

Editorial



Dear Praying Friends,

This isn't the first time we have prayed for Malaysia, but this prayer guide will be different than it was the last time. We usually focus on the Malay Muslim majority peoples, but this time we will focus more on the smaller tribal peoples. Some of these peoples are small, and in some cases, they are in the process merging with other people groups. This has not been the only time such a thing has happened; people groups are changing all over the world, especially in modern times.

One thing to remember as we pray this month is that a key element of identity is *ethnic* identity. As tribal peoples have to adjust to being part of another people group, the last thing they will want is to lose remaining part of their identity passed down by their ancestors. Such a situation makes it essential that when people take the gospel to them, that they leave room for the people to worship the Lord in a way that fits their culture, not the culture of more powerful peoples. Put yourself in their position. Can you blame them?

In Christ,

Keith Carey, editor, *GPD*

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PRAY FOR

*A Disciple Making Movement Among Every People in
MALAYSIA*



THE LONG ROAD TO A MALAY FELLOWSHIP

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—Keith Carey,
editor-in-chief,
GPD

*Based on an article
by a veteran
missionary
to Malaysia*

What comes to mind when you think of Malaysia? Personally, I think of stunningly beautiful tropical scenery, and just about every kind of delicious spicy food you can find in Asia. That's because there are so many different ethnic groups who have immigrated to Malaysia. If this country doesn't have a strong tourist industry, then it is only because they haven't made themselves known.

When I visited Malaysia 28 years ago, they had something they called the "Temple Tour," of Kuala Lumpur's various places of worship. There are many Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, animists, and especially Muslims in this country. This is largely because of immigration, though the major religions have all made their mark on this beautiful country.



THE LONG ROAD

What is now Indonesia and Malaysia was ruled from the 7th-the 13th centuries by the Sriwijaya Empire, which was dominated by Buddhists. It was both a trading center and a stopping point for Buddhist pilgrims on their way to India.

By the 14th century there was a powerful state emerging in Thailand called Sukhotai. At this same time, Muslim merchants from India and Arabia began to arrive in Southeast Asia. At the end of the 13th century, a powerful Hindu prince named Paramaswara fled to Malacca (in what was then called Malaya) and founded his kingdom. He embraced Islam in 1411, and that paved the way for Muslim sultans (regional leaders) to rule Malacca until the Catholic Portuguese arrived in 1511. This 100 year period was very significant for Malaysian spiritual history.

Why Islam Spread and Christianity Didn't

Malacca's sultans ruled the wealthier parts of Southeast Asia, and Islam gradually was embraced by the peoples of the Indo-Malay World of the islands of Southeast Asia. One of the key reasons Muslim traders could spread their religion better than members of other faiths is that their policies resulted in a broader prosperity, so they were viewed as friends, not conquerors. Secondly, the local aristocracy married into Muslim families, and non-Muslim spouses embraced Islam, as did their entire family networks. Furthermore, Islam was attractive to people who did not make distinctions between the secular and the spiritual. Trade, wealth, and Islam were all intertwined. As leaders became Muslim, so did their followers. It was a movement to Islam.

By contrast, when the Portuguese took over Malacca in 1511, there was soon a fight for the release of Portuguese sailors who were taken prisoner two years earlier. Portugal sent a large armada of armed ships, their sails emblazoned with the cross. Portugal prevailed, and for the next 130 years they controlled the trade in the Straits of Malacca. Inter-marriage led to local women becoming Roman Catholic, but these were conversions of convenience. By the time the Dutch took Malacca over in 1641, the Portuguese had 20,000 Roman Catholic adherents, but there was little spiritual change in their lives. When the famous Jesuit priest, Francis Xavier, visited for seven years, he could not improve the spiritual climate, so he left. When the Dutch took over, they did not try to understand the Malay mindset nor spiritual needs any better than the Portuguese, so the people remained Muslim, and those who "converted" did so in name only. The one major accomplishment of Dutch believers serving in Indonesia was their Bible translation work in the late 1600s and early 1700s.

continued on next page



THE LONG ROAD

Create International



The British Era-1786-1957

From 1786 to 1957, the British Empire ruled Malaya (now called Malaysia). In 1815, the London Missionary Society (LMS) sent William Milne to Malaya, but his main focus was on China. One of the greatest weaknesses of mission work at that time was the obsession with reaching China. Malaya was viewed merely as a “stepping stone” for those who were on their way to the Middle Kingdom. Around this same time a Danish missionary, Claudius Thomsen, was actively trying to reach the Malay people in Singapore. He studied the Malay language and built a chapel. He distributed literature and baptized 12 Malays. After he left in 1825, no one continued his work.

In 1839, Benjamin Keasberry joined the LMS initially with a view to serving in China. But stopping in Singapore en route, became aware of the need among the Malay and began ministry among the Malays. He wisely started a vocational school to teach printing. By 1847, opportunity to reach China opened for the LMS, and they wanted all their missionaries in Malaya to go to the Middle Kingdom. Keasberry resigned from the LMS in order to continue his work among the Malays until he died in 1875.

There was another gap in work among the Malays until William Shellabear arrived 1887. Shellabear’s contributions included writing



THE LONG ROAD

tracts in Malay, printing tracts, books, and a revision of the New Testament. He began Malay worship services. In 1931, Rev. R.A. Blasdel began a work among the Malays. His work stopped in 1954. It is of interest to note that in the 1930s there existed in Malaya the “Malay World Prayer Fellowship,” the beginning of a prayer movement that is still with us today. There is regular prayer for the Malay peoples in several parts of the world.

Independence: 1957 to the Present

Since independence from Great Britain and the establishment of the nation of Malaysia, one of the non-negotiables is that mission efforts can reach out to any ethnic group except for the Malays. In fact, in the 1980s, there were efforts to reach Malay students in American universities, and the Malays actually made sure the students were monitored and would be missionaries were not welcome! One of the ironies is that government efforts to curtail violent Islamists sometimes coincide with efforts to stop efforts to reach Muslims for Christ. In 1987, Malaysia’s government cracked down on Islamists through Operation Lalang, and Christian workers involved with the Malay were arrested in the process. This stopped most efforts to reach Malays until the 1990s when there was a renewed effort to reach the Malays for Christ.

In the future, even the best efforts to stop Malays from hearing about the blessings of Christ may not work. The internet offers efforts to see the JESUS Film and download gospel recordings in private homes. Many Muslim peoples, including the Malays, are concerned about the spiritual direction of Islam when they read worldwide news. More non-Muslims speak Bahasa Malaysia than they did in earlier eras. The many believers in Malaysia are more likely to reach out to their Malay neighbors than they were in previous decades. And finally, perhaps most importantly, the spiritual climate of Malaysia is changing for the better because of sustained, stubborn prayer. You are about to join these intercessors!

Let’s Pray!

- Pray for a softening of the hearts of Malay Muslims to the blessings of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers to Malay Muslims no matter where they live.
- Pray for an unstoppable church planting movement among Malay Muslims.



CHERES JAH HUT PEOPLE IN MALAYSIA

HOS 2:23, NLT

At that time, I will plant a crop of Israelites and raise them for myself. I will show love to those I called 'Not loved.' And to those I called 'Not my people,' I will say, 'Now you are my people.' And they will reply, 'You are our God!'"

Pray that this prophecy in Hosea for Israel will come true for the Jah Hut people, and they will indeed reply, "You are our God!"



Malaysia

the plight of the Jah Hut. They were forcibly removed from the jungles on which they depended for their livelihood. They have had to replace their profitable woodcarving industry to become unskilled laborers; they now must take whatever employment they can find. It is sporadic, unreliable, and often takes them far from home. Most have had very little schooling, so they are often cheated out of their earnings.

The Jah Huts are at the bottom of the social ladder. Most are also at the mercy of witchdoctors and magicians who use traditional medicine. They make offerings to the spirits to avoid ill fortune. Some have converted to Islam. There are at most four or five followers of Christ among the 4,500 Jah Hut people.

Many of the younger generation of Jah Hut now migrate to urban areas for education and employment. Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language.

Pray that some of these young people will have an opportunity to read these Bible portions. Pray that they will respond by forming Christ-oriented fellowships where they can learn the ways of Christ and share him with others in their community. Pray that they will soon gain the dignity God gave them as part of his creation, simply because they are created by him.—AHS



KENSIU PEOPLE IN MALAYSIA

DAY

02

“Leave us alone!” could well be the cry of the Kensiu people. They face both racial prejudice from neighboring groups, and well-intentioned attempts of the Malaysian government to modernize them.



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These have brought stressful and traumatic changes to their traditional way of life. Many have retreated to the jungle on the Malaysia-Thailand border. They barter products like rare wood, honey, and herbs to the nearest Thai market for salt, knives, tobacco, and cloth.

The Kensius reject the Malays and neglect schooling, especially when it includes the study of Islam. They keep to themselves. If someone marries an outsider, he is forced to leave the village. About one third of the Kensiu people have turned to Islam, but the majority retain their traditional religion. There are no known followers of Christ among them. They do not believe in any god, but they think spirits reside in places like bridges, graves, and trees. Their philosophy is, “Blessings are for today. Tomorrow is tomorrow's matter.”

Because of their nomadic ways and their isolationism, it is difficult for the government to help them and for workers to reach out to them. There are no media resources available in their language.

Pray that they will not say, “Leave us alone” when Jesus knocks at the door of their hearts. Pray that the Lord will thrust out Holy Spirit anointed workers to guide their families to his blessings.—AHS

PS 34:1-2, NLT

I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart.

Pray that these “helpless” people will find their help in the Lord, and respond with grateful worship to him alone.



DAY

03

PS 34:4, NLT

I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.

Pray that the Lord will free the Lanoh people from fear who put their trust in him.

LANOH PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA



A sun bear in Malaysia

The Lanoh people fear the spirits of dead ancestors and animals they have killed.

They use wild animals for food, medicine, and they have all kinds of folktales about them. Charcoal drawings in caves depict the time when the Lanoh lived entirely as hunters and gatherers. During British rule, the Lanoh were regularly employed as jungle rangers and porters because of their knowledge of the forests.

Of necessity, many of them now work on rubber estates or live in permanent villages. Others continue to gather food from jungles and rivers, but the rainforests are thinning out. The younger people are moving away from old lifestyles and religious taboos, adapting modern ways. The Lanohs are gradually being assimilated into larger surrounding people groups.

There are no Christian media resources available in their language which is regarded as endangered. However, they all speak (Bahasa) Malay. Bibles, audio and video materials are available in this language.

Pray that as young Lanoh people seek employment in nearby towns, they will come across those who will point the way to Jesus and disciple them. Pray that Lanoh people who cannot read will be introduced to the gospel on audio and video recordings.—AHS



MENDRIQ PEOPLE IN MALAYSIA

DAY

04

Imagine yourself deep in the Malaysian jungle in the month of January, and you are with the Mendriq tribe. They



The jungle in Malaysia

AlvaroRodriguezElez

would probably send you away, because they are about to begin the “Puja Pantang” ritual, and outsiders are not welcome. We don’t know why they perform this ritual, but we do know that they are animists who are vulnerable to natural forces of the jungle. They strongly fear the spirits of dead ancestors and animals they have hunted. The enemy of their souls has control and influence over every part of their lives, and he rules them by fear.

The Mendriq population is extremely small. This people group may have assimilated into larger surrounding groups and may no longer be recognizable as a distinct group. Significant change is beginning in the lives, traditions, worldview, and community systems of those who maintain their traditional ways. They are having more contact with people outside their jungle community, and this might be a good thing if done properly. They need help learning how to make a living in the 21st century.

Pray for fear to be replaced with faith and joy of the Holy Spirit. Pray for broken disciples who will do whatever it takes to reach the Mendriq people, and to humbly earn their confidence to disciple them in the ways of the King of kings.—KH

PS 34:6, NLT

In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; He saved me from all my troubles.

Pray for the Mendriq people to be desperate enough to call out to the Lord and worship him as a community.



DAY
05

ORANG KANAQ PEOPLE

PS 34:8-9, NLT

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! Fear the Lord, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need.

Pray that soon the Orang Kanaq people will trade their fear for joy as they make him their refuge.

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(This event is hypothetical.)

Bahiyah sat with her mother near the doorway to their hut in the cool of the evening, waiting

for her father to return from his day of hard labor on the rubber plantation. A simple meal of beans and fruits simmered on the fire. Bahiyah was thinking, “Perhaps the spirits will favor us with an easier life now that we have made all the sacrifices they want.”

Few Orang Kanaq people remain, revealing the threat of extinction of their language and culture. They survive as a tribal people despite low birth rates and their refusal to marry outside their community. They believe such unions will bring curses.

Orang Kanaq people practice the complex beliefs and practices of ethnic religion, fearing the power of spirits whom they believe might help them in times of need. Traditional medicine men act as mediums to communicate with invisible fearsome powers. Numerous taboos are passed down through generations maintaining their spiritual bondage. They have no scripture resources in their unique language, and no knowledge of loving creator God, who loves them, and has paid the penalty for their sins. Who will tell them?

Pray that spiritual darkness and fear will be eliminated by the Holy Spirit, and that his light of truth will shine forth into their communities. Pray believers who love his creation will reach them for the glory of the creator of all.—KH

ORANG PANTAI TIMUR PEOPLE

DAY

06

Can you identify where someone is from based on their accent? The Orang Pantai Timur people have lost their own language, so they speak Malaysia's trade language, Bahasa ... but with an accent!



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IS 63:7, NLT

I will tell of the Lord's unfailing love. I will praise the Lord for all he has done. I will rejoice in his great goodness to Israel, which he has granted according to his mercy and love.

Pray that the Patai Timur people will do just that!

Although the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia is rich in oil revenues, the Orang Pantai have not benefited; they live in two of the poorest states of this country. Some Orang Pantai Timur people work in government offices. Others are fisherman or farm rice or tobacco.

Prospective marriage partners are chosen by the individual, though parents and family still have "veto" power. Couples are married at the home of the bride or the groom. This is a unique practice of the Orang Pantai Timur as most other Malay Muslim peoples hold weddings at the mosque.

Orang Pantai Timur women wear a head covering and full-length dress or pants, but no veil. A point of contact with other Muslim peoples in Malaysia is that the Orang Pantai Timur emphasize Hari Korban (sacrifice day) where they sacrifice livestock.

Pray for them to put their faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, the only sacrifice accepted by the Father. Pray for the Orang Pantai Timur people to be able to share the oil wealth in their homeland. Pray that God will send his witnesses to this people group, and this will result in their community being blessed with the spiritual riches promised by Christ.—KH

DAY

07

SONSOGON PEOPLE

JOSH 24:15, NLT

But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

Pray that these people, whose identity is in their traditional religion, will chose to serve the Lord, and experience the blessings of the sovereign God as a result.

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Change can be a good thing or a bad thing. For the Sonsogon people, there was a sanitation project in 2015 which brought them clean water

and probably spared them from many water-borne sicknesses. In 2017 there was a logging road built to connect their villages with the rest of Malaysia.

But changes have a darker side for this formerly remote people group: They now have to deal with new diseases, and outsiders are using the new road to encroach on their hunting and fishing rights. The Sonsogon people do not have the life skills to survive these new changes. It will be difficult for them to learn new life skills unless loving, compassionate servants can reach them in ways they can understand and accept. What will happen to this people group that is becoming smaller in number?

They have their own ethnic religion which is deeply rooted in their identity; changing religions is considered to be a betrayal of their ways at a time when their culture is threatened. They live in fear on all fronts. They believe that spirits rule their environment rather than Almighty God, who gave himself to bring them life to the full.

Pray for justice and mercy to flood Sonsogon villages as they have greater dealings with outsiders. Pray for a spiritual openness among the Sonsogon people when they are contacted with loving and compassionate servants who will be permitted to earn their trust and live among them.—KH



TEMOQ PEOPLE

DAY

08

You've seen them in your own town—the man at the stoplight with a cardboard sign asking for a handout; the woman positioned at the freeway onramp, begging for change ... You might encounter them camped out in a city park or sleeping in a downtown alley. They are the lonely, the homeless, the disenfranchised. They have been pushed to the margins of society.



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That's the Temoq people of Malaysia. They are avoided and looked down upon by other ethnic groups. They are viewed with suspicion. Their name means "wild people," and they are often referred to as, "people of the fringe."

In the absence of social support, they turn to the occult for help. They believe in ghosts and consider disease to be a spirit. They rely on charms to bring them luck and supernatural abilities. Shamans perform healing rituals for them. The Temoq live in fear. They are afraid of the spirit world and they are afraid of the people groups around them who treat them with contempt.

Pray for the Temoq people to experience the forgiveness, peace, and acceptance waiting for them in Christ. Ask God to reveal his love for them in dramatic and unmistakable ways. Pray for them to embrace the value God has given them as people created to be in his image, and that this knowledge will transform their communities.—CL

PS 34: 17-18, NLT

The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

Pray that these crushed people will call out to the Lord and be rescued from their troubles.



DAY

09

UTIK PEOPLE

MK 3:31-35, NLT

Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him. They stood outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them. There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he looked at those around him and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Pray for the Utik people, who seem to be disappearing as a people, to enter into the security of being part of Christ's family.

istock/Trevorlatt



A disclaimer appears when you search for the Utik people group on the Joshua Project website. It calls them

a "questionable people group" ... "population unknown," and states that they may have been assimilated into other groups. This is rather alarming! Have the Utik disappeared?

Imagine that happening to a family. Your family. Imagine losing track of them, not knowing exactly where they live, or who's still around. You might not know what became of your grandparents. Your parents. Your children. Even if you lost contact, you wouldn't stop caring. And you wouldn't stop looking for them. Would you?

Perhaps the Utiks have been merged with another people group. Maybe they have ceased to exist in terms of statistics. But God created them for a purpose and his desire is for them to be represented in heaven. They are dear to his heart!

Pray for mission organizations to seek out the Utik and find them—no matter where they might be hiding. Pray for members of the Utik who identify with other groups or cultures to hear the gospel message and respond to it, putting their faith in Christ alone. Pray for God to miraculously establish his church among this "extinct" people group. Pray for God to call the Utiks and welcome them into his Kingdom.—CL

NORTHERN SAMA (AKA, BANGINGI SAMA)

DAY

10

The Northern Sama (aka, Bangingi Sama) are descended from the inhabitants of the islands



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and coastal areas between Mindanao and the Sulu Islands. They probably originated from the Sulu region in nearby Philippines, and the majority of them live there today. Those who live in Malaysia live in Sabah.

Once the backbone of the Sulu Sultan's navy, the livelihoods of the Northern Sama still revolve around the sea as fishing, seafaring, and trade in marine commodities such as pearls, shells, and fish dominate their economy. Lacking in political unity, the Northern Sama are fragmented overall. However, they live together in household units, maintaining close ties with family members, all of whom attend the same mosques. They are a Sunni Muslim people that mix their traditions with elements of animism.

The Sama do not yet know peace. A long-time fight for independence has resulted in large-scale relocation, and extremists are still highly active.

Pray that physical and spiritual peace would come to the Northern Sama people. Pray that Northern Sama families would form fellowships that learn and apply the teachings of the prince of peace. Pray that they would receive aid where it is needed and have the opportunities to earn a good living.—BK

HEB 3:12, NLT

Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.

Pray for the Lord to give the gift of faith to the Northern Sama people in Malaysia.

CENTRAL SAMA IN MALAYSIA

HEB 6:19-20, NLT

This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Pray for the Central Sama people to recognize that Jesus offers them the only hope they will ever need.

iStock/Cn0ra



Classified as one of the “Bajau” peoples, the Central Sama people of Malaysia maintain association with the

other Bajau of the Sulu Peninsula in the neighboring country of the Philippines. The Central Sama continue to draw their livelihood from the sea. Their settlements sit on stilts directly over the sea or along protected sections of the shoreline. Houses sit close to one another, grouped together by family ties, and are connected by narrow bridges.

Like their Bajau brethren, the Sama are predominantly Muslim, and they follow many of the Islamic practices such as seasonal observances. However, they have kept traditional animistic religious practices, and these are now intertwined with the newer Islamic ones. For example, they believe that Allah allows an annual return of dead souls to the earth, which prompts a ritual cleaning of graves and offerings of Arabic prayers.

Many Central Samas live below the poverty line and need assistance in the areas of health and drinking water, as well as improvements in education and transportation.

Pray that infrastructure would be improved for the Central Sama people. Pray that God's people would step in to provide assistance where needed, releasing the love and hope of Christ through their actions. Pray for them to have access to the scriptures.—BK



DAY

12

MALAYS OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

How do you define citizenship? How do you define who you are or does the government define it for



Malay women

Create International

you? In Malaysia, one is Malay if a person speaks the Malay language, practices Malaysian customs, and is Muslim. The Malays of the peninsula meet these criteria, whether they be rural or urban, modern or traditional. However, Malay culture blends shamanism, Hinduism, and Islam, though the latter is central to their identity. In light of this, becoming a follower of Jesus runs the risk of cultural suicide, because to be Malay is to be Muslim. Furthermore, a recent law makes it illegal for non-Muslims to print or call God Allah, even though Allah is the traditional name of God in the Arabic Bible and is used in the JESUS Film, Malay Bible, gospel tracts, and audio recordings.

Pray for creative outreach given these restrictions and attitudes. Pray that believers in Malaysia will prove themselves to be good citizens and ambassadors for Christ. Pray that Muslims will read and heed the Bible, just as the Qur'an says they should; and that God's word will lead them to faith in Jesus as the only redeemer. Pray that the Malaysian government ceases from defining God.—TP

HEB 3:6, NLT

But Christ, as the son, is in charge of God's entire house. And we are God's house, if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ.

Pray that the Malay peoples will soon learn that they must become part of the household of God by putting their faith in Christ, not in any religious system.



DAY

13

RIAU MALAY OF MALAYSIA

HEB 4:16, NLT

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Pray for the Riau Malay people to go boldly to the throne of God and receive his great mercy and grace.

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Houseboats in Malaysia

Have you ever wanted to live on a houseboat? In order to do so, you would need to build a floating raft,

then perch your home on top of it. At that point, you could live like some of the Riau Malay people. If a seaworthy houseboat isn't your style, there are other Riau Malay people living in homes on the shorelines.

The Riau Malay constitute the majority of the population of two islands including the huge island of Sumatra, Indonesia. Though fewer in number, Riau Malays also live in nearby Malaysia. Like yesterday's Malays, many of the Riau fish and farm for a living.

And although the Riau of Malaysia are 100 percent Muslim, some 18,000 of them are Christian in Indonesia. Like yesterday's Peninsular Malaysians, Riau Malaysian Islam is a mixture of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shamanism; and the culture has been influenced by Europe.

Pray that the Riau will see the JESUS Film and listen to Bible audio recordings. Pray that the Holy Spirit will reduce their resistance to accepting Jesus Christ as lord of their lives. Pray for them to have dreams and visions of Jesus, and that God will raise up several of them to disciple their people in the ways of the Lord.—TP



DAY

14

ABAI SUNGAI PEOPLE

The Abai Sungai people live in East Malaysia on the island of Borneo (a large island shared with Indonesia and Brunei).

There are only 1,500 of them and they live only in the state of Sabah. Almost all of them live in one village. They are more a language group than an ethnic group. They speak primarily Abai Sungai and secondarily Sabah Malay, the trade language of the area. Their name, Sungai, means “Forget the river,” but we don’t know the story behind that name. Their name is closely connected to their livelihood; these people are fishermen.



Borneo and Sabah

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IS 1:18, NLT

“Come now, let’s settle this,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.”

Pray for the Muslim peoples of Malaysia to understand this from the heart and from the head. God will forgive those who repent!

Like most tribal people in Malaysia, the Abai Sungai are Muslim. Besides holding to the basic tenets of Islam, they also maintain traditional beliefs, such as the power of the Evil Eye. There are no gospel resources in Abai Sungai and no Christian workers among them, but that is no deterrent for our Almighty God!

Please pray for him to reveal himself to these “river” people. May they come to know Jesus, from whose throne springs the “river of the water of life, bright as crystal” (Rev. 22:1, ESV). May the Abai Sungai find their sustenance and life in Jesus. Pray that they will begin a movement among other peoples in Sabah that will lead to families and communities being transformed by joy and peace.—CMW



DAY

15

BAWEAN PEOPLE

IS 2:2, NLT

In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house will be the highest of all—the most important place on earth. It will be raised above the other hills, and people from all over the world will stream there to worship.

Pray that the Baweans and other unreached people groups will soon stream to the Lord to worship him!

iStock/DragonImages



(This is based on a true story from the writer's family in Malaysia.)

Melati had been a maid for only a week in Malaysia

when she noticed that her employer spent at least an hour each morning reading a black leather-bound book. Melati was from Bawean Island in Indonesia, but there was no work there, so she journeyed to the neighboring country of Malaysia, where she had been engaged as a live-in domestic. She missed her children terribly but was grateful that her new boss was kind. Melati didn't yet feel at liberty to ask about the book that seemed so special, but she was sure that it contributed to her employer's peaceful spirit and kindness.

The Bawean people who live in Malaysia come from the small island of Bawean, just north of Indonesia's most populous island of Java. Traditional Baweans were skilled in fishing and sailing. Bawean Island itself is a tropical paradise for young tourists, but because of its limited opportunities, many locals have emigrated to Malaysia. The Baweans are Muslim, but in Malaysia they are exposed to "worldly" lifestyles.

Ask God to provide work, as well as friends who can help them deal with homesickness. May they find believing employers who will boldly share the gospel with them and show them how to follow Jesus. May Baweans in Malaysia take their new knowledge to family back home.—CMW

SABAH BISAYA PEOPLE

DAY

16

Mahmud was fidgety with excitement. This was the long-awaited day of his performance. He and his 13-year-



old friends had been practicing for months on their gong music. It was a real honor that such young players had been invited to perform at the harvest festival. The graduated gongs were shaped like cupcakes that the musicians struck with sticks. The smaller gongs were about 10 inches wide and were arranged in scale order on a rack. The bigger gongs were suspended with string from a beam. It took hours of dedicated practice to drum rapidly and evenly. Mahmud sat in the featured position, playing the fast-treble notes, while his friends supported with rhythmic, slower, bass pitches. He donned his new *songkok* (a pointed cap worn by Muslims) that his dad had proudly given him in honor of the occasion and prepared to go to the Cultural Center.

Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will pray for soft hearts among these Muslim people. There are GRN recordings of Scripture stories and portions of the Bible in the Bisaya language. Beseech the Lord to send his ambassadors to bring these resources to the Bisaya and to be living witnesses to them. Pray that God will bring people to a saving grace that leads to joyful music in heaven!—CMW

IS 5:18, NLT

What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes made of lies, who drag wickedness behind them like a cart!

Pray that this will be the year when many from the Sabah Bisaya people cut the chords of ropes that keep them from living the abundant life Christ offers.

DAY

17

BUKIT BAJAU PEOPLE

MATT 18:12-14, NLT

If a man has 100 sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the 99 others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the 99 that didn't wander away! In the same way, it is not my heavenly father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.

Pray that soon the lost Burkit Bajau people will be found!

iStock/bugphai



Harvesting rice

Jesus spoke to His disciples about the shepherd who left the 99 sheep to search after the one that was lost. With

all the groups of lost souls throughout the world, it is easy to overlook the Bajau Bukit people who live in the Sabah Province of Malaysia.

Numbering only about 2,000, the Bajau once were sea dwelling people who have gradually migrated inland to become rice growers and livestock herders. There are no known followers of Christ among the Bukit Bajaus. Their main language is Papar, but some also speak the national language.

In this predominantly Muslim culture, the Bukit Bajau participate in annual feasts like *kenduri awah*, where they give alms to a local prayer leader called the *pakir*. They do this to remember deceased family members and to gain them greater benefits in the afterlife. The Bukit Bajau people have a greater interest in education, and they have more opportunities to travel. This has resulted in greater job opportunities. Unfortunately, most of the Bukit Bajau fail to complete their education. They need help with medical and educational needs.

Pray that believers will choose to carry the message of the cross and the resurrection to the Bukit Bajau people. Pray for them to have spiritually hungry hearts that will be open to putting their faith in Christ and discipling others to do the same.—JY

MOLBOG PEOPLE

DAY

18

How do you know what outsiders to trust?

Outsiders were always viewed with suspicion by the Molbog people, so

medical and educational efforts coming from outside their community were minimal. Islamic leaders are just now beginning to allow outsiders to help with these needs. Many Molbog people are too poor to afford medical care, and some suffer from diseases like malaria. Pray that will change now! The Molbogs survive by subsistence farming and fishing. Some raise livestock and engage with bartering with other markets in nearby islands. They number about 2,600 and live in the Sabah Peninsula in the south to the Philippine islands in the north.



JN 6:47-48, NLT

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life!

Pray that there will be many from the Molbog people who will be blessed by life-giving belief in Jesus Christ, the King of kings!

Most of the Mologs practice Islam. Yet they also hold some non-Islamic beliefs; some Molbogs act as specialists who cast “love spells.” The people still need help in developing sea transportation facilities which will allow them to transport farm and fish products to needed markets.

Pray for these economic needs to be met. Pray that volunteers with medical training will come with supplies and teaching materials. Pray that the use of the JESUS Film will spread the message of the cross among the Mologs, and that this film will be the beginning of Christ-centered fellowships. Praise the Father for answered prayer!—JY

DAY

19

TALANG MAMAK PEOPLE

IS 49:6B, NIV

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Pray that the Talang Mamak people of Malaysia would become the Lord's light to the peoples who live near them.

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Keri ceremonial knife

Do you believe in magic? The Talang Mamak people who live in Malaysia do. They

believe in spirits that inhabit various places and things. Ancestral treasures, such as a keris (a ceremonial knife), certain weapons, and clothes, are believed to have magical powers. They also believe that a large tree called Kayu Puako has magical powers. The Talang Mamak mix their belief in Islam with their belief in spirits and folk religion. They believe that performance of certain rituals and good works will protect them from evil spirits.

The Talang Mamak show little interest in modern technology and in educating their children. They live in the rubber forests of the Malay Peninsula as their ancestors have for many generations. They plant rice, cassava root and beans, which serve as their main foods. Some Talang Mamaks gain their livelihood through fishing, hunting, gathering rattan, or tapping rubber trees. They live in raised homes made of palm fronds, wood and bamboo in villages scattered throughout the rubber forest.

Pray that the Lord moves Christian teachers and workers to live with the Talang Mamak and help them to start a disciple-making movement. Pray that each Talang Mamak community would have the opportunity to hear the life-changing gospel so they can respond to his offer to become part of his family.—DK



NAROM PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA

DAY

20

What do you do if your traditional occupation is taken away from you? The Narom people of Malaysia have been involved in the practice of trade for many hundreds of years. They would buy a supply of a valuable commodity in one place and sell it at a profit somewhere else.



iStock/skaylim

Tribal woman from Sarawak

Chinese immigrants have moved in and they been able to undercut the Narom in the prices of these items. The Narom have had to look to other sources of income like farming, fishing, and the production of lumber.

The Narom are a small Muslim group who live in the Sarawak state of Malaysia on the island of Borneo. They converted to Islam from their folk religion many years ago when they discovered that this change would enable them to trade more easily with Muslim merchants.

Most Naroms speak the Malayan-Polynesian language of Narom. It is unknown whether their language has ever been given a written script or whether they would read a translated Bible in their language. A few have become believers.

Pray that the small number of Narom believers would be trained and share the gospel with their families and friends. Pray that the majority Muslim Narom would be spiritually open to hearing the claims of Jesus, the savior.—DK

JN 8:58, NLT

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I am."

Pray that the Narom people of Sarawak, Malaysia would see Jesus as more than a human prophet. Pray that they realize he is the co-creator and lord of the universe.



DAY

21

BUGINESE (AKA, BUGI) PEOPLE

JN 10:16, NLT

I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

Pray that there will soon be Buginese “sheep” who will humbly join God’s fold.



A Buginese family

Once called “the best merchants” among the eastern Malaysian Islands, The Buginese today are well mannered and cultured, a far cry from their storied and colorful past as acclaimed sea traders and legendary pirates. In fact, they were so prominent that in Malaysia that the 18th century has been called the “Age of the Bugis.” Malay princes even hired them as mercenaries. They are also well known for their carpentry skills, able to build a wooden house without the use of nails. Today they blend into the Malay culture, and younger people often cannot speak their native tongue.

Once Buddhism camouflaged their animistic beliefs and practices, but today they are mainly Muslim, under pressure to conform to the majority Malay culture. The Buginese are still an unreached people group. Today some Bugis are landlords of large coconut and coffee plantation; others are farmers and fishermen, but we know that despite their different occupations, individual ethnic groups feel most comfortable with those who share their own culture.

Pray for God to send “harvesters” to share the good news with the Buginese in a way that they will know God loves them and wants them to be part of his loving family. May God use their colorful seafaring past to enlist them to become fishers of men! May they become disciples, who teach Christ not only to other Buginese, but other unreached peoples as well.—JS



MINANG (AKA, MINANGKABAU)

DAY

22

JN 10:30-33, NLT

The Minangkabau or Minang people are unique among the ethnic clusters in Malaysia. Women are highly esteemed, so much so that all inheritance and lands are passed down through them. In order to protect the rights of the female, the name and property are passed down through



Create International

A Minang girl

the mother's line. It is one of the few matriarchal societies still active in the world today. Their matrilineal inheritance sets them apart from other Muslim ethnic groups in Malaysia. The blending of communities of people from different Malay groups that use traditional male inheritance is a growing threat to their ways.

Despite their distinctive cultural beliefs and practices, the Minang are devout Muslims; their marriage ceremonies and funerals are consistent with Islamic customs. One way to reach this unique people might be to share the important roles God has given to women in the Bible – Sarah, mother of the Hebrew nation, Esther, a queen who saved her people, and Mary, a young Hebrew woman chosen to be the mother of our Savior Jesus.

Pray for those who witness to the Minang to be sensitive to their culture and the value of women in it. Pray many women will disciple others in the ways of Jesus.—JS

The Father and I are one.” Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, “At my Father’s direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?” They replied, “We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.”

Pray for the Holy Spirit to clearly reveal to many Minang leaders that Jesus is who he said he is in this verse.



DAY

23

YAKAN PEOPLE

JN 13:34-35, NLT

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Make this your prayer for the Yakan people in Malaysia and the Philippines. Pray that there will soon be believers among them who will demonstrate Christ's love to others.

/iStockPhotos



Basilan Island, just south of Mindanao

The small ethnic group, the Yakan, are found in Malaysia, but they originated on the Philippine island of Basilan off of Mindanao. A little more than half of them still live in the Philippines. After the 20th century declaration of independence by the Philippines, land

disputes drove many of them from their traditional island home; however, their culture and way of life did not change. Their houses and crops are centered around a mosque and are scattered across the countryside rather than in distinct villages. Although they are Muslim, they do not follow the traditional dress of others, and few women wear veils. Instead, they are known for their colorful weaving and geometric patterns.

Agriculture rather than fishing distinguishes the Yakan people from their seafaring neighbors, and both men and women share many of the same duties, whether farming or domestic. Music is important to the Yakans, and one might hear an xylophone being played in the rice field “making the rice happy” and frightening the pests! Although they are Muslim, the Yakan people still maintain many of their animistic beliefs (non-living objects have spirits).

Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the spiritual soil for the Yakans through worship and intercession. Ask the Lord to bring forth a vigorous Yakan church for his glory.—JS

BELAIT PEOPLE

DAY

24

The Apostle John who saw a vision: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one



iStock/Tuttye

could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Rev 7:9, NIV). There will be some Belaits standing before God’s throne! “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?” (Rom 10:14-15A, NLT).

We know so little about this small ethnic group except that they originally came from Brunei. Their culture is considered almost extinct by the government in Brunei, and they are erecting a museum in the Belait District to preserve this dying culture. Several hundred are known to live in neighboring Malaysia on the same island as Borneo. Their language and culture is doomed to die out in the next few decades. But, we, the readers of *Global Prayer Digest* can make a difference!

Pray for God to send Belait leaders dreams and visions. Pray for believers to reach them in a way that they understand. Pray there will be a vibrant, multiplying Belait church.—JS

PS 107:14, NLT

He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains.

Pray for spiritual chains to be destroyed among the Belait people, so they can be free to worship the Lord!

DAY

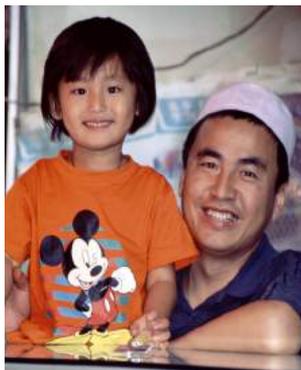
25

HUI PEOPLE IN MALAYSIA

JN 6:37, TPT

But everyone my Father has given to me, they will come. And all who come to me, I will embrace and will never turn them away.

Ask God to stir up prayer for the Hui in Malaysian churches and for Hui hearts to soften to Jesus. Pray for many to learn the ways of Jesus in Malaysia and teach Christ to Hui people in China as well. Ask for a great harvest and disciple-making movement among Malaysia's Hui people.



Hui people

The Hui people form China's largest, most widespread Muslim people group. In years past, many Hui moved to Malaysia. Today, approximately 15,000 Hui comprise part of Malaysia's Chinese ethnic peoples, who together make up Malaysia's largest

immigrant group. Very hospitable and industrious, the Hui fit better into Malay society than many Chinese Buddhists, because the Hui share the Muslim faith. At the same time, Malaysia's ethnic-Chinese, including Hui people, have their own schools and their own social, political, and economic organizations.

Despite how central the mosque is to Hui people, they face disdain from Malay Muslims, because the Malay believe the Hui lack depth as Muslims. Though Sunni Muslim, the Hui are nevertheless some of the least radical Muslims worldwide.

The whole Bible, the JESUS Film, and gospel recordings exist in Mandarin Chinese, the Hui mother tongue. However, few followers of Christ have contact with them. The Hui consider Islam not just as a collection of religious beliefs but as a total way of life, at the core of who they are.

Ask the Father to draw the Hui people to Jesus, so they may find their identity only in Christ, who never rejects those who turn to him. Pray for prepared believers to share Christ with Hui individuals and families.—CR



DAY

26

MUSLIM ROHINGYAS IN MALAYSIA

(This story illustrates issues faced by this people group.)

Moyura, a young Rohingya man of 18, spat out the water he was

about to swallow because it didn't taste right. He stood outside the wooden hut in which his family lived. Moyura wondered if he should complain about the water to the authorities but decided that was a bad idea. The Rohingyas lived in a refugee camp and those who complained about living conditions were either ignored or beaten up.



Rohingyas

iStock/MichalFialkowski

EX 15:27, NLT

After leaving Marah, the Israelites traveled on to the oasis of Elim, where they found 12 springs and 70 palm trees. They camped there beside the water.

Pray that the Lord will lead the Rohingyas to a land of pure water where they can begin new lives. Pray that wherever they go, the Rohingyas will have the chance to join the family of God.

The Rohingyas are a people group from Myanmar. Harsh living conditions in that country have led many members of this Muslim people group to migrate to Malaysia and other countries. Some never got that far, because they were killed or captured in Thailand. Rohingyas captured in Thailand often get sold into slavery. Those who make it to Malaysia often end up in unsanitary refugee camps. The Malaysian government doesn't want these people settling in their country. Perhaps the harsh treatment is Malaysia's way of encouraging this people group to leave. There are few, if any, followers of Jesus Christ among them.

Ask God to provide this people group with water that is safe to drink. Pray that the Rohingyas would come to see Jesus Christ as the true source of salvation. Pray that a mission agency would be used by God to bless this people group.—WK



SINHALESE BUDDHISTS IN MALAYSIA

GEN 1:3-5, NLT

Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed, and morning came, marking the first day.

Pray for the Sinhalese people to seek the true light, and shun spiritual darkness.

!Stock/eyefocusaz



Festive foods of the new year!

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on an evening next month, people will light lanterns and chant to Buddha. April is the time for the lunar New Year, and the members of the Buddhist Sinhalese people will be welcoming the start of a new year. Buddhists understand that light represents truth and enlightenment, and they hunger for it. Lanterns and light have been central in their Lunar New Year celebrations for as long as anyone could remember.

The Sinhalese people group originally came from Sri Lanka, an island nation south of India. The first Sinhalese migrants to Malaysia arrived in 1890. They were jewel merchants. Others migrated to Malaysia to work on rubber plantations. Many members of this people group now live in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

Most Sinhalese are Buddhists. Many members of this people group have yet to hear about Jesus Christ, the true source of spiritual light.

Pray that the Sinhalese of Malaysia would come to see Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the true source of spiritual truth. Ask God to lead faithful workers to reach out to this people group with the blessings of the Lord. Pray for entire Sinhalese families to come together in gratitude to the one who created the sun and the stars.—WK

BENGALIS IN MALAYSIA

DAY

28

Navarati is a nine-day Hindu festival celebrated by the Bengali people group, including the ones living in Malaysia. Most Hindu Bengalis worship these three gods: Durga, Lakshmi, and Saragwati. Of the three Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is the most important. Materialism is a serious issue among the Bengalis of Malaysia.



A Hindu Bengali woman

iStock/ImageDB

I TIM 6:9-10, NLT

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

Pray that the Bengalis in Malaysia will understand that spiritual riches are far more important than the physical riches they now seek.

Bengalis have been migrating from India to Malaysia since 1900. These Hindu migrants come to Malaysia seeking a better life. Malaysia has been a mixed blessing for this people group. Many had found the prosperity they had sought but prosperity comes with a spiritual price that can leave them feeling lonely and isolated. There are few, if any, followers of Jesus Christ among the Hindu Bengalis of Malaysia.

Pray that this people group would come to see Jesus Christ, not money, is the true path to a fulfilled life. Pray for the Lord to bless Bengali families spiritually so that they will find peace and hope. Pray that soon members of their community will come together to learn how to become more like the risen savior. Pray for them to find peace and joy as they experience the blessings of Christ.—WK

DAY
29

HINDU GUJARATIS IN MALAYSIA

IS 64:8, NLT

And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand.

Pray that the Gujaratis in Malaysia will embrace the God who created them as their Heavenly Father and give him all their devotion.

iStock/Antoseitawan



A Hindu funeral

(This story illustrates things about this people group.)

Fida welcomed the Hindu priest (Maharaj) to

her home in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her husband, Baj, was approaching death, and it was time for the final prayers. The Maharaj went to the bedside of the dying man where the other family members had gathered. Fida took hold of Baj's hand and repeated the words the priest was saying in her husband's ear, "From untruth lead us to truth. From darkness lead us to light. From death lead us to immortality. Om Peace, Peace, peace." She lovingly said, "Baj you have been a good man and soon Ganesha, Siva and our many gods will give you a glorious new life! We love you Baj." Smiling her husband closed his eyes and it was over. Tears filling her eyes, Fida announced that after the cremation the family will spread his ashes over the Tapi River located in Surat, Gujarat, their original home city.

The majority of the 32,000 Gujaratis in Malaysia are highly successful people in business, especially in the areas of textile production and diamond refinement. They have a strong Hindu identity and are resistant to anyone presenting the gospel.

Pray that these Hindu Gujarati people will be open to hearing God's word so they will experience his grace and eternal life. Pray that they will seek and find light, truth, and peace in Christ.—PD



HINDU SINDHIS IN MALAYSIA

DAY

30

Danav's Hindu Sindhi family had lived in Malaysia for three generations. He was well known for his textile shop located



iStock/ajijchan

in Malacca, and his generous, happy nature. He and his wife were planning to host an open house for the festival of Diwali, also called the Festival of Lights.

Along with other Sindhi Hindus, the 20,000 who live in Malaysia are known for their Hindu literature, poetry, culture, music, and excellent businesses skills. They are strong Hindus and one of their happiest festivals is Diwali. They offer prayers before one or more deities, but the most common is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Family members and friends celebrate the night of Diwali with fireworks, food, and by exchanging gifts.

Almost 96 percent of the Malaysian Sindhi are Hindus with the remaining four percent identifying as Muslim. They are friendly with Christians; however, they are very resistant to any spiritual change since that could potentially cause friction with their Hindu community.

Pray that believers will have the chance to share about Jesus, who gave the world a light of hope and the only way out of spiritual darkness. May the Holy Spirit give Sindhis the willingness to embrace him and disciple others in his ways.—PD

IS 9:2, NET

The people walking in darkness see a bright light; light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness.

Pray for Hindu Sindhis to give all their devotion to the light of the world, Jesus Christ.



DAY
31

MUSLIM ARABS IN MALAYSIA

REV 3:1A-B, NLT

I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to awaken the Muslim Arabs in Malaysia so that they can become spiritually alive in Christ.

iStock/Konstik



Muslim woman in the modest burkini swimwear

(This story illustrates things about this people group.)

Kail, a Muslim Arab living in Fez, Morocco, was making plans with a local travel agent for his honeymoon. He wanted to take his coming bride to Langkawi, Malaysia, and he had a few questions. “My to-be-wife is devout, and she will not compromise on the veil. However, she loves the ocean and is looking forward to the beaches. Can we buy a burkini hijab so she can swim with me?” The agent responded, “there is a nice shop in Langkawi where she can buy a burkini hijab and she will enjoy all water activities with you.”

There are about 15,000 Arab Malaysians who primarily live in the larger cities of Malaysia. They are generally well educated and very successful in various businesses. A small number have intermarried with the Malay people. About 80 percent are Muslim, others are Christian. Arab tourists are mostly Muslim, and they love to visit Malaysia. They prefer to live in their own countries and feel the Malays are inferior to them. In turn the Malays find the Arabs to be rude; however, they appreciate the money they spend in their country.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will help the Muslim Arabs in Malaysia to find the true savior of the world. Pray that they will gladly start home Bible fellowships where they can learn to practice his ways.—PD