

# **Religions of 2026 America**

**Chester ARP Spring 2026**

# Islam



# Islam

- Islam is the world's second-largest religion, with approximately 2 billion adherents.
- By 2050, Islam is predicted to be as large as, if not larger than, Christianity because of birth rates and the decline of the Christian West.
- Given its size and projected growth, it's essential for us to understand Islam's history, doctrine, and ultimate goal.

# Islam

- Islam is a religion based upon submission to Allah.
- Literally, Islam means “submission” or “surrender.”
- This makes Islam the “path of submission,” and Muslims “submitters” who seek peace in this life and the next by surrendering themselves to Allah.

# Islam

- Islam's emphasis on submission to Allah makes it a works-based religion that is fundamentally different from Christianity.
- Allah gave a law for people to submit to because man's ultimate problem, according to Islam, is self-sufficiency and the hubris of acting like one can get along with God, who alone is self-sufficient.

# Islam

- Christianity is a grace-based religion that centers on God's redemption of sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Christianity proclaims that God entered history to save sinners, while Islam proclaims that God gave a law to which people are to submit.
- Christianity's God lifts up, and Islam's pushes down.

# Islam

- 570 AD – Muhammad was born in Mecca.
- 595 AD – Muhammad married his first wife when he was 25, and she was 40.
- 610 AD – Muhammad received his first revelation from the angel Gabriel while meditating in a cave outside Mecca. These revelations become the beginning of the Quran.

# Islam

- 610-622 AD – Muhammad preached in Mecca and gathered a small following.
  - There is one God.
  - Idols are false.
  - People must repent and obey God.
- This early preaching is significant for understanding Muhammad and his religion.

# Islam

- Mecca in the early 7th century was a place that Muhammad despised because:
  - It was very tribal and politically fragmented.
  - It was violent.
  - It was polytheistic when he had a deep conviction for monotheism because of the violence of polytheism.

# Islam

- As a result of this divided and destructive tribalism, Mecca's economy and public life depended on idol worship at the Kaaba.
- There were blood feuds, no central authority, and rampant exploitation of the weak.
- Muhammad's message combated this reality in three ways.

# Islam

- He taught **moral reform** by condemning idolatry, sexual immorality, abuse of the poor, and tribal injustice.
- He exercised **religious authority** by claiming to have a direct revelation from God.
- He demanded **political unity** by uniting tribes under one god (Allah), one law (Shariah), and one leader (Muhammad).

# Islam

- 622 AD — Muhammad and his followers were forced to flee from Mecca to Medina in the event known as the Hijra.
  - This date marks the first year of the Islamic calendar.
  - At this point, Islam becomes a political and military community that revolves around a common faith in Allah and his prophet, Muhammad.

# Islam

- 622-630 AD – Because Muhammad embarked on a systematic and deliberate process to establish control over Medina and the region.

# Islam

- The extensive process was comprised of:
  - Establishing the Constitution of Medina,
  - Creating a loyalty-based religious identity, *umah*,
  - Authorizing raids on Meccan trade caravans,
  - Turning battles into a sacred duty,
  - Eliminating internal rivals, and
  - Forming alliances with surrounding tribes.

# Islam

- When Islam became a State with Muhammad as its head. He was:
  - The religious leader
  - The Lawgiver
  - The Military Commander who led military battles against Mecca and other tribes in the surrounding areas.

# Islam

- 630 AD – Muhammad returns to Mecca with his army and conquers his hometown. In doing so, he destroyed the idols in the Kaaba and established his rule over the city. Mecca became the center of Islam thereafter.
- 632 AD – Muhammad died in Medina, where he returned after conquering Mecca, because Medina was the capital of the Islamic State.
  - Mecca is the religious shrine, and Medina is the throne.