

Great Britain

Britain has a long and varied history in relation to Muslims from around the world. In the 13th and 14th centuries British traders came into contact with Muslims as they sailed through the Mediterranean and around the coast of Africa into the Arabian Gulf. Some of the first Muslims to settle in Britain were sailors from Yemen. Britain later became friendly with Islamic nations during the reign of Queen Elisabeth I who asked the Ottoman Sultan Murad for naval assistance against the Spanish Armada. Later, Britain colonized many Muslim lands which created a totally different relationship between Britain and many Muslims.

As the British Empire began to change after WWII and many of the colonies gained their freedom, a large immigration began from these former colonies

with many from South Asia making a new home in the cities and towns of Britain. Today there are roughly 2.4 million Muslims living in Britain. They come from all over the world and include second and third generation immigrants as well as converts from the white British population.

Events of recent years have made it difficult for many Christians to build relationships with Muslims in their neighborhoods. Cultural misunderstandings and the isolation of Muslim communities have made it challenging for many British Christians to know where to begin in making friends with Muslims. Education is key on both sides, for addressing fear and creating a platform where relationships can develop in shared schoolyards, workplaces and neighborhoods.

A good web site to learn more about Muslims in Britain:
www.muslimsinbritain.org

Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray against the fear which many British people have about Muslim culture.*
- ▶ *Pray for genuine friendships to develop across the cultural barriers and for real love to characterise the relationships between Muslim and Christian.*
- ▶ *Pray that the church would be a hospitable place for new Muslim immigrants and other alienated Muslims, and that programs to assist them would demonstrate the love of Christ.*
- ▶ *Pray that ongoing dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders in this nation would be fruitful.*



British Muslims Ethnic Categories Census 2001

69% of UK Muslims are from the Indian Sub-continent. There are also significant numbers from other parts of the world (31%). The Census ethnic category 'Black' (6%) applies to 'Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black'. A new census will be taken soon. It is certain that the South Asian percentages will continue to be very high.

