

Christianity is not about rules, but about a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. As we come to know more about Jesus and follow his example and his teachings, our lives are changed - and other people begin to notice!

True story!

There was a 17-yr-old boy that lived in Malaysia. He had accepted Christ but his parents still believed in worshipping monkeys! The dad was very mad at his son for being a Christian and so he threw him out of the house. The son had no place to go that night, so he decided he would sleep on the front steps of the house. In that culture, shoes are placed in a small cupboard on the front porch. According to his father's command, he polished every pair. The next night, he polished his father's car. He obeyed his angry father in every way he could. The next week, the father was touched at how faithful the boy worked and so he accepted his son, and also finally came to accept Jesus Christ also.



This story was sent to us specially by one of our readers - 10 yr-old Jonathan, from New York State. It was told to him by a Christian who is in prison in Egypt, to whom Jonathan and some of his family write regularly. It is fun to write to Christians who live in other countries, and hear about what life is like there. If you would like to write to Jonathan, or to another child who receives this PAL Page let us know. There are children who read it living in England and parts of Africa, as well as children around the USA. Maybe you would like to write to one of the Christians imprisoned in Egypt, let us know and we'll tell you how you can do that.

Here are the answers to the puzzle - how many did you get right? (Taoism 3; Christianity 4; Hinduism 7; Islam 6; Buddhism 5; Confucianism 2; Sikhism 1)

'Til next time,

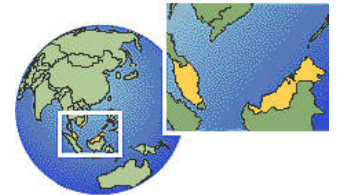
love, Shirley.

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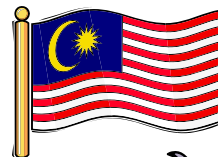
Imagine a country that is split in two by hundreds of miles of sea!

If you look on a map of South East Asia you'll see there are very many strangely shaped islands. Our country this month is formed by the bottom part of the peninsula that points south from Thailand and the northwestern part of the large island, hundreds of miles to the east, called Borneo. Can you find it? It's called MALAYSIA!



The two halves, called MALAYA and SARAWAK, were united to form the country in 1963. It has a total of about 128,000 square miles, and so it is slightly bigger than the state of New Mexico. It has a population of about 23 million people.

The tallest mountain in Malaysia is Mt Kinabalu (13,455ft) and the country consists mostly of tropical forests with areas of farm land and plantations producing tea, rubber, rice and cocoa.



The flag of Malaysia is rather like the "Stars and Stripes!" It has red and white stripes, but has one star and one crescent in yellow on a dark blue background.

Malaysia was a British colony for many years and it has continued to develop and grow, especially economically, with its people mostly belonging to the middle-class. In fact only about 8% of its inhabitants are considered poor. In the past 10-20 years, its cities have become very modern, with lots of factories and industries, especially producing electronics. Today, one person out of every two has a cell phone!



The capital of Malaysia is called Kuala Lumpur, and in 1996 building was completed on the twin towers of the Petronas Building. They are each 1,483 ft high and at the time, were the world's tallest buildings. They are owned by the national oil company of Malaysia and are a symbol of the country's booming economy. In fact a whole new capital is being built about 25 miles south of Kuala Lumpur - it is called Putrajaya, and is ultramodern in its design. At present it is used as the administrative center.



The Malaysians are hard workers and there are few people who are unemployed. Many work in modern industrial parks where you can see well-known names such as Sony, Hitachi, Intel and Philips. Most families work hard, but also enjoy the many benefits of modern life. Children work hard at school and often are involved in sports or martial arts.



But not all the inhabitants of Malaysia live in cities - there are many people in rural areas that still live as their ancestors lived. In the tropical jungle areas, where tigers, leopards, elephants and orangutans roam freely, and where strange and beautiful tropical plants can be found (like luminous mushrooms!), live many Dayak tribes. These native people still live in longhouses, hunt animals with blowpipes and believe that evil spirits inhabit the rocks and trees. They are very superstitious and not too many years ago, some were still known to be headhunters!



There are six major languages spoken in Malaysia, including Chinese and English, but also several others. Over half the people are native Malays, and about 25% are Chinese, but there are also many from other South Asian countries, Europeans and Arabs. The population is therefore very mixed, although two-thirds are Muslims, and Islam is the national religion. There is "freedom of worship" in Malaysia, yet there are laws to stop other religions from trying to influence Muslims.

RELIGIOUS SYMBOL PUZZLE

All these religions are practiced in Malaysia - see if you can match each symbol with its religion.

TAOISM
CHRISTIANITY
HINDUISM
ISLAM
BUDDHISM
CONFUCIANISM
SIKHISM



With so many different religions, and with so much focus on material things in life, it's not surprising that many Malaysians do not know or care about Jesus! Other religions have strict laws about how to please the gods, and many young people only follow their religion as a tradition (this is called being a "nominal" believer - or a believer in name only). Many young people feel they can make a good life for themselves without God's help.



When we think of "lost" people who do not know Jesus, we often think of native people who follow witchcraft, or people who worship idols. But there are also millions of modern, intelligent people who work hard, and try to live "good lives" - yet they are just as "lost" and sure to go to Hell, if they have not accepted Jesus Christ and made him Lord of their lives!



Read Romans 3:10
and 10:9,10