



Malta

Republic of Malta

Europe

Geography

Area 316 sq km. Three small but strategic islands in the central Mediterranean. Dry limestone hills with no rivers.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	409,999	0.37%
2020	422,300	0.26%
2030	426,887	0.05%

Capital Valetta 200,000. **Urbanites** 94.7%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 16%. **Life expectancy** 79.6 yrs.

Peoples

Maltese 93.0%. Descendants of Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans and others.

Other 7.0%. British, Italian, plus increasing numbers of immigrants from Africa and Asia/Middle East.

Literacy 87.9%. **Official languages** Maltese, English. Maltese is a unique blend of Arabic, Latin and Punic. **All languages** 4. **Languages with Scriptures** 2Bi.

Economy

Based primarily on tourism, light industry, shipping (building, repairing, registering and as a container port), I. T. and financial services.

HDI Rank 38th/182. **Public debt** 16.7% of GDP. **Income/person** \$20,281 (43% of USA).

Politics

Independent from Britain in 1964. Parliamentary republic since 1974. Malta entered into the EU in 2004 and the Eurozone in 2008.

Religion

Roman Catholicism is the state church according to the constitution. Freedom of religion is also guaranteed therein. Widespread

Catholic commitment tends to socially isolate other faiths.

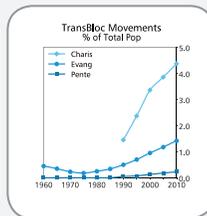
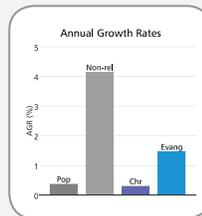
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	96.82	396,961	0.3%
Non-religious	1.90	7,790	1.5%
Muslim	1.20	4,920	4.1%
Other	0.08	328	0.4%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	9	0.35	1,000	4.0%
Anglican	1	0.24	1,000	-0.6%
Catholic	1	91.46	375,000	0.4%
Marginal	2	0.30	1,000	2.0%
Unaffiliated		4.50	18,000	-2.1%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	80	234,375	375,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	8	600	1,050
Church of England	A	1	216	970
Int Pente Holiness	P	1	80	100
Latter-day Saints(Mormon)	M	1	95	180
Evangelical Baptist	P	5	93	130
Bible Baptist Church	P	2	74	125
Other denominations[5]		11	550	1,071
Total Christians[13]		109	236,093	378,626

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	1.3	5,245	2.3%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	4.2	17,333	2.3%
Pentecostals	0.1	236	-12.6%

The majority of charismatics and even evangelicals are found within the Catholic renewal movements in Malta.



Challenges for Prayer

1 Malta was the first nation in Europe to embrace Christianity, after the Apostle Paul's shipwreck on the island. From the Phoenicians in 1000 BC onward, many powers seized the islands (including the Romans, Arabs, Normans, Ottomans, French and British), but the Maltese have retained their identity throughout. This identity has long been staunchly Christian. Pray that Malta's enduring Christian identity might be truly appreciated and lived out by its people.

2 The most religious nation in Europe, Malta has deeply Catholic sensibilities. The majority regularly attend mass and over 80% feel that their religion is important to them. However, not many Maltese enjoy a personal walk with the living Lord Jesus. Pray that their strong religious tradition may serve as a door into and not a barrier against greater commitment to the Kingdom.

3 Catholic charismatic groups are widespread and have had a significant impact; many wonderful believers have emerged as a result. Both the Alpha Course and the JESUS film have been key parts of this movement. Pray for a deeper and wider move of the Holy Spirit through the more than 65 groups. Pray for wisdom for the leaders to know how to have maximum impact while retaining biblical faithfulness.

4 Protestant evangelical witness did not exist until after independence in 1964 – British rulers did not permit it. Praise God for steady, albeit slow, growth since then. There are around 500 evangelicals in the 10-14 Protestant congregations and house churches in Malta. Pray for:

a) The Baptist and Pentecostal groups and their increasing outreach to the Maltese and to tourists. Official opposition to Protestant activities is a thing of the past, but social pressures on seekers and new converts can be intense. For most, to be Maltese is to be Catholic. Pray for multitudes to come to living faith in Christ.

b) The older, English-speaking mainline denominations, which have long catered to the needs of the expatriate community. There is much nominalism and little effective outreach to the indigenous population.

5 Many Maltese have emigrated to other lands, such as Australia, Britain, Italy and Canada, where some have come to the Lord. Although the Maltese diaspora still outnumbers the Maltese population, increasing numbers are returning to their homeland. Pray that those returning would include active, witnessing followers of Christ.

6 Immigration presents a massive challenge. The numbers attempting to enter Europe (2,000 per year and increasing) could potentially overwhelm the small population of Malta. Policing its waters as well as housing and providing for such immigrants are a significant strain on Malta's limited resources. Its proximity to North Africa – a launching point for immigrants from a host of nationalities – makes it all the more vulnerable. Maltese demonstrate general antipathy to those who exploit its accessibility. Most immigrants want to move from Malta; living in a detention centre is more akin to prison than the freedom they sought. Pray for Maltese to demonstrate compassion and Christian love; pray that many of these immigrants might discover the living Christ.

7 Malta's proximity to North Africa means not only significant challenges (such as immigration) but also great opportunities for meaningful exchange. Pray for a positive and godly witness to nations such as Libya and Tunisia.

8 Christian support ministries for prayer:

a) The Trinitarian Bible Society published the first one-volume Bible in Maltese in 1980; a Catholic version was published in 1985 by the Maltese Bible Society. The Gideons widely distribute Maltese, Arabic and English NTs in hotels, schools and institutions. Pray that many may read the Word with inner enlightenment and outward change.

b) Christian literature in Maltese is limited in quantity and variety. Pray for an increase in both evangelical titles and in those gifted in writing or translation. Pray for an effective publishing and distribution structure to be established.

- c) *The JESUS film*, now dubbed into Maltese – the first full-length film ever to have this.
- d) *Christian radio*. Christian Light Radio broadcasts 24 hours/day by FM in Malta and via the Internet in both English and Maltese. Pure Gold Radio (an evangelical station) started broadcasting in 2010.
- e) *Outreach to seafarers* on the many cruise and container ships that pass through Malta is a potential new ministry that could impact thousands per week.
- f) *Adopting a Maltese village for prayer* is a strategy that Ministries for Malta uses to connect churches globally to spiritual needs locally.