

## ZAMBIA MISSION

### Zambia and Malawi

Official Language: **English**

#### Vision Statement

*“May the Holy Triune God Live in Our Hearts and the Hearts of All”*

#### Mission Statement

*We the members of the SVD Zambia Mission, as an intercultural religious missionary community, strive to share in the daily dreams and struggles of our people. We embark upon a new chapter of evangelization, engaging in respectful prophetic dialogue with our people, we build faith communities through our four characteristic dimensions: mission animation, biblical apostolate, justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) and communication.*

### 1. Societal Setting

Located in southern Africa, Zambia is a landlocked country. The country was born when the British colony of Rhodesia became the independent nation of Zambia in 1964. After some years of one-party rule, recent elections have been deemed free and fair although the harassment of opposition parties and other political turmoil continues.

The population of Zambia is 17 million, composed of more than 70 Bantu-speaking ethnic groups. Among these, 95.5% are Christians



(Catholics being 20.2%), Muslims 1%, Hindus, Bahai, Buddhists 1.7%, and those who do not have any religious affiliation are 1.8% of the population. The majority of Zambians are subsistence farmers who hold a blend of traditional beliefs and Christianity. The literacy rate is 63% (male 70.9% and female 56%). Some 66% of the population is under the age of 25 years, with a median age of 16.8 years. Life expectancy is 52.7 years.

Zambia had one of the world's fastest growing economies for the ten years up to 2014, with GDP growth averaging roughly 6.7% annually, though growth has slowed in the last few years. Zambia's lack of economic diversification and dependency on copper as its sole major export makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in the world commodities market and prices turned downward in 2015 due to declining demand from China. Zambia was overtaken by the Democratic Republic of Congo as Africa's largest copper producer. Widespread and extreme rural

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poverty and high unemployment levels remain significant problems, with some 60.5% of the population living below the poverty line. It is estimated that HIV/AIDS affects 12.4% of the population.

## 2. Ecclesial Setting

After 120 years of Catholic faith in Zambia, all the 11 dioceses concentrate on primary evangelization. In urban areas, the Church is very active and alive. However, growth is much slower in rural areas. Missionary congregations concentrate on areas such as these.

Faith formation is the aim of the Church in Zambia in both urban and rural areas. Even the older dioceses still concentrate on this area. Faith formation is done at various levels: adults, youth and children. Family and youth need attention in our rural and urban areas due to the evils that have invaded the traditional African society. Lay organizations are very active within the Church. Their participation and activities give life to the Church. Religious materials are hard to find in Zambia. Catholic editions of the Bible are not available.

Zambia is a very fertile place for vocations to religious and priestly life. The number of diocesan priests is very good in some of the dioceses. There are also many religious vocations in Zambia, both male and female. But the missionary participation is crucial to all the dioceses in Zambia.

Zambia, being a poor country, makes the financial viability of the Church a distant dream. The contributions the faithful make is not enough. As a result the Church still depends on foreign donations.

There are many denominations in Zambia. The Catholic Church does collaborate with other denominations' leadership, especially addressing issues that concern the whole nation. In cancelling the international debt, the Catholic Church played a very important role. The interdenominational Church bodies spearhead dialogue among political parties.

## 3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

### Those in Final Vows

| IN ACTIVE MINISTRY             | Personnel | 2018 (%) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Parish</b>                  | 6         | 28.6     |
| <b>Education</b>               | 1         | 4.8      |
| Schools                        | 1         | -        |
| Universities                   | 0         | -        |
| <b>Formation/ SVD Vocation</b> | 2         | 9.5      |
| <b>Administration/ Support</b> | 3         | 14.2     |
| <b>Other Apostolates</b>       | 1         | 4.8      |
| JPIC                           | 0         | -        |
| Bible                          | 0         | -        |
| Communication                  | 0         | -        |
| Mission Animation              | 0         | -        |
| Others                         | 1         | -        |

## Those in Final Vows

| NOT IN MINISTRY     | Personnel | 2018 (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|
| Studies/Orientation | 6         | 28.6     |
| Retired/Sick        | 0         | 0        |
| Others              | 2         | 9.5      |

The most notable event after the last general chapter is the erection of Zambia as a Mission in 2014, separating it from the Botswana province. As SVDs we still focus on primary evangelization in the dioceses where we are already present. Family and youth are areas in need of special attention in all our parishes. We also are focused on enhancing the biblical apostolate and mission animation.

The main ministries of Zambia mission are parish pastoral, formation, education, social and prison. Though these are areas where other religious congregations are also involved, confreres carry out these ministries knowing that it is special to the SVD.

## Characteristic Dimensions

**Biblical Apostolate:** The biblical apostolate is being done in our parishes by training the lay faithful in the Bible. However, it is happening in isolation. The biblical apostolate is a pressing need. There are no centers where special biblical programs are given now. Procuring Bibles is an urgent need too. Catholic Bibles are provided by a printing press in Ndo-

la diocese only. However as Divine Word missionaries, our specific contribution would be providing Bibles and evangelization through a biblical apostolate. Dioceses look to us to help in this matter. Except in our own parishes, so far the SVD has not done anything remarkable in this area. This is a huge possibility. The mission assembly proposed that we begin a more comprehensive biblical apostolate in the Lusaka archdiocese.

**Mission Animation:** In three parishes there are already SVD lay partners established. This is still in its early stages. Vocation and Mission Sundays are celebrated together with the help of the seminarians. This is making an impact in the community about the SVD religious family.

**JPIC:** Deforestation, rampant mining, poor waste management, conservation of water and energy are some of the areas where JPIC is involved. Parishes run by SVDs are spearheading some of these areas with the involvement of the parishioners on the team.

**Communication:** Through different means, the communication coordinator aims to make the SVD known to a wider range of people. A large section of people are users of social media like Facebook and Whatsapp. Efforts are being made to set these up together with a Web page. A newsletter is already in circulation. The challenge is to find the right tools to reach people. Access to the internet is expensive and service is inconsistent compared to other countries.

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## Priorities among Congregational Directions

**Primary and New Evangelization:** In all the parishes and the mission as a whole the thrust has been primary and new evangelization. Regular catechesis, sacraments, workshops and visits to the rural outstations are activities by which the confreres are trying to fulfill this priority. The yearly baptisms, marriages and the growth in the number of Christians are pointers that prove this fact. The lack of personnel and transport facilities has always been a challenge.

**Family and Youth:** This is an area all the parishes are working towards for effective mission. A lot of attention is needed here. These are two institutions that are falling apart due to various bad elements into the traditional African family.

## Collaboration with SSpS and Others

We had hoped to have combined council meetings with the SSpS to plan some programs, but this has not taken place due to problems beyond our control. The SSpS cover three countries as one region while the SVD is only in Zambia. So the combined meetings have not yet been realized. However, we do come together to celebrate family feast. Collaboration with other religious congregations is through participation in the Association of Religious Men Zambia (ARMZ).

## SVD Lay Association

The SVD Lay Association is promoted at the level of our parishes. Three SVD parishes have

already formed a group: St. Charles Lwanga in Chindwin, Kabwe; Holy Family in Linda, Lusaka; and St. Francis in Dambwa, Livingstone. The initiative comes from our confreres themselves. Information is imparted to them about the SVD, and the lay faithful who wish to join the group come together to form this Lay Association. The SVD lay associates in Zambia is still in its infancy and more development has not taken place yet.

## 4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

| MEMBERSHIP            | 2018      |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Clerics               | 19        |
| Brothers (final vows) | 2         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>21</b> |

| AGE AND COUNTRY | 2018 |
|-----------------|------|
| Average age     | 44.1 |
| Nationalities   | 7    |

**Spirituality:** The integral well-being of each confrere is the aim. The communities have managed to gather for regular Bible sharing. Common retreats were planned and most of the confreres participated. An Arnold Janssen spirituality coordinator was appointed. A confrere was sent to Nemi for the renewal course.

**Community Life:** A strong sense of unity and brotherhood in our community is the aim. Two districts were erected. Responsibilities are sha-

red in the community. However, the resolve to have an intercultural competence workshop could not be fulfilled.

**Leadership:** A flexible, collaborative, sustainable leadership model for mission is the aim. Friendly visits of the confreres and an evaluation of the past two years have taken place. Relationships with other religious orders have been kept. Participatory leadership is the model we try to follow. However, we could not have a leadership workshop conducted for confreres. We could not have combined district meetings.

**Finance:** Accounting and reporting have improved. Confreres follow standard book keeping procedures, and accounting and reporting systems. However, we could not put in place a finance com-

mittee. An annual inventory is done only in the SVD institutions. A health care and old age fund has not been created due to the lack of money.

**Formation:** Integral formation is the aim. Our program for initial formation is in two stages, pre-philosophy and philosophy. Every year we are blessed to have some candidates for initial formation. All the areas of their growth are being attended to. A formation manual was completed. There has been planning for formation personnel and their training. However, we could not raise local benefactors for formation. We have not succeeded in organizing a talk by the women's lay group to talk to the formandi so as to ensure their collaboration. We have not managed to make a manual for new arrivals. We have lagged behind organizing ongoing formation.