

As the bus stops, Mustafa steps out, inhaling the polluted air of Bangkok. It is already 6 p.m., and he must hurry if he is to reach the mosque on time for prayer. Entering a wooden house, Mustafa showers, then dons a sarong and prayer cap. Then he hurries to the mosque where he joins other men preparing to fulfil their ritual obligation.

Mustafa is one of about a million Muslims living in Bangkok. His mosque is one of more than 160 in the city, most found in close-knit Muslim communities like this one.

Mustafa speaks and reads Thai, the national language of Thailand, but he reads the Qur'an in Arabic, even though he can't understand it. Mustafa performs all the Muslim rituals and prayers in Arabic, as is the custom in Islam.

Bangkok's Muslims are not immune to materialism, media influence, unemployment and drugs. Mustafa is pleased that his teenage son, Hassan, is not a drug addict, but he wonders what will happen when Hassan enters university.

Sometimes Mustafa wonders why religious education seems to have so little impact on the lives of young people here. He knows that many of his son's friends are not interested in fulfilling their religious duties. They think it is an impossible burden to pray five times a day. Mustafa worries about these young people, and what will become of society in the next generation.

Mustafa walks home from the mosque, thankful for another day. Unknown to him it is another day without Jesus.

Welcome to Bangkok.



With 12 million residents, Bangkok is one of South-east Asia's largest cities, and is home to many Muslims. Officially, 265,000

Muslims live in Bangkok, but the actual number may be closer to a million.

Who are Bangkok's Muslims?

Most of Bangkok's Muslims trace their roots to southern Thailand. In the 18th century, the Siamese government enslaved many Muslims and moved them to Bangkok, forcing them to dig canals and perform other manual labour.

Today, these Muslims speak Thai and call themselves Thai Muslims. Bangkok is also home to Muslims from other parts of the world, such as Cambodian Cham Muslims, Iranians, Arabs, Pakistanis, Afghans, Indians and Burmese.

Many of Bangkok's Muslims live along the city's canals. To visit a Muslim community you may need to ride a motorcycle or walk carefully along a small canal-side walkway. Although Bangkok's Muslims often separate themselves from the Buddhist majority, Buddhists and Muslims can also be found living together peacefully in the same communities.



Livelihood

While some of Bangkok's Muslims are wealthy, having sold land to developers as the city grows, Muslims can be found in every socioeconomic class. In general, Thai Muslims live at a lower economic standard than the Buddhist majority.

Culture

Bangkok's Muslims look to the local mosque to help them maintain their faith and customs in the face of a majority-Buddhist culture and the temptations of materialism. The mosque bonds the Muslim community together, a strong bond that makes it very rare that a Muslim would consider converting to Buddhism or Christianity.

Beliefs

The majority of Muslims in Bangkok practice Sunni Islam. Influenced by Wahabi teaching in the last 15 years, local Muslims have begun to observe Islamic practices more strictly, fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day and enrolling their children in religious education. Muslims are also urged to replace "worldly patterns" of behavior with "proper" Islamic forms, such as head covering for women. This "New School" of Islam also teaches against the traditional animistic practices still observed by many Muslims today.

To learn more about Bangkok's Muslims, visit: www.apeopleloved.com/bangkok-muslims



Population: Between 265,000 and 1 million
Location: Bangkok, Thailand
Languages: Thai

Prayer Points



Although some of Bangkok's Muslims have heard the Good News, it seems to have had little impact on their lives.

Pray for a breakthrough among Bangkok's Muslims.

Pray that Muslims would think about what they've heard, ask questions and consider what the Good News could mean for them.

Pray that God will touch Muslims' hearts through dreams and visions.

Pray for more people to reach out in love to Bangkok's Muslims. **Pray** that they will persevere, despite the challenges of cross-cultural relationships.

Pray for more followers of Jesus to move to Muslim communities in Bangkok.

Although it is easy to meet Muslims in Bangkok, it can be hard to develop deep, meaningful relationships. **Pray** for followers of Jesus to find creative ways to spend more time with their Muslim friends.

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