



2008 World Methodist Peace Award

She is an extrovert who never met a stranger. When the April 2nd Award Ceremony was scheduled to begin, Sister Helen Prejean was still in the hallway visiting with people! Upon entering the door of Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana (USA), she ran into a friend who had served as a security guard in a school in which she had taught, and they had a lot to talk about in the days since they worked together. Her interest in people and their stories was apparent as she visited with people prior to and after the ceremony which honored her.

As a young Catholic girl, Helen Prejean gave her life to God, and the rest is history. She joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille in 1957 and has since served as Religious Education Director at the St. Frances Cabrini Parish in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the Spiritual Formation Director for her religious community, and as a teacher to junior and senior high school students. In 1981 she dedicated her life



Photo Courtesy of Betty Backstrom Communication Specialist, Louisiana Annual Conference

to the poor of New Orleans, Louisiana and began her ministry to inmates and their families. While living in a housing project she became pen pals with Patrick Sonnier, the convicted killer of two teenagers, who was sentenced to die in the electric chair.

Upon Sonnier's request, Sister Helen visited him often as his spiritual advisor. In doing so, she became aware of the execution process in the state of Louisiana. She turned her experiences into a book that not only made the 1994 American Library Associates Notable Book List, but was also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1993. *Dead Man Walking: an Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* was number one on the New York Times Best Seller list for 31 weeks. It became an international best seller and has been translated into ten different languages. In 1995 the book was made into a major motion picture

which received four Academy Award nominations. Actress Susan Sarandon won the award for the Best Actress in her portrayal of Sister Helen.

Today Sister Helen educates the public about the death penalty through her lectures and writings. As the founder of "Survive," a victim's advocacy group in New Orleans, she continues to counsel inmates on death row, and also the families of murder victims as well. As a member and former Chairperson of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (in the United States), she continues to be a prominent voice in opposition to the death penalty.

In receiving the 2008 World Methodist Peace Award, Sister Helen told the audience "the Methodists stood by my side at the very beginning." In the 1980's, Rev. Tim Lawson, a United

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Methodist clergy person in Louisiana, was also involved in the anti-death penalty movement for which Sister Helen became a leading spokesperson.

In presenting the Award, Dr. John Barrett read from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 6, reminding the audience of the command of Jesus that His followers should love their enemies. "Peace is so much more than the absence of war," he said. "It is about truly living in love. Sister Prejean is doing that by

working to bring reconciliation between individuals and the society from which they have become alienated."

The World Methodist Peace Award is given to individuals or groups who are recognized for their courage, creativity and consistency in working for peace, justice and reconciliation. For her witness in her ministry involving the perpetrators of crime, their families and the families of crime victims, the Council honored Sister Helen Prejean with the 2008 World Methodist Peace Award.



Photos Courtesy of Betty Backstrom



Dr. John C. A. Barrett, Chairperson, World Methodist Council; Bishop William W. Hutchinson, Bishop of Louisiana Annual Conference-United Methodist Church and World Methodist Council Officer; Sister Helen Prejean; and Dr. George H. Freeman, General Secretary, World Methodist Council.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2009 WORLD METHODIST PEACE AWARD

Persons wishing to nominate an individual or a group for the 2009 World Methodist Peace Award may do so by sending a letter of nomination to Dr. George H. Freeman, General Secretary, P. O. Box 518, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745 USA. Criteria for the Award include courage, creativity and consistency in one's ministry, life or work for peace, justice and reconciliation. The letter of nomination should include the rationale for the nomination, something about the person(s) life, work and ministry, etc. A picture of the nominee is also requested. The Officers of the World Methodist Council serve as the selection committee for the Award.

Malaysia National Prayer Network

(The MNPN has called for continued prayer for our nation. For more details see their website: www.prayer.net.my)

A NATION IN PRAYER to proclaim God's power and renewed grace for the healing of our land. The Church must continue to press on with fervent prayers for His purposes to be fulfilled.

A call for 50 days - from Resurrection Sunday to Pentecost Sunday of praise, prayer and intercession for Malaysia (23-Mar to 11-May 2008).

Pray for the Transformation of the Nation (1Tim 2:1-6; Psalm 33; John 17)

“Transformation is the work of God written in the Gospel story, we are not the center of the story, God is.

(1) Proclaim Isaiah 61 over Malaysia. God's favour to fulfill her destiny.

(2) A Bangsa Malaysia. May God forge our peoples together so that we no longer regard each other as Malay, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks, Ibans or Orang Asli.

(3) Wisdom, understanding, and integrity for the King, Sultans, Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and the Chief Ministers. A just and righteous government that can maintain peace, racial harmony and protect the constitutional rights of all peoples. Pray for protection, strength on Christian politicians.

(4) The new Cabinet members will love the rakyat, serve humbly and selflessly. The elected members of parliament (MPs) will uphold the law-making institution, be role models of integrity, courage, fairness and selflessness.

(5) Against strife, greed for power, jealousy and hatred, both in the federal and state government, within political

parties and between political parties. Pray for harmonious and productive working relations among them.

(6) Against those who are out to stir dissension, create strife and unrest in racial and religious matters through messages, such as SMS and e-mails.

(7) To proclaim God's Word, the Sword of the Spirit over our land for e.g. Col: 3: 5-9 'Put to death sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed and idolatry. We rid our land of anger, rage, malice, slander and dirty language. Over the media and communication lines we release Phil 4: 8 – to print whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—let the rakyat think about such things.'

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What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

May

| | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| 1-3 | Thu-Sat | TAC Prayer Convention |
| 2-4 | Fri-Sun | SIAC Team Ministry – Sibu District |
| 6-8 | Tue-Thu | TRAC President / DSs Retreat |
| 24 | Sat | SIAC Sarikei District Lay Seminar |
| 24-26 | Sat-Mon | TAC Methodist Women Annual Conference |
| 26-28 | Mon-Wed | CAC Kindergarten Teachers Training |
| 25-27 | Sun-Tue | GC Youth Conference |
| 28-30 | Wed-Fri | TAC Pastors School |
| 29-31 | Thu-Sat | SPAC Youth Convention |
| 31 | Sat | TAC Tamil Settlement 100 Years Celebration |

June

| | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| 2-6 | Mon-Fri | SCAC World Association of Chinese Church Music Training |
| 6-9 | Fri-Mon | CAC - World United Methodist Youth Conference |
| 8 | Sun | CAC Sunday School Teachers Training |
| 5-9 | Tue-Sat | World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches Youth Convention |
| 6-8 | Fri-Sun | TAC Local Preachers Training Institute TRAC School for Intercessors Trainers & Prophetic Songs Retreat |
| 8 | Sun | Methodist Education Foundation Sunday |
| 12-13 | Thu-Fri | TRAC Board of Ministry Retreat |
| 14 | Sat | TRAC Executive Board Meeting |
| 15-21 | Sun-Sat | TAC Christian Home and Family Week |
| 20-21 | Fri-Sat | TRAC Christian Education Resource Workshop |
| 21-22 | Sat-Sun | SIAC Bintulu District Lay Seminar |
| 24-26 | Tue-Thu | Asian Methodist Council Assembly Johor Baru |
| 28 | Sat | TRAC Board of Youth Work Meeting |

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• Bishop Hwa Yung

The Elections Are Over... what Next?

Many woke up the day after the 12th General Elections on 8 March with the feeling that a tsunami had hit the country over the past 24 hours. Almost no one expected the scale of change that would sweep over the political landscape. The Barisan National (BN) not only lost its 2/3 majority in Parliament, but also an unprecedented five states to the Opposition as well. Whereas some had feared that any major swing towards the opposition will result in a BN government with a much weakened non-Malay representation but an even more dominant UMNO, that was not to be. The swing against BN in West Malaysia cut across all three dominant races—Malay, Chinese and Indian.

A side observation on the election is that the Christian (or at least the Protestant part) community has also grown over the last few decades. As recent as no more than 20 years ago, the idea dominant in many churches was that 'Politics is dirty' and that it should be left to the people 'of this world' to deal with. Christians should be concerned with 'higher things' such as preaching the gospel and getting ourselves ready for heaven (even though many were also trying to make as much mammon for ourselves along the way, sometimes in the most unholy of manners)! And we sang with great gusto hymns like 'This world is not our home, we are just passing through ...' But this election showed that there was widespread concern in many parts of the church to be actively

engaged in the political process, so that we can truly be 'salt and light' in a broken world. It is most heartening to note this change. The challenge now is for the Christian community to move forward towards greater maturity in living out our responsibilities as citizens!

Many have written on the factors that brought about the massive swing of votes. Dr Azly Rahman in his article 'The Malaysian Revolution of 2008!' (<http://www.malaysia-today.net/2008/content/view/4084/84/>) listed a number of moral and governance factors that led many to reject BN, among which are massive corruption and the protection of those involved, rampant abuse of power, arrogant leaders, outdated abuse of racist arguments, inability to produce equitable and sustainable development programs, cronyism and nepotism, creation of an alienated and disposed generation, conspicuous consumption, rampant rising prices, inefficient management of resources, blatant disregard of human rights, exploitation of the dangerous concept of 'ketuanan Melayu', and leaders who have overstayed.

To the above may be added at least three other socio-political factors. The first is the emergence of a more mature electorate, especially among the younger and more educated, who are seriously concerned with the declining standards and the lack of competitiveness of Malaysia in a

globalized world. These are reflected in our declining world ranking in economic competitiveness, FDI, corruption index and university standards. The second is the power of the Internet and the mobile phone. Whereas the BN could control the information flow via the radio, TV and press in the past, the bloggers and the SMS's blew all that away this time round and forever! And of course, there is the Anwar factor. The large swing of Malay votes to the Opposition was no doubt due to the influence he exercises among the Malay middle-class professionals and civil servants!

Clearly Malaysian politics will never be the same again. Whereas BN (or at least some parties within BN) has thought of itself as being untouchable, what this election has shown is that no one can put himself or his party above the concerns of the people of this country, and still think that he or his party will survive in the next round! Much credit for the change this time must go to the people of Malaysia, who dared to ask hard questions and are demanding higher standards of morality and governance from those elected, instead of being merely bought over by handouts and election 'ang-pows'!

So the party has begun, right? Just before we get too carried away by our post-election euphoria, allow me to suggest that we are still a long way from home! For what makes us so sure that the Opposition

is that answer that Malaysia needs? We have seen enough in our country to remind us that when an opposition party comes into power, it does not necessarily do better! As Lord Acton so famously put it, 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'! And if you are not convinced by historic examples from our own country, just look at Zimbabwe. Mugabe, who led and won the fight against the white supremacist government of Ian Smith, and whose Presidency began with such promises for his nation, has tragically ruined his once rich country and made it a basket case!

Further, there are tough questions that the present Opposition has yet to address adequately. To what extent is their present alliance merely a marriage of convenience, which will begin to unfold once the hard process of governing begins, with countervailing forces pulling in hundreds of different directions? How many fairy tale marriages have ended up in acrimonious divorces before our eyes in real life? Moreover, we have to frankly state that PAS' decision not to talk of an Islamic state this round is nothing more than an election ploy. It has never renounced that as its ultimate goal, nor offered the possibility of a more acceptable alternative. Finally, when we examine the track records of some of the opposition leaders, we do not always see virtuous political virgins in unblemished white. Look carefully and you will find skeletons in their cupboards as well.

This brings me to my real concern in this article. How are we to respond as Christians to the sea of change that has swept over the country? Allow me to suggest three things. First, the church must put her own house in order. How can we speak with moral authority about integrity and truthfulness in public life if Christians and church leaders are also known to be dishonest in life and speech? How can we expect our political leaders to be

uncorrupted if we regularly and casually pay bribes to get our own way or maximize our profits? Irrespective of whether the BN or the Opposition wins, our call as Christians remains unchanged: to live by God's truth, to obey His commands, and thereby be the 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' (Mat 5:13f).

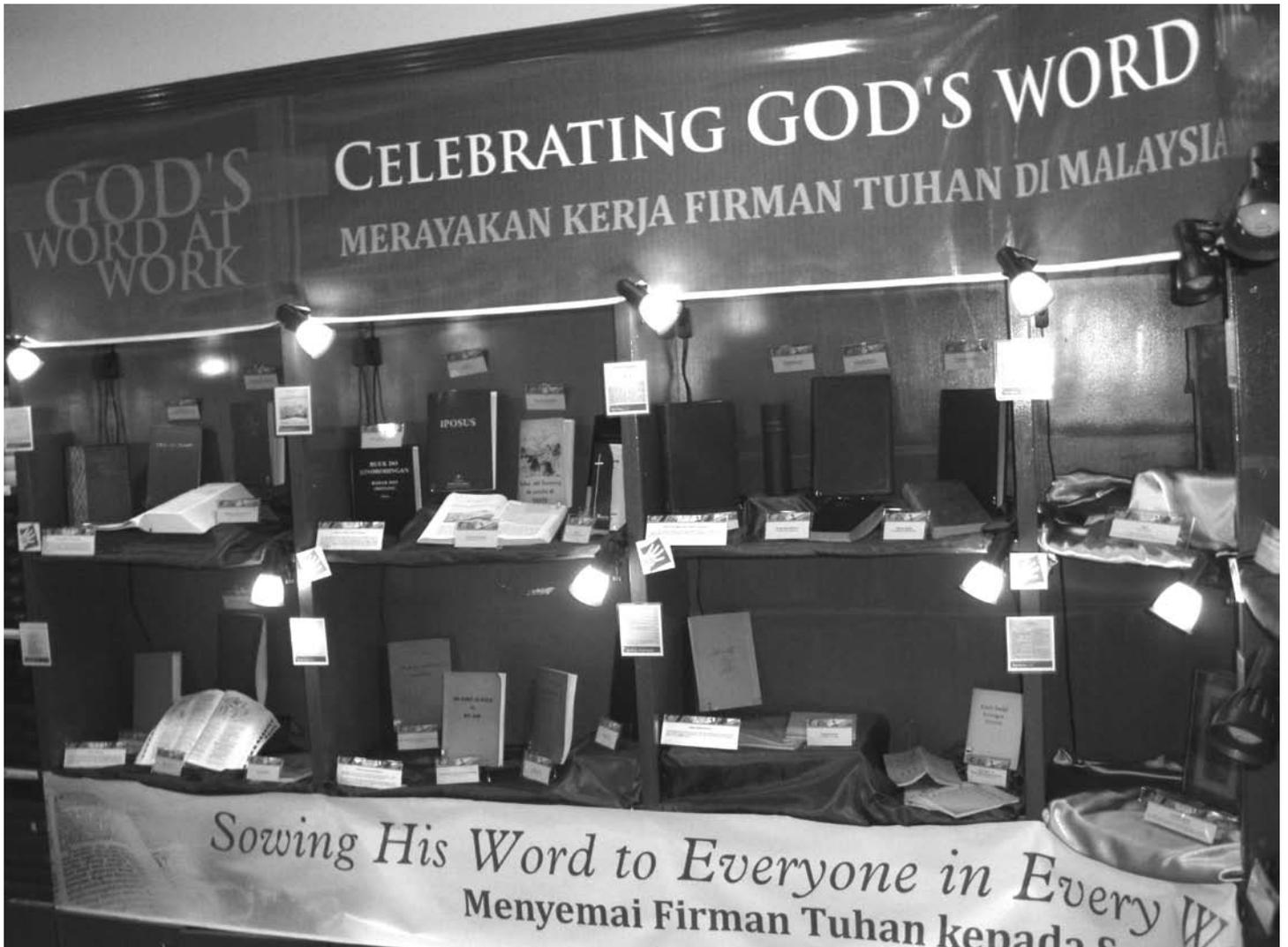
Secondly, irrespective of who is in power, we must do all that is within our means to ensure that integrity and accountability prevails in government. We should demand of our elected officials and civil servants transparency at every level. We should not be afraid to use the press and our blogs, or mass emailing and SMS's, directly or through NGOs and similar organizations, to expose evil, incompetence and corruption at all levels. But whenever we do this, we must ensure that it is done wisely and responsibly, without being careless, extravagant and unnecessarily sensational in our social critique. A good example of this is the 'CPPS Elections 08 Policy Fact Sheets,' produced by the Centre for Public Policy Studies and circulated on the internet. PPS simply stated the plain facts, and allowed thinking Malaysians to draw their own conclusions. And those of us who have been elected or are invited to participate in the process of governing, we should strive to be examples of diligence, efficiency, honesty and compassion towards all, such as Joseph, Daniel and Nehemiah were in OT times.

Finally, the Bible enjoins us to pray regularly 'for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (1Tim 2:2). Many of us had prayed that God will act to bring about a more godly and just government through the last elections. Now that the elections are over, our responsibility to pray does not end. Let us continue to pray that God will subdue all forces of extremism and violence so that stability and peace will prevail in

our nation; that national leaders will stop politicking and get on with the process of responsible governing instead; that God will continue to expose and remove those bent on self-seeking ambition and advancing chauvinistic agendas of every kind; that integrity and justice will rule in the corridors of power; and all citizens, especially the poor and marginalized, will have a fair share of the goodness, wealth and opportunities with which God has so richly endowed Malaysia. Pray too especially for Christians who have been elected or appointed to office, that God will give them grace sufficient for their tasks.

Recently, the Malaysia National Prayer Network (MNPN) was launched on 19 March. This is essentially a network of prayer networks that already exist. The MNPN leadership has called on the whole church in the country to join together in a prayer initiative wherein every Christian takes a few minutes at least (but longer if possible) EVERY DAY at 12 noon, to pray for the revival of the church and the transformation of the nation. In particular, they have asked all Christians and churches over the next 50 days, from 23rd March (Resurrection Sunday) to 11th May (Pentecost Sunday), to set aside time for praise, prayer and intercession for Malaysia and all post-election issues. You will find details at www.PRAYER.net.my on the net. If the whole church can rise up to take on this challenge, many are convinced that the sea change that has begun will certainly open the way for truly greater things to come for our nation, to the blessing of millions in the land and to the glory of God!

The Bahasa Malaysia Bible



The exhibition at the Bible Society of Malaysia

The Bible Society of Malaysia put up a special exhibition on the Bible in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of Merdeka. Entitled “Celebrating God’s Word at Work in Malaysia” it showcased the history of the translation of the scriptures into the Malay language and the languages of many of the indigenous communities of our country. Originally this was intended to be a brief report on the exhibition. But reading the brief history of the translation of God’s Word into Bahasa Malaysia it was not only an eye-opener to some interesting facts but also relevant to recent issues concerning the use of the Christian scriptures in Bahasa Malaysia.

The account below of the history of the translation is based on the paper “Malay Bible Translation: What’s In Store For Malaysian Churches” by Dr. Daud Soesilo, the Translations Coordinator for

the Asia Pacific region with the United Bible Societies, excerpts of which were printed in the newsletter of the Bible Society of Malaysia (Issues 1-3, 2007).

Early History

It would be surprising to many of us to know that a copy of the Gospel of Matthew was translated into Malay before Chinese, Tamil or Tagalog versions became available. The text was completed in 1612, a year after the King James Version was released! But it was printed only in 1629. Another fact to note is that this translation is the very first non-European translation of a Bible portion.

It was translated by a Dutch tradesman named Albert Cornelisz Ruyl. An original printed copy of this Gospel of Matthew can be found at the Public Library of Stuttgart, Germany. Its title is: *Iang Testamentum Baharu: Evangelium Mulkadus Bersuratnja*

Kepada Mattheum. It is of interest to note the instinct shown here to make the Word of God available to the native language of the people, rather than require them to learn another language in order to hear the good news.

Ruyl continued to translate with the help of others. Their edition of the four Gospels and Acts was printed in 1651, followed by the Psalms a year later. By 1668 the first complete Malay New Testament was produced through the work of Rev. Daniel Brouwerious. But this translation suffered from the excessive use of Portuguese loan words, which was not the best kind of translation.

The First Foundations

It was only in the 18th Century that a real beginning took place in translating the whole Bible into Malay. Melchior Leijdecker, a Dutch medical doctor with

theological training based in Batavia (Jakarta today), produced the whole Bible in Malay in 1733. It was entitled *Elkitab, Ija itu segala Surat Perdjandjian Lama dan Baharuw*, and was printed in Roman script in Amsterdam. Twenty-five years later a five-volume Malay Bible in Jawi script was published in 1758.

Leijdecker's Malay Bible was extensively revised in the 19th Century by translators based in what is now Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia. But another translation effort was being undertaken by a Dutch Mennonite missionary by the name of Cornelius Klinkert. This translation was in the low Malay of Semarang, Central Java. By 1879 the full Bible in this Malay language was completed, and constituted the second major step in the process of translating the Bible into the Malay language.

It was during this period of the 19th and early 20th Century that William Girdlestone Shellabear, Methodist missionary based in Singapore, took up the translation project. His was the first Malay Bible translation in the language that was used in the Peninsular, rather than in Indonesian Malay. He is also remembered for the New Testament in Baba Malay.

In the 1930s other efforts were made at new translations to replace these three translations of the Malay Bible. But it was not until 1974 that the "New Translation" (INT) was published, called *Terjemahan Baru*, the first truly ecumenical Indonesian Bible. This followed the "formal equivalence" method of translation that retained the form of the original languages.



The 'Elkitab, the Bible in High Malay, 1821

The Evolution of the BM Alkitab

The INT was also used by Malaysian churches, but "it was eventually realized that a truly Malaysian Bible translation was needed to communicate the Good News accurately, without confusion and misunderstanding brought about by the subtle differences between Indonesian and Malay".

At the same time there was an effort to translate the Bible in common Bahasa Malaysia. This was mainly "the labour of love" of another Methodist pastor, Rev. Elkanah T. Suwito, from an Indonesia background. His translation was based on the dynamic/functional equivalence method that emphasized conveying the meaning of the original languages rather than retaining the form.

The New Testament was published in 1974, the *Perjanjian Baru: Berita Baik Untuk Manusia Moden*. And the full Bahasa Malaysia Bible was published in 1987, the *Alkitab: Berita Baik Untuk Manusia Moden (TMV)*.

Soon after its publication it was thought necessary to revise it to correct certain deficiencies of spelling, use of Indonesian rather than Malay words, mistranslations and the likes. This was done by a team of revisers, a number of reviewers and readers, even a stylist to ensure that the language style was readable and acceptable to all Malaysians.

The revision project enlisted the help of many, including language specialists, academic personnel, the seminaries and numerous BM speaking lay persons and teachers. Thus it was that the revised *Alkitab Berita Baik (TMV96)* was published towards the end of 1996.

One of the issues of relevance to us today was the use of the word "Allah" in the translations. In 1985, and again in 1989, the Heads of Churches decided for the use of the word. This was based on scholarly and historical grounds.

The Arabic loanword "Allah" is the cognate of the Hebrew names of God – 'El', 'Elohim', 'Eloah'.

Arab Christians before Islam had been praying to Allah, and this word was used by Christian theologians writing in Arabic.

"Allah" is the name of God in the old as well as modern Arabic Bible.



Alkitab: Berita Baik Untuk Manusia Moden

The word had been used continuously in the Malay translations from the first printed edition of Matthew's Gospel by Ruyl (1629), the first and second complete Bible by Leijdecker (1733) and Klinkert (1879) and other translations since then.

Today Bahasa Malaysia is widely used in our society and by Christian communities in the Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak. For a great many, BM is the language of their education and communication. For these Christians they read, study and hear God's Word primarily in Bahasa Malaysia. Pastors preach and teach from their study of the Alkitab. The use of Bahasa Malaysia is thus indispensable to their religious/spiritual life and to the practice of their faith.

In this respect, the Bible Society of Malaysia believes it is time to produce another translation of the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia. The Alkitab Berita Baik took the dynamic/functional equivalence approach. This new version would take the formal equivalence method following more closely the original languages. In providing another version it would complement and supplement the dynamic translation, thus affording a greater understanding of the meaning of scripture. This would provide a richer understanding and facilitate a deeper study of God's Word.

For the many Christians for whom BM is the language of understanding and communication it is essential that they are able to worship God, hear Him speak, learn of him in the language of their mind and heart.

Christopher Cheah

(The Miri District Conference is to develop a 4.5 acre piece of land at Luat Bay into a centre for youth activities and training.)

發展為青少年活動與訓練場所

3月25日，蘇慈安會長、總幹事陳康勝弟兄以及年會發展與產業部部員前往美里，與當地牧者和堂址執行會商討有關坐落魯哇海邊 (Luat Bay) 一塊4.5依甲的土地發展事宜。

在商討中，建議該地作為青少年活動與會友訓練之場所。美里教區堂址執行會將成立建築委員會以進行策劃與發展工作。(會長提供)



(Construction in progress of the Methodist Cemetery Memorial Hall, a RM1.6 million project that will provide a scenic memorial park for Sarawak churches.)

衛理墓園禮堂上梁將是砂教會墓園景點山莊

三月二十八日下午二時，位於烏驛路十哩的衛理墓園正舉行禮堂上梁禮拜。



衛理墓園整個墓地約有17英畝，禮堂的工程耗費160多万令吉。大約半年后此工程將竣工，其中將有寬大的停車場、馬路、基設以及迷你湖濱公園等。這將是砂州教會墓園的景點山莊。

會長蘇慈安牧師在禮拜上分享說，在世上我們是寄居的，去世只代表睡著

了，以后就永遠與神同在。這裡是讓我們有暫時逗留的地方，讓死去的人有尊嚴，並等候主再來。

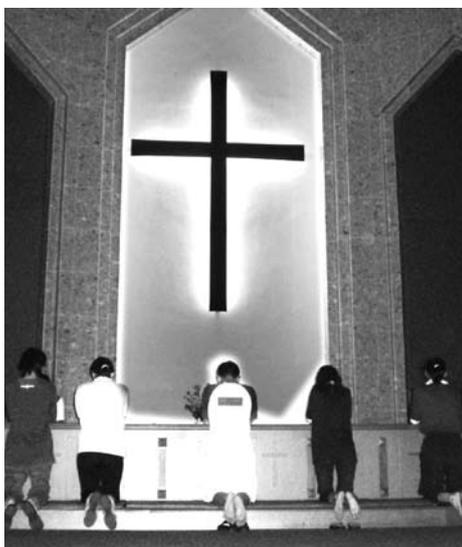
墓園禮堂的建成，讓年會墓園管理委員會和治喪委員會能在管理以及服務方面做到最好，給死去的人和喪家最美好的服務。會長表示很欣賞這兩組人的事奉，他們自願提供這樣的服侍是高超的服務。他們的服務還要繼續



下去，因此需要弟兄姐妹的鼓勵。此墓園專提供給衛理公會會友，去世后只要蓋棺之后就可直接移來，第二天追思禮拜，后舉行葬禮。

接著衛理服務組獻唱一首詩歌。墓園委員會主席李孟進弟兄也藉此感謝神帶領工程順利進行，並表示將響應政府當局的指令，推動美化環境和墓園責任而徵收一次的“美化墓園基金”，但該基金收到數額仍不足，故呼籲還未繳交美化基金者，本著孝心和愛心，響應此工作。

蘇會長給于宣告后，就用“歸耶和華為聖”六個字掛在橫樑上，表示我們一切所做的皆是誠心的奉獻，都為神的國度和福音而做。(林燕)



Prayer Convention bearing fruits at Eng Kwong Church

Since the beginning of this year, Eng Kwong Methodist Church, Bintulu, has a Morning Prayer session in the church once a week. About 30 attend this 6.00 am prayer meeting every Saturday.

The Lay leader of Eng Kwong church relates, “When I attended the Methodist Prayer Convention 2007 in Kuala Lumpur last year, I was touched by Bishop Hwa Yung’s encouraging words. He told us to go back and start a spontaneous prayer

group in the church or in a small group. I keep this advice in my heart.”

The one hour prayer session is then followed by another hour of Praise Dance. It was indeed a spiritual and physical gain for the participants.

Winnie
From Connection
29 Feb. 2008

Jeremiah School 2008

TRAC held yet another edition of the Jeremiah School for school leavers after Form Five and Six. Held over six weeks in January and February, with a break for the Chinese New Year celebrations, this year saw 18 participants – nine guys and nine girls. They represented ten TRAC churches from around the peninsular.

The aim of this programme is to lay the building blocks that will help “build and raise a generation of God-fearing, faithful, persevering and selfless young leaders who will be of a different spirit.” To this end the programme was put together to give an experience not only of learning, living, and serving together but also to cultivate a deeper personal life with God.

This programme is structured towards a varied approach through learning and experience. Classroom learning is combined with small group interaction facilitated by a mentor. The classroom sessions are also varied in their content, from basic doctrinal and biblical topics to life and ministry issues like spiritual disciplines, leadership, spiritual warfare, sexuality & holiness and gender development, freedom in Christ, discerning God’s will, EQ profiling, understanding your mind & emotions, personal mission & core values, to learning skills like quiet time, meditation, conversational ministry, and preaching.

In addition, the youths are also exposed to different churches during the weekends. They gain experience in sharing their testimonies or at speaking at youth meetings. But they also get to meet the pastors and leaders of these churches and see the different ministries run by them. The last ten days of the school was a

mission trip to Kampar in partnership with a Wesley Methodist Church there. The youths practiced prayer profiling that they learnt, focusing on the UTAR campus students. They went on hostel visits and planned for a one night event of fun, sharing and drama. The visits resulted in more than 120 contacts made, and the opportunity to share the gospel with about 25 of them. The night saw about 90 students from the campus and high schools attend the event.

The school celebrated its graduation with a commissioning service by the District Superintendent of Perak, Rev. Ashok Amarasingham. As the participants parted ways it is hoped that their development will continue as they build on their learning and also through future mentors who will come their way.

TESTIMONIES

Before I came to Jeremiah school, I was confused and lonely. I was empty and felt Christianity was a deception. God proved me wrong. God spoke to me in his way during a quiet retreat. He explained to me how he created this world and how he loved me. I personally also felt His love through His personal touch and the companionship of my fellow school mates. I felt I belonged to this group of brothers and sisters. Now I am more confident of myself because I have grown with them and through my mentors also. I have matured and no longer empty because I know I can trust in these people.

Daniel Chiam
WMC, Alor Setar



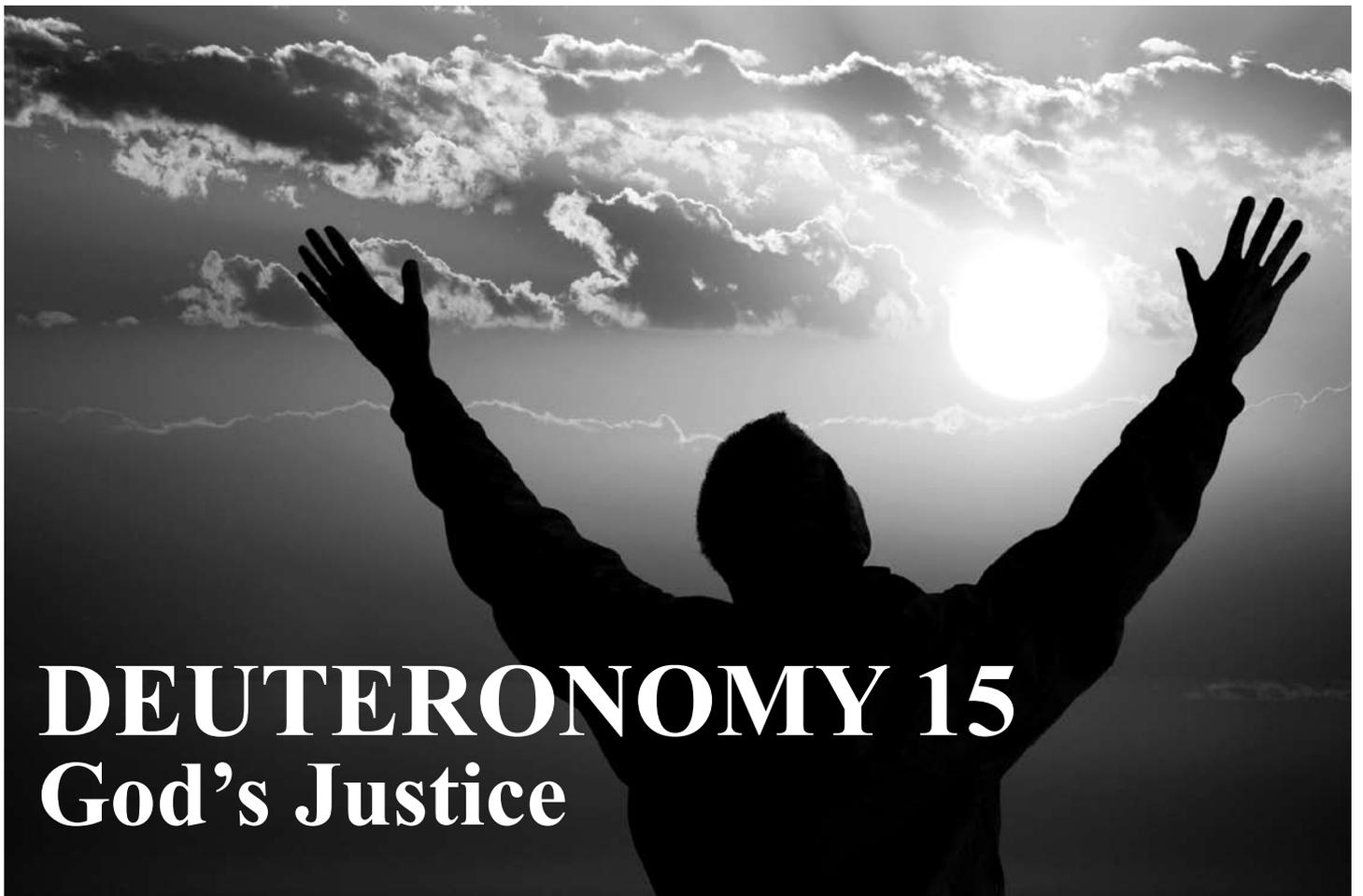
In the beginning, I was not sure of whether to go for Jeremiah School (JS) or not. This was because I had just finished SPM and after all the late nights, I wanted rest and entertainment. My thinking totally changed when I realized God had opened a lot of doors for me to attend JS, so I went for it.

During JS, I learned how to confront people with love whom I have offended or vice versa. Other than that, I had the opportunity to share the gospel to someone I have never met before. During missions week, it was my first time sharing the gospel to strangers! I was filled with joy and happiness after doing so. I have also learned that it is not hard to study the bible; we just need the right tools for it.

After attending JS, I am trusting God to use me to do His will and be the salt and light in this world.

Tiffany Kovalan
WMC, Seremban





DEUTERONOMY 15

God's Justice

The Poverty and Justice Bible is the first ever to highlight more than 2,000 passages that speak of God's attitude to poverty and injustice. Challenging the notion that the Bible is a dusty, outdated rulebook, it shows that, on the biggest issues of our day, God got there first.

by John Douglas, Micah Challenge

John Douglas, Executive Assistant of Micah Challenge, explores striking verses that impact on society.

Deuteronomy 15.1–18 At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts...

God's justice is not just about what is right and fair but is also about overwhelming generosity. I had never understood this before. And thanks to a sermon I once heard based on this passage, The Economics of Generosity, it became so alive to me in a whole new way.

Verses 1 to 3 deal with the release of debt while verses 12 to 18 are concerned with the release of slaves. Both of these are laws based on two ancient economic laws in Exodus reissued in Deuteronomy with added instruction for generosity and compassion. These laws are designed to

protect the impoverished and marginalised on the lower rungs of society.

What strikes me first of all is the fact that God has gone to the lengths and detail of setting out an economic system that is fair and just with the goal of the economic balance he wants to see in society. God has not only considered the plight of the poor but also the responsibility of having plenty, giving clear instruction on how to honour him.

In Deuteronomy 15.1–18 God presents both his ideal, 'No one in Israel should ever be poor' (4) and the fallen human reality that, 'There will always be some Israelites who are poor and needy.' (11)

But that does not leave us without excuse because generosity functions as a bridge between this ideal and our reality while God's laws function as a break from the relentless economic forces at work within society. God tells us that we are not meant to be 'mean and selfish' with our money; we are called to 'be kind' and 'be happy to give to the poor what they need'. Slaves, when they were released, were not to be sent off with mere well wishes but an incredibly generous redundancy package

of 'sheep and goats and a good supply of grain and wine.' God instils generosity in these laws so that his people will reflect to the world the generosity they have been shown by him.

At one point in the sermon, the preacher stated, 'If there was a far great commitment, let alone from the G8 and all those other forces, if there was even commitment among the world Church to commit itself to some kind of fairness and justice and generosity, what a difference that would make and what a prophetic sign that would be.'

So as God's desire for justice and his concern for the poor are plain for us to see, will we commit to fairness, justice and generosity as His people? Can we be the generation that will make that difference and be a prophetic sign to the world?

By Christian Today
www.christiantoday.com.my

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The Certificate in Christian Ministry (Social Ministry)

Seminari Theoloji Malaysia and Bible College of Malaysia in collaboration with Malaysian Care are again offering the Certificate in Christian Ministry (Social Ministry) to lay leaders, Christian social workers and volunteers engaged in social ministry.

This programme is designed to provide a balance of biblical and theological studies with theoretical and practical training. This will enable practitioners to gain theological understanding in Christian response to human needs as well as useful social work skills and perspectives in a macro level approach to address social issues. It is not intended to be too academic but more practical in nature.

Applicants should possess a SPM with an aggregate of thirty or less for five subjects. Those who are thirty years and above and those who have the relevant work or ministry experience will also be considered. Those interested to further their studies upon completion of the certificate, can apply to the respective seminaries to continue in their diploma or degree programmes.

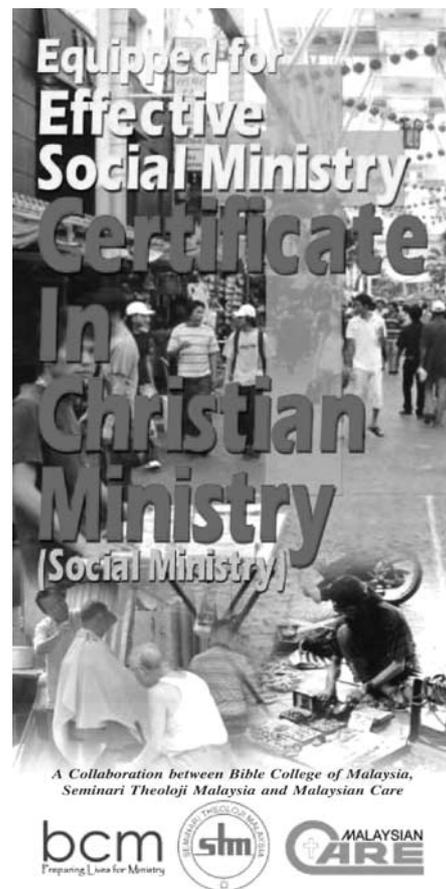
The programme involves 10 modules, six comprising the social core subjects and four theological core subjects. Each module is taught over two weekends (Friday night to Sunday evening). The 10 modules will be offered from June 2008 through 2009. For details of the modules and the schedules logon to www.malaysiancare.org or www.stm.edu.my.

For details & further information, please contact either:

Malaysian Care
Rev. Esther Alfred,
Tel: 03-90582102
Email: esther_alfred@malaysiancare.org

Seminari Theoloji Malaysia
Ms. Sarah Yap, the TEE Director,
Tel: 06-6322815
Email: sarahyap@stm.edu.my

Bible College of Malaysia
Ms May Ong, the Registrar,
Tel: 03-79565621
Email: maybcm@gmail.com



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Seminari Theoloji Malaysia and Malaysian Care

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SEMINARI THEOLOJI MALAYSIA

MALAYSIAN
CARE

CCM News

Tan Sri Dompok to continue making non-Muslim voices heard

KUDAT: Tan Sri Bernard Dompok will continue voicing matters concerning the well being of non-Muslim communities in the country.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department said the government had promised that everybody would have a place under the Malaysian sun.



Tan Sri Dompok (left) receiving a memento from Rev. Masandu after the synode opening ceremony.

"That was the Barisan Nasional manifesto for the recent general election. I intend to help ensure the promise is fulfilled. I will continue to voice out our concerns (as the non-Muslim communities)," he said.

Dompok, the Upko president, said this in his speech when officiating the 33rd Protestant Church of Sabah (PCS) Synode here on Thursday 3 April 2008.

"We are all citizens of Malaysia, this beloved country of ours. Our rights are enshrined in the Federal Constitution. Let us work hand-in-hand to ensure our basic rights, such as freedom of religion, will always be upheld," he said.

In that context, he had contributed towards seeking solutions to sensitive issues including those on Syariah law, apostasy,

the banning of the use of the word Allah by non-Muslims and the likes.

He also noted with joy that the government "has a listening ear" to whatever grouses from people of all walks of life.

"This is actually in line with the Barisan Nasional manifesto that everybody has a place under the Malaysian sun. On our part, let us play well our role where ever we may be. Together, we can make this country a nation we can all be proud of," said Dompok.

The three-day synode, under the leadership of PCS president Reverend Sopirid Masandu, was attended by about 300 people. Also present were Reverend Dr Hermen Shastri, the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) secretary general.

Methodists in Southern Africa to Build Seminary

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is planning to open a Methodist seminary which will develop leaders to transform the church and the nation of South Africa. The new seminary will enrol its first 35 students in January, 2009 and will provide candidates for the ministry with three years of residential, spiritual and academic training, and internships—instead of the current six years of on-the-job training. The new seminary will be located within the Pietermaritzburg Cluster, a center of ecumenical theological institutions including the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, near Durban.

The Rev. Peter Storey, former bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa is chair person of the seminary project. The seminary is currently seeking gifts and matching funds from international friends of the church to endow faculty and staff positions. Rev. Storey speaks of the challenges faced by his

country, including poverty, disease, crime, corruption, racism, education crises, and environmental degradation, etc. Spiritual leaders like John and Charles Wesley, as well as William Wilberforce, a member of British Parliament who helped to abolish the British slave trade, can inspire change that is needed in today's world.

The seminary will be named in honor of the late Rev. Seth Mokitimi, the first black person elected to lead a major denomination in South Africa. Rev. Peter Storey describes him as one of the church's most renowned preachers and educators, and a powerful influence on the life of South African leader Nelson Mandela, who "models the kind of minister the seminary seeks to produce."

(From First Friday Letter, March newsletter from the World Methodist Council)

Rwanda Christians use water project to reconcile with Muslims

Fredrick Nzwili Gatore, Rwanda (ENI). An interfaith project to provide clean piped water in eastern Rwanda is a practical way to make amends to Muslims in the east African country who have been marginalised in the past by Christians, says Anglican Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini.

"We Christians see it is one way of saying, 'We are sorry'," said Kolini, referring to the water project in the Gatore sector of Rwanda's eastern district of Kirehe. The scheme was inaugurated on 19 March by the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation and president of Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa.

"This project signifies more than bringing water to those who lacked it before," said Sheikh Yussuf Bizuru, the grand imam of Rwanda's Eastern Province. "It offers to the rest of Africa and the world a model of harmonious interfaith cooperation for development."

In the past, Muslims were often excluded from education and government jobs since they had no place in the majority

Roman Catholic Church, which exercised great influence in Rwanda. As a result, Muslims were largely confined to engaging in minor trade. This meant they were also held in low regard, because traders are not highly valued while farmers are.

"Religion is supposed to be a uniting tool. That's the challenge we had to face. Now we understand we can work together," Archbishop Kolini told Ecumenical News International.

Switzerland-based Nestlé SA, the world's biggest food and beverage company, provided funds for the project, which was supervised by Rwanda's faith leaders, under the auspices of the Interfaith Commission of Rwanda.

The district of Kirehe is rich in water resources ranging from rivers and springs to swamps, wetlands and lakes, according to the LWF. The most common sources of domestic water supply are streams and mountain springs, many of which are currently unprotected and poorly accessible to the local population.

Archbishop Kolini, who heads the Anglican church in Rwanda, said he hoped the project would strengthen reconciliation efforts in a country where an estimated 800 000 people were killed in 1994 when members of the country's majority Hutu tribe slaughtered minority Tutsis and Hutus seen as accommodating to Tutsis.

"We could not go out and talk about reconciliation when we were still fighting amongst ourselves," Kolini said.

Between 4.6 percent and 15 percent of Rwanda's 9.9 million people are estimated to be Muslims. Many reports, however, have pointed to an increase in conversions to Islam in the years following the genocide.

The interfaith water project serves an estimated 21 600 people with filtered clean water collected in concrete reservoirs, and distributed through 39 kilometres of pipelines and at 156 water points.

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From Mission to Church

About The Book

From Mission to Church recounts how The Methodist Church in Singapore started as a Mission station in 1885 by Rev James Thoburn, its history and the challenges it faced. The efforts of missionaries and local workers began to bear fruit by the outbreak of the Pacific War, later setting the stage for the inauguration of the Southeastern Asia Central Conference in 1950. It was to lead to the autonomy of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and in Singapore after many twists and turns.

CONTENTS

- 1 Prologue
- 2 Planting the Mission
- 3 Early Asian Mission Workers
- 4 Expanding Across Frontiers
- 5 Training Local Workers
- 6 Mission to Young People
- 7 Organising the Mission
- 8 The Gathering Challenges
- 9 The Uses of Adversity

- 10 The Emerging Church
- 11 The Central Conference in Southeast Asia
- 12 The Road to Autonomy
- 13 Organising the Autonomous Church in Malaysia and Singapore — 1968
- 14 Restructuring the MCMS
- 15 Becoming The Methodist Church in Singapore

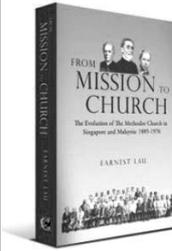
From Mission to Church will be available from April 2008.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Earnest Lau served for many years as an educationist prior to being appointed the Archivist of The Methodist Church in Singapore. He was a teacher and Principal of Anglo-Chinese School, and latterly Director of the Regional Language Centre (RELC). He was educated at Oberlin College in the United States, and Balliol College, Oxford, where he read history. For

many years, he has been closely connected with the Methodist Church, serving the local church, Annual Conference and the General Conference.

Praise for *From Mission to Church*



“This book offers a fascinating and poignant account of the missional, organisational and ecclesiastical developments in Methodism not only in Singapore, but also in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma, with reference to developments in America and India.”

Bishop Dr Robert Solomon
Bishop of The Methodist Church in Singapore
In his Foreword

PRESS STATEMENT • Majlis Gereja-Gereja Malaysia • Council Of Churches Of Malaysia

Hebi – Use Of Bahasa Malaysia

Kami, Ahli Jawatan Kuasa Hal Ehwal Bumiputra Indigenous (HEBI) satu komuniti bagi penganut agama Kristian pribumi seMalaysia di bawah payung Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), ingin meluahkan isi hati kami mengenai larangan pihak kerajaan terhadap penggunaan beberapa istilah, baik secara lisan mahupun tulisan.

Bahasa Melayu Telah Digunakan Sebelum Merdeka

Sebelum Sabah dan Sarawak, atau lebih dikenali pada masa itu sebagai Borneo Utara mencapai kemerdekaan bergabung dengan Malaysia pada tahun 1963, agama Kristian telah dianuti oleh kebanyakan kaum pribumi. Selain menggunakan bahasa ibunda mereka dalam upacara keagamaan, bahasa Malaysia juga digunakan secara meluas. Maka itu bolehlah dikatakan bahawa penganut agama Kristian di Sabah dan Sarawak telah lama menggunakan bahasa Malaysia.

Penganut Agama Kristian Menyahut Seruan Kerajaan Agar Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia.

Sebagai rakyat Malaysia yang bertanggungjawab, maka barulah kita menunaikan seruan-seruan kerajaan untuk memartabatkan bahasa Malaysia dalam kehidupan dan urusan harian. Dengan demikian kami penganut agama Kristian menyahut seruan tersebut sehingga bahasa Malaysia digunakan dalam kehidupan harian termasuk upacara penyembahan. Dengan itu, kerajaan Malaysia seharusnya merasa bangga kerana matlamat kerajaan tercapai.

Bahasa Malaysia Adalah Bahasa Kita Semua

Bahasa Malaysia adalah bahasa kebangsaan yang digunakan oleh semua rakyat Malaysia yang berbilang kaum dan agama. Maka dengan itu setiap rakyat Malaysia mempunyai hak yang sama. Dengan itu seharusnya tiada sekatan terhadap kita sebagai rakyat Malaysia menggunkannya termasuk dalam upacara keagamaan masing-masing.

Bahasa Malaysia Telah Mendarahdaging

Bahasa Malaysia meresap dalam kehidupan rakyat Malaysia. Ia adalah bahasa yang paling dekat dengan hati seluruh rakyat Malaysia kerana sistem pendidikan menekankan kepentingan bahasa tersebut. Apabila kita ingin meluahkan isi hati kita menggunakan bahasa yang paling kita kuasai. Demikian juga dalam upacara keagamaan. Bagi kami, tiada bahasa yang kami lebih fasih selain daripada bahasa Malaysia. Dengan bahasa inilah kami dapat menyembah Tuhan kami dengan lebih baik.

Dengan sebab-sebab yang tercatat diatas, maka kami ingin memaklumkan kepada pihak kerajaan bahawa kami akan terus menggunakan bahasa Malaysia, bahasa kita, bahasa semua kaum, baik dalam bentuk lisan mahupun tulisan untuk melaksanakan tanggungjawab kami sebagai umat Kristian.

Sekian terima kasih.

Rev. Hannock Wong
(Pengerusi HEBI)

Pastor Juraya Masandu
(Setiausaha HEBI)

Rev. Bah Saha
(Bendahari HEBI)

Rev. Trevor Tinda
(Ahli HEBI)

Rev. Asson Ullie
(Ahli HEBI)

Rev. Doding Rito
(Ahli HEBI)

Rev. Markus Sigar
(Ahli HEBI)

Dated: 25th February 2008



A Learning Opportunity With MAPs

MAPs (Ministering through Adventure Programmes) is a Christian ministry that utilises adventure activities as a tool for evangelism and discipleship. As the pioneer of adventure ministries in Malaysia, MAPs provides opportunities for Christians above 18 years of age to be trained in this concept.

Through BOIC (Basic Outdoor Instructor Course), participants will be introduced to the fundamentals and practices of working with youths in the outdoor settings. Topics covered in the two days one night residential training include:

- ★ experiencing adventure activities
- ★ instructional methods
- ★ risk management
- ★ facilitation skills
- ★ evangelism tools

At the end of the course, selected participants will be offered the opportunity to serve with MAPs as a volunteer instructor.

The following training dates and venues are available to choose from:

| Date | Venue | Price* (RM) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 10-11 May | Kepong, Kuala Lumpur | 80 |
| 21-22 June | Sungai Johor, Johor Bahru | 60 |
| 19-20 July | Balik Pulau, Penang | 50 |
| 9-10 August | Bukit Cahaya, Shah Alam | 80 |
| 20-21 September | Gunung Panti, Johor Bahru | 50 |
| 18-19 October | Balik Pulau, Penang | 50 |
| 15-16 November | Kepong, Kuala Lumpur | 80 |
| 6-7 December | Sungai Johor, Johor Bahru | 60 |

***Note:**

i. Price includes food, accomodation, activities and training materials only and may subject to change without further notices.

ii. Full-time students who are not sponsored by a church may request for a subsidy of RM20.

Details of the course will be forwarded to you once you register via email (preferred) to instructor@adventureministry.org at least **two weeks** before the selected training date. Alternatively, you may contact Heng Kai at 012-4852506 for more information.



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Obituary

Rev. Elijah Bala

4 / 5 / 1946 - 24 / 2 / 2008



Rev. Elijah Bala, a member of the Editorial Board of Pelita Methodist, passed away on Sunday 24 February 2008. He was 61 years old. Our deepest condolences to his family, from the Board members of Pelita.

Rev. Elijah came into the pastoral ministry after his retirement from the Health Ministry. After completing studies at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia in 2003, he served in the Tamil Annual Conference from 2004. He was ordained an Elder in 2007.

From 2004 – 2007 he was the pastor of the Tamil Methodist Church Ulu Klang. In 2007 Rev. Elijah was also appointed the pastor of the TMC Sungai Besi/Serdang. At the District level he was the advisor for the Young Adult Fellowship.

Rev. Elijah was the Chairman of the Publications Board of the Tamil Annual Conference publishing their news magazine Berita TAC. As board member of Pelita Methodist he provided news from TAC to the magazine and always offered sound advice to the Board.



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In Honour of Ms Yin Kam Yoke

“Not many people have the privilege of serving another ten years after Government service in God’s service!”

The privilege to serve was how Ms Yin Kam Yoke, Education Secretary of the Council of Education of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, thought of her work as she gave her speech at her retirement dinner.

Friends and colleagues, retired Principals and teachers, associates from the Malayan Christian Schools’ Council (MCSC), members from her church Emmanuel Methodist Church, past Education Secretaries, old students become friends, gathered on 5 April 2008 to honour and celebrate her coming retirement on 23 May this year.



Ms Yin with the COE staff

In her career in education spanning 31 years she has been a teacher, lecturer and Head of Department at two teachers’ training colleges, and Principal, the last being ten years as Principal of Methodist Girls’ School, Ipoh. During her studies for the M.A. in Education at Reading University, UK she became a Christian and joined the Methodist church on her return. Upon her retirement from Government service she joined the Council of Education as Deputy Education Secretary in 1998 and became Education Secretary in October 2004.

Ms Yin, as she is called by all, was fondly remembered for all her work at the COE and the Malayan Christian Schools’ Council of which she is the Honorary Secretary since 2002. Ms Moey Yoke Lai, CEO of Methodist College Kuala Lumpur, specially noted her ability to raise funds for building projects, for the college as well as other mission schools. She indicated the unique hand gesture



Expressing her thanks

Ms Yin would show (not possible to describe here; you have to see it yourself) to say that getting funds will be no problem and she will take care of it. And get the funds she did! Ms Moey ended with the attribution of the virtuous woman found in Proverbs 31 as eminently suited to describe Ms Yin, although she is neither a wife nor a mother.

Bishop Hwa Yung used another reference from scripture to give a description of Ms Yin. In the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8), he drew attention to the response of the judge to the widow’s unceasing badgering and plea for justice. He gave in because he could see that she would wear him out with her persistence. In a light vein, Bishop Hwa Yung declined to say how Ms Yin provokes him with her insistent ways and queries. But he noted that this quality, perhaps, was instrumental in her dealings with officials and Government departments to get things moving.

It was a surprise to know that she was a shy introverted schoolgirl who was transformed into an “overbearing presence.” She testified, “It is by God’s grace that He has transformed me to do His work, by making me overbearing, persistent and vocal, to the extent of being pressurizing.”

Reflecting on what she thought was her greatest contribution Ms Yin chose the

small part she played in getting the official approval from the Lembaga Peperiksaan for the change of text for the SPM Bible Knowledge paper from the RSV to the Good News version. All the groundwork was done by others and the MCSC but it had lain dormant for two years at the Lembaga Peperiksaan. She was there when they did respond and had to prepare letters to be signed by the CFM Chairman. Approval was given within seven weeks! This change to a contemporary version of the Bible will attract and make it easier for students taking the subject today. Ms Yin says this small part (“to be His pencil”) would hopefully result in an increase in the candidacy for the paper but more so that the Word of God will be sown to the next generation.

What lies ahead for Ms Yin? She will go for a holiday and a prayer conference (the ever eager enthusiast for a deeper spiritual life). One project close to her heart that she has had to shelf is to write short stories. Now we can expect, she says, to see *Tales and Testimonies* out in 2009, God willing.

Although retiring from official working life, she continues to serve the Christian schools as Honorary Secretary of the Malayan Christian Schools’ Council. Both Ms Moey and Bishop Hwa Yung wished her a good rest but also hinted that much awaits her at her desk when she returns from her holidays!