

**Malay Transcript:**

Suasana agama di Malaysia tidak selalunya begitu damai dan saya rasa potensi kebangkitan ketegangan antara pihak agama yang berlainan merupakan sebuah cabaran yang pasti dihadapi setiap hari oleh penduduk negara ini. Ah.. Saya ingat beberapa tahun dahulu wujudnya sebuah pergaduhan antara kalangan Kristian dan kalangan Muslim tentang kemusnahan sebuah gereja Kristian di sebuah kampung orang asli. Pihak kerajaan yang merupakan majoriti Muslim berkata bahawa mereka telah mengambil langkah yang um.. dikatakan begitu drastik kerana mereka takut orang asli kampung ini akan dipengaruhi dan akan memeluk agama Kristian. Baru-baru ini juga um.. terdapat berita dan perdebatan yang hangat tentang sesebuah pertelingkahan antara pihak Islam dengan pihak Kristian mengenai isu penggunaan kata “Allah” dalam kitab Injil yang ditulis dalam bahasa Melayu untuk memudahkan pemahaman agama Kristian orang bumiputera Sarawak dan Sabah atau orang Dayak.

Namun orang Muslim berkata bahawa “Allah” merupakan sepatah kata yang eksklusif kepada agama mereka iaitu agama Islam dan mereka keras.. mereka berkeras hendak memaksa orang Kristian menukarkan perkataan “Allah” dalam kitab Injil kepada “Tuhan,” iaitu sebuah frasa yang lebih.. boleh dikatakan lebih sekular. Adakala mere..uh.. orang Muslim ini telah menggunakan taktik yang agresif seperti mengebom api beberapa gereja di Malaysia, tetapi orang Kristian.. golongan Kristian pula masih tetap ingin menggunakan perkataan “Allah.” Dan akhirnya mahkamah tinggi negara memutuskan bahawa menurut undang-undang sekular dan perlembagaan negara pihak Kristian mempunyai hak untuk guna perkataan “Allah” ini. Walaupun saya rasa pengeboman gereja merupakan aksi yang amat memalukan, saya masih menghargai sifat masyarakat Malaysia yang jarang.. yang boleh dikatakan jarang menoleh kepada cara-cara yang ganas seperti membunuh insan yang tidak bersalah dalam sesebuah pertelingkahan. Selepas saya melihat betapa teruknya kesan-kesan jihad di negara-negara Arab, saya berharap agar masyarakat Malaysia boleh terus menghadapi cabaran sesebuah negara yang berbilang kaum, agama, dan pendapat dengan tenang.. dengan tenang dan aman.

**English Translation:**

The religious scene in Malaysia is not always peaceful and I feel that the potential for the flaring up of tensions between various religious groups is a daily challenge faced by citizens. I remember a few years ago there was a fight between Christians and Muslims over the destruction of a Christian church in a rural village. The government, who is majority Muslim, stated that they had taken such drastic measures because they were wary of the local villagers being influenced by and converting to Christianity. Recently, there has been much news and debate regarding the conflict between Muslims and Christians over the use of the word “Allah” in the bibles written in Malay. The purpose of

these Malay-language bibles was to facilitate the needs of the largely Christian Dayak<sup>1</sup> population of Sarawak and Sabah.

However, the Muslims claim that the word “*Allah*” is a word which is exclusive to Islam and they are adamant that the Christians should change all references of “*Allah*” to “*Tuhan*,” which is a more universal term for God. There were times when the Muslims resorted to aggressive tactics like fire-bombing some churches in Malaysia. However, the Christians still insisted on using the word “*Allah*.” Finally, the Supreme Court ruled that according to the secular laws and constitution of the country, the Christians have a right to use the word “*Allah*.” Even though the fire-bombing incidences were very embarrassing acts, I still appreciate the fact that Malaysians are slow to react with violent measures that may result in the killing of many innocents. After seeing the consequences of  *Jihad*<sup>2</sup> in the Arab nations, I really hope that Malaysians will continue to face the challenges of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-opinionated country with calm and peace in mind.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Dayak” collectively refers to the indigenous people of Borneo. There are an estimated 200 different indigenous ethnic subgroups or tribes in Borneo.

<sup>2</sup> *Jihad* is an Islamic term for war waged in defense of the religion of Islam.