



50  
*years*  
MERDEKA

# Church the Transforming Agent



40-Day Fast and Prayer

22 July–30 August 2007

C h u r c h   t h e   T r a n s f o r m i n g   A g e n t

# Church the Transforming Agent

## CHURCH: THE AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION A YEAR OF REFLECTION



(All prayer points serve as guidance only.

We pray that you gain further insight for prayer as you meditate  
on the scriptures, read the daily write-ups, and reflect  
upon the situations in the country.)

**May God enlighten the eyes of your mind and heart as  
you pray. May the Holy Spirit lead you into  
deeper intercession for Malaysia.**

*"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2 :1-4)*

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## FOREWORD

In this year's prayer booklet, we are taking a look back to our past and see how it has shaped us to become what we are today as a nation.

While we are thankful for the 50 years of peace and development, much of the nation continues to lie in darkness.

A good understanding of the past is invaluable. It gives us insight to pray and act for a 'transformed' tomorrow. I believe the information and reflections provided are vital and indispensable as we pursue to stand in the gap as God's agent of transformation for Malaysia.

Therefore, I strongly recommend that you follow this prayer booklet closely and prayerfully as we jointly pray and fast for the nation.

Rev. Andy C. K. Chi  
*Chairman of Prayer Commission*

## A YEAR OF REFLECTION

**M**other Theresa said: "An unreflected life is not worth living." Similarly, the Church must constantly undergo self-evaluation in order to stay relevant. How far has the Malaysian Church impacted the nation in the past 50 years? Has it overcome weaknesses and threats and taken advantage of strengths and opportunities in its nation-building effort?

A weakness inherited from the colonial times is division amongst the different denominations, each taking care of its own turf. We praise God that we have made significant progress in uniting the churches through the establishment of national bodies such as NECF and CFM. Churches have come together to carry out projects that could not have been handled individually.

An inherent threat arises from the fact that the Church, especially that in the Peninsula, consists predominantly of those from the middle and upper-middle class community. When faced with critical national challenges, some have chosen to emigrate thus causing our nation to lose valuable human resource and depriving the Church of capable leadership. This is sadly a problem yet to be overcome.

An obvious strength is the vitality of a relatively young Church made up of many first or second generation believers. The fire of personal encounter with the Lord Jesus compels us to reach out with His love. The Church has tapped into this power source to bring even more into the Kingdom.

Opportunities in nation-building are plenty if we care to look. Though we may feel constrained at the top, there are many avenues at the grass roots level where we can make a difference. Christians and churches need to gain a greater social/civic consciousness to make the best of these opportunities.

In conclusion, let's remember that we are ambassadors of Christ to our nation. Let's seriously count the cost and make the next 50 years more fruitful than the first.

Rev. Wong Kim Kong  
*Secretary-General*

## MINISTER SAYS

**W**e are grateful for being able to celebrate the diversity in this country as one people, that is Bangsa Malaysia. The harmonious coexistence that we have enjoyed for 50 years is a sweet success and should be maintained as such. Even though the majority are Malays, the other ethnic groups like Chinese, Indians and the Indigenous people of the Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak are able to live in accord with one another. I believe that the Christians, in particular, have played the role as catalysts in the process. This is possible because we firmly believe in the Gospel, of which the essence is peace. It is the peace that overcomes cultural, tribal and racial barriers.

We, who have known the Lord, do not merely talk about the peace; our role is to live out the implications of that peace among the Christian communities to those who have not **known** the Gospel. Let us pray that our light will shine through our good witness, and eventually become blessings to the people and to the nation.

Y.B. Datuk Maximus Johnity Ongkili  
*Minister in the Prime Minister's Department*

## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a Muslim-dominant country. However, it has a large non-Muslim population and a secular constitution that guarantees religious freedom for "every person". Regarded as a "model Muslim country" by even Islamic states, developments here whether in economics, politics or religion can have worldwide implications. So the Malaysian Church is well-placed to make an impact not only in Malaysia but also in the world. How did all this come about? European colonialism!

Colonialism was bad. But it laid the foundation for Malaysia to modernise, making the nation a model for the Muslim world. It created an environment that facilitated the planting of Christianity outside Europe and across Asia. In the case of Malaysia it also brought in a large number of non-Muslim immigrants, which eventually shaped the constitution. In retrospect, this influx enabled Christianity to take root all over this Muslim land. God used colonialism for His own purpose.

And it was the Holy Spirit who forbade Paul to continue evangelising in Turkey, leading him to Europe instead (Acts 16:6-10). That means God anticipated European colonialism paving the way for European missionaries to evangelise the world and, in the process, established the Malaysian Church for a strategic purpose.

Leong Tien Fock, Ph.D  
*Research Commission*



## TIMELINE OF MALAYSIAN HISTORY...

- Kedah Sultanate (1136 – present)
- Melaka Sultanate (1402-1511)
- Sulu Sultanate (1450-1899)
- Johor Sultanate (1528 – present)
- White Rajas Dynasty (1841–1946)
- Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824
- Straits Settlements (1826-1946)
- Larut War (1861-1874)
- Klang War (1867-1874)
- Pangkor Treaty of 1874
- British Malaya (1874-1946)
- Federated Malay States (1895-1946)
- Unfederated Malay States (19th century – 1946)
- Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909
- Battle of Penang (1914)
- North Borneo (1882-1963)
- Mat Salleh Rebellion (1896-1900)
- World War II (1941-1945)
- Malayan Union (1946-1948)
- Federation of Malaya (1948-1963)
- Malayan Emergency (1948-1960)
- Independence for Malaya (31 August 1957)
- Independence for Sabah and Sarawak (31 August 1963)
- Federation of Malaysia (16 September 1963 – present)
- Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation (1962-1966)
- Singapore in Malaysia (1963-1965)
- 1964 Race Riots (1964)
- Communist Insurgency War (1967-1989)
- May 13 Incident (1969)
- New Economic Policy (NEP) (1971-1990 – present)
- Operation Lalang (1987)
- Malaysian Constitutional Crisis (1987-1988)
- Asian Financial Crisis (1997-1998)

*(This timeline is incomplete. It serves as general information for the booklet)*

**WEEK 1**  
**JULY 22-28**



## HISTORY SAYS,

### BRITISH INTERVENTION

In the mid-19th century, social disorder was created by the succession wars among the Malay chiefs of Perak and the rival Chinese secret society factions. It led to a political opportunity for the British.

It was Raja Abdullah who agreed to a British Resident. He signed a treaty called Pangkor Engagement in January 1874 to accept British administration and was installed as Sultan of Perak.

According to the agreement, the Resident's advice "must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom." It was recorded that such non-interference policy on religion and custom was carried out to the extent of opposing any attempts by the Christian missionaries to evangelise among the Malays.

The treaty set the first Residential System and effectively gave the British a foothold for political dominion in the Peninsula.

Before the end of 1874 Residents had also been appointed in Selangor and Sungai Ujung (which united with nearby small kingdoms to form Negeri Sembilan). The British 'advice' was later extended to the rest of Negeri Sembilan and Pahang in 1887. The four Protected States with full Residents were grouped into a Federation in 1896, with the capital in Kuala Lumpur.

Johor accepted a treaty of protection in 1885 and eventually gave in under pressure to accept a British Advisor in 1904.

Under the 1909 Bangkok Treaty, Siam (now Thailand) transferred power over the northern Malay states (Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis) to the British. Similar treaties were imposed on them and they became the Unfederated Malay States, each with a British Advisor as chief officer of the colonial administration.

All treaties between Britain and the Peninsular states were largely similar, i.e. to accept British protection and diplomatic role as well as the appointment of a British Resident/Advisor. Protection against foreign invasion was guaranteed.

The Residential System continued until the arrival of the Japanese in 1941. After the Japanese occupation, the British tried to maintain their position by introducing a new administration system which was the Malayan Union in 1946.

The people, however, rejected the new system. In a combined effort, they rebelled against the British administration. Finally in 1957, the British granted Malaya independence.

The Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963 incorporating Singapore, North Borneo (now Sabah) and Sarawak. Singapore withdrew in mid-1965.

## CHRISTIAN LEADER SAYS,

As Malaysia turns 50 this year, let us take time to assess how close we are to our goal of becoming a developed nation. More importantly, let us consider how we, the Church, have contributed towards this goal.

Here, I am reminded of Jesus' charge that we are to be "salt of the earth and light of the world" (Matt 5:13, 14). Salt, as we know, is both a preservative (against decay and corruption) and a "task-enhancer" (gives flavour to food). So, the presence of Christians should help to stop the moral decay in society, and at the same time, improve the quality of life in their communities.

As light of the world, Christians are to help dispel the darkness caused by corruption, injustice and all other forms of evil that mar the good name of the nation.

Let us heed His command to let our light shine before men so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt 5:16). By so doing, we will silence the ignorant talk of foolish men (1 Pet 2:15).

Elder David Boler  
*Founding Chairman, Advisor to NECF Malaysia*

## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."*

*Romans 1: 19-21*

*"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

*2 Corinthians 4:3-4*

**FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION**

## DAY 1 (Jul 22, Sun)

## ISLAM

The first physical evidence of the arrival of Islam in Malaysia is said to be the gravestone (dated 1303 or 1387) with Arabic inscription found in Champa, Terengganu. The location of Champa in the Chinese trade route set off the theory that Islam came to Malaysia through China. Historical evidence also attributes the introduction of Islam to the Muslim Indian traders.

The founder of Melaka, Parameswara, is said to have converted to Islam in 1414 after marrying a princess from Pasai. At the close of the 14th century, Melaka became the first powerful Islamic empire in the region.

It is generally acknowledged that Islam began to spread from Melaka to Southeast Asia as a whole through social contacts in the form of trades, political marriages and by conquest.

Throughout the 15th century, Melaka was reputed as the commercial and Islamic centre in the region. The incorporation of Islamic ideas into the Malay culture led to the notion

that to become Muslim was to *masuk Melayu*. The religion became so ingrained that Islamic rituals were practised as Malay culture.

Johor was the first Malay state to organise Islam on a bureaucratic basis (1895), followed by Kelantan in 1915. The Federal Constitution positions Islam as the religion of Malaysia. Islamic administration differs from state to state with its own syariah courts conducting legal matters related to personal and family laws of Muslims.

As a result of the *dakwah* movement in the 1970s, Islamic influence is evident in the dress-code, art, media, education system, etc.

Islam also plays an important part in the nation's politics. The struggle between political Islam and cultural Islam is seen taking place in recent years. Many conservative Muslims see Islam as a subject that cannot be challenged conventionally or constitutionally.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. The relatively progressive and moderate form of Islam in the country.
  - b. Those who, while holding on to their Islamic faith, advocate and uphold religious freedom for others.
  - c. His Majesty Yang di-Pertuan Agong as head of religion, and the sultans, for their forward thinking form of Islamic leadership.
2. Islamic family law and bureaucracy to be just and impartial so that the welfare of the Muslim women will be safeguarded.
  3. Syariah courts to respect and

recognise the constitutional and judicial responsibility of the civil courts in the matters of conversion, individual's right to religious liberty, and the custody of children of a civil marriage.

4. Civil court judges of Islamic faith to be courageous, open-minded, and impartial in exercising their judicial duties in the matters that involve Muslim and non-Muslim parties.
5. Against the spirit behind ultra-conservatism that may lead to religious extremism.

PRAY



## DAY 2 (Jul 23, Mon)

## CHRISTIANITY

According to historical sources, early Christian presence may be traced to Persian and Turkish traders with Nestorian Christian origins as early as the 7th century. The conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511 marked the introduction of Roman Catholicism. In the 17th century, the arrival of the Dutch in the region ousted the Portuguese and thus discouraged Catholicism and promoted Dutch Reformed Protestantism (Roxborough 1992, pp7-8).

St. Peter's Church, the oldest functioning Catholic Church in Malaysia, was built in 1710 after the Dutch restored freedom of religion to the Catholics. Christ Church in Melaka, built in 1753 by the Dutch, is said to be the oldest Protestant church in Malaysia. It was handed over to the Anglicans in 1838, 43 years after the British took over Melaka.

Most of the Protestant denominations in those days were associated with Chinese and Indian migrant communities and with the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak.

In Sabah, the Basel Mission began its work among migrant Hakka Chinese in 1882, many of whom were Christians. Presbyterianism grew through Chinese churches in Johor and expatriate congregations in Penang, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. The Boxer Uprising in China led to an influx of Chinese Methodist migrants to Sitiawan and Sibul.

Tamil migrants to Peninsula included the Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Methodists. The Orthodox Syrian Church came to Malaya in 1932, made up of Indian migrants. Missions to Sengoi indigenous people also began in 1932.

*Christianity in Malaysia* says that the first Malay language New Testament was published in 1662, and the first Chinese translation of the Bible was produced in 1823.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. The first missionaries of all denominations for their faithfulness and commitment to the Great Commission.
- b. The first group of Christian leaders who took on the baton and obeyed God's call to plant churches especially in the rural areas, to pioneer outreaches, missions and social ministries.
- c. The present leadership for their zeal and vision to expand God's kingdom.

2. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, to rest upon our Christian leaders.
3. All Christians from all denominations will stand in one voice and boldness to speak against injustice and unrighteousness.

PRAY

**DAY 3** (Jul 24, Tue)**BUDDHISM**

**T**here are two major branches of Buddhism: Mahayana & Theravada.

The artifacts discovered in the Bujang Valley of Kedah point to the existence of Mahayana Buddhism in the 4th or 5th century. The writings of a Chinese pilgrim Yiqing in the 7th century suggest that Kedah, a vassal of Srivijaya, was already an important port for trade as well as a major religious satellite centre.

Srivijaya, the first Indonesian kingdom, was a centre of Buddhist learning. Its historical record presents the evidence of Mahayana Buddhism in the Malay Peninsula in those days.

The 8th century saw northern Peninsula under the influence of Buddhism. Perak became part of the great Malay Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya.

Another form of Buddhism, Theravada, spilled over to Kelantan and Terengganu from Thailand in the 10th century.

As the Srivijaya kingdom declined in the 11th century, Buddhist influence gradually disappeared. The influx of Chinese traders and migrant workers reintroduced Mahayana Buddhism to Malaysia, particularly under the British rule in the 19th century. Kek Lok Si Temple (Penang) was built at the end of the century.

The immigrants of Sri Lanka brought with them Theravada Buddhism and founded the Brickfields Buddhist temple, Maha Vihara (Kuala Lumpur), in 1894.

Two years after the 1957 Independence, the Malaysian Buddhist Association was formed to promote unity and social welfare of Malaysian Buddhists.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the Buddhists.
- b. The harmonious relationship among all religious groups in the country.

- 2. Religious barriers that may prevent the Buddhists from being receptive to the Gospel be broken down.
- 3. Hearts and minds to be enlightened to see the TRUTH.

PRAY

DAY 4 (Jul 25, Wed)

## CHINESE RELIGION

The Chinese Religion is a mix of Taoism, Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism. The belief is predominantly expressions of cultural characteristics, ethic and philosophy observed over many generations.

Taoism combines old animistic harmony with the universe.

Confucianism takes care of the political and moral aspects of life, while Buddhism takes care of the afterlife. The practice of ancestor worship is rooted in the Confucian concept of filial piety.

The *Encyclopedia of Malaysia* traces the early history of the Chinese religions back to a 15th century small settlement established in Melaka by Hokkien traders.

However, the building of shrines and cemeteries was attributed to the mass migration of Chinese in the 19th century during the tin and gold mining days. Temples, practices and religious rituals served as important links to migrants' hometowns.

Leaders of the Chinese communities were called *Kapitan*. Some of them became the patron saints worshipped by the Chinese. For example, the leader of the Sarawak *Hakka* gold miners, who died during the anti-colonial uprising in 1857, was declared *Dai Pak Gong* for establishing Kuching as the capital of Sarawak. A statue of him was placed in a temple, worshipped by the local Chinese.

The Malaysian Chinese Religion also integrated the local value and belief system producing some local deities such as the *Na Tuk Kong* and *Tua Pek Kong*.

The Cheng Hoon Teng temple in Melaka is the oldest temple in the country, built in 1645.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the people who have yet to believe in Him.
- b. The harmonious relationship among all religious groups in the country.
- c. The flourishing of the Chinese-speaking churches throughout Malaysia.

- 2. Cultural barriers, superstitions and traditions that may prevent the people from being receptive to the Gospel to be broken down.
- 3. Against the spiritual forces behind all spiritual deceptions (Eph 6:12)
- 4. Hearts and minds to be enlightened to see the TRUTH.

PRAY

## DAY 5 (Jul 26, Thu)

## HINDUISM

Archaeological evidence shows early Indian visits to Perlis in the 5th or 6th century. Tamil sources attest to the close relationship between Kedah and the Chola Kingdom of South India.

Religious monuments in Bujang valley, Kedah, dating to the 7th century have been discovered.

Sir Poyyatha Vinayagar Moorthi Temple on Jalan Hang Jebat, Melaka, built in 1781, is said to be the oldest working Hindu temple in Malaysia.

Indian merchants in the early centuries brought the people of the west coast into contact not only

with Buddhism but also Hinduism. However, much of Hindu worship and practice was imported through large scale migration of Indians in the 19th century, many of whom were of South Indian descent.

The temple is an essential component of the Hindu practice of worship. Salvation, one of the basic beliefs of Hindus, means the state of freedom from reincarnation and union with the Almighty.

Although a matter for debate, Hindu influence on the local culture (e.g. *wayang kulit*), language and political concept is rather apparent.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the people.
- b. The harmonious relationship among all religious groups in the country.
- c. The Tamil-speaking churches.

## 2. Cultural barriers, superstitions and traditions that may prevent the people from being receptive to the Gospel to be broken down.

- 3. Against the spiritual forces behind all spiritual deceptions (Eph 6:12).
- 4. Hearts and minds to be enlightened to see the TRUTH.

PRAY



## DAY 6 (Jul 27, Fri)

## SIKHISM

The first group of Sikhs arrived in the 1850s through British connection. However, the real wave of migration occurred in the 1870s at the dawn of British colonialism. They were largely brought in to maintain law and order in the Straits Settlements. The first unit force was the Perak Sikhs in 1884-1896.

The temple, *gurdwara*, is the focal point of religious and social activities. In 1881, the first *gurdwara* was set up in Penang by the Sikhs in the police force.

One of the earliest temples in Klang valley was Gurdwara Sahib Police in Jalan Parliament, built in 1890.

There are reportedly about 55,000 Sikhs with 119 independent *gurdwaras* in Malaysia.

The Malaysian Gurdwaras Council was established in 1988 to coordinate the functioning of these temples.

The Sikhs believe in one god who is formless. The ideal is to become one who is completely attuned to god's will and whose love for god is expressed in deed and community services.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the Sikhs.
- b. The harmonious relationship among all religious groups.

- 2. Religious barriers that may prevent the Sikhs from being receptive to the Gospel to be broken down.
- 3. Hearts and minds to be enlightened to see the TRUTH in their effort to achieve the 'ideal'.

PRAY

**DAY 7** (Jul 28, Sat)**INDIGENOUS BELIEFS**

Indigenous beliefs are loosely classified as animism, which is considered to be the oldest religion known to mankind.

Indigenous beliefs refer to those practised by the Orang Asli of the Peninsula and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. Their ideas of natural and supernatural world and morality are generally well structured.

Believing in a supreme being who is the creator of the world, the indigenous people recognise the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships with the community and with the different world of spirits, animals and plants. Any imbalance would result in misfortune, illness, crop failure, etc. Restitution must be made to

restore the balance by appeasing the angry spirits through rituals, animal sacrifices and food offerings. Shamans (religious leaders and healers) act as intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds.

As a whole, the belief system is not officially recognised and is in effect non-institutionalised. Teachings and values are transmitted through oral tradition.

In the course of colonialism and modernisation, the indigenous people were placed in the good light of missionary zeal, the Christians and Muslims in particular.

While many have adopted other religions, the key elements of their traditional beliefs are still retained.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the people who live a simple life.
  - b. Their strong sense of community and hospitality.
- ## 2. Cultural barriers, superstitions and traditions that may prevent the people from being receptive to the Gospel to be broken down.

- ## 3. Against the spiritual forces behind all spiritual deceptions (Eph 6:12).
- ## 4. Hearts and minds to be enlightened to see the one CREATOR who gave His only begotten Son for their salvation.

PRAY

**WEEK 2**  
**JULY 29 - AUGUST 4**



# HISTORY SAYS,

## SOCIAL CONTRACT

In 1956, a Constitutional Commission headed by Lord Reid came to Malaya for the drafting of a constitution for an independent Malaya.

In the process, UMNO, the leading partner of the UMNO-MCA-MIC Alliance, was asked to agree to a "common nationality for the whole of the Federation." That would allow "all persons (in Malaya) to qualify as citizen either by birth or by fulfilling requirements of residence and language and by taking an oath of loyalty."

The leaders of the three communal parties agreed to first resolve differences and to speak with one voice to the Commission. This was the origin of the social contract between the UMNO and the MCA leaders. MCA acknowledged that the special rights of the Malays should be protected, and UMNO in return conceded that Chinese and other non-Malays should be granted easier citizenship rights based on the principle of *jus soli* (by birth). The Chinese were also allowed to continue to play a dominant role in economy.

The Reid Commission's draft proposals were published in 1957. They were then reviewed and amended by a working committee, representatives of the Alliance, the Malay rulers, and the British government at a meeting in London. Thus, emerged the Merdeka Constitution (MC). The Yang diPertuan Agong was given the responsibility to safeguard the "special position of the Malays" and the "legitimate interests of other communities".

Before the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, another consultative process was initiated with North Borneo (now Sabah) and Sarawak in 1962. From this process came forth a social contract (contained in the Cobbold Commission Report) similar to the consensus acquired in 1956-57.

The core of the contract as stated in the memorandum submitted by the Alliance was that, Islam was to be the State religion, but the "observance of this principle shall not impose any disability on non-Muslim nationals professing and practising their own religions and shall not imply that the State is not a secular state."

The MC provisions evidently provided the framework for the 1963 Federal Constitution. The latter continued to cover the provisions of special rights and privileges of the Malays, national language, and religion without depriving "any person of any right and privilege, permit or license accrued to or enjoyed or held by him" (Article 153). It also included "several other issues which were/are matters of contention between the Malays and Chinese."

In short, the Constitution, formulated in 1957 and 1963 through consultation and consensus of the nation's founding fathers, is based on the social contract on which this country is founded.

*Extracted from <http://www.necf.org.my/newsmaster.cfm?&menuid=12&action=view&retrieveid=644>*

## CHRISTIAN LEADER SAYS,

What's all this gobbledygook about nation-building?

Isn't this evil world like a sinking ship from which we must all be rescued?

Isn't the church supposed to be the lifeboat into which all good Christians should jump to escape the wrath of God?

The Christian's task is to preach and call all to flee from the coming judgment.

Of course we should also make a little money on the side, or more if we know how to manipulate things. After all, God wants all his children to be healthy, wealthy and blessed while they wait for Christ's Return.

But if things in Malaysia turn uncomfortable for us and hostile to the church, we just have to pack up and migrate to the west.

Talking about Christians contributing to nation-building is nothing but worldly garbage!

Of course there is the uncomfortable bits of the Gospels where Jesus spoke of the church being the 'salt of the earth' and the 'light of the world' (Matt 5:13, 14). Oh, by the way, what did Jesus mean by them?

But honestly, if the Lord should ask me on the Judgment Day what I did with those verses in my life, I wouldn't have the faintest idea what to say!

Bishop Hwa Yung  
Methodist Church Malaysia

## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM. In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."*

Acts 14:15-17

FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION



## DAY 8 (Jul 29, Sun)

## ECONOMY IN EARLY DAYS

**F**oreseeing the development of a multiracial and multi-religious society, coupled with economic reason and based on their notions of different ethnic dispositions, the British introduced the policy of divide and rule to ensure stability.

In the effort to compensate the Malay rulers for their 'loss of power', British interference was minimal. The Malay farmers were left to continue with rice-growing.

The Chinese, seen as capitalists that would help increase the government's revenues, were allowed to freely engage in tin-mining and commercial activities.

The British were, however, heavily involved in recruiting South Indian labourers to meet the need for plantation workers, especially with the rubber boom in the early 20th century.

Such attitudes had probably set the basis for racial polarisation.

In Sarawak, economic development was restricted to uphold the preservation of the indigenous way of life. The governments of Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) relied on European and Chinese capital to develop export-oriented industries e.g. oil and timber.

Regardless, the British establishment of good infrastructure and effective legal and administrative systems had developed a profitable export economy on raw materials, which was the envy of Southeast Asia in those days.

Today, Malaysia's economy is moving from labour-intensive towards skill-intensive, targeting the development of higher value-added manufacturing and expansion of the services sector.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His providence and blessings on the economy.
  - b. A resilient economy despite challenges and crises.
  - c. Policies that address poverty.
2. National commitment and action to eliminate poverty and address the legitimate needs of the poor.
  3. Business community to realise its responsibility to provide opportunities for the poor and the less fortunate.

4. Growing and stable economic environment that enables the poor to move up and become self-reliant, making their contribution to the quality of life in the nation.

5. Honest gain, integrity of the work force, stewardship of resources and community conscience.

## 6. Salt & light:

Christian businessmen and professionals to bear testimonies of godly conscience; to conduct themselves in the world in holiness and godly sincerity; and to demonstrate God's blessings in their respective communities.

DAY 9 (Jul 30, Mon)

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

**M**elaka marked the zenith of the Malay Sultanate. After its fall, subsidiary kingdoms and provinces became fragmented, each with its own rulers and chiefs, exerting great influence over political, economic and military matters.

During the British rule, the sultans' powers were removed. They served as symbols of Malay political sovereignty and received only salaries and allowances.

Under the new administration, the British Residents and the Advisors were the important officials in the Federated States and the Unfederated States respectively. The highest officer was the High Commissioner with a Federal Council (formed in 1909) to advise him on new regulations and policies.

After World War II, new political awareness sparked the formation of several political parties among the Chinese, Indians and Malays. They were the UMNO, MCA and MIC representing the interests of their respective communities.

An alliance was formed in 1954 and proved to be a powerful political force. In 1973, it was replaced with a broader coalition — the Barisan Nasional — composed of 14 parties.

When drafting the constitution for an independent Malaya, UMNO and MCA leaders agreed in 1956 to a 'bargain' whereby MCA conceded Malay special rights in return for more liberal citizenship terms, as well as a free hand for the Chinese in pursuing their economic and commercial interests.

Tunku Abdul Rahman said in 1969, "The Malays have gained for themselves political power. The Chinese and Indians have won for themselves economic power."

The present system of government in Malaysia closely models the Westminster's parliamentary system, a legacy of British colonial rule. Malaysian politics has been relatively stable but not without frustrating forces.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His sovereignty over Malaysia throughout the political history.
- b. Political stability that provides a peaceful environment for the people.
- c. The role of government in His kingdom.

- 2. The government to fulfil its purpose by providing a trustworthy source of righteous governance and justice to serve the needs of all people irrespective of race and religion.
- 3. Respected men and women of integrity with wisdom and understanding to be placed in all areas of legislative, executive, judicial and military.

## 4. Judicial branch

- a. Judges to judge without partiality, without fear of man or power or influences.
- b. Access to legal remedy for everyone who is caught in any dispute or conflict.

- 5. As Malaysians, to appropriate our freedom and exercise our given authority to choose (vote for) men and women of character.

## 6. Salt & light:

- a. Christians to recognise our calling to be good citizens and to work for justice so that His name is glorified at all times.
- b. Christian professionals and politicians to exercise their calling by supporting the pillar of justice and to have the mind of Christ in the political arena.

DAY 10 (Jul 31, Tue)

## THE PLURAL SOCIETY

**E**arly history indicates that a substantial number of Malay population was made up of immigrants from the Dutch colonies, e.g. Sumatra.

The influx of migrants from China and India during the British colonial period drastically changed the racial composition in the peninsula. Instead of returning to their homeland after a certain period, some migrants stayed on and developed roots. This marked the beginning of a gradual development of a plural society.

However, the British's assumed responsibilities for Malays, Chinese and Indians led to stereotyped perceptions and segregation. Cultural integration was slow. The creation of the Chinese Protectorate made it far less important for the Malay leaders to interact with the Chinese.

According to the 1931 census, the Malays were outnumbered. Alarmed by such revelation, the British officials reiterated their commitment

to safeguard the 'special privileges' of the Malays, i.e. to maintain the position and authority of the Malay rulers and land ownership.

The 1913 Malay Reservation Enactment was amended in 1933 to bar non-Malays from acquiring any form of land ownership.

Nonetheless, the Malay rulers had a long history of co-operation with leading Chinese merchants. The relationship between the privileged Chinese and Malays were fostered in the colonial period by common experience of English education and their acceptance of their own social status.

The modern history of Malaysia suggests that religious and racial harmony has been fragile. One of the main reasons is the "identification of religion with race coupled with the political primacy of the Malays colliding with the aspiration of other races for complete equality", as aptly put by a political analyst.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His intervention in the past racial incidents.
- b. Government's effort to create national unity and integration.
- c. Respect, understanding, willingness to accommodate and share among all races.

2. Forgiveness, healing and restoration for those who were or have been hurt from racial incidents.

3. Against the spirit of strife behind those who stir up racial sentiment and religious issues for their own gain.

4. Government and leaders of all ethnic groups to walk the talk in fostering unity and integration.

5. Favouritism and racial discrimination to be removed from all policies and implementation of projects.

6. Teachers and parents to be role models and instil in their children the values of kindness and respect for one another.

## 7. Salt & light:

Local churches to realise their community responsibilities with creative solutions that reveal the goodness of God.

DAY 11 (Aug 1, Wed)

## EDUCATION

To overcome the problem of illiteracy, the British set up vernacular schools in 1872 where Malay language was taught in the morning and religious education in the afternoon. However, *sekolah pondok* was still popular, especially in 1914–1945.

The Chinese vernacular school system was sponsored by individuals, the London Missionary Society and the Manchu government in China. Chung Hwa School in Penang marked the first immigrant school in Malaya. In 1920, the British enforced the registration enactment to control the Chinese schools for fear of spreading anti-British ideology.

The early Tamil schools were built on rubber estates or plantations with aid from plantation owners or Christian Missionary Societies.

The establishment of English schools aimed at giving general education irrespective of race.

Japanese occupation and the struggle for independence in other colonies led the British to redefine education in the multiracial context. National schools using Malay and English as medium of instruction were set up. Chinese and Tamils schools were accepted as national-type schools where English and Malay were also used.

The first Minister of Education, Tun Abdul Razak, led a committee to revamp the colonial education system, in the effort to establish a national system that would be accepted by all. The 1956 Razak Report became the basis for the 1957 Education Ordinance.

To drive the education system to greater heights, the 5-year *National Education Blueprint* was launched in January 2007. The thrusts are: Building "*Bangsa Malaysia*", developing human capital, strengthening national schools, narrowing the education gap between rural and urban schools, uplifting the teaching profession and pushing for educational institution excellence.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God

- a. For our dedicated education ministers throughout the Malaysian history.
- b. That the present education ministry has taken progressive and bold steps to overcome current deficiencies and weaknesses and to improve the educational system.
- c. For principals and teachers who are committed.

## 2. Education ministry and state education departments: wisdom, impartiality, effective implementation of good policies.

## 3. Appointment of university chancellors and lecturers,

recruitment of principals and teachers, promotion, etc., to be based on merit and capability.

## 4. Good stewardship in managing fund allocations to improve school systems.

## 5. The establishment of non-Islamic societies in all schools to be fully implemented. Open doors for Christian fellowships and the Brigades.

## 6. Salt & light:

- a. Churches to find creative ways to relate to schools in their respective communities.
- b. Christian parents to be more involved in schools.
- c. More Christians to take up teaching as a vocation.



## DAY 12 (Aug 2, Thu)

## SECULAR STATE OR OTHERWISE

Since *Merdeka*, the constitutional position of Islam as "the religion of the Federation" in Article 3 has generally been understood as primarily for ritual and ceremonial purposes.

The constitutional document explicitly expresses that Article 3 does not imply to make Malaysia a theocratic state.

The Reid Commission Report, based on the social contract made by the country's founding fathers, has made clear that the observance of such provision "shall not impose any disability on non-Muslim nationals professing and practicing their own religions; and shall not imply that the State is not a secular state."

In 1958, Tunku Abdul Rahman declared in the Parliament that, "I would like to make it clear that this country is not an Islamic State as it is generally understood, we merely provided that Islam shall be the official religion of the State."

The then Lord President Tun Salleh Abas, in the case of *Che Omar bin Che Soh v. Public Prosecutor (1988)*, after reviewing Malaysia's constitutional history, ruled that the religion of Islam in Article 3 meant only actions related to rituals and ceremonies. It was never intended to extend the application of Syariah to the sphere of public law.

In other words, the Federal Constitution was never intended to raise Islamic law above civil law.

Because of the existence of Islamic laws governing personal and family matters of those who profess Islam, Malaysia can be at best described as a qualified secular state.

(Extracted from <http://www.necf.org.my/newsmaster.cfm?&tmenuid=12&taction=view&retrieveid=752>)

# PRAY

1. Praise God for His wisdom on those involved in drafting the constitution to make Malaysia a secular state.
2. Government at all levels, i.e. the legislative, executive and judicial, to uphold our secular constitution.
3. Separation of religious institutions from the state institutions.
4. The interests of all citizens irrespective of religious background will be safeguarded.
  - a. Politicians will not exploit religion for their own political agenda.
  - b. Religious authorities will not exploit religion for their religious agenda.
5. **Salt & light:**  
Christian politicians to be courageous, to stand for justice and speak the truth; favour with God and men.

## DAY 13 (Aug 3, Fri)

## QUALIFIED RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**W**hile Article 11 of the Federal Constitution grants every person the freedom to profess, practice and propagate his religion, other constitutional provisions must be taken into serious consideration in the interpretation.

The pluralistic nature of this nation creates greater sensitivity with respect to the scope of religious liberty. At the same time, the freedom of profession, practice and propagation is subject to general laws that seek to maintain public order, public health or morality.

In addition, states and Federal Territories are permitted to make laws to "control and restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine" among the Muslims. Attempts have been made by certain State Legislative Assemblies to restrain activities of proselytising to Muslims.

The former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Tun Salleh Abbas, once remarked that such limitation was "logical as it is a necessary consequence of the fact that Islam is the religion of the Federation...to protect Muslims from being exposed to heretical religious doctrines, be they of Islamic or non-Islamic origin and irrespective of whether the propagators are Muslims or non-Muslims."

Numerous incidents over the years indicate that the issue of religion and freedom of religion is extremely sensitive.

Although many would agree that limitations on freedom of religion or belief are necessary for the public order and welfare, a question may be asked whether these are imposed by law in a non-discriminatory manner.

*(Extracted from <http://www.necf.org.my/newsmaster.cfm?&tmenuid=12&taction=view&retrieveid=399>)*

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. The relative freedom to worship Him and to profess our faith.
  - b. The many Malaysian citizens who have respect for one another and are willing to accommodate each other regardless of religious background.
2. Article 11 to be fully realised so that every citizen has the right to worship and to profess the religion of his/her choice.
3. Against the spirit behind those who exploit religion to create public disorder and to promote religious extremism.

4. Those who are in marital and custody disputes will not abuse religion for their own benefit.

## 5. Salt & light:

Christian judges, lawmakers, lawyers, advocates, etc.

- a. To stand firm on godly principles without fear of man or power or influence.
- b. To demonstrate God's goodness in their respective areas.

DAY 14 (Aug 4, Sat)

## THE PROMISES OF THE BN GOVERNMENT

In his keynote address at the Invest Malaysia 2007, the Prime Minister cited the launch of the *National Education Blueprint* as evidence of the government keeping to its promises. "We will continue to work hard to deliver our promises to the people," he said (The Star, 23/3/07).

Three years ago, in the 2004 general elections campaign, Barisan Nasional (the present government), came up with its manifesto. The promises made, among many others, were:

- It "ensures that no group is neglected or left behind, and that each citizen has a stake in nation-building".
- Believing "in fair and equitable sharing of the fruits of economic growth. Development must benefit all areas of the country and all groups".
- It "upholds the diversity of religious practice, language and culture"; and "safeguards the interests of all citizens," "listens to and acts on the hopes and aspirations of all groups regardless of age, gender, ethnic background and religion".
- It "will defend the Constitution and the laws of the country".
- While Islam is the official religion, it "believes in a tolerant and progressive Islam. Freedom to worship other religions is guaranteed by the Constitution".

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. The Prime Minister who is humble and willing to serve the nation and the people.
- b. The ministers and elected representatives who are committed to serve the nation and look after the people's welfare.

- 2. The government to fulfil and carry out what it has promised the people.

## 3. PM:

- a. Grounded in truth.
- b. Ruled by humility.
- c. Filled with wisdom and discernment.
- d. Unwavering in justice and in doing what is right.
- e. Surrounded by wise men and women of integrity who prioritise national interests.

- 4. Corrupted ministers, department heads, and elected representatives to be
  - a. Exposed
  - b. Removed
  - c. Replaced by men and women of good standing who can effectively carry out their duties.

## 5. Salt & light:

- Christian ministers, department heads and elected representatives to
- a. Stand firm on godly principles without fear of man or influence.
  - b. Demonstrate God's goodness in their respective areas.

**WEEK 3**  
**AUGUST 5-11**



# HISTORY SAYS,

## RACIAL RIOTS

Economic disparity was evident ever since the colonial period. In the 1960s, seeing sharp divide between the Chinese rich and the Malay poor, the government introduced a policy to readjust and restructure the economic situation.

The policy, however, increased the tension between the Malays and the Chinese. Meanwhile, the People's Action Party (PAP) led by Lee Kuan Yew with its slogan 'Malaysian Malaysia' was gaining favourable grounds among the Chinese.

In his mission to gain a foothold in Singapore, the UMNO Secretary-General, Syed Ja'afar Albar, made several inflammatory speeches. The *Utusan Malaysia* made matters worse with its anti-PAP and anti-Chinese tone in its editorial and news report.

In 1964, Chinese-Malay riots broke out in the streets of Singapore. Tunku Abdul Rahman blamed the riots on Indonesian subversive elements inciting the Singapore Malays.

By May 1965, the Chinese-Malay relation was severely strained. PAP openly challenged Malays' special rights. In August, Tunku officially announced that Singapore would have to leave Malaysia.

The Malay-based politics continued to emphasise on the Malays' special privileges. After the National Language Act in 1967, there was an outburst of Malay passion for *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy). This led to heated arguments about the nature of these privileges. Racial tension continued to simmer.

In the general elections in May 1969, the ruling Alliance coalition won but suffered a serious setback in the polls. The largely Chinese opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Gerakan were excited at the improvement in their position. They secured a police permit for a 'victory' parade through a fixed route in Kuala Lumpur. However, the procession deviated from its route and headed through the Malay district of Kampung Baru, mocking the people.



While the Gerakan party issued an apology the next day (May 13), a group of UMNO supporters assembled outside the house of Selangor Menteri Besar Harun Idris.

Shortly after the counter-procession began, disturbances involving Malays and Chinese broke out. The situation became increasingly uncontrollable and a curfew was declared at 8pm on May 13. However, bloodshed continued in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding state of Selangor.

On May 14, Yang diPertuan Agong proclaimed a state of national emergency. The constitution and parliament were suspended. The elections in East Malaysia were also put off indefinitely. A National Operation Council (NOC) led by Tun Abdul Razak was set up to assume administrative responsibility at this time.

The riots continued for a substantial period of time. 196 people died and 439 were wounded between May 13 and July 31, according to the official figures. 753 cases of arson were recorded and 211 vehicles were destroyed or severely damaged. 6,000 people were made homeless.

Why did the May 13 riots occur? Many Chinese blamed the government, claiming it had intentionally planned the attacks beforehand. In the Malays' eyes, the Chinese were the culprits. In its report, the NOC alluded to the roles of the communist party and Chinese secret societies, differences in interpretation of the constitution by the Malays and the non-Malays, and the resentment of "certain immigrant races" against Malay special rights.

## CHRISTIAN LEADERS SAY,

Nation-building always comes with a price – **the price of diligent prayers.**

When the world has no answer and can no longer be controlled by the armies, police, politicians, counsellors, scientists, etc. because of the upsurge of evil, God has His answer in His distinct people who will pray. Through their upright living, their consistent and accumulated prayers they can unleash the power to 'hedge' or to guard the nation.

May the Malaysian Church rule out all activities that have no eternal validity and **return to a perpetual mighty flow of deliberate, consistent, persistent, focused, self-denying and accurate prayers.**

Rev. Susan Tang  
*Founder, Station of Life*

"Let's Build".

Rev. Dr. Vincent Leoh  
*General Superindentant - Assemblies of God Malaysia*

## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"He who despises his neighbour sins, but happy is he who is gracious to the poor... He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him."*

*Proverbs 14: 21, 31*

*"And He (Jesus) answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.' "*

*Luke 7:22*

FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION

**DAY 15** (Aug 5, Sun)

## ORANG ASLI (OA)

**T**hey numbered 147,412 in 2003 representing a mere 0.6 per cent of the national population (26.5 million).

Land is a pressing issue for the OA because it is their primary source of life and is crucial for the continuity of their communities.

In the Peninsula, when an area is declared as protected, the land rights of the OA are the first to be affected. The people become part of the project of eco-tourism or ecological protection and may be told where to stay. When their land is displaced by development projects, they are either given monetary compensation which may not be sufficient to make up for the loss, or are given another piece of land of which they obtain no written permanent tenure.

Without a land to be called their own, what is the right of the OA in building places of worship? Article 11 gives every person, i.e. including the OA, the right to profess and practice his religion, and every religious group to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes.

However, the inconsistencies in definitions and interpretation of land rights between the OA and the states have created considerable conflicts especially in building places of worship.

None of the provisions on OA ancestral rights over land (The Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954, revised in 1974) are included in the National Land Code Act 56/65.

So far, only about 12 per cent of all the 869 OA settlements are properly gazetted as Orang Asli reserves.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the Orang Asli.
- b. His blessings upon the growing OA churches.
- c. Raising capable OA Christian leaders.
- d. Non-OA churches that are supportive.

2. The authorities to resolve the plight of OA communities and recognise their rights to land and religious freedom.

3. The government to consider amending the National Land Code in terms of land entitlement for the OA.

4. In the event of compulsory acquisition of their lands, OA are equitably compensated for their lands.

5. OA themselves to stand up for their rights with boldness and wisdom.

6. OA parents to recognise the importance of education for their children.

## 7. Salt & light:

- a. Churches to be bold and courageous in voicing OA dilemma and to serve the communities with humility in all aspects with no strings attached.
- b. OA Christian leaders to be full of spirit and wisdom.
- c. OA Christians to stand firm in the Lord, and demonstrate God's goodness in their respective communities.

DAY 16 (Aug 6, Mon)

## THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

There are 28 officially recognised indigenous ethnic groups in Sabah. The largest group is the Christian-majority Kadazan-Dusun, followed by Muslim-majority Bajau, and Murut.

In Sarawak, Christian-majority Ibans form the major ethnic group with about 31.2 per cent of the total population, followed by the Bidayuh, Melanau and other tribes of Sarawak.

The Federal Constitution regards the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak as "natives".

In the Peninsula, the *Bumiputeras* are essentially the Muslim Malays; in Sarawak and Sabah however, the *Bumiputeras* include all the indigenous groups, both Muslims and non-Muslims, as listed in the Constitution.

Article 161 (A) provides for the special position of Sabah and Sarawak natives. It spells out what "native" means and which groups are considered native. It also outlines the conditions for the reservation of lands and the preferential treatment.

Regardless, the Sabah and Sarawak rural indigenous communities face similar problems as the Orang Asli. Their customary lands are being encroached upon by the timber industry and development projects (e.g. building of large dams).

It has also been claimed that the Ibans are being marginalised or sidelined in terms of job opportunities and promotions in the public sectors.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. Sending the first group of missionaries to sow the seed among the natives.
  - b. The spiritual revivals in certain communities (e.g. Bario, Ba Kelalan, etc.) and His abundant blessings on the people.
  - c. Raising capable indigenous leaders.
2. Honest and just state governments to fairly and effectively eliminate poverty among the natives.
  3. All state projects to prioritise public interests and no tribe to be left behind.

4. Business community to help create job opportunities; the rich to empower the poor.
5. Effective implementation of laws to protect the natives and their land.
6. Any discriminatory policies and actions to be removed.

## 7. Salt & light:

- a. Christian natives to shine God's light in their respective arenas.
- b. Churches to demonstrate God's goodness and to sow seed in their respective communities.
- c. The fire and passion for the Lord to be rekindled.

## DAY 17 (Aug 7, Tue)

## MALAYS

**B**efore the embrace of Islam and Islamic laws, the Peninsular Malays lived for centuries under Hindu rajahs. When the Melaka Sultanate adopted Islam, to be a Muslim is to "*masuk Melayu*".

Despite the historical, social-cultural origin and ethnic heritage, Malays as a people group took on legal definition during British intervention.

The first formal colonial definition of 'Malay' was made in the 1913 Malay Reservation Acts, classifying a Malay as any person belonging to the Malayan race who habitually spoke Malay or any other Malayan language and who professed Islam.

Article 160 of the Federal Constitution defines Malay as "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom and – (a) was before Merdeka Day born in the Federation or in Singapore or born

of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or in Singapore, or is on that day domiciled in the Federation or in Singapore; or (b) is the issue of such a person."

The term '*Bumiputera*' ('sons of the soil') was used in the Constitution referring to Malays and other indigenous groups. Consistent with the constitution, the '*Bumiputeras*' are guaranteed a special position, safeguarded by Yang diPertuan Agong, "in the public service (other than the public service of a State) and of scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities."

Theoretically, a Malay who converted out of Islam would have to forfeit his constitutional privileges. It would also be legally possible for a non-Malay citizen to become a Malay if he or she were to fulfil the constitutional criteria.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love and His divine purpose for the ethnic Malays.
  - b. Giving the ethnic Malays creativity and their artistic ability.
  - c. Raising capable national leaders among them.
2. The government to recognise the real problems faced by the Malays and to review policies in order to empower them towards self-reliance.
  3. Good policies to be fairly and effectively implemented to benefit the true less privileged and not the small elite.
  4. Rich and capable Malays be willing to help the less privileged by creating opportunities for jobs (especially in the rural areas), skill-training and self-reliance.

## 5. Minds and hearts be enlightened that

- a. They will not be easily influenced by those who intentionally stir up racial/religious sentiments.
- b. They will be able to discern and resist the ultra conservative views that may lead to extremism.

## 6. Salt & light:

- a. Christian business community to demonstrate God's goodness by providing measures to empower the Malays towards self-reliance.
- b. Local churches (especially the Bahasa-speaking churches) to actively engage in community services in the rural areas with no strings attached.



## DAY 18 (Aug 8, Wed)

## CHINESE

The first significant Chinese settlements date from as early as the 13th century. However, the best known early contacts were during the 15th century when Admiral Cheng Ho visited Melaka.

Some early Chinese traders settled and founded small communities. They had intermarried with Malays, producing what was later known as *Babas* or Straits Chinese. The early Chinese communities each had their own *Kapitan Cina*, appointed by the Dutch in Melaka and elsewhere by the Malay rulers.

Economic opportunities continued to draw large number of migrant Chinese, particularly during the British rule.

Foochow Chinese immigrants played a major role in opening up the plantation sector in Sibuluan. In 1901 Pastor Wong Nai Siong brought the first group of Foochow from China, to cultivate the fertile land around Sibuluan (NST, 18/3/07).

The Chinese, apart from *Baba*, spoke their own language or dialects, and practiced their distinctive ways of life and custom. They tended to congregate in urban settlements and preferred to live in their own areas.

It was said that in 1940, the Chinese (2,400,000) outnumbered the Malays (2,300,000) in the Peninsula.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the Chinese.
- b. The first group of Christian Chinese immigrants who sowed the seed in this land.
- c. The missionaries who responded to His call to minister to the Chinese and helped set up Chinese schools.
- d. Their contribution to the economic growth in the nation.

## 2. Chinese corporate community to willingly share their resources and expertise for the good of the societies and in poverty-eradication.

## 3. More Chinese to serve the nation through joining uniformed groups and public services.

## 4. In its effort to help the Malays, Government will not leave out the less privileged Chinese in its projects.

## 5. Salt & light:

- a. Christians to demonstrate God's goodness in the communities, marketplace and public sector.
- b. Fresh vision and active community involvement for Chinese-speaking churches especially in the new villages.

## DAY 19 (Aug 9, Thu)

## INDIAN

Most Malay states in the early days had a growing Indian population, many of whom were Muslim traders. Among them were men who moved easily between two cultures. It was not uncommon for an Indian trader to have "one wife in India and one in Perak" as mentioned in the *Misa Melayu*.

In the 19th century, Indians arrived to meet the demands for cheap labour in the British owned sugar and coffee plantations. The demand for Indian workers intensified when rubber was introduced in 1905. The colonial government became directly involved in the recruitment process. Many of them were Hindus from South India.

Partly because of the lack of resources to pay for their return to homeland, many stayed on. However, fewer

career options subjected many to alienation and exploitation in the estates. As a result, a group of locally born poor Indians was overlooked and denied of their rights to identity and citizenship after the Independence.

When the manufacturing and service industries supplanted agriculture, many workers lost their jobs and their livelihood was severely affected. Nonetheless, the Indians who were already engaging in commercial activities, especially the Muslim Indians, prospered.

Indians are the smallest of the three main ethnic groups and controlled only about 1.5 per cent of the country's wealth.

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His love for the Indians.
- b. Those who have laboured in the plantations and contributed to the economic growth.
- c. Those who are committed to take care of the poor and needy, especially the orphans.
- d. The missionaries in the early days who served among the Indians.

2. The government to properly address the plight of the stateless local born Indians who do not have access to education, health care, employment and housing.

3. The less privileged Indians not to be left out in government development projects.

4. The rich Indians to be willing to help the less privileged by creating opportunities for jobs (especially in the rural areas), skill-training and self-reliance.

## 5. Salt & light:

- a. Christians to demonstrate God's goodness in the communities, marketplace and public sector.
- b. Tamil-speaking churches to stand firm and be actively involved in the community, bearing witness to God's goodness.

PRAY

## DAY 20 (Aug 10, Fri)

## RUKUNEGARA

In January 1970, the Department of National Unity (DNU) and National Consultative Council (NCC) were formed to address racial issues and to promote national unity. DNU, headed by Tan Sri Ghazali, drafted the national ideology which was then approved by NCC.

In August, at the 13th anniversary of Merdeka, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong formally announced the statement of national ideology, the *Rukunegara*.

The *Rukunegara* became the basic model for the government to bring about national unity. It spelled out the principles meant to serve as a bond to bind together all Malaysian citizens.

"Our Nation, MALAYSIA, is dedicated –

To achieving a greater unity for all her peoples;

To maintaining a democratic way of life;

To creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably distributed;

To ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions;

To building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology.

We, her peoples, pledge our united efforts to attain these ends guided by these principles –

Belief in God (*Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan*)

Loyalty to King and Country (*Kesetiaan kepada Raja dan Negara*)

Upholding the Constitution (*Keluhuran Perlembagaan*)

Rule of Law (*Kedaulatan Undang-undang*)

Good Behaviour and Morality (*Kesopanan and Kesusilaan*)."

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. His wisdom upon those involved in drafting the *Rukunegara*.
  - b. Those who tirelessly promote national unity.
2. All citizens to consciously engage in national integration; promote mutual respect and acceptance of one another irrespective of race and religion.
  3. The government to treat all citizens as equal with no favouritism towards one race in policies and projects.
  4. The government to fully execute the principles of democracy (justice, equality, and respect for human rights and fundamental liberties) in its governance and administration.
  5. The supremacy of the Federal Constitution be upheld and respected at all times.
  6. All "Malaysians to guard against all forms of extremism, chauvinism, racism and isolation" (Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah).
  7. Malaysia moves towards a progressive, courteous, and just pluralistic society.

DAY 21 (Aug 11, Sat)

## NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP)

The government cited the May 13 incident as the main cause of its more aggressive affirmative action, i.e. the New Economic Policy (NEP).

NEP was a 20-year plan launched in 1971 to bridge the economic gap between the Malays and the non-Malays by ensuring the former a 30 per cent equity participation in the nation's economy. Within this period, NEP did successfully create a Malay middle-class and make Malay millionaires. It had also helped to diffuse racial tensions.

The 20-year plan is now approaching its 36th year. Growing discontent in the recent years was evident among the Malays themselves as a new divide emerged between the small elite and majority rural poor. Some argued that it had become a tool for certain groups to increase their wealth. Others claimed that the policy strayed from its original purpose and

became a new source of disunity in the country. Still others criticised that the quotas had allowed corruption to fester.

Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister, recently called it an old obsolete thinking in the economic policy and said that it would not benefit Malays in today's competitive world.

At the same time, the poor Chinese and Indians complained of being marginalised. Orang Asli communities continue to be the poorest in the country.

While the Prime Minister claimed that "the implementation of NEP cannot be seen as a racial issue," it was in fact built upon a race-based paradigm. At the Dewan Rakyat in March, he said that the goal of 30 per cent equity for *Bumiputera* "must be pushed until it is achieved" (NST, 23/3/07).

# PRAY

## 1. Praise God for

- a. Those who drafted the original NEP with the noble intention of helping the less privileged.
- b. The policy which had helped some of the people intended.

## 2. The government to

- a. readily accept and recognise the flaws in NEP, and sagaciously<sup>1</sup> revise it to benefit **all** citizens.

- b. be bold in making new and just policies, free of discrimination, that will benefit the less privileged of **all** ethnic groups.

- 3. Against the spirit of envy, strife, deceit and wickedness, particularly those who intentionally abuse government policies.

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<sup>1</sup>Sagacious: Having or showing keen discernment, sound judgment, and farsightedness.



**WEEK 4**  
**AUGUST 12-18**



## HISTORY SAYS,

### OPERATION LALANG

*Operation Lalang* (Weeding Operation) or *Ops Lalang* was a political crackdown on opposition leaders and social activists on 27 October 1987.

On grounds of national security and preservation of public order, the government arrested 119 persons under the Internal Security Act (ISA). Among them were political leaders, trade unionists, social/community workers, academicians, Chinese educationalists, Church workers and Islamic teachers.

Two dailies, *The Star* and the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and two weeklies, *The Sunday Star* and *Watan* were also suspended.

According to the government's *White Paper* explaining the arrests, racial tension was created by various groups who played up "sensitive issues", and thus forced the government to act "swiftly and firmly" to contain the situation.

Many human rights observers however alleged that the crackdown was merely a response to the rising political division within UMNO, and to an increasing dissatisfaction among the people with government's policies.

Faced with mounting international pressure, the government began to release the detainees in late 1988. By April 1990 all were freed.

As a result of the incident, the Printing Press and Publishing Act was amended to give the Minister-in-charge "absolute discretion" to ban publications which are deemed harmful to public order, morality or security. Licenses must be renewed annually, and can be revoked or suspended at any time without the right to be heard.

Amendments were also made to the Police Act. Any political meeting, including a party's annual general meeting, cannot be held without a police permit.

## CHRISTIAN LEADERS SAY,

The Church is to make an impact at where she is placed. Her eyes must be opened to injustice and poverty, to the plight of the marginalised.

As the Church, we must determine to discharge our responsibilities as a community of believers in the society, the nation and the world beyond. We must think about how we can share our individual and collective resources and expertise in the work of transforming our nation.

Let us be agents for social change, providing social and economic leadership to the communities and the nation.

Rev. Eu Hong Seng  
*Chairman of NECF Malaysia*

Christians must have concern for the nation and actively engage in nation-building through prayer and involvement in combating social ills.

Bishop Voo Thien Fui  
*Basel Christian Church of Malaysia*

## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down."*

*Proverbs 11:10-11*

*"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."*

*Proverbs 14:34*

**FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION**

**DAY 22** (Aug 12, Sun)**MELAKA/NEGERI SEMBILAN****MELAKA**

- Founded by Parameswara who converted to Islam in 1414. He changed his name to Megat Iskandar Shah.
- Muhammad Shah (1424–1444) established an administrative system based on the Hindu pattern of government. The system continued to operate until the Portuguese invasion in 1511.
- Mudzaffar Shah (1446–59) proclaimed Islam as the state religion.
- The famous Melaka hero, Hang Tuah, lived during the reign of Mansur Shah (1459–1477).
- Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488–1528) was the last sultan. He fled Melaka during Portuguese invasion in the early 16th century.
- Was surrendered to the British in the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824.
- Main contribution: incorporation of Islamic ideas into the Malay culture.

**NEGERI SEMBILAN**

- Greatly influenced by Minangkabau culture, *adat perpatih*.
- The Minangkabau from Sumatra settled here in the 15th century.
- In 1773, Raja Melewar was proclaimed the first ruler of Negeri Sembilan, known as Yang Di-Pertuan Besar.
- Civil war in Sungai Ujong led to British intervention in 1873.
- Accepted a British Resident in 1895.
- Now consists of six states. Naning was annexed by Melaka, Kelang by Selangor and Segamat by Johor.
- The Yang Di-Pertuan Besar is elected by the Undangs (territorial chiefs of the state). Only four Undangs (Sungai Ujong, Jelebu, Johol and Rembau) have the right to vote.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Melaka and Negeri Sembilan,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. State governments: wisdom, integrity and corrupt-free, prioritise public interests, good stewardship of state funds, respect and uphold religious freedom.
2. Transparency and efficiency in all public services.
3. Against the spirit of those who incite hatred, bigotry and intolerance.
4. Religious authorities to be sensible and moderate in carrying out their duties. Against the spirit of overzealousness.
5. Crime reduction.
6. Youth and young adults of all ethnic groups: Wisdom, courage, and good discernment; good role models and good family relationship; moral purity and honesty.
7. Economic sufficiency especially for those involved in agriculture, e.g. farming and fishing.
8. Economic development and employment opportunities.

**DAY 23** (Aug 13, Mon)

## SELANGOR/KUALA LUMPUR



### SELANGOR

- Was ruled by the Melaka Sultanate in the 15th century
- The Bugis were brought in from Sulawesi during Dutch rule.
- Present sultanate is of Bugis descent and established since 1740
- Economy boomed in 19th century due to huge tin reserves and growing demand for rubber.
- Civil wars opened window of opportunity for the British intervention.
- Accepted a British Resident in 1874.
- In 1880, the state capital was moved from Klang to Kuala Lumpur.
- In 1978, Shah Alam, the first planned city in Malaysia, replaced Kuala Lumpur as state capital.



### KUALA LUMPUR

- Had its origins in the 1850s, when Raja Mahdi of Klang sent the Chinese upriver to open new tin mines.
- Kapitan Cina Yap Ah Loy was responsible for the development of tin mines and growth of the town during the 1870s.
- Chosen as the capital of the Federated Malay States in 1896.
- Remained as the capital through Independence and the formation of Malaysia to present day.
- Achieved city status in 1972.
- Was established as the Federal Territory (*Wilayah Persekutuan*) in 1974.



### PUTRAJAYA

- Founded in 1995.
- Became a Federal Territory in 2001.
- Acts as a government administrative centre.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. Transparency, integrity and impartiality for the Selangor menteri besar, mayors and all local authorities in governance.
2. Effectiveness and competence in all policy-implementations.
3. Wise financial management and good stewardship.
4. Prioritise public interests and public well-being.
5. Committed to poverty-eradication.
6. Appropriate development plans without affecting the poor and the environment.
7. Corrupt officials to be removed.
8. Religious freedom provided by the Constitution to be upheld and respected by all.
9. Sensible religious authorities; against the spirit behind religious zealots.
10. Public's civic consciousness in the communities; public health awareness to reduce disease-related illnesses (e.g. dengue).



**DAY 24** (Aug 14, Tue)**JOHOR/PAHANG****JOHOR**

- Founded by Sultan Alauddin, son of the last ruler of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud Shah.
- Due to its position as the East-West trading hub, Johor grew economically and eventually evolved into the Johor-Riau Empire.
- The Empire came to an end in 1824 although Johor remained.
- In 1855, Temenggung Ibrahim was recognised by the British as the rightful ruler. He was succeeded by his son, Abu Bakar, in 1862.
- Abu Bakar limited the British influence and developed an efficient administrative system. He was called the "Father of Modern Johor".
- His son, Sultan Ibrahim, was pressured to accept a British Adviser in 1914. He reigned until 1959.

**PAHANG**

- Became an Islamic sultanate under Melaka in 1459.
- Came under the Johor rule in mid-17th century.
- After a civil war (1858-1863), Bendahara Wan Ahmad was proclaimed the new sultan in 1881. He was forced to sign a treaty bringing Pahang under the control of a British Resident in 1888.
- In 1892, an uprising led by Bahaman (Orang Kaya Pahlawan of Semantan) symbolised the struggle for Malay independence.
- Since 1974, the hereditary monarch has been Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Johor and Pahang,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. Good governance and righteousness for the state governments. Prioritise public interests without fear or favour.
2. Greater accountability and wiser management of state funds.
3. Transparent and effective government projects that benefit all citizens regardless of ethnic/religious backgrounds.
4. Improvement in state economy and greater job opportunities.
5. Authorities and public to uphold religious freedom for everyone, and respect the Federal Constitution as the supreme law of the land.
6. Authorities to properly address the plight of Orang Asli communities in all development projects that involve resettlement.
7. All efforts to combat drug abuse among the youth and successful rehabilitation programs.
8. Against the spiritual forces behind extremism, all kinds of crime and immorality.
9. Strengthen the police force in maintaining law and order.

**DAY 25** (Aug 15, Wed)

## PERAK/PENANG



### PERAK

- The eldest son of the last Sultan of Melaka, fleeing the Portuguese conquest, established his kingdom along Sungai Perak in 1528.
- Because of rich tin mines, the Bugis, Acehnese and Siamese attempted to invade Perak. Siam made Perak acknowledge its suzerainty.
- Through the Anglo-Siamese Agreement in 1826, Perak secured its independence.
- In 1848, the discovery of tin in Larut led to a power struggle among the Chinese secret societies.
- A succession dispute between Raja Abdullah and Raja Ismail deepened the chaos, creating an opportunity for British intervention.
- Raja Abdullah agreed to a British Resident. He signed the Pangkor Engagement in January 1874 and was made Sultan.



### PENANG

- Part of Kedah Sultanate.
- Was given to British East India Company in 1786 in exchange for protection from Siam and Burma.
- On 11 August 1786, Captain Francis Light (founder of Penang) arrived and renamed it Prince of Wales Island.
- Seberang Perai (Province Wellesley) was added to Penang in 1800.
- In 1826, Penang, along with Melaka and Singapore became part of the Straits Settlements under British administration in India.
- Direct British colonial rule began in 1867.
- The Island was a free port until 1969.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Perak and Penang,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. State governments and local councils
  - a. consist of men and women of integrity and character.
  - b. prudent in spending and wisdom in managing state funds.
  - c. effective and competent in implementing policies.
  - d. prioritise public interests.
2. Authorities are committed in eradicating poverty and empowering the poor regardless of ethnic/religious backgrounds.
3. The family institution to be strengthened and its sanctity to be preserved.
4. Against the threat of immorality and drug addiction.
5. Wisdom and vigilance of the police force in combating rising crime.
6. State education ministries, schools and parents unite to address rising disciplinary problems among the school children and youth.
7. Against the spirits of religious overzealousness and extremism, particularly in the state of Perak.
8. Authorities and public to uphold religious freedom and respect individual rights to choose a religion.

**DAY 26** (Aug 16, Thu)**KEDAH/PERLIS****KEDAH**

- The Kedah Sultanate began when the 9th Kedah Maharaja converted to Islam and changed his name to Sultan Muzaffar Shah,
- Between 10th and 12th century, the development of *padi* (wet rice) led to economic expansion. Archaeological evidence in Bujang Valley testifies that Kedah was once an established trading centre.
- Siam conquered Kedah in 1821.
- After an agreement in 1923, the British affirmed the sultan's power and the place of Malay as the official language.
- In World War II, Kedah (along with Kelantan) was the first part of Malaysia to be invaded by Japan.

**PERLIS**

- Originally part of the Kedah Sultanate.
- After the end of a 20-year war between Kedah and Siam, Perlis became an independent territory in 1842.
- The grandson of the Kedah Sultan, Syed Hussain Jamalulail of Arab descent, became the first Raja of Perlis.
- As a result of the 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty, a British Advisor was installed.
- In World War II, Japan returned Perlis to Siam as a reward for Siam's alliance with Japan.
- When Japan surrendered, Perlis was re-taken under British Administration.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Kedah and Perlis,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. State governments and local councils: capable men and women of integrity, trustworthy and respect the rule of law, uphold religious freedom for all.
2. Good stewardship and wise management of state funds for public good.
3. Effective measures and efficient implementation to eradicate rural poverty.
4. State governments' commitment in expanding an agricultural-based economy. More job opportunities and improvement in people's living standard and quality of life.
5. Just, transparent and effective implementation of plans in helping poor farmers and budding small business holders.
6. Any subversive element or illegal activity intended for public harm and social disorder to be exposed and removed. Police and armed forces to be strengthened.
7. Moderation and respect for one another. Against the spirit of religious overzealousness and extremism.

**DAY 27** (Aug 17, Fri)**KELANTAN/TERENGGANU****KELANTAN**

- Was an important trade centre by the end of 15th century.
- In 1499, it became a vassal state of Melaka Sultanate.
- Conquered by Siam in 1603.
- Present Kelantan was unified around 1760.
- The 19th century saw the development of religious bureaucracy and expansion of Islamic education.
- Kota Bharu, known as Kuala Kelantan in the 19th century, was the nerve centre for political and economic activities.
- After the Anglo-Siamese Treaty in 1909, Siam surrendered Kelantan to Britain.
- In World War II, Kelantan (along with Kedah) was the first part of Malaysia to be invaded by Japan.

**TERENGGANU**

- Emerged as an independent sultanate in 1724.
- First sultan was Tun Zainal Abidin.
- Johor strongly influenced Terengganu politics throughout the 18th century.
- Baginda Umar laid the foundation for an expansion of Islamic judicial system. In 1869, he established direct relation with Britain in an effort to protect Terengganu from Siam.
- Its 1911 Constitution stated Islam as the 'State and official religion.'
- Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 saw Siam surrendering Terengganu to Britain. A British Advisor was appointed in 1919.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Kelantan and Terengganu,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people*

## PRAY

1. State governments: integrity and wisdom, to put public interests above personal political gain.
2. Economic sufficiency, just distribution of wealth and eradication of poverty.
3. Good management of state funds and effective implementation of government projects.
4. More investments and job opportunities to prevent outbound migration.
5. People to be freed from all forms of spiritual deception and bondage of occult.
6. Sanctity of family institution to be preserved.
7. Social departments and welfare organisations work together to effectively address social problems, e.g. substance abuse, incest, and youth issues.
8. Moderation and respect for human rights and religious freedom. Against the spirit of religious overzealousness and extremism.



**DAY 28** (Aug 18, Sat)

## SABAH/SARAWAK/LABUAN



### SABAH

- Known as North Borneo before 1963.
- Was part of the Brunei Sultanate in the early 16th century.
- In 1882 British North Borneo Company was formed.
- In 1883 the capital was moved from Kudat to Sandakan to capitalise on its potential of producing timber.
- In 1888 North Borneo became a British protectorate. Administration and control remained in the hands of the Company until 1942.
- The most serious resistance was the Mat Salleh War from 1894–1900, and the Rundum Uprising by the Murut in 1915.
- Japanese forces landed in Labuan on 1 January 1942.
- Became a British crown colony on 15 July 1946.
- On 31 August 1963, North Borneo attained self-government and independence from the British.

### LABUAN

- Under the rule of Brunei Sultanate during the 14th century.
- Was made part of North Borneo in 1890.
- Was made a Federal Territory in 1984.



### SARAWAK

- As a reward for assisting the *raja muda* of Brunei to suppress an uprising, James Brooke was given a piece of land and was accorded the title "*raja* of Sarawak" in 1841.
- The White Rajas dynasty ruled Sarawak from 1841 to 1946.
- The use of 'Malay' as a general term for Muslims in 19th century Sarawak was strengthened by Brooke's usage.
- Under Charles Brooke, Chinese communities grew significantly and were encouraged in commercial activities. The 'Malays' were either employed in the administration or remained in agriculture.
- Japan invaded Sarawak in 1941.
- In 1946, Sarawak became a British colony.
- In 1963, it became an autonomous state of the Federation of Malaysia.

# PRAY

*We praise God  
for His grace and His good works in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan,  
for His providence and blessings upon the people.*

## PRAY

1. Justice and righteousness be established in all government ministries and departments. Every decision made will be for public interests without fear or favour.
2. Authorities to be alert and diligent in curbing criminal activities (e.g. piracy, gangsterism, smuggling and human-trafficking).
3. Just and humane solution for the illegal immigrants and refugees.
4. Authorities and welfare groups commit to resolve problems of squatters and homelessness in urban areas.
5. Concrete steps and effective measures to upgrade living standard of the rural poor (e.g. improve transport link, healthcare and educational facilities).
6. Religious authorities to uphold religious freedom and respect the rule of law.

**WEEK 5**  
**AUGUST 19-25**



# HISTORY SAYS,

## THE CHURCH

The experience of Japanese occupation and World War II saw the move towards an indigenous church and the need for national leadership. In 1948, the Malayan Christian Council (MCC) was founded to unite Protestants and coordinate mission groups during the Malayan Emergency. After the Independence in 1957, the desire to establish a Malayan Christian identity grew stronger. In the 1970s, as Pentecostalism became a larger influence through the Charismatic Movement, churches began to develop structures independent of overseas support.

In 1983 the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) was formed to provide a focus for evangelical and independent congregations. Realising the need for a unified voice in dealing with the Government and other religious bodies, the Christian Federation of Malaysia, comprising of the Christian Council of Malaysia (formerly MCC), Roman Catholics, and NECF was formed in 1986. The Sabah Council of Churches and Association of Churches of Sarawak fulfil similar functions in East Malaysia.

## TIMELINE *(Reference: Christianity in Malaysia)*

1511	The coming of Roman Catholicism to the region.
1641	The coming of Protestant Christianity to the region.
1815	The London Missionary Society set up a base in Melaka and the first missionary was William Milne.
1847	The Borneo Church Mission in Sarawak was founded. The first missionary was Francis T. McDougall.
1860	Beginning of Open Brethren in Malaysia with the arrival of John Chapman from Bristol.
1881	The Roman Catholic Mission in Sarawak began with the coming of the Mill Hill Fathers to Kuching on 10 July.

1882	The Basel Mission Society sent missionaries to Sabah. It began work among migrant Hakka Chinese.
1885	Start of Methodist mission with the coming of W. Oldham.
1885	First Presbyterian churches established in Johor.
1890	Founding of Methodist Mission Press (later known as MPH).
1901	Wong Nai Siong and the first group of Foochow Methodists settled in Sibn.
1907	First regular worship of Evangelical Lutheran Church held on 30 January in Kuala Lumpur.
1927	First Mar Thoma Christians met for worship in Klang.
1932	The Orthodox Syrian Church came to Malaysia.
1932	Mission to Sengoi indigenous people began.
1934	First AOG missionaries arrived.
1938	First congregation of Baptist established.
1948	The Council of Churches in Malaya and Singapore formed. It became CCM in 1973.
1954	Baptist Theological Seminary was set up in Penang.
1960	Bible Institute of Malaya (now Bible College of Malaysia) was set up by the AOG.
1963	Formation of the Sidang Injil Borneo (Evangelical Church of Borneo).
1963	First Evangelical Free Church Missionaries arrived.
1978	Formation of Malaysian Care.
1979	Seminari Theoloji Malaysia was set up with joint effort by the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran and Methodist.
1979	Full Gospel Assembly began its meeting in Kuala Lumpur.
1983	Formation of National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Malaysia.
1986	Formation of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM).

## CHRISTIAN LEADERS SAY,

In the nation-building effort, the Church must be the conscience for what is right, and the voice for what is just.

Pastor Jerry Dusing  
*President, Sidang Injil Borneo Sabah*

Christians kneeling in supplication are the pillars that support a nation.

Bishop Philip Lok  
*Lutheran Church of Malaysia and Singapore*

## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you and He also will bring it to pass."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:23-24*

FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION

**DAY 29** (Aug 19, Sun)**CRITICAL SELF-EXAMINATION**

**G**iven the absolute seriousness of the matter to Christ, churches everywhere ought to be in a constant state of prayerful contemplation of their true spiritual condition. The basis for self-examination does not lie in the organisational or managerial but in the spiritual realm.

Indeed, an absence of concern would strongly indicate that there is reason for concern. Apocalyptic literature cannot be taken too literally as words and imagery are often used for a desired effect. The fact that none

of the seven Asian churches survive today may or may not mean that they had their 'lampstands removed'. This is a matter of speculation.

Christ alone has the 'exclusive right' to rebuke, restore or remove. When this fact has been forgotten, trouble usually follows.

What the Malaysian church has to note is that hard work, great sacrifice and rapid growth are no guarantees that it will have a lasting impact.

Steven Wong  
*Forum 5*

**Local churches to**

1. Recognise and constantly be reminded that Christ is the head of the Church.
2. Remain passionate about Christ, to be loyal and to endure to "the end".
3. Demonstrate Christ-like attributes, glorify God and draw mankind back to Him.

DAY 30 (Aug 20, Mon)

## THE EXCHANGED LIFE

**A**s we study the biographies of great Christian leaders, we begin to see a pattern that reveals their secret: initially the noble effort to serve the Lord, yet based on self-centredness and self-effort, but soon realise these efforts bear no fruits. Eventually, there comes an increase in dissatisfaction and discouragement followed by a temptation to give it all up, and finally, when at the end of themselves, total surrender and finding the Spirit of God to be their strength, their guide, their confidence and companion – in one word, their Life. Out of weakness and weariness they have been made strong. Out of ineffectiveness and

apparent uselessness they have become efficient and enthusiastic.

Personal crisis is the key that has unlocked the secret of transformation in these individuals. It is the beginning of the "exchanged life", a phrase first used by Hudson Taylor. After six years of missionary work in China, Taylor was forced to return home to England due to serious illness. For the next five long years, his life was hidden from ministry – forgotten by man but not by God.

Yet, without those hidden years of growth and testing, how could the vision and enthusiasm of a youth be spiritually matured for eventual leadership?

P. Vijayan  
*Forum 5*

1. Devotion to Jesus, surrendering to Him with all our hearts.
2. Every Christian to be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Lord, prepared for every good work (2 Tim 2:21).
3. God to make us complete in every good work to do His will, working in us what is pleasing in His sight (Heb 13:21).



DAY 31 (Aug 21, Tue)

## THE LOCAL CHURCH

Is there a need to talk about church governance? After all, churches have been in existence for almost two thousand years and an ideal church methodology of governance should have already been in place.

In view of the increasing cases of church splits, church scandals arising from poor accountability, churches being stifled by legalism, traditions and bureaucratic governance, it is perhaps appropriate and timely that we re-look some of the underlying biblical principles and

their applications in reforming and transforming the local church.

The local church must be true to its calling and purpose, effective in carrying out its mission not just as a local church, but as an integral part of God's kingdom. Meanwhile, we are mindful that the church operates in an earthy environment that is dynamic and constantly changing, being impacted by social, political and economic variables that influence the hearts, minds and physical well-being of its members.

Paul Low  
*Forum 5*

1. Church leaders: men and women of character and spiritual maturity, with sense of destiny and a sacrificial spirit, passionate about life's calling with tenacity to finish the race.
2. Church leaders
  - a. Serve the Lord with all humility.
  - b. Undertake the responsibility of appropriating God-given authority.
  - c. Willing to seek godly counsel among their peers of leadership (Prov 11:14; Acts 15:22; 16:4).
  - d. Ready to be held accountable.
3. Wisdom and discernment in structuring church administration that best complements the ministries.

DAY 32 (Aug 22, Wed)

## THE CHURCH IN THIS WORLD

Most theologians have voiced their concerns that instead of the church influencing the marketplace, the latter is influencing the former. They call this process the *corporatisation of the church* or the "reverse salt and light effect." The process of corporatisation is deemed as insidious and covert.

However, with the emergence of the megachurches, the corporatisation process seems to have reached the zenith. Key *corporate drivers* are

adopted in church management and church growth. Among them are: marketing savviness, hi-tech worship, advertising and promotion, technology, professionalism, export quality, titles and terminologies and excellent customer service concepts.

The marketplace has a way of deceitfully infiltrating Christian worship, beliefs, practice and church government and we could unwittingly be shaped by them.

Cheong Seng Gee  
Forum 5

### Local churches

1. To return to their First Love, not to love the world or the things in the world.
2. To influence the world with godly attributes, to provide alternative solutions which demonstrate God's ways, and not to be overwhelmed by worldly methods.
3. Not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed to testify what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom 12:2).

DAY 33 (Aug 23, Thu)

## BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The most natural way to gain knowledge of (competence in) a language is to immerse in a community that speaks that language. Formal classes and language laboratory practices can certainly teach us the language. But by themselves they can never bring us to that level of competence.

Similarly, besides cultivating Biblical knowledge by immersing ourselves in the Biblical narrative, we also need to immerse ourselves in a Christian community that adequately embodies Biblical truth. This itself is immersing in the narrative world of the Bible, as this community is part of that world,

occupying a place in the slot between Acts 28 and Revelation.

In fact, as D. H. Williams says in *Evangelicals and Tradition: The Formative Influence of the Early Church*, "believers do not believe and, more importantly, keep believing in isolation. The Bible is capable of being understood only in the midst of a disciplined community of believers whose practices embody the biblical story."

Leong Tien Fock  
Forum 5

1. A disciplined community of believers who truly live out biblical principles in all aspects.
2. Local churches to recognise their role in cultivating a Christian community that embodies biblical truth, so that Christians will be able to
  - a. Grasp the God of the whole Bible.
  - b. Grasp God's commitment to the whole community and all the nations.

DAY 34 (Aug 24, Fri)

## CHRISTIAN YOUTH

The issues and challenges involving Malaysian Christian youth have been highlighted by both the NECF Malaysia in its Youth Workers Consultation 2005 and the Kairos Research Centre in the September 2005 issue of its magazine *Understanding the Modern World through Christian Eyes* with its theme of "Youth Challenge".

In the latter publication, the writer identified three factors contributing to rebellion in Christian youth, which she termed as "benign neglect", "pressure of expectations" and "dysfunctional homes".

"Benign neglect" is in fact the primary contributing factor towards not only rebellion among Christian youth today but is also the main hindrance preventing them from coming to Jesus. This so-called "benign neglect" starts out not as a problem of youth but from infancy itself.

Issues and challenges surfacing among Christian youth are in fact a barometer indicating the spiritual health of the Church in general and of its children in particular.

Minni Ang  
Forum 5

1. Local churches to be in the forefront of preserving the sanctity of a family institution.
2. Greater bonding between Christian parents and their children.
3. Christian parents:
  - a. To recognise the importance of spending quality time with their children.
  - b. Not to provoke their children to anger but to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4).
4. Youth: spirit of humility, assurance, submission and tenderness.

DAY 35 (Aug 25, Sat)

## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

What has been happening in Afghanistan, the Middle East and elsewhere since the infamous September 11 bombing of the Twin Towers in New York seems to have hardened further the perception that whether in Christendom or in Islam, "theologians" are dangerous or irrelevant.

In actual fact, such events could be used to demonstrate the opposite claim: the very *failure* to critically reflect and theologise properly, leading to the possibility of not only ultra-fundamental Islamic groups like the Talibans or Al-Qaeda, but also the ultra-right wing, Bible-thumping "evangelicals" who have been nicknamed "Christian Talibans".

At another level, without theological reflection, we can see that if there are some Muslims who are blindly pro-Arab and all things Arab, there are also some Christians who are blindly pro-Israel and all things Jewish.

While there is more unity or tolerance among churches now, as among the major seminaries, there are continuing tensions between Church and Seminary.

For the Seminary to follow the dictates of the Church uncritically is to forfeit its intellectual and prophetic witness to the sanctity and unity of all truth. Yet not to relate closely to the Church makes the Seminary an irrelevant ivory tower without a pastoral base.

Rev. Loh Soon Choy  
Forum 5

1. Close partnership between Seminary and local churches working towards mutual support and complement for the sake of the Great Commission.
2. Seminary to recognise its role in empowering church planters through appropriate and relevant education.

**WEEK 6**  
**AUGUST 26-30**



## HISTORY SAYS,

### TRANSFORMING THE NATION

The Church is called to transform society. Transformation begins when individuals and groups heed the call of God to be salt and light.

Some left their homes to fulfil their calling. In past centuries, Western missionaries came to our shores preaching the Good News and establishing schools, hospitals and other ministries to the needy. The face of our nation is permanently altered thanks to their sacrifice.

Others fulfilled their calling right where they were. After Independence, local Christians took over the baton of heading Christ's work in Malaysia. It is amazing how many people today would trace their life's turning point to the activity of a church or pastor. In November 1978, Malaysian CARE was established. Today it is a prominent arm of the evangelical church specialising in social welfare services. Christian ministry to specific groups such as corporate executives, women, youth and students, continue to lift people from the mediocrity of life and make them shining stars for Jesus Christ in all fields of endeavour. The nation is thereby transformed.

However, the Church can do much more. Salt and light are most effective when spread out. Christians need to step out of their comfort zones if they are to be effective. It is not enough that churches dot the physical landscape of Malaysia. Our vision is a nation established on Christian principles of love and justice.

Sandy Tan

## CHRISTIAN LEADER SAYS,

"I think it was Hudson Taylor who said, 'I believe prayer alone can move the hearts of men.' Most of us have lost some confidence in the power of prayer. That's why we strive so hard in the flesh and achieve too little lasting result. The need for prayer falls especially on Christian leaders. We need a change from the inside, to let our hearts return to the Lord. Then we can pray more because we would trust Him more, that He will do it. We will still work hard in our service for Him – but with prayer, those will be the work of faith and not the work in the flesh."

Bishop Albert Vun  
*Anglican Diocese of Sabah*



## SCRIPTURE SAYS,

*"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."*

*2 Corinthians 5:18-19*

**FOR YOUR WEEKLY MEDITATION**

DAY 36 (Aug 26, Sun)

## MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

**H**uman nature is such that we will fight for and defend our rights more than that of the others; but if we continue to do so we only intensify our striving against one another and may end up destroying one another. Compromises and sacrifices have to be made. When we can love and help the poor and needy, even those not from our own community or ethnic group, it speaks powerfully of the love of God in our hearts. It is hard to fight against love.

How then shall we live? I believe that we have to start loving our neighbours and desiring their good.

We do so by entering into their world, understanding their position and helping them in practical ways. We don't need to talk to our friends but our enemies. We have to help create an atmosphere whereby we can have genuine friendships, knowing we can trust each other because the other is not out to do me in but to do good in my life.

When we persist in loving others as we love ourselves, we build bridges of genuine friendship and tear down the walls of hostility and suspicion. Fears will be allayed and hearts will be opened.

Living Lee  
*Forum 5*

1. Christians to genuinely love our neighbours as ourselves with no strings attached.
2. Christians to
  - a. Be wise and have understanding, showing good deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.
  - b. Get rid of selfish ambition and arrogance, if any.
  - c. Be peacemakers, sowing seed of righteousness in peace (Jas 3:13-18).

PRAY

DAY 37 (Aug 27, Mon)

## MISSIONAL CHURCH

In the Secretariat for Non-Christians' 1984 document "The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," evangelising mission of the Church comprises the following principal elements: presence of witness, commitment to social development and human liberation, liturgical life, prayer and contemplation, inter-religious dialogue, and finally proclamation and religious instruction. Within this definition, proclamation is only one, though important, basic element of evangelisation.

As Malaysian Christians, we cannot ignore the fact that, while there is a strong resistance towards the Gospel, the harvest is plentiful with few labourers. There may be various reasons for resistance such as strong traditional and cultural bonds among specific people groups, and at the same time Christianity is often seen as a western religion. Other challenges may include the changing political and economic circumstances.

The good news is local churches are now looking afresh their role as a missional church, readily to engage in nation-building.

Teresa Chai  
*Forum 5*

1. The Church to
  - a. Seriously consider long-term plan in local missions, instead of "touch 'n go".
  - b. Recognise peacemaking as an integral part of church mission.
2. Intentional missionary training for the young people.

DAY 38 (Aug 28, Tue)

## CHILDREN MINISTRY

**G**enerational anointing is an anointing that can be passed from one generation to another.

This is best demonstrated in the life of Timothy whose genuine faith was dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (1 Tim 1:5).

A business tycoon wants the family business to be succeeded by his descendants indefinitely. He provides his children with the best education and training, and

expects them to successfully take over his business in the future. The world considers it unfortunate when a successful man does not have an heir to inherit his wealth.

If we fervently believe that children are the Church of tomorrow, then we are to disciple them to be the Church of today. How the church trains children today will have a lasting effect in the future.

Clarine Chun

1. Parents to realise and carry out their responsibility for spiritual nurturing of their children, instead of leaving it to children's ministry workers.
2. Church leaders to recognise the importance of children ministry and give their full support in all areas.
3. Children:
  - a. Love Jesus and love His word.
  - b. Their innocence and purity be preserved.

DAY 39 (Aug 29, Wed)

## YOUTH MINISTRY

If the Church is to be the agent of transformation, the future leaders of the Church must then be so challenged, inspired and directed.

The danger we now face is the fact that many youth ministries are going by the way of comfort and convenience instead of challenge and conviction. The trend seems to be that a successful youth ministry must involve big budget and is therefore expensive. At the same time, we have also made it elusive to churches which are financially challenged.

If such a trend continues, what we will inherit is not a spirit of transformation but conformity. Young people, as does the Church, thrive not on comfort but challenge.

If the emerging Church of Malaysia is to take hold of any transformational power and purpose, we must begin today by encouraging our youth in their own journey of faith and trust in God that will equip them to make a difference – salt of the earth, light of the world. This is the agent of transformation for tomorrow.

Kenneth Chin

1. Tensions between leaders and discontented youth to be reconciled.
2. Leaders to raise young people in God's ways and willingly to release them into what God has for them.
3. Young people to be spiritually revived through challenge and conviction.
4. Both parents and youth alike to place God above all else, not easily influenced by popular opinion (e.g. tuition classes will not take precedence over Bible classes).
5. Youth leaders: Wisdom, strength, patience and stand firm in godly principles.

DAY 40 (Aug 30, Thu)

## FAMILY MINISTRY

It has often been quoted that, "The family is the basic unit of society and the strength of the family determines the strength of the nation."

The Book of Genesis tells us that it was God who first instituted the family when He gave Adam a helpmate as it was not good for a man to be alone. Therefore, to be intentional in building a strong and stable home is to honour God's design. This will result in building a strong community and nation as well.

However, the challenges that confront families today are vast and varied. They can be emotional, physical, social, intellectual as well as spiritual. Hence, the need to be equipped with skills and knowledge to strengthen our roles and responsibilities as husbands and wives as well as children and parents is more necessary than before.

We as God's children need to be a catalyst of change in the intentional building of strong families. When that fundamental and basic institution of the family is in place, a transformation will take place in our nation.

Lee Wee Min

1. Christian families to recognise that FAMILY is
  - a. The first line of defence in values (education), morality, provision, justice and love.
  - b. A sacred covenant meant to produce Christ-likeness in us all.
2. Let there be honour and submission in the family where love is the authority.

(Aug 31, Fri)

## MINISTRY OF HELP

**W**ith rapid development, there is increased stress to families and communities.

In the corporate world, changes happen so fast that new skills and approaches are required routinely to remain competitive. Heavy demands, long working hours, competitive wages and continual change are the order of the day. These pressures, faced by workers at all levels, are being transmitted to the families.

In school, children have to acquire more skills and knowledge in a shorter time to stay ahead. Parents are struggling against the global forces to keep marriage strong and family together. Everyone is racing to excel in order to enjoy the benefits of modernisation. The paradox is: having acquired much, there is little time and energy left to enjoy them with families and communities.

At the same time, the communities are experiencing widening income disparities with high migration of the rural poor to the urban. In the process, emerging low cost housing, long houses and increasing squatter settlements have led to low income and congested poor neighbourhood that form a dangerous cocktail of social ills. Youths are particularly vulnerable to gangsterism and drugs. Racial polarisation and corruption further complicate this problem.

Presently, about 4 million people living in urban centres have an average household income of less than RM1,200 per month.

Government, business sector and civil society must work hand in hand to overcome these challenges. As such, the government's efforts in reducing corruption, strengthening national unity and distributing wealth are crucial.

Kon Onn Sein

# PRAY

1. Just policies, impartial and effective implementation of poverty eradication among all ethnic communities.
2. The Church to
  - a. Engage at all levels in partnership with the government, business corporations and NGOs to fight corruption, racism, and work towards fairer wealth distribution.
  - b. Actively involve in social ministries to help the vulnerable low income communities.
  - c. Share its concern and personify its care in low income communities.
  - d. Address the policies and structures of injustice that marginalise the poor.



## SOURCE

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3. Leon Comber, *13 May 1969: A Historical Survey of the Sino-Malay Relations*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983, 1986.
4. *Forum 5: A Spiritual Healthcheck of the Church in Malaysia*, Petaling Jaya: NECF Malaysia, Feb 2007.

*JUDE 24-25*

*Now to Him who is able  
to keep you from stumbling,  
and to make you stand  
in the presence of His glory  
blameless with great joy,  
to the only God our Savior,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
be glory, majesty, dominion and authority,  
before all time and now and forever.  
Amen.*

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