

# Bible Translations in Belgian Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, and Angola

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Covered in some areas by impenetrable forest and swamps, and with her western entrance guarded by the Cristal Mountains and the falls and rapids of her mighty Congo River, the Belgian Congo lies in the very heart of Africa. Five times the size of France and over eighty times larger than Belgium, Congo's 12 million population is scattered over the vast area on an average of twelve persons per square mile.

On the northwest border lies densely populated Ruanda-Urundi. This smaller country (about twice the size of Belgium), with four million people, is administered by the governor-general of Congo as a United Nations Trust Territory. Ruanda-Urundi and East Congo had much earlier contacts with the outside world than the western areas of Congo. In the comparatively short time since central Africa was first opened up to the outside world by Livingstone and Stanley 75-80 years ago, great and far-reaching changes have taken place.

## Linguistic Groups

*The Bantus.* The majority of the 20 million people in Belgian Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, and Angola belong to the Bantu family which forms the largest and most important linguistic group in the whole of Africa. Studies of Bantu dialects lead to the well-known conclusion that they all proceed from a common root. Not less than between 350 and 400 Bantu tongues are recorded. The word *Bantu* means 'people' and is very much alike in most of these.

The expansion of missionary work towards the end of the nineteenth century into previously unknown areas resulted in intensive interest in these newly discovered peoples of Central Africa. Many were the humiliating experiences of missionaries seeking to learn the languages of the peoples in the markets and villages. With tongues rebelling at mimicking strange sounds, it took perseverance, courage, and a constant sensitivity to enter into some understanding of the ways and cultures of the peoples whom they had come to serve. On the roof-tops and in the kitchens, on the streets and in the fields, around the open fires where people talked freely, the missionaries listened and absorbed. As soon as possible, translations of the Holy Scriptures were begun.

In the face of overwhelming difficulties and hindrances, when many asked themselves, "Can such a thing be expressed in this language?" when they would give up and then lose all peace of mind, translators pressed on to that glorious day when the Gospels were ready for first distribution among the Congo Africans.

The Bible Societies have tried to guide and encourage the translation and revision of Scriptures and have encountered immense difficulties. There are over 100 Bantu languages and dialects in this Agency. Some sources list the number of languages at more than 200 in Belgian Congo alone. However, a language often has several names. At present we

have ten complete Bibles in Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, and Angola. Another ten are either being set up or are in process of being translated. Several New Testaments are also translated or revised. In spite of this prodigious activity, much work remains. Several more tribes should have in their own mother tongue some portions at least, while other translations must be revised.

*The Sudanic Languages.* Even though the Bantus are estimated at some 17 to 18 million people in this Agency, there is in Northeast Congo another entirely different linguistic group, the Sudanic. These people, of whom the Zandes and the Mangbettus are the largest, invaded the Ubangi-Uele region after having forced the Bantus southward. In some places the Sudanic people absorbed them. They are estimated to be between two and three million and speak an entirely different language. The Sudanic tribes are the aristocracy of the northeast like the Batutsis in Ruanda.

The Africa Inland Mission has for many years worked among the Zandes, and missionaries from that mission have translated the New Testament. The translation of the Old Testament is progressing, and the Zandes are before long to have their complete Bible. Among the Mangbettus we find another situation. Unfortunately, nobody has tried to really study their language. When I visited this area, I found that the Kingwana New Testament, which has now been replaced by the Congo Swahili, was the medium to reach the people. There is certainly need for further investigation. The Mangbettus have responded to the gospel and there are fine groups of Christians in that area.

*The Nilotic Languages.* On the eastern border of Belgian Congo there is still another linguistic group of people, the Nilotics. Best known are the Alurs and Kakwas. The Ethiopian influence is seen in these people, and they differ from the Sudanics and the Bantus. Members of the Africa Inland Mission pioneered these languages and reduced them to written form. The Alur New Testament appeared in 1922 and the Old Testament in 1936, both published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Bible has since been revised and the first edition of the revised version has just begun to be distributed on the field.

### **Translations and Revisions in Bantu Languages of Congo**

*The Kongos.* In the footsteps of Stanley, several missionaries followed through the Lower Congo up to the area which is now called Leopoldville Province. Among these was one of Congo's greatest linguists, Rev. Nils Westlind, a young Swede who translated the New Testament into Kongo Fioti. The Swedish Mission printed this first complete New Testament on a small press at Mukimbungu. The Kongo Fioti Bible, published by the B.F.B.S. in 1905, was the first complete Bible to appear in Belgian Congo. This version, the Kongo Fioti, has since then been revised by members of three large missions in Lower Congo and is today our most widely sold Bible in this area.

In the Lower Congo we publish two Bibles in different dialects of Kongo. On the Angola border there is a Kongo dialect which differs

to quite an extent from the Fioti. Rev. Holman Bentley, of the Baptist Missionary Society, translated the New Testament into this dialect, which is called Kongo San Salvador. Efforts have been made to prepare a Union version, but so far no success has been achieved. The Kikongo people, in Angola alone numbering almost half a million, are a fine tribe and one which has most readily adopted Western civilization. There are large Christian communities among them. Revivals are going on in various districts.

Through the Bible translations, the various minor dialects have lost their value and Kongo has become one of Congo's most beautiful languages, and well suited for literature. The unity of the whole tribe has been strengthened through the written language (a medium created by the translation of the Bible). Although considerable literature has been prepared in Kongo, the Bible remains the most important source of inspiration, influencing hundreds of thousands of people in Lower Congo. No Bible in Belgian Congo or Angola has ever been sold in so many copies during the last fifty years as the Kongo Fioti Bible. As in every other language, revisions may have to be undertaken, but there is no great demand at present for such a work. Before long several qualified Africans from that tribe will be ready to collaborate on a revision.

*The Lubas.* There are six different groups of the Luba branch in Central and South Congo. There are, however, two outstanding tribes, the Luba Lulua and the Luba Katanga. The first, one of the largest tribes in Congo, is living around the Lulua River. Protestant missions, particularly the American Presbyterian Mission, opened up work among the Tshilubas in 1890. The Tshiluba Bible, translated by one of their great linguists, Dr. W. Morrison, and published by the American Bible Society some thirty years ago, has been considered as a masterpiece. Missionaries first reduced the language to writing in the 1890's. Through the mission the Tshiluba language has been spread over quite a large area and many minor tribes (of which we find so many here in Congo) have been influenced though not conquered by this language. The Presbyterian and Congo Inland Missions have had great success in their work. There is now an urgent demand for a revised version of the Tshiluba Bible. To this end several competent missionaries are giving some time. It is often very difficult to convince the missions that the most important task is to give the people the fundamental tool for evangelization, the Bible, in a language which is up to date. Some are satisfied with the translations they have and often get so used to the version that they do not realize that, as everything is changing so rapidly, the languages do also. What was good for the Church of Christ in Congo some twenty years ago is not so readily accepted now by the advanced Congolese.

The Luba Katanga (Kiluba) is the other prominent Bantu language of Katanga Province, one of the five provinces of Belgian Congo. It is estimated that between 750,000 and a million use Luba Katanga. The Rev. J. A. Clark, one of the senior missionaries of the Christian Missions to Many Lands, translated the complete Bible. The New

Testament was published by the B.F.B.S. many years ago, but the complete Bible did not appear until 1946.

Since it was first published, the Luba Katanga or Kiluba Bible has been sold in many thousands and a new edition is being printed in London. As the Luba Katanga has become the language of the Copper Belt, we can expect that there will be a growing demand for these books.

In the same province we also find another branch of the Luba family, the Luba Sanga. The Brethren Mission translated the complete Bible, which was published in 1929 by the National Bible Society of Scotland. The small Luba Sanga tribe has more and more been influenced by the larger tribe, the Luba Katanga, resulting in a very small demand for these Luba Sanga Scriptures. Here we have an example of how necessary is a thorough investigation of the actual need for a whole Bible in the light of real facts about the tribe before such laborious work is undertaken. Many missionaries, in their great love and optimism, recommend much larger editions than it is possible to distribute. The result is that the Bible Societies stock some Scriptures for a long time and then perhaps are obliged to sell the books for a much-reduced price to prevent them from taking up the storage space, while other major languages tragically lack in meeting the demand. This position of demand for thousands of Bibles exists in parts of Congo today.

The Luba Songi and Luba Kalebwe are another two Luba tribes west of the Lualaba. Numbering about 50,000, they are just on the border to the Tshilubas, and both the Luba Katanga and the Tshiluba Bibles are used in these border regions. (The New Testament has been published by the B.F.B.S.) In Southern Congo we have another two Luba tribes who so far have not any Scriptures in their language. Among the Hemba tribe the Roman Catholics are very strong. An investigation of the need for Scriptures in these areas will be made in 1958.

*The Lundas.* There are two remarkable Lunda groups in Southwest Congo and in East Angola. The Brethren, who have labored for many years among the Lunda of Kalunda, translated the New Testament almost thirty years ago. In 1956 the translation of the Old Testament was completed and the manuscript is now in the hands of the Bible Society. A revision of the New Testament has also been undertaken. Farther south the Methodist Mission has long worked among another Lunda tribe, the Lunda of Kambove, or Mwante Yamvo. This tribe seems to have been early well established, and it expanded during 1600-1900, chiefly by trading. The Lunda traders became quite influential and intermarried with the local people. After some time, the great chief, Mwante Yamvo, appointed chiefs among these traders, usually from a group of the king's relatives. Wherever these Lundas settled down, they gradually came into power. There are such Lunda chiefs as far as Lake Tanganyika. The language is therefore also called the Lunda of the Chiefs.

The New Testament was published in 1933. Miss A. Lerbach of the same mission has also translated the Psalms. At present it seems that a

couple of lingua francas are used all around in that part of Congo. It is a difficult language which differs in many respects from other Bantu languages. This is, as in other areas, one of the reasons why many missionaries, government folks, and traders prefer to use the easier lingua francas. An investigation concerning the future of the language and the need for further translations will be undertaken in 1958.

*The Tetela, the Pende, etc.* In Central Congo, where a most important translation and revision are taking place, we find two other large language groups, the Tetelas and the Pendes. The Methodist Mission first wrote the Tetela language about 1915 and has since translated the New Testament, which was published by the American Bible Society. These people are quite numerous, over 300,000, and the work has made good progress. Missionaries of the same mission are now engaged in the translation of the Old Testament.

Between the Kasai and Kivulu rivers, one suddenly comes into an area where the Pende-speaking people live. On one of the journeys through their area we noticed the difference (their living and customs) from the Luba Lulus further east. The Congo Inland Mission missionaries have translated the New Testament and one of their experienced men is now revising the first edition published by the B.F.B.S. over twenty years ago. The A.B.S. has recently taken over the responsibility for Scripture distribution among the Pende people.

West of the great Lake Tanganyika there is a strong tribe of about 50,000, who live in the mountain regions of Eastern Congo, the Ibembe. The first translation of St. Mark's Gospel was ready for distribution by the Scripture Gift Mission in 1936. The B.F.B.S. later put out an edition of Genesis translated by a missionary of the British Pentecost Mission. Last year, when I visited the field, I found that services at the mission stations had to be interpreted into Rundi and Bembe. The Union Swahili served as the lingua franca. There is certainly a great need for at least the four Gospels in that language. Further investigations will be undertaken, and we sincerely hope that some missionaries of the British Pentecost Mission will find time to translate at least a few portions.

Further north we find another tribe, the Mashi, which has so far only one Gospel. A missionary of the Conservative Baptist Mission is at present occupied with the translation of the four Gospels. West of Bukavu there is a quite numerous tribe, the Lega, which soon will have the complete New Testament. The manuscript is being set up now in London.

*Languages along the Congo River.* Along the Congo River, between Leopoldville and Stanleyville, a distance of 1,200 miles, there are quite a number of languages. The Baptist Missionary Society was the first mission in these areas. This Society has, together with the Disciples of Christ Mission and the Congo Balolo Mission, produced several versions. Most of the various tribes possess now a New Testament in their own tongue. The Bobangi, Ngombe, and Congo Kele New Testaments were all translated by missionaries of the Baptist

Missionary Society. The Ngombe tribe, one of the largest in this area, is living around Upoto, not far from Lisala. The Ngombe New Testament has just been reprinted. The Lokele, or Congo Kele, New Testament was recently revised and will soon be ready for distribution.

Along the Congo River we find only one complete Bible, the Mongo-Nkundu Union version. Members from the Congo Balolo Mission and the Disciples of Christ Congo Mission completed the whole Bible in 1930. The main responsibility of this work came on Rev. and Mrs. A. E. Ruskin of the Congo Balolo Mission. Members of the same mission have also translated the New Testament in Ngandu, a neighboring language. Some Old Testament portions have been translated but not published.

*Lingua francas.* With the opening up of Central Africa, hundreds of tribes, suddenly becoming aware of their isolated existence, became interested in contacts and relationships with other tribes. The new development of trade and the necessity for armed forces created several lingua francas in Congo. At present we find three or four quite important trade languages, some used over a very large area. Because numerous local tribal languages are known in only small areas, the lingua francas become very important media of conversation. The Bible Society, aware of the necessity for such trade languages which serve minor tribes, has therefore encouraged the translation of Scriptures into several. The B.F.B.S. is at present engaged in the translation of complete Bibles in two of the most used lingua francas, the Congo Swahili and the Lingala.

a. Bangala. The Bangala tribe is a small one at present living on the banks of the Congo River some two hundred miles north of the Equator. When Stanley descended the Congo in 1877, these people offered considerable resistance to him. Their bravery and courage led him to believe that they would make good soldiers. Their language, Bangala, became a lingua franca which now spreads over quite an area in Northeast Congo. It is, however, quite different from the language spoken by a few Bangala remaining in their old area. The original grammatical structure has been much simplified and Bangala has taken up various words from European languages, Swahili, and Kongo. Most of the missionaries would perhaps agree that Bangala is rather poor in both vocabulary and grammatical structure. It was first considered as impossible for Bible translation, but, as has happened many a time in the history of Bible translation, the writing down of the speech and careful discussions with the natives has shown it adequate and has dignified the language. The Bangala Bible was published by the B.F.B.S. a couple of years ago and was translated by missionaries of the Africa Inland Mission. Several thousands of copies have already been distributed.

b. Lingala. This is a very important lingua franca related to Bangala but developed independently. The two languages have grown further and further apart, until today it is hardly possible for a Lingala speaker to understand someone using Bangala. Unfortunately, however, there are several forms of Lingala. The Roman Catholics have one,

the *Force Publique* another. The various Protestant missions use mostly the language of which Dr. Malcolm Guthrie made a scientific record in 1933. Dr. Guthrie published a grammar and a dictionary. Later on, he translated the complete New Testament, a version which is still very much read. Much of the school material used today is based on Dr. Guthrie's grammar and dictionary. Lingala is closely related to the Bantu languages along the Congo River. It seems to be very easy for Africans to pick up this trade language, and it is surprising how this language gains ground all along the river as far as Stanleyville. Even in some parts of the Kasai one finds people who use it. The *Force Publique* has adopted it as its language, and one meets soldiers all over Congo who can understand it.

As a means of translating Scriptures, Lingala has some disadvantages in expressing clearly the Word of God. However, the translation of the Old Testament is proceeding, even though slowly. Rev. S. Westberg of the M.E.U. and Dr. John Carrington are successfully tackling the work. The Bible Society is publishing Genesis, which is anxiously awaited by the various missions. The complete Bible, when published, will serve all the tribes along the river.

c. Congo Swahili. Standard Swahili is spoken over a large area in East Africa. In Belgian Congo, in Ruanda-Urundi, and in the Kivu Province there are thousands of people who use Standard Swahili as a lingua franca. The B.F.B.S. published a Union version of Swahili in 1952. This was very well accepted in Congo. It was, however, quite clear that the language was too classical, making it difficult for the Congolese masses to understand it. The rapid spread of the Swahili was due to the many slave expeditions into Central Africa, which, while directed by Arabs, were made up by Swahili men from the east coast of Africa. As Swahili itself is a Bantu language, it was easy for the Congolese to acquire a measure of it for trade purposes. When the slave traders who opposed setting up the Congo Free State were defeated by the Belgian forces, they were not allowed to return to their homes. Intermarrying with local tribes began and a new name was taken. They called themselves Bangwana 'the Gentlemen'. In trading extensively with the neighboring tribes a language which is now called Kingwana developed.

The Bible Society published two different versions of this trade language, the Kingwana Ituri and the Kingwana Lualaba versions. Other translations were undertaken and it became evident that the multiplicity of translations could only create more difficulties. The B.F.B.S. decided to sponsor a conference of all the missions using any form of Kingwana. In 1934 the first meeting was held at Yakusu, near Stanleyville. It was decided then that only two versions of Kingwana should be used, the Ituri and the Lualaba versions. Some twelve years later another conference was called, again at Yakusu. Kingwana had made steady progress during the years and an improved form had developed. When the two groups began asking for a complete Bible, the Bible Society found the time had come for another discussion on the problem of a composite version.

In 1946 the second conference at Yakusu decided that the work should begin on a new union version which, on the suggestion of the representative of the Bible Society, should be called Congo Swahili. Rules were worked out for the new language, which should be a more grammatical and literary Kingwana. Basic principles were laid down to guide the work on the new version. Bantu forms were to be given preference over Arabic forms, as the Bantu influence is far stronger than the Arabic.

The translation of the Congo Swahili New Testament began and was almost completed when opposition arose on the field. Some missionaries who had earlier agreed to follow the new rules and encouraged the use of the Congo Swahili found it difficult and changed their minds. Another conference was therefore called together by the Bible Society to talk over again the question of further translation in Congo Swahili. Some of the missionaries urged the Society to publish the Kingwana Ituri Old Testament. Last year the Bible Society sent out a very experienced Congo missionary, the Rev. W. D. Reynolds, to investigate with the field-secretary and find out the opinion on the field. An extensive tour of Northeast Congo was undertaken. It was quite clear that the Congo Swahili was the answer to the many problems in that part of the colony. The Bible Society therefore decided to publish also the Old Testament in Congo Swahili. The New Testament, just ready in time for the conference, received a tremendous welcome. The Old Testament is now being prepared for publication. There is every reason to believe that the whole Bible in Congo Swahili will be a real blessing to several million Congolese in East Congo.

d. Kituba or Kikwango. During the last twenty or thirty years another lingua franca, the Kituba, has developed in the Kikwit region near the Kasai River. The first Gospel was translated by missionaries of the Congo Gospel Mission. The B.F.B.S. published St. Mark in 1939. Later on, the complete New Testament was published by the A.B.S. There has been much discussion concerning this trade language. The A.B.S., which is responsible for this language, is following the situation in the Kwango area with keen interest. An experienced linguist who could make a scientific study of the language would probably be the answer. The missionaries working in the region are asking for more Scriptures and are looking to the Bible Society for guidance.

### **Languages of Ruanda-Urundi**

Ruanda-Urundi is the home of two of the largest language groups of the whole area. Formerly a part of German East Africa and mandated to Belgium by the League of Nations in 1925, Ruanda-Urundi has a population of over 4 million, about 200 to the square mile. There are three main groups: the Batutsi or the tall aristocrats, the Bahutu, and the Batwa (or pygmies). These latter comprise about one per cent. Ruanda-Urundi is two separate kingdoms, each with an hereditary ruler, royal family, and nobility.

Although they represent only five per cent of the total population, the Batutsi are the ruling class. It is they, however, who made the



kingdoms the distinctive countries they now are. The Batutsi are believed to have come down from Abyssinia, driving their cattle before them, some three hundred years ago. The nomadic Bahutu, then already loosely established, were easily dominated by the Batutsi.

Although the Ruanda and Rundi are two closely allied languages, the differences are great enough to warrant separate versions. The first translation of the Gospels in Ruanda was prepared by a German missionary, Rev. K. Roehl, of the German Evangelical Society, in 1914. A missionary of the Church Missionary Society, the Rev. H. E. Guillebaud, translated the New Testament and Psalms as well as the Pentateuch. Most of the remaining books of the Old Testament were translated by Dr. Stanley Smith, who, in spite of overwhelming pressure of duties as the General Secretary of the Ruanda-Urundi Protestant Alliance, often began his work at three o'clock in the morning to enable him to translate some verses before his day's work began. Few men have given themselves as unstintingly as Dr. Smith to the great work of translating the precious Word of God into a native tongue. The Old Testament in Ruanda was published by the B.F.B.S. less than two years ago and has since been distributed in thousands, both in Ruanda and Urundi. The New Testament is now revised and the Bible complete.

The Rev. H. E. Guillebaud, an outstanding linguist, visited Urundi to study the differences between the two languages. Soon he was convinced that there was a need for two translations. In consultation with some Danish missionaries who had translated two Gospels into Rundi, Mr. Guillebaud made a tentative version of Mark, Luke, and some Epistles in Rundi. Unfortunately, Mr. Guillebaud was not able to finish all his work. He died suddenly in 1941. His daughter, Rosemary Guillebaud, with the help of Rev. Hans Emming and some African assistants, was able to complete the work her father had begun.

Miss Rosemary Guillebaud is now successfully tackling the enormous and difficult task of the Old Testament in Rundi. In the meantime, the Ruanda Old Testament is used in Urundi, even though it is far from fully understood.

The various missions in Ruanda-Urundi are fortunate indeed to be able to work among two such large groups as the Ruanda and Rundi. A revival passed over the country some years ago and there are many well-established churches among that dense population. The two Bibles, when the Rundi Old Testament is completed, will well cover the need for that part of our area.

### **Angola Translations and Revisions**

Angola, Portuguese West Africa, is one of the least-known big countries in Africa. Situated in the Southern Hemisphere on the Atlantic coast of Africa, this large territory lies south and southwest of Belgian Congo. A province of Portugal, it is fourteen times the area of the mother country, or more than half the size of Belgian Congo. It is equal to the combined areas of Portugal, Spain, France, and Belgium.

The population of Angola is composed of approximately 100,000

white people, mostly Portuguese, 30,000 Mulattoes, and 4,000,000 Bantus. Angola may be considered as divided into five or six great language areas. In the north, on the border to Lower Congo, the Kongo people have their homes. Their dialect is somewhat different from that used in Belgian Congo, although these people belong to the same group of Kikongo we find in Belgian Congo.

*The Kimbundus.* South of the Kongo-speaking regions, a numerous tribe, the Kimbundus (approximately a million), occupy a large part of Angola, with Luanda as the main center. This tribe uses another great Bantu language, Kimbundu, which is spoken all the way from Luanda to the Belgian Congo border. One of the earliest books written in a Bantu speech was produced in Kimbundu. A volume preserved in the British Museum is dated 1642 and shows that the Kimbundu language has changed very little, even though it has been subject to the influence of Portuguese. The Kimbundu region was traversed by David Livingstone, who collected quite a vocabulary in Kimbundu.

The language was reduced to written form by Jesuit missionaries, who also issued a catechism in 1641 in Portuguese-Kimbundu. The Methodist Mission commenced their work in this area in 1897, and one of their missionaries, a Swiss-American, the Rev. Heli Chatelein, who later founded the Philafrican Mission, discovered the rules and structure of the language and produced the first grammar. He also devised a phonetic system of spelling and made the first translation of Scriptures into Kimbundu. His linguistic work has been of inestimable value to the missionaries who carried on after his death. The New Testament, completed by another of the Methodist missionaries, Rev. H. C. Withey, was published in 1922 by the B.F.B.S. Mr. Withey also made good progress on the translation of the Old Testament. Unfortunately, no one has been able to continue this work. Five books remain to be translated, but lack of capable translators has complicated the problem, delaying publication. It seems that for a long time no one has taken keen interest in the study of the native language, with the result that now we have nobody who can take the lead in the translation. Something must soon be done, as this tribe must have a complete Bible. Here the Portuguese language is used more than the Kimbundu as a means to reach the people. There is, of course, some advantage of instruction in a European language like French and Portuguese. But the soul of all people is enshrined in their language. Is it possible to really awake the life of the soul through another medium than the mother tongue? The Bible Society is extremely anxious to give the Kimbundus the Word of God in their own tongue.

*The Umbundus.* Further south of the Kimbundu-speaking tribe we find, on the highlands of Benguela, the Umbundus, the largest tribe in Angola. In the past they were known as slave and ivory traders between the coast and Congo. This tribe numbers some 1,300,000 people. They belong to the Bantu family and some call them the "foggy people" because they came from the "foggy" Congo three hundred years ago. The Umbundus, more ready to adopt Western civilization than the other tribes in Angola, have at present a great influence on

all their neighbors, their Umbundu language becoming a lingua franca in Central Angola.

Protestant work among the Umbundus began some 75 years ago. In November 1880 a small group of missionaries from the American Board landed in Benguela. One of the first pioneers was an African, born in slavery in the United States and freed by the Civil War. He was the first freed man to carry the Gospel to the land of his ancestors. These missionaries followed the paths which for centuries had been the main slave tracks from the interior and arrived at Baliundo, where the first mission station was founded in 1881. A few years later the United Church of Canada joined the American Board. These two missions have carried the main burden for the evangelization of the Umbundus. In spite of troubles and hostilities from the chiefs, the pioneers soon established other stations. Their first task was to reduce the language of the Umbundus to writing and teach the natives to read. Two of these missionaries, Sanders and Stover, felt the need for literature and translated some parts of the Scriptures, portions, and hymns.

The complete New Testament was published in 1897. The Psalms followed in 1928. The Pentateuch has also been translated. It is, however, quite astonishing that this great tribe has still no complete Bible. Owing to various circumstances and the government regulations that all books must be in diglot versions, the work has been delayed. It is now revived, and a couple of missionaries are at present preparing the manuscript of the Prophets, to be followed by the complete manuscript of the Old Testament. The Bible Society is ready to set up a diglot Bible also in Umbundu as soon as the translation is completed. We are fortunate to have a very capable translation committee at Dondi, the main educational center in Umbundu land.

*The Chokwes.* The Chokwe tribe consists of another great group of Bantus in East Angola and also in the western part of the Belgian Congo. They have been great warriors, traders, and travelers, going long distances in the past. Their home is in the Kasai Valley in Belgian Congo, but we also find Chokwes down in Southeast Africa. They number about half a million. Mission work among them began in 1904. In Angola the Brethren have been almost the only mission laboring among the Chokwes. The first decades were far from easy, for this proud tribe counted themselves better than the rest. The Gospel was not good enough for them. However, during the last twenty years a real awakening has taken place and there are at present many fine Christians on several stations all around in Chokwe land. When once they do become Christians, they have a real desire to carry the Gospel to their own people.

Bible translation started quite early. In 1916, Rev. T. Louittit translated the Gospel of John, and seven years later the New Testament was published by the B.F.B.S. Genesis and Exodus were also translated and published by the same Society in 1936. The revised New Testament is being printed in London. At present there are two missionaries working on the manuscript of the Old Testament. The Bible Society

is encouraging the translators to press on in spite of many difficulties. Unfortunately, it will most likely take another three or four years before this Bible is ready for distribution.

*The Luvaes.* On the western border of Congo lives the Luvale tribe. The Brethren have worked among them for many years. One of their missionaries, Rev. A. Horton, has translated the complete Bible into Luvale. This was published by the A.B.S. early this year. Between four and five hundred thousand Luvale are spread over a large area, some being found down in the Copper Belt. The revised New Testament will be completed within a year. However, the Gospel is making good progress and churches are being established.

*The Luchazis.* The southern part of Angola was untouched by Protestant missions until 1914, when the South African General Mission began work among a number of tribes. For many years the first missionaries labored under many difficulties. During the last twenty years, however, great and far-reaching changes have taken place in this remote part of Angola. There is now a splendid work going on among eight or nine different tribes: the Chokwe, Luchazi, Mashi, Nkangala, Umbundu, Luimbe Nyemba, and Songo. This mission has at the present time three main stations as well as many outposts with schools and a hospital, etc. The New Testament was published some twenty years ago. The Old Testament is just ready for the press. Luchazi forms a kind of lingua franca and these Scriptures are used over a large area. The Portuguese Government allows Scriptures to be circulated only if the alternate pages have the Portuguese text. This means that two Bibles will have to be produced instead of one. The cost will therefore be doubled and the production involves also many technical difficulties. However, in spite of these difficulties, our Society is going ahead and these many tribes of Southern Angola will soon have a book which will unite them all. The well-known linguist, Rev. Emil Pearson, has given many years of most thorough work to the Luchazi translation.

### **What Remains to be Done?**

After reading this condensed survey of the translations and revisions of the numerous languages in this area, one can perhaps ask: "What remains to be done?" Although a tremendous work has been achieved and perhaps the greater part of the people of Central Africa now possess the Scriptures in an understandable language, many of these tribes need to have at least the four Gospels in their own tongues, and possibly the New Testament. There has always been the danger of laying too much emphasis on the lingua franca. True it is that many of these groups are small, but there are tens of languages and dialects upon which no study has yet been made. The vast and transforming impact of the Gospel in this part of the continent compels that the task in which we are involved must be carried through, in spite of both long and expensive labor. Opportunities to circulate the Scriptures are limitless, and an eager readiness of the people to receive them exists. Doors are wide open.