

## The Ambonese Malay of Indonesia

The Ambonese Malay people live in central Maluku. They are located primarily in and around the city of Ambon, on the island of Ambon. Ambonese Malay is a creole language spoken as a second language by many in surrounding areas, and is the mother tongue of about 200,000. Islam and Christianity are the main religions of the Ambonese Malay people with adherents comprising about 55% and 45% of the population, respectively. The Protestant Dutch Reformed Church is the largest and most influential Christian group. Traditional animistic beliefs also persist among a majority of the Ambonese Malay. Many people are employed as government workers, fishermen, teachers, doctors, and nurses. The Ambonese Malay are also known for being excellent singers and storytellers. Tension still exists today from the violence in the area between January 1999 and February 2002. Since the violence, more segregation is present between Christians and Muslims. The Ambonese Malay people need the Scriptures translated into their language.

Image  
Unavailable

**Primary Religion:**

Islam & Christianity

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

> 15%

**Churches:**

220

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

Limited audio recordings

**Population (date):**

200,000 (1987)



### LARIKE-WAKASHIHU HOMELAND



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	45%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	> 15%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	55%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	80-85%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Comment (Pastors)	There are fewer pastors than churches.	
Number Of Missionaries Working	0	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	There are currently no missionary visas available for expatriates.	
Response To The Gospel	There has been rapid growth, but it is largely nominal and syncretism persists.	
Number Of Communities	50	
Number Of Churches	220	
Comment (Churches)	Every village is likely to have a church; most people (before the violence) had a church within walking distance	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Jonah, Philemon, and portions of Luke have been drafted. Audio cassettes of Bible stories were done by Gospel Recordings. A translation was done by Dutch missionaries in the 1800's, but this archaic version is not used or even available in Ambon today.	
Translation Medium	Printed and Audio	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There is no approved orthography yet. The Ambonese Malay language is not normally written. Pastors currently base sermons on their understanding of the Scriptures in the national language (Bahasa Indonesia), using very little Ambonese Malay; there would be change in this area if the Scriptures were available to everyone in Ambonese Malay.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Audio recordings - a biblical panorama	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Linguists, Bible translators, teachers, medical personnel, seminary/Bible teachers, media specialists, evangelists, and church planters.	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
World Population For This People	200,000	
World Population (Date)	1987	
World Population (Urban Percent)	50%	
Comment (World Population)	The main population center, Ambon, is a very small city. It is difficult to say how many are "urban".	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Indonesia	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Location	Central Maluku: Ambon, Haruku, Saparua, and Nusa Laut islands; also nearby coastal areas	
Country	Indonesia	
Ecosystem Type	Semi-tropical	
Geological Type	Islands, Other	
Longitude	129 E	
Latitude	4 S	
Climate	Rainy season (April - September), 65-75F; dry season (October - March), 75-90F, with 90-95% humidity	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	It can rain all day every day for a week or two at a time during the rainy season.	
Map Features	Ambon City	
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Primary Language	MALAY, AMBONESE	

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Item Name	Item Note
Comment (Language)	Ambonese Malay is a creole language. Many better educated people consider it a substandard variety of Indonesian, but the less educated are more receptive.
Alternate Language Names	AMBONESE
Comment (Alternate Names)	Also called Melayu Ambon
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Indifferent
Second Languages	Dutch
Second Languages	Indonesian
Comment (Second Language)	Indonesian is a second language for nearly everyone. Most anyone over age 60-65 would know Dutch as a second language.
Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	Mother tongue speakers of Ambonese Malay who are Christians usually do not have another mother tongue. They were evangelized by the Dutch long ago using Ambonese Malay. The Muslims, however, may use a vernacular in addition to Ambonese Malay.
Linguistically Related Languages	MALAY, NORTH MOLUCCAN
Linguistically Related Languages	MALAY
Comments (Related Languages)	Also Manadonese Malay
Neighboring Languages	BURU
Neighboring Languages	PALAUAN
Neighboring Languages	HARUKU
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Seram coastal languages are also spoken nearby. (Seram is a larger neighboring island)

## Literacy

## Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	50-75%
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat resistant
Active Literacy Program	No
Comment (Active Literacy Program)	A program is currently in the planning stages.
Publications In Vernacular	About 100 copies of health booklets have been printed.
Comment (Literacy)	Men are more likely to be literate than women. Generally, this is like a 'post-literate' society. People do not read very much; it is an individual activity, and the culture is more social. Well-educated people have a somewhat resistant attitude toward literature in Ambonese Malay.

## Economics

## Group Description

Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Comment (Subsistence Type)	also industrialists, fishers
Average Annual Income	\$500
Occupation	The Ambonese Malay were historically used by the Dutch as mercenaries. Today, they work in a variety of professions, including fishermen, government workers, singers, teachers, doctors, nurses, and military personnel.
Income Sources	They make window grating and rattan furniture. Women bake bread, sago cakes, and snacks to sell. Carpentry is also a source of income, among many others.
Products / Crafts	pearl jewelry, woven goods, rattan furniture
Trade Partners	They are part of the Indonesian governments system of trade. The Chinese living among them have trading networks. Many of these Chinese Indonesians are native speakers of Ambonese Malay.

## Community Development

## Group Description

Health Care (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Health Care)	At least three hospitals in the city of Ambon; mother/child health clinics are in most villages
Diet (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Diet)	They eat mostly rice and fish or papeda (sago pudding) and fish.
Water (Quality)	Fair

## The Ambonese Malay of Indonesia

Item Name	Item Note
Comment (Water)	There are springs. Water needs to be boiled or filtered.
Shelter Description	Mostly cement block homes. In the villages, they may have homes made of split bamboo (woven). Corrugated iron/zinc roofing is used. There are normally at least 6 people in one home (extended family).
Electricity	most homes in town would have electricity
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Good
Clothing	Government workers wear uniforms. Christian women wear slacks or a long skirt with a shirt; Muslim women wear a sarong with a long blouse (tunic) with long sleeves. Muslim men may wear the traditional clothing (a loose shirt with a sarong). Otherwise dress for men would be more Western.
Transportation	motorcycles, public minivans, cars, bicycles, pedicabs, walking, motorized boats, and airplanes (for travel to other islands)
Leading Cause Of Death	Recently, the leading cause of death has been violence. Heart disease and lung cancer are probably common as well (most men smoke).

### Society & Culture

### Group Description

Family Structures	likely to be patrilineal
Neighbor Relations	Today there are pockets of Christians and Muslims, living in separate neighborhoods. Before an outbreak of violence (1999-2002), Christians and Muslims were more interspersed.
Cultural Change Pace	Rapid
Comment (Cultural Change Pace)	especially among Christians
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self Image	Neutral
Comment (Self Image)	They are proud, but think that their language is inferior.
Judicial / Punishment System	Similar to the Dutch system; Right now, however, there isn't much of a judicial system. A mob is more likely to take care of 'justice'.
Recreations	Singing, storytelling, hanging out at the beach, or on the street corners.
Media	Radio, TV, 3 daily newspapers
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive
Comment (Attitude To Change)	Christians are more receptive to change, overall

### Education

### Group Description

Comment (Primary Schools)	there are more primary schools than secondary schools
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### Church Growth

### Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Engaged
Reached Classification	Evangelized
Total Baptized	76,500
Comment (Total Baptized)	The Dutch Reformed Church baptizes infants. Most of the Christians belong to this denomination.
Bible Schools	2
Comment (Bible Schools)	There is one Assemblies of God school, and a Dutch Reformed seminary. There are also other smaller Bible schools.
Comment (Church Growth)	Some mission agencies were present in the area before 1999.

### Religion & Response

### Status of Christianity

Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat resistant
Comment (Attitude To Christianity)	The nominal Christians would be more receptive than the Muslims.
Attitude To Religious Change	Very resistant
Spiritual Climate And Openness	The people are more open now than before the violence (Jan. 99 - Feb.02).
Recommended Approaches	Be involved with and gain the support of the Dutch Reformed Church.

# The Ambonese Malay of Indonesia

## Item Name

Items For Prayer

## Item Note

Pray for the Scripture to be translated into Ambonese Malay, and that a team of local translators would make this a priority. Pray that the church hierarchy will see the value of a translation of the Ambonese Malay Bible. Pray that the people would view their language as a mode of communication for serious topics.

## History Of Christianity In Group

## Status of Christianity

Year Began

1400's

By Whom

Portuguese Catholics

Comments (History of Christianity)

The Dutch Reformed Church came to this area in the 1600's.

## Scripture

## Status of Christianity

Translation Status

In Progress

Available Scripture

Portions

Form Of Scripture Available

Printed and Audio

Comment (Form of Scripture Available)

Jonah, Philemon, and portions of Luke have been drafted; otherwise, only audio Bible stories are available from Gospel Recordings.

## Missions and Churches

## Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Assemblies of God

Year Started

1940s and 1950s

Comment (Number Of Adherents)

next largest denomination after Dutch Reformed

Language Used By Workers

Indonesian

Organization Name

Dutch Reformed Church Mission

Year Started

1600s

Number Of Adherents

90% of Christians

Language Used By Workers

Indonesian

Organization Name

Seventh Day Adventists

Organization Name

Baptist

Organization Name

Pentecostal

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Year Started

1400s

Language Used By Workers

Indonesian