



Suriname

Republic of Suriname

Latin America

Geography

Area 163,820 sq km. Northeast coast of South America, between Guyana and French Guiana.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	524,345	0.97%
2020	567,766	0.74%
2030	602,436	0.54%

Many Surinamers migrated to the Netherlands around the time of independence.

Capital Paramaribo 263,000. **Urbanites** 75.6%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 29%. **Life expectancy** 68.8 yrs.

Peoples

Startling ethnic diversity, a legacy of colonial importation of indentured labour.

Asians 46.7%. East Indian (mostly originating from Bihar) 29%; Indonesian (mainly Javanese) 15%; Chinese(2) 2.7%.

Surinamese Creole 19%

Maroon 16%. 5 groups.

Mixed-race 11.3%.

Amerindian 4%. Seven ethnic groups.

Other 3%. Dutch; Lebanese; Portuguese.

Literacy 88%. **Official language** Dutch. **Trade language** Sranan Tongo (a Dutch Creole). **All languages** 20. **Indigenous languages** 16. **Languages with Scriptures** 3Bi 8NT 9por 2wi.p.

Economy

Bauxite, oil, timber, marine and agricultural products and growing eco-tourism are the main sources of revenue. Post-independence economic decline has been replaced by modest growth. Remittances from emigrant Surinamers still supplement many incomes. Porous borders allow illegal gold extractions and drug transshipments to multiply.

HDI Rank 97th/182. **Public debt** 25.7% of GDP. **Income/person** \$5,504 (12% of USA).

Politics

Independent from the Netherlands in 1975. A socialist military government ruled from 1980 to 1987; the former dictator still influences politics despite being convicted in the Netherlands of drug trafficking. A succession of coups, uprisings and abortive elections followed. An internationally supervised election in 1991 and an agreement in 1994 with rebels restored the country to democratic government and peace. Racial diversity makes for parties shaped along ethnic lines, which usually leads to awkward and ineffective coalitions.

Religion

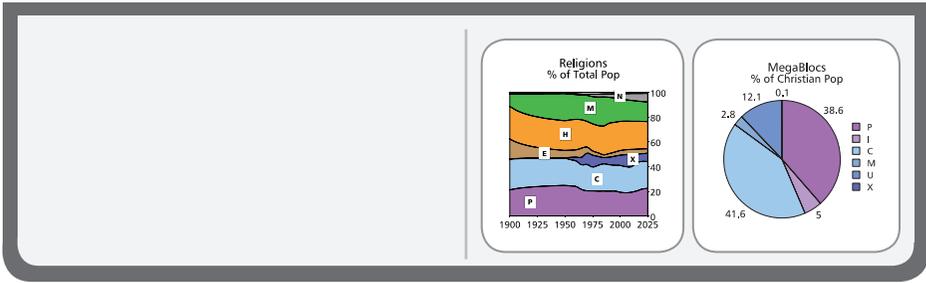
Full freedom for the diverse religious groups.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	49.57	259,918	1.0%
Hindu	22.80	119,551	0.7%
Muslim	16.90	88,614	0.4%
Non-religious	5.50	28,839	3.3%
Ethnoreligionist	4.20	22,022	2.0%
Baha'i	0.70	3,670	-0.4%
Chinese	0.18	944	1.0%
Jewish	0.15	787	1.0%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	47	21.02	110,000	3.3%
Independent	24	2.47	13,000	3.1%
Anglican	1	0.03	<200	-5.6%
Catholic	1	20.60	108,000	0.4%
Marginal	2	1.37	7,000	3.8%
Unaffiliated		4.08	21,000	-1.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	30	35,000	108,000
Moravian Church	P	60	22,222	40,000
Full Gospel Churches	P	92	8,187	14,681
Gospel Center Suri	P	55	8,024	13,400
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	47	2,450	6,125
Seventh-day Adventist	P	18	3,700	5,200
God's Bazuin	P	52	2,994	5,000
Evang Lutheran Ch	P	5	2,198	4,000
Reformed Church	P	3	2,123	3,800
Baptisten Unie	P	17	1,700	3,774
Indep Faith Mission	P	20	1,850	3,090
Faith & Love Ministries	P	6	1,500	2,505
Bribi Ministries	I	14	893	2,500
Foundation Chr Ch	P	12	650	1,086
Other denominations[56]		117	7,779	15,328
Total Christians[75]		548	101,270	228,489

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	13.8	72,235	6.3%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	11.5	60,133	7.1%
Pentecostals	9.7	50,642	7.9%



Answers to Prayer

- 1 **The Church among the Maroon peoples has grown** since the 1960s, bringing up to 60% of the distinctive Maroon population to faith in Christ in the Surinamese interior. Praise God that faithful sowing of the gospel by **WT, IMB**, local churches and others has already borne substantial fruit. The government's apology to victims of a 1980s massacre of Maroons was a step toward a wider reconciliation within the nation.
- 2 **Churches among the southern tribal Amerindians** have embraced the Great Commission and now send missionaries to unevangelized tribes and villages in French Guiana, Brazil and other parts of Suriname.
- 3 **Movements uniting Christians in prayer and action** have grown in number as the Surinamese Church grows in strength and stability. There are networks for Christian women, an organization (Man Mit'Man) to unite men in having a godly influence on family and society, youth movements, prayer movements and others. Partnerships emerge across denominational and agency lines for purposes of strategy, mission and reconciliation.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **Suriname's post-independence existence** faces challenges old and new. While more stable than in the troubled years of coups and dictatorships, the nation remains largely compartmentalized by race and religion – polarizations that cripple political and social development. The sudden and seemingly unstoppable rise of a criminal economy through drug trafficking and gold smuggling requires both wise and concerted action. Pray for the emergence of godly leaders and for a spiritual awakening in this young nation.
- 2 **Nearly half the population profess to be Christian**, but many have little understanding of their faith, and Christian belief is often mixed with spiritism. In the larger Catholic and Moravian denominations, growth has been incremental, but recent Pentecostal and charismatic growth has been rapid. Pray for new life and dynamism to replace traditionalism and syncretism practised by many. Pray for increasing trans-denominational cooperation to continue in Bible-related ministries and outreach to every ethnic group in Suriname.
- 3 **Christian leaders** across all denominations face challenges within both the Church and society.
 - a) **Church growth** necessitates leaders to emerge, from all cultural backgrounds, who possess strong biblical faith and solid ability to minister into Suriname's unique context. Pray for the right individuals and families to step forward and lead faithfully.
 - b) **Three interdenominational Bible institutes** now provide training in-country for Surinamese pastors and workers, obviating the need to study abroad. Several denominational Bible schools and informal Bible and leadership training programmes serve the church. Pray that these will effectively shape well-trained and well-equipped Christian leaders.
 - c) **Christian leaders must re-lay biblical foundations** and standards in this nation that lost its way morally and ethically in the confusion following independence. Pray that Christian leaders seek

greater unity in the body of Christ and hunger after the Word of God in order to powerfully impart it to their congregations.

4 Most of the six Amerindian peoples are now at least nominally Christian. **WT** sees people movements among the Wayana, Akurio and Trio. The coastal Carib and Arawak are more needy. Some Amerindian churches are growing in faith and actively engaging in cross-cultural mission. Others struggle, reverting to sinful indigenous customs or outside secular and materialist pressures. Pray for stability, maturity and indigeneity to be maintained in tribal churches. Pray that Wayana and Trio missionaries rapidly learn and adapt, and pray for the cross-cultural workers among the Amerindians.

5 Foreign missionaries have perhaps decreased in Suriname in the last decade, though the number of Surinamese missionaries and Christian workers increased. Many international organizations have affiliates or branches run by Surinamese staff (**MAF, YWAM**, others), while others work in close partnership with local churches. Pray for effective collaboration in discipling and training new leaders, in Bible translation and use, and in outreach to the less-evangelized peoples.

6 Less-reached peoples. Pray for these:

a) **The Javanese** are predominantly Muslim, but nominally so. New generations of Javanese Christians, across denominations, rise to the challenge of reaching their own people. **CMA** and **IMB** now facilitate church planting training and mobilize churches to reach the Javanese. The Suriname Javanese NT was published in 2000, and plans are underway to translate the OT.

b) **The Indian community** is only now beginning to respond to the gospel. **WT**, in partnership with SKS (a Hindustani organization), seeks to see a church within walking distance of every Hindustani. But local congregations are slow on the uptake regarding outreach to this long-neglected group; pray for this partnership to spark greater zeal for ministry among them. Currently, there is no work or witness among Muslims within the Hindustani. Pray that the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding be removed and the spiritual powers preventing their evangelization be rendered helpless.

c) **Chinese churches** are growing and actively joining other local churches and missions to plant more churches among Chinese in the region. **CMA** and the Moravians are involved in this outreach to the Chinese, who come mostly from the southern coastal provinces of China.

7 Specialist Christian ministries for prayer:

a) **The Suriname Bible Society** (UBS) plays a key role in not only Bible translation and distribution but also in production of media resources that address social and family issues. Bible distribution has increased since independence. With SIL Suriname, the SBS provides literacy training, while **CCCI** and others offer access to the **JESUS** film.

b) **Bible translation** continues through the Suriname Bible Society and other local and foreign agencies. At least five translation projects are underway or planned for the future.

c) **Student ministry.** **JSSM(IFES)** has three university groups and eight high school groups, totalling 200 students. **CCCI** also ministers in schools using their Crossroads programme. Multi-cultural pluralism in Suriname is a threat to Christian young people; many are unable to understand or defend the uniqueness of Christ.

d) **The JESUS film** has been extensively used to draw many to Christ. It is now in the heart language of several Maroon tribes, as well as in the Suriname Javanese, Chinese and in Sranan Tongo, the Creole trade language. Follow-up teams are crucial to long-term success.