

Bamar Buddhists



Quick Facts

Population: 29,000,000

Thailand: 28,500,000

Myanmar: 260,000

Thailand: 60,000

United States: 50,000

Religion: Theravada Buddhism

Believers: 0.07%

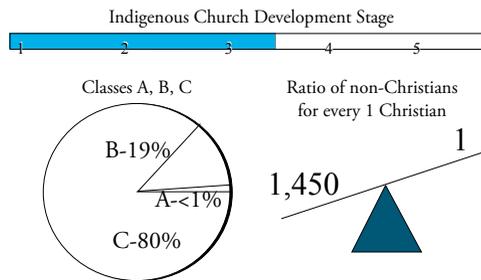
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 3

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 8



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Bamar are believed to have descended from Mongolia in successive migrations from the first millennium B.C. to the 9th century A.D. They settled primarily in the Irrawady River valley, displacing the various Mon tribes which inhabited the region. They are related to the Tibetans and more distantly to the Chinese.

Lifestyle: Burma was once the wealthiest nation in SE Asia. After the British left the country in 1948 it quickly descended into political chaos and economic meltdown. The country has been described as a national prison, with military rule subjecting the entire population to live in constant fear of unbridled harrasment, forced labour, rape and summary execution.

Customs: Burmese culture has become a melting pot of Indian, Chinese and Thai influences. Bamar children often wear *Tanaka* powder as protection against the sun (see photos). Tradition-

ally the Bamar wore Sarongs, though the availability of Western style clothing is changing this practice. Tattoos, earrings and long hair were once common for men, but this has disappeared in urban areas. Both Hollywood and Bollywood films are popular.

Religion: The Bamar are devoutly Buddhist. Their capital city, Bagan, once boasted 13,000 Buddhist temples before the 13th century Mongol invasion. Buddhist holidays and festivals are celebrated nationally, though the Myanmar government no longer officially recognizes Buddhism as the state religion. In practice, however, Buddhism is accorded special priveleges and concessions by the military regime to maintain civil control.

Christian Outreach: Ministry among the Burmese has been hampered by the ongoing civil war initiated by Christianized tribal peoples in the north. This has caused the government and the Burmese

people to be wary of Christianity as a disruptive foreign influence. Persecution of Christians has been fierce, though a visible Bamar church is emerging as the government seeks to appease Western outcries of human-rights abuses.

How to Pray:

☞ Ask God to empower both Chinese and tribal Christians in Myanmar for cross-cultural witness to the Bamar people.

☞ Pray for the emergence of a truly indigenous Bamar church and for the few Bamar young people presently undergoing training for the ministry.

☞ Intercede for the cessation of Myanmar's civil war and for the salvation of those involved, especially the military leadership of the country.

☞ Pray for the widespread printing and mass-distribution of the Bible, which is in limited supply.

☞ Ask God to use the FEBC and TWR broadcasts in Burmese to reach many thousands who are seeking after Truth, especially among Buddhist monks.

☞ Ask God to protect

**Every year 250,000
 Burmese die
 without Christ.**