

South Africa

SIM is involved in evangelism and outreach, theological education, medical and HIV/AIDS ministries, and children's ministry in South Africa.

South Africa is the most industrialised and one of the richest nations in Africa. God continues to develop his church in this land.

South Africa is a country with diverse cultures and has eleven official languages, of which English is the most commonly spoken. The country is considered by many to be a Christian country. There are still plenty of opportunities for cross-cultural ministry. The Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) is a mainly Black denomination and the Evangelical Church of South Africa (ECSA) is predominantly Indian. These churches were started by AEF and are currently our main church partners.

People affected by HIV & AIDS receive spiritual guidance, life-giving support, and practical assistance for survival through HIV & AIDS related projects and programmes. The Hope for AIDS initiative continues to impact communities through its partner projects and ministry organisations, while simultaneously developing capacity within church leaders to participate meaningfully in this ministry within their communities. Quality medical care continues to be provided to people by medical personnel at Mseleni, where 4.5% of the adult population in the Mseleni Health District are currently on active ARV (anti-retroviral) therapy. The ministry to HIV & AIDS sufferers has been expanded by the placement of new long-term personnel with medical qualifications in a township outside Pietermaritzburg.



Orphans and vulnerable children continue to be identified and placed in safe environments or in foster homes within their cultural backgrounds. Leaders in churches are trained to minister to the spiritual needs of children and young people, and to prepare them for their futures through giving them some basic life skills. This is a ministry that is often neglected in some cultures. SIM strives to involve churches in this work.

Church capacity-building and church leadership training is designed to provide church leaders in SIM's partner churches, located in previously disadvantaged areas, with the skills to be effective in all their ministries in the church and their outreach work to their communities.

SIM works to achieve improved relationships and mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims through a Christian Muslim Peace Initiative. Women Arise Africa continues to encourage women of both faiths to befriend and support each other.



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SIM South Africa believes that the spiritual and human needs of individuals are more effectively ministered to through churches, other mission agencies, community structures, NGOs (non-government organisations), NPOs (non-profit organisations), and relevant government departments, and continually seeks out opportunities to partner such organisations.

In all of ministries SIM South Africa seek to model lives based on Christ's example, sharing his Gospel and showing forth his love to those individuals and communities which they are privileged to serve.

Current SIM Ministry

SIM missionaries are involved in a variety of ministries including evangelism and church planting, discipleship, Christian education, theological education, and leadership development. There is a specialist ministry which focus on international students, as well as work at a hospital and a children's home. Work among miners is being handed over to local church partners. A variety of HIV and AIDS projects are being run in co-operation with church partners, encompassing prevention, home-based care, and care for orphans. In 2003, SIM began helping the Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA) to teach the Bible to leaders of African independent churches.

SIM's Partner Church

The first ministries started in 1889 to soldiers, sailors, railway, and mine workers in the developing parts of the country. The vision expanded quickly, however, and soon workers were sent to begin work among the Africans in Natal and Zululand (now Kwa Zulu Natal Province) and in Transkei (Eastern Cape Province) in South Africa, as well as in Swaziland. The influx of Indian farm labourers in the Durban (Natal) area in the 1860s provided other opportunities for ministry.

Out of the early mission outreach, two churches emerged: the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) among the Zulu, Xhosa, and Swazi peoples of South Africa and Swaziland; and the Evangelical Church of South Africa (ECSA) among the Tamil speaking Indian population.

In the 1990s, outreach to the Tswana people of North West Province resulted in the emergence of several congregations, which are now incorporated into existing denominations. And in Johannesburg, outreach to Chinese immigrants has brought about a church affiliated with the Chinese Covenant Churches. Also during this period, a group of former Angolans living in South Africa affiliated themselves with the mission. They are known as the 'Evangelical Bible Church (SIM)' since many of them also worked in Namibia and were influenced by SIM's partner church there (EBC).

In 1984, a group called Life Challenge Africa (LCA) began work among the 350,000 Indian and Malaysians in the Cape Town area. In 1986, LCA merged with SIM, providing the opportunity for further development of outreach through personal evangelism, as well as training and mobilising churches in several major centres. In 2001, a video training tool, Battle for the Hearts, was produced in co-operation with Trans World Radio and is being used in a variety of churches and Bible colleges.

History of Christianity

The Khoi-San people were contacted as early as 1488, but showed little receptivity to mission work. In 1737, a Moravian missionary worked among them. In 1799, four years after the British took control of the Cape, the London Missionary Society (LMS) began work among the Khoi and Xhosa peoples, founding Bethelsdorp. In 1816, British Methodists began working along the southeast coast. That work has resulted in the second largest Black membership in South Africa claiming over 10% of the population. In 1817, Robert Moffatt of the LMS arrived at the Cape and from his mission at Kuruman, the Tswana Bible was translated and printed, schools were established, and vast areas were evangelised. Moffatt was the father-in-law of an even more well-known LMS missionary who worked in Southern Africa, David Livingstone.

The Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) began outreach among blacks in 1836. This work grew but was also fractured by doctrinal, political, and geographical concerns into five separate organisations between 1853 and 1866. In 1963, three of these churches plus another reunited with the mother church in Cape Town to form the General Synod NGK. This is an all-white organisation, but its mission work has developed separate black, coloured, and Asian churches which are all united under the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Under this umbrella, it is the largest church in South Africa today, with over 12.5% of the population.

The Presbyterian Church began work in 1813 to serve the whites of the Cape. Several other Presbyterian Mission groups followed and have formed two important denominations: the black Presbyterian (all Black), and the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (65% white). Negotiations are in progress for the union of these two bodies. In 1908 the Apostolic Faith Mission entered. It is the only mission to have made extensive inroads into the Afrikaans-speaking community. In 1967 the LMS, together with three other missions, formed the Congregational Church of Southern Africa. A number of smaller missions began work in South Africa in the 1980s.

One of the most significant developments in the history of missions in South Africa was the introduction of the teachings of Dr. John Alexander Dowie of the Christian Catholic Church (Zion, Illinois) at the turn of the 20th Century. Under the influence of this teaching, Rev. P.L. LeRoux left the Dutch Reformed Church in 1902 to start up the first Black African Christian Catholic Church in the Wakkerstroom district. The visit of Overseer Daniel Bryant from the 'mother church' in 1905 reported 5000 members among the Zulu and Basuto, in six buildings and 36 preaching points. Today these 'Zion' churches (or amaZioni) form a large part of an estimated 11 million people involved in African Independent Churches spread throughout 7500 different groups in South Africa. Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa (ZEMA) is involved in teaching the Bible to leaders of this movement, and in 2003, SIM was invited to join in this work.

Mission outreach from South Africa has been large and has included some world-renowned missionary enterprises. Examples are NGK (Dutch Reformed Church), with a major outreach for many years to a number of African nations; South Africa General Mission (1889), founded by well-known missionary statesman, Andrew Murray; International Fellowship of Christian Churches, now with a worldwide ministry to and through medical workers; African Evangelistic Band; Dorothea Mission; and more recently, African Enterprise, and Christ for all Nations.

Please pray for

- new missionaries for SIM's Focus Ministries, with the ability and willingness to learn from the knowledge and experience of the existing missionaries.
- God's guidance to establish new partnerships with mainline denominations. conversions to Christ through SIM's Focus Ministries. for workers to develop the exciting ZEMA work (teaching the Bible to the amaZioni).
- God's guidance and wisdom to undertake existing ministries and start up new ones to meet the spiritual and human needs of people in areas where it is most needed.
- for the new South Africa with its multi-faceted freedom which provides many exciting opportunities as well as many challenges.
- Pray that SIM and its partner churches will know God's direction and step out in faith.

Opportunities

[Bible Teacher/Leadership Training](#)

[Teacher for Grades 1-3](#)

[All South Africa Opportunities](#)

Projects

[HIV and AIDS Project Positive Ray](#)

[The In-Service Bible Training Course](#)

Stories

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