

## CHAPTER 4

### THE STORY OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN THE ANGOLA BAPTIST CONVENTION

Various methods of leadership training have been employed through the years since the Angola Baptist Convention was first organized in 1940 due to the efforts of Portuguese Baptist missionary Manuel Pedras and João de Deus Ferreira, the Portuguese Baptist Convention's secretary for overseas missions.<sup>125</sup> Manuel Pedras had first come to Angola in 1929 on his own, but was adopted by a single Portuguese Baptist church in 1931. In 1934, Pedras was officially designated as the first missionary of the Portuguese Baptist Convention to Portugal's overseas province of Angola.<sup>126</sup> (Angola became an independent nation on November 11, 1975.)

Perhaps it should be noted here that British Baptists came to the north of Angola in the late 1800's and Canadian Baptists came in 1957. However, with the outbreak of the war for independence from Portugal in 1961, all missionaries (not Portuguese) had to leave the north part of Angola.<sup>127</sup> Although these

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<sup>125</sup>Harrison Pike, "History of Baptists in Angola," Thesis presented to Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City in April, 1971, 41.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 34, 37.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 14, 26.

missions established schools for academic training, this author has no information about leadership training of nationals for the churches.

However, this paper is concerned with what has happened in the Angola Baptist Convention. Now for the unfolding of that story..

### Beginning Stages

Little is known about the methods of training used by Manuel Pedras and his successor, Tiago António Pereira. However, both had schools for primary education at the Etunda Mission, the beginning place for Baptist work in what is now known as the Huambo province.<sup>128</sup> It is likely that they personally undertook the religious training of many of their students.

When Harrison and June Pike, Southern Baptists' first missionaries to Angola, arrived on August 29, 1968, there were four national pastors and eleven lay leaders (called evangelists by the Portuguese). In 1971, two more from the Huambo area, one from Luanda, and two from what is now the province of Uíge were ordained to the ministry.<sup>129</sup> It has been heard that Portuguese pastors who had come to Angola as teachers for British and Canadian mission schools, had remained, and were pastoring churches were very disturbed over the ordination of the untrained men.

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 38,41.

<sup>129</sup>Herlander Mário Machado da Conceição Felizardo, "História do Trabalho Baptista em Portugal: Primeiro Centenário, 1888-1988," Draft copy, 1986, 241.

### The Bible Institute

In March of 1973, Harrison Pike organized and started the first Baptist training school for pastors and lay leaders on a convention-wide level. It was called the Bible Institute of the Angola Baptist Convention.<sup>130</sup> Students from Huambo and Uíge joined those from the capital for a four-week study in Luanda which included New Testament, Old Testament, and Homiletics. A house was rented for a month; and lodging, meals, books and other materials were paid for by the Baptist Mission. In March of 1974, Old and New Testament studies continued with the addition of Portuguese and music. Pike used some of the Portuguese pastors as teachers.<sup>131</sup>

When Southern Baptist missionaries Curtis and Betty Dixon arrived in Angola in October of 1974, the future seemed bright for Angola. After the bloodless coup in Portugal on April 25th of that year, the Portuguese had promised Angola its independence to be consummated on November 11, 1975. They had set up a transitional government.

Dixon was recruited to teach Theology during the four-week study in March of 1975. Dixon's wife and Pike's wife taught the music course. Twenty-four students were enrolled. New Testament, Old Testament, and Portuguese were again offered.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>131</sup>Bible Institute files.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

This writer recalls that after the close of the Institute, a bus was chartered to take the students to the annual meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention in Nova Lisboa (now known as Huambo). The institute ch'bir sang on the program. Portuguese pastors and others present made an appeal for a fixed seminary that could train those who wanted to study on a higher level. It was even difficult to get them to admit the churches which had been organized in the north during the past year as members of the Convention. There was some question as to their doctrinal integrity because of lack of training in the area.

It was decided to have the Bible Institute again in September of 1975, with plans to continue with two institutes each year thereafter. However, that was not to be. The transitional government was breaking down, and the struggle between the three liberation movements for control of the new nation-to-be intensified. Fighting broke out in the capital. It later spread to Huambo, the second largest city in Angola, where one Southern Baptist missionary couple was stationed and had been joined by two families and a journeyman from Luanda. The Mission evacuated in August of 1975. Although some of the men of the Mission (there were four couples at evacuation time) returned for visits even after Independence, the Mission did not return as such until 1983. The last visit (until 1981) occurred when Dixon went to Angola in October of 1976.

The civil war continued to rage. The MPLA (Movement of the People for the Liberation of Angola) had control of the north central part of the country, which included the capital of Luanda. FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) was based in the north part of Angola, and UNITA (National Union for the

Total Independence of Angola) was in the south. On Independence Day, November 11, 1975, the MPLA raised their flag and claimed control of the government in the capital city of Luanda.

#### Leadership Training during the Interim

Soon after Southern Baptist missionaries evacuated Angola, the Portuguese pastors and missionary also fled the country. The four Southern Baptist couples and a journeyman went to South Africa. By the end of December of 1975, all had transferred to other fields except the Pikes who were on furlough, the Dixons, and another journeyman who had come to teach the Dixons' three sons.

At the end of January 1976, the Dixons were seconded to the Baptist Mission in Zimbabwe to fill in during a missionary's furlough, and the journeyman transferred there. Dixon and Pike made two visits to Angola in May and July of 1976, and Dixon made a third visit in October of that year. (The Pikes extended furlough for advanced studies in the seminary and in 1977, they transferred to South Africa.) Each time the Angolans lamented the absence of their "teachers" and requested the missionaries to return. The Dixons had made plans to go back when he returned in October of 1976, but because Mrs. Dixon's re-entry visa had long since expired, they were unable to do so.

In January of 1977, the Dixons were seconded to the Baptist Mission in Portugal. Although Angola's war for independence had been waged against the Portuguese, the two countries maintained strong relations. The Dixons hoped

that it would be easier in Portugal to get permission from the Angolan government to return.

Letters continued to come from Angola, asking for the return of the missionaries. The pastors and leaders were crying out for training. Angolan Baptist leaders visited the Dixons in Portugal, pleading for their return. The Dixons continued to ask at the Angola Embassy in Portugal for permission to return as residents to Angola. Although visas were never denied, neither were they granted.

During this time, Dixon began to look for ways to help the leaders in Angola to receive training via long distance. He sent copies (in Portuguese) of the Campus Crusade series, Ten Basic Steps to Christian Maturity to pastors. (These are intended to be done in small group or individual study.) As soon as a pastor would finish one book, he would receive the second book, and so on until he completed the series.

Dixon then discovered some copies of TEE textbooks produced in Brazil in the Baptist Book Store in Lisbon. On the inside cover, he found a list of all the books produced by IBETE (Instituto Bíblico de Estudo Teológico por Extensão). Dixon bought practically all the books available at the Baptist Book Store and began his contacts with Brazil. He also found out about books produced by the Mennonites and the Presbyterians in Brazil.

This was like finding a gold mine! But what about teachers or leaders to help with the training? Dixon found help with books about TEE by Fred Holland of Evangel Press in Kenya and Lois McKinney in Brazil. He prepared a manual to

help "monitors" or seminar leaders know how to use the materials and lead group discussion in the seminars. He then chose men in different areas to serve as monitors and sent the manuals and textbooks to them. This clearly was not ideal, because the monitors did not always understand how to carry out the instructions, and the students did not always fill out the books. But it was better than nothing. At least, leaders had access to materials that could help them to better study and understand the Scriptures with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

By 1980, it looked as if Southern Baptist missionaries would never return to Angola; and the Dixons asked to be transferred to Portugal. Both Dixon and his wife had been teaching courses in the Baptist Seminary in Portugal. Curtis was asked to serve as interim director of the Seminary beginning in October of that year, while the Portuguese director was finishing his doctoral studies in Philo Greek in California. Now that the Dixons were no longer the Baptist Mission of Angola, how could they continue to help train Angolans?

In 1981, Dixon received an invitation to visit Angola for the dedication of a new church building for First Baptist Church in Huambo, Angola. The director of the Portuguese seminary was still in the United States, and it looked as if the beginning of classes might conflict with such a visit. Therefore, Dixon's wife went in his place, accompanied by Pastor Daniel Machado, president of the Junta de Missões Estrangeiras (Foreign Mission Board) of the Portuguese Baptist Convention. Since this was only a visit, the pastor of the church was able to get their visas with ease! However, the official invitation from the church was what got the results.

By this time, the MPLA government had solidified their control of the major cities in the eighteen provinces, and the war was confined mostly to the bush areas in the southern part of the country with sporadic outbreaks in other areas. Pastor Machado and Mrs. Dixon were able to visit the city of Uíge (formerly Carmona) as well as Huambo and the villages surrounding these two provincial capitals. However, their travel from Luanda was by air, and the Uíge airport was closed, making it necessary for them to land at Negage, a neighboring city where there is a military airport.<sup>133</sup>

As Mrs. Dixon talked with the Angolan leaders, they again mentioned their desire for the return of the missionaries. When government officials were approached about that possibility, they explained that the missionaries should come in at the request of the Convention as visitors, and near the end of the visit, make a request for a resident visa.<sup>134</sup>

After Mrs. Dixon's return to Lisbon, the Dixons began to think of a four-week visit in February of 1982 to have a short-term Bible institute. Approval for that visit was worked out between the Foreign Mission Board (S.B.C.) area directors for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Europe and the Middle East.

When the Dixons arrived in Luanda on Saturday, February 13, 1982, nine pastors met them at the airport. They started classes the following Monday. Fifty-two students from five different provinces had come to study! Because the

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<sup>133</sup>Betty S. Dixon, letter to Davis L. Saunders dated October 14, 1981.

<sup>134</sup>ibid.

leadership of the Convention wanted the Dixons to visit in different areas, only three weeks of classes were held. This meant that each course would be two hours in duration instead of one and one-half hours.<sup>135</sup> Dixon taught Missions and the Life of Christ, while Mrs. Dixon taught Music and Biblical Introduction during the morning hours. Students could choose which two courses they wished to study. Afternoons were free for individual study and rest. Then in the evenings, Dixon taught Studies in the Book of Acts.

On weekends and after the institute was over, the Dixons were able to travel by air to visit the interior cities of Huambo, Lobito, and Uíge. They were excited about the crowds and the decisions. Water and electricity problems were noticeable, and food seemed to be more available in the interior cities than in Luanda.<sup>136</sup>

Once again, the Dixons were asked to return. The director of the seminary in Portugal was to be back that summer, but the Dixons were due for furlough at the end of 1982. So it was decided that they would return for another institute later in the year shortly before furlough, and that they would make plans to come back to live in Angola after furlough.

The Bible institute in October and into November was held in the interior, in the capital city of the province of Uíge, because of the problems encountered in feeding the students in Luanda back in February. Under communism, people

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<sup>135</sup>Curtis L. Dixon, letter to Davis L. Saunders on April 6, 1982.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

were only allowed to make purchases at one store near where they lived. This meant that the students from the interior could not buy food in Luanda. The missionaries could not bring in adequate food supplies on the airplane.

Another reason for having the institute in Uíge was that the majority of the students were from that area. Also food grown in the area could be used. The Dixons were able to stay in the home of an Angolan pastor. They gave the family there the few food items they were able to bring in their baggage.

This time eighty-two students were enrolled, with nearly 100% from the province of Uíge!<sup>137</sup> This fact was to have an important effect on future plans for leadership training in Angola. Dr. M. G. Fray, Associate to the Area Director for Eastern and Southern Africa for the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Ronaldo Rutter, Brazilian missionary to South Africa, were present for the closing service of the Institute in Uíge on November 5, 1982. Land travel between Luanda and Uíge was still risky and therefore the missionaries went by air again.

In the case of both of these Bible institutes in 1982, the Angolans provided food and lodging for themselves. Funds from the Foreign Mission Board paid for the textbooks and travel expenses of the Dixons, Lisbon/Luanda/Lisbon. Except for the few food items the Dixons had in their baggage, the Angolans insisted on paying their other expenses!

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<sup>137</sup>Bible Institute files.

Before the Dixons returned to Portugal, they, Dr. Fray and Rutter met with the convention's vice president (the president was in Brazil at the time) to make plans for the Dixons to come to reside in Angola after their furlough. The Convention was urged by Dr. Fray to be completely open with the missionaries and make all requests to the Foreign Mission Board through the Dixons. There should be a spirit of oneness and forgiveness when necessary.<sup>138</sup>

Upon return to Portugal, the Dixons packed their household goods to be stored in a warehouse and later shipped to Angola after their furlough in the United States. They knew life would be difficult in Angola, but felt that God wanted them to return there to live. If they could get back into the country and receive resident visas, that would confirm everything.

#### Leadership Training since 1983

When the Dixons arrived in Portugal after furlough (they had already been transferred back to Angola) on July 20, they learned that the Angola Baptist Convention had not yet sent a letter of invitation for their entry visas. They had no house waiting for them in Luanda and were expecting to live temporarily in one room of the First Baptist Church of Luanda. However, a missionary couple of the Plymouth Brethren was in the Lisbon area on their way from Angola to Canada for furlough. They were needing someone to house-sit for them in Luanda! This would give the Dixons a place to live until February.

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<sup>138</sup>Notes of Curtis L. Dixon dated November 8, 1982.

While still in Portugal, the Dixons were surprised to learn that a Brazilian single missionary had been appointed and was already in Angola, supposedly to help them in the Bible Institute. Apparently the Angolans had been talking to Brazilian Baptists about their need for teachers!<sup>139</sup>

After more than two months in Portugal, the Dixons finally had their visas and were able to travel to Luanda . Now they could take up leadership training again!

After the Dixons arrived on September 29,<sup>140</sup> the first "big" event was an evangelistic campaign in the city of Luanda with Pastor Nilson Fanini, famous Brazilian pastor/evangelist. He was accompanied by a music group, the president of the Junta de Missões Mundiais, a lawyer who also went to Lobito, and a medical doctor who traveled to Uíge. All these stayed with the Dixons, and the single missionary was living in the First Baptist Church of Luanda with the pastor's family!<sup>141</sup>

Immediately after the Fanini team returned to Brazil, the Angola Baptist Convention had their annual meeting.

On October 12, 1983, a Brazilian missionary couple with one of their two children, a daughter, and the wife's father arrived in Luanda. He had evidently visited Angola during the Dixons' furlough and had decided that God wanted his

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<sup>139</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, September 6, 1983.

<sup>140</sup>Dixon, letter to. Saunders, October 5, 1983.

<sup>141</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders dated October 17, 1983.

family to come to Angola. They had come to train leaders. They went to Lobito to live,<sup>142</sup> but three weeks later were back in Luanda ready to go back to Brazil! The husband had been so excited about the response to the gospel that he had not sought out information about children's schooling, living conditions in general, and conditions in a communist nation, their effect on family life, etc.<sup>143</sup>

On October 31, 1983, there was a meeting of the Dixons, the three Brazilian missionaries, and the convention leadership in the home of the president of the convention. The following facts came out of that meeting.

1. It had been established at the meeting of the Dixons, Dr. M. G. Fray, Dr. Ronaldo Rutter, and the Vice President of the Angola Baptist Convention in November of 1982 that "the Dixons would return first to recover the houses of the Foreign Mission Board and structure the Bible Institute, and then other missionaries would come."<sup>144</sup>

2. The president of the convention, who had been in Brazil in November of 1982, was not aware of that detail, and had appealed to Brazilian Baptists to send missionaries.<sup>145</sup>

3. The conclusion was reached that there was "no possibility of a fixed institute in Luanda for three reasons: 1) There are no houses for teachers

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<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, November 10, 1983.

<sup>144</sup>Minutes of October 31, 1983 meeting, trans. Betty S. Dixon.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

(missionaries). 2) There are no accommodations for students. 3) There is no food for students, who can't learn when they are hungry."<sup>146</sup>

4. A fixed institute in another province would not be permitted by the present government, only the re-opening of the pre-Independence Bible Institute in Luanda.<sup>147</sup>

5. It was concluded that for the time being, the Bible Institute would have to be by extension with headquarters in Luanda. The Dixons would travel from province to province, having classes from three to six weeks (depending on the desires of the Baptists in the provinces).<sup>148</sup>

6. It was also noted that "a couple with children cannot do the presently required work in Angola."<sup>149</sup>

The Brazilian couple left on November 3, 1983. However, the single missionary stayed on to teach with the Dixons in the Bible Institute.<sup>150</sup> With all the events that had gone on, it would be impossible to have any Bible Institutes before 1984.

An undated agenda of items to dialog or discuss with the Convention Executive Committee was found in the Bible Institute files. It basically consisted

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<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, November 10, 1983.

of what is needed to have a fixed institute and what is needed to conduct a mobile institute. Also to be discussed were the rules to be determined for the functioning of either a fixed institute or a mobile institute. Afterwards the group was to develop a work strategy.

The basic necessities for a fixed institute are summarized as follows:

1. Food for teachers and students as well as cook (or cooks), kitchen, and place to eat.
2. Classrooms--a minimum of three with chalk boards, desks for the students and lecterns (if possible) for the teachers.
3. Books--texts for the students and a library for supplemental studies.
4. Housing for students either with family or at the institute and houses for teachers.
5. Teachers--a minimum of five (Brazilians, Portuguese, Americans or when possible, Angolans). The teachers will not be able to travel to the provinces when the institute is in session if there are not more than three.
6. Students with a call who have time to study 36-40 hours per course, a minimum of 3 months per semester or 6 months per year.
7. Transport for students and teachers.
8. Funds from some source to arrange the necessities.
9. Date to begin, after sufficient time to make all necessary arrangements.<sup>151</sup>

The basic necessities for the mobile institute were listed as follows;

1. Food for students--in their own homes or the homes of relatives, for the teachers according to the plans of each province.
2. Housing for students--in their own homes or the homes of relatives, for the teachers according to the plans of each province.
3. Classrooms--2 for 3 teachers or 1 for two teachers-- with chalk boards, desks for the students, and lecterns, if possible for the teachers.

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<sup>151</sup>Undated agenda of C. Dixon for items to be discussed with the Executive Committee of the Angola Baptist Convention.

4. Books--texts for each student and a library, if possible, for each province.
5. Teachers--2 or 3 according to the possibilities. (One might be possible for a short institute.)
6. Students with time to study 3 to 6 or 9 weeks according to the decision of each province (an intensive study of 36-40 hours per course).
7. Transport for students to be arranged by each one, for the teachers according to the plan of each province. If the distance is not far, they may walk.
8. Funds --for the teachers are part of the current budget, for the provinces according to the plan of each province.
9. Date to begin--anytime a province decides the preferred date.<sup>152</sup>

Rules that need to be determined for either a fixed institute or a mobile institute were listed as follows:

1. Who can study? Only Baptists? What are the conditions?
2. Minimum academic requirements
3. Recommendation by the local church
4. Time needed for study
5. Grade level necessary to receive credit
6. The minimum number of courses to be completed to receive a diploma
7. Maximum number of courses a student can enrol in for each semester (or term) of the fixed institute or for each mobile institute<sup>153</sup>

A last item to be discussed was the interest of the Convention in possibly having special studies or seminars offered in connection with the annual meeting of the Convention or the national Pastor's Retreat.

No further information was found concerning what happened when these items were discussed. However, it is obvious from what already had transpired that for a while, the Angolans would not have a fixed institute because conditions

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

were not yet right and funds to provide the basic necessities were not immediately forthcoming. In fact, the Dixons had been told by their associate to the area director that the Foreign Mission Board was no longer in the business of building seminaries and fixed schools in their area.

### The "Mobile" Bible Institute

The Dixons chose to call their training the "Mobile Bible Institute" because the teachers were going to the students in the provinces instead of the students coming to the capital of Luanda. Although the textbooks used were TEE books ordered from Brazil, this training was not TEE in the pure sense, but rather a hybrid form. Each course was to consist of 36 hours of classes over a period of 3 to 6 weeks, depending on the time the students would be available. The shorter time the teachers could be in an area, the fewer courses would be taught.

Although the Dixons set up tentative schedules, they depended on invitations from the various provinces for a specific time. Of course, there were some conflicts in that more than one province might want to study at the same time. In those cases, the Dixons had to make a choice. Usually they tried to get to four different provinces at least once a year if possible. However, their living in Luanda did benefit the churches in the capital. Naturally, the Dixons preferred to teach than to be idle.

Another problem faced was the availability of textbooks. It might be noted here that the only TEE books available in Portuguese were published in Brazil. Before they ever returned to Angola to live, Dixon had sent a priority list of

desired books to Brazil. However, those at or near the beginning of the list were not always available, especially in the quantity needed.

This meant that although there were over forty titles available, it was not always possible to study the materials in the appropriate order. This became a point of confusion to Angolans who had attended schools under the Portuguese colonial system, who thought the courses should be taken in the proper order.

The Dixons and the Brazilian single missionary taught in their first nine-week institute in the city of Luanda beginning on January 9, 1984. Three courses were offered for a 1-hour period each, 4 afternoons and nights a week. English and Portuguese were taught on Wednesday nights after the mid-week prayer service, and Music was offered on Sunday afternoons.<sup>154</sup> Forty-six students were enrolled, but only twenty-two completed all the work and earned final grades for the regular courses.

The second institute was due to begin in Huambo on March 12, but was delayed because of the cancellation of air flights and mistakes made on the missionaries' resident visas that had finally been granted.<sup>155</sup> The three missionaries eventually arrived in Huambo with plans to return to Luanda on May 17. Ninety students attended classes with 15 or 20 auditing. There were

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<sup>154</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, January 18, 1984.

<sup>155</sup>*ibid.*

electricity problems at night but classes were able to meet with "Petro-Max" lanterns.<sup>156</sup>

After the missionaries returned to Luanda, their next trip was to Uíge, the latter part of May, returning from there in July in time to meet Dr. Fray at the airport on July 9. During Dr. Fray's visit, the Dixons were able to move into a one-bedroom furnished apartment from a Sunday School room at First Baptist Church where they had gone after the return of the Brethren missionaries. Dr. Saunders joined Dr. Fray on July 14. Both of them left on July 16.<sup>157</sup>

In August of 1984, the Angola Baptist Convention had its annual meeting. There were 101 messengers registered from churches in 5 provinces.<sup>158</sup> Then in September and October, the Dixons went to Lobito, a city in the province of Benguela, for their fourth institute of the year. Only two courses were taught this time, and there were fewer students.<sup>159</sup> There was only one mother church with several congregations at that time, but the promise of future growth was bright.

About this time, another Brazilian single missionary arrived. This one came highly recommended, but was not as amenable or cooperative as the first. She indicated that she would prefer to travel outside Luanda for only one institute each year and would only teach one course, once a day, in each institute. She

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<sup>156</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, April 11, 1984.

<sup>157</sup>Dixon, agenda in a letter to Saunders, May 24, 1984.

<sup>158</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, September 4, 1984.

<sup>159</sup>Bible Institute files.

wished to work principally in the local churches and train people in the churches.. She did offer to help get the Institute libraries set up.<sup>160</sup>

In late October, Dixon sent out to the churches a tentative agenda for the Mobile Bible Institute during 1985 and January through April of 1986, at which time the Dixons would be going on furlough.<sup>161</sup>

The Dixons had earlier in the year sent a personnel request for a theological professor to the Foreign Mission Board, indicating that a transfer from Brazil would be welcome. They had also asked about a possible retired missionary to fill in during their next furlough. However, they were seeing the need to prepare Angolans to train their own people. With the help of Dr. Fray, Associate to the Area Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, a Portuguese program was set up at the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe for students from Angola and Mozambique. Missionaries of the Foreign Mission Board serving in Brazil would teach for a term on their way home for furlough or as they returned to the field.

The seminary in Zimbabwe had housing for families, which would be a special help for Angolan students. Only those ready to study on a bachelor's level would go because others could get training on a lower level in Angola in the Mobile Bible Institute.

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<sup>160</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, March 23, 1985.

<sup>161</sup>Bible Institute files.

### The Trend toward a Fixed Institute

Another development affecting future leadership training was in process during this time. The Brazilian Foreign Mission Board was very interested in the Angola Baptist Convention having a fixed institute, as was the Convention itself. The Director for Africa of their board (a Southern Baptist missionary) had visited Angola back at the end of October and beginning of November. He had stayed in the Dixon's apartment while they were in a neighboring country on vacation.

Apparently the Convention had approached him about the Brazilians helping them to purchase a piece of property for a fixed school. He had made two visits to see the property.<sup>162</sup> When the Dixons returned to Angola, they were surprised to learn that the Brazilians had promised to help them get it. Not only that, but they had gone directly to the Foreign Mission Board Area Director to ask for help with the purchase price!

They checked out the details, and Dixon wrote Dr. Saunders: "The property the Angolans are trying to buy is a former chicken farm. . . . It is 960 square meters, with a good high wall and several buildings, all needing repairs. The asking price is US\$20,000. . . . I do think it is a good buy. . . . There is room for a school with some living quarters included as well as some production for support of the students while studying there."<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Bill Ichter, letter to Dr. Saunders, November 30, 1984.

<sup>163</sup>Dixon, letter to Dr. Saunders, December 4, 1984.

Dr. Saunders asked the Dixons' opinion about the involvement of the Foreign Mission Board in the purchase in two different communications.<sup>164</sup> Although they could not foresee the possibility of being able to use the property in the immediate future, the Dixons saw the potential and recommended that the Foreign Mission Board pay 50% of the purchase price.<sup>165</sup>

One interesting sidelight was discovered in a letter from the Brazilian Baptist Foreign Mission Board president to the president of the Angola Baptist Convention: ". . . this property can host the students and Bible Institute in Luanda. *Also, it can serve as housing for our two missionaries.* [italics are the author's]."<sup>166</sup> Also the Brazilian Board later asked the Baptist World Alliance to contribute \$5,000 of the remaining \$10,000.<sup>167</sup>

Dixon also asked about the possible purchase of property in Huambo, which included a residence, annex rooms, a two-car garage, two large warehouses, and a hot house. This could serve as a church building, associational offices, a bookstore, and possibly classrooms for the mobile Bible institute when in Huambo.<sup>168</sup> (Both of these purchases were approved on

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<sup>164</sup>Saunders, letters to Dixon, December 21 and December 31, 1984.

<sup>165</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, January 5, 1985.

<sup>166</sup>Quoted by Dixon in a letter to Saunders, January 4, 1985.

<sup>167</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, July 6, 1985.

<sup>168</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, January 5, 1985.

February 27, 1985 by the Administrative Board of the Angola Baptist Convention, pending approval of the funds by the Foreign Mission Board, which came later.)

In January, the second Angolan family went to the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe for training. The good-byes at First Baptist Church were said with great expectations for the future.

The first institute of 1985 was held in Luanda, with 45-50 students enrolled. This time, the Dixons were assisted by both Brazilian single missionaries. The same classes were taught three times a day: morning, afternoon, and night four days a week. English was taught after Wednesday night prayer service again, and Music on Sunday afternoons to finish the course of the year before.<sup>169</sup>

About this time, the Dixons had to leave the apartment they had been in. Apparently, the apartment had been sub-let to them by a renter and the owner wanted it back. They returned to the Sunday School room at the First Baptist Church of Luanda. Houses were very hard to find in Luanda. One had to "buy the key" in order to rent. Most houses needed major repairs, and foreigners could not buy in their own name. The Baptist Mission was not recognized by the government. To build a house with local materials was impossible. No contractor would build without some imported goods. This raised the price of housing considerably.

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<sup>169</sup>Dixon, letter to Saunders, March 23, 1985.

In March and April, the Dixons went again to Huambo, having the same classes afternoons and evenings. There were not enough students to warrant morning classes. The two Brazilian missionaries were to have gone at the same time to Uíge, but one of them developed an infection and they were unable to do so. However, they did go later in the year.<sup>170</sup>

The Dixons went to Uíge for a special course July 3-August 3 in Pastoral Ministries for the pastors and lay evangelists and a course for pastors' and evangelists' wives. There were 64 pastors and lay evangelists and 24 pastors' and lay evangelists' wives enrolled for the two classes. Just a few days before their scheduled return to Luanda, Mrs. Dixon became very ill, then had a reaction to a medication and had to be hospitalized. It was necessary for her to receive glucose intravenously and also a blood transfusion because of dehydration, low blood pressure, and anemia. This was quite a scare, but the Lord provided the right people at the right time, and they were finally able to fly to Luanda on August 9.<sup>171</sup> (There were to be no more trips anywhere by land travel until after the peace accord in Portugal in May of 1991.)

Because of a special government emphasis in September of 1985, the Dixons were unable to go at their scheduled time to Lobito.<sup>172</sup> Evidently this precluded their being able to have an institute in Lobito during 1985, for there are

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<sup>170</sup>Baptist Institute files.

<sup>171</sup>Betty S. Dixon, letter to Saunders, August 27, 1985.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

no records in the Bible Institute files of such an institute. However, the Dixons did have another institute in Luanda in November and December, teaching three more courses.<sup>173</sup>

In January and February of 1986, the Dixons were to have gone to Uíge, but that province was unable to receive them at that time. So they instead had another institute in Luanda, teaching three courses, while the two Brazilian missionaries went to Huambo where they taught two courses.<sup>174</sup>

Because of a family problem back in the United States, the Dixons had to go on furlough two months earlier than planned. Both institutes scheduled for March and April were cancelled, and no others were held that year after they left the field on March 7, 1986.

After Christmas, they packed their bags and headed back to Africa. Upon arrival in Zimbabwe, they discovered that the Angola Baptist Convention had sent three more families to the Seminary. However, the Convention leadership had not yet been able to obtain the Dixons' re-entry visas, and they had to remain in Zimbabwe until mid-February, when their visas were finally granted. (Although missionaries do not lose their residence status, they must re-apply for re-entry visas if they are out of the country more than forty-five days.)

Upon arriving in Luanda, they learned that there had been a problem with the two Brazilian single missionaries while they had been out of the country, and

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<sup>173</sup>Bible Institute files.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid.

the women had been asked to return to Brazil. Their service as missionaries under appointment of the Brazilian Baptist Foreign Mission Board was terminated. This was to limit seriously the work of the Mobile Bible Institute.

However, it did make the two-bedroom apartment of one of the families in Zimbabwe available to the Dixons because the Brazilian missionaries had been living there. However, they would have to move again when the Angolan family returned at the end of November.

The Dixons took a group of pastors and leaders in Luanda through the first half of Master Life during 1987.<sup>175</sup> This was very challenging. They were never able to do the last half. In Angola, it is hard to get a long-term commitment. Also too many things come up unexpectedly to hinder people from carrying out the commitments which they do make. Satan works hard through the difficult times and struggles of the people.

In June of 1987, the Dixons were finally able to return to Lobito for an institute. Later that year, another institute was held in Luanda. However, only two courses were offered.<sup>176</sup>

In November, the Dixons moved into two of the annex rooms on the property bought by the Convention for the fixed school or seminary. No repairs or improvements had yet been made. Another family was living in the main house and serving as caretaker for the property. This was a difficult situation, but even

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<sup>175</sup>Betty S, Dixon, letter to Bill H. Phillips, Associate to the Area Director for Eastern and Southern Africa of the Foreign Mission Board, October 15, 1987.

<sup>176</sup>Baptist Institute files.

so the Dixons were no longer confined to one room. And they had their own kitchen! The family who had first gone to Zimbabwe returned, and he became pastor of what was to become the largest church in Luanda.

The Dixons were asked to teach in the Portuguese section of the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe during the first term of 1988. Both taught sixteen hours per week. Some courses they had never taught before. However, library books in Portuguese which they themselves had ordered from Brazil for the Portuguese-speaking students were very helpful. However, Mrs. Dixon did have to translate a book on Christian worship as she prepared lectures for one of her classes, and he had to translate materials for Church History. In spite of all the hard work, it was a joy for them to teach the Angolans and Mozambicans.

After the end of the term, the Dixons had a mission meeting in conjunction with the Baptist Mission of Zambia before their return to Angola. They finally returned to Luanda on April 19.

Records for 1988 are sparse. However, as far as the Mobile Bible Institute is concerned, Dixons' report to the 1988 annual meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention reveals the reason: "This year of 1987-88 has been the most difficult during the twenty years we have completed with our Board. Transport was the chief problem. It was necessary to cancel our institute in Huambo and also in Uíge for lack of conditions to arrive in those two places in time to complete the task within the time frame indicated by each province." Dixon also mentioned in

the same report that a curriculum was almost ready for a fixed institute, but awaiting minimum conditions to begin such a school.<sup>177</sup>

The subject of the "necessity of a fixed institute in the province of Luanda" was brought up on the floor of the annual meeting. Dixon stated that conditions were not yet favorable in Luanda. It was mentioned that no one had graduated from the Mobile Bible Institute. However, one student had received a basic diploma for having finished fourteen courses the previous September. That particular student had taken every course that had been offered in Luanda. Others were almost ready to receive diplomas. Nevertheless, it was evident that people were disturbed over the time element involved in the type of training being offered.<sup>178</sup>

A Brazilian missionary who had arrived during the conventional year and was residing in Lobito explained that he had prepared a curriculum in case the Angola Baptist Convention decided to establish a Seminary in Lobito. Of course, nothing was mentioned about the availability of property and buildings or how to take care of students from other areas. Also there were fewer potential students in that province because of the small number of churches. The motion and second was approved by the messengers that a seminary could be established in

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<sup>177</sup>Curtis L. Dixon, Annual Report to the Angola Baptist Convention, 1988; trans. Betty Dixon.

<sup>178</sup>Minutes of the 1988 Annual Meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention, trans. Betty Dixon.

any province and be considered an extension of the Convention. However, no suggestions were forthcoming as to where that might be.<sup>179</sup>

Another development of the 1988 Annual Meeting was the election of the pastor, graduate of the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe, as Executive Secretary.<sup>180</sup> He was to play an important role in the future of leadership training in the Angola Baptist Convention.

In June, after a malaria attack, Mrs. Dixon had developed symptoms indicative of rheumatoid arthritis. She was having problems with her hands, her feet, knee joints, etc. She finally left in September for Zimbabwe for medical treatment. After a month there, Bill Phillips, Associate to the Area Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, sent her to the United States. Her illness was never really diagnosed, although she had many different tests run. She remained under the care of a rheumatologist and was slowly improving. In November, Dixon joined her for a month's vacation and then returned to Angola. After five months, Mrs. Dixon returned to Angola in February of 1989. She was still on medication for her symptoms, but gradually she reduced the dosage. By the time of next furlough in August of 1990, she was only taking enteric-coated aspirin for pain "as needed". Finally she was able to discontinue all medication.

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<sup>179</sup>ibid.

<sup>180</sup>ibid.

When Mrs. Dixon returned to Angola in 1989, her husband was involved in an institute in Luanda with the help of the Angolan graduate of the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe. Three courses were offered.

April was mission meeting time with the Baptist Mission in Zimbabwe. The two new missionary couples, one of the men an agriculturalist and the other a medical doctor, who had just completed language study were on the same plane which the Dixons boarded to go to Harare, Zimbabwe! It was wonderful to have personnel reinforcements. However, their coming meant more administrative work for Dixon who was mission chairman and served as administrator, and for his wife who was mission treasurer. Not only that, but the mission had still not received their number one priority request, a theological education teacher. It had been nearly five years since the request went in, and no one had responded. Such a person could have helped to lighten some of the extra work load.

Dixon had nearly completed the process of importing the vehicles for the new missionaries, but two pre-fab houses, to be used as residences for missionaries, were on their way, scheduled to arrive in the Luanda port in May. The houses would be built on part of the seminary property! There was no other place available. The Mark Hatfields, the couple appointed for agricultural evangelism, lived temporarily in the "big house" (which had recently been vacated) on the property, while the medical doctor and his family were seconded to a mission hospital of another denomination in southern Angola until they later were able to move to Huambo.

The houses were barely imported in time for the arrival of the first of three volunteer teams who came to build the houses. The houses could not have gone up without them. There were some national workers who helped make cement blocks for the wall, helped dig and pour the foundation, and do other manual labor under the supervision of Hatfield. Even so, the houses were only completed toward the end of September.

During the time when the houses were being built, the Angola Baptist Convention had its Annual Meeting in the month of August. The Executive Secretary presented twelve projects, which he considered very important, to the messengers in that assembly. All twelve were approved. In first place was the creation of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Angola.<sup>181</sup> It was only natural that one who had studied in a seminary outside Angola would feel that a fixed seminary would be necessary to train Angolans as they should be trained.

Several other decisions were taken later in that same assembly. The first was that the Baptist Theological Seminary of Huambo be recognized by the Angola Baptist Convention.<sup>182</sup> This seminary had been started a few years before as the dream of a local pastor in Huambo. Its teachers were independent missionaries from Brazil who had been personally recruited by that pastor. When the church could no longer take care of local expenses, they had asked the association of churches in the province to take over its support. Now the

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<sup>181</sup>Minutes of the 1989 Annual Meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention, trans. Betty S. Dixon.

<sup>182</sup>*ibid.*

association was asking the Convention to consider the Seminary as belonging to them. However, at this time no funds were yet to be involved.

Another decision was that the training in Lobito be considered a nucleus for theological training and not a seminary. It was also decided to start the seminary in Luanda in September of 1990.<sup>183</sup> These were not bad decisions, but they would be very difficult to implement.

Naturally there were no institutes during this very busy time, and afterwards the Dixons, who were exhausted, took a much-needed vacation in October. Although nationals in Luanda knew of the building of the houses, they themselves did not realize how much work was involved on the part of the missionaries. In addition to all the leg-work, extra food had to be purchased and prepared for the teams.

After their vacation, Dixon taught, in Luanda, a special series of courses for all the home missionaries of the Angola Baptist Convention. This would be like continuing education in the States. However, some of the missionaries had never studied in the Mobile Bible Institute. Some pastors and leaders in Luanda also studied. There were a total of 15 students. Six different courses of study were taught, including Follow the Master (known as Survival Kit in the United States).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>ibid.

<sup>184</sup>Bible Institute files.

The second family returned from the Baptist Seminary in Zimbabwe. He became the associate pastor of the First Baptist Church, and she was active in women's work.

Travel to the provinces was becoming more and more difficult, and the civil war was intensifying. With the seminary in Huambo and the theological training being given by the Brazilian missionary in Lobito in the province of Benguela, institutes were not being requested in those provinces. Also no invitations were coming from Uíge in the north.

Therefore, the Dixons were faced with the need to find other avenues to train leaders. Dixon taught Follow the Master (Survival Kit) in several churches. He was able to attend the ordination of several pastors in Huambo. But in August, they were due another furlough. They furloughed in Texas for the third time, giving Mrs. Dixon a chance to finish everything except her thesis at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

#### Fixed Seminary Training

The Dixons' return was toward the end of May, 1991. Yes, the seminary had started in September of 1990, with twelve students enrolled and two teachers. At the end of 1990, the other three families returned from Zimbabwe. However two of the families returned to the provinces from which they came where the men had served as pastors before leaving Angola. (However, one of these serves as a teacher of the seminary in Huambo. Another national who graduated from the seminary in Portugal also teaches in Huambo.) One of the

three families stayed on in Luanda to provide a third teacher for the seminary there. Nevertheless, once the Dixons arrived, the Executive Secretary reneged as a teacher because of his Convention and church responsibilities. In addition to that, because of various problems of the students such as transportation, not having time to study and still work to feed their families, the number had dwindled to five by the end of the school year. It started out on the property which had been bought for the seminary, but because of transportation problems, had to be moved to First Baptist Church the next year.

The Dixons were asked to teach the three-month term right after their return to Angola. Classes were held from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. four days a week.

At the end of May, shortly after the Dixons returned, a peace accord was signed in Portugal by Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos and the rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, with the promise of free elections in September of 1992. Peace at last! Angolans were ecstatically happy. Sadly, it was only to be for sixteen months.

In July and August of 1991, Dixon went to Uíge to teach two courses, Church Planting and the Role of the Deacon. He had the smallest school he had ever had in that province, 25 students and 9 auditing.<sup>185</sup>

The Dixons were both asked to teach courses in the seminary starting in September. The students of the newly established seminary had no textbooks

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<sup>185</sup>Bible Institute files.

nor library. However, Dixon gave many books which the Baptist Mission had purchased for libraries in the various centers where the institutes had been held to the seminary. Because of the problems involved in transporting the books to the provinces and a secure place to have the libraries, most of the books were still in Luanda.

The national teachers only had their notes from classes in Zimbabwe and a minimum of books to help them prepare for their classes. The seminary also used the desks which had been purchased by the Baptist Mission for the Luanda center of the Bible Institute. It is only a miracle of God that this seminary started when it did and has continued, in spite of difficult conditions and limitations.

These two teachers are to be commended for their commitment to keeping the seminary going. One is the seminary director and the other serves as dean.

At first, the hope was to have a seminary on the bachelor's level.

However, they soon found out there were no students qualified to study on that level. Not only that, but the teachers were not qualified to teach on the bachelor's level without a masters' degree. Therefore, they could not offer anything above the high school level. But there were students wanting to study who would only qualify on a middle school level.

When classes started again in September, they were still offered at one level (highschool) from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. four days a week. But when the next term began in January of 1992, the curriculum was altered and two levels were offered simultaneously. The following term, two of the mid-level students

had to drop out because of work. Other students had dropped out of the secondary level for the same reason.

Near the end of January 1992, the Baptist Mission had received a new missionary couple. At long last, the theological education professor had arrived! Since they had just finished language school, the Mission thought it wise for him to have ample time to prepare lectures for classes to begin in September, as well as to get used to the Angolan culture. It was decided by the faculty what he would be teaching later. Therefore, the Dixons continued to teach at the Seminary through July.

A team of two Southern Baptist missionary theological educators, one from Kenya and the other from Malawi, visited Angola, March 28-April 4, 1992, to make a survey of the theological education institutions in relation to the needs and potential of the various areas of the country.<sup>186</sup> Their report was intended to influence the future strategy for theological education in Angola. Of course, it was expected that nothing be changed until the survey team's report was received.

However, in May of 1992, the leadership of the Convention made an appointment with Dixon at which time he was asked to step down as Administrator of the Mobile Bible Institute and to discontinue the trips to the provinces to teach. The report of the survey team only arrived some time later (the report itself is undated). This was not a decision of the Theological

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<sup>186</sup>Report of the Theological Education Survey to Angola, March 28-April 4, 1992.

Education Board nor the Executive Board of the Angola Baptist Convention nor the Annual Meeting of the Convention. However, Dixon stepped down as asked.

When the report of the survey team did come, copies were distributed to the members of the Theological Education Board and to the institutions.

However, to the Dixons' knowledge, the report itself was never discussed nor its recommendations considered in a meeting of any kind.

Basically, the Dixons continued with the administrative and treasurer's work of the Baptist Mission in Angola. With the peace accord still in effect, the 1992 Annual Meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention was held in the province of Uíge. This was the first time for the Convention to have its regular assembly outside the city of Luanda for quite a number of years. What a celebration! At this meeting, it was decided that the Convention would help subsidize the salaries of two nationals, the director and one other teacher, in the Huambo seminary as well as in the seminary in Luanda. It also became known that Dixon was no longer doing Bible institutes, that the missionary who had arrived in January would be in charge of developing a TEE program. However, no explanation was given. People who were not at that meeting are still finding out! Often they learn of it when they ask the Dixons when they plan to have another institute in their province.

Elections in September went very well, much smoother than many expected. The Angolans were so proud to be able to vote for the candidate of their choice! It appeared that a new day had arrived in Angola. But the euphoria was short-lived. The rebel leader refused to accept the results, saying the

elections were not fair. He called on his supporters to return to fighting. On the morning of October 31, 1992, fighting broke out in downtown Luanda between backers of the MPLA government and those of UNITA. Both groups blamed the other for starting the confrontation. This was the beginning of four days of sporadic but intense fighting in various areas of the city. Two of the three missionary couples in Luanda evacuated early Sunday morning, November 1 on an oil company ship. The Dixons stayed on until Wednesday to try to secure Mission property. Then they too left on a UN cargo plane for Namibia.

The missionaries met in Zimbabwe. The Hatfields eventually went to the States where his father was terminally ill with cancer. After the vacation they were due, they took a leave of absence to be near family during this difficult time.

Dixon and the missionary teacher in the seminary made a visit back into Angola over New Years to assess the situation. On New Year's Eve, celebrators were firing shots, and a grenade came over the wall of the mission compound. It rolled up against the foundation of one of the houses, close to the window of the bedroom where the missionary teacher was trying to sleep, before exploding. He was more frightened than hurt; but after that kind of scare, it was no surprise that he and his wife asked to be temporarily assigned to Kenya and later transferred to Namibia.

However, the Dixons decided to return to Angola toward the end of February in 1993. Dixon has continued to teach in the Seminary since that time except for the last six months of 1994, when they were on furlough in the States. Mrs. Dixon has been involved in translation and preparation of materials for

Sunday School and women's work since their return, and thus has not been teaching.

The Hatfields continue assigned to Angola, but he serves as a non-resident administrator and his wife as non-resident mission treasurer. They are stationed in Harare, and Hatfield makes periodic trips into Angola.

The current Executive Secretary of the Angola Baptist Convention went to Brazil several years ago and studied at the Baptist Seminary in Rio de Janeiro, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He was possibly helped by someone, but he had not asked the Baptist Mission for a scholarship before leaving Angola, and consequently the Mission was unable to help him with his schooling. When he returned with a Brazilian wife to Angola, he came back to the church in Luanda where he had been a member and started a mission congregation. Now that congregation has become a thriving church in an area which had only a few houses when he went there, but now is a rapidly growing area.

#### The Possibility of Seminary Extension Studies

The Executive Secretary has been very communicative with the missionaries. Soon after the Dixons' return to the field after furlough, he and the Executive Secretary of the Home Mission Board approached Dixon about special training again for the Home Missionaries just preceding the 1995 Annual Meeting of the Angola Baptist Convention. Together they worked out a curriculum and asked the two national seminary teachers to help with this program. This worked out very well because seminary was not in session at that time.

At this writing (April of 1996), it appears that this will be done again this year. The seminary is now in the process of working out a TEE curriculum so that the missionaries can have the textbooks to work on ahead of time. Dixon has been asked by the seminary faculty and administration to be involved in this. At present, fifteen different books published by Evangel Press in Kenya have been translated into Portuguese in Mozambique by an interdenominational team effort. It seems that the most difficult obstacle may again be trying to get enough texts for the needs in Angola. An effort is underway to try to get permission to reproduce these materials in quantity to supply the demand in Angola. These texts should be much better for the Angolans than the books from Brazil, because of the similarity of tribal cultures in sub-Saharan Africa. Also they appear to be written on a simpler level.

Many mistakes have been made in Angola, but the Lord has blessed anyway. Hopefully, the Angolans and missionaries are all learning together from the mistakes they have made. However, God can take our feeblest efforts and use them for His glory, as long as our intent is truly to serve Him and His kingdom.