

Focus - Ramadan

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MUSLIM POPULATION

- > **Indonesia:**
202,867,000 (12.9% of World Muslim Population)
- > **Pakistan:**
174,082,000 (11.1% of World Muslim Population)
- > **India:**
160,945,000 (10.3% of World Muslim Population)
- > **Bangladesh:**
145,312,000 (9.3% of World Muslim Population)
- > **Nigeria:**
78,056,000 (5.0% of World Muslim Population)

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A CALL TO SACRIFICE PRAYING FOR THE SALVATION OF MUSLIMS

Muslims through out the world look forward to this season with excitement as they wait eagerly for the first sighting of the crescent moon to mark the beginning of Ramadan.

Many places will depend on someone seeing the moon with the naked eye. The problem is the sighting of the moon varies from place to place, pending on the weather and countries on opposite sides of the globe. To avoid this confusion more and more Islamic clerics are rely-

during this time that Allah sent the Qur'an from heaven to their prophet Mohammad through the angel Gabriel. This is a very sacred month for Muslims, therefore faithful Muslims all over from the age of puberty are required to fast in sub-

ing on astronomical calculations to determine the start of Ramadan.

Once the moon is sighted the cleric or leader will make a proclamation concerning the beginning of Ramadan and fast will begin the next morning, and will last for 29 or 30 days depending on when the next crescent moon is sighted, marking the beginning of the next month.

Ramadan is derived from an Arabic word Ramazan, this is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the dates vary in the solar

mission to Allah.

However the elderly, mentally and chronic ill, pregnant and nursing mothers and women menstruating during this period are exempt from fasting. The elderly and those with mental and chronic illness must feed

calendar.

The original name for this calendar month was Natiq. Ramadan is purely an Islamic word used for this month of fasting. Ramadan denotes scorching heat that burns or scorches the ground. The climatic condition of this month represents the conditions resulting from fasting, the scorching of ones self to purify the soul and atone for ones sins in hopes of getting mercy from Allah.

The annual fast of Ramadan is one of the five "pillars" of Islam. Muslims believe it was

the poor to make up for not fasting. There is difference in opinion among Islamic scholars whether pregnant and nursing mothers should make up the fast at a later date or feed the poor as a recompense for days missed.

THE PURPOSE OF RAMADAN

Ramadan is a time for fasting, the purpose for fasting is to teach patience, humility, spiritual cleansing and submission to Allah to obtain his mercy,

During this fasting period Muslims refrain from eating, drinking and sexual intimacy during daylight hours, avoid temptation during this period, put more

effort in adhering to the teachings of Islam, thoughts and action must be pure and good, self controlled, disciplined and generous to the poor.

Ramadan is a time for Muslims to increase their good deeds and hopefully outweigh the bad ones, in hopes of obtaining mercy from Allah, but no guaran-

tees.

During this period Muslims feel particularly close to Allah; through increase acts of charity and giving to the poor, and strengthen the bond of love through family and communal gathering.

“Ramadan is a time for Muslims to increase their good deeds and hopefully outweigh the bad ones...”

FASTING PRACTICES

During Ramadan Muslims wake up before sunrise, at 4.30AM to have a meal called Sahur, before fasting begins at 5.10AM with the first of five daily prayers, after which they will not eat or drink until sunset. During this time all pleasures must cease.

At sunset when it is time to break fast, families gather for Iftar the

meal taken to break the fast. The ritual of breaking the fast starts with eating three dates as recommended by their prophet Mohammad, after which they say the Maghrib prayer which is the fourth prayer of the day, the fifth prayer Isha is said at the mosque after dinner. The congregation recites the

Qur’an Taraweeh, which ends the day. The ritual continues the next day and all through the Ramadan month.

It is believed that the 27th night of Ramadan is special, Lailatul Qadr means “Night of power” or “Night of Destiny”. It was on this night Muslims believe the Qur’an

THE CHRISTIAN FAST

was first revealed to Mohammad.

In light of this Muslims spend this night reciting the Qur’an and praying. It is a spiritually intense night, please take note.

As Christians, the Bible does not set a particular date or season for which we are to fast, but rather we have the

free will to set such a time. In fasting we do not seek to persuade our God to forgive us or improve on our good deeds. We are in good standing with God by faith in Jesus. Rather our fasting is to add intensity to our prayers, to humble ourselves before God to seek His

will, seek deliverance from demonic oppression and the salvation of lost souls. “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free and that you break every yoke...” Isa. 58: 6 & 7.

FUTURE OF GLOBAL MUSLIM POPULATION

The Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life estimates world Muslim population to be 1.57 billion from study of more than 200 countries, 23% of an estimated 7 billion world population.

More than 60% of global Muslim population is in Asia and an estimated 20% in the Middle East and North Africa. More than 300 million

Muslims live in countries where Islam is not the main religion. India has the third largest Muslim population worldwide, China has more Muslims than Syria, Russia has more Muslims than Jordan and Libya combined.

87% - 90% of Muslim population are Sunni Muslims, 10% - 13% are Shias. 68% - 80% of the Shia Muslims live in

Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq.

The Pew Forum projects an increase of Muslim population by about 35% in the next 20 years, rising from 1.6 billion to 2.2 billion by 2030. If this happens, Muslims will make up the 26.4% of total world population of 8.3 billion in 2030.

(The Pew Forum for Religion and Public Life)

Europe has seen a rising Muslim population from 29.6 million in 1990 to 44.1 million in 2010.

The Pew Forum projects an increase in Europe's Muslim population of 58 million by 2030 most of which is expected to occur in United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany and other countries in Western, Northern and

Southern Europe.

We have the advantage of reaching them in a non hostile and repressive environments, we must do so by building relationships rather than a hit and run approach.

I must however say this, that the increase in Muslim population is

not from converts but rather rising birth rates, more than any non-Muslim in Europe.

The United Kingdom is expected to have the largest increase of the projected Muslim population in Europe. However Russia will remain Europe's country with the largest Muslim population in 2030.

“The Pew Forum projects an increase of Muslim population by 35% in the next 20 years, rising from 1.6 billion to 2.2 billion”

PRAYER FOCUS

We have 30 days of Ramadan beginning June 28th, I plead with you to join in prayers for the salvation of Muslims worldwide.

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. Jn. 4:35; Lk. 10:2.

Ask the Lord to remove

the veil that covers their eyes from the truth.

2 Cor. 4:3

Ask the Lord to open doors for the gospel to reach them. Rev. 3:7

Ask the Lord to visit them in dreams and visions, a personal experience that will draw them to Him.

Gen. 28:12

Pray for the missionaries working amongst them, that God will protect them and grant them success. Col.4:3-4

Pray for those that have converted to remain steadfast and fruitful. Eph. 1:15-19.

Thank you for praying.

REFERENCES

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- **Ramadan & Eid al-Fitr.** (Islam.about.com/od/ramadan/f/ramadan/intro.htm).
- **The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Projection for 2010-2030.** (<http://pewforum.org/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population.aspx>).
- **Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population.** (<http://pewforum.org/mapping-the-global-muslim-population.aspx>)

FOCUS is a monthly newsletter birth from a God given desire during my time in Missions School at Christ for the Nations Dallas TX over 16 years ago. Also from a recent phone call on my birthday March 16th 2008, from my sister Koko urging me to write a newsletter called *FOCUS*, that as it's name implies bring attention to the unreached people groups, and Countries in the 10/40 window.

This month's edition is one of several articles focusing on the unreached in the 10/40 window. My desire is to bring to the awareness of the body of Christ worldwide, especially in the free world the unreached in the 10/40 window, and the plight of the persecuted Church. My intention in doing this is to provoke you to pray, go as a missionary to these places or people groups, or support the missionaries who are there.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

Transforming the nations through Christ.

Penetrating the 10/40 window with the gospel.