement for religious co-operation….” Indeed, to these individuals the task of creating a global community working towards peace and against the “most terrible and widespread of wars” was at the very core of Christian philosophy. In one essay, philosopher and activist G. F. Barbour cites the “past failure of Christian forces” in preventing war between “professedly Christian powers.” The League of Nations and the IMC should, he argued, work towards avoiding war and alleviating “the exploitation of the less fortunate.” Further, in a 1922 essay, IMC Chairman John Mott called on “missionary cooperation…to counteract the recent marked growth of divisive forces in the world” and help to “furnish the principle bulwark in support of international justice and racial goodwill.” Perhaps the greatest threat to world peace, however, was the “ultra-nationalism which emerged in the war” and which “is contrary to the ideals and teachings of the New Testament.”

201 Ibid., 361
202 Ibid., 361
204 Ibid., 45
the IMC must overcome the few missionaries who “are still under the yoke of unchristian patriotism and racial superiority” and whose work is infected by “national narrowness, prejudice, and ambition” in order to create “international cooperation which will unify mankind . . .” The Church was not an instrument of “commercial or political interests” of any nation and using it as such was “pernicious” and a hindrance to “true Christian internationalism.”

The IMC’s decision to publicly distance itself and member churches from nations and nationalism set the stage for its initiating investigations such as the Ross Report. It set out to found an organization committed to creating “a fellowship which included all nations and races,” which would uphold Christian ideals of peace and equality in order to avoid future wars. Mott and others fueled the decision that there should be no “different national standards” and that all should be held to the same ideals set in the Bible and among individuals at the League of Nations. The ideals expressed by Mott and others were not necessarily calls for a nation-less world, but rather for international cooperation beyond narrow national self-interest. The new extra-national order meant, at least in theory, that all individuals were entitled to the same rights as well as subject to the same scrutiny. Thus, the fact that Portugal was both Christian and European did not hinder the Commission’s leadership from investigating missionary claims about labor abuses in Angola.

Thus, in 1924, the year missionaries were most active in their letter writing, the IMC contacted eminent American sociologist, Edward A. Ross, to investigate accusations

205 Ibid., 45, 49
206 Ibid., 49, 50
207 Ibid., 50
of forced labor in Portuguese Angola. Edward Alsworth Ross was born on December 12, 1866 in Verden, Illinois. In 1890, he received his PhD in political economy from Johns Hopkins University with minors in philosophy and ethics. In 1892, he married Rosamond Simons, niece to the pioneering sociologist Frank Lester Ward, who would become a powerful intellectual influence in Ross’s life. During his own career, Edward Ross helped pioneer the professionalization of social sciences, in particular sociology, for which his ideas were instrumental in the codification of the discipline as a unique field apart from anthropology, history, and political science.

Much of Ross’s early writing focused on the need for governments and professionals to guide societal development. Society, according to Ross, “required a new kind of control rooted in the command of the psychic rather than in physical force.”

While globalization was inevitable, the hope was that it might be steered in a more peaceful direction away from the violence witnessed during World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Modern individuals adopted their opinions from their fellow citizens. Therefore, it was up to professionals to steer mass sentiment in the correct direction because common people “could hardly be expected to think for themselves.” With the help of professionals, industrial society could be directed

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211 Sklansky, *Socializing the Psyche: The Fall of Political Economy and the Rise of Psychology in the United States, 1830-1930*, 413.; Ross’s theories were strongly couched in his nativist beliefs. He believed that “due to the pitiless sifting to which Americans have been subject during three centuries of invading wilderness and subduing lands” made “the American more strong-willed…than even the West-European” and certainly more than the “docile Slav or the quiescent Hindoo.” Peter D'Agostino, "Craniums, Criminals, and the 'Cursed Race': Italian Anthropology in American Racial Thought, 1861-1924," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 2 (April, 2002), 335.
toward “liberal harmony: an increasingly peaceable, rational, and ethical adjustment of interests” and away from “class conflict, social decay, and violent revolution.”

These earlier writings suggest that Ross’s interest in Angola reflected his longstanding concerns about the potential hazards of an improperly guided society. Ross and his contemporaries would not have seen Portugal’s labor abuses as a violation of human rights but rather as a failure of Portugal to properly “civilize” Angolans for inclusion in modern society. Colonial governments often justified labor systems as a means of civilizing their colonial subjects. Portugal’s system, however, was deemed to have crossed the line into abuse by failing to properly guide the development of Angolans. In keeping with this thinking, Ross’s role was to notify Portugal and the world of the colonial government’s abuses. His exposure of the story would help to avoid the type of violence and conflict that he believed arose from improper development.

Ross was first contacted by the IMC “to assess reports from businessmen and missionaries concerning the ill treatment of the blacks by their Portuguese masters.” He arrived in Angola on July 19, 1924 to begin this investigation. For two months, he traveled through the colony interviewing Angolans, Portuguese, and Protestant missionaries. While in Angola, his primary contacts were the Congregational missionaries who were well acquainted with Angolan villages. They guided Ross across the Highlands and were his interpreters for both Umbundu and Portuguese. Ross slept in
Protestant missions, drove in mission cars, and even used mission funds, although the IMC eventually refunded them.\textsuperscript{216} He avoided all contact with the Portuguese government officials in order “to know not the system as laid down in the decrees or as officials profess to carry it out, but the actual experiences of large numbers of natives taken at random.”\textsuperscript{217}

Upon his return to the United States, Ross organized his research into a sixty-one page report that he submitted to the IMC. The bulk of the report is an outline of his interviews with Angolans and missionaries, and his observation of various “work gangs” he witnessed across the interior of Angola and Mozambique, where he traveled following his research in Angola. Ross explicitly charges that the Portuguese failed to properly prepare Angolan men and women for inclusion in modern society.\textsuperscript{218} He praises the work of Protestant missionaries who were “acquainting…natives…with methods of farming, better types of implements, improved varieties of domestic plants, fowls, [and] animals” so that in Angola “a decent Christian civilization will develop.”\textsuperscript{219} The Portuguese government, meanwhile, was doing just the opposite. Colonial authorities were assisting in the creation of “great estates…tilled by unpaid conscripted natives working under the hippo lash” and discouraging Angolans from “acquiring skills,” thus making the “shoots of higher civilization among them…wither.” As a result, Angolans were taking up “with vices which help them to forget their hopeless lot.” “Dominant whites”, in turn, accused missionaries of “teaching the ‘niggers,’ ‘putting

\textsuperscript{216} “Letter from Edward Ross to A. L. Warnshuis,” 17 March 1925. Reel 15, Image 856, Edward Alsworth Ross Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
notions into their heads,’ making them ‘uppish about their station.’”  

Portuguese tactics led to “unscrupulous and cruel whites [going] about in motor cars, snatch[ing] comely black maids to gratify their lust, intimidate the blacks with palmatoro and chicote [whips]…maintain[ing] handsome motor roads, plantation homes, and government building with unrequited native labor.”

The scathing critique of Portugal that Ross voiced in his report was not new. Indeed, the impact of the charges brought by Ross reflected the degree to which they resonated with previous earlier critiques. In 1910, the colonial nation had faced similar accusations regarding its abuse of labor on the cocoa-rich islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. These charges, which involved the British chocolatier William Cadbury, charged that the government was using old slave channels to funnel Angolans (called serviçães) to coastal ports in order to ship them out on five-year work contracts.

However, few of these tens of thousands of workers ever returned home. As opposed to the 1930s when the Ross Report was published, much of the abusive labor recruitment during the chocolate scandal was committed in rural areas where there was little government presence or where government officials chose to look the other way. One editorial in A Voz de Angola rallied against the persistence of slavery in the colony:

The current language among Europeans who have serviçães in Angola is this: “I bought some many blacks. F. sold me so many serviçães. X has so many blacks to sell…” Just as among serviçães…the current language is the following: “My boss bought me. My boss sold me. My boss wants to sell me.” Whoever contests this was really never in Angola.

220  Ibid.
221  Ibid; There is a certain morbid irony in the fact that one might use these same words to describe American race relations and labor standards in the American South during the same period.
222  Satre, Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business.
223  As quoted in Ball, Colonial Labor in Twentieth-Century Angola, 2.
The accusations against Portugal resulted in a boycott of cocoa from São Tomé and Príncipe that stayed in effect until 1916. The humiliation of the boycott led the Portuguese to appoint José Mendes Ribeiro Norton de Matos as Minister of Overseas Provinces. Norton de Matos was appointed in order to bring Angola under better government control. Under him, Portugal succeeded in extending its reach into rural areas that previously functioned outside the realm of government supervision. Forced labor, however, was not abolished. Government officials continued to believe that the only way to “civilize” Angolans was to force them to work. As a result of the extension of the state further into Angola, colonial administrators assumed a new role as labor recruiters for state projects and private employers.

While the reforms implemented by Matos initially helped to end the slave trade to the islands, when he left Angola in 1916 much of his work was undone. In his absence, a new internal forced labor system blossomed. Under this scheme, poorly paid local administrators (chefe de posto) earned extra income from supplying labor to private employers. An employer would contact the administrator with a number of needed employees. The chefé would then go to the village chiefs (sobas) or headmen (seculos) under his jurisdiction and demand a certain number of workers. Those sobas or seculos who did not produce workers would be visited by policemen and workers would be taken by force. In addition, the government instituted a tax on all males that was intentionally too high for most individuals to pay. Those who were unable to pay their taxes had to perform forced labor in which the state kept “four-fifths of the laborers’ pay.”

These moves, which were described in the previous chapter, were also part of the government’s efforts to control Angolan education that resulted in Decree 77.

Ibid., 3

Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present, 50.
system of taxation and government labor recruitment is what eventually attracted the attention of the International Missionary Council and what Ross detailed in his report to the group.

Ross forwarded a final draft of the report to A. L. Warnshuis on March 17, 1925. On April 1, he received a reply that the IMC committee had decided to send a copy of the report to the Secretary of the Temporary Slavery Commission of the League of Nations. Up until this point, American involvement with the League of Nations had been, at best, tentative. The US Senate, led by Henry Cabot Lodge, had rejected the Treaty of Versailles and thus US involvement in the League. In their conservative view, President Woodrow Wilson had gone too far in his negotiations with European governments and compromised “the sovereignty of the United States…dragging it into the swamp of European intrigue.” Despite these objections, the US government sent officials to participate in the League’s Temporary Slavery Commission, thus allowing for the American authored report to be presented to the Commission.

The Temporary Slavery Commission was charged with upholding Article 23 of the League’s Covenant “to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for all men, women, and children.” The Ross Report, however, was the first report submitted to the Commission that asked it to look into forced labor conditions in a European protectorate. Ross’s investigation was followed by similar reports

228 Under League of Nation rules, in order for someone to submit a report, the natal nation had to vouch for the individual. US participation in the Temporary Commission made it possible for Ross to submit his report.
229 Suzanne Miers, Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 107.
230 An interesting side note about the Commission is that in 1923, it sent out a questionnaire “to all countries where slavery had existed asking them what measures they had taken to eradicate it, what the
describing unacceptable conditions in other British and French colonies. More importantly, however, the report on Portuguese Africa, and investigations about other European colonies that followed, eventually led the League to draft a forced labor convention overseen by the League’s permanent International Labor Organization. Examining labor practices in European colonies called for greater oversight because alienating these League members could have meant discouraging the progress of the entire organization. The significance of the Ross Report, therefore, extended beyond the effect it had on domestic politics and helped to spur wider debates about “the promises of the civilizing mission.”

That being said, it is important to keep in mind that neither Ross nor those involved in his report challenged the idea of colonialism. Echoing Portugal’s defense of its labor practices, others argued that a “civilized country…has a right to require a certain amount of industry on the part of the peoples which it is benefiting.” The ILO itself “remained committed to the idea that colonialism was a necessary step to bringing civilization and economic development to backward societies.” But Ross’s accusations against Portugal compelled League members to debate and discuss the merits of forced labor in an open setting. These discussions and the ILO’s decision to continue compiling research documenting abuses of indigenous people set the stage for anti-colonial debates to come.

The United States responded that slavery no longer existed. In light of the Ross Report, Portugal’s response is more telling. It wrote to the Commission, “that they had suppressed the slave trade and that their labor laws were ‘perfect.’ Their natives enjoyed complete liberty, and allegations to the contrary were inspired by ‘sinister,’ even criminal, motives.” See: Ibid., 101

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231 Daughton, *ILO Expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years.*
232 As quoted in Ibid.
233 Ibid, 6.
234 Ibid.
Portugal’s official response to the allegations of “unfree” labor came in the form of a ninety-three page report by former colonial governor Oliveira Santos. The primary aim of the Report was to discredit Ross and, more importantly, to set the blame for the Ross Report itself squarely at the feet of the Protestant missions and missionaries in Angola who, Santos argued, “prepared the report for Professor Ross.” Santos provided evidence, collected over a period of months in Angola, to discredit both Ross and his report. He claimed that Ross exaggerated the length of his stay and the extent of his labors.

As noted above, however, Santos’s chief target was not Ross himself but the Protestant, mainly Congregational, missionaries who assisted in the production of the Report. The language in Santos’s report reveals that he viewed missionaries’ nationality to be of greater significance than their religious identity. The importance of this point cannot be overemphasized because it goes to the heart of Portugal’s critique and backlash against the Ross Report. Portugal believed that Protestant missionaries were representatives of the United States government and Santos accuses missionaries of “betraying the good faith and sincerity that [missionaries] had always met with in the country in which they [are] guests.” Taking up Ross’s contention that Portugal was not fit to properly civilize Angolans, Santos argued that “American missionaries” were unsophisticated and therefore unable “to foresee the results to which Professor Ross’s report might lead…” The report concludes with a thinly veiled threat that American missionaries in their collaboration with their “compatriot” Ross “created in this Province

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236 Ibid, 6.
238 Ibid.
an extremely peculiar situation in relation to the Portuguese” which would not “be advantageous to the future exercise of the mission assigned to them….”239

The newspaper coverage in Portugal and Angola struck much the same tone, laying the blame for the Report on “American missions” and “foreigners.” Lisbon’s largest daily newspaper, Diario de Noticias, featured several front-page editorials on the topic, questioning why other nations were not also being investigated for labor issues and calling the Temporary Slavery Commission an “international police” force clearly biased against Portugal.240 Echoing Santos’s accusations of the United States’ complicity in the report, another editorial accused Ross of being an agent of American industry blackmailed into writing the report while threatening Portugal’s legitimacy as a colonial power.241

As more information about the Report emerged over the next few months, however, its details became clearer, and newspapers turned on the Portuguese government by accusing it of not properly representing the nation as equal to its European neighbors.242 Others asked how the League might question the morality of the Portuguese while simultaneously debating Germany’s entry into the League.243 In articles published in both Portugal and Angola, Portugal’s League representative General A. Freire de Andrade tried to calm an angry Portuguese public by assuring readers that

239 Ibid.
240 “As nossas colonias e os perigos que as estão ameaçando: a questão da escravatura levada agora perante a Sociedade das Nações,” Diario de Noticias, August 15, 1925. Portugal’s accusations were not entirely unjustified. In fact, the other European powers were extremely concerned about the TSC. They had initially worked to block its creation but later only succeeded in making sure that it was temporary. When deciding on the Commission’s leadership, Council officials struggled to make sure that it was not “packed” with colonial officials bent on “paralyzing” it. Three of the great European powers—France, Italy, and Britain—were permanent representatives while Portugal and Belgium had a rotating seat.
241 “Escravatura e Sociedade das Nações: consta que o governo português vai processar, por difamação, os americanos que nos acusaram,” Diario de Noticias, August 31, 1925.
242 “As nossas colonias: a propaganda necessária para enfrentar as perigos que ameaçam,” Diario de Noticias, September 14, 1925.
243 “As nossas colonias e a Sociedade das Nações,” Diario de Noticias, October 19, 1925.
Portugal was not being accused of outright slavery. However, his remarks were tempered by warnings that unless Portugal properly managed its colonies, it might lose them.\textsuperscript{244}

The strongest attacks against the Report came from General Gomes da Costa who, less than a year later, would lead the coup d’État which would successfully overthrow the Portuguese First Republic. In both \textit{Diario de Noticias} and Angola’s main Portuguese-language daily \textit{A Província de Angola}, Gomes accused the government of bringing the League’s criticism on itself by mismanaging the finances of the colonies and allowing a large number of foreigners to live in Angola, effectively outnumbering Portuguese and turning the allegiance of Angolans toward foreign nations.\textsuperscript{245}

Letters from Protestant missionaries stationed in Angola to colleagues in the United States at the time reveal that it was xenophobic comments such as those made by General da Costa that reverberated most with Portuguese settlers and officials in Angola. In retaliation for the Report, government officials closed hundreds of mission outstations, denied missionaries and pastors travel permits, and arrested Angolan pastors and teachers. Missionaries, meanwhile, were surprised by the heavy blame Governor Santos assigned to Congregational churches; they recalled his initial interviews with Congregational mission personnel, during which they had been “impressed with him and thought that he was making an honest investigation.”\textsuperscript{246} It was thus a surprise when, following the Report, foreign missionaries were ordered to report to local administrators

\textsuperscript{244} “O Problema da Escravatura: Importantíssimas afirmações ao ‘Diario de Noticias’ pelo general Freire de Andrade, \textit{Diario de Noticias}, October 12, 1925; General A. Freire de Andrade, “Trabalho indígena e as Colônias Portuguesas: A Escravatura e a Sociedade das Nações,” \textit{A Província de Angola}, November 11, 1925.

\textsuperscript{245} “A infiltração estrangeira nas colonias Portuguesas,” \textit{Diario de Noticias}, December 3, 1925.

and interrogated for hours. However, government officials were loathe to arrest the foreign missionaries, knowing the international outrage such actions would precipitate, and instead it sought to punish those Angolans who had been Ross’s informants. Missionaries, however, protected their sources. Rev. William Bell, director of the Bailundo mission station, remained adamant that he would not reveal his informants because “time and again it happened that those same natives would receive heavy punishment who had said anything in self defense or made statements which might incriminate the government.”

Despite Rev. Bell’s defiant response, however, many other missionaries tried to improve their relations with the colonial government. Fearing public outrage and government threats that mission activities would be permanently curtailed, some at the Congregational missions attempted to assure local administrators that “as a mission and as missionaries” they were in “no ways guilty of the least show of disloyalty against the government.”

Portugal’s underlying paranoia that the foreign missionaries now targeted for contributing to the Ross Report were actually agents of the US government continued to play a role in relations between the missionaries and colonial authorities. This paranoia was not totally unfounded. Indeed, American foreign policy actually undermined missionary attempts to distances themselves from any national association. Throughout the 1920s, the US government sought to minimize the government’s foreign entanglements. Instead of sponsoring official government investments, US officials

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encouraged private American citizens to invest and expand abroad. The Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover believed in the “mutuality of interests of the public and private spheres.”\textsuperscript{249} As part of this so-called Dollar Diplomacy, government officials believed economic expansion would replace traditional political and military involvements, thus fostering a mutuality of national security.\textsuperscript{250} In the eyes of the Portuguese government, the missionaries’ claims of independence seemed shallow and untrustworthy in light of these well-known Republican philosophies that emphasized “reform and human advance” through individual engagement rather than government action. Such was the case in Liberia where the US government was guaranteeing Harvey Firestone’s investment in Liberia to develop a rubber growing empire. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, meanwhile, was encouraging American businesses to “be more aggressive in developing overseas sources of strategic raw materials” and edging out the higher prices of traditional European suppliers. It is not all that surprising, then, that Portugal suspected Angola, rich in natural resources and rich with easily accessible Atlantic Ocean port cities, might be another target of “private” US interests.

Some missionaries, realizing that they could not deny their participation in the research for the Ross Report, attempted to disprove the assertion by colonial officials that the Ross Report was an “American” collaboration. Reflecting on his own experiences as a missionary in Angola, Lawrence Henderson explained that the Portuguese government’s “anti-Protestant argument was based on the false assumption that the churches supporting the missions in Angola were state churches.”\textsuperscript{251} In 1924, Galangue

\textsuperscript{249} Rosenberg and Foner, \textit{Spreading the American Dream : American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945}, 138.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, 139.
\textsuperscript{251} Henderson, \textit{The Church in Angola : A River of Many Currents}, 257.
mission director Henry McDowell was fighting this assumption. McDowell attempted to assure his mission’s local administrator that while he was “an American citizen and at all times…patriotic to my flag and country” he was “not in Angola primarily as an American citizen.”

McDowell assured the administrator that Protestant missionaries were like “Portuguese authorities” in Angola to see “the general progress and betterment of native life in every phase” and was confident “in the ultimate integrity of the Portuguese regime.”

Despite these missionaries’ best efforts, however, battles between Protestant missions and the colonial state progressed, taking on nationalistic tones. Catholic missionary Monsignor Alfredo Keiling, foreshadowing more intense battles to come, commented:

> The battle in which Catholic and Protestant missions are engaged is more than a battle of religious creeds, it is more than a battle of dogmas, it is more than a battle of theological principles: it is a battle of nationalities. In Angola, either Catholicism will win, which has always marched in Portuguese lands carrying the flag of five shields [Portuguese flag], or Protestantism will triumph…and the result—go investigate the history of all the revolts of blacks which have taken place in Angola and Mozambique.

The link Keiling draws between Protestantism and “the revolts of blacks” referred to long-held beliefs by Portuguese authorities that the Protestant Churches were nurturing Africans’ ideas of independence. The insinuation, clearly directed at a Portuguese audience, was that the triumph of Catholicism and Portuguese rule would mean peace for the colonies. Oliveira Santos echoed Portuguese concerns with missions by claiming that the Angolans were “under the influence of the protecting Missions” and “better

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252 “Letter from H.C. McDowell (missionary), Director, Bujei, Galangue to Portuguese official, in whose jurisdiction Bujei, Galangue Mission Station is located,” April 12 1926, ABC 15.1, v. 22, Document 85, ABCFM archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
253 Ibid.
acquainted with the English than with the Portuguese language.” Angolans, he claimed, were brainwashed by American missions and were “less familiar with the glories and grandeurs of Portugal than with the recent history of any other nationality, which is constantly dinned into their ears.” Protestant missions were a threat not because of their differing beliefs but because the Americans were denationalizing Portuguese subjects.

While missionaries attempted to de-emphasize their nationality and downplay their participation in the Ross Report, it was Angolans, ultimately, who suffered most for missionaries’ collaboration with Ross. The Bailundo mission was perhaps the most effected by Ross Report fallout. It was there, under the supervision of Rev. William Bell, that Ross had spent the most amount of time. Many of the mission’s outstations, the majority of which were administered by Angolans, were shut. Other outstations had village church leaders “called up from many quarters and plied with all sorts of questions with the evident desire of trapping them to make some statement derogatory to the government.” Many Angolans were arrested and held without food for weeks. Other outstations were raided and documents seized to be used later as evidence of their anti-Portuguese views. In some villages, elders were arrested and charged with treason.

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256 Ibid.
“being that they profess[ed] allegiance to the missionaries and not to the government.”

Portuguese citizens also attempted to intimidate Protestants. At Dondi mission, Portuguese settlers attempted to threaten missionaries by firing off guns in between their houses.  

The harshest response to the Report came in the form of mass punishment meted out by the colonial government to all Bailundo catequists. Colonial authorities had long tolerated the work of Protestant missions because of their obligation to permit religious freedom as agreed upon at the Berlin Conference in 1884. Indeed, Santos pointed to these agreements as evidence of the humanity of the Portuguese state. Knowing that they could not shut down the Bailundo mission station outright, colonial officials instead chose to drive off all Angolan Protestants. Portuguese officials forcefully recruited Angolan men and deported them to the diamond fields in Northern Angola. “The object,” according to one Angolan, “was to smash or seriously deplete the work at Bailundu by scattering them and sending them over 800 miles away from home.”

Other Angolans, many of them from the Congregational mission schools who were authorized to teach at outstations schools, were sent to sugar plantations for a ten month period.

Despite the colonial government’s best efforts to isolate and criminalize Protestant Angolans and missionaries, however, their actions had the opposite effect. Rather than diminishing the Congregational Church’s influence, government action solidified the hostility between the Protestant Church and the colonial state. It bolstered

261 Ibid.  
262 Ibid., 250  
263 Ibid, 251.  
the impression that the Protestant Church had strong and powerful connections outside of Portugal that were antithetical to Portuguese rule. Mission statistics, submitted to the colonial government and mission boards, confirm this impression. The enrollment in Bailundo mission station schools actually grew in 1926 as did the number of Angolans who visited the mission’s hospital. The Chilesso mission station saw a jump of 25,000 people between 1924 and 1928 in spite of persecution by the Portuguese government.265 The Dondi mission station, center of Congregational Church activity in Angola, also witnessed enormous growth. Between 1920 and 1930, church membership grew from 985 to 8,475 members in the outstations that were associated with the mission station.266 These numbers attest to the fact that, rather than staying away from missions, Angolans were increasingly utilizing them.

Closer observation of these mission numbers tells an important story. In the years following the Ross Report, Angolans became the central engine behind the Congregational Church’s spread and strength. The greatest growth in mission schools and churches did not occur at foreign-run mission stations, but at church outstations run by Angolans. In fact, school enrollment in North American-run mission schools actually dropped, while the number of children enrolled in Angolan-run outstation schools ballooned.267 The Angolan Protestants who ran the outstations had received their own educations at mission schools and upon graduation returned to their villages to open schools, provide medical services, and create local churches. So effective were these Angolan pastors and teachers in bringing in their fellow Angolans to the church, that

265 Caixa 433, Archivo Historico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, Angola.
267 Caixa 433, Archivo Historico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, Angola.
despite the dangers of this association that the Ross Report fall-out had demonstrated, church membership bloomed. Thus, although foreign missionaries continued to dominate positions of authority in the Protestant Church in Angola, Protestant Angolans became the main contacts for the Church. The reforms of mission tactics, discussed in the previous chapter, designed to include more Angolan practices also contributed to this growth.

African-driven church growth was, in fact, a process occurring across southern Africa.268 As colonial governments began restricting the movement of missionaries, Africans, as in Angola, educated at mission schools took the skills they learned back to their villages. Their ability to communicate these teachings led to the expansion of churches well beyond what would have been possible for a small group of foreign missionaries. As was the case with the Congregational Church in Angola, as Africans became the primary movers of the church, control of the churches’ future also began to shift from missions to outstations and from foreign missionary to local pastor.

Out of the upheaval that followed the publication of the Ross Report, a group of young and recently graduated Protestant Angolans emerged for whom this period proved to be a defining moment. These men and women would become the backbone of the Angolan Protestant Church in the years to come. Their influence among both the Protestant missions and the general Umbundu population would make them powerful adversaries of the Portuguese state and many would face violent recrimination and even death at the hands of Portuguese police in later years of anti-colonial war.

One of the greatest successes of Congregational Angolan pastors was their ability to follow Angolans into the plantations and forced labor camps. At their own initiative, Protestant Angolan pastors moved their families into these areas to reconstruct Protestant communities and churches. According to one report,

Many of the drafted laborers and many of the families are from...[the] highland Christian communities and the people back home feel a deep responsibility for those of their number who have been taken away and also for the thousands of others who are not attached to the church, but for whom there is no other hope in [the work] camps and compounds.\textsuperscript{269}

Among the first people to start this practice of bringing the Church to Angolan workers interned away from home was a group of young Angolan male pastors. Their work would leave a powerful legacy in both the country’s politics and the Angolan Protestant Church. Jessé Chipenda was among those who would have the most lasting influence, both through his own labors and those of his sons, one of whom helped found the \textit{Movimento Popular de Liberação de Angola} (MPLA) in the 1960s.

Chipenda was born in Bailundo in 1903 to a successful and wealthy trader. According to one story, Chipenda strongly desired to attend the Protestant schools in order to learn to read and write, but his father forbade it. In 1916, forced by his father to choose between family and his religion, Chipenda chose the Protestant Church, and moved out of his village and into the Protestant Christian community that bordered it.\textsuperscript{270} He completed primary school at the Bailundo mission and was sent in 1920 to the Currie Institute at Dondi mission station to attend high school. Chipenda graduated from the Institute in 1924 with a teaching certificate.

One year before Jessé Chipenda’s graduation, the British railway contractor, Pauling and Company, was hired to build the new railway line that would extend from

\textsuperscript{269} “Letter from Dr. Reuling, #2,” January 26, 1949, Doc. 194, 35-29 Missionary Circular Letters Africa, David M. Stowe Papers, Yale Divinity School Archives, Yale University.

\textsuperscript{270} Henderson, \textit{The Church in Angola : A River of Many Currents}, 70.
the port of Lobito on the Atlantic Ocean to the interior of Angola, along the border with Congo and Zambia. Because of the town’s proximity to Lobito, the majority of the workers compelled to undertake the construction were Angolans from the Bailundo area. When Chipenda returned from school he decided, in consultation with others, to move to Lobito in order to work as a catechist.‡ He received government approval and sought work as a carpenter with Pauling and Company, which association allowed him easy access to potential new converts to the Church, as well as the opportunity minister to Protestant Angolans who had also been contracted, and to run a night school for adults.

Chipenda was also the main contact for Angolans who were forced to leave Bailundo following the Ross Report. In the years that followed the Report, Chipenda extended his work at the port to the in-land sugar plantations of Catumbella. The Portuguese were not blind to the influence that these native pastors had on Angolans. Pastors such as Jessé Chipenda were in fact among the first to be confronted and imprisoned at the slightest of Angolan unrest.

Another classmate of Jessé Chipenda was Lote Malheiro Savimbi. Like Chipenda, Lote Savimbi entered the schools of the Congregational Church near his village at the Chilesso Mission Station. From there, he went to the Currie Institute at Dondi to finish his studies. While at Dondi, Lote Savimbi became good friends with Rev. Curtis McDowell, who founded the Galangue mission station, and accompanied him in 1919 on a one-hundred mile trek from Dondi to Chilesso. Savimbi graduated from the Currie Institute in 1921 and, rather than taking a job at the Chilesso Mission Station, instead went to work for the Benguela Railroad. Although missionaries condemned his decision, this did end his involvement with the Congregational Church. Savimbi used the

‡ Ibid, 83.
mobility provided by the railroad to establish Congregational Churches all along the railroad but “was transferred frequently because Catholic priests did not appreciate having such a fervent Evangelical in their parishes.”272 According to one missionary, despite taking a secular job, Savimbi “probably founded more churches than most pastors.”273

Similar to Jessé Chipenda and Lote Malheiro Savimbi, dozens of other Angolan pastors came of age during the persecution of Protestants that began with the reaction to the Ross Report. These men, as well as the woman who ran the mission and out-station women’s schools, would become the backbone of the Protestant church in Angola. They transformed missions, out-stations, and churches into Angolan spaces that existed beyond the power of the Portuguese government and separate from foreign missionaries.

When Congregational missionaries such as Rev. William Bell and Rev. J. A. Steed contacted the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, they did so as part of a generation of missionaries interested in working across national boundaries towards the creation of a peaceful transnational world. Their concern was that the Portuguese government, entrusted with the duty of “civilizing” Angolans, was showing more barbarism than humanity. By taking their concerns to the International Missionary Council, missionary and ABCFM officials demonstrated their belief in the ability of transnational organizations to act in the greater interests of humanity, outside narrow national concerns.

272 As had been the case since the missions’ founding at the end of the nineteenth century, Catholic missions often felt competitive with the successful Protestant missions. Ibid., 166
273 Ibid.
The Ross Report did succeed in demonstrating that concerted action among global organizations could pose a challenge to national governments. Portugal was humiliated on a global stage and the immediate result was to stop temporarily government recruitment of African laborers for private business interests. The League of Nation’s Temporary Slavery Commission eventually forwarded the Ross Report to the more permanent International Labor Organization, thus opening up larger discussions about forced labor in European colonies and eventually about the legitimacy of colonialism itself.

The transnational successes of the Report were nevertheless overshadowed by the nationalisms it seemed to reinforce. The Portuguese saw the missionary-assisted report as the handiwork of the United States, rather than as an international referendum on Portuguese colonialism. The Report advocated reforms based on an American model: agricultural and religious schooling aimed at self-sufficiency and born from the experiences of former slaves in the American South following the Civil War. In the eyes of defensive European colonial powers, the Report said more about American political aims than about Portuguese rule. While the aim may have been to create an extra-national document, the reality was that Ross was advocating, and the IMC was endorsing, a model of distinctly national origins.

The decision to join or create a transnational network is a privileged decision that presumes one has a nationality from which to move. Under colonialism, Angolans did not have this privilege. While Congregational missionaries and Portuguese colonial authorities were busy debating and defending their respective positions, Protestant Angolans were using the tools learned in Congregational missions and churches to begin
the consolidation of their own power. The freedom the Congregational Church offered Angolan teachers and pastors provided Angolans with a means to maintain and build political alliances, support networks, and community organizations. These moves signaled the beginnings of a power shift within the Congregational Church from foreign missions to locally-run outstations.

The turmoil and change that defined the era of the Ross Report would intensify in the coming decades. Missionaries continued to defend their supra-national position and the Portuguese government continued to accuse Protestant missions of harboring anti-colonial ideas and terrorists. Meanwhile, Congregational Angolans expanded their village outstations and effectively eclipsed the power of the foreign missions to control its own growth and message.

In the following decades, Congregational missionaries and Protestant Angolans continued to prosper. Missionaries continued to affirm that their mission was a peaceful one aimed at development and not at national liberation. They were able maintain this stance throughout World War II, when, owing to Portugal’s neutrality in the global conflict, the situation in Angola remained relatively calm. Angolan domestic politics would change, however, after the war when the rising tide of anti-colonial wars and a new foreign relations stance by the Kennedy Administration in 1961, which favored African political parties over European, made missionaries’ claims of neutrality difficult to maintain and justify. Some Congregational missionaries would profess their commitment to an independent Angola. Most missionaries, however, and their related transnational church societies, would remain steadfastly neutral and committed to the idea of a transnational world. National liberation and the nationalism it spurned were
antithetical to the very idea of a global community that interwar reformers had tried so
hard to create. But as the Ross Report demonstrated, the world these reformers
envisioned was western and, in the case of Angola, the way to get there was on a path
fashioned after an American model. This vision was easy to maintain as long as those
individuals creating it shared a common background. The collapse of European
colonialism would alter this dynamic but the new pressures of the cold war would replace
it. Rather then fighting European barbarism, missionaries were posed to fight communist
atheism while continuing to uphold American-style development. Nevertheless, the
Portuguese would continue to persecute Protestants, simultaneously calling them “anti-
colonial” and “communist.”

While anti-colonial organizing would occur in Congregational churches and
missions, it was not by foreign missionaries. Rather, the power shift from foreign-run
missions to locally- run outstations that began in the 1920s reached maturity in the 1960s
and 1970s. By that time, there was little missionaries could do to control the
underground political organizing. In a real sense, the transnationalism upheld by the
Congregational missionaries was harboring the growing nationalism of Angolans. The
story of how this came to be, what it meant, and how it ended with missionaries
questioning their own complicity in colonialisms’ worst offences are the subjects of the
next chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR:
“FROM THE FREELAND OF ANGOLA”: GLOBAL POLITICS, WANING MISSIONARY POWER, AND ANGOLAN ANTI-COLONIALISM IN THE POST-WAR ERA

Relations between the Portuguese colonial state and the Congregational missions normalized following turmoil that defined the Congregational missionary experience in the 1920s. Government officials, now under the command of António de Oliveira Salazar, begrudgingly tolerated mission activities and foreign missionaries worked to regain officials’ trust in order to keep their churches, schools, and hospitals open. Despite the colonial government’s attempts to stop it, over the next thirty years Angolan pastors, teachers, and students expanded the Congregational Church exponentially. The tensions of the Ross Report years, however, did not go away nor did the processes the Report set into motion. It was only a matter of time before something caused relations to explode again. This opportunity arose in 1961 and continued for the rest of the decade, as Portuguese actions in Angola again were the subject of international investigation, reflecting the era’s evolving concerns.

A close analysis of the careers of missionaries and the Angolan activists who would become the missions’ heirs sheds light on the intersection of missionary politics and geopolitical concerns of the post-World War II era. This chapter sets the stage of the tumultuous decade of the 1960s. In the years after the publication of the Ross Report, geopolitical relations changed significantly. The United States emerged from World War II a powerful nation, dwarfing European nations destroyed by the war. Portugal, already much poorer than its northern European neighbors, approached these changing power dynamics with a combination of fear and antagonism, as well as a desperate desire to hold on to its colonial dependencies. Portugal’s anxieties about changing geopolitical
structures unfolded at the United Nations where its conduct in the Angolan anti-colonial war sparked Security Council investigations. Unlike earlier decades, the United States government chose to support these investigations. This move signaled American support for newly independent nations over those of its traditional European allies and heightened Portugal’s concerns and enmity.

The role that Protestant missionary dynamics played in the UN discussions has been both underappreciated and under-examined by the historical actors and scholars alike and is absent from the broader dialogue about the nature and shape of evolving US power during era.274 For decades, the Portuguese government reluctantly tolerated Protestant missions. As it had for years, Portugal conflated the Protestant missionaries’ approaches with those of the US government and, in light of the situation in the UN, Protestant missionaries were viewed not only ambassadors of the wrong religion but also of the wrong government. Portuguese officials believed the Protestant missions were primarily responsible for ongoing anti-colonial movements and they devoted significant energy toward trying to contain them. Despite their convictions, however, Portuguese efforts were misguided. Since the 1930s, rather than growing, the power of foreign Protestant missions, in fact, had been waning. Real mission power, and by extension anti-colonial organizing, was increasingly exercised by Angolans themselves.

Congregational missionaries, whose networks reached further afield than either the Catholic Church or other Protestant missions, were themselves in denial of their diminishing power and overlooked the anti-colonial furor gaining strength under their

noses. Forced to contend with an increasingly hostile colonial state, the missionaries chose to focus on maintaining services for their faithful and avoiding trouble with Portuguese officials. While they succeeded in keeping their schools and hospitals open, the missionaries’ avoidance of conflict with the Portuguese government amounted to a silent affirmation of colonial policies and contributed to colonialism’s perpetuation. The irony of this situation was that for the first time, United States foreign policy was aimed at harnessing the idealism and promoting the independence of the same individuals the Congregational missionaries had sought to empower. In an unusual realigning of interests, however, the Congregational missionaries’ desire to maintain their decades-old position was stronger than their desire to align with the policies that were aimed at supporting Angolan independence. In fact, the landscape at missions was far more nuanced and dynamic than either the Portuguese or missionaries acknowledged. Mission relations exploded in the 1960s, prompted by the increased violence of the colonial state, the frustration with the missionaries’ refusal to take a firm stand against colonialism, and the overall anti-colonial climate in Africa. The missionaries’ blindness to the colonialisms of the mission and determination to maintain relations with the colonial government allowed for the completion of a process that began nearly forty years earlier in the wake of the Ross Report. Mission-educated Angolans began to enlist Protestant teachings and re-appropriate the Congregational missionary movement as a means of ending the colonialism of the state and the missions themselves.

Only one year after Edward Ross published his report on Portuguese labor practices in Angola in 1925, political upheaval struck Portugal. In 1926, a military coup
deposed the nation’s First Democratic Republic. Within a few years, Finance Minister António de Oliveira Salazar would become Portugal’s Prime Minister and remain in that position for the next forty years. The financial, religious, and ideological changes instituted by Salazar’s government forever altered Portugal and its colonies. Salazar and his ministers called their reforms the New State (Estado Novo) and they hoped to restore Portugal to its previous financial and religious glory when it was among the greatest trading powers in the world and worked to spread Catholicism throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

A crucial component of Salazar’s Estado Novo was the re-establishment of Portugal’s control over its colonies. Unlike other colonizing nations such as France and Britain, Portugal’s influence in its colonies remained relatively limited until well into the twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century, Portugal, unable to convince farmers and other workers to settle in Angola, which was then considered a backwater of the empire, essentially turned the West African nation into a penal colony, sent degregados (exiles) to settle in Angola in exchange for suspended prison sentences. In the twentieth century, Salazar sought to use the untapped riches of Portugal’s overseas colonies to revive the struggling nation. As part of this approach, the government began a massive plan to resettle poor white Portuguese citizens in the African colonies, particularly in Angola, which continued to be considered an undesirable country in which

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275 This is one of many reasons why the presence of foreign missionaries, well-integrated into rural society, was so threatening.
276 Portugal had suspended sending degregados to its other African colonies decades before Angola. As a result, Mozambique, São Tomé, and Portugal’s other African colonies lacked the same stigma associated with Angola. Angolan writer, José Eduardo Agualusa, chronicles this world in his novel Nação Crioula. Also see: Gerald J. Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
to settle.\textsuperscript{277} After World War II, the Portuguese embarked on a more organized effort to recruit poor white nationals to emigrate to Angola in exchange for farm land and the promise of a better life. These settlements would work simultaneously to spread Portuguese influence into rural Angolan areas where the government’s presence was limited.

The consolidation of Portugal’s power in Angola and the renewed efforts to assert Portuguese influence had significant social and political implications for Angolans. The resettlement of Portuguese citizens in Angola displaced many Angolans who for years had filled the employment gap in semi-skilled and skilled trades. The jobs were now given to emigrant Portuguese settlers. Farmland for these new arrivals was also taken from Angolan farmers and villages, many of whom were forced to relocate to new villages. The most obvious effect of \textit{Estado Novo} in the central highlands, where the Congregational Church was active, was the mass displacement of Angolan villages and the seizure of land that was to be turned over to new Portuguese émigrés. In the Highlands of Angola, the Congregational Church stepped in as an organizational replacement for the village life and social structure that the state had ruptured.

Continuing a process that began in the 1920s with the incursion of the railroad, the Congregational church slowly came to replace important community structures and community structures slowly came to take on the practices of the Church.\textsuperscript{278} For years, missionaries and Angolans had operated relatively independently from the colonial government. Salazar’s desire to have more control over colonial finances and


\textsuperscript{278} See chapter two for more discussion of this process in the 1920s; see also Linda Marinda Heywood, \textit{Contested Power in Angola: 1840s to the Present} (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), Chapter 4.
administration meant that Congregational mission could no longer work with such anonymity.

The First Republic’s commitment to the separation of church and state was among the most important reforms that allowed Protestant churches to grow. Salazar reversed these reforms in his first days in power, and in 1926 and again in 1941, he renewed the state’s commitment to the Catholic Church. In an agreement with the Holy See, Portugal made the Catholic Church an institution of the Portuguese state working to further its national and colonial aims in its overseas territories.279 As a branch of the government, the Catholic Church was charged with educating and socializing Africans for eventual assimilation into Portuguese society.280 With the full force of the colonial state behind it, Catholic missions bloomed in Angola faster than there were individuals to staff them.281 The Catholic Church’s attempts to recruit Angolan converts, however, did not undo the work of Protestant missions. On the contrary, in the Congregational Church, Angolan pastors, students, and teachers greatly extended the reach of the Protestant Church into villages. With the Catholic Church now firmly within the hands of the state, membership in Protestant churches took on a renewed subversive undertone, thus making the decision to join the Protestant church a potentially empowering anti-colonial decision.

The decision to join the Protestant Church rather than the Catholic Church, however, was not without its hazards. In the wake of the Ross Report, Portuguese government officials remained suspicious of the Protestant Church and its missions. Hoping to curb their appeal among Angolans, colonial officials strategically located

280 Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*.
281 In response to Catholic mission staffing shortages, Portugal recruited missionaries from other European nations, particularly France. This created a certain amount of discord given that the state expected these foreign nationals to “Portugalisde” Angolans.
large, well-funded Catholic mission stations in close proximity to the most popular Protestant missions. At Dondi, for example, the local Catholic mission station was located just a few kilometers down the road. Congregational missionaries struggled constantly to maintain strong congregations in the face of these Catholic Churches. For Angolans, the potential rewards were great for joining the Catholic Church over the foreign-run Protestant Church. In contrast to the Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, including the Congregational Church, received no legal recognition from the Portuguese government. In practical terms, the Protestant churches had de facto recognition that required them to submit reports to the state about schools and hospitals. For Angolan Protestants this semi-official status created, at a minimum, immense bureaucratic difficulty. Since Protestant churches were not legally recognized, neither then were marriages or baptisms. This was particularly burdensome for students wishing to register for school who were required to present a birth certificate. The government allowed Catholic baptism certificates to be presented in place of a birth certificate, but not Protestant baptism records. Instead, Angolans had to request a birth certificate at the civil registry, which was often miles away from the home or mission. These applications “frequently involved a twenty-to-fifty-mile walk to the nearest civil registry and an indefinite wait until the functionary had time or disposition to attend the petitioner.”

As Portugal was renewing its commitment to the Catholic Church and the development of its colonies, the world’s global powers entered into the Second World War. Portugal remained neutral in the conflict and was thus spared the destruction that befell France, the United Kingdom, Germany and surrounding nations. However, it was not untouched by the war. Rather, Salazar and others in power sought to find ways to

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profit from it by playing both sides. Though it rented air force bases in the Azores Islands to Allied powers, Portugal was also Germany’s main supplier of wolfram, a mineral essential to making armaments.²⁸³

In Angola, Congregational missions mostly contended with shortages of staff and resources that resulted from the US’s involvement in the war. Many potential missionaries in the United States chose to join the war effort. Some who were already in Angola left the mission field to lend their medical skills to the battlefront. Despite the difficulty of safe sea travel during the war, various Congregational Church officials managed to travel to Angola for field visits throughout the 1940s. John Reuling, head of the ABCFM Presidential Committee, visited Angola in 1946. His reports to ABCFM officials describe mission stations that continued to thrive despite government pressures and reduced staff.²⁸⁴ With the war’s front so far away and given Portugal’s neutrality, Angola continued to function much the way it had before the war.²⁸⁵ It would not be until the war’s end and the reshuffling of global alliances in the opening stages of the cold war that global politics would directly affect Angola.

In the years following World War II, Portugal jockeyed to position itself as a power player in post-war diplomacy. Its tickets to global importance were the air force

²⁸⁴ For these reports and others consult: Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Stowe Papers.
²⁸⁵ Reuling’s reports are mostly concerned with the continued tensions between missions, the Portuguese state, and the Catholic missions. The same issues that affected missions before the war continued to be an issue during it. For example, Catholic missions were attempting to gain from the Congregational Church’s staffing shortages. Reuling’s reports explain that most Angolan pastors were located from 7 – 14 days walk from their mission stations. Cut off from contact with other pastors, they became reliant on the visits of the foreign missionaries to give them moral support and offer advice and help. Reduced mission staff meant that these visits only occurred one or twice a year. Reuling cautioned that Catholic fathers were soliciting these isolated Protestant pastors to join the Catholic mission where they would receive greater attention and guidance. For more on this see: Yale Divinity School Archives and Manuscripts, Stowe Papers, Group 156, Series V, Box 35.
bases on the Azores Islands, an archipelago located in the Atlantic Ocean about 900 miles off the coast of Portugal. During the war, the bases were invaluable to the Allies and after the war, they would continue to be an essential asset in the US military’s ability to ward off communist incursions throughout the Soviet Union in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. In 1945, only six months after the US and Portugal signed the bases agreement, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a report stressing that they attached “the highest importance on the acquisition by the United States of right to operate on a long-term basis air and naval facilities in the Azores.”

In 1950 Portugal and the US finally agreed on the terms for the Azores Agreement. After nearly a year of negotiations, Portugal granted the US access to the Azores bases but included in the agreement a “Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement” which stipulated that “if requested by Portugal, the United States would consent to the transfer of arms provided to Portugal under the Mutual Defense Agreement from Portugal to any Portuguese colonial territory.”

Thus, the United States government became contractually bound to Portuguese colonial territories. On the ground in Portugal, America’s renewed and strengthened ties with the country meant that, in the minds of both Portuguese and Angolans, the so-called “American Churches” would have even greater difficulty separating their missionary work from the policies of their national government. This difficulty would further complicate relations between Congregational missionaries, the Portuguese state, and Angolans.

Despite attempts to integrate themselves politically with other European nations, by 1950 Portugal was increasingly politically isolated. The Iberian nation was one of the

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286 Rodrigues, To the “Top of the Mountain” and “Down to the Valley”: The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency, 34.
287 Ibid, 36.
few remaining colonial powers that refused to discuss decolonization or democratization of its own political system. Portugal used the US’s need for the Azores bases to parlay an invitation to become a founding member of the North American Trade Organization (NATO), the only member state that was non-democratic.\textsuperscript{288} Portugal was also one of the last European nations to join the United Nations in 1955, and only after it made its colonies “overseas territories,” thereby legally circumventing the requirements needed to join the organization. Throughout the 1950s relations between the United States and Portugal continued to depend on the American desire to retain the Azores bases and Portugal’s concerns about threats to its colonies. In the United Nations’ General Assembly, the United States stood by its ally and abstained from voting on several resolutions concerned with colonialism, including one that questioned whether Portugal’s overseas provinces of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea were, in fact, “Non-Self-Governing Territories.”\textsuperscript{289}

By mid-century it was impossible to deny the progress of decolonization movements sweeping across former Western colonies. Nineteen-sixty became known as the “Year of Africa” in which seventeen former European colonies gained their independence. The decolonization of the former Belgian Congo (the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) had especially important psychological and practical influences on Angola, with whom it shared one of its longest borders and a number of ethnic groups. The election of Patrice Lumumba to Prime Minister and his message of a unified nation appealed to Angolans who, like the Congolese, shared a history of ethnic and linguistic differences that were often exploited by colonial governments to sow

\textsuperscript{288} Ibid, 36.  
\textsuperscript{289} Ibid, 48.
discord among its subjects. The DRC and neighboring Republic of Congo (sometimes
called Congo-Brazzaville) became bases for Angolan political organizing and clandestine
Portuguese language radio broadcasts that kept Angolans informed of the political
circumstances in both neighboring countries and around the world.

The African anti-colonial movements of the early 1960s forever altered
Portuguese colonialism. Whatever legitimacy Portugal may have drawn from other
neighboring European colonizers and their policies evaporated. In 1961 widespread,
vigorous resistance to Portuguese rule came to Angola. Portugal’s brutal response to the
Angolan uprisings attracted international attention and instigated an investigation by the
United Nations. The anti-colonial uprisings began in the Northern cotton growing
regions of Angola in early February 1961, and quickly spread throughout the colony.
Portuguese officials responded to the anti-colonial rebellion with waves of terror. They banned all foreigners from visiting the effected northern areas and shut down all
Protestant mission stations that it suspected were assisting in the anti-colonial
movement. According to the few reports that made their way out of the area, an
estimated 20,000 Angolans were murdered and nearly 150,000 people fled to neighboring
Congo. In Luanda, approximately 200 Africans stormed the country’s largest political
prison upon rumor that prisoners were going to be transferred to Portugal. None of the
prisoners were freed. Several African pastors affiliated with the Methodist Church

Marcum also reports that Portuguese officials portrayed the violence as “black heathen tribalists”
attacking “white Christian Portuguese.” In response to this characterization, scholar James Duffy
commented “…if savagery and atrocities provide the index of tribalism, Portuguese soldiers and colonists
are no less atavistic than their opponents.” John A. Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, Vol. 1 and 2

As mentioned in chapter one, the northern areas of Angola were served by the British Baptist
Missionary Society. As with the Congregational missions in the highlands, the Portuguese government
strongly suspected that the Baptist missions were an anti-colonial influence in the area. When fighting in
the North began, the Portuguese government immediately moved to close all Baptist mission stations.

Ibid, 128.
reported that they witnessed several “clean-up” operations in response to the attacks.\textsuperscript{293} Protestors also attacked the various other government offices. Despite the fact that the Portuguese government had long been concerned with anti-colonial organizing, according to US Embassy reports, the Portuguese “were caught completely by surprise” by the attacks in Luanda.\textsuperscript{294} The following day at a funeral for seven Portuguese security guards killed in the previous day’s attacks, European mourners chased down and killed African bystanders whom they believed had been involved in the killings.\textsuperscript{295} In response, the streets of Luanda filled with angry protestors and fighting broke out across the city. As it had been in the North, the Portuguese response to the Angolan attacks was swift and brutal. The American Consul in Luanda reported that Luanda was “full of troops” and that “a company of rangers had been transported from Lisbon to Luanda.”\textsuperscript{296} Seeking to capitalize on Portuguese civilian anger, the police organized civilian groups who nightly attacked Angolans in the city’s \textit{muceques} (African townships). Witnesses to the violence reported that “the whites hauled Africans from their flimsy one-room huts, shot them, and left their bodies in the streets.”\textsuperscript{297} A Methodist missionary reported to Time Magazine that he was personally aware of the deaths of three hundred people, and reported a cab driver who “saw five trucks loaded with corpses driven out to a mass burial in the bush.”\textsuperscript{298}

\textsuperscript{293} As generalized fighting spread across the North, missionaries and officials reported “roving bands of Africans” attacking “any Portuguese within their reach.” As Rev. Parson of the Baptist church explained, “There were mutilations. It was a chilling demonstration of what the release of long pent-up feelings can do.” ibid., 126

\textsuperscript{294} Rodrigues, \textit{To the “Top of the Mountain” and “Down to the Valley”: The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency}, 94.

\textsuperscript{295} Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}.

\textsuperscript{296} Rodrigues, \textit{To the “Top of the Mountain” and “Down to the Valley”: The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency}, 94.

\textsuperscript{297} Marcum, \textit{The Angolan Revolution}.

\textsuperscript{298} Ibid.
In addition to military violence, colonial officials gave new and expanded powers to their secret police force, *Policia Internacional e de Defensa do Estado* (PIDE). Originally created at the start of *Estado Novo* in 1933, after World War II the secret service organization developed a reputation for clandestine brutality that terrorized the residents of Portugal’s overseas colonies. This was particularly the case for Protestant African converts. The government traced many signs of anti-Portuguese or anti-colonial sentiment back to Protestant churches. In the words of one official, these missions were Angola’s “cancer.”

In the Northern regions of Angola, where violence commenced and the response of Portugal was particularly brutal, the governor of one of the key areas of rebellion argued, “one of the fundamental causes [of anti-colonial violence] is the missionary program of the various Protestant sects.” These missionary societies, according to the governor, “functioned simultaneously as a front for Communist ideas and international doctrines” that were “aimed basically to separate us from the indigenous population so that the countries they represent can gain new markets for their products or obtain raw materials.”

His paranoia was not isolated. In 1962, the Portuguese newspaper *Diario de Manha* expressed similar sentiment. Quoting a Catholic missionary, the newspaper explained that Protestant missionaries “who enter Portuguese Africa carrying the Bible as a disguise are really agents of American capitalism here….

Their aim is to implant United States materialism…in Angola.”

A report by the colonial government had much the same to say. It warned of the “pernicious

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301 Ibid., 275

influence which the Protestant missions exercise through individuals who made harmful statements and propaganda.” Further, these ideas, “generate admiration and enthusiasm for certain anti-Portuguese ideologies and movements…[and] surreptitiously undermine the idea of Portuguese citizenship…in the service of ideas inimical to Portugal.”

Repeating concerns originally expressed in relation to the Ross Report, the colonial government worried that Protestant missions were “neutraliz[ing] efforts for Portugalization [of Angolans]… and occupy[ing] key positions which make it easy for them to implant ideas contrary to our interests.”

Portugal’s response to violence in the North and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Angolan immediately attracted the attention of the United Nations and put Angola at the center of US and Portuguese relations. The initial UN action came on February 20, 1961, nearly a month before the most violent Portuguese action in northern Angola. On that day, the Liberian Ambassador, George Padmore, requested a meeting of the Security Council “to deal with the crisis in Angola at an early date to be agreed upon by members of the council.” This request immediately sparked a Portuguese campaign to have the issue taken off the agenda of the Security Council.

As it had throughout the postwar period, Portugal turned to the United States as its best ally in an effort to fend off a UN investigation. However, by 1961 the political environment and foreign policy of the United States had changed significantly. That year, John F. Kennedy was elected president and he came to office with a mandate to significantly alter American foreign policy towards the decolonizing and still-colonized

304 Ibid.
305 As quoted in Rodrigues, To the "Top of the Mountain" and "Down to the Valley": The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency, 224.
nations of the world, in particular those in Africa.\textsuperscript{306} Before arriving in the White House Kennedy took a hard-line against European nations that persisted in retaining their colonies by force. He first expressed this position publicly on the floor of the Senate in 1957, when he denounced the French war in Algeria. As chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, he warned the Senate, “call it nationalism, call it anticolonialism, call it what you will, the word is out and spreading like wildfire in nearly a thousand languages and dialects—that it is no longer necessary to remain forever in bondage.”\textsuperscript{307} Foreshadowing his presidential policy, in 1959 Kennedy told his campaign aide that he “wanted to run for president to initiate ‘a new relationship’ between the United States and the developing world.”\textsuperscript{308} This language was aimed not only at newly independent nations but also at the large communities of black American voters on whom Kennedy’s election would hinge.\textsuperscript{309}

The UN investigations into Angola were the first test of the Kennedy administration’s lofty language. Over the next three years Portugal faced international ridicule and pressure based on its violent response in northern Angola and its continued presence in southern Africa. Much of this debate would take place at the United Nations and would try the Kennedy administration’s pledge to take sides with the new nations of the postcolonial world. Immediately following the Liberian motion, Kennedy and his

\textsuperscript{306} Kennedy’s resolve to befriend the new nations of the world was not simply a reflection of his administration’s foreign policy calculation but was intimately tied to the domestic climate of the United States in the early 1960s. For more on this see: Penny M. Von Eschen, \textit{Race Against Empire : Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Brenda Gayle Plummer, \textit{Rising Wind : Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960} (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mahoney, \textit{JFK : Ordeal in Africa}.

\textsuperscript{307} As quoted in Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace Corps," in \textit{Empire and Revolution : The United States and the Third World since 1945}, ed. Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 124.

\textsuperscript{308} Ibid.

advisors considered what the US response should be to the UN investigations. Division within the administration coalesced around two opposing views: Africanists, who believed that the US should support African nationalist interests despite the damage that might cause to traditional alliances; and Europeanists, mainly in the Department of Defense, but also scattered throughout the State Department who argued that siding with Liberia in the Security Council and sidestepping traditional NATO and Atlantic alliances was too great a risk to take in the cold war climate, no matter what benefits that might be gained by having a “foothold in emerging nations.”

They cited a Department of Defense report that underscored the importance of Portugal and the Azores bases as a “major requirement in [the United States’] strategic plans.” African advocates, however, disagreed. They argued that the Portuguese colonies should not be bypassed by the “‘winds of change’” sweeping Africa. And, they warned, failure to recognize liberation movements in Portugal’s colonies would “‘only result in increasing opposition and violence’” escalating the risk that southern Africa would be mired in war and thus become a target for Soviet intervention. Despite objections in his own government, Kennedy told the American UN delegation to support Liberia’s request for an investigation of violence in northern Angola.

Comparing Portugal’s statements at the UN with its domestic and colonial memoranda reveals that Portugal officials drew a straight line between the so-called foreign terrorists in Angola and the Protestant missions and churches they believed were

310 Rodrigues, To the "Top of the Mountain" and "Down to the Valley": The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency, 102.  
311 Ibid.  
312 The Bureau for African Affairs during the Kennedy Administration became its own entity. During the Eisenhower Administration, African Affairs had been run through Bureau of European Affairs. This change, in and of itself, is emblematic of the change in American foreign policy with regard to this region under the Kennedy administration; ibid., 100-101.
supporting them. Portugal’s reaction to American participation in the vote was hostile. It argued that foreign invaders were instigating the violence in Angola, supported by communists. In Portugal’s view, the American support for an investigation of the Portuguese response to this violence only served to legitimize the terrorists who had invaded Portuguese sovereign territory.\(^{313}\) The Portuguese insisted that, although instigated by outside invaders, the Angola conflict was an internal affair over which the United Nations had no jurisdiction.\(^{314}\) Further, Portugal claimed that these foreign elements were not acting alone. Indeed, the root cause of Portugal’s anti-colonial problem was not fomented by Angolans but by the foreign, mostly American, Protestant missionaries who had become Angola’s cancer.\(^{315}\) By solving the problem internally, Portugal could rid itself of these Protestant, anti-Portuguese elements while avoiding a potentially difficult diplomatic situation with its chief cold war ally.

Just as domestic politics influenced the Kennedy administration’s foreign policy towards Africa, so too did Portugal’s conviction that Protestant missions were central to the anti-colonial war shape their proposed strategy over how to end it. Officials from PIDE and local administrative posts recorded the minute activities, speeches, contacts, and writings of missionaries and Protestant Angolans. Every contact that either foreign missionaries or Angolans had with the United States, the UN, or any other international organization perceived to be anti-Portuguese, was labeled both seditious and communist.


\(^{314}\) This was, and continues to be, a frequent response of repressive regimes to UN scrutiny of their crimes; “Relatorio de conversa, Reuniao do Conselho de Seguranca da ONU sobre a questao de Angola” 22 June 1961, AOS/CO/NE-30B, Document 5-9, Folder 3. Arquivo do Salazar (Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Portugal).

To the Portuguese, there was little daylight between being a nationalist and being a communist—the two categories were one and the same.\footnote{316} Portugal’s attacks on the Protestant missions, however, were not based on logic. The same missions they accused of having communist sympathies were also the places officials attacked for their apparent associations with the US government. The Portuguese conviction that US government officials were somehow coordinating Protestant missionary activities only further complicated relations between the two nations and their policies towards individuals on the ground. Therefore, while the issue of Protestant churches and missions only arose a few times in official discussions between the two governments, for the Portuguese it was fundamental to their insistence that they were protecting themselves from foreign invasion.

Of course, it was unlikely that the UN General Assembly would adhere to Portugal’s desire to have Angola taken off its agenda. On March 14, 1961, representatives from Sri Lanka, Liberia, and the United Arab Republic submitted a draft resolution “suggesting the introduction of reforms in Angola and requiring the appointment of a subcommittee to examine the situation in the territory.”\footnote{317} Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, “strongly recommended to the President that we support the resolution” in order to demonstrate “that we oppose colonialism in fact as well as in rhetoric…”\footnote{318} The US voted for the resolution in the UN, but it did not pass. Despite this, the steps taken by the US government in the UN significantly altered relations

\footnote{317} Rodrigues, \textit{To the "Top of the Mountain" and "Down to the Valley": The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency}, 108.  
\footnote{318} Quoted in Ibid.
between the two nations at the exact moment when the US’s contract to operate in the Azores bases was up for renewal.

Despite the importance of the bases to American foreign policy, over the next two years Washington continued to press the Salazar government to begin discussion about the eventual decolonization of its African colonies, and Portugal continued to resist the United States’ maneuverings. In a June, 1961 speech in front of Portugal’s National Assembly, Salazar accused the United States of helping communism’s spread in Africa and undermining NATO and other alliances. The idealism of the Kennedy administration, however, came up against the realities of the cold war. Days after Salazar’s speech, the Soviet Union began construction of the Berlin Wall and threatened to cut off all allied access to Berlin. The so-called Berlin Crisis was Kennedy’s first real test of weakened relations with Portugal and the potential repercussions of taking a hard-line with a crucial ally. In response to hostilities in Germany, the United States called up hundreds of thousands of Guardsmen and Reservists and deployed hundreds of Air Force jets and plans. For these movements, the US was extremely reliant on the bases in the Azores. Kennedy’s determination to risk these bases in order to support liberation movements began to seem untenable.

In less than a year, the United States would again realize the importance of its relations with Portugal and the continued access to the Azores in its ability to fight the cold war. In October 1962, the US government discovered the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba aimed at the United States. As with the Berlin Crisis in 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis put the importance of the Azores bases to US national security into even finer light. Turning to its NATO ally, the US government requested that Portugal deny

319 Quoted in Ibid.
air space to any Soviet or Cuban planes that might be headed to the North American continent. The Portuguese government, while agreeing to cooperate, took the opportunity to remind the United States that it too had obligations towards Portugal and its national security needs.  

Portugal continued to use the Azores bases to force the Kennedy administration’s hand. In 1962, it delayed offering a new Azores contract. This action combined with the Cuban Missile Crisis significantly diminished the Kennedy administration’s criticism of Portugal in the UN. Throughout 1962 and 1963, numerous resolutions and bills related to Angola were brought before the Security Council and General Assembly. After October 1962, the United States decided to take a back-seat in these negotiations. On July 18, 1963, President Kennedy instructed UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson that the US needed to “sit back and let others take the lead” in a resolution calling for an embargo against Portugal. Further, in contrast to the first months of the administration in 1961 when supporting anti-colonial movements was a priority, the President stressed that “of utmost importance to avoid the risk of losing the Azores.”

As important as these developments are in explaining the tensions between the United States and colonial Portugal, they do not tell the whole story. Indeed, a close reading of missionary correspondence and writings reveals that both governments were equally misguided about the situation on the ground. The United States misjudged Portugal’s commitment to Angola and the Portuguese government miscalculated the real

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322 Ibid.
power the foreign missionaries had in the developing anti-colonial war. One of the first people to publicly broach the subject of the changing missionary role in Angola was Former Methodist missionary, and later Bishop of the Africa Central Conference, Ralph E. Dodge.\textsuperscript{323} He argued that it was time for missionaries to leave Angola rather than stay silent and watch Angolans suffer. Like the US government, some Protestant missionaries were concerned that American inaction increased the appeal and influence of the Soviet Union among Angolans. In early 1961, Dodge met with the American Consul in Luanda in order to encourage the US government to be more supportive of Angolan anti-colonial desires and warned that “many African students from Angola had already ‘gone behind the Iron Curtain for training.’”\textsuperscript{324} The same year, Dodge wrote a scathing editorial in \textit{The Christian Century}, which was picked up by major US newspapers. He accused the Salazar government of “brutal treatment of Africans, intimidations, terrorism, religious discrimination and lack of forthrightness in official dealings.”\textsuperscript{325} Dodge explained the predicament: “for years [missionaries] assumed that it [was] better to be within the Portuguese territories, even though silent, than to be excluded as a result of having spoken out.”\textsuperscript{326} After 1961, however, and given the “severity with which the Portuguese government dealt with the uprisings” the position of the Protestant missionary changed.\textsuperscript{327} The actions of the US government led to reprisals against foreign missionaries but the real suffering was felt by African Protestants who had to contend

\textsuperscript{323} While Dodge was a Methodist missionary, he maintained close contacts with Congregational missionaries when he was stationed in Angola. Methodist and Congregational missionaries often joined forces when attacked or threatened by Portuguese officials.

\textsuperscript{324} Rodrigues, \textit{To the “Top of the Mountain” and “Down to the Valley”: The United States and Portugal during the Kennedy Presidency}, 194.


\textsuperscript{326} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{327} Ibid.
with the Portuguese government’s decision that “the only feasible way to handle the
‘Protestant problem’ [was] to discriminate against Protestants.”328

Dodge’s position was not popular when he voiced it in 1961. Many missionaries,
particularly in the Congregational Church, continued to argue that leaving Angola would
validate Portuguese violence and betray Angolans by abandoning them to fight on their
own. Although some missionaries privately discussed the issues Dodge raised, it was not
until seven years later in 1968 that Congregational missionary Sid Gilchrist again called
on missionaries to rethink their presence in Angola. At that point, however, the contours
of Angola’s anti-colonial political parties would have a more defined shape than they did
in 1961 and the rationale for staying in Angola would be harder to justify.

The Congregational missionaries who were stationed in Angola in the post-war
period came from a variety of backgrounds. Some had served in WWII and Angola
represented their first and last assignment. Others came from posts in neighboring
African nations or sister stations in Asia. Among the longest serving missionary was Dr.
Sidney Gilchrist. His story and writings are instructive of the changing role of foreign
missionaries in Angola. Gilchrist is also remarkable in his insightful reflections, for he
was one of the few Congregational missionaries to interrogate the entangled relationships
that existed between the missions and the colonial state. Even he had problems, however,
recognizing the power relations in the mission itself and the extent to which by the early
1960s foreign missionaries’ power had waned.

Sidney and his wife Frances Gilchrist set out to become missionaries in Angola in
1929, only a year after the Portuguese military overthrew the First Republic and at the
very moment that global markets tumbled, throwing the world into economic collapse.

328 Ibid, 1396.
Newly married and in their late 20s, like all Protestant missionaries they began their adventure in Lisbon with language training and a course for Dr. Gilchrist in tropical medicine. They arrived in Angola a year later and were stationed in the remote mission station of Camundongo in the central Highlands. With mission coffers drained by the economic collapse, the Gilchrists were faced with the unplanned hardship of having few funds with which to build up the new mission stations. Despite these challenges, over the next ten years, Dr. Gilchrist was able to expand the services of the mission hospital, establish a leprosy clinic and train dozens of medical assistants.

With the start of World War II and Portugal’s declaration of neutrality in the crisis, Sidney left his family to work as a mission doctor in North Africa where, unlike Angola, war was raging. When he returned to Angola in 1947, he was one of the Congregational Church’s senior doctors and was stationed to the Dondi mission where he would oversee a much larger system of hospitals, clinics, and training programs.

Throughout all these years in service, the Gilchrists and their fellow missionaries experienced the incremental growth of the Catholic Church in Angola and the government’s increased suspicion and animosity toward the Protestant Church’s successes. Missionaries adapted to the changes, understanding well that their future presence depended on the government’s good will to tolerate their work. Yet, after nearly thirty years of service, the Gilchrists left Angola in 1966. In their hearts they felt they “belonged in Africa.” It was in Angola that the Gilchrists had started a family, buried two children who died as infants, and, finally, grew old. After so many years, the world to which they were returning and that was supposedly their home, instead felt like a foreign land.
Given their long history in Angola, the Gilchrists’ decision to leave was not easy to make. Two years after arriving home, Dr. Gilchrist published a book explaining his decision and imploring other Congregational missionaries to follow suit. *Angola Awake* was more than a memoir; rather it was an indictment of Protestant missionary collaboration with the colonial government in Angola and a demand for missionaries to rethink their priorities. Missionaries arrived in Angola with good intentions, but they understood that above all they needed to maintain relations with the Portuguese. In practice, this meant that missionaries were obliged to remain silent in the face of the daily oppression that they witnessed, and thus becoming “earnest handmaidens of colonialism in its worst aspects.”329 The sin of missionaries was not only their cooperation with the colonial government but “closing the ear of [their] souls to much of what [they] have known, seen, heard, and felt.”330 Indeed, in the face of what seemed to be the daily good work of practicing medicine, it was easy for Gilchrist and others “to put off for another day the questions that gnaw at your conscience” but “urgent busy-ness with so many trees makes you almost forget that there is a woods to think about.”331 Rather than grasping the enormity of the injustices surrounding them, missionaries instead chose to turn inward in order to preserve their ability to provide vital services to Angolans.

Historically, Protestant missionaries justified their unwillingness to engage with colonial authorities, in part, from a belief that the relations between the Protestant Church, the state, and Angolans were Manichean, a battle between the evil forces of

330 Ibid, 73.
331 Ibid, 73.
colonialism and the good work of Protestant missionaries and their Angolan allies.332

Sidney Gilchrist challenged this prevailing attitude by acknowledging that Protestant missions did not play an opposing role to the state, as they believed, but rather a supporting role. Gilchrist’s analysis, while insightful, was, however, limited. While acknowledging the complex relations with the state, it did not extend to relations between missionaries and Angolans nor did he explore how missionaries’ participation in Portuguese colonialism may have affected these mission relations. Indeed, Gilchrist’s inability to think about these relations was symptomatic of missionaries’ generalized blindness to the political organizing of Angolans occurring throughout the mission system.

Gilchrist’s realization that foreign missionaries needed to leave Angola stemmed in large part from the violence he and others witnessed after 1961. In the wake of anti-colonial unrest occurring throughout Angola combined with the United Nations’ vote to investigate Portugal’s brutal response to this behavior, Portugal stepped up its attacks on Protestant missions and churches. Newspapers in Angola and Portugal accused the American government of turning its back on its ally. These articles, in turn, led to violent attacks against anything related, or perceived to be related, to the United States. With the international humiliation of the Ross Report still in the minds of government and colonial officials in Angola and Lisbon, Protestant missions were held responsible

for America’s “betrayal” of Portugal. Protestant Angolans, unprotected by foreign passports, suffered the most for their associations with the so-called “American church.”

Countering the presence and spread of Protestant religion in Angola in the post-1961 era became a matter of Portuguese national security. Portugal attempted to slow the influence of the Congregational churches by restricting the movements of missionaries and all individuals involved in church activity. In 1963, colonial authorities began enforcing a decree from 1933 that “meetings called for the purposes of political or social ‘propaganda’ must receive authorization from the civil authorities.”333 Included in this blanket decree were the meetings of Protestant pastors and other church-related organizations in the category. Later that year, Portuguese authorities further restricted Protestant Church activities by requiring all missionaries to request authorization from PIDE officials in Luanda to travel outside local administrative districts. This law applied only to foreign Protestant missionaries, not to other foreigners, nor to Catholic missionaries.334 Travel permits took as long as a month to be processed. This delay allowed government authorities to deter or obstruct many missionary activities.335 These restrictions were particularly burdensome for missionary doctors who would often receive last-minute word of a sick individual in administrative districts far from any medical facilities. In these cases, missionaries often felt compelled to defy authorities, no matter the potential risk.336

333 Henderson, The Church in Angola : A River of Many Currents
334 Ibid., 283
335 Examples of these restrictions and their effects are given in an account by missionary Carl Dille and his wife as they attempted to visit various mission outstations. See Proc 1306C, NP 1972. Folder: Dondi, Doc: 501. Arquivo do PIDE/DGS (Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Portugal).
336 George Burgess (former Congregational missionary), in discussion with author, July 2007.
Unlike the US government, Protestant missionaries could not ignore the political dynamics in Angola since the pressure placed on Portugal translated directly into pressure on missions and Angolan Protestants. After many years of violence, intimidation, and the constant surveillance of mission activities, some missionaries began rethinking their mission in Angola. In some ways, the post-war relationship between Protestant missionaries and Portugal mirrored that of the United States government. While missionaries opposed the colonial government’s worst abuses, they nevertheless restrained themselves from becoming too outspoken against it. As the US had to temper its criticism of Portugal in order to maintain access to the Azores bases, missionaries similarly had to avoid alienating the colonial power in order to ensure that missions and churches stayed open. Missionaries tried to protect Protestant Angolans who had become targets of the state while placating the fears of the colonial authorities by showing deference to it. It was a position that could only be short-lived. Before long, Angolans, now leaders of a strong locally-run church, asserted that they no longer needed the protection of foreigners. In the midst of these assertions, missionaries contemplated whether their decision to stay on in Angola actually did more harm than good.

Despite the insights of both Dodge and Gilchrist, even they did not fully grasp the situation at Protestant missions. The Portuguese government, in its efforts to curtail anticolonial organizing, had an exaggerated fear of foreign missionaries’ power. Missionaries themselves continued to believe that their power and presence was essential to the missions’ ability to function. In reality, however, mission control had passed to a new generation of mission-trained Angolans who based their political movement on the
structures of the church. By the early 1960s, the pastors who had taken control of
mission growth in the 1920s had already nurtured a new generation of Angolans to lead
the Angolan church and the nation. This was a process over which foreign missionaries
had little power and that superseded their desire to maintain a mission and church system
that was both atavistic and anachronistic. Missionaries’ failure to explore the complexity
of power relations at missions and their withdrawal from confrontation with the colonial
state had a refracting effect that lead to two seemingly opposite processes. As Gilchrist
conceded, one of these was the enabling of Portuguese colonialism. Missionary
disengagement, however, also helped spur an opposite process: the growth of anti-
colonial movements in Angolan-run outstations.

One of the first outward signs indicating the levels of political organizing among
Protestant Angolans came as early as 1961 in the form of a student riot. However, the
significance of the Angolan student upheaval extended beyond the violence of the day.
Rather, it forever altered the dialogue between the colonial state, Congregational
missionaries and Angolans. Although they would attempt to deny it throughout the
1960s, mission leaders in good faith could not deny the political organizing occurring in
Congregational missions and churches. More importantly, however, it became clear that
the power in Congregational Churches was shifting to Angolans and out of foreign
missionaries’ control.

In light of the violence in northern Angola and debates in the UN to investigate
Portuguese practices, the colonial government increased surveillance of Protestant
missions and churches. In this climate, Congregational missionaries were extremely eager
to appear pro-Portugal. Not long after the initial UN vote to investigate violence in
northern Angola, the colonial government organized pro-Portugal marches across Angola. A few days before one of the scheduled marches in Huambo, PIDE officials notified Congregational missionaries that that they would be coming to pick up Angolans students at the Dondi mission station, the largest Congregational station, in order to have them participate in a rally. Missionaries understood the importance of maintaining good relations with the state and informed students that they should be prepared to attend the march.

The morning of the scheduled march began the same as any other. At 6 am, the bell in the huge brick church at the center of the mission woke the boys’ dormitory. The girls’ dormitory, which was located several kilometers up the road, had a similar wake up call from the bell atop the Lutamo seminary building. On Sundays, the girls from the Means School, in white dresses, sang as they marched in a double line from Lutamo down the road to the main church. At the church, the boys would line up in their white shirts and dark pants to file into the church behind the girls, taking up their seats in the front pews. The day of the march was planned to be similarly orderly. Students were instructed to wear their Sunday clothing and be present and lined up in order to be driven to Huambo. Missionaries were completely unprepared when, rather than lining up, the mission students staged a riot against the Portuguese government. In the middle of breakfast, one student rose from his table to ring the dinner bell, sending the signal to all students that the riot was to begin. Students smashed the windows of waiting the government trucks and yelled that they would not support the Portuguese government. Behind the backs of missionaries, in the days before the riot, students had snuck out of their dorms to clandestinely plan the action. Through word of mouth, students had
organized a meeting with a representative of the nascent MPLA who visited the mission in the days leading up to the attack.337

On the day of the student revolt, Congregational missionaries were thus surprised by the student’s reactions. They understood that violent retaliation would result from the riot. Mission head Allen Knight supposedly wept as he watched the violence unfold and heard the students yell, “Angola for the Angolans!”338 Other Angolan witnesses remember explaining to missionaries that this was a fight for Angolans not foreign missionaries. In response to the riot, missionaries closed the school for the remainder of the term. Students, many of whom lived more than a week-long journey from the school, were sent home. Many of their journeys back to their villages were perilous. PIDE officials throughout the region knew of the attack and students risked arrest if they caught the attention of patrolling officers. Cornélio Caley, who as a scrawny teenager had rung the bell to start the riots, returned home to a frightened mother. Concerned for the safety of her son, she locked Caley in a grain storage building for a week before convincing him to turn himself in to the local administrator. Government officials interrogated a number of students they believed were responsible for organizing the protest and sent others to prison and work camps.339

Congregational missionaries, students, and pastors remained on high alert against Portuguese settlers whose hostility and anger the government and press helped to ignite. Some missionaries recalled sleeping away from windows and hearing Portuguese settlers firing guns into the air on the mission property in order to scare staff and students at

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338 Cornélio Caley, (former mission student and current Angolan Deputy Minister of Culture) in discussion with author, March 2007.
339 Caley was not one of these individuals. The local administrator sent him off with a warning to stay out of trouble.
night. In 1962, angry Portuguese settlers interrupted Good Friday services conducted by an Ovimbundu Protestant minister and “‘hacked, killed, and wreaked vengeance’ on the congregation.”

The students who participated in the Dondi riots grew up in a church and religious community nurtured by elder Angolan pastors since the early twentieth century. Student empowerment came, in part, from their involvement in this community. By the 1960s, these church elders had brought the Angolan Congregational Church movement to new heights. Because of their importance in the church structure, these individuals were among the first to be arrested. Pastor Jessé Chiula Chipenda was an important figure in Angolan church and a crucial figure in helping to nurture the church’s spread among Angolan. Pastor Frederico Calombo Mussili was from the same generation as Chipenda and a former seminary classmate at Dondi. He was the head pastor in Nova Lisboa and testified in front of the United Nations inquiry in 1962. Both men were arrested under suspicion of anti-colonial activity and forced to sign confessions in which they named missionaries involved in each stage of their careers and declared that they were “dedicated to the propagation of anti-Portuguese political ideas” or tied to particular known anti-colonial organizations. Chipenda and Mussili were transferred from prison in Luanda to the prison, or “recuperation center,” São Nicolau, in southwestern

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340 Ibid.
341 As quoted in Heywood, Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present.
342 Hundreds of pastors were arrested. Other men included: Augusto Cassinda de Vasconcelos, Tiago Álvaro Catumbela, Federico Epalanga Hama, Eurico Cambanda Sangueve, and João Cunanga Máquina Chissende. Their “self-declarations” and those of other people who were arrested can be seen at the Torre de Tombo: PIDE/DGS Angola Proc. 1479, NP 989 and PIDE/DGS Angola Proc 614, 2 vol. Arquivo do PIDE/DGS (Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Portugal).
Angola. After nearly a year and a half in prison, in which they organized small Bible reading groups, Jessé Chiula Chipenda died on October 24, 1969 in the arms of long-time friend Pastor Mussili.

While arresting the most revered pastors was a major blow to the Church, even the pastors themselves would acknowledge that by the 1960s the movement was much bigger than them. The Portuguese government underestimated the strength and breadth of the Angolan Congregational Church. The Dondi students were a part of this strength. Cornelio Caley helped to organize students for the riot. He was born in a rural village near the Bié mission station. As a young child he followed the same path as many future church leaders: taking classes at local village centers, moving up to the local mission stations, and finally earning a coveted spot at the school at Dondi mission station. Throughout all his years as a student, he would follow the paths set by his own Angolan teachers by spending the summers back in the villages teaching younger students, adults, and village elders the lessons he learned at school. When the riots occurred in 1961, Caley was fourteen years old but, like his classmates, he represented the as-yet-undetected backbone of Angolan power in the Congregational Church that was stronger than either the Portuguese or missionaries imagined.

344 Ibid., 288; In 1975, after the fall of Portuguese colonialism, former prisoners held a press conference describing some of the torture they experienced in Portuguese political prisons: “…in 1967 according to one ex-prisoner 12 prisoners attempted to escape, 4 succeeded and 8 were caught, 4 of the 8 were shot on the spot, other 4 were crucified outside the camp’s barracks….One prisoner was allegedly beaten to death for asking for extra water. On another occasion, a prisoner was tied outside barracks and prisoners were forced to beat him each time they wanted to go to latrines.” Incoming FOIAS, Box 2A. (National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington, DC.)
345 Ibid., 289; See also Lawrence W. Henderson, Development and the Church in Angola : Jesse Chipenda, the Trailblazer (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000).
As the 1960s progressed, for many Angolans and some foreign missionaries, the missionary presence came to represent the maintenance of status quo in colonial relations and the denial of Angolan sovereignty. While missionaries struggled to understand whether they were included in this new environment, indigenous Angolan political parties matured. The student riots at Dondi in 1961 were unorganized politically, but this changed as the anti-colonial war persevered. The strength and breadth of Angolan-run Congregational Church outstations and village centers became an asset to the anti-colonial movement. Its power finally eclipsed that of the foreign missionaries, forever altering the political and social climate of Angola.

The two most visible political figures to emerge from the Congregational Church were also children of its prominent pastors. Daniel Chipenda, son of Pastor Jessé Chipenda, was one of the original founders of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), a Marxist-leaning organization. He fought alongside Angola’s future president, Agostinho Neto, and was responsible for significantly expanding the reach of the MPLA in the eastern part of the country. Chipenda eventually split with the MPLA in 1973 and formed his own faction.

The other individual to rise from the Congregational missions was Jonas Savimbi, son of Lote Savimbi, who was another important figure in the Congregational Church. After leaving Angola for a short period in the early 1960s to study medicine in Switzerland and Portugal, Savimbi returned to join the anti-colonial movement. In 1966, he founded the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). To a much greater extent than Chipenda, Savimbi staked his political future on his ability to mobilize the Umbundu people. He used the networks of the Congregational Church to
achieve these ends. More than any other political leader in the 1960s, Savimbi remained in contact with the Congregational missionaries. He was, however, a divisive figure and strongly advocated for missionaries to leave Angola.

While the consolidation of Angola’s anti-colonial parties changed the political climate of the war, so too did the international climate in southern Africa. By 1968, much of the region was in open revolt and Angola held the distinction of being one of the last bastions of European colonialism. The United States and its cold war allies continued to fear that southern Africa could fall to the Soviet Union. US policy towards the region, which was anyway limited, was aimed publicly at maintaining the status quo while privately trying to ensure that Soviet allied parties did not achieve power. Political waves were also hitting Portugal. In September 1968, Antonio Salazar suffered a brain hemorrhage after falling from a chair. With Salazar gone, the government he had run with an iron fist for nearly forty years began to slowly unravel. While little thought was given to the idea of liberating the colonies, the incapacitation of Salazar allowed for Angolans to see a glimmer of hope.

Throughout these years, Congregational missionaries continued to work at keeping mission stations open. The rise of Chipenda and Savimbi and their obvious connection back to the Congregational Church provided unwanted extra attention. By the time Sidney and Harriet Gilchrist fled Angola in 1966 many missionaries felt demoralized. Hundreds of pastors had been arrested, many of whom died in prison. Nevertheless, most missionaries continued to believe that their presence in Angola was essential.
However, in 1967, mission boards in the United States and Canada sent letters to missionaries requesting that they resume their normal furlough schedule, thus essentially recalling them from the field. The home boards’ request that missionaries leave Angola was in keeping with the views expressed by Gilchrist a year later in *Angola Awake*. The age of foreign mission work was over and their presence in Angola was doing more harm than good. Gilchrist’s opinion that missionaries should leave, however, was not popular. In 1968, missionaries Lawrence Henderson and Amy Schauffler pleaded to home mission boards in the United States and Canada and to the colonial government in Angola to allow the missions to continue their operations. In the minds of Henderson and Schauffler, the livelihood of the church, and importantly its schools and hospitals, depended on the presence of some missionary professionals.\textsuperscript{348} Not all missionaries still in the field, however, agreed with Henderson and Schauffler. Rather, a number of Congregational missionaries sided with Gilchrist and decided to leave Angola \textit{en masse} in protest of the treatment of Angolan Protestants. Dr. George Burgess, author of the letter, explained that missionaries, pastors, students, and mission workers had suffered “religious persecution” by the Portuguese government. Protesting the restrictions placed on missionary and pastor movements, which essentially curtailed all mission activity, some foreign missionaries associated with the Congregational Church agreed to leave Angola but pledged that once home they would testify to the terrible conditions in Angola.\textsuperscript{349}

\textsuperscript{348} Henderson recounts this story in his book: Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents*.  
\textsuperscript{349} “Retirada da Provincia de Missionarios Protestantes” NP: 13.06.E; Docs: 55-75. Arquivo do PIDE/DGS (Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Portugal).
The discussions among Congregational missionaries regarding whether to remain in Angola or to return home reflect their deep divisions. Angolans also had divided opinions about the continued presence of foreign missionaries. While the medical expertise of missionary doctors would be the biggest loss for Angolans, after so many years of restrictions on the movement of doctors, Angolan nurses ran many mission hospitals virtually year-round. Further, despite the tragic loss of so many pastors, the popularity of Congregational Church among Angolans in the Highlands remained strong. Among the most vocal against their remaining in Angola was Jonas Savimbi. A series of letters between Jonas Savimbi and the Congregational missionaries that remained in Angola reveal a chasm that existed between some Angolans in the church and the missionaries who continued to hold positions of authority on most mission stations. Savimbi’s first letter, sent from what he called the “Freeland of Angola,” praised *Angola Awake* and Gilchrist for his commentary on the missionary experience, adding that “if the majority of missionaries do not condemn the booklet for being ‘communist inspired’ then there is a valuable change in what the missionaries may think in the future about the African Revolution for national liberation.” Indeed, Savimbi expressed shock at Gilchrist’s ability to critique the missionary experience given that “the Western world has influenced our missionaries so greatly that sometimes their way of thinking follows that of the chancelleries of their governments.” Much of the letter is in support of the fundamental ideas presented in *Angola Awake* regarding the duplicitous

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350 In the early 1970s, one US government official remarked that in one mission area alone “the number of people whose lives are touched directly or indirectly by Dondi and its satellite missions runs into the hundreds of thousands.”; Feb 1975, Frontline States Box 1, Folder FLS (National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington, DC.)

351 Jonas Savimbi, “Open letter addressed to Protestant Missionaries who served in Angola” October 1969 (World Council of Churches Library and Archives: Programme to Combat Racism, aluka.org.)

352 Ibid.
role missionaries played in Angola by staying silent in the face of violence and intimidation. Such silence amounted to the condoning of colonialism and PIDE activities.353 If missionaries refused to decolonize the church, Savimbi claimed that their decision would mean supporting the system of colonialism they claimed to oppose. In Savimbi’s mind, remaining in Angola amounted to a “declaration of war against us fighting inside Angola.”354

While Savimbi’s condemnation of the missionary experience may have been harsh, his letters go to the heart of the impasse Congregational missionaries faced at the end of the 1960s. Throughout the entire history of the Congregational mission movement in Angola, missionaries had maintained that their role was non-national and neutral. They characterized their own work as a singular force of good in an otherwise bad Portuguese colonial system. Publicly, they neither supported colonialism nor condoned it. In reality, however, their relationship to Portuguese colonialism and with Angolans was much more complicated. Outside of Angola, some Congregational missionaries worked to expose the abuses of the Portuguese government. They anonymously testified for the United Nations’ inquiries, helped wanted pastors and students to flee Angola, and leaked testimony and accounts to international newspapers and anti-colonial organizations. And yet, Congregational missionaries continued to cooperate with the Portuguese government and live by the rules of the government that determined the missions’ fate as well as that of many hundreds of associated Protestants. Missionaries made a choice to maintain a relative code of silence in order to continue their work.

353 Ibid.
354 Ibid.
Prior to World War II, missionaries were able to sidestep this dilemma by arguing that they were members of a transnational community committed to peaceful reform. In reality, the transnationality of such organizations was questionable. Organizations including the International Missionary Council, discussed in Chapter Three, were alliances between western nations with little interest in upsetting the global world order. While they may have criticized the operation of colonial governments, they did not challenge their existence. The break-up of colonial empires that began after World War II changed this formula. The start of anti-colonial war in 1961 and the revolt at Dondi shattered any illusion that Angolans did not have their own political voice. For these missionaries, remaining in Angola would have reinforced the colonial relations that Angolans were trying to destroy.

Most Congregational missionaries departed Angola by the end of the 1960s. Many of these individuals reluctantly acknowledged that both foreign missionaries and the colonial government had underestimated Angolan control of the missions as well as the strength and organizational power of the anti-colonial movement among Protestant Angolans. A few missionaries refused to leave despite pleas by home boards, fellow missionaries, and some Angolans. Liberated from the need to stay silent, a number of influential missionaries made good on a promise to publicize Portugal’s injustices. In the decade to come, Congregational missionaries would join other church activists to reform the main global church organization, the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Throughout the colonial period, the WCC had been heavy on pronouncements but light on any meaningful action against colonial violence and oppression. The decolonization of colonial churches and the activism of former missionaries changed the
global church organization. In the 1970s, it began funding political organizations fighting for decolonization across southern Africa. Former Congregational missionaries would be among the most vocal supporters of this new action. While the Portuguese government barred these former missionaries from entering Angola, their work with the WCC signaled a new direction in their relationship with the colonial nation that would have important implications stretching well beyond both the WCC and its pledge to fight racial discrimination in southern Africa.
CHAPTER FIVE:

NO LONGER AT HOME IN ANGOLA: CONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARIES, THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, AND THE PERPETUATION OF AN UNEXAMINED PAST

In 1966 missionary-kid, Nancy Henderson, returned to the Dondi mission station after a five-year absence. A recent graduate of Carleton College, she had witnessed the United States’ changing domestic climate and participated in civil rights and anti-war protests. Despite Ms. Henderson’s embracing of 1960s American protest politics, the United States never felt like home. She resolved to return to Angola and see if there was still a life for her there. She was amazed how much Dondi appeared to be the same. In fact, however, everything had changed. Angolans now ran the mission schools, hospitals, and all community services. While Ms. Henderson felt “utterly at home” in Angola, she admitted that she no longer had a role to play there. Her parents, however, did not share their daughter's insights. Larry Henderson was one of the Congregational mission movement's staunchest defenders and adamant about missionaries' need to stay in Angola to fight the anti-colonial war. He and the other missionaries were unable to acknowledge their complicity in Portuguese colonialism. In 1969, however, out of concern about the safety of their young children still with them, the Hendersons packed their bags to return to the United States. Larry Henderson attempted to reenter Angola in 1970 but the Portuguese denied him a visa. Undeterred, he vowed to continue fighting Portuguese colonialism from abroad.

Nancy and Larry Henderson’s differing perspectives about the Congregational missionary movement in Angola are indicative of the problems missionaries faced at the end of the 1960s. In the United States, Vietnam and other cold war battles led many to a

new critical awareness of America’s involvement in other nations after World War II. As a university student, Nancy Henderson immersed herself in these critiques and reflected on the complexities of the Congregational mission movement in Angola. Her parents, on the other hand, did not. Rather, their desire to remain in Angola and fight its anti-colonial war reflected their inability to confront the changing times and the reality of their own legacy. Having devoted his life to Angola, Larry Henderson clung to his simplistic and outdated view of the Congregational mission movement. When concerns about the safety of his family forced him to retreat to the United States, Larry Henderson’s understanding of the missionary movement’s impact remained intact. Unable to be in the field and unwilling to disengage from Angolan politics, he and other returned missionaries sought out new ways to continue their old relations.

In search of a new guise, missionaries turned to an old ally: the global ecumenical society, the World Council of Churches (WCC), formally known as the International Missionary Council.\(^\text{356}\) The WCC was the world's largest Christian organization, with representatives from every major church, except the Catholic Church, from all over the world. Like many other organizations, the WCC was not immune to global conflicts over race relations and social justice and was swept up in the transformative politics and protests of the late 1960s. Similar criticism that was directed at Congressional missionaries in Angola, WCC member churches and religious representatives accused the organization of helping to perpetuate racial discrimination while claiming to fight it. Determined to remain relevant, members voted to reform the WCC into an activist organization. In the heat of the cold war, the WCC would look beyond political ideology.

\(^{356}\) The International Missionary Council was the organization responsible for contracting the Ross Report in the 1930s, as described in Chapter 3.
and work in working in defense of “the human rights and dignity of the world’s most oppressed peoples.”

Larry Henderson, who served in Angola from 1948 – 1969, and other returned missionaries were at the forefront of efforts to redefine the WCC. Yet, recent literature on the organization by scholars such as Claude Welch and David Weisbrodt does not adequately address the role of individual missionaries and other activists in the WCC’s transformation. These studies reflect one side of the changing WCC that, from the outside, appeared to be a reflection of the era’s politics. However, in the committees where individuals actualized the organization’s reforms, the situation was quite different. Indeed, Henderson and other missionaries responsible for the WCC’s approach to Angola sought to reform the organization by extending their own uninterrogated relations with the Portuguese colony. As a result, the WCC’s policies and funding schemes towards Angola reflected the former missionaries’ colonialisms in ways that scholars have not properly explored.

In the last five years of the Larry Henderson’s tenure, there were significant political and social changes in Angola. Since the 1930s, the colony had been under the iron-fist of António Salazar. Salazar was the chief architect of Portugal’s colonial project

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359 Secular scholarly literature on the transformation of the WCC and the creation of the Programme to Combat Racism is, unfortunately, limited. The organization is best known for its role in helping in the divestment campaigns against South Africa. For more on this see: Welch Jr., Mobilizing Morality: The World Council of Churches and its Program to Combat Racism, 1969-1994; Renate Pratt and Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion., In Good Faith : Canadian Churches Against Apartheid (Waterloo, Ont.: Published for the Canadian Corp. for Studies in Religion by Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997).
in Angola. He closely aligned his government with the Catholic Church, making it a virtual arm of the colonial government in Angola. In the years after World War II, Salazar feared that the independence movements sweeping Africa would force Portugal to give up its colonies. Hoping to avoid this eventuality, Salazar reinforced the power of the Portuguese secret police, PIDE, and made it a weapon of the state with the singular purpose of seeking out and destroying anti-colonial sentiment.360

The intimidation and violence created by PIDE shaped every aspect of peoples’ daily lives. PIDE officials and their informants occupied every level of society. As they had been for years, Protestant Angolans were frequent targets of the colonial government. Angolans, in general, and Protestant Angolans, in particular, feared that they or their loved ones would become one of Os Desaparecidos (the disappeared) who vanished in the middle of the night or failed to return home from work.361 There was no way of knowing who was talking to the police. Indeed, Angolans who did inform on other Angolans were often themselves not in a position to decline cooperation with PIDE. Coerced into providing information, informants would often resort to providing the police with faulty hearsay. Such information, however, was often all the evidence needed in a conviction and prison sentence. Political prisons were also notoriously brutal and sadistic and a prison sentence was more accurately a death sentence. In later years, released prisoners would describe unimaginable situations in which a prisoner who tried to escape

360 Coelho, Salazar, o Fim e a Morte : História De Uma Mistificação.
361 Literature about the disappearance of Angolans during the Salazar years is still growing. Nevertheless, it remains an important part of many Angolans’ memories of the final years of the dictatorship. For discussion about the psychological effect of “disappearances” on civilian populations, it is useful to consult Latin American texts, where similar tactics were used. See for example: Tenma Kaplan, Taking Back the Streets : Women, Youth, and Direct Democracy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Rita Arditti, Searching for Life : The Grandmothers of the Plaza De Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); John Simpson and Jana Bennett, The Disappeared : Voices from a Secret War (London: Robson Books, 1985).
was publically crucified and then, still alive, taken down from the cross to be “trussed up and used as target by prisoners who were force to kick soccer ball at him until he died….”

In the 1950s, the Salazar government sought to shore-up Portuguese support of the colonies by recasting the colonial experience as one of racial harmony with the help of Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre’s theories of lusotropicalism. In 1933, Freyre authored a study in which he argued that “miscegenation had been a positive force in Brazil” and “turned the country’s inferiority complex inside out…[converting] Brazil’s multiracial past from a liability into an asset.” Salazar and his government seized on these theories as a way to justify its overseas presence and potentially lift the spirits of the Portuguese people who saw themselves marred in poverty. It turned the history of Portugal in Africa into a positive for Africans and global race relations. Portuguese settlers had “entered into cordial relations with the non-European populations he met in the tropics” creating a special Portuguese-style non-racial society. Indeed, the Portuguese used “the absence of Portuguese law of the racist legislation in South Africa and until recently in the United States barring non-whites from specific occupations, facilities, etc.” as proof of their special society. The Salazar government’s propaganda around lusotropicalism was so successful that it was able to convince many in Portugal,

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Europe, and the United States that the Portuguese had, indeed, created a racially harmonious society.\(^{364}\)

Despite the fear created by PIDE and the illusion of racial harmony propagated by theories of lusotropicalism, Angola at the end of the 1960s was in transition. In 1968, after nearly forty years in power, Portuguese dictator António Salazar died. Given the control that Salazar maintained of both Portugal and its colonies, his death was an earthquake that threatened to permanently alter the Portuguese colonial state. He was quickly succeeded by Marcello das Neves Alves Caetano, a career politician who had served in the Salazar regime since the 1930s. Both Portuguese and Angolans hoped that Caetano would relax some of the overwhelming powers of the dictatorship under which Portugal and its colonies had suffered. Despite some initial economic and social reforms, these hopes were short-lived. Other government officials who were less interested in softening the old Salazar regime held Caetano’s power largely in check. In short order, the Portuguese government resumed previous efforts to defeat anti-colonial forces.

Attempts to silence political organizing and anti-colonial sentiment were, however, futile. Indeed, young Angolans found myriad ways to express their distaste for the colonial regime and were “much more impatient with the contradictions that they saw around them” than their parents had been.\(^{365}\) This impatience manifested itself through cultural backlash of Portuguese cultural hegemony. Throughout the colonial period, the Portuguese government forbade Angolans from speaking in local languages in public. Some Angolans began disobeying official rules and spoke publically in Umbundu, rather

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\(^{364}\) Angolans, of course, were unconvinced. Angolan leader Mario Pinto de Andrade, objected to the equation of Brazil and Africa arguing, “Lusotropicalism, not valid for explaining the formation of Brazil, is entirely false for the colonial circumstances in Africa.” As quoted in Ibid., xxiii

\(^{365}\) Ibid, 157.
than Portuguese. In Luanda, semba, a fast-paced music similar in beat to Brazilian samba music, exploded in bars and clubs. With the PIDE surveillance making any form political activity nearly impossible, listening and playing semba became a way for Angolans to proclaim their independence from Portugal, a way to “feel proud of their land.” Semba became the beat of an independent Angola, “parallel to the armed struggle and perpendicular to the colonial project.”

When Larry Henderson left Angola in 1969, he entered a wider world, beyond Africa, in chaos. As it did in the streets of Luanda, a spirit of revolution and dissent against ruling powers permeated nearly ever aspect of global politics. In Berlin, Paris, Moscow, Prague, Kyoto, Mexico City, and Wuhan, China, protesters took to the streets. Even the Central Intelligence Agency was alarmed by the simultaneous uprisings. In a report to the president on “Restless Youth,” the Agency described the uprisings as a “world-wide phenomenon” effecting allies, the “Communist-block” and the “third-world” simultaneously. In the United States, anti-war activists protested in all major cities and across college campuses. Cities erupted into flames from angry black Americans still denied equal treatment under the law.

367 The fact that semba resembled music from Portugal’s former Brazilian colony contributed to its sediuousness.
368 Ibid.
369 Ibid, 261.
371 As quoted in ibid., 47
372 For more on black power politics during the this era see, for example: Manning Marable, Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007); Gerald Horne, Fire this Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s, (New York:
Protestors around the world directed their anger at the governments and institutions they believed were upholding discriminatory policies. Faced with a world turned upside-down, global leaders fought for stability. In the United States, Richard Nixon won the presidential election promising to restore law and order both at home and abroad. Along with his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, Nixon overhauled the US’s approach to fighting the cold war. In relation to Africa, Nixon erased the Kennedy administration’s attempts to support local political movements. Kissinger and Nixon saw the liberation battles in purely cold war terms.

Upon entering office, Nixon ordered a complete review of US policy towards southern Africa. The administration’s report highlighted the strategic importance of the region and noted that previous administrations “took a firm view that force was not an appropriate vehicle to bring about constructive change in the region….” Up until that point, the US had pursued a policy that viewed “consultations…to confrontation.” Keeping this precedent in mind, the review, titled National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM 39), set out five policy options for the Nixon administration ranging from total support for white minority governments to a complete severing of relations with the region. The Nixon administration chose to take a middle path and nicknamed it “tar baby” because once adopted “the policy would prove sticky...to abandon if it did not work.” NSSM 39 argued that the minority governments were unlikely to be unseated. The US government would seek to pave “constructive change” through existing

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373 Ibid.
374 As quoted in ibid, 10.
376 Ibid, 129.
governments in order to avoid the “chaos and increased opportunities for the communists” if Africans were allowed to take power.\textsuperscript{377} The administration realized, however, that publicly pursuing friendly relations with minority governments might heighten unrest in the region. Therefore, Kissinger recommended a policy of “‘public opposition’ to colonial and racial policies in southern Africa” but a “quiet policy which would ‘relax’ political and economic restrictions on white states.”\textsuperscript{378}

Portugal and its African colonies were particularly important to US foreign policy. The US government had a vested strategic interest in maintaining cordial relations with the Portuguese government in order to ensure that neither Portugal nor its colonies fell into the hands of pro-Soviet parties. The Azores air force bases remained vital to US national security and were a key refueling location for planes flying to the Middle East and Asia. Cape Verde and Mozambique, also Portuguese colonies, were important potential ports of US naval fleets in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, respectively. Metropolitan Portugal, Madeira, and the Azores formed “a strategic triangle in the North Atlantic, significant for control both of a substantial portion of the Atlantic and of the gateway to the Mediterranean.”\textsuperscript{379} Angola, aside from its mineral and oil wealth, controlled access to the Congo River and thus could be a command base of operations in the Congo if further trouble ensued.\textsuperscript{380}

Seeking to maintain good relations with Portugal and access to the colonies, NSSM 39 allowed the US government to provide the colonial government with increased military and financial support. Nixon realized the potential conflict with other important

\textsuperscript{377} “Kissinger Study,” 66.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid, 12.
\textsuperscript{379} As quoted in ibid, 23.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid, 23; For more on the strategic importance of southern Africa to the United States see: Thomas Borstelmann, \textit{Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle : The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 298.
allies if the US was exposed to be providing military to the Portuguese government, still fighting a protracted and unpopular anti-colonial war. Portugal, however, understood they held an important bargaining chip and were unwilling to settle anything less than military support. Nixon was able to get around the concerns of allies by issuing ambiguous guidelines that allowed for the sale of materials that, while technically for civilian use, could easily be used for military purposes. As a result, Portugal was able to purchase large equipment from the United States while allowing the US deniability when confronted with accusations that the Portuguese government was using the equipment to fight against colonial independence movements.381

Nixon’s realignment of US policy occurred as former Congregational missionaries were in search of a new way to revitalize their relations with Angola. Nixon’s realignment of American policy with minority governments in southern Africa effectively made it clear to the Congregational missionaries that the US government could not longer be counted upon as an ally. In search of a means to continue fighting Portuguese colonialism, the WCC, which was unallied politically or nationally, became an obvious choice. The WCC was established in 1948, the same year the United Nations’ General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its founders envisioned the organization would become a forum in which all Christian Churches, regardless of political or ecclesiastic affiliation, could gather to discuss issues relevant to the global Christian community.382

381 Ibid, 17.
382 Despite the movement towards Christian unity, certain schisms remained in the WCC. In 1948, the Truman administration, hoping to gain the Catholic Church’s allegiance in the cold war, had made some effort to reconcile relations between the Rome and the WCC, but Rome’s outright rejection of the
Congregational missionaries seized this Nixon led policy transition as an opportunity to reinsert their influence in the WCC and re-exert the WCC power by weighing in on the US policy change. For years, the WCC had condemned colonialism and Apartheid. However, its record for delivering on these lofty anti-racist pronouncements was disappointing. In 1948, the WCC acknowledged that Protestant churches had failed to attack racial prejudice and resolved to “take a firm and vigorous stand” against such “flagrant violations of human rights” through local actions. Yet, the nature of these actions was left up to the member churches.\(^{383}\) Similarly, in 1951 the Assembly of the WCC declared its “conviction that any form of segregation based on race, colour or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel….\(^{384}\) However, just one year later in 1952, the general secretary of the WCC, Dr. Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft, visited South Africa and advocated a less critical, softer line on race in order to work “quietly through the churches” in order to encourage the integration of Afrikaaner churches into “the mainstream of modern Christianity.”\(^{385}\)

In 1960, the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa finally moved the WCC to take a clear stand on racial injustice giving some the hope that the organization would finally

\(^{384}\) As quoted in ibid.
\(^{385}\) This recommendation was described by the President of the African National Congress of South Africa, Dr. Z.K. Matthews, as “pussyfooting the way through,” Darril Hudson, "The World Council of Churches and Racism in Southern Africa," International Journal 34, no. 3 (Summer, 1979), 477.
act against racist government. That year, the Dutch Reformed churches in South Africa, all members of the WCC, formally announced that apartheid could “be defended from the Christian point of view.” When the WCC met the next year, the Assembly publically condemned apartheid in a decisive statement, thus turning its back on the member Dutch Reformed Churches. However, any hopes that the Assembly would take steps to implement the statement were quickly dashed. As in previous years, it stopped short of taking any activist steps in its condemnation of South African racism. Rather, the Assembly emphasized “individual actions of individual Christians who are fighting racism.”

In 1968, the inaction and latent racism of the WCC forced a confrontation when it met for the next Assembly meeting in Uppsala, Sweden. As an organization representing thousands of individual churches, the WCC’s history of lackluster action in regards to racism made it an obvious target for protesters fighting status quo policies. Returned Congregational missionaries were among those leading the charge to reform the organization. Like others who had been involved in southern Africa, they were discouraged by the organization’s failure to condemn racism and injustices. The meeting in Uppsala was a momentous display of the changing character of the organization. Throughout its history, churches from around the world sent representatives to the WCC meetings. By the end of the 1960s, however, much of the world had decolonized and so too had the churches. For the first time in the organization’s history, the Assembly was no longer a small cadre of white ministers and church representatives, but full of people deeply invested in the changing politics of the era. The organization’s altered make-up

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386 As quoted in ibid, 478.
changed the atmosphere in Uppsala and charged it with anticipation for how the organization might behave differently.

The Assembly meeting also occurred in the shadow of tragic news. Only a month before the meeting was set to begin the world was rocked by the assassination of one of its leaders and the Uppsala meeting’s keynote speaker, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King had demonstrated to the WCC and the world the powerful role that Christian churches could play in helping to end racial discrimination. With simmering anger and disgust at the death of King, replacement speaker President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia echoed the thoughts of many when he warned the gathered assembly that “spreading Christianity” was no longer a sufficient role for the church for “service to God extends beyond charity and priestly activities.”

Other speakers in Uppsala were less reserved in their language and condemnation of the WCC. For many activists, King’s assassination confirmed their suspicion that non-violence would not end global racism. On the second day of the Assembly, black American writer James Baldwin climbed to the main podium to deliver a scathing assessment of the Christian Church and deliver a clear warning. Baldwin characterized himself “as…one of God’s creatures, whom the Christian Church has most betrayed,” and reiterated Kaunda’s message for action, announcing that “at this moment in the world’s history it becomes necessary for me…not to listen to what you say but to watch very carefully what you do….” Baldwin’s speech also touched on the twin issues facing the WCC: its own historical collaboration with and silence against the injustices associated with colonialism and the possibility that this silence might lead to

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Christianity’s irrelevancy. Without mincing words, Baldwin attacked the Christian Church’s complicity in the world’s worst human rights abuses:

Christians, in order to justify the means by which they rose to power, have had to convince themselves, and have had to try to convince me, that when Africa was ‘discovered,’ as Christians so quaintly put it, and when I was discovered and brought away to be used like an animal, we have had to agree the Christian Church had to conspire with itself to say that I preferred slavery to my own condition and that I really like the role I played in Western culture.390

In the eyes of Baldwin, the Church needed to confront this past and work to amend it or risk becoming “too expensive for the world to afford” and “no longer responsive to the needs of the world” to the extent that its “structure is doomed.”391

Most of the Assembly’s speakers echoed Kaunda and Baldwin’s warnings. Their anger at the status quo policies of the WCC reflected the protests around the world. The appearance of a step backward in US policies towards southern Africa heightened the tenor of WCC speeches. Racist minority regimes, now backed by the United States, seemed even more intractable. Adding to these concerns was the conviction that the nonviolent protests endorsed by the WCC and followed by its member churches would never end global racism and, in fact, may have helped to prolong peoples’ suffering. Yet, within the bipolar political climate of the cold war, nonaligned violent action was near impossible. It was here, in the ability to label the battles against racism as justifiable violence, that the WCC sought to find its niche in global politics. With the assembly in Uppsala drawing to a close, WCC leadership voted to reconvene in Notting Hill, London to decide the organization’s next steps.

Dubbed the Notting Hill Consultation, the follow-up meeting brought together a select group of WCC church representatives to address this most pressing issue that emerged from the Uppsala Assembly: global racism. Protesters lining the streets outside

390 Ibid.
391 Ibid, 376.
the meeting halls quickly dashed any hopes for an orderly meeting. The year since the assembly meeting in Uppsala had been full of assassinations in the US and worldwide.\footnote{The most notable of these political assassinations was Robert Kennedy’s murder on June 5, 1968.}

As Consultation commenced, participants mourned the loss of another ally and the Consultation’s keynote speaker, Mozambique liberation leader Eduardo Mondlane, himself a graduate of Protestant mission schools, who was assassinated in Tanzania on February 3, just before the meetings began.

In Eduardo Mondlane’s absence, the WCC invited African National Congress leader Oliver Tambo to speak. Tambo’s presence at the meeting highlighted the need for anti-colonial organizations in southern Africa to join forces. The WCC provided the forum, and legitimacy, for these movement leaders to speak with one voice against racism and avoid minority governments’ labeling of them as pro-communist. The WCC, however, also represented the Apartheid-associated South African Dutch Reformed Church. When Tambo began his speech, members of the Dutch Reformed Church and pro-Apartheid Nationalist Party began shouting, trying to drown out Tambo.\footnote{Welch Jr., \textit{Mobilizing Morality: The World Council of Churches and its Program to Combat Racism, 1969-1994}, 877.}

Within this tense atmosphere, Tambo implored the Christian World to rise to the occasion and to match words with action. Tambo also met head-on minority governments that equated political violence with communism and who argued that liberation movements were nothing more than communist fronts. Rather, Tambo challenged:

\begin{quote}
You call them terrorists; I call them the standard-bearers of the forces of freedom, the sworn enemies of racial tyranny and colonial exploitation. You call them communists. I don’t. I call them the true leaders of the crusade for a world community, the faithful upholders of the doctrine of human dignity in the defense and assertion of which they are prepared and willing, if need be, to lay down their lives; volunteers who have freely answered the call to rid mankind of the scourge of racism, colonialism, and imperialism.\footnote{Oliver Tambo, “Racism as a Major Obstacle to World Community,” August 1968, Archives of the World Council of Churches, available from \url{www.aluka.org}.}
\end{quote}
Tambo argued that, in some instances, violence is justified and to be a true Christian sometimes requires “‘marching as to war’ against man’s inhumanity to man.”

Tambo’s speech and those of other guests at the Consultation highlighted the anger and disappointment many felt toward the Christian Church, and also the desire for it to take a more activist role in the fight against racism. These emotions were heightened the night before the Consultation’s adjournment when five young blacks moved up to the speaker’s rostrum, took the microphone, and read a “Declaration of Revolution.” The individuals, who were later revealed to be members of the US based Student Non-Violent Coordinating Council (SNCC), identified themselves as “Black Power Representatives.” They criticized “white Christians” who “taught black people to love their neighbors; to be meek, humble, and obedient; to love their white God” and “above all to be non-violent.” The speaker, “George Black,” announced, “this criminal doctrine of loving one’s exploiter must stop.” He proceeded to list a number of demands that included the release of political prisoners such as Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver and members of the Black Panther Party. He also called for donations to various liberation movements; the establishment of a publishing house to “document the liberation struggles of all oppressed people”; and the “publication of the assets, holdings, investments (direct or portfolio) and financial operations of all member organizations of the World Council of Churches.”

The demands of George Black highlight how the WCC, and the Notting Hill Consultation in particular, became more than a place to reform the church organization.

395 Ibid.
396 Ibid., 877, footnote 41, “Preparatory Document No. 11.”
397 Ibid.
Rather, the WCC was quickly morphing into a platform on which a variety of loosely related organization could air their anger at policies and legacies of the Christian Church. Ironically, the meeting that the Black Power Representatives interrupted was in the process of endorsing many of their demands. As opposed to other meetings in which anger only translated into pronouncements, the Consultation set about creating a series of committees and working groups to outline the WCC’s approach to fighting global injustice.

The Notting Hill Consultation’s resolutions were revolutionary not only in the changes they brought to WCC policy, but in the ways the organization, long considered a centrist establishment, lent legitimacy to revolutionary organizations fighting racist regimes. The Consultation recognized that the WCC churches were identified with the status quo and “that [the church] has remained, in effect, part of the racial problem and not a means of eliminating it.”\textsuperscript{398} Citing the fear of irrelevancy, the Consultation warned that “it is imperative that [churches] no longer concentrate their attention on the individual actions of individual Christians who are fighting racism…Individual commitment is commendable—but not enough.”\textsuperscript{399} Further, in response to the main complaint regarding the apathy of Christian Churches, Consultation members urged the WCC to take action against racism and racist regimes by “attacking racism significantly—at its origins, as well as in its symptoms…. ” Echoing the criticisms of speeches given in Uppsala and in Notting Hill, Consultation organizers recognized that “the Church must be willing to be not only an institution of love, but also an institution of

\textsuperscript{398} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.
action, making inputs into societies to help effect a new balance of power that render
racism impotent.400 To this end, the Notting Hill Consultation advised the WCC,

… to apply economic sanctions against corporations and institutions which practice blatant racism,
encourage the principle of reparations and support movements, including revolutions, which are aimed
at the elimination of political or economic tyranny which makes racism possible.401

In order to actualize these ideals, the Consultation created the Programme to Combat
Racism (hereto called the Programme). The Manifesto of the Programme committed the
WCC to uphold the principles of human equality and self-determination that colonial and
minority governments in southern Africa denied non-whites. The Programme pledged
itself to help individuals fighting these systems “of minority control which exists as a
result of, and in pursuance of, doctrines of human inequality” in order that they might
have liberty from these oppressive systems and be “free to determine for themselves their
own institutions of self government.”402 While the authors of the Programme preferred
peaceful liberation from oppressive conditions, such “peaceful progress [was] blocked
by actions of those at present in power in the States of southern Africa.”403 Therefore,
the Programme had little to offer but “to give to the peoples of those territories all the
support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors.”404

WCC leadership instructed the Programme officials to create several region-
specific sub-committees. Each committee would be responsible for reviewing the
political situation in the southern African countries still fighting for liberation. Given
their activism in the WCC, former Congregational missionaries composed the bulk of the
Angola committee, nicknamed Task Force 13 for the number of people assigned to it.

400 Ibid.
401 Ibid.
402 “Manifesto,” 2.
403 Ibid, 3.
404 Ibid.
Former Congregational missionaries participation in the Task Force would prove to be instrumental in shaping the Programme’s policies towards Angola.

The primary function of the Task Force was to analyze the political situation among nationalist groups in Angola in order to determine where Programme funds should be directed. Predictably, the unity and grand language of the WCC and Programme quickly dissolved into disagreements among committee members. The primary disagreement was over which Angolan liberation organization had the most potential to lead Angola towards decolonization and after liberation. Task Force members began picking sides in what, on the ground in Angola, was quickly evolving into a civil war. In essence, the Task Force was replicating the counterproductive patterns that were occurring on the geopolitical level.

Divisions within the Task Force essentially broke down along two lines. As Angola’s political parties matured throughout the 1960s, it became clear to both their members and outside observers that the lines dividing these nationalist movements directly corresponded with historical divisions among different ethnic/linguistic groups in Angola. The divisions between Protestant denominations also reinforced political divisions.405 The Task Force divisions, in turn, reflected these denominational and ethnic differences. On one side were individuals such as Larry Henderson who believed that funding going to Angola’s nationalist organizations should be evenly spread among the three main political organizations: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), and União Nacional para a

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Independência de Angola (UNITA). Having spent most of his adult life as a Congregational missionary, Henderson felt a strong allegiance to the Umbundu people. By the late 1960s, the party for many Umbundu people was UNITA, led by former mission student Jonas Savimbi. Many Umbundu believed UNITA offered the best future for them and they were suspicious of the intentions of the MPLA, which historically drew most of its supporters from urban, Mbundu speakers from the region surrounding the capital, Luanda. Equal disbursement of the Programme’s funds, in Henderson’s view, was the only fair way to settle the Task Force members’ disagreements.

Not everyone on the Task Force had such close ties to the Umbundu people. Some board members were suspicious of Jonas Savimbi and UNITA since many believed that he was taking money from both the Portuguese and the South African governments. Among the most vocal in his opposition to Henderson was William Minter. Minter came from a seminary background and, similar to many members of the church, had an academic and activist interest in southern Africa. In 1969, when he began working on the Task Force, he had just returned from Tanzania and Mozambique where he worked at secondary schools for political refugees run by the Mozambican anti-colonial organization Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). Given his

406 The divisions between the traditional bases of UNITA and MPLA have a long history in Angola politics. In general terms, because Umbundus were often used by the colonial government as laborers and local police offers and soliders, they were seen by many outside the highlands has supporters of Portuguese colonialism. Umbundus, for their part, felt misunderstood and looked down upon by the mostly urban MPLA, whose base was characterized as being people from mixed-race background (metiços). The appeal of the MPLA would eventually grow outside the boundaries of urban centers and Mbundu ethnic group, particularly when Savimbi began receiving funding from the Apartheid South African government. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*, 237; Letter from Lawrence Henderson, Task Force 13, World Council of Churches, Programme to Combat Racism, private papers of William Minter. For more on the division of politics between urban and rural see: Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

background with FRELIMO, which was ideologically in-line with the MPLA, Minter strongly opposed Henderson’s approach to equal funding for all liberation groups in Angola. Rather, Minter argued, the Programme should put its full support behind the MPLA, the nationalist group with the largest organizational structure. In his opinion, the decision to fund an organization called for a “political and theological analysis of the direction and actual role of the movements in the liberation struggle.” Minter conceded that the Programme’s project essentially amounted to an endorsement of the receiving organization’s political vision.\textsuperscript{408} In his opinion, the MPLA “embodie[d] the central forward thrust of the liberation struggle in Angola” and was therefore deserving of most, if not all, Programme’s funds.

Other voices entered the debate as well. Historian John Marcum, whose two-volume book on the anti-colonial war in Angola remains a standard text, was concerned with both the Task Force and the Programme. Marcum highlighted how Task Force members, who felt a moral obligation to assist in Angola, failed to question how their involvement would compound and complicate problems the Churches had already created during their nearly one hundred years of interference.\textsuperscript{409} Marcum also warned that “without so intending, Protestant churches have to some extent developed client relationships with nationalist movements and have subtly reinforced their divisions into three bitterly opposed movements engaged in fighting each other as well as the Portuguese.” Given that the Task Force was formulating the Programme’s policy towards Angola, its involvement in these internal battles would only further complicate,

\textsuperscript{408} Memo from William Minter, Task Force 13, World Council of Churches, Programme to Combat Racism, private papers of William Minter.

\textsuperscript{409} Letter from John Marcum to Murray MacInnes, Task Force 13, World Council of Churches, Programme to Combat Racism, private papers of William Minter.
rather than alleviate, Angola’s problems. Marcum also stressed the inability of both the Task Force and the WCC to probe their own motivations for seeking to become financially involved in Angola’s liberation. Was their involvement merely charity or, “could it be…that institutional self-preservation constitute[d] the principle, if only [a] semi-conscious, motive?” He argued that committee members should have avoided the “escape into the deception that humanitarian aid to embattled nationalist movements is a very different thing than military aid.” Rather, he argued, they were one in the same. George Houser, chairman of the anti-colonial organization American Committee on Africa, echoed Marcum’s concerns. Houser, in particular, was apprehensive of the Task Force idea to provide differing amounts of funding to the nationalist organizations. He reprimanded the Task Force and Programme members for not considering the “serious consequences…an unfair distribution of aid [may] have.”

The concerns of Marcum and Houser go to the heart of what was at stake with the Programme’s funding of Angolan liberation movements and the legacy of the Protestant Church movement in Angola. Behind the organizational pronouncements about the moral obligation to fight states that violated citizens’ human rights was the much messier reality of what this obligation would mean for the internal politics of the target nation. The short-term hope may have been to assist in colonial liberation. The debates and funding decisions on the committee level, however, demonstrate that the Task Force was interested in the long-term shaping of Angola in ways that were strikingly similar to the

410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
412 Ibid.
413 Houser’s concern is particularly interesting given that his own organization was extremely engaged with liberation movements in southern Africa.
414 Letter from George Houser, Task Force 13, World Council of Churches, Programme to Combat Racism, private papers of William Minter.
well-intentioned long-term planning that had originally motivated the missionaries.

While Minter admitted that the Programme funding was as much about politics as it was about morality and human rights, the question of whether outside organizations should be involved in such political maneuvering went without discussion. Indeed, some church leaders expressed concern about whether it was the business of churches to assist organizations “whose avowed purpose is to overthrow the governments of foreign countries….” The urgency of the situation, however, and the feeling among WCC members of the moral obligation to assist in places where there were historical ties, shut down discussion about the messier side of such well intentioned support.

Marcum and Houser’s concerns were not necessarily about the actual dollar amount of support, which were insignificant compared to other funding sources, but the intent behind funding and the meaning such funds conveyed. Weighing-in for one nationalist group over another would implicate the global church organization, and by association, its member churches, in the political battles of Angola’s domestic politics. Thus while defending Angolans’ human right to self-governance, the WCC was playing the role of “arbiter or king maker among competing movements with different constituencies, ideologies and leadership.” Such action essentially denied the fact that “the ultimate test of revolutionary legitimacy must be left to depend upon internal support not external aid.” Marcum questioned whether a church organization, with such a long history in Angola, should continue to be involved in Angola’s domestic politics. His

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417 Ibid.
concern, however, was essentially rhetorical because it was the Programme’s founding purpose to remain involved in southern Africa’s politics.

Concerns about the Programme did not alter the recommendations of the Task Force nor do Marcum and Houser’s questions appear to have been fully answered or explored. Though the WCC denied that its funding was an endorsement of the parties’ political philosophy, the Programme put the majority of its funds for Angola, and therefore its support, behind the MPLA.\footnote{There is some irony in this funding decision given that the MPLA was Marxist in orientation and therefore, in some ways, ideologically angled against the Christian Church.} In the eyes of many critics, the WCC’s support for liberation organizations was unchristian in its endorsement of violence. While argued on theological terms, these disagreements were fundamentally political. Despite the WCC’s attempts to avoid cold war ideological divisions, the political parties they supported in Angola, and throughout southern Africa, were themselves engaged in cold war politics. Therefore, the WCC’s attempts to remain apart from these divisive ideological battles were futile. Most of those groups and individuals who criticized the actions of the Programme simultaneously referred to the African political parties as terrorists. South African Prime Minister John Vorster argued that the churches were “subsidizing murder in the name of God,” while obviously failing to mention the violence of his own government. Among the Portuguese, the main contention was that the WCC was an instrument of international communism.\footnote{Conselho Mundial das Igrejas—uma organização subversiva”, PIDE/DGS, No de Proc: 5898, Doc 184, Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo.} PIDE tracked the movements of the organization’s leadership in order to draw links between the WCC and the Soviet Union.\footnote{“Missão Evangélica do Bailundo,” PIDE/DGS, No de Processo: 13.06.B, Doc 231, Direcção-Geral de Arquivos, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo.} In 1971, the government-controlled newspaper Epoca called for prohibiting
“terrorist-infected chocolate” from a British organization with ties to the WCC.421 Leaders of the Programme and the WCC were quick to counter these critics by pointing out that the majority of criticisms “the decision [to fund anti-colonial groups] are coming almost exclusively from one side: The white West.” However, Programme Chairman Balwin Sjollema argued that the WCC could not “listen to its white constituency only” and “turn a deaf ear to its constituency in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and indeed to the plight of all the oppressed.”422 Programme support was meant to imply “that anti-racist organizations which believe they have no other option but to resort to violence” would “no longer be automatically excluded from the possibility of moral and practical support from the WCC.” Indeed, to bolster this point, in September 1970, the All-Africa Conference of Churches issued a statement welcoming “the revolution in the thinking of donors, in being prepared to trust people who are taking radical action against racism.”423

Ultimately, the issues involved in the politics surrounding the Programme’s actions in southern Africa and the disagreements within the Task Force were the same ones that Congregational missionaries had been confronting during nearly one hundred years in Angola. From the very beginning of their arrival in the late nineteenth century, missionaries were criticized for meddling in Portuguese affairs. The colonial government accused mission schools and hospitals of “Americanizing” Angolans, altering local social customs, and detracting from the Portuguese colonial project. In response to these

422 Baldwin Sjollema, “First answer to comments received after the decisions by the WCC Executive Committee to support organizations combating racism”, (World Council of Churches and the International Documentation and Communication Centre, 1975); available from http://www.aluka.org; internet; assessed January 2008.
423 As quoted in Hudson, The World Council of Churches and Racism in Southern Africa, 482.
accusations, missionaries argued that the growth of Protestant missions was organic and a reflection of the desires of Angolans for mission provided services. Yet, missionaries were too concerned with immediate problems to consider the larger picture. Surrounded by the constant need to serve and heal, Congregational missionaries ignored nagging and explosive questions about the potentially negative effects of their good intentions. Did the Protestant missionary enterprise, for example, help prolong Portuguese colonialism? Were Protestant churches responsible for isolating Angola’s ethnic groups and, therefore, nurturing the growth of competing ethnic nationalisms? Most Congregational missionaries found reflecting on these questions too painful or, even, absurd given their own experiences and personal relations with Angolans. Thus, when returning missionaries joined other activists to form the Programme and Task Force, this lack of reflection translated into the likelihood of repeating past mistakes.

Convinced they were on the side of right, the Task Force and the leadership of the Programme ignored concerned voices that argued for measured reflection about the potential effects of the church organization picking sides within anti-colonial battles. Individuals such as Marcum were not arguing for the continuation of colonialism, but rather, for the discussion and perhaps acknowledgement that the rush to do good inevitably involved an assumption that there were no negative consequences to such well-intended action. Furthermore, the Programme’s decision to pick sides in the developing Angolan civil war meant that the organization was wading into the same imperialistic waters as the world superpowers but with the shield of arguing that WCC actions were in the name of human rights.
In their debates regarding which organization to fund in Angola, Task Force members made their decision without sufficiently weighing other options or reflecting on the potentially negative unintended consequences of their actions. Thus they repeated the same mistakes that they had made as missionaries. Unlike the case of Congregational missionaries in Angola, however, Task Force members were not making these decisions in rural villages of an impoverished European colony, but on the global stage. The World Council of Churches was an important human rights organization. Given the important role that Congregational and other Protestant missionaries played in WCC and Programme discussions, their unwillingness to reflect on their own experiences and thus risk repeating past errors, in a sense infected these discussions at the very moment when global organizations such as the WCC were negotiating the role of human rights in global politics. The outcome of these discussions, and the perceived successes of the WCC and the Programme to end racial discrimination in southern Africa, would in turn strongly influence the global human rights dialogue, a central concern of the post-cold war era and world politics for the decades to come.

CONCLUSION

On November 11, 1975, George Burgess, one of the last remaining Congregational missionaries in Angola, gathered with Angolans in the main square in Nova Lisboa (present-day Huambo), the largest town in the central highlands.\textsuperscript{425} Fifteen months earlier, divisions within the Portuguese government had led to a successful military coup that overthrew the government in Lisbon. One of the first tasks of the temporary military junta was granting independence to Portugal’s remaining colonies.\textsuperscript{426} Angola, however, was unlike the other colonies and did not have one dominant political organization to which power could be granted. The political coup had given rise to such domestic political tumult in Portugal that the new government, perhaps sensing the increasingly chaotic Angolan political scene, was eager to leave Angola as soon as possible. Portugal arranged to hand over power to a tri-partite government on November 11, 1975, with presidential elections planned for later in the year.\textsuperscript{427}

With great anticipation, Burgess joined others in a Huambo restaurant that November evening to listen to the live radio broadcast from Luanda. At 6 PM in a brief ceremony in which no Angolans were present, the Portuguese high commissioner, Admiral Leonel Cardoso, announced that, in the name of the Portuguese president, he

\textsuperscript{425} Only a month before Portugal’s withdrawal, Burgess had refused to leave Angola with seven other Congregational missionaries who were airlifted to neighboring countries. He was one of the few remaining medical doctors in Huambo and believed that Angolans’ need for his services was too great to worry about his own personal safety.

\textsuperscript{426} In 1974, the remaining Portuguese colonies were São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, East Timor, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Macau. In 1975, Macau was the only colony still under Portuguese control under the designation, “Chinese territory under Portuguese administration.” Formal control was transferred to China in 1999.

\textsuperscript{427} The three dominant parties vying for political power of Angola were: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), and União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA).
was transferring power of Angola to the “Angolan people.”

With little ceremony, the Portuguese flag was lowered from atop the governor’s palace in Luanda. Cardoso and the remaining Portuguese troops were quickly ushered to the airport and flown back to Lisbon. Five hundred years of Portuguese colonization ended in what one reporter, shocked by the lack of ceremony, described as “one of the most unusual acts of decolonization ever witnessed in Africa.” Six hours after Cardoso officially ended Portuguese rule, Agostinho Neto, leader of the MPLA, came on the radio. In a loud voice he declared, “In the name of the people of Angola, before Africa and the world, I proclaim the independence of Angola.”

In the background, Burgess and others listening in Huambo could hear the cheers of crowds gathered in Luanda. In spite of the cheering, it was unclear who was running the new Angolan government. In the months leading up to the handover, the inability to reach consensus between Angola’s political parties devolved into open armed conflict between their military wings.

For those gathered in Huambo, however, the victory was bittersweet. The tension that was already evident in 1975 between Angola’s political parties continued to escalate and within six months had become a full-fledged internationally funded civil war. While Angola had rid itself of colonial control, a new battle for control of the government was looming. Hearing Neto’s voice, and not that of the other leaders from either of the competing political parties, could only mean that war would continue. Indeed, unable to enter Luanda, Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA troops had retreated to the central highlands where its Umbundu political base was located. While Neto was master of ceremonies in

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429 According to Gleijeses, the ceremony was designed specifically so that the Portuguese government would not be handing over power to any one of the three liberation organizations. Ibid.
430 As quoted in ibid.
431 Ibid.
Luanda, Savimbi declared the province of Huambo a separate republic within the nation and himself the president.

When the Congregational missionaries first arrived in Angola in the 1880s, they would never have conceived that their actions would contribute to the political chaos of the 1970s. But, as this dissertation has shown, that is precisely what they did. Initially, the missionaries were enthusiastic about bringing Christianity and American culture to the African continent. However, they were ignorant of the political and social realities on the ground and, therefore, misguided in their understanding of how the Congregational missions would interact with Angolans in the long term. The missions almost immediately became entangled in the confusing torrent of Portuguese colonialism. Over the next eighty years, as global and regional politics changed, Congregational missions continued to participate in and influence Portuguese foreign relations and colonialism, as well as local Angolan politics. Yet, the missions’ position vis-à-vis these processes were more complicated than either missionaries themselves or historical scholarship have indicated. Angolans built upon the intellectual and physical foundations laid by Congregational missionaries to create their own identities as both Protestant and Umbundu. However, North American Protestant missionaries could not conceive of an Angolan Protestant identity that was not to permanently tied to the missionaries’ continued presence. In fact, missionaries’ understanding of their role as the benevolent

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white Christian presence in Angola depended upon the longevity of their historic opponent, the Portuguese colonial state.

Over the nearly one hundred year duration of foreign missionary presence in Angola, relations between Congregational missionaries, Protestant Angolans and the colonial state were complex, multilayered, and interwoven. Beginning with their arrival at the end of the nineteenth century, Congregational missionaries expected Angolans to conform to their idea of a proper western Christian lifestyle. Angolans were not allowed to live among non-believers, they had to maintain a monogamous marriage, needed to dress in western clothes, and were forbidden from seeking council from village healers. Missionaries rewarded Angolans who conformed to the Christian and western lifestyle with advancement within the mission structure. Occasionally an unusual missionary, such as Rev. Henry McDowell, succeeded in altering some of the mission guidelines by seeking to understand and incorporate Umbundu worldviews into mission teachings. His alterations helped increase the popularity of the mission among Angolans.

Within a few decades of McDowell’s reforms, Angolans themselves began dictating Christian norms, policing fellow Protestants, and taking responsibility for the Church’s spread among Angolans. The number of Angolan villages touched by the Congregational missions is evidence of Protestant Angolans’ success in convincing fellow Angolans to join the Church. Nevertheless, foreign missionaries were unwilling to give up their control of the missions. Even though Angolans were essential to the spread of the Church, foreign missionaries denied Angolans any roles in mission administration. This pattern of exclusion continued until the late 1960s. Only when faced with extreme missionary shortages were Dondi and the other stations transferred to Angolan
oversight. Indeed, it was not until 1967 that both North American missionaries and Angolans attended the annual mission-planning retreat meetings.

The changing domestic and international climate in the late 1960s ultimately forced Congregational missionaries to transfer control of missions formally to Protestant Angolans. In reality, however, the power transfer had occurred decades earlier. While missionaries ran the administration of missions, Angolans controlled the shape and message of the Congregational Church. In addition to extending the physical boundaries of the Church, Angolans used the cover of missions and Congregational Church connections to organize anti-colonial resistance. Despite the fact that Protestant missions were under constant surveillance by the Portuguese secret police, Angolans found ways to communicate and organize.

Missionaries were unaware of the extent of clandestine activities occurring at missions and outstations. In the nineteenth century, the ABCFM instructed Congregational missionaries to go into the world practicing “universal disinterested benevolence.” By the twentieth century, disinterested benevolence became blindness to the consequences of their actions. Congregational missionaries willfully ignored the signs that their congregants had transformed the missions’ original message and made it their own. North American missionaries could not recognize this because to do so would be to acknowledge that they never controlled the implications of their teachings in first place.

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433 The exception to this was, of course, Galague mission station, which Henry McDowell transferred to Angolan control in the 1930s. This precedent was upheld at Galangue even after the McDowells left Angola.
434 Etta Snow (former Congregational missionary), in discussion with author, July 2007.
435 One technique was to pass blank pieces of paper folded in certain ways to convey a message which could then be passed innocuously between Angolans.
Congregational missionaries reluctance to give up the control of missions was symptomatic of their larger unwillingness to see the situation changing around them. When concerns about safety compelled most missionaries to leave Angola in the late 1960s, they turned to their church organizations for ways to remain involved in Angolans’ struggles for independence. The geopolitical context of the late 1960s shaped the missionaries’ approach to their changing position in Angola. Ironically, they seized upon the language of liberation and human right emerging out of the American Civil Rights Movement and the cold war contest to justify the continuation of their own colonialist relations with Angola.

As they had for a century, Congregational missionaries sought to use their international connections to influence local political struggles in Angola. While the missionaries may have believed they were helping Angolans, in fact, they had become one of many voices assisting in the internationalization, and complication, of Angola’s civil war. Angola’s internal strife offered cold war powers a proxy battlefield upon which to advance their global agendas. Indeed, the end of Portuguese colonialism was not the end of colonialism or missionaries’ relations with Angola. Rather, it was the end of certain colonial relations and the beginning of others. During the fifteen months between the fall of Portugal’s dictatorship and the hand-over of power to Angolans on November 11, 1975, cold war powers lined up behind Angola’s various political parties. After Portugal announced the date of its withdraw, the competing Angolan political organizations, which had sought international funds beginning in the 1960s, increased

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437 For more on proxy war in Angola see: Mahmood Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim : America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).
exponentially.\textsuperscript{439} MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA troops, backed by a cross section of cold war players, took up positions throughout Angola poised to fight until victorious.

Congregational missionaries’ role in helping to internationalize the Angolan conflict was compounded by their allegiance to Umbundus and UNITA. Few missionaries were ever able to reflect on the complexities of mission relations within Angolan society and this did not change after independence. Indeed, on the night of November 11, 1975, George Burgess believed the end of Portuguese colonialism would mean that missionaries could return to Angola to rebuild mission structures and carry-on as they had for decades.\textsuperscript{440} Like other Congregational missionaries, after working with Umbundus for his entire life, Burgess’s political and personal sympathies lay with UNITA. He and other missionaries distrusted the MPLA. They characterized the organization as arrogant and ignorant of the issues and needs facing Umbundus in the highlands.\textsuperscript{441} George Burgess’s loyalty to Umbundus was not exceptional. Other Congregational missionaries decried what they saw as the MPLA’s illegal seizure of the post-colonial government. Congregational missionaries were unfazed when UNITA aligned itself with the conservative United States government and Apartheid South 


\textsuperscript{440} Burgess was so convinced that Savimbi’s republic would hold that he left Angola in December 1975 to spend the holidays with his family and gather medical supplies. While he was away, Huambo slipped from UNITA’s control and Burgess was blogged from re-entering. However, Burgess received a visa to re-enter Angola in 1976. The only part of the mission station still standing when he returned to Angola in 1976 was the leprsorium. UNITA and MPLA soldiers, who at this time were both fighting for control of the highlands, were afraid of the leprosy patients because they believed that physical contact would spread the disease. For this reason, leprosorium patients were guards outside Burgess home when he was there in 1976. Indeed, when I visited Dondi station in 2007 the only part of the mission still standing, and occupied, was the leprosorium. Ironically, their terrible disease had protected them from conflict with both MPLA and UNITA troops who over the previous thirty years both occupied the mission grounds. George Burgess managed to keep the mission hospital up and running for a year before his assistants, concerned for his safety, smuggled him out of Huambo and Angola in July 1977. Personal letter to the author.

\textsuperscript{441} George Burgess (former Congregational missionary), in discussion with author, July 2007.
They continued to support their Umbundu partners, keeping in close contact with UNITA, and receiving scattered reports from former students and colleagues. Concerned for Umbundus’ safety, former missionaries lobbied aid organizations, the US government and the United Nations to intervene on the side of Angola’s Umbundus. Many former missionaries traveled to Zambia in order to cross the boarder into southern Angola to deliver medical supplies, food, and donated money to UNITA.

Congregational missionaries drew attention and money to the conflict in Angola, thus helping to internationalize the nation’s civil war. In doing so, they helped transform what might have been a local battle for political power into a crucial and costly front in a geopolitical and ideological war involving billions of dollars from around the world. In persisting in their support for UNITA and the Umbundu people, the missionaries were fighting a loosing battle. Their ability to rationalize Savimbi’s cooperation with the Apartheid South Africa in order to defeat the Cuban and Soviet supported MPLA ran directly counter to Congregational missionaries’ previous support of African liberation. The inconsistencies of the former missionaries’ devotion to Umbundu liberation, at the cost of other Africans’ liberation, demonstrates the complexities of former Congregational missionaries’ relationship with Angola. Furthermore, it reveals the degree to which their attachments to a particular place and people overrode their stated guiding principles. Missionaries used the language of human rights to call for greater support for UNITA and funding for necessary food and medical supplies. Meanwhile, they continued to make ideological compromises as they defended UNITA despite the

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442 Although at the time these connections were not clear, there were few on the ground who did not see and understand the coordination occurring between UNITA and South African troops. Ibid., chapter 13
fact that the organization’s international backers were the same governments former missionaries condemned in the WCC.

Behind missionaries’ defense of Angolan human rights was a belief that Protestant Angolans needed missionaries’ support to make sense of the war and continue the Congregational missions’ work. In fact, in the civilian zones under UNITA control, Protestant Angolans were rebuilding their congregations and communities on their own. Mission trained teachers taught school for the refugee children, nursing classes for older adults, and delivered medical care, with rudimentary supplies, for those in need. Nor were Angolans unreflective about the domestic political situation. While it was true that many Angolans were caught up in the crosshairs of an internationally funded war, nevertheless, it did not preclude them from making conscious decisions about which organization to defend and why.444 Savimbi’s alliance with South Africa divided Umbundu families and friends, reinforcing the fact that despite the numerous international players involved, the fighting in Angola was a civil war.445

444 The decision over whether to fight with MPLA or UNITA remains an extremely sensitive subject in Angola, beyond casual conversation. Interview: L.M. (former mission nurse), in discussion with author, April 2007; J.E. (former mission school teacher), in discussion with author, April 2007; S.D., (former mission school teacher), in discussion with author, April 2007; S.L., (former mission school teacher), in discussion with author, April 2007; S.J., (former mission nurse), in discussion with author, April 2007. 445 Some Congregational school graduates such as Cornélio Caley, who as a scrawny teenager in 1961 had wrung the bell to begin the Dondi student protests, rose to high ranks within the MPLA power structure. Other families were drawn into the conflict unwillingly. The story of Luis Samacumbi, now head of the Angolan Congregational Church’s community development organization, and his brother Amaral provide a good example of how civil and international war effected Angolans’ lives. While attending church services in 1976, Amaral, then 14 years old, was kidnapped by the MPLA to fight but escaped. Within a few days, however, UNITA forces arrived at his home and kidnapped him to fight on their side. Luis and his family never learned what happened to Amaral. In 1981, Luis was kidnapped by the MPLA on his way to school. Both continued fighting for opposing sides until being demobilized in 1992. Luis believed Amaral was dead but later learned that he was alive and living in a refugee camp in Zambia. When they were reunited, they discovered that in a decisive battle, the brothers were, in fact, fighting each other. In a brutal standoff between MPLA and UNITA forces, Luis was one of the few men in his tank unit to survive. It turned out his brother, Amaral, was commanding the UNITA tanks firing on Luis. For more on this story see: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/4360268/Child-soldiers-the-brothers-trained-to-kill-each-other.html; Luis Samacumbi, (Director of the Department of Social Assistance, Studies and Projects (DASEP) of the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola), in discussion with author, March 2007.
Many of the lessons that the Congregational missionaries in Angola refused to confront continue to afflict humanitarian aid debates today. In this way, the history of the Congregational missions in Angola provides perspective and background for the continued internationalization of local conflict and its interaction with human rights dialogue and US humanitarian policies overseas. Journalist Ben Wallace-Wells recently profiled contemporary debates about US humanitarian policy in an article about the conflict in Darfur, Sudan.\textsuperscript{446} Invoking previous missed opportunities to intervene in violence that threatened to become genocidal, individuals, such as Gayle Smith and Susan Rice, now both now members of the Obama administration, and organizations, such as the religious coalition Save Darfur, lobbied to deem the Darfur conflict “genocidal” in order to rally support for international intervention. As a result, the United States has committed millions of dollars of humanitarian aid to Darfur and military aid to African Union troops.\textsuperscript{447} Wallace-Wells call attention to dissenting voices in the Obama administration that are beginning to rethink US approaches to humanitarian aid. The history of the Congregational missionaries in Angola supports this recent critique and confirms that humanitarian aid can aggravate rather than ameliorate local conflicts.\textsuperscript{448}

The question of Congregational missions' role US global relations is not just an academic exercise; it sheds light on the historical and contemporary role of the US in the world. As this dissertation has shown, discussions about US international humanitarian

\textsuperscript{447} For more on how this process unfolded see: Mahmood Mamdani, \textit{Saviors and Survivors : Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror}, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009).
\textsuperscript{448} As quoted Wallace-Wells, \textit{Darfuristan}, 76. Another interesting connection to US missionary history is that the individual leading the Obama administration’s review of Darfur policy, General Scott Gration, grew up in the Congo in the 1950s and 1960s as the child of Protestant missionaries. He and his family only left the region in 1964, well after departure of the Belgians, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, and the installation of dictator Mobutu Sese Seiko.
aid are not new. Rather, contemporary debates about the nature of humanitarian aid echo debates whose beginnings we see in Angola one hundred years earlier. The history of Congregational mission activity in Angola offers a cautionary tale about the complexities of US relations in the world. It not only sheds light on the various forces at play during the US's emergence as a world power over the course of the 20th century, but raises important questions about the impact of this legacy on today's humanitarian projects.


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