

Monday 26th October

Borneo

Southeast Asia is made up of six countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines. More than 25,000 islands make up this region, where a population of over 420 million people live. There are millions of Christians within this large population, but Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei are predominantly Muslim. The first two of these countries control most of the states that



Island of Borneo

make up the island of Borneo: the northern states of Sarawak and Sabah belong to Malaysia and sit either side of Brunei. The five states of Kalimantan are part of Indonesia, as shown on the map.

The Christian church in Borneo is multi-ethnic and considered to be one of the strongest in the region. The Malaysian state of Sarawak is 40% Christian and Sabah is 16.6% Christian. They have both experienced several movements to Christ over the last 100 years.

The Indonesian states that make up Kalimantan are estimated to be 25-30% Christian. Even the strongly Islamic Kingdom of Brunei is thought to be 9% Christian. And yet the island has between 32 and 43 Muslim unreached people groups, 20 in North Borneo alone, with little ministry to them. This is where we long to see movements to Christ begin. We will be praying for one of these

unreached groups tomorrow.

- Let's thank God for the strong Christian presence and church on this island. Pray for the church to see the need around them in the Muslim population and to find effective ways of reaching out to them.
- Pray for movements to Christ to begin in every unreached Muslim people group in Borneo.
- God is drawing Southeast Asian Muslims to Himself through dreams and visions. Pray for Muslim background believers who can effectively reach their own people.

Tuesday 27th October

The Bisaya of Malaysia

Pop: 76,500

The Bisaya of Malaysia is one of the Muslim unreached people groups in Borneo. They live in western Sabah along the northern coast of Brunei Bay and also in northern Sarawak along the rivers which flow into Brunei Bay. They live among the much larger Malay groups, but remain culturally unique. The local Malays are important to the Bisaya, as they supply them with buffalo, boats, seafood and Malay medicines. The Bisaya are primarily farmers, with rice being their staple crop. They also grow chillies, sweetcorn, cucumbers, pumpkins, aubergines and other vegetables. Women gather plants and jungle products for food, medicines, resin and other supplies.

Bisaya villages are located along river banks and each has a number of rice granaries. True Bisaya villages consist of permanent settlements of two or more houses, one of which is a 'long house.' These rectangular structures are built on stilts 10-15 feet above the ground. Each has a veranda for receiving guests and performing major ceremonies. Each long house also includes four or more apartments for family members who share house repairs, observe the same taboos and share major rituals.

The Bisaya celebrate various ceremonies throughout the year. The major agricultural ceremony is the harvest *temorok*, in which the wealthy contribute large amounts of food. You might want to read a story about the ceremony here: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/sabah-bisaya/>. Another celebration is the Makan Selamat which is a thanksgiving feast shared with the Malays to celebrate the end of an epidemic.

Most Bisaya (90%) are Muslim, and some are animists, believing that non-human objects have spirits. They have few Christian resources available to them and most have never had an opportunity to hear the gospel. Bible resources need to be translated into their language.

- Pray for church-planting movements to begin among the Bisaya and all the Muslim unreached people groups in Borneo.
- Ask God to send out labourers from the existing church and from the new ones He will establish to finish God's redemptive plan to make disciples among the Bisaya.
- Let's pray for all workers who are living in this region, labouring to bring God's message to all Muslim unreached people groups.
- Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will pray for soft hearts among these Muslim people.

Sources: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10876/MY
<http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/sabah-bisaya/>

Wednesday 28th October

Waiting for the Right Moment

The following article is from a Frontiers worker in the Southeast Asia region:

"As a university student studying anthropology, I signed up for an eight-month cross-cultural programme. I had no interest in missions. I wasn't even a believer. But God placed me in the home of Alim, an elderly Muslim man whose family lived on an island in Southeast Asia.

During my eight months there, I studied the local language and taught English. But the best part was living in Alim's home. I became a part of the family. It didn't matter that I wasn't Asian or Muslim. In their culture, staying in their home made me a family member. Suddenly I had dozens of Muslim cousins, nephews, aunts, and uncles.

Shortly after returning to America, I heard the gospel and became a follower of Jesus. Almost immediately I felt an urgency to share the message of Christ with Muslims. Thinking about Alim and his dear family, I asked God to use me to bring them the good news and to help reach their entire

Muslim people group for Christ. Then I met Marie, who also felt called to missions. After marrying, we began preparing to become long-term workers and joined a Frontiers team serving on the same island where Alim's family lived.



During our first months on the field, Marie and I stayed in Alim's home. His family welcomed us wholeheartedly. In those first months, we shared everything together.

After moving into our own home, Marie and I visited Alim and his family regularly. We often spoke about Jesus, shared the good news and told them our testimonies. For more than 10 years, we prayed that the message of Christ would touch the hearts of our beloved Muslim family—but

they showed little interest in the gospel.

Then Alim fell gravely ill and was hospitalised. Knowing that his life was fading, I decided to share the gospel with him one last time. As I made my way to the hospital, I prayed for God to help me wait for just the right moment to share the message of Christ.

In Alim's room, family members surrounded the dying man's weak body. I stayed the entire day. As evening drew near, everyone returned to their homes. But I remained by Alim's bedside, still waiting. Evening turned to night and Alim fell asleep. I made up a makeshift bed on the floor using my jacket as a pillow and eventually fell asleep. When I woke up, Alim was looking at me.

"You obviously want to tell me something," Alim stated. "Isn't that why you stayed here all night? What is it you have to tell me?"

Then I told Alim that what I had to share was nothing different from what I had said many times before: that in His mercy, God sent Jesus Christ to rescue and redeem us. This is a gift from God Himself—not something we can earn," I said. "I long for you to receive the gift of sacrifice that Christ gave on the cross so we will be together for eternity."

"I want to accept this gift," Alim responded, his voice gravelly and sincere. "How do I do that?" At Alim's request, I began to lead him in prayer so he could repent and confess Christ as his Saviour. But he quickly took over. As he turned his heart to God, Alim prayed simply, "Lord Jesus, I accept you. Please save me."

A few days later, Alim passed away. After his death, three more family members put their faith in Jesus. Since then, our team has planted more than 20 fellowships of new believers among Alim's Muslim people group.

We praise God for this Kingdom growth—even as we wait and pray for this entire people to receive the same gift of salvation that Alim accepted."

- Praise the Lord that after years of ministry, men and women from Alim's people group are responding to the gospel.
- Pray that Alim's entire family will believe in and follow Jesus Christ.

- Let's thank God for the workers in this region and ask Him to raise up more teams to share the good news in Muslim communities where there are still no believers.

Thursday 29th October

Pray for Brunei

Brunei is a very small country made up of two enclaves on the island of Borneo. It became an **English** British colony in 1888 and in 1984 the nation gained independence. The monarchy of Brunei, which has been run by members of the same family for six generations, has absolute power, such that the Sultan of Brunei is both head of the state and of government.

Brunei is one of the richest states in Asia, owing to its oil and gas reserves. Free healthcare is provided for its citizens, as well as free education, including for university studies. Citizens do not pay income tax and housing, fuel and food are heavily subsidised.

Islam is the state religion. About 65% of the population are Muslim and, despite constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion, it is illegal to proselytise and illegal for a Muslim to convert to another religion. It is estimated that Brunei has more mosques per square kilometre than any other country in the world.

Few foreign Christian workers are permitted and importing bibles for ministry purposes is illegal, although Bibles are permitted for personal use. Though Christianity is second to Islam, representing about 9% of the population, it is not recognised by the state.

To learn more about this country, watch a Prayercast video: <https://vimeo.com/81006582>

- Pray for salvation for the royal family, that they would lead their nation with righteousness and govern with just laws.
- Pray for more openings for kingdom workers to minister inside this nation and to stand strong for the truth, despite persecution. Let's ask for God's protection and encouragement on them.
- Let's ask for eyes to be opened, drawing many to repentance and salvation.
- The ground is spiritually hard and needs to be watered by prayer and the word. Let's pray for more people to have a burden to pray for this country.

Source of some material: <https://www.prayercast.com/brunei.html>

Friday 30th October

The miracle of one boy's first Bible in Kalimantan in Borneo

Borneo is just one of the 17,000 islands that make up Indonesia, but together with Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Papua, it is one of the five main islands. Indonesia as a whole has the world's largest

Muslim population. Out of more than 263 million people in Indonesia, 229 million are Muslim. Christians do make up the second-largest group, but at only 26 million Christians are outnumbered nearly 9-to-1.

Last year, Mission Network News reported the following story from a small village located in Kalimantan on the island of Borneo. It is about a high school student called Agus. He and his family, as well as following Islam, had many animistic practices. Against the odds, Agus met and became friends with many Christian students at his school. He also had a Christian teacher who had conversations with him about the gospel.

Unfortunately, it's very difficult to get a Bible in Borneo. Even Christians often do not have a Bible of their own. Believers may only have access to Scripture during church services or as part of small groups of 5-10 people who share a single Bible. Providentially, Agus received a Bible from a mission organisation who sent a delivery of Bibles to the island.

Shortly after receiving the Bible, Agus gave his life to Christ. Almost immediately, he went on to share the gospel with his family. Though his parents did not join him in faith, they were glad to see their son making up his own mind and gave a local pastor permission to baptise their son.

- Pray for Agus, his family and his continued journey of faith.
- Pray for believers such as the schoolteacher who took a risk and shared the gospel. Ask that more Bibles and stories of the gospel will reach the Muslim people on Borneo and overcome the barriers of hundreds of local languages.
- Pray for workers to have the courage to share the gospel despite persecution.

Source: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/the-small-miracle-of-one-boys-first-bible/>

Saturday 31st October

Prayer movement in Indonesia

We read in a recent prayer guide about the movement of prayer that is taking place across the world. In Indonesia, there has been 24/7 prayer taking place for the last 30 years. It all began on the top floor of a shopping centre as a result of a series of national crises in 1998 when Indonesia suffered the devaluation of its currency, ethnic violence and widespread riots which combined to topple the president after 32 years in power. People began to cry out to God day and night. Intercessory prayer began to spread across the nation. Not a single hour has gone by since then without prayers being lifted up for Indonesia and the world.

Now this great prayer movement has resulted in astounding church growth and social transformation. It has connected more than 5 million believers from 500 cities. As of 2018, Indonesia had more than 100 prayer towers. The increase in the number of Muslim-background believers globally has been influenced by this prayer movement.

And all of this is taking place in the world's largest Muslim country!

Let's take some time to praise and thank God for all He is doing in and through this nation to draw Muslims to Himself. You may want to listen to the song, *Spirit Move* by Kalley Heiligenthal:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYfso90zhHw>

- Let's thank God for the amazing prayer movement across Indonesia and the encouraging things that are happening across this nation.
- Let's pray that this spiritual awakening will lead to the gospel being taken even more widely to the nations of Southeast Asia.
- Pray that this great movement of united prayer will bring unity to the different countries that make up Borneo and that churches will work together to see the gospel brought to every unreached Muslim people group.

Sources: <https://www.24-7prayer.com/blog/1781>
<https://www.momentumyes.com/session-2/>