

Botswana

SIM is involved in evangelism, children's ministry, and HIV and AIDS ministries in Botswana.

Botswana is a nation in south-central Africa known for the vast Kalahari Desert and its population of the [San](#) people. The largest ethnic group, however, is the Tswana (or Setswana), a Bantu people from whom the nation derives its name. SIM partners with the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) to share the saving message of Jesus and to train church leaders to meet the challenges of a nation where half the population is made up of young people and where HIV/AIDS is taking a tremendous toll.



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Current SIM Ministry

The first Christian conversions from the Tswana tribe occurred more than a century ago. Since that time, the denominations established by the first missionaries have tended to decline, but the number of African independent churches has multiplied. In 1973 the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) in Botswana was founded, and today has about 200 members and 500 attenders meeting in more than twenty groups or churches. SIM is partnering with this church to spread the Gospel and train church leaders. SIM also partners with Botswana-registered Flying Mission, both in mission aviation and in seeking to combat HIV & AIDS.



The AEC and SIM continue to evangelise the Basarwa or San, previously called Bushmen. Two couples from among the Basarwa, representing two different language groups, came to faith in Christ, went to Bible School, and are now working among their own people. Challenges to church planting include complex unwritten languages with distinct tonality and many 'clicks', and a heritage of a nomadic, non-literate lifestyle.

Trained Christian leaders are making an impact on the church, and there are congregations in some locations including the urban centres. Opportunities are unlimited among the young people of Botswana. There is an open door to teach Religious Education in the local schools.

The AIDS epidemic is beginning to destroy the most productive portion of the population, leaving hosts of orphans. There are opportunities for involvement in an integrated programme combining evangelism, discipleship, lifestyle education, literacy, orphan care, and medical and pastoral ministries.

SIM's Partner Church

SIM partners with the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) to spread the gospel and train church leaders in Botswana. In 1973 the AEC was founded, and today it has about 200 members and 500 attenders meeting in more than twenty groups or churches.

Unreached People

Several minority Bantu tribes, such as the Kalanga and Yeyi, have had little or no evangelistic outreach in their own language. Attempts are being made to reach the San people (also called the Remote Area Dwellers, referring to the people who live in the Kalihari Desert which spreads from Botswana into Namibia and South Africa). This is a slow process because their languages are among the most difficult in the world to learn, and the living conditions in this isolated area are very difficult.

History of Christianity

The first Catholic mission was founded in 1895. With the establishment of one national jurisdiction in 1959 came a new sense of identity, and the Catholic church has been characterised by rapid growth over the past decade.

The Tswana people were the first Bantu people in southern Africa to respond to the gospel in large numbers. Many of them became Christians more than a century ago through the work of missionaries from the London Missionary Society, including Robert Moffat and David Livingstone. Other mission societies followed, and many Tswana call themselves Christian, though their faith is nominal and mixed with animism.

Protestant churches have been a significant force in Botswana since the early nineteenth century, though for many years the church remained small. The first British resident commissioner in 1885 was a missionary and since independence, the speakers of the Botswana parliament have been Christian missionaries.

Since that time, the denominations established by the first missionaries have tended to decline, but the number of African independent churches has multiplied. The major Protestant denomination is the United Congregational Church, a result of the pioneering efforts of the London Missionary Society. Although a number of denominations (Methodists, Lutherans, Dutch Reform) have existed in Botswana longer, the Seventh-Day Adventists are the second largest Protestant church. Prior to independence, all hospitals and secondary school facilities were maintained by church organisations, most of which were Protestant before World War II.

In 1973 the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) in Botswana was founded and today has about 200 members and 500 meeting in more than twenty churches. Today there are 22 mission groups bringing the gospel to Botswana, including SIM. A great need exists for Bible teaching and for the training and support of pastors. Scripture Union is working among young people. Church involvement in education, health care, and social service continues to be extensive.

The National Church

The United Congregational Church has been considered the established church of Botswana because of its work in all parts of the country. However, it has seen slow growth in recent years, and large numbers of nominal adherents are out of touch with it.

Please pray for

- the AEC bishop as he seeks to lead the churches and develop an effective administration. wise application of God's grace to the HIV & AIDS crisis.
- revival in the church. the ministry to the San people. the outreach in the local schools and with children at risk.
- continued involvement with the Botswana church in leadership training.

Opportunities

[Care Ministry Christian Counsellor--Trainer](#)

[Schools Outreach Coordinator](#)

[All Botswana Opportunities](#)

Projects

[Life Skills Programme](#)

Stories

[Give me road](#)