



Day

13

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Muslim Foreign Workers in Taiwan



Islam first reached Taiwan in the 17th century when Muslims accompanied Koxinga on his invasion to oust the Dutch from Taiwan. But their descendants became assimilated into the local Taiwanese society, adopting the local customs and religions, and Islam did not expand.

In 1949, some 20,000 Muslims, mostly soldiers and civil servants, fled mainland China with the Kuomintang (non-communist government) to Taiwan. Two mosques were built in the cities of Taipei and Kaohsiung to meet the needs of the Muslim community. In 1989, in order to carry out 14 major construction projects, the Taiwanese government recruited foreign laborers to solve the labor shortage problems. Since that time foreign workers have become a major source of cheap labor in Taiwan. They are mostly employed in manufacturing, construction and housekeeping activities (over 60% are women). They are legally allowed to stay for only six years.

No statistics are available about the number of Muslim

foreign laborers, but a high percentage of the Indonesians are probably Muslims. They have not only contributed to the Taiwanese economy, but they have also shared their food, customs, traditions and beliefs with the Taiwanese.

Some Taiwanese churches and ministries have reached out to the different ethnic groups since many Christian workers speak several languages. Some pastors are originally from the Philippines, Thailand and even Indonesia. Many Taiwanese Christians also use foreign workers for domestic employment and have the opportunity to bring the message of salvation to their employees.

Taiwan Statistics

- Population: 22,850,660 (Oct. 2006)
- Christians: about 3%
- Foreign laborers: 336,985
- Indonesian: 79,650 (23.6%)
- Filipino: 91,995 (27.3%)
- Thai: 93,673 (27.8%)
- Vietnamese: 71,618 (21.2%)

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray that the Lord will cause more Taiwanese Christians to reach out to Muslims around them.
- ▶ Pray that the Lord will raise up local Christian workers who will learn the languages and cultures of the foreign workers in order to establish fruitful relationships.
- ▶ Pray that needed Christian literature, brochures, tracts, audio and video material in various languages will become available.

Also pray for...

- ▶ Some Muslims are establishing themselves in Korea as well. An estimated 40,000 migrant workers from various Muslim countries live and work in Korea.