



Suriname

A country of vast diversity

A mosque is a place of worship for followers of Islam. The Arabic name for mosque is “masjid.” The primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer, but mosques sometimes have significant roles as community centers where people can have celebrations, learn more about Islam, and meet other Muslims. All mosques have prayer halls and some have domes and minarets. Mosques have an element called a “mihrab” which is often a niche, indicating the direction of Mecca.

Day 29



which is tropical rain forest. It is not unusual to see monkeys traversing the trees and boa constrictors crossing well-traveled roads. The interior region remains unspoiled and sparsely inhabited. Suriname is four times larger than the Netherlands and became a Dutch colony in 1667. After the abolition of slavery in 1863, agricultural workers arrived from India and the Indonesian island of Java. Suriname’s independence from the Netherlands was granted in 1975.

Diversity of peoples: Suriname has an amazing mix of peoples, languages, and religions. East Indians make up 37% of the population, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, “Maroons” (former African slaves who escaped into the interior) 10%, Amerindian 2%, Chinese 2%, white and other 3%. Eleven different languages are spoken in Suriname. Dutch is the official language, but Sranang Tongo (Surinaams) is spoken by mostly everyone. Many speak English as well. Religious affiliation is also quite varied: Hindu 27.4%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly

Suriname (formerly Dutch Guyana) is a small Republic on the northeast coast of South America, 80% of

Moravian), Roman Catholic 22.8%, Muslim 19.6% (88,000), indigenous beliefs 5%. There are several mosques spread all over the country. Most of Suriname’s 439,000 people live in the capital, the “city of flowers,” Paramaribo. Here one finds a mosque, a Hindu temple, a church, a cathedral, and a synagogue within a few hundred yards.

In other countries, Muslims are called to prayer from the top of the minaret (the tower) of a mosque. In Suriname, however, Muslims of Javanese origin follow their ancestral customs and respond to the sound of a drum.

PRAYER REQUESTS

▶ *There are several Christian denominations active in the country, but the Gospel has been slow to take root among both Javanese and Hindustani Muslims. Pray that the “Jesus Film,” and other media efforts can reach the Muslim population. The “Jesus Film” has been extensively used in film showings and on television.*

▶ *Roughly a third of the population moved to the Netherlands after independence. One of the first mosques in Netherlands was built in 1981 by Muslim immigrants from Suriname. Pray for the Surinamese Muslims in Holland to be touched by the Gospel.*

