

PASTOR DINIS EURICO
IGREJA EVANGELICA SINODAL DE ANGOLA (IESA)
Report #A05

SURVEY

Pastor Eurico was listed more frequently than any other pastor by Angolan Christians as the pastor with the most significant impact. Respondents identified him as in his 50's and rated him highly for training leaders.

ABSTRACT

Dinis Marcolino Eurico is a pastor, member and National President of the Igreja Evangélica Sinodal de Angola (IESA). In the middle of the communism in Angola and against all of the odds he made the decision to renounce his position as a high employee of the state to obey the call of God to serve Him in an exclusive way. Today, his mission is to preach the Gospel for the transformation of lives in Christ Jesus, using the most varied forms for the effect. For him, the radio waves have been an effective instrument in the proclamation of the Good News. Every day, under his coordination, two radio programs are broadcast—"Hora de Reflexão" and "Semeador da Manhã"—in a commercial radio station in the Province of Huila. His vision is to see Angola transformed for Christ; with Christians capable of influencing all levels of the social life; with more united churches in the faith where the denominational barriers are undone and not able to impede the progress of the Gospel; a church with dedicated pastors to Christ's cause. He wants to see an Angola where the state organs in the exercise of their functions express fear to God and recognize His sovereignty on the nation. The institution that he leads has been establishing relationships with several churches or ecclesiastical organizations in and out of the country, essentially in the domain of training, project elaboration and construction of infrastructures. However, IESA has a vision that encourages financial self-sustainability, and it tries to depend as little as possible on external donations. Although being a pastor member of IESA, he feels, above all, he is a pastor of Christ, available to preach the Gospel in every moment and anywhere, even beyond the borders of his denomination. He understands that God has given him this gift to preach the Gospel and looks to do it with complete responsibility and dedication.

BACKGROUND

Childhood Home

Diniz Marcolino Eurico was born in the Municipal district of Kuvango, Province of Huila, in a family of eight siblings, being three women (one is already with the Lord) and five men. His Father was a farmer and bricklayer but also worked in the church as an evangelical catechist. His mother was always beside her husband, also working for the kingdom of God. Therefore, it was in this religious atmosphere, and fear of God that Pastor Eurico was born. But of course, this fact didn't make him a saved person. He came to know Christ as Lord and Savior much later when he was already 22 years old. This encounter with Jesus Christ was very strong, and he used to say it was not him that found Jesus, but, Jesus found him. If it didn't go like this, he would not be what he is today.

Countries of Residence

Pastor Eurico was never out of Angola for more than three months; however he has been traveling enough. He has been to Singapore for 45 days for training of Itinerant Evangelists.

He was already in several African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Namibia, and Zambia, in a pastoral visit, during approximately one month. He already visited some countries of Europe, among them Germany and Holland; and with more regularity Switzerland, for professional reasons; and Portugal, for studying reasons. He has been to the USA for a few weeks, namely in Philadelphia, Illinois, and Chicago where he had the opportunity to preach at Moody Church. He was also in service mission in South America, concretely in Brazil.

Current Family

Pastor Eurico considers himself a very well married person because his wife has been an indispensable part of the ministry for which both were called. They have five children a girl and four boys; and six grandchildren. His wife is a nurse; however she is dedicated exclusively to the pastoral work, supporting the ministry with the women in the denomination.

Educational Background

Pastor Eurico received a religious education early and through his teenage years. After being called by God for serving he entered the Higher Institute for Evangelical Theology in Lubango in 1987, and acquired his degree in 1991. After that he went to Singapore for training in Itinerant Evangelism, training that prepares men and women to preach to the crowds, or individuals; live or through the media; impacting in these way communities with the Gospel. This training has been producing a big impact on his ministry, as Evangelist. Regarding academic education, he has a degree in economics by the *Universidade Agostinho Neto* in 1989. He was, for thirteen years, a teacher in this University, teaching Public Finances at the Law Faculty. As part of that, he ended up doing the Master's degree in law at the Classic University of Lisbon - Portugal, in 2008. He made other training in radio programming (1997) through TransWorld Radio having resulted in the creation of the evangelical radio Programs "Hora de Reflexão" and "Semeador da Manhã" that are broadcast daily on a commercial radio called *Radio 2000*.

His education in a general way was self-financed, and in some cases, he received friends' support. With the exception of the training on projects management, which was sponsored by an organization from Holland, he had never benefitted from any scholarship.

Personal Testimony and Call

When he received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior on February 21, 1981, pastor Eurico was moved to serve God, having involved himself in the youth's works, where he coordinated the works of this department at the local church; at the city of Lubango level; at the south area of Angola level; and later at national level, in his Denomination.

A lot of times he felt that God was calling him for serving, but he didn't respond, at that time. He had a quite stable life in the economic point of view. After all he was the Director of a state-owned company that distributed foods for the population. However, whenever he heard preaching he felt touched by God and challenged to serve him full time, but his attitude was of refusal. At that time, the country lived under a communist regime that made things even more difficult to answer affirmatively to the appeal of God, because this involved risks. At the time neither his wife nor friends or other known people were favorable: "you are already a believer; you are already serving at the church; it is not worthwhile to involve yourself in full time" - they said; Therefore there was no peace in his heart. Finally, in 1987, he made the decision of leaving the *Ministry of Internal Trade* where he had already received the proposal to assume the maximum position of this Ministry in Huila Province. In the middle of

communism in Angola, he had a lot of difficulties in facing the challenges that appeared when making this decision, but God kept him and today he understands why God called him in such difficult time.

Since he accepted to leave his secular work and to embrace full time the ecclesiastical ministry, pastor Eurico feels peace, and he also feels like part of those that were called to help others to grow in the faith. He has been doing this through radio messages, Biblical study, conferences, and through the Pastoral ministry in the Church. According to him, what he did was to pray and to be attentive to the Holy Spirit's voice to do what is right and not to disappoint Jesus Christ that entrusted him such responsibility.

Influences

Pastor Eurico was consecrated in 1998 in the Centenary of the Church, and he highlights some of his mentors whose lives had an important impact on him. Among them is Pastor Lote Alfredo, which is like a father in faith to him, and his wife Mama Sara Wendo, which he will never forget. Both worked a lot, through the study of the Bible, and because of that he is the person that he is today. Pastor Eliseu Simeão, (already with the Lord) a former President of IESA Denomination, for his theological expertise and depth in terms of ideas. Pastor Alfredo Cambonde, for his influence in terms of spiritual leadership. Pastor Eurico said "pastor Cambonde is an exceptional man in the area of spiritual leadership. At times we learned a lot of the administrative techniques, homiletics etc; but I learned from him that those are just tools and without the action of the Holy Spirit nothing can be done; we can have good theologians but bad spiritual men, and that I learned with him."

CURRENT MINISTRY AND CALL

Work/Ministry

As for the ministry of radio, everything began on March 3 of 1993, when the program "Hora de Reflexão" was launched. Without any experience and ignoring the communication techniques through radio he started this project, moved by the action of the Holy Spirit and love for the people lost in their sins. Four years later, that is in 1997, he benefitted from training through Transworld Radio from South África, which contributed to his improvement in the use of this means of communication, envisaging the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For twenty years Pastor Eurico has been taking the good news of the gospel to the homes of many Angolans through the programs "Hora de Reflexão" and "Semeador da Manhã" and also sometimes through the program "A Voz do Evangelho". Today he is a person impassioned by the radio, however, more than that he faces this task with great responsibility seen that in this way God has given him the opportunity to sow in the heart of the people the living seeds of the Kingdom of God. He recognizes that the credit is not his because everything has been possible thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit.

Mission

His mission is to preach the Gospel for the transformation of lives in Christ Jesus, using the most varied forms for the effect.

Vision

In his view, Angola is growing materially but in the spiritual point of view, it is dying. Therefore, pastor Eurico wants to see an Angola transformed for Christ; with Christians capable of influencing through their lives and testimony, family environment, residence area, working place, and the society in general. He wants to see an Angola where the state organs,

in their official sessions put prayer into consideration as an expression of fear to God and recognition of His sovereignty in the nation.

Organization

Pastor Eurico is president of the Igreja Evangélica Sinodal de Angola- IESA. For him, the church has two dimensions: on one side is an *organization* and this organizational side is reflected in its administrative structuring, through committees, and divisions. But, above all people are the most important element within the organization. Therefore, it is not possible to speak of IESA without speaking of the people that constitute it and its leaders; they are the ones that make the machine move forward. On the other hand, the church is an *organism* given that it moves forward by the Holy Spirit's power. IESA in itself would never be anything if it didn't have pastors, evangelists, catechists, men and women committed to Christ and only to Christ; and the Scripture; and love for the sinner. Their workers serve full time and because of that, they are always available to go everywhere in and out of the country. Maybe the difference relies on that and, for this reason, it has been growing and expanding even beyond the national borders.

Impact / Success / Evaluation

For pastor Eurico it is difficult to do self-evaluation; it is easier for the people evaluate our performance because they might have a better perception of what we are doing. According to the statistics, IESA has more than two hundred thousand baptized members, however the impact of its work, when proclaiming the Gospel through the radio waves, has been reaching probably thousands of people; many of them are members of other Christian churches and give their testimony on how they are being edified by the Gospel through radio; and others even have met Christ through these programs.

From 2009 IESA became international not because of a denominational expansionist policy, but because the inherent circumstances of the proclamation of the Gospel that took us to transpose the geographical borders. Today IESA has been developing evangelistic activities and implanting churches in the Republic of Namibia, in particular in the north-center area (Oshakati, Oshikango, Rundu, and Windhock); in the Republic of Zambia, where the Zambians themselves decided to begin evangelism work in their country under the coordination of IESA. This happened when some of them traveled to the east area of Angola (Moxico) and heard Jesus Christ's Gospel, through IESA, and they decide to go back to their country to preach the Gospel. The church has been receiving requests to install in more countries, such as Malawi, Mozambique, Portugal, Brazil, and even the USA. But they have been refusing such requests. According to pastor Eurico, the main focus is Angola, because he understands that God has been calling them firstly to serve in this country. Therefore, the reason for this internationalization has not been a subject of denominational pride or mere expansionism but because of the circumstances and the action of the Holy Spirit itself that has been moving them towards other directions.

Training/Leadership Development

Leadership development has been a very big concern. He was already a leader of the youth for twenty years and is taking this experience to work with young people. According to pastor Eurico, a good student depends on a good teacher; because of that, it is necessary that senior leadership today be very qualified to train young leaders. If the juvenile leadership today is weak the implications of this will echo for the future. For this reason, he has a concern for the young today that will be leaders tomorrow.

Pastor Eurico has been challenging them, *firstly*, to demonstrate in practical life, a serious commitment to Jesus Christ; to be attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and to let their character be molded according to the patterns of God. *Secondly*, he has been challenging the youth for the importance of establishing a purpose and a vision for their lives to know what to do and where to go. This makes possible the youths to value their life, and drive themselves in a responsible way, avoiding behaviors that misguide them or take them to destruction. *Thirdly*, he has been challenging them for the importance of the Christian enterprise; for him, the Christian has more advantages to succeed in different spheres of life than the non-Christian.

Even avoiding mentioning names, Pastor Eurico admits that under his tutorship many young people have become capable leaders; today they are pastors and leaders in several sectors of life. He encouraged them to overcome timidity and other character problems to become what they are now - courageous and proficient leaders; for the present and future; inside and out of the church.

Professional Relationships / Partnerships / Connections

After his graduation in Economics Science at *Universidade Agostinho Neto* Pastor Eurico became a member of Angola Economists Association; He is also member of the Association of Former-students of ISTEEL. With respect to partnerships, the institution that he drives has been establishing relationships inside of the country, with several churches or ecclesiastical organizations, and out of the country. This partnership is more in the domain of training; project elaboration and construction of infrastructures. However, IESA, according to pastor Eurico, has a vision that encourages financial self-sustainability, and it tries to depend as little as possible on external donations. Only 10% to 15% of the global budget of the Denomination – *estimated in more than three hundred thousand American Dollars year* - is coming from outside. Therefore, the church is self-sustainable; it builds its church buildings, buys their means of transport, and pays its workers.

IESA, particularly its leadership looks forward to working with those that identify with their vision, which is focused on the Cross of Christ. Pastor Eurico believes that it is possible to work even with the government institutions, however only up to where the faith is not compromised.

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Pastor Eurico, as the senior leader of his denomination, has elaborated a questionnaire to be distributed to the regional leaders that work with him. The objective is for these leaders to evaluate his actions, identifying his strong and weak points to improve his performance and on the other hand to promote a more participative leadership. He did not reveal the results, but he considers this quite a positive experience and he tries to do this exercise frequently. According to him, his wife has also been important in this evaluation process, and she has been helping him to get better and to grow as a leader and as a person.

Reading & Writing

Pastor Eurico reads a lot, and one of the books that he reads more is the Bible, and he tries to read it once a year. He also reads other books, and he doesn't have a favorite author as such, but he likes to read Dr. Carson, and Dr. Shedd (that he invited to be in Angola in July of this year of 2014 for some Biblical reflections). For him, Africans write little, particularly those of Portuguese speaking countries. However, he has been reading some African authors like

Festo Kivengere, Mark Cassidy, and also Adeyemo with whom he had the opportunity to relate while he was General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of Africa.

Electronic Media

Usually, he has been making use of the telephone and internet to communicate, to correspond (email), and for research. Through the telephone he interacts with the people sending messages of comfort and encouragement; biblical verses for the sick and bedridden people in the hospitals; to answer the questions that the people put; etc. Therefore, for him, the telephone has been an important instrument for the communication with the people.

What he would like to see improved is the internet system in Angola. According to him, even though it is a quite powerful instrument for several effects, however, it has been of relatively little use due to the poorly rendered service and the weakness regarding the supply of energy, factors that discourage the use of this electronic resource.

Political Arena

For pastor Eurico, politics is not a bad thing; it depends on how people see it in the face of their socio-historical reality. The subject of misinterpretation of the politics in Angola is a problem of the Angolans; during a long period the church and the politics were considered as mutually exclusive; the Christians could not wrap up in political subjects, and the politicians should avoid religious subjects. In spite of the new picture that the country is living at present, still one can feel the influences of the past. In light of this Pastor Eurico challenges Christians to shine where they are, as students, merchants, nurses, drivers, politicians, etc. What matters is for them to be Christians that influence their socio-moral environment; and, therefore, be, as Paul said to the Philippians, "as stars that shine in the darkness." According to him, the statistics say that about 90% of the Angolan population is Christian; therefore, we are considered as a Christian country. But, paradoxically one cannot see the effect of that statistical information in practice; on the contrary, every day comes across situations of corruption, of robbery, of murder, of violations, etc. If 90% of the population is considered Christian, this means that in some ways Christians are also involved with these incorrect social practices, what means that they are not shining as they should. Therefore pastor Eurico defends that Christians in Angola can and they should be involved in politics, but they must do it with responsibility; influencing and not being influenced; accepting government responsibilities to make difference through their Christian testimony.

Future

Pastor Eurico dreams about an Angola that is truly Christian, not only for the statistics but in the practical sense; with people genuinely converted and committed with Christ, whose reflex makes to feel in his/her social testimony; with more united churches in the faith where the denominational barriers are undone and they are not able to impede the progress of the Gospel; where the evangelization won't be a type of "fishing in the aquarium" but yes the proclamation of the Good News to the lost ones. He also dreams about an Angolan Church self-sustainable so that it doesn't depend so much on the money that comes from outside; a church with dedicated ministers and committed to the cause of Christ.

In terms of writing, he has several works finished, but the challenge is related to the publication. He has a book already published in Brazil with the title "Chamados para Servir" – "*Called to Serve*" but he intends to dedicate more time to the effort. He sees the need to publish his thesis in theology that approaches *economical subjects in light of the Bible*; even though it is a long time since it was written. He understands that the subject is still pertinent for the actual socio-economic and ecclesiastical context of Angola. One of the great

challenges that churches face today in the country is the subject of the workers' sustenance within the church, and in his thesis, he approaches this matter and suggest solutions. The other work that intends to edit is his thesis of Master's degree in Law. Therefore, he intends to offer a book for the Christians and other for the society in general.

Questions for Pastors: How are you influential as a pastor?

As for this subject pastor Eurico, once again, understands that people that mentioned him would be in better conditions to answer this question. However, he notices that it should have been because of the message that he has been preaching seeing that he is frequently invited to several churches. Although being a pastor member of IESA, he feels, above all, pastor of Christ available to preach the Gospel in every moment and anywhere, even beyond borders of his denomination. He understands that God has given him this gift to preach the Gospel and looks to do so with the whole responsibility and dedication.

He also gets connected to the people through prayer, interceding for the patients that later end for curing, and this also serves to impact people. A lot of times he is called with urgency to assist at the request of people in hospitals that the edge of the death wants to hear a word of faith and hope before they give the last breath. Once he had to enter into the intensive care room because the patient was in the door of the death and she wanted to see him. After some moments of prayer, that person died in peace. He also remembers when he was called to another hospital where there was a girl already dying, whose the doctors had authorized the family to take her to die at home. After they prayed the girl woke up and until today she is alive; etc. it might be for these situations that people point to him in this research. However, the most important are not to impress people but to do everything for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Information about the Preparation of this Report

This report was elaborated by Alberto Lucamba. Alberto Lucamba interviewed Pastor Dinis Marcolino Eurico on February 15, 2014.