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SIMAO TOCO: AN ANGOLAN PROPHET

BY

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Introduction

The first Baptist mission to the Zombo people of north Angola was established by Thomas and Gwen Lewis and John Pinnock, missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society, in 1899. The first convert, Garcia Mayungulu, was baptized in 1906 and when four others were baptised the Kibokolo Baptist Church was formed in 1910. By 1923 membership had grown to 189. During the 1920's and 1930's the Kibokolo Church experienced rapid growth so that by 1938 membership had passed the 2,000 mark and the chiefs of over 80 villages and towns were clamouring for teacher-evangelists.

According to Portuguese law the Baptist Church had no legal existence apart from the mission, so a continuous missionary presence was maintained by the B.M.S. until the missionaries were ordered to leave by the Portuguese authorities in 1961. Even so, during the years of growth the missionaries had encouraged the church to be self supporting and, in consequence, a strong and capable African leadership had emerged.

The prophet movements of the 1920's which had their origins among the Kongo churches in the Belgian Congo, following the brief activity of Simon Kimbangu, did not make very much impact on the Kongo and Zombo churches of Angola. The statistics of the Kibokolo Church indicate that not a single member left to join the prophet movements during that period. In fact it was not until the refugee period (1961-1975) that many Angolans, by then in Zaire, were attracted to Kimbanguism. However, the movement started by Simão Toco was different. In its early period it attracted many Zombos who had gone to live in Kinshasa and later made considerable impact in a number of places in Angola.

Simão Toco

Simão Gonçalves Toco was born on 24th February 1918 at Sadi, a small town on the road from Maquela-do-Zombo to Kimbata, close to the frontier with the Congo. From 1926 to 1933 he attended school at the Kibokolo Baptist Mission. 'He was a very bright pupil, so far in advance of the rest of the children, that the mission supported him in a three year course at the Liceu Salvador Correia in Luanda from 1934-37.'¹ During his stay in Luanda he participated in the life of the Methodist church.²

From Luanda he returned to Kibokolo and taught at the mission school and for a year, during the absence of the Portuguese headmaster, he took charge of the school. He also organized evening courses for adults. With the return of the Portuguese headmaster, Toco was transferred to Bembe, the third of the B.M.S. stations in Angola, where he taught 1939-43. Though not a qualified teacher, he was permitted to teach by the Portuguese authorities provided his work was supervised, from time to time, by the Portuguese headmaster at Kibokolo. At Bembe, according to David Grenfell, 'Toco worked steadily and well and had a great influence for good amongst the boys and young men of the district.'³

In 1943 he was given six months leave in order to get married to a Kibokolo girl, Mollie, who was the daughter of Pedro Sadi, the Secretary of the Kibokolo Church. Although the date had been fixed and the preparations made by the respective families, Toco did not appear for the wedding and never returned to his work as a teacher. Instead he went to live in Kinshasa.⁴ A dispute over his pay and conditions of work may have been the cause of his discontent. Emmanuel Kunzika (a former associate of Toco who was later to emerge as the leader of ALIAZO, the Zombo political party) suggested that he quarrelled with Bruno da Silva, the Portuguese headmaster.⁵

In Kinshasa Simão Toco became active in the Baptist churches and organized a Bible study class encouraged by Ronald Salmon, a B.M.S. missionary, who had previously worked in Angola. He became secretary of various mutual aid societies, which is a clear indication that he was a trusted member of the Zombo expatriate community. He also formed a very successful Zombo choir which sang regularly in the Kinshasa churches and for some time there was no hint of a break with the church.⁶

In 1944 he organized a voluntary association of mainly Zombo expatriates in Kinshasa which became known as 'Nkutu a Nsimbani' (Nkutu

= bag or case: Nsimbani from verb Nsimba = to support) with the aim of raising funds to build schools and to support medical work in Angola. There are conflicting reports of how he lived in Kinshasa for he was not employed by the mission or the church. It was thought by some that he was supported entirely by his Zombo friends, while others have suggested he painted pictures with religious motifs and sold them to support himself in a modest life-style.⁷

The Influence of Other Movements on Simão Toco

Because so few people outside the Toco movement were able to talk with Simão Toco after his arrest in 1949, it is difficult to know to what extent his beliefs were stimulated, or modified, by the various churches and movements he encountered. Most observers who have written about him have assumed that Kimbanguism and Watch Tower were the most powerful influences on his thinking. They argue that these, together with some aspects of traditional African religion, formed the most significant elements in his teaching. Thus Fr. Van Wing, in the conclusion to his study of Kimbangu, refers to the role of the Angolan prophet Toco as an overflow of the influence of Kimbangu into Angola.⁸ Simão Toco certainly was in contact with Kimbanguist groups in Kinshasa and met Diangienda.⁹ There are obvious parallel features between the two movements and undoubtedly there would be cross fertilization. But it would be a mistake to assume that Tocoism was a mere extension of Kimbanguism. Simão Toco insisted his inspiration was direct from 'Nzambi' or from 'Nkanda Nzambi' (Book of God) and seems to have had enough force of character to retain his own individuality and prevent most of his followers from becoming submerged into the older movement.¹⁰ After his removal to Angola a few did come under the influence of Diangienda and turned to Kimbanguism, but some of these continued to confess that it was Toco who had first transmitted vital impulses to them.¹¹ In fact it was even suggested by Emmanuel Kunzika that in his time in Kinshasa it was Toco who attracted a following amongst the Kimbanguist groups.¹²

Missionaries in Kinshasa were alarmed when they discovered Toco was reading and translating into KiKongo religious books published by the Watch Tower Movement. They tried to warn him of the dangers of 'false teaching' and the reading of 'banned books.'¹³ The Jehovah's Witnesses claim that Toco wrote to their New York office in 1949 asking for literature and was sent copies of the 'Watch Tower' etc.¹⁴ This contact with the Jehovah's Witnesses is always referred to by those who

were critical or afraid of Tocoism, both missionaries and government officials. But later, in detention in Angola, Simão Toco indicated to Silva Cunha that he was 'not a follower of the Watch Tower Movement and that his teaching was no different from other Protestants who based their doctrine on the Bible.'¹⁵ In 1955 John Cook an American representative of the Jehovah's Witnesses, visited Angola and succeeded in meeting Toco in a government office in Sa da Bandeira. In the presence of a Portuguese official they were able to have a long conversation in which Toco is said to have made it clear he would not join the Watch Tower Movement.¹⁶ Again it is obvious he did not want to be part of a larger movement but Watch Tower publications may well have been the source of his fondness for the prophetic and apocalyptic books of the Bible. It is unlikely he would have got that from the preaching of the Baptist missionaries who were in Angola or Kinshasa in that period.

A third influence, which Simão Toco admitted played a part in his 'call,' was the West Central Africa Regional Conference sponsored by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America held in Leopoldville/Kinshasa from July 13th to 24th 1946. At this conference Simão Toco's choir sang and there was considerable exchange of ideas, particularly with the representatives of some Black American churches who were present. Much later, in 1966, he wrote to Antonio Domingos Afonso Pereira of Nova Toia, near Maquela do Zombo, referring to his participation in the conference. He said he was one of two Angolans to be invited to pray during one of the sessions. He prayed 'asking only for the power of the Holy Spirit in Africa and for the increase of the Word of God.'¹⁷

At the time of the conference Mrs. Paul Robeson, the wife of the singer, was visiting several African countries collecting material for a book. She was not part of the conference but while in Kinshasa did meet many of the delegates including Toco. Following this contact, it is reported, the songs sung by the Toco choir seemed to take on protest overtones which the Belgian and some missionary sources regarded as dangerously political.¹⁸ It seems likely too that by this time Toco considered himself, and was regarded by his friends and members of his choir, as a prophet. He was still, however, a member of the Baptist Church in Kinshasa.

1949: Celebrations in Kibokolo and Arrest in Kinshasa

Back in Angola at Kibokolo in July 1949 the Baptist mission was celebrating its 50th Anniversary and a whole week of meetings was held. Large crowds of Zombo people attended from all over north Angola and from Kinshasa to share in the rejoicing. Simão Toco brought his choir and many others; he made all the travelling arrangements and the whole group stayed about a week. The event was a success and when Toco requested a loan of about £150 to help pay for their transport back to Kinshasa, the missionaries and church leaders were sufficiently confident of his reliability to feel able to make the loan. Even after the arrest of Simão Toco, some of his followers made sure the loan was repaid.¹⁹

During this visit leaders of the church and mission tried to persuade him to return to Angola and work for the church. It seems that despite past differences there was still considerable good will. At that stage the B.M.S. Angola missionaries did not share the misgivings of some of their colleagues in Congo Belge.²⁰

On his return to Kinshasa Toco continued to work with his choir, holding frequent prayer meetings. On the 15th July 1949 he seems to have made a positive decision to launch his own religious movement. According to the interview he gave to Silva Cunha, while under restriction in southern Angola in 1955, his decision followed events at a choir-prayer meeting when 'suddenly he felt a wind, and some of the singers began to shake and speak strange languages.' These events he later saw as an answer to his prayer for the Holy Spirit when he participated in the conference in 1946. At the time he interpreted the experience to his followers by readings from Acts 2 (The coming of the Holy Spirit), Acts 4 (The persecution of the Apostles) and Joel 2.28: 'I shall pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.'²¹

These two themes, the experience of the Holy Spirit and the persecution which could be expected to follow, seem to have developed into the biblical basis for the movement. Toco taught that from such suffering, 'there would follow positive results which would bring in more faithful to confirm the faith and develop the church.'²²

At that stage the shaking and speaking in tongues is said to have become a feature of their group meetings. For a time they were called the 'Nzambi na mpapu' (the winged god) group—a reference to the trembling which was similar to that experienced by 'Ngunzists.'²³ Later,

the emphasis on such exotic experiences seems to have diminished, particularly when Toco and his close followers were sent back to Angola. Estermann comments, 'the Angolan prophet avoided assuming characteristics of radical ecstasy or unbalanced contortionism with which his precursors could hypnotize masses. It is not reported that he has thrown himself into the dangerous adventure of curing the sick and raising the dead. Toco was able to control his conduct by rules of prudence and carefully avoid excesses of word and deed.'²⁴ However, the Swiss Protestant missionaries at Kalukembe in southern Angola, in the late 1950s, reported 'great scenes of confession, absolution,—always at night—and followed by singing and dancing.'²⁵

News of these events spread rapidly and church leaders in Kinshasa began to be concerned, not just because they were suspicious of the 'emotionalism' but because there were reports that Simão Toco had 'arranged a marriage, in the spirit, with a girl member of the choir and encouraged his followers to take similar partners.'²⁶ It is not clear what Toco meant by a 'marriage in the spirit' or if the reports were true, but the church leaders felt they had to do something. So after long discussion Simão Toco was put out of fellowship for adultery, along with many others who were associated with his movement.²⁷

The Belgian authorities arrested Toco and many of his followers on 22nd November 1949 and on the 8th December they were accused of practising 'the rites of a mystical-religious doctrine of hierarchic nature, which preached the arrival of a new order under the reign of a new Christ and would put an end to all present authorities and power. They would then take over and restore justice.'²⁸ As they were all Angolans, the Belgian Administration resolved their problem by expelling them from Congo. On 10th January 1950 they handed Simão Toco over to the Portuguese authorities at Noqui. They also expelled eighty two of his followers (66 men, 2 women, and 14 young boys).

The Influence of Simão Toco in Northern Angola, 1950-61

The Portuguese accepted them and put Toco and the unskilled members of the group in an agricultural labour colony in the Loge Valley (Colonato do Loge) situated between Bembe and Novo Caipemba. There they were set to work making a road and planting coffee. Some were also detained in a similar labour colony between Damba and 31 de Janeiro and a few were sent to the cocoa plantations of San Tome as indentured workers. In the first few years they suffered a great deal and some died.²⁹

Those with some education or who had worked as office clerks were held in a camp near Luanda. They were given work in government offices at half pay and obliged to return to their detention camp at night. Marxists of the Viriato da Cruz circle, who were already active in Luanda, contacted the Tocoistas, but were unsuccessful in recruiting them into their political movement.³⁰ However, when the authorities demanded that they pay taxes, they were defiant and refused, arguing that they were only on half pay. David Grenfell was able to visit their camp on two occasions and was impressed by their courage and religious fervour.³¹ James Russell, a former BMS missionary who had worked at Kibokolo and was the General Secretary of the *Aliança Evangélica de Angola* during the 50s, also maintained contact with them and entered into sympathetic dialogue with them from time to time.³²

In the camp in the Vale do Loge, Toco continued his preaching and choir-prayer meetings and this attracted people from nearby villages. The Portuguese, believing the movement to be a cover for political activity, became alarmed and separated Toco from his followers. Later in 1950, he was sent far away from his home territory to a 'colonato' in Caconda in the Umbundu speaking south, close to the Swiss Philafricaine Mission at Kalukembe.³³

After he was deported to the south of Angola his followers in the north had little influence on the population and less on the life of the church. For a number of years they were restricted to the labour colonies, but in the second half of the 50s they were given leave, from time to time, to visit their home villages. Occasionally a few of them would attend Baptist churches. They were always polite and never disruptive. They were distinguishable because they always stood during prayer times with their eyes open looking to the sky. They usually wore a small red cloth badge with a star or a lightning flash embroidered in yellow.³⁴

Before the war of independence a few 'Tocoistas' who had not been arrested, returned from Congo Belge and one or two villages in the area where Simão Toco was born had Toco churches in addition to Baptist and Catholic churches. But the overall effect of the Toco movement before 1961 was very small. Amongst the Zombo leaders of the Kibokolo churches, who knew Simão Toco well from his earlier days as a school boy and teacher, there was a feeling of disappointment that he did not accept their invitation to return to work for the church. They were also sad that one of their people should have been led astray by strange ideas!³⁵

The movement made no impact at all on the Kongo (Mbanza Kongo)

people, either inside Angola or amongst the expatriates in Congo. The Administrator at San Salvador only detained three people who were suspected of being Tocoists and all were connected with Zombo districts.³⁶

The long-standing rivalry between Kongos and Zombos could well account for this. The San Salvador Baptist church community in Kinshasa was already well established by the time Simão Toco arrived. It was led by Garcia Diwambaka Roberto (the father of Holden Roberto the politician). He had left Mbanza Kongo in the 1920s and became a deacon, and later church secretary, of one of the Kinshasa Baptist Churches where his brother-in-law Barros Nekaka (the son of Miguel Nekaka who was a deacon in the Baptist Church at San Salvador for over fifty years) was the leader of the San Salvador/Kinshasa choir. This group regularly sent financial contributions back to Mbanza Kongo to support the work of the church. According to Kunzika, after Simão Toco organized his Zombo choir, there developed a certain amount of rivalry between these two Angolan choirs.³⁷

There is no doubt that rivalry at many levels existed and it probably stimulated the Zombos to try to copy and outdo the Kongos in their support of Toco's 'Nkuta a Nsimbani' (Support Fund), but it would deter Kongos from seeing Tocoism as anything but a Zombo affair.

The Influence of Simão Toco in Southern Angola, 1950-61

Although the Toco movement had minimal success in the north of the country it spread rapidly in other parts of Angola. While he was in the 'colonato' at Caconda, Simão Toco held clandestine meetings at night and quickly gained the reputation of being a preacher of wonderful sermons. He won many followers, 'attracted by his strong personality, his religious passion, and the fact that he was an educated African proud of his race and head of his own religion. Toco appealed especially to folk who had already some Bible knowledge.'³⁸ 'Tocoism spread like fire in straw over the field of the Philafricaine mission.'³⁹

According to the information from the Swiss missionaries, three or four of the Kalukembe villages went over to the new sect. There were reports of miraculous healings and many claimed to have seen visions and heard voices after hearing Toco's preaching.⁴⁰ Some of the Protestant pastors started to incorporate Tocoist practices into their own services which caused considerable confusion amongst the people and the Swiss missionaries a great deal of anxiety.

Not wishing to condemn the new movement out of hand, the missionaries persuaded Simão Toco to ask for leave of absence to spend

a day on the Mission at Kalukembe. Dr. Rodolphe Brechet, reporting on the long conversations, indicated that Toco was vague about his doctrine; admitted to reading literature from the Jehovah's Witnesses; emphasised a limited number of biblical passages; attempted to 'demonstrate that the missionaries came to Angola with the intention of hiding the greater part of Christian teaching.'⁴¹ Pastor Daniel Canyanga also reported a private conversation in which Toco asked him why he was willing to be a slave of the whites.

The Kalukembe missionaries, in an effort to counter what they called the 'Tocoist heresy,' decided on diversionary tactics. They called for help from some of the leaders of the East African Revival in the hope that they would be able to win back those who were leaving to follow Toco. A visit by William Nagenda and Dr. Joe Church from Uganda took place. Dr. Brechet reported many 'testimonies to the blessings received from this visit,'⁴² but there was disappointment that their efforts did not have the desired effect on the Toco movement which continued to grow in the Caconda-Kalukembe area. It was still causing concern to the Swiss missionaries two years later. According to a report by Heini Schmid, some old members of the church were claiming that the moral life of the new Tocoist villages was superior to that of the mission villages.

In 1952 the Portuguese authorities transferred Toco from Caconda to Jau. Henderson claims this was the result of complaints from both Protestant and Catholic missions, and he points out that some of the first converts of Simão Toco while he was in Caconda were Catholics.

In 1954 Toco was again moved, this time from Jau to Cassinga and then in 1955 to the lighthouse at Ponte Albina on Baia dos Tigres, twenty miles from Porto Alexandre. By moving Toco and also some of his followers from place to place the Portuguese hoped the movement would die out. However, the Tocoist groups were able to survive the absence of their leader and the frequent movement helped to spread Tocoism. By 1958 there were Tocoist congregations in Moçamedes, Porto Alexandre, Benguela, Caconda, Malange, Huambo and Uige, as well as in the 'colonatos' in the Maquela and Bembe districts and in Luanda where there were 118 members in the Luanda Tocoist congregation.

During the period when they were in the concentration camp at Baia dos Tigres, differences developed between Simão Toco and Joao Macoka, an associate from the Kinshasa days. Macoka broke away and formed a dissident group which eventually joined the Jehovah's Witnesses.⁴³ However, the majority of his supporters from the Kinshasa days stayed loyal to Toco, as did most of the new converts.

Tocoism and Political Action

The Swiss Protestant missionaries regarded the Tocoist movement as a religious heresy and a rival to their own church. Until the start of the war of independence in 1961 most Portuguese government officials, settlers, traders and Catholic missionaries believed the Tocoists to be a disturbing religio-political movement and a threat to both church and state. The authorities had little choice than to receive them back into Angola once the Belgians decided to expel them from Congo, but they did everything possible to discourage the movement by separating Toco from his followers and dispersing them around the country.

Were they really a subversive force? They claimed to be pacifist and Toco taught them to be obedient to the authorities. But it was a tough pacifism which resisted payment of taxes when the Luanda group were forced to work for half pay.⁴⁴ He also taught the importance of hard work and the new converts in the Caconda area took him at his word, with the result that Europeans who employed them praised their industry, behaviour, honesty and sincerity. This caused local authorities to treat them favourably but resulted in complaints from at least one Catholic missionary, Fr. Valente, who wrote, 'hundreds of Tocoists are coddled, while the few who have remained faithful to Christianity are despised.'⁴⁵

In the Loge Valley, however, where they had transformed a wilderness into a profitable coffee plantation, the local Portuguese business men of Carmona/Uize 'repeatedly sent memos to the Governor General complaining of the Tocoists systematic refusal to be recruited for agricultural work.'⁴⁶ Toco had taught them to seek out specific job training in order to qualify for work normally held by whites, to gain more economic independence, but also to prepare themselves for work in the new kingdom when it came. The messianic preaching prophesied that Christ would return to earth to liberate the Africans and there would be a reversal of roles.⁴⁷

So the subversive aspects of Tocoism cannot just be described as 'the practising of civil and non-violent disobedience of the laws of the colonial administration,' as Mario de Andrade, the MPLA politician, did in 1962 and as many Portuguese believed. It seems to have been primarily a religious movement, but there were latent elements of radical and political protest. By creating an entirely African organization it demonstrated the possibility of developing black power. The refusal to volunteer for agricultural work could well have been one factor in provoking the awakening of the resistance to the forced labour system

in the Uize and Bembe areas which ultimately led to widespread revolt in March 1961.⁴⁸

Amongst the Zombo emigré community in Congo, once Toco had been deported, his religious influence declined, but his emphasis on assertive self reliance continued to have an impact. He had encouraged 'communal solidarity, discipline in work and the learning of new skills.'⁴⁹ These themes were taken up as Zombos sought out schools, B.M.S. and Salvation Army, which would accept Angolans. Others enrolled on a variety of correspondence courses. Then in December 1956 when the Toco affair had quietened down and Belgian policy had relaxed, Emmanuel Kunzika and André Massaki organized an ethnic mutual aid society known as ASSOMIZO (Association Mutuelle des Ressorissants de Zombo) which later became the Zombo political party ALIAZO, then PDA (Partido Democrático de Angola), which was to form a common front with Holden Roberto's UPA (União das Populações de Angola).

The Tocoist Church During the War of Independence

During the war of independence the Toco people seem to have remained uninvolved. They had always claimed to be pacifists and so they refused to take up arms to support either UPA or MPLA against the Portuguese. There were attempts on the part of the nationalists to force them to support the war but with no success. Nor were the attempts of the Portuguese to recruit them for anti-guerrilla work successful either. The Vale do Loge remained an area of relative peace surrounded by areas of unrest for most of the sixties; consequently it became a place where Portuguese took visiting journalists and foreign politicians and so was used by them for propaganda purposes.

During the height of the fighting in 1961 Toco was interviewed on Luanda radio, and on the 17th October 1961 the newspaper *Diário de Luanda* started a series of articles on him. They reported that his conversion to Catholicism had taken place several years previously. The headlines referred to him as 'The Great Catholic Mystic,' and the reports said that he urged the Angolan people to stop fighting and work in peace and harmony with the Portuguese.⁵⁰

Later, because so many Angolans had gone to Congo as refugees and the coffee growing economy of north Angola was in ruins, Simão Toco was again used by the Portuguese to make more speeches on the radio. He was also taken to Maquela-do-Zombo, near his own home town, and to the border posts to speak with refugee representatives in

an attempt to persuade them to bring their people back to Angola. Toco called himself Portuguese and the speeches, if not completely pro-Portuguese, called for loyalty and for all to work together in peace.⁵¹ Some refugee leaders who went to the frontier to meet him reported that he made secret signs to indicate he was not a free agent.⁵² ALI-AZO/PDA, the Zombo political party, angrily accused the Portuguese of using Simão Toco as a 'tool.'⁵³

While in the north of Angola during this period, Toco, with Portuguese help, caused the village of Taia-Nova near Maquela do Zombo to be built to house some of the refugees it was hoped would return from Congo. Very few did return and thousands more left. Toco used his unexpected freedom of movement to renew his preaching to his followers, in the Loge Valley and in Luanda, with considerable success. His followers, particularly in Luanda, considered his presence as a real victory and claimed that thousands were converted to Tocoism. The result was that some Portuguese again regarded him as dangerous. For some Catholic missionaries, his preaching successes in Luanda confirmed their opinion that Toco was an opportunist and dangerous, if not politically, at least religiously.⁵⁴

After the failure of the efforts by the Portuguese to use Simão Toco, little more was heard of him being a Catholic mystic, though Antonio da Silva Rego, writing in 1970, does refer to him being 'changed considerably and to have been received into the Catholic Church and ordering his children to be baptized into the same faith.'⁵⁵ Judging by the fact that there was no reference to this, either by Toco himself or his followers, when he returned to Luanda in 1975, most Angolans seem to think the story was fabricated by the Portuguese propaganda machine.

Possibly as a result of the rumours amongst the refugees in Congo and the protests delivered to the Portuguese Embassy in Kinshasa, the Portuguese began to doubt his sincerity and so in July 1963 Toco was again moved, this time to the island of St. Michael in the Azores, where he earned his living again as a lighthouse keeper.⁵⁶

The Tocoist Church Under The MPLA Government

At the end of August 1974, following the revolutions in Portugal, Simão Toco was released from detention and returned to Angola. He was jubilantly received by his followers in Luanda and interviewed by the press.⁵⁷ During the early months of the Provisional Government in 1975 he was free and lived in Luanda. In March people in his own area close to Maquela do Zombo made plans to welcome him back

and built shelters and pulpits in a number of villages.⁵⁸ He does not seem to have returned and he and his movement were soon again in the midst of controversy.

There were reports of meetings with leaders of the rival political groups but he refrained from becoming involved with any one of them. During the fighting between FNLA and MPLA in and around Luanda in July and August of 1975 there were stories, but little real evidence, of Toco's efforts for peace. His house was attacked in July. Some of his followers accused FAPLA (the armed forces of MPLA) of being responsible, but Toco himself refused to make such an accusation when questioned by journalists.⁵⁹

He was in a very difficult situation, being a northerner and having many friends in the FNLA movement, which was to a large extent a KiKongo speaking alliance, while living in Luanda amongst the Kimbundu, who were predominantly pro MPLA. Then, too, he had many followers in the south of Angola where UNITA was strong.

After the victory of MPLA in 1976 there was still some FNLA guerilla activity in the north until the end of 1979. The fighting was around the Bembe, Toto and Caipemba areas and again the Toco people tried to remain neutral and got into serious trouble because their young men resisted being called up for the MPLA militia. In June 1976 militants of the Women's Organization of Angola (OMA) protested to the Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento, demanding severe sanctions and political re-education in work camps for all who were members of Tocoism, Kimbanguism or the Jehovah's Witnesses. They carried banners 'CIA equals Jehovah' and 'Toco equals FNLA.' The government in fact only banned the Jehovah's Witnesses.⁶⁰ Representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Jean Fischer and Laurence Henderson, who were in Luanda at the time of these disturbances, were able to make representations to the Government about religious liberty.⁶¹ However, in the turmoil the Tocoist Tabernacle of the Lord was destroyed and Toco went into hiding for fourteen months.

Relations between the movement and the Government remained strained until after Simão Toco's death on 1st January 1984. There followed a struggle for power within the church, leading to fighting as two main factions emerged. The Government in consequence did not include the Tocoist Church (The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the World) among the first twelve recognised churches. The divisions were finally resolved in 1988 with the election of Luzaisso Antonio Lutango and Panzo Firmon as general representative and second representative of the Church. On 12th May 1988 the Secretary of State

for Culture announced that the suspension of the activities of the Tocoist Church had been lifted.⁶² There are Tocoista Churches in many of the districts of Luanda and during 1995 Pastor Fernando Paxe Cotelto opened an office in London to serve Angolans, 'asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and students.'⁶³

The similarities between the careers of the two prophets Simon Kimbangu and Simão Toco are striking. Both spoke dialects of the language of the BaKongo and their influence was initially amongst their own people. In their formative years both became members of Baptist Churches and read 'Nkanda Nzambi,' the KiKongo Bible used in those churches which had emerged from the work of the Baptist Missionary Society. Both spent some time in Kinshasa and appear to have been much affected by their experience there. After an intense, but brief, ministry both men were arrested by the colonial authorities on charges of subversion and spent many years in detention isolated from their families and followers. Many of those who had been influenced by them were also detained for long periods by the Belgians and Portuguese in futile attempts to prevent the movement's spreading.

There were also significant differences. Kimbangu's ministry was spectacular and widespread in the early 1920's, whereas twenty years later Toco's early influence was almost entirely amongst the Zombo emigré community of Kinshasa. The strong emphasis on the healing ministry of Kimbangu had tremendous emotional appeal, but he had little time to develop his teaching ministry before he was arrested. The result was that the scattered groups of his followers developed a wide variety of beliefs and practices. Toco was better educated than Kimbangu and had worked as a teacher. Before his ministry developed charismatic features he had already taught his Zombo followers to value education, work and mutual support, elements which were to continue as important features of the Toco movement.

In spite of the restrictions imposed on Kimbanguists and Tocoists by the Belgians and Portuguese, both movements continued to grow, in fact their dispersal into distant regions actually helped them gain converts among non-KiKongo speaking peoples. Except in Angola 'The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the World' (Tocoist Church) is not well known and even in Angola since independence internal strife has kept it on the fringe of church life. However 'The Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu' (EJCSK) has become the largest independent church in Africa, a member of the World Council of Churches and the focus of attention for many theologians.

The success of the Kimbanguist movement owes much to the genius

and organizing ability of Diangienda, the third son of Simon Kimbangu. He succeeded in winning most of the scattered groups of Kimbanguists to his leadership and built a structure of church government which proved effective in the turbulent time of post independent Congo/Zaire. He established a measure of uniformity in doctrine and practice and he was very successful in gaining international recognition for the Kimbanguist Church. It was the misfortune of the Tocoist Church that no one of the calibre of Diangienda emerged to guide that movement through the troubled times in Angola which coincided with the declining years of the Zombo prophet.

NOTES

1. Grenfell, W.D., English version of 'Statement concerning the affair of Simão Gonçalves Toco' compiled at the request of the Provincial Governor 1950. Included in the *Kibokolo Station Report Jan. 1951*. BMS Archives. Angus Library, Regents Park College, Oxford.

2. Henderson, L.W., *The Church in Angola*, Ohio, 1992, p. 122.

3. Grenfell, W.D., *Statement*, 1950.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Marcum, J., *The Angolan Revolution*, MIT Press (1969), p. 77.

6. Grenfell, W.D., *Statement*, 1950.

7. Marcum, J., 1969, p. 78.

8. Estermann, C.C., 'Tocoism as a religious phenomenon' Garcia de Orta. 13 (3), 1965, p. 332. English Translation, p. 6. 'O Tocoismo como fenomeno religioso,' *Etnografia de Angola (Sudoeste e Centro), Colectanea de Artigos Dispersos 1* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigacao Científica Tropical, 1983).

9. Martin, Marie-Louise, 'Kimbangu. An African Prophet and His Church,' (1975), p. 100f.

10. Estermann, C.C., p. 332. *English Translation*, p. 6f.

11. Martin, M-L., 1975, p. 101.

12. Marcum, J., 1969, pp. 78 & 88.

13. Grenfell, W.D., *Statement*, 1950.

14. Year Book 1955 of Jehovah Witnesses, quoted by Margarido, A., in 'The Tocoist Church and Portuguese Colonialism in Angola,' *Protest and Resistance in Angola and Brazil*, Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, p. 39.

15. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 128, quoting from J.M. da Silva Cunha, 'Aspectos dos Movimentos Associativos na Africa Negra,' *Estudos de Ciencias Políticas e Sociais* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1959), p. 45.

16. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 127.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

18. Hancock, M.W., Max Hancock was a BMS missionary in Angola (1926-56) and was a delegate to the Conference in Kinshasa in 1946. He prepared a short statement at the request of the Provincial Governor. An English extract from the statement is in the BMS Angola report for 1950.

19. Personal Observation. David and Margaret Grenfell on numerous occasions spoke of this incident as an example of the basic honesty of the Tocoistas.

20. Grenfell, W.D., *Statement*, 1950.

21. Henderson, L.W., 1992. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, pp. 40-41.

22. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, p. 41f.

23. Martin, M-L., 1975, p. 100.

24. Estermann, C.C., *Eng. Trans.*, p. 6.
25. Henderson, L.W., 1992.
26. Grenfell, W.D., 1950.
27. Salmon, R., to Parsons, C.J., Letter 17/2/1950 BMS Archives.
28. Henderson, L.H., (1992), p. 124, quoting from J.M. da Silva Cunha, 'Aspectos dos Movimentos Associativos na Africa Negra.' Lisbon, 1959. Jehovah's Witnesses' Year Book 1955 quoted in Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.) (1972), p. 41.
29. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.) (1972), p. 42.
30. Marcum, J., 1969. Vol. 1, p. 80. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, p. 47.
31. Grenfell, W.D., Letter to John Marcum, 1/1/1966 in Marcum, J., 1969, p. 80. Photograph dated 1952 of David and Margaret Grenfell with a group of Kimbanguists outside the Methodist Church in Luanda. On loan from Margaret Grenfell.
32. Personal Observation. During 1958 I was present in the home of James Russell in Luanda when Tocoist friends called to see him. They had been his pupils in the primary school at Kibokolo before going to Kinshasa. Their discussion was animated but friendly.
33. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 125. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, p. 42.
34. Personal Observation. I was present at Christmas and Thanksgiving Services at Kibokolo in 1958 and 1959 when two or three Tocoists were present.
35. Personal Observation. From frequent conversations with Afonso Malassa the senior deacon of the Kibokolo Baptist Church, and with Rev. Joao Makondekwa of the Bible Society Luanda.
36. Parsons, C.J., Letter to Salmon, R., 17/2/1950 BMS Archives.
37. Marcum, J., 1969, vol. 1, p. 78.
38. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 125.
39. Brechet, R., 'Essai sur l'Histoire de la Mission Philafricaine' Lausanne: *Alliance Missionnaire Evangelique*, (1972), p. 68.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
41. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 125.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
44. Marcum, J., 1969, p. 80.
45. Margarido, A., in Chilcote, R.H., (ed.), 1972, p. 48. Quoting F. Valente, 'Confianca e interrogacao' *Portugal em Africa*, 2nd ser XXI, No. 125 Sept.-Oct. 1964.
46. Marcum, J., 1969, p. 82, quoting Margarido, A., *L'Eglise Toko*, p. 89.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
50. Rego, A. da Silva, 'Syncretic Movements in Angola' (1970) *Luso-Brazilian Review* 7(2) 1970, p. 33. Personal Observation. I read the articles while I was still at the BMS mission station at S. Salvador in Oct. 1961. Some of my Portuguese contacts in the town were as sceptical as I was. We felt that this was just another example of Portuguese propagandists anxious to use any tactic to help their cause.
51. Henderson, L.W., 1992, pp. 387-8. Marcum, J., 1969, p. 279.
52. Personal Observation. My information on Toco's secret sign was from Afonso Malassa, senior deacon of the Kibokolo Baptist church in exile, who went to the frontier from the refugee reception centre at Kibentele to investigate what Toco was saying.
53. Marcum, J., 1969, p. 279, quoting *Courrier d'Afrique*, for July 13, 1962.
54. Estermann, C.C., 1965, *English Translation*, p. 6. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 388.
55. Rego, A. da Silva, 1970, p. 34.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
57. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 388; *Mondo e Missione*, 103 (24) 1974, pp. 629-630.

58. Personal Observation. In March 1975 I visited this area as part of a fact finding tour for the BMS and saw the preparations being made for the return of Simão Toco.

59. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 388, quoting *Journal de Angola*, 3/7/1975.

60. Henderson, L.W., 1992, p. 389.

61. Personal Note. Jean Fischer visited London in August 1975 and met with Rev. H.F. Drake and myself at the BMS office to discuss the situation in Angola. During the discussion he told us of the demonstrations against the Kimbanguists, Tocoists and Watch Tower. I also discussed the incident with Laurence Henderson in November 1990.

62. Henderson, L.W., 1992, pp. 389-390.

63. Fernando Paxe Cotelo to Rev. R.G.S. Harvey, BMS Didcot 19/6/1995.