

Mongolia by Brad Garrison

After centuries of darkness, Mongolia has allowed Christian witness over the last 20 years, and many have come to Christ. Other religions remain strong, and there is a large non-religious group. The people are extremely poor and providing aid is a daunting task for Christians.

Mongolia is located between Russia and China. Mongolia covers a large area, and the terrain ranges from desert to rugged mountains.

Just under 3 million people live in Mongolia. 90% are native Mongols, and nearly half are nomadic. The land is sparsely populated.

Although blessed with natural resources, Mongolia has struggled economically. At one point, aid from the former Soviet Union constituted one third of the economy. The breakup of the Soviet Union brought an abrupt end to the aid and extreme poverty. Little improvement has occurred over the last decade.

A world power in the 13th century, Mongolia disintegrated and was part of China for centuries. In the early 1900's it became an independent territory and eventually fell into the Communist bloc. Mongolia gained independence in 1990 as a multiparty democracy. The opposition party gained control in 1996, but the Communist party regained a large majority in the 2000 elections.

The government officially recognizes 3 religions: Buddhism, Shamanism, and Islam. Those 3 groups account for well over 50% of the population. Those who consider themselves non-religious comprise the largest single group with more the 40% of the people.

Although only 3 religions are recognized, others are permitted limited religious freedom. Mongolia was closed to the gospel for centuries. Only in the last 20 years has the gospel been preached in a significant way. Fifteen years ago there were essentially no Mongol Christians. Today there are several thousand. Pray for these new believers and their growing churches.

Pray for missionaries as they seek to reach people with the gospel. Pray also for Christians involved in aid ministries. The economic conditions are very difficult. Some agencies attempt to prevent Christians from sharing their faith. Pray that these Christians may successfully meet the physical needs and wisely point people to Christ.

Pray for the printing and distribution of Bibles and Christian literature. Mission Aviation Fellowship is now allowed to fly in Mongolia - pray for their ministry. Pray also for the effective use of Christian Radio and Television programs to reach people.

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