

**NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER: A HISTORY OF THE IGREJA REFORMADA  
EM MOÇAMBIQUE, 1908 – 1996.**

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**Tesis ingelewer ter gedeeltelike voltoening aan die vereistes vir die graad Magister in  
Teologie, aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch**

**Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Theology, at the University of Stellenbosch.**

**Promoter: Professor Pieter Coertzen**

**April 2005**

***“Declaration:***

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis, is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

***“Verklaring:***

Ek, die ondergetekende, verklaar hiermee dat die werk in hierdie tesis vervat, my eie oorspronklike werk is en dat ek dit nie vantevore in die geheel of gedeeltelik by enige universiteit ter verkryging van ‘n graad voorgele het nie.

Handtekening:

Datum:.



## **Opsomming:**

**Inleiding:** Redes vir die skrywe van 'n geskiedenis vir die Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, die vertrekpunt vir so 'n skrywe, verduideliking vir keuse van datums wat dien as tydperk grense, die metode van aanbidding en oor die titel.

### **Deel Een: Vestiging van die NGK Sending in Portugees Oos Afrika: 1908 -1922**

Opening van die Sending in die POA: 1902 –1909, Uitbreiding: 1909 – 1915, Probleme en sluiting van Sending stasies: 1915 – 1922, Evaluering

### **Deel Twee: Seventig Jaar in Ballingskap: 1922 – 1992**

#### *A: Vyftig Jaar sonder Formele Leierskap in Gemeentes: 1922 -1971*

Pogings om te heropen: 1922 – 1933, Donker Eeue – trans-grens bedieninge: 1933 – 1962, Veranderinge en Leierskap van die Ouderlinge: 1962 – 1972, Die begin van die IRM in Gaza/Maputo: 1971

#### *B: Twintig Jaar van Moeilike Vooruitgang: 1972 - 1992*

Kort tyd van genade: 1972 – 1975, Politieke Verandering en Vervolging: 1975 – 1982, Bemoedigende Gebeure, 1977 -1982: Mphatso Sinode, Besoeke deur Moderator, Maputo Besoeke, Oorsig van Ekklesiologiese Ontwikkeling

Nuwe Velde tussen 1983 – 1991: Zambesia: 1983 –; Buitelandse Hulp en die Eerste Sendeling na 1975; Aanpassing by die Landsomstandighede: 1986 – 1990; Eerste Spanne; Nuwe Gemeentes: Beira, Tete, Vila Ulongue

Mediese Samewerking /Acris

Nuwe Tydperk: Meer Sendelinge , Bybels

### **Deel Drie: Vinnige Vooruitgang, Konsolidasie en Heling, 1992 –**

#### *Vooruitgang en Nuwe Grense: 1992 -1996*

Sinode van 1992, Tete gemeente, Spanne, Vrede – Begin van herkonstruksie, Mielie Saad.

1993 -1995 - Ekklesiologiese Ontwikkeling: Tete (Ulongue Kerk en Binneland); Zambesia

Provinsie, Werk in die Suide, Sinodale Byeenkomste en Ekumene, Drome Bewaarheid: Hefsiba,

Ander Bedieninge, Ondersteuning

Nuwe Grense: 1995 -1996

Yao Uitreik, Makua Uitreik, Jeug span '95, Twee Sinodes (redes en vorming van die "Joint Com").

**Epiloog:** Konklusie n.a.v. hoof doelstellings, die IRM as Gereformeerde Kerk en die uniekheid van haar geskiedenis

## Summary:

**Introduction:** The reasons explained for writing a history of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, the point of departure, defining the dates chosen as parameters, the method of presenting this history and about the title.

### **Part One: Establishing the DRC Mission in Portuguese East Africa: 1908 -1922**

Opening the Mission in the PEA: 1902 –1909, Expansion: 1909 – 1915, Problems and closure of missions: 1915 – 1922, Evaluation

### **Part Two: Seventy years of Exile: 1922 – 1992**

#### *A: Fifty years without formal leadership in congregations: 1922 -1971*

Efforts to re-open: 1922 – 1933, Dark ages – trans-border ministry: 1933 – 1962, Changing Climate and Leadership of the Elders: 1962 – 1972, The beginnings of the IRM in Gaza/Maputo: 1971

#### *B: Twenty years of painful progress: 1972 - 1992*

Short time of grace: 1972 – 1975, Political change and Tribulation: 1975 – 1982, 2.1 Encouraging events: 1977 -1982: Mphatso Synod, Moderator visits, Maputo Visits, Overview of Ecclesiastical Development  
New fields: 1983 – 1991: Zambesia: 1983 –, Exterior Support and First Missionary, 1986, Adjusting to the climate: 1986 – 1990, First Teams, New congregations: Beira, Tete, Ulongue  
Medical Co-operation /Acris  
New Dawn: More Missionaries, Bibles

### **Part Three: Rapid expansion, consolidation and healing: 1992 –**

#### *Expansion and New Frontiers: 1992 -1996*

Synod of 1992, Tete congregation, teams, Peace – starting with reconstruction, Maize Seed  
1993 -1995: Expanding Orderly (chronological development)

Ecclesiastical Development: Tete (Ulongue Church) & Zambesia Province.

Work in the South, Synodical Meetings and Ecumenism, Dreams coming true: Hefsiba,

Other Ministries, Support.

New Frontiers: 1995 -1996

Yao Outreach, Makua Outreach, Youth Team, Two Synods (reasons and formation of Joint Com).

**Epilogue:** Conclusion on main objectives, the IRM as Reformed Church and the uniqueness of its history.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACRIS	Acção Cristá Interdenominacional de Saude /Interdenominational Christian Action for Health
A.E.A.M.	Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar
A.E.M.	Association of Evangelicals of Mozambique
CCAP	Church in Central Africa, Presbyterian (United Body of Presbyterian Missions, including DRC Mission, in Malawi)
CCM	Conselho Cristão de Moçambique / Christian Council of Mozambique
CRWRC	Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church, (Afrikaans - Ned. Geref. Kerk (NGK) Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk)
DRC in Africa	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
GSM / CFCWM	Gesamentlike Sending in Mosambiek (Committee of the Federal Council for Witness in Mozambique)
GSSM	Gesamentlike Sending in Suid Mosambiek (Committee for Joint Missions in Southern Mozambique)
IRM	Igreja Reformada em Moçambique
<i>IRM Internal used abbreviations, normally as indication for the kind of Minutes/Acta</i>	
S	Sinodo (before 1996)
SM	Sinodo de Mphatso
SN	Sinodo Novo
ST	Sinodo de Tumbini
PM	Presbeterio de Maputo
C.S	Comissão Sinodal/ Synodical Committee
KK	Synodical Committee (Chewa)
JC	Joint Committee / CC – Comissão Conjunta
LO	Liaison Officer
LWF	Lutheran World Federation

NGO	Non Governmental Organization
Past/Pr	Pastor
PEA	Portuguese East Africa
Presb	Presbytery, Church body consisting of several congregations with overseeing powers
Rev(s)	Reverend(s); normally referred to as “Pastor” in Portuguese and therefore also the common used term in the IRM.
UN/NU	United Nations (Nações Unidas – Port.)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
URC/VGK	Uniting Reformed Church (Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk)



## INTRODUCTION

### *i) Objective and Principle*

The first question to be asked when undertaking a project like this is probably the following: “Why write a History of the *Igreja Reformada em Moçambique*?” or, “What is the objective when writing the history of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique?” The answer is obvious, but not necessarily simple: The history of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique (abbreviated IRM) needs to be documented, because no such comprehensive history exists currently. The local church expressed their wish for such a document already in 1992 (Acta da...IRM, 29/1 -2/2/1992, S 91), and repeated it several times afterwards. A few earlier works exist in Afrikaans and other lesser attempts have been made, but until now a more complete compilation of historical events, including recent developments, has been lacking. Most of the efforts have been concerned with the earlier planting stages, made brief reference to the 50 years following 1922, or was concerned with a specific area's, e.g. Beira's or Milange's, unique history. The main purpose of this writing is therefore to address the need for a more comprehensive history of the IRM, in the first place for the benefit of the local church.

In the process, one of the aims is to pay tribute to the many members, leaders, supporters and pastors, who faced their circumstances with courage to guide God's flock in difficult times. Secondly, it will create a base from where further study on the various aspects of the IRM's development can be done. A history of the IRM will also benefit the broader body of Christ, especially the Reformed Church Family, to know about God's miraculous deeds in Mozambique through the IRM. It is widely believed that the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique's history is unique in many aspects and a more “full history” will clearly demonstrate this. Within Reformed context, another aim will be to indicate if the IRM, as fruit of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, is indeed a Reformed Church, expressing itself uniquely within Mozambique.

With “A history of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique”, the following is implied: The documentation of the appropriate events and contributing factors that led to the foundation, formation and establishment of the modern day Reformed Church in Mozambique or, *A Igreja*

*Reformada em Moçambique*. Therefore, what follows, will primarily be a gathering of facts and incidents that effected the IRM's development, in order to create a general historical overview of events. In the process an analysis of historical facts or evaluations of decisions and trends will be made where required to portray the IRM's history more effectively, for example, taking into consideration the effect of religious and political trends in Mozambique on the IRM.

However, having the material at hand, analysed and evaluated, does not mean a church history has already been written. Another question, that of principle, needs to be answered beforehand. What is the theological point of departure when writing such a history? The theological viewpoint taken as the foundation for compiling this history, is that of the IRM's proper theological disposition: Confessing Evangelical Reformed values. In their "Estatutos", points III – VIII, and "Regulamentos Internos", it is clear that the IRM defines itself as a classical Reformed Church in terms of the three Reformed confessions, presbyterial governance and signs of a living Church: Preaching of the Word, Celebrating the Sacraments and Exercising Discipline. Therefore, the Ecclesiastical model to which the IRM's history is measured is that of the Church as the Body of Christ, emphasising His special involvement in the development of the Ecclesiastical character of the IRM. In this process He used spiritual leaders, local and expatriate (missionaries) to play a very important and interactive role, building up His church in Mozambique.

In his evaluation of the writing of African Church history, Dr. Mark Shaw came to the conclusion that African Church history writing (and history in general) is in a crises due to the post modern approach that doesn't take kindly to the previous missionary dominated church history presentation. The post modern, ecumenical approach adopts a tolerant tone and strives to write from the viewpoint of personal observance, in the first place of those whom the history is about; the local people. This is in contrast to the previous ideological and later scientific approach that was predominantly Western and therefore "mission" friendly. (Mark Shaw; 2000, p1-2) It is the author's wish however, that the history of the IRM will transcend ideological, tribal, self centered and even scientific aims, as far as lastnamed considers the personal observations and unofficial accounts of the local populace as of lesser importance, in order to testify about something that satisfies all above mentioned pre-occupations: The way Jesus Christ kept and still upholds his Church in Mozambique.



Therefore: The main objective of this work is to document events and incidents, even trends that led to the establishment and formation of the modern day Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, for the benefit of the local and wider church. In the process material and facts will be constantly evaluated and interpreted in order to give an effective witness of how the Lord has planted, kept and exalted the IRM over a period of almost hundred years, the major part of which witnessed serious opposition. Secondary aims will be: 1) Pay tribute to believers and leaders who were obedient instruments in His hand during these times, 2) provide a base for further and needed study 3) evaluate the Biblical and Reformed character of the IRM and 4) emphasize the unique character of its history within broader church history.

## *ii) Presenting the IRM's history*

A) Where does one start with the history of the IRM? The most likely place would be to begin where the first steps were taken that eventually led to the establishment of the IRM. Therefore, in the author's opinion, the history of the IRM should start at Mlanda, Malawi (Nyasa-land) in the year 1902, when the first contacts were made that led to the establishment of mission stations in Mozambique at a later stage. Officially though, the IRM's history starts in 1908, because then permission was granted by the Portuguese government to start a mission within the PEA. At that time Mozambique was called Portuguese East Africa, abbreviated PEA. There are records of an earlier attempt by Dutch missionaries when they tried to establish a Reformed mission near Maputo in June 1842, but it was mainly to make contact with the "Boers" who settled into the interior, near Lorenzo Marques. Since their license was refused by the governor general, Abreu de Lima, their effort was absorbed by other denominations when they left, and therefore does not influence the IRM's history in a concrete way. (Chimango, 1982, p. 13)

For the purpose of this study, events will be described until February 1996, when the IRM was organised into two Synods. The reasons for choosing 1996 as a "cut off" date, are the following.

1) The IRM's main structural or external development occurred up to 1996, laying the basis for the current involvement of the IRM on the various fields in Mozambique. 2) After 1996 a consolidation period started and few new fields were opened since then. An equal important process, that of internal growth, which had a significant influence since 1999 in terms of local leadership, was prompted by this spirit of consolidation. 3) The 1996 division also marked the



startingpoint of duplication of ecclesiastical functions and developments in the IRM and, together with points 1) & 2) above, necessitates a more specialised and comprehensive study of and a different approach towards available material.

Although the IRM's history was explored by the current author until 2004, it was done in broader lines and by way of general impressions, mainly for the purposes of presenting a complete history to the local church as they had requested and not in depth as the present study.

B) How is the material sorted? About the first efforts, development of the work and how the mission was later obliged to close down, a great deal has been written and events were well documented. Events were documented by RW Murray (1949), OD Scheuer (1957), HTS Page (1963), PB Botha (1969) and JM Cronje (1981) and numerous articles appeared in church papers and magazines such as the "Sendingblad" and "Kerkbode". For the sake of completeness however, an overview of the initial stages will be given, for it formed the basis of continued involvement and the later return of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and other Reformed Churches to the mission fields of Mozambique.

In the period 1930 till 1971, very little has been documented or chronicled, making a chronological overview less viable. From the late 1980's there are plenty of documented material, but not yet concisely or orderly chronicled, which poses the the following question: How does one present the essence of the 95 year history of a church, of which the major part had not been explored/researched? This is further complicated by the fact that in the last twelve to fourteen years more happened in the ecclesiastical development of the IRM, than in the previous eighty years. Another complicating factor is to present all the facts and attributing factors within the context in which it happened. A good example is the severe influence of the political and economical climate of Mozambique, which changed drastically and even violently at several stages. This resulted many times in suffering for the church on the one hand, but it also presented new opportunities on the other hand, affecting the forming and development of the IRM.

So, the following method was opted for:

The IRM's history was broken down into main eras, subdivided again into smaller periods, aiming to portray certain events in context of time and place. It is therefore a chronological compilation (and division) of events where possible, with important themes (e.g. 50 years without pastors,

external help, etc) and trends (e.g. religious ambient, political influences, ecumenism) being highlighted where necessary. The intention is to clearly and accurately indicate, above all, God's protection and later upliftment of His flock in Mozambique, in a time when they felt particularly helpless and without guidance and support.

C) One way of compiling the IRM's history is to divide it into three to four distinctive periods, e.g.: a) The planting of the DRC Mission and initial era from 1908 (1902) to 1922; b) the long period of tribulation and a church without any pastors until 1971-2, but steady progress till 1992, called the "Seventy years of Exile" and then finally, c) the last part of rapid development and firm establishment until 1996. A more complete division will be as follows (not according to chapter divisions and subdivisions as in script):

## **I. Establishing the DRC Mission in Portuguese East Africa: 1908 -1922**

1. Opening the Mission in the PEA: 1902 –1909
2. Expansion: 1909 – 1915
3. Problems and closure of missions: 1915 – 1922
4. Evaluation

## **II. Seventy years of Exile: 1922 – 1992**

### ***A: Fifty years without formal leadership in congregations: 1922 -1971***

1. Efforts to re-open: 1922 – 1933
2. Dark ages – trans-border ministry: 1933 – 1962
3. Changing Climate and Leadership of the Elders: 1962 – 1972
4. The beginnings of the IRM in Gaza/Maputo: 1971

### ***B: Twenty years of painful progress: 1972 - 1992***

1. Short time of grace: 1972 – 1975
2. Political change and Tribulation: 1975 – 1982
  - 2.1 Encouraging events: 1977 -1982
    - Mphatso Synod, Moderator visits, Maputo Visits
3. New fields: 1983 – 1991
  - 3.1 Overview of Ecclesiastical Development

- 3.2 Zambesia: 1983 –
- 3.3 Exterior Support and First Missionary, 1986
- 3.4 Adjusting to the climate: 1986 – 1990
- 3.5 First Teams
- 3.6 New congregations: Beira, Tete, Ulongue
- 3.7 Medical Co-operation /Acris
- 4. New Dawn
  - 4.1 More Missionaries
  - 4.2 Bibles

### **III. Rapid expansion, consolidation and healing: 1992 –**

#### ***A. Expansion and New Frontiers: 1992 -1996***

- 1. Synod of 1992, Tete congregation, teams
- 2. Peace – starting with reconstruction, Maize Seed
- 3. 1993 -1995: Expanding Orderly:
  - 3.1 Ecclesiastical Development: Tete (Ulongue Church) & Zambesia Province.
  - 3.2 Work in the South, Synodical Meetings and Ecumenism.
- 4. Dreams coming true: Hefsiba, Other Ministries, Support.
- 5. New Frontiers: 1995 -1996
  - 5.1 Yao Outreach,
  - 5.2 Makua Outreach,
  - 5.3 Youth Team, Two Synods

Summarising the IRM's development during the years following 1996 until present, is as follows:

#### ***B. Growing into the New Millenium: 1996 –***

General: Change in support base, change in country

Internal Development:

Mphatso Synod: Tete Province, Hefsiba, Other Ministries, Zambesia

Sinodo Novo: Congregations, Other Ministries, Unreached peoples – Makua, Yao,  
Makwe, Mwane



Special Events: Missionary and pastors' Conferences, Working groups, End of an Apostolic Era – P Botha's passed away 9/1999, Floods of 2000

Healing, Consolidation and local leadership: General Synod (2004)

**C. Facing the Future:** Internal and Principle Challenges, Addressing Social Evils like Poverty, Aids and the Legacy of War

*E) Alternative Division?* An alternative way of covering the IRM's history would be to concentrate mainly on Ecclesiastical events and not consider external influences as much. In this case yearnumbers with "2" in it divide the IRM's history meaningful into main eras, also implying that the IRM in reality turned a 100 years old in 2002. Such a division would look as follows:

1. PLANTING THE IRM IN PEA: 1902 – 1922

Initial contact, growing interest, first initiatives, planting, problems and closure of missions

2. FIFTY YEARS WITHOUT PASTORS: 1922-1972

2.1 Forty Years in the Desert: 1922 – 1962

Efforts to re-open, difficulties for local believers, contact in neighbouring countries

2.2 Ten Years Waiting Period: 1962 – 1972

Renewed interest, Liberation War started, Bungwe la Nine/Ten, Church planted in Gaza, first visits

3. DEVELOPING OF AN OWN SYNOD: 1972- 1982

Pastors again allowed in Angonia, formation of congregations, registration, Marxist government, formation of Mphatso Synod, visits by the moderator, first local pastors for Angonia, full member of the CCM/ government eases policy on religion.

4. SIGNIFICANT ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENT: 1983 – 1992

Zambesia joins the IRM, Mawi Synod, war interrupts development, first fulltime missionary, adapting to the situation: Beira, Tete and V. Ulongue established, teams, Synod of V. Ulongue: Hope restored.

5. RAPID EXPANSION - IRM BECOMES A NATIONWIDE CHURCH: 1992 -2004

5.1 Expansion and Tension: 1992 -1996:

Peace Accord- war ends, Interior of Tete and Zambesia evangelised and old congregations re-opened, Missionary influx and other ministries, Hefsiba, Yao and

Makua missions, Manica, Maputo Synods, tensions, two Synods in Febr. 1996, Joint Committee.

## 5.2 Consolidation and Local Leadership: 1996-2004

Internal development, Makwe, Supporters, Special events, End of Apostolic age  
Hefsiba's role, Facing Challenges locally: Floods of 2000/1, Missionaries' role,  
General Synod, Social and Spiritual Evils

Which one is the better? For the purpose of this study the first division is chosen, for the following reasons: 1) It is more in line with the local perception of the IRM's history. The year 1908 is generally perceived as the year of the IRM's birth (see official letterhead – 9.1.4 and shown in the planned centenary celebrations for 2008). 2) It takes more accurately into account external developments that definitely influenced the IRM, like the laws on missionaries, the civil war etc.

### *iii) Documentation*

Another introductory remark important to the understanding of the IRM's history is the role of documentation. Usually 'things happened' when missionaries were around, as revealed in the decisions and reports of many meetings held in ecclesiastical circles, but that may give a false impression. True, there were missionaries like AG Murray, DPLaurie, PB Botha, JS Minnaar and others, who planted and, in a sense, re-started the 'Igreja Reformada' in Mozambique, but, especially after 1922, it was the undocumented, unplanned and many times unnoticed long-suffering and faithful endurance of local leaders and believers, like the Chikakudas, Magagulas, James Ngozo's, Bambo Bika, Marata and Chibotas that established the Reformed Church in Mozambique.

Unfortunately many of these brave deeds and decisions were never recorded or minuted, or got lost; others only exist in oral traditions. Some of these traditions were included in the script, although it doesn't exist on paper yet. As a measure to verify these parts of the IRM's history, 30+ copies of the whole document were printed and distributed to the leaders, pastors and others involved in and with knowledge of the IRM's history. The feedback was anything but satisfying, although a few people did respond and made very valuable contributions. On asking others,



especially IRM leaders, nobody had definite complaints, except for spelling and minor mistakes. The assumption is therefore that the IRM's history, as documented here is correct, as far as it concerns the oral traditions and personal witnesses. Much research was also done locally at places of importance to get a feeling of the ambience of certain events and to verify how written decisions were applied in practise.

Four main groups of resource material were used for this study:

- 1) Previous compiled histories (especially for era up till 1933) and Autobiographies,
- 2) Church magazines such as "*Die Sendingblad*" etc, articles about the IRM, newspapers and non ecclesiastical reports of various kinds
- 3) Official church documents (reports, agendas and minutes),
- 4) Personal interviews, oral traditions and unofficial notes on the IRM's history.

As mentioned about documented material, the situation improved in the 1980's and since 1992 there was a definite attempt to keep record of decisions and actions. In turn this resulted in heaps of information and paperwork, but with various methods of record keeping. Material was also not centrally archived by all the local church bodies, apart from individual efforts by Revs P Botha, M Taute, D Murray and myself. All of above complicated research and reference extensively, especially as far is concerned documents dating before 1988. Some important scripts (like baptism registers and the Minutes of the 1977 Synod) were archived at Pretoria, but could not be identified satisfactory at the new premises at Stellenbosch. The whole issue of a central archive for the IRM needs to be addressed in the near future, in order to accommodate and encourage effective further study. Proof for this statement is that most of the non published material used in this study, is currently in my personal care, recovered from various locations and accumulated over the years. The problem is to know to whom it must be handed over to be effectively archived. Hefsiba Theological Seminary has been indicated by the IRM to fulfil this function, but no such facility or policy currently exists within the IRM, concerning archivation of important ecclesiastical documents.

A last remark concerns the use of names and certain terms. With the passage of time, especially place names underwent small changes, for example "Nkhoma", which was first written "Mkhoma". Some names have more than one correct form or are used with various spellings, like



Milange/Milanje or need to be distinguished from similar sounding names like Mulanje (Malawi). Please be aware of this, since the names are written as it was known at the time. The same principle applies to new names for the same place, like Maputo that was first Lorenzo Marques, or Zimbabwe that was (Southern) Rhodesia. The name or term is used as was applicable at that time. Abbreviations are also used and not all of them may be indicated within the list of abbreviations, but definitely within the text.

#### *iv) The Title*

The title to this work reads, “**Not by might, nor by power ...**”, and refers to Zacharia 4:6 (NIV) where the following is written: “This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, ‘**Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.**’” What does it have in common with the sub-title, which describes the topic of this document’s content, “A history of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique”? Apart from the fact that the quoted verse also serves as the theme verse together with the emblem of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, taken from the same passage, it describes in a special way the existence of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique. The prophet Zachariah, in the times after the people of Judah returned to their country, urged God’s faithful to start rebuilding the temple of Yahweh, but they had to remember that in their own power and through violent effort, they would not succeed. After their many hardships and struggles, they had to behold the power of God’s spirit who would merge the preaching of God’s word and the help from abroad into a force that would complete a task that for the moment looked impossible to the hearers. This is true also of the way in which many members of the IRM survived difficult times and how the small church grew: Not by the might of being a protected religion, nor by their own power, but by the Spirit of God an insignificant group of believers grew into a church that gives glory to God in Mozambique.

In a way it reminds of the struggle of Elijah, who had to operate by the same principle: Elijah was feeling at the end of his rope and he wished for it all to end (1 Kings 19:18). Although God used him in a most spectacular victory over evil, Elijah was bearing the brunt of Yeshabel’s wrath and felt victimized by superior forces. Therefore God gave him a few last tasks, appointed him a successor, but above all reminded him that Yahweh Himself was keeping his people. The Lord

showed him that others were also fighting the good cause, not being pressurised into worshipping Baals. Maybe they were not publicly known and were not coming into the open by force, but they existed and were kept by God himself, far more than anyone expected. Not by force or human power, but by God's Spirit, silently but strong enough to withstand furious onslaughts, even from high authorities. Sometimes the Elijahs like Rev. Murray, Bambo James Ngozo, Revs. Kasamba and Chikakuda, Matunda, Tembe and Botha felt like God had left them alone in the face of trials, but then always the encouraging and miraculous revelation came; ten fold, hundred fold more believers than expected, kept by God's grace to continue despite hardships. It is a testimony to "Seven Thousand Faithful", when others believed there were none.

Finally, may the documentation of the following events pay tribute to the courageous and faithful witness of the IRM's members in the face of controversy, but may it also show the loving support of their fellow believers in neighbouring countries, especially the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. Above all may this history give glory to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in a special way and may we all learn from it and may it be an encouragement to all followers of Christ.

## **PART ONE:**

# **PLANTING OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION IN PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA.**

## *Chapter 1*

### **OPENING THE MISSION IN PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA: 1902 –1909**

#### **1.1 General Situation**

As an introductory note to this first part of the IRM's history, the general mission set-up of the Dutch Reformed Church and the political climate of the time are briefly described to better understand the background of events.

##### **1.1.1 The DRC Mission Effort into Southern and Central Africa**

What was the DRC mission set-up at the time of 1902, concerning work north of the Limpopo? At that stage the DRC mission had joined the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland with the mission thrust into Nyasaland (Malawi) and had already established itself well since its initiation in 1889, especially near Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi) and the Highlands in central Malawi. Missionaries like Revs AC and WH Murray had also advanced significantly with the translation of the Bible into Chichewa, done at Mvera mission, the oldest and then still the main mission station. A trend to establish missions on a higher altitude than the Lake valley was adopted, because of malaria and other tropical diseases, which had accounted for several missionary deaths at that stage. This was especially true in the hotter seasons and "retreat missions" that were situated right on or near the edge of the escarpment, overlooking the Lake, were established. In this way, Mlanda mission was



established in 1901/2 to serve as a “retreat” for Livlezi, Cape Mclear and later Malembo-missions in the Lake valley. Another important factor was that Mvera, Livlezi and Mlanda all lay within Angoni tribal areas. (Cronje, 1981; p7-31)

All the DRC mission work in Nyasaland was supported by the Western Cape Synod’s Mission Board. This mission activity was prompted in the last half of the 1800’s as a result of the revival in the Western Cape that influenced the whole DRC. Godly families like the Murrays, Hofmeyrs, Louws, Retiefs, Pauws and others were instrumental in motivating the Church into missions. (Cronje, 1981; p 7) Dr. CM Pauw in his book *“Mission and Church in Malawi”* summarizes in essence the process of Mission Awareness in the DRC and development of mission strategies within the DRC Synods of South Africa during the late 1800’s till 1930’s. (Pauw, 1980, p 50 -59) During the same time however the two Northern Provinces of South Africa were involved in a war with England which influenced support for missions negatively. This makes the Transvaal support for the work in 1908 all the more impressive.

Three other fields were reached from Nyasaland:

1) Work amongst Chewa speaking people (Miners) in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) that developed into the CCAP Synod of Salisbury, apart from the mission thrust from SA (Cronje, 1981; p 78-81); 2) the mission work that expanded into Zambia supported by the DRC of the Orange Free State, (Cronje, 1981; p 144 -150) and 3) the effort into Mozambique (PEA) jointly supported by the Cape, Transvaal and Free State in the beginning (Cronje, 1981, p 194-196; Pauw, 1980, p 48). Mission boards resided over the work done in the different mission fields, reporting to the different Synods for support and oversight. In Malawi there was an own mission board to reside over activities and it was a sub-committee to the general mission board of the Cape Synod. During this time the chairman was Rev. William H Murray (later Doctor), a tough missionary with strong leadership abilities (nicknamed the Boss) and vision for the expansion of the Kingdom. (Cronje, 1981; p 62-64)

### **1.1.2 Political Background**

The political atmosphere was that of colonial powers battling for imperial gain, and native Africa being forced into submission. A lot of development took place during this time and missions

attracted many people, also because of job-opportunities, medical help and education. One fact that influenced the PEA mission work directly, however, was the tense relationship that existed between Portugal and England. This was partly due to missionary activities. These two countries were in land-disputes over the interior of central Africa, whereby Portugal lost control over the Monopotapa Kingdom, alias modern-day Zimbabwe. What left a bitter taste with the Portuguese though was when Dr. Cecil J Rhodes succeeded to uphold a demand for the Shire Valley, to be annexed to Nyasaland, rather than to Portuguese East Africa, made possible by appeals of missionaries of the American Board in that area, to be under British control. Understandably it left the Portuguese most suspicious of British-Protestant-Missionary combinations. (Page, 1963, p. 9-10; Pauw, 1980; p 12-14)

The modern day names of Mozambique and Malawi were only given at a much later stage. At the beginning of the twentieth century Mozambique was still called Portuguese East Africa, Malawi was Nyasaland, Zimbabwe known as Southern Rhodesia and Zambia as Northern Rhodesia. The overall development of the interior of Africa was still in its initial stages with very little infrastructure in the modern ways of communication and transport. There were still vast areas of virgin Africa, especially in Mozambique, where wild animals roamed freely, not yet diminished by the power of the gun. This was also the state of the peoples who lived in the more remote areas. Entire groups of unreached peoples inhabited the interior of Africa; set firmly in the ways of Traditional African Beliefs. Tribal wars waged daily and to aggravate things, especially to the eastern parts of Africa, near the coast and over a wide area, the slave-trade was rampant. Just to complement the complex situation was the fact that the big trek northwards by the fleeing generals of Chaka Zulu, finally came to a rest and that these moving Zulu groups started to settle at various places within Southern Africa. One of these places was on the Angonia highlands in PEA, as well as on the central escarpment in Nyasaland, where the Maseko Angoni settled. (Cronje, 1981; p.10-12; Pauw, 1980, p. 8-12) A very interesting account of the Angoni settling process has been documented by B Pachai in his book: *Malawi – the History of the Nation*, p 36 ff.

Another very important fact to take into consideration was that the colonial powers favoured the denomination of their own countries and implemented the values set by them. By the beginning of the twentieth century England was occupying the most of Southern Africa, enforcing to a big extend the values of Victorianism and the order of Civil Services back home. On the other hand



all territories under Portuguese rule were subjected to the rule of the state-church, the Roman Catholic Church, married to a very bureaucratic civil service. The Catholic Church did not have a good record in the beginning for trying to reach the peoples with the Gospel in the PEA either; on the contrary, clergymen were sometimes deeply involved in some dubious activities, even slavery. There were some very serious missionaries, but no real evangelism plan was followed, rather a random way of witnessing and more for the colonialists, than for the local populations. (Chimango, 1982, p 3-4; Page, 1963, p 11 -14) A good account of how colonial interest and missionary activity were interwoven is given by James Duffy in his book "Portugal in Africa", p 73ff. Special mention is made of two serious missionaries in the beginning, Francis Xavier and Gonçalo de Silveira, lastnamed becoming a martyr for the Gospel in the Monomotapa Kingdom, but not before he baptised the King and of his family, although it was apparently a superficial conversion. (Duffy, 1962, p 89 -90) By 1875 a new era began and the Catholics started a new missionary offensive with the "Real Colegio de Cemache do Bonjardim" (Chimango, 1982, p 6) and the Padre Pavia de Andrade (Page, 1963, p 15) In general there was also an antagonistic feeling in Portuguese Colonies towards Protestant missions, due to the Shire valley and other incidents, but also because of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. It was in this setting that the DRC Mission ventured into Portuguese East Africa. (Page, 1963, p 16, 25 -30)

## **1.2 Getting Involved in PEA: 1902 -1908.**

Although the official date for the planting of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique is considered to be in the year of 1908, the actual entrance into Portuguese East Africa was years earlier. It started when missionary, Rev. Andrew George Murray, came into contact with Angonis from PEA at his mission station, Mlanda. Mlanda is situated in Central Malawi/Nyasaland, right next to the border (2 km away) between Malawi & Mozambique. The border though, is only of academical value as far as it concerns the local people who live on both sides and near to it. Everybody in the vicinity and on the Angonia plateau as a whole speaks Chichewa and is related to the Angoni clans. At that stage the Angoni was still a rather unreached group and widely respected and feared, because of their fierce ways dating from their Zulu ancestry. (Cronje, 1981, p 195)



### 1.2.1 Learning about the Need:

Rev. Andrew George Murray, a member of the famous Murray family, was posted at the newly established Mlanda mission, near Dedza, in the Lizulu vicinity. Shortly after his arrival, while busy with the construction of the first brick-building at the mission, one of the workers for Rev. Murray, a certain Mr. Lipenga, asked to go and visit his family in neighbouring PEA. Rev. Murray was surprised to learn that there lived more people of the same tribe (and language) further to the interior of the PEA border than in Nyasaland itself. He was immediately interested and in September 1902 he visited Portuguese Angoniland, as it was known at the time, by bicycle. He made contact with a Mr. Gil de Macho F Maya, who could speak English and received the visitors well. Mr. Maya also confirmed that about 200 000 people lived in the Angonia area and that nobody was doing any mission work there, neither Catholic, nor Protestant.

Although Rev. Murray immediately requested to start with mission work, his requests, including written requests, were always passed on to a higher official, including Mr. Bettingcourt, the governor of the Tete area. Rev. Murray's interest was kept alive however, by the continuous contact with people from that vicinity. It so happened that Angoni's from Portuguese East Africa just crossed the border to receive schooling and other care, since it was not as available or near to them in their own country as was the case at Mlanda. In this way, and via members of Mlanda congregation who had family and friends in PEA, catechumens from PEA attended the catechism-classes and sermons. They also began to ask the pastor to visit their homes on the other side of the border, where they said were thousands of people living without any knowledge of God's Word. On one occasion 13 pupils from PEA came for schooling at Mlanda, of whom five became catechumens and later the first evangelists to their country.

In 1905 another incident stirred the interest of Rev. Murray. He and his wife attended an emergency call of an old man of Angoniland to help his sick daughter with medical treatment. While there, they became aware of the enormity of the physical and spiritual need of the people. (Ibid, p 195-196, Page, 1963, 36 ff) What follows till the end of Chapter Two is basically a combination and summary of three works on the topic, except where another source is indicated: Rev. P Botha's "Ad Hoc Verslag aan die Federale Raad van Ned. Geref. Kerke aangaande Argiefstukke oor die NG Sending in Mosambiek", 1969; Dr. JM Cronje's "Aan God die Dank" 1981, P 196 -222, and Rev. HTS Page's "NG Kerk Aanslag op P.O.A ..." 1963, p 38 ff.

### 1.2.2 Walking the Bureaucratic Mile

In 1906, another Governor, captain Coutinho, travelled through the district, but was not willing to give permission either and he referred the request to Portugal. Murray followed up with other visits to Angoni-land, especially after hearing about the dense populations near the Domwe mountains and the banks of the Mawi and Lifidzi –rivers. He estimated about half a million (later statistics proved it too high; see footnotes also in Cronje, 1981, page 196; # 8) people were in need of the gospel and felt that serious efforts had to be made to get permission to start working amongst them. This was especially the case when he and others visited the area of headman Chide, where they were well received. Therefore the Sub-commission of the Mission board in Nyasaland gave the order to Rev. Murray in 1907, before the summer rains started, to go to Tete and obtain the necessary permission to start work within the PEA. This Rev. Murray did and by hangmat (machila) travelled the 272 kms to Tete, carrying with him a letter of approval by the local administrator of Vila Continho, Mr. Raphael Bivar.

The honourable governor Bettincourt received him well, especially after learning that Rev. Murray was a 'Boer' missionary and he, the first named, had a high esteem of the Afrikaners after contacts with them during the Anglo-Boer war. The governor promised to approve whatever piece of ground the mission may choose, but final approval had to be given by the governor general in Lourenço Marques. On his return, Rev. Murray's report led to immediate action and in October 1907, Revs. William H Murray and AG Murray went into Angoni-land. Near **Madzo**, 25 miles from Mlanda, they chose a place for a mission station. Mr. Maya, who also translated the application into Portuguese, represented the government and forwarded the application to Lourenço Marques. However, governor Bettincourt, who appeared very friendly, seemed to have called in the Catholic priest after Rev. Murray's visit and warned them of a Protestant occupation, criticising the Catholics' lack of interest. (Cronje, 1981, p. 196 -198)

In the meantime (since 1906) the Cape Mission Office made contact with the South African government to assist in obtaining official approval from the Portuguese government. However, here tactics of delay were used as well, in order to give the Catholic Church a head start. Reports of a Catholic priest who visited Angoni-land on the tracks of Rev. Murray and who also 'discovered' **Madzo**, reached the missionaries at Mlanda, but then came the big shock: In the governmental Gazette of Portuguese East Africa, the "Boletim Oficial" of April 1908, access to



the heartland and majority of inhabitants of Angoniland was given to the Catholics, with an "excluding" rule of 20 miles west of Lifidzi and 20 miles east of Mawi for other missions. Another big surprise came in the form of the "Portarias" or regulations. These regulations were concerned with education and published in December 1907 and were to influence the way in which mission work was done in PEA significantly. The most important were the following:

- 1) *No school may establish itself in this Province without first obtaining a written authority from the Administrator of the Circumscription, or 'Capitao Mor', or military commandant or from the chief of the administration of the respective territory, who shall keep a register of all the schools existing within the area of his jurisdiction.*
- 2) *During three years dating from publication of this Portaria, the instruction may be given through the medium of the Portuguese language, or through the native language of the district, and only by means of such books as have been officially approved.*
  - a) *After the above period has expired, instruction may only proceed through the medium of the Portuguese language.*
- 3) *No individual, white or coloured, will be permitted to teach in the schools of the Province, who does not speak the native language well and knows the Portuguese language.*
- 4) *It will not be permitted to employ any foreign language in teaching natives or in giving them religious instruction.*
- 5) *No person shall be permitted to teach in a school for instruction of natives until he has submitted to an examination before the Governor of the district, Administrator of the Circumscription or other proper authority, and has proved that he speaks well the language of the natives of the district and knows the Portuguese language.*
- 6) *After the period of one year from the date of the Gazette in which this is published, the provisions of Articles Nos. 3, 4 and 6 shall be put into the intervening period being given for existing schools to regulate themselves as provided in this Portaria.*
- 7) *If the local authorities shall become aware of any school being established without the necessary authorization, or of an authorized school for the religious teaching of natives where any language not permitted under this Portaria is being used in teaching, or in which is employed as a teacher any person who does not possess a certificate as provided, of qualification, the authorities shall order the schools to be closed, and if the act of disobedience be continued, the parties shall be dealt with accordingly."*



Although these rules over schooling and language were intimidating, they were not necessarily unreasonable. They were however not wise for an undeveloped area like Angonia. As for the religious regulations, they were a big disadvantage to the new mission. (Cronje, 1981, p. 1991-200; Botha, 1969, p 5; Murray, 1941, p 7 ff)

### 1.2.3 Second Effort

In June 1908 Rev. Murray went to Lourenço Marques in person to see the governor general, general Freire d'AnDrade, who received him well. Rev. Murray left with a written approval, giving him permission to establish a mission station near the Chibvomodzi-river, provided that it is not nearer than 20 miles to the Lifidzi and Maue rivers. On two conditions the mission work in PEA could be started by the DRC, e.g.: 1) The mission should not be erected or operated within 20 miles from the Roman Catholic mission and 2) the Portarias concerning the schools should be strictly implemented. Rev. Murray returned joyfully to Mlanda and immediately the Nyasa Mission board sent a delegation into PEA, which included Rev.s. WH and AG Murray, to search for a suitable site. They chose a site on the banks of the Chibvomodzi River and named it "Mphatso", meaning "Gift" (indicating their thankfulness to God for His gift, but also that it was given to them, be it not their first choice). (Cronje, p. 202; Botha, Hefsiba Notes) Just to make sure, they verified their choice with the head of the Baroma mission on the banks of the Zambezi River, father J. Hiller. The Lifidzi mission functioned under the supervision of the Baroma mission at that stage.

The following written statements were signed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1908 by the two parties:

#### Concerning the borders

*"We, the undersigned, Father J. Hiller of the Baroma Mission, Tete, and William H Murray of the Dutch Reformed Mission of South Africa, agree to the water shed between the Lifidzi and Chibvomozi Rivers being the boundary between our respective spheres of work.*

*(Signed) P. Good Hiller      W. H. Murray; Lifidzi, 15 October 1908*

#### Concerning the place of the proposed mission station:

"I, Father P. Hiller of the Baroma Mission, consider a Dutch Reformed Church Mission station on the right bank of the Chibvomozi far enough distant from our sphere of work in Angoniland." (Signed) P. J'. Hiller Lifidzi, 15 October 1908`

(Botha, 1969, "Bylae I"; Page, 1963, p 41-43; original copies in DRC Archives at Stellenbosch)

#### 1.2.4 Supporting the new Initiative

Immediately afterwards the Nyasa mission board sent Rev. AG Murray to South Africa in search of financial support. The Cape Synod's Mission Commission indicated that they were not able to help in PEA, since they were already heavily involved with other fields. He turned to the Transvaal Sinodical Mission Commission and in faith they accepted the challenge, without approval of Synod at that stage. The Lord, however, opened a way, through the Women's and Men's Mission Societies. This happened after these groups were briefed on the challenge of Angonia by Rev. Murray, at meetings throughout the Transvaal. It must be stated to the honour of the Transvaal Women's Mission Society (Transvaal Vroue Sending Vereniging –T.V.S.V.) that they not only provided the first funds for the mission effort of the Dutch Reformed Church into Portuguese East Africa, but continued to support in prayers and other ways. This feat was achieved when the organisation itself was only five years old and was still establishing itself. It therefore is quite remarkable that over the years they increased their financial assistance as well. (T.V.S.V., Feesuitgawe- 25..., Pretoria, 1930, p 29, 69; Cronje, 1981, p 203-204) A very interesting article on the issue appeared in "*Die Sendingblad*" of April 1973, p. 134, by the former Secretary of the 'T.V.S.V.', Mrs. H Van der Horst, who stated that Rev. Murray's appeal for help was like a Macedonian distress call to them and in this manner they became involved. Together with other support, and Heidelberg DRC congregation serving as anchor congregation for the Murrays, it cleared the way for the Transvaal Synod's Mission Commission to call Rev. Murray on 21 April 1909 to start work in PEA, a decision upheld by the Synodical meeting in the same year. Since that moment the DRC work in PEA stood under the authority of the Transvaal Synod, although the Nyasaland Committee still had to oversee it.



## 1.3 Mphatso Established

### 1.3.1 Steps of faith

Back at Mlanda Rev. Murray immediately started to prepare for the establishment of the mission at Mphatso. He also went to Tete (again 550 kms to and fro) to hire a lawyer, a certain Mr. Ribeiro, who had to handle all the legal aspects of the ground and laws concerning the mission. It was a very wise move and Mr. Ribeiro proved to be worth his money. On the 18th of May 1909, Rev. Murray was ready to enter Portuguese East Africa to start with his mission. That evening he wrote (in Dutch): *"I'm standing on the verge of entering Portuguese Nyasaland (Alternative Name used for Angonia-Author) in the Lord's Name. Tomorrow morning early, D.V., I'll depart from here, my cargo and men are ready and registered. I count on your prayers and that of your church. Without it I will not be able to stay in Portuguese Nyasaland. We are undertaking a big effort for the King. Let us expect all things from Him."* (Cronje, 1981, p 204)

### 1.3.2 Stressful Progress

Rev. Murray then went to settle at Mphatso, 40 kms from Mlanda, nearby the village of the big chief Chide. Immediately he started with construction - first grass and clay structures, and then the brick house. Hundreds of people reported for work and those who were accepted, worked till three in the afternoon. After that they were educated in reading and writing and then in God's Word. Mrs Murray remembered that it was still very much untamed and that the missionaries had to clear dense bush in order to erect buildings. Lions roamed freely and regularly passed over the mission grounds, "rattling the window panes with their fierce roaring". The traditional practise of the "poison cup" left many dead each year and other cruelties were common amongst the people. In these conditions the tireless efforts of the three evangelists, who came with the missionaries from Mlanda, namely *Tsoka, Jenija and Malekano*, were of great encouragement since they enthusiastically spread the gospel of Christ. (T.V.S.V., 1930, p. 68, 70; Page, 1963, p 42-44)

Unfortunately, problems soon started. A letter by Mr. Bivar, of Vila Continho, was delivered at the mission. It stated that the Governor General of Maputo was re-considering his authorization, since the Catholic Church at Baroma wanted their area of control in Angonia extended. Mr. Bivar



requested a copy of the declaration of father Hiller, since he thought that would satisfy the governor General. Although he was disappointed to work under such uncertainties, Rev. Murray continued and indicated that the issue was in the hands of the Transvaal Church in whose service he stood. This incident was followed by another letter, claiming that the mission should have been 30 miles, not twenty miles, from the Catholic mission. After intervention from the DRC and government authorities from South Africa, who sent delegates to Lourenço Marques, the issue was settled and the status quo honoured. (Ibid, p. 44ff) However, one thing became clear. The Roman Catholic Church didn't like the presence of a Protestant mission in Angonia and used all their influence to try and stop the establishment of the Reformed mission at Mphatso. For three hundred years they didn't do anything for the evangelisation of Portuguese Angoni-land, but when the Reformed mission moved in they tried everything to keep it "Catholic." (Cronje, 1981, p 205-206, Page, 1963, p 45-47)

### **1.3.3 Fruitful Mission**

In the annals (Botha, 1969, p 7) we also learn about more joyful events: On 10 December 1909, shortly after starting the mission, the new mission field 'produces' its first mission child. Danie Theron Murray was born at Mphatso and named so in honour of the Transvaal mission secretary who put in much effort to get things started in PEA. The evangelism of the people started in all earnest and by the twenty fourth of July 1910, the first people were baptised at Mphatso by Rev. Murray. The names indicated are the following: Yeremiah Julias, Israel Mbengo, and Rakele Nabengo. (Botha, Hefsiba notes) These people were actually the first members of the IRM.

## *Chapter 2*

### **GOOD BEGINNING, SAD ENDING**

#### **Expansion: 1909 – 1915**

#### **2.1 Enormous task**

##### **2.1.1 Effective Methods**

The work method was much the same as the approach taken in Nyasaland. Working from the center, outposts were established all through the area of operation, each one run by a local evangelist, who taught the people basic schooling, Bible and appealed to the locals to convert to Christ. There were already such evangelists available from the PEA youths that studied at Mlanda, and the following names are mentioned: Mbambo Tsoka, Jenya, Malekano and Julias. (Page, 1963, p 39). From Mphatso the missionaries penetrated the interior of Angonia and Maganga more and more. Many times this was done on invitation of Chiefs, like Silia of Mwendu. Even some believers from the Zambezi Industrial Mission joined the developing mission at Mphatso. The vastness of the task soon became evident, for no mission existed between Mphatso and the 270 km stretch to Tete at that stage. As far as it concerned the PEA, Mphatso was one of the very first Protestant mission stations north of the Zambezi river. (Botha, History notes..., p3) Therefore, in January 1910, permission was asked from the governor of Tete to establish a second mission station near Furancungo, almost 80 kms from Mphatso. Another outpost was also established at Ziyaya and, to keep up with the development, another missionary from South Africa, an evangelist Jozua Joubert arrived with his family, supported by the Transvaal Men's Mission Society.

By 1911 Rev. Murray reported that 150 people gathered at Mphatso daily to be educated and hear God's Word. He also reported that the new converts turned away from drinking, Nyao dancing (Initiation ritual for men consisting of 'animal' behaviour and dancing), spirit worship and other traditional practises. Another important aspect of the work was that the missionaries gave attention



to the government requirement concerning language, by studying Portuguese in Lourenço Marques. Two missionaries and seventeen evangelist teachers were the first to receive certificates for Portuguese language. In the same year Miss J Faul arrived and she became a dedicated Portuguese student, teaching many locals in an astonishing short time. (Cronje, 1981, p. 207-208) Strangely, the popularity of some missionaries was enhanced by carrying guns. Rev. Murray became very popular at some villages, because he was called a few times to save livestock like cattle and goats from lions. Some villages also suffered from man-eating lions and Rev. Murray got rid of some of these beasts with his accurate shooting (Angonia Mission Traditions).

### **2.1.2 More Missions:**

In 1911 Mwenzi mission station near Furancungo was officially opened, mostly because of the spontaneous witnesses of local Christians. Evangelist Joubert was placed there. This was followed by a significant development in Portugal in the same year: It became a Republic and freedom was granted to all denominations to work in PEA, provided it was done in Portuguese. In principle it meant that the Catholic Church was not to be favoured any longer, but in practise the government, because of the officials, still stood strongly under the control of the Church.

A third mission was founded at Chiputo, in 1914, 140 miles from Mwenzi. A certain Evangelist C.A. Roode went there with his family. According to tradition he undertook the journey, took 14 days by donkey from Mphatso, while his wife was already months pregnant and settled at Chiputo under the most primitive circumstances. Rev. Murray however didn't approve of this act and reprimanded them for being irresponsible. The Roodes later worked closely with the missionaries at Nyanje mission in Zambia. This mission was followed by Benga mission, also established in 1914, where evangelist Liebenberg and his family were posted. The application for Benga mission however, was opposed by the Roman Catholics, since the mission was definitely within the 20 mile mark. While discussions were held on this matter, even on Ministerial levels, the application for a fifth mission at Matengi was already presented to the authorities. Rev. Murray also started considering Tete as a possibility for mission work. (Cronje, 1981, p. 209 -210; Page, 1963, p 46, 48, 51-53)



### 2.1.3 Optimism

At this stage the Nyasa Mission Committee felt that the time had come to "...occupy the whole of Portuguese East Africa, north of the Zambezi..." for the Kingdom of Christ. From all over requests came in to open mission stations, and a proposal "... to create a big forward thrust to open ten new missions with 35 missionaries within PEA..." was tabled. A special meeting for co-operation took place in April 1914 in Stellenbosch, with representatives of the Cape, Transvaal and Free State Synods present, as well as the famous Dr. Andrew Murray. They made a joint appeal to the DRC in South Africa to do everything possible to send 30 new missionaries into the field to man the ten proposed missions. Sadly though, the response was very poor in all the provinces, bringing little about of a very ambitious plan. Afterwards, much speculation followed about what the future situation would have been, if this call was yielded to more positively.

In the field however, optimism continued and the poles and clay church at Mphatso was replaced with a brick building. Financial support for Mphatso increased as well. A special day in the history of the IRM was when the congregation of Mphatso was established on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1915. It formed the center of all the other mission stations in PEA. The others were considered as prayer-houses of Mphatso, to be developed into autonomous congregations later. The statistics looked as follows:

Mphatso:	Members	94	Catechumens:	249
Mwenzi		9		20
Chiputo		4		5
Benga		<u>22</u>		<u>102</u>
		129		376

A big delegation from Nyasaland Mission was present and shared in this big moment for the new mission. A few headmen were also present. It was also during this stage that the DRC mission effort reached its peak as far as the 1908 -1922 era was concerned. A steady flow of converts to the congregations secured the work and guaranteed its expansion. In 1917 the missionary personnel reached its highest number for this era, totalling 15, including several DRC ordained

pastors. At the missions medical help was also given, on a basic clinic level. (Cronje, 1981, 210ff)

## **Problems and closure of Missions: 1915- 1922**

### **2.2 Storms Brooding**

#### **2.2.1 Incidents and Suspicion**

Mission work continued steadily, but clouds of trouble were also brooding on the horizon. A major negative influence was the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 – especially on local believers who were called (under obligation) to help on the different fronts. There they witnessed the sinful ways and flaws of the white people (considered Christians), leaving many of them confused about Christianity. Another big negative influence on the mission also occurred in 1914. A local spiritual leader nearby Blantyre in Nyasaland, a certain John Chilembwe, initiated a revolt against the British government which was suppressed by force. This incident left the Portuguese suspicious of “...Christians' instigation of indigenous people against white domination...” and the Protestant presence in Angonia.

This was followed by a similar revolt in PEA in the Barue area, south of the Zambezi, in February 1915. The authorities were afraid it could spread to Angonia and that the protestant missionaries would support it, therefore Revs. Murray and Liebenberg were arrested and jailed for 14 days. They were released on condition that they would always be faithful to the Portuguese government. It was a DRC mission policy in any case, e.g. to stay out of local politics. This setback was followed by the ill health of Rev. AG Murray (1915) and CA Roode (1916), which forced them both to return to South Africa, Rev. Murray just temporarily, but Roode permanently.

In 1916 several nasty incidents occurred. The government gave permission to a sugar company to freely round up local Africans for forced labour in their plantations. This violent initiative also reached the missions, since there were many skilled and faithful workers. One missionary's cook was removed right from his kitchen and no protest could stop the abductors!! Another shock came shortly afterwards which affected the mission effort most profoundly. All 65 evangelist teachers



were arrested on the charge of not teaching in Portuguese, and were banned from the country. Some escaped and managed to return to Angonia, others were killed, others never returned from India to where they were deported. This meant that all outposts had to be closed down, concentrating on the work at the centres. It also created a spirit of fear and some believers stopped attending sermons, others decided to leave for Nyasaland. Within a short time the effort was drastically reduced and church attendance plummeted. (Botha, 1969, p 9ff, Cronje, 1981, p 212-213)

### **2.2.2 Framed**

In spite of these problems, the enthusiasm of the workers was not quelled and in places it actually grew notwithstanding these setbacks. Things started to take a more serious turn however when in 1918 the Chiputo mission was closed down. The reason for this was because of the revolt led by chief Kamtengo and other headmen in April 1917 against the Portuguese authority, the “asilikari” and their “high level of immorality” in the Chiputo area. The revolting masses one evening, first reached the mission station where Revs. Laurie and Jackson were ministering, but left the mission alone, shouting “... these people are God's people, our friends; don't touch any of them or their property”. The rebels then continued and burned down the Portuguese government post. The conclusion was unfortunate, but looked obvious: The rebels were instigated by the Protestant missionaries. It was a very unfortunate assumption, since the missionaries had absolutely no part in it. It seemed that some of the missionaries were not even present at that stage, but this incident led to the closing down of Chiputo mission. (Page, 1969, 75-6)

### **2.2.3 Reforms and Bravery**

In 1919 Rev. A.G Murray returned. Although the mission suffered severely with the loss of the outposts, other programmes like the medical care given by Miss. Mouton at Mphatso continued to reach a lot of people. An attempt to re-open the outposts was rejected by the government. A certain Miss Maree and two evangelist teachers, who succeeded to return, however resumed evangelising the outposts. Many people were afraid, but especially some of the young people, fearlessly came for teaching in God's Word. They were called “Ana a Misyoni”, Children of the Mission. Others, who came for work opportunities, were also taught God's Word. Miss Marree's witness continued



with the following story: “A letter from the local administration arrived at Mphatso, warning against the evangelists active in some of the villages and that they will be punished, even be sent to Mozambique Island again. After the evangelists were called in and informed, one of them Zefaniya, who has previously been sent to Mozambique Island, stood up and said: “Sir, if they want to send us, so be it, but we need to continue, because the people here are so hungry for the gospel!” His brave stand was then confirmed by all the others present. The same courage was shown by two others, Jefita and Stefano, who had already suffered as slaves for their faith, but felt so much for their people that they were willing to face persecution again. Eventually they were forced to flee to Nyasaland in order to escape. (T.V.S.V., 1930, p. 83-84)

On 29 June 1920 the control over the mission work in PEA was transferred from the Nyasa Mission Committee to an internal Mission Board under the chairmanship of Rev. A.G. Murray. This move, together with a stronger emphasis on the use of Portuguese, was also an attempt to give the DRC Mission in the PEA a more indigenous character, a very strong recommendation by Rev. Laurie before he left. The whole mission effort in PEA was now also being supported by the Transvaal Mission Board. At this time, the Portuguese government warned all institutions that only Portuguese could be used in schools. (Cronje, 1981, p. 214)

## **2.3 More Opposition and Closure**

### **2.3.1 Intolerant Jesuit**

However, it was more the appointment of father Bazilio, a Jesuit priest, utterly opposed to the Protestant mission in Angonia, who turned the tables against the DRC missionaries. In mid 1920 Bazilio was appointed new head of the Lifidzi mission and immediately started to query the borderlines set up by the Father Hiller. He also accused the DRC mission of several malpractices against the Portuguese government. With the use of more modern apparatus, he also established that the Benga and Mphatso missions were within the 20 mile limit (No-go zone) set as principle in 1909. His efforts led to the rapid closing down of Benga mission, in spite of the DRC's strong objection with the following arguments: 1) The authorities did not object when the ground was purchased, 2) the mission had been occupying the terrain for a long period and made big

investments, 3) a written and signed agreement was drawn up with the Catholics and 4) no qualified person was available to do the measurements at the time.

Father Bazilio took his case to the High Commissioner, who visited Tete at that moment and complained that the DRC was in breach of the 1909 agreement. Rev. Murray's appeals led to nothing. On the contrary, the Mwenzi missionaries were also forced to leave their place in 1921, due to a new law, proclaiming that area of Maganga a nature reserve, commanding all white people to leave. That left only Mphatso, also under dispute, because of Bazilio's official complaint on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1921. The Transvaal Mission's Board tried everything to stop the hostile influence of the Roman Catholic Church, even asking the South African prime minister, general J.C. Smuts to intervene, but to no avail. The situation looked desperate by May 1922, but on advice of the Nyasa Mission Committee, the missionaries decided to stay on till they were put out of the country.

### **2.3.2 Final Notice**

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1922, after the Holy Communion Sermon at Mphatso, the missionaries were summoned to appear before the magistrate at Vila Coutinho. The briefing they received in father Bazilio's presence was clear: Benga had to be evacuated immediately, due to the breaching of two laws. The mission was only 10 miles from the Maue River, the indicated boundary, and the head of mission was not speaking Portuguese solely, but used the native language to communicate as well. Mphatso's case was awaiting new evidence, but till then it could operate. A fact not obvious to the missionaries was that the situation between South Africa and the Portuguese government in Lourenço Marques was very tense at that stage and the missionaries were seen as a threat to the interests of the Portuguese regime. Maybe it was the same reason why General Smuts did not see his way open to intervene. In any case, another Cabinet minister of South Africa, Minister F.S. Malan, became interested in the issue and tried to resolve on high level. The result however was not positive and in November 1922 the missionaries had already made preparations to leave, by transporting all their belongings back to Nyasaland. The law seemed to side strongly with the Catholics and the closing down of Mphatso seemed evident.



### **2.3.3 Visions of the Future**

A very sad Rev. Murray finally left from Mphatso in December 1922. This was the first time something like this happened in the history of the DRC Mission. Never before in the history of the Dutch Reformed Church was a whole mission field abandoned and members left behind without any pastor to care for them. At that stage the statistics for the DRC mission in Portuguese East Africa read as follows: Members 255, Catechumens 342, Evangelists 17, awaiting school to continue – 1386. (Cronje, 1981, p 216-218; Botha, 1969, p 25-28) They were left behind to fend for themselves. Rev. Murray encouraged them with these words: “I leave God’s Word with you; if you love it and follow it, the Lord will guard over you and will be your Shepherd.” (Die Sendingblad, 04/1973, 134) On his way back to Nyasaland, Rev. Murray stopped at Lifidzi and said the following to father Bazilio: “I do believe that the Gospel will be preached here by a Protestant mission again!” (Cronje, 1981, p 218)

## **Evaluation**

### **2.4. Pressing Questions**

Although this first era of the IRM’s history came to such a sad end, the question must be asked how the church can learn from it. There is a need to evaluate, since lessons taken from those times, may prevent similar situations today or tomorrow. Rev. Pieter Botha warns against an over simplistic conclusion, e.g. that it was all the Roman Catholic’s fault. (Botha, 1969, p.36) It is therefore necessary to answer to some of the following questions regularly asked:

#### **2.4.1 Premature Evacuation?**

They were not ordered out; they just assumed the worst and abandoned the mission before being ordered to do so. This point was later addressed by the government as proof of their acceptance of guilt, although seriously contested by the missionaries. (Botha, 1969, p28 & Appendix C) In hindsight it may be easy to judge that the missionaries left too soon, but the impression does exist

that they felt it almost unsafe to continue staying in PEA. It therefore seems that the next question asked is more pressing: Did the missionaries really stand in breach of the country's laws?

#### **2.4.2 Did Missionaries breach the Law?**

Concerning the question of breaching of laws or ordinations of the Portuguese government, it seems that, as in all the concerning issues, the arguments always had two sides:

##### *a) Law on distances between the missions:*

On the one hand, the DRC missionaries did not abide within the letter of the law, especially not in the case of Benga. The Portuguese government had the full right to demand the 20 mile buffer between the missions, although it seemed unfair and because of pressure from the Catholic Church. The missionaries had to abide by that. It seemed even more unfair that the Catholics could use a technical point to oust the DRC mission, if taken into consideration the Catholic's own policy in the British controlled areas. There they deliberately established missions in very close proximity of Protestant missions, especially Reformed, as occurred in Nyasaland.

On the other hand, two conditions have to be taken into consideration before condemning the DRC missionaries: i) The altered law of 1911, which gave religious freedom to all denominations, surely influenced the regard for the laws concerning the distances between missions and to an extent, rendered them unnecessary. This in turn could account for the agreement between the Catholics and the DRC on the site for Benga. ii) The other condition is that the spirit in which the location of Mphatso was finalized, was one of co-operation, not to violate the orders of the authorities. The absence of capable **surveyors** further aggravated the situation, together with the fact that both parties came to a combined agreement.

##### *b) The regulations on language:*

Although the missionaries were obliged by their Mission Boards to first study Portuguese in Lourenço Marques for three months, only two of them held official certificates in the end, thus giving a strong argument to their opposers for not complying. The other law concerning language was about the medium of teaching at the outposts or schools. As seen in the Portarias, these laws made provision for the indigenous languages in the beginning,



but not as an alternative. Understandably it would have been easier for the local population, the evangelists and even the missionaries to continue in the Chewa dialect, but the law was clear on several points. The one serious trespass on the DRC missionaries' side was that only 17 of the 65 evangelist teachers held recognized certificates in Portuguese when they were rounded up. This point was sufficiently stressed by the Consul-general of Portugal in the *Rand Daily Mail*, when his government was criticised in public for the closing down of the missions. (Cronje, 1981, p 219-22, Botha, 1969, p. 12-14) To a large extent this law was unfair and short-sighted, because Angonia was still very much underdeveloped and in need of any kind of literacy project. This point is proven by a report by an international organization for education, African Education Commission, who visited the Tete province during 1924: "Tete with its 400 000 natives, has only one small Roman Catholic mission. Very unfortunately the excellent work of the South African Mission has been excluded from this really needy territory by action of the Portuguese Government..... It seems impossible to justify the loss to the Colony of such efficient teachers on such a ground. Through this action the 400 000 natives are left largely without any educational influence". (Pauw, 1980, p 109 -110) Even so, it was not good enough to try to comply, but rather to adhere to the letter of the law, especially when things became complicated.

### **2.4.3 Lack of Confidence?**

Many scholars who studied this history agree with the conclusion that the PEA mission was way too Nyasaland or South Africa orientated. (Compare Botha, Cronje, Page, Murray) Quite understandably the missionaries who came from there, who spoke the language and saw certain methods work, wanted to copy it in the new mission field. The question raised is whether the missionaries sufficiently took into consideration the fact that they were working under a totally different government, with other principles and viewpoints. It seemed that neither they, nor their supporters, had appreciated this fact sufficiently. In this respect the report by Rev. D Laurie in April 1918 to the secretary of missions in South Africa, comes as a sober appreciation of the situation. He pleaded for the mission to seriously attempt to comply with the language rules and building regulations, even if it meant the work would develop slower and cost more. (Letter in DRC Archive, Stellenbosch) His plea to adapt to a Portuguese way of action and in a way cut ties with Nyasaland and South Africa, (Botha, 1969, p 13-14) was confirmed by Rev. Murray, who

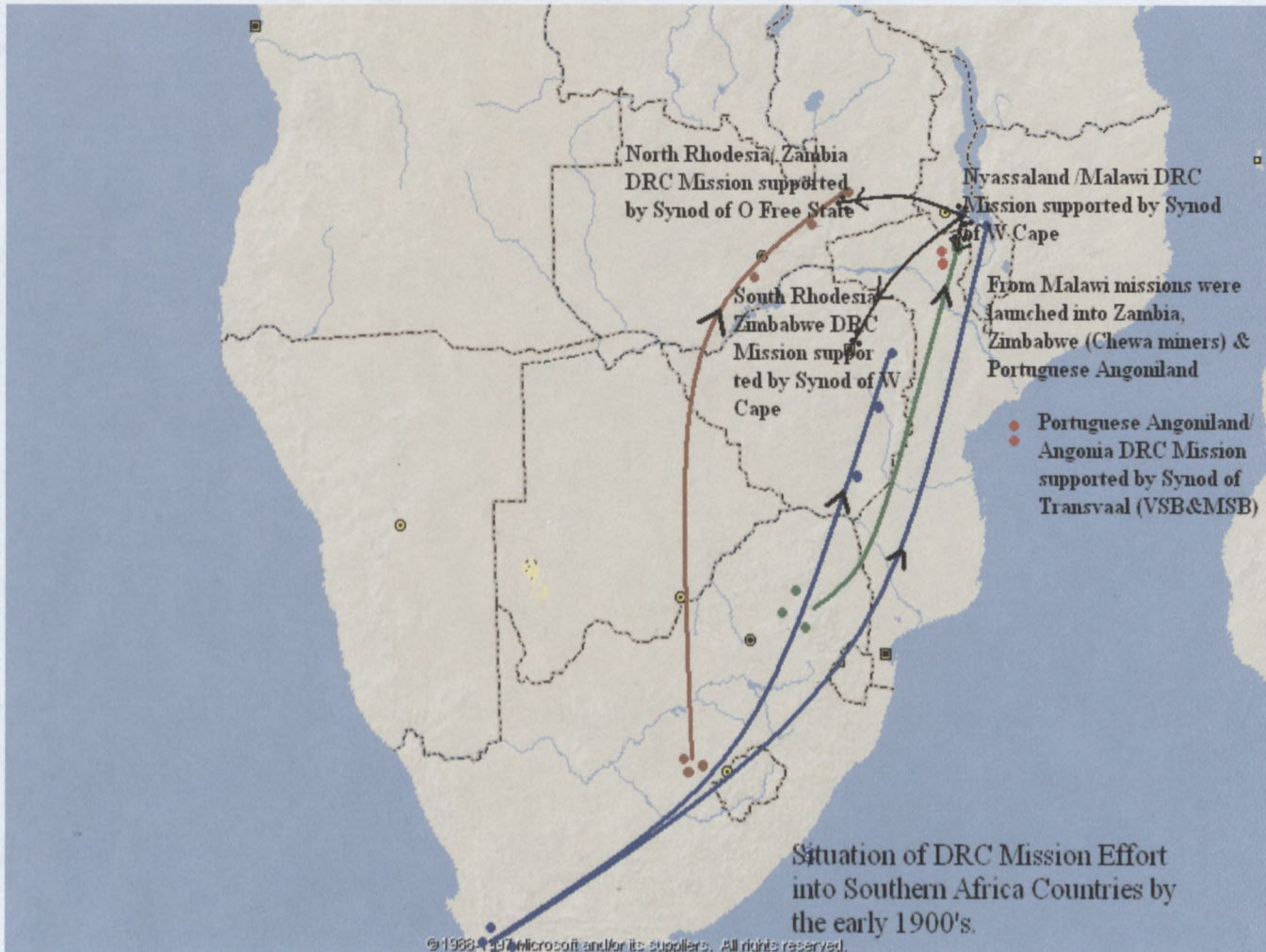
vowed to take a new approach the moment he returned. This was not to be, because he had to stay a year longer in SA and by the time he returned, the DRC mission already had an “English”, foreign and uncomplying badge given to it by many high ranking officials of the PEA. The many high level interventions didn't help either to change this perception. (Cronje, 1981, p 213 – 214)

So what did it boil down to? It seemed that the mission had the right approach to the local population, even the local government, but failed to win over high level authorities. Rev. Pieter Botha in his report on this mission era concluded that the lack of trust was the main reason for the eventual exit of the DRC missionaries from PEA. The Portuguese authorities didn't trust the missionaries for various reasons: 1) They were Protestants again from a British ruled colony (Shire case), 2) they implemented methods used in Nyasaland, sometimes contrary to Portuguese law, 3) and frequently called in the help of the DRC, even the government of South Africa, whom the Portuguese government didn't trust after the first World War. 4) Combine these facts with the incidents of the Chilembwe, Barue and Chiputo revolts and the distrust seemed all the more comprehensible. (See footnote 15 in Botha, “Verslag...”, 1969, p 25, and p 37 iii). 5) It seems however that all these obstacles were possible to overcome and could be proved insignificant with time, but the constant instigation and opposition of the Catholic Church, especially in the person of Padre Bazilio, seemed just to fuel minor incidents into major obstacles. They were against the idea of a Protestant mission from the start and fought it with all means possible. (Cronje, 1981, p 222; Page, 1963, p 81-82)

Even so, it was a pity that they had enough grounds to launch their complaints from and sow distrust. Another sad factor was the failure of the ambitious plan to open the 10 new missions all over the area north of the Zambezi. That could have saved the missionaries from abandoning the entire effort. Whatever the reasons and mistakes though, it led to the exit of the DRC missionaries from Portuguese Angoniland and in the process a most vulnerable group of local believers were left behind.



## DRC Mission Effort into Southern Africa

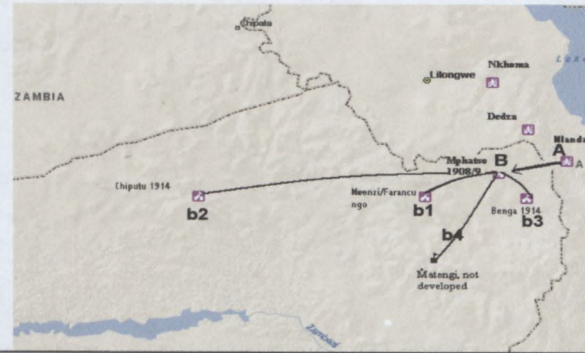


**Distance over land: - Cape to Angonia, via Pretoria and Maputo – 3800 km**

**In 1902 travel was done mainly by rail and sea between mentioned areas, otherwise by hangmat, horse or donkey**



## DRC Missions formed in Angonia: 1908 -1915



(A) Mlanda Mission in Malawi, from where Rev. Murray initiated Mpatso (B) Mission station in Angonia, PEA, 1908/9, +/- 40km. From there Mwenzi -1911 -(b1), Chiputo -1914-(b2) and Benga -1914 -(b3) missions were started. Another mission, Matenge (b4) was planned, but didn't materialise. Tete town lays 240 km South West





(i)

Some members of the group of 65 Evangelists who worked with the DRC Mission in PEA, 1909 -1922



Ds. A. G. Murray en Gesin.  
Eerste Sendeling van T.V.S.V.

(ii)

Rev A G Murray and Family: First Missionary of the "T.V.S.V." (Main supporters), who initiated the work at Mphatso in 1908/9





Inwyding van Steen Kerkgebou op Mphatso.

iii)



(iv)

**Mphatso Church** building with its inauguration in 1912 (iii); its ruins a few years after meetings were stopped (iv)



(v)

Elders leading sermons under the trees, a common sight after 1922, even today.



## **PART TWO**

### **SEVENTY YEARS OF EXILE: 1922 – 1992**

#### **Introductory Note**

Although this era can be separated into two or more distinctive periods, the choice for one heading, “Seventy Years of Exile” (Read - little or no freedom), is because it accurately describes what the IRM went through in these years. The Biblical analogy is fitting in more than one way. Apart from having their spiritual leaders exiled in a figurative sense, the Angonia part of the IRM in particular, but also some parts of the Maputo /Gaza and Milange congregations, were literally in exile in neighbouring countries from the mid-1980’s to 1992, due to the war.

These seventy years can then be further sub divided, at least in two definite identifiable periods: 1922 - 1972 and 1972 until 1992. Although the fifty years from 1922 to 1972, is the longest section within the IRM’s history, it is also the period of which least is known. In a sense it can be called the dark and middle ages of the IRM, but mainly in terms of exterior ecclesiastical activities. The heroism of local believers in the face of opposition, of which little was documented, stands out as the distinctive trait of this era. It is even more extra-ordinary if taking into consideration the fact that almost 50 years there were no ordained pastors to care for these members. Within Reformed circles this quality within the IRM’s history must be unique.

The two distinctive dates used as markers during the era from 1922 to 1992, is 1972 and 1992. The year 1971 -1972 stands out as a marker for two reasons: 1) First official visits by ordained pastors to Angonia after 1922 and the start of the re-organisation of the believers into congregations. 2) Commencement of work in the Maputo/Gaza –provinces, by Pastor Pedro Tembo, which was a very important detail in the IRM’s later history.

The year 1992 stands out as a special date for being: 1) the year of the first full representative Synod of the IRM, on Mozambican soil and 2) marking the end of almost thirty years of war in Mozambique, facilitating a new beginning for many in this old Portuguese colony.

## SECTION (A)

### FIFTY YEARS WITHOUT PASTORS: 1922 –1972

As mentioned, little is known about this period, although covering decades of history. Since 1962-4 interest in the Mozambican field started to rekindle and then gradually grew until the field opened for missionary visits in 1972. Therefore the following division is proposed to study this period more effectively: 1922 – 1962, titled 'Forty years in the desert'; 1962 – 1972 titled 'Changing Climate and leadership of the Elders'. The first forty years will be covered as a whole, attempting to highlight the main trends as follows: Efforts to re-open the mission field till 1933, the situation of the believers, the role of Nkhoma mission and contacts in the exterior. The latter part till 1972 will again be covered more chronologically.

## *Chapter 3*

### FORTY YEARS IN THE DESERT

After the DRC missionaries left from P.E.A. in 1922, the local believers entered a very difficult period, maybe even feeling abandoned. The idea may exist that the P.E.A. mission field was given up after a few efforts, but documents reveal that serious efforts were made to re-open this mission field, both by prayer and negotiations.

#### **3.1 Faithful Prayers:**

When Rev. AG Murray was asked what should be done to regain access to the mission stations left behind, he responded that it should be made a case of prayer in the first place. This was exactly what followed the events of 1922 in PEA and since 1923 a "golden chain" can be followed right through developments, of faithful intercessors for the mission fields in Angonia. First of all it was the exiled missionaries themselves, who continued to pray for a "second chance" and who in turn



motivated others to join the battle, even as many years later with the Student Volunteers Movement of Stellenbosch, during the 1950's and 1960's. (Page, 1963, p83) Through these continued prayers the vision was kept alive and on God's agenda and together with the local Christians' plea for the DRC not to forget her orphaned children, it formed the basis to re-open these missions in the 1970's. (Van Wyk, *Die Kerbode*, 18/10/'61)

Rev. Koch, retired mission secretary of the DRC of Western Cape, stressed this fact as one of utmost importance, when asked what impressed him in the history of the IRM. Another example was the letter of Rev. P Laurie in "*Die Sendingblad*" of August 1966, p. 11, where he exclaimed: "...only me, the only one still living, can in a special way have the joy to see that the prayers through all the years have been answered! What a privilege!! Thank you Lord! But now we must pray even harder...." Not only in South Africa constant prayers rose for the re-opening of the PEA, but also many Christians of Nkhoma prayed constantly for the re-opening of that missionfield. One such an example was Sara Nabanda, one of the first converts at Nkhoma, who spanned the fifty years of "Exile" with constant prayers for the Lord to re-open the Mozambican missions. When she heard in 1972 that Rev. Katundu was consecrated to restart the work Mozambique, she was utterly grateful and jubilant for the grace to see her prayers answered. (*Die Sendingblad*, 10/1972, p. 329)

## **3.2 Efforts to Re-open the Missions: 1923– 1933**

### **3.2.1 Negotiations and High Level Intervention:**

As mentioned, these prayers were followed by deeds and efforts to re-open the Angonia missions started immediately after, even before December 1922. This happened especially when Mr F.S. Malan, minister of transport of South Africa, came to know about the whole issue. He had special interest in mission work and started to mobilise the different governmental offices to handle the issue on governmental level with the Portuguese in Lourenço Marques. In the long series of letters and discussions that followed, three names are prominent: Rev. Theron (first Mission Secretary of the DRC of Transvaal), Mr. E.F.C. Lane, secretary of the Prime Minister and Mr. A.T. Long, Union Agent, Lourenço Marques. From letters sent to Rev. Theron, we know that the Prime

minister, Gen. JC Smuts had knowledge of the issue, but was not particularly optimistic or enthusiastic to get involved. However, since Mr. Malan was pressing for results, the prime Minister's office became involved again. Through this office, the "Men's Mission Association (MMA) of Transvaal" had the following declaration of their congress, held on 10 November 1922, delivered to the Portuguese authorities in Lourenço Marques: "...Congress confirm emphatically its deep felt disappointment about and protest against, the treatment done there against us by a fellow Christian European nation, of whom the subordinates and fellow believers, always receives the biggest freedom in the Transvaal.... Congress has trust that the Portuguese government will not continue with its planned actions..." (Botha, 1969, p. 27, #80) The Prime Minister's office however, still was of opinion that the Catholics, although not acting in a Christian spirit, did have the law on their side.

### 3.2.2 Making Headlines

Another development was when the newspaper, *The Rand Daily Mail*, became involved in the whole controversy and published many articles on the "Dutch Mission in Angonia", prompted by an English translation of the MMA's declaration, and sent in by Rev. Theron on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1922. In one main article it read: "We can see no good reason why the Union government should not make a very strong protest to the Portuguese Government." (As quoted from Botha, 1969, p 28, #86 & 89) This resulted in a battle of the pens in *The Rand Daily Mail*, that lasted until April 1923, with the Portuguese Consul writing letters three times to defend his government's actions. It boiled down to the following: The missionaries didn't possess the necessary language qualifications or certificates, the schools were not abiding to the laws of the country and they didn't abide to the law of distance between the missions. The fact that Rev. Murray signed without protesting the government's order to withdraw was proof to the lastnamed of the DRC Mission's admittance of guilt. (See *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 December 1922 till April 1923, under headings: "Angoniland" and "Dutch Missionaries")

In the same year, 1923, Mr. Lane asked Rev. Theron to document the DRC's position and actions taken and to respond to the accusations made by the Portuguese government. He also stated that "the publication of the correspondence with the Consul General of Portugal didn't do any good to the case." A new approach was taken in June 1925, when Rev. Theron attended a mission



conference in Le Soute, Belgium, with an appeal written by Rev. AG Murray to look into the case of the DRC in Portuguese East Africa. An appeal of the Benga congregation was included, where they lamented the fact that they are obstructed from being ministered to by their own church. A certain Professor Braga promised to attend to the issue, at least to address the case of evangelist Sitima, who was still in captivity in Goa, Portuguese India, since 1916. Prof. Braga channelled the issue to Rev. Julio B da Silva of Lisbon, warning in October 1926 however that at that moment the issue was difficult, because of new powers given to the Roman Catholic Church, to “nationalize the Africans”. (Botha, 1969, p 30, # 91, 96, 97)

### 3.2.3 Alternatives

In the meantime the Transvaal Mission searched for new mission fields within the borders of Transvaal itself and in Northern Zulu-land, as was proposed by Rev. AG Murray himself on an earlier occasion. Rev. Murray in the meantime (March 1925) settled in Grahamstown and his link with the Transvaal Mission Board was terminated. As a result a big mission effort was started in Zulu-land, Northern Natal. Rev. Theron though, continued to ask help and again the Honourable Minister Malan discussed the issue during meetings with his Portuguese counterparts in June 1928. The responses from the new government in Lisbon was very positive (under certain conditions though) and as a result a delegation of the DRC managed to see Mr. Jose Cabral, governor-general of Mozambique in Johannesburg the same month. He was very sympathetic, describing the whole issue as a misunderstanding and requested a report from the DRC’s side. This was done immediately, including the articles of the *Rand Daily Mail*. In the same month Rev. AG Murray resigned as pastor, due to his poor health, asking Rev. Theron to attempt reopening the PEA again, “if necessary – de novo!” (Botha, 1969, p 31, # 101-104)

A second meeting between DRC representatives, including the moderator and secretary of Transvaal, and Mr Cabral was organised by Minister Malan in August 1928 and he promised to immediately re-open the DRC mission stations if they could bring official documentation for their premises. The documents in their possession were handed over, but it was only the applications. Even so, Mr Cabral ensured the delegates, that if these applications had resulted in title deeds, the DRC could immediately return. In October 1928 a report reached the Transvaal that the local believers at Mphatso were informed by the “Boma”/government that they were free to meet at

Mphatso station. It also seemed that during that time Mr. Gabral went in person and investigated the issue on site. (Cronje, 1981, p 222-223; Botha, 1969, p 30-32)

### 3.2.4 The Final Word

However, on 20 December 1928, the governor's answer, which he translated in English for Mr. Malan, read as follows:

*"Dear Mr. Malan,*

*In reply to your letter dated 30th November 1928, I beg to enclose a copy and its translation into English of the Surveying Department's Report on the subject.*

*It can be seen from this report that Rev. Murray made five applications for land, three of which were considered null and subsequently filed, as some legal steps had not been taken and were not taken by the applicant; even after notices for that purpose had been issued in the Boletim Oficial; another application was not granted because the land applied for is placed in one of the areas reserved for natives; and about the fifth one, Rev. Murray, himself declared later on that he did not want the application to be considered.*

*So Rev. Murray has not any right to any land in this Colony.*

*As to the other points of your letter, I beg to confirm what I had opportunity of telling you verbally and by my letter dated of the 31st August 1928 - there will be no objection to the fact of the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries doing religious propaganda in this Colony on the same conditions in which missionaries of other Religious Missions do it.*

*The legislation in force dealing with religious propaganda and native education, is the following: portorias 730 and 731 of the 4th December 1937, issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 50 of the 14th December 1907. However I beg to advise you that some amendments to these 'portorias' are now under consideration."*

The following document was annexed:

*Applications for Land placed in Makanga, Angonia and Maravia "prazos" Tete district, made by Andrew George Murray*

*A. Report: File No. 2435 - Application for emphyteusis of 506 hectares of land, placed in the Makanga, "prazo", Tete district. Not granted the application and filed by decision taken by His Excellency the Governor-General dated 13th July, 1920, as the applicant did not give any reply to the notice issued in the Boletim Oficial No.29 dated 19th July 1919, during the period of four months given to him for that purpose in the aforesaid notice. Decision issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 33, second serial dated 14th August, 1920.*



- B. File No. 3251/2 - Application for emphyten3j, of 50 hectares of land, placed in Yttengo Yodxi, Angonia "Prazo ", Tete district. The applicant, in his application dated 26th January, 1925 and received on the 27th of the same month and year, renounced the land previously applied for and asked to receive back the money paid as deposit.
- C. File No. 3252 - Application for emphytensis of 50 hectares of land placed in the h"aravia "praxo" near Chiputo Hill, Tete district. Not granted the application and annulled by decision of the Secretary of Public Works and Lands dated 23rd September, 1925 as the applicant did not attach the necessary documents to the application, even after being advised to do so by the notice issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 43 dated 27th October 1923. Decision issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 40, second serial dated 3rd October, 1925.
- D. File No. 3253/4 - Application for emphytensis of 50 hectares of land placed in the Angonia "prazo", Tete district near Dlakazakozn River. Not granted the application and annulled by decision of the Secretary of Public Works and Lands dated 23rd September, 1925, as the applicant did not attach the necessary documents to the application even after being advised to do so by the notice issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 43 dated 27th October, 1923. Decision issued in the Boletim Oficial No. 40, second serial dated 3rd October, 1925.
- E. File No. 4952 - Application for emphytensis of 533 hectares and 43,36 sq. meters of land, placed in the Makanga "prazo" Matengi area, Tete District. Not granted the application, as the land applied for is part of a native reserve, reason why it cannot be given as concession, by decision of His Excellency the Governor General dated 12th April, 1918.

Surveying Department in Lourenço Marques, 12th December, 1928.

(Signed) Cesar Augusto de Oliveira Moura Braz, Lieut. Comdes. Director.

This response came as a shock to the DRC mission. This left Rev. Theron totally demoralised and in a letter to Mr. Malan, he apologized to the minister for the time spent in vain. Mr Malan however urged them to draw up a statement about the issue that could be sent to Mozambique, which was done on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1929. Unfortunately, it was a much generalized statement and not always factually correct.

### 3.2.5 Contact Lost

Another unfortunate fact was that the DRC was unaware of new "portarais" which were proclaimed only three weeks later, making it much easier for the missionaries to work in PEA. If they (DRC mission) had known and tried to re-enter at that stage, it would probably have been quite possible for the DRC to start "de novo". However, it seemed that their new fields of mission were already

draining their resources and they didn't see their way open restarting in Mozambique. The same was true of the Cape Missions Board. One must remember that South Africa was going through the depression years at that stage and funds were limited. In 1933 the case of PEA at the Transvaal Mission Board received another setback with the passing away of their champion, Rev. Theron. It was not until 1938 that the PEA featured again on the agendas, becoming a field almost forgotten for some time. (Botha, 1969, p 33-35, #108, 109, 114, 119 120)

### **3.3 Dark ages: Trans-border ministry: 1923 – 1962**

#### **3.3.1 Around Angonia**

##### ***3.3.1.1 Faithful “Adutch”***

What happened to the Christians in the meantime? At this stage many of the missions' members went into hiding out of fear for the authorities and police. There were orders not to continue with any religious activity. In this regard the report in 1923 of Rev. A.G Murray on the Benga situation was quite enlightening: “When we asked them whether we may preach, they refused. When we asked whether the people may congregate to serve the Lord in the churches they built with their own resources, the answer again was negative, under no circumstances. So we asked: Supposedly we would like the people to cook “mowa” (beer) and let all come and have a Drink? The answer was: As much as you like!! To pray to God however, NO!” (Page, 1969, p. 80)

Therefore the mission stations were avoided by the local believers after the missionaries left. In a way these believers were left to their own mercy for several years, except for the faithful intercession as mentioned. How did they react to this situation? Did they fall back to their old ways or join the Catholic Church to prevent the antagonism from the church and state? Understandably it did happen, but the large majority stayed firm. One Roman Catholic priest complained that he could not understand why these “Dutch” Christians were so loyal to their church, because he couldn't succeed in persuading them to become Catholics. (Scheuer, 1957, p 58,) The stories are numerous of ways how members were discouraged to continue to practise their beliefs. Some leaders were even arrested and deported or sent away for forced labour. The missions were off bounds. Others were beaten and chased away if they tried to meet on Sundays.



Therefore the members went underground and started to attend sermons under trees or in caves, taking different routes not to attract unwanted attention. Many times a funeral would serve as the venue to spread the gospel or to organise the place of worship. This was possible because, directly after the missionaries left, the local members appointed leaders who fulfilled the role of elders. These leaders would then continue with Sunday sermons, Wednesday prayers, catechism and Sunday-school. Bibles and other church books were obtained from Malawi. Members who could read, also started to teach others, so that more would be able to read the Bible. At a later stage schooling became connected to the Catholic religion and in this way many “Adutch” members’ children became Catholic in order to have education. (Cronje, 1981, p224)

### ***3.3.1.2 God does not live in Buildings***

What happened to the buildings? Since the members were not allowed to maintain the churches and the mission’s buildings, it fell into disrepair. The bricks of the churches and other buildings however later became the “pews” under the trees. On Benga the bricks of the buildings that fell into disuse, were used by the Catholics to construct one of their schools nearby. The same happened to Mphatso, as shown in a photograph in “*Die Sendingblad*” of April 1966, as well as August 1966, p10-11. In a place like Chiputo however, some buildings and even the unused brick-ovens can still be found (overgrown with grass and shrub of course) as it was left in 1920. (Benga Presbytery’s visit to Chiputu in 1995, Rev. Minnaar’s report, 1993) It appears however that there were different seasons to the government’s policy, because in 1928 the members were notified by the local officials that they were free to meet at Mphatso, apparently after intervention by the governor-general. It seems that it depended rather on the person in charge’s disposition, than on law. Even so, it left the “Dutch” members in a difficult position in Angonia. (Botha, 1969, p 32-33, #107)

### ***3.3.1.3 True Disciples***

Question is: How did the small group of believers react to their situation? In this regard Rev. Page recorded two very special stories in his work on the DRC Mission in P.E.A. (the first story was told by Miss Pietjie de Beer who worked at Mlanda in Nyasaland.) She recalled how the PEA Christians until 1946 walked miles to attend church sermons and even school at Mlanda. One elder, Mr. Eliya from Benga, cleared a piece of ground for a church near his village in order to preach the gospel to his fellow villagers. The police heard about it and prohibited him, but then

the believers decided to sit around the campfire at midnight and have informal church-sermons. They were discovered and put into jail. Eliyas's bible was taken and he was forced to work as a carpenter at the Magistrate. He then attended the Sunday services at Mlanda by foot, a few hours of hard walking to get there. (Page, 1963, p 84) The other story concerns a disabled young man, Bartimeyu, who could only walk on his knees. He started a school within PEA, near Mlanda, and had up to seventy children and young people attending, leading many to the Lord in the process. They also learned how to read their Bibles. Of the bigger youth were later accepted for the baptismal classes of Mlanda congregation and through them the gospel was carried deeper into PEA. So why did the officials leave Bartimeyu to continue unhindered? The answer came through one of the evangelists: If Bartimeyu was to be jailed the "asilikari" (as the PEA police was known in that time) would have to carry him all the way, so it was better leave to him alone. (See also Labuscagne, 2001, p 110-111)

### **3.3.2 God will make a way –to the Other Side**

#### ***3.3.2.1 Cross Border Pastoral Care***

The border between Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa was not fenced and free access for families living on both sides, was possible and still remains so today. This then prompted the practise of members visiting the DRC mission stations near the border, especially Mlanda and Mphunzi. It was at Mphunzi that Rev. Rens and his wife felt that they should give special attention to the Mozambican members. What happened in practise was that the Mozambican members only became integrated into the border congregations of the Malawi church. The valuable work of the Rens couple became the standard and Mozambican members were specially attended to in the main border-congregations of Malawi, those of Mphunzi, Mlanda, Malingundi and later Dedza. The Mozambican Christians were organised into eight ministry zones or prayerhouses and incorporated into the activities of the mentioned congregations. This attention to the Mozambican Christians was of the utmost importance and value as one of the main factors for the IRM's strength in the Tete province today. The Malawian example was followed by the Reformed Church in Zambia and congregations like Nzadu, Nyanje and Hofmeyr took special care of the Mozambican members from the Chiputo area. ("Die Sendingblad", August 1966, p 10-11)



As mentioned earlier, the normal church activities were guided by the appointed leaders in Mozambique itself. For the final catechism and sacraments, the people who were interested had to go to Malawi or Zambia, depending on where they lived in Mozambique. This sometimes meant for Christians to travel on foot for two to three days. This was not the only problem to deal with. The authorities became aware of the *modus operandi* and warned the local people about illegal trans-border activities. Stories of older members are numerous of how they in secret and usually at night crossed into Malawi, because if they were discovered, it led to punishment in jail or beatings. One of the older leaders, Mbambo James Ngozo, was put into jail three times by the Portuguese authorities for such “illegal” activities. It was also not only a case of avoiding the authorities, but also sometimes family-members or friends who could become informants for the priests or police. This cautious approach to church matters was again practised when religion became unwanted under the Marxist regime after 1975. (Interview with Mr. James Ngozo, 2003) Another interesting story is that of Miss. Maree, (see page 16, *Reforms and Bravery*) who secretly visited Mphatso again, together with a Miss Burger, from Mphunzi Mission in Nyasaland. At first their presence stirred fear, but then they were recognised by a leader, Jobi, and were taken to Mphatso. (15+km) They found the buildings in ruins, but their visit encouraged the local believers a lot, to such an extent that after the two missionaries had left, people still came the following day in big numbers to hear God’s Word. When they learned that the visitors had already gone, a big lamentation was heard with: “Tiri ana a masiye” – We are orphans! (T.V.S.V, 1930, p 85)

### ***3.3.2.2 Special Spiritual Qualities***

These hardships however led to special spiritual qualities. The witness of many pastors, who ministered to the Mozambican catechumens or members, testified about their vigil and faithfulness, even calling it a ‘higher quality of Christianity’. This is a remarkable witness, but comprehensible, because if it is necessary to sacrifice for something, that something is treasured more. So strong was this inner conviction of the Mozambican members, that they under difficult circumstances not only survived, they multiplied by tenfold their own numbers in the fifty years from 1922 till 1972. (Cronje, 1981, p 224) In his book “The Missionary”, Rev. Labuschagne argues convincingly against the myth that missionaries in Africa were always white, also using above-mentioned examples. The following is taken from the referred book: “...was done by the elders and they were regularly helped by the mission staff at Mlanda and Mphunzi. .... the converts could go to these stations to confess their faith in Christ as catechumens and

could later be baptised and could come to Mlanda and Mhpunzi for Holy Communion. At Mlanda mission there was a boardingschool for children from Mozambique who could attend the Mlanda School. Elders from Mozambique also attended training-courses held at Mlanda and Mphunzi stations to equip them for their work as the spiritual leaders of their people. Some of them also served as elders of the Mlanda and Mphunzi congregations. When the present author arrived at Mlanda in 1943, Chief Gomane II of *Lizulu*, a grandson of paramount Chief Chikuse of Mozambique, was a dedicated and fervent Christian and an elder of the Mlanda congregation. *Lizulu* is today in Malawi, but in those days, before the boundaries between Nyasaland and PEA were demarcated, *Lizulu* was part of Mozambique. ....The Church was fervently praying that the day would soon come when PEA would again be open for the spreading of the Gospel. The Church in Nyasaland and the mother Church in South Africa was ready to enter Mozambique to assist the Christians in preaching the Gospel as soon as the doors were opened.” (Labuscagne, 2002, p 116)

### 3.3.3 Nkhoma: Nurturing the Orphan

As mentioned, Nkhoma became deeply involved with the plea of the Mozambican Christians. When attempts to re-open the Angonia missions seemed to have failed and support for these missions dwindled, the presbytery of Nkhoma decided to do something about it. In 1931 there came an urgent request from the Christians in Angonia to attend to their spiritual needs. Again from Rev. Labuschagne’s book, “The Missionary”, p 166ff and Dr. CM Pauw’s “Mission and Church in Malawi”, 1980, p 320 -321 :

#### *The first Mission Committee (MC) of the Mkhoma Presbytery*

In July 1932 the Mkhoma Presbytery met at Chinthembwe. At this meeting the following question was asked by an elder from Malingunde congregation: ***Has the time not come for our congregations to send out their own missionaries?***

The Presbytery unanimously decided that the time had indeed come for the Mkhoma Presbytery to start its own mission work. Rev. AF Louw, the minister of Stellenbosch, who attended the Presbytery as a visitor, rejoiced that the Presbytery had taken this step.



A Mission Committee was elected consisting of. Revs WH Murrav, JA Retief, JH Rens, Amon Ndiwo, Ashan Malenga and the elder of Mlanda, Mr Naboti Soko. This committee was to plan the mission action of the Mkhoma Presbytery. As this decision was taken, some elders prayed that the Lord would bless the mission work, to be started by the Nkhoma Presbytery.

### ***3.3.3.1 The first step towards mission work in Mozambique:***

In 1933 the Mission Committee [MC] suggested that the Presbytery should send two men to Lourenco Marques [LM] to learn Portuguese, so that they could go as missionaries to Mozambique.

In 1934 the MC reported that Zefania Malekebo, who was sent to LM to learn Portuguese, was progressing well. The people in LM were also pleased with his behaviour. The Presbytery then decided to send Paulo Miloto in 1935 to join Zefania in LM. But for the time being he would go to Mr Best at Furancungo to learn Portuguese.

In 1935 Rev. Amon Ndiwo reported to Presbytery that Zefania and Paulo were at Ricatla, an interdenominational school near LM and that they were doing well in their studies. In 1936 the MS reported that Paulo Miloto was still at Ricatla, but Zefania had left Ricatla before he had finished third level grade. It was then decided that he should go to PEA, his home country, as an evangelist to assist the Christians in witnessing to the unbelievers.

In 1939 the Presbytery met at Mkhoma.....the MC reported that Paulo Milota did not start his work as an evangelist in PEA because his wife was very ill. In 1941 Paulo Milota, the missionary of the Mkhoma Presbytery did not attend the Presbytery meeting at Mphunzi, on the border of PEA, to report on his work as evangelist. Presbytery decided to write a letter to him and ask him to bring his report to Mkhoma in November 1941. If he did not turn up at Mkhoma his services as evangelist of the Presbytery would be ended and he should then return the £24 the Synod had paid for his training....." (Ibid, p 116-117) Paulo Milota later went to Zambia and worked as a teacher at Nyanje missionstation under Rev. JCC. Pauw. He wrote down the history of his people in Mozambique under the title "*Mbiri ya Ansenga ndi Afumu Nyankungura pakate pa Portuguese East Africa*" (*History of the People and Great Kings in PEA*). (Pauw & Koch, 2004, p 2# 16)

Although this last effort didn't produce visible success, it was very illustrative of the kind of support that existed from Nkhoma's side. Mphatso was incorporated into Mphunzi congregation, etc. and village schools near the border drew pupils from Protestant homes in PEA, even villages moved into Malawi. An ever increasing number of catechumens from PEA (one thousand in 1956) were incorporated in Malawian congregations, as well as elders were elected from PEA. (Pauw, 1980, p 320 -321, Cronje, 1981, p 225)

### **3.4 Other Contacts in Foreign Countries**

#### **3.4.1 Mineworkers Evangelised in South Africa**

The cross-border ministry was of vital importance to the Mozambican "Adutch" members, but it was not the only Christian contact with the outside world. Although a later development, Mozambicans were reached with the gospel in neighbouring countries through organised evangelism initiatives. Of these efforts the "Kampong" mission in South Africa, done mainly by the DRC of Transvaal and the DRC in Africa amongst the migrant workers at the mines, became the most familiar. These workers were from various African countries, including a big number from Mozambique. Mozambicans were often known as "Ampanyira", which was derived from "A Companhia de Mozambique", the Company which was a governing agent in Mozambique on behalf of the Portuguese Authorities, with rights to "call up" Mozambicans for any kind of labour, including mining. Many young Mozambicans were sent away or went to Rhodesia or South Africa willingly, as "Ampanyira" for improved wages. (Labuscagne, 2002, p 118)

They were housed in big hostels or "Kampongs" and often in very bad conditions, especially on spiritually level. To address this problem, the DRC churches decided to launch a special evangelism initiative to attend to the spiritual needs of these workers and very fruitful results followed. For the first time many workers came to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ during these evangelism campaigns, amongst which the most successful was done at the Wenela-depot in Johannesburg. Rev. Samuel Jossitala himself was "Mpanyira" at Stilfontein mines in the North Western Province in the RSA. One day as he was resting between shifts, he noticed the face of a missionary he knew. It was Rev. Johan Steytler whom he knew from Malawi



and who was doing mission work amongst the Chewa speaking people in the mines. He testified that many miners were reached by this evangelism campaign or were prevented from backsliding in the harsh mining setup. (Jossitala, Personal Interview, 2003) In the same manner pastor Pedro Tembe helped at the mines, before starting missions in Gaza. (Die Sendingblad, Oktober 1972, p. 329)

### **3.4.2 Mozambican Migration Workers in Zimbabwe**

In 1954 the Presbytery of Nkhoma decided that, as it was not allowed to preach the gospel in Mozambique, mission work should be done amongst the 50 000 “Ampanyira”, who were working within the boundaries of the big congregation of the CCAP in Salisbury. This decision was made after the “Salisbury Issue” was finally resolved between the DRC Synods of the Western Cape and the Orange Free State, and the Presbytery of Nkhoma. The issue concerned the question of who had authority over the work amongst the Malawians and Zambians working in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the problem of under whose supervision they were to be spiritually nurtured. After it was decided that the Malawians would be cared for by the Nkhoma Synod in conjunction with the General Mission Committee in Cape Town, Rev. MS Daneel was requested by them to find a suitable evangelist who could also undertake the work amongst the Mozambicans, under Rev. Daneel’s supervision. (Cronje, 1981, p. 182 -183; Pauw, 1980, p. 112-117) The next year Rev. Daneel negotiated with Rev. Kaltenreider of Beira concerning the possibility of appointing a minister for this task. There was a minister who was willing to come to Salisbury, but the Portuguese authorities refused to grant him permission to leave Mozambique. Rev. Daneel then found an evangelist, Genisis Nowa, a person well-known to the people from Mozambique, who was keen to do the work. In 1956 Rev. Daneel reported that Nowa's work amongst the people from PEA was, by the grace of God, bearing fruit. Presbytery asked all the congregations to remember this mission work in their prayers and that people from PEA who became Christians in Salisbury, would return to their own people as missionaries, witnessing and leading others to believe in Jesus Christ. (Labuschagne, 2001, p. 111) In this way the Beira Committee was formed and Revs. Daneel and Kaltenreider planned various joint ventures, also outreaches along the Beira Corridor, as known presently. (Minnaar, 2004; Pauw, 1980, p 321-322)

### **3.4.3 The Case of Uria Simango**

An interesting figure within the history of the IRM and who has recently roused a lot of interest in the local media (*Savana*, 23 de Julho de 2004, “Sei quem mandou fuzilar meu pai” and a book just published, written by Barnabe L N’Komo: “*Uria Simango – Um Homen, uma Causa*”) was Uria Simango. He was a pastor of the Igreja de Cristo serving in Beira, but via the Beira Committee came into contact with Rev. Daneel in Zimbabwe. In this way he started ministering to Mozambican workers in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe under the supervision of the DRC mission. In 1962 he attended a planning conference at Nkhoma concerning future mission efforts amongst the Mozambican workers and even into the Manica and Sofala provinces. Shortly after his return to Zimbabwe however, he disappeared. A little while later word came through that Uria Simango was in Mozambique and that he was a co-founder of the newly formed resistance group in Mozambique, Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, Frelimo. (Minnaar, notes) He continued to be part of Frelimo’s top leadership until 1969, when the leader, Eduardo Mondlane was killed and he became suspect of collaboration. He went into exile to Tanzania and Egypt, but in 1975, after independence, he returned to Maputo, where he and his wife died in strange circumstances. (*Savana*, 23 de Julho de 2004, p1-4, “Sei quem mandou fuzilar meu pai”)

#### **3.4.4 Shangaan Mission in RSA and Christian Radio Broadcasting:**

In 1959 Rev. Eddie Bruwer started with a mission initiative amongst the Shangane people at Nkhensani, in the North-Eastern corner of Lowveld region. Although the RSA- Mozambican borderline cut through the territory of the Shangane ethnic group, families living on either side of the border still had free access to visit one another. Rev. Bruwer soon mastered the language and won over the population’s trust, resulting in the establishment of a local congregation. He also had the assistance of a few lay workers, who helped to expand the missions influence as far as Shingwedzi and towards the Mozambican border. In this way people in Southern Mozambique were also reached with the gospel and it was this contact that laid the foundation for the involvement of the Reformed Church in Africa with the IRM in Southern Mozambique, and in particular the close bond with Rev. Tembe. (*Die Sendingblad*, Augustus 1972, p267)



From several places in Africa, Christian Broadcasters such as Transworld Radio in Swaziland started reaching people in Mozambique. This encouraged many believers to continue when they felt disheartened. (Die Sendingblad, Januarie 1982, p. 19)

### **3.4.5 Mozambican Refugees in Zambia**

Although it started after than the indicated timespan (till 1962), the Zambian outreach to Mozambican refugees is part of this era of trans-border ministry. It started in the mid 1960's when Mozambicans fled into Zambia from hostilities in the Tete province and were attended to spiritually at their camps. A report by Rev. J.B. Veitch in this regard is very interesting. He wrote that by the end of 1965 approximately 2000 Mozambicans fled into Zambia and were settled near Nyimba, east of the Luangua River. By 1969 there were three such camps. The NGO, Luthern World Federation catered for the physical needs but appealed to the local churches to look after the refugees spiritually. It was during a women's conference in that vicinity that two missionaries Mss. Spies and Stoffberg, were touched by the needs of these people and especially by the fact that almost every-one was illiterate. The congregation of Hofmeyr, within whose borders Nyimba was located, provided a teacher –evangelist to reach these people. Although the first teacher was soon discharged, his successor, Dickson Lungu did invaluable work to teach and evangelize the refugees, aided by faithful prayer and financial support. Since 1967 there was a steady rise in number of attendants to church-services and visitations. By May 1968 there were already 43 class members to become part of the Hofmeyr congregation. (Die Sendingblad, Januarie 1969, p 18-19)

### **3.4.6 A New Influence**

These inputs prompted converted Mozambicans, who returned to their homes, to link up with other believers and where possible, join existing congregations. Others spontaneously started witnessing about their faith and initiated their own groups, growing into small congregations. It seems that the Lord used this method to undo the church's predicament. Rev. Veitch expressed it well: "His (God's) elected must be brought in and the ways in which He does it, sometimes are incomprehensible, but always wonderful in our eyes." (Ibid)

## ***Chapter 4***

### **CHANGING CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP OF THE ELDERS: 1962 – 1972**

#### **4.1 The General Situation till 1962:**

As mentioned, the position of Christians varied from time to time, becoming sometimes more restrictive, sometimes less, depending on the religious predisposition of the person in charge of a certain area. However, this was influenced by a series of events and decisions, mostly originating from Portugal.

##### **4.1.1 Influence of the Catholic Church**

As stated earlier, Portugal became a republic in 1911. In principle this meant freedom of religion, but a big majority of Portuguese were still Catholic. The church influenced the people who had to govern, as seen in the case of Father Bazilio, who succeeded to convince the authorities to close down the DRC missions. What did the Catholic Church do with this influence? Unfortunately, they did remarkably little. Till the 1980's Mozambique still had the biggest number of unreached people in Africa. Although they had the education laws in their favour, they didn't do much with it, leaving Mozambique as one of the most illiterate countries in Africa in the 1960's. It seemed they had all the opportunity, but applied it mainly for the benefit of the Portuguese settlers. (Johnstone, 1965, p 13-14)

Two of the most influential events concerning above mentioned, were the following: The rise of the dictatorial government of Salazar, who came to power in Portugal in 1926, and the Accord with the Vatican in 1940. Salazar was a staunch Catholic and in 1928 signed an accord with the Santa Se (RCC in Portugal), restoring the pre -1911 status quo, making the Roman Catholic again the state church in Portugal and its colonies. This close relationship between Church and state was later intensified with the accord between Portugal and the Vatican, The Concordat, on 7<sup>th</sup> May



1940. This latter accord gave unhindered access to the Catholic Church, becoming the educational agent for the government in Mozambique. This advantage they used extensively, also realising that they hadn't explored their past opportunities. Since that time the Roman Catholic Church Dramatically expanded their influence over the local population.

A specific law that only permitted members of the Roman Catholic Church to continue studies past the fourth grade, benefited the Roman Catholic Church extensively. This gave a dual advantage: Many people became members in order to study and qualify themselves. Many of these people later became leaders in the community and government. In this way the Church not only accumulated more members, it extended its influence over the community as well. (Duffy, 1962, p 171-173) However, it also allowed for more liberal clergy to enter Mozambique, such as "The White Farthers", who were more from Italian and French origin. It was primarily these priests and clergy who started to openly question the Catholic Church and Portuguese Government's actions in Mozambique and who promoted social reform. (Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 2)

What happened to the DRC members? Many of them refused to be intimidated in this way and sent their children to Malawi for education. That is why many IRM members and the first pastors in Agónia and even Milange, still speak English instead of Portuguese, and are more Malawi orientated than Mozambican. (See Pauw, 1980, p. 321) However, many young members of the DRC mission decided to accept the conditions for further education. This led to many educated people being Catholic today, with "Adutch" parents, for example, the children of Amayi Adelessi in Vila Ulongue. She became a DRC member at a young age, but all her children and grandchildren, except one, are Catholic. (Adelessi Magagula, Personal Testimony, 2003)

In general the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique was still severely opposed to any kind of Protestant mission. To illustrate this attitude, we take as example the letter written in 1955 by the Catholic Cardinal for Mozambique, Cardinal Theodossio. In the introduction he gave various descriptions of how Protestants are against stability and how bad the Reformers were. He continued: "To favour Protestantism in this colony is to collaborate with the forces of religious, social and political disintegration... All of us Portuguese have the imperial duty placed upon us to preserve our colony from such a crisis, denying to the Protestant cause any co-operation whatsoever." The government backed this with laws like these: "No new mission will be allowed to

come into the land, no new stations of existing missions will be opened and no additional personnel will be appointed.” (Jackson, 1960, p 6; Chimango, 1982, p 10 - 12)

#### **4.1.2 Small Benefits, Big problems**

Although the church had this influence, it didn't succeed in establishing a strong moral code amongst the colonials in particular, and in Mozambique in general. As seen with the Chiputo revolt, immorality amongst many of the Portuguese and their over-all conduct, led to resentment amongst the locals. “Pretos” (blacks) were often degraded, although Mozambique was seen as a province of Portugal rather than a colony. There was a law which enabled black Mozambicans to become Portuguese citizens, called “assimilados”, while the rest were labelled “Indigenas”, but until 1958 little more than 5 000 Mozambicans had achieved this privilege. (Duffy, 1962, p160-162) The state of education was also desperate. In 1950, almost 99% of the native inhabitants of Portuguese East Africa were still illiterate, counting for only one university degree amongst them. There was also only a single Secondary school. Marvin Harris in his *“Portugal's African Wards”* called it “...no place in Mozambique for Africans who have been taught how to think for themselves...” (Jackson, 1960, p 2; Serapiao, 1972, p 4-5, 7)

In general the infrastructure of Mozambique stayed behind and was not as well developed in comparison to other colonies of that time. To the end of their reign over Mozambique (since 1950) however, the Portuguese government invested in very big projects like the Caborra Bassa Dam, the Senna-, Tete-, and Save bridges, the Pemba, Nacala and other ports and airports. Tourism was a major income, especially from South Africa. (Johnstone, 1965, p 6-7) Unfortunately, the production of the land didn't benefit the locals as much, except for a few lucky ones. In Southern Mozambique this was aggravated by the “shibalo” system (companies could hunt people for forced labour in the SA mines and Rhodesian estates.), which left very few able-bodied men for work near their homesteads. (Jackson, 1960, p. 2-3) The point is, with more locals becoming educated and leaders becoming aware of reform in the rest of the world, a resistance movement was gradually born. There were voices within the Catholic Church as well going up against many kinds of abuse (like Bishop D Sebastiao S. de Resende), especially concerning manpower, but still for many the Catholic Church was part of the oppressive system (Serapiao, 1972, p. 5, 6, 7-9) When the freedom struggle began in Mozambique, it was mainly



leaders from churches like the Presbyterians and Methodists who led the revolution. (Duffy, 1962, p 172-174, Vines and Wilson, 1993, p. 3)

#### **4.1.3 The Need for Liberation**

Clearly, this state of affairs, created resentment amongst the local populations towards the government and even the church. It therefore came as no surprise when a movement for liberation started an armed struggle to free the land of these oppressive influences. Officially this armed struggle commenced on 25 September 1964 when insurgents launched attacks in the Cabo Delgado province, on military targets, also killing a Roman Catholic priest in the process. This quickly led to many similar incidents by various groups at several places. These groups were already organised into a united political and military group in Tanzania during 1961-2, called Frelimo, an abbreviation for “**Frente de Libertação de Moçambique**”. The first leader of this united group was Eduardo Mondlane, a well –educated man, with a doctorate obtained in America. Although he was an ardent socialist, he was also a defender of certain free market principles and was dedicated to Mozambican nationalism. Under his leadership Frelimo not only organised the whole country into an armed struggle, but also initiated social and educational reform programs. They had definite successes, especially in rural areas such as Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado. (Henriksen, 1971, p. 11-15) The Portuguese government reacted with military force and an armed struggle ensued which lasted for ten years. In 1974 the effort was becoming most expensive and a new socialist government in Portugal, who had a strong decolonization policy, decided that a transitional government should be appointed. Many Portuguese who had settled in Mozambique and Angola felt betrayed, till today, by the hastily “give away” of the two colonies. The many atrocities committed after independence only intensified this feeling.

#### **4.1.4 Liberation Captured**

Unfortunately, at the beginning of their struggle, no western power was willing to become involved in the Mozambican issue, because Portugal was needed for positive support in the cold war with Russia and the growing crisis with the OPEC. This forced Frelimo to contact the Soviet Union, other Communist countries and other independence movements for weapons and support. The request was granted; and more, such as free studies for future leaders and training of doctors,

teachers etc. In this way the Communist doctrine was carried into the very heart of Frelimo (Henriksen, 1971, p. 9, 15) and their great future leader, Samora Machel, became a staunch disciple of Marxism with all its consequences. (Johnstone, 1965, p 14) This was a most unfortunate period in history, when an African leader asked for help at the doors of the western powers, but was refused. In this way they forced a possible ally to become part of the oppressive communist set-up. (H Kitchen, 1967, p 31-32; Seegers, 1984, p 15-16)

## **4.2 Protestant Growth**

### **4.2.1 In General**

Frelimo's war activities after 1964 led to an increasingly unsafe environment in Mozambique, and a realisation by the Portuguese authorities that they needed friends, not enemies, promoted a less restrictive attitude from their side. Even so, Protestants were still eyed with suspicion by the authorities, because of past influences and the resistance movements' Protestant links. (Tempo, 23/2/1986, p 17) The request in 1970 by the Dutch Reformed Church to be re-admitted to do mission work in Mozambique serves as an example: The request was processed till ministerial level, but was turned down by the Portuguese authorities once again. (Cronje, 198, p. 226-227)

What happened to other Protestant missions? In general the Protestant missions were expanding, especially in the South. By the time of independence, the biggest Protestant denominations in Mozambique were the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. In general Protestant missions were far more tolerated in the Southern parts than in the north, since it was more in the public eye. Even so, there were sometimes drastic actions taken against suspected non compliant missions. (Botha, Hefsiba Notes; Chimango, 1982, p 8 -10) Three developments of importance within the Protestant circles of Mozambique are mentioned at this point (although a very interesting study on its own), since it had a direct influence on the IRM:

- 1) The establishment of the Seminary of Ricatla by the Swiss Presbyterian Church, near Maputo.
- 2) The story of Mehicane mission in Zambesia province, planted by a Scottish mission and later taken over by the South African General Mission.



3) The formation of the “Conselho Crista em Moçambique”, Christian Council of Mozambique in 1948.

#### **4.2.2 Ricatla**

The Ricatla Theological School, near Maputo, was initiated as a mission of the Presbyterian Church of Switzerland (Missao Suiça) in 1887, which gradually developed into Bible school for pastoral training in 1917 and eventually into a Theological Seminary in 1958. After the Mozambique branch of the Presbyterian Church became autonomous in 1970, responsibility for the school was handed over to the Christian Council of Mozambique and the Institute became known as The Interdenominational Seminary of Ricatla, or as known in Portuguese, *Seminario Unido de Ricatla* (SUR). In the beginning six churches were affiliated with SUR, e.g. Presbyterian, United Methodist, United Congregational, Igreja de Cristo of Manica & Sofala, Igreja de Cristo Norte and Wesleyan Methodist, but after 1986 others also became part of the guardian churches, like the Igreja Reformada em Mozambique and Igreja Luz Episcopal. However Canadian and Swiss liberal theology found its way into the Seminary, resulting in the withdrawal of some members, such as the Igreja Reformada in 1994. (Chamango, 1982, p. 24 -25)

#### **4.2.3 Mehicane**

The story of Mehicane is well recorded in the book “Life out of Death in Mozambique”, by Phyllis Thompson and deals with the spiritual battle that took place to establish a Protestant mission in a traditionally animist and witchcraft orientated area. This mission was started in 1945 by Rev. Gordon Legg and Sr Martinho after severe spiritual battles. In the beginning it was very successful in reaching the local people with the gospel. (see pages 20-70) Unfortunately it was targeted by the Roman Catholics and after a sad and unfortunate incident the state had enough grounds to close it down in October 1959. The doors of the church were literally closed by nailing cross-members over it and then sealed. Members were prohibited from gathering there. (Page, 1963, p 96-97) After some years however it was re-opened and became the head quaters for the Igreja Evangelica de Cristo and also the Igreja União Batista. It was the former who contacted the Igreja Reformada in the late 1980's and asked for DRC missionaries to serve in their churches.

#### **4.2.4 Conselho Crista de Moçambique**

The formation of a united forum for the mainline Protestant Churches in Mozambique in 1948, in fact was only the local expression of the international movement founded in the same year, the World Council of Churches. However, the “Conselho Crista em Moçambique” (CCM) became an important spokesman for the Protestants in Mozambique and its good relationship later with the DRC was beneficial for the IRM in particular. After independence in 1975, the CCM was for some time the only organisation recognised by the new government as representative of the Christian Churches. (World Sending Service, 1994, 9-1)

### **4.3 Awakening of Interest in the DRC Effort**

During this time a new interest in Mozambique on the side of the DRC family was awakened. It never was totally dormant, as people like Rev. SK Jackson, chairman of the Mashonaland Mission, always talked about the PEA challenge. His speech at the “Studente Vrywilliger Bond” in 1960 had inspired many people to reconsider the DRC mission in Mozambique, amongst others, Rev. Pieter Botha. (Page, 1963, p 85; Personal Interview with Rev. Botha) In 1957 the General Synod of the DRC of South Africa gave instructions to the Moderamen and the Mission Committee to approach the Portuguese government anew about the work in the PEA. (Handelinge van die Sinode, 1957, p 99) This request was repeated in 1961 and Rev. PES Smith and Dr. AJ van der Merwe were delegated to handle the issue. A few letters in the “Kerkbode” also stressed the urgency to make new efforts to open the PEA mission fields, like those of Rev. AJ van Wyk, dated 18 October 1961, and letters from Rev. JP Laurie to Prof. GBA Gerdener in March 1963. (Page, 1969, footnotes 133 –135)

#### **4.3.1 Visiting the Neighbours**

In 1962 a group of interested missionary pastors working in Malawi, namely Revs. Botha, Minnaar and Smit visited Mozambique, to the North-Eastern side of Niassa and Zambesia provinces. They included Mehicane in their visit and had some interesting experiences with the police, who immediately wanted to know what their business was. This visit stirred interest in



themselves as well as others, to such an extent that Rev. Botha went with his family to Beira on own accord in 1964 to study the Portuguese language. After a while though, they were sent away by the Secret Police of Moçambique. (P.I.E.J) (Mrs. JM Botha, Personal Interview, 2003; Minnaar, notes, 2003; Page, 1963, p. 97) In 1966 Nkhoma appointed a Committee to investigate affairs in Angonia, but when they reached Mphatso, they discovered that it was guarded by the Catholics and not possible to do anything there. (Cronje, 1981, p 225-226)

In 1967, the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, a visit by a representative committee of Nkhoma Synod consisting of four pastors, went to see the government officials at Vila Coutinho, district capital of Angonia. They were well received, but when they inquired about the whereabouts of the CCAP members, the response was negative: "No such church in Portuguese Angoni-land." Rev. Botha tried to point out on the big map of Angonia where these Christians had their places of worship and then discovered that these places were marked "Adutchi". After further deliberation the delegates discovered that the Mozambicans known as CCAP members in Malawi, were known as "Adutchi" (for DRC) by the authorities and their congregations were marked on a map of Angonia, right in the office of the Administrator. They realised that the local church had to get its own identity, whereby it could be identified as a Mozambican church. (PB Botha, Personal Accounts & Hefsiba notes)

## **4.4 Working from Two sides: "Bungwe la Nine" and the Federal Council**

### **4.4.1 Nine Elders: 1967 -1969**

A very significant step in this direction and an important detail for the development of the IRM occurred in the same year. This happened with the forming of the "Bungwe la Nine" (Committee of Nine), an executive committee appointed by the local church to handle church-matters on their behalf. The committee consisted of nine Mozambican elders; taken from the Malawian congregations who were of the Mphunzi, Dedza and Mlanda congregations. They gave new direction to the church and from then on started to organise issues concerning the local Christians from within. They went to see the 'regulos' (Chiefs) to ask permission to restart the work and started to have sermons openly. They also encouraged the building of churches and opened new ministry fields. Suddenly there was an organised movement from within and this gave a new

identity to the Mozambican DRC members. The original “Bungwe la Nine” continued to mobilize the local believers until 1973, when it was disbanded and restructured with a wider representation base, after which it became known as “Bungwe la Ten.” (Die Sendingblad, Maart 1970, p 79; Botha, Hefsiba Notes; Kasamba, Personal Interview)

#### **4.4.2 Joining hands**

In 1969 another significant development took place. Nkhoma CCAP Synod and the DRC in SA (Cape Synod) took the Angonia area as a joint venture and co-ordinated efforts to reach the people and serve the DRC members of that part of Mozambique. They then approached the DRC Synods of Northern Transvaal and Southern Transvaal, whose responsibility it has been since 1908 until 1922 and whose members were still involved in prayer for Mozambique to re-open. In the meantime the two Transvaal synods of the DRC in Africa (black church), also became involved with the work amongst the Shangaan people in the Eastern Transvaal and migration workers in South Africa. The Reformed Church in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and CCAP, Synod of Salisbury, also ministered to the Mozambican workers who lived within their boundaries. It was quite clear that all these ministries of the many Churches and Synods were in fact working to a common goal, namely to reach Mozambicans with the gospel. It was decided to structure the many efforts into a joint venture of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Therefore a Committee was appointed by the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches to decide on a co-ordinated effort, and everybody involved was willing to accept the guidance of this newly appointed group.

#### **4.4.3 The Call**

With the new committee in place, yet another event took place in 1969 that stimulated interest in the PEA mission work greatly. The Mozambican DRC members, through the “Bungwe la Nine” (Committee of Nine) appealed to the mother church to please come and help “her children”. This appeal, directed to the appointed committee of the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches, made a very big impact and resulted in renewed efforts, even at ministerial levels, for the DRC-missions to enter into Mozambique. The following letter is quoted to reflect its significance (translated):



*As your children in Mozambique, brought into life through you, but orphans for 47 years, we humbly come to you now. We make known to you that the Lord's work has grown so much that the number of full members are more than 2000 and those in catechism-classes more than 700. Today we think of you and beg you, that you, since we are orphans, will give us pastors who will feed us and care for us spiritually.*

*As a start, we respectfully request three pastors. We ask you, our Mother, to give these three pastors as a start to us, till our church is being established (congregations been formed). We also politely ask that you will supply for their salaries, travel-expenses and housing.*

*We trust you will favourably consider our request. We are,*

*Your Children....."*

This letter was signed by six elders of the "Bungwe la Nine". (Cronje, 1981, p. 226-227)

In April 1969, "*Die Sendingblad*" placed an article by Rev. Pieter Botha under the heading "Doors open again in P.E.A.". This testimony of the inner growth of the Mozambican church, stirred a lot of positive reaction. This was especially the case when the strength of the local Christians became evident by way of the following figures: From Mlanda, Dedza and Mphunzi congregations alone, a total of 1982 members and 509 catechumens of Mozambican origin were registered, not accounting for people registered at other sites. These articles, together with photos of people gathering under trees sitting on bricks and the ruined church buildings, created a new awakening amongst SA church-members and new efforts were being made to re-enter Mozambique. (*Die Sendingblad*, 4/1969, p 79).

#### **4.4.4 Keeping the Faith**

In the meantime the "Bungwe la Nine" constantly gathered and kept the impetus alive. One example was how elders like Laideni Ngozo went to look up members at the old centres like Benga. After making several visits to Benga during 1969 to 1971, he managed to regroup a significant number of the "old folk" of Benga, including the likes of Jamusi Ngozo. He even involved pastor Viljoen (Afiyuni) of the CCAP, Mlanda in a effort to equip and re-activate the

older members into forming prayer groups. However, this brought about some problems with the Zambezi Industrial Mission's local leadership, under whose care these members had been standing for a long time. In the end some of these "rediscovered" members, went and established a prayerhouse at Ntachi, near Vila Ulongue, and thus started to expand to other villages like Kampesa, Mulale etc, - all of them of the stronger "zones" of Vila Ulongue congregation today. (*Historia de Benga, p 1&2*) In June 1971 the following members were elected, representing a greater number of places: Winiasi Soko (Mzewe), Geresoni Kagomo (Mzewe), Wilisoni Phiri (Mzewe), Staniel Phiri (Kachoka), Zefaniya Phiri (Komatulo), Tomelo Chuma (Mberera), Samisoni Sigwa (Domue), Samuel Mbewe (Benga), Patisoni Mbewe (Mphatso). (*Botha, Hefisiba notes*)

#### **4.4.5 First Visits to DRC Members in PEA**

These developments led to immediate negotiations with the Portuguese government concerning the re-opening of the missions. A written request was handed in at the governor-general's office in LM (Maputo). He in turn had to forward it to the Portuguese government in Lisbon. In June 1970 the response came from Portugal: "It is not possible to consider your request positively." Although a big disappointment for the missions on the one side, there was good news for the local church on the other hand. The local believers had permission to gather freely, celebrate Holy Communion, and pastors of the bordering congregations in Malawi could get permission from the district administration to visit the members on special occasions. (Cronje, 1981, p 226 -227) Two special occasions soon followed: On 24 October 1971, Rev. Kainja of Nkhoma Synod and then chairman of the Joint Missions Committee for Mozambique, visited Mphatso and a total of 1500 people gathered, many of them celebrating Holy Communion. (*Die Sendingblad, Oktober 1972, p 329*) On 14 May 1972 Revs. A.J. Viljoen and G.M. Vollenhoven, with the inauguration of a new church-building, celebrated Holy Communion near Pitala in Mozambique (near Mlanda mission station) where many Christians were present. Also present was the area headman, chief Majawa, and his counsellors who welcomed the people "of peace" heartily. 120 people celebrated Holy Communion and several children were baptised. (Kuunika, June 1972)

There were also some very positive reactions from within the DRC family: The Cape Synod's Mission Council undertook to support two missionary pastors and Nkhoma Synod was ready to support a Malawian missionary. By 1972 Rev. N.A. Katundu was called to go and assist the DRC



Christians in Angonia, which he started doing from Dedza congregation. The Salisbury CCAP Synod promised to support an evangelist. The DRC in Africa already supported a Mozambican/Shangaan pastor (Pedro Tembe) who passed his admittance exams at Stofberg Theological School. (*Die Sendingblad*, 3/1970, p 79). Everything looked set for a big restart.

## **4.5 The Establishment of the IRM in Gaza/Maputo: 1971**

### **4.5.1 Shangaan Ministry in SA:**

The next development of utmost importance to the IRM and another sign of the awakening of interest of the DRC family in Mozambique was the opening of the Shangaan ministry in Southern Mozambique by Rev. Tembe. The story however goes back to 1959, when Rev. Eddie Bruwer pioneered the spiritual work amongst the Shangaan people in the North Eastern Lowveld at Nkensani mission station. (See page 30). With time the work expanded to Makhuva, also in the Lowveld, where the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (now part of the Uniting Reformed Church) started and supported a mission. Other DRC congregations became involved and at Shingwedzi another initiative was launched. As mentioned, many evangelists helped the pastors to take care of the increasing number of believers. All these activities also influenced the people of Mozambique, since families lived on both sides of the border and access to one another was unhindered.

The big importance of this work for Mozambique however became clearer when Pedro D Tembo came into contact with above mentioned pastors and evangelists. Mr. Tembe, a Mozambican by birth, worked on the mines but eventually became a member of the ministry team to the Shangaan people and was a co-founder of the mission established at Mukhuva. Before that he already made several attempts, as an independent pastor, to start congregations in the North Western districts of Gaza province and had several close encounters with the PIDE, the Portuguese secret police of Mozambique. He was suspected of collaborating with the Frelimo in their struggle for liberation, but no evidence could be gathered against him and he was released. After some time at Makhuva, he was sent to Turfloop and later Stofberg Theological School. On 7 March 1971 he was ordained as a pastor of the DRC in Africa.

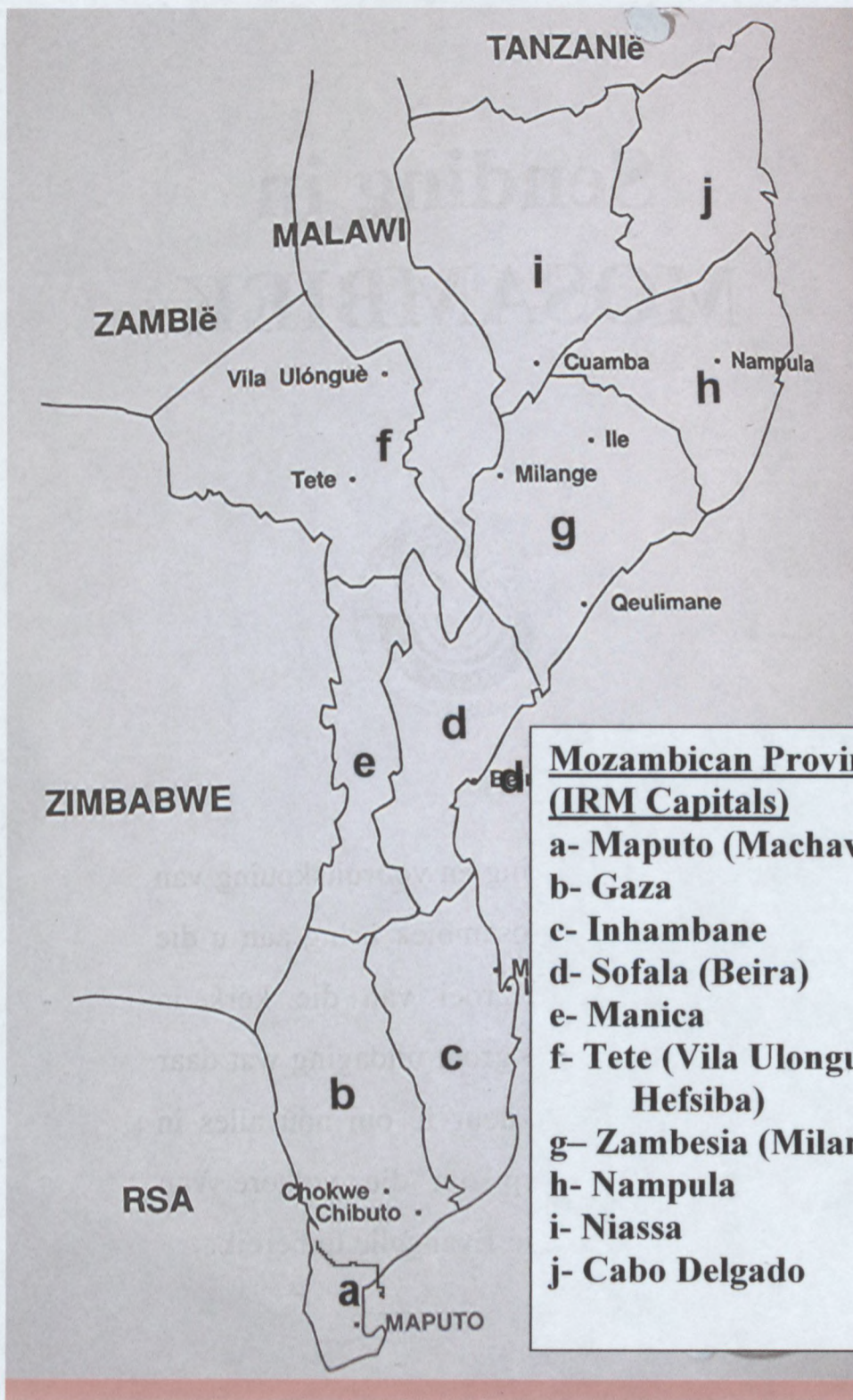
#### **4.5.2 The Planting of the DR Mission in Gaza, Southern Mozambique**

Since he, as a Mozambican citizen, could work freely in that country, the DRC in Africa, Synod of Northern Transvaal, decided to send him out as soon as possible to start mission work amongst the Mozambican Shangaans. Although pastor Tembe was a citizen of Mozambique, he could not speak Portuguese, only Shangaan, Zulu and a little of Afrikaans, but that was sufficient to work in Gaza, where Shangaan was the predominant language. During the time of his training, two young Mozambicans came to Nkhensani and spoke about the enormous spiritual needs amongst their people in the area close to the confluence of the Limpopo and Elephants Rivers. Therefore, on 25 May 1971, pastor Tembe departed to the Limpopo Valley and started evangelism near Vila Trigo de Morais, in the Chokwe district, Gaza province. He and his wife soon congregated eleven members, gathered 49 catechumens, and faithfully continued to witness to their own people. They endured many hardships, also with the government, but were able to continue notwithstanding initial setbacks. (Die Sendingblad, 8/1972, 267; Tembe, Personal report)

In the meantime the DRC in Africa had difficulty in supporting the growing work financially and other partners were invited into a joint effort. After some time the DRC synods of Northern, Western and Southern Transvaal all became supporters of the Gaza initiative. In this way a joint effort was undertaken into Mozambique, giving birth to the Joint Committee for Mission Work into Southern Mozambique, known as the "GSSM" in Afrikaans. By 1975 the work grew to a total of 60+ members and many children attended Sunday school. (See also page 43, Ch. 5) In 1978 Rev. Tembe was asked by the Committee to move to Maputo in order to have representation within the capital. In April the same year a congregation was established near Chokwe, with 100 members and a lay preacher/evangelist to care for them. (Cronje, 1981, p 229 -230)

So, by the end of 1971, beginning of 1972, there were two areas where the DRC family had mission interests in Mozambique, namely in Angonia and in Gaza. The setting was right for a major effort to re-establish the work already started and it seemed that the country was opening for missionaries to enter again. Politically the country was also changing and a strong African Nationalism was active in Mozambique, resulting in serious military struggles, -especially in the North. After fifty years it seemed that the heavy yoke on the DRC Mission members was ready to be lifted, indeed a Jubilee, and maybe symbolic of times to come for the country.





**Mozambican Provinces**  
**(IRM Capitals)**  
a- Maputo (Machava)  
b- Gaza  
c- Inhambane  
d- Sofala (Beira)  
e- Manica  
f- Tete (Vila Ulongue/  
Hefsiba)  
g- Zambesia (Milange)  
h- Nampula  
i- Niassa  
j- Cabo Delgado





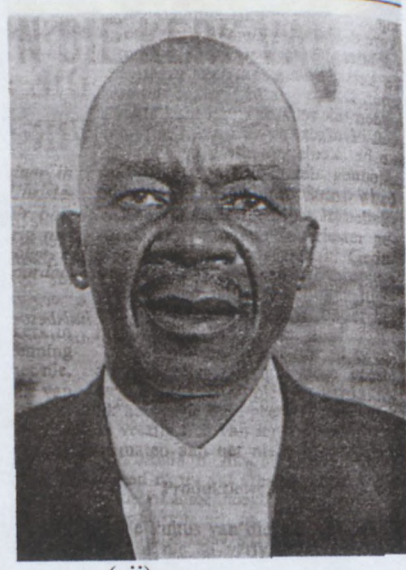




(vi)

Six members of "Bungwe la Ten", 1975.

*Back: L. Mkusa, W. Soko, J.E. Chikakuda  
Front: L. Ngozo, L. Phiri, F. Mbewe.*



(vii)

Rev. P Tembe, who started the IRM  
in Gaza, South Mozambique, 1971/2



(viii: a-c)

Images depicting the **official birth of the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique**, with the formation of Msanja congregation, Angonia, June 1973. a) *Presentation of elders and Rev. Katundu (left, front); b) elders and headmen; c) Women's league.*



## **PART TWO (Section B)**

### **TWENTY YEARS OF PAINFUL PROGRESS**

**1972 - 1992**

#### ***Chapter 5***

#### **SHORT TIME OF GRACE: 1972 – 1975**

##### **5.1 Angonia opened for Missionaries Again**

###### **5.1.1 Rev. Katundu in Angonia**

As we have seen, the door was gradually opening for external mission work within the country and both in Angonia and Gaza there was internal growth and ecclesiastical development. The installation of Rev. N.A. Katundu at Dedza on 11 June 1972, by the CCAP, Nkhoma Synod, as missionary to Mozambique however initiated a new phase for the Angonia Christians. This was quite significant, since the last mission work ceased at Mphatso on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1922, fifty years earlier, almost to the day. He immediately set to work to meet the authorities in Angonia, but sometimes the local believers were unwilling to accompany him, fearing the repetition of past experiences. However, he was well received by the local government officials and was given freedom to preach God's Word. He travelled by bicycle and later by motorbike, always carrying books and Bibles with him, because of the great need for Christian literature in that area. Sometimes it was with great danger that he fulfilled his duties, since the war of liberation was quite severe in that region, especially towards Mphatso. Landmines were a definite threat on smaller roads.

###### **5.1.2 Preparing for Forming Congregations**

He started to re-organise the members into "congregation units" and by November 1972 became convinced that the time has come to form congregations that would constitute a local independent



church. This was planned for June 1973. In the meantime he also reached some of the Portuguese people, in quite a few cases the military personnel, with Bibles in Portuguese and co-operated with the government in joint ventures to aid people affected by the war. This definitely helped to combat suspicion that some still harboured towards the DRC mission. Quite interesting was Reverend Katundu's plea for a bigger transport means, in order to reach more people. This was followed by a remarkable response by SA DRC members to meet that request in no time by giving funds, with which the Nkhoma Mission Board bought a Peugeot pick-up. (Die Sendingblad: Nov. 1973, p 376 –377; Des. 1974, p 409 –410)

By June 1973 the work was well organised and at least three congregations could be established. This marked another milestone within the history of the IRM. Although Mphatso congregation was established some 60 years earlier, it was still done as part of the DRC mission. This time it was planned as part of the establishing a local church. Three congregations were prepared to be established during the span of June 1973, namely MSANJA, MZEWE and MAWI.

## **5.2 Birth of a Sister Church in the DRC Family**

A very vivid account of the events was given by Rev. Pieter Botha, (who was then secretary of Nkhoma's Mission Committee for Mozambique) in "Die Sendingblad, November 1973, p 371-375". The following is extracted (translated). "We could realise the foundation of the first congregation of the DR. Church in Mozambique, named Msanja D.R.C.M., on 2-3 June 1973. Actually the name given was *Igreja Hollandesa Reformada em Mocambique*, but the English name was so wellknown amongst the people, that the name, *Dutch Reformed Church in Mozambique. (D.R.C.M.)* was adopted.

### **5.2.1 Establishment of Msanja Congregation**

The article continues to describe the following events. Msanja is located near the foot of Domue mountain, about ten miles north east of Mphatso and near to Lifidzi –mission where the Catholics built an impressive cathedral in the 1960's. Msanja's church, on the contrary, was just a small grass and clay structure on a bare hill, but the joy of the local Christians knew no limits; tears were

mingled with dances of joy, because of the fulfilment of half a century's prayers. During the consecration meeting, with Revs. & Mrs. Katundu and Botha, Revs. Kasusu and Kanjala present, at four o'clock on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1973, the elders came forward to hand in their "elder labels" of CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Rev. Katundu explained: "Hereby we thank Nkhoma Synod for 51 years in which she cared for our children and now we establish the **Msanja** congregation of the DR. Church in Mozambique". *The congregation consisted of 948 full members and 170 catechumens, 22 elders were chosen for nine zones.* Meetings were held till past ten at night, the word of God was preached and hymns were sung. The following day more delegates arrived from Nkhoma, including Revs. Christie Burger, Johan Steytler, E. Katsulukuta, YA Chienda and others. In the open air meeting, together with the headman and other interested parties, 795 people attended. By three o'clock the afternoon all was done. A new sister of the DRC family was born. Although it consisted of only the one congregation of Msanja, it represented the *Igreja Hollandesa Reformada em Mocambique*.

### 5.2.2 Establishment of Mzewe (Calomue) Congregation

Two weeks later, 16 -17 June, the process was repeated with the establishment of the Mzewe congregation. Again, this meeting place was situated on a high open space and during the winter months this part of Mozambique can become rather chilly due to cold winds from inland. A warming thought, however was that this congregation was to be established in the "prohibited area", almost right between the Mawi and Lifidzi rivers, allocated to the Roman Catholic Church in 1908. In any case, the meetings started with many people present, with only a grass structure and a tin roof serving as church. At ten past four in the afternoon, on the sixteenth of June 1973, the second congregation of the D.R.C.M. was founded, named **Mzewe** congregation, *consisting of 800 full members, 139 catechumens. Eleven elders and 7 deacons* were elected to take care of the members. The following day many delegates of Nkhoma arrived once again; missionaries and church-leaders such as Revs. Pretorius, Kainja, Chienda, Steytler and others who wanted to be part of these special events. Even the great Mozambican headman of the area, Jemusi, was present. All together, 1442 participants were counted. Many choirs participated, as well as the astounding number of children, who sat through events.



### 5.2.3 Establishment of Mawi Congregation

Another two weeks followed and again, on 30 June 1973, the Nkhoma delegates were entering Mozambique for the establishment of a third congregation, this time at Pitala, near Mlanda. At the meeting 316 people were present. After consulting with the local headman, named Pitala, the congregation was named **MAWI**, after the historical river that flows nearby. The congregation was founded *with 487 members, 59 catechumens and 16 elders, who elected to oversee the 15 zones*. Again the crowd endured the cold winds, including children who stayed till late, to sing and hear God's Word. The following morning, Sunday 1 July, 1023 people gathered to be part of the events.

At the same event a delegation of the old Benga mission, approximately 40 miles / 64 kms south of the Mawi congregation, were present as well. They informed the leaders about a big group of believers at Benga who considered themselves as DRC members and as children of “bwana Liebenberg”. At that stage they were spiritually attended to by the Zambezia Industrial Mission of Malawi, but requested that the DRC would come and minister to them. The issue was later discussed with Z.I.M. head-office in Malawi.

So, in this way the exciting events of June 1973 ended, but for the D.R.C.M., or *Igreja Hollandesa Reformada em Mocambique*, it was a new beginning. The establishment of Mphatso and Benga congregations had to be postponed due to the state of war in those areas. Although an orphan for fifty years, the *Igreja Hollandesa Reformada em Mocambique* was finally welcomed as a worthy sister within the DRC family. A lot still had to happen before an own Synod could be formed and before having her own pastors, but the foundations were well laid.

## 5.3 Continued Growth

### 5.3.1 In Angónia

With these congregations established, members could now be attended to in a more orderly manner and their spiritual needs cared for within Mozambique. It soon became clear that a second

missionary was needed to work in Mozambique and by 1974 Pastor Pieter Botha was called by the Nkhoma Mission Comm. for Mozambique to fulfil that role. At that stage he was working at CCAP, Lilongwe, Lingadzi congregation, but made regular visits into Mozambique, because it was his dream, later a passion, to work there. He was installed as pastor of Mzewe and Mawi congregations in the beginning of November 1974. By the beginning of 1975 he also moved to Dedza, enabling him to work into Mozambique more easily, since he had full-time responsibility for the Mzewe and Mawi congregations. The Mozambican authorities allowed both pastors Katundu and Botha to move freely across the border to fulfil their duties. During 1974 the war ended with the peace accord being signed in Lusaka, giving in principle political autonomy to Mozambique. A transition government was appointed and this brought peace and stability to the region, at least for a while. (Cronje, 1981, p 227; Die Sendingblad, Maart 1975, p 93). It was during this interim time that two more congregations of the IRM were officially formed, namely Mphatso and Benga.

### 5.3.2 A Special Visit

A special occasion during this time was the big delegation of the Federal Council for Mission Work in Mozambique that visited Angonia on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 1974, amongst them Rev. P.E.S. Smith (Chairman) and Dr. J.M. Cronje (Scribe). The delegation had meetings at Nkhoma the previous day concerning the organising and future of the work in Mozambique, under the chairmanship of Rev. P.E.S. Smith. Important decisions were made, such as the following: (Minutes of Liaison Committee, Nkhoma 20 Nov. 1974)

- 1) Registration of the church within Mozambique, under the name *Igreja Reformada em Mocambique*, as was approved by both the Angonia and Maputo based leaders. (# 4.1)
- 2) For this purpose official application should be done with the authorities in Lourenço Marques (Maputo). The 500 signatures of members of the IRM has already been obtained. (#4.3)
- 3) Convocation of representatives of the existing congregations, in order to approve a Church order and form a Synod. They should also obtain property. (#5.1)



4) Future development of the mission effort: a) The local church should start ministering in the rural areas (# 5.2) b) plan for staff and medical and educational witness (# 5.3-4) the different areas of entrance: In the South (Gaza) from the Transvaal, RSA; in the center (Umtali till Beira), from Zimbabwe; and in the North (Angonia) from Nkhoma, Malawi with the support of the DRC W. Cape. (# 5.5.1-5)

Therefore it was quite a big group of people (from at least five countries) who entered at Dedza border on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, amongst them the following: Revs. P.E.S. Smith, J. Cronje, Eddie Bruwer, M. Dippenaar, B. Jackson, P. D. Tembe, N. Katundu, P. Botha, C. Burger, J. Minnaar, C. Badenhorst, S. Buti and L. Moolman. (Minnaar, Notes) They visited Mzewe congregation, passed via Vila Coutinho (administrative centre for Angonia, now named Vila Ulongue) and reached Benga congregation the same morning. There they had an emotional experience of Angonia hospitality and witnessed the spontaneous joy of the locals, being able to receive foreign visitors again, right at the very ruins of the old mission station. At that stage however, the bricks had already been removed and a Roman Catholic School was built nearby. Encouraging messages were delivered from God's word by the visitors to the many believers who came to receive the "Alendo" (visitors) - amongst them an evangelist-teacher who had worked with the missionaries 52 years earlier. The group left with this song echoing from the crowd, while waving branches: "The earth was shaken today..., we rejoice over this visit..., The Lord did great things to us..., We rejoice!!" (Die Sendingblad, Maart 1975, p. 92 -96)

This visit was significant in more than one way. For the local Christians it was good to know that they were indeed remembered and thought of. On the other hand it brought home to the supporters involved, in practical terms, the position of the Mozambican DRC members:

Their needs, both spiritually and physically (church-structures), and their future plans.

For pastor Tembe, to obtain first hand knowledge of the birth cradle of the Igreja Reformada, a much needed contact he would be able to use at a later stage.

### **5.3.3 Developments in Gaza**

In the meantime, the missionwork in Gaza was also growing. Rev. Tembe had by the beginning of 1975 succeeded in accumulating 60 members, of whom 27 were baptised during 1974, as well as

45 catechumens who prepared to become members. These believers were encountered within the Chokwe area, counting 11 outposts, attended by 5 elders. One of them was Mr. Paolo Timane, a son-in-law of Rev. Tembe, who helped as an evangelist. Other churches in the vicinity accepted the presence of the Igreja Reformada, even joining in small groups, like the pastor of the Ethiopian Church who joined with some of his members, as well as others. This was later revealed to be less of a blessing, since the rites of the Church were not yet well established amongst the new believers and with the other churches joining, strange influences were introduced. Children were attending in big numbers, but effective ministry was not possible due to shortage of staff and material, and irregular attendance. (Die Sendingblad, Februarie 1975, p 60 ff)

The method of operating was to open small preaching-posts at the house of a member or interested party. From there the process of evangelism would be continued. In this manner pastor Tembe worked in a very big area between Vila Trigo de Morais, Guija and Chibuto. On the other hand it made intensive discipleship training and thorough church-planting very difficult. The absence of the many mine-workers, husbands and fathers, who worked in South Africa, also affected the ministry. Worse even, it affected the stability in the family households, still a big problem today. (Gaza traditions)

### 5.3.4 The IRM Registered

Immediately after the Federal Council's visit to Angonia, the two missionaries entrusted with the work, started with the preparations for registration of the Church with the government. For this to be done, at least 500 signatures of local believers (and recognised by local authorities) were required and necessary to be collected, confirming that they wanted to register their church with the government. After that, it had to be accepted by the different Departments of Religious Affairs; local, provincial and finally National. This was done in conjunction with the church-elders and early in December 1974, Rev. Botha, Rev. Katundu and other church-leaders commenced the almost 2000kms journey to Maputo in his Peugeot Station Wagon. The new national road made it possible for them to get there in two days, after picking up Rev. Tembe in Gaza. They were able to apply for registration of the *Igreja Reformada em Moçambique* in Maputo. Since the politics in Mozambique was in a transitional phase, their application was received, but had to be confirmed by the new government. (Minutes, Skakelkommissie van GSSM, 31 Jan. 1975, # 4) PThe new



government was to accept this registration, an important factor later on. After handing in the registration, the group immediately returned to Angonia and within less than a week this very important milestone was accomplished. (Botha, Personal Accounts; Hefsiba Notes) In 1976 their application was finalized, as was recognised by the Joint Missions Secretary at that stage, Dr. JM Cronje. (GSM, letter by JM Cronje, May 1976) In this latter development the CCM played an important role, making the necessary amendments and changes to the the IRM's constitution for it to be accepted by the new government.

## ***Chapter 6***

### **STORMS OF CHANGE: 1975 – 1982**

#### **6.1 Mozambique: Turmoils after Independence**

In 1975 the new government of Pres. Samora Machel came to power and during the period 1977 to 1982 vigorously implemented Marxist and Communist ideas into the new independent Mozambique. Only in 1982, when help was needed, did the new government start lifting restrictions. This not only affected the citizens of Mozambique itself, but also the country's relationship with its neighbours, especially South Africa, Malawi and Rhodesia, all of whom were anti Communist at that stage. When the new government's true colours, even before its take-over in June 1975, became evident, it led to strained relationships at the borders. This was the case especially with Malawi, which in turn directly influenced the mission's initiative into Angola.

##### **6.1.1 First Problems**

In the beginning of the year 1975, all seemed set for another year of exceptional growth and development; with time however it became clear that it was the starting-point of yet another bout of trouble. By March 1975 Revs. Katundu and Botha were working across the border as usual, while Mozambique was preparing for the final take-over by the new Frelimo government under leadership of President Samora Machel, an outspoken disciple of Marxist-Leninist Communism. This new development was not welcomed by Dr. Hastings Banda and the leaders of Malawi. The Malawian president also had questions about Nkhoma's mission-effort into Mozambique. At that very time Rev. Botha was helping the Mozambicans with maize, bought in Malawi, in order to relieve some IRM members who were suffering from hunger. In conjunction with stories that Rev. Botha was spying for the enemy, a complaint by the local Mozambican governmental officials was tabled that missionaries were "creating" problems of hunger. All these fabrications helped to intimidate the Nkhoma CCAP leadership who decided that cross-border mission activities had to cease immediately. In this way they could avoid an international incident and



would not clash with their own president. The two missionaries were called back immediately, but more drastic measures followed for the Botha family: They were given a 48 hours deportation notice (life long) by the Malawian government to leave the country. Reasons given for this drastic action were very vague, but the same treatment was in store for Rev. C Burger. As the liaison officer and chairman of the Mozambique Mission Committee of Nkhoma CCAP, he was responsible for Rev. Botha's actions and therefore he was also deported, with 48 hours notice. At that stage Nkhoma Synod broke off official links with the IRM, due to political pressure, leaving again the Angonia members of the IRM to tend to themselves while still in a fragile stage. In his autobiography, *"Van Sandveld tot Sendingveld"* Rev. Christie Burger vividly recalls the sad events surrounding their deportation. (Burger; 2003, p 252-256) In other autobiographies such as *"My Lewensreis van Nyasaland na Malawi"* (Louise Hugo, 2001, p 265-267) and *"Gesante van Christus"* (Attie Labushagne, 1996, p358) the same incident is recorded and interpreted as stated above. Some even held the view that it was a message to missionaries not to become involved with local political affairs.

This was a severe blow to the Angonia Christians. Unfortunately more was to follow. Rev. Botha shared how he had left Malawi via Dedza border post and wanted to travel to South Africa through the interior of Mozambique to Maputo in order to register there. At the crossroads near Chimoio he however felt that he should see the Red Cross personnel in Salisbury (Harare) who could give a more informed opinion on the state of affairs. After that he continued to South Africa in order to organise his transfer to Maputo. Shortly afterwards however, President Samora Machel expelled almost all foreign missionaries from Mozambique, closing the door also to the IRM for external help. (Personal interview with Rev. Botha, 1999; verified by Mrs Jeanette Botha 2004)

### **6.1.2 New Government, New laws, New Problems**

Mozambique was declared an independent state, or a People's Republic (Republica Popular de Moçambique), on 24 July 1975 and her new leader was President Samora Machel. He had been a most charismatic leader during the freedom struggle, but was greatly influenced by his Russian, Cuban and East German mentors, becoming a very strong sympathiser of Leninist Marxism. Although he grew up within a Christian environment in Gaza, he became clearly atheist and from the very first speech he made as president, this became evident. In his opening speech on 25 July

1975 he clearly stated his business and that he expected the church to become part of the new system or disappear. Shortly afterwards, on 24 July 1975, Frelimo passed law, nationalising all assets and services, including that of the churches. The new government also bore down heavily on the Churches' activities. (Hastings, 1979, p 213ff; Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 3-4)

A great deal has been written about this very dramatic turn in the Mozambican history. In affect it was turned from a conservative theocratic type of governance to a liberal Communist social order. (Bruwer in "Die Sendingblad", Junie 1976, p. 191) About the person of President Samora Machel also much has been said, with contradictory views even from theologians. Many, such as A. Hastings and TM Leew (compare "The Church and Human Liberation..." in his book: The Church in Africa, 1977, p 25ff) hailed him as the Mozambican messiah who gave new direction to a people oppressed and without selfesteem. Other sources argue that he and his government used the sword and might to force the religious Mozambican people into a mould they didn't want or needed. (Brother Andrew of Open Doors, P Hammond, Frontline Fellowship, articles in "Die Sendingblad" between 1976 and 1984, for example, February 1978, p 45; Die Kerkbode, 14/9/1977, p. 327 ) The objective of this work is not to give a report of and provide a conclusion to this debate, but in general it must be concluded, (as is the case in all Communist countries) that the new ideology brought much suffering to the church, in this case especially to the Roman Catholic Church. Stating this however would be simplistic and therefore the following laws and actions are mentioned. Only a few are stated, because they were implemented from 1975 till 1982, all part of the process to make Mozambique a model of Communism in Africa.

\* It is true that Pres. Samora Machel openly rejected the need for religion and the existence of God, even mocking the believers. In January 1976 he declared that dialogue between the government and the churches were open, but this was contradicted continuously till 1982, when a new approach towards the church was taken.

\* Even though the new constitution guaranteed freedom of religion, some very restrictive laws concerning religion were implemented. For example: The church was not allowed to collect tithes and Biblical instruction of children and young people under 18 were not permitted. Reason for this was that in a totalitarian state, which Mozambique had been since 1977, the right for propaganda was the privilege of the state/Frelimo only. Religion, especially Christian doctrine, was considered counter propaganda.



\* Church property such as schools and hospitals were nationalized and later even some churches were nationalized, because "...Mozambicans built them...". The president argued that some churches were being controlled by Western Countries such as America, Switzerland and South Africa. To a big extent this was a legitimate argument, at least at that stage. This was also the reason for the very restrictive laws concerning missionaries; others were simply refused the right to continue working in Mozambique.

\* Until 1981, even to 1991, there were many incidents of severe intimidation and even execution of "enemies of the state" or religious leaders who didn't comply. (Geopende Deure, Jaargang 15, No. 1, p 2-4; Die Sendingblad, Junie 1976, p 192-195; Maart 1977, p107; Februarie 1978, p 45; Desember 1979, p 412; The Argus, 13 February 1979; Vines and Wilson, 1993, p. 4 )

In provinces up North, especially Zambezia, there were very serious cases of human rights violations and religious persecution. A most horrifying account of what happened during the 1980's till 1990's in the Tete and Zambezia provinces was given by Peter Hammond of Frontline Fellowship, in his book, *"The Killing fields of Mozambique"*. Although officially denied by some churches and the CCM, (Christian Council of Mozambique), his reports were backed by similar accounts by organizations such as "Open Doors" (Geopende Deure, Jaargang 15, No. 1, p 2-4) and confirmed by local believers.

### **6.1.3 Counting the Cost**

So, in Mozambique the Communist doctrine had the same effect on the church as elsewhere in the world and would definitely influence the normal church rhythm. At local level this led to oppressing conditions. Of all the churches, the Roman Catholic Church was the most severely affected. They were the prime suspects for the continuation of colonial influences in Mozambique and as the closest collaborators with the Portuguese in the past. Via nationalization they also suffered the greatest losses in terms of property: 4237 schools, 141 community centres and 202 medical centres. It took quite a while for the RCC to convince the political leaders of her new identity within Mozambique. (Die Sendingblad, Januarie 1984, p 18) However, also the other churches were in jeopardy, as described by a Methodist missionary superintendent in October 1975: "In Mozambique the church had lost its credibility with most of the leaders and a large

majority of the population, first of all because of the identification of the Catholic Church with the state...., and secondly because of the silence of the Protestant Churches.” (Die Sendblad, Junie 1976, p 195)

The immediate effect on the IRM was that members waited to see in what direction things would develop, but some members were overwhelmed by the new freedom and ideology and even renounced the church. In Angonia most of the gathering sites were of grass and clay, but the churches were not allowed to rebuild them. (Angonia Mission Traditions, compare “Die Sendingblad, Augustus 1983, p 252) Pastor Tembe in the South felt that he had all the freedom needed. However, as time passed, movements were restricted and documents like the infamous “Guia de Marcha” (movement pass) were required to move in Mozambique. Also, studying in Western Countries was limited, and no passports for such initiatives were issued. This was the case with the two IRM candidates of Angonia in 1977. (Die Sendingblad, Desember 1979, p 412)

#### **6.1.4 Resistance**

Another effect of this condition was the birth of a resistance movement, within Mozambique. Many contradictory theories exist on the issue, but in short it boiled down to the fact that local disillusioned “combatentes” (freedom fighters), even supported by some clergy, teamed up with Portuguese, Rhodesian and South African elements to “seize” Mozambique for the “Free World” cause. Coup efforts shortly after independence testify to this fact. Out of this joint venture RENAMO (Resistencia Nacional de Moçambique) or as known in English, Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) was born. In 1976 Renamo started operating militarily in Mozambique under the leadership of Alfonso Dhlakama, in order to overthrow the FRELIMO government.

This immediately plunged the country into an ever worsening spiral of Civil War which as from 1985/6 affected the local populations all over the country severely. Until 1979 it led to open hostilities between Mozambique and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and to tense relationships with South Africa and Malawi. This internal political rift ran through the church as well (Fauvet, 1984, p 108, 114 – 117) and in the IRM in Angonia it was especially the case. Many of the believers were conservative members and Malawian in outlook, who didn’t appreciate the harsh approach of the new government. It appeared way too familiar for them to the old system and therefore many



members became part of the resistance, even becoming leaders in the organization of Renamo. Renamo had been enjoying strong support overall in the Tete-province since the early 1980's. (Vines and Wilson, 1993, p. 5-6) Other IRM members however backed the new government, and as the war intensified, the impact of this difference increased severely.

## **6.2 Encouraging Events: 1977 - 1982**

While the country was going through these changes and seemed to sink into turmoil once again, church life in the meantime continued normally as far as was possible. Although the new government were not simplifying matters for the church, and turning Marxist-Communist in 1977, meetings continued, although restrained. However, a few events continued to encourage the members of the IRM during these uncertain times, of which the following had a profound affect.

### **6.2.1 The First Synod: January 1977**

#### ***6.2.1.1 Agenda from Afar***

The appointed church-leadership in Angonia decided it was time for the Igreja Reformada to establish its own Synod while still possible and in order to ensure a local character. In this way the criticism of Pres. Machel that churches were still run from abroad (Die Sendingblad, Maart 1977, p. 107) would not apply to the IRM. Therefore the elders called for such a meeting on 27-29 January 1977 at Mphatso. This was also on advice of Rev. Botha, (who had settled at Stellenbosch, RSA in the meantime, but continued to help the church in Angonia) and other church leaders. For this meeting pastor Botha helped by preparing the agenda and on some issues even suggested possible decisions! One of his proposals was that Rev. Tembe be elected the chairman of the meeting. When he was asked why he continued to be involved with the IRM, although thousands kilometres away, his answer was that he was at no stage prepared to sever the link with the IRM and be officially absolved from his duties in Angonia, until a capable successor be found. In this way he continued to be involved with the IRM until 1980, but without the total consent of neither the Nkhoma nor Western Cape Mission Committees. (Botha, letter to GSM and Cape Mission's Office, 1979)

In any case, this very important meeting was held at Mphatso at above-mentioned dates and in a way must have been one of the most extra-ordinary church-meetings held within Reformed circles. This was a Synodical meeting, the first one for the IRM, to officially establish the IRM Synod and to elect its leadership. However, not a single ordained pastor was present, only elders. It was not possible for the only ordained pastor within the IRM at that stage, Rev. Tembe, to be present, due to the conditions in Mozambique. The meeting was opened by the delegates with a day of fasting and prayer and were even joined by members from some of the congregations. In this way the Synod of Mphatso was founded, the leadership elected, ecclesiastical issues debated, disciplinary actions taken and the future planned by the elders of the church. Even the chairman, the only ordained, was elected in his absence. The agenda prepared by Rev. Botha helped them to a large extent, since it was closely followed, but still, this first Synod meeting of the IRM, was completely and correctly executed by the elders present. Actually it was fitting for them to do so, since it was the elders anyway who had kept the flock of Christ intact during the difficult times before 1972. (Die Sendingblad, April 1977, p1.20-121; Cronje 1981, p 230; Botha & Kasamba, Personal Interviews)

#### **6.2.1.2 Agenda and Decisions:**

Congregations represented:

Nsanja, Mzewe, Mawi, Benga, Mphatso. Tsakane was absent.

The following members were elected for leadership:

Rev. P. D Tembe (Chairman)

Winias Soko

G.P. Ngozo

S.J. Mkumbaleza

The following important decisions were taken during the meeting:

- 1) The official name of the Church would be: Igreja Reformada em Moçambique.
- 2) The Statutes and Code of Conduct were also presented and approved in principle.
- 3) Two candidates were approved for theological training, namely F Kasamba and D. Chikakuda (Botha, Hefsiba Notes)



It was now possible to register the church with the government with an officially elected leadership and approved Statutes, as well as to become part of ecumenical bodies. The IRM's registration was intermediated by the chairman of the CCM, who made the necessary adjustments and finalised the IRM's documents before being delivered to the ministry of Justice in 1978. (Cronje, 1981, p 231)

## **6.2.2 Synodical Candidates**

As mentioned, one of the decisions of the meeting was to approve the two proposed candidates for theological training at Justo Mwale Theological College in Lusaka, Zambia. Both were serving as elders at that stage, but Fanuel Kasamba and David Chikakuda were the first two candidates to be accepted internally to be trained as pastors. The choice for Justo Mwale Theological College was not without reason. Both candidates, as with the majority of Angonia members of the IRM, had not mastered Portuguese, thereby making it impossible for them to go to Ricatla in Maputo. That left them with the Nkhoma theological training done at Zomba, but due to the sensitivity of their origin, Nkhoma Synod didn't see their way open to accommodate the two students. Therefore the choice fell on Justo Mwale, since it was also an institution where English and Chichewa were used. Making the choice was one issue, getting there, something totally different.

### ***6.2.2.1 Where there is a will, there is a way***

For the two students to reach Lusaka, they needed passports and letters of authorisation from the government, as well as letters of reference. Since the Frelimo government didn't see the need to support theological studies, especially in a foreign country, the two candidates couldn't get the passports, nor the necessary authorisation. They did have a letter of invitation from the Justo Mwale Theological College and their personal ID's or "Bilhete de Identidade (BI)" and with only that, first Kasamba and later Chikakuda undertook the seemingly impossible journey to Lusaka. As if this was not troublesome enough, the two students decided two months later to return and bring their families to Lusaka, in fear of the consequences their venture could have for their beloved ones. This story of bravery and faith was to be repeated in numerous ways by many to come, since only in such a way, was it possible to build the church in the face of adversity. As Rev. Kasamba puts it: "You had to believe, not see, in order to accomplish". Once there, the two

families were cared for and prepared for ministry, a task they accomplished by the end of 1980. To come back as trained pastors would also prove to be troublesome, but fortunately they could get back to their homes without problems. In 1978 another two candidates were indicated to go to Zambia, but only one, Joshua Mlinda, son of the influential secretary of Nsanja congregation, got the approval to go to Lusaka in 1979. (Botha, Hefsiba Notes; Personal Interview of F Kasamba, M Pauw and D Chikakuda; 2003)

### **6.2.3 Rev. P. Tembe's role as moderator**

#### ***6.2.3.1 Moving to Maputo, Tskane Congregation Established:***

By 1978 it had become clear that the IRM needed representation within the capital, Maputo. It would make contact with the CCM easier (which facilitated the IRM's registration), as well as representing the IRM to the different government departments in the capital. Since the work was well established in Gaza and growing, Rev. Tembe decided to go to Maputo, where he had some family and people interested in becoming members of the IRM. Before he moved to Maputo with his family, it was decided to establish the Tsakane congregation, consisting of all the IRM work zones in Gaza and Maputo. This happened on 28 April 1978 and the congregation consisted of 119 members and 111 catechumens. After Rev. Tembe left for Maputo, elder Timane took over as the leader of the Gaza IRM members. (Acta Sinodi, N.Tvl, 1979, p 230 #4.3.2; Cronje, 1981, p 230)

Rev. Tembe and his family stayed at a pastor friend's house in Machava while looking for a suitable place. He also contacted interested people. In Machava he found a suitable place, fixed the price and then had to accumulate all funds available to buy the stand. It is told that he sold a lot of his belongings even clothes, encouraged the new believers to sacrifice for an own place of worship and in the end managed to collect all the necessary funds. Unfortunately, he had severe problems to register the terrain in the church's name.

Rev. Tembe immediately got to work and in little time managed to congregate interested people on Sundays. Some of the interested people were youths from Matola and the first "prayer house" (zona) of the Machava group was in the house of a Mr Luis. His children were attending Rev. Tembe's sermons and through them, sermons were held in Mr Luis' house, although he himself



was not yet participating. Through the change in his children, he became convinced of the truth of the gospel and later not only became a member of the IRM, but became the elder of that area/zona. This was a trend to repeat itself many more times, till today, that through their children, parents became believers and followers of Christ. Although it may be the wrong way round, it is still a beautiful witness of God's grace working through the 'weak'. (Elder Luis, Personal Interview, 2004)

### ***6.2.3.2 Visiting Angonia***

During the December of 1978, Rev. Pedro Tembe visited the Angonia region. His story was quite remarkable. When he arrived in Vila Ulongue from Maputo, he went to the government offices to enquire about the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, especially the congregations of Mzewe (as Calomue was known by then) and Mphatso. On arriving at Mphatso for baptism and Holy Communion, he encountered the result of catechism classes since 1975, when Revs. Botha and Katundu left. It is told that Rev Tembe, with no knowledge of Chewa and with insufficient Portuguese, when he saw the multitude, decided that he would only do baptisms that day. So, in midmorning the baptisms were started, continued till lunch and continued till mid afternoon. The strange thing was the language: Since he had worked in the mines in South Africa, as well as some of the members present at Mphatso, Zulu or "fanagalo" were the only common languages understood by some and so the teaching and baptisms were done in Zulu and translated into Chewa.

This remarkable story was repeated at Nsanja and at Calomue congregations. At Calomue he finally noticed that Nzewe congregation was indeed the big congregation he remembered from 1974, only in a different place, and called Calomue. At all the centres the same procedure was followed. Catching up "back-logged" baptisms till midday, break for lunch, finishing in the middle or late afternoon, all done in Zulu. Rev. Tembe became so aware of the immense need for pastors that at Calomue he asked if there were any people who felt the calling to go Theological School. Three members stood up to answer positively, of whom Revs. S. Jossitala and Z. Mbewe are still serving today. After these visits Rev. Tembe returned to Maputo, thoroughly impressed by the grandeur of the work in Angonia. He later brought a second and third visit to Angonia and in 1981 refused to return if not accompanied by a candidate for theological studies. The man who accompanied him was Samuel Jossitala. (Jossitala, Personal Interview, 2003) Unfortunately,

Jossitala's home congregation didn't approve of his going to Ricatla to study as pastor. This led to serious problems concerning his position and it was only after he was interviewed by both a delegation of the Federal Council to Maputo in 1984 and by the Training Committee in Dedza in January 1987, and after offering an official apology for not honouring the correct procedures, that he was accepted. (Mau a Msonkhano la Bungwe la Sinodi, Jan. 1987)

## **6.3 Supporting the IRM**

### **6.3.1 Reverend Botha's position**

After 1975 the work had to be supported in a different manner from S.A. The conditions were different for the two spheres of working: In Angonia there were no pastors, land was still not officially in the church's name and no new development could be done for the moment. Nkhoma held a safe distance at the moment. (See #1 on Minutes of "Uitvoerende Komitee van Skakelkommissie Mosambiek Sending, 13/2/1981, Pretoria) Via letters Rev. Botha continued to advise the Angonia elders, as was the case with drafting the agenda and suggesting decisions with the first IRM Synod of 1977. (See letter of Rev. Botha 7 Oktober 1980 after the 1980 IRM Synod meeting of 15 Augustus, and the answer from "Die Sendingkantoor, Algemene Sinode as signed by Rev. P Smith, 15 October 1980) This led to accusations of paternalism and mingling with internal affairs; a claim Rev. Botha vigorously denied. It also led to considerable tension with Rev. Tembe, who had a different style of church leadership. At that stage an interesting debate was conducted by the Cape Missions Office, members of the Federal Council, Rev. Tembe and Rev. Botha concerning his position as pastor of the Angonia church. (See letters as above: 15 October 1980 from "Die Sendingkantoor..."; Rev. Botha's reply to "Skakelkommissie tussen die IREM..." 18 March 1981)

Rev. Botha refused to accept his demission offered by Nkhoma Synod given in absentia and argued that until he was released by the Angonia elders he would continue to serve these "pastorless" members. He would freely resign if suitable leaders could take over his position; until then he was the only ordained pastor of the Angonia members, even if it was from afar. His case became so complicated that it had to be resolved by the moderator of the DRC general Synod at



that time, Dr. Koot Vorster. (Botha, Personal Witness, 1998) This tension was finally laid to rest when the two new pastors returned from Zambia, were ordained and could take the responsibility early in 1981. After that Rev. Botha received demission in “absencia” from the Angonia church leadership on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1981, although they felt it left them “fatherless”. The process was handled by the new mission secretary of the Western Cape DRC, Rev. J Thom and Rev. A Labuscagne of the CCAP in Malawi. (Minutes of “Skakelkommissie van Mosambiek Sending...”, 16 June 1981, Kaapstad)

### 6.3.2 The “GSSM”

The work in the South was approached differently. Through the appointed commission of the Federal Council, Joint Mission in Mozambique, the Transvaal Synods of the DRC and DRC in Africa were given responsibility for the mission work in Southern Mozambique. After the change of government and policy in Mozambique in 1975 it became clear that a different approach should be taken in order to continue supporting the IRM. At that stage the salary of Rev. Tembe and other disbursements such as building, required a budget to be met. (Compare Minutes, Skakelkommissie van GSSM, 31 Jan. 1975, # 9) By 1978 the different Synods involved in the work in Southern Mozambique channelled all their work through the Joint Mission Committee in Southern Mozambique (Abbreviated GSSM in Afrikaans) which helped co-ordinate their efforts into Gaza and Maputo. The authority of the GSSM was tabled and accepted by the various regional Synods of Transvaal in 1979. In order to co-ordinate the mission work with the other areas as well, representatives of the Federal Council and the Cape Synod were also invited to their meetings. (N. Transvaal, Agenda, 1979, p 229, # 4.1-4.2; Acta Sinodi: W Transvaal, 1983 # 6.4; Agenda Oos Tvl, 1983, SSK, # 4 p. 226; Agenda, Oos Tvl, Sending, p 62, #7)

Through the “GSSM”, congregations were encouraged to pray for and support the work of the IRM. A leading role in this regard was taken during the beginning of the 1980’s by the Eastern Transvaal Synod of the DRC who gradually took over responsibilities from the DRC Synod of Northern Transvaal. The role of the GSSM was crucial in guiding and giving moral and financial support to the IRM in the South. Several visits made to Maputo during this time testify of the members’ involvement. In 1978, Rev. E Bruwer, Dr. J.M. Cronje and two other visitors visited Rev. Tembe in Maputo to become acquainted with the situation on ground level. They also made

valuable contact with the CCM, meeting the secretary, Rev. Mahlalela and others as well as the personnel of Ricatla Theological Seminary. Another delegation, led by Rev. Bruwer and including Revs. J Thom and A. Hofmeyer visited Maputo in 1981, by invitation of Rev. Tembe. The visitors helped with the Colloquium Doctum of L. Muhlenga who had received two years training at Ricatla. He was ordained and inducted at Machava during their visit. Again there was contact with the CCM and it was at this visit that some of the needs within the CCM and at Ricatla were expressed. This was a significant development and led to close co-operation between the Mozambique Mission Committee and the CCM, as was evident a year later with the donation of Relief Goods given by the DR. Churches of SA to Mozambique and that was channelled through the CCM. (See Acta Sinodi: W Transvaal, 1983 # 6.4; Agenda Oos Tvl, 1983, SSK, # 4 p. 226; Die Sendinblad, Mei 1981, p157ff)

## **6.4 Ecclesiastical Development of the IRM: 1978 –1982**

### **6.4.1 General**

Although the general state of affairs made it difficult for believers to continue with worship, it wasn't impossible. Many churches in Angonia were gradually destroyed by the termites and seasonal rainstorms, but never collapsed, as rotten poles and even the grass were secretly replaced. Many members were distracted for a while, especially young people; others even turned their backs on the church. A beautiful story was recorded later by Rev. Mlinde that illustrated this: A certain Mr Jere denounced his faith after becoming a Frelimo party official. He stayed away for a long time, even scorning his faith of old. Then at a funeral he heard the gospel preached by one of the pastors again and started to reconsider his condition. After the pastor confronted him about his life, this man repented and even served as an elder at a later stage. (Nuusbrieff uit Malawi, Maart 1985, p 5-6) Similar trends were witnessed at Vila Ulongue in 1990 -1991. In the South Rev. Tembe witnessed that he had freedom of movement and didn't feel that he was restricted, although he tried not to provoke any sentiments within the government. He also had good relations with other churches. (Acta Sinodi: W Transvaal, 1983, p. 186, # 6.4.4.1 & 6.4.6.2)



#### 6.4.2 Part of the Federal Council and more pastors

So, by 1978 the IRM was functioning independently within Mozambique, with cautious support from SA and surrounding countries. Another milestone for the IRM was being admitted to the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches as a full member in 1978. (N. Transvaal, Agenda, 1979, p 229, # 4.1-4.2;) Pastors Tembe and Botha (via correspondence) were giving guidance to the IRM's two main regions of ministry. The Northern and Southern working areas of the IRM had so little contact, that it almost became two separated churches in practise. Communication was difficult, resulting in tension between Revs. Tembe and Botha at some stage. In 1979 Rev. Tembe made allegations that Rev. Botha had taken decisions unilaterally as was the case with a certain theological student who was sent to Zambia. It seems all was based on rumours and after several letters from the Federal Council and personal conversations between Botha and Tembe, the issues were resolved. Another point that caused friction was Rev. Tembe's decision that a student from the South, Rev. L. Muhlenga should be posted in Angonia. This decision was being questioned by Botha for its wisdom and the Angonia elders also didn't approve. Fortunately all these matters were resolved, but also indicated the difference in interpretation of Church governance by the two pastors. By the beginning of 1981 however, three more pastors started to serve within the IRM: The two candidates F. Kasamba and D. Chikakuda, from Justo Mwaile Theological College in Zambia and Muhlenga from Ricatla. (See page 82, *Rev. Botha's position*)

After the first IRM Synod held at Mphatso, 27- 29 January 1977, the leadership united as far as was possible. It was actually only with his visit to Angonia in 1978 that Rev. Tembe could confer with the other elected members of the moderamen for the first time. The first Synodical meeting after 1978 was in 1980, held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August at Benga. Very little is known about this meeting and it seems that it was basically a leadership meeting. The following names are mentioned: P Tembe, W Soko, JE Chikakuda, Josiya (moderamen) as well as Numeli, Mika, Funuyasi (Rev. Viljoen of Mlanda CCAP?), Lazalo, Nasimelo, Laideni, Nelepodi. Rev. Tembe had an idea to send one of the Zambian candidates to Beira and the candidate from Ricatla, L Muhlenga, of whom also no official knowledge existed until 1980 to Angonia. (See Rev. Botha's, letter to Mission Office, October 1980; Minutes of IRM Synod, Benga, 1980) This plan never materialised and Rev. Muhlenga disappeared from the scene shortly after 1981.

### 6.4.3 Angonia's local leadership

By the end of 1980 the two candidates of Angonia, on request of the IRM, were ordained in the Reformed Church of Zambia and were ready for ministry. J. Mlinde was through to his third year at Justo Mwale Theological College and J Kagoma was elected to go to Maputo, to study at Ricatla Theological Seminary. These developments were especially good news for the Angonia members. (Minutes: Uitvoerende Komitee van Skakelkom....., Pretoria, 13/2/1981. # 10;) Nkhoma gradually became involved with the Angonia Christians again and especially during this time guided the new pastors in the ecclesiastical development of the IRM. The many leadership meetings and Synodical Committee meeting held on Malawian soil, with Malawian pastors present, testifies to this fact. (See Minutes of IRM Moderamen: 1984 till 1992) A missionary greatly involved with the welfare of the Mozambican pastors and serving as their official intermediater at this time, was Rev. Cristie Burger of CCAP, Nkhoma. In the Malawian DRC Mission's newsletter, "*Nuusbrief uit Malawi*", Rev. Burger had constantly been placing an article on the Mozambican situation since 1984. This trend was continued by his few times substitute and later successor, Dr. H. van Deventer.

Since 1981 meetings took place more often at leadership level, a fact that helped the IRM a great deal to develop its own character. Surely, far from regular or ideal and usually with some of the ministry fields not present, these meetings regulated the IRM work. In 1982 there was another attempt to have a Synod meeting, but little is known of this meeting, apart from the fact that the two new pastors were elected into the positions of Moderator (F Kasamba) and secretary (D Chikakuda).

## 6.5 Ecumenical Ties

### 6.5.1 The CCM

Another important milestone for the IRM was that it became a full member of the CCM, Conselho Crista de Mozambique, in 1982. This made it part of the mainline protestant churches in Mozambique and part of a very important government approved forum for Churches to express themselves. (Minutes: Uitvoerende Komitee van Skakelkom. {from now on abbreviated F.C.C.W.M., later the GSM}, Pretoria, 13/2/1981. #5). This new relationship was immediately put



to good use when the effects of a severe famine, plaguing Southern Mozambique during 1982, required help from abroad.

One of the reasons was that the Communist experiment was not delivering according to human plan, but reaping the effects of negating God. Also the Civil War was taking its toll. It was at this stage that the Frelimo government changed its policy on religion (Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 4-5) and the president called on all the Churches to involve their supporting churches to help relieve the food shortages.

### **6.5.2 Special Outreaches to Maputo**

This request from the president was channelled through the Christian Council in Mozambique and in this manner the request for humanitarian help to Mozambique, also came to the door of the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa. As mentioned above, there already existed contact between these two organizations. There was an immediate response from the SA DR. Churches and in December 1982 a truckload of maize (Valued at R14 000+) was delivered to Maputo, taken there by Revs. E Bruwer and AM Hofmeyer. This special envoy was heartily welcomed and the cargo gratefully received. (F.C.C.W.M., 15/3/1984, Pretoria, # 9)

During 1983 it was not possible to repeat this gesture, due to a severe drought in South Africa itself. A letter from the secretary of the CCM, Rev. I.D. Mahlalela, which in part read as follows, demanded a second thought: "We do realise that the drought is most severe in South Africa, but I am sure people are not dying from hunger." At that stage (1984) estimates of people dying of hunger were varying between 100 000 and 160 000. The general opinion was that something had to be done, although be it extremely difficult. A limited appeal was launched to various offices, but the response was beautiful and with R22 000,00+ collected, a special envoy was sent to Maputo to hear how these funds could best be used by the CCM. The CCM was distributing foods in close collaboration with the government. A cargo of 18 tons of groundnuts and Soya beans was later delivered to Maputo for distribution to the needy. In the same year Rev. Bruwer of the "GSSM" went to visit the Maputo congregation personally. In his report to the "GSM" he mentioned interesting points such as: Rev. Tembe received a regular flow of visitors at his house, sermons were attended by as many as 150 participants and the IRM students were doing well in the congregation. (Die Sendingblad, Nov/Des 1984, p. 386-387)

## ***Chapter 7***

### **NEW FIELDS (Part One): 1982 – 1989**

Although it was still a difficult time for the church in Mozambique, especially with the escalating civil war, the IRM's ecclesiastical development accelerated during the era mentioned above, both in structure and in numbers. Apart from those mentioned, a big internal problem that has been hampering the development of the IRM, was the lack of communication between North and South. This was mainly because of conditions in the country. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 15/3/1984, Pretoria, # 12) In spite of these obstacles though, this era saw several important events, of which the following are mentioned and then some are further highlighted afterwards. Since it deals with a lot of information, this part of the IRM's history is covered by two chapters.

#### **7.1 Development of the IRM: 1982 – 1991**

##### **7.1.1 General**

1982: As mentioned above, the IRM was accepted as a member of the CCM, the only interdenominational forum recognised by the Mozambican government. Two students of the IRM were studying at Ricatla, Samuel Sekazatha and J Kagomo. J Mlinde was in his final year at Justo Mwale Theological College, Zambia. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 3/3/1982, Pretoria, #5)

1983: The Milange CCAP members, claimed to be almost 7000, sought affiliation with the IRM. A visit by the IRM pastors, led to the baptism of 800 "backlogged" catechumen members, one of whom later became a pastor for the IRM in Zambesia. They also served Holy Communion to more than 2000 members. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 15/3/1984, Pretoria, # 8.1.1)

A Synodical meeting was held by the Angonia leaders and two Presbyteries formed, Angonia and Milange. The Federal Council's Committee however warned against a one-sided affair and proposed a full meeting where a third presbytery, Maputo, could be formed. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., Sept. 1984, # 6). Rev. Mlinde is ordained as pastor in Angonia.



1984: Rev. J Cuamba was ordained as pastor in Gaza. His consecration was handled by Rev. Tembe, without prior notice to the others, causing strained relationships. (Ibid, #8) The IRM's position was ecumenically further enhanced by the Federal Council's donation of relief goods to Southern Mozambique, paving the way for better co-operation.

Later in the year, on 13 -16 September, a very important Synod meeting was held at Mawi congregation in Angonia. Apart from the fact that for the first time all the fields were presented, a big group of representatives from various other churches were also attending, including CCAP Nkhoma, CCAP Blantyre, CCAP, Harare, RCZ (Zambia), DRC of W Cape, DRC of Transvaal, DRC in Africa (TVL). Another very important delegation was the one from Milange, Zambesia. Elders Patsani Rumala and John Steward, who represented thousands of believers in the Milange area, conveyed the wish to be incorporated into the IRM. (Mau a Msonkhano..., Mawi, 1984, #E,G) They were enthusiastically received. It was decided (again) that the congregations formed in that area should constitute a new presbytery as soon as possible. That was also to be the case with Maputo. (Ibid, S 68) Another important point on the agenda was the acceptance in principle of the Nyale, the Chewa summarized catechism based on the "Heidelberg Catechism", which was developed by a team of pastors under the leadership of Rev. A Labauschagne. (Ibid, S 69).

A new leadership was elected and the new moderamen comprised of the following: Revs. D. Chikakuda (moderator), F. Kasamba (vice moderator), W Joshua (Mlinde) (Secretary), M Cuamba, Elders F Kuthamowa, and O Kadzakumanja. Rev. H van Deventer was the Liaison Officer. (Ibid, S 70.1) This new moderamen of the IRM was the first to have an "all pastors" executive. Unfortunately this very significant synod couldn't be succeeded with similar meetings, as the deteriorating conditions forced the Angonia leadership into "exile" in Malawi by the end of 1985.

During the same time a group of approximately 5000 believers from the Chiputo area also wished to be affiliated with the IRM. (Minutes: C.F.C.W.M., 28/2/1985, #7)

1985: Another visit by GSSM (and Federal Council) members was undertaken to Maputo to become acquainted with the situation in the field. Apart from meeting with members and the students, it also paved the way for finalisation of an IRM appointed lecturer at Ricatla. (Report of

Rev. Bruwer to GSSM/ Federal Council on visit to Maputo, 14-17 Jan 1985) Rev. Botha also visited Maputo in July after being called as lecturer to Ricatla. (Minutes: C.F.C.W.M., 28/2/1985, #5) As the Civil war intensified, especially in rural areas, the work in congregations became gradually crippled and the Angonia pastors had to leave their homes for Malawi towards the end of 1985. Pastor Cuamba was seriously hampered in his ministry in Gaza as well. (See Agenda: Sinodale Sendingkommissie, 22-23/7/1986, Kaapstad, p. 107-108, #4)

1986: Rev. Botha arrived in Maputo to start lecturing at Ricatla. The IRM in Machava started purchasing a terrain for a big church complex. (Minutes: GSSM, 12/2/1986, #6; Botha Report, 22/3/1986 to GSSM)

1987: Samuel Jossitala was ordained as pastor and started ministry in Maputo, while J Kagomo started in Angonia. Jossitala was the first IRM candidate to receive his entire training in Mozambique. Rev. Tembe retired in May of the same year, but afterwards continued to minister in Gaza and the Machava congregation. {Acta Sinodi, (Agenda) Suid Transvaal 1987, p 270, # 4.2.3} The same year, Synods affiliated with the GSM, started planning for the refugees in RSA, and the DRC Synod of Eastern Transvaal started a very effective ministry amongst the refugees in their area. (Agenda: Ned. Geref. Kerk Oos Transvaal, 1987, Pretoria, p 46-47). ) Nkhoma Synod CCAP and Mphatso Synod representatives in Angonia planned how to minister jointly to the thousands of refugees in Malawi. (Mau a Msonkhano.... 1988, S 84)

1988: The GSSM Revised its activities and internal ordinances. (Minutes: GSSM, 11/4/1988, # 5.3) The Federal Council is represented on the Ricatla Board in the person of Dr. A Hofmeyer. (Minutes: C.F.C.W.M., 15/3/1988, # 5) Rev. C Beukes started working within Rivoni congregation, particularly amongst the Shangaan refugees. (Report of NGKA (N-Tvl) to Federal Council, by Rev. Beukes, 15.03.1988)

The Sixth Synodical meeting of the IRM, Mphatso Synod was held at Mlanda, CCAP, Malawi. This was the case because of the war situation. Communication was also a problem and Milange representatives couldn't attend. The Synodical Committee was kept the same, with elders FP Khutamowa and Laiden Ngozo chosen as additional members. (Mau a Msonkhano Wachisanu ... Mawi, Sept. 1988, S87). Contact was made with a congregation in Beira that wanted to be affiliated with the IRM; Tete was identified as a new zone to be opened. (Ibid, S 79)



1989: Rev. J Minnaar joined the IRM as missionary. The IRM started working in Beira and Tete, at first as outposts of the Tsakane congregation. (See pages 67ff) Rev. S Jossitala is transferred to Tete; the IRM obtained a site and house in the city. Teams from DRC congregations, University of Stellenbosch and Inserve started with outreaches into Southern Mozambique, facilitated by Kobus and Jeanette (jnr) Botha; both being fulltime missionaries with the IRM. (See p 65-66)

Igreja Evangelica de Cristo requested a DRC missionary in collaboration with the IRM.

The concept of “divided” support for Mozambique between DRC Synods in South Africa was queried by Rev. J Thom and it led to the formation of the Joint Missions in Mozambique, “GSM” in order to co-ordinate support to the IRM more efficiently. (Minutes: GSSM, 16/5/1989, # 9)

1990: Vila Ulongue was visited and land obtained to open a mission there; Rev. Minnaar was temporarily stationed there. The congregation was officially established in December 1990. Revs. Minnaar and Jossitala also visited the members in Milange and celebrated Holy Communion. The first outreach team from SA visited Tete to erect a steel structure. (See p 65 & 68)

The Synodical meeting in Tete was not well attended and therefore was given Presbytery status by the delegates. The Presbytery of Maputo as it was constituted, assumed the role of Synod within Mozambique, until the situation was normalised. Rev. Silambo was appointed as pastor for Beira. The IRM became a co-founder of Acris, an interdenominational organisation for medical work in Mozambique.

1991: Three missionary couples arrived in Mozambique: Revs. LKR Matanda for Milange, W Gouws for Vila Ulongue, and A Schwartz for Ile, Igreja de Cristo. The team from the DRC of Tulbagh erected steelstructures at Vila Ulongue. ( See # 8.4 & 8.5)

### **7.1.2 Leadership of the IRM since 1984/5**

Although several efforts were made after 1984 to meet in Maputo, at least to let the moderamen meet on regular base, it was not to be until 1992 at Vila Ulongue that a full Synodical meeting could be realised. As result of their refugee status in Malawi, obtaining the right documentation like passports etc. was most difficult for the Angonia based pastors and seriously hampered efforts to have meaningful meetings. A lengthy letter discourse between Revs. Van Deventer and Botha

between 1987 and 1988 in order to get the members of the moderamen in Maputo, which eventually failed, was proof of the difficulty of movement for the Angonia pastors at the time. (See Report/ letter of Rev. Botha to Federal Council, April 1987) This led to the numerous (uncompleted) executive meetings held in Malawi where the CCAP basically accommodated the IRM leadership until 1992. (See all minutes of “Bungwe la Mphatso Sinodi”)

It also seriously hampered the scope of decisions, basically treating local and personal issues, taking notice of other developments and approving new candidates. Important decisions were the posting of new pastors such as J Kagoma in 1986 and Samuel Jossitala Sekazatha in 1987. Kagoma’s situation was quite unique, since he had to be posted and ordained within a Malawi congregation, as it became impossible to install him in a Mozambican congregation at the beginning of 1986. It was most dangerous to visit all the congregations, especially those in the interior like Mphatso, Mpatsa and Benga. The only congregations that were accessible to an extent, were Mawi and Kalichete. Therefore Rev. Kagoma had to obtain permission from the Malawian government to be ordained within Malawi, which was finally granted. Unfortunately he became involved with seedy business deals and left the ministry by May 1988. (Nuusbrief uit Malawi, Sept 1987, p 6-7; Mau a Msonkhano wa Bungwe la Tsogolera..., 17/12/1987, KK 280; 26/4/1988, KK 296; 9/5/1988, BS 4; 26/5/1988 KK302)

On ground level within Angonia, the work became less and less accessible as the war between Renamo and Frelimo intensified. The same situation influenced the work in Gaza, but to a lesser extent. Pastor Luis Cuamba continued serving the small pockets of Christians throughout Gaza, but was more confined to the bigger centres of Chokwe and Chibuto. Travel became extremely dangerous and it was surprising to know that the train operating between Maputo and Chokwe, Barragem and Chiquala-quala was relatively safe. All the pastors in Angonia however had to flee from Mozambique, accompanied by the majority of their members, to refugee camps in Malawi near the border. Many villages on the border just moved over the tarred road between Dedza and Ntcheu, serving as border between the two countries, and settled a few hundred meters from their original home, safe. This was one of the reasons why they could just visit border congregations instead of entering into Mozambique. The same applied to Milange. (See p. 64 ff)



## **7.2 Zambia: 1983 – 1990**

In 1983 another chapter was opened within the history of the IRM that had a profound influence on the growth of the IRM at a later stage. It happened when the Milange area in Zambezia province became part of the IRM's field of operation. In 1983 a delegation that represented a big group of Christians in Milange and vicinity went to Angonia to go and see the leadership of the IRM about possible inclusion within the IRM. Members of the moderamen (Revs. Kasamba, Chikakuda) received them enthusiastically and immediately decided to investigate the possibility of including such a big number of believers within the IRM. The history of Milange, however, started much earlier as was recorded by Rev. Samuel Bessitala in 2000. The following is taken from his notes, but was also verified with other local leaders at Milange in 2003 and 2004.

### **7.2.2 The Witness of an Elder**

It started already in 1945 when a certain Mr. Reginate Mutunda, a believer of the CCAP, Blantyre Synod, who stayed near Mulange (Malawi), started evangelizing the people with whom he had worked in the tea factory at Milange (Mozambique). This development stook him to Malawi, to Malowa CCAP congregation, in the territory of chief Bondo, asking the leaders' permission to enter Mozambique and start with a congregation near Milange. The church leaders not only enthusiastically gave their permission; they also helped the elder Matunda with Bibles, catechisms and songbooks to start the work. Mr. Mutunda then went to a chief named Njendu, asking him permission to start a CCAP congregation in that area, a request that was granted. In this way Mr. Matunda initiated the planting of a church at a place named Mikongone.

The work developed well and in 1958 the first eight catechumens from Mikongo were baptised at Malowa CCAP congregation. After this occasion work grew rapidly and in 1959 another area was identified to establish a congregation, namely Liazi, and a certain Mr. Mafungo Nandolo was sent there to commence with evangelism in the area. Unfortunately, some people didn't like this new initiative and reported the church-leaders at the government of malpractice, trying to defame their good work, as well as that of some other church leaders. On 4 April 1960, brother Matunda, Kaponda Duguda, Hare Kuwani and some leaders of other churches were arrested. They were

detained for six months and their books were burnt. They were eventually released from prison. To encourage the local Christians, a missionary named Bagstala, came from Malawi and visited the Mikongone group.

After this the Colonial government of Mozambique adopted a new policy and prohibited the believers to cross the border to Malawi for the sacraments and other church related activities. Therefore brother Mutunda and other leaders went to Milange CCAP to ask missionaries for help in this regard, especially for baptizing catechumens within Mozambique. This request was granted, but only for 1972, when Revs. Simuja, Kadawati, Nchozana and Ntulumbwa came to baptize the believers in Mozambique for the first time; a feat they repeated in 1974.

### **7.2.3 Orphans**

Then in 1975, the Frelimo government took over, leading to the decree in Milange that Malawian pastors were no longer welcome to visit and teach God's Word in Milange, if not living in Mozambique. The Malawian pastors however, rejected this. In the same year, certain pastors of Blantyre CCAP planned programs to assist the local believers, but they were stopped at the borderpost, for not complying with the condition described above. Later, elders Tulama, Subir, Pasani and Jizalemu were sent to Mulange CCAP to ask pastors to come and work within Mozambique, but the pastors reacted negatively, even chasing the elders away in shame. These leaders however, due to the wish to have pastors to tend to their members, continued to Blantyre, where they met with some pastors, some from Mulange CCAP. Again the answer was: "You are being ridiculous, Mozambique is no place for mission work; we will not send a pastor there. Please return and tell your leader that he may baptise you. You'll never see a pastor of Blantyre Synod to help you again. If you wish, you may search for other churches to baptise you, but we unfortunately cannot. Please don't bother us again with this request, you may go!!!" (Bessitala, 2000, p1-3, verified locally with IRM leaders)

What could have caused such a change of heart? I think we must look into similar cases such as the discontinuation of mission work in Angonia. It is well known that the political leadership of Malawi was not happy at all with the new Marxist government of Mozambique and that they wanted to discourage cross-border activities for the moment. Mission work from Malawi counted



as part of this and therefore it was speculated that the Malawi churches were asked to reduce their trans-border ministries. (Botha, History Notes and personal Impressions)

#### **7.2.4 Brothers in Arms**

The Mozambican leaders returned to Mikongone, where they called a general meeting to relate their journey. Members were greatly distressed by this development, not knowing where to go from there. During this time Mr. Mathunda was working at Mbozi tea estate, where he was assisted by a certain Mavilla to contact pastor Njewa of "Christian Service". Mathunda went to see him and explained the situation at Milange and the need for pastors. Pastor Njewa helped him with Bibles, hymnbooks and other material from "Open Doors". He also advised him to write a letter to the Igreja Reformada em Mozambique in Angonia, Tete, requesting their help. The IRM received this letter and agreed to assist in serving these members, whereby the elders felt "our suffering, laments, tears and petitions" were finally heard, not "being orphans anymore like in the past". This happened in 1982-3. In the same year of 1983 Revs. Kasamba and Chikakuda came from Angonia, but due to the war, they all had to meet in Malawi, at Gambula in the house of Mr Kalowa.

The visiting pastors asked the elders to legalize their documentation in order to be able to visit Angonia, since they were going to have the Synod meeting of Mphatso. In this way certain leaders managed to go to the Synod meeting that took place in September 1984 at Mawi congregation. At that meeting all the baptised believers from Milange represented by the visiting leaders were accepted as members of the IRM, a total of 587 new members. In the same year Revs. Kasamba and Chikakuda reached Mikongone and worked as far Mulongoze. They explained that the IRM had the same doctrine as the CCAP. New members were baptised and received membership cards of the IRM. It was during this visit that they installed new elders and deacons, and baptised 800 new members in one day, from morning till noon, including some of the elected elders and deacons. Amongst those baptised was Adrienne Adisonne, one of the first Zambesia theological candidates to be trained at Hefsiba. These visits were not done on a regular basis on account of the war and suspicion against the church.

In 1986 the war became very bad in the Milange area and people were forced to flee, either to refugee camps in Malawi or to stronger centres within Mozambique. Those who fled to Malawi (at Muloza and other places) took their membership cards with them to be received within the CCAP. As with Nkhoma Synod, these people were taken up as members of the CCAP, until they returned to Mozambique. Still during wartime, Rev. J. Minnaar visited Milange twice in 1990 to distribute Bibles and baptise new members. The third time he came with Rev. Samuel Jossitala and they again baptised new members and administered Holy Communion. (Bessitala, 2000, p1-3, verified locally with IRM leaders 2003 and 2004)

## **7.3 Linking the Support**

### **7.3.1 First Full-time Missionary after Independence**

In 1986 another important development took place: the arrival of the first fulltime missionaries for the IRM since 1975. It already started in 1981 when Ricatla Theological Seminary asked the Igreja Reformada to appoint a lecturer of their choice to assist with the training of pastors. The Federal Council of DR. Churches, in collaboration with the IRM, felt that Rev. Wallace Chikakuda, a Mozambican by birth and who had also lectured at Zomba Theological Seminary in Malawi, was their first choice. This immediately led to negotiations and, in principle, he accepted. (See a lengthy report in Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 15/3/1982, Pretoria, # 6.3 – 6.18.5) However, after several attempts to get him there, the whole project came to a halt when he indicated that it was no longer possible for him to go there. This happened in 1983, delaying the whole process, (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 15/3/1984, Pretoria, # 5.2- 5.3) but soon the next candidate was indicated. It was Rev. Pieter Botha, who was pasturing the Portuguese Community in the Western Cape at that stage. He was called in the same year and after praying about it, he accepted. His wife Jeanette and he could only start at Ricatla in 1986, while their six children stayed behind in Stellenbosch. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., 2/8/1985, Pretoria, # 4)

#### ***Warm Welcome***

The Bothas were well prepared when they entered Mozambique, having thoroughly mastered both Portuguese (they worked amongst the Portuguese Refugees in the Cape Peninsula) and Chichewa



and knowing the cultural setting first hand. Mozambique however, proved to be yet full of surprises, owing its blend of Portuguese beurocracy and Communist inefficiency, mingled with a fair margin of corruption. So, in January 1986, Rev. and Mrs Botha left Stellenbosch with their overladen Yellow Volkswagen Mikrobus and via Pretoria and Swaziland undertook the dangerous trip to Maputo. Mrs Jeanette Botha recalls the first day of arrival. *“We stopped before our “new” home in the early evening, with garbage strewn in the streets and hordes of small dirty boys ... While climbing the pitchblack staircase with a torch and our belongings, big hungry rats were reluctantly making way and cockroaches filled in the spaces. It was very hot and humid as well, all adding to our warm welcome.”* (Personal interview with Mrs J. Botha, November 2003)

The Bothas were enthusiastically received at the Machava congregation, in the blistering sun, during a normal marathon five hour sermon in February 1986. Rev. Botha was installed as a pastor of Maputo congregation in April 1986. He soon made contact with the local IRM leaders, since he had to fulfil a dual role: One was to be the IRM’s lecturer at Ricatla and two, was to start liaisioning for the IRM from within Mozambique. At that stage the Civil war was growing more intense and the roads around Maputo were also under attack. A journey to South Africa could only be done via Swaziland, under the protection of a military convoy, and even then, many people were killed and vehicles destroyed. Often people were abducted by the “bandidos” right on the outskirts of the city. Machava was considered a dangerous zone due to attacks. Even the 30 km to Ricatla at that stage was dangerous and a few times Ricatla itself was attacked and students carried off, amongst them two IRM students, who narrowly escaped death. Under these circumstances travel in Mozambique was limited to air or sea travel and contact between the South and North was very difficult. (See letter of Rev. Botha to GSSM, dated 22 March 1922)

### **7.3.2 Caring Sisters**

As mentioned earlier the Federal Council was the overseer of Reformed Churches’ involvement, in coordinating the support of the IRM. The two main contributors were the DRC of Western Cape Missions Office and the “GSSM” or Transvaal DRC Synods and they shared the costs linked to the post of Rev. Botha. Up to this day the lecture post to the IRM is still funded, mainly by these two bodies. (Minutes: F.C.C.W.M., varia 1984 -1986). In 1986, Rev. Willem Louw became the missionary secretary of the Eastern Transvaal Mission’s office and gradually it became the anchor

office for organizing support into Southern Mozambique. Rev. Louw and his two assistants, Mrs. Corrie Swanepoel and Adri Steyn deserves special mentioning, as they skilfully administrated the support for the work in the South. Rev. Louw, together with Rev. J (Kobus) Thom and later Rev. K Koch, faithfully recruited more support for the youngest sister of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. In the Western Cape the Mission Office's personel like Mr. J. Van der Merwe and Mrs. Heyli Enslin, and later joined by Maryke Barnard gave enthusiastic support, especially to the Northern areas of Tete and Zambesia. (Various Articles in Sendingblad and Voorligter, 1986 – 1990's were prepared by these two offices)

## **7.4 Adjusting to the climate: 1986 – 1990**

### **7.4.1 General**

The civil war in Mozambique took a serious turn at the end of 1985, beginning of 1986, and accusations of breaching the non-aggression treaty between South Africa and Mozambique, signed at Komatipoort in 1984, was aired by both sides. The conflict spread to all sectors of Mozambique and only the bigger centres were relatively safe to stay in. Attacks became more brutal and the people or towns suspected of co-operating with the enemy, usually shouldered retaliation. Both sides in disputed areas committed many atrocities. This insecurity urged thousands to flee Mozambique. Big refugee camps sprang up in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. Other Mozambicans decided to flee to the bigger centres such as the cities and main district towns, for example Vila Ulongue, Songo, Furancungo, Milange, Chokwe, Chibuto etc. (Die Sendingblad, Mei 1986, p. 156; Agenda: Suid Tvl Sin. Sendingkommissie, 1987, p 270, #4.2.4). Other civilians preferred to remain in the villages if it was under Renamo's control, as it would be more dangerous to flee. Near the end of the war it was mainly the big cities and district centres that were Frelimo controlled, while the rural areas, especially in the north were under Renamo control. It became almost impossible to 'cross' between the different areas and for mission workers to be active, it either had to be in these mentioned urban areas, or in Renamo controlled areas, illegally. (Compare Vines and Wilson, 1993, p. 4ff; Hammond, 1998, p 63ff )



#### ***7.4.1.1 The IRM Severely Affected***

Since the IRM was primarily a rural church, this seriously hampered the mission work. Rev. Tembe was already operating in Machava and Matola near Maputo at that stage, but in general the pastors stopped working altogether in the rural areas. In Angonia the pastors fled to Malawi by the end of 1985 with the majority of members and settled near CCAP centers at Mphunzi (Rev. Mlinde), Dedza (Rev. Chikakuda) and Mlanda (Rev. Kasamba). (D Chikakuda, Personal Interview, 1995) In Mozambique itself, this situation led to a re-assessment of the IRM ministry strategy. It became clear that the ministry should be moved to the centres where the most people were staying. Therefore the church-leadership decided to concentrate primarily on the bigger centres in order to reach their own members, but also to evangelise the populated areas where ever possible. It had another advantage: In future the government would have knowledge of the IRM, whereas in the past it has always been tucked away in the bushes. (Botha, Hefsiba Notes; Report to GSSM, November 1989)

#### ***7.4.1.2 Making the Best of It***

The situation in the refugee camps had to be addressed as well. In the different countries where these camps were erected, the Reformed Churches did a lot to reach the people and minister to them. Special mention needs to be made of the efforts in the Eastern Transvaal, SA where the DRC in Africa, with Rev. Beukes leading, evangelised and gave relief to the camps near Lilydale (Die Sendingblad, Jan 1990, p 9). The CCAP, Salisbury Synod, spearheaded by Rev. HW Murray reached out to the refugees in Zimbabwe. (Die Sendingblad, April 1988, p 119) However, it was the CCAP above all, who took in IRM members that fled to Malawi, as their own. Many Mozambicans who were not believers, came to know Christ in the refugee camps, many ending up as members of the CCAP. The membership register of CCAP Malingunde congregation by the end of 1992 showed the names of more than 300 Mozambicans who were accepted by Rev. L. Tsitsi. (Minnaar, Notes, 2003) It was not without problems though: Church leadership meetings had to be conducted in Malawi, with some restrictions applied. To administer Holy Communion and Baptism to their members, pastors had to obtain permission from the local congregation, but later this privilege was reviewed; all membership contributions and offerings had to be handed in at the local CCAP congregation, in order to be kept safe for use by the IRM, at a later stage. It has been there, ever since. The Mozambican pastors were mainly entrusted with pastoral duties such as funerals and visits. (Mau a Msonkhano..., 1984, S 84)

Within Mozambique it became clear that the IRM was forced to start ministeries in the bigger centra and by 1988/9 opportunities presented itself for establishing congregations in the following strategic places: Beira, Milange, Tete and Vila Ulongue. There were no established congregations in any of these places, though IRM members were already residing in these cities and towns. In order to materialise this vision, personnel was needed and missionaries were requested to assist. Fortunately, theological students at Ricatla and Zomba were finishing their studies and in this way could satisfy some of the ministerial needs.

#### **7.4.2 Developments in Gaza and Maputo:**

In the South more places were opened as well, although more spontaneously. As members of the IRM moved into the bigger centres of Chibuto and Chokwe towns, the church was established in these towns. In 1987 Rev. Cuamba started a congregation *in Chokwe*, primarily with members who came from the outposts of Chissinguele, Chake, Macaringue, Massingir, Colhane, Muianga and Manhiça. By 1989, however he had to leave for Tsakane, Machava. The work was left in the hands of inexperienced elders, causing the work to dwindle slowly to a few hardliners. Rev. Tembe, who had been helping in Gaza since 1988 on a part-time bases after his retirement, congregated IRM members *in Chibutu* and from there as far as was possible, served the areas of Hoyo-hoyo, Hlamalane, Cocamissava, Txatxane, Chilembene and Tsakelane.

By 1989, *in Maputo* itself, the work expanded from Machava, headquarters of Tsakane congregation, to the following places: Matola, Liqueleva, Salina, Maputo-city, Laulane, T-3, Bunhica, and Namaacha. All these meetingplaces fell under the guardianship of Tsakane congregation, in Machava. This was the situation with the Beira and Tete initiatives in the beginning as well.

By 1989, the pastoral staff of the IRM Tsakane, consisted of the following people: Revs. Julio Cuamba, Pieter Botha, Samuel Jossitala (*Tete*), Pedro Tembe (*retired*), Kobus Minnaar, Evangelists Samuel Cossa (*Chibuto*) Paulo Timane (*Chibuto*), two others in the Chokwe area and Simone Mandlate (*Namaacha*). (Annual Report of Tsakane Congregation to GSSM May 1989, Translation in Afrikaans; Verslag van die Mosambiek skakelbeampte aan die GSSM, 21 Nov 1989, 1-3)



## 7.5 First Teams

One of the biggest stimulators of growth within the IRM, since 1989, was the dedicated and sacrificial efforts and contributions of teams to various congregations of the IRM. The first outreach team of the DRC to the IRM after 1984 was a student team from Stellenbosch University in June 1988. In Maputo hospedice was a real problem and in 1989 one team which was 40 persons strong, at a stage all slept in the flat of Rev. Botha on the thirteenth floor!!! Even so, teams became increasingly popular and formed a crucial part of the IRM's rebuilding process and development, especially with the creating of Church-structures. Many teams had a dual purpose e.g. a) building or relief and b) evangelism or spiritual work like training of leaders or intercession. The team mentioned above for example helped to clean out and roof an old ruin that became the place of prayer for the Portuguese ministry of the IRM in Maputo till 1997/8. They also did child evangelism and "Jesus é Bom" (Jesus is Good) was sang al through the mid-city by scores of children. (Die Sendingblad, Sept. 1988, p 18)

Three other teams need mentioning: 1) The team who came to erect the steelstructure at Machava in December 1990 and 2) the team who erected one in Tete, in June the same year. Both teams were from Stellenbosch and came about because of special efforts by Kobus Botha (responsible for IRM projects) and his sister Jeanette Botha. These two young people, through friends from university and the Portuguese congregations in SA, motivated teams to come and serve the IRM with outreaches. The involvement of Mr Lopes and members of the Abreu-family was especially notable for being the first people from the DRC's Portuguese ministry to join outreaches to (Portuguese speaking) Mozambique. In both cases they made invaluable contributions. After these initiatives there was an explosion of interest and other teams streamed to Mozambique.

3) Another team, whose involvement had far-reaching influences later, was the team from Inserve, led by its founder, Dr. Marius Olivier and which included theological student AnDries Schwartz and members of the Smit family, all to become involved in Mozambique later on.

By 1990 the following places have been visited by teams: **June 1988** – Maputo - Building and Child evangelism; **June 1989** - Maputo – Evangelism; **June/Dec. 1990** – Maputo, Beira, Tete - Two Churchstructures, evangelism & Pemba - Intercession team. (Verslag, Skakelbeampte aan die GSSM, 21/11/1989, p 2 #2.1; Personal Interview, de Wet & Botha, 2003)

## ***Chapter 8***

### **NEW FIELDS (Part Two): 1989 -1991**

All seemed set for expansion within the IRM, even though the war was still raging. From 1989 to 1991 this was definitely the case, as revealed by the establishment of strategic congregations of Beira, Tete and Vila Ulongue and the influx of new pastors and missionaries, which almost doubled the ordained staff of the IRM. A missionary, who was going to have a big influence in the process of establishing new congregations in the above mentioned town and city centres, was Rev. Kobus (JS) Minnaar. Together with Rev. Botha he always dreamt about the time that Mozambique would be re-opened for mission work. They had also worked together in the Portuguese ministry in SA at an earlier stage. Rev. Minnaar had just retired from ministry in 1988, when Rev. Botha contacted him to inform him of new fields opening in Mozambique. At that stage he felt capable of helping especially in Tete, since he was fluent in both the dominant languages, Chichewa and Portuguese. Therefore in 1989 he arrived in Maputo and together he and Rev. Botha started planning these initiatives. Soon he became engrossed in the practical execution of these ideas. (Die Sendingblad, Augustus 1991, p 11; Minnaar, Notes)

#### **8.1 The Establishment of Congregations in Beira, Tete and Vila Ulongue:**

##### **8.1.1 Beira**

Before the IRM became involved, there were other developments that led to the IRM's establishment in Sofala –Beira. In 1977, a certain pastor Caetano Dausse of the African Assemblies of God (AAoG) Church started a zone near “Milha 3” in Beira. It was taken over by a young leader, Franque Luis Capece, but he left the group in 1982 for Tete. His younger brother, Tome Capece, took over responsibility in 1983, together with elders L. Germano, A Chutar and B Nsangadzi. They were confronted and disapproved of by a pastor of the AAoG. These leaders however continued to edify the congregation, even constructing a church from their own funds



which was inaugurated in May 1986. About the same time Franque Capece returned and under his leadership the Christian community of Milha 3 grew considerably. After negotiations with the highest authorities of AAoG, they managed to obtain their “independence”, with an own council.

However, by 1987, these Christians felt abandoned by their provincial Church leadership and wanted to liase with a church of considerable means. With this in mind, they formed an executive of seven members in April 1989, which included the two Capece brothers and pastors Caneravava and Miti. Pastor F. Capece was sent to Maputo in June 1989 to search for such a church and finally presented the needs of these Christians to the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique. The IRM agreed to consider their proposal and on 8-9 October 1989, a delegation from Maputo arrived at Beira to investigate and discuss possibilities of incorporating into the IRM, the believers of Milha Tres, as well as members of other zones. The delegation consisted of Revv. W Louw (DRC Eastern TVL Synod, mission secretary), Botha, Minnaar, Cuamba and elder Mahumana. After much discussion on doctrine, general behaviour and conduct, ecclesiastical laws etc, the IRM delegation accepted the 173 members in principle and “conditionally” honoured the leaders’ positions. However, all decisions had to be approved by the Synod. After this meeting, the local believers registered the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique in Sofala-Beira and the following people were chosen for the Executive. *Franque Luis Capece, A Caneravava and R Miti, Tome L Capece, L. Germano, A Chutar and B Nsangadzi and A Quembo*. They also represented members from Dondo and Chiringoma. Their application was approved by the Governor of Sofala in January 1990.

In August 1990 F. Capece and Caneravava attended the Presbytery meeting of Maputo in Tete, where they were officially received and the formation of an IRM congregation in Beira authorized. At the same meeting, Rev. Amorim Dos Santos Silambo passed his Colloquium Doctum and was placed in Beira by the Presbytery of Maputo to guide these new members. The local pastors and members were all to study the IRM’s catechisms and the pastors, who had ‘conditional’ status, had to be trained at Ricatla. Another visit to Beira was made by the Maputo Presbytery from 3 to 5 November 1990, and during this visit all the deacons, elders, evangelists and pastors were officially installed. The congregation was also donated a minibus, but it soon fell into disrepair leading eventually to accusations of misuse. An unfortunate incident took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1991, when pastor Canravava was killed in a hit-and-run accident, on his way to receive an

IRM delegation which had come to do training within the congregation. He was one of the stabilising factors within the whole process of the Beira congregation being assimilated to the IRM. Only one month later a very big part of the original group broke away. Eventually just Tome Capece stayed behind with some original members. Frank Capece and the other pastors never went to Ricatla as planned and left the church; it was Tome Capece who went to Ricatla and became the first IRM student to finish pastoral training at Hefsiba, Ulongue. (Capece, 1995, p 1-5)

### **8.1.2 Tete**

As seen in Chapter 2, Rev. AG Murray already felt in 1914 that a mission should be opened in the strategically situated city of Tete. Tete city, situated on the banks of the Zambezi-river, was established before Cape Town and was a very important part of the Portuguese Colonial program in the mid 1500's. It became the junction of roads leading into East Africa and still today guards one of the few crossing-points over the Zambezi. Due to its harsh weather (extremely hot temperatures of up to 53 °C.), it never developed into a big centre.

However, with the war forcing many people into the bigger centres, Tete city and nearby Moatize were flocked with people coming from the rural areas into the safety of the city, including members of the IRM. Some were also searching for job-opportunities and an estimated 68 000 people were residing in the Tete-Moatize sector. It also housed the only complete high school in the province at the time. Very good access roads existed, but the war prevented use unless under the protection of a convoy. The Tete corridor was infamous for "running the gauntlet", especially when Zimbabwean troops were protecting the convoys. (Thom, 1989, p 1; Minnaar, Report 1989, p1) However, by 1988 a definite decision was taken by the Synod of Mphatso, held at Mlanda Malawi, 6 -7 September 1988, to establish a congregation in the city. It was decided to put Rev. Samuel Jossitala there (Minutes... S. 79) and on 26 January 1989 he was presented there by the following IRM delegation: Revs. J. Thom, J Minnaar, P Botha, D Chikakuda, F Kasamba, J W Mlinde and Mr Kobus Botha. A very detailed report was tabled for the GSSM and Federal Council by Rev. J Thom after this visit. (See Thom, 1989, p 1-2) Later in that year, a delegation who also visited Beira, went to Tete directly afterwards and contacted some of the IRM members. Rev. Kobus Minnaar accompanied the Jossitala family to establish the work in Tete, at the same time as



they went to settle in their new home. (Minutes: Presbyterio de Maputo, 1990, PM 25; Report: Minnaar, Maputo, Nov. 1989)

In the same year of 1989, the IRM managed to obtain a house for R62 000,00 which was paid for by the DRC in SA (Western Cape), and immediately started planning for a church building at the back of the terrain. This plot was very well located, within one of Tete's main streets and near the city centre, (Thom, 1989, p.2) but unfortunately it couldn't be utilized to the full, since the church-building was concealed behind the manse, making it undetected to the majority of people in the city. Rev. Jossitala got off to a very good start though and by January 1990 reported at the Synodical Executive meeting that the work was developing wonderfully, especially in the Moatize area. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1990, the first 8 catechumens were baptised and received in the congregation. At that stage it was basically a Chewa congregation, with members coming mainly from Angonia and Malawi. (Acta da Reuniao da IRM, Tete, 4/8/1990, PM 25, Adendum 2) In June 1990 a steel structure was erected on the church property. (see "Teams" above, p. 101-102).

### **8.1.3 Vila Ulongue**

In February 1990 Revs. Minnaar and Jossitala visited Vila Ulongue for the first time. They entered via the Biri-Wiri border-post. The road southwards to Tete was closed for 100km due to cut bridges and landmines. Therefore, all road traffic to Angonia had to pass via Malawi and enter at Biri-Wiri or Calomue borderposts. Vila Ulongue is about 40 kms from both borders, but during the war both passages were attacked and at some stages were not passable. The only other access was via aeroplane, since Vila Ulongue has an excellent asphalt landingstrip. On one of their visits to Vila Ulongue, Revs Minnaar and Jossitala had to turn back, because they ran into a group of "bandidos". Fortunately there was enough time to make the turn around on the muddy road and, without getting stuck, could make their getaway. (Minnaar, Personal Notes 2003 p. 3 & Report, 1990, p 1-4)

Thousands of people (estimated at 35 000 in town and surroundings) were staying in Vila Ulongue to escape the war, but even so, in 1986 and 1987 Renamo made two attacks on the town and briefly occupied it. Many perished in those attacks (Angonia Traditions), but it was still the safest government controlled town in the Northern highlands of the Tete province. The UN organisations

like UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) and UNICEF also had their area headquarters at Ulongue. The Secondary School was still operating, as well as other basic public services, like electricity etc., all protected by a substantial force of Frelimo soldiers. Even so, with their first visit pastors Minnaar and Jossitala found less than 20 IRM members in Vila Ulongue. This group consisted mainly of the families of two elders living in the town, Mr. Magagula and Mr. Bengo. An old lady, Adelessi Magagula, who had known the first missionaries, was also amongst them. Only her grandson belonged to the IRM, the rest of the family all turned Catholic. No outside posts (like Ntachi, the oldest IRM prayerhouse near Ulongue) could be visited and a curfew from 19h00 till 6h00 was enforced for security reasons. The two pastors made the obligatory visits to the three governmental offices of the Mayor or "Administrador", the police and Frelimo offices. They also enquired about land for the church or property for hire. (Minnaar, 1990, p. 2-3)

In June the same year a stand of 40m (street side) x 80m (length) was allocated to the church in Avenida (Avenue) Samora Machel, where the church building stands today. Pastor Minnaar visited Ulongue when possible and on a big flat rock adjoining the churchgrounds, held sermons. He also started with the preparations of a brick-oven. At that stage the church's terrain was the only one on that side of the street and was used previously as the point of attack by Renamo. With hyenas howling and the intimidating calling of the vicious Nyao dancers (Traditional initiation cult) by night, Rev. Minnaar felt quite lonely sometimes, in the open, in his small 2mx3m asbestos shack. (Minnaar, Notes, 2003, p3)

By November 1990, he felt enough members and elders were present to establish a congregation. This was done on 2 December 1990, with Rev. Jossitala from the IRM in Tete and Dr. Van Deventer and others from Nkhoma CCAP, present. The three IRM pastors in Malawi couldn't enter due to problems their refugee status could create. In hindsight this establishing of Vila Ulongue congregation was unique in the sense that it was formed in Angonia, but by the Presbytery of Maputo. Pastor Minnaar went out from the assumption that Tete was an already founded congregation and formed part of the Benga presbytery, but in reality Tete was still operating as an outpost of Maputo congregation, with Pastor Jossitala as a representative of that presbytery. (Actas do Presb. de Maputo. Agosto, 1990, PM 9.1 -9.3)



Vila Ulongue congregation was founded with 19 members, 6 catechumens and two elders who were Modesto Magagula and Nalisiziyo Bengo. (Mau a Msonkhano la Bunwe...18/12/1990, KK 505) A delegation from Nkhoma CCAP was also present, like Revs. L. Matanda and H. van Deventer and Miss. A de Klerk, all of whom continued to play a significant role in supporting the IRM in the years to follow. In this manner Ulongue was established and set to become the regional centre of the Angonia congregations (Minnaar, 2003, p. 3). As stated in one of his newsletters, Rev. Minnaar remarked in July 1991: "...in the vicinity that AG Murray entered by bicycle from Mlanda in 1902, almost 90 years later we may arrive in a modern diesel bakkie to start again with a mission station in the centrally situated town of Vila Ulongue..." Rev. Minnaar continued ministering to the congregation, but had to shuttle regularly between Johannesburg, where his family lived, and Vila Ulongue, a distance of almost 2000kms, but worse, through numerous border-posts and pot holed roads.

## **8.2 Synod of 1990**

### **8.2.1 From Synod to Presbytery**

At this point it would be fitting to mention the Synod of 1990 that took place in Tete, since it officialised many of above mentioned initiatives. It was decided for some time before 1990 that the next Synod should be held on Mozambican soil and when Tete was opened to IRM ministry, the choice was obvious. The date was marked for the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1990, but it seemed that communication was insufficient and everybody was not notified in time, for example the Milange congregations. The delegates from Angonia couldn't attend, due to problems with their documents once again. Therefore the meeting was basically held with delegates from the Maputo Presbytery as well as visitors like Rev. J Thom from the Western Cape's Mission Office, Rev. L Matanda, J. Chienda and Dr. Hennie van Deventer from Malawi and delegates from Beira. Rev. Thom, since he was the oldest pastor present, was appointed as chairman of the meeting to determine its authority. After it was decided to give the meeting presbytery status. Rev. Cuamba was elected president, S Jossitala secretary and L. Mahamana additional member of the Maputo Presbytery Committee. (Actas do Presb. do Maputo, 8/1990, PM 3)

### 8.2.2 Decisions

Some of the interesting decisions were the following:

PM 6. This was a Drastic decision, stating that the Presbytery of Maputo was to act with the authority of Synod in Mozambique until it was possible for Synod to function normally again. Therefore, the presbytery committee would act as the IRM's maximum authority in Mozambique, until the Synodical Committee could call a Synodical meeting again. The proposal of a general secretary was also rejected.

PM 8. The Beira representatives reported that the believers under their leadership had increased from 173 to 623 since 1989, but received insufficient teaching and catechism.

PM 9 & 36 Rev. Minnaar was to be installed at Vila Ulongue and was appreciated for his efforts to establish a new congregation at Vila Ulongue.

PM 10. An "Act of Agreement" between the IRM, Mphatso Synod and CCAP Nkhoma was finalised and was to be signed at the next Synodical meeting. Rev. Matanda was welcomed as CCAP's missionary to the IRM and was destined to go to Beira. After his documents/permits had been finalised, he would be installed as a pastor of the IRM. The IRM was responsible for arranging housing for the missionary. This decision was changed later. (See PM 18-20 below)

PM 11 Co-operation between the DRC in SA and the "Igreja Evangelica de Cristo" in Zambesia was accepted by the IRM, and agreed that a missionary could be sent from the DRC to the Igreja Evangelica.

PM 13 Revs. Minnaar and Jossitala had to visit Milanje till the situation there was suitable for placing a resident pastor in that area.

PM 18 -20 Amorim Silambo was examined and accepted by the meeting to be a pastor within the IRM and it was decided that he, not Rev. Matanda, was to be placed in Beira.

PM 29, 31, 39, 40 All these points were concerned with material and literature of the Church, for example: Sunday School material, Catechisms in Portuguese, membership Cards, and the Church order, indicating the wish to "standardize" the IRM's teachings within the various field of ministry.



## **8.3 Doors Opening:**

### **8.3.1 Mozambique becomes a Republic**

A significant development in Mozambique, which had a positive effect on the churches, was the official denunciation of Marxism by Parleмент (AR), by mouth of the President, Joaquim Chisanno, declaring Mozambique the “Republica de Moçambique”, instead of “Republica Popular de Moçambique”. The revised constitution of the country was adopted in December 1990 and laid the foundation for a multiparty state. It also signalled the end to harmful laws to the church (though many were not implemented any more) and accelerated the process of denationalization. Although the civil war was still raging, much more freedom was officially given to people which was most beneficial to the church in general. The President at one occasion asked the church to help the people of Mozambique stand up from their state of helplessness, since the believers had the answer. (See: Botha, Report to GSM, Aug. 1991, #1; World Send. Service, 1994, p 4-8, 4-9)

During the same time the Frelimo Party and Renamo were negotiating a peace agreement. The Catholic and major Protestant churches in Mozambique played an immense role in reaching this agreement. An interesting account of how the process was facilitated by church leaders and their constant appeal for dialogue, is given by Alex Vines and Ken Wilson in their report, “Churches and the Peace Process in Mozambique”, at a seminar at Leeds University, 20-23 September 1993. (Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 9-13)

### **8.3.2 Medical Co-operation**

It has always been a trait of Reformed Church Missions to have a holistic approach towards mission work, addressing the whole person’s needs, which includes medical care. The IRM’s modern day pioneer in this regard, is Mrs. Jeanette Botha, a qualified nurse and health teacher and who always had a heart for the medical work. Since their arrival in 1986, Mrs Botha was involved with clinics at Ricatla. During their visits to different places, she always tended the sick and usually had her “mobile pharmacy” available. Often while visiting a town, old students from Ricatla, would visit the Bothas to ask for counsel and many times for some medicine from “Mama

Jeanette". Mrs Botha co-ordinated medical work as far as it was within her powers and visited many NGO offices like Tear Fund and World Relief to get financial support for projects. Her South African connections, who were mission minded people and from the medical profession, also became involved and she and Dr. Audrey Muller became close allies in addressing the medical needs in Mozambique. (Botha, Personal Interview, 2003, Die Sendingblad, Augustus 1991, p. 11 & 19)

However, the vast medical need within Mozambique required a bigger thrust than provided by a single mission and in this way the IRM linked up with other institutions and churches to help address the medical needs within the country. In this regard a significant development took place in 1990, when ACRIS (*Acção Cristá Interdenominacional de Saude / Interdenominational Christian Action for Health*) was formed and became the IRM's prime agent for medical work within Mozambique. Two of the founders of ACRIS were Mrs Jeanette Botha, and Mrs. Linda Mercer, missionary for the Assemblies of God Int. Mission.

A pamphlet given out by ACRIS is quoted to explain its dynamics:

**" A Brief History of ACRIS**

ACRIS is a Mozambican Christian interdenominational non-profit medical organization. After several interviews with health officials, other mission and medical organizations and as a result of studying the situation in Mozambique in 1990, it was evident that a Christian organization of this nature was desperately needed. The founders of ACRIS also saw the need for cooperation between national and international churches as well as other evangelical organizations to help the country relieve the health crises it was facing and to network resources preventing unnecessary duplication of effort. As a result, ACRIS was started in 1990 by a group of Christians made up of Mozambicans and foreigners.

This small organization has grown much faster than anticipated, even with projects starting and others finishing. ....

The ACRIS programme is in line with the National Health System of Mozambique and has been working closely with the Health department to identify their priorities, while at the same time evaluating critical needs and areas where the church has influence or potential. ACRIS does not financially have the capacity alone to launch and sustain projects, but already has the manpower



(Management staff including a Field medical supervisor, Administrative assistants and Secretary, as well as Project staff as mentioned above).

### **Mission and Purpose**

ACRIS was established for the advancement of health in Mozambique in cooperation with the national health system by providing professional Christian health care workers (e.g. Doctors and nurse practitioners) to provide a curative and preventive service, as well as training local primary health care workers and medical personnel. The aim of ACRIS is to help the government of Mozambique in the rehabilitation of the medical system that has experienced severe set-backs due to the war. It is also the aim of ACRIS to work closely with the church groups which already exist in Mozambique for the dissemination of preventive health knowledge.

### **Objectives**

1. Contracting and posting medical doctors, nurses and other medical personnel with special training in community health and primary health care in areas requested by church groups and/or local health officials and/or the Health department which ACRIS deems acceptable and which the Health department has approved. The primary purpose for these medical personnel, besides providing emergency/interim curative services is: Supplementing the training of Mozambican primary health care workers who staff the clinics as planned for in the Government Health programme. Training health educators. Training traditional birth attendants to increase their expertise. Training village health workers (or activists). Strong emphasis will be placed on teaching preventive medical knowledge. This will be done in cooperation with the churches or any other social grouping which may allow for this type of Christian ministry.

.....**The exact places** where the doctors and nurses will be posted is influenced by requests from church groups and/or other local representatives but is dependent upon Health Department needs and requests..... appropriate by ACRIS and their support structures. .... In every case, personnel and projects will only be started after the involvement and approval of the National as well as the Provincial and Local health directors.”

The Rationale behind ACRIS' goals and objectives became more evident after the peace accord, as a Revised brochure later explained: ..... after many years of war and thousands of refugees are now returned to Mozambique from the surrounding countries. UNICEF reports have shown Mozambique had the highest under - 5 mortality rate in the world (i.e. 350 deaths / 1,000.) The health status in urban and rural areas was precarious. After independence in 1975, absolute priority was given to primary health care and mother & child care. As a result of the war more than 300 health units had

been destroyed with 750 ransacked and closed. There were approx. only 400 doctors in Mozambique of which 210 were expatriats. In the Province of Zambezia for example the doctor/population ratio was 1:513,000. In the country as a whole the average was 1:52,000. An ideal would be 1:5,000.

ACRIS wished to assist in the re-establishment of the health system as originally planned by providing emergency curative relief where necessary initially but focusing on training of primary health care workers and preventive education for the population in general.

**The problems addressed:.....**

1. Non-existing or insufficient health care in most rural areas.
2. Insufficient doctors or other qualified medical personnel, although many Mozambican doctors have been trained.
3. Non-existent or insufficient health care workers at the village level.
4. Insufficient preventative education. .... part of the preventive programme to reduce the mortality rate of children under 5, which was approximately 350 deaths / 1 000 according to "Health in Mozambique", .....

The program also included longterm objectives.

Although not all of those mentioned underneath, immediately participated, they were part of the many people who became involved.

The primary church organizations are:

The Dutch Reform Church of SA (Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Eastern Transvaal Mission Offices), The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (ERDO Division), Stadts Mission - South Africa , Missão Antioquia – Brasil, Igreja Batista Filadélfia-Brasil, Igreja União e Vida-Brasil, and others

This partnership is also strengthened by the help of funding organisations. These at present are: Hilfe Für Brüder and CFI – Germany; ZOA Refugee Care – Holland; TEAR FUND – Holland; TEAR FUND – England; World Outreach - South Africa; Dorcas Aid International – Holland; Norollah Trust - South Africa; PROMISS – South Africa; World Ministry to Others – Canada.

The funding and staffing of ACRIS projects takes on various forms. ....” (Acris, 1999)



It was through ACRIS that the IRM could obtain the necessary documents and permits for missionary doctors and other personnel, as well as obtain medicine and permission for outreaches. Since their establishment, they have built a very good relationship of trust and co-operation with the different governmental departments. (See Medical Work, Chapter 11)

## **8.4 More Missionaries to Help**

### **8.4.1 First Entrees and Needs**

The first IRM missionaries to arrive after Rev. and Mrs Botha and to assist them, were two of their children, Kobus and Jeanette (jr) Botha, who in turn had a lot to do with the first teams that came to Mozambique. Another person well-known to the Botha family was Maretha Blignaut, daughter of Dr. Chris Blignaut from Nkhoma-hospital, Malawi, who did secretarial work, child evangelism and youth work at a later stage. (Botha: Verslag van Skakelbeampste aan GSM, Augustus 1991, # 2.1.2 -2.1.4) However, by the middle of 1990 it was evident that more missionaries were needed immediately, especially to fill rapid growing pastoral needs. At Vila Ulongue another pastor was needed, since Rev. Minnaar was planning to stay temporarily. A pastor was also urgently needed at Milange. During 1989 the leadership of the Igreja Evangelica de Cristo (fruit of the old South African General Mission in Zambesia, who had links with the Mehicane-mission) contacted Rev. Botha to send them a missionary from “his church”, the DRC Mother Church. (See also Report by Thom, 1989, p. 6)

### **8.4.2 New Candidates: Placing and Support**

This meant that three missionaries were needed immediately. The three candidates who presented themselves by June 1990 were Rev. LKR Matanda of Nkhoma CCAP, proponent A. Schwartz from Pretoria and proponent W.J. Gouws from Stellenbosch, a son-in-law of Rev. Botha. During the rest of 1990 the mission secretary of the DRC Western Cape Synod, Rev. J. Thom, had to meet with various groups to accommodate this new strain on the mission office’s budget. Several congregations and Tulbagh presbytery, in particular undertook to support these missionaries both financially and spiritually. One organisation, however that became involved with the support of

all three fields was Narollah Trust. Narollah Trust promoted a Christian witness in places of need, which Mozambique surely was at that time. To a big extent, Narollah's involvement was because of the interest of Dr. Audrey Muller from Stellenbosch. "Tannie Audrey" as she was generally and fondly known, was a retired mission doctor, of Nkhoma-mission amongst others, and took special interest in Mozambique. In conjunction with other partners, Narolla Trust, was therefore involved with a lot of the pioneering missions in the IRM that were initiated after 1990.

The three fields of Milange, Igreja de Cristo in Quelimane and Vila Ulongue were "catered" for by the following congregations, presbyteries or Synods: Milange was to be the responsibility of CCAP, Nkhoma Synod and their missionary was to be Rev. LKR Matanda. The Igreja de Cristo in Zambesia, with Quelimane and Ile as base, was to be the responsibility of the DRC congregation Stellenbosch "Moederkerk" in collaboration with other partners and by the end of 1990 the church-council called proponent Andries Schwartz to be their missionary. At that stage two elders, both Van der Merwe, were the driving force behind the mission awareness of the congregation. Prop. Willie Gouws was to be the missionary to Vila Ulongue and Tulbagh congregation and presbytery was responsible for his support. In this regard the faith and efforts of Revs. Teyo Smit and Chris Eksteen was the energy behind the involvement of that presbytery, but the enthusiasm soon spread and involved many more. Revs. Schwartz and Gouws were ordained as ministers at Stellenbosch and Tulbagh respectively during the beginning of February 1991, but were under the supervision and care of the Western Cape Missions Office.

### **8.4.3 Preparations**

The next big responsibility was to study the language, pass via Maputo to grow accustomed to the Mozambican setup, acquire the necessary documents and finally reach their various fields of work. This was done and all of the Matanda, Schwartz and Gouws families passed through Rev. Botha's house to learn about the country's customs and language. (See Botha, Verslag...GSM, Aug. 1991, # 2.1.6 – 2.1.8, # 5) It soon became evident that Mozambique was not to be taken for granted as was evident from the burnt out vehicles along the road and other spoils of war.

It was also necessary to obtain their DIRES (Documento de Identificação para Receidencia para Estrangeiros) or Residence Permits. Obtaining this document within the Mozambican



Administrative System, sounded bureaucratic in principle, but in practise was quite an achievement. The one office crucial for any official application done by the church, was the Department of Religious Affairs (Departemento de Assuntos Religiosos), directed by the Honourable *director Job Chambal*. This man became a close friend of Rev. Botha and a very special relationship between himself and the IRM's leadership existed. Through director Chambal's guidance and wise advice the IRM was saved from making mistakes in the eyes of the government or taking decisions that could harm their work.

#### 8.4.4 Settling Down

By June 1991 these new missionaries were ready to arrive at their destined places of ministry. Mphatso Synod sent Rev. LKR Matanda from Nkhoma CCAP as a missionary to Milange. Rev. Matanda already paid visits to Milange at that stage and had contact with the believers. His installation took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 1991 at Milange and delegates from Nkhoma CCAP and the IRM were present. Finally, the Zambesia IRM members had a resident pastor. This was another joint effort by various institutions to materialise a common goal. Nkhoma Synod expressed their wish to help the IRM with missionaries, even though the war was still raging. The funding of such an effort was however bigger than they could afford. In this way the Narolla Trust agreed to help the Matandas to serve as missionaries where the IRM would like to use them. The IRM was responsible to officialize the Matandas stay- and work-permits in Mozambique, as well as his job-description within the IRM. (Mau a Msonkhano la Bungwe..., 19/9/1991. KK 552, 21/11/1991, KK 568; also see Nuusbrieff uit Malawi, Maart 1996, p 2)

Rev. Schwartz departed with his pick-up and went via Malawi to enter at Interlagos to go to Ile and Quelimane. As mentioned, to reach Quelimane by road was an enormous task of several days and had to be negotiated from Malawi, first by railroad and then over extremely bad and dangerous roads. During the next years, he was twice ambushed and once robbed of belongings and products, worth R30 000.00+, got stuck for days, shot upon etc. Fortunately he also had close links with Inserve, a Missions Supporting Ministry and good support from Stellenbosch. (Schwartz, Personal Interview, 1992, 2003)

## 8.5 Bringing the Good News

### 8.5.1 Getting Acquainted

In order to identify himself more closely with the circumstances at the various fronts in Mozambique, Dr. Marius Olivier from Inserve embarked on a fact-finding mission to the various ventures of planned involvement, in June 1991. Since roadtravel was not an option to certain places, this mission had to be accomplished with a small six seater Piper Cherokee aeroplane, of Mission Aviation Fellowship. Revs. Botha and Gouws joined him and together they visited Tete, Ulongue, Lichinga, Cuamba, Ile (where Rev. Schwartz awaited them) and Quelimane. Meetings were held till late at night with various churches' leaders and officials, and future outreaches and missions discussed. Especially the future of outreaches to the Yao-people, one of the bigger unreached groups in Mozambique and living mainly in Niassa province and Lichinga surroundings, was discussed with various people involved. There was also a big interest in the biggest unreached group of Mozambique, the Makua people, and discussions also touched future plans on that. (See Report: Olivier, July 1991, p. 1-6)

In the meantime things happened in rapid succession. A team of approximately 30 people from Tulbagh presbytery under the leadership of Rev. Teyo Smith and organised by Rev. Chris Eksteen, embarked on the long journey to Vila Ulongue to assist with the establishment of the mission. This outreach, undertaken in July 1991, was very special for a few reasons.

- 1) It was one of the first full DRC teams consisting of professional people (commercial farmers, engineers, etc) to reach out into Northern Mozambique, even into Africa North of the Limpopo, and set the trend for years to come. Previously it was mainly student teams accompanied sometimes by professional people to accomplish a set task. The outreach to Tete the previous year to erect a steel-structure, was a good example.
- 2) It was strange for the Mozambicans to see that previous "enemies" and "brancos" (White South Africans were unpopular in Mozambique) could come and help to rebuild their country, working day and night. It was the talk for long after that so few people could come and erect two steelstructures and put up the 240 meters 6 foot fence in less than four days!! (Gouws Newsletter, September 1991)



Rev. Gouws was inducted as pastor of the congregation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1991 by Rev. Minnaar, while a delegation of Nkhoma CCAP was also present after their successful evangelism outreach to Vila Ulongue. (Ibid; Minnaar, 1991, p.2; Mau a Msonkhano la Bungwe..., 19/9/1991. KK 553-4, 21/11/1991, KK 565)

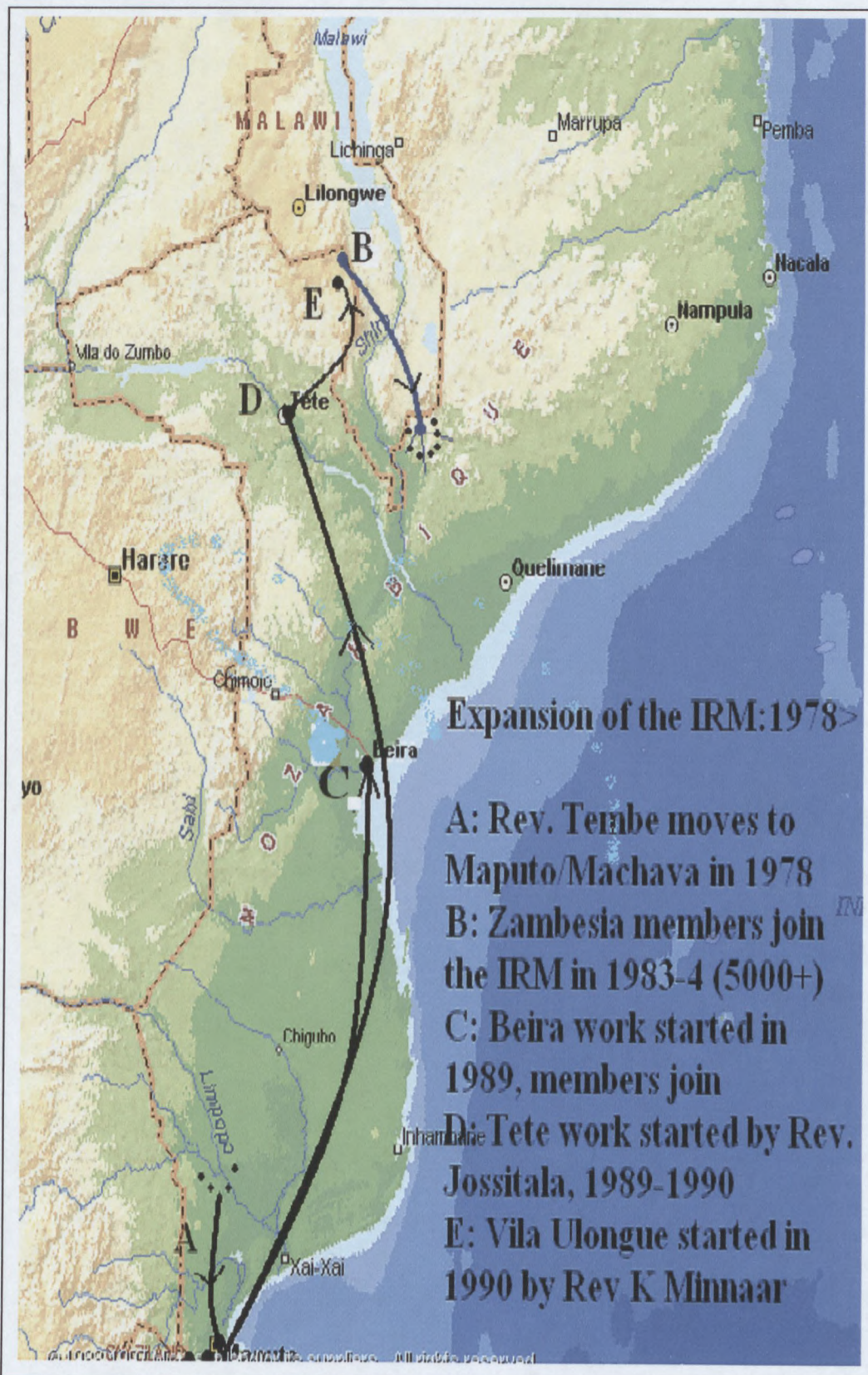
### **8.5.2 A Truck load of Blessings**

By December 1991 the work at Ulongue was progressing well, with the first building, a store room, already finished with bricks. The interest and support of Nkhoma CCAP at Vila Ulongue was invaluable, as was shown by their building department's team under the leadership of Mr. Dick van der Wilt, and special outreaches with the Jesus film. (*The Jesus Film used was the one issued by Campus Crusades for Christ in the 1970's, which was "translated" in most of the major languages, including Chichewa, the language used in Malawi, Angonia and the Eastern parts of Zambia. The Jesus film was used with great effect throughout the mission field and shown extensively in Angonia, even in the most remote areas, where thousands attended*) They were present with the installation of Rev. Gouws in December 1991. (Labuscagne, 2002, p 121) However, a big need was experienced by all the churches in the area: Christian literature, above all Bibles in Chichewa. This need was taken up by Rev. Botha and he discovered 11 000 Chichewa Bibles in Maputo's Bible Society, at exceptional good prices (due to the devaluation of the Mozambican currency, the Metical, to the South African Rand). This led to the borrowing of the Swaziland DRC mission's 8 ton Toyota truck and then the long journey to Vila Ulongue was undertaken before Christmas 1991, with 8 tons of Bibles and the Gouws' furniture on top. (Ibid) Due to the war the interior road through Mozambique was closed and the road taxes through Zimbabwe very high, so the route taken was the following: From Maputo, through Swaziland, through South Africa, through Botswana till Kazangula ferry, 1000 kms through Zambia, till Malawi's Michingi border, then up to the Dedza border, into Mozambique till Vila Ulongue; twice the distance in a slow truck. (Botha Newsletter, January 1992)

The visit indeed proved to be a truck load full of blessings: It soon became known that the IRM was selling Chichewa Bibles at a fifth of the price asked in Malawi and people literally sat in rows to buy Bibles also from other churches who were allowed to take limited quantities. After a while though, it was discovered that some of the "leaders" and "members" were from the Jehovah's

Witnesses and they resold the Bibles at Malawi markets at three times the price. In any case these Bibles were a big help to the Angonia and even Milanje Christians, especially as the older congregations re-opened. (Personal Witness of Elder Magagula, IRM, Vila Ulongue, 1992)









**1989-1991 Outreaches:** (top left, clockwise) Brick-making at Vila Ulongue (1991); Kobus Botha putting up a cross on the Maputo city church (1988-9), after 32 tons of rubble was removed; Tulbagh DRC team prepares to leave after putting up two steel-structures and a fence, 1991; DRC Stellenbosch team with an over laden truck to put up a church structure for Tete (1990), Pastors S. Jossitala and K. Minnaar with Mr. A Lopes in the front; DRC Stellenbosch team put up the church structure in Machava.



## PART THREE

### RAPID EXPANTION, CONSOLIDATION AND NEW FRONTIERS

1992 – 1996

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This part of the IRM's history is the most difficult to divide into meaningful units, because many things were happening on many fronts all the time. The scope of this study will terminate at February 1996, but since then more than eight years' history has been added. As stated in the Introduction, under # (ii), the reason for choosing 1996 as a *terminus ad quem*, is that from this point on information is so vast and sources are decentralised (two Synods), that specialization will be required to do justice to such a study. On the other hand, most of the IRM's development in structure and expansion into the various fields were basically established before 1996 and consolidated and refined afterwards, making it a good "cut off" period. Therefore, "Part Three" in this study will only cover 1992 -1996, where-as it can cover up till the very present.

A suggested overview for the time after 1992 may look as follows:

1992 - 1996

From the "Synod of Unity" at Vila Ulongue in February 1992, till the "Synod of Division" in Maputo in Februry1996. During this time the most spectacular outward growth and structure expansion within the IRM took place, because the country was open after the peace accord. However, these developments also brought severe tensions within the leadership ranks of the IRM. Both tendencies eventually contributed towards the forming of two Synods, "Sinodo de Mphatso" and "Sinodo Novo", in 1996.

1996 –2004

The work, especially amongst the unreached groups started in the middle 1990's, was to a big extend consolidated during this time, although the IRM continued to expand, reaching more and more areas. In this regard, the initiative amongst the Makwe at Quionga is the best example. Since 1999 the influence of the IRM's local leadership was greatly

increased, continuously taking more responsibility, being the fruit of Hefsibah in particular. This process was accelerated by the passing away of the father of the DRC's modern-day Mozambican Missions, Rev. Pieter Botha. During this time, a third Synod was formed, Tumbini Synod and the geographical boundaries between the different Synods redesigned. However, events also cleared the way for a more visible unity within the IRM, the forming of a General Synod, which took place as recently as 24 June 2004.

A danger exists with this part of the IRM's history that it can be portrayed as a sequel of decisions made in the various leadership-meetings, since a lot of planning, organizing and principle forming took place during this time. However, to an extent opportunities presented itself and "things happened" at such a rate, that the IRM's leaders and others involved were forced only to keep some sort of order, rather than calmly direct the church. In order to portray more of these grassroots happenings, a lesser accent is sometimes laid on the formal part of the ecclesiastical development, like all the Presbytery, Synodical and broader meetings. This is a difficult choice, since all the internal ecclesiastical meetings of the IRM's suddenly came into practise since 1993; in many cases it was possible for the first time.

Through the accelerated dynamics that followed 1991, the IRM was taken from a small church in a few districts, to a nation wide church in 2004, with local leaders taking responsibility and in a way it brought a whole new character to the IRM. The foundations for these developments were already laid by 1996. In order to understand this very exciting part of the IRM's history more clearly, a historical overview is presented first, followed by main events in more detail. This will prevent repetition of topics, since ministries were developed over an extended period of time. Events in 1992, in a way, still stand loose from the 1993-1995 expansion period and is therefore treated as such.

### **Chronological Development**

- Jan 1992 - Start of release of 11 000 Chichewa Bibles in Angonia.
- Feb. 1992 - Synod of V. Ulongue > IRM's rebirth.
  - Application for bigger church grounds.



- June 1992 - Founding of Tete congregation.  
 - Teams visit various congregations.
- Oct. 1992 - Peace Accord in Rome (4/10/1992).  
 - IRM one of founder members of A.E.A.M, Mozambique.
- Nov 1992 - Big numbers of refugees return to Angonia, first of old missions visited.
- Dec. 1992 - Rev. Minnaar receives honoured demission.  
 - Maize seed project for Angonia, first rains break long drought.
- Jan 1993: - Vision of Hefsiba born.  
 - Rev. F. van der Merwe departs from Port Elizabeth, S.A., to work with Igreja Evangelica de Cristo in Cuamba; DRC Eastern Cape becomes involved in Mozambique.  
 - Building starts on Ulongue Church.
- Febr. 1993 - Tumbini Congregation (Milange) established.  
 - Roads opened throughout country, Vila-Tete-Maputo takes 48 hours.
- March 1993: - Dr Peg Cumberland arrives at Ulongue, first clinic vehicle.  
 - Synod in Maputo – big shifts of pastors: Jossiatala to Maputo, Bessitala to Zambesia, Mlinde to Tete (5/’93).  
 - Hefsiba Bible School confirmed and to be started.  
 - New Mission Secretary in W. Cape: Rev. K Koch in Rev. J Thom’s place.
- April 1993 - IRM starts taking over Trichardt School; Mr. Barry de Wet becomes headmaster.  
 - Liazi and Thezese congregations founded in Zambesia.  
 - Servir Moçambique started as Kingdom Bussiness Initiative.
- May 1993 - Mackeys arrive at Ulongue for Health, first foundations for Hefsiba project.
- June 1993 - Big number of teams into Mozambique to various congregations; Stellenbosch and Worcester main contributors.  
 - Rev. Minnaar starts exploring the Northern and North Western parts of Tete Province.
- August 1993 - Various Presbytery meetings reactivate ecclesiastical functions in Angonia.  
 - CRWRC (Canadian) supports a community development of the IRM program in Angonia.
- Sept 1993 - Follow up team finishes first house of Hefsiba.

- Oct 1993 - Rev Minnaar visits Chiputo and makes contact with IRM members in Luia.  
- Inauguration of Church building at Vila Ulongue.
- Dec 1993 - Rev. W Bester and family for Hefsiba, Miedema couple for CRWRC, and G van der Meulen (Building) arrive at V Ulongue.
- Feb 1994 - Rev. Bester starts with Hefsiba (Bible school) classes, with 6 students; insufficient means, but big enthusiasm. Building on houses started.  
- Rev. H Taute starts as lecturer at Ricatla, helps ailing Gaza work.  
- Big influx of missionaries, especially for the South with Trichardt School.
- March 1993 - Youth Team prepared in South Africa to start in Angonia.
- April 1994 - Rev Murray arrives in Milange.
- May 1994 - Synod meeting in Maputo: Decision to start own Theological training.  
- Three Presbyteries in North: Mphatso, Benga, Tumbini.  
- Exploration outreach under Rev. Botha to Yao in Niassa, Chiconono.
- June – July - Outreach teams all over Mozambique: Tete and Milange big teams.  
- Building started at Milange.  
- First combined outreach (Medical and Evangelism) for IRM to the Yao:
- Aug 1994 - IRM Womens' Conference in Vila Ulongue.  
- Founding of Tsakalane congregation in Gaza province.
- Sep. 1994 - Yao Outreach to Muembe and Chicono.  
- First IRM Missionary Conference at Cape Mclear, Malawi.
- Jan 1995 - Rev. Taute arrives at Ulongue to start the Theological Course at Hefsiba.  
- Rev. Silambo and A Banda move to Chiconono, Rev Schwarts follows later.
- April 1995 - Youth team arrives at Ulongue and start visiting IRM congregations in North Mozambique.
- May 1995 - Reconnaissance trip to Maua and Muapula to start mission amongst Makua.
- June – July 1995 - Teams to various congregation of the IRM.  
- Rev. Van der Merwe called by the IRM to start work amongst the Makua.  
- Hefsiba's first classroom officially opened.
- August 1995 - Rev. Van der Merwe starts at Muapula, joined by Knoetztes.  
- Inauguration of Church building at Machava, biggest of the IRM.



- Sept 1995 - Tensions grow concerning Northern dominance of Ecclesiastical decisions in IRM, Rev. Botha requested to retire as Liaison Officer.  
- Founding of Furancungo congregation (near old Mwenzi Mission).
- Nov- Dec 1995 - Various meetings in Angonia and Maputo lead to split in Mphatso Synod.  
- T Capece is first student of Hefsiba to be ordained as pastor of IRM, in Buzi.
- Febr. 1996 - Official formation of two Synods in IRM, "Sinodo de Mphatso" and Sinodo Novo".

## ***Chapter 9***

### **HOPE RESTORED**

#### **9.1 A Very Special Synod: Vila Ulongue, February 1992**

The Synod Meeting held at Vila Ulongue from 26 January to 3 February 1992 was special and the “launching-pad” for a new era in the IRM for various reasons. It was the very first complete Synodical meeting of the IRM, held on Mozambican soil, with representatives from all her congregations and ministries present. Secondly, it was a Synod predominantly filled with hope and expectation, rather than a pre-occupation with a hopeless situation in Mozambique, as at previous meetings. Conditions were primitive: A steel-structure church with half-height grass walls, dusty floors and only one robust fold-up table for the moderamen to sit at. Smaller meetings were held in the open, on the ground and under trees, which served as the gathering-‘halls’ for the different committees and commissions. Even so, there was a spirit of optimism, unity and purposefulness for the future of the IRM. It must be remembered that it was still war, a very big number of the IRM members were still in the refugee camps, but a new identity was born during this Synod.

##### **9.1.1 Getting There**

To give an idea of the ambient at that time, a few examples:

1) Free movement through the country was still not possible. Although hostilities died down a little near and around Vila Ulongue, in areas of Angonia, attacks were still taking place. There were very positive signs for peace, but the situation was still far from secure and free movement was not possible. Rev Botha and some of the delegates from Maputo came by road, but others came by chartered plane from Mercy Air, an aviation ministry started by Ron Wayner and his wife Barbara, near Whiteriver, South Africa. This was the beginning of what would later become a very special ministry co-operation, between Mercy Air and the IRM. It was necessary to go “private” for two reasons: One: Due to the war, there was no interior road-link between the South and the North open at that stage. Two: The National Airline, LAM was still an insecure and expensive option to book for a



group of people. At that stage, having a confirmed ticket in hand, didn't mean having the seat before actually sitting in it and the plane being ready for take-off. (Compare Report: Thom, 1989, p 5-6)

- 2) The pastors in the refugee camps in Malawi were very apprehensive of coming to Vila Ulongue in the beginning, due to their very negative experiences with officials in the past. It was necessary to obtain special documentation from the government to allow these pastors, Kasamba, Chikakuda and Mlinde to attend the meeting. Even so, it was still necessary for Pastor Kobus Minnaar to persuade all concerned in his unique, but firm manner, to be brought in from Dedza at the time of the meeting.
- 3) Delegates from South Africa came via Malawi by air and together with delegates from Nkhoma CCAP, including Dr. Hennie van Deventer, they drove in to Vila by car. There was however not yet a border-post on the Mozambican side so all immigration and customs documentation had to be done in Vila Ulongue itself.
- 4) There were many stories of how people sacrificed to attend the meeting, a trend to repeat itself often at the numerous Synodical and presbyterial meetings held afterwards. Long distances by foot or bicycle (like the elder of 65+ years who pedalled 130kms over mountainous roads to attend Synod, and back again), sometimes through dangers and sleeping hungry, these were and still are the sacrifices made by the leaders to faithfully continue caring for God's people under their authority.

### 9.1.2 Long Agenda

Once the meeting started however, the agenda was purposeful and a Mozambican feeling was born. All of the following points were taken from "Acta da Setima Reunião do Sinodo de Mphatso da IRM, Realizada em Vila Ulongue.... 29/1-4/2/1992".

Delegates present: (Congregation-Pastor-Elder)

Msanja:	Pastor W S J Mlinde	Filipe Phiri.
Kalomwe:	Pastor D E Chikakuda	Olivala Mkhewu.
Mawi:	Pastor F E Kasamba	Amossi Magagula.
Benga:	Pastor F E Kasamba	Laideni Ngozo.

Mphatso:	Pastor W S J Mlinde	Lodnegue Dzonzi.
Mphatsa:	Pastor F E Kasamba	Tekitala Duwe.
Kalichete:	Pastor F E Kasamba	Samuone Chisale.
Samwa:	Pastor W S J Mlinde	Lamisoni Phiri.
Tsakane:	Pastors J M Cuamba, P B Botha,	Eduardo Simango.
(Maputo):	S Jossitala (for Tete)	
Beira:	Pastor Amorim dos S Silambo	Agostinho Cavela
V. Ulongue:	Pastors J S Minnaar e W Gouws	Nafitala Magagula e Eliya Bengo.
Milange:	Pastor L Matanda	Fernando Maglass.

Of above mentioned, Revs. L. Matanda, P.B. Botha, J.S. Minnaar, A.de S. Silambo and W. Gouws were attending an official Synod meeting of the IRM for the first time.

The following invited guests were also present:

Rev. Y A Chienda, Dr. Hara and Dr. Van Deventer, (all from CCAP Nkhoma),

Rev. J D Thom, Secretary of DRC W.Cape, Missions,

Rev. W F Louw, Secretary of Missions, DRC Eastern Transvaal, Pretoria.

Pastor Filipe Luis, Pastor Estagiario Samuel Bessitala, IRM, Maputo.

The following leaders were appointed: Pastors. F E Kasamba (moderator), D E Chikakuda (Vice), W S J Mlinde (Secretary), S Jossitala (Actuary), plus two elders of the Presbyteries for the Synodical Committee.

For the record we give a summary of the minutes and main decisions:

S 90. Acceptance and appreciation for the “Nyale” (light), catechism for the IRM in Chewa done by Dr. M Pauw, A Labuschagne, and others and the translating into Portuguese, initiated by J Minnaar. *(The “Nyale” of which 10 000 copies were printed, was a summarised version of “The Catechisms of Heidelberg”, combined with elements of the “Three Confessions of the Reformed Church”. This has put the Catechism in the IRM on a much needed organised base. The two main authors had combined theological expertise and local language and custom knowledge into a very useful catechism.)*



S 91. There needed to be written a history of the IRM; Revs. Gouws and Minnaar were appointed.

S 95. Marriages needed to be officialised by all members. *(This point surfaced repeatedly, as many of the IRM members, especially in rural areas, mere "took" in a partner)*

S 102. No more IRM leadership meetings should take place outside Mozambique. *(As all Angonia based leaders enjoyed refugee status, many meeting concerning the IRM took place in Malawi, leaving an uncomfortable feeling with members and leaders inside Mozambique .)*

S 106 & 12 Two presbyteries were formed, that of Maputo (for the Maputo, Gaza, Sofala & Manica provinces) and of Tete, (for the Tete & Zambesia provinces and refugees in Malawi). After the return of the refugees a new division could be studied. The two Presbytery Committees were the following:

Presbytery of Tete: President:	Pastor L Matanda
Secretary:	Pastor W Gouws Nafitala Magagula Laideni Ngozo
Presbitery of Maputo: President:	Pastor A Silambo
Secretary:	Pastor P Botha Agastinho Cavela Eduardo Simanga

S 110 The Synod approved co-operation between the DRC of South Africa and the "Igreja Evangelica de Cristo em Moçambique", Zambesia.

### 9.1.3 Several points on training

S 114 Minimal and maximum age for theological students, 20 and 35; S 115 - preparation course for candidates to Ricatla needed; S121 - Timothy Training accepted as a means to train leaders within the IRM (Revv. S Jossitala, A Silambo, L Matanda and S Bessitala needed to attend course); S 128 new candidates; S 129 practical work by students; S 130 – Synod appointed a Training Committee.

The main point concerning training however, was S 119: A letter to the Administrative Council of the Seminary of Ricatla (SUR) to appeal against the influence of liberal

theology at Ricatla and the reduction of the study of scripture. "...the Bible must be respected as the infallible word of God". This point would later become the reason for the establishment of Hefsiba.

S 127 This was also the last IRM Synod to be attended by Rev Thom, mission secretary of the Western Cape DRC, and he was praised for his vision and support to the IRM in this time of awakening. The number of times his name appeared in the minutes of IRM related meetings, testifies to this fact.

#### 9.1.4 End of the IRM Exile

It was however at the end of the meeting that another big spiritual impact was made. Reverend Botha was asked to close down with scripture reading and prayer, so he quoted from Jeremiah 29: 10 –14. It was a prophetic word indicating that the time of exile for the IRM was over. God's has broken the bondage of 70 years of "EXILE" for the IRM, 1922 –1992, and that He would be leading the IRM into a new era of rebuilding and reoccupying the country for God's glory. "This is now the time to re-construct the household of God that has laid in ruins for 70 years....This Synod was proof that we had entered a time of peace and blessings..". (Minutas...S 133) This word couldn't be more true of the period that followed the Synod meeting of 1992.

With this in mind, the emblem for the IRM, according to Zacharias 4: 1- 6, was officially approved. The theme-verse comes from verse 6: "...This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, ' *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*'" In the context of the just completed synod meeting, the passage of Zacharia 4 had special significance. The prophet of old urged the people of Judah to set to task the rebuilding of the temple of Yahweh, but to remember that in their own power and through violent effort would not succeed. They had to behold the power of God's spirit who would merge the preaching of God's word and the help of the government into a force that would complete a task that at the moment seemed impossible. Therefore, the message was: Be strong, courageous and start the task of rebuilding God's house, even if your efforts seems like "... small things...". (Ibid; Report: Botha, Report, 1992, #1)





## Igreja Reformada Em Moçambique Sinodo De Mphatso

FUNDADA COMO MISSÃO DA DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH NO  
ANO DE 1908 EM MPHATSO, ANGÓNIA, PROVÍNCIA DE TETE

The official emblem  
and letterhead of the  
IRM

With this in mind, some delegates stayed behind after the Synod to organise the finances and handle other issues, but also to request the government to enlarge the existing property (50mx100m) of the IRM at Ulongue to an ambitious 11,4 hectares. Eight days later, the Gouws' son, Antonie Botes, was born. He was immediately renamed by the moderator to "Mphatso", as 'he was born at the time of a very special meeting of Mphatso Synod' and sign of the IRM's rebirth. Revs. J. Thom and W. Louw, mission secretaries of the Western Cape and Eastern Transvaal DRC Synods respectively, returned with many requests for help, funding and of course, missionaries to start the enormous task of reconstruction. They also realised that the IRM was 'reborn' after many years of frustration and hardships.

### 9.2 Tete Congregation Founded:

After the '92 Synod meeting, the presbytery of Benga started to investigate the possibility of the Tete acre being formed into an independent congregation. At that stage Tete still operated as a 'prayer house' of the Maputo congregation. Rev. Jossitala proposed that the presbytery should come to Tete to investigate the possibility in May. This was done and after investigation, Tete was accepted and established as a congregation on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1992. (Acta da oitava...IRM, 3/1993, S.152.1) However, according to the statutes of the IRM, it should not have happened. Only one elder, but no deacons, was eligible at that stage, and very few confirmed members could constitute a congregation at the time. However the presbytery committee decided to continue, because of the tense political atmosphere in Northern Mozambique at that stage and the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of future movement and its effect on church development. So Tete congregation was founded and Rev Samuel Jossitala consecrated as its first pastor. (Minutas: Comissão do Presbeterio de Tete, Maio 1992)

The formation of the Tete congregation was very important for other reasons as well. It could now more effectively serve as launching congregation for outreaches into the interior of the Tete

province that opened up after the peace accord was signed. The other important reason was that Pastor Jossitala could now be the official provincial representative of the IRM in Tete, with the back-up of the church-members and council of Tete itself, rather than standing under the Maputo congregation, which didn't have the necessary insight and contact and was 1550 km away.

### **9.3 More Teams into Angonia:**

Although the war was not yet over, a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm took hold of almost everybody involved with the IRM. Word went out about the needs and personnel required, as well as the opportunities that presented themselves. A big stimulant was the testimonies of people already involved in outreaches to Mozambique. Especially the Tulbagh-outreach of 1991 got many DRC members of that presbytery enthusiastic about the planned 1992 outreach. Another factor that helped the awakening to Mozambique mission work was Love Southern Africa (LSA) conferences, that co-ordinated interdenominational short-term outreaches into Southern Africa, amongst them Mozambique. Many DRC members were leaders or organisers in the LSA outreaches. (Personal Witnesses of leaders like Gerhard Roux and Roux Meyer, Laingsburg; Kitty Smit, Somerset-West; etc)

However, word got around and the interest grew rapidly. Vila Ulongue would soon become a popular outreach destination and this was one of the reasons why it became, by any standard, one of the fastest growing mission stations of the DRC ever. (Kobus Koch, 1995) Another pattern that was to be followed by many big outreach efforts was also set during the 1992 outreach to Vila. That was to send a pre- or investigation team, to make an assessment of the needs and the liability of outreach objectives. Although costly, it helped making the best of the enormous amounts of energy and funding that goes into a big, long distance, outreach. In May 1992 such a pre-team, consisting of four professional men, with medical doctor Sieg Schreve the leader, came for an assessment visit to Vila Ulongue. The next year, another member of this pre-team, Mr Andries de Wet, came to prepare the way for the '93 big team, which counted for a total of 60 people. (Gouws, Nuusbrief, Julie 1992)

When the big team arrived later in June 1992, the group of 30 plus (mainly from DRC congregations in the Ceres area, Western Cape) had a well-balanced team for both spiritual and



building work with achievable goals. They also brought with them a 3,5 ton truck, a much needed implement for the building work, as well as for the expanding youth work. It was the enthusiasm and vigour of people like Dr. Schreve and other members of the pre-team and Mr Hennie Sieberhagen, who sold his new Kombi to provide the deposit for the truck, that made this and other big outreaches a much needed blessing to the church in Mozambique. In this group were also future missionaries to Mozambique, like Mr. Piet du Plessis, who later became the factotum at Vila Ulongue. A lot of building material and gifts for the Mozambican people were brought along, as well as Bibles and other donations. Thanks to their effort the “parochia” (pastor’s manse) could be finished (basically) by the end of ’92. The Isuzu truck which still operates to this day, not only made the building of several churches and later Hefsibah possible, but numerous other spiritual activities: A blessed donation, made possible through sacrifice. (See Die Sendingblad, Augustus 1991, p19; see photo in “Die Getuie”, 3/1993; Gouws Nuusbrieff, Julie 1993)

#### **9.4 Peace: Starting with the Reconstruction**

The biggest single external or secular influence in the rapid development of the IRM after 1991 was the signing of the peace accord between the warring Renamo and Frelimo parties. The peace treaty was signed in Rome on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1992 and brought to an end the years of uncertainty and hostilities. With the end of hostilities, the entire country would be open, in principal, for freedom of movement, and subsequently, development. However, roads were still in severe disrepair, and the biggest threat of all, landmines, were a constant thread. The landmine threat was a real hazard and many people were maimed or killed even long after the war ended.

##### **9.4.1 Reopening the country: Return of the masses**

What was the affect of the ‘peace’ on the people who lived in the refugee camps in the neighbouring states and the people who went to live in the bigger centres and cities? For many, especially the older people it was an answer from God to be able to return to their home lands and to where their ancestors were buried, even if it probably meant returning to a burnt down and destroyed kraal. However, resettlement started and in this case, the resettlement movement was big, one of the most ambitious ever undertaken by the international organization dealing with such

issues, UNHCR (see abbreviations). Between 1992 and 1995 1,7 million Mozambicans returned to their homeland and were aided with food, planting materials and Quick Impact Projects. Officially, Mozambique was the poorest country in the world at that stage, making the prospect of return not at all an easy one. (UNHCR, 1996, p. 1)

Even so, immediately after news of the peace became common knowledge, some people were packing. In the refugee camps they couldn't accumulate much, but very soon people could be seen carrying their few belongings on their heads, bicycles or, on their ox-carts (the affluent), back into Mozambique. Many tried to reach their homes before the onset of the rainy season, which starts seriously during mid-December. This was also dangerous, for in many fields landmines, especially anti-personnel mines, still laid wait. After a few incidents of serious injury or even sometimes death, the UNHCR, ran a serious awareness campaign against landmines throughout Mozambique. In this way the mission in Ulongue could help many members and other older people to return as close as possible to their home territories. Going back was one issue, facing your one-time enemy was quite something else. The many atrocities, murders, rapes, divisions and separations could not just be forgotten by the stroke of a pen. So many people went back with fear in their hearts, reliving awful experiences as they returned to familiar places. Missionaries witnessed how people started crying as they arrived at 'home', and it was not always because of what they saw; but maybe the horrors they encountered there. (Ibid, p 2 # 6-8, p 3 # 12; Personal Witnesses, Minnaar and Gouws)

#### **9.4.2 The Church as facilitator of Peace**

In their paper on the "Churches and the Peace process in Mozambique", Vines and Wilson gave evidence that it was basically the Christian Churches, more than any other who secured peace on grassroot level. Apart from facilitating the initial process, churches also actively contributed to reconciling former enemies and rebuild communities. (Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 14-15) Against this background, the following account is a witness to the way in which faith in Jesus, heals many wounds.

By the end of November 1992, the main roads in Tete province were opening up to various places, amongst them to Mphatso, the old mission that was in a strong Renamo-controlled area. Revs. Minnaar, Gouws and certain elders, went to see if they could get as far as the Mphatso



mission. Accompanying them was elder Bengo, a secretary of Frelimo, born at Mphatso and one who had lost family members during the war. The group got as far as Mphatso's run down and ruined Church. While sitting down and praying to God to forgive the past and restore this old mission beyond its original glory, another church-elder of that vicinity stepped into the church. He was a "commandante" of Renamo in that part of the province and responsible for many attacks. He also suffered his part and had been on a wanted list for long. Bengo and he immediately recognised one another and the tension was touchable. Then they both stepped forward, embraced and through laughter and tears said: "We are brothers belonging to the same Father, let the past belong to the past." God's presence was felt at that moment and the group sat down to thank God for mercy, and asking that this spirit of reconciliation would prevail throughout Mozambique. (Personal Witness, Minnaar and Gouws)

#### **9.4.3 Vila Ulongue's First Fruits:**

By December 1992 Pastor Kobus Minnaar prepared to leave Vila Ulongue. His date for demission was 6 December 1992. At the same occasion the first catechumens with whom he had started in 1990 were baptized and received in the congregation, amongst them a young man, Gettinala, who became Ulongue's first theological candidate and a pastor in Tete. At the same event the youth leader of the congregation was to be baptised as well, but on the Saturday just before, was disciplined for incest. He later became a pastor in the Presbyterian Church. Of the other first catechumens also became pastors or evangelists. The three Malawian based IRM pastors and Nkhoma CCAP visited the congregation with two truckloads of members and a big feast was arranged. The congregation and the community was sad to see "Oupa Koos" leave on that Sunday afternoon. (Newsletter Gouws, December 1992)

#### **9.4.4 A special project: Maize seed**

As pastor Minnaar was preparing to leave Vila Ulongue, refugees from neighbouring countries were streaming increasingly back to Mozambique, with very little belongings, but also with very little means to restart their lives. The UNHCR handed out "starter-packs", but it was a survival kit only and the handing out took time. Against this background Rev. Pieter Botha had the vision to help the Angonia people, who are predominantly substance farmers and were flocking back, with

insufficient means to restart. Through ZOA, a Dutch Christian Relief Agency, he acquired funds to buy 25+ tons of high quality maize seed in South Africa (PANNAR) for the returnees in Angonia. Because of delay in documentation, the cargo only arrived on the 7th December 1992, which was already the rainy season. After another five days, the seed was approved, with a 98+% passing figure. At that stage the rain was late and becoming very dry (1990 -1992 saw severe drought in Southern Africa), by many interpreted as God's punishment on the dragging war and atheist leadership. (See Vines and Wilson, 1993, p 6) The distribution was organized with the different IRM congregations in Angonia and Tsangano districts as main distribution points, but a great deal of effort was put into distributing it to the most needy, whether member of the IRM or not. To some extent it succeeded, since everybody was needy and 3 592 families received 6,9 kgs of seed each. This was a wonderful testimony of God's mercy for all. (Notule GSM, 8/2/1993, # 8.10; Agenda, GSM, 26/4/1993, # 17.1) Another outflow of these visits to distribute maize was that a beautiful church-building of trunks and grass was discovered, deep into the woods in a Renamo held area. Two weeks later Holy Communion was celebrated there, the first time since its erection five years earlier. (Gouws Newsletter, December 1992; April 1993)



## ***Chapter 10***

### **ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE IRM: 1993 -1995**

During this period, the foundation was laid for many of the IRM's current ministries and involvements. As mentioned, these ministries were developed over an extended period, making a topical division of events a better alternative than a chronological discourse. In the beginning of 1993 the peace process looked well set and the influx of returnees was an ever increasing stream back into Mozambique. The UNHCR was running vast repatriation programs for the approximately 1,300,000 refugees, one of the biggest they ever undertook. (UNHCR, 1996, p 1-2) Many Mozambicans were apprehensive though and had already made the neighbouring countries their homes. The church had to play a role in this process and it was on community level that the ever-growing need for organisation and structure was addressed. (See following pages).

#### **10.1 Developments in the Tete Province**

##### **10.1.1 Starting Anew: Congregational Level**

One of the provinces which was affected most by the mass return of refugees, was Tete Province, and Angonia district in particular saw a big influx of returnees. For the IRM it meant that the old congregations could again be opened. New "zones" and prayer-houses could also be started, which would ultimately lead to new congregations. A special grace was that the leaders; those returning, new, or those who stayed behind, worked in union to re-establish or start places of worship. Many people converted in the refugee camps and in this manner significant numbers were added to the IRM. On several places new grass churches were put up to have a place of prayer. This obliged the presbyteries to normalise and organise the new work and restart long neglected fields. For example, in some of the "opened" areas, members had not celebrated sacraments for more than eight years. In Benga and Mpatsa congregations alone, more than forty people were baptised during the first sermons, due to the extended absence of ordained pastors. In a way, the work had

to be reconstructed from scratch in 1993, and continued throughout the following years. (Gouws Newsletters, April 1993)

These developments took place in spite of severe shortages in catechisms, Sunday school and other literature. Many of the congregations' registers were also lost during the war and material sometimes were lost while stored in places such as under an elder's bed in a house that leaked during rains, or eaten by termites. In spite of these shortcomings and disadvantages, there was a spirit of hopefulness and with that the IRM expanded spectacularly. They were not the only ones though. In Angonia the Roman Catholic Church had a serious 'comeback' program, but it was the extremely aggressive expansion program by the Jeova's Witnesses, in the Tete province in particular, that influenced hundreds of people with their excellently prepared, but misleading literature. (Ibid)

### **10.1.2 Reaching Tete's Interior**

Rev. Minnaar, after leaving Vila Ulongue, felt that he should start exploring the North Western interior of the Tete province, towards the Zambian border, and visit the old mission stations established before 1922. By mid 1993 he set to task in collaboration with Rev. Jossitala and with Tete as base, started making reconnaissance trips along the road to the Zambian border. He also involved the MAF missionary pilot, based at Tete, Skip Parrish. In this manner they visited several pockets of IRM members, going as far as Maluera, in the far North West. At Luia an incident took place that needs mentioning: While Revs. Minnaar and Jossitala were exploring possible church-sites along the tarred road from Tete to Zambia they were waved down by a man. It was Mr. Mofatti, who had recently returned from the refugee camp near Malingundi, Malawi. While there, he had become a CCAP member and turned evangelist. At Malingundi he met Rev. Minnaar in July 1992 during his visit to the camp and immediately recognised the vehicle when walking along the road. He had already congregated several people and a big group of children and was preaching in the vicinity. Later Rev. Mlinde, who became Tete's new pastor, continued to support these small groups. (Minnaar Notes, 2003, p 2- 3, Jossitala, Personal Witnesses, 2003)

Under Rev. Minnaar's guidance, teams started to reach out from June 1993 towards Manje, Luia, Jaki and Furrancungo. The first teams were from Stellenbosch and later others followed, such as



DRC Craddock etc. These initiatives eventually led to the formation of congregations such as Furrancungo and Luia in 1995 and 1997. (See *Youth Team and Support*, p. 107-108, 112) An interesting report is that of Rev. Minnaar in the same year; him and other church leaders went to locate the old mission station of Chiputo, in the Chiputo mountain range. After following many trails, they succeeded to locate the ruins, but no big communities were left in the vicinity, making the re-establishment of the old mission unnecessary. (Minnaar, Verslag ...1993, P1-2)

### 10.1.3 Vila Ulongue Church Project

The next big project at Vila Ulongue after the construction of the manse was the Church itself. By the end of 1992 the Nkhoma building department did not see their way open to continue with the projects in Mozambique. It was now left to Rev Gouws and the local church to see how this would be continued during 1993. The congregations in the vicinity, such as Benga and Kalichete, were also his responsibility - to see to their reconstruction and resume their ecclesiastical functions. Presbytery meetings were also to be held and some issues debated. Teams were planning to come in June '93, and for them building material, especially bricks, had to be ready. All together it proved to be too much for one missionary, therefore serious prayers were made to God to send somebody (preferably local) to take over some of the responsibilities.

The Lord had mercy and prayers were answered, above expectation. On the 19th of January 1993, while the leadership of the Ulongue congregation was contemplating on the development of the 27x9 square meters steel-structure into a church, a young Malawian by the name of Francis Kamazizwa, arrived, offering his expertise as master-builder and designer to the church. At first thought, it sounded too good to be true, but soon afterwards *Francis showed up, exceeding expectations, even with testimonies from the CCAP congregation he belonged to and served as elder*. He has been with the Ulongue mission ever since and instrumental in the development of Hefsibah and other projects. (Gouws Newsletter, April 1993)

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January '93, the building of the church was started and inaugurated nine months later on 31<sup>st</sup> of October, greatly because of the effort and skill of Mr Kamazizwa. In a country with a predominantly Catholic population at that stage, the date of 31<sup>st</sup> October was quite significant, Reformation Sunday. Another interesting fact was that the Ulongue church was the first fully

finished church-building of the IRM after 1922 and the first one to be completed in an urban area. This feat was even more significant when an old elder who said he knew Rev. AG Murray, came to the pastors who attended and said: *“I praise God for this building, for now the Igreja Reformada has a face again, for all to see that God still loves us and not to be chased again.”* (Personal Witnesses, James Ngozo, 2003) For those involved, this statement laid to rest another complaint that came from some South African mission circles, namely that the DRC shouldn't get involved again with the physical development of a mission field to the extent of constructing large buildings that would later just need maintenance and increase dependency. Surely there is a limit to helping another church building its own structures, but in this case it helped to create a new identity and vision for a brighter future, especially for the older members; money well spent. (Author)

#### **10.1.4 From Builder to Evangelist**

Another story concerning the Ulongue church building was the participation of the builder Aubi Banda. Aubi was part of the Nkhoma team, which helped with the building at Vila during '91 – '92. He was only a helper in the beginning, but by the end of '92 he was ready to be a bricklayer in own right. Aubi was a Yao (his wife Lucy also) and a convinced Muslim, but through the testimony of a fellow builder, Simeon, accepted Christ as his Saviour during '92. He also favoured Vila Ulongue to such an extent that he decided to come and help with the building of the church in 1993, especially when he had to stop working with the Nkhoma team. Some other bricklayers also turned up and soon a strong team was formed which worked speedily on the project. Aubi also started with catechism classes during 1993, (although his wife didn't agree) and starting bringing others to Christ.

His catechism was done more intensively, because in May 1994 he had to accompany the first reconnaissance team to Niassa province to evangelize the Yao. As he recalls: “I had to accompany my pastor in his pick-up to fetch materials in Malawi and in Tete and then had to answer the catechism or recite Bible verses on the way.” In this manner Aubi was crash-coursed through the catechism, but it was done with the approval of the local leadership. He became a full member of the IRM in May 1994, was followed by his wife and children and became a prominent role-player in the Yao outreach effort. (Aubi Banda, Personal Witnesses, 2003)



### **10.1.5 Rebuilding the Ruins**

In Angonia, existing congregations had to be rebuilt and it was during this time that the “Church roof” project was launched by the Cape Missions Office. One such donor was Rev. Marthinus Daneel, ex Malawian missionary, who donated the roof for the Msanja congregation during this time. From Vila Ulongue several local outreach programs were launched especially towards Tsangano, where the district agricultural director, Mr Maxford was an IRM sympathiser. The Jesus film was shown in the heart of communities with strong traditional African beliefs, where children had never seen a white man and at places where the name of Jesus had never been heard before. Another important factor was that the Angonia pastors gradually settled within Mozambique again: Rev. Kasamba near Mawi, Rev.Chikakuda near Calomue and Rev. Mlinde near Samwa. From within the country, the progress of congregations could be directed more effectively, since it was a process of stabilizing the existing congregations and affiliating new members and “zones” into them. (Nuus uit Mosambiek, Maart 1994, p 1-3)

In 1994 another possibility presented itself when an evangelist from Mutarara, Mr. Jose Limpo, came to Vila Ulongue to hear if the IRM could reach out to that area. This idea was already expressed by a dynamic youth member and headboy of the secondary school at Vila Ulongue, who became a member of the IRM, Jose Texeira. This prompted visits to Mutatara by Benga Presbytery members and in 1995 a Zionist Pentecostal group, with their leaders, joined the IRM. Mr Limpo became a fulltime evangelist of the church and after completing a Theological Education by Extension course from Hefsiba, was later ordained as pastor within the IRM. After a short while many of the original members broke away with their leader, Mr Pedro Temba. Teams from the DRC in Kuilsrivier and Kemptonpark, RSA became involved with Mutatrara and helped developing the congregation. (Gouws Newsletter, August 1994)

### **10.2 Expansion in Zambesia**

Before the war forced the Angonia pastors to discontinue their visits to Zambesia during the mid 1980’s, several (up to seven) congregations linked to the IRM, already existed in area. These congregations were not officially formed by the IRM, but were recognised. However, work was

so badly disrupted during the last years of the Civil War that, when Rev. Matanda arrived in Milange in 1991, he had to start all over again. Rev Matanda also had to contend with tensions within the ranks of the local leadership and even with officials. Milange was a difficult place to work in (multi tribe and language influences), but by 1993 he felt that the time had come to form a congregation in Milange itself. Therefore Milange was the first congregation to be formed by the IRM after normality set in during 1993 and from there the old cords were picked up again.

### **10.2.1 Formation of Tumbini Congregation**

Early in 1993, 19 -22 February, the Benga Presbyterial Committee went to Milange to investigate this possibility and found a vibrant community of the IRM there. In between the normal meetings and investigations, the government offices were also visited concerning the application of churchgrounds. (Gouws Newsletter, April 1993) The weekend's meetings resulted in the establishment of the Tumbini congregation and with pastor LKR Matanda as their first pastor. This took place in the little mud-church in Milange on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1993. (Acta da...IRM, 3/1993, S. 152) Leaders came from afar although the conditions and infrastructures were still very bad. It was during this visit that Rev. Matanda showed the delegation the effects of the war in Zambesia province; even very old people were naked and hungry, not receiving the dignity they should have had. In these circumstances the church had to give a special witness in many ways and had to attend to the needs of broken people. Therefore the foundation of a local congregation was important, because from there onwards, the ecclesiastical development of the IRM and its overall witness in Zambesia continued in strides. In the same year (April 1993), two other congregations, Liazi en Thezeze had been formed. Various small groups of believers started to join the IRM, increasing the number of members daily. It was also a base from where the logistical support from outside could be developed, with the input of local leadership of course. It was the local leaders who identified the necessity to call another missionary, as was expressed explicitly afterwards by Rev. Matanda, amongst others to John Roux in June the same year.

### **10.2.2 Milange gets SA Connections**

Amongst the team-members of the Ulongue team in June 1993, was Mr. John Roux from Helderberg DRC, Somerset-West, with the task to look for a suitable project for that congregation to support. The possibility of Milange was discussed as a future project for Helderberg DRC, but



the problem was how to get there for an assessment. First of all, transport for the almost 400 kms trip via Malawi was a problem and he would need another visa (only obtainable in Lilongwe/Blantyre with a one day delay). He also didn't know how to get to the mission from the border. Strangers were not easily let in without prior consent of the hosts, which in this case would be Rev Matanda, but he couldn't be contacted, except with a 2 –3 days delay. At this point the issue was prayed about and God provided by way of the UNCHR charter plane on its way to Milange.

John didn't know how he would come back and boarded the plane only with his briefcase, toothbrush, almost no extra clothing and faith that it was God's will . Four days later the same plane brought him back, (the pilot marveled at God's timing and provision on the UNHCR's account) in time to depart with the team he came along with, having a very good assessment in hand. He could speak to Rev. Matanda who wanted 'resourceful' (SA) Christians to help developing the Milange project. It was God's appointment. This visit led to the first outreach and support team from the DRC to Milange in June 1994 under the leadership of Mr. Roux and has been a stimulating force to motivate teams to go to Milange ever since. This first team from the DRC Helderberg congregation was accompanied by two other teams from Durbanville-Bergsig and Stellenbosch to help build the pastor's manse on the new grounds. (Personal Interview with John Roux, Ulongue, 2003; Nuus uit Mosambiek, Sept. 1994, p 2-3)

### **10.2.3 Rapid Expansion**

This fact, together with small pockets of Christians joining the IRM all over Zambesia, led to spectacular growth within the IRM of Zambesia. As the country opened Rev. Matanda discovered pockets of Christians into the interior, especially in the directions where the old congregations once were. Strong elders like Mr. Kalulu and others brought many people to Christ through their powerful teaching. The story of Kalulu is beautifully recorded in Rev. Labuscagne's book *"The Missionary"*, on page 125 -127. Through many hardships like hunger, away from home and family, outside in cold and storms, sickness, etc. he continued, because: "The Lord sent me here and here I will stay until He calls me back."

In April 1993 Rev. Samuel Bessitala joined Rev Matanda in Milange and became the first local IRM pastor to reside with the Zambesia members. This brought about more stability and soon congregations were founded towards the Southern interior of Zambesia, like Liaze and Thezese. The roads in Zambesia were probably the worst in Mozambique at the time, making visits over big distances a tiring experience. Rev. Bester had some serious falls with his motorbike and Rev. Matanda became seriously stranded on several occasions. Rev. Murray joined them in May 1994 and he had a 4x4. After their arrival they had to live in a tent for two weeks at Rev. Matanda's house, before moving to the church terrain, where they stayed in the old Sprite caravan from Vila Ulongue. They also arrived in time for the building team from Vila Ulongue, which came to develop the Milange mission. The same year teams from Stellenbosch and Helderberg DRC came to help with the church and manse. (Murray, Newsletters, 1994; Nuusbrief uit Malawi, 3/1996, p 2)

Due to the structural stability within the IRM, many groups joined the IRM, especially from 1995. One such group was from Lugela, near Tacuani and Macuba. At the start of 1995 Rev. L Matanda received an invitation to visit small pockets of congregations in the Lugela area. This invitation was made by Mr. Ossumane Pequenino, who was the spiritual leader and wanted to be incorporated into a more established church. After visiting the groups of believers, Rev. Matanda came back and reported most enthusiastically about the new open door in Zambesia. This was reported to Synod and the Presbytery of Tumbini was asked to receive these members after investigating properly. (Acta da Comissão Sinodal...15-16/6/1995, C.S. 314.2. a-b) Several visits followed by Revs. Matanda, Bessitala, Murray and some elders and they discovered that other groups were also formed by Mr. Pequenino, as far as Macuba and Magodani near Maganje da Costa. Mr. Pequinino was operating in the name of the Presbyterian Church and therefore the group could be easily incorporated into the IRM. At Maganje da Costa they came into contact with the headman, Mr. Elias, who invited them enthusiastically to start mission work in that area. This invitation was taken seriously and by 1997, and several visits later, catechumen-classes were started. (Murray, Oral History of Zambesia)



## 10.3 Expansion in the South

### 10.3.1 Difficulties

In Maputo and Gaza the work was not doing as well, for three reasons.

- 1) The IRM had to establish itself in the city amongst numerous other churches which were well established and were more favourably positioned for urban ministry. In Gaza it had some good successes in the beginning, but discipleship ministry fell through and numbers dwindled again. With the influx of missionaries into the south of Mozambique during 1994 a new stimulus was felt, especially within Maputo and Gaza. Gaza also benefited a lot with the three churchstructures erected by student-teams in 1994. (See: Verslag van die Skakelbeampste...GSM, 31/5/1995, #2)
- 2) Disciplinary action taken against Rev. Cuamba in 1993 and consequent court cases caused a lot of discord and confusion. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 20/3/93, PM 66, 5/5/1995, PM 71 & PM 80; Comissão do Presb. 11/5/1995, all points, etc) The continued interference of Rev. Tembe into church matters in Machava and his distrust towards SA missionaries didn't help either. At that stage the three evangelists and the elders were not yet completely settled in the Reformed idiom and left much work to be attended to by the pastor. (interesting debate on the issue of evangelists in the IRM at Presbytery meeting of Maputo, 5 May 1994, PM 73.2.7,)
- 3) During the same time Rev. Bessitala, who had started a vibrant youth ministry in Maputo with Miss Maretha Blignaut, was transferred to Zambesia (on his request). Although pastor Jossitala moved to Maputo in May 1993 and was well received, there were serious shortages of personnel in Maputo and Gaza to man energetic evangelism and discipelling initiatives. Rev. Botha did minister to local congregations, especially by way of training courses, but was involved as lecturer at Ricatla until March 1994 and had many liaisioning duties. The Maputo pastors also had to attend to numerous administrative issues concerning the church since they were the IRM's representatives in the capital. In Gaza Rev. Filipe Luis was just settling in and had a vast area to attend to without any means of reliable transport. When Rev. Taute came to Ricatla in 1994, he did a lot to stimulate the Gaza congregations and made several journeys into Gaza with some Ricatla students to re-

activate the ministry. Even so, the severe shortages in Christian literature, church books like Sunday and membership registers and severe poverty seriously hampered the work. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 5/5/1994, PM 73.2.5, report by Revs. Luis and Taute)

### 10.3.2 Maputo/Gaza Congregations

A significant move forward though was the formation of the Tsakalane (*Rejoicing*) congregation on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1994. Tsakalane included all the IRM initiatives in the Gaza province and had Pastor Filipe Luis as its first pastor. By May 1994 there were 9 elders, 157 members and 652 catechumens of the IRM in Gaza. (PM 73.2) Pastor Filipe was supported by the DRC congregation of Skuilkrans, and Rev. Willem and Mrs. Fransie Louw were instrumental in getting them involved. (Reunião do Presbeterio de Maputo, 5/5/1994, PM 73.2.1.2; Botha Newsletter, Sept. 1994) Pastor Filipe also had regular contact with Dr. Daniel Maluleke, representative of the Uniting Reformed Church (URC), Synod of Northern Transvaal to the GSM, and a keen supporter of the work in Gaza. He also planned visits from the Shangaan speaking URC members to Mozambique. During 1995 another group from SA became involved in Gaza. "Back to the Bible" College from Baberton under leadership of Rev. P Erasmus and of the students did fruitful outreaches towards the Western part of Gaza. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 25/10/1995, # 7)

*One very big development* was the construction done on the Machava mission terrain, where the Van Vuren (engineer) and Steenkamp families were based in 1994/'95 to start faith ministries. Both knew the construction industry well and started to complete the big church building at Machava. This was made possible thanks to the contributions of Mr. and Mrs. Jan van der Berg, a business man from Pietersburg in South Africa and brother in law of Mrs. Jeanette Botha. Mr. Van der Berg almost single handedly carried the costs of the multi million rand church building. The church was inaugurated on 20 August 1995, together with a clinic and guestrooms, built by the mission active DRC congregations of Kempton Park, especially DRC Hoogland. These developments gave a new face to the IRM in the capital and membership increased. (Ibid, #6)



### **10.3.3 Ministry in Sofala**

In Beira /Dondo Rev Silambo worked faithfully till the end of 1994, when he was transferred to Niassa and Rev. Atanasio replaced him. Before that, groups from Chimoio showed interest to join the IRM and Rev. Silambo visited pockets of Christians along the Beira corridor and Sofala interior. Unfortunately, by May 1994 he reported that all these members as well as some Beira participants left with their leaders, Franque Capece and J Miti, resulting in a sharp decline in membership numbers, reaching 100. However, at the same time he also managed to start an IRM zone in Buzi, where he could congregate 40 members and 60 catechumens. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 5/5/1994, PM 72) In 1995 there was an increase again in participants under the enthusiastic ministry of Rev. Atanasio Massina, who was supported by DRC congregations of Roodekranz, White River and Kloofendal. In this process Revs. Kruger du Preez and Willem Wiid played important roles to mobilise and accompany the teams, opening work in the Inhaminga, Caia, Marromeu and Gondola areas. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 25/10/1995, #5)

## **10.4 The Need to Co-ordinate: Synodical Meetings and Ecumenism**

### **10.4.1 The 1993 Synod of Maputo**

*General Situation:* The NGO's in Mozambique were working on several fronts, busy with the reconstruction of the country, one being the re-opening of the badly damaged national road, which ran from Maputo to Beira and to other Northern Cities like Chimoio and Tete. By late February 1993 the road was re-opened up to Tete, as well as the direct road between Tete and Angonia. Although opened, the roads were still in a very bad state. It was then that pastor Botha drove 48 hours from Maputo to Vila Ulongue, with the new clinic vehicle of ACRIS, earmarked for Angonia. This was done just before the delegates of Tete and Zambesia had to travel to Maputo for the planned Synod meeting. (Bester, 2003, p 2)

Due to funds shortages it was decided to prepare the Isuzu truck to take the 15+ delegates to Maputo. For many it would have been the first time to even see Tete, let alone the rest of the country. In Tete however, things almost came to an abrupt end when customs impounded the

truck, because of its foreign registration, transporting ‘nacionais’. After much negotiation, promises and putting down a substantial deposit, the group was free to leave. Driving around the clock for two days to catch up lost time, it was an epic journey across very bad roads (one section took 11 hours’ hard drive to complete 360kms), but the 1800kms journey was completed successfully, despite sore backs and bumped heads. It also gave a vivid idea of the spoils of war; destruction as far as the eye could see. (See Gouws Newsletter, April 1993)

Again the meeting (20 March till 24 March 1993) was held in a semi-completed church building, this time in the enormous one at Machava, Maputo. The Synod meeting started with some apprehension, since the enormity of the task within Mozambique became clear to the delegates, as well as the differences in culture and ‘style’. There were also some problems within the Maputo congregation and a lack of Reformed culture was evident, as compared to the IRM in Tete-province. However things got underway and many pressing issues were tackled. All congregations were represented again, with pastors Chikakuda, Kasamba, Mlinde and Gouws responsible for up to three congregations each. All the following points come from: “Acta da Setima Reunião do Sinodo de Mphatso da IRM, Realizada em Maputo, nos dias 20 -24 de Março de 1993”

Others present:

**Theological Students:** Tito Maganga, 4<sup>th</sup> Year; Atanasio Erasmo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tome L Capece 2<sup>nd</sup>; Raimundo A Bacacheza, 1<sup>st</sup>.

**SA representatives:** Pastor J H Koch, Mission Secretary (W Cape), Dr. C M Pauw, Theologian, University of Stellenbosch, and chairman of W Cape Mission’s Committee, Pastor W F Louw, Mission Secretary (Eastern Transvaal), Prof. P. J. Robinson, Theologian University of Pretoria.

The following points were of special interest:

S 139 Pastor Jossitala was asked to contact Ricatla Theological School again concerning issues about the conduct of students and teaching about the Bible as the Word of God.

S 141 The proposal to divide the Synod as discussed by the Synodical Committee 6/12/1992, was not accepted. (The idea already existed in 1992).



- S 143 There was still a Liaison Officer needed (against backdrop of argumentation for self efficiency of indigenous churches)
- S 144 The division of Tete presbytery into two presbyteries: Presb. of Mphatso (consisting of Msanja, Kalomwe, Mawi, Mphatso, Kalichete, and Samwa) and Presb. of Benga (Benga, Mpatsa, V. Ulongue, Tete and Tumbini)
- S 148 Pastors of other Reformed Churches who wished to minister in the IRM, will first be examined (Colloquium Doctum) by the Training Commission, due to liberal theology in certain Reformed circles
- S 151 Suspension of pastors: Three pastors were suspended with immediate effect, because of irregularities. The first two were the conditionally accepted pastors from Beira, who never went for studies as was prescribed, resulting in their suspension as pastors. The case of Pastor Julio M. Cuamba, suspended for adultery was the most far-reaching. (Apart from the fact that it lead to numerous court cases and unpleasant mudslinging afterwards, it also left the Machava congregation without a Shangaan speaking pastor and the IRM without a senior local official representative to government.)
- S 153 The idea of a Bible School in Vila Ulongue was approved, as has been discussed at a Synodical Committee (Minutes...KK 573) meeting and had to be initiated in an orderly manner. Rev. Wessel Bester from the DRC mission in Swaziland was one of the candidates mentioned to start such a school. He and his wife Wika were known by the three Angonia pastors, because they received their training at Justus Mwale in Zambia, where Pastor Bester was a lecturer.
- S 159 In order to stabilize the effects of actions taken, as described in point S151, Pastor Jossitala was transferred to Maputo, but that left the Tete congregation without a pastor. For this reason Rev J Mlinde was transferred to Tete. Rev. Samuel Bessitala, who was doing his practical in Maputo and son in law of Rev. Kasamba, was transferred to Milanje to serve in the new congregation of Liyazi. This was a dramatic, but necessary shift within the IRM.

The Northern delegates made it back to Vila Ulongue in the same way as they came, with one difference: They took the Bessitala family with them back to Angonia. A visit to Vilanculos, for the delegates to see the open Indian Ocean, almost turned sour when the truck got stuck in deep sand and needed an hour and half's hard work by already stressed pastors to free it.

### 10.4.2 1994 Synod in Maputo

As a result of the rapid development of the church after 1992, as seen above, it was decided to have annual Synod meetings until the situation normalised. Therefore it was decided to have another Synodical meeting in Maputo in 1994, a request from the congregations of Southern Mozambique. This meeting was realized from 6 -10 May 1994. It was a very big sacrifice for the delegates from the North, who were the majority by far, but they made the long and uncomfortable journey to Maputo for the second year. The roads were still in disrepair, even worse after the raining season. Just before leaving for Maputo, however, the delegates learnt that President Chisanno was going to visit Ulongue and the church needed an official delegation to be present with his public address. Pastors Kasamba and Gouws were summoned to be present while the others continued with their journey. The president was handed a Bible and a photo of the Ulongue church, as well as a historical overview of the IRM. A very special moment took place when the area headmen or “Nakwawa”, interrupted the program and, in the presence of the president’s wary bodyguards, clothed the president in the honorary leopard skin, cattle shield and spear (Zulu Influence), as highest tribute to their leader. (Gouws Newsletter, June 1994)

#### 10.4.2.1 Decisions

Once everybody had arrived at the meeting, procedures got underway. A new leadership was elected after a marathon session and was more representative of the IRM’s working fields. The moderamen elected were the following: Revs. D. Chikakuda (Moderator), S. Jossitala (Vice), A. Silambo (Secretary) and L. Matanda (Actuary).

Of all the decisions taken, probably the most far-reaching concerned Theological Training. (S 195 - S 199) Synod received reports from the IRM students at Ricatla, from the lecturer Rev. Taute (annexed to Minutas, 1994), as well as Revs. Jossitala and Botha about the harsh forms of Liberal Theology endorsed at Ricatla. *(The main complains were the following: The place of Scripture as the Infallible Word of God was seriously questioned, especially by lecturers from Canada and Switzerland who were advocates of radical text critic, the drastic reducing of O.T and N.T studies in favour of contemporary theological studies, praying in the name of Sophia (Feminine God), the questioning of moral values, such as the sanctity of the marriage (immorality was rampant on the premises and no disciplinary action taken), the Jesus debate was endorsed by certain lecturers*



*etc.*) Synod took a far-reaching decision: The IRM would start its own theological school and train its own pastors at Vila Ulongue. That also meant the IRM would withdraw its lecturer, Rev Taute, as well as its students from Ricatla by the end of 1994. The GSM would be asked to transfer the lecturer's post at Ricatla to Vila Ulongue and help with the development of the Theological School. Rev. Taute was asked to negotiate with Timothy Training to form the base of the IRM's theological training, incorporating the first year Bible School training already done at Vila Ulongue by Rev. Bester. This decision was taken in all serenity and local pastors and missionaries pledged between 5 % and 10% of their salaries, to be subtracted monthly, to this end. (See: Page 100; Acta da Nona...IRM, Maio 1994, S 195 - S 199, see also #11.1.4).

Other points:

- S 170 Liazi and Thezeze were formed as congregations on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1994. Rev. Murray was sent to Milanje as missionary. (S167)
- S. 179 Benga presbytery was divided into two presbyteries, giving the Milange branch prebyterial powers, called Thumbini Presbytery. This was significant for the rapid development of the IRM in Zambesia afterwards.
- S 185 Womens leadership conference to be held at Vila Ulongue, September 1994.
- S 191 The Niassa initiative in collaboration with Promiss, to reach the Yao was accepted and placed under a sub-committee, consisting of Revs. Botha, Jossitala and Silambo.
- S194 The Synod took knowledge of Trichardt School for Christian Education that came under the protection of the IRM and belonged to the IRM.
- S200 The IRM decided to become member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council.
- S202 Various Committees were formed, of which the Youth Committee was essential in stimulating a co-ordinated youth initiative within the IRM.
- S204 The IRM concords with the Kampala Conference, that AIDS should be eradicated according to Biblical teaching.

The 1994 Synod was therefore an important Synod, because it brought together a lot of loose strings. The most important decisions however were to start the theological training at Hefsiba and to open the Niassa mission field. The meeting also showed the discomfort of some delegates with the ever expanding IRM and the new influences coming with it, as well as the enormous land the IRM was working in and the differences in culture and language between the various fields.

The meeting's common language was Portuguese, but very few Angonia (by far the majority) and even Milange delegates could speak it, therefore leaving a big section of the attendants out of proceedings, including the chairman!!

#### **10.4.3 Synodical Committees:**

The Synodical Committee now had the task of holding the strings together and did so by meeting every six months at least, usually to fall together with sessions of the IRM's Training Committee. Meetings were usually held at Vila Ulongue during June or November in order to evaluate students and approve final year candidates. With the fast expansion of ministry fields, this was almost not sufficient, but even so, meetings placed a heavy load on the already stressed leaders, because of long distances to be travelled over damaged roads. Communication was a problem as well. For a poor church it was also an expensive practise. All went well though, until September 1995 when the president called delegates from the northern parts of Mozambique and gave a last minute invitation to Rev. Jossitala for an urgent meeting. After this meeting there came a breach in confidence and eventually contributed to the formation of two Synods in 1996. (See page 113ff)

#### **10.4.4 Women's League**

Synodical meetings in the IRM are basically masculine affairs, even if it concerns women related ministries, such as the Women's League. In both the North and the South of Mozambique the IRM always laid a very strong emphasis on the necessity of the women's League. The women's league in the African church, including Reformed congregations, started off as a voluntary movement for women who are church members, in order to encourage and support one another. Soon the women's league became a most prestigious and powerful organization, since it was answering to its purpose for the many silent suffering women. In the different cultures it took different forms and dress differed, but in essence it served the same purpose. In Malawi, especially, it became an integral part of the CCAP's ministry and the women (azimayi) took pride and honour in belonging to the League (Chigwirizano). Meetings became a 'women's' sermon, and they had their own leadership, almost to a synodical level. The Women's League also served as the base from where counsel was given to new members, young women about to marry and

adolescent girls, as well as the group to take responsibility at funerals, especially of important members.

The Malawian model automatically influenced the IRM women members in Angonia and Milange, with the local Women's League basically being a copy of the CCAP's Chigwirizano, using until today the same books and structure in most places. In the South, influences came strongly from the DRC in Africa's model, but also strong influences were felt from the Presbyterian Church in Maputo and the CCM's version of the "Associação das Mulheres". (Women's Association) As happens at many structured meetings, the Chigwirizano unfortunately soon became a legalistic and book bound series of events, putting a too strong emphasis on uniform (and uniformity) and rituals, discouraging many younger and missionary women to become involved with the women's league whole heartedly.

The IRM's Synod of 1994 also addressed the issue of the women's league and ordered a Women's Conference to promote uniformity within the ranks of the IRM's congregations. (Acta da Nona Secção..., S.185) This meeting was realized on 9-12 September 1994 at Vila Ulongue and delegations of all the main areas were present. The language barrier was a big problem, but in the end unity in Christ prevailed. A national representation for the IRM was elected, with Mrs. Jenetti Bessitala as chairwoman. A new name, to demonstrate the IRM's united women's league, was given to the group: **Martha and Maria**. It referred to the two sisters of Lazurus who both served Jesus, first by abiding in His presence, but also by caring about others' needs through service. Some points, like the uniform, where cultural practice could play a more important role than principle, were left to be decided locally. Unfortunately, the name of Martha and Maria, rich in significance, never implanted itself in the northern zones and the name *Chigwirizano* continued to be used to this present day. (Botha Newsletter, September 1994, p3)

#### 10.4.5 Ecumenism

Although the IRM maintained good relationships with the CCM's member churches, it was made uneasy by some of the liberal influences within its ranks. The CCM is the governing body of Ricatla and there were strong liberal theological influences operating in both institutions, (compare p. 148) also concerning other religions. This was one of the reasons why the IRM finally decided



to start its own Theological Training. Pulling out of Ricatla was questioned by the GSM for its wisdom in terms of ecumenism. It was during this time that church leaders and associates of the *Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar* (AEAM) started meeting and planning a Mozambican branch of the AEAM. On 19 -21 May 1992, 15 different denominations, theological institutions and mission agencies, 38 church and international leaders came together to pray for and plan this new ecumenical movement amongst evangelical churches in Mozambique. This initiative was followed up by a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1992 and the "*Associação Evangelica de Moçambique*" (AEM) was founded. Pastor Botha was elected as its first secretary and was instrumental in drafting its constitution. The IRM played a major role in the functioning of the EAM in the beginning and was one of few churches that belonged to both the CCM and AEM. Later an affiliate of AEM was formed, namely SUMO, Support Unit for Mozambique. (AEAM, Update 2, p.1, & 6, p. 4-7).

## ***Chapter 11***

### **DREAMS FULFILLED: 1993 -1995**

#### **11.1 Hefsiba**

##### **11.1.1 Birth of a Vision**

Since the start of the Ulongue mission, Pastor Botha visited Angonia regularly. As in 1991, he visited Ulongue again at the end of 1992 with members of his family. The visit was important however for another reason. The good relationship between Rev Botha and the ‘administrador’ of Ulongue, Mr. Wezalo, led to the oral confirmation that the application to enlarge the church’s terrain, done in February that year, was authorised. (Botha Newsletter, February 1993) Sitting in the half-finished manse at Vila Ulongue, early in January 1993, the Botha family members prayed together for God’s will for this big piece (11,4hs) of land. The vision of a theological school and teachers college was confirmed and it was then that Griet Gouws felt that the name should be Hefsiba (My Delight is in Her), according to Isaiah 62: 1-4. It reflected the circumstance of the IRM and Rev. Botha took the proposal to the Synod that was to take place in Maputo later that year and it was accepted. (See “Actas...IRM, 3/1993, S 153; Gouws Nuusbrief, April 1993)

##### **11.1.2 Hefsiba’s Buildings Started**

At the Synod meeting of 1993 in Maputo, the go ahead was given to put the structures in place for Hefsiba Bible School. (Minutas do Sinodo...3/1993, S153) The processing of the documents in Tete, started in 1992, was finalized by the end of May 1993, after several visits paid by Revs. Jossitala, Gouws and Botha to the Department of Agriculture and other offices. The official document was only handed over some time afterwards, but at least the area was conceded to the IRM, measured off and indicated on the town map. Assurance was already given by the end of 1992 by the director of Tete’s provincial Agriculture department, Mr. Matsinhe that building could precede. Rev. Kobus Koch, the new mission secretary of the Western Cape, felt funds were a

major factor and asked that suitable and cost effective plans had to be drawn up for the houses of the Bester family and the students.

At the same Synod meeting where Rev. Bester was chosen to be the first lecturer for Hefsiba, it was also decided that the outreach team going to Ulongue would build the new house for the lecturer as far as possible. In June 1993, DRC congregations of Worcester got involved into outreaches and decided to start building the house for Rev. Wessel Bester at Vila Ulongue. The team arrived with six mini-buses and two trucks to transport the sixty plus people, building material, food and extras to do the building and evangelism. The team stood under the leadership of a very capable administrator, Natalie Roelofse, who in the end led six teams to Mozambique, all of them very big teams. They also sent two professional people ahead to prepare the ground work. First Mr. Andries de Wet came for carpentry, and later Mr. Piet du Plessis, who became full-time builder at Ulongue in 1996, arrived to prepare the foundations. (Gouws Newsletter, September 1993, Bester Notes, p 2-3)

#### ***11.1.2.1 Finishing the task***

Housing big teams like that was quite a problem with a restricted and scheduled water-supply from the town council. The same supply had to be used for the building and brick-making and there was no “campsite” to accommodate these teams. After the two weeks though the house of Rev. Bester was halfway finished, the church got some extra roofing and the Jesus-film was projected in the main centres of Angonia. However, the team felt that they had the obligation to finish the Besters’ house, which was to arrive in December the same year. So by September 1993 a smaller team arrived under the leadership of Rev. Hans Roux (one of the Roux brothers involved with the IRM) and Mr. Chris Heyns. After many hours of dedicated work they finished “Villa Worcester”. Of importance also about that outreach was the fact that Mr. Gerhard Van der Meulen came with the team, later the first full-time missionary builder of the IRM after the re-admittance of DRC missionaries into Mozambique. (Ibid)

#### **11.1.3 Hefsiba kicks off**

After the 1993 Synod, negotiations took place between the IRM and Timothy Training International to use their material as base for the Bible School’s curriculum. Negotiations between



Revs. Botha, Bester and IRM representatives on the one side and Johan Gouws and Rev. Chilaule of Timothy Training on the other, took place to use Timothy's material for the one year formation of "spiritual workers". By 1994 the material was in place, but the structures for a Bible School not at all. Even so, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 1994 the school was officially opened and six students reported. Two students arrived later, but all had to stay (Sleep, cook and study) and be tutored within the church building, where a busy congregational program was running as well. Their families had to stay at home till conditions allowed. The first students to be allowed were F. Cuboia, Gettinala Mgwagwa, Manasse Fulassitala (Chisale), Luis Mbewe, Aizac Phiri and Jacob Rambique (who helped Rev. Bester with translating). E. Samuteni and Phiri arrived later. Three students returned to their homes during the first months.

Rev. Bester soon discovered that the students' doctrinal base was insufficient and a basic Reformed building block, such as assurance of faith, was missing in quite a few candidates. The language used for teaching was Chichewa and it created problems with some of the southern Mozambican students. Progress was therefore slow, the main reason why they couldn't complete the course within the first year. The same was experienced with the women. By May 1994 the first house was completed and the students could bring their families to Vila Ulongue. One student stayed in town. This meant that 28 souls were staying in the biggish, multi roomed house, but some women had never stayed in a western setup before. It was in this situation that Mrs Wika Bester started to put the women's course in place. She gave attention to literacy, (which had been a big problem with the wives of the candidates up to this day) hygiene and handwork skills, apart from establishing a basic bible and doctrinal knowledge. (Bester, History Notes, 2003, p 3)

#### **11.1.4 Hefsiba becomes a Theological School**

While lecturing at Ricatla, Rev. Botha stated several times that the influence of liberal theology at that Seminary was a big concern and damaging to the IRM's students. (Varia: "Verslag van die Skakelbeampte aan GSM: 1990 -1993; Botha Nuusbriefe) However, things were forced to a point when the new lecturer for the IRM at Ricatla, Rev. Manie Taute wrote a very damning report about the situation at Ricatla to the IRM's Synod and to the "GSM." The students attending the meeting also gave their witnesses, as well as Revs. Samuel Jossitala. Both reports and accounts were lamenting the very harsh forms of liberal theology advocated at Ricatla, and the consequent

bad moral values among the students. The feeling was that the IRM with its conservative theological viewpoint and high emphasis on moral standards was not welcome there any more. Various attempts to address the issue have resulted into nothing, if not victimization. (Taute, *Teologies Skool, Ricatla*, 5/1994, see page 148) As Synod contemplated in shocked silence, the logical decision was taken: Start the IRM's own theological training at Hefsiba. To that end the IRM was to withdraw its lecturer and students from Ricatla by the end of 1994. (*Acta da Nona...IRM*, Maio 1994, S 195 - S 199)

### **11.1.5 Team Effort**

As mentioned, this decision was not lightly taken. At the same Synod meeting of 1994, Rev Botha asked the Synodical delegates if they really believed that the IRM needed a school, so much that they would contribute towards it. Although the local pastors received an allowance from SA, their general financial situation was very bad; they already couldn't support their families sufficiently with the small salaries (R400-R500/month) they were earning. A paper went round and all the pastors put in writing their pledge to contribute to the project on a monthly base - to be deducted beforehand from their salaries. It showed the IRM's leaders heart for the cause and appealed to many donors to help with Hefsiba's development afterwards. This was a strong argument in obtaining more funds from external sources and the local pastors continued with their contributions, up to the year 2000, even afterwards. (Ibid) One big contribution already came during 1994, by a German Christian organisation, *Hilfe für Bruder*. With their support it was possible to build Rev Taute's and a student's house at Vila Ulongue. So by end of 1994, things started falling in place, also the planned course in collaboration with Timothy Training. Two things however were not in place yet: It was clear that the first year students, who came to Ulongue for training, were not going to finish in time. They had to finish the first year course before they could continue. Also, the building program (the Taute's and student houses) was lagging behind. (Bester, *History Notes*, p 3)

#### ***11.1.5.1 Linking with Potchefstroom Theological School***

Even so, Rev. Taute and his family arrived at Vila Ulongue, in January 1995, with most of their belongings, and immediately set to work with the theological training. In the beginning they had to move in with the Besters and the church flat (the entire family in a two-man flat). Because the

first years students had to continue in 1995 to finish their level, time was available for curriculum development and adjustments; it also meant no new students were taken in 1995. (Ibid; Botha Newsletter, February 1995) The curriculum development and the link with Potchefstroom took place as follows: It started in 1993 when Rev. Botha and the Mphatso moderamen visited the Mission Office in Cape Town as well as the Reformed theological schools of Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom. On the grounds of their experiences, the moderamen felt to explore possibilities of future collaboration with Potchefstroom Theological Faculty. In June 1994 Revs. Samuel Jossitala and Manie Taute, visited the Potchefstroom and Pretoria faculties again. It was just after the May 1994 Synodical decision to establish a full theological school in Vila Ulongue and made contact with a University and accreditation for its courses more urgent. The same issue was pursued with the Bloemfontein faculty. Both Bloemfontein and Pretoria Theological Faculties mentioned a lot of difficulties in accrediting the future Hefsiba and did not encourage further contact. Potchefstroom in the person of Prof. Fika van Rensburg immediately made work of the request. They requested the registration of a new BA Theology degree from the SA Government that paved the way for accredited Bible Schools to register their students at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. This approval was granted in 1996. (Taute, summary of Hefsiba history, 2003)

#### **11.1.6 Back to Basics**

The curriculum development was done in close co-operation with Potchefstroom and, as mentioned, had the Timothy Training International as its base. Rev. Wessel Bester was responsible for the first part of the course, especially the first year's preparation for further studies and Rev. Taute the latter part of the curriculum (Commissão do Treino, 6/10/1994, C.T 212 & 225). It was a very difficult process for most women: Many were illiterate and found the modernised (brick houses, with ablution and electricity) setup a little intimidating. In these sometimes frustrating conditions, Mrs. Anneli Taute started the Biblical tuition of the women and Mrs. Wika Bester started literacy and handwork skills, because she had more access to the women by way of her good knowledge of Chichewa and the culture.

During 1995 more houses were built and the original house could be inaugurated as a classroom and library. In this manner Hefsiba Theological Seminary was inaugurated on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1995,



with members of the IRM's Training Committee, high government officials and visitors from Nkhoma present. (Acta da Comissão Sinodal..15-16/6/1995, C.S. 328) The students who continued with theological studies were: Luis Mbewe, Eurico Samuteni, Manassa Fulassitala, Ferdinand Cuboia, Gettinala Chibongo. They were the first pastors to be placed within the IRM, at the end of 1998 who had received their full training at Hefsiba. The other students, who had only finished their first year studies, received a diploma enabling them to become evangelists or teachers within the congregations. Tome Capece, who was in his final year at Ricatla, however also came to Vila Ulongue and was the first student from Hefsiba to be ordained as a pastor of the IRM at the end of 1995 (Comissao do Treino, 23/11/1995, CT 278).

The students who were accepted for 1996 were the following:

IRM Students:

Samuel Reginate Matunda (Milange), Cardoso Paulo Labuquene (Milange), Horacio M Nefitale (Vila Ulongue), Noe Muandiona Khoza (Mphatsa), Timoteo Fabiao (Msanja), Luis Vicente (Mphatso), Nataniel Jolasi (Samwa), Jonassi Tenessi Tembo (Mutarara-never showed up), Joao Pequenino (Milange), Jaco Rambiki Nkhoma (Milange),

There were also students from the Igreja Jesus é o Caminho, Igreja Evangelica de Cristo, Zambesia (Alberto Nahoma, Alvaro Colher) and Dorothea Mission (Joseph Momba), who did their studies with own burseries. (Ibid)

Although the entire group didn't manage to complete their studies in 1999, they became one of the most influential groups within the IRM to date, providing two moderators of the IRM Synods. This group included four candidates from Zambesia, indicating the IRM's sincerity to address the critical shortages in pastoral care experienced in that province.

## **11.2 Other Ministries**

### **11.2.1 The Afrikaans ministry**

Since the early 1990's, as the economic rebuilding of Mozambique was becoming a fact and trade with South Africa increased drastically, there was a big influx of South Africans into Mozam-

bique, especially Southern Mozambique. The opening of numerous holiday resorts was initiated and developed by South Africans, many ex-military, as was a horde of other professional services of which building and construction (roads) were the biggest. In all these activities there were many Afrikaans speaking people who made Mozambique their new home. Some were active Christians, others were not at all, but through the initiative of a South African High Commission (Later embassy) member and a friend of Rev. Botha, a certain Mr Olivier, the need for services in Afrikaans was addressed. In the beginning it was held in the Maputo caravan park, where many of the South Africans stayed, in the house of Mr. Johan Senekal. Amongst them were the founders of Joaco Cimentos, Hanlie and Jaco Bothma, (who were married in Maputo) and made big contributions to the work of the IRM, the last being 750 bags of cement donated in 2003. Rev. Botha became the spiritual father of this group, but visiting pastors were also involved and the chaplains of the SA Defence Force from Nelspruit became regular visitors. (Oral Traditions about Afrikaans Ministry – J Senekal, H Bothma, J Botha, Rev. J. Olivier)

### **11.2.2 Medical Work:**

As mentioned earlier, it was the idea from the very beginning to have a holistic mission approach in the fields where the IRM operated and this vision amongst others led to the formation of ACRIS (See p. 73-75). In this way ACRIS then became the mouthpiece for medical work of the IRM and the body through which they brought in missionaries, in collaboration with the different mission offices. The first two doctors to come to Mozambique in this manner were Drs. Estelle Fröhling and Pieter Ernst, who were to run medical ministries in Gaza province, mainly around Chibuto and Chokwe. After an initial orientation in Maputo and a long wait to get approved (one year plus), they could start with their ministries in July 1993. Both did excellent work (Dr. Ernst even did operations by torch and lamplight) and Dr. Fröhling also started Bible studies amongst hospital personnel. {Compare Newsletters: News from Chokwe (Ernst), Bush News (Fröhling)} Unfortunately the work didn't benefit the IRM much, since the local church leaders didn't try to accommodate these ministries efficiently into their congregations. Dr Estelle Fröhling had a closer relationship with the IRM, and made part of the Synod's Medical Committee. (Botha Newsletter, Aug. 1993; Minutes of IRM Medical Committee, 14/6/1995) Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic redtape her excellent medical services were lost to Mozambique and she went to Angola after

being frustrated, although being highly qualified. Dr. Ernst is still operating in Chokwe until today. (J Botha: Verslag van Mediese Werk van IRM, 1999, p 1)

It was also through ACRIS that the first two doctors for the medical witness of the IRM in Northern Mozambique, were brought in, namely Drs. Peg Cumberland (Vila Ulongue) and Suzanna Roberts (Milange) both from Britain. They had a special interest in community and preventative health care, rather than in specialized medical practise. Dr. Cumberland started to work at Vila Ulongue in March 1993 and Dr. Roberts and Salome Greef at Milange in September 1993. (Botha Newsletters, Aug and December 1993) A third medical assistant, Donald Mackey (Irish) with his wife Ester and son also reported for service at Vila Ulongue, seconded to the IRM via Promiss of South Africa. They had to wait however for some time to get recognition from the government for their kind of training. (Ibid)

In 1994 ACRIS decided to divide all their projects into 1) Umbrella and 2) Functional projects, meaning the following: 1) Administrative involvement, but not financially and directly responsible and 2) Total Responsibility. Many of the IRM health projects were Umbrella projects, but most of all, the one at Vila Ulongue. (Minutes – Vila Ulongue concerning Medical Work, 26/12/1994, # 1) The programs started and developed by Dr. Peg Cumberland, a hard worker and a strong advocate of preventative community health, are still running to date. In Milanje dr. Roberts and Salome Greef also rendered good services, although Dr. Roberts didn't approve of the IRM's policy on medical care. In both cases the position of village health agents became an issue, the church leaders feeling they should be Christians, as where the doctors and organisations like CRWRC (Christian Reformed World Relief Committee) didn't deem it necessary. (Minutes of meeting held at Vila Ulongue to discuss working relationships between the IRM Health Committee and CRWRC, #7-9) During the same year CRWRC, that was primarily running an agricultural and literacy project in the Benga and Mphatso Presbyteries through their missionaries, Wayne and Judy Miedema also became involved in the Health teaching programs. The health team at Ulongue consisted of the mentioned missionaries and four Christian Mozambican health workers: Dausse, Lemmejasse, Fatima and Lukrecia. (Minutes – Vila Ulongue concerning Medical Work, 26/12/1994, # 2.5, 14/6/1995, # 5.1; Minutes of meeting held at Vila Ulongue to discuss working relationships between the IRM Health Committee and CRWRC, #7-9, 14, II.6) Another initiative was the "Eye tours" undertaken by dr. Chris Blignaut from Nkhoma hospital



and organised by ACRIS; one of the first was to Cuamba in 1994, where Salome Greef assisted him and the team. (Van der Merwe Newsletter, Dec. 1994)

In 1995 the IRM's involvement in Health Ministries was enlarged. First of all Dr. Johan Eloff arrived at Vila Ulongue to take over from Dr. Cumberland, but was to be more involved in the local hospital, while D. Mackey were to take over the mobile clinics and primary health care. In July the same year, Mrs. Estelle du Plessis also joined the team and later became involved in both the hospital and community health services. She made invaluable contributions, especially after the Mackeys and Dr. Eloff left. (Minutes – Vila Ulongue concerning Medical Work, 26/12/1994, # 2.1- 2.4; Bester History Notes, p. 3) The IRM also got involved with the ACRIS functional project at Cuamba, where DRC missionary doctors Murray and Cheryl Louw were placed and supported by Tear Fund. They arrived there in May 1995 and were primarily involved in the government hospital. (Newsletter: Murray and Cheryl Louw, Junie 1995; November 1995) In the meantime (1194) Miss S. Greeff from Milange moved to Cuamba as well, leaving the Milange project non-functioning, since Dr. Roberts also left. (Newsletter S Greef: Januarie 1995; Minutes of IRM Medical Committee, 14/6/1995, # 5)

The IRM's health involvement in Mozambique expanded during this time and IRM missionaries and health workers became very familiar names in their areas of operation. Mrs. Nicky van der Merwe started a clinic at Muapula, which was further developed by a German couple Andreas and Almut Rose, sponsored by Hilfe fur Bruder. Hilfe was also supporting an ACRIS initiative in Ile, Zambesia province, where Drs. Klaus and Elfriede Leihkauf were serving. (Christeliche Fachkrafte International, Marz 1995, p1) In Gaza, Chibuto, a New Zealand veterinary started with primary health care and teaching, together with a Mozambican couple and IRM members, Ruben and Isabella Maibassi. Mr. and Mrs. Maibassi became one of the longest serving medical personnel of the IRM and did excellent work, presenting a combined health and spiritual teaching program. (Botha Newsletter, 1996; Verslag: J Botha, 1999, # 3)

### **11.2.3 Trichardt School for Christian Education and Servir Moçambique**

Another ministry that was linked to the IRM during this time was the church took control of a private school, "Trichardt School for Christian Education". The School came under the church's

authority between March and June 1993. A board of directors was appointed by the IRM and a constitution drafted to give it legal grounds. Although the school was registered as a non-lucrative organisation, the Trichardt School supported the IRM with various projects through the years. Mr de Wet, a highly qualified Science teacher and dedicated Christian leader, took over the operation of the school in the position as headmaster, seeing it as an opportunity to be become acquainted with the Mozambican educational system. In 1994 Synod approved this take-over. (Acta da Nona...IRM, Maio 1994, S 194)

What was the importance of this take-over? For one it gave precious insight into and contacts within the workings of the Educational Department of the country, knowledge later very useful for the process of legalising Hefsiba. The biggest asset however was the steady flow of teachers who came to teach and then became involved with the work of the IRM. Teachers like Petria Theron, Anine Steyn, Hester Botha, Jac en Hessie Smit and others later became full-time missionaries of the IRM, but also the teachers in the beginning formed the foundation from where the Afrikaans ministry was launched. The school also constantly gave support to the IRM, especially to the New Synod later, in terms of finances, building and infrastructure, to this very day. (Interview with Mr. B de Wet, Maputo, 2003; Botha Newsletter, August 1993)

Another ministry that influenced the IRM's development positively later was the Kingdom Bussiness Organization, SERVIR Moçambique of which Promiss and IRM leaders were co-founders in March 1995. The IRM and Servir Moçambique had joint projects in Chiconono and Muapula and later Servir also contributed substancially for the other projects. (Projek Niassa, p 3)

## **11.3 Missionaries**

### **11.3.1 Big Influx**

In order to address above mentioned ministry possibilities, appeals were made to many churches and believers for help and personnel, which proved most fruitful. By the end of 1993 several missionaries presented themselves for service in Mozambique, especially in the Western Cape.

- 1) The first to arrive by beginning of 1993 was Rev Frits van der Merwe, together with his wife Nicolene and their children, Ansie and Willem. Rev. Van der Merwe, accepted the call to minister within the Igreja Evangelica de Cristo (IEC), Nampula Synod, and would join Rev. Andries Schwartz. After many delays, the Van der Merwes were sent out by the DRC Sentraal congregation from Port Elizabeth, under the guidance of Eastern Cape Mission Office's Secretary, Rev Giep Louw. (Rev. Louw was also the person who got the pension fund for the IRM pastors in order, together with others such as Rev. K. Koch and P. Botha.) The Van der Merwes settled at Cuamba and were involved with the training of the leaders and ministry within the Igreja Evangelica de Cristo.
- 2) In Maputo Riette Cilliers and Leendert van der Linde were helping Rev. and Mrs. Botha with the heavy load of Administration in Maputo. The Trichardt School also brought in new personnel under protection of the IRM, many of whom became involved in IRM ministries. Another person who became part of the IRM family during this time and who had an important knowledge of the Mozambican administrative system was Miss Maria Helena de Matos. Her contributions and counsel concerning legal and linguistic issues over the years were very valuable, up to this day (Botha Newsletter, August 1993, p1-2; Sept. 1994, p 2)
- 3) Next up was Dr. Peg Cumberland who arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March at Ulongue to start the medical work of the IRM in close collaboration with the IRM. She was followed by the Mackeys, who were sent out by PROMISS (Professional people with a Mission), via the Western Cape Missions Office. They were allocated to Vila Ulongue for medical work, but had to wait a long time for their approval as medical staff. With their arrival in May 1993 at Vila Ulongue, Donald Mackey helped with the building program in the beginning. A part time missionary during this time was Mrs. Kietie Smit and all the missionaries used the Gouws' manse and wooden hut as base and house
- 4) During September 1993 Dr. Roberts and Nursing Sister Salome Greef settled at Milange after passing orientation trials in Maputo. (Botha Newsletter, August 1993, p1-2)
- 5) In December more missionaries arrived at Vila Ulongue: First to arrive were the Bester family (5 December), who had to start the Hefsiba Bible School. They were of the few missionaries to occupy a completed house, but had to wait a while for their belongings to arrive at Vila. Mr Gerhard van der Meulen, who reported at Vila Ulongue by the 18<sup>th</sup> December had to take up the enormous building challenge that laid ahead. By the 28<sup>th</sup>



December 1993 the last of the Ulongue “influx” took place, when the Miedema’s from Canada and supported by CRWRC (Christian Reformed World Relief Committee) arrived.

- 6) There were also missionaries sent to other fields of the IRM. Some of them received further orientation and training before coming to Maputo. Rev. Danie Murray (Milange), Petria Theron, Anine Steyn, the Van Vuren, Steenkamp and Hill families all arrived at Machava mission station at the beginning of 1994. At that stage the mission was still undeveloped and all stayed in primitive/temporal housing. Rev. Manie Taute and his family had also moved from South Africa to Machava by March 1994, staying in a pre-fabricated house with his entire family. This development helped the Maputo church to a large extent, especially after Rev. Taute started visiting the congregations in Gaza, as well as helping the Afrikaans ministry amongst the South Africans who came to establish themselves in Mozambique. In Cuamba Almut Krúkels joined the Van der Merwes. (Botha Newsletter, December 1993; September 1994; Bester, Notes, p 2)
- 7) During 1995 Dr Johan and Alett Eloff (Ulongue), Piet and Estelle du Plessis (Ulongue), Knoetze family (Cuamba), Dr Stephanie Herron (Gaza) and the the Rose Seck couple (Ulongue for Muapula) also joined the IRM missionary personnel, while others like Miedemas and Peg Cumberland left. (Botha Newsletter, 1996, Van der Merwe Newsletter, Febr.1995; Knoetze, 2003)

All these entrees meant a big increase in mission activity, but also an increased straint on the IRM leadership, especially on the Liaison Officer, Rev. Botha. A joint meeting seemed necessary, in order for all to know about the IRM’s general mission situation.

### **11.3 2 The First IRM Missionary Conference (1994)**

By September 1994 most of the new missionaries were settled in their new fields of ministry and it was at this stage that the need for many to have a general picture was addressed. The conference, which was sponsored by the two Missions Offices of Western Cape and Eastern Transvaal, was held at Cape Mclear, at Lake Malawi in September 1994. The aim of the Conference was for DRC missionaries and others in IRM related ministries, to exchange their expectations, limitations and visions in the light of Gods Word.

Almost all the invited missionaries, forty adults and twenty children, attended and some became familiarised with the Northern parts of the country for the first time. Participants reflected on the Word, followed by corporate prayer for the different fields. It was a very necessary experience to create unity amongst the various groups of ministry and to come and know the IRM's setup in general. Rev. Chikakuda was also present and could explain what the IRM leadership wanted from the missionaries within the Mozambican situation and what to expect from the fields where the missionaries operated. The conference was also an indication of the very rapid growth within the IRM and the Mozambican church as a whole: There were four times more missionaries in 1994, than in the beginning of 1991. A very strong sermon was given by Rev. Minnaar on the last morning, calling missionaries to come to terms with the African situation and be faithful witnesses to Christ in all matters. (Botha Newsletter, November 1994)

## **11.4 The Support:**

### **11.4.1 Teams**

Everything previously mentioned were significant internal developments, but a factor that needs to be mentioned, must be the support from the DR Churches from South Africa and abroad. All the members of the "GSM" really helped their Mozambican sister in many ways, but it was especially the case with the "white" DRC congregations. The biggest proof of this was and still is the phenomenal thrust of outreach teams during holidays and otherwise, that arrived to aid the Mozambicans in their spiritual or physical needs. The witnesses of how God provided in the IRM's needs through these teams and how He blessed team-members' faith with miracles, are so numerous, that it is worth a study on its own. There were pitfalls as well, but in general it can be concluded that the teams to Mozambique contributed immensely to the development of the IRM, especially during the early stages. The number of teams increased annually until 2000, always helping the IRM to break new ground or structures. (Compare article in "Die Kerkbode", 27/6/2004 concerning outreaches to Mozambique)

A few groups that became regular outreachers during this era need mentioning. Tulbagh and Worcester Presbyteries organised some of the biggest teams and since 1993/4 made the annual

voyage (“trek”) to Mozambique, either to Angonia or Tete city. It became a regular sight to see teams (not only of the DRC, but also other churches going into Africa north of the Zambesi) crossing the Tete bridge during the winter holidays. These convoys resembled the old “Trekking” to an extent, only with modern horses and carts, alias “bakkies/kombis and trailers”. The biggest single initiative of one congregation must be that of the DRC Stellenbosch Student Congregation in June 1993. The overall organizer was Mr. Johan Beukes and he and other “old timers” mobilized four subteams who reached out to Maputo, Gaza, Chibuto-Beira and Tete city, doing evangelism, building and showing the Jesus film. The one team erected 3 churchstructures in Gaza and Sofala provinces (totaling 3000 km over very bad roads) during the two weeks. (Report of HJ Beukes, “Mosambiek Werkersaksie”, Stellenbosch, Sept. 1993)

#### **11.4.2 Combined efforts**

These kinds of initiatives also encouraged other congregations to become involved and eventually led to new partnerships in obtaining a common goal. One such partnership was the “Niassa Komitee”, launched by the Presbytery of Bellville and DRC Vredelust in December 1994 and eventually got congregations such as DRC Saldanha, Stellenbosch, Riversdale and others on board. Promiss (in the person of Dr. Stephanus Snyman) played a major role as facilitator in this process and was an important example for similar ventures in the future. (Projek Niassa – “Oorryp Oesland” 1995, p. 3, 8; Promiss Pamphlet) Another such combined effort that became a stable support group, was the three congregations (initially) that took responsibility for the Milange area and Zambesia province. The DRC congregations of Helderberg, Stellenberg and Springbok (North Cape Prov.) became involved primarily to support Rev. D Murray, but soon expanded their involvement. To date (since 1994) this combined effort has been very supportive of the IRM’s work in Zambesia and Mr. Bertus van Schalkwyk from Somerset West became one of the major facilitators.

In many ways these initiatives were well orchestrated by the mission offices and the fatherly support of Revs. K Koch, (W Cape), Willem Louw, Andries Louw (East. Tvl.) and Giep Louw (East. Cape). Rev. Koch regularly visited Mozambique during these days, co-ordinating these efforts, helping to create a wonderful support base. The Western Cape Mission Office started to give out a regular newsletter, “Nuus uit Mosambiek”, apart from their general newsletter “Die



Getuie”, that was distributed in congregations. Another initiative needs specific mentioning here: The Sunday School (Kinderkrans) project of the Western Cape DRC Synod, later followed by others, helped with fundraising via the children for Clinics and transport in Mozambique. Many letters to the missionaries and big amounts of money were sent to Mozambique to help with the work, such as the medical warehouse and Clinic at Vila Ulongue, which was built only with money from the “Kinderkrans” contributions. (See: Touleiertjie, Nr. 140, 1993, p 1-3) The “Kinderkrans Tannies” under leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Koch visited Mozambique in April 1994 to become more acquainted with the situation first-hand. A similar project was later launched by the DRC of Western Cape’s Womens Association, called “Geboue Vir Vroue”. They succeeded in collecting big amounts of money and material for the bettering of Hefsiba’s buildings, especially those concerned with the women’s training.

The main co-ordinating body during this time however was still the GSM which counselled the IRM on several issues, such as the decision of an own theological school, liason Officer and the formation of two synods. Regular meetings were still necessary to handle the big demands of the young and fast expanding church and to motivate the church to bring in new partners. During this era, in the Northern Provinces, it was mainly congregations like DRC Kempton Hoogland, Krugersdorp and Roodekrans communities and DRC Skuilkrans in Pretoria that played an anchor role in supporting the IRM. In Mpumalanga, the best situated geographically for supporting the southern IRM congregations, enthusiasm was remarkable subdued, except for a few individuals who became involved along the Krugerpark’s boundery, like DRC congregations of Whiteriver and Skukuza. (Reunião do Presb. de Maputo, 25/10/1995, # 6-7)

One observation needs to be made here and needs further study: The positive influence of the receiving field on those who reached out and supported the IRM. It was and is a re-iteration, a living example of the notion, “It is better to give than to receive.” Lamin Sanneh in his book, “Encountering the West..” refers to this phenomenon as “Intercultural Critique” (Sanneh, 1993, p.162 ff), quoting from the arguments of the scholar Leslie Newbegin. According to this argument, the returning missionary will look at his or her home situation with a new and adjusted perspective as was prompted by the dynamics of the gospel in a new setting and culture. This was to a lesser extend true of many short term outreachers (and returning missionaries), who came to appreciate anew certain faith values and become critical of the so-called developed and christian

standard back at home, if not increasingly uncomfortable with the high level of materialism encountered in the home church.

### **11.4.3 Other Support**

It was not only the DRC of South Africa that supported the IRM though. Mention has been made of how the CCAP, RCZ, DRC in Africa/Uniting Reformed Church, CRWRC and others like “Hilfe fur Bruder”, ZOA and World Relief became involved with ministries of the IRM. Apart from the physical support, a lot of spiritual support was given to the workers in the field and constant and continuous prayers went up throughout SA and other places for the work in Mozambique. Through newsletters feedback was given to concerned supporters, and many spiritual battles were won because of the faithful prayers of believers “back home.” In 1993 the CRWRC (North American Reformed Churches’ Relief Branch) became involved with the IRM, via Nkhoma CCAP and the person of Mr. Roland van Es and especially in the Benga and Mphatso Presbyteries. They started off with diaconal development and agriculture projects, but also helped with literacy and health projects later on. CRWRC handed over a three bedroom house at Ulongue mission, when their missionaries left in 1995. (CRWRC – Mozambique report, 4/1995)

In 1995 another significant initiative saw the light. Although Nkhoma CCAP has faithfully supported the IRM through the years, there was a decline due to Mozambique’s internal problems and the sensitivity of certain issues. However, Nkhoma CCAP was still the best situated of all involved to help the IRM in the Tete and Zambesia provinces. During its 1995 Synodical meeting the CCAP made a re-assessment of its involvement with the IRM and decided to enlarge its mission involvement in Mozambique. For this purpose a Committee for Missions in Mozambique was approved and Dr. Ryk van Velden from Lingadzi Congregation in Lilongwe was appointed chairman. At that stage Rev. LKR Matanda was already well established in Milange and together with Revs. Bessitala and Murray had to serve four congregations with more than a thousand members each. By 1995 the prospect of short-term outreaches and mission projects started to catch on since it was less costly and within reach of the average congregation. One such project was to send translators for the Helderberg outreach team of 1995 to Milange. Next was to send a short term evangelist to Furancungo as it was nearby the Malawian border and Nkhoma as well. Evangelist Chagomenera started working amongst the many returnees around Furancungo over a

wide and inhospitable area. He was given a motorbike by Nkhoma Synod to better reach the people. (Nuusbrief uit Malawi, Maart 1996, p 2)

By the end of 1995, the IRM has drastically expanded its internal infrastructure, especially in terms of re-occupying its old congregations after the war and normalising its ecclesiastical functioning. At Vila Ulongue it not only established a fast growing congregation, it also managed to start Hefsiba, its own Bible School and Theological training. Similar initiatives resulted in the Afrikaans ministry in Maputo, Trichardt School for Christian Education and Servir Mozambique, as well as initiatives into the North East, reaching out to the unreached peoples with the gospel. This resulted in a big influx of missionary personnel, teams and external funding, all helping the IRM to reconstruct and materialise dreams; held long by some of the older members.



## **Chapter 12**

### **NEW FRONTIERS: 1994-1996**

#### **12.1 The Yao Outreach**

##### **12.1.1 Becoming Involved**

During 1994 -1995 the findings of Inserve (*Institute of Strategic Services*) about the Yao of Niassa were being channelled into plans of action. Inserve introduced their conclusions about the Yao to PROMISS (*Professional People with a Mission*) and Global Careers (a related institution) for them to mobilise the church in reaching the Yao people. This research report was handed to the IRM (Minutas ....Maputo, 5/1994, S 191), and in May 1994, directly after the Synod meeting in Maputo, an IRM delegation, led by Revs. Pieter Botha and S. Jossitala and Inserve made a joint reconnaissance trip into Niassa to investigate the situation. They found it to be an “overripe mission field” and through the Holy Spirit’s guidance came upon the village Chiconono, situated high on the Niassa plateau and considered the birth cradle of the Yao people. They returned and very enthusiastically reported to the IRM leaders. By 27 May 1994 the following decisions were taken by the moderamen:

Rev. Botha was requested by the IRM to oversee the work until the Synod appointed a pastor for that area. Funds had to be secured to support Rev. Kajawa of Malawi, since he speaks Yao.

Rev. A Silambo from Beira congregation was proposed to go to Niassa, as soon as housing could be finalised.

The IRM, via its moderamen, would request the GSM to call Rev Andries Schwartz in Quelimane to go to Niassa.

Promiss was requested to assist the IRM with the effort in Niassa. Details on how this would be done still needed resolve. (Comissão Sinodal..., 27/5/1994; Projek Niassa – “Oorryp Oesland”, p. (i), 3)

This led to a joint outreach into Niassa in July 1994, representing all above mentioned people and institutions, as well as some other interested parties. Amongst them was Aubi Banda, who made an invaluable contribution as translator and evangelist.

### **12.1.2 Who are the Yao people?**

The Yao lived between the Luyenda and Revuma and came into contact with the Arab merchants who established commercial posts all along the African East Coast as early as 700 AC. The Portuguese started doing the same from 1498, which eventually led to clashes with the Arabs, who drove the Portuguese back southwards to Cabo Delgado in 1698. A main commercial route for slaves, gold, ivory etc. from the African interior still went through the Yao's territory, who became the main merchants of these "products" (especially slaves and ivory) from the African interior to the East Coast. In this manner they became very powerful, economically and politically, dominating the Niassa province. Via migrating pockets this influence was extended to Malawi, dominating tribes across a big area. In 1866 David Livingstone found them very much influenced by Arab and Muslim traditions, as well as to be the most active slave merchants. The Yao took to Islam by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although it was a "folk Islam", heavily mixed with traditional practises and beliefs. It could have been encouraged by the "Slave War" in Malawi, where the British Colonial powers, missionaries and the Nguni tribe fought back the Arabs, Yao and Swahili merchants. This struggle with slave-traders was later, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, taken up by the Portuguese and in this way the power of the Yao was diminished. (Projek Niassa, p 3ff; "Yao Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1 p.1)

### **12.1.3 Making Contact**

Niassa, however remained an undeveloped province during Portuguese rule and was not actively developed, as some other provinces, although it had excellent potential. After independence it became the Siberia of Mozambique, even described as the "*forgotten province of Africa*" by the likes of the BBC. Through its isolation and weak infrastructure many of its tribes remained unreached with the gospel of Jesus, until the 1990's. With this in mind a combined outreach between the IRM, Inserve and Global Careers was launched to Muembe and Chiconono in July 1994, mainly to do medical work, prayer and evangelism where possible. Prior to the teams visit

for example, no medical doctor had visited Chiconono for six years and this outreach made a profound impact on the communities visited and laid the foundation for other visits during 1994-5, which were all well received. (Projek Niassa, p. 3)

#### 12.1.4 Chiconono Mission Started

The teams that visited Chiconono in July and September 1994 also applied for land in the IRM's name and after a few follow-ups, sixteen to eighteen hectares of ground was allocated to start a mission. It was situated on the outskirts of the town, with a strong stream of clean running water forming one of the boundaries. In the meantime Rev. A Schwartz accepted the call to work amongst the Yao (a longstanding wish being fulfilled) and Stellenbosch DRC Congregation continued to support him there. Rev. A Silambo also got the necessary support (Global Careers and Riversdale DRC) to be transferred to Chiconono from Beira. Aubi Banda, who received his main support from various institutions, was sent out by the congregation of Vila Ulongue as their first missionary and a pledge to support him with prayer and goods. (*Decision by Vila Ulongue congregation, December 1994; probably the first missionary to be officially sent out by an IRM congregation*) Therefore, by January 1995 all was set to start off with the new work and a team of the IRM departed from Maputo under the leadership of Rev. Botha. One of the persons in the group heading for Chiconono and who became a regular face at Ulongue en route to Niassa was Mr. Louis Geldenhuys. He is a South African farmer with a calling to start agricultural projects under Servir Moçambique as a witness to the unreached Yao's and accompanied several groups. (Ibid, p 5-7; Botha Nuusbrief, Febr. 1995, p1 -2)

The Ulongue truck was sent to fetch Rev. Amorim Silambo in Beira with his family and belongings, and at Vila would pick of Aubi Banda and his family. Rev. A Schwartz was on his way to Chiconono as well; all to establish the multi disciplinary mission station on the grounds obtained from the government. After the opening of the academical activities at Hefsiba, the group left for Chiconono, right in the middle of the rainy season. The group got to Chiconono though and Rev. Silambo could temporarily move into a concrete building, offered by the government. From there the mission ground was slowly developed; in the beginning with local building-materials. Rev Schwartz later dared to tow in a caravan over the same road and after a full day from Lichinga succeeded to arrive with his caravan in one piece. The idea was to develop



the Chiconono mission into a centre from where the whole area could be reached via outreach teams. (Ibid)

Progress was slow and developing the new terrain took a lot of time. Enthusiastic groups under leadership of Mr. Frans Botes (non resident missionary from Belville, RSA) undertook projects to establish minimum facilities, such as a waterpump, camping facilities and solar power. Evangelism had to be done very cautiously amongst the suspicious Muslim community and initial successes were met with strong opposition later on and even death threats. The Catholics also suddenly re-opened their neglected community when they heard that the IRM moved in. Initial contacts were one to one and lifestyle evangelism, where especially Aubi was well dispositioned to reach his fellow tribesmen. Rev. Silambo was the IRM's representative to the government in the Niassa province. (Projek Niassa, p 9-11; "Yao Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1 p.1ff)

## **12.2 The Makua Outreach**

### **12.2.1 The Makua People**

The biggest people group in Mozambique is the Makua, counting for up to six million of the total Mozambican population. They were also one of the biggest unreached group with the Gospel in Africa at that stage. This is what led INSERVE to call to the church's attention again the need to establish a ministry amongst the Makua. Since the Makua is such a big group, spreading across the four north-eastern provinces of Mozambique, they have 6 main different dialects within the same people group. Via Promiss/Global Careers the IRM became involved and it was with the vision of finding a suitable stand for starting a mission station that a reconnaissance team again ventured into Niassa province in May 1995.

### **12.2.2 Becoming Involved**

During 1994 Drs. Murray and Cheryl Louw established themselves in Cuamba, where they worked together with the Van der Merwes and other new missionaries, Dewaldt and Valerie Knoetze (first were part of the support co-ordinators of the Van der Merwes). Rev. Van der

Merwe and his wife Nikki could already speak the Makua dialect around Cuamba, but relations between him and the Igreja de Cristo (IECM) leadership were deteriorating concerning ethic issues and the IECM's handling of donations. It was during this time that the IRM was approached by Promiss and Inserve as a partner to start ministry amongst the Makua. Rev. Van der Merwe was identified as a strong candidate to lead the IRM's initiative. It was therefore decided to start ministry amongst the Makuas who stayed in the area north of Cuamba, towards Lichinga and the Northern border, since the new missionaries would have support from Cuamba, "closeby" and also because they knew the dialect. A week before the reconnaissance group went to investigate, the involved parties had a time of prayer and fasting. The group, under leadership of Rev. Botha went as far as Mua on the typical bad roads and after deliberation with the district "administrador", strongly felt that the Holy Spirit was leading them to start the IRM's mission at Muapula. They applied for a big piece of land, together with SERVIR Moçambique and had the assurance that their application would be accepted.

### **12.2.3 Muapula Started**

With this in mind, Rev. Frits Van de Merwe was called by the Synodical Committee of the IRM, on 14 June 1995 (See Comissão Sinodal..., 14/6/1995, C.S. 302) to start its ministry amongst the Makua and by middle August 1995, the Van der Merwes went there and pitched their big tent on the premises. (Presbeterio de Maputo, 25/10/1995, # 9) They soon discovered that it was wild country: While walking around one day, Frits became aware of something following him between the grasses alongside the road. He soon realised it was the shape of a lion. By the end of August Dewaldt and Valerie Knoetze and their two daughters also showed up and started the Servir project, an ambitious Sunflower seed and press program within the bush. This initiative was launched in order to stimulate the almost absent commerce in the area and build a kind of financial system there. Via their missionaries (Van der Merwes and Knoetzes) the DRC Synod of Eastern Cape and its Missions Office also became involved with the IRM and would still become more involved as more missionaries of that area went to settle at Muapula. These missionaries were joined by a German missionary, Almut Krúkels, an agronomist with special interest in the veterinary field. She started a goat project, apart from doing evangelism, and later became involved with the same kind of project at Chiconono as Mr. Luis Geldenhuys. They were married and are now farming at Chiconono. (Knoetze, History Notes, 2003)

As was the case with Chiconono, progress was very slow, due to the deep rooted traditional and Islamic beliefs of the Makua people. The strong spirit of immorality also kept many people away from the gospel and a long road of discipleship was required for converts from that background to stand firm. The Roman Catholic Church had a big mission at Mua and some Makua's had already accepted Christianity, but they were few or syncretistic. Rev. Van der Merwe once explained the level of syncretism. "Makua women of the Catholic Church wanted to know if the following was a sin: If they were to fetch the Holy bread for Communion at the mission station and they went back to their church and was asked by a man/men on the road to have intercourse with them, would it be a sin to put down the bread or not. It was so much part of the mindset that a woman had to comply with men's desires, that it was not even considered a sin, although the act was strongly condemned by Scripture. The upkeeping of the Church's holy rites was considered more important than Biblical law. Even so, with the help of teams and the Jesus film, big numbers of people were exposed to the gospel and converts started coming in; unfortunately many fell back. (Ibid, Van der Merwe, Personal Witnesses, 2003)

### **12.3 The Youth Team of 1995**

Another 'new item' for the IRM on the 1995 agenda was the successful launching of a "Service Year for Christ" equivalent in Mozambique. The idea was already suggested by the IRM's Youth Committee to the Western Cape's Mission Office in 1994 (Letter from IRM, 17 May 1994) and Rev. Koch succeeded in converting a suggestion into a plan of action by the end of 1994. Therefore, by January 1995, after choosing three candidates from the the Mphatso and Benga presbyteries, a Mozambican youth group under leadership of Rev. Bessitala went to Wellington in the Cape Province, RSA, to be trained with their South African teammates, before going into ministry. The team were as follows: Rev. Samuel Bessitala (teamleader), Wilson Kasamba, Nixon Chikakuda, Jose Teixeira, Tolla Lombard, Terry de Waal and Leon Bastian; Rev. Gouws was the team's local co-ordinator. (Die Getuie, Junie 1995, p1)

They were presented a strenuous program and visited *all the congregations from Mphatso, Benga and Thumbini presbyteries*. The emphasis was on stimulating youth work via the Jesus-film with-



in the congregations, as well as to train Catechism and Sunday school teachers. Congregations were informed beforehand of the dates of visit and the kind of ministry the group would like to activate. (Die Getuie, Junie 1995, p1; IRM letter to Presbyteries, 31/3/1995) In some of the congregations, they were not always received in an organised manner, but the team was very “flexible” because of their camp-style mobility. They found that youth work was not well organised in almost any of the congregations and that it was a neglected ministry. The team also visited new fields like Mutarara, had all the experiences of the mission field in a short time (bad roads, illness, hard luck, broken vehicles, etc) and did excellent work. The response was very good and literature was always required. The team finalized their good work with visits to Beira, Gaza and Maputo, as the South Africans headed back home in November 1995. The stimulus of this team was most positive and was a good testimony of how different people from very different backgrounds could work together in obtaining a common goal. Tolla and Terry, the two South African members who stayed till the very end, went back filled with memories of car breakdowns, incidents and grateful congregations. (Newsletter, Mozambique Youth Team, 15 July '95; Aug. '95, Oct. '95)

## **12.4 Two Synods**

### **12.4 .1 Feeling Neglected**

As the work was progressing on all levels, so did the administrative weight, especially on the Maputo office. Rev. Botha, as Liaison Officer (LO) of the Synod, was also involved in the initiation of many of the new programs and fields. The joint responsibility of his LO administration, the IRM ministry, Servir and AEM duties was not made easier by the fact that the banking system in Mozambique at that stage was not at all dependable. Bank services did not exist in the most of the districts where the IRM was operating and it took weeks for money to be transferred. Till 1996 there was also no reliable and quick way of communicating with Angonia, Vila Ulongue and some districts in Gaza. A request for HF radios since 1994 could not yet be met, due to the high cost of quality radios. Therefore the salaries of the pastors were taken by Rev. Botha on a round trip every two to three months and paid in advance or back-paid, depending on the situation. Although he paid faithfully and kept meticulous record of these funds (sometimes

carrying up to seventy million meticaais {R35000} with him), the situation didn't create a lot of confidence. (Botha, Personal Witnesses, 1998)

Some of the leaders felt that they didn't have any control over the church's money, not even their own. The Angonia pastors used to get their salaries in Malawi, at Nkhoma CCAP, but due to big losses because of the exchange rates, were forced to rather receive their salaries in Mozambique. There was also a feeling that Rev. Botha, who once was the champion of the Angonia church-members, was neglecting some of their pressing needs in favour of the newer fields. A specific incident that led to more tension and in a way confirmed their suspicion was when the pastor of Tete, Rev. Mlinde, received four times more than he should have, because of a new banknote with a higher value. When Rev. Botha went back to correct the payment, it was not possible anymore. This case later became so complicated that the Synodical committee had to resolve it. (Acta da Comissão Sinodal..15-16/6/1995, C.S. 309)

#### **12.4.2 Offending the South**

Even so, it was felt that the Liaison Officer's responsibilities needed to be reduced. In June 1995 this led to extensive debates at the meeting of the Synodical Committee (see C.S. 280 & 281, 288 – 289, etc.) about the position of the LO, whether he was still needed and if he should have any powers within the Synodical structure. At the same meeting, Rev A. Silambo, the Secretary of the Synodical Committee, was uncustomary axed on a technical point, and it seemed that the LO's position had something to do with it. However, this led to immediate reaction by some of the delegates present, so much so that Rev. Silambo was reinstated in his position. (C.S. 306 & 312). After the meeting and the official opening of Hefsiba School, (16/6/1995) and when all the delegates had already left, Rev. Botha was handed a letter signed by some of the Angonia members of the moderamen, as well as other leaders from Angonia, informing him that he was not needed as liaison officer any more and that the GSM had been informed. (Letter by Rev. Matanda on behalf of some Synodical Committee Members to Rev. Koch, 25/9/95: *It stated that Mphatso Synod didn't need his services any longer and that Synod was grateful for what he had done, no reasons given.*)

Rev. Botha, as well as the delegates from the South, was shocked and deeply hurt by the manner in which he was informed. It seemed that Rev. Silambo's discharge and Rev. Mlinde's re-election as secretary was to get a stronger vote against Rev. Botha as liaison officer. All these actions however created a serious breach in confidence for the delegates from the South, who were big sympathisers with Revs. Silambo and Botha. This condition worsened at the next Synodical Committee meeting at Vila Ulongue, 20/09/1995, where the delegates from the Maputo presbytery were omitted, including the Synod's secretary. Only Rev. Jossitala received a late and verbal invitation. At the same meeting Revs. Kobus Koch and M Pauw from the Cape were also present, but in spite of their objections, the decision concerning Rev. Botha was confirmed, without giving reasons for such an action. No minutes were presented of this meeting afterwards. The impression was also given that all the new fields opened had lesser importance within the IRM.

An urgent Presbytery meeting was called in Maputo on 25 October 1995 to address these issues. The meeting lamented the treatment of the Maputo Presbytery by Synod, the lack of recognition and appreciation for the development of the new fields for the IRM and the demission of the LO for "hidden motives". The Presbytery of Maputo then made the following decisions:

They accepted the proposal from the Angonia churches of 1993 to form two Synods and therefore form the "Sinodo Novo" (New Synod) of the IRM, which will have authority in the Maputo, Gaza, Sofala, Manica and Niassa provinces.

Issues of common interest would be handled by a "Joint Committee" of the two moderamen: HEFSIBA, Pension of the Workers, Statutes and Church order (to be the same for both Synods). In other issues the Sinodo Novo wished to co-operate in a spirit of brotherhood. (Minutas do Presbiterio de Maputo, 25/10/1995, #11)

After these decisions the Sinodo Novo was officially formed and its first moderamen appointed:

President – Samuel Jossitala, Vice President- Filipe Luis, Secretary – Pieter Botha,  
Actuary – Amorim Silambo. (Minutas do Sinodo Novo, SN 1 & 2) A translated document was sent to the different Mission Offices concerning the reasons and act of synod forming.



### 12.4.3 Forming of Sinodo Novo and the Joint Committee

The first reaction upon these developments was a letter from the GSM's secretary, Rev Willem Louw, who requested an opportunity for delegates of the GSM to confer with the IRM leadership on the issues of the Liaison Officer and the Sinodo Novo. The GSM was objecting to the following: 1) The way in which the IRM leadership unilaterally terminated the services of Rev. Botha as Liaison Officer (his appointment was a combined decision between the GSM and IRM) and then without giving reasons. 2) The formation of the Sinodo Novo, without prior consultation within the IRM, was in fact unconstitutional and could be harmful to the unity of the IRM. (Letter from GSM secretary, Rev. Willem Louw to IRM, November 1995) The biggest reaction, however, was when the Training Committee (C.T.), concerned with issues for Hefsiba, gathered in Vila Ulongue on the 23<sup>rd</sup> till 24<sup>th</sup> November 1995. The delegates from Mphatso Synod discussed the whole issue with the Sinodo Novo's moderamen at length, but the delegates couldn't reach a satisfactory conclusion, rather asking for another meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1995. All these tensions in a way overshadowed an important milestone, the legitimization of Tome Capece, first student from Hefsiba to be accepted as pastor of the IRM. (C.T., 1995, # 278)

The 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1995 saw a full delegation of the Sinodo Novo present at Vila Ulongue, as well as an authoritative representation from the GSM in the persons of Revs. K Koch, A Louw, W Louw and Dr. M Pauw, but from Mphatso many elders and pastors were absent. The Mphatso delegates therefore wanted the meeting to be only advisory in nature. No conclusion could be reached after intense discussions and an extra-ordinary synod meeting was called for the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1996, to be held in Maputo. (Reunião...13/12/1995, SN 23, 24, 25) This meeting was realised and the formation of the Sinodo Novo accepted, although by way of obligation. The main and official reason given for the formation of two Synods was that the administrative load and distances between the main centres of the IRM, could be handled more effectively by two administrative bodies, one in Mpaputo, one in Vila Ulongue. As indicated, other motives also played a role.

A Joint Committee for the two Synods (Commissao Conjunta) was formed to treat issues of common interest, consisting of the two moderamen, two liaison officers, and two extra elders. The following areas resorted directly under the Joint Committee, also to be the highest authority of the

IRM: Hefsiba, Pension, Mission work in new areas, the appointment and approval of new missionaries, health, the Church order and constitution, official contact with the GSM and local government. Two synodical committees were elected:

**Mphatso:** Past D. Chikakuda (pres), F Kasamba (vice), D Murray (secr.) S Bessitala (actuary)

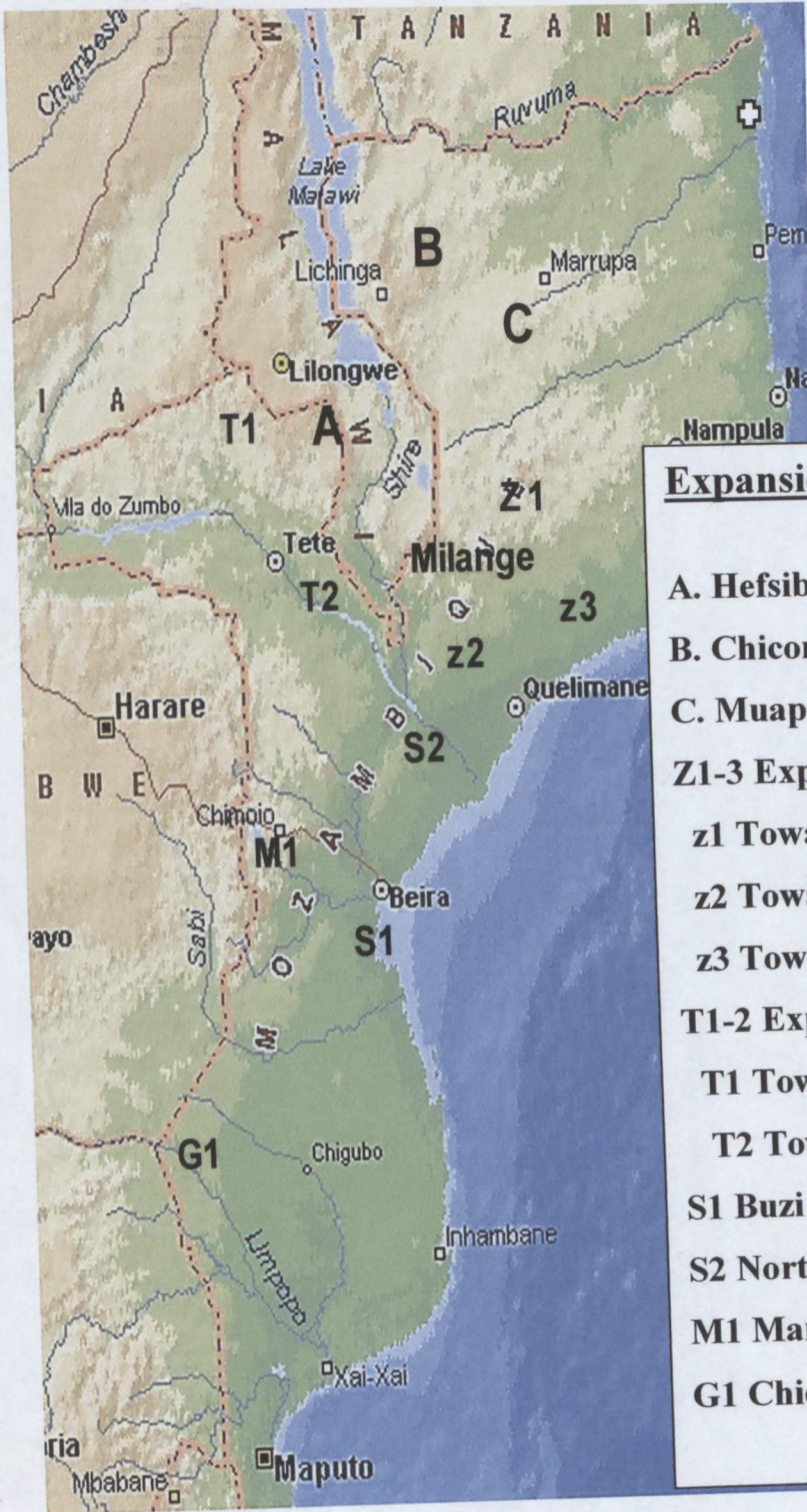
**Sin. Novo:** S Jossitala(pres), A Silambo(vice), P Botha(secr.), F Luis (actuary).

The official representative for the IRM to the government was Rev Samuel Jossitala. Revs Pieter Botha and Manie Taute served as Liason Officers for the New and Mphatso Synods respectively.

A Commission was appointed to decide about the Synods' boundaries (Acta da Reunião do Sinodo., 2/2/1996, #1.2), but for the moment all missionary areas were to fall under the Sinodo Novo until congregations could be formed. In practise it meant that the Sinodo Novo was entrusted with all the provinces, but for two, namely Tete and Zambesia provinces. Mphatso Synod was to oversee the IRM's work in these areas. (Ibid, #3) In this way the "fait accompli" of the October 1995 decision by the presbytery of Maputo, was accepted by the entire IRM and in a way just officialized the existing undertones within the church at that stage. Unfortunately it didn't help to create a united identity; it rather contributed to the development of separate identities (North-South) within the IRM and was an easier, but less effective way to handle the tensions.

The 1996 Synod signalled the end to a special period in the IRM's history; a period that saw dramatic expansion, both in structure and in ministry fields. Although the IRM continued to expand after 1996, it seems that events prior to the 1996 division in a way triggered and required the beginning of a consolidation process in the IRM. This next phase was just as necessary, for the IRM needed to come to terms with the many new initiatives it started the previous six to seven years. For its size, the IRM undertook spectacular projects, but it was also straining its limited resources. The support of the DR Churches in South Africa, the mission secretaries and other supporters were of immense help, but eventually insufficient resources, too few pastors in the field and internal tensions required some kind of consolidation. This process started in all seriousness following the 1996 events and was accelerated after Rev Botha passed away in September 1999, since he left a big vacuum in terms of initiating new missionary initiatives.





**Expansion of the IRM since 1992**

- A. Hefsiba Theol. School ('94)**
- B. Chiconono Mission ('95)**
- C. Muapula Mission ('95)**
- Z1-3 Expansion in Zambesia '94>**
  - z1 Towards Gurue**
  - z2 Towards Lugela/Macuba**
  - z3 Towards Gile/Maganje de Costa**
- T1-2 Expansion in Tete**
  - T1 Towards Northern Corner**
  - T2 Towards Mutarara**
- S1 Buzi – Sofala**
- S2 Northern Sofala: Caia, Marromeu**
- M1 Manica/Chimoio**
- G1 Chicuala Cuala/ Mapai**





**Rebirth:** Synodical delegates at the IRM Synod of February 1992, Vila Ulongue. The two mission secretaries, Rev. Willem Louw, (left back) of East. Tvl, and Rev. Kobus Thom (right front) of W. Cape also attended the meeting. It was the last IRM meeting attended by Rev. Thom. The moderamen at the main table: Revs. Kasamba, Chikakuda, Jossitala and Mlinde. Commission "rooms".



a)



b)

Although peace finally came to Mozambique in October 1992, its effect is still felt long afterwards: 1) The general infrastructure, especially secondary roads, had to be rebuilt (still going on) and 2) severe poverty and even famine still plagues the country, notwithstanding its immense potential. In the photo b) to the right top, Rev. Matanda and elder Magagula of Benga presbytery are visible with its visit to Milange, 2/93.





**The Church at Vila Ulongue**, built (insert at top) during 1993 and inaugurated 31 October the same year. (insert at the bottom, right). It was the first completed brick church building of the IRM after 1922 and gave a “face to the IRM again”, as one elder said. The insert at the bottom left portrays two of the oldest members of the IRM, Adelesi Magagula and James Ngozo, who both knew the first missionaries, like Murray and Liebenberg. They still attend sermons faithfully on Sundays.



**Outreach team to the Yao, Chiconono, Niassa, July 1994:** A. Silambo (left, back row), A Banda (middle, back row) A. Schwarts (2<sup>nd</sup> right, middle row) and Louis Geldenhuys (front with hat) became long term workers at Chiconono. Dr. S. Snyman (far left, middle row) and F. Botes (middle, with beard) became the facilitators of the support groups in SA and elsewhere.



## CONCLUSION

### Meeting the Objective

Since the first visit to Mphatso in 1908, until the events of February 1996, almost 90 years of extra-ordinary Reformed Church history played itself off in the former Portuguese colony on the East African Coast. What started off as an almost insignificant missionary effort into a remote corner of darkness in the African interior, at the beginning of the twentieth century, resulted in an autonomous Reformed Church in Mozambique, with thousands of members by the close of this era. The aim of this document is to investigate these developments as accurately as possible, using the available sources, to portray a true picture of how events unfolded. As far as the main objective stated in the beginning, is concerned, namely to document the "...appropriate events and contributing factors that led to the foundation, formation and establishment of the modern day Reformed Church in Mozambique or, *A Igreja Reformada em Moçambique*", the previous 180 pages should serve to satisfy that pre-occupation. During the discourse it was attempted to portray events within their broader settings and especially to portray the courage of the local believers, of whom some withstood the most severe circumstances in order to live out Biblical truths and Reformed values. This in itself should benefit the church as a whole, being an encouragement for those passing through similar situations.

Another objective set in the beginning was to create a base for further study, something that is especially needed for the time after 1996. During the course of the study it was necessary to identify possible sources. This was quite demanding, due to the fact that the relevant material was recorded in only one or two of the following languages: Afrikaans, English, Portuguese, Chichewa and to a lesser extend Shangaan. This is especially the case with IRM related documents, usually only available in Portuguese and Chichewa. Future study will have to take that into consideration. This study was also the first attempt to create a general framework for such a long period, where in historical facts can be fitted. This framework can serve as a reference point from which future studies can benefit. In the process it was also attempted to highlight certain trends that had a big influence on the IRM. Apart from the above mentioned objectives, the following are also discussed: 1) The unique character of the IRM's history within broader church history and 2) an evaluation of the Biblical and Reformed character of the IRM.



### **How does the IRM's history benefit the church in general?**

It may be asked: Is the IRM's history a special witness about God's deeds on Earth? In my opinion it is a definite "Yes!" It is a special witness of His faithfulness. As seen in the chapters preceding, the IRM's history was not easy. From the first day there was opposition to its establishment and continuation. It went through times of severe opposition, even persecution, with no ordained leaders to guide it in these times of hardship. However, the IRM's humble but steadfast leaders in those times had crucial qualities: Hope in God, Faith in Jesus, Courage through the Holy Spirit and Respect for the Bible. Their perseverance saw them through many trials, almost all of it originating externally. Their physical circumstances were of the worst in the world and many believers perished in Mozambique. Slowly however, signs of hope started showing. Then God's time of favour came and suddenly the IRM was lifted into a position of glory and shown much love by fellow brothers and sisters. Circumstances and conditions changed for the better and opportunities were endless. Since 1992 the IRM witnessed spectacular development and progress, obtaining a huge infrastructure of enormous value in very little time, a process that continued even after 1996. In other words: A positive history for all believers to be encouraged.

Within Reformed circles the IRM's history is unique in terms of the following:

- 1) Never before, nor afterwards, had it been necessary for the Dutch Reformed Church to abandon a mission field, as in PEA. In other instances it could either hand over to other missions (like in Nigeria), or accompany the local believers to "independence". (Cronje, 1982, Ch. 1-3, p. 267 ff)
- 2) The absence of ordained pastors to guide the members for fifty years: It must count as a unique situation that the IRM's (then still Dutch Reformed Mission) members had no local pastors to attend to their spiritual needs for such a long period. Another astonishing fact is that elders not only led the believers during these difficult times, to let the church survive, but even succeeded in leading the church to grow tenfold during this time, from 253 members in 1922, till 2500+ in 1972!
- 3) The special bond between the Angonia members and the CCAP, Nkhoma Synod and the way the border congregations opened their doors for the administration of the sacraments and support to the "Adutch", was a unique experience of brotherly care. This support was so effective that it

basically created a CCAP in Angonia, as the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique is still known there till today.

4) The Synod of 1977 which officially founded and established the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique, Sinodo de Mphatso, must be very rare within Reformed circles, since no ordained pastor was present to participate in the meeting, making the IRM maybe one of the most extraordinary examples of the Reformed notion that elders constitute a church or congregation, rather than a pastor. The only ordained pastor, Rev. Tembe was elected as chairman of the moderamen, in his absence!!

5) The speed and intensity with which the IRM was helped after 1990, especially after the 1992 peace accord, is also special. This is most certainly the case in how DRC congregations all over South Africa became involved in projects in Mozambique, giving literally millions of rands for IRM projects. Of this process the mission stations at Vila Ulongue, Milange and Maputo are vivid examples. They were developed over a remarkably short period of time. At Vila Ulongue not only a big church building and other mission related structures were erected between 1992 and 1996, the whole ambitious Hefsiba project with a total of 30+ buildings was well advanced by 1996. Many (like Botha and Koch) considered Vila Ulongue by 1997/8, as the fastest growing mission station ever undertaken by the DRC. The support of teams with professional people, the DRC mission offices and other institutions made this possible. In this whole process Rev. Botha played a central role as facilitator and visionary, both in IRM circles and the supporting groups, with active involvement of the various mission secretaries.

### **Is the IRM a Reformed and Autonomous Church?**

Another question asked in the Introduction, was about the Reformed character of the IRM. The fact that it was born from a Reformed mission, cared for a long time by a fellow Reformed church, established as a Reformed church in 1973, confirmed in its “Estatutos” and “Regulamentos” (as approved in 1977 and 1992 by its special Synods), is a good indication of its character. The IRM, through the years showed all the traits of a typical Reformed church, especially in the centrality of the Word through preaching, the desire to celebrate the sacraments, even though it was not possible within Mozambique at a certain stage, and the constant, even rigid implementation of discipline. Although there were only a few local pastors until 1996, already five pastors or candidates had been disciplined at that stage. This number was even higher in 2000. A definite

disciplinary system is applied in the Angonia, Tete and Zambesia regions. Influenced by the CCAP it concentrates mainly on the problems of drinking, smoking and adultery/polygamy.

The catechism and Sunday school programs were hampered by shortage of material and teachers, but even so it is functioning. In this aspect elders and members have been faithful, but not always effective. Training made part of the 1993 rebuilding process, but was not sufficient. The big number of informal marriages amongst members didn't help to bring children to the care of the church as well and a definite program to "officialize marriages" amongst IRM members at least in the church and especially in rural areas, was promoted by several Synodical meetings (See IRM minutes of 1993, 1994 Synods, p. 147-149).

Although it is almost 100 years old, the IRM's road to full autonomy is still a long and uphill one. Although not the absolute norm, Henry Venn's "three-self" model, (Quoted from M, Shaw, 1996, p. 149) is a good indication of a local church's progress towards autonomous functioning. In 1996 the IRM was to a big extent *self governing*, a process that was significantly enhanced after Hefsiba's first students graduated and were allowed to the ministry in 1998. Missionaries were still making an important part of the decision making and executing process in church matters, as was seen in their presence in various presbytery and Synodical Committees. However, creating its own and unique character, interpreting Biblical truths and Reformed values into the Mozambican reality, will be the IRM's main test for successful self government. A definite strain on its ability to reach this goal, will be the financial and administrative weight that the huge infrastructure it has acquired, will lay on it. The IRM is definitely *self propagating*, as seen in the numerous examples of elders and pastors going out with the message under difficult circumstances, but it is more confined to the immediate surroundings and impeded by the financial situation in the congregations. With the start of Hefsiba, the IRM also started to become a *self-theologizing* church.

*Self-support*, however is still a serious problem and the country's economical situation is not the single culprit. In 1996, in the majority of cases, the IRM was still dependant on external help for its programs, including its pastor's salaries. This situation continues until today, indicating a lack of initiative from members' side to rectify the situation. On the other side it also reflects on church governance. The vast amounts of help via teams and other sources was a blessing to the



IRM in a very needy time, but unfortunately also led to dependency and even self pity in certain cases. In this aspect the congregations' financial systems were and still are very much underdeveloped, both in structures within the congregations and in the way money were handled. Due to the absence of effective banking systems within the majority of areas where the congregations of the IRM are encountered, church money was usually kept by an elder or leader at his house or in a private place. This surely didn't enhance confidence in the system, and coupled to a weak tithing culture, IRM congregations' finances have been in a very sorry state of affairs.

The Synodical Committee for Finances' work was handled mainly by Rev. Pieter Botha and Elder Mahumana and at several stages they asked for the implementation of more effective financial systems within the IRM. Rev. Botha usually presented a detailed financial report at the Synodical meetings, but funds usually originated from external sources and didn't reflect much on internal income generation. A significant development in this respect was the local pastors' contributions for Hefsiba, but their good example was not followed by the elders and members in the congregations.

### **Facing the Future**

With the new developments however, new problems also manifested. The little orphan grew into a young and vibrant sister, and suddenly, the challenges were not external only, but also internal and more indirect. The IRM will have to face these new issues, many of which only it self can face, being part of the Mozambican reality. It is here that values will decide which road the IRM will take. How is the IRM going to respond to the many influences and forms of evil that is still surrounding it and is attacking its members, only in different and more subtle ways? There are also new challenges that are not negative, but difficult. A good example is the empowerment of local leadership, a crucial part of the consolidation process. After 1996 this point became a thorny issue at certain mission stations such as Maputo and Vila Ulongue, as was worded by a delegation of the GSM by mouth of Prof Kritzinger in 1998.

The IRM had and still has to face other problems as well, new enemies of the church, such as poverty and its counter product, greed, immorality and Aids, weak moral and ethical values in society, ignorance and even arrogance amongst young people etc. The fact that these problems are

not endangering Christians in the same way as in the past, doesn't mean they are not as dangerous. No, the same courage, faith, hope and respect that were the foundations of the previous and victorious generation, will be needed by the new generation. It may be easier for the IRM's leaders and members to try and escape their battle and be dependant on external help or just try to appease society and the authorities, but that would be forsaking its prophetic role.

One may ask: Is it possible for the IRM, in reality a small and young church, to manage its enormous responsibilities to help establish the Kingdom of God in Mozambique? Until now it was well supported by the Reformed Churches of South Africa, Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as other partners from Germany, Holland and America, but eventually the IRM alone can face certain realities in Mozambique. If the history is anything to go by, it seems a simple truth will also determine how the IRM shapes in future: Man may have their ideas, but it is Jahwe who decides the outcome of a situation. In the past the IRM was faced with problems that seemed unsurpassable, but overcame by trusting and confessing Jesus as their Saviour. It should therefore be able to face the future as well, although faced by different and more subtle challenges. There is one big difference though. In the past the IRM had to passively outlive its troubles, but was carried through trials, because of its members' steadfast and courageous faith. Now the same faith and courage will be needed, this time to pro-actively tackle its problems in a more free ambient, in order to establish the principles of the Kingdom of God in Mozambique. Their history, as compiled in the previous chapters, serves as a reminder that all is possible for the people of God, even if man despairs.

All things are possible, that is true, but only when the following rule applies to all involved, be it pastor, leader, elder, moderator, deacon, missionary, member, catechumen, teacher or activist:

**“NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT”, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.** Let all involved continue to intercede for the Igreja Reformada em Moçambique to live according to this truth and give glory to her Redeemer, Jesus Christ. In this way the IRM will continue to encourage the wider Body of Christ with its special witnesses about God's wondrous deeds in Mozambique.

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