

THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF MOZAMBIQUE IN THE COLONIAL WAR (1964-1974) AND IN CIVIL WARS (1977-2014): CHRISTIANS IN COLONIAL WARS

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ABSTRACT

Founded in 1948, the Christian Council of Mozambique (Conselho Cristão de Moçambique - CCM) is an institution which contributed to the Colonial War (1964-1974) and to ending the Civil Wars (1977-1992) (2012-2014). The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs informed the CCM ideals on 'sustainable development'.² By the latter's evangelisation and teaching, leaders such as Eduardo C. Mondlane were produced for the independence of Mozambique.³ After independence the CCM embarked on facilitated dialogue, bringing peace to a nation torn apart by two belligerent parties, RENAMO⁴ and FRELIMO.⁵ In 1984 it created the Commission for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation which attended to the victims of war. This article explores the role of the CCM, its President Bishop Dinis Salomão Sengulane, and other religious leaders in ending the Civil Wars and implementing peace,⁶ including within recent history.

Key words: Christian Council of Mozambique; Conselho Cristão de Moçambique (CCM); Colonial War; Civil Wars; Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Bishop Dinis Salomão Sengulane; Renamo; Frelimo; Rahil Khan; Afonso Dhlakama; Ps. Rodney Hein; Portuguese Empire.

Introduction

Methodologically surveyed data and interviews inform this article. The title time frames (1964-1974), (1976-1992) and (2012-2014) correspond to armed conflicts. Established in 1948, the Mozambican CCM became involved in three wars: (i) from 25 September 1964⁷ until 1974⁸ leading to independence on 25 July 1975;⁹ (ii) from 1977 until the peace accord was signed in Rome on 4 October 1992;¹⁰ and (iii) from April 2012 until 7 September 2014.¹¹

Catholic and Protestant establishment and political engagement

Catholic establishment

By issuing the bull ‘*Romanus Pontifex*’¹² in 1455¹³ Pope Nicholas V endorsed Portugal’s monopoly to explore, ‘the whole [African] continent’.¹⁴ Thus, Vasco da Gama held the first Mass on 11 March 1498, as Francisco Gomes de Amorim informs in *Quadros da História de Moçambique; Vasco da Gama*.¹⁵ In 1752¹⁶ Portugal detached Mozambique from her India domains,¹⁷ creating a ‘captaincy-general’.¹⁸ Cruz e Silva (1998) wrote *Educação, Identidades e Consciência Política; A Missão Suíça no Sul de Moçambique (1930-1975)* stating that Portugal enforced¹⁹ ‘Portuguese culture, through language, education and [Catholic] Christianity’.²⁰

Protestant establishment

The 1885 Berlin Conference forced Portuguese authorities to permit Protestants to become established in Mozambique, as Jones stated in its General Act.²¹ Consequently, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican missionaries settled in Mozambique.²² Nonetheless, the Portuguese did not welcome Protestant missions. Cunha e Silva noted that they opposed²³ the ‘Swiss missionaries’.²⁴ By 1940 Catholicism was ‘in all regions’,²⁵ as ‘...working with local institutions to support sustainable livelihoods’. The south ‘was largely Protestant’.²⁶ According to Garcia, by ‘1967 [Protestants numbered] 450 000’.²⁷ The Vatican Council II Catholic and Protestant Mozambican leaders supported independence.

The CCM raised political leaders

Protestant missions used a different evangelisation approach from the Catholic missions, and this promoted an independent spirit.

CCM's history and a different approach to politics

- The establishment of the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM)

The CCM resulted from harsh conditions experienced by Protestant denominations in Mozambique. Since 1920²⁸ Protestants had cooperated inter-denominationally founding the CCM in '1948'.²⁹ In *História de Moçambique* Hedges declares³⁰ that Protestant churches were repressed since 1941 because they were 'anti-colonial nationalist'.³¹ Representing 24 churches, CCM promotes 'social and economic justice',³² and 'human rights'.³³

- Protestant evangelisation produced political leaders

Initially, Catholic missionaries dedicated themselves to civilise the natives by teaching them ... Portuguese'.³⁴ However, evangelisation by Protestants promoted local languages and personal identity, fostering political leadership. They taught reading and writing in the indigenous peoples' own languages. The CCM taught in Portuguese, but its education and evangelisation methods were based on the retention of a 'national' Mozambican culture as an alternative to that of the Portuguese, developing a nationalist consciousness.³⁵ Cunha e Silva has argued³⁶ that 'they operated...against the Portuguese education'.³⁷

Printed in³⁸ 'South Africa',³⁹ Protestants 'published magazines and newspapers in local languages'⁴⁰ informing readers about social and political conditions in the colony. From 1921 to 1949 the Swiss Mission published the 'Nyeleti Ya Miso'⁴¹ in Tsonga. The 'Mahlalhe'⁴² was published by Presbyterian and Methodist denominations, being⁴³ 'written in Tshwa, Tsonga and Portuguese'.⁴⁴ Religious in nature, vernacular newspapers published news on current politics in Mozambique and the world, often defending or confronting policies as social intervention.⁴⁵ Portuguese hostility to African languages was advantageous.

The Protestant media was backed by ethnologic and ethnographic studies carried out by Protestant missionaries in Mozambique and South Africa. They learned that the Tsonga were situated in 'Khosen Hlengwe, Gaza, Speloken, Nkuna, Mpfumu, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Shilubana and Maputo'.⁴⁶ These efforts⁴⁷ 'played an important role in the socialization of cultural identity and internalization of belonging to an ethnic-linguistic group'.⁴⁸ Garcia also informed the reader:⁴⁹

Protestant missions ... supported independence movements ... against Portugal ... The civilizing mission ... was transformed into subversive action ... Numerous leaders of FRELIMO grew up in a Protestant background ... [such as] ... Eduardo Mondlane ... Alexandre Guebuza, Pascoal Mocumbi and Sebastião Mabote.⁵⁰

The Swiss Mission was transformed into 'Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique ... [in] 1970'.⁵¹

Protestant and Catholic dialogue against colonialism

The Second Vatican Council helped to combine the Christian approach and collaboration on the Mozambican colonial problem, as Diamantino Antunes discusses in *Presença Antiga e Diversificada dos Cristãos*. According to Antunes:⁵²

Dialogue and ecumenical cooperation between Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church is good. The most important body of ecumenical collaboration in Mozambique is the ... CCM.⁵³

CCM's role for peace

The liberation war (1964-1974) led to independence in 1975. However, civil war broke out two years later between opposing sides, FRELIMO and RENAMO.

CCM's role on the War for Independence (1964-1974)

The United Nations fostered human rights which were used in Africa against colonisation. Particularly, the Conference of Bandung (1955)⁵⁴ supported and intensified the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. Francisco Miguel Gouveia Pinto Proença Garcia argued in *Análise Global de Uma Guerra* (Moçambique 1964-1974) that the initial opposition to the colonial regime was expressed by the⁵⁵ 'MAC (Anti-Colonial Movement), among students, cultural associations, religious organizations ... These organisations were precursors of the future independence movements',⁵⁶ such as 'MANU ... UDENAMO ... [and] UNAMI'.⁵⁷ They united on⁵⁸ 'May 25th, 1962',⁵⁹ and⁶⁰ 'FRELIMO was founded in ... June 25, 1962, in Accra'.⁶¹ They were inclined to establish⁶² 'Communism',⁶³ as Garcia reports.

In *The origins of war in Mozambique; A history of unity and division* Funada-Classens recorded, 'the liberation struggle ... [was] from 1962 to 1975'.⁶⁴ Guerilla action against colonialism was taken by FRELIMO on 24 September 1964.⁶⁵ The CCM was not involved in the independence movements, but educated their leaders. As illustrated by Armando Pedro Muiuane in *Datas e Documentos da História da FRELIMO*, Protestant missionaries educated Eduardo Mondlane:⁶⁶

Rev. Emile Kaltenrieder helped me ... to study at night ... In 1936 ... Rev. Charles Perrier ... got a place for to work at the Swiss Mission's hospital ... with the tasks to sweep the yard and wash the bandages.⁶⁷

CCM's role in ending the Civil War (1977-1992)

The civil war (1977-1992) ripped the Mozambican nation apart. Notwithstanding, the CCM helped those affected by the war, and in finding the road to peace.

- Independence and the conflict between state and churches

The normalisation, initiated by independence (25 July 1975) travelled a rough way. On 30 May 1977 Civil War broke out. The Marxist-Leninist state also entered into conflict against the churches. Jessen explains:⁶⁸ ‘Religion...felt its freedom of action curtailed’.⁶⁹ He adds,⁷⁰ ‘FRELIMO continued a hostile policy towards the churches’.⁷¹ However, circumstances forced the state to redefine its allies by inviting ‘Catholic and Protestant leaders to participate’⁷² to tackle the crisis.

- The CCM minimised the effects of the Civil War

The horrors resulting from the Civil War were alleviated by the CCM. Faithful to their values, Protestants were involved in solving social problems and national crises. The CCM proposed that 10 per cent of goods raised should be given by the churches to the needy and 90 per cent by the⁷³ ‘Department to Combat Natural Disasters’.⁷⁴ This resulted in ‘The Government decreasing...attacks against Churches’.⁷⁵

The CCM became a respected civil organisation working to help needy populations. It minimised suffering. This is corroborated by *Avaliação Conjunta do Apoio à Participação da Sociedade Civil no Diálogo sobre Políticas: Relatório Nacional de Moçambique*, which declares:⁷⁶ ‘Apart from the initiatives organized by the Government, there have also been those by ... the ... CCM.’⁷⁷ In *Porque Prevaleceu a Paz: Moçambicanos Repondem* Van den Bergh stated:⁷⁸ ‘The CCM played a role in emergency activities for victims of war ... in refugee camps ... concluding neither evangelism nor relief were sufficient to end suffering.’⁷⁹

- CCM’s role and that of Dinis Salomão Sengulane in ending the Civil War

By 1982 Anglican Bishop Dinis Salomão Sengulane as well as the Catholic Bishop, Dom Jaime Gonçalves had helped establish peace. Interviewed, Sengulane said that what motivated him⁸⁰ was Jesus’ teaching and faith. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God. The ‘1982’⁸¹ Anglican Synod⁸² also encouraged resolution to the conflict.

Catholics and Protestants found it difficult to reach a solution for the conflict. Interviewed, Professor André Thomashausen said:⁸³ ‘[Dhlakama, the RENAMO leader] did not trust ... Dom Jaime ... [He preferred] Dinis for not imposing his views and being humble and for having access to Dhlakama’.⁸⁴

Solving the civil war included the search for peace. But, when interviewed, Sengulane said:⁸⁵ ‘The only path to peace was to talk... Mozambicans had...to consolidate what united us.’⁸⁶ Born in 1946, Sengulane became bishop, CCM’s president, and⁸⁷ became ‘involved in the peace negotiations that ended the war’.⁸⁸ Sengulane was respected by RENAMO for its influence on the⁸⁹ ‘ground’,⁹⁰ as mentioned by Pastor Rodney Hein,⁹¹ a Pentecostal missionary working in areas controlled by Dhlakama. In 1984 the CCM created a Commission for Peace and Reconciliation,⁹² as Van den Bergh stated.⁹³

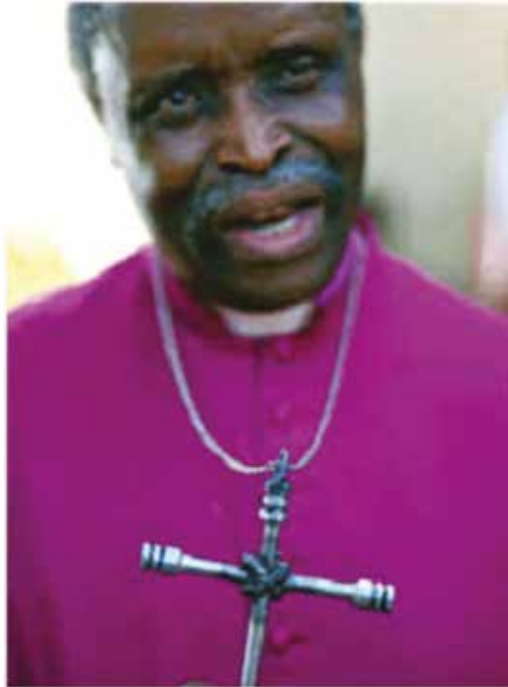


Figure 1: Catholic Bishop of Beira Gonçalves

In 1985 the CCM sent representatives to meet President Samora Machel. Interviewed, Boaventura Zita reported:⁹⁴ 'In 1985 we told Samora Machel to talk with...RENAMO.'⁹⁵

The CCM also sent a letter to President Joaquim Chissano⁹⁶ in 1987.⁹⁷ According to Van den Bergh this declared:⁹⁸ 'It does not matter where bullets come from...Mozambicans are dying.'⁹⁹ CCM's leadership argued:¹⁰⁰ 'Dialogue is not the legitimization of destabilization; it is simply to recognize suffering.'¹⁰¹

The CCM's president Sengulane with the Catholic Bishop of Beira Gonçalves joined hands, both¹⁰² 'playing an influential role in the emergence of peace and reconciliation'.¹⁰³ Van den Bergh notes:¹⁰⁴

Catholics had access to RENAMO, the CCM influenced the government. The CCM forged ties with the [Catholic] Archbishop of Maputo, Dom Alexandre dos Santos, and both Catholics and Protestants tried to persuade the two sides that talk was needed.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the efforts were carried out separately. While the Catholic bishop produced a public pastoral letter calling on the government to talk with RENAMO, the CCM did it in a more direct manner. Sengulane said:¹⁰⁶ 'We made it not in public but in a pastoral way. It was different from the Catholics, they did not talk, they pressured the Government through a pastoral letter, stating: 'The Government has to talk.'¹⁰⁷

- The efforts bore fruit

By 1987¹⁰⁸ Chissano had recognised the solution to the Civil War needed to follow a different path, by perceiving the importance of involving religious leaders in finding peace, as Van den Bergh records. While visiting Mozambique on 16 April 1988 Pope John Paul II addressed President Chissano alluding to the need for peace, saying:¹⁰⁹ ‘I come to you as Bishop of Rome, Vicar of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, to Whom every man is a brother who must be loved, respected and supported.’¹¹⁰

Four years later the peace accord was signed in Rome. The definitive role in the signing of the peace accord was carried out by the Catholic community of Sant’ Egidio,¹¹¹ as explained by Major-General Carlos Branco in *As Organizações Não Governamentais na Mediação de Conflitos Intra-Estaduais Violentos: O Confronto Entre a Teoria e a Prática no Processo de Paz Moçambicano*. Branco wrote:¹¹² ‘With the consent of the Vatican and the financial and diplomatic support of the Italian Government, the Community of Sant’ Egidio organised the first round of negotiations held in their facilities in Rome in July 1990.’¹¹³ It was there that the peace agreement was signed between ‘RENAMO ... [and] FRELIMO’,¹¹⁴ according to Luís Leitão in *Porque Moçambique Está na Moda*. Belchior Faustino Canivete reported in *Os Escorços da Igreja Católica de Moçambique na busca da paz para Moçambique, 1982-1992: o caso específico do arcebispo da Beira, D. Jaime Pedro Gonçalves*,¹¹⁵ ‘The Comprehensive Peace Agreement ... [was] signed on 4 October 1992’.¹¹⁶

The CCM were not mediators, but, facilitators of peace talks. They delivered a letter¹¹⁷ from the government to the RENAMO leader, Afonso Dhlakama, in August 1989. Nevertheless, Sengulane did not go to Rome, as he said:¹¹⁸ ‘Dom Jaime was present ... It was enough just one of us.’¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, Bishop Sengulane’s role was underlined by McVeigh in an article entitled Peacemaker extraordinaire: Bishop Dinis Sengulane and the quest for peace in Mozambique. Sengulane’s visionary idea was the ‘win-win strategy ... He understood instinctively, as no other, that it would be victory without anyone defeated or it would not be victory at all’.¹²⁰

The CCM became involved in implementing peace after the peace agreement. As Van den Bergh commented,¹²¹ the populations in the ‘refugee camps’¹²² and in the countryside needed peace and reconciliation. They needed to return and to forgive. The CCM therefore participated in nationwide civic education and reconciliation programmes¹²³ to integrate people. Van den Bergh wrote:¹²⁴ ‘The main concern was helping people to accept the inclusion of the enemy.’¹²⁵

The CCM’s campaign¹²⁶ ‘weapons for spades’¹²⁷ was a practical disarmament project to collect arms giving working tools in return labelled as ‘TAE’,¹²⁸ as indicated by Croll in *Transformação de Armas em Enxadas: A Abordagem TAE para um Desarmamento, Prático*.



Figure 2: Weapons

Concerning resources, Homerin wrote:¹²⁹ ‘The CCM established ongoing partnerships with international NGOs.’¹³⁰



Figure 3: President Armando Guebuza

Second Civil War (2012-2014)

In 2012 animosity returned, and the CCM continued playing a role in the peace process. Clashes between RENAMO and FRELIMO forces claimed lives. As Hein stated: ‘Mozambique is still in turmoil, the solution is not in war, but ... peace.’¹³¹ Thomashausen similarly argued¹³² ‘the conflict will never be resolved by armed force’.¹³³

Fortunately, the truce and peace prevailed. Again, Sengulane¹³⁴ assisted in this respect, as Thomashausen indicated.¹³⁵ Interviewed, Rahil Khan stated that an agreement was reached on 11 August 2014. For Reuters, Manuel Mucari wrote: ‘Mozambique’s parliament has approved an amnesty law that will allow opposition RENAMO party leader Afonso Dhlakama to leave his hideaway in the bush, sign a peace accord with President Armando Guebuza and run for office in the Oct. 15 election.’¹³⁶ On Friday 5 September 2014 President Armando Guebuza and the RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama joined to sign the peace accord, ratified by Parliament on Monday 7 September.¹³⁷

Sengulane was a guest at the ceremony as confirmed by television news report broadcast on that day by STV. Asked what had crossed his mind then, he said:¹³⁸

I thanked God for softening the hearts to recognise for both are brothers ... What was happening should be transferred ... [to] Mozambican communities to continue dialogue ... We should establish a movement of national reconciliation in which everyone feels they are peacemakers, what I have called “Hello Peace” ... And, I felt great for the history of peace and understanding among Mozambicans.¹³⁹

Sengulane added:¹⁴⁰ ‘Peace has three conditions: First, formal and informal dialogue; second, to face issues of social character; third to eliminate the instruments of war.’¹⁴¹

Sengulane pointed out that there is a long way towards effective peace.¹⁴²

The people are at peace ... We must ... disarm minds and hands. This is the most crucial for the maintenance of peace ... Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact that we have not reached the end of the walk.¹⁴³

Sengulane is optimistic, declaring:¹⁴⁴ ‘I see Mozambique increasingly smiling ... reconciled ... [and] turned to God. More than in 1992 many say peace is the result of divine intervention in human hearts.’¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

The CCM influenced Mozambican history. Protestant values were absorbed by many who became significant politicians. The independence of Mozambique was partly shaped by the evangelisation, education and ministry of CCM’s churches. Portuguese authorities accurately perceived Protestant churches as pervasive and a threat. Protestant, as the Swiss Mission, intervened politically in the movement towards independence.

The CCM ministered to the entire nation, overcoming the government's Marxist-Leninist ideology. The CCM provided help for those affected by the horrors of war and intervened in places where the government could not. As evangelisation and resources were not enough to end the Civil War, the CCM searched for peace.

The now retired Bishop Sengulane is respected for bringing peace, forgiveness and economic development to the nation in need.

ENDNOTES

1. This article emanates from one of the research strands in the research field Rev F.C. da Silva is exploring in the DTh thesis that he is currently researching with UNISA, in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria in 2014 under the supervision of Prof. M.H. Mogashoa.
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27. Original text in Portuguese: ‘Dom Jaime esteve presente. Eu nunca fui. Chegava um de nós.’
28. Van den Bergh, L. *Porque Prevaleceu a Paz: Moçambicanos Repondem*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

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31. Van den Bergh, L. *Porque Prevaleceu a Paz: Moçambicanos Repondem*, op. cit., p. 29.
32. Original text in Portuguese: 'A primeira prioridade foi envolver as igrejas associadas com CCM no país inteiro. A principal preocupação foi ajudar a população a aceitar a inclusão do inimigo. Reconciliação e perdão eram no início as questões mais importantes.'
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45. SAPA, *Mozambique parliament ratifies peace*. Article in: *news24*, online portal: <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Mozambique-parliament-ratifies-peace-20140908> (accessed on 8September2014 at 20:31).
46. Original text in Portuguese: 'Primeiro agradecer a Deus que amoleceu os corações para reconhecerem que ambos são irmãos e parceiros na busca do bem estar para os moçambicanos. Em segundo lugar senti que aquilo que estava a acontecer devia ser transferido ou devia transbordar para as comunidades. As comunidades moçambicanas devem continuar a dialogar porque afinal o diálogo pode produzir resultados tão bonitos como aqueles onde tenham havido grandes desacordos. Portanto, senti que devemos estabelecer um movimento de reconciliação nacional em que todos se sintam que são pacificadores, aquilo que eu tenho chamado de "Olá Paz"...Havia também um sentimento de fazermos parte da história da paz e do entendimento entre os moçambicanos.'
47. Da Silva, F.C. Interview with Bishop Dinis S. Sengulane. Interview to inform this article conducted telephonically on 10 September 2014 from 11:25 am to 11:41 am. This was done from my cell phone and in my office in Benoni, South Africa, to his cell phone and in his office in Maputo, Mozambique.
48. Original text in Portuguese: 'São três condições para a paz: Primeira é o diálogo a todos os níveis, formal e informalmente. Segundo, garantir que questões de carácter social são encaradas; e, terceiro, que não há possibilidades de instrumentos de guerra... Mas, de notar que o povo moçambicano é um solo fértil para a paz. Portanto, foram os moçambicanos que exigiram dos dois dirigentes que eles se entendessem.'
49. Da Silva, F.C. Interview with Bishop Dinis S. Sengulane. Interview to inform this article conducted telephonically on 10 September 2014 from 11:25 am to 11:41 am. This was done from my cell phone and in my office in Benoni, South Africa, to his cell phone and in his office in Maputo, Mozambique.
50. Original text in Portuguese: 'O povo está em paz. Então se o conteúdo está nas mãos do povo e não vejo motivo para voltarmos a ter qualquer perturbação. Mas estamos a completar o desarmamento das mentes e das mãos. Este é o ponto mais crucial para a manutenção da paz que é desarmar as mentes e as mãos. Temos como país um caminho... que gostaria que não fosse tão longo, mas estamos a par do facto que não chegamos ao fim da caminhada. Mas os passos que nós demos são muito encorajadores...Acho que nós demos mais do que o primeiro passo.'
51. Da Silva, F.C. Interview with Bishop Dinis S. Sengulane. Interview to inform this article conducted telephonically on 10 September 2014 from 11:25 am to 11:41 am. This was done from my cell phone and in my office in Benoni, South Africa, to his cell phone and in his office in Maputo, Mozambique.
52. Original text in Portuguese: 'Vejo um Moçambique cada vez mais sorridente... reconciliado...virado para Deus. Muitos estão a dizer que esta paz é fruto da intervenção divina nos corações. Estão a dizer agora muito mais do que diziam em 1992.'
53. Da Silva, F.C. Interview with Bishop Dinis S. Sengulane. Interview to inform this article conducted telephonically on 10 September 2014 from 11:25 am to 11:41 am.

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