

## The Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca



Saudi Aramco World/PADIA

*“And proclaim the Pilgrimage among people,” says the Qur’an 22 (Hajj), verse 27. “They will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways.” In verses 29 and 30, “Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House. Such (is the Pilgrimage): Whoever honors the sacred Rites of God, for him it is good in the sight of his Lord.”*

Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, is one of the five pillars of Islam, the duty of every Muslim who is physically and financially able to perform it. In the 19th century B.C., Muslims

believe, Abraham—the revered patriarch of Islam, Christianity and Judaism—was instructed by God to build a house of worship in a narrow valley between two barren ridges in a place today called Mecca, on the present site of the Ka’bah, the cubic structure inside the Grand Mosque.

Since that time, Mecca has become a city of pilgrimage. Toward the end of the fifth century, under the dominance of the Quraysh, a Meccan tribe, both commerce and pilgrimage flourished in the city, yet the monotheism of Abraham had been nearly forgotten. Idols representing as many as 360 different deities are believed to have been erected in and around



# Until All Have Heard

*How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? Romans 10:14*

**Jim Bennett, Director**  
**Center for**  
**Ministry to Muslims**




Each year two million Muslims observe the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, making it the world's largest annual religious convocation. The Hajj's timing is absolutely fixed, as are the sequence and nature of its ritual acts. At no other time except the closing days of the last month of the Muslim year and by no other actions than those prescribed is the obligation fulfilled.

From years of living in the Middle East, here are a few vivid Hajj-related memories:

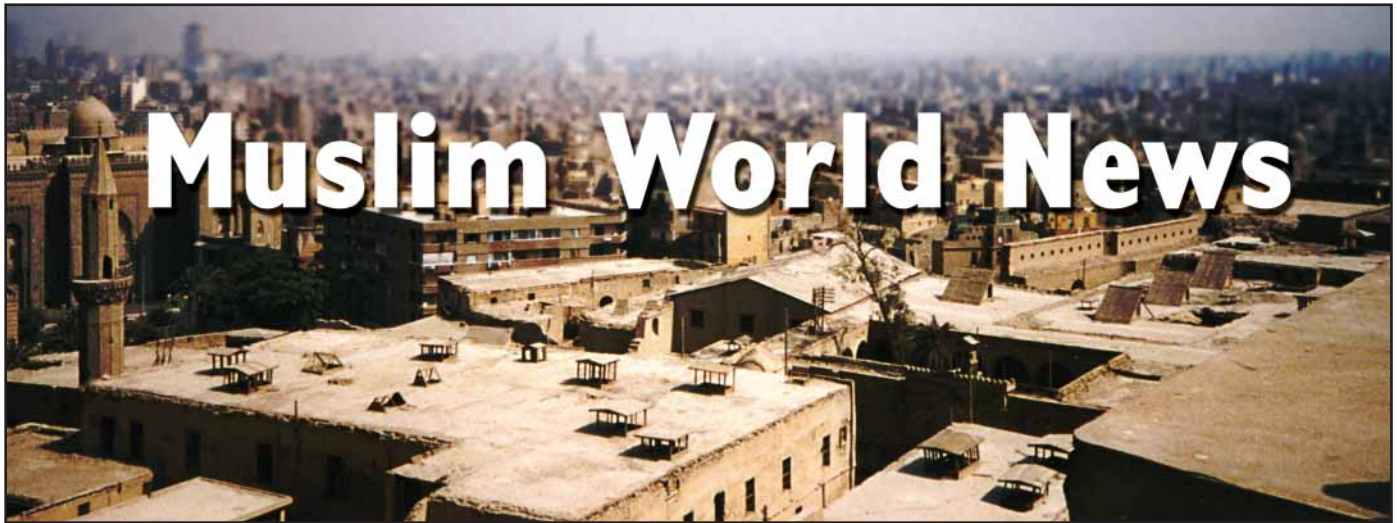
- Watching hundreds of Turkish Muslim pilgrims file out of their buses and position themselves in a field near my home for dawn prayers.
- Observing dozens of white-clad Uzbek Muslims in a Middle Eastern airport returning from Mecca, each carrying a plastic container filled with holy water from the well of Zamzam, which provided life-saving water for Hagar and Ishmael, according to Muslims. The water is shared with family, sprinkled in homes, applied to the sick, or saved for various holy purposes.
- Visiting neighbors upon their return from Mecca and offering congratulations upon their safe return. Some friends felt I had gone too far, but I knew that all the years of building bridges of friendship to my Muslim neighbors would be jeopardized if I did not observe this cultural expectation. Often these visits provided opportunities to talk about Jesus.
- Always amazed at the strings of multi-colored lights and fancy “welcome home” banners at the homes of returning pilgrims.

I once visited an elderly neighbor who had just returned from his pilgrimage. He wore a henna-dyed beard, a sign of a “Hajji.” I asked him if it was his first pilgrimage. “Oh no,” he said, “I’ve been five times.” Today, because so many Muslims desire to make the pilgrimage, quotas are imposed in most countries. My elderly neighbor probably will never be approved for a sixth trip. The theory is that no one should go twice until everyone has the opportunity to go once.

As you read our fine lead article on the Hajj, you will be impressed with Muslim dedication to ritual; in this case fulfilling their Hajj obligation. I hope you will be inspired to pray that Muslims will discover something more important than ritual; that they will find the truth, the life and the way—Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. 







## Afghanistan

Five Afghan men who had converted to Christianity have been killed in separate incidents since last June near the borders of eastern Afghanistan. The first death was reported in July by Reuters news agency, which received a telephone call from a Taliban spokesman announcing the murder of Mullah Assad Ullah the previous day in Ghazni province. “A group of Taliban dragged out Mullah Assad Ullah and slit his throat with a knife because he was propagating Christianity,” the man told Reuters. The murder of another Christian convert who had gone to visit Assad Ullah’s family was confirmed in August. The body of Naveed ul-Rehman was discovered in early August near his abandoned car in Awdand. Three more Afghan Christians were stabbed or beaten to death in separate incidents on July 15, July 23 and July 28. Each of the murdered men left behind a wife and several children.—*Compass*

## Indonesia

Papua is the most Christian region in Indonesia, the world’s most populous Islamic nation. Islam never penetrated the island’s rugged terrain. After decades of missionary labor, a church with a cross stands in almost every village. Papuans are becoming bold evangelists and taking the gospel to hard-

core Muslim areas of the country. They minister in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan. Last July the Papua Cross-Cultural Institute opened to train evangelists who will target other parts of Indonesia and some of the few remaining unreached tribes of their own island. While only 20 slots were open for the first class, 100 people applied.—*Pulse*

## Iraq

While the overthrow of Saddam’s regime was believed to usher in an era of women’s rights, for many Iraqi women, chronic violence and rising religious conservatism are crushing hopes for freedom. Iraqi men are killing their female relatives they say have stained the family honor by doing things they deem un-Islamic. The number of “honor” killings since the United States’ March 2003 invasion is unknown, but may run into the hundreds.—*Pulse*

## Nigeria

Muslim militants have threatened to kill Christian nurses serving at the Federal Medical Center in a town in the state of Nasarawa unless they stop conducting Christian worship services. A letter received by hospital management and the Fellowship of Christian Nurses (FCN) stated, “We are making it abundantly clear that our thirst for your heads/blood is

mounting daily if you continue with your worship services in the hospital unabated.” The letter carried no names and was simply endorsed by a group calling itself “Islamic fundamentalists.” Subsequently, the medical director and chief executive at the medical center banned Christian-related activities at the facility and banned the FCN chapter indefinitely. The same facility has allowed two mosques in the hospital built with public funds.—*Compass*

## Pakistan

Yousaf Masih, 33, a Protestant pastor in Pakistan’s Sindh province, is recovering slowly after being kidnapped, drugged and beaten severely by bearded assailants. Masih was abducted off a back street near his home last September, while walking home from a worship service. His Muslim captors told Masih that they were taking revenge for the United States’ military presence in the country and ordered him to stop “praying for Muslims” in his Baptist church in Jacobabad. The attackers held him hostage for two days before dumping him along a road nearly 600 miles away. Married with two young children, Masih is undergoing treatment for his injuries. He is the second Protestant pastor subjected to kidnapping and torture at the hands of Islamist extremists in Pakistan in 2003.—*Compass*



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the Ka'bah during this era. These remained until Muhammad's return to Mecca from Medina in 629.

Two years later, Muhammad made the first Hajj and by his example showed Muslims the rituals that are now being followed. Near the Mount of Mercy on the plain of Arafat, he gave his farewell sermon, in part of which he emphasized kindness toward pilgrims.

For the next 14 centuries, the journey to Mecca remained arduous and lengthy, with many pilgrims taking not days but months or years to reach Mecca. It became incumbent on the tribes of Mecca to receive the pilgrims warmly, in recognition of the hardships they had endured. Jurists have debated whether a Meccan may charge a pilgrim for accommodation, or whether a modest charge is acceptable. The modern outcome of this debate is that the Saudi government currently regulates the prices pilgrims may be charged for most necessities, and many people provide accommodations to pilgrims without charge as an act of charity.

### What is Involved?

The Hajj always takes place on the same six days of the lunar calendar, beginning on the eighth and ending on the 13th of the month of Dhu Al-Hijjah, the last month of the year (mid-January 1425 this year). The rituals take place in five locations in or near Mecca: On the outskirts of the Holy City (Miqat), in the Holy Mosque, on the plain of Arafat, at Muzdalifa and at Jamarat. Each ritual must be completed at or within a prescribed time.

#### 1. Ihram (purification) up to 14 days before Hajj

Before entering Mecca, pilgrims clean themselves physically and spiritually at designated times and places at the edge of the sacred precinct surrounding the city. At this time they announce their intention to perform Hajj by reciting an invocation called *talbiyah*. Men don a garment of two seamless pieces of white cloth called *ihram*, which they wear for the duration of the Hajj. Women may wear modest dress of any color and cover their heads but not their faces.

#### 2. Tawaf at the Holy Mosque before Hajj

Between their arrival in Mecca and the eighth of Dhu al-

Hijjah, pilgrims walk seven times counterclockwise around the Ka'bah, the cubical structure at the center of the Holy Mosque. This circumambulation, which expresses the centrality of God in life, is called *tawaf*. Afterward, to the east of the Holy Mosque, pilgrims jog seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah, commemorating the desperate search for water of Abraham's wife, Hagar. This ritual, undertaken now in a 400-meter covered arcade, is called *sa'y*.

#### 3. Encampment at Mina: the first day of Hajj

On the eighth of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims gather in the flat valley of Mina, about five kilometers east of Mecca. Meditating and praying in preparation for the next day, most spend the night in tents.

#### 4. Wuquf (standing) at Arafat: the second day

In the morning of the ninth, pilgrims continue 10 more kilometers east to the plain of Arafat. They stand or sit—some for minutes, some for hours—and before God reflect on their lives and pray for mercy and renewal. Some climb Jabal Rahmah, the Mount of Mercy, a rocky hill at the foot of which Muhammad delivered his farewell sermon.

#### 5. Muzdalifah: the second night

After sundown at Arafat, pilgrims turn back toward Mecca and stop for the night at Muzdalifah. There, most pick up 49 pebbles that they will throw at the three pillars of Jamarat over the next three days.

#### 6. Stoning at Jamarat and 'Id al-Adha: the third day

At dawn on the 10th, pilgrims begin moving to a place just west of Mina called Jamarat "stoning." There they throw seven pebbles at the first of three pillars, which have come to represent Satan. This symbolic repudiation of evil commemorates Abraham's three rejections of Satan when God asked him to sacrifice his son; afterwards, pilgrims further commemorate Abraham's faith by sacrificing a sheep, as God commanded Abraham to do. This day is the first of the three-day *'Id al-Adha*, the "Feast of the Sacrifice." After throwing stones at the first pillar, men shave their heads, and women cut off a lock of their hair. Male pilgrims may return to their customary clothes, but many remain in *ihram* for the duration of the three-day 'Id or until they leave Mecca.





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### 7. 'Id al-Adha and Tawaf al-ifadhah: the third - sixth days

Pilgrims return to the Holy Mosque in Mecca at any time during these days, again circle the Ka'bah seven times and perform *sa'y* again. After this, many return to the tents at Mina and from there, pass through Jamarat again on the fourth and fifth days, stoning each of the three pillars with seven pebbles. On the 13th of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims return to the Holy Mosque to make a third, final, "farewell" circumambulation called *tawaf al-ifadhah*. At this point, pilgrims are deconsecrated, and the state of *ihram* is ended.

### 8. Departure: up to 14 days after Hajj

To ease crowding, pilgrims do not leave Mecca and Saudi Arabia all together. Many pilgrim groups go north to visit Medina, the second Holy City of Islam, and the Prophet's Mosque where Muhammad is buried. Many pilgrims remain in Medina, hoping to die there, thus meriting a gracious welcome into Paradise. This observance is not a part of the Hajj.

Wahhabis (members of a strict Muslim sect) contend that visits to Muhammad's tomb as a religious ceremony is a serious sin (*shirk*), through associating a creature (Muhammad, in this case) with God. In response, pilgrims to Medina argue that they make this optional "pilgrimage" to pray for Muhammad (that "peace may be upon him"), rather than to pray to Muhammad.

Beyond question, the annual Hajj is the world's largest and most cosmopolitan gathering of people anywhere. Sheer numerical strength provides encouragement, especially to recent converts to Islam who tend to take seriously the command to observe the Hajj. To many of them, the Hajj is a type of jihad in which serious striving, struggle and discipline precede the intended success.

Returning pilgrims who complete the prescribed rituals are welcomed back from Mecca with affirmation and acclaim. Thus, the hajji tends to significantly impact relatives, the village, the small mosque community or even a city quarter where the person resides. Immediate changes in the life of the pilgrim may be observable in clothing, personal appearance, priorities and even name changes. They also typically intensify their efforts to propagate Islam (*da'wa*).

### A Christian Response

A surprising dimension of the Hajj, to most Christians, who are informed for the first time, is the reenactment by Muslims of biblical and extra-biblical accounts of the Abraham-Hagar-Ishmael drama. Also startling are the roles assigned Abraham as: the first Muslim, God's protector of monotheistic worship and the builder of an early foundation for the holiest place in Islam, toward which all Muslims bow.

Muslims contend that the earthly origins of Islam occurred at Mecca, milleniums before the birth of Muhammad in 570 A.D. Abraham is believed to be the prophet God called to begin the establishment of monotheism in Arabia.

Some Christian students of Islam contend that the circling of the shrines, the stoning of three pillars (representing temptations by Satan), physical purification rites, vigils and sacrifices during the Hajj rituals appear to be adapted from pre-Islamic pagan and subsequent Semitic practices.

Though a Muslim usually makes one pilgrimage during his lifetime, the Christian's "pilgrimage" never ends and is not to a place. Christ alive within us is the precious gift which assures us of "successful striving" in the Spirit. Our response to the Muslim pilgrimage includes an enhanced awareness of Islam's annual drama in Saudi Arabia. More essential is a stirred compassion for Muslims who are taught that acceptance of the Truth of God, Jesus Christ, God's Resurrected Son, is the most serious sin (*shirk*). Though Muslims sincerely want to serve God, they need to understand that their prayers and rituals are not the way to reach God.

### Pray:

- For God to call millions of Christians around the world into united, focused prayer countering the spiritual forces behind Islam, crying out to God for the revelation of Jesus to spring forth among its people.
- For God to reveal himself to leaders of Islamic nations through dreams and visions of Jesus.
- For the enemy's plans against the gospel to be thwarted.
- For "Daniels" and "Esthers" to be raised up in places of influence throughout the Muslim world.



# Saudi Arabia



**Population:** 25 million  
**Religions:** Muslims 93%, Christian 4.5%  
**Official Language:** Arabic  
**Peoples:** Arab 83.8%, Asian 14.2%



Unreached People  
Group...

## Bedouin Arabs

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic kingdom located on the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia is almost entirely desert but contains 25 percent of the world's oil reserves. The nation is ruled by an absolute monarchy, with the semi-feudal state tightly controlled by the large royal family.

Saudi Arabia was the birthplace of Islam 1,300 years ago. Islam controls nearly every area of life, public and private. The government is known as one of the world's most repressive regimes, and human rights are routinely violated.

Saudi Arabia is committed to preserving traditional Islam. It is one of the least evangelized nations on earth. All Christian workers and materials are banned, although Christians make up nearly 5 percent of the population.

**Location:** Arabian Desert

**Population:** 850,000

**Religion:** Muslim (Sunni) 99.9%

**Language:** Badawi, or commonly known as Bedouin Arabic

Saudi Arabia was one of the first lands inhabited by the Bedouin. Bedouin fall into two basic social classes. One class is known as the "true" Bedouin, and they live as nomadic shepherds. The other group has embraced farming and is known as the *fellahin*. The *fellahin* lead a more settled life on the edge of the desert. The "true" bedouin move into the desert during the rainy winter seasons and back to the desert's edge during the summers.

The material culture of the Bedouin is limited. Their tents are their main possessions. To endure the extreme heat of the desert, the Bedouin wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing.

Pray  
that...

...God will raise up faithful intercessors who will stand in the gap for the Bedouin.

...the spirit of Islam that has kept the Bedouin bound for generations will be broken.

...God will encourage and protect the 70 or so known Bedouin believers living in Saudi Arabia.



# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

**PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS  
AROUND THE WORLD!**



Friday, January 7, 2005. Please pray

...for God's comfort, healing and peace for the suffering people of Beslan, Russia, following the Muslim terrorist attack on a school there.

...that Muslims will become disenchanted with the religion of their birth as a result of the violence and terrorism that is being promoted.

...that many more Scripture portions will be made available in the languages of the Muslim people groups. Pray that those who read them will be touched and challenged by the words and life of Jesus.

Friday, January 14, 2005. Please pray

...for the Cham people of Cambodia. Pray that a family who is going to work there will enjoy good health and favorable relationships with the people.

...that the recently-elected government in Indonesia will take decisive steps against all terrorism.

...that God will direct the Institute of Islamic Studies being held in Amsterdam and that He will bring eager students to the classes. Pray for the CMM team members who will be teaching the Islamic courses for the next two weeks.

Friday, January 21, 2005. Please pray

...for the CMM member who will be teaching an Islamics class in a Bible college in British Columbia, Canada. May God challenge the students to the needs of the many Muslims who are returning home after making their *Hajj*.

...for Christians who are sharing the love of God and the truth of Jesus with Muslims through the internet. Pray for wisdom and humility as they share Jesus and that many more will make this a vital avenue for ministry.

...against the militant group Laskar Jihad, which has declared its intention to return to Ambon, Indonesia, and continue its atrocities.

Friday, January 28, 2005. Please pray

...for the students who will be taking an Islamics course next week at Northwest College. Pray the students will be inspired concerning the great challenge that has been given to the Church to reach Muslims with the gospel.

...that Muslim prisoners will be presented the Truth of Jesus and will respond to outreach focused toward them and their needs. Pray that more workers will reach out to them.

...for the Christians and churches in northern Cote D'Ivoire during this time of conflict between the southern and northern peoples. Pray these churches may be strong witnesses during this period of reconciliation and rebuilding.

**I URGE, THEN, FIRST OF ALL THAT REQUESTS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSION AND  
THANKSGIVING BE MADE FOR EVERYONE. -1 TIMOTHY 2:1, NIV**



# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

**PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS  
AROUND THE WORLD!**



**Friday, February 4, 2005. Please pray**

...for the situation in **Darfur, Sudan**, where Black Africans are being abducted, raped and killed in increasing numbers. Pray for the ongoing peace process.

...for the **evangelization of villages in Azerbaijan**. Rising nationalism, linked with Islam, has brought about a religious revival and rejection of evangelical Christianity.

...that many Muslim viewers of the "Passion of the Christ" will be convinced of the truth and believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Pray that many will continue to view this movie.

**Friday, February 11, 2005. Please pray**

...that God will guide in the discussions at the Islamic Consultation being held in **Baguio, Philippines** next week.

...for the participants in the Islamics class being conducted in **Pune, India**, next week. Pray for safety in travels for the CMM member who will be teaching.

...for the **Jesus film to be viewed more widely on the internet**. Nearly 90,000 have seen it via the internet. Pray that viewers will be convicted and commit their lives to Jesus in increasing numbers.

**Friday, February 18, 2005. Please pray**

...for the **Druze people** who live in an area where Lebanon, Syria and Israel come together. They are an offshoot of Islam in 11th century Egypt. Pray that Christians will share their faith and many will accept Jesus as Savior.

...for the efforts of the **Moroccan government to stem the tide of extreme Wahhabism** in their country. Wahhabi theorists from Saudi Arabia who created a terrorist organization, *Salafia Jihadea*, have spread ideas of violent revolution.

...for **peace and security to be restored to Aceh**, a resource-rich territory at the northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia. Acehese rebels and Indonesian forces have been committing acts of violence against one another for more than a decade. Pray for Acehese hearts to be liberated.

**Friday, February 25, 2005. Please pray**

...that the **Saharawi people who are mostly confined to refugee camps in Morocco will find hope and spiritual healing in Christ**. Pray that the Holy Spirit may empower those who take the gospel to the Saharawi people.

...that a **miracle will happen in Saudi Arabia**, the world's strictest Islamic state and the birthplace of Islam, and the Saudi people will receive the gospel through the workers God has sent to them. Pray God will protect Christian converts.

...that **God will lead prominent Uighurs to faith in Christ**, and use them to provide just solutions to the problem of Uighur unemployment in China's Xinjiang Province.