

## ***Hundreds of Evangelical Missionaries Requested for the Philippines!***

**Pop 104** million, **Capital** Manila (Manila/Quezon City 20.6 mill).

Evangelical Christians 11.6 mill.

**Largest Religion** Roman Catholicism.

**Largest Ethnic Groups** Filipinos (98.1%, Tribal peoples 9.6%, Muslim majority peoples 5%), Chinese (1.7%).

**Official Language** Filipino (based on Tagalog), English.

**All Languages** 181.

**Politics** A Spanish colony (1565-1898), which led to the large Catholic majority and many Spanish customs. Governed by the USA until independence (1946).

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**1. The Philippines has not yet achieved its economic and political potential.** The nation has natural resources, democratic roots, and a well-educated population. There is a large growing middle class. Half the population live in poverty. Tropical storms, floods, and landslides destroy lives and homes, especially in the slums. Most farmers do not own land.

**2. Metro Manila** is a mega-city of 20 million people. It faces enormous challenges, but God is greatly at work here. Modern ministry to the urban poor began in Manila.

Many are open to the gospel, and there are several very large churches of 5000 to 40,000 people, but most evangelical churches are in the wealthiest areas. Nearly 50% of slums and squatter communities have no evangelical church. At the same time, Manila is home to the country's wealthy elite. Pray for many Filipino Christian Workers and missionaries to serve with the masses without Christ.

**3. The Roman Catholic Church** retains great influence. Some Catholics want to preserve the Church's role in politics and society, and a few work to oppose Protestant or Independent movements. For many Catholics, witchcraft or animism actually holds more influence over their lives than Christianity.

**4. Almost all evangelical denominations continue to grow.** Church planting slowed down after strong growth in the 1980s and 1990s, but many large congregations emerged, together with a diversity of Christian ministries. Praise God for increased spiritual unity among evangelicals. Several groups work to strengthen fellowship and collaboration between churches. Few countries have more extensive Christian television coverage, and the Filipino Church makes impressive use of the Internet (online communities, podcast sermons, Bible studies, webstreaming TV). Of the Philippines' 42,000 *barangays* (its smallest government unit), 23,000 still have no evangelical church.

**5. The Filipino Church is a significant missionary-sending Church.** The Philippines already supports over

3,000 cross-cultural workers, coordinated through the Philippines Missions Association (PMA). Their goal is 5,000 missionaries sent from the Philippines. They also train and encourage the thousands of Filipino evangelicals who work overseas to be Kingdom ambassadors.

Shortwave broadcasts go out from the Philippines to less accessible Asian areas (China, Siberia, Indochina, Myanmar, others).

## **6. Evangelicals of this generation face new**

**challenges.** Pray for the spiritual health of the Church.

Pray for the Bible and other Christian resources to make a deep and lasting impact on lives (54 translation projects underway, 14 languages still have translation needs).

- ***Many sects and cults*** mix Christian ideas with false teachings. Most have highly controlling and manipulative leadership. Ask God to expose all lies, and pray for effective ministry to the millions caught within these groups.
- ***Extreme poverty*** (especially in rural areas) can lead to additional problems. Some depend on foreign funds and sponsorships. Others adopt prosperity gospel. Pray that Christian organizations and Filipino churches with better resources might find sustainable ways to assist the poor.
- ***Leadership development*** is a priority. Praise God for many Filipino leaders with national and international influence! Yet even more than 100 seminaries and Bible colleges and numerous training resources cannot keep up with the rapid church growth. Rural congregations

especially suffer, as trained graduates have less desire to serve there. There are an estimated 41,000 untrained and undertrained Pastors!

### **7. The major export of the Philippines is people!**

Filipinos are hard-working, and many are highly skilled, but too few work opportunities exist at home. Over 8.1 million live abroad. Many work as nurses, engineers, domestic servants, nannies, menial workers, and seamen (the 245,000 Filipino seamen are the largest group from any nation). Many go to difficult and “closed” countries to witness for Christ, and some suffer much for their faith. Pray that Christians from the Philippines may be lights to the whole world.

**8. Pray for the less-reached peoples and regions.** The Church made great progress in reaching isolated tribal peoples all over the islands. Of the 17 that remain unreached, most are Muslim. Pray for the Church to grow in its concern for and outreach to Muslims, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable peoples.

- ***Mindanao has a good number of evangelicals***, but growth has slowed down. Violence between government forces and Muslim rebels, and ethnic resentment among some groups block the spread of the gospel. Pray for peace in Mindanao, and for a fair solution that ends the cycle of military presence, violence, kidnapping, and suffering.
- ***The Sulu Islands*** (between Mindanao and Borneo) are home to the Muslim Tausug, Sama, Sinama, and Yakan

peoples. A significant breakthrough came among the Sama Bajau Sea Gypsies who moved to the urban areas! They now take the gospel back to their home areas.

- **Palawan** (a long, isolated island) receives many new Tagalog and Muslim immigrants as it rapidly develops. Praise God that some of the indigenous peoples responded to the gospel! Pray for spiritual fruit to come among the Muslim Molbog, Batak, Palawano, and Sama Mapun.
- **Luzon** has some regions with few Christian peoples (the Bicol, the north and northeast coastal mountains). Church planting there is difficult.
- **Visayas** is a needy region of the country. Christianity is widespread, but many do not actively practice their faith. Widespread poverty leaves many people without hope.
- **The nearly 1 million Chinese** are only 2-3% evangelical Christian. Some of the Philippines' oldest Protestant churches are Chinese. Pray especially for new outreach to the younger generation of Chinese-Filipinos, and to the newly arrived mainland Chinese.
- **Vulnerable and at-risk groups** need special ministry. Over half the population are under age 20. 24% miss their education because they must work to help their family, or they have no local school. Up to 100,000 children and 400,000 women are currently involved in illicit trades, with many of them trafficked to other countries.

Source: adapted by Doug Nichols from *Pray for the World*,  
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