



# Namibia

## Republic of Namibia

### Africa

### Geography

**Area** 823,144 sq km. Predominantly arid, semi-desert; the driest African land south of the equator.

| Population | Ann Gr    | Density |
|------------|-----------|---------|
| 2010       | 2,212,037 | 1.94%   |
| 2020       | 2,614,338 | 1.62%   |
| 2030       | 2,993,057 | 1.27%   |

Most people live on the central plateau and the better-watered northern border regions adjoining Angola.

**Capital** Windhoek 354,000. **Urbanites** 38%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 37%. **Life expectancy** 60.4 yrs.

### Peoples

Five major groupings and 28 languages.

**Bantu** 69.8%. Dominated by Ovambo grouping of peoples in the north. Ovambo 43% (Ndonga 22.8%; Kwanyama 14.0%; Ngangela 3.5%; Kwambi 1.5%); Kwangali 7.9%; Herero 7.6%; Lozi 2.3%; Chickwahane 1.5%.

**Khoisan** 8.9%. Khoi and San are separate groups. Nama (4.8%) is the largest Khoi group.

**European** 8.5%. Afrikaner 7.3%.

**Mixed Race** 12.8%. Afrikaans-speaking. Coloured 9.0%; "Baster" 1.1%.

**Literacy** 85.0%. **Official language** English, though few speak it; most speak Afrikaans. **All languages** 37. **Indigenous languages** 28. **Languages with Scriptures** 9Bi 4NT 6por.

### Economy

Mining diamonds, uranium and many other minerals, cattle ranching, fishing and increasingly tourism are important. Many still live in deep poverty.

**HDI Rank** 128<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 20% of GDP.

**Income/person** \$4,278 (9% of USA), but a large gap between rich and poor.

### Politics

A German colony from 1883-1915. Ruled by South Africa 1915-1990. Independence gained in 1990 after a long, costly war that severely disrupted the social and economic fabric of the country. The major party, SWAPO, renounced Marxism and espoused multiparty democracy. The longstanding president handed over power to a protégé in 2005. A member of the British Commonwealth.

### Religion

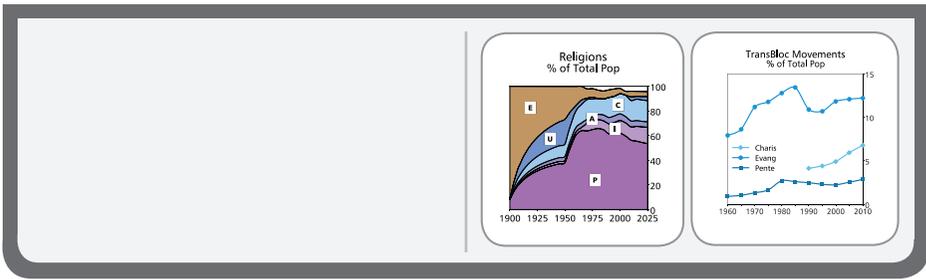
Secular state with freedom of religion.

| Religions        | Pop % | Population | Ann Gr |
|------------------|-------|------------|--------|
| Christian        | 91.44 | 2,022,687  | 1.7%   |
| Ethnoreligionist | 4.52  | 99,984     | 9.4%   |
| Non-religious    | 4.00  | 88,481     | 1.9%   |
| Jewish           | 0.04  | 885        | -2.5%  |

| Christians               | Denoms | Pop % | Affiliates | Ann Gr |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|------------|--------|
| Protestant               | 41     | 60.64 | 1,341,000  | 1.2%   |
| Independent              | 128    | 11.59 | 256,000    | 2.6%   |
| Anglican                 | 1      | 5.20  | 115,000    | 1.3%   |
| Catholic                 | 1      | 17.86 | 395,000    | 1.4%   |
| Marginal                 | 2      | 0.19  | 4,000      | 4.2%   |
| Unaffiliated             |        | 3.30  | 73,000     | 0.0%   |
| <i>Doubly affiliated</i> |        | -7.32 | -162,000   | 0.0%   |

| Churches                     | MegaBloc | Congs        | Members        | Affiliates       |
|------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Evang Luth Church            | P        | 330          | 264,000        | 660,000          |
| Catholic Church              | C        | 103          | 236,527        | 395,000          |
| Ev Luth Ch in Rep of N       | P        | 70           | 158,333        | 380,000          |
| Anglican Church              | A        | 177          | 23,000         | 115,000          |
| Evang Ref Ch in Afr          | P        | 119          | 37,107         | 59,000           |
| Uniting Ref Ch of SA         | P        | 140          | 28,750         | 57,500           |
| Protestant Unity Ch          | I        | 225          | 22,455         | 37,500           |
| Seventh-day Adventist        | P        | 65           | 18,000         | 32,000           |
| Full Gospel Ch of God        | P        | 105          | 12,800         | 25,600           |
| Ovamboland Anglican Ch       | I        | 75           | 11,261         | 25,000           |
| Dutch Reformed Ch            | P        | 47           | 16,300         | 24,600           |
| Rhenish Ch in Namibia        | P        | 14           | 9,600          | 19,200           |
| Evangelical Bible Ch         | P        | 18           | 6,700          | 13,400           |
| AoG (Back to God)            | I        | 63           | 6,930          | 12,474           |
| African Meth Epis Ch         | I        | 44           | 3,498          | 10,600           |
| Other denominations[157]     |          | 1,165        | 131,811        | 244,969          |
| <i>Doubly affiliated</i>     |          |              |                | -162,000         |
| <b>Total Christians[173]</b> |          | <b>2,760</b> | <b>987,072</b> | <b>1,949,843</b> |

| TransBloc           | Pop % | Population | Ann Gr |
|---------------------|-------|------------|--------|
| <b>Evangelicals</b> |       |            |        |
| Evangelicals        | 12.2  | 270,326    | 2.2%   |
| <b>Renewalists</b>  |       |            |        |
| Charismatics        | 6.8   | 150,207    | 4.7%   |
| Pentecostals        | 2.9   | 63,224     | 4.4%   |



## Answers to Prayer

**1 Stability and some economic progress** marked the post-independence 1990s, despite the fears of many of ethnic strife and economic collapse. The scars of the colonial and apartheid past are gradually healing. There was much united prayer by Christians at the time. There is a significant national prayer movement.

## Challenges for Prayer

**1 Namibia is a stable country** rich in natural resources, but there is significant risk of strife and collapse if able governance and communal harmony do not prevail. Pray that the nation's leaders would address the issues of poverty, land ownership and AIDS with wisdom and determination.

**2 German and Finnish Lutheran and then Anglican missionaries** gave birth to large denominations in the 19th Century. Liberal theology and syncretistic Afro-Spiritism eroded that spiritual heritage, and now many self-styled Christians are either nominal or incorporate unbiblical practices into their faith. Reformation is greatly needed, but first there needs to be an opening of hearts to the Spirit. Pray for a biblical faith to be restored throughout Namibia's many churches.

**3 New life in the churches** has come recently through new mission activity by **SIM/AIM, YWAM** as well as Reformed, Baptist and Pentecostal groups, particularly to under-reached areas and peoples. Charismatic fellowships – both independent and within many denominations, including the mainline groups – bring new life and fervour. Several strategic groups formed to see Namibia transformed for Christ, the Evangelical Fellowship most notable among these. Pray for all to hear the gospel once again and many to turn back to Christ, and pray for unity and cooperation among all groups seeking to uplift Christ in this nation.

**4 Spiritual leaders.** Pray for current and future pastors and leaders to be trained and formed to God's standards. Crucial to biblical formation are Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary in Windhoek (**SIM/AIM, NGK**), the Namibia Ministry Training Institute (Pentecostal) and **YWAM's** training bases. TEE plays an important role, especially in the north, through the NETS distance education programme. Pray also that the mainline training institutes would capture a love and respect for God's Word.

**5 Major social issues loom ominously** over Namibia's future. Averting disaster requires appropriate government action, but more so a mobilization of the Church.

**a) Poverty.** A dangerous gap separates the rich and poor. Over 35% are unemployed. Ovamboland in the north is most acutely affected. Migration to the cities to find work creates shantytowns.

**b) AIDS.** Namibia has the fourth highest infection rate in the world. This prevalence (25% of adults and young people) and ineffective government programmes create a major crisis as life expectancy plummets. The Caprivi Strip records a staggering 43% adult infection rate. SU addresses this through their Aid for AIDS programme, and many churches and missions are finally making this tragedy a ministry priority.

**c) Reconciliation.** Namibia's colonial past under German and then South African rule, the legacy of apartheid and the Cold War-fuelled fighting and terrorism before independence have left many

scars. Some good progress is being made in the area of reconciliation; pray that in Christ both perpetrators and victims might find forgiveness and peace.

**6 Missions are experiencing a time of growth** as the need to re-reach many peoples in Namibia becomes apparent. Pray that they would minister in the power of the gospel, but also with sensitivity. Major missions are: **AIM, YWAM, AoG, SIM**.

**7 The less-evangelized peoples.** Pray for:

- a) **The San** (Bushmen) cluster of peoples – much romanticized but in reality a suffering people. Their traditional way of life is threatened by cattle ranching, mining and conservation efforts, not to mention the havoc wrought by sedentary vices. The NGK and Pentecostal Assemblies work among them, yet the San have barely been touched by the gospel; their animistic faith and semi-nomadic lifestyle require a very special kind of outreach.
- b) **The peoples of the Kavango and Caprivi Strip** in the northeast – the Mbukushu, Wayeyi, Gckiruku and Fwe. Many are animists. **AIM/SIM** planted several churches among them. A number of Adventists are among them as well.
- c) **The Himba** (5,000) and **Dhimba** (15,000) are offshoots of the Herero people in the barren northeast and in southwest Angola. Nearly all are animist, though a few are Lutheran and Reformed Christians. Bible translation into Dhimba is nearly completed, along with Scripture songs in traditional Dhimba forms.

**8 Christian help ministries.** Pray for these:

- a) **Bible translation.** All the major languages have full Bibles. The Namibia Bible Society and Lutheran Bible Translators are involved in revisions of several of these, including Dhimba, Damara/ Nama, Ju/'huan and Kwanayama. A Bible in the Hands of Every Namibian is a major project for the Society.
- b) **Christian literature** for local languages and away from main centres is scarce. The Bible Society's mobile Bible shop, a specially equipped van with literature and media resources, is a big boost to getting materials into the hands of Namibians. **SU** and **YWAM** have bookstores.
- c) **The JESUS film** soundtrack has been prepared by Media for Christ in several Namibian languages with more in preparation. Pray for lasting results from the showing of this film.
- d) **Christian radio.** Radio teaching on national networks has a wonderful impact in strengthening biblical faith in the nation (especially within mainline churches) as well as in effectively reaching resistant peoples. Evangelical presence in mainstream radio and TV is decreasing, but Media for Christ runs a station with many other effective, related ministries. Pray for continued impact on the nation through Christian media.