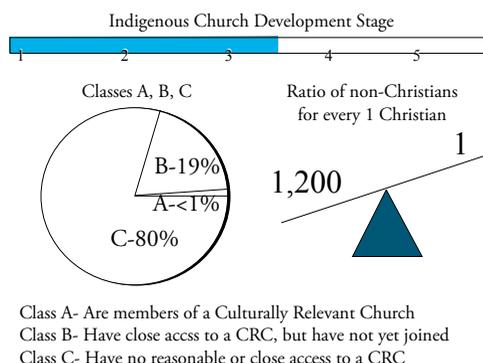




Quick Facts

Population: 3,100,000
 Laos: 2,700,000
 United States: 175,000
 Cambodia: 90,000
 France: 50,000
Religion: Buddhism
Believers: 0.08%
Scriptures: NT, OT
Ministry Tools: JRGT
Church Status: 3
Mission Status: 3
MS Subgroups: 8+



Identity: The Lao are a Daic people closely related to the Thai and the Isan. Their separate identity as an ethnic group can be traced back as far as the 14th century when the great conqueror Fa Ngum founded the first Laotian state.

Lifestyle: The Lao are primarily subsistence farmers, and as a nation they are self-sufficient in rice production. Cash crops of sugarcane, coffee, tobacco and opium are also grown by some. Following the Vietnamese invasion in 1968, the Lao were cut off from the rest of the world. The Vietnamese demanded that even trade with China be suspended, resulting in Laos becoming one of the poorest countries in Asia. However, with incremental steps Laos is reconnecting with world markets. Lately, tourism has become a major source of revenue.

Customs: Traditionally, Lao society has been divided between nobility and

commoner. The nobility made up the urban social elite, and owned all the farmland in the country. The Vietnamese conquest resulted in the dismantling of this noble class and the creation of another: the Communist party. Ironically, those who run the party today are descendants of the former aristocracy.

Religion: Buddhism first came to the Lao around the 3rd century A.D. Before the communist revolution, there were over 1,900 Pagodas (Lao-Buddhist worship centers) and 100 Pali schools (training centers for Buddhist monks). In the 1970s the government began to systematically shut these down, and thousands of monks fled the country. The government now controls today's Buddhist clergy in an effort to influence the national culture. Monks are required to study Marxism and incorporate party principles in their teaching.

Christian Outreach: The Laotian government is committed to the eradication

of Christianity throughout the entire country. Churches have been closed, pastors and leaders arrested, and congregants pressured with force to publically renounce their faith or be sent to re-education camps. Nonetheless, the Church continues to grow, and a strong underground network of fellowships is emerging.

How to Pray:

☞ Pray for God's protection on those ministries seeking to hand-carry Christian literature and Bibles into Laos. Intercede for complete freedom to one day publish Christian material in the country.

☞ Christian radio broadcasts are having such a powerful effect, authorities are now arresting people who are caught listening. Pray that efforts to jam signals and locate listeners will be frustrated and unsuccessful.

☞ Pray for the families of leaders who have been imprisoned or martyred. Ask God to pour out upon his Church incredible grace to love their enemies and bless those who persecute them.

☞ Over 300 Laotian leaders have been trained to plant house-churches. Pray for a powerful movement to sweep the nation!

**Every year 28,000
 Lao die
 without Christ.**