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Church council marks 50 years

IN conjunction with the 50 Years of United Witness and Service Anniversary, the Council of Churches in Malaysia has lined up many programmes to celebrate the occasion.

On Friday, the council will be organising a thanksgiving dinner at the Putra World Trade Centre's Tun Hussein Onn Hall.

The dinner will be graced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Council of Churches in Malaysia general secretary Hermen Shastri said the council was expecting 600 guests for the dinner.

"The event is aimed at laying the foundation for stronger ties between the Government and the council," he told reporters at his office in Jalan Universiti.

He said the Council of Churches hoped to convey to the Government some points that would benefit the church, at the dinner.

Shastri added that the celebration was also to mark the success of the church in moulding its own identity under Malaysian leaders.

"Since Malaysian churches are not under the influence of Western leaders, we are free to practise the religion according to the local environment," he said.

Shastri added that the celebration was an effort to merge all the churches into one body and to pool their resources.

As part of that effort, the council would be organising the CCM 50th Anniversary Youth Quest at the Majodi Centre on May 24.

The camp is open to youths aged 18 to 30. The registration fee is RM60 each.

Themed One Faith, One Body, the four-day camp will present a speaker from Kenya, Reverend Grae Imathiu, who is expected to speak on contemporary issues such as caring society and migrant workers.

On November 22, the council will organise the Women's National Convention.

Open to Malaysian women, the programme will be held in Kuala Lumpur.

Themed United in Christ Serving The Nation, the year-long celebration began with a 50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service at the Trinity Methodist Church on April 17.

Malaysian church leaders were present at the event.

According to Shastri, the CCM, which was formed in 1948, is part of the modern ecumenical movement of the 20th century.

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