

# THE MUSLIM WORLD

While the world is at war, Islam continues to be identified with its militant extremists. Yet the vast majority of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims are intelligent, peaceful people leading simple lives.



## WHAT IS A MUSLIM?

A Muslim is a follower of Islam – the teachings of Muhammad, as recorded in the Qur'an.

Muhammad is revered by Muslims as the greatest prophet. In life,

he was characterized as honest, generous, and sincere. He became known as, al-amin, the trustworthy one. For 23 years, beginning at the age of 40, he received revelations from the Angel Gabriel. These are collectively known as the Qur'an.

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF ISLAM?

Islam originated in the Saudi Arabian peninsula during the sixth century A.D. The prophet Muhammad descended from a tribe located in Mazzah on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. Islam's quick and continued success is attributed in part to its unshakable faith and its emphasis on social equality and justice.

## WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION OF ISLAM?

Muslims are family-oriented, enjoy hospitality, practice loyalty and value honor. Islam encompasses every aspect of a Muslim's life. The Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, and the Hadiths contain instructions for every detail of daily living.

## WHAT DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE?

Muslims believe Allah (God) will weigh good deeds against bad deeds in order to grant salvation. A Muslim hopes to earn salvation by following Islam's five 'pillars' – reciting the creed, praying five times a day, giving to the poor, fasting, and making a pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca, Islam's holy city.

## WHAT DO MUSLIMS MAKE OF JESUS?

- Jesus is mentioned in 93 verses of the Qur'an as a prophet.
- Jesus is known as "a word" from God, "messiah" and "a spirit from God."
- Muslims believe in Jesus' miraculous virgin birth.
- Muslims do not believe that Jesus is divine or the Son of God.

# MUSLIMS IN AMERICA

Many Muslims have grown up in families – and an entire culture – immersed in Islam. For many, their very identity is entwined with the Islamic faith. Today, Islam is reportedly the fastest-growing religion in the United States – especially among African-Americans, the largest social group of Muslim converts. In 2001, America's Muslim population was estimated at 6-10 million – with the largest Muslim communities in New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Denver and Detroit. Today, there are more than 1,500 mosques across America – and hundreds of Islamic centers.



Photograph: Jon Warren

## GROWTH OF ISLAM IN THE U.S.

- The second largest social group of Muslim converts in America consists of white, American women who marry Muslim men.
- The American Muslim Council reports that there are 80,000 American-born converts to Islam.
- In 1994, the U.S. military commissioned its first Muslim chaplain to advise the estimated 10,000 Muslims in the U.S. armed forces.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Become a friend to a Muslim immigrant or refugee family.
- Show Muslims in your community that Christians are people of word and deed.
- Pray for Muslims to discover that Jesus is God's Son.
- Pray for stronger relations between all the world's nations.

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