



GLOBAL FOCUS

What is God doing around the world?

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VIETNAM Victory amidst Turmoil

Located in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is one of only five countries in the world that is still ruled by a Communist party. The current population of this poor country is 95,415,000 making it the world's 15th most populous country. Despite communist rule, economic changes have been taken to improve conditions which used to be one of the worst in the world.

After the Vietnam War the Communist party attempted to remove all religious worship from the country. According to the government Vietnam is officially an atheistic state. However, with reforms in the 1990's religious freedoms were reintroduced with strict limitations. The country used to be predominately Buddhist. Today, most of the religious Vietnamese practice various folk religions (45.3%). 16.4% are Buddhists, 8.2% are Christians (mostly Catholics), and about 30% are unaffiliated with any religion. During the war, religious persecution was at an all-time high with Christian missionar-

ies specifically targeted. Even though today religion is sanctioned by the government, it still makes the Open Doors USA list of persecuted churches, ranking number eighteen. Most of the persecution comes from the government. Some Christian churches have seen their land confiscated and leaders jailed. Converts from folk religions as well as Protestant Christians experience the most intense persecution. New believers often face exclusion, harassment, discrimination, loss of property, and even violent attack for their faith.

In the early 1900s, the Christian and Missionary Alliance planted churches, trained pastors, translated the Bible, and raised up indigenous leaders—all essential factors in rooting the gospel in a world where it survived through Communist rule and civil war and today thrives. Of the 1.7 million evangelicals, one million are associated with the C&MA.

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Despite persecution, revival has spread through small, rural villages raising up young believers who are on fire for the Lord and ready to stand for their faith and share it boldly. How is God preparing you to take a stand for the gospel right where you are?