

**Bishop raps Hasan over 'talking Bible'**  
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**by Terence Netto**

Catholic Bishop Dr Paul Tan Chee Ing advised Selangor state minister of religion Hasan Ali that he would do better if he produced proof of the existence of eight Muslim apostates instead of proffering eight ways in which Christians are allegedly proselytising Muslims.

"I find it amusing this man can carry on with impunity the way he has the last few months - that is, continually spawning gratuitous fear among Muslims that their faith is in danger of subversion from Christians," commented the head of the Catholic Church in the Malacca-Johor diocese.

Bishop Paul Tan (left) was commenting on Hasan's reply in the Selangor State Assembly yesterday to an Umno member's question on Christian proselytisation of Muslims.

"It's the way mere assertion has substituted for proof that is most disturbing about Hasan Ali's carriage," commented the Jesuit-trained prelate.

"Thus far, since the genesis of this phase of Christian bashing last May when a Christian plot to dethrone Islam was allegedly discovered in Penang to the Damansara Utama Methodist Centre controversy in August, this has been a story of plenty of smoke and no fire, of billowing fog and no facts behind it," remarked the bishop.

"There has not been an iota of proof to back any of the claims made of Christian plotting or proselytising, but these claims persist like they have a life of their own," he lamented.

Technologically savvy

Bishop Paul Tan, who is president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, said Christians were no more capable of refusing aid to the needy than were Muslims capable of imagining God as anything but one.

"So for Hasan Ali to suggest that the Christian ethical imperative of aid to the needy constitutes subversion of the faith of Muslim recipients is akin to saying that Christian belief in the Trinity is a grave provocation to Muslim monotheism," said the prelate.

"If you weigh your values only in the scales of your belief-system, you emerge, in a plural world, with a view that is so lopsided it makes you daft," opined Bishop Paul Tan.

On a lighter side, the prelate said he was delighted to know from Hasan that Christians are using solar-powered handheld talking Bibles to spread the faith.

"I'm delighted to learn that Christians have become technologically savvy but I doubt they are using these devices for the express purpose of subverting the faith of Muslims," he said.

"Why does Hasan Ali think that the faith of Muslims is so fragile?" quizzed the bishop.

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