



Stephen C. Rasor*
Christine D. Chapman*

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSLIM CONGREGATIONAL LIFE SURVEY

Introduction

Congregational profile surveys were completed by one person in thirteen of the thirty predominantly African-American mosques participating in MVP. Results are compared here to those of the random sample of congregations that participated in the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey¹ to help MVP leaders more readily identify the unique strengths of African-American mosques. (Responses from MVP Protestant and Catholic churches are not included.)

Facilities

- One-half of MVP mosques were built by the mosque community; the other half were purchased.
- None of the MVP mosques report their facilities are used or rented by community groups at least once a week. In fact, 31 percent say their facilities are never used by other groups. Such use occurs weekly in 39 percent of US CLS congregations.

*Stephen C. Rasor, MVP Director, is professor of Sociology of Religion and director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

*Christine D. Chapman is full-time visiting professor, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia and Research Director, Institute for Black Religious Life, Interdenominational Theological Center, also in Atlanta.

¹A total of 417 congregations in the random sample completed the US CLS profile survey in April 2001. These congregations include Protestant churches, Catholic parishes, and non-Christian congregations.

- MVP mosque facilities have large seating capacities (MVP mosque median, 400; US CLS median, 258).

Size and Finances

- In the year before participating in the survey, average weekly worship attendance (median) was 350 in MVP mosques (attendance at *Jum'ah* prayer) and ninety in US CLS congregations.
- The total number of adults (people eighteen years or older) regularly participating in the life of the mosque/congregation averaged 150 in MVP mosques and eighty in US CLS congregations.
- Almost all congregations (100 percent of MVP mosques and over ninety percent in US CLS congregations) report that the largest source of income for the congregation is offerings, pledges, and donations.
- Few MVP mosques (17 percent) describe their financial situation as an "increasing financial base." A stable financial situation exists in 75 percent of MVP mosques and 53 percent of US CLS congregations.

Worship—*Salah/Jum'ah*

- Fully 92 percent of MVP mosques report holding each of the five daily *salah* in congregation in the mosque.
- On a typical weekday, total attendance at all five *salah* averages twenty-five in MVP mosques, although three mosques report attendance over 200.
- Many MVP mosques use more than one language for the main message of the *Jum'ah Khutbah*. All (100 percent) use English; 62 percent also use Arabic; 8 percent use Urdu; 8 percent use another language.

- In six of ten MVP mosques (62 percent) women make *salah* behind a curtain or partition in another room. On average, MVP mosques report that 75 percent of the participants at *Jum'ah* are male and 25 percent are female.
- Seven in ten MVP mosques (69 percent) report that the number of adults regularly participating in *Jum'ah* or weekend activities has increased over the previous five years.

Other Services and Programs

- Less than half of mosques (MVP mosques, 46 percent; US CLS 58 percent) use small groups for sharing or spiritual growth.
- Large majorities of congregations and mosques offer religious education classes (MVP mosques, 100 percent; US CLS, 98 percent).
- The largest groups of MVP mosques (69 percent) have no planned activities to ensure new members are integrated into the life of the mosque. Some issue invitations to service (15 percent) or to join a group (15 percent). MVP mosques are less likely than US CLS congregations to offer a group or class specifically for new members (MVP mosques, 8 percent; US CLS, 42 percent). The largest group of US CLS congregations (57 percent), but no MVP mosques report using follow-up visits by members or clergy for this purpose.
- Few MVP mosques (8 percent) and only 28 percent of US CLS congregations report that one or more members entered ministry in the previous five years.

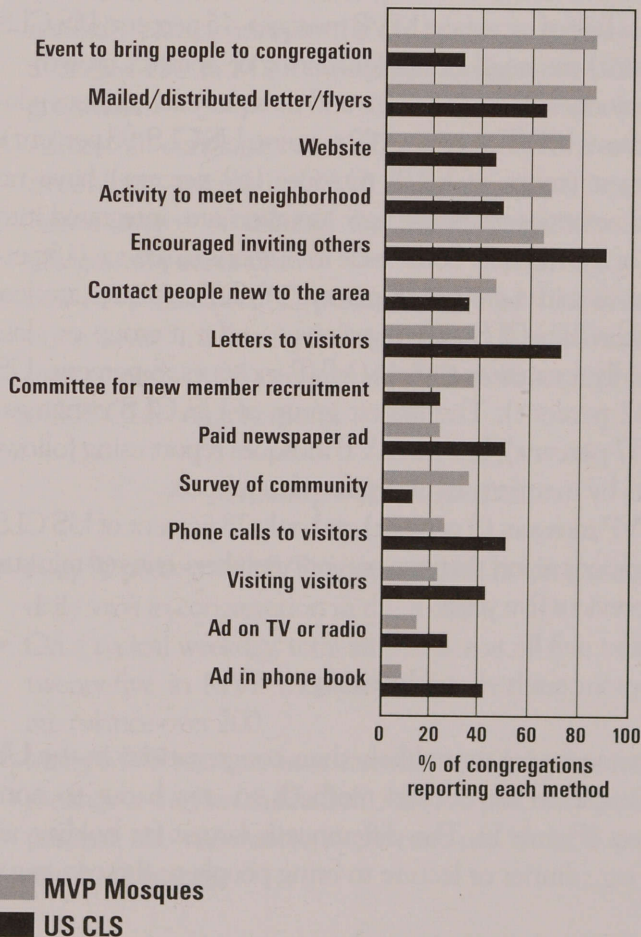
Outreach

- MVP mosques are more likely than congregations in the US CLS sample to use certain methods to reach out to non-members (Figure 1). The difference is largest for holding an event, e.g., dinner or lecture to bring people to the congrega-

tion, having a website (though this difference may be related to the fact that the MVP survey took place four years later than the US CLS project), and conducting a survey of the community.

- MVP mosques are less likely to send letters, telephone, or visit people who have visited the mosque. They are also less likely to use advertising to reach out to nonmembers.

Figure 1: Reaching Out to Nonmembers

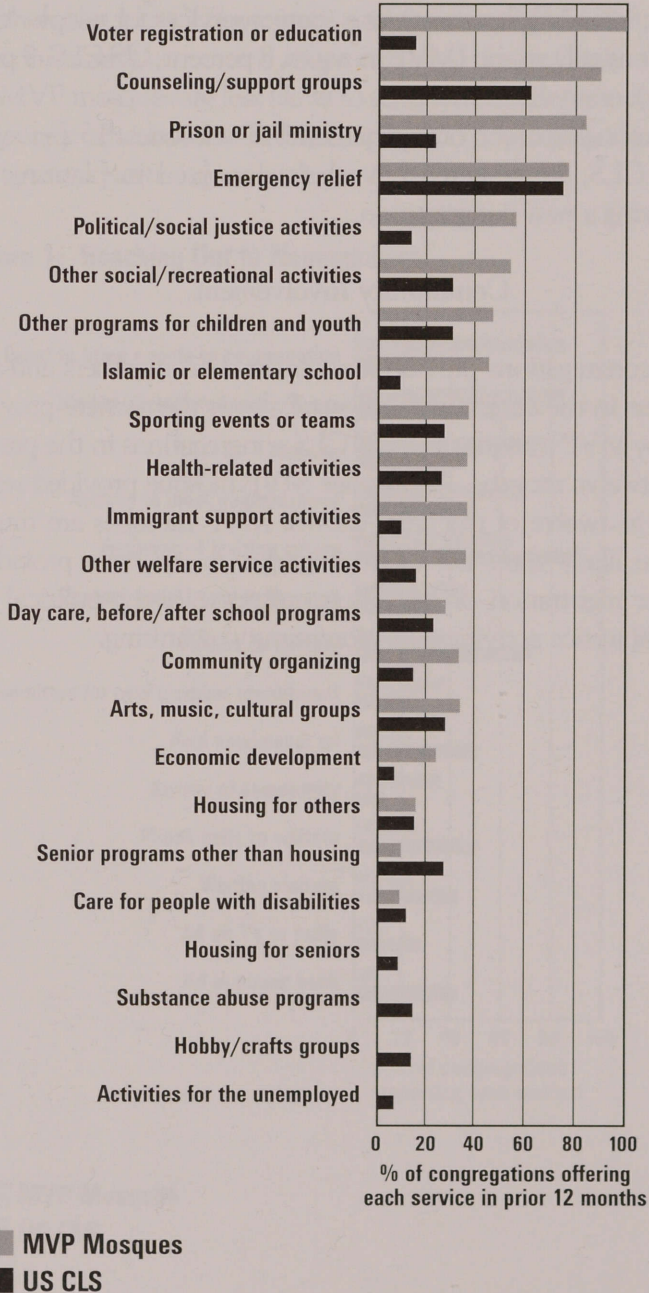


- Reorganizing or starting new worship services for distinct age, racial or ethnic, or interest groups is rare (MVP mosques, 15 percent; US CLS, 7 percent), as is starting services for people who don't usually attend (MVP mosques, 8 percent; US CLS, 9 percent).
- Few congregations or mosques (MVP mosques, 15 percent; US CLS, 12 percent) have been involved in planting or growing a new congregation.

Community Involvement

- All congregations provide services for their members and for others in the community. Figure 2 shows the services provided by MVP mosques and US CLS congregations in the previous twelve months. An average MVP mosque provided services in twelve of the areas shown. MVP mosques are much more likely than US CLS congregations to have provided voter registration or education, prison ministry, political or social justice activities, and community organizing.

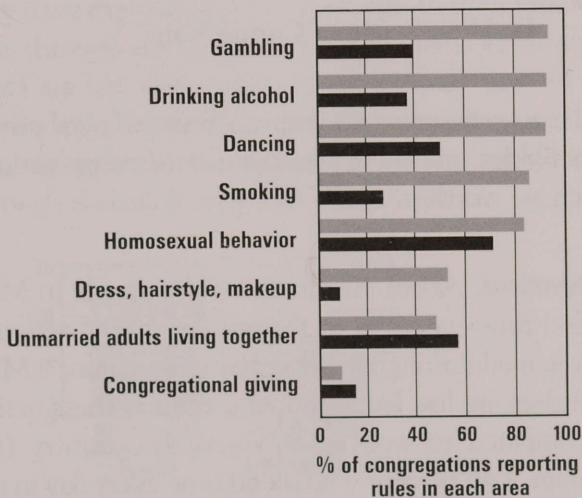
Figure 2: Services for Members and Others



Congregational Politics

- MVP mosques are much more likely than US CLS congregations to have a variety of rules about the behaviors of members (Figure 3). The largest differences are for gambling, use of alcohol, dancing, smoking, and matters of dress and hairstyle.
- Most MVP mosques describe their "Islamic" stand as "right in the middle" (58 percent). Among US CLS congregations, 29 percent say their theological stand is "right in the middle." US CLS congregations are more apt to say they are "on the conservative side" (US CLS, 60 percent; MVP mosques, 25 percent).

Figure 3: Rules and Prohibitions



MVP MUSLIM SUMMARY

Introduction

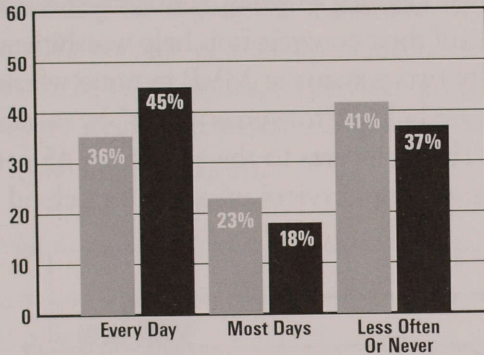
Members Voice Project (MVP) is the nation's most comprehensive survey of African-American congregational life from the perspective of the people in the pews. This resource reflects the data collected from more than 1,416 members of Muslim congregations in twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia. The MVP study enables local congregations, denominational officials, and others to understand what congregations are doing regarding their spiritual lives, reaching out to their communities, and developing their congregational identities.*

Building Spiritual Connections

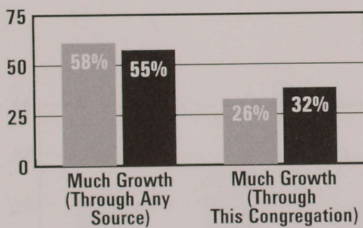
Spiritual connections are made through worshipers' private devotional activities and their participation in congregational activities such as worship.

Private Devotions. About 36 percent of the people in MVP mosques spend time every day in private devotional activities (such as prayer, meditation, or reading the Quran alone). MVP mosque attendees are less likely to spend time in these activities when compared to worshipers across the country (the national average is 45 percent who spend time every day in private devotional activities).

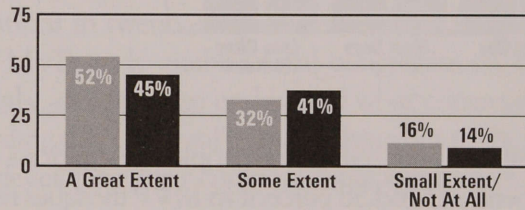
**Editor's note:* The graphs in this survey represent MVP African-American Mosques data and U.S. Congregational Life (US CLS) data. The MVP survey was conducted in conjunction with the US CLS study that surveyed a diverse sample of 2,000 predominantly Euro-American U.S. congregations. Go to www.uscongregations.org for information regarding US CLS.



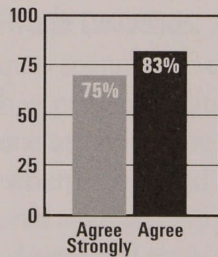
Growing in Faith. About half of the people in America's congregations (55 percent) and 58 percent in MVP mosques report they have experienced much growth in their faith over the last year, through any source. Worshipers in MVP mosques (26 percent) are less likely to say their spiritual growth comes from involvement in their mosque. Some mosque worshipers reported growing in their faith through other groups (13 percent) or through their own activities (20 percent).



Help with Everyday Living. To what extent do the worship services or activities of their congregation help worshipers with everyday living? Fifty-two percent of MVP mosque worshipers reported that they are helped "to a great extent" by worship or mosque activities. This compares to the average of 45 percent who report finding worship services or activities helpful with everyday living.

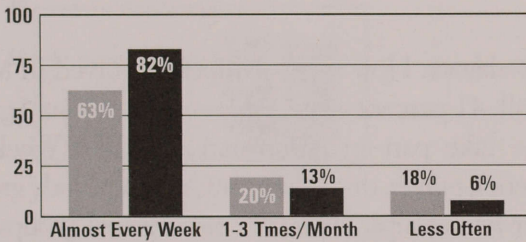


Meeting Spiritual Needs. Like the majority of worshipers in the U.S., 70 percent of MVP mosque worshipers feel that their congregation meets their spiritual needs. Across the U.S., 83 percent of worshipers feel this way.

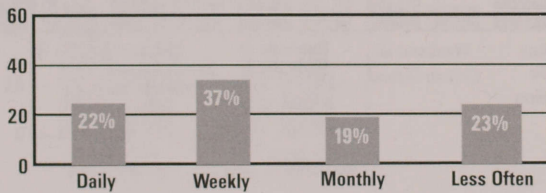


■ MVP Mosques
■ US CLS

Attending Worship or Prayer Services. In the typical congregation, 82 percent of worshipers attend services almost every week. In MVP mosques, 63 percent attend *Jum'ah* Prayer usually every week, and another 20 percent attend between once and three times a month.



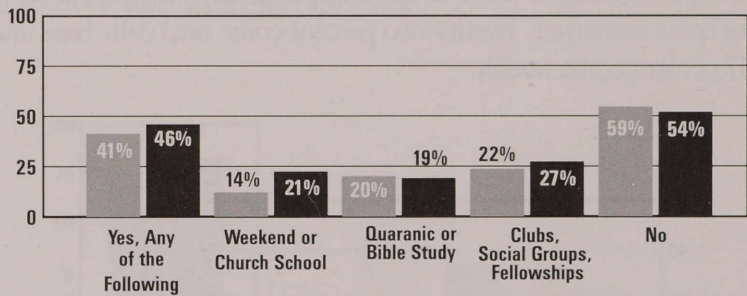
Participation in Other Mosque Activities. Many come to the mosque for activities other than *Jum'ah* Prayer. How often do MVP mosque worshipers come to the mosque whether for daily *salah* or for other activities? Twenty-two percent come on a daily basis and 37 percent come weekly.



Building Inside Connections

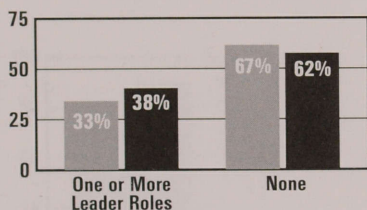
Worshippers connect with others in the congregation through group activities (such as church school, prayer and study groups, and fellowships or clubs), serving in leadership roles, and financial support.

Involving Worshipers. How are worshippers involved in MVP mosques? Overall, 41 percent of worshippers join in small group activities. Some take part in group activities like Weekend school (14 percent); prayer, discussion, or Quaranic study groups (21 percent); or fellowships, clubs, or other social groups (22 percent). The percentage for MVP mosques is lower than the national average where 46 percent engage in some small group activity.



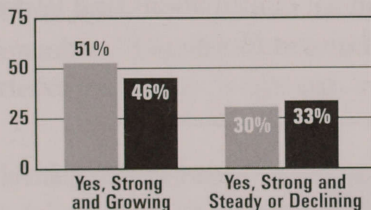
■ MVP Mosques
 ■ US CLS

Involving Leaders. How many worshippers serve in leadership roles in MVP mosques? Thirty-three percent hold at least one leadership position in the congregation (such as governing board, committee, assisting in worship or *salah*, church school teacher, etc.). About 38 percent of worshippers across the U.S. serve as lead-



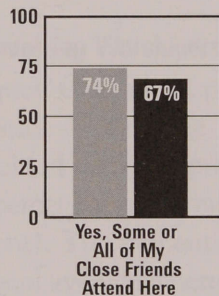
ers.

Belonging Here. Do worshippers in MVP mosques feel like they belong? Eighty-one percent report a strong sense of belonging to their mosque, which is similar to the typical congregation. Fifty-one percent in MVP mosques said this sense of

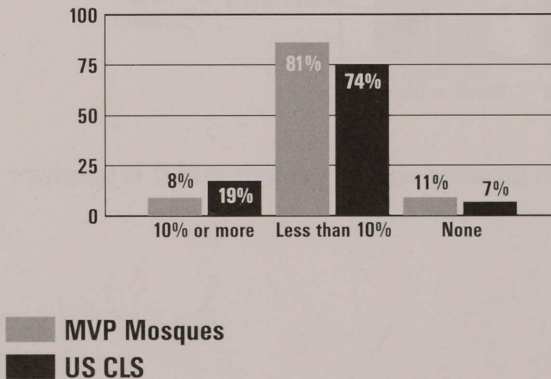


belonging has been growing and 30 percent said it is steady or declining.

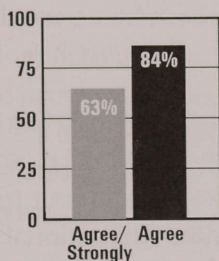
Making Friends. Are worshippers developing friendships with others in their congregation? About 74 percent of MVP mosque worshippers say some or all of their close friends attend the same mosque. This is similar to the national picture where 67 percent of worshippers say they have some close friends in their congregation.



Giving. Financial support connects people to a congregation and its mission. In MVP mosques, 89 percent make financial contributions including 8 percent who regularly give 10 percent or more of their net income to the mosque. Nationally, 93 percent of worshippers make financial contributions, and 19 percent give 10 percent or more of their net income.



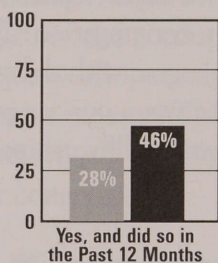
Being a Team. Do worshipers feel there is a connection between leaders and worshipers in their congregation? Most worshipers in MVP mosques (63 percent) agree with the statement: "In general, there is a good match between our congregation and our Imam or mosque leader." Across all worshipers in the U.S., about 84 percent agree.



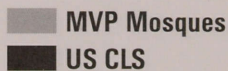
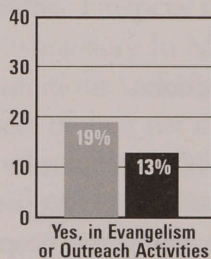
Building Outside Connections

How do MVP mosques connect to the community and nonmembers? Outside Connections consist of inviting others to attend, caring for neighbors, and welcoming new people.

Inviting Others. Do MVP mosque worshipers invite others to attend the mosque? In the past twelve months, 28 percent invited a non-Muslim friend or relative to the mosque. This is less than the average US congregation where 46 percent asked someone to attend worship services.

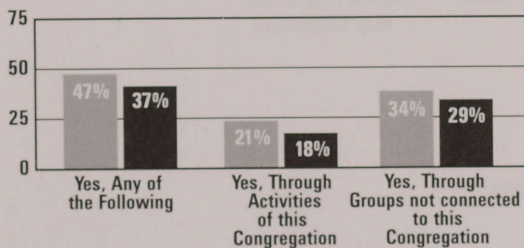


Reaching Out. How many worshipers contribute to the congregation's outreach or evangelism efforts? In MVP mosques, 19 percent join in these types of activities to reach out to the wider community. This percentage is unlike the national picture where 13 percent report being involved in evangelism or outreach activities.

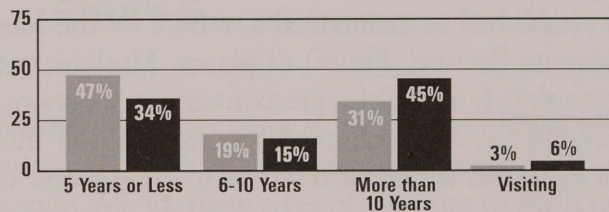


Your Mosque's Inviting Activities. From a list of fourteen possible activities, a typical congregation reports using six strategies to reach out to non-members in the previous year. The most common strategies are encouraging people in the congregation to invite someone new, mailing a letter to visitors, and mailing newsletters or flyers. The average MVP mosque listed six outreach strategies: mailed or distributed newsletters, letters or flyers; established or maintained a website for the Mosque; had an activity (lecture, dinner) to attract Muslims; encouraged people already in the Mosque to invite a new person; tried to identify and contact Muslims who recently moved into the area; and sponsored an outreach service to bring people to the mosque.

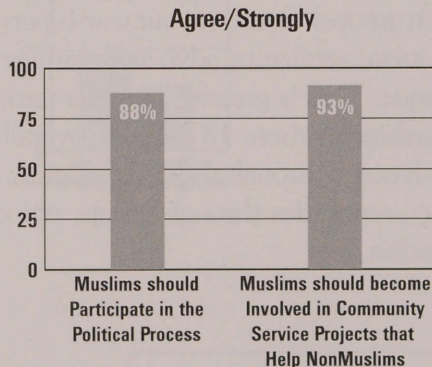
Serving the Community. Are your worshipers involved in any community service, social justice, or advocacy activities? Forty-seven percent of MVP mosque worshipers take part in service or advocacy activities. Some join in community service activities organized through their mosque (21 percent in MVP mosques take part in such groups). Some of your worshipers (34 percent) participate in social service or advocacy groups not connected to their mosque. This is greater than the national average for all U.S. worshipers where 18 percent overall get involved in service or advocacy through the congregation, and 29 percent serve their communities through groups not connected to their congregation.



Welcoming New People. How many new people attend MVP mosques? About 47 percent of those attending MVP mosques have been coming for five years or less. Nationally, about 34 percent of all worshipers report attending five years or less. Visitors make up 3 percent of worshipers in MVP mosques. This compares to a national average of 6 percent of worshipers who are visitors.

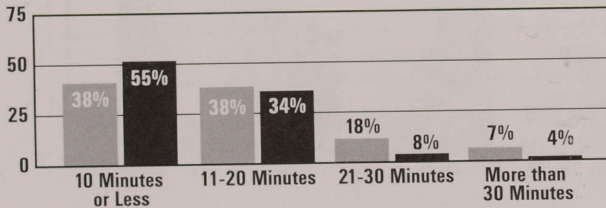


Other Outside Connections. What do MVP mosque worshipers say about the role of Muslims in the community? Eighty-eight percent believe that Muslims should participate in the political process. Ninety-three percent think they should help non-Muslims.



■ MVP Mosques
 ■ US CLS

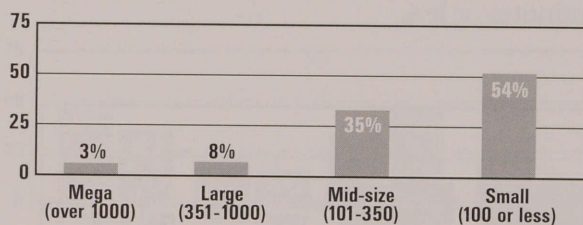
Getting Here. Do worshipers come from the immediate community or do they travel some time in order to attend? The largest percentage of people in MVP mosques take ten minutes or less to get to the services. Most of the people in these mosques (76 percent) travel twenty minutes or less to attend services. Across all American congregations, 88 percent arrive in twenty minutes or less.



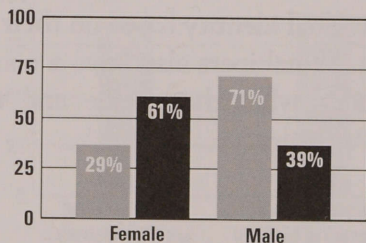
Building Identity Connections

Worshipers have an individual identity based on their age, education, and other factors. Worshipers also have a congregational identity that includes what they value and their dreams for the congregation's future.

Your Size. Small congregations dot the landscape, but most worshipers find themselves in large congregations. The average mosque is mid-size with a median of 350 attendees. The chart below shows where MVP mosques fit in the size picture of all congregations.

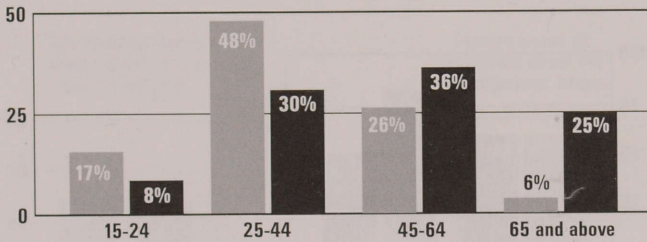


Your Gender Profile. Who makes up MVP mosques? There are fewer men (39 percent) than women (61 percent) in most US CLS congregations. Men outnumber women in MVP mosques (71 percent are men).

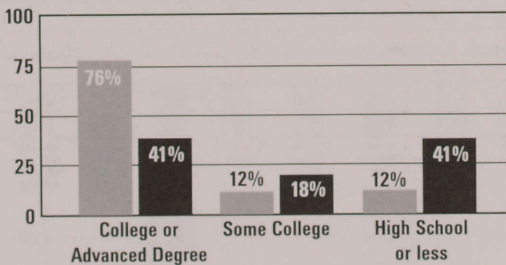


■ MVP Mosques
 ■ US CLS

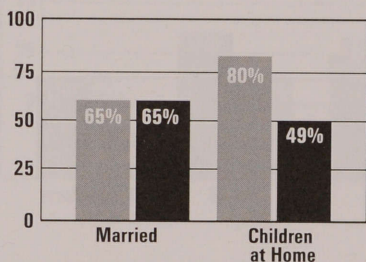
Your Age Profile. In most congregations across the country, those aged forty-five - sixty-four make up the largest group (36 percent). The average age of worshipers in MVP mosques is thirty-nine. This is younger than than the national average of fifty-one. People in the age range of twenty-five - forty-four comprise the largest age group in these mosques.



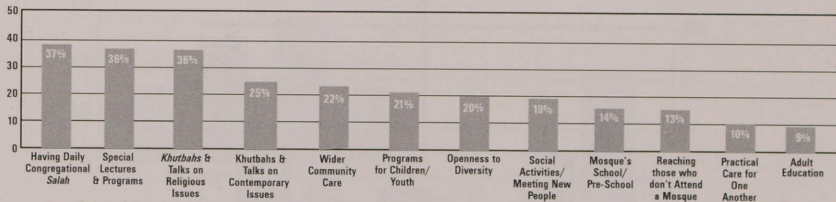
Your Educational Background. Worshipers in the U.S. tend to be well-educated. The U.S. Census shows that about 23 percent of people across the country hold at least a college degree. Among all worshipers, the figure is 41 percent. In MVP mosques, 76 percent report a college or graduate degree.



Your Household Type. Most worshipers in America are married, and this is true in MVP mosques as well. Overall, 49 percent of worshipers have children living at home, less than the results for these mosques (80 percent). Again, worshipers differ from typical Americans. The U.S. Census indicates that only 52 percent of the population in this country are currently married, and about 33 percent have children living at home.

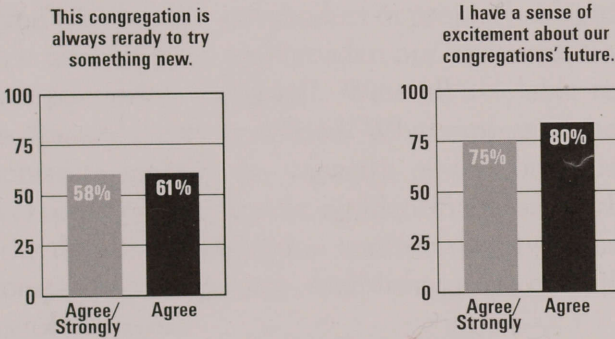


What You Value. What do worshipers in MVP mosques value? Your worshipers most value having daily congregational *salah*, special lectures and programs, *khutbahs* and talks on religious issues, *khutbahs* and talks on contemporary issues, and wider community care.

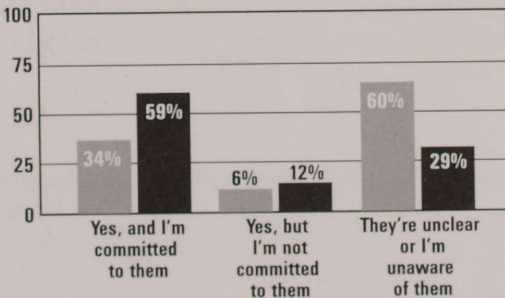


MVP Mosques
 US CLS

Seeing Possibilities. How open are worshipers in MVP mosques to change and new directions? Many worshipers there (56 percent) feel the mosque is always ready to try something new. Most (75 percent) also express a sense of excitement about the congregation's future. Many worshipers in US CLS congregations describe their congregation as willing to try new things (61 percent) and excited about the future (80 percent).



Committing to the Future. Do worshipers in MVP mosques claim a clear vision, goals, or direction for their congregation's ministry and mission? Several worshipers there believe there is a clear vision or direction for the future (only 40 percent say yes). However, some are not sure that the vision is clear or that it exists (60 percent). The national average shows that most US CLS worshipers believe their congregation has a clear vision for the future (71 percent).



The first study was a 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) x 2 (group) factorial design. The dependent variable was the number of correct responses. The independent variables were gender, condition, and group. The results showed that there was a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 100) = 10.5, p < .01$. Males performed significantly better than females. There was also a significant main effect of condition, $F(1, 100) = 12.5, p < .01$. The experimental condition resulted in significantly more correct responses than the control condition. Finally, there was a significant main effect of group, $F(1, 100) = 15.5, p < .01$. The experimental group performed significantly better than the control group. There were no significant interactions between the independent variables.

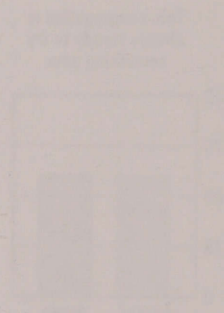
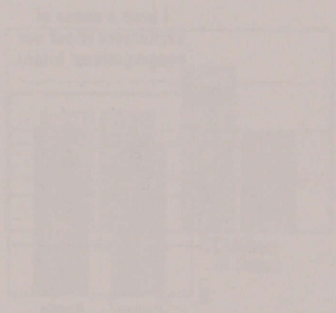


Figure 1. Number of correct responses by gender and condition.

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