

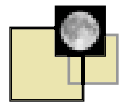
- Population of Fiji: 893,354 (2005 estimate)
- Religious populations: Muslim 7.5% (largely Sunni Muslim); Christian: 52% (Methodist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and others); Hindu: 38%; Other: 2.5%

Fiji is an independent island republic in the Pacific Ocean made up of a few large islands and over 300 small ones. Fiji became independent in 1970, after nearly a century as a British colony. The islands have a varied population of Fijian Melanesians (51%), Indians (44%), Europeans and others.

Fijian Muslims were originally Indian immigrant laborers for the sugar cane industry. While Indian Hindu groups invested in building schools and pursuing Western education, Muslims historically put an emphasis on traditional Islamic schooling to protect and promote their identity. Because of the educational differences, Muslims have often been under-represented in institutions, civil service and in the professions.

The first mosque was built in Navau in 1900, and now there are approximately 200 mosques and "prayer houses" in Fiji. In rural areas, the Muslim communities can be identified by the presence of a mosque or "prayer house." However, in urban areas, and particularly in Suva, the capital, the Muslim population is largely mixed with other groups and is more difficult to identify. An increasing number of Muslims have begun using Arabic forms of dress, thought by some to make them "real Muslims." The majority, however, remain fairly nominal, though they react strongly if someone converts to Christianity.

Christian mission attempts are just beginning to recognize the cultural and religious differences among the Indian people groups in Fiji. Until now, the conversion of Muslims has been more accidental than deliberate, but small numbers of Muslims are coming to Christ through many denominations.



## ► Pray

- In recent years the church in Fiji has grown in unity, with notable miracles taking place. Pray that these positive events would influence more Muslims toward Christ.
- Christian congregations of former Muslims are needed to help new Muslim converts grow in discipleship. Pray for church-planting teams to establish groups of former Muslims.
- Most Muslims who come to Christ receive threats from religious leaders and pressure from relatives. Many lose their jobs and are cast out by their families and friends. Pray that they would have courage and commitment (Rev 12:11).