



Middle East

Where Church History Began

Middle Eastern Hospitality

Middle Easterners are renowned for being extremely friendly, polite, and hospitable people. They take pride in their hospitality.

However, as workers and foreigners, life and ministry takes a toll on workers and their families. As one of the least-reached areas in the world today, the need for workers is great.

The Joshua Project estimates that only .04% of the population are evangelical believers, with 96.3% of the population professing to follow the teachings of Islam.

In some areas, a mixture of Islam and fierce nationalism leads to Christian persecution. Citizens are expected to be Muslims. This leaves little space for minorities and indirectly results in the persecution of Christians.

Within the home, Christian converts in particular face strong opposition from their families. They are seen as traitors to both Islam and their national identity.

Converts from Islam, while not legally prosecuted, face social opposition. And, as a result, some keep their faith hidden from family and community members. Christians with Muslim backgrounds are threatened with divorce and loss of inheritance rights upon conversion, and Christians face employment discrimination.

Islam

The Islamic faith originated in the Arabian peninsula, based on what Muslims believe to be divine revelations by God to the prophet Mohammed. Approximately 90 percent of Muslims are of the Sunni tradition; most of the remainder are of the Shi'ite tradition. Unlike the West, there is not a tradition of separation between faith and state institutions.

Situated between Africa, Asia, and Europe, the Middle East has been a crossroads for traders, travelers, and empire builders for thousands of years. It is the birth place of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Religion plays a large part in the rhythm of daily life, not only through prayer and study, but also influencing market place decisions.

An awareness of God (*Allah*) is exhibited in common expressions. In response to "How are you?" is "Praise be to God." When expressing hope for a future event, one might say "God willing." The exclamation "What God wills!" is often heard as an expression of delight.

While there are those for whom these phrases reflect the divine, others use them out of tradition from a more secular vantage point.

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Loving Muslims to Jesus

Honor Shame Culture

The team first met ‘Y’ when she was a university student in their city. Only one year earlier ‘Y’ was struggling deeply because of rumors that had been told about her, leading to humiliation and a loss of friendships.

Not wanting to continue on with her life, ‘Y’ contemplated suicide. She reached out to a friend who encouraged her to take her life. In this culture, if someone is perceived to have brought shame to their family, one of the acceptable ways to regain honor is to eliminate the person who caused the shame.

The good news is that ‘Y’ reached out to another friend who is a Christian. After meeting with ‘Y’ and sharing the hope of the Gospel, ‘Y’ put her faith in Christ.

After ‘Y’ put her faith in Christ, she began attending a local church. World Team workers met with ‘Y’ to disciple her in her newfound walk with Jesus.

‘Y’ did not tell her parents about becoming a Christian for over a year. Her reluctance came from a fear of rejection and causing her parents shame. When her parent’s noticed the change in her life, ‘Y’ shared about her life changing faith in Christ.

Culturally, until something is out in the open, it can be ignored. Then it does not cause shame. Pray for ‘Y’ and others like her who want to honor their families—but also want to openly share their growing relationship with Christ.

Middle Eastern Culture

Culture is a shared set of traditions, belief systems, and behaviors that is shaped by history, religion, ethnic identity, language, and nationality, among other factors.

To live and serve in a Middle Eastern culture requires patience (the work is slow), the ability to live with ambiguity (things often don’t go as planned) and a strong belief that God has a plan for the Muslim world.

Ministry Overview

People	Muslim
Language	Various
Location	Middle East
Opportunities	Evangelism and discipleship Women’s Ministry College Ministry Sports Ministry Business Development

This quote from David Livingston describes the attitude needed for workers serving in the Middle East:

God, send me anywhere, only go with me.

Lay any burden on me, only sustain me.

And sever any tie in my heart except the tie that binds my heart to you.



Join the Team!

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