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# MISSION PATHWAY

PRAY FOR THE UNREACHED

SUMATRA, INDONESIA



## 3 What You Need to Know Before You Join

Pekal People



On the southwestern coast of Sumatra lives the Pekal people, who dwell in Bengkulu Province. With the Indian Ocean to the west and the Barisan Mountains to the east, the region is known for its scenic beauty. A major road connecting Lampung Province and Padang runs through this area, making transportation accessible. Most Pekal people are Muslims, but they also recite incantations to summon rain or drive away evil spirits.

To become part of the Pekal community, you must first choose a clan (the Pekal are divided into several clans). Then, you are expected to roll up your sleeves and prepare a meal for your future family. Make sure there's plenty of food—neighboring clans are usually invited to join the feast as well. Once the meal is shared and the celebration ends, you are accepted as a member of the Pekal people, regardless of your ethnicity, religion, education, or economic background.

Being part of the Pekal community means embracing their customs and traditions. They have a strong sense of mutual responsibility and believe that everyone has an obligation to care for others. Even when income is limited, they are generous in helping those in need and willingly contribute to building mosques.

However, compared to other parts of Sumatra, the Pekal people face slower economic development. They need skilled professionals in fields like education, healthcare, agriculture, and technology.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for letting us come to know the Pekal people—their warm hospitality, communal values, and the way a shared meal can turn strangers into family. Their traditions remind us of how Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, gathered His disciples for one final meal, showing them how to remember His sacrifice on the cross. More than that, Jesus has prepared a banquet for us in eternity, waiting for us to join. Father, we believe You deeply love the Pekal people. Even before we knew them, You already knew each one by name. Your salvation is for them as well. We ask the Holy Spirit to shine His light upon the Pekal, leading them to the gospel, so they too may join Your heavenly banquet and experience the joy of dining at the Lord's table. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

## 4 Balancing Between One and Two Kilos

Rejang People



The Rejang people live in the cool highlands of the Barisan Mountains. According to the 2000 census, their population numbers around 350,000. Research suggests that the Rejang are descendants of the Sarawak people from northern Borneo. They speak the Rejang language, which is not mutually intelligible with the languages of neighboring groups.

In Rejang culture, the division of responsibility between husband and wife follows a clearly defined framework. If a wife carries a burden of one kilo, then the husband is expected to carry at least two. The husband bears the primary responsibility of providing for the family and works hard outside the home. In contrast, the wife is viewed as a helper and is not expected to work too strenuously outside, as doing so might cause her husband to lose face and be seen as irresponsible. However, this does not mean the wife has an easier role—on the contrary, she often shoulders much of the hard labor within the household.

The Rejang people continue to practice traditional farming methods, avoiding chemical fertilizers and planting rice only once a year, alongside or in rotation with other crops. Their agricultural life is steeped in interesting taboos and superstitions. For example, whistling or pointing with fingers in the fields is forbidden. These seemingly simple rules reflect a deep reverence for nature. While the Rejang are predominantly Muslim, their beliefs also incorporate animistic elements.

*Heavenly Father, we ask that You transform the cultural practices of the Rejang people. You designed marriage to teach us how to love one another—may the Rejang people come to see this and shift their focus from society's expectations to Your truth. Help them understand that their worth comes from You, and teach them to love and honor each other so that the two may truly become one.*

*May the Holy Spirit shine light on the spiritual condition of the Rejang, so that in the midst of superstition and taboo, they may behold the power and love of the cross and experience the perfect love that casts out fear. We pray that Your salvation will enter the Rejang community, setting free those who are captive and bound. Lead them to know Jesus Christ, and through Him, be reconciled to God. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

# 1 Praying to the Rice Spirit for a Good Harvest

Lakitan People



If you ask the Lakitan people living outside Lubuklinggau in Sumatra about their religious beliefs, they will say they worship Allah, the one true God of Islam. However, their faith is still shaped by traditional animistic practices and influenced by Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam. Religion touches every part of their daily lives—from housing and work to the smallest routines. In their villages, shamans perform exorcisms and healing rituals and offer prayers to the rice spirit on behalf of the community, asking for a bountiful harvest.

Life among the Lakitan people is simple, and most make a living through farming. Many grow rice in swampy fields. Some travel into town to work for government agencies or on privately owned farms, cultivating rubber, tea, fruit, cinnamon, cloves, palm sugar, or coffee. Others take up informal labor in the city—jobs like carpentry, mining, or bricklaying, though these roles often come with unstable income.

Despite their economic challenges and limited access to education, the Lakitan people live in a land rich in natural resources. Their rice harvests are typically enough to meet local food needs. Their diets are supplemented with vegetables, meat, and fresh fish from nearby rivers.

*Heavenly Father, we pray that You would grant wisdom to the Indonesian government, that they may create policies rooted in justice and fairness, with genuine concern for the needs of the Lakitan people. Please raise up nonprofits as channels of Your blessing—organizations that can offer job training, employment services, and counseling to help the Lakitan people find stable work and improve their livelihoods. Almighty God, we ask that You reveal Yourself personally to the Lakitan people. Open their eyes and hearts, that they may come to know You as the true source of abundance, healing, and peace—and find in Christ the fullness of life and eternal hope. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 2 A People Who Grow Rice in the Marshlands

Banyuasin People



*Photo by Lihat di bawah on Wikimedia ommons*

The Banyuasin people live in the Banyuasin Regency in southern Sumatra and are one of many ethnic groups along the Musi River. Since Musi is widely spoken in the region, communities near the river are often collectively referred to as Musi people. However, the Banyuasin have many distinct cultural traits that set them apart from other Musi groups. They are scattered across swamps, wetlands, riverbanks, and even the forested hills to the west, spanning nearly 15,000 square kilometers within the regency.

Most Banyuasin people are farmers, cultivating rice and various fruits and vegetables. Some work as harvesters in coconut plantations, oil fields, or rubber estates. While their society was once strictly patriarchal, today both paternal and maternal lineages are acknowledged. Important household decisions now require mutual agreement. Their wedding traditions still preserve rituals that symbolize a bride leaving her parental home.

Although most Banyuasin people practice Islam, traditional animist beliefs continue to have a strong influence. Ancestral graves are found throughout the region, and it's common for people to revere their ancestors and pray to them for protection. The Banyuasin are not a primitive people, but they do face the need for more stable economic development. Because they live near rivers and depend on them for daily life, they are also vulnerable to waterborne diseases and urgently need improved access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure.

*Heavenly Father, we ask that You grant the local government wisdom and vision to improve infrastructure for the Banyuasin people. Guide their leaders to implement sound economic policies that bring sustainable development to Banyuasin Regency, so this land may flourish and its people thrive. Lord, we ask for Your abundant provision—for the government to receive sufficient funding to complete vital projects, and for experts and scholars to come alongside them, offering wisdom and guidance. We also pray for Your blessing over the Banyuasin people's rice harvests. May their land be fertile, their rains timely, and their labor richly rewarded. Holy Spirit, we ask You to water the dry and weary places in their hearts. Stir in them a longing to know the Savior, Jesus Christ, and may they find true security and joy in Him. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 3 A River People in Pursuit of Progress

Sekayu People



Historical photo of the Sekayu people

The Sekayu people live in the regions of Musi Rawas, Sungai Lilin, Lakitan, and Musi Banyuasin. Because they live along the Musi River, they are often referred to as Musi people—and more specifically, as “River People” due to their riverside homes. Their houses are distinctively built on wooden stilts, and most Sekayu live near urban areas, enjoying relatively stable economic conditions and a higher standard of living.

Most Sekayu work in agriculture, forestry, fishing, or animal husbandry. However, those living in the city of Palembang hold a wide variety of jobs—ranging from university professors and researchers to shipyard workers, land developers, and becak drivers (three-wheeled vehicles). They speak Musi, Palembang Malay, and the Sekayu dialect, though the latter is increasingly at risk as fewer people learn it, posing a threat to cultural preservation.

Nearly all Sekayu people follow Islam. Each village has a mosque or prayer room, along with schools that teach the Qur’an and Islamic teachings. Nonetheless, traditional practices such as consulting spiritual healers for fortune-telling or healing are still present.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your abundant provision for the daily needs of the Sekayu people. Yet we pray that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes to see that beyond material well-being, there is a deeper and more lasting fulfillment found in knowing and drawing close to You. Father, we ask that Your Spirit would be poured out among the Sekayu, igniting in them a hunger for truth. May their hearts be touched by Your love and drawn to Your Word. Let the gospel reach every corner of Sekayu communities. Lord, we pray You would send Your messengers—whether missionaries, local believers, or through various forms of media—to serve as vessels of Your grace, bringing the message of salvation to the Sekayu people. In Jesus Christ’s name we pray, Amen.*

## 4 People of the Great Waters

Palembang People



The Palembang people have long lived alongside water. Most of them reside in Palembang City in eastern Sumatra, where the world-renowned Musi River converges with other rivers. These waterways provide for their daily needs—bathing, washing, and irrigating rice fields—and serve as vital routes for transportation. Making full use of these natural resources, the Palembang people sell their agricultural produce from small boats, giving rise to the vibrant Pasar Terapung, or floating market.

But learning to live in harmony with water is a critical challenge they face. The community needs external support to develop better drainage systems to prevent flooding, improve irrigation during dry seasons, and upgrade farming techniques to increase rice yields beyond a single annual harvest.

The Palembang people practice Islam. On Friday afternoons, the streets often fall quiet as many gather for prayers. Yet despite the influence of Islam, traditional shamans still hold a prominent place in their lives. Whether dealing with illness or seeking lost items, many continue to turn to shamans for help.

*Heavenly Father, the Palembang people's lives revolve around water. Yet amid water's blessings and its dangers, we know that You alone sit enthroned above the flood and rule over all creation. May the Palembang people come to know this truth. Lord, we ask that You reveal Yourself to them, that they may receive Your salvation and turn to You as a people. May they no longer place their trust in Allah or the shamans, but follow You and experience the joy of renewal and fullness of life. We also pray that You provide skilled professionals to help them improve their agriculture, drainage, and irrigation systems, so their quality of life may be uplifted. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.*



## 5 The Great Wisdom of the Small Mantis

Rawas People



According to legend, a woman once saw a giant praying mantis engaged in fierce combat with other insects by the riverside. Fascinated, she watched intently and lost track of time. Her delayed return angered her husband, who struck her in frustration. To his surprise, she skillfully dodged and fought back. She explained that by observing the movements of the mantis and the other insects, she had learned the principles of self-defense and combat—thus giving rise to Pencak Silat, the martial art now practiced around the world. The Rawas people of Indonesia are especially passionate about this traditional art form.

The Rawas live in Musi Rawas Regency in South Sumatra Province, a region characterized by rivers and mountains, including Mount Hijau, which rises over 2,000 meters above sea level. The language spoken by the Rawas belongs to the Malay family, reflecting the shared migration history between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Musi Rawas Regency is home to a variety of religions including Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. The majority of Rawas people are Sunni Muslims. Perhaps because they live in such a religiously diverse environment, the Rawas are known for their respectful attitude toward people of other faiths and their friendliness toward immigrants.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for showing us how Your grace reaches even the most remote corners of the world. You have used a diverse religious environment to shape a community in the Rawas people that is gentle, humble, and full of hospitality. We pray that the Holy Spirit would work in their hearts, leading them to recognize that You alone are the Way, the Truth, and the Life—and that no one comes to the Father except through You. May Your mercy be poured out on the Rawas people, drawing each one into Your loving embrace. We also give thanks for the brothers and sisters among them who already know You. Strengthen and sustain them, Lord. Turn Your face toward them, and let Your grace flow abundantly through every part of the Rawas community. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.*



# 1 The Radiant Garment of the Kaur

Kaur People



Traditional Kaur women in Indonesia wear a unique ceremonial garment adorned with shells and pieces of glass that sparkle like stars. The centerpiece of the garment is a hornbill motif, symbolizing protection. Today, this exquisite garment has become a prized collector's item.

The Kaur people are generally divided into two subgroups based on region. Those living in North Kaur have been culturally influenced by their neighbors, the Pasemah people. Those in South Kaur—also known as the Bintuhan people—speak a dialect shaped by the Lampung language. Most Kaur villages are located along rivers, with homes built from corrugated metal sheets and often painted in blue and white.

In past generations, Kaur families tended to be large, often with as many as 13 children. However, since the implementation of family planning policies, the average number of children per household has decreased to around three. The Kaur are predominantly Sunni Muslims, and there are currently no known followers of Christ among them. Only portions of the Bible have been translated into their language.

*Heavenly Father, Jacob showed favoritism to Joseph by giving him a richly ornamented robe, stirring jealousy among his brothers. But You, O God, are full of both love and justice—Your salvation was not given to only a few, but offered to all people, including the Kaur of Indonesia. Thank You for never forgetting the Kaur. While we may have only just come to know about this people group, we believe that You have always known them by name—and even numbered every hair on their heads. We pray for missionaries serving among the Kaur. May they wisely use the story of Joseph's coat as a bridge to share the gospel within the Kaur's rich cultural traditions. Father, we ask that Your Spirit would open the ears of the Kaur people so they may hear Your voice—calling them home into Your loving embrace. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.*

## 2 Anyone Can Join In

Kikim People



*Photo by Boysoer on Wikimedia commons*

The Kikim people are widely spread across Lahat Regency in South Sumatra, Indonesia. Agriculture plays a central role in their lives, and they continue to observe a traditional ritual known as Sedekah Rame. Before cultivating the land, the community gathers to offer the soil to the heavens and pray for a bountiful harvest.

To the Kikim, land is more than a means of livelihood—it is like a mother who nourishes them. During the Sedekah Rame ritual, the Kikim express a deep reverence for the earth. Everyone has a designated role: honored elders lead the prayers, villagers prepare the offerings, and women cook the food. Interestingly, this ritual is not just for those directly involved—any passerby can join in and enjoy a bowl of food.

After the ritual, the Kikim's first task is to drain standing water from the fields and catch the fish that are left wriggling across the land—an act that indirectly prepares the soil for farming. Notably, this fishing activity is open to all, regardless of whether they own farmland. Each participant can take a live fish home.

The Kikim people are predominantly Sunni Muslims. There are no known followers of Christ among them, but portions of both the Old and New Testaments were translated into their language in 1995. Online Christian resources are also available.

*Heavenly Father, in a world that often chases economic gain above all else, the Kikim people's respect for the land and reverence for nature are especially precious. Yet they do not yet know You—the One who "created the heavens, stretched them out, spread out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it." (Isaiah 42:5) We pray that the Holy Spirit would prepare and soften the soil of the hearts of the Kikim people, so that when gospel seeds are sown by missionaries, truth would take root and flourish. Lord, call more brothers and sisters to join the work of bringing the good news to the Kikim. Grant them creativity to develop engaging and culturally appropriate evangelism strategies. We also ask that You provide all the resources needed for Bible translation and open new pathways to make Scripture available and known among the Kikim. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

## 3 A Pharmacy in Every Yard

Lintang People



Despite the advancement of modern medical technology, the Lintang people of Indonesia continue to favor traditional healing methods. Herbal medicine remains a vital cultural heritage passed down through generations. In fact, their village—Rantau Kasai—is known as the “Herbal Village.”

In 2021, researchers interviewed residents of Rantau Kasai and found that out of 50 participants, 33 still regularly used herbal remedies. A majority of Lintang people possess knowledge of medicinal plants, with 54% saying they are able to gather herbs themselves. Their home gardens are like personal pharmacies, filled with various herbal plants ready for use whenever needed.

The use of herbal medicine does not reflect a lack of access to government healthcare—it is a cherished cultural tradition. The Lintang people are wise stewards of the environment, deeply aware of the value of natural resources. Researchers described them as people who “neither waste nor exploit the treasures of nature,” harvesting herbs in ways that minimize environmental impact.

The Lintang are predominantly Sunni Muslims, with only a small number of known Christians in their region. Portions of the Bible have been translated into their language, and online resources are available to support spiritual growth.

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wisdom of the Lintang people in their use of herbal medicine. Their knowledge and reverence for nature reflect a heritage rich in insight and care. Yet we know that all true wisdom comes from You—the Creator of the heavens and the earth. We pray that the Lintang people would come to know You as the source of all wisdom, the God who brings healing and life. We lift up the work of Bible translation—may You bless this effort and provide every resource needed to see it through. Protect and guide the translators, so that the Lintang may soon read Your Word in their own language and have their lives shaped by the truth. Raise up more workers who are willing to serve among the Lintang people. May they bring the gospel with love, bearing witness to Your grace and glory in their midst. In Jesus Christ’s name we pray, Amen.*

## 4 Blessings Tied to a Tree, and a Shower of Tradition

Lembak People



Photo by Axel Drainville\_Bengkulu

If you ask the Lembak people of Indonesia what a wedding means to them, they might say: coconut water and a small tree covered in cash! Lembak couples aren't particularly interested in red envelopes—what captures their hearts are lush green plants. At the entrance of a typical wedding, guests will find a small tree placed there for them to tie on their cash gifts. This “money tree” symbolizes the abundant blessings of the community.

As the ceremony begins, the bride and groom stand before their guests, adorned in dazzling gold headpieces and elaborate attire—yet all of it is draped in a plain white cloth, an unexpected contrast. With eyes full of anticipation, the couple waits as ladle after ladle of cool coconut water is poured over them—a symbolic shower of overflowing blessing.

The Lembak people live in Bengkulu Province on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. According to reports, the first dictionary in the Lembak language was completed in February 2024, aiming to preserve the vitality of their language and culture. The Lembak are predominantly Muslim and are also influenced by animistic beliefs. At present, there are no known evangelical Christians among them, and only parts of the Bible have been translated into their language.

*Heavenly Father, we ask that You reveal Yourself to the Lembak people—for they are Your creation, dearly loved by You. Like the one lost sheep sought out by the shepherd in Scripture, You are willing to pay the highest price so that not one would be lost. May the love displayed on the cross reach them, and may the Lembak people turn from animism and Islam to receive the outpouring of Your Holy Spirit and be restored to a relationship with You. Father, we ask You to raise up workers who are both wise and full of Christlike compassion. May they recognize the Lembak people's need for the gospel and for Scripture in their heart language. Stir up their hearts with passion and peace as they bring the Good News, becoming bridges between the Lembak people and You. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.*

## 5 Waterside Homes

Lematang People



Lematang Waterfall

After burying yourself in work for so long, you finally decide to take a vacation to Indonesia—with one non-negotiable goal: rafting. Your search on the internet leads you to the Lematang River in South Sumatra. It's perfect for beginners—calm but never boring, with a charm all its own. Along the way, you'll pass through traditional villages of the Lematang people, known for their warmth and hospitality. Beyond rafting, the journey offers rich cultural experiences, making it an ideal choice for first-timers.

These riverside villages are home to the Lematang people, whose communities are located not far from Muara Enim Regency and Prabumulih City. Their origins remain mysterious. Some say they descend from mass migrations from the Indian subcontinent, while others trace their roots to the once-great Srivijaya Empire. Today, over 300,000 Lematang people live in Indonesia, the vast majority of whom are Muslims, still influenced by traditional animistic beliefs.

Only a few Lematang people have come to faith in the gospel. Resources such as a children's Bible, audio Bible stories, and Christian films are available, and portions of the Bible have already been translated by a dedicated team.

*Father God, You are the world's greatest artist. You crafted the beauty of nature that surrounds the Lematang people—a place where they can enjoy, play, and rest. How precious is Your love! While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Though the Lematang people do not yet know You, You have already prepared love and grace for them. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would lead them to rejoice as they come to know You as their Savior. Raise up workers who are moved to care for the Lematang people, and call forth more gospel messengers—well-equipped and culturally sensitive—to serve among them. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 6 Given a New Name

Besemah (Pasemah) People



*Photo by RaiyaniM on Wikimedia commons*

Mount Dempo is the tallest volcano in South Sumatra, and around this calm, active volcano live the Besemah people. Their name carries deep meaning—it refers to the abundance of Semah fish once found in the rivers that run through their region. Later, during the Dutch colonization of Indonesia, the Dutch gave the Besemah people a new name—not to mark colonial conquest, but simply because they had trouble pronouncing “Besemah” with a “B.” Instead, they said “Pasemah,” and so the people came to be known by both names.

Linguistically, the Besemah are classified as part of the Central Malay group,<sup>\*</sup> but their language remains distinct due to the high homogeneity of the group. Today, most Besemah people follow Sufi Islam, a tradition with which they share a long and complex history. Originally animists, they gradually became familiar with Islam through trade with Muslim merchants. Eventually, in 1914, under the influence of an Islamic Union official, Islam became the community’s official religion.

<sup>\*</sup>The Central Malay language, also known as South Barisan Malay, is a Malay dialect commonly spoken in southwest Sumatra.

*Father God, names carry profound meaning. In Scripture, many received new names after encountering You, but more importantly, they were called Your children. We pray that You would likewise call the Besemah people back into close relationship with You. Father, living in a Sufi Muslim context and placing high value on group identity, it is difficult for the Besemah to change their faith. But we ask You to open a door that no one can shut. We proclaim by faith that the Besemah will turn to You, household by household, and join us in bearing witness to Your glory. Raise up workers who share Your heart to translate the Bible into their language and disciple new believers—until every Besemah person calls Your name holy. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*



## 7 The Powerless Matriarch

Semendo People



The Semendo people have long lived in Muara Enim Regency in South Sumatra. Drawing on the wisdom of their ancestors, they irrigate rice paddies and cultivate coffee, rubber, and other crops. When their forebears were still searching for a place to settle, they discovered that rice farming was key to establishing a permanent home—and that sustainable settlement would require both food crops and cash crops to thrive side by side.

One of the most distinctive traditions among the Semendo is the Tunggu Tubang system, in which the eldest daughter inherits the family estate. After marriage, she moves into the ancestral home and takes on the responsibility of caring for the extended family and managing household assets such as farmland and crops. Often married young, these daughters begin learning household management early. While they carry great responsibility, they are what one might call “powerless matriarchs”: they manage the property but do not own it. Scholars have noted that everything from seating arrangements to political engagement reflects the limited status of women, signaling that gender equity remains an unresolved issue.

Today, 99.8% of the Semendo people are Muslims, and Islam touches nearly every aspect of life. Very few identify as Christians. However, partial Bible translations (Old and New Testament) and online Scripture resources are now available, along with digital gospel content in their language.

*Father God, the breath of the Semendo people is in Your hands. We believe You led their ancestors to a land flowing with milk and honey so that generations could find rest in Sumatra. Only Your Word can take root in the heart, leading to repentance and reconciliation. Reveal Your original design for humanity and help the Semendo reevaluate the inequalities between men and women. Holy Spirit, fill the Semendo people and stir within them a hunger for truth that transforms—truth they cannot find within Islamic tradition. May they turn to call on Your name and behold Your glorious face. Strengthen the few believers among them so they may stand firm in the faith. And we ask that You stir and send workers to that land to glorify Your holy name. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## 8 Faithful Stewards of the Earth

Serawai People



*Photo by Tassilo Adam on Wikimedia commons*

The Serawai people primarily live in Seluma and South Bengkulu Regencies on the island of Sumatra. They believe that humans coexist with other living beings and are not the owners of the earth. Over time, they developed a code of land stewardship known as Celako Kemali, which is passed down through generations in the form of proverbs. The Serawai carefully choose which areas of the forest to cultivate based on its characteristics and select crops accordingly. Land is deliberately divided among multiple leaders to prevent large-scale exploitation for personal gain. Violations of this code are met with punishment—historically, even the death penalty—highlighting how deeply they value the land.

The Serawai community also places great importance on the Ka'aik Nari, a rite of passage for girls. This ceremony is a way for parents to express gratitude to Allah and to uphold ancestral tradition. Typically held for girls between the ages of 6 and 12 or before their first menstruation, the ceremony takes place near a river or well. A female elder performs a purification ritual using water and prays for the girl. She is then dressed in traditional Serawai bridal attire and joins other children in traditional dance. The ceremony ends with a feast in front of witnesses, marking the girl's transition into a new stage of life.

*Heavenly Father, the Serawai people hold the land in great esteem—may they come to know You, the Lord of heaven and earth, and understand that caring for creation is a sacred trust from You. We pray that You pour out Your Spirit upon Serawai children, that they may grow in wisdom and grace. Reveal Yourself to the youth and draw them to follow You. We thank You for the movement of 300 new believers in Bengkulu Province in 1984. Many of today's Serawai Christians may have come to faith through that revival and have since experienced transformed lives, leading their families to You. Father, continue to guard their hearts. Stir and guide them by Your Spirit so that Your truth may burn brightly within them and impact those around them. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

# 1 Postpartum Thanksgiving Ritual

Batin People



The arrival of new life brings immense joy to the entire family. As I play with the newborn, I begin preparations for next week's thanksgiving ritual—Nulak Padang Balik, which means “making the fallen blade of grass stand again,” a metaphor for the midwife helping the mother “unload.” One week after birth, the extended family gathers for this ritual to express their gratitude for the midwife's efforts. The three-hour ceremony includes prayers and Quran recitations offered to Allah, followed by a feast prepared with care by the family. Afterward, the midwife performs a postnatal check-up, and the father respectfully escorts her home, presenting her with a generous helping of food as a token of thanks.

This deeply grateful people group is the Batin of Indonesia, who have lived for generations in the inland regions of Jambi Province. They number around 72,000. As one of the oldest ethnic groups on the island of Sumatra, the Batin's traditional houses date back over 300 years. The totems used in their architecture have evolved over time with religious influence—for instance, since the 15th century under Islamic influence, intricate plant motifs became highly popular.

The majority of the Batin are Muslim. At present, it is unclear how many have come to faith in Christ. Please continue to lift them up in prayer.

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your abundant love. Though we know little about the Batin people, we trust that You know each one by name and count them as precious. We pray that You would reveal Yourself to this ancient people group, that—like Paul—they would be struck by a great light. Though their eyes may be blinded, may their hearts be deeply touched by the love of the cross and led to lay down their old beliefs. We pray especially for Batin parents: may the Holy Spirit stir in them a longing for Your presence, and may their children grow up immersed in Your love. Father, in Your perfect wisdom, prepare missionaries and gospel resources for the Batin at just the right time. We also pray that Mission Pathway will one day have the opportunity to report on the state of Christian faith among the Batin. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 2 Can't Go Without Fish

Jambi People



Photo by Hans Kyoto on Wikimedia commons

The Jambi people live in Jambi Province in south-central Sumatra. The provincial capital, Jambi City, is the sixth-largest city on the island, home to a port and a major producer of oil and rubber. Most Jambi people live in basins, where the Batang Hari River flows through, shaping their exceptional swimming and fishing skills. They are deeply passionate about fish—no meal is complete without it.

Naturally reserved and indirect, the Jambi people often use metaphor and rhetoric to express their true thoughts. Their figures of speech are usually drawn from daily life. For example, when warning someone not to repeat the same mistake, they might say, “The coal is gone, the iron is ruined—what a waste of the blacksmith’s effort” (Arang abis, besi binaso. Tukang puput payah bae.). This proverb comes from the iron-forging process that uses coal for fuel, and it speaks of fruitless labor. Coal and iron, after all, are essential elements of everyday life for the Jambi.

Before Buddhism spread to the region from India, the Jambi people primarily practiced animism. In the 19th century, records began to appear of Islamic religious leaders and members of the Jambi Sultanate. Since then, Islam has gradually become the dominant religion among the Jambi.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for pouring out Your abundant grace on the Jambi people, so they do not lack but instead enjoy the blessings of Your provision. Whether rubber, coal and iron, or the fish in the river, everything surrounding the Jambi reflects the beauty of Your creation. We ask that You guide the Jambi people so that their words and communication would not only draw on daily life for expression, but also proclaim the glory of Your name and the good news of the gospel. Father, please send laborers to prepare a Bible translation for the Jambi, that they may come to know You—the Creator of the heavens and the earth. May material abundance no longer be their only satisfaction. Instead, may their hearts yearn to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness. Only by heeding Your Word can they truly enjoy what is good, taste of abundance, and be filled with joy. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## 3 Echoes of the Ancients in the Buffalo Cave

Penghulu People



*Photo by Sandalipit on Wikimedia commons*

On a dry afternoon, several researchers from the South Sumatra Archaeological Center arrived in Sarolangun Regency, Jambi. Excitement buzzed in the air—they were on a mission to examine 3,000-year-old rock art. When they got there, one researcher asked in confusion, “Wait... are you sure this is the place?” The team stared thoughtfully at the mouth of a cave—currently being used to house water buffalo. Yes, this was it. The cave paintings were inside. Following a narrow path inward, the researchers found black images on the stone walls. The long-tailed bird figures resembled peacocks, but their shapes and colors were distinct from rock art in other parts of Indonesia. A mysterious and exhilarating energy filled the air.

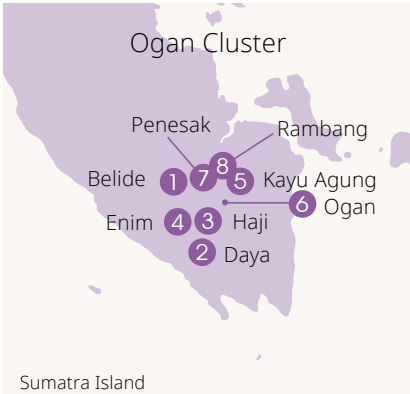
These ancient artworks lie within the Bukit Bulan highlands of Sarolangun Regency, home to the Penghulu people. This area, rich in cultural heritage and scenic beauty, was settled by the Minangkabau in the 15th century as they passed through while panning for gold along the Batang Hari River—giving rise to the present-day Penghulu community. Today, around 28,000 Penghulu people live here, making their living from gold mining, agriculture, and forest gardening.

Most Penghulu are Muslim, and traditional taboos still shape many aspects of life. For example, newborn boys and girls are bathed at different times according to custom. The region is home to just over a dozen Christians, and since 2010, parts of the New Testament and other discipleship materials have become available in their language.

*Heavenly Father, You are the Creator who transcends all things. Out of formless chaos, You made a world full of beauty, wonder, and purpose. We thank You for the Penghulu people—for You not only created them, but also gifted them with creativity and skill. Lord, we pray that You would open the eyes of the Penghulu to recognize You as the unparalleled Artist, whose every work reveals Your boundless love for humankind. May Your Spirit stir their hearts so that their art and craftsmanship are no longer ends in themselves, but expressions of reverence for You, compassion for others, and care for Your creation. May they become channels of blessing in every field of work. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

# 1 Quick as a Squirrel

Belide People



Muara Enim Regency in South Sumatra is home not only to the Belide people but also to the Semendo, Enim, and Lampung ethnic groups. Today, the Belide population numbers close to 90,000. As of 2020, around 75,000 people still spoke the Belide language as their mother tongue. However, Belide is increasingly influenced by Palembang Malay. Even among Belide villages, variations in tone and accent are becoming more noticeable.

The distinct identity of the Belide people is vividly expressed in their dance, Tupai Begelut. During welcoming ceremonies, dancers mimic squirrels—leaping and darting in a playful sparing dance. Over time, this dance was combined with the dances of the Lembak and Lematang peoples, evolving into a welcoming performance accompanied by the famous Indonesian gamelan music.

The Belide also preserve the ancient Sedekah Dusun ritual inherited from the Sriwijaya Kingdom. Held annually at the end of the year, this communal event includes the slaughtering of livestock, cleaning of the village, recitation of the Qur'an's Surah Yasin, prayers for Allah's protection, and visiting neighbors. Despite their rich and complex cultural history, the Belide continue to observe traditional spiritual practices such as spirit-calling rituals. According to the Joshua Project, their animistic beliefs often hold more influence than Islam. It is unclear whether any Belide have come to faith in Christ. Some portions of the Bible were translated into their language in 2019.

*Heavenly Father, the Belide are Your beautiful creation, uniquely gifted with a rich and vibrant culture. We commit them into Your loving hands, trusting that no matter their numbers, they are always on Your heart; no matter their accents, You know Your sheep and gently lead them back to You. May the Holy Spirit open the eyes of the Belide to see the salvation You have already prepared for them—Your flawless Son, whose blood cleanses all sin. We ask that Your Spirit would lead them out of the bondage of old beliefs into the true freedom of life in Christ. Protect them, Lord, from every spiritual attack, and grant them peace and strength. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 2 Crossing the Seas to Indonesia

Daya People



*Photo by Ezagren on Wikimedia commons*

Long ago, a group of Malay tribes from South India fled conflict and migrated to the island of Sumatra. Over time, these tribes intermarried and integrated with the island's indigenous inhabitants, giving rise to new ethnic groups—including the Daya people.\* Today, the Daya live in the Barisan Mountains, mostly at elevations between 100 and 500 meters, alongside the Komering and Aji peoples. It's said that the Daya and Komering languages are very similar, and the Komering consider the Daya to be part of their extended ethnic group. However, some say the Komering disapprove of how casually the Daya manage their land.

From the Daya's perspective, many acknowledge their lack of skill in land management. As a result, some choose to sell their land to Javanese buyers or hire Javanese workers to farm on their behalf. Their fields yield two to three harvests per year, and one-third to half of each harvest is given as wages to the workers.

The Daya population is around 95,000. Islam is a key part of their identity, and fewer than a thousand Daya are Christians. It is unclear whether a full Bible translation exists in the Daya language, but some online faith resources are available.

\*Other related groups include the Komering, Ranau, and Lampung peoples.

*Heavenly Father, You know every Daya person by name. You have counted the very hairs on their heads. You are their Creator, and You understand their spiritual needs and inner longings. We ask that their identity as Your children would become part of their core identity, and that they would find a new sense of belonging through faith in You. Lord, raise up and equip wise and loving workers who can develop effective mission strategies and build meaningful relationships with the Daya people, walking with them through every step of life. We pray that You would use online resources to draw more Daya to know You. Holy Spirit, remind us often to pray for their needs. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 3 A Hidden People in the Hills

Haji People



*Photo by Ifan Bima on Unsplash*

Also known as the Aji, the Haji people number fewer than 30,000. They live in small settlements scattered across the mountainous regions of Sumatra. Compared to the neighboring Pasemah and Daya peoples, they are often considered insignificant. Because of their Islamic background, the name “Haji” is often associated with the honorary title given to Muslim pilgrims (Hajji). However, later studies suggest that the group may have descended from a local kingdom that emerged during the final years of the Majapahit Empire<sup>1</sup> in the 1500s. The name “Haji” is thought to be a transliteration of an Old Malay word meaning “ruler.”

Scholars believe that the Haji language has been deeply influenced by nearby Lampung dialects and has absorbed elements from Komering, Daya, Ogan, and other languages. According to legend, the Haji ancestors overslept and missed the moment when languages were being distributed by the heavens. As a result, they had to borrow words from as many as twelve other languages, which formed the unique Haji language. In addition, the Kerta Duabelas—the Twelve Laws<sup>2</sup>—have been passed down orally to this day, preserving the Haji people's harmonious relationships with others, with nature, and with God.

Nearly all Haji people are Muslims. Fewer than one hundred are Christians, and there is currently no Bible translation in the Haji language.

<sup>1</sup> A powerful empire in Indonesian and Southeast Asian history.

<sup>2</sup> A set of traditional laws that guide the Haji people's behavior—for example, showing respect in conversation, and expressing inner frustration in a healthy way.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace in giving the Haji people their language and their laws, which help them communicate and live in an orderly society. Lord, each Haji person is deeply loved by You. Though they are little known to the world, they are a treasured people redeemed through Jesus' sacrifice. May they come to understand their true identity and worth in You, and discover the calling You've given them to care for the world. Father, it is Your will that all people come to You. We ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the Haji people so that they may yield to Jesus Christ. Let the gospel renew their culture. Raise up and send workers to live among them, plant churches, and begin the work of Bible translation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## 4 Agricultural and Fishing Experts

Enim People



*Photo by CIFOR-ICRAF on Flickr*

On the southern part of Sumatra, the communities living along the banks of the Musi River are collectively referred to as Malays. Each group is named after the tributary where they settled—for example, the Enim people are Malays who live along the Enim River. In 2000, many ethnic groups were officially categorized under the broad label “Malay.” But after 2010, the Indonesian government began recognizing these groups as distinct ethnicities, each with its own rich and unique culture. This shift was made possible by the growing sense of cultural identity among the various Malay peoples.

The Enim people primarily live in the Muara Enim Regency, where there is also a small Lematan population. They tend to settle along riverbanks or on fertile river terraces—locations well suited to agriculture and fishing. While these activities bring a stable source of income, the Enim people are often overlooked in political and economic spheres.

There are approximately 140,000 Enim people in Indonesia. The vast majority are Muslim, though some also practice ancestral worship or identify as having no religion. Only 0.01% are Christians. Parts of the Old Testament have already been translated into the Enim language, and the New Testament was completed in 1995. Online faith resources are also available.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving the Enim people the opportunity to explore and celebrate their cultural heritage. Lord, we pray that beyond understanding their cultural identity, they may come to know their heavenly identity as Your beloved children. May they experience Your love—shown through Jesus’ sacrifice, their calling in this world, and the hope of the new heaven and new earth You have prepared for them. We ask that the Indonesian government would wisely allocate resources and protect the Enim people’s right to participate in public life. May the God of abundance meet their physical needs and provide for their daily sustenance. We also pray that You would raise up passionate, well-equipped workers who are culturally sensitive and willing to follow the example of Jesus by living among the Enim people. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## 5 A Wedding Fit for a Parade

Kayu Agung People



If you're lucky enough to visit Kayu Agung, Indonesia during Eid al-Fitr, you might witness one of the city's most anticipated annual events—the Midang Bebuke parade, a tradition dating back to the 17th century. According to local legend, a wealthy bride wanted to celebrate her wedding by parading through the streets in full ceremonial dress. Her groom, from a poor background, struggled to make it happen. But in the end, he found a way to fulfill her wish and won her heart. Today, the tradition lives on. On the third and fourth days of Eid, newlywed couples don elaborate traditional outfits and parade through town to the rhythm of music, circling the Komering River.

The Kayu Agung people primarily live in the Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, with a population of about 23,000. In Indonesian, Kayu Agung means “precious wood.” They are a settled people who build wooden homes, typically choosing lowland areas between 0 and 500 meters above sea level.

The vast majority of Kayu Agung are Muslim, though traditional beliefs still shape their worldview. For example, they believe that ancestral spirits can disturb the living. Before burial, they wash the body with flowers to confuse the spirit and keep it from finding its way home. Christians make up only 0.02% of the population. Portions of the Bible were translated in 2003, and audio Bible stories and gospel films are now available in their language.

*Heavenly Father, the Kayu Agung people are a beautiful part of Your creation, rich in cultural heritage. We pray that behind their treasured traditions, they would come to know You—the Creator of all. May they, like the bride in the Song of Songs, experience the deep love of the Bridegroom and eagerly follow after You. Lord Jesus, Your cross has broken the power of death, and Your name is mighty to save. In a land where Islam seems dominant, reveal Yourself in power and truth. Raise up wise, Spirit-filled laborers—those You have called, prepared, and equipped—to bring the gospel into Kayu Agung villages. May they dwell among the people, walking with them, pouring life into life, and leading many to Christ. May a faithful community of disciples be formed who follow You with all their hearts. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 6 Each Grain Earned with Toil

Ogan People



*Photo by Claudia Fernandez on Unsplash*

Hassan carefully packed the rice he had grown at home, preparing to bring it to the Sedekah thanksgiving ceremony. “If we don’t bring our own rice,” he explained, “we would be deeply ashamed. Even worse, if we host the ceremony using rice bought from the market, people will think we didn’t prepare at all.” For the Ogan people of Sumatra, rice is not just a staple—it is the very foundation of their culture. Rice features prominently in their Islamic rituals, so they always maintain a personal stockpile for any occasion.

The Ogan number around 350,000 and live in the Ogan Komering Ulu Regency. The name “Ogan” refers to the communities settled along the Ogan River. Scholars note that they choose to live where the river’s current is strongest, since the high water flow makes irrigation for rice paddies easier.

Devout Muslims, nearly every Ogan village preserves its own stories of people embracing Islam. Yet when they encounter followers of other faiths, they are known for their openness. Today, portions of the New Testament have been translated into the Ogan language, and there are roughly a thousand Ogan Christians.

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for creating the wise and wonderful Ogan people and for sustaining them through the generations by Your grace and care. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would open their eyes and hearts to know You—the source of all heavenly wisdom, peace, purity, and gentleness. Use the small community of Ogan believers as salt and light among their people, bearing witness to Your presence and power. Lord, would You go before them to open the doors of the gospel and send workers to bring Your salvation to the Ogan? May they not only know how to prepare their daily bread, but also become like the wise virgins—alert and ready for the coming Bridegroom (Matt. 25:3–4). In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## 7 Descendants of Nobility

Penesak People



In South Sumatra, over 150,000 Penesak people live in the Ogan Ilir Regency. According to legend, their ancestors were distinguished nobles from the ancient kingdom of Srivijaya\*. Perhaps that's why the Penesak are such skilled public speakers.

In earlier times, they practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, moving from place to place each season in search of fertile land. This method, however, led to the depletion of natural forest resources. By the time they returned to their old fields, the soil was barren and difficult to cultivate. Eventually, the Penesak transitioned to growing crops like rubber, pineapple, sugarcane, and vegetables. Others found livelihoods in fishing and the palm oil industry.

While the Penesak people follow Islam, many also practice spiritism and venerate their ancestral burial sites as sacred. They believe the supernatural powers possessed by their ancestors in life remain active after death. Currently, there are no known Christians among them.

\*The Srivijaya Empire was an influential kingdom that ruled parts of Sumatra from the 7th to 13th centuries.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for leading the Penesak people to discover a way of life that is well-suited to them, from their early slash-and-burn practices to agriculture, fishing, and palm oil production. May the Holy Spirit open their eyes to recognize Your constant provision and care. Lord, throughout history and across cultures, You have revealed Yourself in diverse ways, drawing people to know You. Have mercy on the Penesak people. Through dreams and visions, reveal to them the truth that Jesus is the only way to salvation. May the Penesak become a people who fear the Lord, offering themselves as living sacrifices—holy and set apart for Your purposes. Use their gift of eloquent speech to proclaim peace, the gospel, and salvation to those around them. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## 8 Loss of a Bygone Era

Rambang People



Tonight, the village square is packed with a sea of people. Grass mats are laid out in preparation for the upcoming Benah dance performance. As the gong and drumbeats begin, the show starts. This traditional form of entertainment among Indonesia's Rambang people features male and female dancers gracefully moving to the rhythm of the music. Families gather in the center of the square, each contributing a dish to a shared meal of fragrant bamboo rice, chili paste, curry, fish, and other delicacies. It is a feast for both the eyes and the palate—a celebration of the Rambang people's unity and cooperation, and a cherished moment of joyful fellowship.

Sadly, the Benah dance is gradually fading under the tide of modernization, replaced by solo organ performances.

There are over 160,000 Rambang people in Sumatra, primarily living in the city of Prabumulih and the regency of Muara Enim. Their ancestors first settled along the Rambang River. The lush forests once encircling the rivers have now given way to rows of rubber plantations. While rubber farming has boosted the local economy and created jobs, it has also led to reduced water retention, soil degradation, and a decline in biodiversity. A 2021 study noted that while road access to Rambang communities has improved compared to the past, the rough and uneven terrain remains a major obstacle.

*Heavenly Father, we pray that You would move the leaders of Indonesia to recognize the urgent environmental crisis before them and develop economic policies that support sustainable development. Grant them wisdom and foresight to protect water resources, restore damaged soil, and preserve local biodiversity. Raise up capable leaders to improve infrastructure in Rambang villages, so that the people may connect more easily with the outside world, broaden their horizons, find new job opportunities, and encounter Christians who love You. We also pray that You would guide ethnographers to value and preserve the unique cultural traditions of the Rambang people—recording them with professionalism and care so that these cultural treasures may be passed on to future generations. Lord, call Your people to go to the Rambang communities, build deep relationships with the local brothers and sisters, proclaim the gospel to them, and awaken in their hearts a deep hunger for Your truth. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

# 1 New Titles, New Identity

Komering People



Most of Indonesia's Komering people live in the southeastern part of Sumatra, with a population of about 530,000. The Komering River, like a mother's embrace, has nurtured this entire people. Islam has deeply shaped the lives of the Komering, with Muslims making up over 99% of the population. As descendants of the Malays, the Komering feel a strong responsibility to preserve their traditions. A local proverb captures their commitment: "The Malays will never vanish from the earth"—a solemn vow to their ancestors.

One important tradition is the conferral of Jejuluk, a traditional title, on newlyweds during their wedding. These titles do not indicate rank or hierarchy; rather, they signify the different family lineages the couple inherits. The Komering believe that once someone receives a title, if friends or relatives continue to call them by their original name, it will bring misfortune (Walat)—such as poor career prospects, failed harvests, business losses, or even social isolation.

The Komering people are deeply committed to their faith and strictly forbid intermarriage with non-Muslims. Among the entire people group, there are only about 100 Christians—just 0.03% of the population.

*Heavenly Father, ever since Adam and Eve's rebellion, sin has created a chasm between humanity and You. Yet we thank You, for You sent Your one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the mediator between us and You. We pray for the Komering people. You have promised: "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you." May these words deeply move the hearts of the Komering and help them understand that You are not a God to be feared, but a loving and merciful Father. We pray that the Bible will be translated into the Komering language—may Your Word flow like streams of living water, nourishing their thirsty souls and leading them out of fear and into the arms of Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## 2 The Rise of the Detail-Oriented

Saibatin Lampung People



The Saibatin are part of the Lampung ethnic cluster in Indonesia, with a population of about 580,000. They mainly live in Lampung Province on the island of Sumatra. The Saibatin can be further divided into two groups: the Pesisir, who live along the coast, and the Peminggir, who reside closer to the inland areas.

The term Saibatin means “one heart.” This patrilineal society also interprets the term to mean “one mind” or “one ruler,” reflecting a long-standing tradition of loyalty to a single leader. Known for their attention to detail, the Saibatin believe that every word and action in daily life reveals the purity of one’s soul. Their motto, Sai Bumi Ruwa Jurai—“One land, two lineages”—refers to the Saibatin people and those from other ethnic backgrounds, expressing a spirit of openness toward newcomers and a desire to live in peace.

The Saibatin are predominantly Muslim, and their society is governed by both tribal customs and Islamic law. While tribal customs may be negotiated within families, Islamic law is non-negotiable, underscoring the high authority of the Qur’an and the Hadith in their lives.

Today, there are only about 60 Christians among the Saibatin—just 0.01% of the population.

*Heavenly Father, may the Saibatin people, who hold deep respect for their leaders, come to know You—the one true God who rules over heaven and earth. May they bow before You in reverence and become a people who fear the Lord. Draw them near to You, the Holy One. Only through the precious blood of Jesus Christ can hearts be truly cleansed and perfect peace be found. Holy Spirit, we ask You to move powerfully among the Saibatin. Let nothing hinder them from knowing Your love. Remove every obstacle—whether cultural tradition or longstanding beliefs—that might block the gospel from reaching them. We also ask that You care for the local believers and provide them with the resources they need to grow strong in their faith. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*



### 3 “Cash is King”: Rewriting the Story of Status

Pesisir Lampung People



Photo by CIFOR-ICRAF on Flickr

In the egalitarian, democratic society of the Pesisir people, there is one way to completely turn your life around.

While the Saibatin trace their social status through bloodlines, the Pesisir believe in making a name for themselves through personal effort. By hosting a weeklong coronation ceremony (Cakak Pepadun)—which includes slaughtering a buffalo and throwing a feast for the whole community—a person can display their financial strength and elevate their social standing.

The Pesisir Lampung live inland and in the mountainous regions of Sumatra’s Lampung Province. They are a patrilineal society, and the highest authority within a family is the “eldest son of the eldest son” (Perimbangan), whose opinion must be consulted in any decision. To this day, the Pesisir still wear their traditional clothing, which is not only a source of ethnic pride but also admired internationally.

After embracing Islam, the Pesisir naturally wove Islamic practices into their ceremonies around marriage, funerals, and other life events. For example, their traditional rituals for pregnancy\*—meant to protect the mother and unborn child from illness and evil—now incorporate Quranic prayers alongside older elements like incense and chants.

As for the gospel among the Pesisir Lampung, there is currently no clear information available.

\*Bulangekh, meaning “healing and protection from evil.”

*Heavenly Father, only You can heal the sick, raise the dead, change a person’s destiny, and forgive sin. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. We ask You to draw the Pesisir people to Yourself. As they search for identity and significance, reveal to them Your perfect love. May they bow before Your throne, believe in their hearts, and confess with their mouths that You are Lord. Raise up faithful and kind workers to live among the Pesisir, to be good neighbors who carry the fragrance of Christ into their midst. We long for the day when we can worship You together with the Pesisir before Your throne in heaven. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## 4 Only Odd Numbers are Blessed

Ranau People



"Did you hear? They just had their second child."

"Really? Then they'll need to have another one!"

According to the beliefs of the Ranau people, a family must have an odd number of children for the household to be blessed. Sadly, due to poor access to healthcare, the infant mortality rate in the area is as high as 50%.

The Ranau live in the mountains near a beautiful lake. The name "Ranau" itself comes from the local word for "lake." The land in the region is fertile, with coffee and tobacco farming serving as the main sources of income. At certain times of year, liquid sulfur bubbles up from the lakebed, killing off large numbers of fish. But this also creates a distinctive hot spring landscape, which has led the government to develop the area as a tourist destination.

The Ranau have a saying: "Your weapon is your clothing." It's common for them to carry a traditional Malay dagger (keris) with them at all times. At Ranau weddings, the groom places a keris on a tray and presents it to the bride, symbolizing his vow to protect her with all his strength. For most Ranau, Islam is more of an inherited tradition than a personal faith. Even so, their society imposes strong communal expectations: conversions to other religions are strictly forbidden, and interfaith marriages are not allowed.

*Heavenly Father, move the hearts of local government officials to see the severe lack of medical resources among the Ranau. Give them compassion and wisdom to act, that they may work to improve healthcare in the region. May every newborn child receive the care and love they need. Your Word is sharper than any blade the Ranau carry—it pierces to the depths of the heart and brings new life. Let Your truth take root in the hearts of the Ranau people and bear abundant fruit. We especially lift up Ranau believers who already know You. Keep them steadfast in the face of social pressure. When they experience the pain and awkwardness of breaking from tradition, be their comfort. Strengthen them to remain faithful and follow closely in Your footsteps. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

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📍 P. O. Box 3356  
Los Altos, CA 94024-0356 U.S.A.  
☎ +1 (650) 968-1868  
☎ +60 18-315 7707  
✉ [info@missionpathway.org](mailto:info@missionpathway.org)  
🌐 [www.cross-roads.org/eng](http://www.cross-roads.org/eng)



### **Chief Editor**

Yein Yein

### **Editor**

Enoch Lee, Isa Hsu, Joan Chang

### **Translator**

Cindy Wu

### **Proofreader**

Keith Carey

### **Administrative Coordinator**

Priscilla Pua, Novia Lu, Sukin, Maritza

### **Cover Photo**

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Crossroads Publications

📍 P. O. Box 3356

Los Altos, CA 94024-0356 U.S.A.

☎ +1 (650) 968-1866

✉ info@missionpathway.org

🌐 missionpathway.org

### **CANADA**

CCCOWE Canada

☎ +1 (437) 216-6085 (Ps. Enoch Lee)

✉ missionpathway.ca@gmail.com

### **TAIWAN**

UMOT

☎ (02) 2321-2915

✉ service@umot.org.tw

### **HONG KONG**

HKSTM

☎ +852 52822747

✉ info@hkstm.org.hk

### **SINGAPORE**

CNEC

☎ +65 6280 0312

✉ cnecc@cneccintl.org

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