



World Methodist Council

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Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng,
Chairman,
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Warm Christian Greetings to you!

The World Methodist Council, which brings together Methodists, Wesleyan, Nazarene, United and Uniting Church traditions throughout the world would like to add its voice to the shock and consternation to the recent decision to bar the Arabic word for God to be used in a Christian Publication or in a worship service. The decision represents a rather troubling attempt by the courts in Malaysia to allow one religion to take ownership over a universal terminology. This verdict has the possibility to create unnecessary division between Christians and Muslims in Malaysia.

Throughout the world, the use of the word "God" in a believer's mother tongue is not something that authorities should be seen as politicising. This would create a troubling and dangerous precedent in our already fragmented world. The Malaysian courts need look no further than the neighbouring country of Indonesia to see that Christians and Muslims refer to God as "Allah" without incident or controversy.

As daughters and sons of Abraham we share the same God, and to claim exclusive ownership over the name to whom we pray would constitute a divisive action in a time when religions should be working together to unite believers..

I write to you as the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council, which represents over 80 million believers in 130 countries, and together our worldwide church family prays that all Malaysians may be able to practice their faith freely, that a spirit of unity, civility and peace will sweep over the people of Malaysia and that the forces that seek to divide will one day learn the power of reconciliation and hope.

May God bless Malaysia. Thank you.

Ivan M. Abrahams
General Secretary, World Methodist Council

cc. Rev Dr. Ong Hwai Teik, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia
Mr. Anthony Row, General Secretary, The Methodist Church in Malaysia
Rev Dr. Hermen Shastri, General Secretary, Council of Churches of Malaysia.