

## Muslims in Norway

Some estimate the Muslim population in Norway at around 150,000 people, a ten-fold increase since 1980 mostly due to immigration (out of a total population of 4.8 million), with about 50,000 living and around Oslo. About 1,000 Norwegians have become Muslims, mainly as a result of marriage. The largest groups have come from Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Turkey and Kosovo.

The first mosque was formed in 1974 and today there are about 100 Muslim congregations that serve various Islamic streams, but also serve as community centers for specific ethnic groups, meeting mostly in existing facilities. The first mosque built especially for the purpose of Islamic worship was constructed in 1995

### ***A More Multicultural Society***

Today, Norway, just as the rest of Europe, is a multicultural society that is increasingly concerned with how to preserve its open society while faced with immigrant minorities enjoying access to their host countries but opposed to integrating with it. While maybe not even half of all immigrants are Muslim, the post-9/11 apprehensiveness about

terrorism and the fall-out from the Danish cartoons depicting Mohammed with a bomb as turban (reprinted in Norway), as well as the assassination of a Dutch filmmaker criticizing Islam's treatment of women, has focused much of the public discourse on the subject of religion, and Muslims in particular. Secular but also Christian opinions are divided over the importance of freedom of speech in light of the sensitivity to Muslims' religious feelings.

The vast majority of Norwegians are members of the Lutheran Church but relatively few are active members, and many have beliefs, which actually do not reflect Biblical faith. Possibly 225,000 Christians are in smaller denominations of several types.

During Ramadan for the last few years there has been growing involvement in interdenominational prayer meetings in several cities. Muslim-background Christians have also participated, and testified to life-changing encounters with Jesus, and Norwegian believers have heard from Iranian Christians about great revivals in their country. Seven thousand "30 Days" booklets were distributed in Norway last year.



## ▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for all the Christian individuals and churches reaching out to Muslims. For boldness and revelation of His will.*
- ▶ *Pray for all Muslim immigrants, that they will meet believers wherever they settle, and that these neighbors will show them Jesus. That Jesus will be their comfort and help in times of need.*
- ▶ *Pray that Jesus will be revealed in Norwegian society, in media and through the churches and believers.*