

CO

More than 25,000 Co people live in central Vietnam. The majority are located in the Tra Bong and Son Ha districts of Quang Nai Province, and the adjacent Tra My District of Quang Nam-Da Nang Province.

Co villages are often situated half-way up mountain slopes. Their area is conducive for growing tea, betel leaves and cinnamon. Most Co in the Tra My District earn their entire income from cinnamon production. The high quality of the crop has earned a famous reputation throughout Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia.

For centuries the Co have lived in extended 'long houses' up to 70-80 meters in length that contained several

generations of the same family under one roof. The long-houses were protected by a high and thick hedge; which prevented hostile tribes and clans from attacking. Today the hedges are more basic and only help protect the Co's homes from wild animals.

Only in the past decade have an increasing number of Co started to live in normal homes of single family units.

Co men go around naked from the waist up, while women prefer to wear sleeveless shirts, and adorn themselves with necklaces, bracelets, and earrings made of glass beads, silver or copper.

the last few decades. In the past they stubbornly refused to intermarry with members of other ethnic groups, but now young people are allowed to take partners who are Vietnamese, Hre, or Sedang.

The Co formerly did not use family names. Now many call themselves *Ho*, in honor of the former Vietnam President Ho Chi Minh.

Monogamy is practiced by the Co, although if a woman proves to be barren her husband may take a concubine with the consent of his wife.

Sons are held in great honor by the Co. According to their custom, the second son is responsible to take care of his parents in their old age.

In the past there was much inter-clan and inter-tribal warfare among the Co. Feuds and vendettas often lasted for generations. The resulting murders caused the Co population to remain relatively low.

The Co love to sing, dance and tell ancient stories about the origins of their race and their struggles to survive. Their folk-songs (called *Xru*,



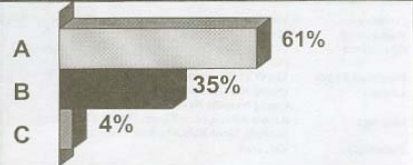
Population:
22,649 (1989)
28,100 (2000)
34,300 (2010)

Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Animism

Christians:
1,000

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = Adherents to any form of Christianity

Klu and *Agiol* are an integral part of their lives and help perpetuate Co ethnicity from one generation to another.

Within Co society, patrilineal relationships are held in higher regard than matrilineal ones. The children of two brothers are allowed to marry each other only after four generations have passed.

The Co are animists. They worship a wide array of ghosts, demons and disembodied spirits. They believe each man has 18 souls or life-sources (called *phol*), while women have 19 souls, the additional soul being located in her breasts.

The Co are a very superstitious people. They hire shamans to consult the spirit-world and to secure signs through divination. No major event, such as a marriage, funeral, or long journey, occurs before a shaman has been consulted, and the most auspicious place and times have been determined by the shaman.

Between 300 to 1,000 Co profess to be Christians. The Biblical books of Mark, Acts, James and Luke 15 were translated into the Co language in 1973, and audio cassette messages of the Gospel are available in Co.

Despite the presence of these believers, however, the majority of Co have little awareness of the Gospel and remain unreached and unevangelized. The bulk of the Co Christians are concentrated in a few villages in one area.

Often when a Co turns to Christ they face great pressure from the other members of their village. If they refuse to recant their faith they are usually ostracized and driven away from their community and friends. The shamans believe the presence of the believers in their village will upset the spirits and bring a curse on the people.



Pray for the Co

- 1 Ask the Lord to break down the powerful evil spirits that control the lives of the Co and which prevent them from understanding the Gospel message.
- 2 Pray the few Co believers would be strengthened and have courage to take the Gospel to the majority of Co who have never heard of Jesus Christ.
- 3 Pray the Co churches would be culturally relevant, without compromising the Gospel, so that non-Christian Co would not think of Christianity as foreign and irrelevant.

Overview of the Co

Countries	: Vietnam	Subgroups	: 0
Pronunciation	: "Coh"	Religion	: Animism, Shamanism, Christianity
Other Names	: Cor, Col, Cua, Trau, Khua, Mei, La Thu, Bong Mieu, Moi Tra Bong, Bong Miew	Christians	: 300 to 1,000
Population Source	: 22,649 (1989 census)	Scripture	: Portions 1973; Mark, Acts, James, Luke 15 are available
Location	: Quang Nai: Tra Bong and Son Ha districts; Quang Nam-Da Nang: Tra My District	Jesus film	: none
Language	: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Eastern Mon-Khmer, Bahnaric, North Bahnaric, East, Cua-Kayong	Gospel Recordings	: Cua #01931
Dialects (2)	: Kol, Traw	Christian Radio	: none
		ROPAL code	: CUA00