



October 2019

Missionary Childhood in

South Africa



The Republic of South Africa is the southernmost country in Africa. It is slightly less than twice the size of the state of Texas, making it the 25th largest country by area in the world. With a population of more than 58 million, it is our world's 25th most populous country. There is no designated capital city; each branch of the government is headquartered in a different city.



The beautiful countryside of South Africa

There are eleven official languages in South Africa—two of them, Afrikaans and English—trace their roots back to the colonial period when Dutch and British settlers ruled the country.

About 80% of South Africans are black African. Though the vast majority, they were not allowed to vote and were discriminated against by the white-rule minority government until 1994 under a system called apartheid.

After increasing opposition from not only the majority of South Africans, but also from many countries and world businesses who refused to work with the country, the leader of the African National Congress—Nelson Mandela—was released from 25 years of imprisonment for advocating for rights for all. He went on to become the first black president of South Africa.

The end of apartheid did not end South Africa's problems, however. Unemployment has remained very high, leading to many thousands of protests—some violent. Also, although the government has managed to bring clean water to most citizens, proper sanitation is still not provided for over a third of all South Africans.

The country has a large illegal immigration problem—it is estimated that there are over 5 million people in the country without proper papers. Most live in poverty with little income.

MCA in South Africa

Many problems in South Africa are still divided along racial lines and healthcare is one of them. Because of lack of access to good medical care, the average life expectancy for a white person is 71 years while it is 48 years for a black person. Only about 16% of all people are covered by any kind of health insurance. Most people pay “out of pocket” - meaning they use their own money – or they go without healthcare. According to the Cia World Factbook, South Africa has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate of any country in the world, with about 7.2 million people living with the disease. Again, the racial divide is seen: over 13% of the black population is infected and only about 0.3% of the white population has the virus. It is estimated that there are over 1.2 million AIDS orphans in the country, causing a crisis in healthcare, education, and family life.

Missionary Childhood is active around the country, most especially in rural areas. Many of the outlying dioceses of the country face problems of incomplete infrastructure—some have access to electricity, some to running water, some to working toilets, but many places do not have all three.



This is a very large problem when, due to the AIDS death rate, the person in charge of a household may be a child themselves and not used to dealing with these basic issues of everyday life.

MCA funds clinics, schools, and nursery care for orphans and vulnerable children across

the rural dioceses of South Africa.

During his tenure as the National Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, soon-to-be-beatified Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen visited the missions of South Africa. He is pictured below at an orphanage in Sasolburg, South Africa.



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is the adult version of the Missionary Childhood Association and, like, MCA, is one of our Church's four Pontifical Mission Societies. Archbishop Sheen, who was famous for his award winning Catholic radio and television shows not only called the missions “the greatest love of his life” but through his famous career raised hundreds of millions of dollars for the missions! He also started the World Mission Rosary as a way to pray for people on every populated continent. By doing both, he succeeded in promoting both pillars of the Pontifical Mission Societies: prayer and sacrifice for the missions!

The members of the Missionary Childhood Association are still supporting the children of Sasolburg, South Africa: at last report, you sent \$8,000 to support schools, day care centers, feeding programs, health clinics, and clean water projects.

The children of South Africa sent \$86,438.00 to help their brothers and sisters in the missions.

Missionary Childhood Association

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