

Countries of the Pacific Islands (Oceania)

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<https://operationworld.org/prayer-resources/countries-alphabetically/>

<https://www.ducksters.com/geography/oceania.php>

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American Samoa

Capital: Pago Pago

Population: 55,312 (as of 2022)

Brief History of American Samoa:

It is thought that the Samoan Islands were first settled around 1000 BC. They were first discovered by Europeans by a Dutchman, Jacob Roggeveen, in 1722. In 1768 a French explorer Lous Antoine de Bougainville visited the islands and named them the Navigator Islands. There wasn't much contact at this time until the mid-1800's when trader and missionaries started to visit the islands.

In the late-1800's there was a dispute over the islands between Germany and the United States. The islands were split between the two countries. The American side would become the US Territory that is today American Samoa.

As a US Territory, American Samoa is somewhat self-governing. Someone born in American Samoa is not considered a citizen of the United States and cannot vote in elections, but they can travel to and from the rest of the United States easily.

The Geography of American Samoa

Total Size: 199 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: five volcanic islands with rugged peaks and limited coastal plains, two coral atolls (Rose Island, Swains Island)

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Lata Mountain 964 m

Climate: tropical marine, moderated by southeast trade winds; annual rainfall averages about 3 m; rainy season (November to April), dry season (May to October); little seasonal temperature variation

Major cities: PAGO PAGO (capital) 60,000 (2009), Tafuna, Leone

The People of American Samoa

Type of Government: Governed by USA

Languages Spoken: Samoan 90.6% (closely related to Hawaiian and other Polynesian languages), English 2.9%, Tongan 2.4%, other Pacific islander 2.1%, other 2%

Religions: Largest Religion: Christian 95.1% (Congregationalist 50%, Roman Catholic 20%, Protestant/Pentecostal 30%)

Praise God for the evangelical ministries and churches making an impact for the Lord. Evangelical groups, especially Assemblies of God, have grown rapidly. There is also a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) base in the islands.

Literacy Rate: 97 %

People Groups: 9

% Unevangelized: 1 %

Economy of American Samoa

Major Industries: tuna canneries (largely supplied by foreign fishing vessels), handicrafts

Agricultural Products: bananas, coconuts, vegetables, taro, breadfruit, yams, copra, pineapples, papayas; dairy products, livestock

Natural Resources: pumice, pumicite

Major Exports: canned tuna 93% (2004 est.)

Major Imports: materials for canneries 56%, food 8%, petroleum products 7%, machinery and parts 6% (2004 est.)

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Cook Islands

Biography: Makea

Capital: Avarua

Population: 17,572 (as of 2023)

Brief History of Cook Islands:

The first inhabitants of the Cook Islands were Polynesians who migrated there from the nearby island of Tahiti. The first Europeans to visit the Islands were the Spanish in the 16th Century. The islands were first called San Bernardo, which means Saint Bernard, and then later Gente Hermosa, which means Beautiful People.

In the late 1700s British captain James Cook arrived. He didn't name the islands either as he called them the Hervey Islands. It wasn't until later that the islands were named the Cook Islands in honor of Captain Cook.

The islands became a British protectorate in 1888, but were soon given to New Zealand to govern. Today, the Cook Islands are mostly independent while New Zealand oversees the country's defense.

The Geography of Cook Islands

Total Size: 240 square km

General Terrain: low coral atolls in north; volcanic, hilly islands in south

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Te Manga 652 m

Climate: tropical; moderated by trade winds

The People of Cook Islands

Type of Government: self-governing parliamentary democracy

Languages Spoken: English (official), Maori

Independence: none (became self-governing in free association with New Zealand on 4th August 1965 and has the right at any time to move to full independence by unilateral action)

Religions:

Christian: 96.2 %. Denominations include Evangelical, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic (16.8%) Seventh-Day Adventists (7.9%)

% Unevangelized: 0 %

Other religions: Latter Day Saints 3.8%

The strong Christian legacy of over 150 years – bordering on theocracy on some islands – is fading rapidly. Increasing numbers are nominal or even non-religious, and Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are the fastest growing groups. Pray for reversal of these trends and for new life to come to the mainline Churches.

Economy of Cook Islands

Major Industries: fruit processing, tourism, fishing, clothing, handicrafts

Agricultural Products: copra, citrus, pineapples, tomatoes, beans, paw paws, bananas, yams, taro, coffee; pigs, poultry

Major Exports: copra, papayas, fresh and canned citrus fruit, coffee; fish; pearls and pearl shells; clothing

Major Imports: foodstuffs, textiles, fuels, timber, capital goods

Currency: New Zealand dollar (NZD)

Fiji

Biographies: Daniel Bula, Joeli Bulu, Ratu Cakabau

Capital: Suva (on Viti Levu)

Population: 889,953

Brief History of Fiji:

The country of Fiji is a set of Islands in the South Pacific. The original settlers of Fiji were Polynesian and Melanesian peoples who have lived on the islands for thousands of years.

In the first part of the 19th century, Europeans arrived on the islands. The tribal groups on the islands began to war and finally the local chiefs decided to give the islands to Britain in 1874 in an effort to restore peace.

Fiji was a British colony for around 100 years when in 1970 it became an independent country. Since becoming independent, Fiji has experienced times of democracy and military dictatorship. In 2006 Commodore Frank Bainimarama led a military coup and took over the country. He ruled Fiji without free elections until 2023. In the January 2023 election, Rabuka became Prime Minister. His party, with a coalition of two other parties overturned Bainimarama's government.

The Geography of Fiji

Total Size: 18,270 square km

General Terrain: mostly mountains of volcanic origin

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Tomanivi 1,324 m

Climate: tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Major cities: SUVA (capital) 174,000 (2009); Nadi on the West coast is the main tourist destination.

The People of Fiji

Languages Spoken: English (official), Fijian (official), Hindustani

Independence: 10 October 1970 (from UK)

Religions: Christian 52% (Methodist 37%, Roman Catholic 9%), Hindu 38%, Muslim 8%, other 2%

British colonial greed left Fiji ethnically divided. The British imported Indians as indentured labourers from 1870 onward. Fijians lived as a minority in their own country at times. Indians worked hard to build new lives in Fiji, but they cannot own land. They face resentment and racial prejudice. Poor treatment by the British and Fijians, both considered

Christian, discredited the gospel for most Indians. Pray for a spirit of repentance and reconciliation, and a society known for freedom and equality.

% Unevangelized: 13 %

Economy of Fiji

Major Industries: tourism, sugar, clothing, copra, gold, silver, lumber, small cottage industries

Agricultural Products: sugarcane, coconuts, cassava (tapioca), rice, sweet potatoes, bananas; cattle, pigs, horses, goats; fish

Natural Resources: timber, fish, gold, copper, offshore oil potential, hydropower

Major Exports: sugar, garments, gold, timber, fish, molasses, coconut oil

Major Imports: manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, petroleum products, food, chemicals

Currency: Fijian dollar (FJD)

French Polonesia (includes Tahiti)

Biography: Piri and Maki

Capital: Papeete

Population: 282,534

Brief History of French Polynesia:

French Polynesia is a French overseas territory. It is located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and is made up of a number of islands, the most famous island being Tahiti.

Prior to European arrival the island was governed by native chiefs. Several explorers sighted or visited the islands over the years including Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 and James Cook in 1769. France claimed ownership of various islands over time including Tahiti. In 1889 France united the islands into a single protectorate for the first time.

The Geography of French Polynesia

Total Size: 4,167 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: mixture of rugged high islands and low islands with reefs

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mont Orohena 2,241 m

Climate: tropical, but moderate

Major cities: PAPEETE (capital) 133,000 (2009)

The People of French Polynesia

Languages Spoken: French (official), Tahitian

Independence: none (territory of France)

National Holiday: Bastille Day, (French) 14 July (1789)

Nationality: French Polynesian(s)

Religions: Protestant 54%, Roman Catholic 30%, other 10%, no religion 6%

Those with a vital personal faith are now rare. As a result, there is a reversion to the bondage of pagan occultism and a multiplication of syncretistic and foreign sects, especially two forms of Mormonism. Pray for a spiritual revolution to take place among the many nominal Catholic and Protestant Christians.

Economy of French Polynesia

Major Industries: tourism, pearls, agricultural processing, handicrafts, phosphates

Agricultural Products: coconuts, vanilla, vegetables, fruits, coffee; poultry, beef, dairy products

Natural Resources: timber, fish, cobalt, hydropower

Major Exports: cultured pearls, coconut products, mother-of-pearl, vanilla, shark meat

Major Imports: fuels, foodstuffs, machinery and equipment

Currency: Comptoirs Francais du Pacifique franc (XPF)

Guam

Capital: Hagatna (Agana)

Population: 170,184

Brief History of Guam:

Guam was originally settled by the ancient civilization of the Chamorros. The first European to visit the island was Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Later, in 1565, General Miguel de Legazpi would claim Guam for Spain. Guam would become a Spanish colony in 1668.

In 1898, the United States gained control of Guam as part of the Treaty of Paris following the Spanish-American War. The island was captured by the Japanese in 1941 during World War II. It was retaken by the US three years later. Today there is a major US military

installation on the island. It is considered one of the most strategically important US bases in the Pacific Ocean.

The Geography of Guam

Total Size: 541 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: volcanic origin, surrounded by coral reefs; relatively flat coralline limestone plateau (source of most fresh water), with steep coastal cliffs and narrow coastal plains in north, low hills in center, mountains in south

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mount Lamlam 406 m

Climate: tropical marine; generally warm and humid, moderated by northeast trade winds; dry season (January to June), rainy season (July to December); little seasonal temperature variation.

Major cities: HAGATNA (capital) 153,000 (2009)

The People of Guam

Languages Spoken: English 38.3%, Chamorro 22.2%, Philippine languages 22.2%, other Pacific island languages 6.8%, Asian languages 7%, other languages 3.5% (2000 census)

Independence: none (territory of the US)

Nationality: Guamanian(s) (US citizens)

Religions: Roman Catholic 85%, other 15% (1999 est.)

Guam is the hub of Micronesia, and as such, the population is multicultural and diverse. There is spiritual and church growth among many of the immigrant communities, including the Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos. Micronesian groups have dozens of churches, although their more isolated villages and their tribal culture present an evangelistic challenge. The continued influence of cultural and animistic traditions holds back their discipleship. Also, with such ethnic and denominational variety, unity is an important issue and a need for prayer.

Economy of Guam

Major Industries: US military, tourism, construction, transshipment services, concrete products, printing and publishing, food processing, textiles

Agricultural Products: fruits, copra, vegetables; eggs, pork, poultry, beef

Natural Resources: fishing (largely undeveloped), tourism (especially from Japan)

Major Exports: mostly transshipments of refined petroleum products; construction materials, fish, food and beverage products

Major Imports: petroleum and petroleum products, food, manufactured goods

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Kiribati

Capital: Tarawa

Population: 121,388

Brief History of Kiribati:

Kiribati is an island nation in the Pacific Ocean. It was first settled by the I-Kiribati people around 1000AD. The first Europeans arrived on the island in the 1500s, but it wasn't until the 1800's that they began to arrive in larger numbers. At this time they introduced diseases and caused local conflicts. The British took control of the islands 1892, which were called the Gilbert Islands at the time. They became an official British colony in 1916.

During World War II, Japan gained control of some of the islands. Some of the fiercest fighting of the south pacific occurred on Tarawa Atoll when the United States fought the Japanese in what was a turning point in the war.

In 1979 Kiribati became a fully independent country. The first president of Kiribati was Ieremia Tabai.

The Geography of Kiribati

Total Size: 811 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: mostly low-lying coral atolls surrounded by extensive reefs

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location on Banaba 81 m

Climate: tropical; marine, hot and humid, moderated by trade winds

Major cities: TARAUA (capital) 43,000 (2009)

The People of Kiribati

Type of Government: republic

Languages Spoken: I-Kiribati, English (official)

Independence: 12 July 1979 (from UK)

Religions: Roman Catholic 52%, Protestant (Congregational) 40%, some Seventh-Day Adventist, Muslim, Baha'i, Latter-day Saints, Church of God (1999)

The once-strong Congregational Church (Kiribati Protestant) is in slow decline and losing members to other groups. The theological college in Tarawa is not evangelical. Pray for a return to the Bible. Nominalism and syncretism with traditional spiritist practices are all too common.

Economy of Kiribati

Major Industries: fishing, handicrafts

Agricultural Products: copra, taro, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, vegetables; fish

Natural Resources: phosphate (production discontinued in 1979)

Major Exports: copra 62%, coconuts, seaweed, fish

Major Imports: foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, miscellaneous manufactured goods, fuel

Currency: Australian dollar (AUD)

Marshall Islands

Capital: Majuro

Population: 59,618

Brief History of Marshall Islands:

The Marshall Islands is a small island nation in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The islands were first inhabited by migratory people from Southeast Asia. The first European to arrive was Spanish explorer de Sasvedra who landed in 1529. In 1799, English explorer John Marshall visited. The islands were named after John Marshal.

Spain was the first to claim the islands in 1874. Not long after that in 1884, they were purchased from Spain by Germany. During World War I, Japan took control of the islands until late in World War II, when the United States expelled the Japanese and took control. The islands became US territory until 1979 when they became an independent nation. Today the Marshall Islands hosts the US Army Reagan Missile Test Site.

During WW11, the Marshall Islands was the site of a massive 1954 US nuclear bomb test and dozens more nearby. The tests absolutely devastated the small island nation, but the US has steadfastly refused to make real amends for it.

Almost seventy years later, the fallout from this explosion and dozens of others conducted nearby is still doing damage to the health and livelihood of the Marshallese people.

Here's quote from a child who lived on the Marshall Islands at the time:

"We had heard about snow from the missionaries and other westerners who had come to our islands, but this was the first time we saw white particles fall from the sky and cover our island. . . We kids were playing in the powder, having fun, but later everyone was sick and we couldn't do anything. . . . Toward the evening, our skin began to burn like we had been out in the hot sun all day. The next day, the problems got worse. Big burns began spreading all over our legs, arms, feet, and they hurt very much. Many of us lost our hair."

In the years following the testing, rates of cancer, thyroid disorders, stillbirth (including "jellyfish babies" born without bones), and congenital birth defects skyrocketed in the Marshall Islands. To this day, the Marshallese suffer these conditions at some of the highest rates in the world.

For years the people of the Marshall Islands had to import canned and packaged food to live on, because their soils had been polluted by the atomic testing. This is another reason for their poor health.

The Geography of Marshall Islands

Total Size: 11,854 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: low coral limestone and sand islands

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location on Likiep 10 m

Climate: tropical: hot and humid; wet season May to November; islands border typhoon belt

Major cities: MAJURO (capital) 30,000 (2009)

The People of Marshall Islands

Type of Government: constitutional government in free association with the US.

Languages Spoken: Marshallese 98.2%, other languages 1.8% (1999 census)

Independence: 21 October 1986 (from the US-administered UN trusteeship)

Religions: Protestant 54.8%, Assembly of God 25.8%, Roman Catholic 8.4%, Bukot nan Jesus 2.8%, Mormon 2.1%, other Christian 3.6%, other 1%, none 1.5% (1999 census)

The traumatic history of occupation, exploitation and war, as well as the impact of US nuclear bomb testing, have all had a devastating effect on the Marshallese. Traditional values of land, family, and community – the roots of society – are being undermined. Over-urbanization, unemployment, substance abuse, sexual immorality, and a high birth rate threaten the Marshallese way of life. Many inhabitants suffer the effects of nuclear radiation, including genetic disorders and high rates of cancer. Pray for leaders who will

govern wisely and bravely, for economic dependency to be broken, and for the positive aspects of Marshallese traditional culture to be restored and upheld.

Economy of Marshall Islands

Major Industries: copra, tuna processing, tourism, craft items from seashells, wood, and pearls

Agricultural Products: coconuts, tomatoes, melons, taro, breadfruit, fruits; pigs, chickens

Natural Resources: coconut products, marine products, deep seabed minerals

Major Exports: copra cake, coconut oil, handicrafts, fish

Major Imports: foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, fuels, beverages and tobacco

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Micronesia, Federated States of

Capital: Palikir

Population: 112,640

Brief History of Micronesia, Federated States of:

Micronesia, and the Caroline Islands, was settled thousands of years ago. Initially the islands were tribal and ruled by local chiefs. Later this developed into a more centralized empire with the main power located in Yap and Pohnpei.

The first Europeans to arrive were the Portuguese. They were searching for the Spice Islands. Later the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth century. The Spanish took control of the islands, but they would later move to German control and then to the Japanese in 1919. After World War II the islands were administered by the United States.

The islands became the separate nations called the Federated States of Micronesia in May of 1979. They are also sometimes referred to as the FSM.

The Geography of Micronesia, Federated States of

Total Size: 702 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: islands vary geologically from high mountainous islands to low, coral atolls; volcanic outcroppings on Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Chuuk

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Dolohmwar (Totolom) 791 m

Climate: tropical; heavy year-round rainfall, especially in the eastern islands; located on southern edge of the typhoon belt with occasionally severe damage

Major cities: PALIKIR (capital) 7,000 (2009)

The People of Micronesia, Federated States of

Type of Government: constitutional government in free association with the US

Languages Spoken: English (official and common language), Trukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Kosrean, Ulithian, Woleaian, Nukuoro, Kapingamarangi

Independence: 3 November 1986 (from the US-administered UN Trusteeship)

Religions: Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 47%, other 3%

Biblical Christianity faces challenges on three fronts. On one front are the traditional cultural elements such as the use of magic and of sakau, the herbal drink used as a communal narcotic. Another front is the pull of Western consumerism encouraged by US aid and the temptation to migrate to the USA. Finally, Mormon missionaries are highly active in Micronesia. All three require a response of wisdom and faith. Pray for a revelation of the power and love of Jesus to the peoples of Micronesia.

Economy of Micronesia, Federated States of

Major Industries: tourism, construction; fish processing, specialized aquaculture; craft items from shell, wood, and pearls

Agricultural Products: black pepper, tropical fruits and vegetables, coconuts, cassava (tapioca), betel nuts, sweet potatoes; pigs, chickens; fish

Natural Resources: forests, marine products, deep-seabed minerals, phosphate

Major Exports: fish, garments, bananas, black pepper

Major Imports: food, manufactured goods, machinery and equipment, beverages

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Nauru

Capital: no official capital; government offices in Yaren District

Population: 10,873

Brief History of Nauru:

Nauru is a tiny island nation located in the western Pacific Ocean. The island was inhabited for thousands of years by local tribal people. There were 12 tribes living on the island when Europeans showed up in the 1830s. It is thought that the introduction of alcohol and

firearms destroyed the peaceful life of the 12 tribes. The tribes warred with each other for 10 years starting in 1878.

In 1886 Germany gained control of the island. Ten years later prospector Albert Ellis discovered that Nauru was rich with phosphate. Phosphate became a major export of the island.

After World War I the island was managed by Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. For a short period during World War II, Japan occupied the island. After WWII, the island became a territory of Australia. Nauru became an independent republic in 1968.

The island of Nauru was environmentally damaged by the phosphate mining over the years. There have been efforts to rehabilitate the areas damaged by the mining, but they have been unsuccessful so far.

The Geography of Nauru

Total Size: 21 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: sandy beach rises to fertile ring around raised coral reefs with phosphate plateau in center

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location along plateau rim 61 m

Climate: tropical with a monsoonal pattern; rainy season (November to February)

The People of Nauru

Type of Government: republic

Languages Spoken: Nauruan (official, a distinct Pacific Island language), English widely understood, spoken, and used for most government and commercial purposes

Independence: 31 January 1968 (from the Australia-, NZ-, and UK-administered UN trusteeship)

Religions: Christian (two-thirds Protestant, one-third Roman Catholic)

Spiritual awareness grows as the economy shrinks. Materialism's decline is faith's gain. Church life is reawakening and evangelical numbers are growing. The Nauru Independent Church is the largest evangelical group, but there are believers in the other denominations as well. Small island nations have a precarious existence; pray for Nauru's 11,000 people to put its future in God's hands.

Economy of Nauru

Major Industries: phosphate mining, offshore banking, coconut products

Agricultural Products: coconuts

Natural Resources: phosphates, fish

Major Exports: phosphates

Major Imports: food, fuel, manufactures, building materials, machinery

Currency: Australian dollar (AUD)

New Caledonia

Biography: Maitaka

Capital: Noumea

Population: 288,217

Brief History of New Caledonia:

New Caledonia is an island nation located near Australia in the South Pacific. The largest island is the island of New Caledonia. Other major islands are the Loyalty Islands and the Isle of Pines.

The islands were originally settled by the Lapita people. They arrived in New Caledonia in 1500 BC. Much later, in the 1000s BC, the Polynesians arrived.

Europeans arrived and began to settle the islands in the 19th century. Both the French and the British settled on the islands. In 1853 New Caledonia became a French colony. For some time after 1854 the island served as a penal colony, meaning that the French sent their convicts and prisoners to live on the island.

In the 1980s and 1990s the local New Caledonians began to ask for independence. Per the Noumea Accord, more and more responsibility is being moved from France to New Caledonia.

The Geography of New Caledonia

Total Size: 19,060 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: coastal plains with interior mountains

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mont Panie 1,628 m

Climate: tropical; modified by southeast trade winds; hot, humid

Major cities: NOUMEA (capital) 144,000 (2009)

The People of New Caledonia

Languages Spoken: French (official), 33 Melanesian-Polynesian dialects

Religions: Roman Catholic 60%, Protestant 30%, other 10%

Most Kanaks (the indigenous people of New Caledonia) are Christianized and most villages have a church, but the gospel is often confused with Western culture. Animist practices usually underlie a Christian veneer. Pray for pastors to discern between tradition and the pure gospel, and that a truly biblical, truly Kanak church may continue to grow and demonstrate the power of Jesus over the evil one.

Economy of New Caledonia

Major Industries: nickel mining and smelting

Agricultural Products: vegetables; beef, deer, other livestock products; fish

Natural Resources: nickel, chrome, iron, cobalt, manganese, silver, gold, lead, copper

Major Exports: ferronickels, nickel ore, fish

Major Imports: machinery and equipment, fuels, chemicals, foodstuffs

Currency: Comptoirs Francais du Pacifique franc (XPF)

Niue

Population: 1,615

Brief History of Niue:

Niue is a small island country in the South Pacific Ocean. Its nickname is the Rock.

Niue's remoteness, as well as cultural and linguistic differences between its Polynesian inhabitants and those of the rest of the Cook Islands, have caused it to be separately administered. The population of the island continues to drop (from a peak of 5,200 in 1966 to about 2,166 in 2006), with substantial emigration to New Zealand, 2,400 km to the southwest.

The first European to discover Niue was British Captain James Cook in 1774. He called the island Savage Island because he thought they were painted with blood. However, it was just the hulahua, which is a red banana native to the island.

The Geography of Niue

Total Size: 260 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: steep limestone cliffs along coast, central plateau

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location near Mutalau settlement 68 m

Climate: tropical; modified by southeast trade winds

The People of Niue

Type of Government: self-governing parliamentary democracy

Languages Spoken: Niuean, a Polynesian language closely related to Tongan and Samoan; English

Independence: on 19 October 1974, Niue became a self-governing parliamentary government in free association with New Zealand

Religions:

Most Niueans are Christian and a variety of denominations are represented: 75% of the population belong to the Protestant Church of Niue (Ekalesia Niue) with the remainder being a mix of Catholic and Seventh Day Adventists. Other religions represented are Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Baha'i. Although most Niueans are active Christians, many still embrace older religious ideas, believing in a supernatural world inhabited by aitu (ghosts and spirit beings) and spirits of dead ancestors.

Economy of Niue

Major Industries: tourism, handicrafts, food processing

Agricultural Products: coconuts, passion fruit, honey, limes, taro, yams, cassava (tapioca), sweet potatoes; pigs, poultry, beef cattle

Natural Resources: fish, arable land

Major Exports: canned coconut cream, copra, honey, vanilla, passion fruit products, paw paws, root crops, limes, footballs, stamps, handicrafts

Major Imports: food, live animals, manufactured goods, machinery, fuels, lubricants, chemicals, drugs

Currency: New Zealand dollar (NZD)

Northern Mariana Islands

Capital: Saipan

Population: 56,188

Brief History of Northern Mariana Islands:

The Northern Mariana Islands is an island country located in the Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and the Philippines. There are 15 islands in that make up the territory. Most of the population lives on the island of Saipan.

The first European to arrive on the islands was Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Later the Spanish would lay claim to the islands. Today the island nation is under United States administration as part of the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific.

The Geography of Northern Mariana Islands

Total Size: 477 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: southern islands are limestone with level terraces and fringing coral reefs; northern islands are volcanic

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location on Agrihan 965 m

Climate: tropical marine; moderated by northeast trade winds, little seasonal temperature variation; dry season December to June, rainy season July to October

Major cities: SAIPAN (capital)

The People of Northern Mariana Islands

Type of Government: commonwealth; self-governing with locally elected governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature

Languages Spoken: Philippine languages 24.4%, Chinese 23.4%, Chamorro 22.4%, English 10.8%, other Pacific island languages 9.5%, other 9.6% (2000 census)

Independence: none (commonwealth in political union with the US)

Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic majority, although traditional beliefs and taboos may still be found)

Economy of Northern Mariana Islands

Major Industries: tourism, construction, garments, handicrafts

Agricultural Products: coconuts, fruits, vegetables; cattle

Natural Resources: arable land, fish

Major Exports: garments

Major Imports: food, construction equipment and materials, petroleum products

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Palau

Capital: Koror

Population: 18,174

Brief History of Palau:

Palau is an island nation located 500 miles southeast of the Philippines. It is sometimes called the Black Islands. The islands were originally inhabited as many as 4,000 years ago. The British came to Palau in the 18th century followed by the Spanish in the 19th century. The Spanish came into possession of Palau but sold it to Germany in 1899 after losing the Spanish-American War.

After World War II, Palau became a territory of the United States. In 1994 Palau became a fully independent nation. This makes it one of the youngest independent countries in the world.

The Geography of Palau

Total Size: 458 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: varying geologically from the high, mountainous main island of Babelthup to low, coral islands usually fringed by large barrier reefs

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mount Ngerchelchuus 242 m

Climate: tropical; hot and humid; wet season May to November

The People of Palau

Type of Government: constitutional government in free association with the US; the Compact of Free Association entered into force 1 October 1994

Languages Spoken: Palauan 64.7% official in all islands except Sonsoral (Sonsoralese and English are official), Tobi (Tobi and English are official), and Angaur (Angaur, Japanese, and English are official), Filipino 13.5%, English 9.4%, Chinese 5.7%, Carolinian 1.5%, Japanese 1.5%, other Asian 2.3%, other languages 1.5% (2000 census)

Independence: 1 October 1994 (from the US-administered UN Trusteeship)

Religions: Roman Catholic 41.6%, Protestant 23.3%, Modekngai 8.8% (indigenous to Palau), Seventh-Day Adventist 5.3%, Jehovah's Witness 0.9%, Latter-Day Saints 0.6%, other religion 3.1%, unspecified or none 16.4% (2000 census)

Christianity is generally professed, but nominalism is widespread, the most ardent Catholics being the Filipinos. Many older people are followers of the Modekngai movement, a religion unique to Palau that is a mixture of Christianity and magic; materialism and pluralism are

the greater threats to the younger generation. Pray for the revival of the Koror Evangelical Church – the fruit of the work of the Liebenzell Mission. The AoG have a small but growing work.

Economy of Palau

Major Industries: tourism, craft items (from shell, wood, pearls), construction, garment making

Agricultural Products: coconuts, copra, cassava (tapioca), sweet potatoes; fish

Natural Resources: forests, minerals (especially gold), marine products, deep-seabed minerals

Major Exports: shellfish, tuna, copra, garments

Major Imports: machinery and equipment, fuels, metals; foodstuffs

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Papua New Guinea

Biography: Ruatoka and Tungane

Capital: Port Moresby

Population: 8,776,109

Brief History of Papua New Guinea:

Papua New Guinea is located on the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. New Guinea is the second largest island in the world after Greenland. People have inhabited the area for thousands of years and even today the country has over 850 different languages and cultures.

Spanish and Portuguese explorers came upon the islands in the 16th century. The name Papua was given to the land by Don Jorge de Meneses. It is a Malay word describing frizzy hair. Later Inigo Ortiz de Retes named the island New Guinea as the inhabitants reminded him of the people from African Guinea.

The area was colonized by the Germans in the north and the British in the south in the late 1800s. The Japanese invaded the island during World War II. The two areas joined together after the war. Papua New Guinea became an independent country in 1975.

The Geography of Papua New Guinea

Total Size: 462,840 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: mostly mountains with coastal lowlands and rolling foothills

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mount Wilhelm 4,509 m

Climate: tropical; northwest monsoon (December to March), southeast monsoon (May to October); slight seasonal temperature variation

Major cities: PORT MORESBY (capital)

The People of Papua New Guinea

Type of Government: constitutional parliamentary democracy

Languages Spoken: Melanesian Pidgin serves as the lingua franca, English spoken by 1%-2%, Motu spoken in Papua region

Independence: 16 September 1975 (from the Australian-administered UN trusteeship)

Religions: Roman Catholic 22%, Lutheran 16%, Presbyterian/Methodist/London Missionary Society 8%, Anglican 5%, Evangelical Alliance 4%, Seventh-Day Adventist 1%, other Protestant 10%, indigenous beliefs 34%

Papua New Guinea (PNG) continues to face a wide range of crises, to the point where some observers question whether the nation can continue to function as such. Widespread corruption limits progress, and foreign aid meant to help local workers rarely reaches them. Difficult geography makes natural resources hard to access, and greedy foreign companies seize control of them. Cities receive migrants who seek work, but cannot support them well. Violent crime increases, and HIV infections spread rapidly, mostly through sexual immorality. The vast ethnic diversity (1,000 groups) makes the country difficult to unite. Tribal fighting and revenge killings extend back thousands of years. Pray for peace that reaches beyond non-violence to bring true unity, and for national identity that rises above ethnic ties.

Economy of Papua New Guinea

Major Industries: copra crushing, palm oil processing, plywood production, wood chip production; mining of gold, silver, and copper; crude oil production, petroleum refining; construction, tourism

Agricultural Products: coffee, cocoa, copra, palm kernels, tea, sugar, rubber, sweet potatoes, fruit, vegetables, vanilla; shell fish, poultry, pork

Natural Resources: gold, copper, silver, natural gas, timber, oil, fisheries

Major Exports: oil, gold, copper ore, logs, palm oil, coffee, cocoa, crayfish, prawns

Major Imports: machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, food, fuels, chemicals

Currency: kina (PGK)

Samoa

Biography: James Chalmers

Capital: Apia

Population: 200,144

Brief History of Samoa:

Samoa is an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean. It has been inhabited for thousands of years. The first settlers were migrants from Southeast Asia. The first Europeans arrived in the 1700s, but did not start to settle until the 1830s.

At the start of the 1900s the Samoan islands were split into two sections. The eastern half of the islands became territories of the United States. Today they are called American Samoa. The western islands became part of Germany and were called Western Samoa. In 1914 control for Western Samoa moved to New Zealand. The islands became a fully independent nation in 1962.

In 1997 the country changed its official name to the Independent State of Samoa. It was called Western Samoa prior to this and it generally just called Samoa today.

The Geography of Samoa

Total Size: 2,944 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: two main islands (Savaii, Upolu) and several smaller islands and uninhabited islets; narrow coastal plain with volcanic, rocky, rugged mountains in interior

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mauga Silisili (Savaii) 1,857 m

Climate: tropical; rainy season (November to April), dry season (May to October)

Major cities: APIA (capital)

The People of Samoa

Type of Government: mix of parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy

Languages Spoken: Samoan (Polynesian), English

Independence: 1 January 1962 (from New Zealand-administered UN trusteeship)

Religions: Congregationalist 34.8%, Roman Catholic 19.6%, Methodist 15%, Assembly of God 6.6%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3.5%, other Christian 5.8%, Latter-Day Saints 12.7%, unspecified 1.8% (2001 census)

Samoans have been Christian for over a century, and every village has at least one church. But the traditional class structure and pre-Christian cultural standards were not necessarily transformed by the gospel. Much of the Church suffers from nominalism, and rivalry among denominations does not generate a good spiritual atmosphere. Pride and politics influence church life too much, and the financial demands on a poorer population are heavy. These, coupled with the modern challenges of domestic strife and imported moral vice, make for a society in need of prayer.

Economy of Samoa

Major Industries: food processing, building materials, auto parts

Agricultural Products: coconuts, bananas, taro, yams, coffee, cocoa

Natural Resources: hardwood forests, fish, hydropower

Major Exports: fish, coconut oil and cream, copra, taro, automotive parts, garments, beer

Major Imports: machinery and equipment, industrial supplies, foodstuffs

Currency: tala (SAT)

Solomon Islands

Biographies: Peter Ambouofa; Jacob Vouza

Capital: Honiara

Population: 703,995

Brief History of Solomon Islands:

The Solomon Islands is an island country located in the Pacific Ocean northeast of Australia. There are over 1,000 islands that make up the country. Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, is on the largest island called Guadalcanal.

The islands were first inhabited by tribal peoples as early as 1000 BC. The first European to discover the islands was Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana Y Neyra in 1567. He was searching for the legendary treasure and Isles of Solomon.

It was many years later in the 1800s when more people began to arrive and try to settle on the Solomon Islands. In 1900 the British took control of the islands.

The Solomon Islands were an area of fierce fighting between the United States and Japan during World War II. Over 21,000 Japanese and 7,000 Americans were killed in battles on the islands. The Allies finally gained control in December of 1943. In 1978 the country became fully independent.

The Geography of Solomon Islands

Total Size: 28,450 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: mostly rugged mountains with some low coral atolls

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mount Makarakomburu 2,447 m

Climate: tropical monsoon; few extremes of temperature and weather

Major cities: HONIARA (capital)

The People of Solomon Islands

Type of Government: parliamentary democracy

Languages Spoken: Melanesian pidgin in much of the country is lingua franca; English is official but spoken by only 1%-2% of the population

Independence: 7 July 1978 (from UK)

Religions: Church of Melanesia 32.8%, Roman Catholic 19%, South Seas Evangelical 17%, Seventh-Day Adventist 11.2%, United Church 10.3%, Christian Fellowship Church 2.4%, other Christian 4.4%, other 2.4%, unspecified 0.2%.

Ethnic diversity and a divided geography (6 major island groups) create a divided society. Tribes and political groups live together, but struggle to form a unified nation. Outside intervention brought peace in 2003 and disarmed the militias, but deep divisions remain. These language and culture barriers also inhibit Christian work. Each small ethnic group needs a different approach and language resources. Denominations divide along tribal lines. Pray that Christianity may take root in each group in a relevant way, and can overcome division. Pray for true forgiveness and reconciliation that come only through repentance. Without these, the nation can never truly progress.

Economy of Solomon Islands

Major Industries: fish (tuna), mining, timber

Agricultural Products: cocoa beans, coconuts, palm kernels, rice, potatoes, vegetables, fruit; timber; cattle, pigs; fish

Natural Resources: fish, forests, gold, bauxite, phosphates, lead, zinc, nickel

Major Exports: timber, fish, copra, palm oil, cocoa

Major Imports: food, plant and equipment, manufactured goods, fuels, chemicals

Currency: Solomon Islands dollar (SBD)

Tonga

Biographies: Tau'fa, Semesi Nau

Population: 110,940

Brief History of Tonga:

Tonga is an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean. The main island is Tongatapu. It has been inhabited by Polynesian peoples since 500 BC. The Tongan kingdom was at its peak during the 1200s when it had influence as far as Samoa.

The first Europeans to discover Tonga was the Dutch in 1616. In 1643 Dutch navigator Abel Tasman visited the island of Tongatapu. Later Captain James Cook visited the islands and gave them the name "Friendly Islands".

Christianity began to spread throughout the islands in the 1800s. The leader Taufa'ahou became a Christian and also united the islands under one rule. He became King George Tupou I in 1845.

The Geography of Tonga

Total Size: 748 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: most islands have limestone base formed from uplifted coral formation; others have limestone overlying volcanic base

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location on Kao Island 1,033 m

Climate: tropical; modified by trade winds; warm season (December to May), cool season (May to December)

The People of Tonga

Type of Government: constitutional monarchy

Languages Spoken: Tongan, English

Independence: 4 June 1970 (from UK protectorate)

Religions: Christian (Free Wesleyan Church)

A strongly Christian nation, Tonga sends significant numbers of missionaries from both Catholic and Protestant traditions, despite its relative poverty and isolation. Much more can be done; pray for the ministries of YWAM and other evangelical groups working toward this.

Economy of Tonga

Major Industries: tourism, fishing

Agricultural Products: squash, coconuts, copra, bananas, vanilla beans, cocoa, coffee, ginger, black pepper; fish

Natural Resources: fish, fertile soil

Major Exports: squash, fish, vanilla beans, root crops

Major Imports: foodstuffs, machinery and transport equipment, fuels, chemicals

Currency: pa'anga

Tuvalu

Biography: Elikana

Capital: Funafuti

Population: 11,646

Brief History of Tuvalu:

Tuvalu, formerly known as the Ellice Islands, is an island nation in the Polynesian subregion of Oceania in the Pacific Ocean. Its islands are situated about midway between Hawaii and Australia. They lie east-northeast of the Santa Cruz Islands (which belong to the Solomon Islands), northeast of Vanuatu, southeast of Nauru, south of Kiribati, west of Tokelau, northwest of Samoa and Wallis and Futuna, and north of Fiji. Tuvalu is composed of three reef islands and six atolls.

The islands were settled by Polynesians many thousands of years ago. There was very little contact with Europeans until the 19th century. In the 20th century the area became part of a British colony.

During World War II, troops from the United States were located on the islands. The US built several airbases on different islands. Tuvalu became an independent nation in 1978 and still has good relations with the USA.

The Geography of Tuvalu

Total Size: 26 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: very low-lying and narrow coral atolls

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: unnamed location 5 m

Climate: tropical; moderated by easterly trade winds (March to November); westerly gales and heavy rain (November to March)

The People of Tuvalu

Type of Government: constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy

Languages Spoken: Tuvaluan, English, Samoan, Kiribati (on the island of Nui)

Independence: 1 October 1978 (from UK)

Religions: Church of Tuvalu (Congregationalist) 97%, Seventh-Day Adventist 1.4%, Baha'i 1%, other 0.6%

Economy of Tuvalu

Major Industries: fishing, tourism, copra

Agricultural Products: coconuts; fish

Natural Resources: fish

Major Exports: copra, fish

Major Imports: food, animals, mineral fuels, machinery, manufactured goods

Currency: Australian dollar (AUD); note - there is also a Tuvaluan dollar

Vanuatu

Biography: John Paton

Capital: Port-Vila (on Efate)

Population: 314,464

Brief History of Vanuatu:

Vanuatu is a small island nation in the South Pacific Ocean. The islands were inhabited for thousands of years prior to being discovered in 1606 by Portuguese explorer Pedro Fernandez De Quiros. However, Europeans did not return for many years. In 1774 Captain Cook visited the islands and named them the New Hebrides.

Over the years, many colonists from both France and Britain settled on the islands. The French and the British decided to jointly administer the islands. The islands gained independence in 1980 changing their name to the Republic of Vanuatu.

The Geography of Vanuatu

Total Size: 12,200 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: mostly mountainous islands of volcanic origin; narrow coastal plains

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Tabwemasana 1,877 m

Climate: tropical; moderated by southeast trade winds from May to October; moderate rainfall from November to April; may be affected by cyclones from December to April

The People of Vanuatu

Type of Government: parliamentary republic

Languages Spoken: local languages (more than 100) 72.6%, pidgin (known as Bislama or Bichelama) 23.1%, English 1.9%, French 1.4%, other 0.3%, unspecified 0.7% (1999 Census)

Independence: 30 July 1980 (from France and UK)

Religions: Presbyterian 31.4%, Anglican 13.4%, Roman Catholic 13.1%, Seventh-Day Adventist 10.8%, other Christian 13.8%, indigenous beliefs 5.6% (including Jon Frum cargo cult), other 9.6%, none 1%, unspecified 1.3%

Vanuatu's motto is "In God We Stand". Pray that leaders of this complex little nation may be examples in doing so. Committed Christians played a major role in attaining independence, and they continue to help lead the country – not least is the President himself. Two of the main islands of Vanuatu are named Espiritu Santo and Pentecost – how appropriate for such a linguistically diverse nation! May the same Holy Spirit visit this nation powerfully.

Economy of Vanuatu

Major Industries: food and fish freezing, wood processing, meat canning

Agricultural Products: copra, coconuts, cocoa, coffee, taro, yams, fruits, vegetables; beef; fish

Natural Resources: manganese, hardwood forests, fish

Major Exports: copra, beef, cocoa, timber, kava, coffee

Major Imports: machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, fuels

Currency: vatu (VUV)

Wallis and Futuna Islands

Capital: Mata-Utu (on Ile Uvea)

Population: 11,432

Brief History of Wallis and Futuna Islands:

Wallis and Futuna Islands are a French Overseas Territory. It is an island group in the South Pacific Ocean. The islands were first discovered by the Dutch in 1616. The French were the first to settle on the islands and laid claim to the islands in 1842 as a protectorate. They took control of Wallis and Futuna over the next 40 years. US troops occupied the islands during World War II. They became an overseas territory in 1961.

The Geography of Wallis and Futuna

Total Size: 274 square km

World Region or Continent: Oceania

General Terrain: volcanic origin; low hills

Geographical Low Point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Geographical High Point: Mont Singavi 765 m

Climate: tropical; hot, rainy season (November to April); cool, dry season (May to October); rains 2,500-3,000 mm per year (80% humidity); average temperature 26.6 degrees C

The People of Wallis and Futuna

Languages Spoken: Wallisian 58.9% (indigenous Polynesian language), Futunian 30.1%, French 10.8%, other 0.2% (2003 census)

Independence: none (overseas territory of France)

Religions: Roman Catholic 99%, other 1%

Evangelical numbers are increasing through the missionary efforts of Pentecostals from New Caledonia. Action Missionnaire Calédonienne has sent several New Caledonian missionaries to Wallis and Futuna, yielding dozens of new believers. Pray for a greater growth of this wonderful development – Pacific Islanders reaching cross-culturally to other Pacific Islanders.

Economy of Wallis and Futuna

Major Industries: copra, handicrafts, fishing, lumber

Agricultural Products: breadfruit, yams, taro, bananas; pigs, goats; fish

Major Exports: copra, chemicals, construction materials

Major Imports: chemicals, machinery, passenger ships, consumer goods

Currency: Comptoirs Francais du Pacifique franc (XPF)