



## Quick Facts

**Pop. in Indonesia:** 3,500,000

### Major Cities:

Banda Aceh: 260,000  
 Lhokseumawe: 90,000  
 Lengsa: 50,000  
 Dewantara: 40,000

**Religion:** Islam–Sunnī

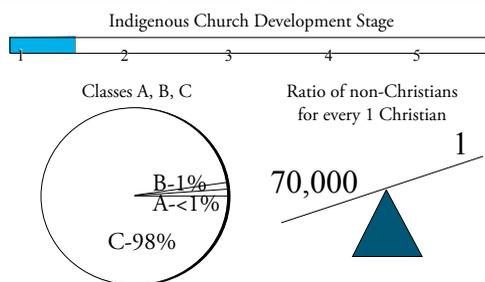
**Believers:** 0.001% (MBB)

**Scriptures:** NT, OT

**Ministry Tools:** JRT

**C Status:** 1 **M Status:** 1

**MS Subgroups:** 7+



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

**Identity:** The Aceh are a Malay people which have inhabited northwest Sumatra since ancient times. Their language is closely related to the Cham people. They are the 7th largest indigenous ethnic group in Indonesia.

**Lifestyle:** Development in Aceh has been hindered by an ongoing independence movement that dates back at least 300 years. The recent tsunami in 2004 further devastated the economy, and wiped out 5% of the population. The economy is based on agriculture, however only about 15% of the Aceh own their own farmland. The rest make their living as laborers or sharecroppers. The introduction of mechanized farming has forced many men to look elsewhere for work throughout Indonesia to support their families.

**Customs:** Inheritance generally follows the Islamic tradition of males receiving a double portion. However, before the arrival of Islam, the Aceh were a matri-

local society. Thus even today property is passed down through a man's daughters. Women run all household affairs and are responsible for child rearing.

**Religion:** Islam became dominant among the Aceh by at least the 12th century, and they are regarded as the first Malay people to fully embrace the new religion. They see themselves as the guardians of the faith, and have implemented Shariah law in their semi-autonomous province. They are known throughout Indonesia for their zealotness, and Aceh is called *Serambi Mekah*, meaning "Mecca's front porch." In the last century there have been various attempts to purify Islam in Aceh, such as the Muhammadiyah reform movement, which sought to eliminate pre-Islamic traditions, as well as mystical practices taught by early Sufi missionaries.

**Christian Outreach:** Although a proportionally large number of mission agencies are committed to reaching the

Aceh, progress has been slow and discouraging. Concerted efforts to engage each subgroup among the Aceh have borne fruit. Even so, most Aceh believers reside outside of their communities for security reasons. The last few years have seen the growth of several small fellowships, though they are still heavily dependent on missionary teaching and leadership.

## How to Pray:

✞ Converts to Christianity are required to change their identity cards which displays their religious affiliation. Once this is done, they are no longer considered to be Aceh. Pray for the right way to approach this situation among new believers.

✞ West Sumatran authorities have confiscated and burned Bibles in the last decade. Pray for favor with those in authority so that the Word of God might be widely distributed.

✞ The loving Christian response to the 2004 tsunami has begun to thaw the ice built up by 400 years of colonial occupation. Pray for effective follow up with those who heard the gospel.

✞ Pray that God might use the witness of the neighboring Christian Batak tribe to reach thousands of Aceh.

**Every year 32,000  
 Aceh die  
 without Christ.**