



Monthly Missions Focus: Indonesia

Location: Southeastern Asia, archipelago between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean
Area 1,919,440 sq km. – slightly less than three times the size of Texas. The Republic's 17,000 islands (4,000 inhabited) stretch 6,400 km of land over 9.5 million sq. km of the Indian/Pacific Oceans, with 23 provinces, 2 special regions and the capital district.
Population 245,452,739 (July 2006 est.) Capital: Jakarta 12.2 mill.
Ethnic groups: Javanese 45%, Sundanese 14%, Madurese 7.5%, coastal Malays 7.5%, other 26%
Literacy 87.9%. Official language Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia). Its increasing use is both unifying the nation and lessening the importance of smaller languages to the younger generation. All languages 726.
Religion: Monotheism and communal peace are the basis for the stated government ideology of Pancasila. Muslim 80.3%, Christian 16%, Hindu 1.9%, Traditional ethnic 1%, Chinese 0.5%, Buddhist 0.3%

Answers to Prayer

- ☉ The lives of committed Christians and their vibrant witness have made an impact on a society influenced by the power of the occult.
- ☉ Outpourings of the Holy Spirit brought revival in the 1960s in West Timor, in the '70s in East and Central Java, and in the '80s and '90s in some major cities
- ☉ Great people movements to Christ have occurred in many animistic peoples.

Challenges for Prayer

- ☉ A spiritual conflict rages for Indonesia. Ancient and powerful occult powers seek to deny the power of the gospel, while modern Muslim stratagems to eliminate the influence of Christians have the ultimate goal of removing the presence of the gospel.
 - ☉ The creeping Islamization of Indonesia is eroding the long-prevailing communal tolerance and religious freedom. The Islamists' stated aim is the complete elimination of Christianity in the country. There has been an orchestrated Islamic jihad against Christians — with over 600 churches destroyed by mobs.
 - ☉ Development of a missionary vision.
- (Statistics are compiled from Operation World and CIA – The World Factbook 2006)*

The Gayo People of Sumatra, Indonesia

For most people in the West, the word, "Sumatra," brings to mind dark, full-bodied coffee, but few are aware of the unstable, strife-filled political climate of Aceh, a region in the northern part of Sumatra, and home to the Gayo people. Prior to the tsunami relief efforts, very few foreigners were even allowed into the volatile Aceh region.

Like many in Sumatra, the Gayos harvest Arabica coffee eight months out of the year. Most live in extended families in isolated mountainous villages. Due to their remote location, very few have ever heard the gospel, and even those who hear are steeped in tradition and resistant to change.

Like most Indonesians, the Gayos are Muslims, but they have very little knowledge of authentic Islam. Most believe in spirits, ghosts, and saints whom they attempt to appease through the giving of gifts and various cultic practices. They have no written language, thus most of what they believe has been handed down through oral tradition. (*Global Prayer Digest – May 22, 2006*)

Muslim Aceh People of Indonesia

Today is the first anniversary of a natural disaster that seemed like something you would only hear about in science fiction novels. It was a 9.0 earthquake that causes a tsunami that affected much of Asia, and even parts of Africa.

The epicenter was in Aceh Province, Indonesia, home of the devout Muslim Aceh people, 235,000 of whom died in this disaster. Eight hundred thousand were made homeless, according to a January 19th article in the BBC News.

How has the tragedy changed the Aceh people during this past year? To a degree, Aceh Province has gotten back to normal. esper Lund, a relief coordinator for the United Nations commented, "Banda Aceh is alive today because people have the will to move on."

One of the things that probably surprised the Aceh Muslims, is that people from Christian, not Islamic nations took the forefront in coming to their aid. Muslim intellectuals have written articles in newspapers asking if Allah is angry with his people in Aceh, the only part of Indonesia that enforces Islamic Law. (*Global Prayer Digest – December 26, 2005*)