



Hungary

Republic of Hungary

Europe

Geography

Area 93,030 sq km. A landlocked, central European state on the River Danube.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 9,973,141	-0.21%	107/sq km
2020 9,766,105	-0.22%	105/sq km
2030 9,509,025	-0.29%	102/sq km

Capital Budapest 1,706,177. **Urbanites** 68.3%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 15%. **Life expectancy** 73.3 yrs.

Peoples

Magyar (Hungarian) 86.8%. Over a third of all Hungarians live in other lands: Romania 1.8 million; USA 1.4mill; Slovakia 600,000; Serbia 300,000; Ukraine 200,000; many in other nations.

Minorities 13.2%. Romani (Gypsy) 7.7; Slavic(9) 1.8%; German 1.2%; Jews 1.0%; Romanian 1.0%.

Literacy 99%. **Official language** Hungarian. **All languages** 17. **Indigenous languages** 9. **Languages with Scriptures** 6Bi 1NT 1por.

Economy

Traditionally rich agricultural land. Hungary has negotiated a successful, albeit difficult, transition from a socialist economy to a market economy. The older generation struggles in some ways to adjust – from a system that cared for their needs to one in which they, mostly, must look after themselves. Hungary enjoys a strong share of foreign investment into Central Europe. Economic difficulties, compounded by the financial crisis of 2008–2009, have required reform and austerity measures.

HDI Rank 43rd/182. **Public debt** 67.7% of GDP. **Income/person** \$15,523 (33% of USA).

Politics

Hungary lost 60% of its land area at the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, leaving large

Hungarian minorities in surrounding lands. After WWII, the Soviets imposed Communism, only leaving in 1991. The Hungarian uprising against Communism in 1956 brought terrible revenge from the Soviets; 80,000 were killed, wounded or deported, and 200,000 fled to the West. Hungary was the first Communist bloc state to abandon Marxism and institute a multiparty democracy (1990) although most of the leaders were the same ones as under Communism. Corruption and unpopular policies kept any party from gaining conclusive control of parliament, until 2009, when a centre-right party gained the two-thirds majority needed to change the legal system, the constitution, etc. There has been recent growth of far-right parties. Part of NATO and the EU.

Religion

In 1600, Hungary was 90% Protestant. Many reverted to Catholicism during the Counter Reformation and the periods of discrimination that followed. The Communists enforced strict controls on all Christians from 1948–1988, through discrimination, intimidation and infiltration. In 2000, Hungary celebrated 1,000 years since its conversion to Christianity. Freedom of religion since 1990.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	87.99	8,775,367	-0.5%
Non-religious	10.90	1,087,072	1.9%
Jewish	0.91	90,756	-0.2%
Muslim	0.16	15,957	4.0%
Buddhist	0.04	3,989	5.7%

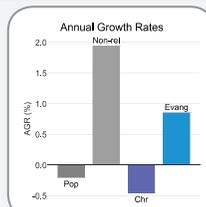
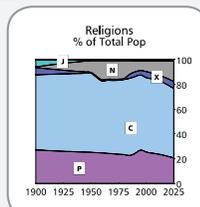
Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	16	23.73	2,367,000	-0.7%
Independent	26	1.09	109,000	2.7%
Catholic	1	59.56	5,940,000	-0.4%
Orthodox	4	1.07	107,000	0.6%
Marginal	5	0.77	77,000	7.1%
Unaffiliated		1.77	177,000	-3.9%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	2,330	4,466,165	5,940,000
Reformed Church	P	1,250	506,250	2,025,000
Evang Lutheran Ch	P	320	72,500	290,000
Romanian Orthodox	O	22	52,632	80,000
Faith Church	I	70	31,000	62,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	265	23,700	46,200
Baptist Church	P	333	11,500	19,850
Seventh-day Adventist	P	119	5,950	11,900
Fell of Ev Pentecostals	I	146	4,730	10,500
Other denominations[43]		711	65,981	113,391
Total Christians[52]			5,566	5,240,4088,598,841

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	2.8	282,181	0.9%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	2.4	238,107	2.9%
Pentecostals	0.2	17,430	0.1%

Missionaries from Hungary

P, I, A 60 (45 long-term; 20 cross-cultural) in 3 agencies: in Hungary 40, among the Romani 5, Central Asia 9, Romania 2.



Answers to Prayer

- 1 The small, but historically rich, evangelical movement** is growing in size, maturity, diversity and confidence. Many types of ministries are springing up around the nation, and the vision exists to see an evangelical church planted in every city, town and village in Hungary.
- 2 Unity across denominations** is experiencing much-needed growth, as churches come together to pray, worship and minister. There are also many prayer ministries that represent the different flavours of Christian faith – Budapest Prayer Wall, National Prayer Network and 168-hour Intercessory Prayer Chain are examples of these.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1 Disillusion, dissatisfaction and upheaval** against the government and economy in particular often characterize life in Hungary. The 1956 uprising and widespread demonstrations in 2006 and following demonstrate the desire for a better state of affairs. Political scandal has brought much disappointment and skepticism. Pray for elected officials, that they would look past political point-scoring, root out the widespread corruption and labour toward improving life for the whole nation.
- 2 Hungarians have lost contact with the gospel**, despite enjoying a rich theological history. They seek answers in many places: materialism, hedonism, alcohol and, increasingly, false religion. Postmodern mentalities predominate. In recent years, public spiritual life is characterized by an alarming rise in occult activity and eastern mysticism, including pagan witchcraft, ancient Magyar shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. Most common is a pick-and-choose spirituality that is effectively non-religious, with some personal sentiment. Pray for all falsehoods and empty philosophies to be exposed as such and for Christ to be exalted as the truth in this historically Christian nation. Pray that Hungarians might see the truth of the gospel and the freedom it brings through Jesus.
- 3 The openness of the post-Communist 1990s has passed.** It is now increasingly difficult to openly witness – restrictions forbid teachers, doctors and such from sharing their faith in the workplace. The Church failed to respond adequately to the window of opportunity that is now largely closed. Christianity, while present and active, does not quite have the impact it should on society, politics, ethics, education and the economy. Pray for a new revival in the Church – following on those from 1939 and 1946–50 – that gives birth to a new spirit of witness and activism.
- 4 The Church's impact in Hungary is uneven and inadequate.** Some parts of the country are much more alive than others. Within the major denominations, including Catholic and Reformed, are vibrant charismatic and renewal movements. Independent and emerging churches are growing, but trust and unity need to be built between these and the traditional churches. In all groups, positive holiness and spiritual maturity are real needs. In Budapest, believers are blessed with many churches, but they often church-hop rather than commit to one congregation. Apathy and worldliness, as in so many lands, are challenges, even for evangelicals. Pray for unity, trust and cooperation to flourish among churches, and for the Holy Spirit to bring revival and renewal to all expressions of God's family.
- 5 There remains a great need for evangelism**, despite the increasing amount and types of outreach and public ministry. Christians need to acquire confidence in the power of the gospel and its effectiveness when shared in the right way and in the Spirit. The number of nominal Christians

Hungary | June 17

is high, and millions of people have only cursory contact with the good news. There is still resistance to the gospel in much of Hungary. Pray for Spirit-led, creative forms of witness and for wisdom in how, when and where to reach out. Thank God for increasing levels of collaboration in outreach among churches and denominations.

6 **There is a deficit of Christian leadership** in Hungary. Pray for the following:

- a) **Leaders with high morals and fresh vision.** Many evangelistic challenges are unmet, many eyes scrutinize the conduct of Christian leaders and many leaders are cautious because of the past. Pray for God's anointing and inspiration for those in leadership.
- b) **The release and empowerment of lay leaders.** Most pastors are overworked and spread too thin, and there is a shortage of young pastors, both in active ministry and in training to join the ministry. There is a strong Reformed Elders Association. Lay-training movements are on the rise in most denominations. Pray that the Church might mature in its giving in order to support nationals involved in local and foreign Christian work.
- c) **Leadership training.** Hungary is a Central European hub for theological education. There are four Christian universities providing education in theology, humanities and law, with several thousand students enrolled. There is an increasing focus on missions and evangelism. Pray also for the Protestant Institute for Mission Studies, the Pentecostal Theological College, Calvary Chapel Bible College and for teaching seminars run by New Hope International and others. Central European Theological Academy and Word of Life are two of several English-language theological institutions. TEE/BEE is increasingly used, especially to train laity. Pray for the younger generation to commit itself to the work of the Lord, and for the Lord to provide for those who take on full-time training.

7 **Young people** remain one of the most receptive groups to loving and culturally relevant witness. Pray especially for:

- a) **Teaching of religious knowledge in schools,** in the several hundred Christian schools and in public schools that invite this input. Increasingly, restrictions prevent teachers and evangelists from sharing the gospel in the public school context. Pray for freedom to witness in schools and for gifted people who focus on this ministry.
- b) **Children's and youth programmes in churches.** Since Hungary opened up, denominational and parachurch youth associations, such as YMCA, Awana, **CEF**, *Dunamis*z and others, have grown in scale and impact. Large-scale youth conventions are proving attractive. Foreign mission groups contribute much in this area of ministry.
- c) **University students,** who are open to most spiritual influences, both healthy and unhealthy. Nationally led international ministries such as **CCCI**, **MEKDSz(IFES)** and **YFC** continue to grow in size and impact. But with over 200,000 university and college students in Hungary, the majority have no contact with a Christian group.
- d) **Summer outreach programmes** – by many Hungarian churches and by *Barnabas Csoport*, The Bible League and **OM** – train scores of young people from various denominations to participate in evangelism and follow-up work.

8 **The less-reached:**

- a) **The Jews.** Before the Holocaust, there were 800,000. Now their numbers are 90,000 – which is still Eastern Europe's largest concentration of Jews outside of Russia. There are several Messianic Jewish communities. Pray for a reconciliation between Christians and Jews.
- b) **The Romani (Gypsy) community,** Hungary's largest minority and most certainly its most socially and economically disadvantaged. This group has not seen the same spiritual breakthrough as have the Romani in Spain, France and Romania, but several new Protestant and charismatic fellowships are among them. Also, a number of agencies are attempting to meet their social and spiritual needs and, increasingly, ethnic Hungarians are gaining a burden to show the love of Christ to this needy people in both spiritual and practical ways.
- c) **The homeless** – who are concentrated in Budapest and number as many as 30,000 – face very difficult living conditions. Pray for the ministries of churches and missions that seek to reach out to them; pray for the establishment of Christian facilities that can care for them and demonstrate

the gospel in real ways.

d) **The many immigrant peoples** who make Hungary their home. These include mostly the various Slavic peoples, Chinese and others. Most have a better chance to encounter the gospel in Hungary than in their own nation.

e) **Hungarians abroad.** Concerns remain about discrimination against Hungarian ethnic minorities in Serb-controlled Vojvodina, Romanian Transylvania and southern Slovakia – all remnants of Greater Hungary. Pray for reconciliation between these minorities and the various national majorities, and pray for Hungarian Christians to reach out to their own who live abroad.

9 **Expatriate missions increased numerically** in the 1990s, but have since levelled off. Pray for sensitivity and a true servant attitude in seeking to help the Hungarian Church. The main ministries required of expatriates are leadership training and mentoring, equipping the laity and imparting missionary vision. The need is still very real for long-term workers who will learn the language and culture. The Hungarian missions movement is still in its infancy, but the great promise is beginning to be realized – a Missions Expo recently attracted 20,000 people. The largest agencies are: **CCCI, YWAM, RG, ABWE**, Greater Grace World Outreach.

10 Christian help ministries:

a) **Scripture distribution.** The Hungarian Bible Society was revitalized in 1989. Pray for its ministry in distributing the Bible. A revised New Translation of the Bible in 1990 marked the 400th anniversary of the original Hungarian version.

b) **Christian literature is in demand.** Many new Christian publishing companies have been founded. The need continues for Christian books, written in Hungarian, that communicate the gospel to non-Christians in today's language and idioms. Balanced books, written in Hungarian, for the spiritual growth of believers are also needed. **CLC** has two bookstores in Hungary. The Hungarian Literature Mission is a major source of evangelistic materials.

c) **Christian media.** In addition to many broadcast hours a week in Hungarian by **TWR**, opportunities are increasing for local Christian programmes on TV and radio. Hungarian Gospel Radio Foundation and the Reformed and Lutheran Churches have their own radio programmes. **IT** has a music-recording studio to serve Central Europe. The Internet and a host of Christian websites offer another means for discipling believers and reaching out to non-Christians.