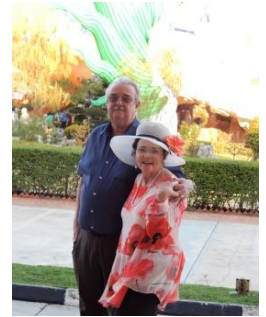


# The Seeker

*"Seeking the Souls of Men and Pointing Them to Christ"*



Dear brethren,

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord. We have just returned a few days ago from a 40 day mission trip to Malaysia. Malaysia is a country in Southeast Asia bordering Thailand and Singapore. It consists of 13 states and 3 federal territories and has a population of about 35 million. It is a Muslim country practicing a Shafi'i version of Sunni theology. About 61 % of its people practice Islam, 19% Buddhism, 9% Christianity, 6% Hinduism, 1% Confucianism, 0.7% Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions about 0.7% declare no religion and 1% practice other religions.

There are many places in the world where things are not as their governments may say. In Malaysia their constitution grants freedom of religion and makes Malaysia an official "secular state." (A secular state is a nation where the state is kept separate from religion. It does not discriminate or favor persons based on their religious beliefs.) But in reality a Malay must be a Muslim. Malays cannot convert to other religions. Islamic religious practices are determined by official Sharia law, and Muslims can be fined for not fasting or refusing to pray. Attempts by Muslims to convert to other religions are punished by the government ranging from fines to imprisonment. Children born to Muslim parents are considered to be Muslim. A non-Muslim who



Carolyn Gilbert helped members at Skudia paint a wall mural with Bible scenes



Ron Ying and Ronald Gilbert presenting certificates to BCC students at Subang Jaya

wished to marry a Muslim must first convert to Islam. Authorities only allow Sunni Islam to be practiced. Those who stray from those beliefs can be arrested and taken to be rehabilitated by Islamic authorities. It is illegal to disseminate any non-Islamic religious materials to Muslims. The PAS party in Malaysia wishes that the death penalty be enacted for Muslims who attempt to convert, as a part of their ultimate desire to turn Malaysia into an Islamic State.

In so many places in the world our brethren are struggling in areas where it is hard to practice New Testament Christianity. In Malaysia there are several mainstream denominations and about 600 New Testament Christians. We need to keep our brethren in our prayers.

We had a good trip working with 5 different congregations. Our goal is to encourage and strengthen the brethren there. These brethren are a great source of encouragement to us also we appreciate them so much and the good work they are doing under difficult circumstances. While we were there 3 precious souls they had been studying with were baptized into Christ. A few years back some of you may remember a report in our newsletter from a Malaysia trip about a young lady about age 19 who was in an auto accident and was paralyzed. She was a Buddhist living with her mother and grandmother. Many of the brethren there studied with this young lady and about 3 years ago while we were there she was baptized into Christ. The brethren there continued to visit and study with her mother and while we were there this year the mother who also was a Buddhist was baptized into Christ. Our brethren in Malaysia are very evangelistic. They make mission trips to many other places in the world and have helped establish other congregations in different areas. Several of these congregations have helped our work by giving funds to purchase Bibles in Africa. We appreciate their concern for the lost and their efforts to help with these Bibles.



Former Buddhists who are now Christians



Ong Eng Boon, new ICOTB graduate



Church camp at Melaka

When we returned from Malaysia we learned that Madalisto Banda, one of our teachers at the preacher school in Malawi, had been studying the Bible with a 92 year old woman. He recently baptized her and her 38 year old grandson. How many of us would consider a 92 year old woman as a good prospect to study with? This shows the great power and appeal of the Gospel of Christ!

A Publication of *International Bible Teaching Ministries*  
Sponsored by *Rock Valley church of Christ*

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May 2019

Volume 8, No. 4

International Bible Teaching Ministries  
C/o Rock Valley Church of Christ  
PO Box 49494  
Cookeville, TN 38506-0494

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A few weeks ago back in Malawi they had a youth rally with one of the instructors at the preacher school and one of our graduates speaking. They had 1,125 present and 15 baptized into Christ! What wonderful news!

We are hearing from our preacher schools in Africa that the large shipments of books, Bibles, tracts and BCC booklets are arriving at the different locations where we sent them. We hope all of this material will arrive and be in place by August when we arrive in Africa. One of the projects we do each year is purchasing Bibles in different local African languages. We have started sending funds to Africa for the purchase of these Bibles. Sometimes it takes a few weeks or even months to find these Bibles.

The 2 new preacher school projects are coming together and looking good. The building in Solwezi, Zambia will be finished soon. The new building in Malawi is finished. The students are at the end of the school quarter and home for a few days on break. When they return they will move into the new school dorm. This project is a 2 phase building project and we have completed phase one which was to purchase the land, drill a well, put up a security fence around the property, build a storage building and build a building that would house the student dorm and bathrooms. Now we are ready to start phase 2 of this building project. We need to build a building that has a classroom, library, kitchen and cafeteria and a school office. We are looking for churches and individuals who are willing to help us build this much needed preacher school building to help train faithful Gospel preachers in Malawi and surrounding nations. The school in Malawi currently has 21 full time preacher students.

Our brethren in Malawi are doing a great job in training faithful Gospel preachers. The Jackson Heights church of Christ is the sponsoring congregation for the preacher school in Malawi, Africa. If you can help with phase 2 of this building project please send your funds to Jackson Heights church of Christ, Attn: Elders, 1031 Hermitage Drive, Florence, AL 35630 and mark for "preacher school Malawi." We hope to be able to build this new building for around \$70,000.00, at this point we have raised \$25,000.00 of the needed funds. Please consider helping us build this much needed preacher training school building.

We are excited about the good works being done by IBTM around the world. Our thanks to our supporters. Please continue to help us as you can to take the precious and powerful Gospel of Christ "*into all the world.*"

In Christ,  
**Ronald D. Gilbert,**  
Director of IBTM

*Things You Helped to Accomplish*

Baptisms	12,803
Restorations	9,659
Congregations Established	298
Schools of Preaching Begun	7
BCC Students	45,116
ICOTB Students	485
Preachers Graduated	475

*Office News*

I love Spring! It always brings me joy seeing everything growing and blossoming. As usual the spring flowers inspired me so I brought home a carload. *Some* of them are even still alive.

I am so glad that my computer skills outrank my gardening know-how.

Spring is a very busy time for me since brother Gilbert usually travels to Malaysia. This campaign he was gone 6 weeks. During his absences I assist with his ICOTB students, sending their assignments, tests, etc. and helping with technical problems. This trip I also spent considerable time surfing the web, searching for additional resources we can use both with the ICOTB students and with a new study program brother Gilbert requested I put together. Hopefully, I will be sharing more information about that soon as well as several other projects that are cluttering my To Do list.

But naturally my primary duty is still working with the Bible Correspondence Course program, so I was very pleased to learn that 31 of our BCC students were recently baptized including 2 online students in Tanzania. Sending that news to a teacher makes for a great Spring day!

Linda Hill