

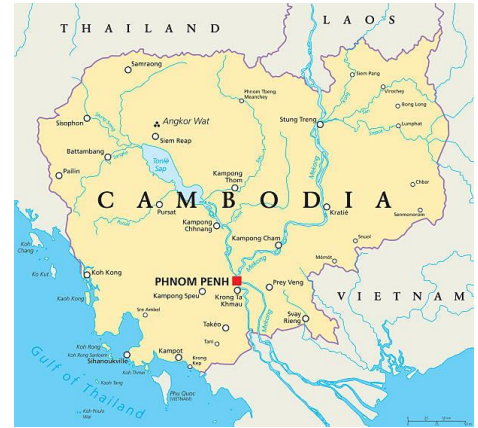
MBoB Nation Profile – January 2024

Our monthly handout will have a different focus this year. We will present a range of nations:

- Where we have connections through church members.
- Those parts of the world where the church is growing.
- We will cover nations from all continents of the world.

Cambodia

Pam and Bob served an international mission team in Cambodia between 2009 and 2015. We are still in touch with some members of that team.



Many tourists have visited Cambodia to explore the extensive temple complexes of the Angkor Wat area. These date back to the times of the great Angkor Empire that spread across this area of Southeast Asia. Cambodia was caught up in the Vietnam War and was then controlled by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge from 1975-78. During this short period around 2 million people died through fighting, executions or starvation. Some of us will remember the 'Killing Fields' images in newspapers, TV and films. The United Nations set in motion political changes in the early 1990s. The nation is now a constitutional monarchy. Hun Sen became Prime Minister in 1993 and handed that role to his eldest son in 2023. He remains head of the Cambodian People's Party. All major political opposition leaders have largely either been imprisoned or have fled to other countries. Corruption is a serious problem across society, especially for getting justice in the courts. Land grabs by the powerful deplete natural resources, enrich the few at the expense of the majority. Its largely rural subsistence economy is dependant on clothing manufacture, tourism (that was badly affected by COVID) and international aid. The latter is now mainly from China, which has gained influence. This is a 'young' nation. 31% are under 15. This compares to 18% for the UK.

The church in Cambodia.

There is a slogan that says, "To be Khmer (Cambodian) is to be Buddhist". Buddhism is the pre-dominant religion of Cambodia, with a small minority of Muslims (Cham people) and around 3% Christian. The church was very small in the 1970s. Then the Church was nearly extinguished during the slaughter of the 1970s; 90% of Christians died or fled to Thai refugee camps. Whilst there many Cambodians who fled become Christians and moved to countries like the US, Canada, France and Australia. Some returned to Cambodia to support a growing church in the 21st century.

Pray for:

- Continued freedom of religion. The constitution guarantees it, but the government has re-affirmed the ban on outdoor public events and distribution of literature. Pray for continued freedom to wisely and appropriately spread the good news.
- Deep healing is required for many who suffered acute trauma. Many of the former Khmer Rouge have become believers; receiving God's forgiveness for past crimes is essential.
- Children and young people to be effectively discipled in the churches and shown how to live in healthy family structures. Few are equipped for this but this generation must begin to lead the Cambodian Church now.
- Training for existing and future church leaders to equip them for leadership in their context.
- Unity in this young church where there has often been division.
- For some former team members – Dave and Ruth Bryce and their children Abby and Josh. They will return to Australia having been in Cambodia for 18 years. They are continuing the process of handing over projects to Cambodian nationals they have been training.

