



10 Faces

of Ho Chi Minh City

Pray with us for the 10 million faces of this great city where every 10 minutes a lost person dies and goes to Hell.

The Buddhist

Lien*

Historically, the Vietnamese people have never celebrated birthdays but rather give a strong emphasis to commemorating the date of death of family and loved ones. Lien came to the Buddhist temple to do just that. To pray on behalf of her father who had died 100 days before. Lien told us that when she comes to the temple she prays for happiness.

The Buddhism practiced in Ho Chi Minh City is largely influenced by Chinese Buddhism stemming from the 1,000 years of Chinese reign over Vietnam. As with all religious or spiritual expression in Vietnam, Buddhist practice is very syncretistic, drawing from other Asian religions, fortune telling, animism and most importantly ancestor worship. *Here are some ways you can pray:*

- ◆ The majority of Vietnamese people identify themselves as Buddhist. **Pray** that God will pour out His Spirit among the Buddhists so that they may see clearly the hope of new life through Jesus Christ.
- ◆ **Pray** for Lien and millions of others Buddhists in Ho Chi Minh City to find more than happiness but rather true joy and peace that can only come from God.
- ◆ **Pray** for opportunities to share the Gospel with Buddhists in Ho Chi Minh City in a way that will speak to their desire for spiritual fulfillment.



“When I come to the temple,” said Lien as she knelt in front of the gold statue of the Buddha, “I feel the happiness I pray for.”



The Catholic

Binh*

“I pray because Mary answers my prayers,” says Binh as we speak to her at one of the many Catholic churches in the city. “I pray for the people of Ho Chi Minh City. There are so many people here, and many people have trouble in their life.”

The Catholicism practiced in Vietnam is generally seen as “Folk Catholicism” including a mixture of Roman Catholicism, Vietnamese ancestor worship and other indigenous spiritual belief. Beginning with Portuguese and French missionaries in the 1600’s, about 7% of the population of Vietnam identify themselves as Catholic currently. *Join us in praying for this people segment with these requests:*

- ◆ **Pray** for the Catholic peoples of Ho Chi Minh City to open their hearts to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

- ◆ **Pray** that a revival of Bible reading would occur among Catholics in the city so that they will hear clearly from God His message of grace and assurance of salvation.
- ◆ **Pray** for those Catholics that are exposed to the Gospel and particularly those close to making a decision. Catholic neighborhoods in Ho Chi Minh City are very close knit and new Believers face much opposition from family when making a decision for Christ.

The Chinese

Trang*

Today’s Ho Chi Minh City came together in part as the two metropolitan areas of Saigon and Cholon were combined and given its current name commemorating the late leader of Vietnam. Cholon historically has been the “Chinatown” of this area. Upwards of 800,000 ethnic Chinese live within Ho Chi Minh City, most congregated within the Cholon district. Strong elements of Chinese culture remain among these diaspora though there is also much assimilation with Vietnamese culture and values.

Trang is a typical second generation Chinese living in Ho Chi Minh City. He operates a small stall selling clothes in one of the large markets of Cholon. Together in their home his family still communicates with their heart language of a southern

Chinese dialect though he is also fluent in both Vietnamese and Mandarin Chinese.

Pray with us for the Chinese of this city:

- ◆ Please **pray** for God to call out laborers to evangelize and start churches among the Chinese population of our city.
- ◆ **Pray** for effective communication of the Gospel to the Chinese of Ho Chi Minh City who tend to have a strong adherence to traditional Chinese religious and spiritual belief.
- ◆ **Pray** that as new Chinese Believers come to Christ they will in turn impact all of the peoples of Vietnam with the Gospel as they have broad access throughout the country through their business dealings.



“I don’t think about religion,” says Trang. “But when my family goes to the Buddhist temple, they pray to have a good life, good business, and good health.”



The Factory Worker

Tan*

“I don’t have time to pray,” said Tan. “Besides, when I live here, I am unable to worship, because I must be in the same place as my ancestors. Now my family who still lives at my home where my ancestors are buried must pray for me.”

For a large segment of the 10 million people living in Ho Chi Minh City, it is an overwhelming entity that never feels like home. They don’t like or dislike the city. The city is reality. They must work in the factories that provide an income and support beyond what they could ever hope for in their home province. With every paycheck they send money back home to parents, spouses or children who have remained in the countryside. If they have had a good year they will also get to travel back home to visit their family once a year at the traditional lunar new year festival. But the remainder of the year they live disconnected from loved ones, often laboring to produce luxury items they will never themselves be able to afford.

Pray with us for the factory workers of HCMC:

- ◆ **Pray** for the Gospel to spread like wildfire among the masses of workers in factories throughout Ho Chi Minh City. Pray that they will find the true hope in life through Jesus Christ.
- ◆ **Pray** that new churches will be started among factory workers that will multiply into many other segments of the city and into the home provinces of the workers.
- ◆ **Pray** that Tan and the majority of people in Ho Chi Minh City will be given sight to see that help does not come from the spirits of dead ancestors but from the Creator God.

The Families

Vien*

The family unit is integral to Asian culture, and for the people of Ho Chi Minh City, it is no different. Young families especially are growing in Ho Chi Minh City. Census data from 2010 shows that there were approximately 215,000 kindergarten students in the city and increase of more than 10% from the previous year. As young families continue to grow there is such a critical need to touch this next generation of Vietnam with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

In Ho Chi Minh City, multiple generations often live in the same house. Tradition as well as spiritual beliefs are passed down almost automatically in this context. When one person follows Christ out of the family

it often creates a great deal of conflict even to the point of the new Believer being cast out of the family. *Pray with us for Vietnamese families with these requests:*

- ◆ **Pray** for young families in Ho Chi Minh City that they might find the hope of their future in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ **Pray** for many young families to make the decision to follow God and so to lead their precious young children in the way of the Lord.
- ◆ **Pray** for God to call out laborers to share the Gospel with young families, that entire families would come to Christ and form the start of a new church in their neighborhood.



Coming to one of the many temples in the city, Vien tells us his story. “When I was young, my parents brought me to the temple to light incense. They showed me at home how to put the fruit on the altar for our ancestors. Now I do the same with my son. Nothing should change that.”



The Restaurant Worker

Tu*

“I like working here” said Tu as she served food to a customer. “At least I have a job and get to eat from what we cook each day. But I wish there was more I could hope beyond that. If there is, I haven’t ever found it.”

Thousands of restaurants are scattered throughout Ho Chi Minh City – from chain restaurants to small roadside food stands. Restaurant work, whether it be as a cook or server in a restaurant, or making coffee at a stand on the sidewalk furnished only with small plastic stools -- leaves those completing the work exhausted at the end of the day, often barely able to make ends meet. Restaurants are found on virtually every street or in every neighborhood of Ho Chi Minh City. Restaurants also reach every socio-economic segment of the city from the wealthiest to the poorest. *Pray with us for the restaurant and other service industry workers that they might find Christ!*

- ◆ **Pray** for Tu, and other restaurant workers like her. Pray that in the midst of their busy and tiring work they will find the love and strength of God.
- ◆ **Pray** for the Gospel to be shared broadly among restaurant workers, impacting not only them and their families but also the customers they serve.
- ◆ **Pray** that as restaurant workers have contact with every part of the city in this way, so also will the Gospel of Jesus Christ touch every segment of Ho Chi Minh City.

The Street Vendor

Mai*

Mai carries her shop on her shoulders, two baskets slung from a bamboo pole. The load looks heavy but she makes carrying it look effortless. At 66 years old, Mai’s life is common to many in the city. Estimates are as high as 70% of the employment in Ho Chi Minh City is ‘informal’ or unregistered. Small vendors like Mai operate portable shops selling everything from drinks and cigarettes to baked goods and fresh spring rolls. Their life is difficult, living from hand to mouth and many sleeping on the street next to their business. *Please pray with us for the ever present street vendors of Ho Chi Minh City with these requests:*

- ◆ **Pray** for Mai that she will find the love and provision that God offers to her.
- ◆ **Pray** for Christians in Ho Chi Minh City to take every opportunity to show God’s love and His message of salvation to the street vendors with whom they interact every day.
- ◆ **Pray** for a strategy to share the Gospel among street vendors and other informal entrepreneurs through which many might come to Christ and new multiplying churches would be started.



“I pray for my health,” says Mai as she scans the crowd looking for potential customers walking along the street. “I work every day from 6 AM until 10 PM. I never married, so if I get sick, I have no one who will take care of me.”



The Student

Phuoc*

“I don’t have time to pray,” says Phuoc, who moved to Ho Chi Minh City from his hometown about 50 miles away. “It’s hard to live here – I am away from my family, my home – it’s so different here. So many people, so many motorbikes, and so much noise.”

Education is highly valued throughout Asia, but this is particularly true for Vietnam at the country’s current level of economic development. Higher education is commonly seen as the ‘ticket to success’ by families sending their son or daughter to the city for school.

Most of the some 750,000 college and university students in Ho Chi Minh City live very frugally with their families unable to provide much if any support. The oldest child will often come to the city and attend university. Later he will stay in the city working and supporting younger siblings as they also come to study. Almost no dormitory space is available for students, so most will rent a room with several other students as near to the campus as possible, working a part time job to pay their part of the

rent. *Please pray for the students of Ho Chi Minh City with these requests:*

- ◆ **Pray** for the students of Ho Chi Minh City that as they learn in school they will also learn the most important lesson in life – that God loves them and sent His Son to die for them that they might have eternal life!
- ◆ **Pray** for local Believers in Ho Chi Minh City to take notice of the students around them and reach out with the message of salvation.
- ◆ **Pray** for God to bring many students in the city to Christ, that they will grow as obedient disciples and form the basis of new churches reaching even more students.

The Xe Om Driver

Duc*

If you had a bird’s eye view of Ho Chi Minh City the streets would no doubt look like endless flowing rivers of motorcycles. While the vast majority of households in the city own a motorcycle, on every street corner you will also find multiple motorcycle taxis, or Xe Om (pronounced ‘say ohm’).

Many people use motorcycle taxis to go from place to place, favoring the cheaper and faster method of transportation over that of taking a regular taxi. *Pray with us for the numerous Xe Om drivers of Ho Chi Minh City with these requests:*

- ◆ **Pray** for Xe Om drivers in Ho Chi Minh City that they might hear of God’s love for them and respond through faith in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Given their contact with numerous people throughout the day and ease of moving through the city, **pray** that God would call out many Xe Om drivers to not only believe in Him but to serve Him as evangelists throughout the city.
- ◆ **Pray** for effective ways to share the Gospel and discipleship materials with Xe Om drivers that they might be able to read or listen to as they wait between customers.



“I go wherever people want to go,” says Duc as he waits for an older woman to come out of the shop where he brought her. “I like this job because I can work whenever I want for as long as I want. I am my own boss.”



The Young Professional

Hai*

"I work every day and most nights. If I don't they can find someone who will. I need this job and its benefits. I try to help my parents who still struggle to take care of my younger brothers and sisters. At this point in my life, religion is simply a luxury I cannot afford."

While Hanoi as the capital of Vietnam and the political hub of the country, Ho Chi Minh City, the largest city in Vietnam is without a doubt the economic or financial hub of the entire country. Hai works as an account manager at a small start-up computer software firm in the city. Like Hai, young people from all over Vietnam come to Ho Chi Minh City in search of a better life. The city holds strong attraction especially to young professionals where they seek to leverage their college education to land a position with a multi-national corporation or receive other benefits from the high degree of foreign investment. *Please pray with us for the young professionals in Ho Chi Minh City:*

- ◆ **Pray** for Hai and the many other educated, young professionals like him in Ho Chi Minh City. Pray that they will see clearly that the issue is about much more than religion and how they cannot afford to ignore God any longer.
- ◆ **Pray** for the development of new ways to reach young professionals with the Gospel and disciple them using tools that fit their lifestyle and schedules.
- ◆ **Pray** for Christian foreigners that have business dealings in Ho Chi Minh City to impact their Vietnamese co-workers with the Gospel.

The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 (HCSB)

Ten million people live in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

God knows every person, every face.

He knows them and wants them to repent and turn to Him.

With ten million in population, the number is so large that it's mind-boggling. Many of us cannot even hold a number that big in our mind. Within that ten million however, scarcely **2%** has found the hope and joy of salvation in Jesus Christ. If you do the math based on the average mortality rate in Vietnam, every ten minutes a lost person dies in Ho Chi Minh City and goes to Hell. It may be hard to wrap our head around 10 million, but we can all understand 'every 10 minutes'.

Pray with us for the 10 Faces of Ho Chi Minh City, *the Buddhist, the Catholic, the Chinese, the Factory Worker, Families, the Restaurant Worker, the Street Vendor, the Student, the Xe Om Driver, and the Young Professional* as they represent the ten million of this city.

Stay connected for ongoing prayer requests and information about God's work in Ho Chi Minh City by following www.reachingvietnam.com.

10 million. Every 10 minutes.

**names in this publication have been changed for security*

