

CLS Commentary: Update on the AI Islam Issue

Kuala Lumpur, May 11, 2011 -- In 2009, AI Islam, a local magazine published an article where it claimed that two journalists entered a church on a Sunday to find if they were carrying out conversion of Muslims in the Church. They discovered there was none. They nevertheless proceeded to attend Mass (celebrated in Bahasa Malaysia) and received Holy Communion. They then spat the Holy Eucharist out and photographed the sacred specie. They proceeded to publish their act and conduct in the magazine. No action was taken by the authorities against the journalists or the magazine editor despite the lodgment of a police report.

The CLS requested for a meeting with the Home Minister. Such a meeting was scheduled on 27 August 2009. CLS was represented by Fr. O.C. Lim (Spiritual Advisor), Mabel Sabastian (President), Joy Appukuttan (Vice President) and Francis Pereira (Past President). The Home Minister was represented through his Deputy (1) Datuk Abu Seman Yusof, Datuk Markiman and Datuk Michael Chong. CLS presented a Memorandum to the Deputy Minister and requested for action to be taken against the journalists, the editor and the publishers of the Magazine so as to deter future acts and misdeeds by others.

No action was taken until in early 2010, the police informed that the case was classified as 'NFA' (No further action). The Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Tan Sri Murphy Pakiam called for a Press Conference on 4th March 2010 and criticized the Attorney General for not taking action (http://www.shermankuek.net/2010/03/catholic_church_demands_apolog.php). His Grace called on the journalist, editor and publisher to make a public apology (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnQ57zQ_3fY). The CLS also issued a press statement which was carried in several newspapers (<http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=44069>).

On 7th March 2010, the Magazine apologized. (<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Malaysia/Story/A1Story20100306-202965.html>)

Some of the material that is relevant to this episode are attached:

1. The CLS Memorandum
2. The Photo with the Deputy Minister

Regards,

Joy Appukuttan



**CATHOLIC LAWYERS' SOCIETY
KUALA LUMPUR**

MEMORANDUM

**TO THE HONOURABLE, THE MINISTER OF
HOME AFFAIRS & INTERNAL SECURITY**

**RE: ARTICLE IN MAY ISSUE OF AL ISLAM ENTITLED
'TINJAUAN AL ISLAM DALAM GEREJA – MENCARI KESAHIHAN
REMAJA MELAYU MURTAD'**

DATED THIS 27TH DAY OF AUGUST 2009

**CATHOLIC LAWYERS' SOCIETY KUALA LUMPUR
Registered Address:
ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL
Jalan Bukit Nanas
50250 Kuala Lumpur**

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MEMORANDUM

1. INTENTION OF THE MEMORANDUM

This Memorandum is intended to express the concerns over the insensitivity of the magazine Al-Islam, its journalist, its editor and its publisher who were responsible for the publication of the article '**TINJAUAN AL ISLAM DALAM GEREJA - MENCARI KESAHIHAN REMAJA MELAYU MURTAD**' ("Impugned Article") that appeared in its May 2009 issue.

A copy of the Impugned Article is attached hereto and marked as **Annex 1**.

2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE MEMORANDUM

To convey the severity of these inconsiderate acts that are disclosed in the Impugned Article and to express hope that The Honourable, The Minister, will take appropriate action against those responsible including such actions as are appropriate against the editor and publisher of the magazine itself.

3. STATEMENTS FROM THE IMPUGNED ARTICLE

The following particulars are extracted from the Impugned Article:

- 3.1. The journalist, Muhd. Ridhwan Abdul Jalil @ Erwanz received news that Malay adolescents (remaja) suspected 'murtad' were converting to Christianity.
- 3.2. From undisclosed source(s), the journalist was informed that many had embraced Christianity after being persuaded and being offered various

inducements such as monthly allowances and that their tuition fees will be paid for.

- 3.3. That these young Malay 'murtad' congregate at Church every Sunday morning.
- 3.4. From their undisclosed source(s), the journalist was informed that Christians who have successfully converted the students from Centres of Higher Learning will be rewarded monetarily. If they convert a Malay, their monetary reward would be higher.
- 3.5. On Sunday at 8am the journalist and his friend appeared in a Church. The service was in English.
- 3.6. The journalist and his friend proceeded to another church at 11 am. A church that was close to Puduraya Bus Station.
- 3.7. While waiting for the Church service they found that those present at the Church premises were from, inter alia, Sabah and Sarawak and that they looked like Malays.
- 3.8. At 12noon, the journalist and his friend entered the Church and participated in the service.
- 3.9. During the service, the journalist partook in Holy Communion by receiving the white bread (host) from a priest.
- 3.10. The journalist having received the Holy Communion (host) in his mouth removed it later, photographed the same and published it in the Impugned Article.
- 3.11. That the journalist and his friend did not find any cases of conversion of Malay adolescents (remaja) as alleged by his sources.

4. VIOLATION OF CATHOLIC BELIEF

- 4.1. Fundamental and central to the Catholic belief is the Holy Communion, the wafer or white bread/host that is transformed into the body of Christ during the Mass.
- 4.2. It is a tenet of the Catholic faith that only Catholics who have been adequately instructed on the doctrines of the Faith are eligible to partake in Holy Communion.
- 4.3. In this respect anyone who is not a Catholic or who has not received the requisite instruction is not permitted to receive Holy Communion. This is announced strenuously at Mass before the congregation is invited to receive Holy Communion.
- 4.4. By violating the sanctity of the Holy Communion as described above in paragraph 3.10, the journalist showed utter disrespect for the sensitivities of others, and Catholics in particular.
- 4.5. This sacrilegious act of the journalist is an unprovoked attack on the fundamental belief of the Catholic community.
- 4.6. Regrettably it was not just the act of the journalist that had breached this fundamental belief of the Catholic community, rather, it was the blatant disrespect shown by the editor and publisher of Al Islam in publishing the Impugned Article.
- 4.7. The acts, conduct and lack of respect shown by these persons have filled the Catholic community with outrage, shock and disbelief!

- 4.8. Such callous acts on the part of the journalist, the editor and publisher of Al-Islam have only added fuel to the racial and religious polarisation that has besieged this nation.

5. POLICE REPORT

- 5.1. Against such abuses, two members of the Catholic community, K. Sudhagaran Stanley and Joachim Francis Xavier ("complainants") had lodged a police report on the Impugned Article.
- 5.2. The police report was lodged at the Jalan Patani police station in Penang on 8th July 2009. The investigations are however carried out at Dang Wangi police station at Kuala Lumpur by Investigating Officer Inspector Terwaris (Tel No. 019 424 8148).

A copy of the Police Report is attached herewith and marked as **Annex 2**.

6. OUTRAGE FROM THE PUBLIC

- 6.1. Since the Impugned Article was made public, many have expressed outrage over the unrepentant misconduct of the journalist and the audacity of the editor and the publisher of the magazine Al-Islam for publishing the Impugned Article.
- 6.2. YB Khairy Jamaluddin expressed himself over the Impugned Article in his blog as follows,

"THE ACTIONS of a journalist from Al-Islam magazine of going undercover to two Catholic Churches during Sunday mass, consuming and spitting the Holy Communion wafer - what Catholics believe to be the flesh of Christ himself

- out of his mouth before photographing it, can only be described as appalling and offensive. As Leader of Barisan Nasional and UMNO Youth and as a Muslim, I have no reservations whatsoever in condemning this instance of unethical journalism, grounded in both disrespect and ignorance.”

6.3. The Honourable Member of Parliament for Rembau went on to state that,

“Everyone involved in the researching, writing and publishing of this article should have considered the fact that Muslims already find it offensive when non-Muslims do not observe basic courtesies expected when in a mosque, like taking off shoes and covering heads. They should further imagine their own reactions if someone went undercover in their local mosques, pretend to worship as a Muslim and made a mockery of congregation prayer. I suspect Al-Islam failed to consider the fact that the gravity of their own actions were similar to this hypothetical situation where the sanctity of the Muslim place and act of worship are violated. And this is at the heart of the problems we face as a multi-cultural and multi-religious society - people simply do not stop to think about another community's legitimate interests and sensitivities by positioning themselves from another's perspective before acting.”

For completeness a copy of YB Khairy's statement is attached herewith and marked as **Annex 3**.

6.4. Such outrage drew concerns on the level of respect and tolerance accorded to religious communities. The Christian Federation of Malaysia had this to say,

“Firstly it is not proper or acceptable for adherents of one religion to spy on worshippers of another. Matters of faith and belief are personal, and it should not be the case that citizens of Malaysia should be made to live in fear of professing and practising the religion of their own free choice in public.”

A copy of the article is attached herewith and marked as **Annex 4**.

- 6.5. Some have expressed outrage in that the Impugned Article afflicts inter-religious understanding in this country. Farish Noor in his article said,

“This, then, is the root of our problem today and the revelation of the report in al-Islam is just the tip of the iceberg. If we are worried about the impact that such reports may have on inter-religious understanding in the country, we ought to be more worried about the social environment that produced such reporting in the first place, and which sustains the readership of such divisive material. We are, in short, in a mess.”

A copy of Farish Noor’s article is attached herewith and marked as **Annex 5**.

- 6.6. The foreign press too had reported the controversy surrounding the Impugned Article. The Associated Press reports religious minorities fear that their rights are being sidelined. We quote their report as follows,
- “The investigation poses a fresh challenge for the government in its efforts to reduce religious friction in this ethnic Malay Muslim-majority country, where religious minorities have complained that their rights are being sidelined in favor of Islam.”

A copy of report is attached herewith and marked as **Annex 6**.

6.7. There were many other reports and statements that have raised similar outrage and sentiments over the Impugned Article. Suffice for the purpose of this Memorandum a few of the statements are mentioned above to impress upon the Honourable Minister the severity and concerns expressed over the Impugned Article.

7. OUTRAGE BY THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

7.1. The Catholic community remains in disbelief over the conduct of the journalists.

7.2. Martin Jalleh a fellow Catholic had expressed himself as follows,

“Sadly, your disrespect knew no bounds. You chose to abandon all human and religious decency with impunity as a journalist and a Muslim. Under pretense of being a Catholic you participated in the church service and even partook of the Holy Communion (a white and sacred wafer) strictly meant only for Catholics.

You consumed the white wafer which Catholics hold as very sacred and treat with utmost reverence, and both of you spat out the remnants, photographed it and published the picture in an article entitled “Tinjaun Al Islam Dalam Gereja:Mencari Kesahihan Remaja Murtad” which was published in the May 2009 issue of the Al Islam magazine.”

“The sensitivities of Catholics have been completely ignored. Indeed, the latest episode is but a blatant act of contempt towards our religion.”

7.3. Another Catholic, Gregory Chan had this to say,

“Such conduct and behaviour is intolerable, inexcusable, unjustifiable, outrageous and, above all, criminal. In such circumstances, justice has to be allowed to take its course, and due process of the law must take place. I want these journalists to know and understand that there are consequences to their actions. I want these people who think they are at liberty to desecrate our rituals, our sacred liturgy, and our most Holy Eucharist on the pretext of ferreting out "murtad cases" to understand that such misguided and unfounded belief does not afford them a defence. Such belief does not give them the licence to commit what Catholics regard as sacrilege, to desecrate what we hold as holy, sacred, reverent and sacrosanct.”

7.4. The profound sadness of the Catholic community arising from the Impugned Article cannot be over simplified or brushed aside.

8. CONCERNS OF INACTION FROM THE AUTHORITIES

8.1. Concerns have now been expressed that there appears to be inaction on the police report and on the part of the relevant authorities in bringing to book those responsible for the Impugned Article.

8.2. Some have written open letters to declare outrage over the inaction with respect to the Impugned Article. We quote one letter written to Malaysiakini by Dr. Jacob George as follows,

“Prime Minister Najib Razak is on record that serious action will be taken on those who offends any religion or religious practices in the country.

One of the penal sanctions which may be considered in this matter is the law applying to sedition.

Of late, I see many individuals been hauled up for allegedly insulting religion without first ascertaining the facts.

I'm wondering what ever happened to the police report filed by Joachim Francis Xavier on the actions of monthly Malay-language Al-Islam magazine.”

- 8.3. Another concerned person expressed his views in a letter to the editor of The Herald over such inaction as follows,

“Like any other Catholic, I too feel very sad and unhappy at the response from the authorities regarding the episode on our very precious Holy Eucharist.

I feel as though our hands and legs are tied and we cannot do more in seeking justice towards the great wrong done towards our Faith and the statement in our Rukun Negara - *Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan.*”

- 8.4. It appears that the authorities are slow to investigate and act on matters where rights of religious minorities in this country have been violated. Such sentiments were expressed recently in a letter to the editor of the Herald where it was said,

“Sesungguhnya Ekaristi merupakan puncak hidup seorang umat Katolik. Kita telah diajar bahawa kita harus menghormati Tubuh Kristus, berpuasa dan dibaptis terlebih dahulu sebelum layak menerima Tubuh Kristus. Ekaristi merupakan lambing pengorbanan Kristus diatas kayu salib dan sebagai tanda kehadiran Kristus.

Tubuh Kristus pernah dicemari oleh dua orang wartawan Islam yang masuk ke Gereja kerana mencari kesahihan sama ada umat Islam murtad.

Mereka menyiasat dan mengikuti tatacara liturgi Gereja sehinggalah sanggup menerima Tubuh Kristus.

Sehingga kini, masih belum ada apa-apa tindakan terhadap dua orang wartawan tersebut. Tidak ada tindakan daripada pihak berkuasa, ataupun kenyataan daripada pihak mereka.

Tetapi anehnya, sembilan orang Kristian ditangkap pula di UPM, selepas beberapa pelajar membuat laporan polis. Wah! Begitu cepat sekali tindakan telah diambil.”

- 8.5. The perception remains that no action will be taken against those responsible for the Impugned Article.

9. REASONS FOR SUCH PERCEPTION

- 9.1. Such perception is not without basis. Previous incidents abound where the authorities have failed to take to task those responsible for instigating religious disharmony.
- 9.2. One such incident is the act of the Mufti of Perak, Haji Harussani Haji Zakaria who in November 2006 alleged that Muslim students of the Ungku Omar Polytechnic were to be baptised by national mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor! This saw the presence of about 500 Muslims protesting in front of the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Ipoh following a widely circulated SMS.

- 9.3. The church was not converting Muslims but instead was holding the First Holy Communion Mass (one of the rites of initiation to the faith) for 98 Catholic children, many of whom were traumatised by the sight of a threatening mob.
- 9.4. The mufti blamed the presence of this mob on the SMS sent out by a woman. Again no action was taken against the mufti, and the authorities remained mute (on both occasions) over his misconduct.
- 9.5. Granted that the acts of the mob at the church in Ipoh were only conducted outside the perimeter of the church but we note with concern that without firm action from the authorities on the aforementioned incident, others have now seen it fit to enter the compound of the church to not only desecrate what the Catholics have held as holy and sacred but to publish such insidious acts in a magazine for all and sundry to read without a thought that such acts will offend the Catholic community.
- 9.6. This progression of misconduct lies at the heart of our concern. The continued silence by the authorities over past misdeeds appears to legitimise subsequent misdeeds. Unless those responsible are brought to justice, there will be others in future who will treat such inaction as a license to act and continue other atrocities without fear of the law and consequences of their action to the detriment of religious minorities in this country.

10. THE LAW

- 10.1. It is for these reasons that laws have been enacted to act as a deterrent to those who incite religious disharmony.
- 10.2. Section 295 of the Penal Code states that it is an offence,
“... to defile damage or destroy any object held sacred by any class of persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion...”
- 10.3. Section 298A of the Penal Code states that it is an offence,
“... to cause or attempt to cause, or do any act that is likely to cause disharmony, disunity, or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will; or prejudice or attempts to prejudice, or is likely to prejudice, the maintenance of harmony or unity, on grounds of religion, between persons or groups of persons professing the same or different religions....”
- 10.4. Similar provisions are available in the Printing Presses & Publications Act 1984 that provides for sanction against the journalist, the editor and the publisher which includes suspension and revocation of their printing and publication licenses.
- 10.5. The authority to act, investigate and prosecute in accordance with these laws lie with the various agencies that are under the auspices of the Honourable Minister and the Attorney General.

11. 1 MALAYSIA

11.1. The Federal government has now promoted the concept of 1 Malaysia. The Honourable Prime Minister explains the goal of 1 Malaysia as follows,

“1Malaysia is intended to provide a free and open forum to discuss the things that matter deeply to us as a Nation. It provides a chance to express and explore the many perspectives of our fellow citizens. What makes Malaysia unique is the diversity of our peoples. 1Malaysia’s goal is to preserve and enhance this unity in diversity which has always been our strength and remains our best hope for the future.”

11.2. If the objective of 1 Malaysia is to preserve and enhance unity of our people, then sadly the Impugned Article has done just the reverse.

11.3. The Honourable Prime Minister has recently called on the police to investigate those who have made seditious remarks.

11.4. The Honourable Prime Minister was quoted as follows,

“The Sedition Act not only can be applied in cases of seditious statements made against Islam, but against other religions and races too.

If we insult someone and the insult can cause friction (among the people), then action can be taken under the law.”

11.5. We reiterate our hope that the Honourable Minister will do likewise and bring to justice those responsible for the Impugned Article.

We look forward to swift and immediate action in the matter by the Honourable Minister.

God Bless,

Yours Faithfully,

.....sgd.....
Mabel Sabastian
President
Catholic Lawyers Society Kuala Lumpur

ANNEX 1

COPY OF THE IMPUGNED ARTICLE



Oleh: Muhd. Ridhwan Abdul Jalil@Erwanz



Suasana di dewan besar gereja ketika penganut Kristian mula ambil tempat sebelum upacara peribadatan bermula.



Kecantikan dan keunikan seni bina di gereja.



Pemandangan di dewan utama gereja.



Lambang salib yang tergantung di tengah-tengah dewan gereja.

Tinjauan Al Islam Dalam Gereja: Mencari kesahihan remaja Melayu murtad

TERSENTAK hati kami apabila mendapat tahu khabarnya terdapat remaja Melayu yang murtad dan memeluk agama Kristian. Kebanyakan mereka dikatakan berusia antara 19 hingga 27 tahun dan ramai antara mereka adalah pelajar-pelajar dari institut pengajian tinggi (IPT).

Menurut sumber yang diterima, kebanyakan daripada mereka memeluk agama Kristian setelah dipujuk dan ditawarkan bermacam-macam ganjaran dan kesenangan seperti wang saku pada setiap bulan, dan yuran pengajian mereka akan ditanggung. Mereka yang terpengaruh kebanyakannya daripada golongan remaja terutama yang ada masalah dalam keluarga.

Selain itu, kami juga diberitahu remaja-remaja Melayu yang murtad mengunjungi gereja pada setiap pagi Ahad. Kebanyakan remaja yang murtad ini datang dari Petaling Jaya, Klang dan Shah Alam. Bertambah kesedihan di hati kami apabila sumber kami itu mendakwa, terdapat segelintir mereka yang dulu bertudung litup tetapi kini berubah dan tergantung di lehernya rantai bersalib. Remaja bertudung ini juga berlagak seperti muslim sedangkan hakikatnya secara bersembunyi mereka mengunjungi gereja dan mendalami kristian dengan kumpulan ter-

tentu. Mengapa terjadi begini? Mengapa begitu mudah mereka berpaling dari agama Allah yang lurus?

Malah daripada sumber yang kami terima, penganut Kristian yang berjaya memurtadkan pelajar-pelajar di IPT akan mendapat ganjaran berupa wang tunai. Dan, ganjaran wang tunai ini lebih tinggi sekiranya mereka berjaya memurtadkan pelajar yang berbangsa Melayu berbanding pelajar bangsa Cina dan India. Justeru, mereka akan berusaha sedaya upaya bagi memurtadkan pelajar-pelajar Melayu.

Sumber-sumber yang kami peroleh, kami kumpul. Dan, satu perancangan dibuat bagi mengenal pasti apakah dakwaan-dakwaan daripada sumber tersebut benar atau sebaliknya. Tujuan kami ialah untuk mengetahui punca yang mendorong mereka murtad? Begitu juga, bagaimana mereka murtad? Dan, apa yang membuatkan mereka murtad? Di samping itu, tergerak juga di hati untuk mengetahui siapakah yang memurtadkan mereka.

Lantas pagi Ahad baru-baru ini buat pertama kali saya menjejakkan kaki ke gereja. Sebelum ini, tempat itu begitu asing bagi saya walaupun saya tahu, ia adalah tempat untuk penganut-penganut Kristian menjalankan upacara ibadah mereka.

Namun atas dasar kerja, tepat pukul

8.00 pagi, saya dan seorang kawan sudah tercongok di salah sebuah gereja di ibu kota. Setibanya di pekarangan gereja tersebut kami lihat suasananya cukup meriah, ramai penganut Kristian yang hadir dalam majlis tersebut. Tepat pukul 8.30 pagi tanpa perlu diingatkan, semua yang hadir masuk ke dalam gereja dan mengambil tempat duduk masing-masing.

Kami juga turut masuk dan duduk di dalam gereja tersebut bagi menyaksikan upacara peribadatan mereka. Hati ketika itu penuh debaran. Takut kalau-kalau misi penyamaran kami diketahui. Dalam hati terus berdoa supaya 'topeng' kami tidak terbuka demi mendapatkan jawapan apakah ada remaj-remaja Melayu bertudung yang telah murtad dan adakah penganut-penganut kristian ini masih menggunakan kalimah Allah dalam upacara sembahyang sebagaimana yang didakwa oleh penganut-penganut ini?

Upacara dimulai dengan nyanyian lagu-lagu kerohanian, dituruti dengan khutbah oleh paderi dan juga doa memohon ampun. Pada masa ini khutbah disampaikan di dalam bahasa Inggeris, Lord dan God digunakan bagi merujuk kepada tuhan. Justeru, tiada kalimah Allah yang digunakan.

Namun ketidakpuasan hati kami masih belum padam. Pada pukul 11.00

pagi, kami terus bergegas menuju ke suatu gereja yang lain iaitu berhampiran dengan Hentian Poduraya, Kuala Lumpur. Kami mendapat tahu gereja tersebut akan menyampaikan khutbahnya di dalam bahasa Melayu pada sebelah tengah hari nanti.

Tiba kami di sana, orang ramai sudah pun berpusing-pusing menuju ke pekarangan gereja berkenaan. Sementara menunggu pukul 12.00 tengah hari, kami berehat sebentar di bawah seponon pokok yang besar nan rindang yang berada di pekarangan gereja tersebut. Kami memerhatikan gelagat mereka yang berada di situ. Ada yang berbual-bual sahaja dan ada yang membeli buku-buku keagamaan, loket berbentuk salib, ukiran patung dan lain-lain lagi di khemah-khemah jualan yang dibuka di pekarangan gereja tersebut.

Rata-rata yang datang pada masa itu terdiri daripada warganegara Indonesia dan Filipina serta terdapat juga yang berasal dari negeri Sabah dan Sarawak. Kami betul-betul keliru kerana kebanyakan daripada mereka berwajah seperti orang yang berbangsa Melayu. Kami cuba menyelidiki hal ini kerana mana tahu ada antara anak-anak muda kita yang telah murtad dan memeluk agama Kristian berada di situ. Tambahan pula kami telah diberitahu, terdapat ramai anak muda yang telah murtad. Bagaimanapun, usaha kami untuk menjejak golongan itu tidak membuahkan hasil.

Jam di tangan sudah memberikan isyarat. Lebih kurang 10 minit lagi tepat pukul 12.00 tengah hari. Sebelum masuk ke dewan gereja, kami mendapatkan beberapa buah buku keagamaan Kristian di khemah jualan yang berada di situ. Sungguh mengejutkan! Inilah yang kami temui. Dua buah buku bertajuk *Masalah Doa dan Kebaktian* serta *Surat Suci Dari Yesus Sang Penebus Manusia*. Kedua-dua buku ini terkandung di dalamnya kalimah Allah. Timbul persoalan di benak fikiran kami, mengapa buku ini masih lagi dijual?

Menghurai dan menceritakan tentang cara-cara berdoa, waktu berdoa, adab berdoa dan segala kemusykilan berkenaan doa dan kebaktian itulah isi-isi yang terkandung di dalam buku yang bertajuk *Masalah Doa dan Kebaktian*. Berlainan pula isi yang terkandung di dalam buku yang bertajuk *Surat Suci Dari Yesus Sang Penebus Manusia*. Buku tersebut menceritakan tentang kesengsaraan yang dialami oleh Yesus dan corak penyeksaan yang dikenakan kepadanya sewaktu Yesus berada di kayu salib. Antara bab di dalamnya, lima belas penyeksaan rahsia terhadap Yesus anak Allah, penebus manusia, doa wasiat, mohon perlindungan bonda Maria, pujian malam kepada hati terkudus Yesus, pujian pagi kepada hati kudus Yesus, doa kepada Allah roh kudus, dan lain-lain lagi.

Menurut buku ini lagi, Surat Suci Orasi Yesus yang aslinya tersimpan di Makam Suci Yesus Penebus Manusia di Yerusalem dan disemayamkan dalam sebuah peti perak oleh Bapa Suci, dan para Raja dan Ratu Iman Kristian.





Cebisan roti putih yang disuapkan paderi ke dalam mulut penulis ketika intipan dibuat.

Hebatnya buku ini sebagaimana yang dinyatakan di dalamnya, sesiapa yang selalu membawa buku ini akan dibebaskan daripada mati tenggelam dan ajal yang secara tiba-tiba, dibebaskan daripada segala jenis penyakit yang menular dan sambaran kilat, tidak akan meninggal sebelum membuat pengakuan dosa, akan dibebaskan daripada penguasa yang zalim dan daripada semua pengadu dan saksi yang palsu. Bagi perempuan yang sedang mengandung pula, sesiapa yang menyimpan buku ini maka akan dipermudahkan ketika melahirkan anak. Manakala rumah yang menyimpannya pula tidak akan mengalami gangguan-gangguan daripada iblis dan lain-lain lagi.

Tepat pukul 12.00 tengah hari, masa yang ditunggu telah tiba. Kami bersama penganut-penganut Kristian yang lain masuk ke dalam gereja dan mengambil tempat duduk masing-masing. Pembantu paderi bangun dan memberi tunduk hormat kepada paderi dan diikuti oleh semua penganut-penganut Kristian yang hadir. Agar tidak diketahui kami menurut segala bentuk perlakuan yang dilakukan dalam majlis tersebut termasuk melutut dan menadah tangan ketika berdoa.

Sewaktu kami membuat 'tinjauan' ini kami berasa amat kagum melihat akhlak mereka yang hadir. Mereka sangat menghormati satu sama lain dan sangat mudah mesra kerana mereka sangat berpegang kepada konsep kasih sayang dan hormat-menghormati. Mereka turut berjabat tangan dan diikuti dengan senyuman yang manis

dengan kami apabila paderi memberi arahan ramah dan mesra bersama saudara-saudaramu. Muzik dimainkan, dan lagu-lagu keagamaannya dinyanyikan dengan irama yang lembut dan syahdu. Melihatkan kami tidak mempunyai buku yang mengandungi lirik-lirik lagu yang sedang dan akan dinyanyikan, seorang lelaki yang memperkenalkan dirinya Steven yang datang bersama teman wanitanya dan duduk sebaris dengan kami, meminjamkan kepada kami buku tersebut.

Sangat mengejutkan! Lagu yang dinyanyikan mereka mengandungi kalimah Allah. Kami menyelak sehelai demi sehelai buku lirik yang dipinjamkan oleh Steven kepada kami tadi, dan tebalnya hampir menyamai dua buah majalah *Mastika*. Terkedu kami dibuatnya apabila hampir kesemua lirik lagu mereka mengandungi kalimah Allah. Perasaan kami bercampur-baur pada ketika itu. Ada kala kami berasa gembira kerana kalimah Allah dilafazkan di bibir mereka dan ini membawa erti mereka mengakui kewujudan Allah, namun perasaan sedih dan geram turut terpacu di hati kami kerana zat Allah telah dicabuli apabila mereka menyatakan Allah adalah bapa kepada Jesus dan Allah juga adalah Tuhan Bapa di dalam konsep trinitas yang dipercayai oleh mereka sedangkan di dalam al-Quran, dalam surah al-Ikhlâs secara jelas menyatakan, Allah tidak beranak dan diperanakkan malah Allah adalah Tuhan yang Maha Esa.

Tidak cukup dengan itu, khutbah yang disampaikan oleh paderi juga menggunakan kalimah Allah. Ber-

ulang-ulang kali kalimah Allah disebut di dalam khutbahnya yang merujuk kepada Tuhan Bapa dan bapa kepada Jesus yang berada di syurga. Inilah kefahaman mereka tentang Allah yang sangat jauh terpesong dari agama Islam. Makanya, ulama dan kerajaan Malaysia sepakat melarang keras penggunaannya demi kemaslahatan umat Islam khususnya dan masyarakat Malaysia amnya agar tidak ada kekeliruan timbul di masa akan datang. Tapi mengapa penganut Kristian ini berdegil mahu menggunakan kalimah Allah? Tidakkah perbuatan mereka ini seolah-olah mahu mencabar undang-undang?

Selesai paderi menyampaikan khutbah, sebelum menamatkan majlis, upacara makan roti putih pula berlangsung. Paderi menyuapkan roti putih ke dalam mulut setiap penganut yang hadir dan penulis juga tidak terkecuali daripada merasai roti tersebut yang sedikit tawar. Berbagai-bagai kepayahan dan pengalaman yang kami lalui dalam usaha untuk mendedahkan hal ini.

Apa pun, sepanjang tinjauan yang dibuat, kami dapati dakwaan-dakwaan yang mengatakan ramai remaja Melayu dimurtadkan di gereja-gereja pada setiap hari Ahad tidak kami temui. Yang ada hanyalah mereka yang berwajah Melayu tetapi berasal dari Sabah yang menganut Kristian sejak lahir. Begitu juga kalangan warga Filipina yang memenuhi ruang gereja yang ternyata mereka bukan Melayu tempatan. Di samping itu pengajaran yang kami peroleh, andai kalimah Allah di dalam kitab mahupun buku-buku atau risalah-risalah yang didedahkan kepada orang ramai tetap menggunakan kalimah Allah, ia bukan sahaja menyebabkan masyarakat Islam terkeliru malah ia boleh merosakkan akidah umat Islam yang masih ter-cari-cari ilmu berkaitan Islam. Dan ternyata, larangan yang dibuat oleh Kementerian Dalam Negeri (KDN) berhubung kalimah Allah, sewajarnya dilakukan! **A**

Laporan Polis

Kami ingin membuat laporan terhadap majalah Al-Islam yang mempunyai kandungan yang amat menghinakan agama Katolik. Artikel majalah tersebut yang terkandung dimukasurat 28-30 majalah Al-Islam bulan May 2009 dan bertajuk "*Tinjaun Al-Islam dalam Gereja: Mencari Kesahihan Remaja Melayu Murtad*". Mengikut artikel tersebut, dua orang lelaki beragama Islam telah menyertai misa Katolik bagi tujuan mencari remaja melayu yang disyaki murtad. Semasa misa tersebut, lelaki ini telah menerima roti putih daripada paderi. Roti putih ini, mengikut agama Katolik adalah suci dan tidak boleh dipermainkan sewenang-wenangnya kerana ia dianggap sebagai Tuhan Yesus yang hanya boleh diterima oleh umat Katolik. Perbuatan dua lelaki ini iaitu meninjau didalam gereja, menerima roti putih ini, meludah keluar roti putih tersebut bagi tujuan mengambil gambar dan kemudian menulis mengenai pengalaman tersebut dalam majalah Al-Islam merupakan perbuatan yang amat menghinakan kepada umat Katolik dan berprovokasi. Kami membuat laporan ini supaya polis menyiasat perkara ini secepat mungkin supaya perbuatan sedemikian dihentikan serta-merta supaya perkara yang tidak diinginkan tidak berlaku. Sejurus it, kami juga meminta polis supaya pihak Al-Islam mengembalikan secepat mungkin roti putih tersebut kepada pihak atasan Gereja. *Artikel ini dibaca di 290 Jalan Macalister P. Pinang.*

Sudhagan Stanley dan Joachim Francis Xavier
8^{hb} Julai 2009

K. 

ANNEX 3

COPY OF YB KHAIRY JAMALUDDIN'S STATEMENT

Khairy: Un-Islamic Al-Islam?

2009-07-16 20:47

BLOG

THE ACTIONS of a journalist from Al-Islam magazine of going undercover to two Catholic Churches during Sunday mass, consuming and spitting the Holy Communion wafer - what Catholics believe to be the flesh of Christ himself - out of his mouth before photographing it, can only be described as appalling and offensive. As Leader of Barisan Nasional and UMNO Youth and as a Muslim, I have no reservations whatsoever in condemning this instance of unethical journalism, grounded in both disrespect and ignorance.

Needless to say, these actions are contrary to the goal of an empathetic society that I have been promoting as a way for Malaysians to progress as a people from diverse backgrounds. Empathy requires sound appreciation of one another's unique cultures and sensitivities - it calls for us to consider the perspectives of others before acting in ways that may affect them.

It also violates the Islamic injunction for empathy, plurality and respect, something made clear in the Holy Quran Surah Al-Hujarat, verse 13: "O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another."

The Islamic virtues of empathy, respect and tolerance were obviously absent in both the journalist and the magazine's editorial team that sanctioned the publishing of the article and the methods employed to gather information over supposed cases of Muslims converting to Catholicism/Christianity.

Everyone involved in the researching, writing and publishing of this article should have considered the fact that Muslims already find it offensive when non-Muslims do not observe basic courtesies expected when in a mosque, like taking off shoes and covering heads. They should further imagine their own reactions if someone went undercover in their local mosques, pretend to worship as a Muslim and made a mockery of congregation prayer. I suspect Al-Islam failed to consider the fact that the gravity of their own actions were similar to this hypothetical situation where the sanctity of the Muslim place and act of worship are violated. And this is at the heart of the problems we face as a multi-cultural and multi-religious society - people simply do not stop to think about another community's legitimate interests and sensitivities by positioning themselves from another's perspective before acting.

In this case, it is also especially telling that the journalist felt it necessary to go undercover to investigate the supposed instances of Muslim converts to Catholicism, when in fact, as far as I am informed, one can sit through and observe mass without having to be Catholic. This 'blunder' speaks volumes of the journalist's ignorance and the prejudices held even before he set out on his little mission.

I am further disturbed that this article was even published in the first place when ultimately the journalist could find no evidence of Muslim apostates going to Church. There was, in essence, no story to sell. Regrettably, perhaps starved of genuinely informative reports beneficial to the Muslim community, the tone of the article was decidedly mistrusting and almost vindictive - presumably in an

attempt to create a sensationalist appeal. At one point in the article, the journalist even wrote of his dissatisfaction in finding nothing controversial during his visit to the first church. These sentiments reflect a certain fetishistic desire to confront "the enemy" when in fact it is completely unnecessary and harmful to inter-religious harmony. Feelings of moral superiority and righteousness vis a vis other faiths, even if unavoidable, should remain private and not manifested in the public domain.

As such, I am hopeful that this issue will not be hijacked or spiral into one that pits Islam/Muslims against Christianity/Christians. It was never about that. Instead, it is a case of unethical, and dare I say, un-Islamic journalism that has inadvertently underscored some of the reasons why genuine harmony is still elusive. Above all, it is a timely reminder to us, regardless of our faiths, to be more respectful, sensitive and empathetic to each other in order to build a better Malaysia which we all call home.

Khairy Jamaluddin

<http://www.rembau.net.my/>

16 July 2009

(Khairy is Rembau MP and UMNO Youth Chief)

ANNEX 4

COPY OF CFM'S STATEMENT

CFM accuses Al Islam magazine of desecration

2009-07-17 17:02

The Christian Federation of Malaysia deeply regrets the surreptitious manner in which information was gathered for, and the publication by the magazine Al Islam of, the article entitled "Tinjauan Al Islam Dalam Gereja: Mencari Kesahihan Remaja Murtaf" in its May 2009 edition where the "investigators" took it upon themselves to be "undercover spies and policemen".

Firstly it is not proper or acceptable for adherents of one religion to spy on worshippers of another. Matters of faith and belief are personal, and it should not be the case that citizens of Malaysia should be made to live in fear of professing and practising the religion of their own free choice in public.

Regrettably the interpretation/existence of certain laws, customs, practices and teachings in Malaysia has bred a type of religious imperialism, intolerance, intemperance and illegality which is unhealthy and unhelpful in the development of a truly multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society where everyone is able to profess and practice their own faith free from the interference of the authorities, whether civil or religious.

Secondly, no right-thinking publication and editor should have stooped so low so as to condone, let alone permit, this so-called investigative piece of journalism (if the article can even be called that) to be published. The authors of this article clearly failed in their stated aim as described in their chosen title – to seek the truth about Muslim youths who had converted to Christianity. It should have ended there.

That it went further, and led to the actual publication of the article and the proud disclosure of acts which can only be described as religious desecration (by the illicit and wrongful participation in the rite of Holy Communion of Christians without understanding its meaning and consequences), only goes to reveal the moral, ethical and journalistic bankruptcy of the editors of this publication. The sacrilegious behaviour of the authors simply breached all standards of common decency. All God-fearing and peace-loving Malaysians, regardless of their faith traditions, should rightly distance themselves from such conduct.

Thirdly, Christianity has nothing to hide. If people indeed seek the truth, if they are curious about what Christianity is all about, what Christians do, what Christians believe, they need only ask. If they sincerely wish to learn, we welcome them with open and loving arms, as we do people of all faiths, or of none, into our churches and seminaries to learn more about Christianity. There is no need to snoop or to spy. Doing so is merely going about things the wrong way.

Finally, we trust that the authorities will do the right thing and take the necessary action to correct the wrong that has been done.

The Rt. Revd. Ng Moon Hing
Chairman, Executive Committee
Christian Federation of Malaysia
Petaling Jaya
17 July 2009

MySinchew 2009.07.17

ANNEX 5

COPY OF FARISH NOOR'S ARTICLE

We no longer understand one another

2009-07-16 16:02

 enlarge

MALAYSIA is once again landed with yet another predictable mini-controversy (as there are too many controversies at the moment, this one has been relegated somewhat) involving a report that was purported written by two Muslims for the magazine al-Islam.

The report was written by the two Muslims who claimed that their intention was to investigate the allegations that Muslims were being converted to Christianity in the country, but the cause of the controversy lies in the fact that the two writers chose to pretend to be Christians and took part in Christian rituals of worship in the Church.

For many Christians the most offensive aspect of the investigation lay in the claim that the writers took part in the rituals without revealing who they were, and that they consumed the holy wafer/bread of Christ, then spat it out, and photographed the remnants of what they had consumed later.

Now of course this begs the obvious question: How would Muslims had reacted if some non-Muslim journalists had done the equivalent; to enter a mosque, take part in rituals, photographed them, and then published the report in some journal?

In response to the clamour of complaints that have been issued, the authorities now claim that the two writers will be investigated, and if found guilty of carrying out acts detrimental to public order may even be imprisoned. This would not, however, address the key issue which is this: Have levels of empathy and understanding in Malaysian society dropped to such an extent that someone could even contemplate doing such a thing without considering its wider impact on society and the consequences to others and themselves?

Could the writers of the article not even consider the potential offence that they might have caused by assuming a fake identity only to take part in rituals they did not believe in; and did they not realise that this might have been seen as outrageous by others? Empathy - the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another, no matter how different that other person is - and to share the pain, joy, hopes and aspirations of others is one of the variable factors that hold societies together. An alienated society that does not communicate with the various streams that flow within the broader mainstream is a society that is in danger of losing touch with itself and growing more fragmented and alienated in time. That is the juncture that we have reached in Malaysia, despite talks of national unity and one-ness.

Here again we need to look back to the structural and institutional factors that may account for this lack of empathy among Malaysians. For a start, a quick look at our urban landscape will tell us that the shared public spaces that ought to mark out the contours of our public domain are rapidly deminishing. Our public parks and playgrounds are being replaced by shopping malls and condomeniums, and the shared spaces where young Malaysians may meet, interact and form lasting childhood friendships are being lost and eroded in time.

To compound matters further, our manifold multi-streamed educational system that still allows for different vernacular streams has also eroded the shared public domain where young Malaysians can meet and interact across the divide of ethnicity and language. Is it a surprise that some Muslims can walk into a Church to write a report as was done by the two writers today? After all, when we look at the social landscape of Malaysia at the moment there is precious little in terms of space where genuine inter-ethnic communication (and by this I mean meaningful communication, not ordering a pizza) can take place.

The absence of a national educational system for all means that young Malaysians are growing up in not one but several Malaysias that are growing apart. I would not be surprised if the two writers were themselves from such a background, and had had little contact with non-Muslims in their lives. This absence of a shared public domain where there is the recognition of different subjectivities is one of the factors that is compounding the problem of nation-building and that is why we as a nation remain fragmented and unable to empathise with one another.

And in case Malaysia's Christians are so offended by the article that was written for al-Islam (which it was, in this writer's opinion) then they should spare a thought for the Muslim minorities who live among us too, such as the Shias and Ahmadis who have for decades now been branded apostates, deviants, heretics and outsiders within. I was informed recently that in our school exams today Malaysian Muslim children are even asked to identify the groups that are considered deviants/apostates, in a systematic and institutionalised manner of generating a sense of alienation and radical difference with others.

If this is the sort of social and educational landscape that we now inhabit and have to work with/in, how can there be the sort of empathy that is required for citizens to recognise the common humanity they share with others? Worse still in the present-day context of Malaysia, such strategies of deliberate Othering and alienation have become institutionalised by and through the educational process, as in the case of the exam questions for Muslim kids who are told to identify other Muslims as outsiders and deviants against the norm.

This, then, is the root of our problem today and the revelation of the report in al-Islam is just the tip of the iceberg. If we are worried about the impact that such reports may have on inter-religious understanding in the country, we ought to be more worried about the social environment that produced such reporting in the first place, and which sustains the readership of such divisive material. We are, in short, in a mess. *(By FARISH A. NOOR/MySin Chew)*

(FARISH A. NOOR is Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore.)

MySin Chew 2009.07.16

ANNEX 6

ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT

Malaysian Muslims stir anger over church article

2009-07-15 16:12

KUALA LUMPUR (AP): Malaysian authorities are investigating two Muslims who sparked complaints after they pretended to be Christians at a church service to write a magazine article, officials said Tuesday.

The investigation poses a fresh challenge for the government in its efforts to reduce religious friction in this ethnic Malay Muslim-majority country, where religious minorities have complained that their rights are being sidelined in favor of Islam.

A churchgoer filed a police complaint last week after reading an article in the monthly Malay-language Al-Islam magazine written by a contributor who described how he attended a Roman Catholic mass with his friend and hid his Muslim identity.

The writer said they were trying to confirm rumors that many Muslim adolescents (remaja) were being converted to Christianity in Kuala Lumpur's churches every Sunday. He described how they tasted communion wafers to blend in with the crowd, but found no evidence to support the rumors.

Rev. Lawrence Andrew, the editor of the Herald, the Catholic church's main publication in Malaysia, said the men had "insulted the Christians" through their actions.

"For us, this is a very holy matter," Andrew told The Associated Press. "They have shown disregard, disrespect. ... So we are very upset about this."

Representatives of Al-Islam, which writes about Islamic teachings and news, could not immediately be contacted.

Police federal crime investigations head Mohamad Bakri Zinin said officials were investigating the two men for possibly causing religious disharmony--a crime that carries a prison sentence of up to five years.

Joachim Francis Xavier, the Catholic man who filed the police complaint, said the men had been irresponsible and that their actions could cause religious tensions.

"If everyone starts to intrude into each other's services and write about it, there will be chaos," Xavier said.

He noted that non-Christians were welcome to attend church ceremonies, but they cannot take communion. The magazine article also indicated the men had spat out the communion wafer because they took a photograph of it partially bitten.

Christian, Buddhist and Hindu minorities--who comprise about one-third of Malaysia's population--often say their constitutional right to practice religion freely has come under threat from Muslim-dominated authorities. The government denies any discrimination.

Religious disputes include a court battle between the Catholic church and the government over a 2007 order banning non-Muslims from translating God as "Allah" in their literature. The government says its use would confuse Muslims, but Christians say the ban is unconstitutional. *(By JULIA ZAPPEI/Associated Press Writer)*

Associated Press writer Sean Yoong contributed to this story.



Catholic Lawyers Society Kuala Lumpur presenting the memorandum.