



# Afghanistan

Islamic Republic  
of Afghanistan

Asia

## Geography

**Area** 652,225 sq km. Dry and mountainous but with fertile valleys. This strategic land has been fought over by rival foreign empires for nearly three thousand years.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	29,117,489	3.51%
2020	39,584,751	2.94%
2030	50,648,930	2.41%

No comprehensive census or careful ethnic survey has been made for decades; a census is planned for 2010. Due to years of conflict, Afghan refugees are approximately 2 million in Iran, 2 million in Pakistan and smaller numbers around the world. As many as 4.5 million have returned to Afghanistan since 2001.

**Capital** Kabul 3,731,312. The civil war extensively damaged the capital and many villages. Significant reconstruction has been done in the capital. **Other cities** Kandahar 475,000; Mazar-e-Sharif 336,000. **Urbanites** 24.8%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 46%. **Life expectancy** 43.6 yrs.

## Peoples

**Iranian-Median** 76.2%. 31 peoples. Largest: Pashtun (Pathan) 42.7%; Tajik 26.2%; Aimaq(6) 5.0%; Baloch 1.2%. **Turkic** 21.5%. 9 peoples. Hazara 12.9%; Uzbek 6.4%; Turkmen 2.1%. **South Asian** 2.1%. 28 peoples, all smaller in numbers. Brahui 0.8%.

**Other** 0.2%.

These numbers do not include the large number of military personnel nor the expatriate NGO workers in the country.

**Literacy** 28.1% (around 15% for women). **Official languages** Pashtu (used by 50% of population), Dari (Afghan Persian, used by 70%). **All languages** 41. **Indigenous**

languages 38. Languages with Scriptures 1Bi 1NT 7por.

## Economy

Shattered by decades of war. The countryside was bombed and still contains over 1 million landmines and other undetonated ordnances. The ongoing conflict destroyed much of the infrastructure, including housing and irrigation; rebuilding infrastructure and developing public sector buildings are focal points of redevelopment. Extensive gas and mineral deposits offer potentially lucrative exports. Investment of extensive foreign aid and millions of former refugees returning have generated an influx of funds and entrepreneurial initiative. The conflict with armed opposition groups, including the Taliban, continues to stunt recovery and growth. Despite efforts to eradicate its cultivation, as much as one-third of the nation's GDP has come from the production of opium, although this is decreasing.

**HDI Rank** 181<sup>st</sup>/182. **Public debt** 76% of GDP. **Income/person** \$416 (1% of USA).

## Politics

The monarchy was overthrown in 1973. The republican government ended in a Marxist coup in 1978. Then followed an invasion by the USSR. Ten years of war ensued, culminating in the withdrawal of the Soviet forces in 1988-89. Civil war among ethnic, political and religious factions continued, with enormous damage and large numbers of casualties. The extreme Islamist (mainly) Pashtun Taliban gained control of over 90% of the country by 2001. The post-9/11 invasion by US-led forces allied with anti-Taliban Afghan factions has attempted to oust Al Qaeda and the Taliban. A new democratic government structure and a new constitution were established 2002-2004. Despite the increasing presence of NATO troops, the Taliban continue to operate and resist the foreign military presence. The re-election of the president in 2009 was widely recognized as tainted; Afghanistan still struggles with corruption.

## Religion

The Taliban's takeover of the country imposed a deviant expression of strict Wahhabist Islam, particularly devastating for the lot of women in society. Since the entry of foreign military forces and the establishment of the Loya Jirga, the acceptable interpretations of Islam have been less strict, and while there is limited freedom to practice other religions (such as Shi'a Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism), there appears to be no freedom to propagate another faith or to convert from Islam. Shi'a Muslims are 20% of the population.

→ Noah



Afghanistan, p. 2 of 2 → Noah

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Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	99.85	29,074,395	3.5%
Non-religious	0.07	20,382	15.8%
Christian	0.05	<15,000	14.6%
Hindu	0.01	<3,000	3.5%
Other	0.01	<3,000	-9.9%
Sikh	0.01	<2,500	1.1%

The "high" number of Christians is due to the increased population of resident foreigners. Foreign military have not been counted.

## Answers to Prayer

- 1 **The ousting of the Taliban** from power by the alliance of US-led Western troops and Afghan warlords opposed to the Taliban has come at a great cost. Following the overthrow of the Taliban, the Afghan people, particularly women, have gained new freedoms and opportunities. These still occur largely within and are limited by the framework of traditional Afghan culture.
- 2 **The increase of Afghan believers** is impossible to document, yet undeniable. At least several hundred Afghans now follow Christ, when 20 years ago perhaps a few dozen were believers.
- 3 **Christian media** have been developed in many formats – audio/MP3, mobile phone memory, radio, video, literature and the Internet – for evangelism and discipleship. This is an area of real growth and excitement.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **The present political situation** – a foreign military working with a national government that is trying to be both progressive and conservative – is far from ideal, but it is an improvement from the tyranny of the Taliban. The Taliban imposed a harsh brand of Islam on the nation and continue to be a threat to national stability and security. The power of the warlords and tribal leaders is greater than that of the government forces or the US military; currently, most of them side with the NATO/Loya Jirga entente. Pray that the Afghan government might serve and govern with humility and wisdom. Pray that the people of Afghanistan may experience genuine freedom and an improved quality of life. Pray also that attempts by insurgents and warlords to destabilize the country might be thwarted and that a settlement might be negotiated.
- 2 **The upheaval of the last 30 years** reduced the country to ruin and destitution. The Soviets (1979-89), the Mujahedeen (1992-96) and the Taliban (1996-2001) all perpetrated different problems and failed to build up the nation. Over one million died and an estimated four million children were orphaned. Though the country still suffers from conflict, progress has been made in those areas where there is peace. The suffering takes many forms; Afghans perceive poverty and lack of security to be the greatest problems. Pray for practical, timely and sustainable solutions to each of these:
  - a) **Continued threat of violence.** The Taliban are very active and often operate from civilian buildings or in civilian guise. Hundreds of thousands of land mines and other undetonated ordnance still litter the country.
  - b) **Health risks.** Afghanistan is the world's most dangerous place for a child to be born. Infant mortality rate is among the world's highest. Many causes of death are preventable (diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery and pneumonia), but lack of health care and clean water (78% do not have regular access to clean water) causes many deaths. Refusal to allow women to receive medical care from men causes high maternal mortality rates.
  - c) **The disabled.** There are an estimated one million people suffering with disabilities, mostly with damaged or destroyed limbs as a result of war. In remote areas, many are still being injured by landmines. This is one of the world's highest proportions of disabled people, in a nation with little provision for their care or rehabilitation.

- d) **Poverty and living standards.** Most Afghans live in poverty. Many who fight for the Taliban do so largely to escape poverty. The population seeks to exist by subsistence farming, but since almost all irrigation was destroyed by war, they lack electricity. Yet employment opportunities are increasing in the stable areas.
- e) **Drugs** are a scourge on the nation, and indeed the world's opium-producing poppies.
  - i **Poppy cultivation** has long been the main internal source of income for the GDP (a proportion now greatly reduced due to the Taliban). Failure to harvest heavily financed the Taliban. Failure to improve impoverished farmers to continue, despite its prefeasibility of alternative agricultural projects.
  - ii **Heroin and opium addicts** abound in Afghanistan. Every year, more Westerners and Russians die from drug-related fatalities during all the years of Soviet and Taliban rule.
- 3 **Recovery and rebuilding** are occurring in the north, but there is a real mix of optimism and pessimism as to what can be made. Pray for the following issues:
  - a) **Billions of dollars in foreign aid** are being poured into the country. NATO countries, China and India. Over 1,500 NGOs are active. Inefficiency and corruption are very real threats. Tighter government regulations has forced NGOs to be more transparent in their funds and activities.
  - b) **A new generation of Afghans with a different attitude** are reaching the age of 20 and have known nothing but war; the employment and some freedom of choice. Up to the task of rebuilding the country when it was under Taliban control. Pray for international connections and an entrepreneurial spirit.
  - c) **National security.** Establishing well-trained, disciplined forces is vital. These institutions must build a reserve of loyalty and be immune to corruption and infiltration by Taliban sympathizers.
  - d) **Physical infrastructure** was devastated by nearly 30 years of war. Medical facilities, schools and other public service buildings need to be rebuilt.
  - e) **Human development** is equally vital. The infant mortality rate is dropping rapidly as health services improve. A record number of micro-enterprise initiatives are giving many opportunities for respectable living and provide for others.
  - f) **Christian involvement** in aid and development. Since the Taliban, development agencies have ministered to the blind, the lame, the deaf, in the name and Spirit of the Lord Jesus. Many Christians are working to serve the people of Afghanistan. Pray that their love and service will impress many Afghans, breaking down prejudice and fear. In addition to the tragedies of lives lost, enforced reduction of entire organizations from the country caused a great loss of both courage in the face of adversity and wisdom to the Afghan people.
- 4 **Afghanistan is one of the least reached countries in the world.** There are many mosques but not a single church building. Pray for the following groups:
  - a) **Pashtuns.** They number over 40% of the Afghan population. They live on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The largest Muslim tribal society in the world – as many as 200 sub-tribes. Christians among them remain few, but some have shown some response. Pray that multitudes may be reached.



China, p. 1 of 3 → Gabe



# China

## People's Republic of China

### Asia

(See p252 for Hong Kong, p256 for Macau, and p258 for Taiwan.)

## Geography

**Area** 9,573,000 sq km. The third-largest state in the world, also containing the highest mountains and plateaus in the world. The climate and geography are extremely diverse, ranging from tropical in the south to sub-arctic in the north, from a highly industrialized and modern eastern seaboard to sparsely populated western deserts and mountain ranges. Hong Kong and Macau are integral parts of China, though their statistics are not included here; Taiwan's status is debated. These three are handled separately.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 1,330,584,783	0.63%	139/sq km
2020 1,406,717,659	0.50%	147/sq km
2030 1,437,790,295	0.13%	150/sq km

**Capital** Beijing (Peking) 12,385,263. **Other major cities** Shanghai 16.6 million; Chongqing 9.4m; Tianjin 7.9m. 111 cities or conurbations of over 1m inhabitants (included by province below). **Urbanites** 44.9% (unofficially considerably higher). **Pop under 15 yrs** 20%. **Life expectancy** 72.9 yrs.

## Peoples

There are close to 500 indigenous, distinct ethnic groups, but 55 "nationalities" officially recognized for administrative convenience. Over many centuries of regional domination, the Han peoples have assimilated dozens, if not hundreds, of other ethnicities.

**East Asian** 93.1%. 73 peoples.

Chinese 89.8%, 41 peoples. Mandarin Han 60.1%; Wu Han 6.7%; Cantonese Han 4.8%; Jin Han 4.5%; Gan Han 4%; Xiang Han 2.8%; Min Nan Han 2.6%; Hakka 2.6%; Min Dong Han 0.7%; Hainanese Han 0.4%; Dan

Han 0.4%; Min Zhong Han 0.2%; Puxian Han 0.2%; Subei 0.2%; Min Bei Han 0.2%; Pinghua Han 0.2%. Chinese-Hui 1.3%. 4 peoples. Hui 1.0%; Huizhou 0.4%.

**Manchu** 1.0%.

**Mongolian** 0.7%. 19 peoples. Mongol 0.5%.

**Other East Asian** 0.3%. Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese.

**Southeast Asian** 3.3%. 167 peoples in southern provinces.

**Zhuang** 1.2%. 24 peoples. Central Hongshuihe 0.2%; Eastern Hongshuihe 0.2%.

**Miao/Hmong** 0.7%. 47 peoples.

**Tai** 0.5%. 28 peoples. Southern Dong 0.2%.

**Yao-Mien** 0.4%. 29 peoples.

**Bouyei** 0.2%. 5 peoples.

**Other Southeast Asian** 0.3%. Li, Mon-Khmer, Shan, Vietnamese people clusters.

**Tibetan/Himalayan** 2.5%. 238 peoples in western and southwestern provinces.

**Nosu** 0.2%. 7 peoples.

**Tibetan** 0.5%. 65 peoples.

**West China/Yi** 1.6%. 137 peoples. Tujia 0.7%; Bai 0.2%.

**Other Tibetan/Himalayan** 0.2%.

**Turkic** 1.0%. 26 peoples in northwest. Uyghur 0.8%.

**Other** 0.1%. Western, Iranian-Median, Malay peoples, African, Arab, Jews.

**Literacy** 91%. **Official language** Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese); local languages in the five Autonomous Regions. 15 regional mega-languages. There are an estimated 600 different spoken Han dialects, but one written language common to all. **All languages** 296. **Languages with Scriptures** 24Bi 16NT 27por.

## Economy

The application of Maoist/Marxist economics from 1948 onward was a disaster, most pronounced during the Great Leap Forward and then the Cultural Revolution. Since 1978, pragmatists have exerted increasing influence on economic policy – reflected in the degree of liberalization applied to agriculture but even more so to industry and business. The result is "Chinese socialism", a form of socialized market economy. The last three decades of centrally managed change and growth have greatly raised China's living standards. The greatest growth has been in the coastal region and a few larger inland cities. After two centuries of eclipse, the nation's economic might is once again global, with China now the world's third-largest economy. It is also the world's largest holder of foreign exchange reserves; its role in global finance will be profound, and its economic policies will shape the world in the 21st Century. Quite apart from the tensions between centralized control and privatization, managing growth into the future will face monumental challenges. The huge amounts of natural resources required to maintain – never mind expand – such a massive economy have forced China to increasingly engage with other

resource-rich nations, especially in the developing Global South. Impending crises loom in the areas of environmental degradation, healthcare, pensions, privacy, property ownership and unsustainable growth and consumption. Corruption, scandal, unethical business practices and illegal economic activity (such as human and drug trafficking) sadly abound, and China's human rights record abroad does it no favours. Massive urbanization and soaring social problems such as internal migration, family breakdown, suicide, divorce and unbalanced male-female ratios all add fuel to the potential fire. Nevertheless, managing the stability of a country of over 1.3 billion and lifting an unprecedented number of people out of poverty are themselves remarkable and unparalleled achievements.

**HDI Rank** 92<sup>nd</sup>/182. **Public debt** 15.6% of GDP. **Income/person** \$3,259 (7% of USA).

## Politics

This great and ancient nation has regained its place of importance in the world after nearly two centuries of decline and humiliation at the hands of Western powers and Japan. After the final conquest of mainland China in 1949, the Communist Party remoulded the nation along Marxist lines. The Cultural Revolution (1966-76) was the culmination of Mao Zedong's policy and caused great suffering. It is estimated that 20 million Chinese lost their lives during that time. Mao's death in 1976 was followed by a more pragmatic leadership under Deng Xiaoping. He initiated a series of carefully controlled economic, political and cultural reforms, but the crushing of the 1989 student protest in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and the collapse of Communism in Europe and the USSR left China diplomatically isolated. It responded by reverting to ideological rigidity and by increasing crackdowns on political, ethnic and religious dissent. From the 1990s onward, other extensive reforms have occurred, but still with tight state control over most sectors of life and society. Repression of minorities and dissidents, systemic violations of the rights to privacy and expression and a harsh penal code continue to plague China's political profile. China faces notable political challenges at home and abroad, with current ethnic and diplomatic tensions (Uyghurs, Tibetans, Taiwanese) as well as inevitable pressures and expectations as it emerges into the role of a world superpower. The social ills facing China are many, but an emerging civil sector, including both private and government-owned aid and development groups, will go a long way toward assisting the struggles.

## Religion

Suppression and strict administrative control of religious groups characterize the years under the Communist regime; the government continues to strictly control the five officially recognized

religious groups: Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism. The government also controls the activities of religious groups, and the religious freedom of citizens is restricted. The government also controls the activities of religious groups, and the religious freedom of citizens is restricted. The government also controls the activities of religious groups, and the religious freedom of citizens is restricted.

**Religion**  
Non-religious 49.5%  
Chinese Buddhism 18.2%  
Christianity 3.1%  
Ethnic religions 1.5%  
Muslim 0.8%  
Other 2.9%  
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HDI Rank 92<sup>nd</sup>/182 Public debt 15.6% of GDP. Income/person \$3,259 (7% of USA).

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## Religion

Suppression and strict administrative control of religious groups characterize the years under the Communist regime; the government continues to strictly control the five officially recognized

religious groups (Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestant, Catholic) through a state-monitored patriotic association for each – including the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) among Protestants and the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) among Catholics. During the Cultural Revolution, even these acquiescent structures were banned and all religious activity was forced underground, giving birth to the house church movement. In 1978, restrictions were eased and the TSPM and CPA resurrected as a means of regaining governmental influence over religious expression. By this point, however, the momentum of growth among unregistered churches was too strong to rein in; further persecution seemed to only encourage further growth, despite horrendous cruelties inflicted on many thousands of church leaders. More Christians are detained in China than in any other country, but many regard the persecution of house churches as an issue of political control rather than of religious freedom. The 21st Century sees signs of relative easing of persecution and pressure on most religious groups. Some say with cautious optimism that this is the beginning of real openness by the Party to grant true religious freedom and to utilize religious faith as a means to combat corruption, instill positive morals and cope with China’s increasingly materialistic society, which is emerging with little by way of moral framework. The state recently recognized that there are over 300 million religious believers and over 50 million Christians in unregistered church networks. The traditional beliefs of the Chinese and many minorities are a blend of folk religions, Daoism and Buddhism. Buddhists are of three major strands: Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, among Chinese and southern peoples such as Dai, Zhuang and others, and Lamaistic Buddhism among Tibetan and Mongolian peoples of the west and north. Islam is dominant in Xinjiang and Ningxia and is the major religion of the Hui, Uyghur, Dongxiang and other Turkic peoples. There are no confirmed numbers for religious/Christian data apart from the state-controlled structures of the TSPM and CPA; all others are estimates.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Non-religious	44.36	590,247,410	0.2%
Chinese	28.50	379,216,663	-0.1%
Buddhist	12.50	166,323,098	2.5%
Christian	7.92	105,382,315	2.7%
Ethnoreligionist	4.55	60,541,608	1.1%
Muslim	1.87	24,881,935	0.3%
Other	0.30	3,991,754	4.4%

The historic hostility of the government toward any religious expression, and the fact that normative practice of religion has been private/secret, mean that exact statistics for religions do not exist. These are estimates based on government information and the work of China-focused researchers.



China, p.3 of 3 → Gabe

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	1	2.24	29,846,000	2.2%
Independent	680	4.12	54,833,000	3.0%
Catholic	2	1.60	21,295,000	2.7%
Orthodox	2	<0.01	17,000	5.5%
Marginal	21	0.23	3,053,000	3.7%
Doubly affiliated		-0.27	-3,600,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
House Church Networks	1	997,333	34,906,667	52,360,000
TSPM/CCC	P	60,910	21,318,571	29,846,000
Roman Catholic Ch	C	36,821	9,573,427	13,690,000
Cath Patriotic Assoc	C	6,560	5,805,344	7,605,000
Ethnic minority chs	I	10,991	1,648,667	2,473,000
Orthodox Ch of China	O	94	9,444	17,000
Other denominations[25]		6,365	1,907,950	3,052,550
Doubly affiliated				-3,600,000

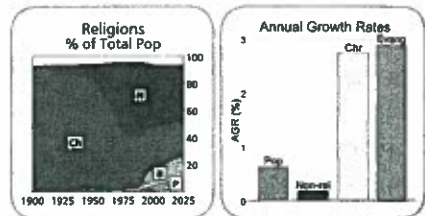
**Total Christians[706]** 1,119,074 75,170,070 105,443,550  
Official statistics exist only for the TSPM and CPA (who deliberately underreport and do not count children or unbaptized non-members). Estimates given by various official and house-church network leaders are used here. As the government becomes more accepting and transparent regarding the existence and scale of the unregistered

house church networks, a number of China-watchers who attempt to enumerate Christians find their respective estimates growing increasingly closer to one another.

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals	5.7	75,399,270	2.9%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	2.1	28,240,180	4.5%

#### Missionaries from China

P.I.A 120,000 long-term: 118,000 in China, 20,000 cross-cultural.



## Answers to Prayer

- The survival and growth of the Church in China** are two of the decisive events of our generation. The staggering recent growth of the Chinese Church has no parallel in history – from 2.7 million evangelicals in 1975 to over 75 million in 2010. Much growth is among the majority Han Chinese, with some growth among minority groups. A few groups with no known believers among them in the late 1990s now have networks of growing house churches.
- The faith and commitment of Christians** under what may have been the harshest and most widespread persecution of the Church in all history. Persecution and suffering refined the Church and shaped it to withstand successive waves of repression and government efforts to weaken or destroy it. God, powerfully working through the unwitting atheist rulers of China, cleared spiritual roadblocks for the advancement of Christianity through Mao Zedong; freed up the economy and gave more freedom to Christians through Deng; and, through Hu Jintao, God guided China to new levels of interconnectedness with the rest of the world, strengthening the link between the Chinese Church and the worldwide body of Christ.
- Christians are now found in every stratum of Chinese society.** The emergence of vibrant urban professional churches – a third expression of faith distinct from the official churches and traditionally rural house churches – marks a turning point for Christianity in China. Tragedies such as the Tiananmen Square (1989) massacre and the handling of the SARS epidemic (2002) spurred many to seek answers to difficult life questions. Corruption within the government and society has further disillusioned people. One result of such ideological disillusionment – together with rising distaste for crass materialism – has been a significant turning to God for the first time among urban professionals and rural and minority populations.
- Christians are engaging in social causes** and impacting the lives of millions. With social programmes once provided solely by the government but now often absent in a privatizing economy, the Church offers a platform to address these needs. Some faith groups form NGOs or serve communities in a less structured manner. The gospel confers strength in Jesus to face life's challenges and to demonstrate love for others in Christ-like service.
- The government's changing attitude and approach toward the Church,** particularly the unregistered Church. While substantial opposition and persecution remain,

the Chinese government now, for the first time, recognizes as being at least 50 million and is making overtures of size and influence that it can no longer be ignored. Christian faith-based organizations' potential for addressing

**6 Welcome changes in government and** peaceful transition of power (this time to Hu Jintao) in pursuit of a socio-economically ideal "harmonious society" and graft in politics and a shift toward more transparent handling of H1N1 after the ill-advised response to the civil sector is being allowed to flourish and may usher the people rather than being imposed upon them.

**7 There is a growing unity within the Church** – strengthened through the joint response to the devastating 2008 Sichuan and 2009 passion extended by Christian relief workers were. This opportunity to serve together marked a turning point, a new era for both the Church's fundamental unity

**8 Missions vision in the Church** – to unreached and neglected nations beyond – is flourishing.

**9 Praise God for the growth of Christianity** – the Word of God and Christian teaching. The remarkable faith of those who had broadcast into China a response are now plain to see. The Internet is also sharing the gospel, for discipling and for community. Most astonishing is the emergence of Christian publishing in terms of quantities and distribution, Bible produced in impressive quantities.

## Challenges for Prayer

### General

- The window of opportunity for spiritual growth** in China today faces materialism – with increasing corruption, moral decline and the growing social policy. All of these may profoundly affect the spiritual life itself. Pray that the Refiner's fire might keep burning – honed in the midst of persecution – might not be extinguished.
- China's rising role on the world stage** – the Olympics – is shaping what some call the "Chinese influence" on world economics and politics, particularly in trade and goodwill and to exert influence. Yet, China is wracked with corruption. Pray for God's Sovereign government; pray that all forms of wickedness may be exposed and that justice and prosperity for all be the result of policies.
- China remains officially atheist,** and Communist Party (70 million). But the Christian population has exploded (by Chinese Buddhists). Increasing numbers of Party members promoted for so long – and now so assiduously – finally be revealed as hollow and deceptive lies. Pray that state structures might walk faultlessly and be a redemptive force.
- Opposing forces at work in Chinese society** – urgent attention and foresight. The reformed and control over state authorities and trusts economic growth



Under Norwegian and Danish rule 1262-1944.  
Parliamentary republic and a member of NATO.  
Not part of the EU.

## Religion

The Lutheran Church is still recognized as the state church, but there is religious freedom.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	90.60	298,327	1.2%
Non-religious	8.33	27,429	18.2%
Other	0.60	1,976	4.0%
Buddhist	0.27	889	5.5%
Muslim	0.11	362	8.9%
Baha'i	0.09	296	0.0%

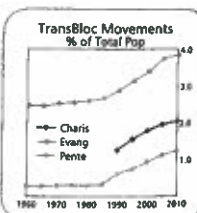
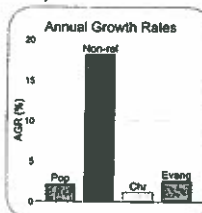
Christians Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	19	83.57	275,000
Independent	2	0.46	2,000
Catholic	1	2.52	8,000
Orthodox	2	0.11	<500
Marginal	2	0.27	<1,000
Unaffiliated		3.67	12,000

Churches	MegaBloc	Cong	Members	Affiliates
Lutheran Church	P	275	177,273	253,500
Lutheran Free Chs	P	4	11,958	17,100
Catholic Church	C	5	5,929	8,300
Pentecostal Church	P	8	1,518	2,270
Charismatic churches	P	4	528	900
Pentecostal Fellowship	I	4	553	800
Seventh-day Adventist	P	7	525	760
The Way Chr Fell	I	1	438	700
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	9	358	680
Other denominations[11]		209	882	1,190
<b>Total Christians[26]</b>		<b>526</b>	<b>199,962</b>	<b>286,200</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	3.8	12,641	2.6%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	2.0	6,700	3.1%
Pentecostals	1.2	4,005	4.0%

### Missionaries from Iceland

P.I.A 8 (6 long-term) in one organized agency, and denominational efforts: to Ethiopia 4, Kenya 2.



## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **Traditional Icelandic life can be considered under threat.** High-profile disputes divide opinion between conservationists wanting to preserve the environment and industrialists wanting to cash in on the resources. Although the total number of immigrants is not massive, Iceland's relatively small population has seen possibly the largest migration rate in Europe, bringing other faiths and cultures into a traditionally guarded society. Pray for wisdom for leaders and the people in dealing with these new challenges.
- 2 **The majority of Icelanders are Christian, but only nominally so.** Biblical Christianity and a lifestyle of following Christ are alien concepts to most. Some of the more isolated areas are spiritual wastelands, with almost no active Christianity at all. Ask the Lord to break into Icelandic society and orchestrate a revival that touches every person and aspect of life.
- 3 **The Lutheran and the smaller, but similar, Free Churches** are suffering the same challenges as much of Europe – declining and aging congregations, low attendance and a general lack of spiritual vitality. There is, of course, a segment of Lutherans who faithfully follow Jesus; pray that their numbers might multiply. And, there is actually a surfeit of young trainees – so much so that churches may “export” them to serve in Lutheran or Anglican congregations abroad! Pray for a surge of new life in the congregations and the leadership. Pray also for the theological faculty where all pastors are trained.
- 4 **Evangelical believers are not many** (3.8%), but their numbers are growing. In particular, Lutheran Free Churches, Pentecostals and charismatic churches are increasing and displaying admirable unity and cooperation. The Pentecostal Church, together with World Horizons, runs a short-term discipleship ministry, and the ex-YWAM training centre is now a residential Christian training community. Several congregations use the Alpha Course to good effect. Pray that the living faith and unity of evangelicals might open the hearts of many to the good news.
- 5 **The Bible Society** launched in 2000 a new Bible translation, which was well received. The 2007 release of *The 100-Minute Bible* in Icelandic resulted in many acquiring Bibles. Pray that many would come back into contact with the transforming Word of God.
- 6 **Christian Radio.** Radio Lindin, which can reach about 90% of the population, remains on air and is a blessing to believers. And it has been used to bring some unbelievers to faith. It is also available via the Internet.

India, p.1 of 4 → Rose



## India

Republic of India  
Asia

### Geography

**Area** 3,166,000 sq km. A further 121,000 sq km of Kashmir – a contested area – is administered by Pakistan and China. Geographically and politically, India dominates South Asia and the Indian Ocean. There are 28 Union States and 7 Union Territories.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	1,214,464,312	1.44%
2020	1,367,224,576	1.10%
2030	1,484,597,882	0.73%

**Capital** Delhi 22,156,810. **Next largest city** Mumbai (Bombay) 20,040,868. **Other cities** 45 cities of over 1 million people; 459 of over 100,000. **Urbanites** 30.1%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 31%. **Life expectancy** 63.4 yrs.

### Peoples

India's ancient, complex and often historically inscrutable past; its racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity; and the caste system all make detailed population analysis exceedingly difficult.



India, p. 2 → Rose

2/4

## Ethnicities

The most ethnically diverse nation on earth, with over 2,500 distinct people groups. Community and identity are based on caste as much as on race and language. The greatest shift in India's ethnic history remains the Indo-Aryan migration into the subcontinent over 3,000 years ago. Differing schools of thought label this mass people movement as conquest, absorption or both. Regardless, many of the original inhabitants (tribal peoples) and Dravidian peoples were forced to endure centuries of subjugation. The following list is based on Omid/JPL data and covers only the largest groups by Affinity Bloc and people cluster. Treatment of India is unique on this issue, since caste is often a major factor in determining people group identity.

### South Asian Peoples 97.7%.

**Hindi** 37.0%. 297 groups. Brahmin 4.9%; Yadava 4.8%; Chamar 4.3%; Rajput 3.5%; Kurmi 1.5%; Teli 1.5%; Kumhar 1.2%; Dhobi Hindu 1.0%; Nai 0.9%; Mali 0.8%; Lohar 0.8%; Kahar 0.6%; Pasi Hindu 0.6%; Sonar 0.6%; Lodha 0.5%; Gadaria Hindu 0.5%; Badhai Hindu 0.5%; Bhoi Hindu 0.5%; Kachhi Hindu 0.5%; Dosadh Hindu 0.5%; Bhang Hindu 0.4%; Mina 0.4%.

**Bengali** 14.25%. 162 groups. Shaikh 6.6%; Mahishya 0.9%; Kayastha 0.7%; Koiri 0.6%; Namasudra Hindu 0.4%; Rajbansi 0.4%.

**Telugu** 5.4%. 135 groups. Kapu 1.4%; Viswakarma 0.7%; Madiga 0.6%; Mala 0.5%.

**Marathi-Konkani** 5.3%. 110 groups. Mahratta 2.4%; Mahar Hindu 0.7%; Mau Buddh 0.7%.

**Rajasthan** 5.3%. 110 groups. Bania 2.2%; Gujar 0.6%; Bania Agarwal 0.4%.

**Tamil** 4.6%. 89 groups. Vanniyar 1.0%; Adi Dravida 0.8%; Nadar 0.4%.

**Gujarati** 4.1%. 127 groups. Kunbi 1.4%; Koli 1.0%; Mahratta Kunbi 0.6%.

**Kannada** 3.1%. 162 groups. Lingayat 0.6%; Vakkaliga 0.5%.

**Malayali** 3.1%. 97 groups. Mappila 0.8%; Nair 0.6%; Ilavan 0.6%; Syrian Christian 0.3%.

**Urdu Muslim** 3.1%. 142 groups. Ansari 0.8%; Sayyid 0.6%.

**Jat** 2.8%. 104 groups. Jat Hindu 1.3%; Jar Sikh 1.0%.

**Munda-Santal** 1.4%. 11 groups. Santal 0.7%; Munda 0.3%.

**Punjabi** 1.4%. 120 groups.

**Oriya** 1.4%. 284 groups.

**Gond** 1.4%. 6 groups. Gond 1.2%.

**Bhil** 1.3%. 4 groups. Bhil 1.2%.

**Gypsy** 0.6%. 8 groups. Banjara Hindu 0.5%.

**Kashmiri** 0.6%. 42 groups. Kashmiri Muslim 0.5%.

**Assamese** 0.4%. 21 groups.

**Oraon** 0.4%. 1 group.

**Tibetan/Himalayan Peoples** 1.1%, 252 groups. Almost all in north and northeast.

**Iranian-Median** 0.9%. Northern Pashtun 0.9%; 4 other groups.

**Others** 0.3%. Southeast Asian, Eurasian/European, Turkic, Chinese, Arab, Jews.

## Languages

**Indo-Aryan** 76%. Main languages, mainly north and central India. Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Urdu, Gujarati, Rajasthani/Mawari, Bhojpuri, Oriya, Punjabi, Magahi, Chhattisgarhi, Assamese, Maithili, others.

**Dravidian** 21.6%. 83 languages, mainly south India. Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Oraon, others.

**Austro-Asiatic** 1.2%. 32 main languages, scattered over central, south and northeast India. Mundari, Ho, Khasi, Jura, others.

**Sino-Tibetan** 1.0%. 157 main languages. Bodo, Meitei, Garo, Mizo, Karbi, Kuki-Chin, others.

**Other** 0.2%. Arabic, others.

**Literacy** 67% (55% for females, 77% for males). Functional literacy is lower. **Official languages** Constitutionally there are 22 official languages. The official language is Hindi (spoken by 40% of the population). English is a subsidiary official language. **All languages** 456, including 18 with more than 10 million speakers. The SIL Ethnologue lists 438 living languages. **Languages with Scriptures** 70Bi 120NT 89por 136 w.i.p.

Language	Pop 2010	Dialects	People groups
Hindi	489.6m		297
Bengali	96.7m	15	159
Telugu	85.8m	9	355
Marathi	83.4m	42	170
Tamil	70.5m	20	247
Urdu	59.8m	6	163
Gujarati	53.5m	15	199
Kannada	44.0m	20	174
Rajasthani*	41.8m	20	>130
Bhojpuri*	38.4m	10	42
Malayalam	38.4m	17	129
Oriya	38.3m	10	200
Punjabi	33.8m	10	85
Magahi*	16.2m	3	30
Chhattisgarhi*	15.4m	12	66
Assamese	15.3m	5	38
Maithili	14.1m	8	42
Bhili/Bhulodi	11.1m	16	6
Haryanvi*	9.3m	5	44
Santali	7.5m	6	1
Kanauji*	7.0m	3	
Kashmiri	6.4m	17	47
Nepali	3.3m	3	24
Gondi	3.1m	8	11
Sindhi	2.9m	9	9
Konkani	2.9m	14	55
Dogri	2.6m	7	55

\*There is debate as to whether these are dialects of Hindi or languages in their own right. There are 29 languages with over 1 million speakers in India.

## Caste

The caste system reflects ancient social and occupational hierarchies, but its origins are disputed and unclear. Ancient Indo-Aryan traditions, Hindu religious texts and beliefs, Indian social structures, the British Empire and even

modernization and globalization today have shaped how the caste system impacts life in India. Today, the four major divisions are: Forward Castes, Other Backward Castes, Dalit/Bahujan/Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Around 4,700 castes and 25,000 subcastes (or *jatis*) function as clearly defined, hierarchically arranged, endogamous hereditary groups. These have been the foundation of Indian social order for centuries. This system impacts life much more profoundly in rural areas than in cities, where educational, economic and social mobility increasingly blurs caste lines. Discrimination based on caste is constitutionally illegal, and the government has affirmative action policies in place to help the groups previously most disadvantaged by the system. But caste-based discrimination persists throughout much of India.

## Economy

Traditionally an agricultural economy, but because of market-economy policies adopted in 1991, India has rapidly transitioned to become more financially diverse. Industry and especially services are taking the lead in the 21st Century. India is a nuclear power, has a space industry and is increasingly a world leader in the IT sector. Its booming economy is one of the success stories of the last decade and will significantly impact the global economy for the foreseeable future.

The rapid growth of the new rich is outdone only by the increase in the middle class, which now possibly numbers around 350 million. Yet, the rural poor and impoverished urban slum-dwellers still number in the hundreds of millions. For those at the bottom of the heap, India's economic boom is meaningless.

The inadequate infrastructure – for travel, power and sanitation in particular – must be addressed if growth is to be sustained long-term. Corruption, inefficiency and prejudice remain further obstacles to overcome for economic improvements to be made to all of Indian society. Nearly 40% of the population live below the poverty line, and 40% of children are underweight. India's widespread use of English gives the country a major advantage as its economy opens to the world.

**HDI Rank** 134<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 56.4% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,017 (2% of USA).

## Politics

Independent from Britain in 1947. The world's largest functioning democracy. The RSS and the VHP (Hindu extreme nationalist movements) grew in strength and influence, and as a result, the Hindu nationalist BJP party gained political power in the 1990s. Since then, a coalition government led by the Congress Party (INC) has won two elections. The current administration emphasizes economic growth and social progress

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## Religio

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## Religions

Hindu  
Muslim  
Christian\*  
Sikh  
Ethnoreligious  
Buddhist  
Non-religious  
Other  
Baha'i  
\*For many rea  
antly under  
researchers in I  
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## Christians D

Protestant  
Independent  
Anglican  
Catholic  
Orthodox  
Marginal  
Unaffiliated  
Doubly affiliated

## Churches

Catholic Church  
Ch of S India (C  
Syro-Malabari  
Seventh-day Adv  
Oriental Orth  
United Evang L  
Believers Church  
Ch of N India (C  
Presby Ch of I  
Methodist Ch in  
Mar Thoma Syri  
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on issues including caste and freedom of religion. As a result, significant progress has been made in terms of equality for all groups in India, but millennia of oppression will take some time to overturn. Long-standing tensions with Pakistan continue, especially over the issue of Kashmir.

## Religion

India's constitution provides full religious freedom of worship and witness for all religions. The rise of Hindutva extremism resulted in a hate campaign against Muslims in the early 1990s and against Christians in the late 1990s as followers of "foreign" religions. Due to mass-conversion movements by Dalit groups away from Hinduism, and to evangelistic activities by Christian groups, issues of conversion and anti-conversion laws are of high importance and sensitivity. Persecution levels range widely, usually depending on the strength of Hindutva groups from one state to the next.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Hindu	74.33	902,711,323	1.2%
Muslim	14.20	172,453,932	2.0%
Christian*	5.84	71,011,000	3.7%
Sikh	1.86	22,589,036	1.3%
Ethnoreligionist	1.35	16,395,268	1.0%
Buddhist	0.82	9,958,607	2.7%
Non-religious	0.48	5,829,429	2.8%
Other	0.47	5,707,982	1.0%
Baha'i	0.15	1,821,696	0.1%

\*For many reasons, the most recent census (2001) significantly underenumerated Christians at 2.34%. Christian researchers in India indicate much higher results, even up to 9%. New 2011 census results are expected before 2013.

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	319	2.13	25,924,000	4.2%
Independent	860	1.44	17,442,000	4.8%
Anglican	1	0.02	270,000	2.1%
Catholic	3	1.55	18,797,000	1.9%
Orthodox	10	0.18	2,236,000	1.1%
Marginal	15	0.02	221,000	1.9%
Unaffiliated		0.80	9,725,000	3.7%
Doubly affiliated		-0.20	-2,429,000	

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	6,681	8,016,760	14,350,000
Ch of S India (CSI)	P	15,300	2,056,338	4,380,000
Syro-Malabares Cath	C	723	1,879,524	3,947,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	3,819	1,470,364	2,747,769
Oriental Orth	O	1,660	1,191,617	1,990,000
United Evang Luth Chs	P	12,974	1,167,665	1,950,000
Believers Church	P	9,000	1,500,000	1,800,000
Ch of N India (CNI)	P	4,500	824,176	1,500,000
Presby Ch of I	P	2,456	585,970	1,394,609
Methodist Ch in I	P	723	575,000	1,150,000
Mar Thoma Syrian Ch	P	1,171	626,347	1,046,000
Samavesam of Telugu	P	1,407	633,333	950,000
Assemblies of God	I	3,427	367,841	835,000
Orissa Bapt Evang	P	3,865	405,000	745,000



India, p.4 of 4 → Rose

	P	1,400	484,174	726,261
Nagaland Bapt Ch	P	1,400	484,174	726,261
New Life Fellowship	I	3,899	680,667	620,000
Garo Baptist Conv	P	2,407	242,402	600,000
Churches of Christ	P	6,400	224,000	560,000
Syro-Malankaresi Cath	C	588	294,118	500,000
Indian Nat Evang Fell	I	4,262	262,368	472,262
Brethren Assem	P	1,929	135,000	449,550
Evang Ch of India	P	2,494	176,986	442,465
Ch of God (Cleveland)	P	2,020	285,000	430,000
Christ Groups	I	9,749	243,713	407,000
Menn Savodara Sangam	P	1,040	130,000	395,000
Indian Evang Team	I	5,140	205,600	385,500
Salvation Army	P	4,062	224,368	374,695
Manipur Bapt Conv	P	1,284	173,320	363,972
FMPB	I	2,118	180,000	360,000
Nagaland Chr Revival	I	1,195	161,364	355,000
Manna Full Gospel	P	1,605	144,444	325,000
India Gospel League	I	6,900	192,814	322,000
Assem Jehovah Shammah	I	910	95,000	310,000
Good Shepherd	P	3,000	150,000	300,000
Filadelfia Fellowship	I	1,400	210,000	295,000
Other denominations	[1,131]	125,383	7,351,708	13,507,111
<b>Total Christians</b>	<b>[1,208]</b>	<b>256,891</b>	<b>33,072,981</b>	<b>61,286,194</b>

### TransBloc Evangelicals

	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals	2.2	26,290,283	3.9%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	1.6	19,636,544	3.6%
Pentecostals	0.4	5,219,760	0.4%

### Missionaries from India

**P, I, A** 82,950 long-term in more than 200 agencies; nearly all serving cross-culturally in India.

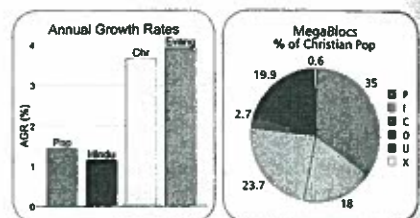
### Annual Growth Rates

Category	Growth Rate (%)
Pop	~1.5
Hindu	~1.2
Chr	~3.5
Evang	~3.9

### MegaBlobs % of Christian Pop

Category	% of Christian Pop
P	19.3
I	2.7
A	0.6
Chr	35
U	23.7
X	18

**Missionaries from India**  
P.I.A. 82,950 long-term in more than 200 agencies; nearly all serving cross-culturally in India.

**I**

- ① **The restoration of political centrism** – following the election defeat of a Hinduistic government with extremist tendencies – has returned a measure of religious freedom and has overseen economic growth and the addressing of injustices inherent to the caste system. Booming numbers of indigenous NGOs, policy changes meant to uplift those in (or beneath) the lowest strata of the caste system and even legal changes all point toward a society looking to be more modern, pluralistic and humane.
- ② **Action on the plight of the Dalits/Bahujans/Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**, who together amount to over 25% of the population. This comes after literally millennia of oppression, justified by the caste system and by Hinduism. The UN, the Indian government and international NGOs have all taken action to address this situation. Most notably, the Indian and the global Church have begun work to establish human rights, education, health, employment and salvation of the Dalits. Encouraging change is occurring at an admirable pace, although so much remains to be done.
- ③ **Christianity's positive contribution to Indian society** is best known from William Carey's incredible legacy. But it is also the result of Catholic work and, more recently, of evangelical awareness of effective holistic ministry. The work of Christians in education and health and in challenging social ills brings goodwill, makes the appeal of Christianity more effective and makes it more difficult to stir up anti-Christian sentiment.
- ④ **Praise for continued freedom for Indian Christians** to proclaim the gospel, despite efforts from certain communal and political forces to limit this freedom through legislation, intimidation and persecution.
- ⑤ **Persecution of Christians** – especially in Orissa, Karnataka and Gujarat – has not only refined the Church and drawn it together, but it has also caused the Church to re-evaluate its methods and priorities in evangelism and ministry. Persecution has exposed the hateful agenda of extremist religious groups and made Christians more aware of their constitutional rights.
- ⑥ **Missions, church planting and research initiatives** in India have grown far beyond the humble beginnings in the 1960s, which were largely controlled by foreign groups. Today, over 1,000 Indian mission agencies and church-based initiatives have sent out over

**7** The increased response of previously resistant people in Uttar Pradesh, but also in many other states in India, among lower-caste Hindus and tribal peoples. Other groups and social groups are increasingly open to the good news.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **Political, economic and social challenges to** India's government. Much positive progress has been made and built on such progress, prayer is called for. Pray for India.
- a) **Continue to uphold the constitution by maintaining** religious and ethnic minorities. Religious freedom and the constitution have recently come under threat. Some state abuse of human rights and discrimination against Christians have passed anti-conversion laws that, among other things, target people who become Christian.
- b) **Uproot corruption in all levels of government** – from the national to the local level. Mass media is a powerful means of exposure. Information Act forces government staff to be more accountable. Members of Parliament having criminal cases pending against them needs transparency. Pray for courage and resoluteness to change a culture of corruption to persist is a much easier and safer path.
- c) **Tackle the serious ills of society** with greater commitment. Malnutrition, which affects 40% of the population; ill health with widespread use of child labour, bonded labour and the spread of AIDS and serious environmental degradation.
- d) **Address the growing threat of Maoist/Naxalite insurgency** from Nepal down to Andhra Pradesh is known as the Maoist threat. It threatens stability and security, both locally and regionally. Pray for the growth of the Church through Naxalite infiltration and the general disruption caused by violence.
- e) **Manage the economic situation with wisdom.** India has the fourth-most millionaires and the greatest disparity between rich and poor. The workforce every year; millions of jobs must be created. Pray for a growing economy and a growing middle class, ways to reduce poverty.
- f) **Wisely address increasing threats to stability,** from neighbouring countries, and Hindu nationalist groups and Naxalites/Communists.
- 2 **The "New India"** is a youthful, ambitious, cosmopolitan. Differences of religion, caste and gender mean less and less. The India of call centres, cricket, Bollywood, *bhangra* is exposed to and open to new ideas and ways of living, including Western influence. In this context is materialism – as capable of entrapping the younger generation – 70% of India is under age 35, and 3 billion by 2050. As such, they are a hugely strategic group to reach for. Missiological strategies must be undertaken to communicate the Gospel and missions are now focusing on this issue; initial evangelism.
- 3 **India has more human need than any other nation.** A large population, but also due to many areas of suffering and poverty, considered action and sustained prayer.



y that will reach them with the gospel.

ead worldwide since the 19th Century, are persecuted y Muslims as a heretical sect for their belief that their er Mohammed. The government seeks to drive them nidation, prejudice in education and employment, and / little Christian love and witness has been shared with the five million worldwide. Pray that in their despera- l Jesus.

ndants of those exiled to Babylon 2,700 years ago. Due bers are declining through emigration. A number have

contains some of the largest unreached, unengaged oples have no known believers among them, but the resources in Persian and other languages is seeing that ed to seeing church planting movements among every

**Azeri and Bakhtiari and the Turkic Qashqai**, largely agros Mountains. There are only a few dozen known obile lifestyle makes church planting among them a id the JESUS film exist in some of their languages and anguage also gives them access to further Christian ning to reach out to these peoples. Pray that the small these groups, meeting both inside Iran and abroad,

rthwest and northeast Iran. They continue to face cultural suppression from the regime (which they ms. There are some Christian resources in the dialects increasing numbers of Kurds in Iraq who are coming ce their kin in Iran.

ie north are closely related, but have scarcely had any is form the largest minority group within Iran; their It is listed here as 13.5m, but could conceivably be letion and distribution of the Azeri NT, Psalms and mpletion – pray that the availability of Scripture in o read and be transformed. The traditionally nomadic ated area, but there are the beginnings of a church

och and Brahui. The Baloch are restive and unhappy ess appear to be increasing. There are only a handful as radio and the JESUS film are increasing in number.

Domari and the sub-groups Ghorbati and Mawari. ow social status and semi-nomadic nature keep them o Christian workers dedicated to reaching them.

i important component in reaching Iranians and ning Iranian Church. Many media ministries and

high demand – 10 million Bibles would be readily ate the Scriptures, yet they continue to slip into the m Ministries and Open Doors, focus on increasing There are three translations of the Bible in Persian, ray for innovative and effective ways of distributing made through it. Pray also for translation teams to have a need for Scripture translation.


needed, especially in Persian. Elam, 222 Ministries, Sonhad Books, Persian World Outreach, Iranian Christians International and others are involved in production and distribution. Pray also that the Lord will raise up more indigenous writers to produce Christian material to meet the accelerating demand from the Iranian Church. Pray that God will continue to open new avenues for distribution. Pray specifically for the development of children's materials – a glaring need with 15 million Iranians aged 15 or younger.

c) **Radio** remains a valuable ministry. Millions listen despite government restrictions, and thousands of response e-mails and letters are received. Voice of Christ Media Ministries, TWR and others prepare daily programmes in Persian and Azeri and broadcast them on satellite, shortwave and medium wave.

d) **Other media** include Christian and worship music (very popular with the younger generation, in particular) and film, including the raft of materials associated with the JESUS film. Pray for these to have a great impact.

**13 TV ministry is an area of huge growth for reaching Iranians.** Many ministries pour resources and efforts into developing videos for evangelism and Christian teaching. Possibly 20 million illegal satellite dishes are used to access television broadcasts. Stations such as SAT-7 Pars, Nejat TV, MOHABAT TV, and producers such as Iran Alive Ministries, 222 Ministries, Elam Ministries and others reach millions through this popular medium. Live worship broadcasts with music and teaching prove especially effective. Pray also for the development of Christian video programming and materials for youth and children, who constitute such a large swathe of Iran's population.

**14 The Internet** is another powerful tool for the evangelization of Iran, enormously popular among young people in particular. It is the ideal medium for a host of materials – readings, audio and video – in Persian. Many ministries are developing resources, from evangelistic sites to Christian news, to teaching materials to worship music in the main languages of Iran. Just a few examples – Farsi Christian News Network, Kalameh, Farsinet, Iranian Christian Broadcasting, Online Kelisa, Farsipraise Ministries, PWO and many others. Around 23 million Iranians have access to the Internet. Iran is the world's third-largest blogging community, but the regime is very active in shutting down sites that pose perceived threats to the status quo. Over 40 million have mobile phones – another potential but unexploited means of transmitting the good news. Pray for the vast potential of the Internet to be realized for reaching Iran with the good news and for building up the body of Christ.



## Geography

**Area** 438,317 sq km. Fertile plains of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers; high mountains to the north and Syrian desert in southwest. Site of the ancient Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	31,466,698	2.19%
2020	40,227,611	2.31%
2030	48,909,281	1.82%

**Capital** Baghdad 5,891,000. **Other major cities** Mosul 1.5 million; Erbil (Kurdish Autonomous Region – KAR) 1.0mill; Basra 923,000. **Urbanites** 66.4%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 41%. **Life expectancy** 67.8 yrs.

## Peoples

The Sunni Arab minority long dominated other ethnic groups; for political gain, all claim higher statistics for their own group.

**Arab** 74.3%. Iraqi Arab 64.8%; Najdi Bedouin 4.4%. Egyptian Arab 1.2%.

# Iraq

## Republic of Iraq

### Asia



→ Storm

**Iranian-Median** 22.0%, 10 groups, largest: Northern Kurd 9.8%; Southern Kurd 7.8%; Central Kurd 1.6%; Persian 1.1%.

**Turkic** 2.5%. In centre and north, Turkmen (Iraqi Turks speaking a form of Azeri, different from the Central Asian Turkmen people group). May be larger, many claimed by Kurds.

**Other** 1.2%. Other Middle East peoples, Western, Asian.

**Literacy** 40.4%. **Official languages** Arabic: Kurdish in the KAR. **All languages** 26.

**Languages with Scriptures** 4Bi 3NT 3por.

## Economy

Oil-based economy – since Genesis 11! Profits were spent during Saddam's rule on building a war machine. War with Iran halted economic development. The two Gulf Wars and 13 years of UN sanctions further devastated the economy and impoverished ordinary people. Iraq has the world's third-largest known oil reserves. Control and distribution of that wealth are key issues that will dominate the politics of the next few years. Rebuilding the national infrastructure after five decades of tyranny and war will take many years. This is made much more difficult by rampant corruption in government, the seemingly irreconcilable armed factions and instability. Unemployment is high (18–30%), and the population young (83% under 40 yrs). **Income/person** \$3,007 (6% of USA).

## Politics

Created as a political entity by the victorious Allies after WWI. Faisal was installed by the British as king in 1923. Independent as a monarchy in 1932. Faisal II was overthrown in a revolution in 1958. The Baathist military regime became a dictatorship under Saddam Hussein. A massive military machine was built up; it was used to protect the dictatorship, to repress Kurds and Shi'as, to launch a war against Iran (1980–88) and then to invade Kuwait in 1990. UN forces defeated Iraq and imposed sanctions until 2003. The subsequent US invasion in 2003 was prompted by Iraq allegedly possessing weapons of mass destruction (which never materialized). Western occupiers ousted Hussein and set out to create a new government and rebuild the economy (on terms favourable to Western oil interests), but were hampered by intense attacks by Islamist insurgents. The country was governed by Shi'a political parties after the 2005 election, but the 2010 election was narrowly won by a secular, Sunni-backed alliance of political groups. Although a representative and constitutional democracy, politics can often align along ethnic-religious lines. The lethal mix of longstanding divisions and rivalries (Shi'a-Sunni and Arab-

Kurd) combined with Islamist terrorism, in the end, make the country difficult to govern peacefully.

## Religion

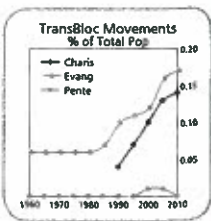
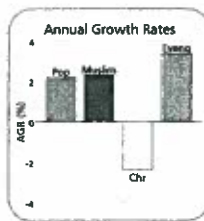
Pan-Arab socialism rather than Islam was the ideology of the Baathist regime. Under Saddam, Shi'a Muslims were persecuted and Christians tolerated. Since 2003, Islamist groups have stepped up persecution of religious minorities, causing mass emigration of the ancient Christian confessions, whose presence in Iraq pre-dates the Arabs by centuries. The new constitution states that no law can be passed that contravenes Islam, so guarantees of religious freedom are not particularly trustworthy. Registration of new churches is particularly difficult.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	95.91	30,179,710	2.3%
Other	1.90	597,867	-0.8%
Christian	1.59	500,320	-2.4%
Non-religious	0.60	188,800	8.2%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	12	0.04	12,000	-6.1%
Independent	8	0.13	42,000	7.1%
Anglican	1	0.01	4,000	32.7%
Catholic	1	1.18	370,000	-2.2%
Orthodox	8	0.23	72,000	-6.9%
Marginal	1	<0.01	<1,000	1.9%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	80	200,000	370,000
Assyrian Ch of the East	O	45	22,527	41,000
Armenian Apos Ch	O	7	6,593	12,000
Syriac Orthodox Ch	O	14	7,186	12,000
Arab Evangelical chs	P	60	3,153	7,000
Anglican Church	A	1	2,846	3,700
Other denominations[24]		63	8,903	55,630
<b>Total Christians[31]</b>		<b>270</b>	<b>251,208</b>	<b>500,310</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	0.2	53,371	3.4%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	0.1	45,275	4.6%
Pentecostals	<0.1	1,450	-14.1%



## Answers to Prayer

- 1 The establishment of a representative reduction of sectarian violence and the end of deaths of millions are points for praise. Growing pain hope for the emergence of a stable, self-governed education, healthcare and welfare offer signs of prog
- 2 The emergence of Iraqi Arab evangelica During Hussein's rule, there were a few hundred country. Many of them come from Muslim background through evangelical witness, gospel radio and especially They are obvious targets for persecution.
- 3 A Kurdish Church is now a reality. With region – including religious freedom – an exciting Christ is occurring.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 Iraq's future remains uncertain. Saddam's host of problems still plagues the country. Prayer!
- a) The establishment of a national government that of the various religious and ethnic communities, an accountability to the people, economic growth a future is bleak. Anarchy, civil war, fragmentation of people – especially Christians – could follow. Prayer who can act with wisdom, courage and integrity.
- b) Healing after decades of suffering. Nearly ever experiences – from Hussein's cruelty, from the violence that has followed. Only the gospel can be freely proclaimed.
- c) The elimination of corruption. Iraq is ranked as one has significantly held back the nation from repairing
- d) The suffering the Iraqi people have endured. invasions, insurgencies and deprivation may be as people displaced. More than half of the population
  - i Women suffer forced marriage, abduction, honor threat and weapon against them. They have almost religious establishment does little or nothing to
  - ii Children live in a context of instability and uncertainty, half have access to safe drinking water and some thousands face life as refugees in neighbouring areas
- 2 Many deep divisions run like fault lines through Shi'as against Sunnis, Muslims against religious groups. These groups jostle for the power and money the future. These divisions run deep; they cripple the future night – probably not even in one generation. Only the pray that somehow, against all odds, the good news is transformed by God's love and justice.
- 3 Monumental political changes have occurred grateful to the USA since it liberated their homeland of Iraq. Saddam's harsh rule came to an end in 2003 platform for Islamist insurgents to unleash terror against forces and other perceived collaborators in an orgy of



For centuries, the preserver and defender of the Irish, amid onset of modernity and a series of high-profile laments, the nation is rapidly losing the deep Catholic faith. Once an exporter of trained priests, the Catholic Church, once 85% nationally, is now less than 50%, and there are more non-religious Irish than ever before. A renewal movement within the Catholic Church and expressions of the Christian faith. Pray for the Irish of deep and profound faith in Christ.

**Shattered the Catholic Church** devastated the nation's deeply trusted institution. Possibly the only things more are the cover-ups and collusion that occurred after of Church leaders. Ireland's Catholic faith was already in a death spiral. Pray that true restoration might occur on the part of those education and redemption of Catholicism in Ireland.

**"New" emerge**, complete with radical change in ethnic, pastoral Celtic image of days past has given way to a new from immigration, and where foreign religions and adopts these new arrivals, who in turn bring cultural those who do not know Christ or who come from other the land where they meet the Saviour.

**Sustained growth**, especially among charismatic and a surge contributes to this, with around one-third of cities. Pray for:

recently formed Evangelical Alliance in Ireland will believers together from across denominational (and and), traditional Protestants and newer immigrant or charismatic fellowships can all benefit from shared

the lowest percentage of evangelicals of any English-d from a huddled and marginalized minority to a new Christian leaders speak of a 20/20 vision, wherein a relationship with Christ by the year 2020.

raised up. The Irish Bible Institute launched in 2000 subsequently merged with the Global University-based

**Ministry** by evangelicals. This already includes helping those suffering with AIDS and reaching out to the urban and Serve the City focus on blessing neighbours kindness. Pray that evangelicals might be salt and light the whole gospel by word and by deed.

as a young population by European standards, with d is underlined by the rapid increase of serious social s, alternative lifestyles and post-Christian attitudes. presented and expressed in a new way. Ministry in pture Union, CEF (67 full-time workers), the Faith is increasing numbers of international students. Pray ng encounters with Christ.

are entrenched in rigid traditional mentalities about ul and Irish-speaking. Relational, patient interaction The Irish Evangelistic Band was formed in 1936 to

b) **Muslim numbers** are increasing faster than evangelicals. They are an ethnically diverse immigrant population, poised to continue rapid growth. Pray for Irish believers to reach out to them in friendship and Christian love.

c) **Travellers (Gypsies)**, numbering 25,000 and growing, have been in Ireland for centuries, and they spread from here to elsewhere. They tend to be poor, illiterate and with the lowest life expectancy of any group in Ireland. Little has been done specifically to reach them.

9 **Missionaries now work** in all 26 counties, but they are mostly focused on the Dublin area. GEM is instrumental in leadership training and church planting, with 16 full-time workers. Other significant missions include AoG, OM, TEAM, IMB, UFM and Christian Associates. Pray for their ability to minister ably, for new congregations to be planted and for long-term investment in indigenous churches and leaders.

10 **Ireland has a long tradition of sending missionaries**, from the *peregrini* of the early Celtic Church onward. But now the number of Catholic missionaries is rapidly declining as is the number of traditional Protestant missionaries, though to a lesser degree. The new churches recognize the need for reaching the unevangelized in their midst and in the wider world. Pray for the release, training and funding of more Irish missionaries and leaders by evangelical churches and fellowships.



Yiddish Jew 4.7%; Maghrebi 4.4%; Spanish Jew (Ladino) 2.7%; Yehudi 2.3%; Beta Israel/Falasha (Ethiopian) 1.8%; Hungarian Jew 1.3%; Dzhidi 1.2%; German Jew 1.2%; French Jew 1.1%; Yemeni Jew 1.0%; Bukharan Jew 1.0%; Arabs 20.4%; Israeli Arab/Palestinian 16.5%; Druze 1.8%; Bedouin 1.3%.

**Other** 4.1%. European, African, Chinese, Thai, Filipino, North and South American. The numbers are probably significantly larger.

**Literacy** 96.9%. **Official languages** Hebrew, Arabic. Numerous immigrant languages from all over the world are spoken. **All languages** 48. **Indigenous languages** 33. **Languages with Scriptures** 12Bi 1NT 6por.

## Israel

### State of Israel

Asia

#### Geography

**Area** 20,700 sq km. A further 7,540 sq km of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights have been controlled by Israel since 1967.

	Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	7,285,033	1.71%	352/sq km
2020	8,306,679	1.21%	401/sq km
2030	9,219,268	1.01%	445/sq km

The Palestinian Authority, although under Israel administration, is treated separately.

**Capital** Jerusalem 783,000; but not recognized internationally. **Other major cities** Tel Aviv 3.3 million; Haifa 1.0mill. **Urbanites** 91.7%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 28%. **Life expectancy** 80.7 yrs.

#### Peoples

**Jews** 75.5%. 28 groups. Israeli Jew 23.1%; Russian Jew 13.6%; Romanian Jew 5.6%; Polish Jew 5.5%; Eastern

#### Economy

Modern, sophisticated industrial state. Well developed high-tech, bio-tech, chemical and agricultural sectors. Many start-up companies. Brakes on further growth, however, include the high burden of defence expenditure due to security issues, the cost of absorbing new immigrants and the growing crisis of lack of water (despite extensive desalination and reuse). Israel lacks natural resources and needs to import petroleum, coal, grains and military hardware. Large gas and oil deposits under the Mediterranean could significantly alter Israel's energy status.

**HDI Rank** 27<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 76.8% of GDP. **Income/person** \$28,409 (60% of USA). **Unemployment** 8.2%.

#### Politics

The founding of Israel in 1948 ended 1,900 years of exile for the Jews. Six wars with surrounding states in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982-85, 2006 plus the Gaza War in 2009 have kept the country on a war footing. Repeated military engagement in Lebanon, the rising

→ Gonny



Israel, p.2 → Gonny

pressure of Palestinian civil unrest, the *intifada*, acts of terrorism by Islamist groups (Hamas, Hezbollah, others) and the increased threat from Iran have sapped Israeli stamina. Israeli society remains deeply divided on the peace process, the future of Jewish settlements in the Disputed Territories and the future of Jerusalem and of the Golan Heights. The four-way division of political parties (left, right, far right religious, Arab) means that coalitions generally must be formed – giving disproportionate influence to the ultra-orthodox Jewish *Haredi* minority. Repeated efforts by the UN, USA and others to facilitate a peace deal have met with only limited success. Divisions internally (in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority) as well as fundamentally irreconcilable and deeply held convictions on both sides make long-term solutions very difficult to envision.

## Religion

All religions are free to minister within their own communities. Jews who follow Messiah Jesus, however, have in the past been denied legal standing as a religious body and faced difficulties obtaining premises for fellowship. This changed in 2009, enabling Messianic congregations to register as houses of prayer and religious entities. Reform and Conservative Jews are often marginalized by ultra-Orthodox influence, which applies constant pressure to limit freedom of religion through anti-conversion laws and persecution of Messianic Jews.

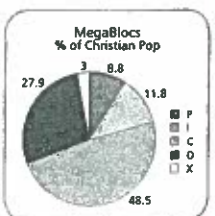
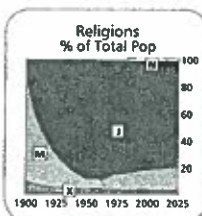
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Jewish	75.40	5,492,915	1.5%
Muslim	16.70	1,216,601	2.5%
Non-religious	3.81	277,560	3.3%
Christian	2.04	148,615	0.5%
Other	1.90	138,416	2.3%
Baha'i	0.15	10,928	1.7%

The Jewish population is approximately 25% Orthodox, 20% secular and the rest somewhere in the middle.

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	43	0.18	13,000	5.9%
Independent	25	0.24	17,000	5.3%
Anglican	1	0.02	2,000	0.0%
Catholic	3	0.99	72,000	-0.6%
Orthodox	7	0.57	42,000	-0.8%
Marginal	2	0.04	3,000	3.6%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Ch (5 rites)	C	80	42,604	72,000
Greek Orthodox Ch	O	11	23,750	38,000
Messianic Assemblies	I	160	6,000	12,000
Assoc of Baptist Chs	P	20	800	3,000
Baptist Conv Israel	P	30	1,500	3,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	21	1,480	2,960
Assemblies of God	P	15	1,150	1,500
Episcopal Church	A	3	833	1,500
Seventh-day Adventist	P	44	800	1,200
Coptic Orthodox Ch	O	2	639	1,150
Other denominations[65]		1245	6,565	12,400
<b>Total Christians[81]</b>		<b>510</b>	<b>86,121</b>	<b>148,710</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	0.4	31,045	5.6%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	0.3	22,472	4.9%
Pentecostals	<0.1	3,080	4.5%



## Challenges for Prayer

1 The return of Jews to Israel was a watershed that Israel is the nation with the world's large fulfilment of prophecy (Ezekiel 20:32-34, 36:16-24 land in unbelief, but a movement to Messiah Jesus in Eastern Europe, Russia and Ethiopia. Pray for the nation. There is currently an increased intensity in Israel turning to God, fervently praying and turning to God.

2 Israeli-Arab conflict in the Holy Land intensifying since 1948. Resolution is elusive. Both sides lay claim to the land, and all human efforts to both sides will find true reconciliation and genuine peace.

a) The threat of violence and war from outside Israel settlers and soldiers from Gaza and the controversy fired into Israel from Gaza. Hezbollah's growing increasingly strident rhetoric all point to potential conflict.

b) The as-yet-unfinished security barrier is planned Jewish areas, making movement and access very difficult. It would not unduly restrict free movement of Jews who destroyed the wall of separation of hostility reconciliation between Israeli Jew and Palestinian.

3 The Jewish mindset toward Christianity, of a long and painful history, is a barrier to be destroyed of the Jewish nation whether by persecution. Pray that the gospel may be understood. Pray that a widespread turning to their Messiah might be more active than ever; pray also that all attempts to Jewish identity of Messianic believers may ultimately succeed.

4 The Christian Church in Israel is fragile beginning. It is comprised of about 80% Arab, Greek, Russian, Armenian, Italian, others) and 8% Jewish (nine traditions) and Protestants/Independents (congregations and over 100 mission agencies). Pray for ethnic conflict, national origins, eschatology and security.

5 Followers of Jesus in Israel are likewise a rare Arab-Israeli Christians. All three groups have expatriate believers – the result of both immigration and speaking gatherings. Russian-speaking congregations followed by eight Amharic-speaking (Ethiopian) congregations in various European languages. Israeli-born Messianic Jews.

a) Boldness in witness and perseverance of faith despite regard evangelicals as subversive and a threat to Jewish identity. Tolerance of Christians and Israel increasingly opposed, especially by the ultra-Orthodox.

b) Full legal rights of immigration and social acceptance. Israeli law states that national identity secular Jews can become citizens, but Christian Jews cannot.

c) Clarity of teaching and understanding about the identity without compromising New Testament identity in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Nazareth for the future.

d) Arab evangelicals are more numerous in Protestant total fewer than 4,000. Of these, only a few do. Number of those coming to faith is growing at an extraordinary rate.

## Answers to Prayer

1 Within Israel, interest in the gospel is increasing, notably among Jews, and especially in the last few years. The hard shells that surround Israelis are beginning to crack open to the gospel. The numbers of Messianic Jews are rising rapidly, now up to 12,000 or possibly even higher. Some of these even come from a *Haredi* background. Messianic Jews are becoming a recognized part of Israeli society, but greater growth has intensified persecution.

2 Globally, there is a significant response to the gospel among the 14.5 million Jews. Even the more conservative estimates indicate an unprecedented response, and some of the more optimistic claims exceed 100,000 said to be linked with Messianic congregations. Most of these believers are in North America as well as Russia, Ukraine and the UK. A much larger number have integrated into mainstream Christian churches.



→ Deana

b) **The Rastafarians** began as a protest movement that mixed Christian beliefs with Black consciousness ideas and deified the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I. They are well known for their reggae music and use of *ganja* (marijuana), as well as for their non-violent "peace and love" philosophy. They have considerable influence in Jamaica and have spread to Europe and North America. In recent years, a few prominent Rastafarians have professed Christ as Saviour and become active evangelicals.

## 6 Christian help ministries – many serving the whole Caribbean.

- a) **The Bible Society**, based in Kingston, channels Scriptures to most of the mini-states of the region. The Society has a strong vision of making Scripture accessible to young people in particular.
- b) **Christian bookstores**. Source of Light Ministries operates six Christian bookstores in Kingston and runs the region's largest Bible Correspondence Course. CLC has a notable ministry through three bookstores.
- c) **Christian broadcasting**. Radio is broadcast in English by **TWR** (from within Jamaica) and by others from outside, totaling 77 hours per week. In the country itself, there is also a religious radio (LOVE FM) and TV station.
- d) **The Student Christian Fellowship and Scripture Union (SCF/SU)**, as well as Jamaica Youth for Christ and Jamaica Child Evangelism Fellowship, do valuable work among the younger generation. Many outstanding Christian leaders serving globally or in Jamaica are products of these ministries.

recession led to Japan's first trade deficits in many years as well as its highest post-war unemployment rate (5%). Public debt is close to 200% of GDP, but private savings levels are still extremely high, protecting many individuals from the poor economic performance. The low birth rate and aging population are major societal and economic concerns for the future.

**HDI Rank** 10<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 172% of GDP. **Income/person** \$38,457 (81% of USA).

## Politics

Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Years of stability and economic expansion since WWII turned Japan into an economic superpower. Rising nationalism and willingness to exert political power in the Pacific cause unease among neighbours. Numerous scandals, corruption and factional politics discredit the present political system and delay the implementation of reforms. In the general election of 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) defeated the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP), which had been in power almost continuously since WWII.

## Religion

Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all by the constitution. Over 70% of Japanese claim no personal religion, but the majority follow the demands of idolatrous and ancestor-venerating Buddhism, and rituals of polytheistic Shintoism. Historically, Japanese identity is deeply tied to Shintoism, and formal disassociation from this connection is extremely difficult in a land where conformity rules. Many also follow some of the hundreds of newer religious movements that are off-shoots or interpretations of these. The main ones: *Sokka Gakkai* (10m), *Rishokoseikai* (5.5m), *Seicho no Ie* (3.7m). Therefore, figures in the table below cannot adequately show the multiple religious loyalties of the Japanese, which could be described as New Religions 24%, Buddhist 85%, Shinto 90%!

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Buddhist	69.59	88,376,107	-0.1%
Other	23.70	30,097,912	-0.2%
Non-religious	5.00	6,349,771	1.2%
Christian	1.54	1,955,729	-0.2%
Muslim	0.15	190,493	1.3%
Baha'i	0.02	25,399	-0.1%

## Answers to Prayer

- ① **Uncertainty about the future** has prompted response to many economic and social change constant threats of a major earthquake, of economic the feeling of social isolation (*hikikomori*) that so mar



# Japan

## Nihon

### Asia

## Geography

**Area** 377,801 sq km. A 3,000 km arc of four large islands (Honshu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyushu) and 3,000 small islands in NW Pacific. Mountainous; only 13% can be cultivated.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	126,995,411	-0.07%
2020	123,664,363	-0.34%
2030	117,423,894	-0.56%

**Capital** Tokyo-Yokohama 36,669,000. **Major cities** Osaka-Kobe 11.4million; Nagoya 3.3mill; Fukuoka 2.8m; Sapporo 2.7m; Sendai 2.4m; Hiroshima 2.1m; Kyoto 1.8m. **Urbanites** 66.8%.

**Pop under 15 yrs** 13%. **Life expectancy** 82.7 yrs.

## Peoples

**Indigenous** 98.5%.

**Japanese** 98.5%. Sub-groups: Ryukyuan 0.8%; South American Japanese returnees 0.2%.

**Ainu** 0.02%. The aboriginal inhabitants who have largely lost their original languages and largely been assimilated into Japanese culture. Officially numbering just over 25,000, unofficial estimates range up to 200,000.

**Foreign** 1.5%. Korean 0.5%; Chinese 0.3%; Filipino 0.3%; other Asian, Western.

**Illegal immigrants**. Possibly 1 million Pakistani, Iranian, Bangladeshi, Filipino, Thai, Malaysian, others.

**Literacy** 100%. **Official language** Japanese. **All languages** 16 (including 11 Okinawan-Ryukyuan dialects). **Languages with Scriptures** 2Bi 1NT 2por 1w.i.p.

## Economy

One of the world's most powerful export-oriented economies despite lack of natural resources and oil. High savings and low interest rates stimulated a massive capital investment boom based on high property values. This property bubble burst in 1989, leading to recession and a debt crisis. What followed is known as "The Lost Decade", characterized by zero growth and higher unemployment as Japan struggled to bail out its failing banking sector. However, Japan's enormous trade surplus with the world continued. The 2008-09 worldwide

**Christians**  
Protestant  
Independent  
Anglican  
Catholic  
Orthodox  
Marginal

**Churches**  
Catholic Cl  
Jehovah's W  
United Ch  
Spirit of Jes  
Latter-day Sa  
Holy Cath  
Independent  
Baptist Co  
Assemblies  
Evang Lut  
Seventh-d  
Japan Hol  
J Gospel C  
Presby Cl  
Immanue  
Christian  
Korean-sj  
English-s  
Reforme  
J Chr All  
Holy Ec  
Baptist L  
Other d  
Total C

**Transf**  
Evang  
Evangel  
Renev  
Charis  
Pent

**Miss**  
P.I.A



...movement that mixed Christian beliefs with Black  
 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I. They are well known  
 ja (marijuana), as well as for their non-violent "peace  
 derable influence in Jamaica and have spread to Europe  
 a few prominent Rastafarians have professed Christ as  
 ls.

ly serving the whole Caribbean.

, channels Scriptures to most of the mini-states of the  
 n of making Scripture accessible to young people in

ght Ministries operates six Christian bookstores in  
 t Bible Correspondence Course. CLC has a notable

adcast in English by TWR (from within Jamaica) and  
 us per week. In the country itself, there is also a reli-  
 m.

d Scripture Union (SCF/SU), as well as Jamaica Youth  
 sm Fellowship, do valuable work among the younger  
 an leaders serving globally or in Jamaica are products

Pop under 15 yrs 13%. Life expectancy  
 82.7 yrs.

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 struggled to bail out its failing banking sector.  
 However, Japan's enormous trade surplus with  
 the world continued. The 2008-09 worldwide

recession led to Japan's first trade deficits in many  
 years as well as its highest post-war unemployment  
 rate (5%). Public debt is close to 200% of GDP,  
 but private savings levels are still extremely high,  
 protecting many individuals from the poor  
 economic performance. The low birth rate and  
 aging population are major societal and  
 economic concerns for the future.

HDI Rank 10<sup>th</sup>/182. Public debt 172% of  
 GDP. Income/person \$38,457 (81% of USA).

## Politics

Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary  
 democracy. Years of stability and economic  
 expansion since WWII turned Japan into an  
 economic superpower. Rising nationalism and  
 willingness to exert political power in the  
 Pacific cause unease among neighbours.  
 Numerous scandals, corruption and factional  
 politics discredit the present political system and  
 delay the implementation of reforms. In the  
 general election of 2009, the Democratic Party  
 of Japan (DPJ) defeated the Liberal Democrat  
 Party (LDP), which had been in power almost  
 continuously since WWII.

## Religion

Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all by the  
 constitution. Over 70% of Japanese claim no  
 personal religion, but the majority follow the  
 demands of idolatrous and ancestor-venerating  
 Buddhism, and rituals of polytheistic Shintoism.  
 Historically, Japanese identity is deeply tied to  
 Shintoism, and formal disassociation from this  
 connection is extremely difficult in a land where  
 conformity rules. Many also follow some of the  
 hundreds of newer religious movements that are  
 off-shoots or interpretations of these. The main  
 ones: *Sokka Gakkai* (10m), *Rishokoseikai* (5.5m),  
*Seicho no Ie* (3.7m). Therefore, figures in the table  
 below cannot adequately show the multiple  
 religious loyalties of the Japanese, which could be  
 described as New Religions 24%, Buddhist 85%,  
 Shinto 90%!

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Buddhist	69.59	88,376,107	-0.1%
Other	23.70	30,097,912	-0.2%
Non-religious	5.00	6,349,771	1.2%
Christian	1.54	1,955,729	-0.2%
Muslim	0.15	190,493	1.3%
Baha'i	0.02	25,399	-0.1%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	155	0.44	555,000	-1.1%
Independent	37	0.25	317,000	0.9%
Anglican	1	0.04	57,000	0.0%
Catholic	1	0.40	513,000	0.2%
Orthodox	2	0.03	32,000	1.5%
Marginal	8	0.38	484,000	-0.3%

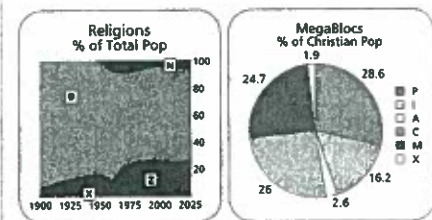
Churches	MegaBlocs	Cong	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	1,095	358,741	513,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	3,180	212,000	354,040
United Ch of Christ	P	1,730	130,769	187,000
Spirit of Jesus Church	I	624	74,850	125,000
Later-day Saints (Mormon)	M	300	99,600	124,500
Holy Catholic Ch	A	316	28,450	56,900
Independent churches	I	751	33,786	47,300
Baptist Convention	P	335	16,875	35,100
Assemblies of God	P	215	22,800	31,000
Evang Lutheran Ch	P	160	7,267	22,020
Seventh-day Adventist	P	119	15,300	17,150
Japan Holiness Ch	P	168	5,400	13,500
J Gospel Ch of Christ	P	228	9,600	12,960
Presby Ch of Christ	P	125	5,485	12,450
Immanuel General Miss	P	123	7,029	12,300
Christian Brethren	P	165	8,500	11,200
Korean-speaking chs	P	139	6,950	10,425
English-speaking chs	P	189	6,667	10,000
Reformed Ch in Japan	P	154	5,297	9,800
J Chr Alliance (TEAM)	P	190	6,704	9,050
Holy Ecclesia of Jesus	I	112	6,885	8,400
Baptist Union	P	70	4,420	7,028
Other denominations[159]		5,087	217,646	328,747

Total Christians[204] 15,575 1,291,021 1,958,870

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	0.5	596,498	-0.4%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	0.3	374,431	1.1%
Pentecostals	0.2	256,679	0.8%

## Missionaries from Japan

P.I.A Estimated 300 serving outside Japan.



## Answers to Prayer

① Uncertainty about the future has prompted spiritual searching. This is partly in  
 response to many economic and social changes that threaten the status quo in Japan. The  
 constant threats of a major earthquake, of economic decline, the widening generation gap and  
 the feeling of social isolation (*hikikomori*) that so many suffer provoke widespread soul-searching.

Japan | July 25-27

489

P.2

→ Deana



regular floods caused by massive deforestation, more than three  
 pray for:  
 resorted to desperate measures to feed their families. This may  
 le grass and plants, hazarding the dangerous passage to China  
 listic activity. Pray that, in some form, food might arrive at  
 resorting to crime or sin.

ristian, have been able to offer food but never with permission  
 s food might get to the population - much is diverted to Mr.  
 ury. Pray for wisdom on the part of foreign governments and  
 id delicate situation.

rea was the birthplace of Korean revival - Pyongyang was  
 he East". But most Christians fled to the south during the  
 their churches destroyed. Very little is known about today's  
 as survived and is growing amid great suffering and danger.  
 churches in the capital, but up to 100,000 Christians are  
 the Bible, saying "God" or "Jesus" and meeting as believ  
 r North Korean believers, that they persevere in what is  
 n which to be a Christian.

th Korea is greater than commonly perceived. Foreign  
 n, are on site through aid and development projects. Strict  
 but the very presence of believers and the testimony of  
 e in many lives. There are possibly hundreds of Christians  
 es:

an broadcasts as well as TWR and FEBC reach far into  
 tuned to government stations. Smuggled radios pre-tuned  
 neable radios are making their way into the country.

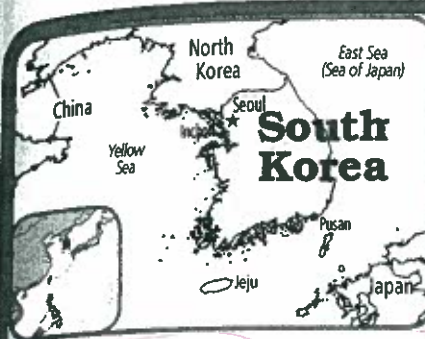
smuggled into the country by various means as well as  
 ore. Smugglers are liable to be executed if caught, but  
 xtremely precious to believers. A North Korean dialect  
 l.

elsewhere who are able to visit and gain opportunities  
 usnessmen, and their easy access to the country could  
 e multiplied in recent years, too many to list, and most  
 sands of believers are forming an unbroken chain of

a number in the region of 300,000. It is highly risky  
 nprisonment and likely torture or death. Pray for:  
 etween international pressure against such inhumane  
 nd awkward loyalty to North Korea. North Korean  
 se as pastors, build fake churches to entice Korean

s living in neighbouring Chinese provinces. Many  
 l share the gospel with them, but they are punished  
 e in hiding and are hunted by Chinese and North  
 een 70% and 90% of women refugees end up as  
 any refugees find Jesus through the kindness of  
 to South Korea via other nations, but find it very  
 erted North Korean escapees return home to take  
 vn lives.

8 Reunification of North and South Korea is a wish and a prayer for most Koreans on both  
 sides of the demilitarized zone, but on very different terms. South Korean Christians  
 praying for any such prayers to be answered. If or when the two nations become one, at worst,  
 prepared for any such prayers to be answered. If or when the two nations become one, at worst,  
 it could be on the back of a terribly damaging war and, at best, it would require massive  
 external assistance to relieve a failed state.



# Korea, South

## Republic of Korea

### Asia

**Geography**  
 Area 99,067 sq km. Southern half of Korean peninsula. Forested mountain ranges; 22% arable.  

Population	Ann.Gr.	Density
2010	48,500,717	0.39%
2020	49,474,990	0.13%
2030	49,146,236	-0.14%

 Capital Seoul 9,773,000. Other major cities  
 Pusan 3.4 million; Incheon 2.6mill; Taegu 2.5m;  
 Taejon 1.5m; Kwangju 1.5m; Changwon-Masan  
 1.3m; Suwon 1.1m; Ulsan 1.1m. **Urbanites**  
 81.9%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 17%. **Life expectancy**  
 79.2 yrs.

**Peoples**  
 One of the world's most ethnically homogeneous nations.  
**Korean** 97.8%. An ancient and cultured nation.  
**Other** 2.2%. A mix of Western, Chinese, Japanese and many South and Southeast Asians. Of the approximately 1 million foreigners, nearly one-half reside for work purposes and one-fourth are illegal immigrants.  
**Literacy** 100%. **Official language** Korean.  
**All languages** 4. **Indigenous languages** 2.  
**Languages with Scripture** 2Bi 1por.

**Economy**  
 Transformed from a poor, devastated nation in 1953 into the eleventh-largest economy in the world by rapid industrialization and

modernization. A wide range of sophisticated, export-oriented industries, driven by the powerful *chaebol* conglomerates. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-99 exposed several weaknesses in the Korean system, but liberalization helped the economy push on. Few natural resources and high dependence on exports make Korea financially vulnerable, but a highly educated workforce and technological innovation mitigate this.  
**HDI Rank** 26<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 24.4% of GDP. **Income/person** \$19,136 (40% of USA).

**Politics**  
 A millennia-old history of frequent invasions and interference from surrounding nations. The Japanese occupation (1910-1945), the foreign-engineered division of Korea (1945-48) and the devastating Korean War (1950-53) have moulded the attitudes and politics of Koreans. Strong military-civilian governments held power from 1950 until 1987, when public unrest led to constitutional change and a more open, multiparty democracy. The first civilian president in 32 years was elected in 1992. The disastrous state of North Korea seems to make either conflict or unification inevitable.

**Religion**  
 Complete religious freedom. Published numbers range widely due to uncertain boundaries between religious heritage and actual belief and practice.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Non-religious*	30.98	15,025,522	0.9%
Christian	30.95	15,010,972	0.4%
Buddhist	23.70	11,494,670	0.5%
Ethnoreligionist	7.00	3,395,050	-1.0%
Other	4.30	2,085,531	0.9%
Chinese	2.70	1,309,519	-2.4%
Muslim	0.29	140,652	3.4%
Baha'i	0.08	38,801	3.1%

\*Many Koreans have no formal religious ties but do have a connection to Confucian values and teachings.

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	180	34.48	16,723,000	0.3%
Independent	19	0.86	416,000	1.6%
Anglican	1	0.10	50,000	0.2%
Catholic	1	9.18	4,450,000	0.3%
Marginal	69	2.98	1,446,000	1.2%
Doubly affiliated		-16.65	-8,075,000	0.0%

P. 1  
 → Clare



So. Korea, p.2 → Clare

The huge number of doubly affiliated can be attributed to countless denominational schisms, inconsistent enumeration mechanisms in churches and widespread failure to account for dual and transferred memberships, especially within Protestant bodies. The actual number of Protestants may be near half of what is claimed in official denominational reports.

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	1,243	2,486,034	4,450,000
Presby-HapDong	P	11,112	1,164,990	2,912,476
Presby-Tong Hap	P	7,671	1,343,406	2,686,812
Korean Methodist Ch	P	5,443	762,019	1,585,000
Korea Assembly of God	P	2,800	948,000	1,185,000
Korea Baptist Conv	P	2,785	801,437	931,000
Presby-HapDong Jeong	P	3,004	262,606	866,599
Korea Holiness Evang	P	1,011	374,000	748,000
Jesus Korean Holiness	P	2,758	112,852	564,260
Presby-Ko Shin	P	1,689	197,520	474,047
Presby-Ki Jang	P	1,291	148,458	337,000
Presby-HapDong BoSu	P	877	140,000	242,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	695	206,000	238,960
Presby-Gae Hyuk	P	3,163	129,928	220,877
Presby-Ye Jang Hap Bo	P	179	114,706	195,000
Jesus Assembly of God	I	1,008	69,620	174,051
Presby-HapDong Jung	P	1,012	53,333	160,000
Other denominations[242]		19,449	2,497,582	5,113,947

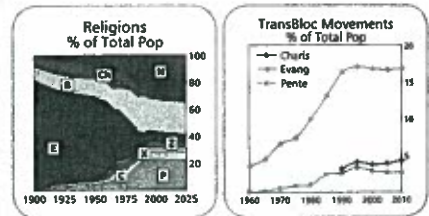
Doubly affiliated Pentecostals -350,000  
Doubly affiliated -7,725,369

Total Christians[270] 67,190 11,812,491 15,010,660

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	16.8	8,164,977	0.7%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	4.3	2,103,888	2.5%
Pentecostals	2.7	1,311,424	0.6%

#### Missionaries from South Korea

P, I, A 21,500 Korean missionaries in about 175 countries with about 200 mission agencies: 97% international, 95% cross-cultural, 95% long-term. Many Korean missionaries are sent by indigenous denominational groups but serve with international agencies, resulting in some duplication.



dependent on exports, and inequity between r for leaders and justice for those most vulnerab

- b) **Moral foundations appear to be eroding.** This increasing materialism, a growing generation addiction and, as with most developed nations, cosmetic surgery industry and decreased sensit
- c) **Traditional religious faiths** increasingly co agnosticism. A spectrum of Buddhism, Co Religions (usually a blend of Christianity, Bu most of the population, although the majorit however, there has been an awakening of religi which has happened to coincide with a relativ

- 2 **The looming spectre of North Korea m** from the demilitarized zone, any conflict we than an invasion is the collapse of North Kore humanitarian needs and a huge challenge to the S may be ready for such an occasion and make wise c to the North is almost impossible, but many in the for the opportunity to share the gospel. OMS/KEH refugees as a first step. Other initiatives include the North Korea campaign and initiatives by OMF, the
- 3 **The Korean Church has major spiritual** the world and effectiveness in ministry are to

- a) **Stagnation and saturation.** Numerical growth continued evangelism and prayer. Exaggerated n common enough that up to 45% of all "claime more groups. This is especially true of the young away from genuine Christian faith and practice.
- b) **Spiritual pride,** including the belief in some circ of God's favour. There is often a pride in statistic buildings, along with exaggerated claims made. It i to seek success, wealth and academic degrees mo God's blessings to their own hard work or brillian
- c) **Divisions and schisms sadly typify** the Korean l occupation, there was only one Presbyterian de growing. While some splits were actually heal personality clashes have been at the root of much disciples needs more attention. Yet some work has of Prayer for Unity, adopted by Catholics and Prote and a new spirit of cooperation to be evident in e
- d) **Patterns of leadership.** Leadership is sometimes pastors hinders biblical servant-leadership, promot discipleship, since too many depend more on p priesthood of all believers.
- e) **Church structures are not always conducive** to Christians have at times condoned low ethical sta they have not addressed the wrongs in wider so effective discipleship and integration of new believ causes "church hopping". With many new Christian solid teaching and discipleship are essential.
- f) **Lack of transformational impact on society.** The not yet fulfilled its capacity to have a transformir Korea today. Poverty, corruption, moral drift and u could be more directly addressed. Christians woul ety were the churches mobilized to act in concert.

## Answers to Prayer

- K 1 **Praise God for the unique Korean Church.** It was founded on sound indigenous principles, blessed with a succession of revivals, refined by persecution and is now one of the foremost Churches in the world for missions vision. It has one of the highest proportions of evangelicals in Asia. Korea's Church presence is highly visible; Korean society has been impacted on many levels by it, and a number of high-profile leaders of politics and industry are Christian. From the first Protestant church planted in 1884, South Korea now has possibly 50,000 Protestant congregations.
- 2 **Commitment to sustained, sacrificial and passionate prayer,** both corporately and individually, characterizes much of the Korean Protestant Church. With early morning and evening prayer meetings every day and all night, prayer concerts on weekends and prayer mountains (retreat centres), the commitment of Korean Christians to prayer is remarkable; the fruit of these prayers will never be fully known this side of heaven.
- 3 **Korean Christianity is one of superlatives.** Six of the ten largest churches in the world are in Korea as are some of the world's largest theological colleges, baptismal services and evangelistic and Christian gatherings in history. Praise God, not for the size of these events, but for the growth and strength that they reflect.
- 4 **Korea's missionary-sending movement** has expanded to make it the second-largest foreign-mission-sending nation on earth. Over 20,000 workers have been sent out from South Korea. Even greater numbers are targeted for the longer term.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **Society and culture in Korea** saw great change in the last generation. Pray for the following issues:
  - a) **Economic growth has been remarkable** in the last 50 years. But the global success of some Korean brands has exposed corruption in politics and industry. The economy is highly



sionals will have a serious effect on the nation as will with grandparents while they move abroad. But, on cal churches have been planted throughout Western s might reach out beyond Romanians to the spiritu- so for more Romanian Christians to stay or to return own nation.

venly spread throughout the nation. Pray for the

e 15 counties in the northwest have many times more ie southeast. There are 7,000 villages in the southeast at believers might be burdened for these less-reached to them.

include Hungarians, Russians/Lipovens and Serbs -- all ethnic Romanians.

ge, but it is in need of Christian witness. Most are s done to reach them, although there have been some rs.

otoriously difficult to count, but numbering between y are proportionately more evangelical than majority le. They suffer discrimination and isolation, with much alth care and employment. Government programmes em into society, but deep-seated prejudice must be e Romania only to meet harsh treatment in other the most spiritually responsive ethnicity to the gospel. ave bold vision to reach their own people.

blishing houses and for the distribution networks to d literature ministry. Pray that more locally written pastors have a theological library. Pray that the recent ng and a useful tool for all Bible-minded Christians.

ues to develop despite difficulties with permission and nia. RMS and HCJB collaborate with the EA on the rich includes eight FM stations, all uplinked to satellite. ian stations and transmissions from abroad. Alfa Omega ial stations available on cable, satellite and the Internet ngelism, discipleship and promoting Christian values.



## Russia

### Russian Federation

#### Europe

#### Geography

**Area** 17,075,400 sq km. The world's largest country, extending across 9 time zones between the Baltic and the Pacific. The Russian Federation is composed of 83 administrative districts, including 46 oblasts (provinces), 21 republics, 9 territories, 4 autonomous okrugs, 1 autonomous oblast and 2 federal cities.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	140,366,561	-0.39%
2020	135,405,523	-0.38%
2030	128,864,354	-0.53%

Massive decline -- an estimated loss of 30 million between 2000 and 2050 is likely. A further 25 million Russians live in 15 other ISU states. Siberia has one of the lowest population densities in the world.

**Capital** Moscow 10,549,892. **Other major cities** St. Petersburg 4.6 million; Novosibirsk 1.4m; Ekaterinburg 1.3m; Nizhny Novgorod 1.3m; Samara 1.1m; Omsk 1.1m; Kazan 1.1m; Chelyabinsk 1.1m; Ufa 1.0m; Rostov-na-Donu 1.0m; Volgograd 977,000. **Urbanites** 72.8%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 15%. **Life expectancy** 66.2 yrs.

#### Peoples

Great diversity made more complex by migrations, intense efforts to Russify minorities and continued large-scale immigration of FSU peoples into the present Russian Federation.

**Eurasian peoples** 90.6%. 82 peoples.

**Slavic(9)** 83.2%. Russian 80.5%; Ukrainian 2.1%; Belarusian 0.6%.

**Caucasus** 3.8%. 34 peoples. Chechen 1.0%; Avar 0.5%; Cherkess (Kabardian, Adyghe, Cherkess) 0.5%; Dargwa 0.4%; Kumyk 0.3%; Ingush 0.3%; Lezghi 0.3%.

**Finno-Ugric** 2.0%. 24 peoples. Udmurt 0.4%; Mari 0.4%; Mordvin(2) 0.5%; Komi(3) 0.3%.

**Other** 1.5%. 15 peoples. Armenian 0.8%; German 0.4%. **Turkic-Altaic** 8.0%. 49 peoples.

**Ural-Siberian** 6.8%. 37 peoples. Tatar(5) 3.9%; Bashkort 1.2%; Chuvash 1.1%; Yakut 0.3%; Tuva(3) 0.2%.

**Kazakh** 0.5%. 3 peoples.

**Other** 0.7%. 9 peoples. Azerbaijani 0.4%.

**Other** 1.4%. 29 peoples. Ossetian 0.4%; Buryat 0.3%; Jews(4) 0.2%. East Asians, Southeast Asians, Iranian-Medians, others.

**Literacy** 99.4%. **Official language** Russian; local languages in autonomous republics. **All languages** 135. **Indigenous languages** 100. **Languages with Scriptures** 6Bi 19NT 47por 21wip.

#### Economy

Vast natural resources including gas, oil, timber and minerals as well as huge amounts of arable land offer great economic power and potential. Sheer size, geographic isolation and few decent seaports have historically limited advancement. Marxist centralized politics and infrastructure prevented efficient exploitation of these resources for the people's benefit, but did allow for large-scale plundering. Oligarchs, Russia's homemade billionaires, at an opportune moment seized control of what had been state industries, thus concentrating most of the economy in the hands of a few men. Centralized forces under a strong president, a revamped manufacturing sector and high oil prices turned around the economic disaster of the 1990s to a stronger performing decade from 2000 to 2010, but government rhetoric makes it difficult to obtain accurate figures. What is undeniable is that Russia's poor and unemployed number in the millions, and the economy remains very dependent on oil and gas exports. A huge budget deficit, endemic corruption and bribery, a crumbling and aged infrastructure, limited foreign investment, low productivity (both industrially and agriculturally) and, most alarmingly, rapid demographic decline -- all present a challenging future for Russia.

**HDI Rank** 71<sup>st</sup>/182. **Public debt** 6.5% of GDP. **Income/person** \$11,807 (25% of USA).

#### Politics

Russia has known little but autocracy or tyranny since it became a country in the 8th Century. Imperialist Russia collapsed in 1917, shortly before the Bolshevik Communist revolution. Russia dominated the USSR from its founding in 1922, and the Communist leadership exploited ordinary Russian people as well as the many ethnic groups and satellite states it seized or controlled. A multiparty federal democracy was instituted in 1990. The subsequent decade was a tense tug of war between various forces in Moscow as well as the restive republics and regions. Putin's appointment in 1999 (and election in 2000) restored strong central authority, which in many ways echoed the Soviet era of state control.

→ Leo



Russia, p.2 → Leo

In 2008, Putin "stepped down" to become prime minister as his protégé (many would say puppet), Medvedev, became president. Xenophobic nationalism and erosion of basic freedoms remain very real threats. Freedom of the press and media is limited; all television stations are government controlled or strongly self-censored. Relationships with the West, Ukraine, Belarus and emerging Asian superpowers are crucial but are often characterized by belligerence. Upheaval in Dagestan and Ingushetia point toward a possible full civil war – on the scale of Chechnya – in the not too distant future.

## Religion

The Church in Russia has suffered some of the most severe and sustained persecution of any nation in recent history. Deaths in the Gulag (prison camps) between 1920 and 1990 are reckoned at 20 million; many prisoners were Christian. Up to 200,000 Christian leaders were martyred. Of the 100,000 church-owned buildings in 1920 (mainly Orthodox), almost none, by 1940, were in use by Christians; they had been seized or destroyed. Structures and ministries were emasculated or manipulated, leadership was cowed into compliance and compromise, Christians and their children were discriminated against and millions were consigned to years of imprisonment, exile or psychiatric "treatment". Today, freedom of religion is written into the constitution, as is the equality of all religions before the law and the separation of church and state. In reality, this is not the case. Orthodoxy's 1,000-year history as part of the culture of Russia gives the Church enormous political influence. The 1997 federal religion law – focused on issues of registration and operation of religious congregations – can override local laws, impose restrictions on and discriminate against minority religions. The legislation's complexity and ambiguity makes the religion law a tool for arbitrary application against newer religious groups and especially foreign-based ones.

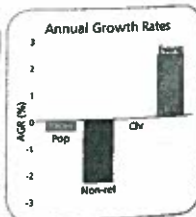
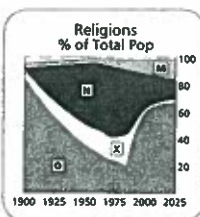
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	66.90	93,905,229	0.0%
Non-religious	19.15	26,880,196	-2.4%
Muslim	12.50	17,545,820	0.9%
Buddhist	0.71	996,603	-0.1%

Ethnoreligionist	0.40	561,466	-0.4%
Jewish	0.20	280,733	-4.7%
Other	0.10	140,367	-5.5%
Hindu	0.03	42,110	-0.4%
Baha'i	0.01	14,037	-0.4%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	74	1.24	1,747,000	1.9%
Independent	13	0.80	1,129,000	-1.5%
Anglican	1	<0.01	4,000	1.2%
Catholic	1	0.56	783,000	-0.2%
Orthodox	22	64.02	89,860,000	0.0%
Marginal	12	0.28	395,000	0.6%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Russian Orthodox	O	12,300	56,493,506	87,000,000
Ukrainian Orthodox	O	222	886,667	1,330,000
Old Believers	I	260	668,085	942,000
Armenian Apos Ch	O	63	544,910	910,000
Catholic Church	C	51	508,442	783,000
R United Un of Pente	P	2,400	396,000	594,000
True Orthodox Chs	O	4,901	264,667	397,000
Un of Pente Chr	P	1,600	207,647	353,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	1,047	157,000	290,000
Lutheran Church	P	141	143,713	240,000
Un of Chrs of Ev Faith	P	400	60,000	180,000
Un of Ev Chr Baptists	P	1,750	80,000	110,400
Assoc Chr Chs (ACCR)	I	490	58,800	105,840
Other denominations[85]		3,395	432,944	682,073
<b>Total Christians[123]</b>		<b>29,020</b>	<b>60,902,381</b>	<b>93,917,313</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	1.2	1,636,627	2.3%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	1.0	1,416,220	2.7%
Pentecostals	0.9	1,211,027	2.9%



## Answers to Prayer

- The fall of the Iron Curtain** opened Eastern Europe and Central Asia to unprecedented access to the good news – opportunities for evangelism, church planting, re-establishing a Christian infrastructure, many partnering networks, theological education and Bible translation and distribution. Churches more than doubled in number and in size, and those identifying themselves as non-religious or atheist dropped by more than half from pre-1991.

- Evangelicals are moving forward**, from being part of the religious landscape of Russia. Many of them are now number in the hundreds of thousands of affiliates. They are beginning to weather both foreign Western and domestic government challenges in councils in the Kremlin.

- Ambitious and faith-filled church planting** networks is a far cry from the insular survival mode.

- Many hitherto totally unreached peoples** – Muslim and Buddhist – have the opportunity to hear the good news as churches are being planted.

## Challenges for Prayer

- Russia is a proud nation with a great legacy**, but its future is uncertain. Some see a bleak future, others a resurgent Russia. Russia is now as an economic disaster; others see growth and strength. Russia is still seen as a grim outlook. For the nostalgic older generation, Communism is preferred; for the younger generation, modernization is preferred for the following long-term cultural issues:

- Demographics reveal a civilization caught in a deadly decline** of over 500,000 each year. Such a rapid numerical decline is unable to reverse the trend. Russia's birthrate is among the lowest in the world's highest. Figures indicate more abortions than live births, especially for the following long-term cultural issues:

- Health issues are spiralling to crisis level.** Health care is making it inaccessible to many – just when it is most urgently needed.

- The alcoholism rate in Russia is one of the world's highest.** Homicide and suicide can in large part be attributed to the use of cheap, illegal and often poisonous vodka; Russia sells more vodka than any other country.

- Drug addiction controls the lives of as many as 2.5 million** at one point that 8% of teens used drugs daily. The influx of money has led to mafia involvement and control. Ministry to addicts is a necessary one.

- Russia has Europe's highest and fastest-rising rate of HIV.** Tuberculosis, raises mortality rates and drastically reduces the life expectancy of the mostly young people, further robbing Russia of its future.

- Russian nationalism and its outworkings.** Strong nationalistic sentiments, from religious Orthodox Russia to the Soviet era, 21st Century trends seem to be leading to irrevocable trouble.

- Racist nationalism is increasing.** Nazi-style expressions are being used to describe Russian Slavs as an expression of identity and "patriotism" by far-right political groups, but also to huggery against visitors. Such racist attacks increased by 30% in 2008 alone, forcing the government to address this issue.

- Nationalism in foreign policy** and Russification internally, is often led to belligerence, particularly in Chechnya and in the Caucasus, for good relations with foreign powers and with minority groups.

- Minority groups from within the former Soviet Union** face discrimination. The very ones who colonized them through Russian imperialism are now being persecuted. Millions of Central Asian immigrants work in Russian cities, but are not counted in census figures. The great irony is that with



→ Delia



# Thailand

## Kingdom of Thailand

### Asia

### Geography

**Area** 513,115 sq km. A fertile and well-watered land bordering on Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	68,139,238	0.66%
2020	71,443,041	0.43%
2030	73,462,037	0.23%

**Capital** Bangkok. **Other major city** Bangkok/Thonburi conurbation 7.0 million. **Urbanites** 34%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 22%. **Life expectancy** 68.7 yrs.

### Peoples

**Southeast Asian** 81.0%.

**Thai** 78.4%. Four main peoples: Central 31.3%; Isan (Lao-Thai) 26.5%; Northern 10.6%; Southern 9.2%.

**Mon-Khmer** 1.2%. 25 peoples. Largest: Kui 0.5%.

**Tai** 0.9%. 16 peoples.

**Other Southeast Asian** 0.5%. Vietnamese, Miao/Hmong, Lao, Shan, Cham, others.

**East Asian** 10.8%. Chinese (7) 10.6%. Most are now Thai-speaking; some sources claim up to 17% Chinese.

**Malay** 6.1%. 8 peoples. Most in the far south. Pattani Malay 5.0%; Malay 1.0%.

**Tibeto-Burman** 1.2%. 17 peoples, largest: Karen(8) 0.9%.

**Other** 0.9%. South Asian; Western; other.

These numbers do not account for the more than 1 million Burmese migrants who come from many ethnicities.

**Literacy** 92.6%. **Official language** Thai. **All languages** 85. **Indigenous languages** 74. **Languages with Scriptures** 16Bi 9NT 19por.

### Economy

Free market principles, foreign investment, fertile agricultural land and recent industrialization

have led to strong exports – textiles, shrimp, sugar, rubber, jewellery and electronics. Thailand is also the world's largest exporter of rice. Rapid economic growth in the 1980s and '90s was halted by a crash in the late 1990s. Subsequent investment-driven growth was hampered again by the economic crisis of 2008-09. Tourism is a major aspect of the economy; there is also an endemic economy of vice, in particular the sex trade and drug trafficking.

**HDI Rank** 87<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 37.9% of GDP. **Income/person** \$4,116 (9% of USA).

### Politics

A kingdom since the 13th Century, and never ruled by a Western power. A constitutional monarchy; the popular king – the world's longest-reigning monarch – plays a strong, unifying and stabilizing role. The powerful army dominated politics and commercial life for 60 years; widespread corruption ensued, which persists to a degree today. A military coup ousted the prime minister in 2006. Elections in 2007 saw his party re-elected at the head of a coalition. Opposition groups demonstrating en masse and counter-demonstrations escalated in 2008. The courts then dissolved the ruling coalition on charges of electoral fraud, after which a new coalition was formed, led by the main opposition group, the People's Alliance for Democracy. In 2010, the Red Shirts political pressure group, loyal to the People's Power Party (which was deposed in 2008), initiated sustained protests that took over key areas of central Bangkok, paralyzing much of the city. The main protest sites were eventually seized by the army and police, but disruption is far from over. The Thai political scene is deeply divided; some regard civil war as a worst-case scenario. Additionally, violent insurgency among Muslims in the south at times destabilizes that region.

### Religion

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution, which was modified in 1998 to loosen ties between the state and Buddhism and increase harmony among religious communities. All new religious groups must come under one of the government-recognized umbrella networks in order to be legally recognized.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Buddhist	85.32	58,136,398	0.5%
Muslim	7.90	5,383,000	2.3%
Non-religious	2.40	1,635,342	2.0%
Chinese	1.80	1,226,506	-0.4%
Ethnoreligionist	1.20	817,671	-0.9%
Christian	1.10	749,532	2.8%
Other	0.10	68,139	0.7%
Hindu	0.10	68,139	0.7%
Baha'i	0.08	54,511	0.7%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	55	0.48	330,000	3.5%
Independent	29	0.08	54,000	4.3%
Anglican	1	<0.01	1,000	3.9%
Catholic	1	0.50	341,000	2.0%
Orthodox	4	<0.01	2,000	9.0%
Marginal	2	0.04	25,000	3.7%

Churches	MegaBloc	Cong	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	454	256,541	341,200
Ch of Christ (CCT)*	P	1,095	76,648	139,500
Karen Baptist Conv	P	416	27,040	33,800
Hope of God Int	I	496	17,365	29,000
Latter-day Saints	M	81	9,730	18,000
Associated Chs (OMF)	P	318	11,143	15,600
Lahu Bapt Conv of T	P	66	5,320	13,300
Thai Bapt Chs Assoc	P	94	7,156	11,020
Christian Fell (AoG)	P	72	5,000	8,350
Full Gospel Chs in T	P	135	6,750	8,100
Gospel Ch of T (CMA)	P	140	4,790	8,000
Other denominations[81]		1,727	75,167	124,540
<b>Total Christians[92]</b>		<b>5,094</b>	<b>502,650</b>	<b>750,410</b>

## Answers to Prayer

- The Church in Thailand is growing.** Nui best, but of late, they are proportionately more interest in the gospel by many in Thailand. Many poised for its greatest – or first – breakthrough of church members are first-generation believers.
- Emerging indigenous leadership** is making now have ambitious goals for reaching the whole Church Growth Committee has bold plans to reach and neighbourhoods with the gospel through intercultural research.
- Missiological maturity** has come in leaps. Christianity dominated the church scene for too sensitivity to Buddhist worldviews and Thai culture and national workers.

## Challenges for Prayer

- Thailand has been an island of stability and "Land of Smiles"** is also awash with difficulties. I wise leadership and reform needed to address them:
- The political upheaval** of 2006-2008 revealed a parties, the military and the royalty. Protests brought
- The violent insurgency** in the southern areas near It is a result of some discrimination against the prec the radicalization of the same.
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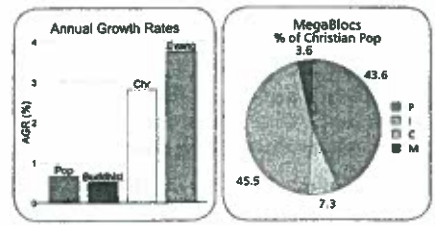
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<b>Total Christians[92]</b>		<b>5,094</b>	<b>502,650</b>	<b>750,410</b>

\*The Karen and Lahu Baptist Conventions are part of the CCT, but are counted here separately.

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	0.5	307,305	3.6%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	0.2	105,102	4.1%
Pentecostals	0.1	70,590	4.1%

## Missionaries from Thailand

P.I.A Estimated 468 long-term, nearly all in Thailand.



## Answers to Prayer

- The Church in Thailand is growing.** Numeric increases have always been modest at best, but of late, they are proportionately more rapid. There is a perception of greater interest in the gospel by many in Thailand. Many church and mission leaders feel Thailand is poised for its greatest – or first – breakthrough of church growth. Already, 65% of ethnic Thai church members are first-generation believers.
- Emerging indigenous leadership** is making up for years of shortfall in this area; they now have ambitious goals for reaching the whole country. The Thailand Evangelism and Church Growth Committee has bold plans to reach every one of Thailand's 80,000 villages and neighbourhoods with the gospel through intercession, outreach and the wise use of sound research.
- Missiological maturity** has come in leaps and bounds. Foreign expressions of Christianity dominated the church scene for too long, but increased understanding of and sensitivity to Buddhist worldviews and Thai culture are shaping more effective missionaries and national workers.

## Challenges for Prayer

- Thailand has been an island** of stability and freedom in a troubled region, but "The Land of Smiles" is also awash with difficulties. Pray for these pressing issues and for the wise leadership and reform needed to address them:
  - The political upheaval** of 2006-2008 revealed deep fault lines among various political parties, the military and the royalty. Protests brought the country to a standstill.
  - The violent insurgency** in the southern areas near Malaysia has claimed thousands of lives. It is a result of some discrimination against the predominantly Malay Muslim minority and the radicalization of the same.
  - Tensions with other neighbours**, including disputes with Cambodia and more notably Myanmar, from which over a million have fled disaster and persecution into Thailand.

Thailand

November 18-19

813

→ Delia



→ Analyse



# Turkey

## Republic of Turkey

### Asia

### Geography

**Area** 779,452 sq km. Straddles two continents; 3% in Europe (Thrace), 97% in Asia (Anatolia). Also controls the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles, vital sea links between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Its strategic position has made the area of prime importance throughout history.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	75,705,147	1.24%
2020	83,873,140	0.96%
2030	90,375,144	0.68%

**Capital** Ankara 3,906,044. **Other major cities** Istanbul 10.5 million; Izmir 2.7m; Bursa 1.6m; Adana 1.4m; Gaziantep 1.1m. **Urbanites** 69.6%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 27%. **Life expectancy** 71.7 yrs.

### Peoples

**Turkic peoples** 71.8%. A Central Asian people that conquered and largely absorbed the indigenous peoples of the land from the 11th Century onward. Though ethnically diverse, Turks have a fairly homogeneous culture. Sub-groups: Azeri 0.7%, living in the east; Koruk (Gagauz) 0.5%.

**Iranian-Median** 21.1% (Kurds constitute possibly as much as 20%). An Indo-Iranian people with concentrations in east and southeast Anatolia. Many Kurds use Turkish as their primary language. Other Iranian language groups: Kumanji 10.8%; Zaza(3) 1.8%.

**Arab** 2.5%. In south Anatolia, adjoining Syria.

**Eurasian peoples** 2.8%. Cherkess (Adyghe) 0.8%; Pomak 0.4%; Bulgarian 0.4%. Small numbers of several European peoples. Rapid decline through emigration. There were 1.75m Armenians and 1.5m Greeks in Turkey in 1900.

**Other** 1.8%. Jews, East Asians, South Asians, Africans, South Americans.

**Literacy** 88.3%. **Official language** Turkish. **All languages** 45. **Indigenous languages** 34. **Languages with Scriptures** 10Bi 7NT 12por.

### Economy

A mix of traditional agriculture, modernizing industry and commerce, and a strong tourism sector. Agriculture still employs more than one-third of the workforce. Continued development of both the Tigris and Euphrates river basins in the east. Economic reforms in the 1990s and 2000s and a growing private sector yielded a great deal of growth, though somewhat undermined by high inflation. Turkey has the world's 16th largest economy, but is marked by high trade deficits and rising unemployment. It is simultaneously one of Europe's poorer nations and the richest, most developed of the six Turkic nations in West and Central Asia. The push to fully join the EU persists, although friction between EU-demanded reforms and Turkish intransigence on certain issues continues to slow the process.

**HDI Rank** 79<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 40% of GDP. **Income/person** \$10,479 (22% of USA).

### Politics

The Turkish Ottoman Empire once stretched across North Africa, Arabia, Western Asia and Southeast Europe. Its demise and final fragmentation in World War I led to revolution, the birth of modern Turkey and the formation of a republic in 1923 by the much revered Atatürk. Periods of social disorder and military rule were followed by a return to democratic government in 1983, but with the military retaining considerable influence. Turkey is a member of NATO, but in dispute with fellow NATO member Greece, largely regarding full recognition of Cyprus. The long, bitter strife with Kurdish separatists caused 30,000 deaths and the ravaging of the southeast, but since 1999 its intensity has considerably reduced. Legal reforms in 2002-2003 significantly improved the lot of Kurds in Turkey. Economic links with Europe, cultural links with Central Asia and proximity to traditional conflict areas of Iraq, the Balkans and the Caucasus enhance Turkey's strategic importance. This unique situation positions Turkey as a potentially excellent diplomatic mediator among the region's various powers.

### Religion

Turkey's Ottoman Empire was for centuries the guardian of all the holy places of Islam and its chief protagonist. Since the sweeping reforms of the 1920s, Turkey has officially been a secular state. There is, however, a fault line between Islamists and secularists. Constitutional guarantee of religious freedom has not been fully upheld. Recent death threats and murders of Christians highlight the present reality and severity of persecution and the likelihood of more to come. The EU ruling against including

religion on Turkish identity cards may help prevent discrimination against Christians.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	96.64	73,159,940	1.2%
Non-religious	3.10	2,346,860	3.3%
Christian	0.21	163,140	-1.4%
Other	0.03	22,712	1.2%
Jewish	0.02	16,655	-4.2%

Sunni Muslims 70-80%, Alevi 15-25% (amongst Turks, Kurds, Zaza). Shi'a among Azeri and Iranians. There are also Yezidis among the Kurds.

Christians Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	15	0.02	13,000
Independent	2	0.01	4,000
Anglican	1	<0.01	2,000
Catholic	2	0.06	46,000
Orthodox	12	0.12	94,000
Marginal	2	<0.01	4,000

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Armenian Orthodox	O	24	33,000	55,000
Catholic Church	C	69	18,563	31,000
Bulgarian Orthodox	O	5	7,500	15,000
Foreign Protestants	P	32	3,497	10,000
Ancient Ch of the East	O	5	2,100	4,200
Turkish indigenous chs	I	42	2,517	3,600
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	31	2,030	3,390
Other denominations[21]		105	23,109	40,950
<b>Total Christians[34]</b>		<b>313</b>	<b>92,316</b>	<b>163,140</b>

### Answers to Prayer

- 1 The opening of Turkey to EU influence and diplomatic force. Both invite increased possibilities.
- 2 Give praise for the slow but steady growth. Turkish and Kurdish believers probably number around 4,000 by 2010. While growth is not as rapid of consolidation and maturation distinguishes the Church.

### Challenges for Prayer

- 1 Turkey is a nation torn in different directions. Middle Eastern nor Western, Turkish society is secular. The future are several issues that must be addressed. wisely, focused on the welfare of all who call Turkey home.
- 2 The rivalry between secular Turkish nationalism (Islamic headscarf) has been a flashpoint for this division and military are secular and notionally meant to uphold be as anti-Western, anti-minority and anti-Christian influences help to fuel fundamentalist Islam, while hindering. Pray that Turkey might steer a moderate path between.
- 3 The issue of membership in the European Union reforms for greater integration with Europe (especially





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Orthodox	12	0.12	94,000	-2.3%
Marginal	2	<0.01	4,000	2.0%

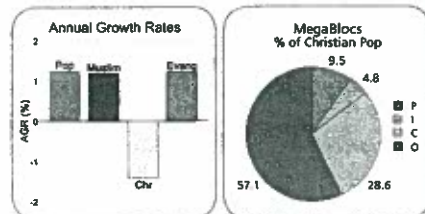
Churches	MegaBloc	Cong	Members	Affiliates
Armenian Orthodox	O	24	33,000	55,000
Catholic Church	C	69	18,563	31,000
Bulgarian Orthodox	O	5	7,500	15,000
Foreign Protestants	P	32	3,497	10,000
Ancient Ch of the East	O	5	2,100	4,200
Turkish indigenous ch	I	42	2,517	3,600
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	31	2,030	3,390
Other denominations[21]		105	23,109	40,950
Total Christians[34]		313	92,316	163,140

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	<0.1	7,267	1.2%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	<0.1	7,005	0.6%
Pentecostals	<0.1	228	3.7%

Close to 4,000 nationals are part of the overlapping evangelical and charismatic movements. The large majority of these are ethnic Turks and Kurds from a Muslim background plus a few ethnic Assyrian and Armenian evangelicals; the other evangelicals are expatriates living in Turkey. Growth rates for various Christian groups (ethnic Turks, all nationals, expats, etc) differ, often significantly.

## Missionaries from Turkey

**P, I, A** 24 (14 long-term); 10 short-termers serving among Turks in Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, France.



## Answers to Prayer

- 1** The opening of Turkey to EU influence and its own developing role as a regional diplomatic force. Both invite increased possibilities for sharing the gospel in Turkey.
- 2** Give praise for the slow but steady growth of Turkish evangelical Christianity. Turkish and Kurdish believers probably numbered around 10 in 1960. This number rose to around 4,000 by 2010. While growth is not as rapid as many hoped for or expected, a sense of consolidation and maturation distinguishes the Church today.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1** Turkey is a nation torn in different directions. Straddling Europe and Asia, neither Middle Eastern nor Western, Turkish society is secular yet Muslim. Critical to shaping the nation's future are several issues that must be addressed. Pray for leaders who will act justly and wisely, focused on the welfare of all who call Turkey home. Pray for:
  - a) The rivalry between secular Turkish nationalism and Islamism.** Legality of the hijab (Islamic headscarf) has been a flashpoint for this division. While the constitution, judiciary and military are secular and notionally meant to uphold religious freedom, secular Turks can be as anti-Western, anti-minority and anti-Christian as any hardline Islamists. Wahhabist influences help to fuel fundamentalist Islam, while hardline nationalism is also strong and rising. Pray that Turkey might steer a moderate path between these twin dangers.
  - b) The issue of membership in the European Union.** Some strive to introduce necessary reforms for greater integration with Europe (especially on human rights, religious freedom

Turkey

November 24-26

831

→ Analyse



→ Aiden



# Vietnam

## Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Asia

### Geography

Area 331,653 sq km. Long, narrow country occupying the entire eastern and southern coastline of Indochina.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	89,028,741	1.15%
2020	98,011,415	0.92%
2030	105,446,593	0.66%

Capital Hanoi 2,814,417. Other major cities Ho Chi Minh City 6.2 million; Hai-phong 2.0 mill. Urbanites 28.8%. Pop under 15 yrs 26%. Life expectancy 74.3 yrs.

### Peoples

**Vietnamese** 84.0%. Predominantly coastal people; large cultural differences between northern and southern Vietnamese.

**Mon-Khmer** 4.3%. 53 ethno-linguistic peoples. Largest: Muong 1.5%; Khmer (Cambodian) 1.4%.

**Zhuang** 3.0%. Tai Tho 1.9%; Highland Nung 1.1%.

**Thai-Dai** 1.9%. 17 ethno-linguistic peoples.

**Hmong/Miao** 1.5%. 8 peoples. Hmong Daw/White Meo 1.0%.

**Cham** 1.1%. 9 peoples.

**Other Southeast Asian peoples** 1.4%.

**Chinese** 2.6%.

**All others** 0.2%. Westerners, other Asians.

**Literacy** 90.3%. **Official language** Vietnamese.

**All indigenous languages** 106. **Languages with Scriptures** 7Bi 9NT 25por.

### Economy

Decades of war followed by Marxist economics, then the loss of Soviet-bloc financial backing which left the economy in complete shambles. Reforms begun in 1986 have modernized the economy, tamed inflation somewhat and seen

the emergence of a young middle class. Joining ASEAN Free Trade Area and WTO has also made a significant difference. There remains a large gap between urbanites and the rural poor. Poverty reduction, job creation and foreign investment remain economic priorities. Vietnam is the world's 2nd largest rice exporter, and seafood product exports are likewise crucial. **HDI Rank** 116<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 48.8% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,042 (2% of USA).

### Politics

Vietnam gained independence from France in 1954, an event followed by three decades of war until re-unification of the North and South under the Communist Party in 1975. The Communist Party retains supreme control of all state policy and activity; the government and military are the other major powers, both tied closely to the party. Strong authoritarian rule brooks no dissent, especially not from minorities, ethnic or religious. As a result human rights violations continue despite some improvements. Economic growth and increasing materialism present great challenges to the Marxist-Leninist ideals of the Party.

### Religion

The constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion is greatly diminished by a vast Bureau of Religious Affairs and Religion Police bureaucracies. For Protestants, new regulations in 2004 and 2005 ostensibly provided improvement through a regime for church registration. They also outlawed forced renunciations of faith, although some cases still occur. Registration is still denied to most churches in Vietnam. Those who do have it report a change in problems rather than significantly more freedom. Unregistered churches and ethnic minority Christians still suffer harassment, discrimination and sometimes outright persecution.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Buddhist	52.48	46,722,283	0.8%
Non-religious	23.30	20,743,697	1.8%
Christian	9.43	8,395,410	2.3%
Ethnoreligionist	7.85	6,988,756	0.9%
Other	5.40	4,807,552	0.8%
Chinese	1.00	890,287	0.2%
Baha'i	0.39	347,212	0.6%
Muslim	0.08	71,223	1.2%
Hindu	0.07	62,320	1.2%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	14	1.28	1,141,000	2.3%
Independent	94	0.72	639,000	3.4%
Anglican	1	<0.01	4,000	1.1%
Catholic	1	7.69	6,845,000	2.3%
Marginal	2	0.02	20,000	2.6%
Doubly affiliated		-0.28	-250,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Cong	Members	Affiliates	Tra
Catholic Church	C	2,615	4,444,805	6,845,000	Eva
EVCN (2)	P	928	219,937	695,000	Eva
Hmong churches	P	1,450	103,704	280,000	Rer
House ch movement	I	1,600	100,000	250,000	Cha
VN Chr Mission Ch	I	1,141	57,057	190,000	Pe
Chr Fellowship Ch	I	139	11,111	30,000	
Seventh-day Adventist	P	24	13,000	21,710	
Bapt Chs of V (BCV)	P	450	6,993	20,000	
Mennonite Ch of V	P	133	6,000	15,600	
Presbyterian Church	P	103	9,000	12,600	
Other denominations[37]		2,666	149,768	289,714	
Doubly affiliated				-250,000	

**Total Christians[125]** 11,249 5,121,375 8,399,624  
Significant overlap exists between the ECVN, the House church movement, the Hmong and Montagnard church networks and the many foreign denominations claiming affiliates in Vietnam. The doubly affiliated category attempts to account for the fuzzy lines between these groups.

## Answers to Prayer

- 1 A growing, witnessing Church is emerging. Protestant, new expression and old, a significant places, in both registered and unregistered churches, Vietnamese diaspora is also seeing many become belie back to Vietnam with them. There are three main gro
  - a) Among the mountain tribal peoples of central preservation and growth – by some estimates as gr years! This occurred despite cruel persecution on
  - b) Among the Hmong and other minority peoples Church grow rapidly among the Hmong from n 400,000 just two decades later, catalyzed by FI movements among Northern peoples have spread.
  - c) Among the ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh) themselves this group, clear church growth is happening, in the of Vietnam [which actually consists of two se EVCN(N) and one in the south EVCN(S)], in ot and in the unregistered church networks as well. Chi Minh City in 2009 attracted 40,000 people.

- 2 Increased numbers of Bibles in Vietnamese a released with permission from the government spread rapidly and has a shortage of Bibles in the he Christian books and study materials have recently be own publishing company.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 One of the few Communist nations in the lenges. Repression of all types of freedom conti on the rise. Drug addiction, AIDS, prostitution and exp The land has seen great violence. Division and mistrus bands in recent generations. Pray that the ideological a be banished by the light of the gospel.

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## Religion

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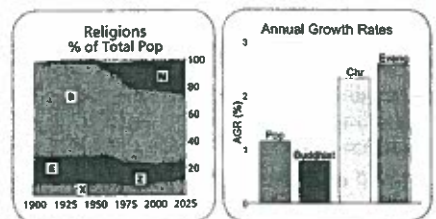
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TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals	1.8	1,576,889	2.6%
Renewalists	0.8	736,929	4.5%
Charismatics	0.1	93,214	5.5%
Pentecostals			



## Answers to Prayer

1 **A growing, witnessing Church** is emerging from years of persecution. Catholic and Protestant, new expression and old, a significant turning to God is occurring in different places, in both registered and unregistered churches, and among different people groups. The Vietnamese diaspora is also seeing many become believers. These converts then bring the gospel back to Vietnam with them. There are three main groups where church growth is occurring:

- Among the mountain tribal peoples** of central and southern Vietnam. Praise God for preservation and growth — by some estimates as great as nine-fold increase in just over thirty years! This occurred despite cruel persecution on the part of the government.
- Among the Hmong** and other minority peoples of Northern Vietnam. The 1990s saw the Church grow rapidly among the Hmong from no believers in 1988 to estimates of up to 400,000 just two decades later, catalyzed by FEBC radio broadcasting. House church movements among Northern peoples have spread.
- Among the ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh) themselves.** Although much more modest among this group, clear church growth is happening, in the formally recognized Evangelical Church of Vietnam [which actually consists of two separate organizations, one in the north EVCN(N) and one in the south EVCN(S)], in other, smaller but registered denominations and in the unregistered church networks as well. A Christmas gathering and service in Ho Chi Minh City in 2009 attracted 40,000 people.

2 **Increased numbers of Bibles** in Vietnamese and major tribal languages are printed and released with permission from the government. This is a great need, as the Church has spread rapidly and has a shortage of Bibles in the heart languages of Vietnam's peoples. Many Christian books and study materials have recently been published, some by the government's own publishing company.

## Challenges for Prayer

1 **One of the few Communist nations** in the 21st Century, Vietnam faces new challenges. Repression of all types of freedom continues, but at the same time, social ills are on the rise. Drug addiction, AIDS, prostitution and exploitation of children are all too common. The land has seen great violence. Division and mistrust have been effective tools in the enemy's hands in recent generations. Pray that the ideological and moral darkness over this nation might be banished by the light of the gospel.