

VIETNAMESE

By the year 2000 the population of ethnic Vietnamese in Vietnam will be close to 70 million. More than 1.5 million Vietnamese live in over 25 nations on six continents around the world. More than 850,000 Vietnamese live in the United States.

The Vietnamese, who call themselves *Kinh* or *Jing* have a long history. It is generally believed they were a collection of Mon-Khmer speaking groups who occupied areas primarily in north Vietnam around the time of Christ. About 500 years ago, the Vietnamese migrated to the southern extremities of the country, destroying the Chamba Kingdom in 1471.

The Vietnamese language has been influenced by many neighboring ethnic

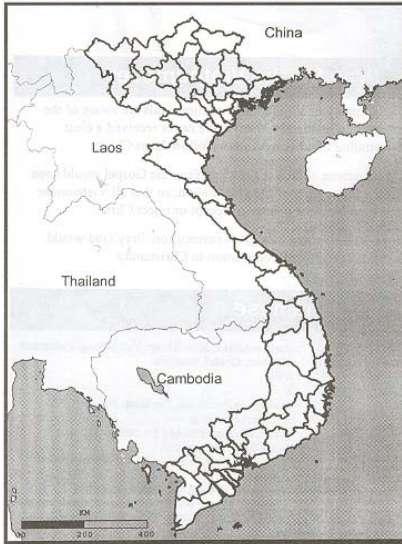
groups over the course of their long history, including the Khmer, Tai and Chinese. The Chinese ruled Vietnam as a vassal state from about 200 BC until 938 AD. Their influence has been felt by all generations of Vietnamese since. In the past the Vietnamese used Chinese characters to express the written form of their language. Franciscan monks in the late 1600s created a Roman script, using tone markers, which remains the national orthography today.

The Vietnamese have been at war for most of their history. In 1968 Trinh Cong Son composed an anthem (called *The Yellow Skin Song*) that reflects the feelings and struggles of the Vietnamese... "O destiny of Yellow Skin People; A Thousand Years

dominated by Chinese invaders; A Hundred years dominated by French invaders; Over 30 years faced with local war day by day..."

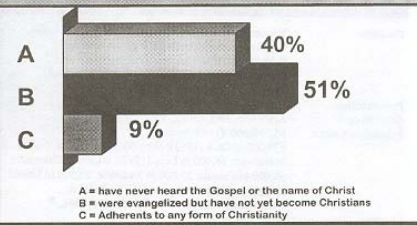
The nation of Vietnam was etched into the consciousness of Americans forever during the US-Vietnam War which ended when the Communists captured South Vietnam in 1975. More than 60,000 Americans were killed and 300,000 wounded during the bitter conflict. In 1979 the Vietnamese fought a brief yet devastating war against China. The Chinese forces were completely routed by the battle-hardened Vietnamese soldiers.

Regional divisions are still strong among the Vietnamese. Their language divides into three dialects, Northern, Central and Southern. Although speakers can all understand each other, their accents are markedly different. People from one region are instantly recognized if they are away from their home. In recent years this verbal distinction has proved a barrier to the advancement of the Gospel in the north of the country. Protestant evangelists from the south and central regions, where the highest concentration of Christians are found,



Population:	55,900,000 (1989) 69,427,800 (2000) 84,701,900 (2010)
Language:	Mon-Khmer
Religion:	Buddhism
Christians:	6,200,000

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



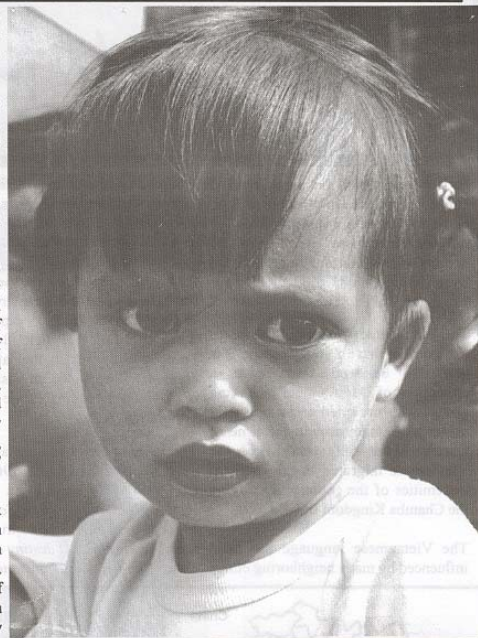
have been stifled in their attempts to share the Gospel by their accents. Their presence in the north has immediately aroused suspicion with the police.

Today the Vietnamese religious mindset has been influenced by numerous factors. Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, animism and Christianity (especially Catholicism) have all played a role in shaping the Vietnamese worldview. The southern part of the country has been influenced by Hinduism, introduced by Indian traders and merchants.

In 1926 a civil servant named Ngo Van Chieu founded a new religion called *Caodaism*. He claims to have received a direct revelation from a spirit named *Duc Cao Dai*. After three years of studying and meditating, Ngo had a following of 247 disciples. Caodaism took what it considered the best parts of Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Daoism, claiming that all of these religions by themselves had become corrupted and a new, final revelation was needed. Today more than 7 million Vietnamese follow Caodaism.

At present there are believed to be about six million ethnic Vietnamese Christians in Vietnam. This figure includes 5.8 million Catholics and only 400,000 Protestants. According to Patrick Johnstone, author of *Operation World*, of the six million people in Vietnam affiliated with the Catholic church, only 3.9 million are actual church members.⁵²

Catholic work in Vietnam was commenced in the 16th century by missionaries from Portugal, Spain and France. In 1659 the Pope assigned the first Bishops to Vietnam. By 1685 there were estimated to already have been 800,000 Catholics in Vietnam. Protestant work, on the other hand, did not get underway until the early 1900s. The Christian & Missionary Alliance has spear-headed work, especially among the receptive tribal groups in the central highlands.



Pray for the Vietnamese

- 1 Although many of Vietnam's 70 million souls are aware of the existence of Christianity, many have never received a clear understanding of what it means to follow Jesus Christ.
- 2 The Vietnamese church is growing. Pray the Gospel would soon saturate every corner of the great nation, so that all Vietnamese would soon have the chance to accept or reject Christ.
- 3 Evangelical believers face great persecution. Pray God would soften the government's opposition to Christianity.

Overview of the Vietnamese

Countries	: Vietnam, USA, Cambodia, Norway, Laos, Germany, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, New Caledonia, China, Vanuatu, Martinique, Thailand, Philippines, New Zealand, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Finland	Language	: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Viet-Muong, Vietnamese
Pronunciation	: "King"	Dialects (3)	: Northern, Central, Southern
Other Names	: Kinh, Gin, Jing, Ching, Viet, Annamese	Literacy	: 65%
Population Source	: 55,900,000 (1989 census); 859,000 in USA (1993); 600,000 in Cambodia; 99,000 in Norway; 76,000 in Laos (1993); 60,000 in Germany; 60,000 in Canada; 35,000 in Australia; 22,000 in United Kingdom; 10,000 in France (1975); 8,000 in Netherlands; 5,000 in New Caledonia (1984). ⁵³	Subgroups	: 0
		Religion	: Mahayana Buddhism, Caodaism, Non-Religious, Daoism, Christianity
		Christians	: 6,200,000 (approximately 5.8 million Catholics and 400,000 Protestants)
		Scripture	: Bible 1916, New Testament 1914, Portions 1890
		Jesus film	: available
		Gospel Recordings	: Vietnamese #04568, Vietnamese: Hue #00757, Vietnamese: North #00680, Vietnamese: South #00002
		Christian Radio	: available (FEBC, TWR)
Location	: all of Vietnam	ROPAL code	: VIE00