



# PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

## Pray for Myanmar

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

— James 3:17

## Country Profile

Myanmar is one of the most resource rich countries in South East Asia. Yet after 50 years of military government, it also remains one of the poorest. Most people live in rural areas with rice farming, fishing, and agriculture as their main occupations. However, the main exports are petroleum gas, gems, and logs.

Myanmar has been in the news over the last few years, notably for its moves towards democracy and the opening up of the country. For better or worse, Western brands are being seen in increasing abundance, cellphone usage is rapidly increasing, and there are more and newer cars on the roads. For many, however, it seems that little has changed – especially for the poor. Still, there is generally a much more positive atmosphere.

Buddhism is the majority religion, following the Theravada tradition. Myanmar considers itself one of the last outposts of true Buddhism. Although officially only 1% is considered animist – in reality, religion is often mixed with a wide range of traditional and animistic practices. The Christian population is estimated at around 9%, with the majority being from ethnic minorities such as the Kachin, Chin, and Karen.

There is a significant church in Myanmar, but the majority of the believers came from the ethnic minorities. The Bamar, Shan, Mon, and Rakhine ethnic groups, in particular, have very few believers. Local Christians had some interest in mission work to their countrymen, but the cultural divide is huge and it is challenging to know how to begin.

Church planting in Myanmar can be hard. There is a lot of uncertainty about what the authorities will allow, and what might create trouble for local believers. OMF workers focus on building mutually beneficial partnerships with the local church, as well as preparing the way for more workers to come. There are ongoing challenges finding stable permissions to work in the country and good ways to study language, culture, and worldview. God has graciously provided missionaries with a wide variety of visas and ministries. This is not just for opportunities in Yangon, but in other parts of the country as well.

## Population

- **Total:** 55 million people
  - **Bamar:** 68%
  - **Shan:** 9%
  - **Karen:** 7%



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- **Rakhine:** 4.5%
- **Others:** 12%

## Religions

- **Buddhist:** 80%
- **Christian:** 9%
- **Animist:** 1%
- **Other:** 7%

*God, thank you for your love for the people of Myanmar and your work to grow your church there. We ask that you would continue to raise up more workers for this country and provide a welcome for them to live and share your gospel in new parts of the country. We pray that the Bamar church will grow in the same way that we have seen new believers growing and sharing their faith in other peoples such as the Kachin, Chin, and Karen.*