

## **'Allah' ban hurting prayer services**

**Free Malaysia Today**

**31 March 2014**

**Oleh William Mangor**

SRI AMAN: Prohibiting the use of the word 'Allah' by Christians is "affecting" the practice of the faith in Sabah and Sarawak where Bahasa Melayu is an integral language.

Association of Churches in Sarawak (ACS) chairman, Archbishop Bolly Lapok said the ban is hurting the prayer process and the federal government must recognise Sarawak Christians' cultural heritage and constitutional rights without undue interference and intervention.

"The recent finding of the Court of Appeal that the word 'Allah' is not an integral part of the faith and practice of Christianity affects the rights of Christians in Sabah and Sarawak.

"The word 'Allah' as referring to God has always continuously and consistently been used by these Bumiputera Christians in all aspects of the Christian faith including all form of religious services, prayers, worship, liturgy and religious education with irrefutable historical evidence in support of this," he said in his communique during the Fellowship of Iban Anglican Church Conference on Saturday.

Bahasa Melayu and other indigenous language speaking Christians of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak constitute 64% of Christians in Malaysia.

Sabah and Sarawak have 1.6 million Bumiputera Christians who use Bahasa Melayu and their native tongues as the medium to profess and practise their Christian faith.

He noted that the finding of the Court of Appeal had emboldened certain religious authorities to seize copies of the Alkitab Berita Baik and the Bup Kudus in which the word 'Allah' is used, imported into Malaysia for the use of Bumiputera Christians.

This violated the community's inalienable rights to complete religious freedom as guaranteed under the Federal Constitution, he said.

"It has not been easy for us. But because by the grace of God we are defined as family with a call to act in reconciliation,

"It is our sacred responsibility to find not only the call but also the means of being reconcilers, when our instincts and passions often lead us in the opposite direction,

"We have gone the extra mile for the sake of reconciliation. May God bless Malaysia." he said.

## **Tyranny by the majority**

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Adenan Satem, on the eve of the Balingian by-election, assured Christians in Sarawak that his administration will "not permit" a law forbidding the use of the

Arabic word for God, 'Allah' in Sarawak.

“There is no law in Sarawak that says you cannot use the word ‘Allah’, and I will not permit such a law in Sarawak as long as I am the chief minister,

“That is the way it ought to be. You are at liberty to practise your religion in your own way,” he was quoted saying, with reference to the Federal Constitution.

Sarawakians had been living in peace for hundreds of years without religious discord, and added that Peninsular Malaysians could learn lessons from their Borneo counterparts in religious tolerance.

He also says that there were Melanau families who were able to live under one roof even though the parents and children followed different faiths.

Bolly also believed the current situation is, in fact a tyranny by the minority while the rest of peace-loving Malaysians have been sucked into the spiral of silence only to become the suffering majority.

“All Malaysians’ goodwill is to ensure that Malaysia is not hijacked by the deluded minority. To turn the other cheek in these circumstances is indeed to bear false witness to the Gospel of Reconciliation itself, this we will not do,” he said.

Copyright © 2013 – Free Malaysia Today

Source:

<http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2014/03/31/398460/>