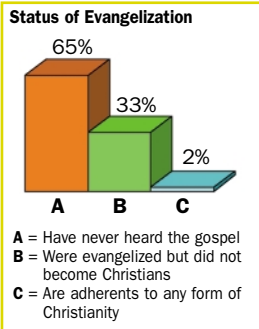




**Population in China:**  
 48,945,000 (1984)  
 59,125,600 (2000)  
 66,811,900 (2010)  
**Location:** Guangdong, Hong Kong, Hainan Island, Guangxi, Macau  
**Religion:** Daoism  
**Christians:** 1,250,000

## Overview of the Cantonese

**Countries:** China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Canada, Singapore, Indonesia, USA, Brunei, Philippines, Thailand<sup>1</sup>  
**Pronunciation:** "Gwang-dong-Hwa"  
**Other Names:** Cantonese, Yue, Yueh, Guangdong, Punti, Baihua  
**Population Source:** 46,305,000 (1988 B. Grimes – 1984 figure);<sup>2</sup> Out of a total Han population of 1,042,482,187 (1990 census); 748,010 in Malaysia; 500,000 in Vietnam; 400,000 in Canada; 314,000 in Singapore; 180,000 in Indonesia; 180,000 in USA; 29,400 in Thailand<sup>3</sup>  
**Location:** Guangdong; Hong Kong; Hainan Island; S Guangxi; Macau  
**Status:** Officially included under Han Chinese  
**Language:** Chinese, Cantonese  
**Dialects (7):** Guangfu, Yongxun, Gaoyang, Siyi, Goulu, Wuhua, Qinlian  
**Religion:** Daoism, Buddhism, No Religion, Christianity  
**Christians:** 1,250,000  
**Scripture:** Bible 1894; New Testament 1877; Portions 1862  
**Jesus film:** Available  
**Gospel Recordings:** Cantonese #00013  
 Toi Shaan #02097  
**Christian Broadcasting:** Available (FEBC, TWR)  
**ROPAL code:** YUH00



**Location:** Approximately 60 million Cantonese-speaking Chinese live in southern China. The majority are concentrated in Guangdong Province, radiating out from the capital city of Guangzhou (Canton). More than five and a half million Cantonese also live in the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions. Others are located in the southern part of Guangxi and on Hainan Island. In addition, large Cantonese communities are found in many countries around the world.

**Identity:** Although the Cantonese today proudly consider themselves part of the Han Chinese race, one ethnohistorian has concluded, "The ethnic origins of the ancient Yue people... may have been Tai, but with a sizable Miao-Yao minority in the hills.... The ancient Yue language was definitely not Sinitic.... It is estimated that the population of Guangdong was less than 30 percent Sinitic in 1080."<sup>4</sup>

**Language:** The more than 30 Han Chinese language groups described in this book are considered by linguists to be mutually unintelligible languages. They are not merely dialects of the same language. Cantonese contains up to nine tones — compared to the national language, Mandarin, which has only four. Although they speak different languages and dialects, all Chinese people in China use the same written script.

**History:** The large southern city of Guangzhou — which has been continually inhabited for 2,200 years — has always been the center of Cantonese civilization. In the 33rd year of the reign of Emperor Qin Shihuang (214 BC), the Nanhai Prefecture was established in today's Guangzhou. Large numbers of Han flooded into the area.<sup>5</sup> Guangzhou became home to large numbers of foreign merchants in the ninth century until the T'ang emperors lost control of it in AD 878. An Arab traveler reported that "a hundred and twenty thousand Muslims, Jews, Christians and



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Zoroastrians were slaughtered [in Guangzhou]."<sup>6</sup>

**Customs:** The Chinese have a saying that to be happy in this life one must be born in Suzhou, live in Guangzhou, and die at Suzhou, "for in the first are the handsomest people, in the second the richest luxuries, and in the third the best coffins."<sup>7</sup>

**Religion:** Throughout the Communist era the Cantonese have continued to be the most openly religious of all Chinese. Most homes in Guangdong Province have spirit altars. The Cantonese also zealously observe Daoist and Buddhist festivals.

**Christianity:** In September 1807 Robert Morrison landed in Guangzhou. A new era of Protestant missions began in China. Seven years later he baptized his first convert, "At a stream of water issuing from the foot of a lofty hill, far away from human observation.... May he be the first-fruits of a great harvest."<sup>8</sup> Today there are at least 1.2 million Cantonese Christians in China. Guangdong contains at least 200,000 Protestants<sup>9</sup> and 110,000 Catholics,<sup>10</sup> while heavily evangelized Hong Kong numbers 552,000 Protestants and 312,000 Catholics.<sup>11</sup>