

Zimbabwe

SIM is involved in HIV and AIDS ministry, theological education, and children's ministry in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country with dramatic scenic beauty, abundant wild game, and friendly people. Situated in south central Africa it is bordered on the north and northwest by Zambia, on the southwest by Botswana, on the east by Mozambique, and on the south by South Africa. After becoming a British colony in the 19th century, it declared independence (as Rhodesia) from the UK in 1965. At that time, a war of liberation started, until the nation of Zimbabwe came into being on 18 April, 1980.

The country is working to develop its resources in the areas of education, infrastructure, and social services. About 85% of its people are of Bantu origin. More than half the population are children under the age of 15. English, chiShona, and siNdebele are the three official languages.



Current SIM Ministry

Ministries of the church and mission include theological education, secondary schools, children's ministry, bookshops, Christian Education resources, church planting, radio, film outreach, Bible translation, medical ministries, and development projects (community and individual). HIV and AIDS present a daunting challenge. The infection rate is climbing rapidly and presently stands at one in four of all adults. The number of orphaned children is estimated at one-tenth of the country's population.



SIM's Partner Church

SIM's history in Zimbabwe, through the Africa Evangelical Fellowship and its forerunners in southern Africa, dates back to 1897. The churches that were planted are now affiliated as the United Baptist Church (UBC). SIM missionaries enter Zimbabwe in fellowship with the UBC. As of January 2003, the UBC had 96 organised churches.

History of Christianity

The first Christian contact with the Shona was initiated by the Portuguese Jesuit Gonzalo da Silveira in 1561. Further efforts followed in the 1600s, but no permanent Catholic presence resulted until 1879; since then, there has been substantial growth. In the two main cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo, the Catholic Church has been most closely associated with the white community. Catholicism in Zimbabwe has been characterised by strong lay activity.

The first Protestant missionary to Zimbabwe was Robert Moffat who opened a London Missionary Society (LMS) station at Inyati in 1859. Several missions tried to follow the footsteps of LMS but were unsuccessful. It was not until 1888 that new groups began work in the country. The Protestant churches have had a significant role in education, medicine, and social service. Before 1970, 90% of all African students received education in government aided church schools.

The British Methodists and the United Methodists (USA) arrived in 1890. The former has a large white constituency while the latter is mostly African. The Salvation Army, which entered in 1891, has the largest single Protestant community, which is predominately Shona and is increasing in size at a fast rate.

AEF/SIM began work in Zimbabwe in 1897 when the first missionaries arrived from South Africa to establish stations in the eastern highlands. They aimed to reach the people of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, which was then a closed country. From this station, they were able to cross the border freely.

Please pray for

- spiritual growth of church members.
- political and economic stability.
- wisdom in dealing with all the implications of the AIDS crisis.
- effective evangelism and discipling of the multitudes of children, many of whom are orphaned.
- the door for ministry in Zimbabwe to remain open.

Opportunities

[Zimbabwe Team Leader](#)

Projects

[HOPE for AIDS : 'Today for Tomorrow'](#)

[Home Based Care](#)

[All Zimbabwe Projects](#)

Stories

[A voice for those who are not being heard](#)

[On behalf of Caiphaz Ngarivhume - Thank you!](#)

[All Zimbabwe Stories](#)

