

Vietnamese Need Jesus



At Christmas time in 2009, 12,000 people gathered in Hanoi, Vietnam's capital city, for a "Praise Jesus Together" rally. Choirs sang, pastors preached, and people prayed for their nation. In Ho Chi Minh City, 40,000 people celebrated Christmas together.

These meetings were big news in Vietnam. For more than 35 years Christians were not allowed to worship together. They prayed for change—and God is answering!

Fifty-five years ago, the country of Vietnam was divided. North Vietnam was Communist and was fighting to rule the entire country. Communists believe people should serve the government instead of serving God. In South Vietnam, people were free to worship as they pleased. Most followed Buddhism, which teaches that people can find peace through worshipping the Buddha. Others followed Chinese religions or animism, a religion that worships spirits found in nature.



Assemblies of God missionaries arrived in 1971. Working with missionaries from the Philippines and with Vietnamese Christians, they opened the first church, in the town of Vung Tau, and then a Bible school to train pastors.

In 1975, North Vietnam won the war. The new government made people stop all religious meetings. They closed churches and took the land. In 2000, they tore down the Vung Tau church—the last church left. Church members had to meet secretly in homes. But Christians kept praying for their country.

In 1988, the Assemblies of God began to organize again and by 2007 there were 300 house churches. However, the challenges were great, and many pastors spent time in prison for telling others about Jesus.

Finally, in October 2009, the people's prayers were answered. The government gave the Assemblies of God permission to be a legal church. A year later, the

Assemblies of God of Vietnam held its first official meeting. Government officials sat and listened as more than 700 people rejoiced and heard God's Word.

Today the Assemblies of God of Vietnam has more than 21,000 members and 300 churches. Missionaries have come back. Some are telling people about Jesus at a coffeehouse in Ho Chi Minh City. Now a church has started, and some young people are studying Global University Bible courses thanks to help from BGMC. An Assemblies of God orphanage gives children a home. Across the country, more people are finding peace in Jesus rather than in Buddha!



The churches in Vietnam have very little money for supplies, so BGMC has been helping them with the supplies they need to teach the people about Jesus. Christian education supplies and children's ministries supplies have all been provided by BGMC.

LET'S PRAY...

- for our missionaries as they work with the Assemblies of God of Vietnam to tell people about Jesus.
- for the kids of Vietnam. Many, especially in the cities, are tempted by drugs and alcohol and get involved in gangs. Pray that they will serve Jesus instead.
- for the pastors and church members as they tell others about Jesus' love for them. Many people think that following Buddha's teaching can save them. Most believe that dead ancestors can bless or help them. Pray that they will learn that only Jesus can save and help them.



Winnie's Newsletter

A take-home paper for kids!

VIETNAM



Quick Facts

Location: Vietnam is in Southeast Asia. It is a long, skinny country. China is to the north, and Laos and Cambodia to the west. Vietnam is about the size of our state of New Mexico.

The Land: In the north are rugged mountains and thick forests. Along the northeast coast lies the Red River Delta. The long "backbone" going down the country and the wider part below are highlands, where many people farm the land. In the south, farmers plant rice in the Mekong Delta.

Weather: Southern Vietnam is hot and humid and gets a lot of rain from May to September. Storms called monsoons blow in from the sea. Typhoons sometimes hit the central part and cause a lot of damage. The north has cool winters, but no snow.

Capital City: Hanoi (more than 6 million)

Population: About 90 million

People Groups: Kinh (Viet—86%), Chinese (2%), Thai (1.7%), more than 50 mountain tribes

Languages: Vietnamese (official), English, some French, Chinese, and tribal languages

Religions: Buddhism is the main religion, but many people say they are Buddhists but do not really follow the religion. About 7% are part of the Roman Catholic church. Others follow the Chinese religion of Taoism. Mountain tribes worship various spirits. Most people believe in honoring and even worshiping ancestors.

Assemblies of God Facts: The Assemblies of God of Vietnam has more than 300 churches, with 21,000 members. More than 200 pastors lead the churches, with the help of 20 missionaries. Two Bible schools train about 75 students.



Kheim

Today's the day! Kheim's cousin Binh and his family are coming to visit—all the way from the other end of the country. About 50 years ago, when Vietnam was at war, Kheim's grandparents fled from the north to the south. They settled there to farm in the Mekong Delta. Kheim's mother grew up there, but left when she married.

The families can't get together very often, so everyone is excited. Kheim runs to the window whenever he hears a car. Finally a taxi pulls up and the family unloads, happy to arrive after their long bus trip. They are staying for a week, and Kheim is ready to show his cousin his room, his neighborhood, and his city!



City School, Country School

Kheim and his cousin Binh are both in third grade. Binh is amazed at the three-story school building. The classrooms are built around a big courtyard, with plenty of room to play during breaks. Classes start at 7:00 a.m., and Kheim stays at school all day, even for lunch. He stays busy with extra activities, like art, soccer, and computer class.

Binh's country school in the Mekong Delta is much different. It is smaller, just one story of classrooms around a smaller courtyard. Many of the students stay only a half day, so they have no time for extra activities.



Floating Markets

Kheim's aunt has come with gifts of rice, coconuts, and vegetables from their garden. Binh tells Kheim about helping his mother take fruits and vegetables to the floating market on the river. Every morning, beginning at 5:00, boats gather with bushels of goods, which traders buy to resell in the cities and towns. There are even restaurant boats and floating gas stations!



Time for Fun!

Binh and Kheim both love sports. In the city, Kheim plays soccer, volleyball, and badminton. On the way to school he sees many people jogging and doing exercises. In the country, Binh likes to play soccer and enjoys games with friends.

Both of the boys especially love the water. Binh is good at handling boats on the delta rivers. Kheim loves to swim. His family often goes to one of the lakes within the city. Today Kheim is going to show Binh some new water fun—water puppets! For hundreds of years in northern Vietnam, people have made wooden puppets and have given puppet shows in the flooded rice fields. Today villagers use a pond for a stage, and in the cities there are water puppet theaters. Puppets stand in a pool of water and the puppeteers, hidden behind a bamboo screen, move them. Opera singers sing the story and an orchestra plays as the colorful puppets act out stories of life in the country and folk tales.



Rice & Chopsticks

Kheim's mother and Binh's mother begin preparing the main meal. Soon the kids can smell the chicken pieces and pig bones simmering to make broth for a wonderful noodle soup called *pho ga*. When Kheim smells the perfumed rice, he knows it's almost time for dinner! The women put the food on the table—a pork dish, boiled vegetables, the rice, and the soup. Because there are so many people, they sit around the table on mats.

Everyone serves himself, putting what he wants into his rice bowl. It's considered lazy to set the bowl on the table to eat, so Kheim holds his bowl in his left hand and uses chopsticks with his right hand. He uses a spoon for the soup.



The Singing Festival

One day the two families take a short bus ride to the village of Lung Giang to see the Quan Ho Festival. About 50 villages organize this festival each February.

Quan Ho is a type of singing that began about 800 years ago in north Vietnam. Men and women sing back and forth to each other. The women start with a "challenge" song that the men have to answer. The songs may tell stories about love and daily life.

The singers often stand in boats. The women wear long, colorful dresses and large, flat hats. The men wear long black shirts, white pants, and black turbans, and they carry umbrellas.

Quan Ho has lots of other activities, such as human chess, wrestling contests, water puppetry, and lion dances.

BGMC Blesses Vietnam!

BGMC has blessed the churches in Vietnam by providing them with Christian education supplies and children's ministries supplies. Many pastors need to be trained in God's Word, so BGMC has paid to have Bible courses translated for them. BGMC has also helped in the orphanages with supplies and money to keep them running.

One way to reach the children of Vietnam is through the KidsQuest evangelism program. BGMC has supplied the kits, the training, and the Christian comic books given out. Many kids are hearing about Jesus.

Thank you, kids, for giving to BGMC to help reach the people of Vietnam!