

Pray for the world in 2012!

The following pages of maps and flags and other information were compiled in December 2011 and January 2012. The information was accurate at the time of compilation, but details (names of presidents, kings, etc.) may change during the course of the year.

Sources include www.worldatlas.com, <http://education.nationalgeographic.com>, www.persecution.com, and www.kidsofcourage.com.

The prayer requests are from the 2012 VOM Prayer Calendar. You can use this information to pray for the world with or without the calendar.

WILL YOU PRAY?

The 2012 VOM Prayer Calendar

The Voice of the Martyrs' 2012 Prayer Calendar will help you fellowship with and pray for these persecuted believers, sharing in their trials and being encouraged by their tremendous faith. The calendar features photos and brief stories of persecuted Christians, many of them youths, who exhibit an unwavering trust in Christ despite persecution.

The prayer calendar makes an excellent gift for family and friends, serving as a daily reminder to pray for the persecuted church. For as little as \$4, you can give the gift of prayer to the persecuted church while giving family and friends the opportunity to fellowship with those persecuted for their faith.

But Jesus called them unto Him, and said,
"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not:
for of such is the kingdom of God." Luke 18:16 (KJV)

Visit

http://etools.vomusa.org/a/vomso/bg_vomso_wdbm-20111205-PrayerCalendar_443.html

to request your 2012 Voice of the Martyrs Prayer Calendar.

www.scripturemelodies.com

February 2012

Belarus

Bhutan

Brunei

Burma (Myanmar)

Chiapas (Mexico)



The Belarus flag was officially adopted on May 16, 1995.

The dominant red and green were colors used on its flag when it was a republic of the former Soviet Union. The woven fabric ornament on the left uses traditional Belarussian red and white colors.

Belarus (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

History

The U.S.S.R. (often called “The Soviet Union”) was the largest communist country in the world. In the early 1990s, it broke up into many smaller countries. Belarus was one of those countries.

Religion

The majority of the people are part of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Persecution

The government in Belarus tries to strictly control Christian activity. Only churches that are registered with the government can meet for worship. Christian groups with fewer than 20 members are not allowed. Most Christian gatherings in homes are against the law.

The government uses newspapers and other news media to insult Christian groups that they do not like. They control and limit Christian materials that are printed.

Pray for Belarus.

1 – Religious literature is subject to censorship. Pray for its effective distribution and for eternal fruit.

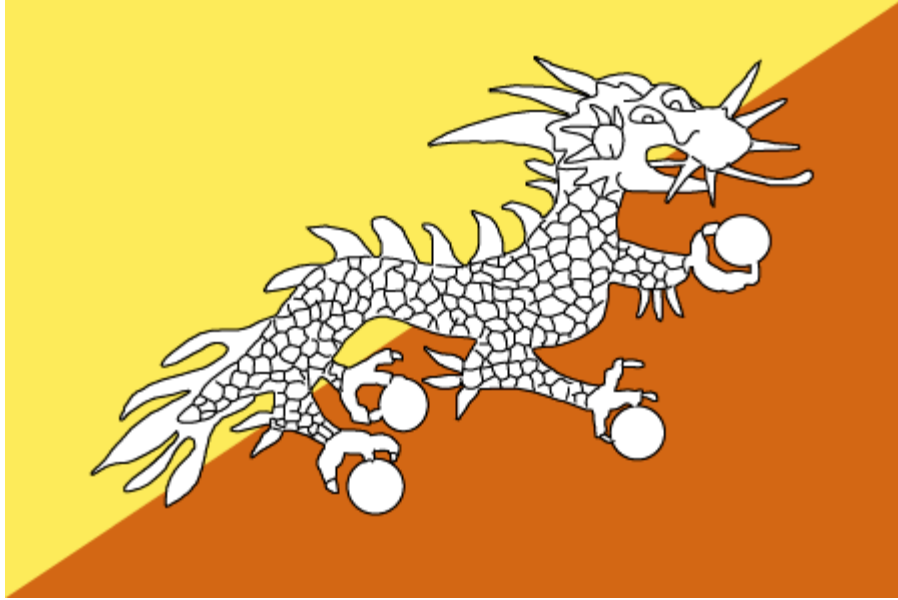
2 – While the population declines overall, the church continues to grow. Pray for spiritual maturity.

3 – Pray for unity between denominations as they continue the work of God's kingdom.

4 – Pray for President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Belarus&ar_a=1



The Bhutan flag was officially adopted in 1965.

The flag features the Thunder Dragon, the country's emblem. Yellow symbolizes the authority of the king, white represents purity and loyalty, while orange is symbolic of the Drukpa monasteries.

Bhutan (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

December 13, 2011

Purnima was 13 years old in 1993 when she was taken with more than 30 other Christians to the police station at a town in Bhutan. Bhutan is a Buddhist country. "Who gave you permission to celebrate Christmas?" an officer asked her. "This is Bhutan. You are not allowed to celebrate Christmas here! This is your last chance. Either return to Buddhism, or leave Bhutan."

"I will not deny Christ," Purnima answered. "I do not wish to leave my country, and I will not leave Christ. He is the only one who can save me or you."

Purnima and the other Christians were given five days to pack and travel from Bhutan to Nepal. Her parents had already kicked her out of their house when she became a Christian; now she was being kicked out of her country.

Purnima and her friends were later arrested for sharing about the love of Jesus in a marketplace in Nepal! They continued spreading the gospel after they were put in prison for witnessing to non-Christians.

Some of the prisoners appreciated Purnima's words of hope. Others mocked and despised her.

All the prisoners were given a small amount of money. Every week, an old man came and collected the money and bought food at the market. The guards provided the prisoners with cooking equipment. But Purnima never gave the man any money. Instead she saved it and ate only the two meals a day of rice or potatoes that the guards gave her.

At Christmastime, she gave the man all her money and whispered to him what she wanted through the bars of the cell. Later that day, the man returned, and Purnima began cooking and making preparations. When she finished, she announced to the other prisoners, "Since I have been here, God has put it on my heart to save my prison allowance. I used the money to buy the best food in the market. And now I have cooked it all for you!"

The prisoners were amazed. Why would Purnima cook the best prison food they had ever eaten when they had mocked her? Purnima explained to them the meaning of Christmas, and later some of the prisoners gave their lives to Christ.

Purnima continued to share the gospel after she was released from prison.

Pray for Bhutan.

1 – Pray that Bhutan’s “pursuit of happiness” will be replaced by faith in Christ.

2 – Pray for “Jul” and other Christians who are persecuted for their commitment to Christ.

3 – Pray for VOM’s underground Bible schools.

4 – Pray for Christians in this Buddhist nation. Some Buddhists see Christianity as a threat.

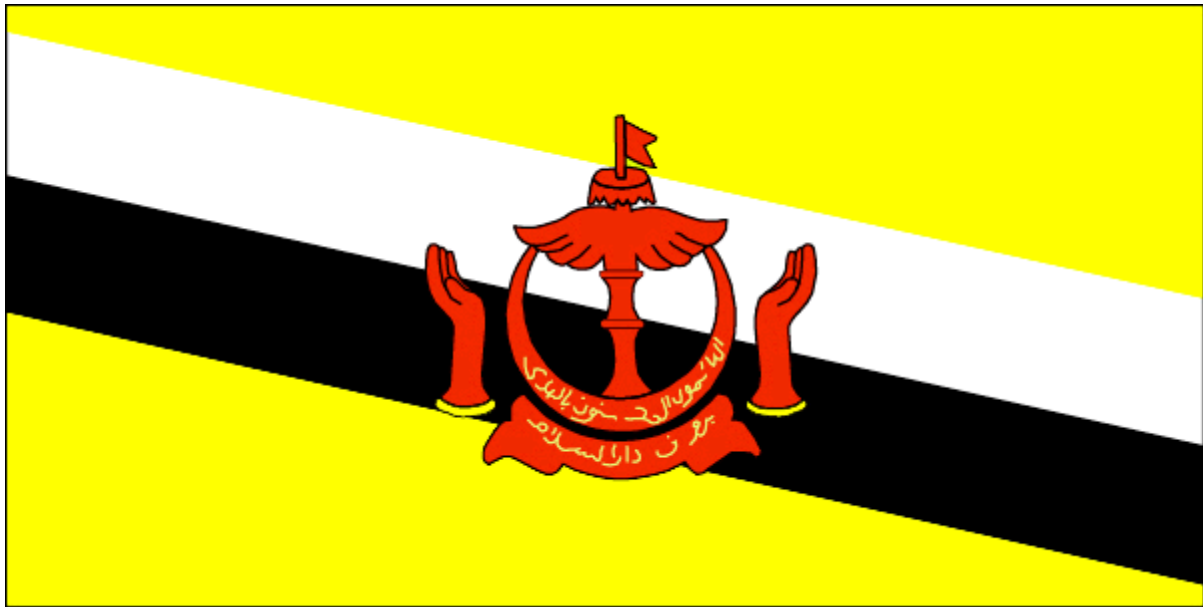
5 – Thirty-two of Bhutan’s 35 people groups are unreached by the gospel.

6 – Bhutan is one of the most restricted nations in the world for Christians.

7 – Pray for King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Bhutan&ar_a=1



The Brunei flag was officially adopted on September 29, 1959.

The flag features the country's national emblem. Yellow represents the Sultan of Brunei, and the black and white stripes represent the country's chief ministers.

Brunei (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

History

Brunei used to be ruled by Britain, but it became independent in 1984. The country is very rich, getting its money from oil. However, in recent years, much of the money has been wasted by members of the royal family.

Religion

Mostly Muslim

Persecution

The official religion of Brunei is Islam, the religion of Muslims. Christians are not allowed to spread their faith. School books show women and girls wearing Muslim clothing, and do not show people who follow religions other than Islam. Muslims are not permitted to marry people who are not Muslims. Christian believers often meet secretly for worship.

Pray for Brunei.

1 – Pray that the majority Malay people will be reached with the gospel.

2 – Evangelism is illegal, and missionaries are banned. Christian materials are allowed only for personal use.

3 – Pray for continued unity and perseverance among Christians.

4 – Brunei's Muslim monarchy dates back to the 15th century. Pray for positive change in the government.

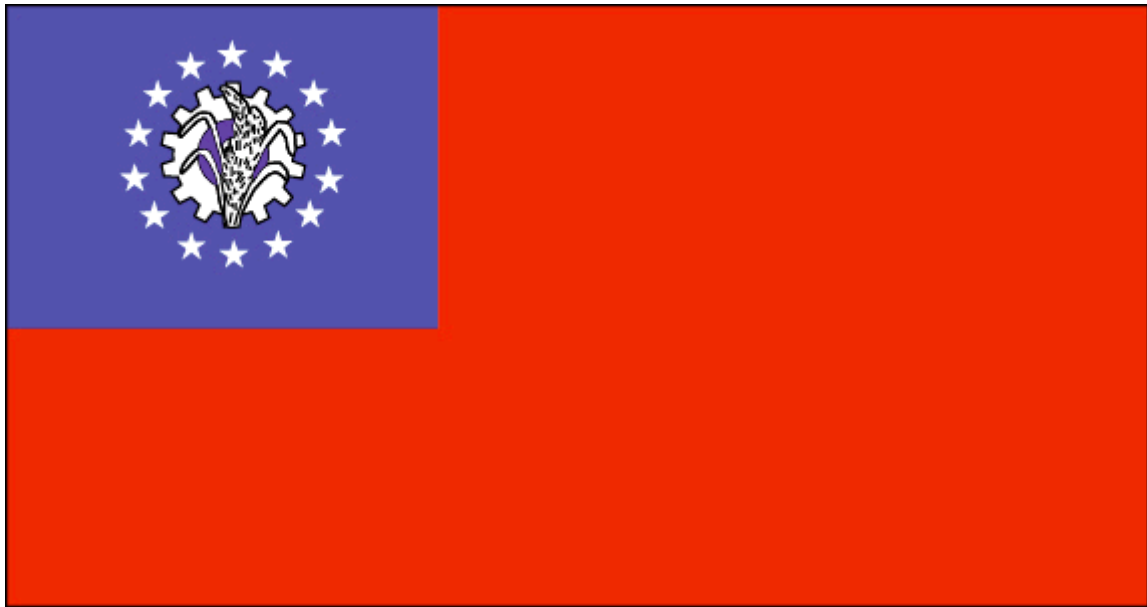
5 – Religions other than Islam are often infiltrated and monitored. Pray for spiritual openness.

6 – Pray for the encouragement and growth of believers who meet in secret.

7 – Pray for Sultan/Prime Minister Sir Hassanal Bolkiah.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Brunei&ar_a=1



The Burma (Myanmar) flag was officially adopted on January 4, 1974.

Red, blue and white symbolize courage, peace and purity, in that order. The flag features a socialist style symbol on the blue field.

Burma (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

Capital

Rangoon (also called “Yangon”) has been the capital. The government has moved many of its offices to Nay Pyi Taw, making that city the “administrative capital.”

Size

Burma is a little smaller than Texas.

Main Languages

Bangla (also known as Bengali), English

Time

At 6 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time, it is 6:30 p.m. in Rangoon.

Interesting Fact

Thanaka is a paste or powder made from tree bark. Many women and children in Burma wear thanaka on their faces to prevent sunburn and to keep their skin cool. It is also used as makeup. Some people apply it on their faces in pretty patterns.

History

Myanmar was part of India until 1947. Then it became East Pakistan. Myanmar became an independent country in 1971. Natural disasters are common in Myanmar. The government has not had a history of treating people fairly. Human rights and freedoms are often not respected.

Religion

“The government would like all the people to speak the same language, Burmese, and to follow the same religion, Buddhism,” a Christian worker said. Most Christian missionaries were kicked out of the country in the 1960s.

The government persecutes minority groups. Christianity is strong among some of the groups. This gives the government two reasons to persecute members of the groups.

Persecution

Christians have a hard time getting permission to build new churches or repair old ones. Sometimes government officials destroy places of worship. The government limits the number of Bibles that can be brought into the country. Sometimes they have even listed certain words that cannot be printed in the Bibles! Most Christian missions and missionaries were kicked out of the country in the 1960s. In general, no new permanent Christian missions are allowed to come into the country.

Burma: Jail, a New Place to Preach (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

March 1, 2011



A Burmese monk

Luke grew up in a Buddhist family in Burma. He and his family are part of the Rakhine tribe. Few Rakhine people know about Jesus. Only about one-tenth of 1 percent are Christians. That means if there were 1,000 Rakhine people, maybe only one would be a Christian. (There are actually more than a million Rakhine people in Burma.)

Many Rakhine boys spend a few months living as monks in a monastery. A monastery is a place where monks live together, separate from others and from their families. Monks spend their time studying their religion and following its rules. Some Buddhist boys decide to become monks for the rest of their lives.

But Luke heard about Jesus and decided to give his life to him! He wanted to share his new faith with other Rakhine people, so he walked from village to village, talking to people about the good news of Jesus.

The police did not want Luke to help more Buddhists become Christians. First they burned his Bible to try to stop him from spreading Christianity. Then they put him in jail for nine months. "At first I was afraid ... because I knew the people inside the jail are very cruel and they would beat me and treat me bad," Luke said after he got out of jail.

Luke was right. The police hit him and fed him terrible food. He received only one cup of water a day to drink. But Luke noticed that the criminals in the jail were worse off than he was, because they did not know Jesus. "When I was inside, I worried about them more than myself. I always had concern for them," said Luke.

Luke saw his time in prison as another opportunity to tell people about God and Jesus. He led six prisoners to Christ. Thank God for persecuted Christians who continue to share his love, even in harsh places. Pray that more Rakhine people and other Buddhists will give their lives to his Son, Jesus.

(To protect their identities, the names of some of the people on this site and some identifying details have been changed.)

Pray for Burma (Myanmar).

1 – Pray for Karen and Chin ethnic Christians, who are singled out for abuse.

2 – Pray for Christians among the Naga, Kachin, Shan and Karenni people.

3 – Pray for VOM's efforts to provide Bibles and assistance to pastors and believers.

4 – Pray for "Luke," "Peter" and "Paul," who share the gospel in this hostile environment.

5 – Pray for a strong church among the Rakhine tribe, Burma's most unreached people group.

6 – Pray for Stephen, a Christian teacher severely beaten for sharing Christ with his students.

7 – Pray for President Thein Sein.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Myanmar&ar_a=1



The flag of Mexico was officially adopted on November 2, 1821. The basic design is taken from the French Tricolor flag and the red, white and green are the colors of the national liberation army of Mexico. The coat of arms (centered) in the white band is the badge of Mexico City, the country's capital. Its main feature is an eagle, and it is said that an Aztec legend told them to build their new city on the exact spot where they saw an eagle sitting on a cactus, eating a snake.

Chiapas

Chiapas, officially Estado Libre y Soberano de Chiapas, is one of the 31 states that, with the Federal District, comprise the 32 Federal Entities of Mexico.

Capital

Tuxtla Gutierrez

Size

More than 4 million people live in Chiapas.

Main Languages

Spanish

Time

At 6:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time, it is also 6:00 a.m. in Chiapas.

History

Mexico was ruled by Spain for 300 years until it became an independent country in 1810.

Religion

The constitution of Mexico states that the country has freedom of religion.

Persecution

Religious freedom is usually respected in Mexico. But “traditionalists” in Chiapas sometimes persecute people who do not want to follow their customs. Traditionalists follow some Catholic teachings, but mix the teachings with practices from the ancient Mayan religion, which does not follow the Bible.

Mexico: Children in Chiapas (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

February 1, 2008



Manuel Mendez was 12 years old. He was in the first grade at a school in Chiapas, Mexico. Manuel was still in first grade because he had been expelled so many times. He struggled to stay in school.

Getting an education was important to him. "I want to be a teacher," said Manuel, "so I can teach my mother and father how to read." (Many adults in Chiapas never had the chance to go to school or to learn to read.)

Manuel had not been expelled for bad behavior. Instead, he was one of many children who had not been allowed to stay in school because of his parents' faith.

Over the past few years, traditionalists have stopped evangelical children from registering for school, or have gotten them expelled. Traditionalists follow some Catholic teachings mixed with unbiblical practices of the ancient Mayan religion. Evangelicals believe in the truth of the Bible and in sharing the Good News of Jesus with others.

On one registration day, traditionalists with rocks and guns prevented evangelical children from entering a school. The students stayed out of school for the whole year.

The next year, they went to school in a house. After that, the evangelicals built a 12 foot by 20 foot shed as a school room. About 60 students were expected to attend school in the shed. Manuel was one of them.

Evangelical children have been forced out of school in several towns in Chiapas. A report from one town said three children were expelled from their elementary school. Then their parents were put in jail for 15 days! They were punished for their faith in Christ.

Ask God to help Manuel and others to continue serving Him, even when it is difficult. If you are able to go to school in peace, thank God for your freedom. Ask Him how you can use your freedom to do His will.

Pray for Chiapas (Mexico).

1 – Evangelical Christians continue to suffer at the hands of community leaders in the Chiapas region.

2 – Pray for Christians attempting to return to their community after being run off.

3 – Many Chiapans are enslaved by traditional practices. Pray that they will find freedom in Christ.

4 – Pray for President Felipe Calderon.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Mexico&ar_a=1