



# SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

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[sarawakbahainewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sarawakbahainewsletter@gmail.com)

## From the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

Dearly loved friends,

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak would like to take this opportunity to wish all the Dayak friends, 'A belated Selamat Hari Gawai Dayak'. May God showers His blessing upon the wonderful friends who labour for the Faith in this stage of community building. We hope that all of us persevere in times of hardship and continue to serve to the best of our capacity. We all can serve.

The most widely talk about topic now is none other than the 11 page with 33 paragraphs Ridvan Message 2010 from the beloved Universal House of Justice. This message will be studied over and over again from time to time so that we can get an in-depth understanding of the plan of God that we have to undertake in the coming years. It is very important that the community get together and study the message.

The Spiritual Assembly had planned two major events from now until December 2010. The events are :

- 1) State Institutional Meeting in Sibu (10-12 Sept 2010)
- 2) School Teachers' Conference at Penview Inn (18-19 Dec 2010)

We announce the events early so that those involved or those who want to support these events can make early arrangement to avoid disappointment.

A learning mode has now become part of our culture. We do and learn. The more we do, the more we learn. Based on this culture, the treasury department has learnt that one of the effective ways to grow the fund for the friends is through the use of Auto Debit service, Internet Banking or through ATM transfer for your contribution to the fund. What had observed that when friends are unable to attend the Nineteen Day Feast, they fail to contribute to the fund. Another alternative method is to issue standing order with the bank but this will incur some bank charges.

**EDUCATION must be lifelong.** It should help people to develop the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary to earn a livelihood and to contribute confidently and constructively to shaping communities that reflect principles of justice, equity and unity. It should also help the individual develop a sense of place and community, grounded in the local, but embracing the whole world. Successful education will cultivate virtue as the foundation for personal and collective well-being, and will nurture in individuals a deep sense of service and an active commitment to the welfare of their families, their communities, their countries, indeed, all mankind. It will encourage self-reflection and thinking in terms of historical process, and it will promote inspirational learning through such means as music, the arts, poetry, meditation and interaction with the natural environment.

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Lastly, we would like to call upon the Bahai School Teachers to update us on your activities in the schools by sending in your report. We get excited whenever news of students participating in the children's Class or Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme reaches us here in Kuching from different parts of the state. The following are places where Bahai School Teachers have initiated the spiritual education for the children and JY :

In Kapit, under the guidance of Cikgu Jesion Meding, he had started with 2 groups of 35 children and 30 Junior Youth.

In Mukah, Cikgu Jeraman and his wife, Nazrin have 96 students from SK Bedengan and SK Penipah taking part in the children's class and JY programme.

In Sibu Jaya, Cikgu Kong Ing and Mr. Assan Kasau have 37 children attending children's classes of which majority are friends of the faith.

In SMK Long Lama, Cikgu Liendra Kandau is undertaking the training of human resource for Book 5 and Ruhi Book 1 for 19 students.

In SK Bakas, Bakong, Cikgu Nyawai and his wife, Cikgu Miro had 17 JY participating in the JYSEP.

In SMK Serian, Cikgu Floria also have 17 students participating in the JYSEP.

In Kapit cluster, Tatai Ruai, Tatai kenyalang and Kampung Sawang have an influx of 82 children attending children's class. The teachers in charge of these classes are Terence and Jessica.

Friends, we are looking forward to hear more reports from you and the excitement is culminating each time news of successful activities reaches us.

With loving greetings,

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahai's of Sarawak

## Irish President makes historic visit to Bahá'í Centre

DUBLIN, IRELAND, 28 May (BWNS) -The President of the Republic of Ireland, Mary McAleese, has praised the universality of the Baha'i teachings and the contribution its members make to the life of their nation.



*Irish President Mary McAleese addresses the gathering at the Dublin Bahá'í Centre*

"You are marked out as people with values that are worth observing, worth learning from, worth looking at, worth imitating and so never be in any doubt of the value you are every single day in this world," President McAleese told a gathering of some 60 Baha'is during her first ever visit to the National Baha'i Centre in the Irish capital. "Something you probably do not know, and I am sure it is true of many of you, is that in and through your lives, you are extraordinary ambassadors for your Faith," she said in impromptu remarks. President McAleese, first elected as Ireland's President in 1997, made her special visit to the Baha'i Centre on 30 April to mark the Festival of Ridvan, the anniversary of Baha'u'llah's declaration in 1863 that He is the most recent in a line of divine Messengers that includes Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Mohammed, Moses, Zoroaster, and others. The President also expressed concern about the persecution of Baha'is in other countries. She said it was both sad and remarkable that a Faith with such principles would attract, in any shape or form, violence from others.

"And on this evening I think we just keep in our hearts those who are paying such a dear price for

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their fidelity to that simple human and divine charism that reaches right into the heart of humanity," said President McAleese.

"How fortunate all Irish people are to live in a State where followers of all religions or none are free to practice," she added, according to the Irish Times, which covered her visit.

During the reception, President McAleese was presented with a specially bound edition of the Baha'i book, *The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah*, in both English and the Irish language.

Brendan McNamara, the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Republic of Ireland, described the President's visit as "a milestone - a very joyous occasion."

"She was very generous and spoke with everybody present," said Mr. McNamara, "particularly taking time to encourage the youth - in whatever they were doing - to make a contribution to the future of Ireland."

## **Simunjan launched 6th cycle of IPG**

The joy of teaching picked up momentum in the 6th cycle of intensive program of growth for Simunjan cluster which held its reflection meeting a week before the launching on 15th May 2010. Auxiliary Board Members Mr, Kalong and Mr. Bunsie guided the cluster in its reflection meeting which saw participants from several villages in the cluster.

The expansion phase saw eight groups of approximately 30 believers participating in sharing the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with a neighbouring village. From Kuching, two members of the Regional Council, Mr. Lagan and Thomas accompanied the teaching teams. Most of the teams reported favourable responses from those visited. The teaching trip generated confidence in those participating in a way they had not witnessed before. A sharing of experience session held at Kampung Batu Mumong that evening ended at 11.30pm.

*Report by Ms. Norini Sampai*

**A GRAND DINNER RECEPTION** was organized by The Kuching Buddhists Association in conjunction with the Wesak Day celebration on Monday 31st May 2010 at the Sarawak Club. It was also held to coincide with the visit of the Tibetan Buddhists and their spiritual leader from Tibet. Everyone present was entertained with a sumptuous dinner with pleasant music, songs and wonderful group dances. Representatives from the Interfaith Group representing the Bahá'ís, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were invited to grace the occasion. Dr. John Fozdar and I represented the Bahá'ís. Upon request by the event organizer, Dr. Fozdar obliged on behalf of the Interfaith Group, delivered a sweet and impressive impromptu speech at the function.

*Shared by Mr. Michael Kho*

"... we, the few who have caught the vision, should not waste our energies beating up and down the paths pursued by humanity, and which are not solving its ghastly present-day problems. We should concentrate on the Cause, because it is what is needed to cure the world..."

... if the Bahá'ís want to be really effective in teaching the Cause they need to be much better informed and able to discuss intelligently, intellectually, the present condition of the world and its problem...

We Bahá'ís should, in other words, arm our minds with knowledge in order to better demonstrate to, especially, the educated classes, the truths enshrine in our Faith."

*From a letter dated July 5, 1949, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believers*

## HUQÚQU' LLÁH-*The Right of God*

### **From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh**

Great God! In this glorious Dispensation the treasures laid up by kings and queens are not worthy of mention, nor will they be acceptable in the presence of God. However, a grain of mustard offered by His loved ones will be extolled in the exalted court of His holiness and invested with the ornament of His acceptance. Immeasurably exalted is His bounty, immeasurably glorified is His majesty. And yet, when an offering was adorned with the glory of His acceptance and reported by Jináb-i-Amín, twice that amount was ordered to be paid out to the poor and the needy. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded man of insight, and those that are truthful and trustworthy.

The benefits accruing from benevolent works shall fall to the individuals concerned. In such matters only a word would suffice. Should anyone offer Huqúq with utmost joy and radiance, manifesting a spirit of resignation and content, his offering shall be acceptable before God, otherwise He can dispense with all the peoples of the earth... Well is it with them that have fulfilled that which is prescribed in the Book of God. It is incumbent upon everyone to observe that which God hath purposed, for whatsoever hath been set forth in the Book by the Pen of Glory is an effective means for the purging, the purification of the souls of men and a source of prosperity and blessing. Happy are they that have observed His commandments.

Whenever they make reference to the Huqúq, let them confine themselves to a mere word uttered for the sake of God and this will suffice; coercion is unnecessary, inasmuch as God hath never wished that those engaged in His service should experience any hardship. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.... No goodly deed was or will ever be lost, for benevolent acts are treasures preserved by God for the benefit of those who act. Blessed the servant and the maidservant who have fulfilled their obligation in the path of God our Lord, the Lord of all worlds... The Right of God must be paid whenever possible and should be offered in a spirit of joy and radiance. Those that are unable to pay will be invested with the ornament of His forgiveness.