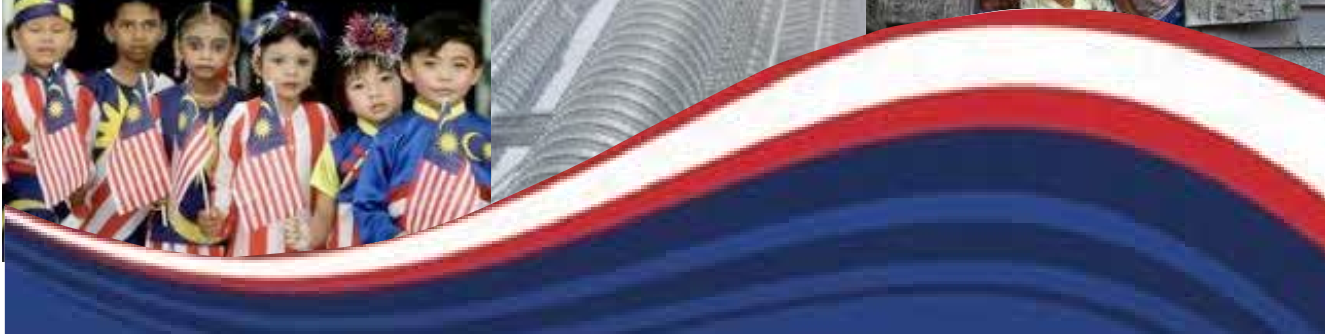


PELITA METHODIST

VOLUME 39, NO. 5
MAY 2013



Post "The 13th General Election (GE 13)"



Moment

The biggest event in our country for 2013 has ended. We thank God that the GE13 was conducted smoothly and without any trouble. With the election of our leaders, we do pray that God would enable them to lead and guide our country with good governance, integrity and unity. On our part we are called to carry out our democratic responsibilities of being stewards of the things that God brings upon us. Each of us needs to do our part to make our country a country that pleases God and man.

The greatest commandment in the bible is to love our Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are also commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves. In this issue we are looking forward towards post GE13. Much is needed in country especially towards reconciliation and justice. There are many issues facing our country and our church specifically. God's love for this country causes us to love others as well.

One of the last recorded prayers of Jesus ended with these words, "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them". This is taken from John 17:25-26. Let us be the answer to His prayer to God our Father. We are called to make Him known and be the bearers of God's love for our people in Malaysia. The work has not ended and much still needs to be done.

By Michael William



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Contents

PG.

04 Post the 13th General Election (GE 13)
by Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

PG.

06 Current Affairs
Press Statement By CFM
-08

PG.

09 Stage 3 - The Jump of Faith
The "Abraham-Risk" Motif
By Dr. Lee Bee Teik

PG.

13 Methodist College Kuala Lumpur
Article From The Malaysian Insider

PG.

14 Essay
The Biggest Job is Ahead

Malaysia National Prayer Network



On May 12, people celebrated Mother's Day to honour and/or remember their mothers for their love, labour and hardship. It is interesting to read that Paul, in relating to the Thessalonian Christian community, compared himself to a nursing mother who tenderly cares for her own children (1 Thess 2:7, NASB). He continued to say that he loved them deeply, not contenting to just pass on the message, but wanting to give them his life for the sake of their spiritual and eternal welfare. A nursing mother loves her child with all her heart, she does not claim the honour that is due to her, but is prepared to do anything she can for her child. So Paul did. It was such love that the Thessalonian church was ministered to, built up and strengthened amidst persecution and worldly temptations. As spiritual parent to the sheep, Paul's gentleness and selflessness shines through in this passage.

God Himself likens His care over us to the role of a mother.

As the Lord leads.....

Beloved [a disciple-making community with a tender heart] Psalm 39; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

- We will seek to please God, the Giver of all things.
- That we may be gentle among those over whom we have authority, caring for them like a mother tenderly cares for her own children.
- That in our dealings with fellow-believers, we may be pure, honest and blameless in the sight of God.

Nation [a changed nation for His glory]

Changed for His Glory

"I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the LORD" (Hosea 2:20, TNIV)

- For the Government of the day to focus their energy and efforts on the nation's well being and good governance
- Choice of cabinet members: be the right men and women who love peace, just, and honesty
- For the elected representatives to carry out their duties well and strive to serve the nation as best as possible
- Rakyat continue to be strong and courageous, to desire and do what is good and just for all. May 13 is no longer a haunt of fear but a source of strength for multiracial solidarity
- All state governments: good governance, clean, transparent and accountable, good moral values and ethics
- Against the spirit behind those who keep stoking up racial and religious tensions, that they may be silent and put away for good
- For freedom of expression in national language

Remembering others in our prayer

- **For freedom to choose in Saudi Arabia**
 - o RIYADH, May 13 — A court in Saudi Arabia has sentenced two men to lashes and prison terms for converting a woman to Christianity and helping her flee the conservative Islamic kingdom, the *Saudi Gazette* reported today. A Lebanese man was sentenced to six years in prison and 300 lashes for converting the woman, while a Saudi man was sentenced to two years and 200 lashes for aiding her escape abroad, the English-language daily said. It added that the pair had challenged the verdict and would appeal. (<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/world/article/saudi-arabia-to-punish-men-over-christian-woman-convert-say-paper/>)
- **The Rohingya people**
 - o The Rohingya people of Myanmar Burma in Southeast Asia face religious and governmental persecution; the 800,000 Rohingya people living in Myanmar are classified by the United Nations as one of the world's most persecuted minorities. They are a Muslim population in the state of Rakhine and a minority to the Rakhine Buddhists that occupy that area. "They are subject to torture, gang rape, starvation, slave labor, and [are] forced to reside in the most dire camps in the world," (<http://venturebeat.com/2013/03/25/anonymous-puts-plight-of-rohingya-people-in-twitter-spotlight/#3Lz0YGxfbMLLxflb.99>)

Post “The 13th General Election (GE 13)”

Dear brothers and sisters in the Methodist family

I thank the Lord for all in our Methodist Family who have contributed in various ways in seeking the Lord for the GE 13 of our beloved nation. We are especially thankful for those of our churches that have organised prayer meetings as well as helpful forums either for their own congregations or as a combined church/group effort. We also appreciate those who have taken every effort to be trained to play official roles in the polling stations. It is indeed most commendable that we in the Methodist Family take the process, duty and responsibility of casting our votes very seriously.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the just concluded GE 13 held on 5 May 2013, we as a community of **God continue to seek the Lord for transformation of this land** – which is a process that takes time, not a quick overnight “one of” event. Hitherto we do **give thanks to the Sovereign God** of the universe and history, for we have experienced and witnessed the growing unity, prayer, clarity of vision and voice of response in the Church of Malaysia in the build up to the GE 13. We also thank the Lord for the increased public and media space for the bringing up of matters that are of national political, economic, religious and social relevance that affect all Malaysians. Of course **there is still plenty of room for improvement** and breaking of new grounds in all these areas and more.

In the wake of expectations unmet for many, let us next, all the more take time to solemnly ask the Lord what He is further saying to us through this recent outcome of the GE13. This includes studying sound, fair and objectively wise analyses concerning the GE 13 outcome, rejecting the ones that come from wounded reactions that would only deepen our social fractures and alienation. Of course we do this with an accompanying serious undertaking to the Sovereign Lord - that we are committed to continuing to seek Him for His **“unfinished business” of transformation for this our beloved land.**

We are determined that our contributions as being awakened “salt and light” in this nation do not lose momentum but continue with greater impetus – whatever our personal feelings post the GE 13. We in the Methodist Church in Malaysia are resolute in our pursuit of – *Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation.*

In this light, may we faith-fully affirm:

- Circumstances may change and expectations may be dashed – but **our Sovereign God, Who is the Alpha and Omega does not change.** He remains omnipotently in control and immutably merciful – “His mercies never come to an end” (Lam 3:22);

- “The church lies at the very heart of God’s eternal purpose”, says John Stott, which is a revealed truth in Scripture. This key eternal purpose of God calls for the **Church to be Christ’s ambassadors and redemptive agents** in which God is making His appeal of “reconciling the world to Himself in Christ” (2 Cor 5: 18-20);
- We the Church of the Lord will then **continue to be advocates of reconciliation** and healing grounded in truth and love - addressing all the different foundational fractures and deep-seated “alienation” in our land, be this ethnically, socially, religiously, economically and politically;
- We the Church of the Lord will also continue to do our very best to **fulfil our call to be “salt and light”** in this nation. At this time this means, amongst other paramount issues: to uphold the law and Constitution of this country, to proactively support good governance by the separation of the powers of the Judiciary, Parliament and Executive arms of government, to jealously guard the democratic freedoms enshrined in our Constitution notably religious freedom, and to vigilantly find ways of addressing key evils such as corruption, racism, and fraudulent practices committed by any party that decimates this beloved country of ours.

May I just share that in my prayer and reflection over the GE 13, I am reminded of the Luke 24 account of Cleopas and his companion who were over taken and absorbed with “the things that have taken place there (Jerusalem) in these days” (Luke 24: 18). Scripture also stated “that their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (v 16). Let us at this time not be so absorbed and overtaken with “things that have just taken place” (without denying their due importance) in Malaysia that we miss “recognising” the sovereign risen Lord in the journey of this land – which is still on-going and unfinished.

Let us instead remember that the One Who declared, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6) had also said, “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin....” (NLT Zechariah 4:10).

Let us unwaveringly soldier on in seeking the welfare and blessing of this our beloved nation in the name of the Christ Who is “the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end”.

Sincerely in Christ our Lord

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

基督徒何时、为何、如何使用“阿拉”(Allah)一词

前言与背景

此文件的目的是向基督徒解释清楚马来西亚的教会何时、为何、如何使用“阿拉”(Allah)一词。这文件也将说明,当非穆斯林对基督徒使用“阿拉”之事不了解时,基督徒该如何回应。

有许多(误误性)言论表明基督徒不应使用“阿拉”,因为那是用于称呼伊斯兰教的“神”的回教专用词,只有穆斯林可以使用。这种特殊的情况只发生在马来西亚,其他国家的穆斯林圈子里说阿拉伯语的基督徒都是使用“阿拉”的。

基督徒本身往往对这件事也一知半解,我们若非用马来语祷告,一般都是以各自的日常用语向神祷告;比如在英语的主日崇拜中,我们都不会使用“阿拉”一词。

然而有60%以上的马来西亚基督徒只谙马来语,而自从1731年起马来文圣经就已经将“神”译为“阿拉”了。在沙巴、砂拉越和马来西亚半岛,以马来语作为日常用语的土著基督徒都会使用“阿拉”一词;此外,马六甲的峇峇娘惹也都使用该词。

历史性的用法与意义

- “阿拉”用以称呼众神之上的至高神,这在伊斯兰教的启示之前就已经如此。H. A. R. 吉布和 J. H. 克雷默所著的《简明伊斯兰教百科全书》与约翰 L. 埃斯波西托所著的《牛津当代伊斯兰教世界百科全书》都申明并支持了这一观点。
- 史上在东南亚说马来语的基督徒都是以“阿拉”称呼神的。论据如下所示:
 - 写于1514年,出版于1545年的马来文《基督徒祷告文》或《基督教教义问答》; · A. C. 瑞尔在1629年翻译的印刷版马来文《马太福音》;
 - 1631年在罗马印刷的《马来文拉丁文双语词典》(The Dictionarium Malaicum-Latinum and Latinum-Malaicum);
 - D. 布罗沃利斯(1662)翻译的《创世记》;
 - M. 莱兹德克(1733)的译本;
 - H. C. 克林克特(1879)的译本;
 - W. A. 波德(1938)的译本以及
 - 1731年至1733年间完整的马来文圣经都含有用以称呼神的“阿拉”一词。
- 由此可见,早在很久以前,说马来语的基督徒就已经在礼拜、祷告和敬拜时使用“阿拉”了。然而他们这几个世纪以来使用“阿拉”并未引起任何反抗或争议。

语言

多数对于基督徒使用“阿拉”的抗议都出自于政治演讲,甚至有些人还争论说该词的翻译与使用是近来的决定。其实这是不正确的,因为:

- 追溯到公元前5世纪,闪米特语中的“阿拉”一词已经在中东地区广泛使用了,这甚至更早于公元7世纪伊斯兰教的扩展和阿拉伯语的传播。
- 翻译马来文圣经并不是基于英文的译本,而是基于希伯来语和希腊语的圣经文本。在希伯来语中,“神”的词根与阿拉伯语相似。于是,当译者将“神”译成马来文时,是随着阿拉伯基督徒的用法而保留了“阿拉”一词。
- 如前文所述,“阿拉”更早于伊斯兰教,该词并不是穆斯林所造,也并非起于可兰经。

基督徒是否应以“主”(Tuhan)代替“阿拉”(Allah)?

这是不可能的,因为:

- 在马来文中,“阿拉”的意思是“神”,而“Tuhan”的意思是“主”。当我们读圣经时可明显地发发圣经中的“神”和“主”有不同的含义,于是不能以“主”(Tuhan)代替“阿拉”。
- “主”一般都用于称呼耶稣基督,并且也称为耶稣。如果基督徒以“主”代替“阿拉”,这将导致圣经中许多有关神和耶稣的说法变得不清晰,因为:
 - “阿拉”和“主”的意思并不一样。
 - 以下的例子就足以说明了。在以赛亚书41章13节、43章3节以及51章15节,“因为我是主你的神.....”译成了“*Akulah TUHAN, ALLAH kamu.....*”(《ALKITAB: Berita Baik》第二版,马来西亚圣经公会2001年出版)
 - 如果基督徒将“主神”译成“Tuhan Tuhan”就会造成一种奇怪的发象。重叠的词语“Tuhan Tuhan”在马来文中表示复数,这将让人以为基督徒信奉许多的神,而这是无法接受的。
 - 说马来语的基督徒将无法申明耶稣基督的神性并教误有关三位一体的教义,因为在传该真理时“阿拉”和“主”这两个词都是必不可缺的。

禁用“阿拉”的后果

- 禁止使用“阿拉”将有违违邦宪法所规定的宗教自由权利。违邦宪法第11条文保障每个马来西亚公民都有权信奉与实践其宗教信仰,第11条文第3款也明确地规定了所有宗教团体皆有权利理自身的宗教事务。
- 在2011年,高等法院已经判决允许天主教教会使用“阿拉”。马来西亚政府却对于该判决提出上诉,其结果还待定未决。
- 马来文圣经中还有其他重要的词语也涉及类似的侵权情况。内政部在1986年12月5日所下达的指令表示,除了“阿拉”之外还有其他不可在圣经中使用的词语,包括:Al-Kitab、Firman、Rasul、Iman、Ibadah、Injil、Wahyu、Nabi、Syukur、Solat和doa。然而通过伊斯兰教令所下达的禁令就只牵涉到穆斯林而已,因为伊斯兰教法并不套用于非穆斯林。
- 禁止使用“阿拉”与上述其他词语是不公平的。土著基督徒应该被尊敬并可自由以他们唯一的日常用语来称呼神,这对于他们的信仰与文化身份而言是很重要的。
- 如果马来西亚的教会同意停止使用“阿拉”,这就表示我们把编编世界一大宗教的经文的权力交给了一个世俗的政府。这对任何宗教与政府来说都是可耻而不可行的。

结论 (Conclusion)

有些穆斯林不断表示说,马来西亚的基督徒拒绝停止使用“阿拉”是为了混淆穆斯林并让他们改信基督教,这就威胁了国家安全。该指控是毫无根据的,因为并无证据证明马来西亚基督徒使用“阿拉”将对国家安全造成任何威胁,可见那是一该没有依据的控告。

相反地,该言论是基于不了解事实的情况下所说的;其实基督徒使用马来文圣经单单是为了那些说马来语的基督徒,而且马来西亚的教会也不曾想过把其他语言的圣经里的“神”和“主”分别别成“Allah”和“Tuhan”。

2013年5月16日
马来西亚基督教违会编
(Christian Federation of Malaysia)

When, Why and How Christians Use the Word 'ALLAH'

Introduction and Background

The objective of this document is to explain briefly to those Christians who do not understand when, why and how Churches in Malaysia use the word 'Allah'. It is also for Christians who are confused about how to respond, when confronted by the ignorance of non-Muslims about the Christian use of the word 'Allah'.

There are many (misleading) statements by non-Christians who claim that we should not use the word, because it is an exclusive Muslim term for the God of Islam and can be used only by Muslims. This is a situation peculiar to Malaysia, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, Arabic-speaking Christians use the word 'Allah'.

Christians themselves are sometimes ignorant, because unless we pray in Bahasa Malaysia, we pray to 'God' in our own language. In English services, for example, nowhere do we use the word 'Allah'.

However, more than 60% of Malaysian Christians only speak Bahasa Malaysia, and the word used for God in the Bahasa Malaysia Bible (*Al-Kitab*) since its translation in 1731, is 'Allah'. The word is used by Bumiputera Christians who only have Bahasa Malaysia as their common language in Sabah, Sarawak and peninsular Malaysia, and by the Baba community in Malacca.

Historical Usage and Meaning

1. The word 'Allah' was a term used for the supreme God in a pantheon of gods, before the revelation of Islam. The *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam* ed., H. A. R. Gibb & J. H. Kramer and *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, both affirm and support this contention.
2. Historically, Malay-speaking Christians in South-East Asia have used 'Allah' to refer to God. The proof is as follows:
 - The *Kitab salat as-sawai* or Christian catechisms in Malay written in 1514 and published around 1545,
 - The printed version of the Gospel of Matthew in Malay by A.C. Ruyl in 1629,
 - Malay-Latin Dictionary was printed in Rome in 1631 (The *Dictionarium Malaicum-Latinum* and *Latinum - Malaicum*)
 - The translation of Genesis by D. Brouwerius (1662),
 - M. Leijdecker's translation (1733),
 - H.C. Klinkert's translation (1879),
 - W.A. Bode's translation (1938), and
 - The complete *Malay Bible* of 1731-1733 containing the word 'Allah' for God.
3. Therefore, from the very beginning, the word 'Allah' has been used in the liturgy, prayers and worship of those Christians who speak Bahasa Malaysia. But for centuries, there has been no opposition or uproar about their use of 'Allah'.

Language

Objections to the use of the word 'Allah' comes mostly from political discourse, or those who argue that the translation and usage of the word is a recent decision. This is not true for the following reasons:

1. In Semitic languages, the word 'Allah' has been widely used in the Middle East dating back to the 5th century BC and up to the time of the expansion of Islam and the spread of the Arabic language in the 7th century AD.
2. The translation of the *Al-Kitab* is not from the English translation but based on the Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible. In the Hebrew language, the word 'God' has the same root form as the Arabic language. So, when the word 'God' was first translated into Bahasa Malaysia, the translators merely followed the Arabic Christian usage and retained the word 'Allah'.
3. As stated earlier, the word 'Allah' pre-dates Islam. It is *not* a creation of the Muslims and its existence does not begin in the *Al-Quran*.

Should Christians Substitute the word 'Allah' with 'Tuhan'?

This is not possible for the following reasons :

1. In the Malay language, 'Allah' means 'God' and *Tuhan* means 'Lord'. As is obvious when we read the Bible, both God and Lord are used in the Bible, and both have different connotations. Therefore 'Allah' cannot be substituted by 'Tuhan'.
2. The word *Tuhan* has been applied to Jesus Christ and read as *Tuhan Yesus*. If Christians are to substitute the word 'Allah' for *Tuhan*, it will render many Biblical references to God and Jesus incoherent because:
 - The meaning of 'Allah' and *Tuhan* are different.
 - This is obvious in just one example. In Isaiah chapter 41 and verse 13; also 43 : 3 and 51 : 15. "For I am the LORD, your GOD..." is translated as "Akulah TUHAN, ALLAH kamu...". (*ALKITAB : Berita Baik*. 2001. 2nd edition. Published by the Bible Society of Malaysia).
 - It creates an absurd situation if Christians have to translate the biblical phrase 'Lord God' as *Tuhan Tuhan*. The repeated words *Tuhan Tuhan* indicates plural in Bahasa Malaysia, and creates the impression that Christians believe in many Gods, which is unacceptable.
 - Bahasa Malaysia-speaking Christians will not be able to affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and teach the doctrine of the Trinity as these two foundational words are essential to maintain and communicate these truths.

Consequences of Banning the Word "Allah"

1. Being denied the use of the word 'Allah' disregards the constitu-

tional right of Malaysian citizens to freedom of religion under the Federal Constitution. Article 11 of the Federal Constitution safeguards the right of each Malaysian to profess and practice one's religion of choice. Article 11(3) expressly provides that every religious group has the right to manage their own religious affairs.

2. In 2011, the High Court handed down a judgement allowing the Catholic Church to use the word 'Allah'. The government (of all Malaysians, including Christians) is appealing the judgement and it is pending.
3. There have been other infringements on the right to use words imperative in the Bahasa Malaysia Bible. See the directive of 5 Dec 1986 from the Ministry of Home Affairs stating that, in addition to 'Allah', the words: *Al-Kitab, Firman, Rasul, Iman, Ibadah, Injil, Wahyu, Nabi, Syukur, Solat* and *doa* are not to be used in the *Al-Kitab*. In addition, making such prohibitions through *fatwa* render them only relevant to Muslims as the Shari'a does not apply to non-Muslims.
4. Prohibiting the use of the word 'Allah' and these other terms is unjust. Bumiputera Christians should be given the respect and freedom to call God in the only language they have in common. This is important to their religious and cultural identity.

5. If Churches in Malaysia agree to stop using the word 'Allah', it means that the right to edit the Scripture of a major world religion has been given over to a secular government. This would be a shameful and an unprecedented development for any religion and government.

Conclusion

Some Muslims have claimed repeatedly that Christians in Malaysia refuse to stop using the word 'Allah' because they want to confuse and convert Muslims, thereby posing a threat to national security. The claim is groundless as there has been no evidence offered of any threat to security. These remain unfounded accusations.

On the contrary, such an assertion is made in ignorance of the fact that when Christians use the *Al-Kitab*, it is simply for Bahasa Malaysia-speaking Christians. Malaysian Churches have never suggested changing the words 'God' and 'Lord' to 'Allah' and 'Tuhan' respectively, in the other languages of the Bible.

16 May 2013

PREPARED BY
THE CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA
(Persekutuan Kristian Malaysia)

Bila, Mengapa Dan Bagaimana Kristian Menggunakan Kata 'ALLAH'

Pengenalan dan Latarbelakang

Tujuan dokumen ini adalah untuk menjelaskan secara ringkas kepada orang-orang Kristian yang tidak faham bila, kenapa dan bagaimana Gereja-gereja di Malaysia menggunakan kata 'Allah'. Ia juga untuk orang Kristian yang keliru tentang bagaimana harus bertindak apabila berhadapan dengan orang bukan Islam yang jahil tentang penggunaan kata 'Allah' dalam agama Kristian.

Terdapat banyak (tidak tepat) kenyataan bukan Kristian yang mendakwa bahawa kita tidak boleh menggunakan kata 'Allah' kerana ia adalah istilah eksklusif untuk agama Islam yang merujuk kepada Tuhan Islam dan hanya boleh digunakan oleh orang Islam. Ia merupakan masalah pelik di Malaysia kerana di negara-negara Islam yang lain, di negara Arab – penganut Kristian berbahasa Arab menggunakan kata 'Allah'.

Umat Kristian sendiri kadang-kadang jahil kecuali jika kita berdoa dalam Bahasa Malaysia, kita berdoa kepada 'Allah' dalam bahasa kita sendiri. Sebagai contoh, dalam Bahasa Inggeris, kita tidak menggunakan kata 'Allah'.

Walau bagaimanapun, lebih 60% daripada Kristian di Malaysia hanya bercakap dalam Bahasa Malaysia, dan perkataan yang digunakan untuk Tuhan di dalam kitab Bahasa Malaysia (*Al-Kitab*) sejak terjemahan pada tahun 1731, adalah 'Allah'. Kata ini digunakan oleh Bumiputera Kristian yang menggunakan Bahasa Malaysia se-

bagai bahasa pengantara mereka terutama di Sabah, Sarawak, Semenanjung Malaysia, dan masyarakat Baba di Melaka.

Sejarah Makna dan Penggunaan

1. Kata 'Allah' adalah istilah yang digunakan bagi Tuhan yang tertinggi di antara tuhan-tuhan, sebelum wahyu Islam. *The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb & J. H. Kramer dan *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, menyokong dan mengesahkan pernyataan ini.
2. Dari segi sejarah, penganut Kristian berbahasa Melayu di Asia Tenggara telah menggunakan 'Allah' untuk merujuk kepada Tuhan. Buktinya adalah seperti berikut:
 - Wujudnya *Kitab salat as sawai* atau Katekismus Kristian di dalam Bahasa Melayu telah ditulis pada tahun 1514 dan diterbitkan sekitar 1545,
 - Telah ada versi cetakan *Injil Matius* di dalam Bahasa Melayu oleh A.C.Ruyl pada tahun 1629,
 - Kamus Melayu-Latin telah dicetak di Roma pada tahun 1631 (*Dictionarium The Malaicum-Latinum* dan *Latinum - Malaicum*)
 - Terjemahan *Kitab Kejadian* oleh D. Brouwerius (1662),
 - Terjemahan M. Leijdecker (1733),
 - Terjemahan H.C. Klinkert (1879),

- Terjemahan W.A. Bode (1938), dan
- Pada tahun 1731-1733, telah wujud *Al-Kitab* Bahasa Melayu lengkap mengandungi kata 'Allah' iaitu terjemahan untuk 'God'.

3. Oleh itu, sejak awal lagi, kata 'Allah' telah digunakan dalam liturgi, doa-doa dan ibadat orang-orang Kristian yang bertutur dalam Bahasa Malaysia. Tetapi selama berabad-abad itu, tidak ada bantahan atau kegemparan mengenai penggunaan kata 'Allah'.

Bahasa

Bantahan terhadap penggunaan kata 'Allah' kebanyakannya berpunca dari wacana politik, atau di kalangan mereka yang membantah dengan tuduhan bahawa penterjemahan dan penggunaan kata 'Allah' baru sahaja berlaku. Ini tidak benar kerana sebab-sebab berikut:

1. Dalam bahasa-bahasa Semitik, kata 'Allah' telah digunakan secara meluas di Timur Tengah sejak abad ke-5 SM, sehingga masa perkembangan Islam dan penyebaran Bahasa Arab pada abad ke-7 M.
2. Penterjemahan *Al-Kitab* bukan menterjemah dari Bahasa Inggeris tetapi berdasarkan teks-teks dari *Al-Kitab* Ibrani dan teks Yunani. Dalam Bahasa Ibrani, kata 'Allah' mempunyai bentuk akar yang sama seperti Bahasa Arab. Jadi, apabila kata 'Allah' pertama kali diterjemahkan ke dalam Bahasa Malaysia, para penterjemah sebenarnya mengikut penggunaan Bahasa Arab Kristian dan mengekalkan perkataan 'Allah'.
3. Seperti yang dinyatakan sebelum ini, kata 'Allah' digunakan sebelum kedatangan Islam. Ia *bukan* ciptaan umat Islam dan kewujudannya tidak bermula di dalam *Al-Quran*.

Haruskah Kristian Menggantikan kata 'Allah' dengan 'Tuhan'?

Ini tidak mungkin atas sebab-sebab berikut :

1. Dalam Bahasa Melayu, 'Allah' bermakna 'Tuhan' dan 'Tuhan' bermaksud 'Lord'. Ini jelas apabila kita membaca *Al-Kitab*, 'Allah' dan 'Tuhan' digunakan di dalam *Al-Kitab*, dan kedua-duanya mempunyai konotasi yang berbeza. Oleh itu 'Allah' tidak boleh digantikan dengan 'Tuhan'.
2. Kata *Tuhan* telah digunakan untuk Yesus Kristus iaitu *Tuhan Yesus*. Sekiranya Kristian menggantikan kata 'Allah' untuk *Tuhan*, ia menimbulkan banyak kekeliruan dan tidak keruan yang merujuk kepada Tuhan dan Yesus kerana:
 - Makna 'Allah' dan *Tuhan* adalah berbeza .
 - Ini sangat jelas melalui satu contoh sahaja. Di dalam Yesaya, Bab 41 dan Ayat 13; 43:3 dan 51:51. "For I am the LORD, your GOD..." diterjemahkan sebagai "Akulah Tuhan, Allah kamu..." (*ALKITAB : Berita Baik*. 2001. Edisi Kedua. Terbitan The Bible Society of Malaysia).
 - Ia akan mewujudkan situasi tidak masuk akal jika orang Kristian perlu menterjemahkan frasa alkitabiah 'Lord God' sebagai *Tuhan Tuhan*. Pengulangan kata *Tuhan Tuhan* menunjukkan jamak di dalam Bahasa Malaysia, ia seolah-olah memperlihatkan bahawa agama Kristian percaya akan banyak tuhan, ini adalah sesuatu yang tidak boleh diterima.
 - Umat Kristian berbahasa Malaysia tidak akan dapat meng-

esahkan ketuhanan Yesus Kristus dan mengajar doktrin Tritunggal kerana dua perkataan ini adalah kata-kata asas dan penting untuk mengekalkan serta menyampaikan kebinatangan ini.

Kesan-kesan Larangan Kata 'Allah'

1. Dinafikan untuk menggunakan kata 'Allah' adalah melanggar hak perlembagaan kebebasan beragama rakyat Malaysia di bawah Perlembagaan Persekutuan. Perkara 11 Perlembagaan Persekutuan melindungi hak setiap rakyat Malaysia untuk menganut agama dan amalan pilihan masing-masing. Perkara 11 (3) jelas memperuntukkan bahawa setiap kumpulan agama mempunyai hak untuk mengurus hal ehwal agama mereka sendiri.
2. Pada tahun 2011, Mahkamah Tinggi memberikan penghakiman yang membenarkan Gereja Katolik menggunakan perkataan 'Allah'. Kerajaan (semua rakyat Malaysia, termasuk Kristian) membawanya ke Mahkamah Rayuan dan ia masih belum selesai.
3. Selain itu, terdapat juga pelanggaran hak menggunakan kata-kata penting dalam *Al-Kitab* Bahasa Malaysia. Lihat arahan 5 Disember 1986 daripada Kementerian Hal Ehwal Dalam Negeri menyatakan bahawa, sebagai tambahan kepada 'Allah', kata-kata : *Al-Kitab, Firman, Rasul, Iman, Ibadah, Injil, Wahyu, Nabi, Syukur, Solat* dan *doa* adalah tidak boleh digunakan dalam *Al-Kitab*. Di samping itu, membuat larangan melalui *fatwa* hanyalah relevan dengan umat Islam sahaja dan tidak terpakai kepada bukan Islam.
4. Melarang penggunaan kata 'Allah' dan istilah-istilah lain adalah tidak adil. Kristian Bumiputera perlu diberi penghormatan dan kebebasan untuk memanggil Tuhan dalam satu-satunya bahasa yang mereka. Ini adalah penting bagi identiti agama dan budaya mereka.
5. Jika gereja-gereja di Malaysia bersetuju untuk berhenti menggunakan kata 'Allah', bermakna hak untuk mengedit Kitab Suci agama utama dunia telah diberikan kepada sebuah kerajaan sekular. Ini akan menjadi satu perkara memalukan dan kejadian yang belum pernah berlaku pada mana-mana agama dan kerajaan.

Kesimpulan

Sesetengah umat Islam mendakwa berulang kali bahawa orang Kristian di Malaysia enggan berhenti menggunakan kata 'Allah' kerana mahu mengelirukan umat Islam dan memurtadkan penganut Islam, sekali gus menimbulkan ancaman kepada keselamatan negara. Tuntutan itu adalah tidak berasas kerana tiada bukti penggunaan kata ini membawa ancaman keselamatan negara. Tuduhan ini kekal sebagai tidak berasas.

Sebaliknya, keadaan sebegini dibuat kerana jahil dengan hakikat bahawa apabila orang Kristian menggunakan *Al-Kitab*, ia adalah khusus untuk umat Kristian berbahasa Malaysia. Gereja-gereja di Malaysia tidak pernah mencadangkan untuk mengubah kata 'Allah' dan 'Lord' kepada 'Allah' dan 'Tuhan', begitu juga bahasa-bahasa lain dalam *Al-Kitab*.

16 Mei 2013

DISEDIAKAN OLEH
PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA
(The Christian Federation of Malaysia)

By Dr. Lee Bee Teik

We come to the final stage of our common pilgrimage as God's children. Note that these stages often repeat themselves for a given situation on earth for each person or as a local community. However, we may encourage one another that overall we are like going three steps forward and taking two backwards till He comes again! Faith is a daily practical experience for all born into this world. For example, to sit on a chair requires faith that it will take our weight. Even though we do this automatically, it is by others' (as described in biographies) and our past experiences with chairs that do not break when we sit on them that we dare to do it repeatedly anywhere. However, it is essential that the object of our faith is trustworthy. In like manner, we can trust God as He has provided records of His faithfulness to His word to others and to us in so many ways since Genesis. Sometimes we misunderstand Him and His ways with us. Nevertheless, He has provided means for us to know that in the end, things will be all right, as in Romans 8.

Therefore, having sorted out our past with God in positive retrospection, what does He want to do with us? He would like to take us into His future good for us in accordance to His overall purpose and plan for His redeemed people. We can rest assured that He knows what He is doing though our faith in Him seems to lag behind ever so often. He understands that we are made of clay. Therefore, He coaxes us, goads us, disciplines and embraces us so that we are able to receive His customized good for each of us now and forever more.

1. What sort of relationship did Abraham have with his God?

In Genesis 12:1

God called Abraham (then Abram) to leave his familiar and secure environment to go to the land He will show to him.

"Go, I will show you..." formed the crux of his calling.

Abraham trusted God with a childlike faith and obeyed. He moved on even though he was as weak as we are. He went out not knowing where he was going...

In Genesis 12:10-20,

Abraham told his wife to tell a lie. Conse-

quently, God punished the Egyptians because Pharaoh took her as his wife. Abraham did this to save his own skin (similar to Peter's denial?). However, God honoured his humility and integrity as shown in Genesis 14. He really cared for God's honour before outsiders. Therefore,

In Genesis 15,

Abraham openly expressed his doubt to God.

Was God angry with him for asking sincere questions?

No, instead, He reassured Abraham of His faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to him. He just had to wait. God understood his struggle to trust Him and reassured him of His promise. Abraham believed God's word and God counted his faith in Him as righteousness. When he needed a sign, God granted it to him. God appreciated his trust so much that He entrusted His secrets about the future generations to Abraham.

Abraham trusted God and kept moving, even though he failed again by listening to Sarah's pestering to help God give them a child (Genesis 16).

In Genesis 17,

God did **not** talk to Abraham, He **talked with** Abraham and changed his name from Abram to Abraham...signifying a change of role as head of a family clan to head of a nation. That God honours those who honour Him is indeed true.

In 2 Chronicles 20:7,

when King Jehoshaphat prayed for help, he added his appeal with a reminder to God,

"Lord, we are descendants of Abraham, Your friend...remember? Abraham with whom You talked...we are his descendants...I am sure You will listen to us because of him..." (Rather Asian indeed!)

Again, in James 2:23,

it is stated once more that Abraham believed God and his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. How privileged to be called "the friend of God"!

Therefore,

The Critical Issue at this stage of pilgrimage for us, once we have dealt with our past before God and man, is to jump like an ac-

robat on a trapeze.

An acrobat has to let go of one swinging bar before he can reach out to grip the next one. On a similar manner, the recovering pilgrim needs to let go of the bad past in order to be able to reach out and receive God's new present and future blessings. He moves:

** From the Known -> to the Unknown because

** Faith in God's word as command means **obeying** Him through the exercise of faith and

** Faith in God's word as promise means **trusting** Him even when we cannot see ahead of us clearly.

This jump is often difficult to take because:

It is sometimes less painful and therefore **more comfortable** to remain in a bad situation (and old patterns of thinking and behavior) than to deal with deeper hurts in order to let them go. The future with God, though good, **can be rather uncomfortable** at first because it is so new. Hence, often, hurting people need a temporary assistant to the Holy Spirit to stand with them till the crisis is over and then they are able to proceed with joy with their Saviour and Friend!

For example,

Chin Chin grew up in a dysfunctional family where, as the eldest child, she had to parent her own parents who could not fulfill the roles of leadership at home. After God's healing in her own life, something happened to her Dad.

A year after she was discharged, Chin Chin called up, out of the blue, for another session. I thought she had had a relapse into her old lifestyle. For the first time in their family history, Dad had called a family meeting and led in the discussion and she was nervous about it. She complained about feeling queer and did not know how to respond to her Dad's new behavior at home. She was so used to leading his parents and her siblings...she would rather have his old ways back...at least she would know how to respond to him! When I explained to her that God was answering her prayers by helping her Dad to grow up, she began

The Jump of FAITH

The "Abraham-Risk" Motif

to see the changes from God's perspective and rejoice in the changes at home. If I had also panicked, as I would have if the Lord had not given me this new insight, I could have encouraged her to slide back into her old thought pattern, feelings and life again.

Quote:

"While sometimes times we have to understand before we believe (especially true in most tangible scientific and academic educational matters); At other times, we have to believe before we can understand (especially in relational and eternal matters)."

2. Where did Abraham find the strength for his on-going faith?

In Genesis 12:7,

An altar represents something stable, strong and immovable. Abraham built an altar each time the Lord spoke to Him about the certainty of His promise to him and his descendants. More significantly, as we have seen, an altar was the constant awareness of the presence of God in Abraham's inner life. This led him to know that in a crisis,

"The Lord will provide!" (Genesis 22:9).

However, he was willing to hold on to the temporal external necessities of this life by living in tents that are mobile, unstable and changing.

Therefore, the **SECRET** of the ability to trust in God is to get to know Him better by meeting with Him as much as possible. It was this **unchanging interior altar of friendship with God** that enabled Abraham to **trust** that God would and could raise Isaac to life, if He has to do that, in order to fulfill His promise of a covenant heir. It was

this trust that enabled him to **move** from the **known to the unknown** when God called him "to leave" his homeland and "to go" to the promise land of blessings. God did not tell him what would happen in between. On hindsight, we know.

3. Therefore, as we seek to help ourselves, we need to ask ourselves, in the later stages of pilgrimage:

"Are we willing to trust God enough to leave our wrong ways of thinking in order to receive God's blessings of right thinking and, eventually, right feeling and right living?"

God reminds us in Hebrews 12:1-3 to:

Give up the past to Him...live today for Him...and move forward into the future with Him...

What a joy for His children when they finally begin and continue to walk with his God, His Father, Bridegroom and Friend! Hence, to trust and obey is actually our daily food for here is truly no other way to be happy in Jesus!

Reflection

1. Where are you in your current pilgrimage with Christ while in this world?
Journal.
2. Are you ready and willing to be God's tool in His ministry of reconciling men and women, children and adults to Him? If so, may this be your prayer...

Jesus I Come

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress to jubilant psalm,
Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into Thy blessed will to abide,
Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward for aye on wings like a dove,
Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into the joy and light of Thy home,
Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
Jesus I come to Thee.

William T. Sleeper

SUBANG METHODIST CHURCH
VACANCY for FULL-TIME YOUTH WORKER



The remuneration will commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Applicants to submit a brief profile and statement of suitability to:

Pastor Robert Khaw
 Subang Methodist Church
 5 Jalan PJS 10/32
 46000 Petaling Jaya
 Selangor D E

Email:
 robertkhaw@gmail.com

Short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Develop vision, strategise, spearhead, and plan programmes and activities for young adults and college youth (YACY) ministry, including pioneering campus outreach.
- b) Disciple YACY of the church through teaching, facilitating programmes and organising activities, recommending relevant resources, and keeping abreast of YACY issues.
- c) Develop and mentor potential YACY leaders through a structured leadership development programme, including on-the-job training and exposure.
- d) Provide pastoral care for YACY, including counseling, visitation, facilitating foster home programme, prayer support and practical helps (e.g. transportation, etc).
- e) Work closely with the pastor and other church leaders in aligning YACY ministry with overall church's vision, mission, essentials and plans.
- f) Network with relevant Christian organisations (TRAC and others) to facilitate YACY development mission and community service.

PREREQUISITES

- a) Minimum of STPM qualification. Other theological degree or relevant courses taken will be an advantage.
- b) Preferably a minimum of two years of practical experience working with YACY in a Christian setting.
- c) Must be a committed Christian and a member in good standing of a church.
- d) Passionate about YACY ministry.
- e) Be prepared to consider being a member or regular worshipper of SMC upon acceptance of the job.
- f) Able to work independently as well as a team player with CY leaders, youth counselors and Church leaders.
- g) Able to accept a flexible working schedule that includes some weekday evenings and weekends, and occasional extended trips.

DEVOTION

*Bad Dispositions:
 "The Vice of the Virtuous"*

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)

A bad disposition has been called "the vice of the virtuous" which brings us directly to the conclusion that it is time we Christians stop trying to excuse our un-Christian dispositions and frankly admit our failure to live as we should!

Wesley said that we will not injure the cause of Christ by admitting our sins, but that we are sure to do so by denying them.

Dispositional sins are as many as the various facets of human nature. Just so there be no misunderstanding, let us list a few of them: sensitiveness, irritability, churlishness, faultfinding,

Renewed Day by Day by A.W. Tozer

peevishness, temper, resentfulness, cruelty, un-charitable attitudes; and of course there are many more.

These kill the spirit of the church and slow down any progress which the gospel may be making in the community. Many persons, who had been secretly longing to find Christ, have been turned away, embittered by manifestations of ugly dispositional flaws in the lives of the very persons who were trying to win them!

Unsaintly saints have been the tragedy of Christianity. The low state of religion in our day is largely due to the lack of public confidence in religious people.

There is a remedy for inward evil. The power of Christ can enable the worst of us to live lives of purity and love. We have but to seek it and to lay hold of it in faith. God will not disappoint us!



Wesley Methodist Church

Dr Thomas Leung speaks on "Christians & Chinese Culture"

12 - 14 July 2013

Holy Bible

What instructions does the Word of God have for us concerning these practices and beliefs?

The practices of Feng Shui and Divination seek to discover the destinies of individuals and suggest how people might better engage with their respective destinies. From time immemorial, human beings have been tempted to engage in and have been engaging various forms of activities and acts as a result of the lure of hidden secrets and special knowledge of the forces of nature, both visible and invisible.

Many of us are confused and dumbfounded by the many claims made by geomancers and practitioners of divination. As a Christian, what and how would you respond to such claims?

This seminar will help you understand what Feng Shui and other forms of occult practices are all about against biblical teaching and help strip off superstition to reveal the truth and power of God's Word. Know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

12 JULY 2013, FRIDAY

8.00 pm - 9.30 pm

Session 1 How to share our faith with a Confucianist, Taoist or Buddhist?

13 JULY 2013, SATURDAY

9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Session 2 Can a Christian get involved in Fengshui, Qigong or Tai Chi?

Session 3 Can a Christian participate in Qing Ming and other festival of the dead?

Session 4 How should a Christian respond to Ancestral Veneration, is it cultural or religious?

Session 5 Where do Christians draw the line on Traditional Chinese Cures/Medicines?

Session 6 Q & A and Ministry Time

14 JULY 2013, SUNDAY

9.00 am - 10.30 am

Session 7 Combined Worship Service "From Chinese Philosophy to Christian Faith"

REGISTRATION FEES

By 28 April 2013	RM35 Individual (1 Pax) RM140 Group (5 Pax)
By 31 May 2013	RM40 Individual (1 Pax) RM160 Group (5 Pax)
By 28 June 2013	RM45 Individual (1 Pax) RM180 Group (5 Pax)

2, Jalan Wesley, 50150 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tel : 03-2072 0338 / 0339 Fax : 03-2072 9982 Email : wmckl@klwesley.org

www.klwesley.org

Options and Opportunities at Methodist College Kuala Lumpur

by Lydia Koh

KUALA LUMPUR, May 22 — Looking at Ali Mustafa Hamid today, you would never have guessed that he spent his early years in war-torn Iraq.

Wearing a confident smile, this 20-year-old looks like any other student at Methodist College Kuala Lumpur (MCKL), where he scored 3A*s and 1A for his A-Levels.

“Life was hard in Iraq. I was born in 1993 when the US imposed sanctions on my country. Then, there was the 2003 war and my family decided that it was too much so we finally decided to move to Malaysia,” said the well-groomed young man.

Ali recently received two scholarships to study Civil and Structural Engineering in City University of Hong Kong based on his outstanding results. The scholarships cover both his tuition fees and living expenses.

Being offered those scholarships really helps because money for education is sparse in his family as he has two older siblings who are studying as well.

Ali did his O-Levels at the International Islamic School but he has no qualms about studying at a Christian college.

“It’s not about the college’s religious background as long as it teaches discipline and the right values. At MCKL, I learned how to respect other religions. Back in my international school, I was only mixing with other international students and I wanted a Malaysian experience because it was a new culture to me. I’m glad I chose MCKL because now I have many ‘heng tais’ (brothers in Cantonese)” said Ali.

He also works part-time as part of his “personal development.” The generous-hearted young man volunteers for EPIC Homes, an NGO that build homes for the Orang Asli.

“When you are in need, you want to help those in need as well,” said Ali.

His college mate, How Han Ming, decided to study at MCKL because it offered

him both science and arts subjects for his A-Levels. The recipient of the merit scholarship wanted to do English Literature and Economics alongside Biology and Mathematics, and the college offered that.

“Other private colleges in Malaysia do not offer that option and after finding out about MCKL at an education fair, I checked out the campus and decided that I wanted to study here,” said the affable student.

The articulate 19-year-old received offers from eight colleges in the States due to his excellent results in A-Levels, among other deciding factors.

“I decided on Wesleyan University because I want to do Film Studies and Economics. A few alumni from Wesleyan University have gone on to Hollywood,” said the eloquent How. He got accepted into the Wesleyan Freeman Asian Scholars Programme which provides scholarships for Asian students, one each from 11 countries in the region.

The Malaysian-American Commission On Educational Exchange (MACEE) covered the costs of his application and flight to the States. It is a grant for Malaysian students interested to study in the States.

How found his passion in storytelling and creative abilities at a tender age of 15 when he went for the International Life Sciences Symposium in Singapore.

“We (the students) were required to present scientific research based on structured themes. I wasn’t passionate about research and being stuck in a lab so I created a storyboard and presented my ideas in fiction form,” said How.

He started writing freelance for a local newspaper and he wrote a few articles for NGOs like Malaysian Nature Society and Amnesty International.

At 17, he wrote scripts for The Platform, an open-mic night organised by KLPac for young talents in performing arts. Last year, the creative How wrote the play “Love is



a four-letter word”, a play for the Short + Sweet Festival.

Short + Sweet Festival is dubbed ‘The Biggest Little Festival in the World’ where 10-minute original plays are run in one sitting.

What’s it like to be a young playwright?

“At first I felt intimidated because a lot of people in the theatre world are working adults. But I get feedback from performing art veterans and I learned how to communicate with the actors.”

The “accidentally artistic” How believes that there’s a bright future for the film industry in Malaysia and hopes to come home armed with the knowledge he gets from Wesleyan University.

“The government is investing in film studios in Malaysia. Also, I think Hollywood is saturated with too many actors and directors,” said How.

And like Ali, How did not find studying in a Christian college an issue despite coming from a Buddhist background.

“I like the culture in MCKL. Other colleges would just prioritise studies but here, I’m able to learn beyond the textbook,” said How.

Find out more about Methodist College Kuala Lumpur at <http://www.mckl.edu.my/index.php>

Used with permission from The Malaysian Insider.

Essay

Hari Ini Dalam Sejarah Methodist

Pelita is beginning a new series of rediscovering some of our Methodist roots and history.

The First Session of **Sarawak Provisional Annual Conference**

The Biggest Job is Ahead

Earnest effort and pleasant anticipation were everywhere apparent when the Sarawak Provisional Annual Conference was organised and set up for work at Sibu, December 3-7, 1952. The pace and tenor of the Conference was set during the morning hour of worship on the first day, when Bishop Raymond L. Archer's spiritual and compelling message prepared the way for Holy Communion.

Attentive ears listened to the reading of the Enabling Act, passed by the General Conference in session at San Francisco, which gave authority to organise the Provisional Conference in Sarawak. The need for a separate Conference was imperative, but during the days following organisation, the experienced hands of the Malaya Conference were greatly missed.

Elders ordained at the first session of the Sarawak Provisional Annual Conference. Representing three national groups, they are: Lucius Memora of the Batak Church, Sumatra; Martha Graf of Switzerland; Lau Kie Ngie, of China. Bishop Archer is at the right.

The ecumenical growth of the Church in Sarawak was a significant first impression at the Conference. For the first time in the history of our Church there, Dyak Christians took an active part in the work of the Church outside their local communities. Four Dyak delegates, two of whom are

Penghulus and one a local preacher, were introduced to the Conference. A burst of applause greeted and welcomed them. Also delegates were two Batak missionaries from Sumatra who are working among the Dyaks in the upper Balleh River area.

Later during the Conference, at the ordination service, three races from as many different countries were represented. A Chinese, the Rev. Lau Kie Ngie, from Fukien, China; a Batak, the Rev. L.D. Mamora from Sumatra; and Miss Martha Graf, European from Switzerland, were ordained elders.

The evening of the first day was given to emphasizing the work of the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Mrs. Archer noted the progress of the WSCS work in Sarawak in the past and challenged the organisation to excel its past efforts through a more devoted Christian service for Christ in the next Conference year. The work of this most important body of the Church received hearty congratulations from the Conference. It is only since the visit of Miss Louise Robinson, Associate Secretary of the Woman's Division of Christian Service, New York, late in 1951, to Borneo, that it has been officially recognized as an area for WDCS work. To date there have been three WDCS missionaries assigned to Sarawak, Misses Blanche Apple, Emma Palm, and Martha Graf, all formerly of China. They were introduced at this evening programme, which was concluded with a pageant, "The

Challenge of the Cross."

On the afternoon of December 5, during a short and impressive ceremony, Fiftieth Anniversary Memorial Hall - was dedicated. A Conference dinner and reception were held in Memorial Hall on the evening of the same day.

The youth work was brought to the fore on Saturday, when the Methodist Youth Fellowship concluded a day of activities in the first Chinese MYF Conference of Sarawak. The officers for the new year were installed at a candle-light service by Bishop Archer. Later, addressing the group, the Bishop used the words of the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me", for his theme. The on-going programme of the Church needs the daring of youth as well as the cool deliberation of age to hold its course, and at the same time reap success during these most difficult times.

The closing service of the Conference on Sunday evening echoed a pattern of thought that reflected the summary of each of the morning worship hours conducted by Bishop Archer. A busy Conference came to its inevitable close, feeling more sure of itself and of the future after the week's experience, and ready to address itself to the high task of labouring more ardently for Christ. The closing message of the Bishop contained words from Philippians, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." With appointments read, the Conference was over. But everyone knew in no uncertain terms that the biggest job was over. But everyone knew in no uncertain terms that the biggest job was yet to be done - the proving in the years ahead.

By Thomas A. Harris
Malaysia Message
February 1953





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