

Malay



Quick Facts

Population: 20,000,000

Malaysia: 12,000,000

Indonesia: 5,000,000

Thailand: 2,200,000

Singapore: 450,000

Religion: Islam

Believers: 0.22%

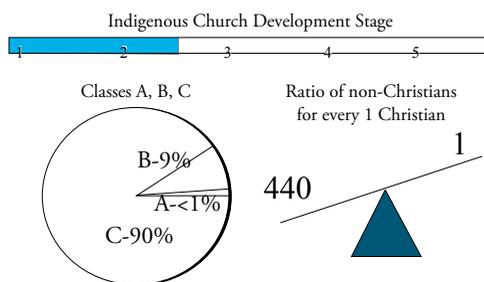
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 2

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 30+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Malay were the founders of several trading empires, resulting in the spread of their language and culture throughout SE Asia. Many peoples have been absorbed by the Malay throughout the centuries, especially through conversion to Islam. The national language of Indonesia is based on their language.

Lifestyle: The Malay of Malaysia and Singapore have a much higher standard of living than those in Thailand and Indonesia. Malaysia supplies the majority of the world's rubber and many rural Malay make a living from this industry. In Indonesia, the Malay live mostly on a subsistence level. Their homes are built on stilts due to frequent flooding. Some river communities build their homes on rafts.

Customs: Among the Indonesian Malay, a person's status can be seen from the number of poles which support his house above the ground. Men and

woman are considered equals, a rarity among Muslim cultures. Brothers and sisters receive equally in inheritance. The Malay peoples have a higher incidence of matrilineal and matriarchal customs than other Muslims, such as tracing descent from the mother and allowing female leadership.

Religion: The Malay have an expression, "To become a Muslim is to become a Malay." Their religious and ethnic identity are so closely intertwined, to cease to be a Muslim would be to cease being a Malay. Even so, despite their fierce allegiance to Islam, the Malay continue to practice many pre-Islamic traditions which were influenced by both animistic as well as Hindu-Buddhist customs.

Christian Outreach: It is illegal to evangelize Muslims in Malaysia, and this law is strictly enforced. Though there are many non-Malay Christians in Malaysia, they have been effectively

intimidated from reaching out to their Muslim neighbors, with a few notable exceptions. Short-term evangelistic missions among the Malay have been very successful due in part to the widespread use of the English language, and an eagerness among the Malay to hear the gospel.

How to Pray:

✞ Praise God for the rapid growth of the underground Malay church. The Malaysian government has estimated that there are over 50,000 secret believers.

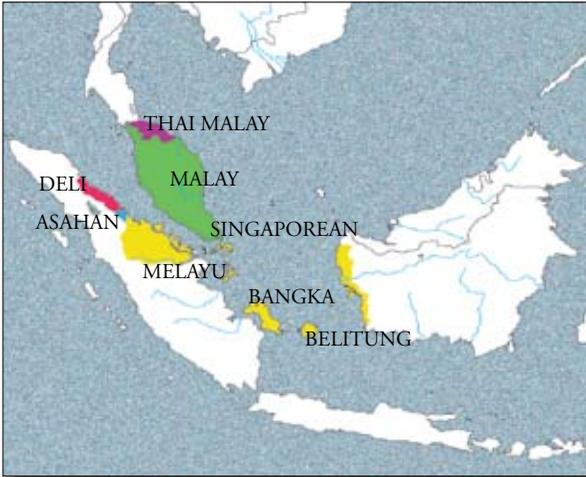
✞ Pray for boldness to be given to the Chinese believers in Malaysia to reach out to their Muslim friends and co-workers, despite the danger of imprisonment and even torture.

✞ Praise God for the completion of a Muslim-sensitive Bible translation into Malay. Pray for the protection of those distributing this new Bible as it has been banned in Malaysia.

✞ The Malaysian government discourages and restricts churches from using the Malay language. In the last decade over 200 churches have taken the risk to begin Malay services. Pray that hundreds more would

Every year 180,000 Malay die without Christ.

MAJOR MALAY SUB-GROUPS



Sub-Group	Hub	Population
Malaysian Malay	Malaysia	12,000,000
	UK	45,000
Thai Malay	Thailand	2,200,000
Deli	Indonesia	2,000,000
Melayu Riau	Indonesia	2,000,000
	Malaysia	90,000
Asahan	Indonesia	500,000
Singaporean Malay	Singapore	450,000
Belitung	Indonesia	400,000
Bangka	Indonesia	200,000
Talang Mamak	Indonesia	20,000

THAI MALAY

The recent insurgency among the Thai Malay has resulted in a strict crackdown of separatist groups by the Thai government and the proposal of a security wall across the border with Malaysia. The Thai Malay have been the most accessible Malay population over the last two decades, with the greatest degree of freedom to proclaim the gospel and establish ministries. Heavy drug-use among young people has prompted several ministries to establish rehabilitation programs. The upsurge in radical Islam across the border in Malaysia has affected the Thai Malay and this may one day curtail future ministry among them.

MELAYU RIAU

The national language of Indonesia is based on the Melayu Riau dialect of Malay. The province of Riau in Sumatra has close to 3,200 islands, and is shared with the Minangkabau tribe—a Muslim people of 8 million which has significantly influenced their culture. Though the Melayu Riau were once a great sea-faring people of trade, commerce and imperial ambitions, their province is now highly underdeveloped, due in no small part to the limitations in transportation and communication which separate their communities. The Melayu Riau are famous for their raft buildings known as *rakit*, which are built upon a foundation of layered bamboo. These floating foundations serve as both homes and trading centers.

DELI

The Deli Malay live north of the Melayu Riau along the Deli and Labuhan rivers. Along with the Melayu Riau, they are the least-reached Malay mega-peoples with only a handful of isolated believers between them. The Deli were evangelized by Sufi missionaries, and the majority now adhere to this form of Islam. Sufism blends in well with the Deli's pre-Islamic beliefs and practices which involve magic arts and spirit appeasement. The Deli have a well established historic aristocracy, which is divided between the king's extended family and the descendants of high-ranking nobility.

ASAHAN

The Asahan are sandwiched between the Melayu Riau and the Deli. They are the descendants of intermarriage between the Minangkabau tribe and the Batak. It is believed that they adopted the Malay language as part of the process of converting to Islam. Like the Melayu Rian and Deli they live primarily along rivers or the coast in small villages which are raised about six feet above ground due to flooding. The region where they live, called Batabara, is known for its abundance of fish and oysters. There are no known believers among them.