

# About ANGOLA. . .



## Geography

- ▣ Located in southwestern Africa, bordering Namibia, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Atlantic Ocean
- ▣ Area is slightly less than twice the size of Texas
- ▣ Capital: Luanda
- ▣ 18 provinces
- ▣ Mineral resources: Petroleum, diamonds

## People

- ▣ Population of approximately 12 million
- ▣ Official Language: Portuguese
- ▣ Over 8 major ethnic/language groups, the largest of which are:
  - o Ovimbundu
  - o Bakongo
  - o Kimbundu
- ▣ Religions: approximately 40-70% Catholic, 15-20% Protestant, 10-45% traditional beliefs
- ▣ Literacy rate: approximately 40-50%
- ▣ Poverty rate: approximately 70%
- ▣ Infant mortality rate: approximately 20%
- ▣ Demographic information uncertain due to the long period of war and the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons during this period

## History

- ▣ Inhabited for thousands of years
- ▣ First millennium A.D. Bantu peoples arrive, displace Khoisan people
- ▣ Kongo Kingdom flourishes, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries
- ▣ 1482/1483 Portuguese arrive, slave trade begins

- ▣ 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: Angolan resistance to colonization, slavery
- ▣ 1671 Portuguese consolidate control of Kongo and Ndongo kingdom
- ▣ late 1800's/early 1900's: Portuguese consolidate control of interior of Angola, including Ovimbundu kingdoms
- ▣ Modern independence struggle, 1961 - 1975
- ▣ November 11, 1975: independence
- ▣ Civil war: 1975 – 2002

### **The UCC and Angola**

- ▣ 1880: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sends 3 missionaries to central Angola, including one African-American
- ▣ 1922: African-American mission established at Galangue Mission; supported by American Missionary Association (AMA) and ABCFM
- ▣ 1955: Council of Evangelical Churches of Central Angola (CIEAC) formed
- ▣ 1975: Last UCC missionaries leave Angola as civil war starts
- ▣ 1979: CIEAC transformed into the national post-independence denomination Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola (IECA)
- ▣ 1980's - 1990's: UCC support for IECA continues, with periodic exchanges of delegations during times of relative peace
- ▣ 1990' s: Southeast Conference supports landmine removal efforts
- ▣ 2000 - 2004: University Church/Trinity UCC of Chicago begin partnership work with IECA; Tuthill Fund of Illinois Conference provides funding for Canata Cultural Arts program, Lobito, Angola
- ▣ 2004: Illinois Conference Annual Meeting hosts IECA delegation, adopts partnership with IECA – Delegations visit in Angola in 2005 and 2009 with visitors from Angola in Illinois during 2009 and 2013.

### **Illinois Conference U.C.C./IECA Partnership**

#### **Purpose and Philosophy**

- ▣ To build on historical ties between the UCC and IECA and between the U.S. and Angola
- ▣ The 2002 cease-fire ushered in an era of peace, creating a *biros* moment, a time when God offers Angolans, and us, an opportunity for faithful discipleship and action together
- ▣ The body of Christ consists of many members and “if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)
- ▣ Recognize the many opportunities we have to learn from each other and grow together
- ▣ Priorities for projects and action to be set by the Angolans for projects in Angola
- ▣ New avenues of reconciliation and transformation

#### **Current Projects**

- ▣ Support IECA initiatives for church and community development:
- ▣ Fundraising for Dondi Seminary Married Student Housing Project
- ▣ Education and outreach to Illinois Conference congregations
- ▣ Preparing for hosting and sending delegations in coming years
  - Potential “Minister in Residence” within the Illinois Conference