



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN

response

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CAMBODIA

COUNTRY PROFILE



AREA: 181,035 sq km
POPULATION: 14.49 million
CAPITAL: Phnom Penh
ETHNICITY: Mon-Khmer 90%
Vietnamese 5%
Chinese 1%
RELIGION: Buddhist 96.4%
Muslim 2.1%
Christian 1.2%

BACKGROUND

Cambodia continues its struggle to recover from the after-effects of decades of war. 1999 marked a new beginning, the first full year of peace in 30 years. However, the country still has a long ways to go before it attains greater economic and political stability. Changing politics, a weak economy, and natural disasters are responsible for an ongoing sense of insecurity at both a personal and societal level. With its natural resources, Cambodia was once considered one of the richest countries in South East Asia. Yet, extreme communist measures under the leadership of Pol Pot turned the country into the poorest. During the gruesome regime of the Khmer Rouge, about two million people were brutally murdered.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Buddhism has been the national religion since the fifteenth Century. Nevertheless, Churches are growing at a rapid pace in this predominantly Buddhist state. Young people in particular (about half the population is in their teens or even younger) are longing for lasting inner peace and are very open to the gospel. Many foreign missions organizations seek to empower churches to have a lasting impact in their communities. Development projects, such as fish farming, are helping Christians to become self-supporting, as well as giving them means to help others even less favored. Having lost nearly a whole generation of their educated, mature believers, churches now have a real leadership vacuum. Young believers are seeking to take their place, but they need guidance and training along the way.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.CHRIStIANRESPONSE.ORG

CAMBODIA

Help to bring about lasting change in Cambodia

On a Sunday we witness the baptism of 93 people who became believers in the previous six months. In two rows they make their way down in the Mekong River where pastors receive and baptize them in the very muddy water. During the fearful years under the Pol Pot regime this same river was a place of death. Dead bodies floated down the river. But today the river becomes not only a symbol of death but also of life and resurrection. Just as Romans 6:4 describes, "Through baptism we were buried with Him and just as Christ was raised from the dead by the resurrection power of God the Father, we too received a new life in which we now ought to walk." People are submerged and put off their old life. At the same time they receive a new life in Christ. There is great joy over everyone who is getting baptized. Many villagers come to see what is going on. During a baptism an old man asks, "Is this a feast for a European god?" One of the students takes time to talk to him and explains that it's not a feast for a European god but rather for God who created Europeans and Cambodians. Baptism becomes another opportunity to tell others about Jesus Christ.

Pray for...

- Thanksgiving for the great openness towards the gospel, particularly among the young people
- Pray for lasting peace in a country with such a horrific past and for true reconciliation to take place
- Pray that evangelism and relief work supplement each other to have a maximum impact
- HIV is a growing threat to the Cambodian society. Pray that God would bring his truth and light to all structures of society
- Pray for wisdom and strength for Christian leaders to train and equip new leaders to fill the great lack of mature leaders



How will you respond?

www.christianresponse.org



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