

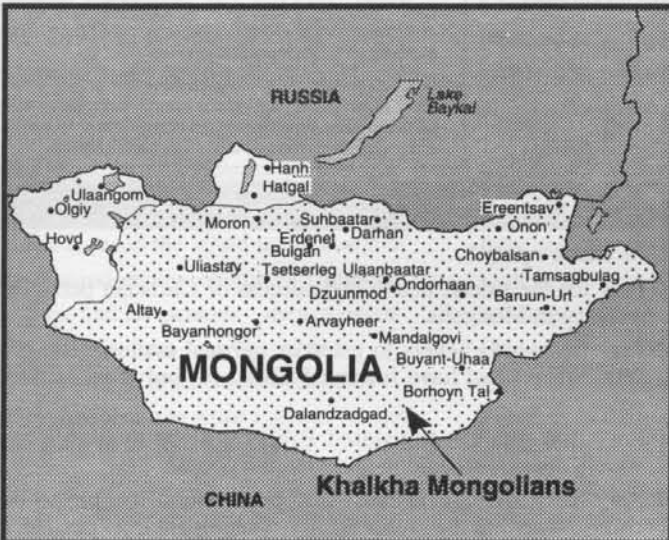


## The Khalkha Mongolians

### Mongolian People's Republic

**Location.** The Khalkha are the largest group of Mongol people living in the Mongolian People's Republic, formerly called Outer Mongolia, located north of the People's Republic of China and south of the eastern stretch of the former Soviet Union.

**History:** The Mongols were originally a group of loosely organized nomadic people. In the 1200s they were united under the leadership of Genghis Khan who eventually ruled the largest land empire in history. This grandson, Kublai Khan, ruled an empire extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf to the Arctic Ocean, including China. Mongolians carried to other lands the inventions of gunpowder, paper printing and the compass. Marco Polo, one of the most famous European travelers to the Orient, recorded the wonders of this era.



Under the rule of Kublai Khan religion was tolerated and Catholic missionaries were invited into China. The great empire crumbled over a period of 300 years and the Manchu armies conquered China and Mongolia. When the Manchus fell in 1911, Mongolia became an independent state.

In the years that followed, conflicting forces tried to control Mongolia. China and Russia alternately gained temporary control. In 1924 the Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed and became the first communist state in Asia. In spite of strong ties to Russia, Outer Mongolia was not detached from China until 1945 when it was part of the Yalta agreement. In 1990 it discarded communism.

**Identity:** The Khalkha see themselves as descendants of Genghis Khan, the true carriers of Mongol culture and their language the real Mongolian.

**Culture:** Mongolian culture is a combination of a nomadic pastoral way of life and civilized Asian culture. Traditionally most



*This young Mongolian sits inside his tent. The tent, made of white felt, is taken with him as he moves several times each year. These frequent moves may make it difficult for Christian workers to reach him with the gospel.*

Khalkha were a nomadic pastoral people, herding sheep, horses, cattle, camels and goats. With their felt tents, they moved four or five times a year from one pasturage to another.

Since the 12th century, the Mongols have been literate, possessing a code of law, knowledge of world religions and literature, including works on theology, philosophy and medicine.

**Customs:** Old Khalkha hospitality is very ceremonial and polite. The honored guest sits in the northwest opposite the tent door. Jade snuff bottles and flattering remarks are exchanged. "White foods" (dried curds, cheese, clotted cream) are served. The tea bowl is filled to overflowing. The rules for offering and receiving food express respect for a guest, thanks to the host, and the recognition of each one's place in the group. Throwing food away would show disrespect for animals or for the herding life.

**Language:** Most cling to the Khalkha and Buriat dialects of the Mongol language.

**Political situation:** The Khalkha are politically central since they form the majority in the only Mongolian state. Although friendly with the Russians, the People's Republic of Mongolia has an autonomous political structure and its own representation in the United Nations.

**Religion:** Mongolian society formerly practiced Tibetan Buddhism and nature worship. In the 1930s the communists destroyed 700 monasteries and killed thousands of monks and by indoctrination produced the nonreligious Mongols of today.

**Christianity:** Barely 5 percent of the population had heard of Jesus in 1924, when Soviet communists expelled missionaries. In 1990 the Mongolian government adopted democracy and began

**Population**  
2,190,000 (mid-1990)  
2,847,000 (mid-2000)

**Religion**  
Nonreligious (44%)

**Christianity**  
Less than 1,000 Christians

to allow foreigners, including Christians, into the land. The 10 Mongolian believers in 1991 grew by 1992 to 10 congregations in four cities, totaling 855 attending.

# This people's country: THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

## DEMOGRAPHY

Population: 2,190,000 (1990); 2,503,000 (1995);  
2,847,000 (2000)

Doubling time: 25 years

Major languages: Mongolian (Khalka), Russian, Kazakh,  
Buryat

Official language: Mongolian (Khalka Mongol)

Capital city: Ulaanbaatar 582,628

Other cities: Dorhan 85,962; Erdenet 52,779

Megametro dwellers: 0%

Metro dwellers: 32.3%

Urban dwellers: (1990): 52.3%

Birth rate: 3.4% per year

Death rate: 0.77% per year

Life expectancy at birth: male 62.3 years, female 65.0  
years

Labor force: 38%

Refugees: 725

## RELIGION

Religious profession: Nonreligious 44.1%; Shamanists  
30.9%; Atheist 21.5%

Major denominations: Orthodox Church, Catholic Church  
in Ulaanbaatar

Christian workers: 200

Christian service agencies: 18

## HEALTH

Physicians: 5,300 (1 per 390 persons)

Hospital beds: 23,400 (1 per 88 persons)

Infant mortality rate: 60.0 per 1,000 births

Blind: 4,686

Deaf: 131,400

Leprosy sufferers: 219

Major causes of death: n/a

Daily per capita caloric intake: 2,481 (102%)

## EDUCATION

Adult literacy: 89.5%

Education rate: 50%

## COMMUNICATION

Radios: 275,000 receivers (1 per 7.5 persons)

TV sets: 120,000 receivers (1 per 17 persons)

Telephones: 62,600 (1 per 35 persons)

Computers: 12,000 (estimate)

INDEXES (optimum condition = 100%)

Human Suffering Index (HSI): 43%

Human Freedom Index (HFI): 5 out of 40

Human Development Index (HDI): 59%

Status of Women Index (SWI): 53% (estimate)

Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI): 74% estimate

## People Status: Khalkha Mongols of Mongolia

Countries where present: Mongolia, Russia,  
China, Kyrgyzstan

People names: Khalkha Mongols (Mongols)

Language: Halh Mongolian (Halh, Khalkha,  
Mongolian Mongol)

Autoglossonym (what they call their language):  
halh (khalka, urat)

Population: 1,480,000 (1990); 1,740,000 (1995);  
2,000,000 (AD 2000)

Minipeoples: Five dialects

Political location: Throughout most of Mongolia

Chief cities and towns: Dorhan, Erdenet,  
Ulaanbaatar

Religious profession: Nonreligious 50%; Shamanists  
30%; atheists 16%; Lamaists 3%, Muslims 1%

Christians (baptized church members): 2,000

Scriptures: New Testament

Jesus film: Yes

Christian broadcasting: yes?

Mission agencies working among the Khalkha  
Mongols: more than 10

## Miniglossary: some technical terms

**Christians.** Those who have made a personal profession of faith in Christ. Includes both members and non-members of organized churches.

**ethnolinguistic people.** An ethnic or racial group distinguished by common descent, history, customs, and language. The largest possible group that can communicate without barriers of understanding or acceptance.

**unevangelized people.** An ethnolinguistic people, over half of whose members have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ with such cultural and personal relevance that it results in sufficient understanding to accept Christ by faith as a believer (disciple) or to reject Him.

**unreached people.** An ethnolinguistic people among whom there is no viable indigenous church movement with sufficient strength, resources, and commitment to sustain and ensure the continuous multiplication of churches.

## Ministry Options

### What can be done?

What follows is a list of 10 ministry options that would impact the evangelization of the Khalkha. In each case, special action is required by agencies with particular areas of focus.

- ❖ Rally Christian church groups committed to praying for the rise of strong Christian churches in Mongolia.
- ❖ Study Mongolian history to find events that could illustrate the thrust of the gospel or provide a link between their life and God's plan for man.
- ❖ Ask mission boards to appoint missionaries to specialize in studying Khalkha and living among the people.
- ❖ Encourage Christian radio broadcasting into the north China area specifically to appeal in music and to speak to Mongolian cultures.
- ❖ Seek additional English teachers for teaching positions.
- ❖ Search for ways to contact a scattered rural population of four people per square mile.
- ❖ Investigate scholarships or exchange programs for promising Khalkha professionals to attend Christian universities.
- ❖ Locate veterinary experts who could train Mongolians in caring for the livestock which outnumber people 25 to 1.
- ❖ Contact western businessmen interested in the wool industry to begin trade with Mongolia.
- ❖ Investigate the types of western athletic skills for which Mongolian youths want professional coaches. Provide sports events which lead to friendship and open witnessing opportunities.

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## Prayer Topics (Note: † above highlights special needs)

### How can we pray?

- ❖ Pray for the safety, health and success of Christian personnel working in Mongolia.
- ❖ Pray for new believers to grow in spiritual maturity and discernments. Most have followed Christ for only two or three years.
- ❖ Pray that modern translated Bibles will be available and widely distributed among these literate people.
- ❖ Pray for Christian business and professional people to become aware of the open door for using their expertise in Mongolia and be willing to learn the language and serve Christ in lay roles.
- ❖ Pray for the form of church worship and fellowship that will develop in a truly Mongolian flavor, not a western one.

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