



Côte d'Ivoire

SIM is involved in church planting and leadership training, theological education, and development ministries in Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire is a linguistic tapestry of at least 60 languages and an ethnic composition which includes many indigenous groups as well as large populations of expatriate Lebanese and French. Although 40% of Ivoirians are Muslim, the nation boasts two of the largest Catholic cathedrals in the world. Evangelicals are now estimated at about 9.2% of the total population.

Current SIM Ministry

Côte d'Ivoire was one of the most prosperous nations in sub-Saharan Africa until the December 1999 coup d'état. Due to continuing political and military turmoil and the destruction of schools, most SIM missionaries were evacuated out of the country in November 2004 and have not been able to return. The International Christian Academy in Bouaké was also forced to close. The regional ministries of Life Challenge Africa and HCJB Global were forced to relocate to Senegal and Ghana, respectively.

Many people, especially the young, are nonetheless open to the Gospel. The official language is French, but there are at least 60 languages spoken. Julia ([Maninka](#)), the trade language, is spoken by most of the Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire, currently estimated at about 40% of the population.

Current SIM ministries in Côte d'Ivoire include radio outreach, church planting, mobilising the church for Muslim ministry, Bible correspondence courses, small business development, and helping with new initiatives in mission. Several of these ministries are continuing without the presence of expatriate missionaries, which is encouraging to see.

Abidjan is the base for SIM media ministry to French-speaking Africa. The FM radio station, Fréquence Vie, has been on the air since 1999. It is the only national Protestant radio station in the country, and it now has an African director. In addition, SIM has loaned personnel to Trans World Radio's leadership team.

SIM's Partner Church

Two SIM-related churches exist, one in Abidjan and one in Odienné, each led by an Ivorian pastor. The focus of both congregations is to reach out to Muslims. Converts are at times expelled from their families and deprived of their means of support, calling for wise and compassionate response on the part of the church. One such response is the Maison Dorcas project, where women who have converted to Christ are learning sewing, jewelry making, and other related skills. A second similar project is also underway.

Ivoirian SIM missionaries are working diligently at overseeing correspondence courses and training leaders from churches and Bible schools to reach out to unreached people groups. As well, they are promoting the idea of church planting movements throughout West Africa.

Unreached People

Among the more than 60 ethnic groups of Côte d'Ivoire, 26 are still unreached with the Gospel. Less than 20% of the population has any affiliation with a Christian church.

History of Christianity

Catholic missionaries first arrived in 1637, but soon left due to difficult circumstances. Missionaries did not return until after renewed French interest in Côte d'Ivoire in 1843. The Catholic Church has worked hard to develop African leadership at increasingly higher levels of its hierarchy. Its work has been concentrated mostly in the south and especially in Abidjan, where up to 50% claim some affiliation with the Catholic Church.

Côte d'Ivoire has seen several indigenous churches arise. The most famous was begun by William Wade (Prophet) Harris. He visited Côte d'Ivoire in 1913-1915 and in a short time, about 120,000 were baptised. Many of these people later joined the Methodist Church, but the independent Harris Church is still strong, though losing ground in the cities.

Protestant missions did not enter Côte d'Ivoire until 1924, when the British Methodists opened work. Others soon followed: Assemblies of God, Mission Biblique, CMA, and WEC, among others. Protestant work has not been characterised by rapid growth. The Methodists and CMA have the largest followings, with about 120,000 members each. Mission activity has resulted in over 1,000 evangelical church congregations in Côte d'Ivoire. By some estimates, 9.2% of Ivoirians are evangelical Christians. Although steady growth is being experienced, mature national leadership must be further developed in order to cope with the growth.

The State Church

No official state church exists. The government is very open to mission activity.

Please pray for

- just solutions to the political crises the country is facing, with the Christian church serving as light in the midst of darkness.
- effective use of broadcasting, and especially for the development of a network of stations throughout Côte d'Ivoire.
- the church in the northwestern town of Odienné, which is struggling to keep going in spite of the political and economic troubles in the country, and the church in Abidjan which is looking into a merger with another small denomination.
- Ask the Lord to provide godly leadership in both churches. the existing church to be mobilised to reach out to their Muslim neighbours and to care wisely for converts; also for the spread of church planting movements all over the African continent.
- believers, including missionaries, to model godly relationships and Christian compassion. the small business projects to become models of

spiritual growth, financial integrity, and self-sufficiency.

- the new mission agencies to become effective and powerful tools that the Lord will use to reach the unreached of Côte d'Ivoire and beyond.

Opportunities

[Supervisor for Pastors' Book Set Project](#)

[Administrator](#)

[All Côte d'Ivoire Opportunities](#)

Projects

[Maison Dorcas Sewing Project](#)

Stories

[New West Africa office opened](#)