

Churches of Sumatra

by Kirby Olson (June 2018)



Amsterdam, Irina Rumyantseva, 2015

The tigers of Sumatra and the orangutans
of Borneo may not have been bothered
by the Dutch missionaries who largely failed
to transform Indonesia into a church-

driven society, as the prevailing Muslims
quietly but firmly retained a strangle-hold
on faith. In the far-off jungles cryptozoologists claim
pterodactyls still circle, eyeing carbon-based

life as a caloric adjunct to solar
glucose. Plain white spires compete
with onion-domed mosques, whereas some
painters, some poets left a record

that the Jakartans would take to heart.

The peoples of Papua New Guinea
continue to hunt heads, shoot darts
from blow-guns, and boil missionaries
in round-bellied pots, while in Amsterdam
Indonesian immigrants enjoy Frank Sinatra.

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