



### History

Modern Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Ibn Saud, who united much of the Arabian Peninsula by conquering land from tribes that assumed local power after the expulsion of the Ottoman Turks in World War I. A country of 26.1 million people, Saudi Arabia is both the birthplace of Islam, as well as the site of mass annual foreign pilgrimage to the cities of Mecca and Medina.

### Government

Saudi Arabia is ruled by an absolute monarchy, in which the King elects both his Prime Minister and council ministers. The legal system follows Sharia law, which even foreigners are subject to whilst in the country.

### Social Issues

Saudi Arabia faces a number of social problems, from increasing rates of juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug use, to the growth of indigenous terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world in which women are not allowed to drive. Women require male permission in a number of activities, such as travelling abroad, having surgery, and opening a bank account.

### The Way TV Viewership

Surveys for The Way TV indicate that the channel is watched by 1.8 million children.

### Religion

95% of Saudi Arabia's population is Sunni Muslim, with Ismaili Muslims and Shiites accounting for much of the remainder. There are no official statistics on the exact number of Christians in the country, although it is evident that the majority of them are foreign expatriates. Apostasy is punishable by death in Saudi Arabia, and the public practise of any religion other than Islam is prohibited. Religious minorities cannot be registered with the state and are not permitted to build places of worship.

### Prayer Points

Pray for the safety of Saudi believers who have to meet together in secret to worship.  
Praise God for the numbers of children who are watching The Way TV.

"Five years ago, I started seeking for the truth in different religions. I was lost, confused and wanted to reach out to God. I really needed comfort and peace. Thank God I found peace and the truth through the programmes and songs on my favourite channel, The Way TV." A female viewer in Saudi Arabia