

# INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

## TOPIC: Congo & Southern Africa

Where in the world is Congo? What do we mean by Southern Africa?



**Congo**

**Southern Africa:** We've served in each these countries:

Zambia

Zimbabwe

Botswana

South Africa

	Congo	Southern Africa
<b>Date of foundation:</b>	1894 – Request of Jesuits	1899 – Request of Jesuits
<b>Sisters sent from</b>	Belgium (7)	England (5)
<b>Length of Journey</b>	Depart June 6, 1894 & land July 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 15 days up river to Kimwenza, (40 km by rail, 300 km by foot, 70 baggage carriers) <b>43 days</b>	Depart South Hampton May 27, 1899, landed at Cape Town June 20, 1899 (4 days by train to PlumTree, Empaneni 30 km by wagon) <b>28 Days</b>
<b>Language Study</b>	KiKongo – immediately translate materials, books, etc.	Some Sindebele on journey
<b>1<sup>st</sup> works</b>	Care of orphans rescued from slavers, need for nursing immediate & catechetical work	School opens Sept. 4 with 53 children & catechetical work
<b>Additional Sisters</b>	1896 (5)	1903 (3), 1907 (8)
<b>Problems:</b>	Sleeping sickness – estimated it killed 5/6 of population at missions between 1896-1914, a cure found in 1915	2 <sup>nd</sup> Boer War October 1899-May 1902 (conflict between English & people of Dutch decent)

	Impact of slavers on political stability of tribes is huge but no white settlements	Dutch made a permanent settlement at the Cape in 1652	
	British explorer Stanley's expedition to explore Congo River 1874-1877	1805 the British inherit the Cape as a prize during the Napoleonic Wars	
	Dealing with the heat	Dealing with the heat AND cold	
Imposed Government	King Leopold II of Belgium drove the 1884-1885 Berlin West Africa Conference effectively divided up the African continent ... creating artificial state boundaries as well as a colonial system that was in effect for the next sixty years.		
	Private property of King until 1908 – no focus on creating European settlements, so no infrastructure	From 1652: creating permanent European settlements = infrastructure	
	Unwanted colony of Belgium from 1908 to 1960	Union of South Africa 1910, embassy status 1949, Republic of South Africa 1961	1923: Colony of Southern Rhodesia, 1965 unilateral declaration of independence by white government, WAR UNTIL 1979, 1981 Independence & creation of Zimbabwe
Cultural challenges	Racism but not apartheid	Apartheid and racism	Racism but not Apartheid
Apartheid impacts our ability to grow: how can you do formation if whites & blacks can't live together? Financially we lose government income AND lose schools we paid to build. Racism also plays a factor: we are just ready to start a multi-racial novitiate in Zimbabwe in 1965 when the white government unilaterally declares independence and strengthens segregation of races.			
	Vast tribal differences	Tribal divisions (Ndebele & Zulu) & differences (Ndebele & Shona)	
		whites, blacks, colored, Indian	
		What defines indigenous?	
	Maintained cultural identity	Lost cultural identity	
Church/SNDdeNs horrified by many cultural practices			
Relationship to Hierarchy/ Clergy	very collaborative and helpful	Propagation of Faith randomly reassigns men's congregations causing us to lose missions; difficulties with bishops & some priests	
Education	Basic primary and vocational	More unified approach to education	
	Secondary/university as only preparation for priesthood until 1954	1953 Bantu Education Act furthers inequality of resources	Similar to South Africa
	1960: no unified educational system, only 16 university grads out of 13 million; no physicians or engineers	More university graduates in both countries	

### Dates & Events-Congo:

1894: Congo foundation

1909-1910: Critics of King Leopold II treatment of Congo take aim at work of SNDdeN

1915: Cure for sleeping sickness found & 4 missions

1925-1926: decision to help start native congregations at Lemfu & Djumu instead of accepting Congolese postulants (Little Sisters of Our Lady)

1929: 1288 participate in annual mothers retreat (part of work of training of mothers)

1935: SNDdeN mark 10 years of working to educate women in nutrition of mothers/infants and cut infant mortality from 50 to 10%

1936: 3 year normal school to prepare teachers opened at Lemfu

1940: SNDdeN help begin the Sisters of St. Mary of Kisantu; SNDdeN in charge of their formation until 1962

1959: SNDdeN accept 1<sup>st</sup> 4 Congolese Postulants – Independence in 1960 threatens maintaining a presence

1961: During their retreat the Bishop asks Sisters of St. Mary of Kisantu which congregation they want to belong to – 8 choose Notre Dame. This included 5 perpetually professed Sisters who had to start over as postulants.

1967: Sr. Marie Chantal of the General Council visits and pushes Belgians to use KiKongo in community, incorporate native foods at the convent table and really work to adapt to the Congolese culture.

1969: 1<sup>st</sup> American SNDdeN arrive to serve in Congo

1971: All Congolese Sisters of all congregations are asked to adapt the pagne at the request of Cardinal Malula

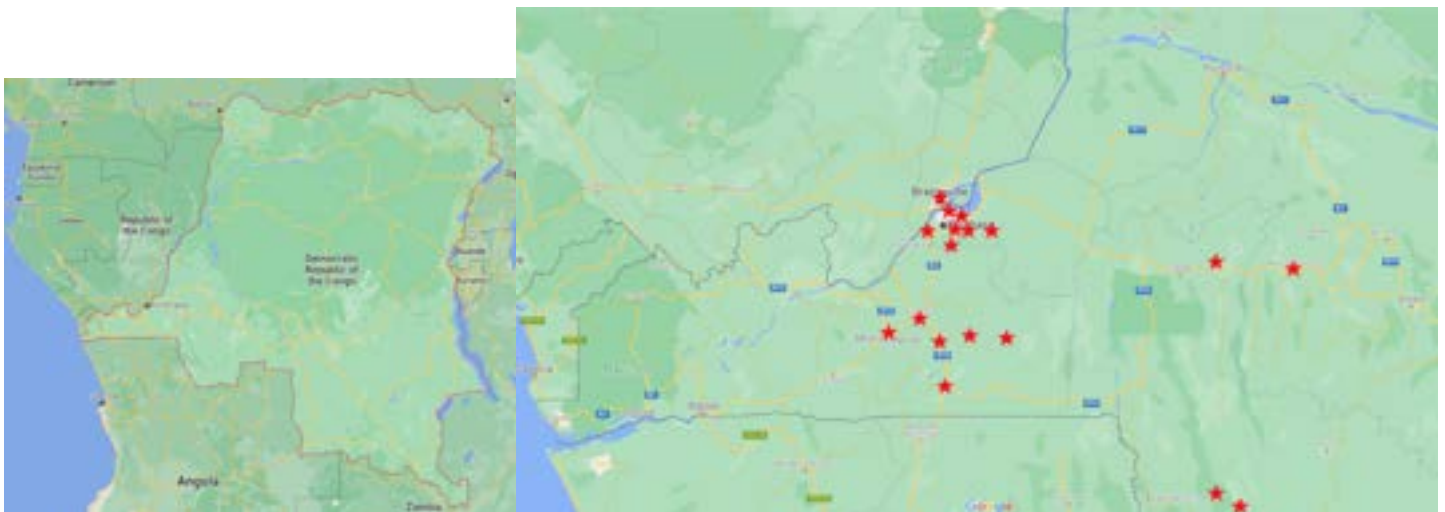
1975: 1<sup>st</sup> Congolese Sister elected vice provincial (Sr. Elizabeth Marie Mbanga) & Congo becomes a province.

1989: mission expands to French Congo (Loutété)

### **Places - Congo:**

Kimwenza 1894	Pelende 1956	Intenga
Ndembo 1896-1900	Nselo 1986	Righini
Kisantu 1900	Loutété – Brazzaville 1989	Thuin, Belgium
Lemfu 1905	Kinshasa	Namur, Belgium
Wombali 1920-1930	Kinsaku	Cuvilly, France
Djuma 1924-1934	Mbanza-Ngunga	Nairobi, Kenya
Ngidinga 1928	Kisenso	Rome, Italy
Beno 1931-1932	Limété	Kroonstad
Mpese 1932	Masanga Mbila	Zimbabwe
Kitenda 1952	Maman Mobutu	

**Kimwenza to Kitenda = 405 miles**



### **Dates & Events-Southern Africa:**

1899: September 4 – school opens at Empandeni w/53 children

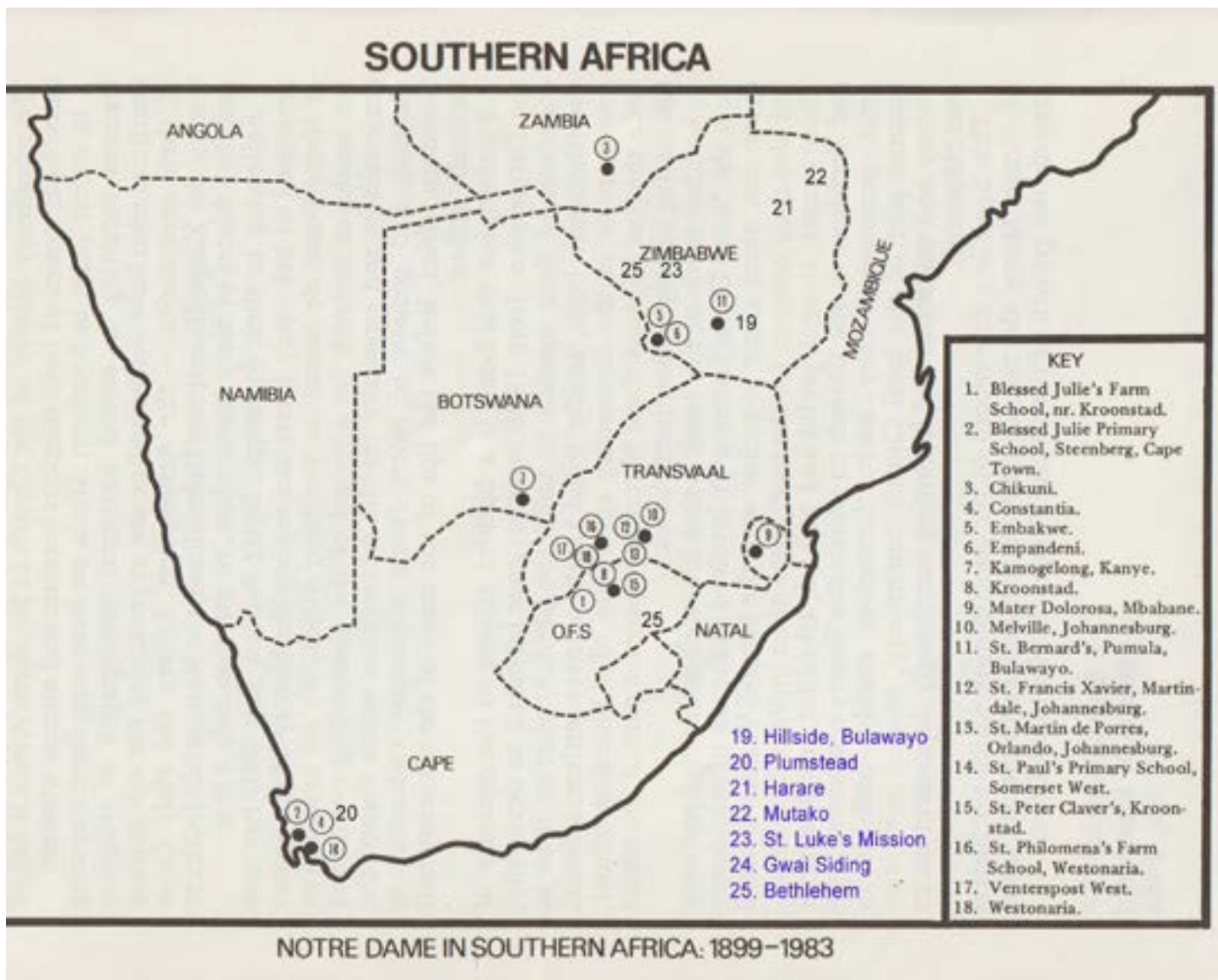
1902: Mère Aimée de Jésus sends Sr. Ann Editha as Visitrix to Southern Africa  
 1903: proposed teacher training college in Johannesburg (Belgravia)  
 1907: Kroonstad  
 1920: Begin work with the Jesuits in Chikuni (Zambia); help begin Little Children of the Virgin Mary religious order at Chikuni  
 1932: Propagation of the faith swap areas for Jesuits and Missionhill Fathers (Jesuits to Mashonaland, Missionhill to Matabeleland) and we lose Empandeni  
 1935: 1<sup>st</sup> white South African goes to England to enter the SNDdeN  
 1953: Novitiate opened at Constantia & 3 postulants accepted  
 1962: Southern Africa made a vice-province; decision to focus on teaching black children in townships  
 1965: St. Bernard's, Pumula, Bulawayo; talk of putting provincial house in Bulawayo and opening a multi-racial novitiate  
 1972: Decision to close last of white-boarding schools and focus on direct service to the poor  
 1975: Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) becomes vice-province)  
 1978: June 2 – Embakwe Mission attacked  
 1980: Begin ministry in Harare  
 1989: Zimbabwe opens formation house  
 2002: ZimSA unit formed  
 2021: Zimbabwe and South Africa become Communities in Mission

#### **Places - Southern Africa:**

Empandeni 1899-1932	Hillside, Bulawayo 1965 (19)
Embakwe 1904 – 1978	Mbabane, Swaziland 1969-1978
Kroonstad 1907-72, 1996 -	Melville, Johannesburg 1975
St. Peter Claver 1916 (in Kroonstad)	Plumstead, South Africa 1965 (20)
Chikuni 1920-48 (in Zambia)	Harare, Zimbabwe 1980 (21)
Martindale 1932-1959	St. Luke's Mission, Lupane, Zimbabwe
Somerset West 1932-1943	1982 (23)
Westonaria 1952-1972	Mutako, Zimbabwe 1983-1988 (22)
Venterspost West 1951-72	Gwaii Siding, Zimbabwe 1990-1994 (24)
Steenburg 1961	Bethlehem 1992- ? (25)
Orlando West, Soweto 1959	
Kanye, Botswana 1974	
Constantia 1949-1975	
St. Bernard's, Pumula, Bulawayo 1965	

**Harare to Cape Town: 1565 miles**

**Harare to Johannesburg: 786 miles**



### Primitive Spirit:

- Devotion to Julie
- Catechetical work more important than schools in the beginning
- Teach them what they need to know for life – including nutrition and basic health care
- Adaptability: every mission in Congo had at least a dispensary as well as a school
- Strong focus on women and children
- Sharing resources: 1962 Ashdown in underwriting Southern Africa with £30,000 annually
- Concerted effort to put the poor 1<sup>st</sup> – not easy when there is no way to fund the work
- Helping other orders get started is a part of what we do
- Formation programs marked by the cross (1<sup>st</sup> Congolese Sisters having to almost become European, barrier after barrier in Southern Africa)
- Equality among the Sisters
- Hearts wide as the world

### Spirituality underpinning everything:

- Great devotion to Mary
- Living the cross (letter from Congo in World War II – is anyone left?)



- Importance of Eucharist everywhere
- Tremendous faith of Sisters, not afraid to be small in number
- Ministry of accompaniment – being with a people when we are powerless to change the reality
- Motivated by the experience of the love and goodness of God
- United across geographic distance in the Heart of God

### **What touched your heart?**

- In spite of the racism, lack of cultural understanding on the part of the ex-patriots, the charism called and united
- Devotion of the people to the Sisters, loyalty of the Alum
- Balance of Sisters' work in Congo from the beginning – focus on the whole person, so of course health care was included
- The wrenching of relationships when we were pulled out of places in Southern Africa (Sisters we worked with in Chikuni leave for novitiate, come back and we are gone but they keep the spirit of Julie alive among them)
- The wonderful impact of the work of our Sisters (one example: Kroonstad – 3 Catholics when Sisters arrive, 10,000 in area when new school building for St. Peter Claver is dedicated in 1916)
- Surviving through wars, fires, floods, sickness, political battles.....
- It is Africa where we've perhaps come closest to truly developing international communities

### **Some additional resources:**

- <http://ultimatehistoryproject.com/belgian-congo.html>
- <https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/wisep-news/how-belgium-cut-off-hands-and-arms-and-killed-over-15-million-in-africa/>
- <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/zimbabwe>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094918>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Boer\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Boer_War)
- [https://web.stanford.edu/~jbaugh/saw/Lizet\\_Education\\_Inequity.html](https://web.stanford.edu/~jbaugh/saw/Lizet_Education_Inequity.html) (education in South Africa – check out link to timeline)