

## BOTSWANA PROVINCE

### Botswana and South Africa

Official Language: **English, Setswana, 11 official languages in South Africa**

#### Vision Statement

*We the Divine Word Missionaries of Botswana Province are an Intercultural Religious Missionary Community, witnessing and proclaiming the Reign of God.*

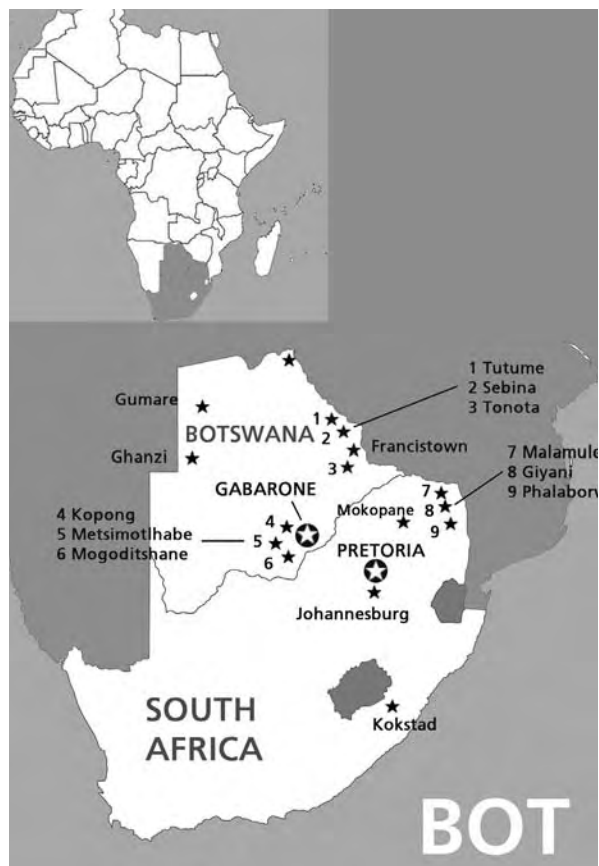
#### Mission statement

*Inspired by the Trinitarian and Incarnational spirituality of our founder, St. Arnold Janssen, and challenged by the signs of the times, we commit*

- *to form viable, inculturated missionary Christian communities in parishes*
- *to foster works of advocacy, care and support for the marginalized*
- *to deepen and strengthen the life of faith among the youth through God's Word*
- *to nurture the school children in our care with Catholic ethos and holistic education.*

#### 1. Societal Setting

**Botswana District:** The Botswana District encompasses the whole country of Botswana. Even though Botswana is one of the richest countries in Africa, the people, especially those who are li-



ving in the north and northwest are still uneducated and poor. Nowadays, many young people and educated young people are unemployed. Moreover, Botswana is experiencing a high rate of HIV/AIDS among its people (24.8% among adults ages 15-49). This condition is slowing down the country's economy as well. Most of the people of Botswana claim to be Christians but the majority of them are still practicing traditional beliefs; most follow syncretic traditions of mushrooming sects and African Churches.

The population of the country is about 2.3 million (2017). Christianity is the dominant religion in Botswana; however, there are also followers of Islam (around 5,000) and Hinduism (3,000). The practicing Christians are estimated at around 20% of the population. Catholics represent about 5-6% of the population - most of them in the southern part of the country. In the north (where most of us are working) the percentage is much lower - 1% or less.

Women and children are sometimes treated as the property of men; men can do whatever they like with them. There is a significant emancipation among women. Single mothers are the norm. Family and marriage institutions are in a deep crisis. There are many unreported instances of domestic violence and abuse of women and children. The main ethnic group (Batswana) often does not respect the minorities. There is widespread xenophobia towards foreigners. Many Zimbabweans are presently coming to the country, looking for a better life in Botswana. Many of them are abused and treated unjustly, even by authorities. Therefore, immigrants, especially Zimbabweans, need our care and protection.

**South Africa District:** The population of South Africa is estimated at 56 million; of this number, 80.2% are Black African; 8.8% are “Coloured”; 8.4% are White; 2.5% are Indian or other Asian; and 0.5% are Other/Unspecified. Christians account for 79.7% of the population: Protestant (36.6%), Zionist Christian (11.1%), Pentecostal/

Charismatic (8.2%), Roman Catholic (7.1%), Methodist (6.8%), Dutch Reformed (6.7%), Anglican (3.8%), and members of other Christian Churches account for another 36% of the population. Muslims (largely found among the “Coloured” and Indian ethnic groups) are 1.5% of the population, 2.3% are “Other”, 1.4% are “Unspecified”, and 15.1 % are “None”.

## 2. Ecclesial Setting

**Botswana District:** The Catholic Church is still less than 70 years in Botswana; most of the people are of the first generation of Christians. The Church sees her duty and responsibility in helping the country to develop (in various aspects, especially spiritually) and to bring her faith to the people by all possible means. Primary evangelization is the priority mission carried out by the Church. This is done by operating mission schools, such as St. Joseph College in Gaborone, Mater Spei College in Francistown, and St. Arnold in Tonota (SVD school). Since 1981 the SVD has been assisting the local Church to grow by opening new missions and supporting local vocations. At the moment most of the SVD confreres work in the Catholic diocese of Francistown and others are serving in one parish in the diocese of Gaborone. The financial dependency on foreign subsidies is a big problem in the diocese of Francistown. The Catholic population is much smaller and more scattered in this diocese. The SVD has no vocations at all. The present situation regarding vocations for the local clergy is slowly improving, especially in the diocese of Gaborone.

The situation of the diocese of Francistown is very different, still depending heavily on the presence of the SVD. Here, there is one seminarian, 7 Batswana priests, and 8 local Sisters of Calvary. Ecumenical and interreligious collaboration efforts include a group of leaders of different denominations and Churches who are involved in various activities such as prayer at official ceremonies, hospitals, counseling offices, police stations and also during funeral prayers and a month of prayer in September for various reasons. In the SVD missions in Botswana, both in the dioceses of Gaborone and Francistown, the majority of us are working in parish situations and some are living alone. There are huge distances between the missions (500 km. or more) where we are working. Some of our parishes still rely on support from the generalate. In 2006 we established the non-parish based ministry of St. Arnold School in Tonota.

**South Africa District:** The history of the Catholic Church in South Africa began with the arrival of Bartholomew Diaz at Walvis Bay on December 8, 1487. The first Mass, celebrated perhaps in late December 1487 or early January 1488, was celebrated on the island of the Holy Cross (named as such by Diaz) just off Port Elizabeth. Ten years later Vasco da Gama, on his way to India, would, on Christmas day, sight the land to which he gave the name "Terra de Natal". Between 1652 and 1795, under the Dutch East India Company rule, Catho-

licism was forbidden in South Africa. Under the British rule between 1795 and 1802 the same attitude prevailed. In 1804, the Dutch government opted for religious toleration, but two years later, the British again forbid the presence of the priests and lost no time in expelling them. In 1818, Benedictine Dom Edward Bede Slater was appointed by Pope Pius VII as the first Vicar Apostolic of the Cape but he never set foot on South African soil as the government in London forbade him to go there, so he went to Mauritius where he was the first Vicar Apostolic there also.

His successor, Dom William Placid Morris likewise resided in Mauritius, never putting foot on South African soil. But with the appointment of Bishop Raymond Griffith, Dominican, as the third Vicar Apostolic of the Cape and first bishop of South Africa in 1837, the history of the Catholic Church as a visible institution began and currently there are five archdioceses and 21 dioceses. Some dioceses are doing well in vocations while others are struggling and a few of the dioceses are financially viable while others are not. There are many missionary congregations working in South Africa - some local and others international, both male and female. At the Bishops' Conference level there is a department responsible

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for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. The SVD presence in South Africa began in 2001.

**Botswana District:** We are working predominantly in the northern part of the country, in the Catholic diocese of Francistown, working in Selebi Phikwe, Tonota, Francistown, Sebina, Tutume, Gumare, Kasane and in Ghanzi. All of those missions have several outstations. In the diocese of Gaborone, in the south, we are in Mogoditshane parish. Most of the people we are serving are ethnic Batswana. However, there are places/missions where ethnic minorities are dominant: Kalanga people near Francistown, Tutume, Sebina; Bakgalagadi people and the San (Bushmen) near Ghanzi, Gumare, Kasane; Hambukushu and Bayeyi people near Gumare; Basubiya people near Kasane.

Most of the SVDs are working in the parishes and a few are in the school ministry. In most places we are running pre-schools, and helping marginalized, refugees (Tutume), orphaned and neglected street children (Bana Ba Ditlou project in Kasane). Two confreres are working in St. Arnold Primary School and two are in Mater Spei College in Francistown.

**South Africa District:** Currently there are ten confreres working in five parishes and two confreres in a pastoral center; they are spread in four dioceses - Tzaneen, Kokstad, Polokwane and Johannesburg.

### 3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

#### Those in Final Vows

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	20	58.8	45.5	56.4
Education	3	8.8	8.0	2.4
Schools	3	-		
Universities	0	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	0	0	6.4	9.7
Administration/ Support	2	5.9	1.8	4.8
Other Apostolates	2	5.9	12.5	13.7
JPIC	0	-		
Bible	0	-		
Communication	0	-		
Mission Animation	0	-		
Others	2	-		

#### Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/ Orientation	5	14.7	25.8	12.9
Retired/Sick	0	0	0	0
Others	2	5.9	0	0

\* *These statistics include Zambia, which was part of the BOT Province before.*

## Characteristic Dimensions

**Botswana District:** Wherever we are, we try to exercise our "SVD-ness". Some confreres are working with the marginalized, refugees (*Tutu me*), needy children (*Bana Ba Ditlou*), or prisoners. Some are continuing to promote the Word of God to the people through giving workshops, teaching of faith, Bible sharing and Bible study.

**South Africa District:** Confreres live out the Characteristic Dimensions through the integration of dimensions in their parish programs and activities - basic Bible courses and seminars, weekly Bible sharing in the Small Christian Communities of the parishes; procuring and making Bibles and related materials available on sale in the parishes; training and formation of catechists in using the Bible as their main source for catechetical lessons; promoting the programs and activities of the justice and peace departments/desks of the various dioceses in the parishes and ensuring that the parish justice and peace groups are active; organizing occasional mission animation programs in the parishes and using various occasions and opportunities to talk about the missions and the fact that all are called to be missionaries.

## Priorities among Congregational Directions

### Botswana District

**a) Primary and New Evangelization:** We try to initiate our mission among San People (the poorest minority in Botswana) as our commitment. We agreed to focus our mission efforts in

the North-Western part of Botswana, in Ghanzi area, by providing pastoral care for communities in Chales hill, Nocjane, Karakubis, with the possibility to do primary evangelization in Chobokwane, Xanagas, Makunda, Kule, Metsimatle and Metsimantsho. There are plans to assign more confreres to Ghanzi mission area.

**b) Family and Youth:** We have many single parents, broken families, and divorce cases as our challenges. The majority of us are visiting families on a regular basis, ministering to small Christian communities and prayer groups. Children are taught to appreciate family life. We do social work by helping the needy, sharing food, clothes and blankets.

**c) Promotion of the Culture of Life:** This is ongoing formation in Botswana and we could and should do more in parishes and communities. We organize workshops for ourselves and are planning to organize similar workshops for our teachers working in our Catholic institutions.

### South Africa District

**a) Primary and New Evangelization:** The lack of Catholic identity, the presence of many Christian Churches and sects, strong traditional beliefs, and people looking for miracles and healings leads us to strengthen existing parish communities and deepen the faith of the members to create missionary communities. We do this by training catechists on the diocesan level (as most confreres are on diocesan catecheti-

cal training teams) and on the parish level, the training of lay leaders such as Parish Pastoral Council members and various lay leaders; e.g., funeral leaders, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, leaders of the Small Christian Communities. These trainings were carried out through quarterly Basic Bible Orientation in the parishes, quarterly Catholic doctrine sessions for parish groups, monthly ongoing formation meetings and Bible sharing for parish catechists and monthly Basic Catholic Catechism for the entire parish community.

**b) Family and Youth:** Unstable marriages, coming from different Christian Churches, migration to cities, and youth leaving the Church leads us to promote Catholic identity and the sacrament of marriage, strengthening the faith, getting to know the community, and making a pastoral inventory. We do this by doing systematic and regular house visitations, joining the different Small Christian Communities regularly, having regular meetings with the youth with regular ongoing formation, organizing parish retreats at least once a year, and involving the youth in various Church activities (e.g. liturgy, altar serving, choir, holiday youth camps, and sports).

### Collaboration with SSpS and Others

In the Botswana district, we continue to build up our cooperation with the SSpS as one family. For many years, the SSpS have been working with us in St. Arnold Primary School in Tona and in some parishes like Our Lady of the

Desert and in Metsimotlhabe. Very often, we had common celebrations together during our Family Feast, SSpS day, birthday celebrations, Easter and Christmas celebrations. Even though we have our own recollections and meetings as a district, we are also working with other congregations and the local Church. We are involved in diocesan activities. We invite other congregations and local clergy for parish activities or workshops given in our parishes.

### SVD Lay Association

In the Botswana District, promoting an SVD lay association has been done in Mogodithsane parish and all other parishes are encouraged to do so. We haven't done enough in this area. However, there are some of our friends and employees who work with us in the parishes, pre-schools, primary school and also in our communities, who are interested to become partners in the mission of the SVD. Some people expressed the wish to be SVD friends or associates.

### 4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012*	2005*
Bishops	1	1	1
Clerics	33	54	55
Brothers (final vows)	2	8	6
Scholastics	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>

## BOT

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012*	2005*
Average age	46.1	44.5	42.6
Nationalities	10	14	15

\* *These statistics include Zambia, which was part of the BOT Province before.*

The province has organized workshops with specialist facilitators in all the *ad intra* areas of *Spirituality, Community, Leadership, Finance, and Formation*; it is an on-going effort. Spiritual renewal in ongoing formation has led us to talk

about it, organize workshops, encourage liturgical participation, yearly provincial common retreats or individual retreats, and renewal courses. The South Africa District's *ad intra* priority is *Community*, given the struggles and challenges of living in international and intercultural communities. We set out to deepen the relationships among confreres in order to enhance intercultural living and mission by having community prayer and meal at least once a day together, celebrating Mass together, having monthly meetings in all communities, celebrating confreres' birthdays, ordination days and feast days, and planning and having community outings.