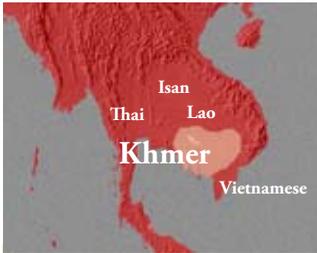


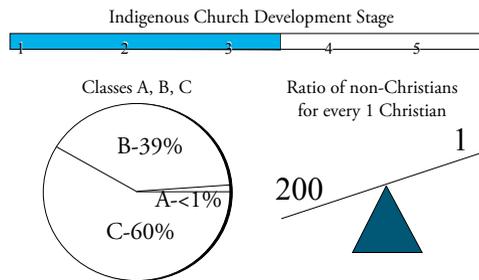
# Khmer



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 15,000,000  
 Cambodia: 12,000,000  
 Thailand: 1,200,000  
 Vietnam: 1,000,000  
 United States: 215,000

**Religion:** Theravada Buddhism  
**Believers:** 0.5%  
**Scriptures:** NT, OT  
**Ministry Tools:** JRGT  
**C Status:** 3  
**M Status:** 2  
**MS Subgroups:** 5



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church  
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined  
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

**Identity:** The Khmer are the predominant ethnic group of Cambodia. They are related to the Mon of Myanmar and the Vietnamese. They are believed to have migrated from China's Yunnan province along the Mekong River and settled near its delta around 3,000 years ago. By the first century A.D. they had become the most powerful ethnic group in Indo-China and ruled the region for 1500 years.

**Lifestyle:** The Khmer have been devastated by decades of civil conflict in which 2 million have died. Today, 80% of the population engages in subsistence farming. They live in small villages consisting of 200 to 300 people. A family of five can usually be supported by one hectre of land (2.5 acres) in which rice, fruits and vegetables are cultivated. Chicken, pork and fish are the primary sources of protein.

**Customs:** The Khmer practice a form of astrology which they learned from

both the Indians and Chinese. Fortune tellers called *hao-ra* are consulted before major decisions or events, such as where to build a house or locate a business, going on a journey, setting a wedding date, and even who to marry.

**Religion:** For centuries the Khmer practiced a form of Hinduism mixed with their own traditional beliefs. The famous Angkor Wat structure was built to honor the Hindu god Vishnu. In the 13th century the Khmer converted to Buddhism, though they still retain many Hindu elements such as veneration of the god Shiva. The Khmer believe that a good person will be reincarnated as a person of wealth and influence, and a bad person will come back as a peasant or even an animal. Buddhist monks officiate most important social ceremonies, though if someone is sick, a traditional shaman will be consulted.

**Christian Outreach:** The rapid growth of the Cambodian church is a cause for

great rejoicing. The years of sowing among Khmer refugees by dozens of mission agencies resulted in many Khmer leaders being raised up. One such leader returned to Cambodia and has led over 5,000 Khmer to Christ and planted dozens of churches.

## How to Pray:

✞ Buddhism was the state religion from the 15th century until the Khmer Rouge in 1975, in which 90% of Buddhist monks were killed. Pray that the new government will not favor the Buddhist majority but will allow Christians to worship and evangelize freely.

✞ The struggling economy has resulted in a lucrative tourist driven sex-industry. Rates of HIV and child-prostitution are some of the highest in the world. Pray for God's grace upon the Khmer Church as they minister the love of Christ during this national crises.

✞ Pray that Cambodia will continue to remain open to missionary work, and also that the influx of missionaries from around the world will not restrict the development of indigenous leaders.

✞ Pray against the spread of divisive and false teaching in the emerging Church.

**Every year 135,000 Khmer die without Christ.**