



# PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

## Pray for The Netherlands

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

— Isaiah 11:9

## Country Profile

Despite its relative small size, The Netherlands is a country that punches above its weight. It is the sixth-largest economy in the European Union; it is the fifth largest exporter of goods in the world; and is the second largest exporter of agricultural products, after the US. In addition, Dutch engineering is renowned globally, especially in the area of water management.

The UN Development Program ranks The Netherlands 5th in position worldwide in terms of prosperity, as defined by its GDP as well as in other aspects, such as life expectancy, public health, literacy levels and educational standards. The economy enjoys a persistently high trade surplus, stable industrial relations, and low unemployment.

The Netherlands has a long history of immigration. Currently almost 20% of the Dutch population are immigrants or children of immigrant parents. Traditionally, migrant workers from Northern Africa and Turkey came to work and contributed significantly to the economy and to the diversity of the population, especially in the bigger cities. In recent years however, The Netherlands took in huge numbers of asylum seekers from countries like Syria.

The Chinese community in The Netherlands is quite large compared to other European countries. The 2012 Census estimates there are over 80,000 Chinese in the Netherlands, and this figure does not include the early Chinese migrants who came from Indonesia, a former Dutch East Indies colony. The more recent Chinese migrants are students from China or Taiwan.

In The Netherlands, church and state are strictly separated and there is a growing tendency of 'social correctness' to keep faith and the practice of it in the private realm. Secularisation is a reality in The Netherlands. Fewer than a third of Dutch people have a religious faith and nearly one in four describe themselves as atheists.

The current political setting has impeded freedom for religious organizations and Christian influences on society. There is a tendency to restrict governmental and tax privileges for religious groups, including Christians. There is also a decrease in donations for Christian organizations.

The churches have seen a dramatic decrease in members over the years since WWII - evangelical committed Christians have become a minority. The church is facing the challenge to stand firm and is looking for ways to stay relevant in society. Interestingly, this has kindled a new movement of mission activities in many cities.



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OMF Netherlands is involved in student and diaspora ministry among the thousands of Asian students studying in the country. OMF Netherlands works with various denominations in mobilization for mission work in Asia. By God's grace there is still awareness, both in evangelical fellowships and traditional churches, that the Gospel is relevant for the world.

The first Dutch OMF missionaries were sent to Asia through OMF UK, but in 1966, a Dutch Home Office was officially launched. In 2007, a Belgian Office became operational as a regional office linked with OMF Netherlands.

## Population

- **Total:** 17 million
  - **Dutch:** 78.3%
  - **Germans:** 2.4%
  - **Turks:** 2.3%
  - **Moroccans:** 2%
  - **Indonesians:** 2%
  - **Others:** 13%

## Religions

- **Roman Catholic:** 23.7%
- **Protestant:** 15.5%
- **Islam:** 4.9%
- **Others (Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish):** 5.7%
- **Non-religious:** 50.2%

*Lord, thank you for the opportunity for your church in The Netherlands to send many cross-cultural workers to Asia in recent years. We pray that you would strengthen the church in The Netherlands, and continue to mobilize people to be involved through prayer, reaching out to Asians in their area and in overseas missions.*