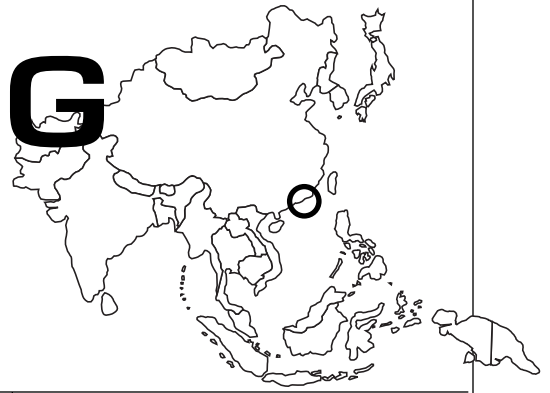


HONG KONG



HONG KONG HAS BEEN A BRITISH DEPENDENCY IN EAST ASIA BUT IS NOW A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF CHINA. IT IS STRATEGICALLY PLACED TO HAVE AN IMPACT, ECONOMICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY, DISPROPORTIONATE TO ITS TINY SIZE.

population

- Population: 6.9 million
- Density: 7,037 per sq km
- One of the world's most densely populated regions
- Majority ethnic Chinese

There has been rapid population change because of the changing political fortunes on the Mainland. Chinese culture dominates in Hong Kong. Yet, as a port inhabited and visited by people of many nationalities, it is subject to diverse influences, especially that of the West.

religions

- Chinese religions/Buddhist 66.13%
- Non-religious/other 18.25%
- Christian 10.05%
- Other 3.8%
- Muslim 1.5%
- Hindu 0.25%
- Jewish 0.02%

Most people adhere to a version of Chinese folk religion, which combines elements of Buddhism, animism, Confucianism, Daoism, and other beliefs. There are over 360 Daoist and Buddhist temples. Generally people follow these traditions as required by family.

language

Cantonese is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the Chinese population. English is second in

importance, and Mandarin is third.

geography

Hong Kong has a land area of only 648 sq miles. There are three main regions: Hong Kong Island, the mainland Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories/Lantau Island. Much of Hong Kong is hilly, and much of the low-lying terrain is reclaimed land. Only 28 percent of the land is rural.

climate

Although within the tropics, Hong Kong has a subtropical climate because of the southwestern monsoon, a moist, warm, equatorial wind that brings a rainy season between May and August. The average annual temperature is 22°C [72°F], with a range from 10°C [50°F] in February to 33°C [92°F] in July. Typhoons occasionally cause great destruction.

history

Before the British occupation, Hong Kong had a small fishing community and was a haven for pirates and opium smugglers.

Because of its excellent natural harbor, Britain first used the island as a naval base during the Opium Wars with China. By the Treaty of Nanking [Nanjing] in 1842, which ended the First Opium War, Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British in perpetuity. Following a second conflict in 1860, Britain acquired Kowloon and in 1898

obtained the New Territories under a 99-year lease.

After Japanese occupation during World War II, Hong Kong swiftly regained its status as a major Southeast Asian trade center. Many thousands of Chinese took refuge in the colony before and after the 1949 Communist victory, providing labor, entrepreneurial skills and money. The resultant economic boom transformed Hong Kong into one of Southeast Asia's wealthiest and most productive areas.

In 1997 Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty. According to the agreement with China, the territory is allowed to maintain its legal, social, and economic systems until 2047. In practice, most people expect these liberties to be "trimmed." China is responsible for foreign affairs and defense.

economy

Hong Kong was once famous for manufacturing, but in recent years it has moved away from this towards services and processing exports from China. It is a banking and business center.

In common with other East Asian countries, Hong Kong was hit by recession with the Asian financial crisis of 1998. It suffered further recession in 2001 and 2002 during global financial changes. In 2003 Hong Kong's economy was affected by a SARS



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(Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak. The economy has revived with a tourism boom and a rise in exports.

christianity

Most denominations were present during Hong Kong's early days, leaving many Western-style church buildings as their legacy. The majority of the 1,000 plus congregations now meet in improvised accommodation, often two or more converted apartments. Land is at too much of a premium to be allocated for new churches.

1950-52 saw the great exodus of missionaries from China through Hong Kong. OMF set up an administrative office to handle these affairs. Some OMFers stayed to work among the

many Chinese refugees. There were many other mission agencies, so OMF focused on producing desperately-needed literature. The company which was formed is now fully independent and a major publisher of Christian literature throughout the Chinese-speaking world.

OMF later concentrated on evangelism, preaching, teaching and partnering with the churches. As new towns were constructed, OMF and the Chinese churches sought to evangelize the highrise concrete jungle. OMF has also worked with blue-collar and underprivileged peoples in grassroots



evangelism.

Christians are needed to work with young people and students, in theological education and leadership training.

The Hong Kong church today contains a mixture of nominalism, vitality, youth and fear of the future. Many remain unreached by the gospel.

Recently there has been

an increased emphasis on united church intercession for Hong Kong, China and beyond. This has brought churches together in large evangelistic events and inter-church prayer meetings. OMF has sought to widen the vision of the Hong Kong church and mobilize its members as missionaries. About 57 percent of congregations now have a mission vision and active participation. Since 1997 much of this involvement has been outreach to the southern provinces of China.

Student ministries have also flourished recently, with about 30 percent of university students professing a Christian faith.

OMF's strategic priorities

- Work with local churches developing new churches and para-church organizations
- Mission mobilization
- Church development through children's education and literature
- Outreach to the many new arrivals from Mainland China

opportunities available

- Evangelism, teaching, training and counseling
- Bible college lecturing
- Professional ministry, including English teaching

how to pray

- Pray for the ongoing working out of the "One Country, Two Systems." The people of Hong Kong continue to desire greater autonomy, including full and direct election of its leaders.
- The Christian community grew rapidly in the 1960s, but growth has slowed because of emigration and a high dropout rate among young adults.
- There is increasing opportunity for ministry among Mainland Chinese in Hong Kong as well as ministry across the border to the southern provinces of China.
- Pray for godly leaders and Christian leadership training, with students committing their lives to holiness and missions as well as theology and pastoral work.
- There are many Christians from Hong Kong now serving abroad, often with Western-based mission societies.
- Pray for the church's interest in mission to grow, unhindered by fears for the future, with churches looking to China, Asia and beyond.
- Student ministries, which show dynamic growth through programs in evangelism and Bible teaching. For the many students studying abroad, where the conversion rate is high, and for the influence of Christian graduates on society.
- Less-reached sections of the community include:
 - The blue-collar industrial workers
 - Wealthy businessmen
 - Immigrants from Mainland China, many of whom live in crowded settlements or on boats in the harbor
 - People in the farming and fishing industries
 - The Muslim and Indian minorities