

The “A” Word – What We Need To Understand

There is much confusion over the usage of the Allah word to refer to God even among some Christians. Some have even suggested we stop using the word Allah and replace it with Tuhan to please the authorities. Or to avoid trouble.

One Christian agency has even dropped the word Allah from the Bahasa version of its mass evangelism tracts. Even quotes from the Alkitab, the Bahasa Bible, where the word occurs have been switched to Tuhan. Still others have altered Bahasa prayers and songs without permission from its authors or publishers.

Unfortunately, those avoiding using the Allah word are doing so out of fear or ignorance. Majority of them are non-Bahasa speakers or non-users of the Alkitab.

Why must Christians confront the authorities just over a word? That's the wrong question. It should be: Why can't the authorities allow Christians to practise their faith without unreasonable and undue interference to the extent of telling us what words we cannot use?

It is more than just a word. Let one thing be clear. The reason why the word is used by Bumiputra and Bahasa speaking Christians and in the Alkitab and Bahasa Christian publications is simply because this is the correct terminology in all aspects – etymology, theology, liturgy, law, facts

and history.

Recently, in the *Herald vs. the government case*, the Kuala Lumpur High Court ruled that *The Catholic Weekly* can use the Allah word. The government's decision to stop it from using this word is “illegal, unconstitutional, irrational, unreasonable and null and void.”

On law, the judgment said: “Any prohibition on the use of this word (Allah) is a serious violation of its (Herald's) constitutional rights.”

On facts: “...none of the factual considerations were ever disputed or challenged by the (Home Affairs) Minister as factually incorrect...”

On etymology, theology, liturgy and history:...”the word “Allah” is the correct Bahasa Malaysia word for “God”... and “Lord” is translated as “Tuhan”...The word “Allah” has been used continuously in the printed edition of Matthew's Gospel (since) 1629...”

On the government's claim that the use of the word is a threat to national security: “There has never been any untoward incident arising out of the use of the word “Allah” in the Herald in the past 14 years.”

A few words...

Dear friends,



Thank you for your partnership in this ministry. We have been actively writing, publishing and distributing books in Bahasa since last year.

Hundreds and thousands of books (the **OBOR Remaja & OBOR Belia** series) have been distributed even to the remotest areas of Sabah and Sarawak. A set of books have been placed in a remote village of Pitas for the 20 youths in that little church. This hidden church is not easily accessible and it took a challenging 8 hours on foot to reach there. Surprisingly, we were told the villagers tasted salt only in 1986 as there was almost no communication with the surrounding towns earlier

The need of the indigenous churches is incredibly vast and urgent! May we challenge you, your church and your organization to continue to give (your time, energy, money and prayers) to allow more books to be disseminated into the interior of Sabah & Sarawak.

Enjoy this issue and be challenged.

Berita Rakan Penabur is an electronic publication of Wawasan Penabur containing news and information about our work and new Christian resources in Bahasa Malaysia.

Please direct all your emails and support to:
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Resources

Books from Wawasan Penabur



OBOR Remaja & Belia is an integrated and systematic curriculum, which consists of 30 books for 5-year discipleship materials. It has a successful track record in systematically teaching and challenging God's people to grow their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ. Priced cheaply at RM 6.



Sunday School Materials in BM
RM 8 each with 20 lessons per book!

Contact Alice & Selwyn (019-7550757/019-7735356)

So what happens if the High Court ruling is reversed by the Court of Appeal or the Federal Court? We cannot predict what the Judiciary will or can do. One thing we know: The final authority is truth. The word of God is clear: "...the truth will set you free." (John 8:32, NIV).

The choice of terminology for Bahasa speaking Christians is very clear. If we can only understand this, then there is little to be confused over the usage of the Allah word.

Brief Introduction to our "East Malaysia Awareness Seminar & Dialogue" speakers:

- ❖ **Alfred Tais** – Executive Secretary of NECF BM Commission. His burden is to spur strong BM & OA churches in Malaysia through the Teaching of God's Word, Mission & Evangelism, Practical Prayers, Church Leadership & Economic Development.
- ❖ **Maklin Masiau** – Chairman of the Sabah Christian Teachers Association and the Council of Churches in Pitas.
- ❖ **Bakar Mogot** - Chairman of NECF Orang Asli Commission. A Mahmeri pastor from Sg. Pelek. His desire is to see strong OA Christian communities in West Malaysia.
- ❖ **Lim Heng Seng** – His 30 years of experience in legal & judicial has serves the Church through his research, writings and speaking especially on the Federal Constitution.
- ❖ **Baru Bian** – An activist particularly in advocating for the Sarawak Pribumi's land rights.
- ❖ **Stemmah Sariau** – Writer and editor of RBC's Pedoman Harian. 25 years involvement in the Bahasa Malaysia, Dusun, Murut Tagal & Biatah Bible translation.
- ❖ **Phua Seng Tieng** – Pastor and motivator. A Pengetua Cemerlang & Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan whose heart is to raise strong Christians (especially the BM-speaking) who will be responsible for themselves.

EAST MALAYSIA AWARENESS
Seminar, Dialogue & Cultural Performances
1st May 2010 (Sat), Sungei Way-Subang Methodist Church, PJ

The BM-speaking Christian community is facing alarming challenges recently. How does the prohibited terms and expressions affected the BM-speaking Churches and the way we do/write? What should we as a community of God's people do with the shortage of Alkitab and other printed Christian materials in BM? What is our response to the homeless East Malaysians in KL? How can we be sure of doing the right thing?

The Seminar and Dialogue will address these issues, and we should, as God's people in this land, be does not just hearers, to the issues affecting the church.

Seminar Speakers & Dialogue Panelists :
Alfred Tais (Executive Secretary, BM Commission, NECF)
Maklin Masiau (Chairman, Sabah Christian Teachers Association)
Bakar Mogot (Chairman, Orang Asli Commission, NECF)
Lim Heng Seng (Lawyer, Editor & Writer)
Baru Bian (Sarawak Pribumi's Land Rights Advocate)
Stemmah Sariau (Writer & Translator)

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)

Organised by
NECF MALAYSIA
WAWASAN PENABUR

Special Announcements

◆ 1st May 2010

Jointly organized by Wawasan Penabur and BM Commission NECF, "East Malaysia Awareness: Seminar, Dialogue & Cultural Performances", 9AM – 10PM, at Sungei Way-Subang Methodist Church, PJ.

Please logon to our website to find out more about this event. **DON'T MISS IT!!**