

MANUEL MISSA

Report #A03

SURVEY

In our Angola survey Manuel Missa was the fourth most frequently listed non-clergy leader said to have a significant impact.

ABSTRACT

Mr. Manuel Missa is an Angolan aged 60, a primary school teacher by profession. He married Alice Canhenhe Aurelio in 1976. He is a father of eight: five boys and three girls. Two of his boys are pastors: one in The Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA) and the other in Igreja Evangelica Sinodal de Angola (IESA), for he was ordained in Lubango. The others have been actively engaged in Church, and they are civil servants. Mr. Missa is a singer as well as a religious music composer. He is a choirmaster and has conducted choir rehearsals at the Church. He also conducts Bible Studies and serves as a Church Deacon. He works as Head in-charge of the academic department at the school where he is posted.

BACKGROUND

Childhood Home

Mr. Manuel Missa was born on August 23rd, 1954, at Kavango Village, Ringoma Commune, Kamacupa Municipality, Bie Province. He lived with his parents in that village for a while and then they moved to the Chiuka region at Kalumbala Village where he grew. His father died in the sixties, so he lived with his mother, who died in the eighties.

Educational Background

His schooling and career training were marked by a lot of personal sacrifices. It was his mother who paid for his schooling. He was enrolled at primary school until Grade Four. Then he left his mother and moved to Kuito City where he did senior primary; that was during the colonial era. Later on, through great effort, he secured a place and enrolled in grade six and thence went on to finish senior secondary schooling. To make ends meet he had to apply for a job with the Government. That job would grant him support for him and his family. He has been a schoolteacher since 1980, and he has served for the last 34 years.

Regarding Church activities, he says that he has ever felt that the Holy Spirit is leading him. He further states that he always derives lots of self-fulfillment from reflection on God's Word/Bible. He felt passion to attend Church services. Owing to his proven unquenchable desire, pastor Castro Capanda, who recognized in him unfailing commitment towards Church work; this led to his consequent choice and an invitation to attend pastors seminary. It was expected that he would come to work as a pastor; unfortunately, that was not going to be, as he became ill, which rendered him unable to achieve that dream. At that time, his childhood friend was Amôs Chikunho Buta, who now lives and is the pastor-in-charge at Kamundongo Mission station.

Owing to his commitment Mr. Missa was later elected as a Catechist at Kamacupa. Soon after that he moved on and established his residence in Kuito City where he continued working as a Catechist. At the death of a church deacon, he was elected as Deacon; he took the deceased's place and up until now Mr. Missa still serves as the Evangelical church Deacon.

Personal Testimony and Calling

How does he feel God work impacting upon him? Mr Manuel Missa had the following to say in answering this question: “it is amazing to note that in spite of being a sinner, he felt God being by him, in as far as, I have witnessed in all my life, going through great sickness distress, I survived from various road accidents; two of which, if it were not for God being by me, I would have disappeared, so I marvel at how I escaped and continue living up until now. Therefore, I do acknowledge that the Lord is keeping me as well as my family.”

Influences

The late Pastor Castro Capanda was the leader who most influenced him. In fact, he has great admiration for his pastoral work carried out at Chiuca region. He felt greatly influenced by him, as he was still young and single while at Kamacupa; that was in the eighties.

As to a female leader whose influence impacted him, Mr. Missa cites Pastor (Mrs) Mauricia Njila, his Christian Education teacher when he attended a Bible course that lasted for two years.

Other Background

His daily social activities are geared towards provision for family sustenance and toward the Bible or other Christian literature that deepens his understanding of the Bible—he uses his free time for this. Besides these two above stated, he does not run any other business.

As a qualified personnel in the field of education, he taught and, later on, became a Headmaster: the post he held for ten years. Presently, he works as an academic head.

The other work he considers as complementary is farming/agriculture. He took us to see his field just in the surroundings of his homestead where he has some fruit trees. Mr. Manuel Missa got and offered us some maize cobs he had grown.

CURRENT MINISTRY OR VOCATION

Work/Ministry

He is a church Deacon, so he takes part in deacons’ work of diaconia (by helping the Pastor in administering the Holy Communion, visiting the sick and the bereaved members), and teaches Sunday School. On Saturdays, he takes women and men’s Bible Study.

Mission and Vision

He told us that had he been young he would have taken a pastors’ training since he reported feeling so much “thirst and hunger” for God’s word; but as his age is already so much advanced that is no longer attainable. His wish now is to have two of his sons educated, as these are not yet pastors (as pointed out earlier on, he has already two who are pastors); yet he still desires that these would also become church leaders. Mr. Missa places much emphasis on this particular vision among many others. He is praying for every extended family member (his children, granddaughters and great-grandsons), that they might abide by God’s Word and that they might become church leaders as well.

Organization

The organization he has been working for to achieve his objectives. He works for no other organization that helps him attain his set objectives besides the Church and the Government, where he has been working as a school teacher. His income comes from his salaries as trained personnel. Other sources of income are just subsidiaries, thus being complementary: coming from farming by sowing maize, beans, cabbage, onions, tomatoes, and other locally grown farm produce.

Impact/Success/Assessment

As a school teacher, according to him, he has influenced, as well as trained a lot of people, and some of these are better qualified than him, regarding the higher standard of education attained by these. Regarding his religious standing, he says that only God knows the number of people he has converted to the light of salvation; these are many, but again only God does know best how many they are. Even as a Sunday school teacher, at the Church, he is unable to give an estimate of them. In spite of this, he went on making the following comment: “It is hard for me to highlight just some, however, concerning my family, I would like to state that all my brothers were influenced by me, as it seems that God first chose me. I have got an elder brother who did not know anything other than tilling the land, but now on Sundays, he endeavors to go to Church. I also do have three sisters who today still admire me for their conversion; I have a sister who used to both smoke and drink so much so that I cannot just imagine how she was able to give up on these vices, even here where I am residing on temporary basis I have been striving much so that my neighbors would follow my way of life and I say that tomorrow or later on with the help of the Holy Spirit who would be able to convince them all it might be possible for them as well.”

Furthermore, concerning the number of those who came under his influence, Mr. Missa preferred not to go to the length of supplying a concise figure, as referred to above. Since he started working, even before he became a Catechist, he was already elected as a choir group president since he sang a lot and his God-focused transforming influence thus touched so many in contact with him. Even now he sings a great deal. Therefore there are people at the church that acquired and remained in the Word of God owing to these songs. In short, as there are many people he has influenced, it has not occurred to him to determine their specific numbers.

On the other hand, in the social arena, concerning education, he states that he influenced over ten people who are now leaders. As stated earlier on, he has been working in education as a school teacher for thirty-four years now. As an example, at the school in which he has been posted this year as a school teacher, there is a pupil of his whose son is Rafael, he just remembers one forename. Some of those who were trained by him are in Luanda: they are quite many, and he does not remember their names anymore. He did not hide his surprise when one stopped and greeted him, and yet he could not remember who he was and to make matters worse, this one did not even introduce himself to Mr. Missa.

The underlying reason for his work success as a leader: He comments that as a leader he is unable to face up to life's hardships, so he has got support from, or resorted to prayer; this has greatly helped him in his social work as a religious person. These are some of the resources he has made use of.

His role played as a young leader trainer: There have been meetings for talks, teaching, and advising the youth so that these would follow the lead, taking a good Christian way of life in religious terms. He says that presently the youth is much more interested in worldly things, in the latest fashion that has nothing to do with one's dignified character or personality. So, he has taken this up in order to stage talks geared towards both scientific and Christian education.

Specifically, he has played an advisory role with the youth, covering biblical themes that exhort and admonish people so that they continue displaying good character in the course of their lives. Now regarding the social arena, I would like to give the following examples, covering everyone who leads exemplary lives, nowadays, as in the past, they did everything so they would show obedience and so be able to take up the—for example—work that has been done then so as to earn that life that they have attained, up until now.

He motivates the youth so that they would engage meaningfully in their studies, realizing that, be it either social or religious work, only through this work is one dignified.

Training/Leadership development

Mr. Missa asserts that he has faced some hurdles as a Christian leader for not undergoing theological training, as he desired earlier on in his life; however, to influence others, he has turned to the elders and others with working experience, from whom he has requested help. Also, taking into consideration the period we are going through, Mr. Missa has requested from elders that they explain how Church leadership in the olden days was performed. Meetings were held with a view to reflecting on what ought to be done today, regarding both the youth and new leadership for present and promising future times.

During such sessions with much more knowledgeable persons, who have based their knowledge on good dedicated people, they have given examples and analyses of those who have led both safe social and religious lives. He assured us that others have achieved good results after these.

Professional Relationships/Partnerships/Links

In the olden days when he used to work at Kamacupa, he was a member of the Ministry of Education syndicate, but now he is no longer. He does not belong to any association other than academic work and Church leadership, which are not party activities.

He is convinced that the Lord does help; this influence comes through prayer, so he supplicates God to continue training. He would like to learn from other leaders' experience, which is a worthwhile strategy.

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Music makes up part of him; hence, he thinks his strongest hallmark is related to singing. It is singing that qualified him as a leader, according to him. In every community or Church where he has gone through he has been recognized for having been endowed with such a gift. This is the reason he has been asked to lead rehearsals for choir groups.

Weak points: the sickness which sometimes has blocked progress. Nevertheless, he has been able to carry out preaching to transmit God's Word. When undergoing illness he laments, "Why is this happening?" as his express wish is to be very conscious and much more hardworking.

He takes physical health as an opportunity. He feels one should not forget the community and the area in which he comes from, and in his case this is Chiuca. He lives in Kuito City but is not a native of there. He imagines the manner in which he remembers his native village people has to do with doing something for them. Therefore, he was led to have a church built at Chiuca Commune. The walls have already been erected, and it will be similar to the one at Kassalo village.

As to the threats, he blatantly concedes that, truthfully, it has to do with personal health, which sometimes has served as a stumbling block to his activities' development.

Reading & Writing

He regularly reads the Bible and other books that help him to get a profound understanding of God's Word. He has a Roman Catholic Church Bible copy and other literature that help him understand it; thus safeguarding him from those who would like him to deviate from his denomination and join other church denominations.

As qualified personnel in education, he has read a Portuguese Grammar by José Maria Relvas, besides other textbooks for Mathematics, as he enjoys teaching this subject.

Mr. Missa's daily reading includes the following books: religious books, books by Wanhenga Xito, and by Angola's founding father, Dr. Agostinho Neto, entitled "Sagrada Esperança."

He has not published any literature; even as a school teacher, he was unable to write any textbook at all.

Political Arena

He would like to see Christians participate in politics but in a different manner. It follows that for Mr. Missa the only politics is the Christian ones as compared to other political ideologies—there is all the difference in the world. Hence, the only politics is the one that engages in making souls for Christ.

Future

He has this to say, unfortunately: "I am nearly approaching my age limit, but had I been a youth, as soon as I retired I would have asked to work in an Evangelical Mission, and dedicate all my life to this work no more. Had I been young I would have loved attaining a higher leadership post, that of being a pastor," which he has dreamt of a lot.

His dream is about working at mission stations as in the past: leading the modern youth, and thus showing them the way, as to how they should behave as a religious person, and with them derive further experience as one is born, grows and dies learning. He further comments that being human it is not a permanent status here on earth, as tomorrow, he is called up and disappear. All that he is should be imitated by his kith and kin, for example, his dynamism in religious work, singing, prayer, preaching and teaching God's Word.

His son, who is a pastor, tells the following account:

Father has ever been a leader since his youth at Kamacupa. When they arrived at Kuito City, they joined the Church at Catemo Congregation. My father is a music composer, singer and choir leader taking their rehearsals until today. He has influenced many, and all family members were taught how to sing. There are eight children, and none of them is an atheist. We all follow suit his leadership. Our home is ever full with relatives and non-relatives. Relatives regard him as a leader of all of them. During family reunions, he takes a leading role in these.

He was sick for a nine years period; he has turned 60 years of age though he looks older than his age. Up until now we cannot tell about his illness, but we have seen our mother carrying our father on her back and take him to the health post. Nowadays, he is feeling well: only at times when he suffers from heart problems.

His character has led others to appoint him and take a pastors course, but his illness has blocked the plan, and he was unable to attend a theological course, as ever desire.

Information about the Preparation of this Report

Albano Cachela da Silva – Transcribed

Manuel Missas – Interviewed

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