

# PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 26, JUNE 26 - JULY 2

## Buddhism



The idea of Buddhism—and Hinduism—as a ‘religion’ is at least partly an invention of early Western explorers and missionaries. Only later was the concept taken up by Buddhists themselves. Almost everywhere Buddhism appears (mostly south-east and east Asia) Buddhist ideas are woven into a much wider tapestry of belief, ritual, filial piety and morality. This tapestry will often include rituals involving other gods, the ancestors, and often the occult.

A few things are worth noting for prayer

1. Relatively few people have turned to Christ from active Buddhist practice despite centuries of Christian witness.
2. The main exception to this rule is countries where existing beliefs have first been suppressed by communism or war: Cambodia, China, Laos, Mongolia, South Korea and Vietnam, for example, all have growing churches or substantial Christian populations.
3. Yet churches are being planted among Buddhists, and there are increasing reports of Buddhist monks studying the New Testament and meeting Christ.
4. Though Buddhism is hailed as a religion of tolerance, militant versions of it are appearing just as similar radicalism has developed within Islam, the Hindu world, and Christianity.
5. Buddhist ideas such as certain forms of

mindfulness, some types of meditation, and Buddhist statues, are being adopted around the world.

Pray for:

✎ The remaining Buddhist peoples of the world to encounter Jesus Christ, who is ‘desired by all nations’ (Haggai 2:7). May the Buddhist nations of the world experience this desire!

✎ God to raise up church-planters, scholars and study-centres that can learn and teach fresh Christian approaches to the 540 million members of the Buddhist world.

THE NATIONS

## INDIA'S CHURCH

India's Church is ancient, dating back (by tradition) to the Apostle Thomas. It is strongest in the south of India and in the northeast.

While many of South India's Christians have a relatively high social standing, most of the rest are from the poorest parts of society, and this affects how Christians are perceived and treated in the nation. India's Church includes Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Independent Christians, plus an unknown number who trust and follow Jesus but remain culturally identified as Hindus.



Christian growth is a reality. Nearly all of it due to the faithful witness of indigenous believers sharing the good news village by village and town by town. India's 600,000 villages contain nearly 2/3rds of its population.

Churches struggle to keep up with the needs of people open to Christian ministry. Also, the scale of the Christian movement, its informality, and the way that many people stay within traditional religious frameworks after meeting Jesus, means Indian Christianity is very hard to measure or comprehend.

Indian Christianity is better at travelling within cultural networks than across them. This is a challenge: taking the gospel across cultures means learning new languages, cultures, and ways of working, and demands patience and faith. And India is home to thousands of unreached groups; India's unreached are a large percentage of the world's unreached.

✎ Pray for the Church to persevere with love, forgiveness, and joy in the midst of intensifying persecution.

✎ Pray for the Church to multiply, village by village, and town by town.

✎ Praise God for the way that Indian missionaries are starting to cross cultures to bring the gospel to unreached groups. India has more national missionaries than any other nation.

✎ Pray for a great turning to Christ also in India's urban areas. First-generation urbanites are often receptive to evangelical and Pentecostal expressions of the Christian faith. Pray the opportunity offered by India's urbanization won't be missed.

*Praying for the World* is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit [www.lausanne.org/pray](http://www.lausanne.org/pray) to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.

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