

The 5 “-isms”

When praying for Cambodia, it is helpful to know some of the underlying issues that are present in the culture. Here at IHSI we have a saying that there are 5 “-isms”, spiritual and philosophical foundations that have been laid in layers throughout the centuries of Cambodian history. These layers must be prayerfully demolished in individual believers’ hearts in order for the country as a whole can progress toward laying a new foundation in Christ. So please join us in praying for Cambodians to leave behind each of these “-isms”, however they have had their effect on their lives and mindsets.

1. Animism/ancestor worship – The worship of spirits and ancestral ghosts believed to be in inanimate objects and nature is Cambodia’s oldest form of religion, and is woven through the daily life of all unbelievers in home, school, work, and religious life.
2. Hinduism – Early North-Indian settlers brought Hinduism to this region, and many idols and architectural structures throughout the country still are made to resemble Hindu gods. Although a rigid caste system is not observed here, the separation of classes stemming from Hinduism is a way that the Enemy has fostered division, inequality, and racial profiling. The Cambodian veneration of kings as deities also stems from this “-ism.”
3. Buddhism – Cambodians practice Theravada Buddhism mixed with practices from many of the other “-isms”. See our PDF on prayer strategies for evangelism to learn more!
4. Communism – The Khmer Rouge genocide era introduced communism to Cambodia, opposing religion as a whole while imposing terribly destructive ideology on a generation of people who are now (if they survived) parents and grandparents. The effects of this time in the nation’s history still are reverberating in every sphere of Cambodian society.
5. Humanitarianism – In recent years Cambodia has become one the most NGO-populated countries in the region, yet still ranks incredibly badly in international ratings for corruption, poverty, and human rights. It is very important for any NGO or ministry to be discerning so that the time, money, and resources they invest is truly of long-term benefit to Cambodia itself, rather than becoming part of the humanitarian bloat that creates entitlement mentalities without lasting change. We meet many “rice Christians” here; people who were drawn to local churches by gifts of rice or noodles, and who soon fall away when the giving is replaced with spiritual food.

IN HIS STEPS

INTERNATIONAL

Without deep down, foundational transformation at the heart level, new believers in Cambodia are left simply stacking Jesus and Christianity on top of all the other “-isms” that already have taken hold in their worldview. Yet in the Bible we are instructed to tear down everything which exalts itself above Him! So for intercessors, it is key to prayerfully come against every other foundation laid so that Jesus can become Chief Cornerstone.

Some scriptures to use when praying:

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Matthew 7:24-27

1 Corinthians 3:11

Isaiah 28:16

Ephesians 2:19-22