
Vietnam

**Total area:**

331,210 km²

Population:

92,700,000 (2016)

Literacy:

94%

Official languages:

Vietnamese

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$6,925 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

75 years

Religions:

85% Buddhist, 7% Catholic, 2% indigenous beliefs, 1% Protestant, 2% other religions

Prayer points

New Religious Laws

New religious laws threaten to limit the freedom of Christians in Vietnam. The Law on Belief and Religion, which came into force on 1st January 2018, has alarmed Christians because it insists religious groups must be registered and approved by the Government. They believe the law's vague wording could be exploited to limit church activities. Pray that Christians in Vietnam will know God's peace and presence. Despite some improvement in religious freedom in Vietnam in recent years, some believers continue to face intense pressure, especially those who speak out against corruption and rights abuses. Christian lawyer Nguyen Van Dai and Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton are still in custody in Hanoi, following their arrests in December 2015 and 2017 respectively, after they called for greater religious freedom. They have been barred from meeting their lawyers. (Release International - March 2018)

Trying to maintain control

Vietnam is one of the few remaining Communist countries, but change is taking place. As a result of the expanding private economy, many Communist leaders have become rich, leading to an ideological crisis. In an attempt to maintain control, the regime operates harshly against 'deviant thought', including Christianity, which is still seen as a foreign influence and highly suspicious. All religious groups must be registered and abide by strict rules, so many house churches are forced to meet in secret. Pray for protection for these secret churches and wisdom for their leaders. Two thirds of Vietnamese Christians are from tribal backgrounds. Pray for them as they face pressure from their families and communities to return to traditional faiths. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - July 2015)

Specialised English Clubs

Specialised English Clubs are proving popular in Vietnam for people wanting to improve their language skills. These clubs meet weekly to listen to a programme together and to discuss English usage in small groups. As well as hearing holistic Christian content in the programmes, the participants also come into direct contact with registered churches and end up building relationships with people of faith. Pray, as more English clubs are started, that God's love will clearly be seen in these practical sessions and that lives will be changed as a result. (Reach Beyond - May 2015)

Abandoned and enslaved

Pam arrived at a refuge for street-girls in August this year. She had been abandoned by her parents as a baby and taken in by people from another major ethnic group, the Hmong. However, she was treated more as a slave than an adopted daughter, having been ordered to 'serve' her new family. She was sent to the capital city to earn money for the family and unsurprisingly ended up selling alcohol and working as a prostitute until she came across the team from the refuge. She begged them to take her in. It has been great to see the progress. While she is no longer gripped by the chains of prostitution, she remains a fragile soul, admitting recently, that all she had ever wanted in life was to be loved. Pray for Pam as she makes the long adjustment. Ask God to help the staff as they disciple her. (AsiaLink - January 2014)

Growth despite restrictions

Vietnam is one of the few remaining Communist countries today. We receive regular stories of surveillance of Christians, restrictions, arrests and imprisonment. Paradoxically, the churches are growing - both those registered and unregistered, and especially so in rural and mountain regions. There is much to thank the Lord for. It is also interesting to note that the government has permitted increased numbers of Bibles in Vietnamese and in some of the 100+ other languages used today. Pray for our partners who are using this currently open door to print and distribute in as many places as they can. (AsiaLink - September 2013)

'Heavy government suspicion'

Vietnamese house churches remain in a difficult situation. Reports of attacks on church buildings, meetings and worshippers remain. Officials continue to play a part in these state-sponsored attacks. The Hmong Christian movement in Vietnam's Northwest Mountainous Region is reported to have grown from nothing to approximately 400,000 believers in the last two decades. It's the Hmong people, and Christians specifically, who remain under "heavy government suspicion" according to Compass Direct. They continue to suffer outright harassment and even persecution. It is said that more than half of Vietnam's Protestant congregations remain unregistered. Hundreds of congregations have applied for proper registration and documentation but have been repeatedly denied. Pray with us for our brothers and sisters there who long to worship openly and freely. (AsiaLink - November 2012)

Improving language skills

Spotlight English Clubs are proving popular in Vietnam for people wanting to improve their language skills. These clubs meet weekly to listen to the *Spotlight* audio programme together and to discuss English usage in small groups. As well as hearing holistic Christian content in the programmes, the participants also come into direct contact with registered churches and end up building relationships with people of faith. Pray, as more English clubs are started, that God's love will clearly be seen in these practical sessions and that lives will be changed as a result. (Reach Beyond - September 2012)

Vietnamese evangelists

Vietnam is the largest of all the Southeast Asian countries. Most of its people groups are still unreached, including the Green, Red, and White Gelao. These groups have no known believers. However, Vietnamese evangelists are labouring day after day in conditions that are less than ideal. Pray for all those who are endeavouring to take the message of the gospel to their countrymen

and women and for new believers to know the strengthening of God's Holy Spirit, and have courage in the face of opposition, to stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ. (AsiaLink - March 2010)

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