



SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

www.sarawakbahai.org

BE 167 Issue 4

Kalimát / Words

13 July 2010

CALL FOR RENEWED COMMITMENT

The weekend of 18-20 June 2010 witnessed an event that called for renewed commitment of the friends to intensify the growth of the Cause especially in clusters, which had launched intensive programs of growth. About forty members of the institutions including members of the National Assembly, Regional Councils, and members of the Local Spiritual Assemblies and Area Growth Committee of Kuching cluster met with Counsellor George Soraya and Auxiliary Board Members at the Kuching Bahá'í Centre to study the 2010 Ridvan message. In order to benefit all participants, the reading of the message and discussions were carried out in both English and Malay, paragraph by paragraph. All of the 33 paragraphs were covered in the two days' session. One thing was made obvious; right from the beginning, the participants were made aware that the whole purpose of this message was to call for a renewed commitment in building a community whose culture is striving to translate the Bahá'í teachings into reality.

Clusters already in the intensive program of growth were especially called to intensify effort in putting in place the learning process involving people of all ages the institute process for the adults and youth, the junior youth spiritual empowerment and children's classes for those in their respective age groups.

To cap the event, Mr. Soraya drew up a chart of the "health indicator" of clusters in the southern region. These indicators include figures in the last three months of the number of Book 7 graduates, enrolment, as well as number of on-going study circles, junior youth groups and children's classes. Needless to say, most of the clusters fell short of the expectations with a few even falling within the "critical" level. It's obvious that all clusters need to redouble their effort if they were to achieve the "healthy" target by Ridvan 2011.

Following this weekend study session, all Area Growth Committees of the eighteen clusters with intensive program of growth were called upon to carry out similar study sessions for communities in their own respective cluster. But before they can do that, the members of the Area Growth Committees need to attend a similar study sessions organized by their respective Regional Council. The critical role of the cluster level institutions especially that of the coordinators for institute courses became more apparent with increasing responsibility and the high expectation for each cluster.



"When the friends realize that the hosts of the Kingdom are waiting to rush forth and assist them, that others from their own ranks have arisen and have been successful, that everyone can find some effective method of teaching according to his own particular capacities and talents, they will then no doubt arise with greater confidence to take the first step, and this, we know, will be aided and guided from on high, for the very act of striving to respond to God's call will bring in its wake countless divine blessings."

From the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, March 3, 1977

LONG TISAM GETS A NEW BAHÁ'Í CENTRE

Report by Lion anak Janggat

A simple opening ceremony of the newly built Bahá'í Centre at Long Tisam, a longhouse situated in the upper reaches of the Tinjar River was held on 5 June 2010. The 186 attendees included 21 invited guests from Miri City, Niah and other communities in the Bakong cluster. A member of the Regional Council, Mdm. Elam Langgoh was given the honour of launching the ceremony in which she also touched on the subject of Bahá'í Fund. In the evening it was time for celebration and many showed their talents in dancing and singing.

ACTIVITIES IN GEDONG CLUSTER

Report by Margeretha Jumerie

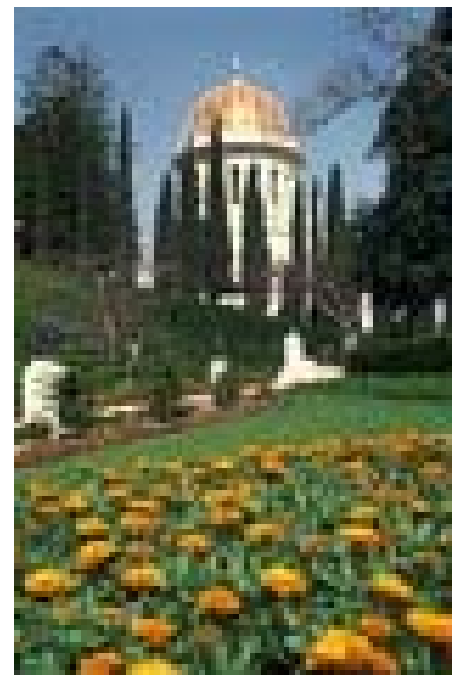
Under the auspices of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kampung Triboh a group of youth and young adults organized a camp for youth and junior youth at the Bahá'í Centre on 10-15 June 2010. There were 26 participants and the program included study sessions using *Breezes of Confirmation* and *Glimmerings of Hope*. In addition to acting out the characters in *Breezes of Confirmation*, the participants learned some traditional dances. The last night of the camp was dedicated to social program whereby the parents of the participants were invited to watch their children performing the dances and drama learnt during the camp. Feedbacks from the parents showed that they were happy with what their children had learnt and expressed their desire to see more of such events being held.

THE 19TH CYCLE OF IPG FOR KUCHING

The 19th cycle of intensive program of growth in Kuching, launched a week following the study of the Ridvan Message, witnessed a few changes in the cluster administrative body. The newly appointed Cluster Development Facilitator and the secretary of the Area Growth Committee was Mdm. Lim Boon Eng. She will serve the cluster along with the other members, comprising of Dr. Teh Jo Hun who had just relocated from Limbang Town, Mdm. Kula Sabang, Mdm. Julianah Ebin and Ms. Mantan Abet. Mr. Sulang chose to serve as the Institute Coordinator and Lee Yih Ven as the Junior Youth Group Coordinator. Nobody has arisen to the challenge of serving as coordinator for children's class. This is the first time cluster coordinators were not members of the committee. With the new awareness gained from the study of the Ridvan Message, many friends expressed their desire to seriously look around their own neighbourhood to expand their circle of friends. In Kuching City North community, the friends look forward to having Samariang housing estate as a centre for children's class and junior youth activities.

FROM THE WORLD CENTRE, on 4 June 2010, The Universal House of Justice wrote: "With gladdened hearts, we hasten to share with you the attainment of a significant milestone in the restoration work being undertaken on the Shrine of the Báb." The work mentioned was replacing the tiles that covered "the dome of the exalted Sepulchre which, after nearly sixty years' exposure to the elements, had suffered irreparable erosion."

The new tiles which are expected to last for no less than two centuries were costume-made in Portugal. The first consignment is scheduled to reach the Holy Land by September. When the work is done, the dome "will regain the luster intended by the Guardian for the august edifice that embosoms the sacred remains of a Manifestation of God. Only one original tile will remain: beneath it, placed by the Shoghi Effendi himself, is a fragment of plaster from the prison cell in Máh-Kú that once confined the Martyr-Herald of the Faith."



RELIGIOUS LEADERS CALL FOR ACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT, POVERTY AND PEACE

World leaders meeting in Canada have been urged to take “inspired leadership and action” to halt poverty, protect the environment and end violent conflict. The challenge was made in a statement drafted by the representatives of the world’s religions, who gathered at the University of Winnipeg in advance of this week’s G8 and G20 summits in Toronto.

“Acknowledging our common humanity and embracing the imperative to treat all persons with dignity, we affirm that no person is more or less valuable than another,” said the statement.

“We urged the political leaders to consider first the vulnerable among us, particularly our children, and to work together to address the dehumanizing scourge of poverty and injustice and practice and promote care for our common environment, the Earth,”

The World Religions Summit 2010 was the sixth in a series of interfaith gatherings associated with the annual G8 meetings. It brought together more than 80 participants from all of the world’s major faiths including, for the first time, representatives of the Bahá’í community.

Religious leaders from more than 20 countries attended, including each of the G8 nations – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Reverend Dr. James Christie, secretary general of the Summit, said the meeting and its output was directed principally at the leaders of the so-called “Group of 8” countries because they represent the nations that have the most power to effect change in the world.

“The reality is that these nations have the money, they have the clout, and they make a difference,” said Dr. Christie.



Susanne Tamas, centre, a delegate from the Canadian Bahá’í community, participates in the World Religions summit 2010

ATTENDING SEMINAR ON RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Picture: On June 22-23, Dr. John Fozdar was invited to be part of the Bahá’í Community to participate in a

seminar on “Religion and Human Rights” organized by IKIM (Institute of Islamic Understanding, Malaysia) in Kuala Lumpur. The guest of honour was Tun Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi. According to Dr. Fozdar, there were frequent opportunities to interact with the speakers during breaks and mealtimes. Opportunities were also present for audience participation.



RETREAT FOR NORTHERN REGION

Report by Nancy Gumbang

Miri Bahá’í Centre: On 2nd – 4th July 2010, the Regional Council organized a study session on the 2010 Ridvan Message for members of the Area Growth Committees. Representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly were Mr. Chin Chia Chau and Mr. Dajai Mancha. More than forty people from Bakong, Suai/Niah, Bintulu and Miri City attended the study session, which was conducted in two languages, English

and Iban. On the first day, most of the participants were quite reluctant to talk but on the following days it was an encouraging sight to see everyone had something to say. By the end of the session, we all had gained insight into the core of the Message and all felt inspired to start activities within our own neighbourhood or community... We learned that the more we do the more we learn...learning is the mode of operation.



Participants of the study session on Ridvan Message at Miri Bahá'í Centre on 2-4 July 2010.

HUQÚQU'LLÁH – the Right of God.

.....“religion is the light of the world, and the progress, achievement, and happiness of man result from obedience to the laws set down in the holy Books. Briefly, it is demonstrable that in this life, both outwardly and inwardly, the mightiest of structures, the most solidly established, the most enduring, standing guard over the world, assuring both the spiritual and material perfections of mankind, and protecting the happiness and the civilisation of society...is religion”

“...the religions of God are the true source of the spiritual and material perfections of man, and the fountainhead for all mankind of enlightenment and beneficial knowledge.”

“.... The Divine religions, the holy precepts, the heavenly teachings, are the unassailable basis of human happiness, and the peoples of the world can hope for no real relief or deliverance without this one great remedy.” (*Abdul Bahá: Secret of Divine Civilisation.*)

We believe that the Creator knows the stages of development of the human race and He sends His Messenger with guidance, which is just right for that age.

Bahá'u'lláh teaches us that religion is like a garment for the human body. In the age of infancy, the clothing required is just suitable for that stage. As we grow, our garments also need to be adjusted to conform to the changes in us.

Bahá'u'lláh explains,“ Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared.”

There are great similarities among the religions of God. They all have their own founders, e.g. Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad, Báb, Bahá'u'lláh. They all have their own Holy Books, e.g. Tanakh (Old Testament) Gita, Dhammapada, Gathas, Gospels, Quran, Beyan, Aqdas.

All these holy religions have their own laws, and their own communities, and they all have provided the inspiration to give birth to civilizations.

All religions have laws. So what is a law?