

**PEACEBUILDING IN DAILY LIFE:
A THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN
MALAYSIA**

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**Thesis With The Title: PEACEBUILDING
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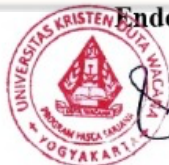
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my investigation and exploration, except for those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at UKDW or other institutions.

Lim Wan Yin

Signature: 

Date: 7th July 2022



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ABSTRACT

A strong sense of national identity and a peaceful social climate have been top priorities for the government and people of Malaysia ever since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1957. Three primary ethnic groups (Malaysians, Chinese, and Indians) live side by side in Malaysia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious culture, although there have always been sharp differences among these people. Unification was never attempted, not even under colonial administration. When Malaysia was founded, it was determined that the 'Malays' had a unique status and that the legitimate interests of other groups should be taken into consideration when setting quotas for admittance into the civil service, public scholarships, and public education.

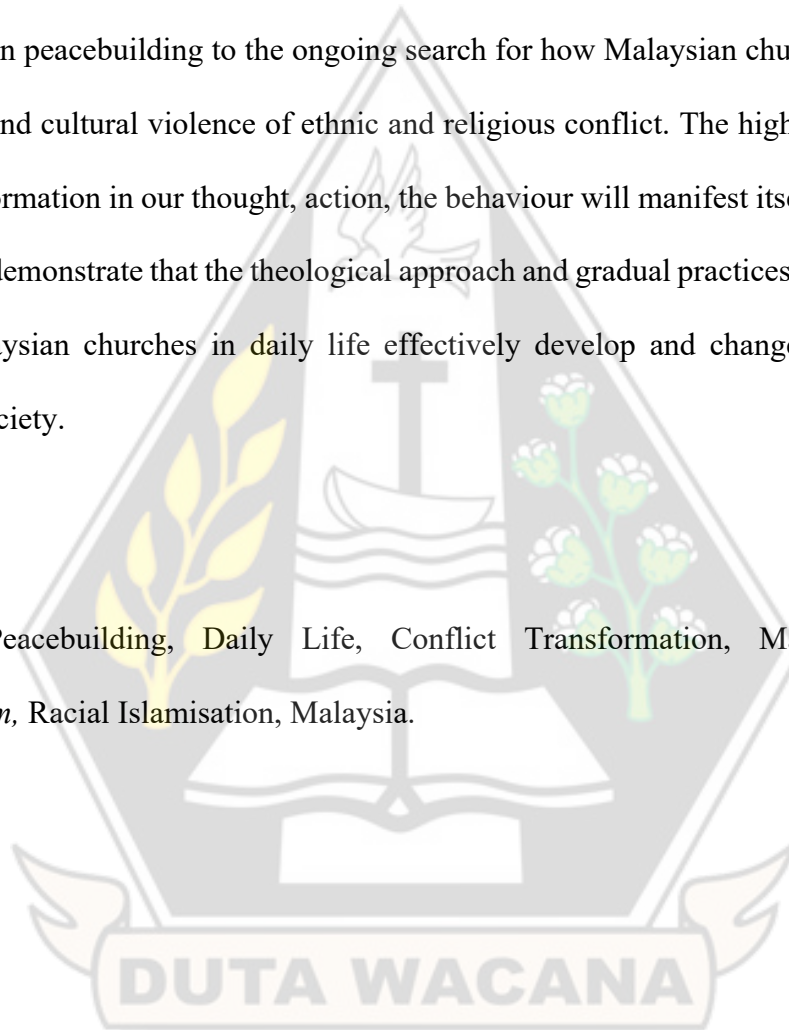
After the political crisis and ethnic riots on 13 May 1969, the state proceeded to institutionalise the Malay special position in the Economic aspect. The New Economic Policy (NEP) was created to alleviate the poverty of Malays and share the wealth more fairly. As a result, tensions between various races became increasingly tense. In addition, Article 160 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia defines a "Malay" as someone who practises Islam, speaks the Malay language regularly, and follows traditional Malay customs. As a result, Malaysia's ethnic-religious connection has always been a difficult one.

However, scholarly attention in Malaysia from History, Economy, Psychology, Anthropology, Education, Sociology, etc., has shown the political, religious, and cultural predominance of the Malay people has exacerbated societal divisions and posed a threat to the country's peace, unity, and progress. In the end, it had resulted in enormous setbacks for the nation-building process, resulting in anxiety and distrust, turmoil, mass brain drain, and devastation of lives and property. Likewise, from the perspective of Peace and Conflict Studies, this is not only

structural and cultural violence in a latent pursuit but also a potential flashpoint for a violent outburst that causes damage.

Therefore, I will discuss these and ultimately argue that a process-structure type of theological approach to conflict transformation is needed for Malaysian churches to transform conflict in day-to-day life. Hence, this thesis is to contribute theological thinking, practical reflections, and practices on peacebuilding to the ongoing search for how Malaysian churches can change the structural and cultural violence of ethnic and religious conflict. The highest excellence of conflict transformation in our thought, action, the behaviour will manifest itself. Undoubtedly, the result will demonstrate that the theological approach and gradual practices of peacebuilding from the Malaysian churches in daily life effectively develop and change a peaceful and harmonious society.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Daily Life, Conflict Transformation, Malay hegemony, *Bumiputeralism*, Racial Islamisation, Malaysia.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Looking back in history will be a perfect way to start tracing how ethnic and religious conflict became entrenched in Malaysia. Malay is a nation with a wide range of ethnicities and religions. To sum up the history of Malaysia in one sentence, there would be “the coping and blending of various cultures”. This is because everything about Malaysia, from the geography, the climate, and the name, to the ethnicity and cultures, was under external influences. The famous late Malaysian historian Khoo Kay Kim once said, “*It’s not surprising that the search for historical materials in Malaysia must develop outward because Malaysia has its ‘foreign’ tradition- this is also the characteristic of her becoming Malaysia*”.¹ Geologists told us that the land of Malaya, including West and East Malaysia, was 70 million years ago. It was caused by the ‘Yanshanian Movement’ in China that was the beginning of her being affected by foreign influences.² Archaeologists told us that Malaya’s ethnicity and prehistoric culture were transplanted from the Asian continent.³ Meteorologists told us that the monsoon controls the climate of Malaya, and the monsoon results from the alternating divergence and convergence of the high and low-pressure centres in Australia and China, which affects her native products and people’s economic activities.⁴ It is noticeable that the most peculiar thing is that even the names ‘Malaya’ or ‘Malay’ were also foreign.”⁵

¹ Lew Bon Hoi 刘文辉, *Ma Lai Xi Ya Shi* [A History of Malaysia], Rev. ed. (Malaysia: The Malaya Press, 2018), 1-10.

² Lew Bon Hoi 刘文辉, *Ma Lai Xi Ya Shi* [A History of Malaysia], 1-10.

³ Lew Bon Hoi 刘文辉, *Ma Lai Xi Ya Shi* [A History of Malaysia], 1-10.

⁴ Lew Bon Hoi 刘文辉, *Ma Lai Xi Ya Shi* [A History of Malaysia], 1-10.

⁵ Lew Bon Hoi 刘文辉, *Ma Lai Xi Ya Shi* [A History of Malaysia], 1-10.

Likewise, the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia, Malays, Chinese and Indians, were all migrated into this land from outside, and none of these three ethnic groups was the original residents of this land. Similarly, in terms of religion, whether it is the Malay ethnic group that believes in Islam or the majority of other ethnic groups that believe in Christianity, even Buddhism and Hinduism are not the original religions of this land. This leads one to conclude that if people from various races and religions were to live in a multicultural society, only mutual respect and appreciation could result in a stable and harmonious society.

However, to endorse its divide-and-rule strategy in pre-independence Malaya, the British recruited Chinese and Indian labourers. As a consequence, residents were culturally, socially, and economically separated as a result. When the Chinese and Indians gained citizenship, the situation swiftly escalated since the Malays saw this as a challenge to their identity as an inland people. Because of this, experts think that ethnic preferences, which have a long-term impact on ethnic and religious strife, stem from this root and rationale.⁶

In addition, Islam has been declared as the federation's religion, assigned to the Malay ethnicity, and expanded to encompass involvement in public life. Also, to be a Malay is to adhere to Malay customs and speak the Malay language in accordance with Article 160 (2) of the Constitution.⁷ Also, the Muslims in Malaysia follow *the Shafi'i* version of *Sunni* theology and

⁶ M. Shamsul Haque, "The Role of the State in Managing Ethnic Tensions in Malaysia," *American Behavioral Scientist* 47, no.3, (November, 2003): 244, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764203256186>; Jaclyn Ling-Chien Neo, "Malay Nationalism, Islamic Supremacy and the Constitutional Bargain in the Multi-ethnic Composition of Malaysia," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 13, no.1 (2006): 97-98, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24675389>.

⁷ Federal Constitution (Malaysia) art 153(2), https://www.jac.gov.my/spk/images/stories/10_akta/perlembagaan_persekutuan/federal_constitution.pdf

jurisprudence while defining Malaysia as constitutionally a secular state. In short, religious nationalism is the term for this phenomenon.⁸

Nevertheless, one should not forget that the revival of Malay hegemony and consciousness has sparked Malay nationalism among Malaysian Malays, who have attempted to bring ethnic and religious issues to the forefront of public discourse. According to Hamayotsu, the United Malay National Organizations (UMNO) have been employing the exclusive *Bumiputeralism* of the “Muslim-Malay-centric” ideology during the term of Mahathir Mohamed’s administration in Malaysia.⁹ This agenda aim to ensure that Malay Muslims maintain their political and cultural dominance. Hence, in shaping Malaysian culture, Islam has been central to political policies. Malaysian political and cultural structures and traditions have been saturated with Islam and have acted as a foundation for them.

From these facts, one may conclude that the latent structural and cultural violence of Malaysia’s ethnic and religious conflict has formed in this way. It is hard to say how long Malay Muslims will continue to dominate the political landscape and Malaysian society and ultimately lead to the occurrence of direct violence. But, no doubt, how to transform this dispute is a matter for Malaysian churches to address. In the most recent national census, Malaysia’s population in 2020 is estimated at 32.7 million, and it was reported that statistically, the *Bumiputera* constitute 69.6%. *Bumiputera* means ‘sons of the soil’ and ‘son of the land;

⁸ Nilay Saiya, “Pluralism and Peace in South Asia,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 17, no.4 (2019): 12-22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2019.1681779>.

⁹ Kikue Hamayotsu, “Islam and Nation Building in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Indonesia in Comparative Perspective,” *Pacific Affairs* 75, 3 (2002): 353-375, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4127290>. Even though the leading faction, UMNO, later allied with the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) to form the Barisan Nasional (BN, National Front), Islamism has continued to dominate the party in order to preserve the status quo.

There are some non-Muslim aborigines on the Peninsula, as well as certain tribal people in the east, who are referred to as “Malays.”¹⁰ For non-*Bumiputera*, Chinese 22.6%, Indians 6.8% and the remaining others 1.0%.¹¹ In terms of religious distribution, according to the statistics of 2010, Muslims account for 61.3% of the world’s population; the Buddhists account for 19.8%, the Christians account for 9.2%, and the Hindus account for 6.3 percent.¹²

1.2 Research Problem

To this day, since colonial rule, ethnic groups in Malaysia have fought for their own interests and promoted their own identities. Thus, conflicts of interest and hegemony between the various races have been deeply rooted in the history and society of the founding of Malaysia. Additionally, because of the constitution’s inclusion of both race and religion in its characterization of the Malay people, Malaysian society has been riven by ethnic and religious strife. Sure enough, scholarly research, including History, Economy, Anthropology, Education, Sociology, etc., has established that racial discrimination and religious or cultural hegemony is essential to the peace, tranquillity and well-being of the nation and people. Not only that, Christian researchers in Malaysia are constantly researching and publishing the theological

¹⁰ “Being Mixed is No Privilege,” *Borneo Post Online*, 29 October 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20091101102147/http://www.theborneopost.com/?p=60757>. Abdul Razak Hussein was the first to coin the term “bumiputra ethnic community” in Malaysia, and it acknowledged the Malays’ “unique position” as defined in Malaysia’s Constitution, especially Article 153. The Constitution, on the other hand, does not use the word bumiputra; instead, it describes “Malay” and “indigenous peoples” (Article 160(2)), “natives” of Sarawak (161A(6)(a)), and “natives” of Sabah (161A(6)(b)). Different institutions, organisations, government departments and agencies have different definitions of bumiputra in public use.

¹¹ Department of Statistics Malaysia, *Current Population Estimates, Malaysia, 2020*, Malaysia: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 15 July, 2020, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=155&bul_id=OVByWjg5YkQ3MWFZR TN5bDJiaEVhZz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09. The Population and Housing Census is conducted once in every ten years, the last census was conducted in 2020.

¹² Department of Statistics Malaysia, *Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010*, Malaysia: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 07 May 2015, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthem&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09&bul_id=MDMxdHZjWTK1SjFzTzNkRXYzcVZjdz09

approaches to resolving ethnic and religious tensions. Hence, for the Churches in Malaysia, resolving ethnic and religious tensions is a major concern and necessity.

However, in Malaysia's highly dynamic culture, where human connection is swiftly and continually evolving—for example, in day-to-day public life—there is a general lack of study on how to best transform ethnic and religious conflict for Malaysian churches. Therefore, this research aims to present and analyse the ethnic and religious conflict in Malaysia and to adopt the government vision of “Satu-Malaysia” for the Malaysian churches as the horizon future of conflict transformation, and develop a theological change process of conflict transformation. Hence, Malaysian churches in such environments are ill-implemented regarding conflict transformation concepts, theological approaches and strategies.

1.3 Research Questions, Research Aim, Research Objectives,

The topic of this research is peacebuilding in daily life: a theological approach of conflict transformation in Malaysia. In this regard, the overarching goal of this research is to investigate the religious approach to handling conflict in Malaysia. As the outcome of the research, a new theological approach is developed which supports the Malaysian churches in transforming the racial and religious conflict in daily life. To accomplish the purpose of this research, the following research questions were outlined:

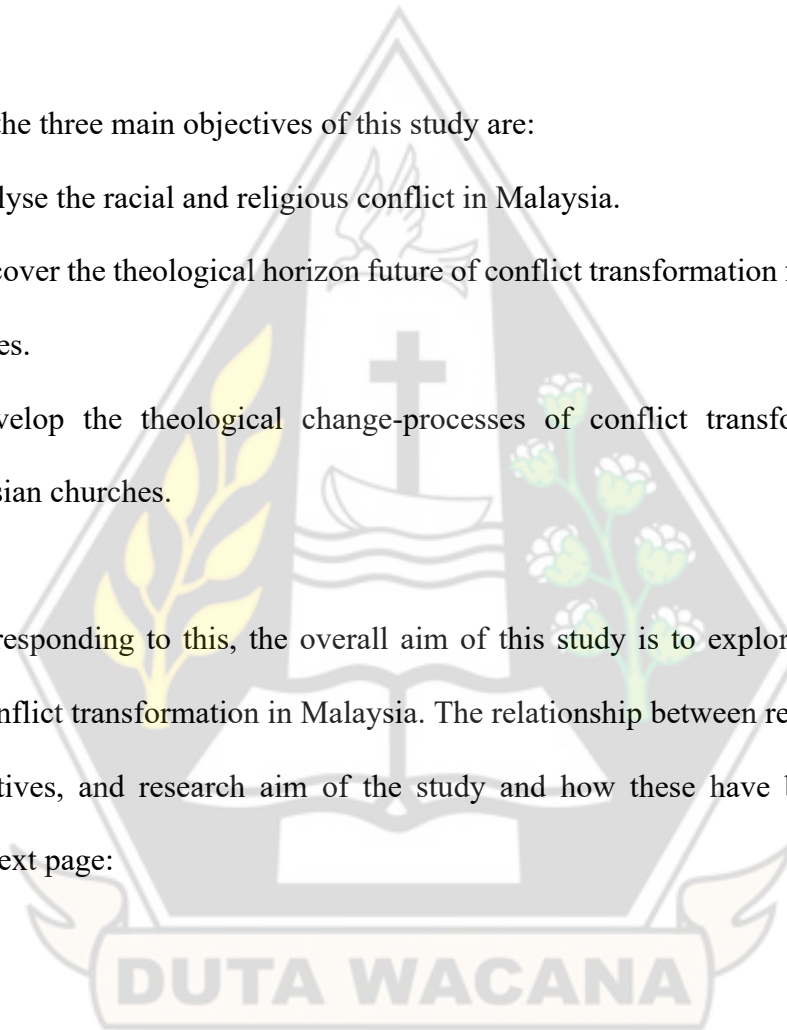
1. What kind of racial and religious conflict is in Malaysia?
2. What approach to peace can be taken by Malaysian churches regarding to this kind of conflict?
3. Why the government vision of “Satu Malaysia” can be adopt by the Malaysian churches in transforming conflict?

4. What is the theological meaning of “Satu Malaysia” for Malaysian churches in transforming conflict?
5. What is the theological meaning of “daily life” in the way of peacebuilding and transform conflict?
6. How this theological approach can be develop as change-processes for the Malaysian churches in transforming conflict?

In this regard, the three main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the racial and religious conflict in Malaysia.
2. To discover the theological horizon future of conflict transformation for the Malaysian churches.
3. To develop the theological change-processes of conflict transformation for the Malaysian churches.

Therefore, corresponding to this, the overall aim of this study is to explore the theological approach of conflict transformation in Malaysia. The relationship between research questions, research objectives, and research aim of the study and how these have been achieved is illustrated on next page:



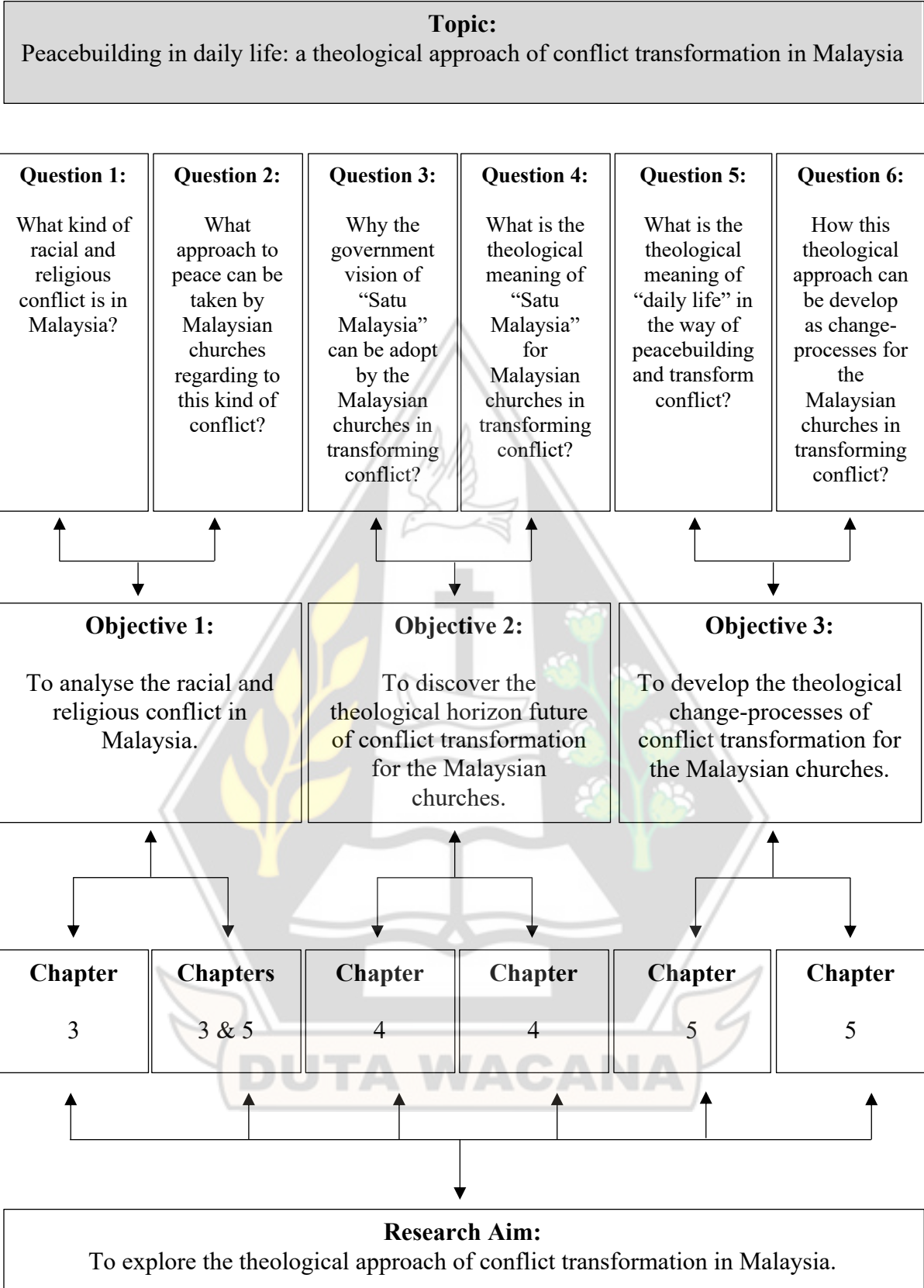


Figure 1. 1. Relationship Of Research Questions, Research Objectives And Research Aims

1.4 Scope and Limitations

To begin, the theological approach of Malaysian churches to changing ethnic and religious strife is the study's research area. Although some parts of the discussion will introduce and analyse the ethnic and religious conflict, this discussion must be done for the need to transform the conflict. The focus of the research is to explore the theological approach and the practical reflections for the Malaysian churches to practice in day-to-day public life to transform the ethnic and religious conflict.

Secondly, the conflict analysis developed by Johan Galtung, the originator of the field of peace and conflict studies, is used in this work. Using the conflict analysis will help us understand the latent structural and cultural violence of Malaysia's ethnic and religious conflict. In addition, this study makes use of John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework in terms of research methodology, which is a pretty authentic and constructive advancement. To transform from structural and cultural violence, the all-encompassing perspective or framework of conflict transformation eventually results in a major shift in our thinking. Hence, using the conflict transformation approach seemed to convey this meaning.

Thirdly, the thesis takes place in the country of Malaysia. East Malaysia and West Malaysia are the two regions of Malaysia. People from diverse ethnic or religious origins may benefit from the study's findings regardless of where they live, even if ethnic or religious disputes are more prevalent in West Malaysia. Fourthly, the study concentrated on Malaysian churches of all denominations. It should be emphasized that, according to Lederach, the episode and centre will be interpreted differently by different parties, and solutions to the problems will be presented, with changes to the patterns possible while they are being developed. As a result, this research is studied from the perspective of Malaysian churches, as well as this responsive

study and the theological constructive transformation change process. In addition, the aim is to break through the constraints of previous Christian public involvement, open up the space for public participation in daily life, and become a public activity in which Christians may engage. Nonetheless, the implications of the theological approaches to change conflict in daily public life are relevant for Christians in churches.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual concerns highlighted in this work are addressed in this section. It aims to explain the definitions of regularly used ideas to eliminate confusion and regulate how essential phrases are used, and this is crucial for understanding the study's key point.

1.5.1 John Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Approach

John Paul Lederach proposed and published the concept of conflict transformation in 2003, and his book is called *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* in The Little Books of Justice & Peacebuilding series.¹³ Conflict transformation is a broad term that refers to action and procedures that aim to change the many features and displays of conflict through time by addressing the root causes. Indeed, it is consequently vital to engage and change the underlying underpinnings of society that allow violent conflict to continue in order to transform conflict.

Constructive change is better expressed by the term “conflict transformation” than “conflict resolution” or “conflict management.” He says that transformation provides a clear and meaningful vision because it puts into focus the goal we are striving for, the establishment of

¹³ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, The Little Books of Justice & Peacebuilding (New York: Good Books, 2003), <https://professorbellreadings.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/the-little-books-of-justice-peacebuilding-john-lederach-the-little-book-of-conflict-transformation-good-books-2014-1.pdf>.

healthy relationships and communities both locally and internationally. Human relationships are full of conflict, and conflict itself is a source of growth and development.¹⁴ It should be noted that Lederach defined Conflict Transformation as: “Conflict transformation is to *envision* and *respond* to the *ebb* and *flow* of social conflict as *life-giving* opportunities for creating *constructive change* process that *reduces violence*, *increase justice* in *direct interaction* and *social structures*, and respond to *real-life problems* in *human relationships*.”¹⁵

When discussing resolution, it's vital to note that it depends on the content. Instead, Consideration for content is there throughout transformation, but the focus is on the context of connection styles. Conflict is a part of the web and system of relational patterns.¹⁶ In addition, to find the root of a dispute, it goes beyond a problem-solving approach that focuses on a single incident. It includes, but is not limited to, the components and procedures of the resolution-based language.¹⁷ In a relationship or system, a conflict episode is a visible representation of conflict that occurs over time. It aims to draw attention and resources to particular issues that need to be dealt with. It is common for conflict to arise from a web of interpersonal patterns that have been woven together over time. Conflict energy is generated when the *epicentre* releases it in the link. In other words, conflict and its epicentre are both addressed by change.¹⁸

¹⁴ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, chap. 1, pg. 2.

¹⁵ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, chap. 3, pg. 1.

¹⁶ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, chap. 5, pg. 2.

¹⁷ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, chap. 5, pg. 3.

¹⁸ John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, chap. 5, pg. 3.

1.5.2 Johan Galtung's Conflict, Violence, And Peace Triangles

Conflict theory is equally relevant to the study of both development and peace. Galtung, one of the most influential analytical peace study's authors, believes peaceful conflict resolution is the only path to long-term peace. Peace is also concerned with minimising violence and resolving problems in peaceful ways. In a nutshell, the thesis of this research is that peacebuilding in daily life is an effective application of Peace Theory for conflict transformation in Malaysia. As a response, Peace Theory's theoretical framework must be outlined. The section below attempts to describe the concept of Galtung's triangles as a direction, approach, and framework.

The First Conflict Triangle A conflict analysis, according to Galtung, should include both apparent and unseen factors. On top of the ABC-Triangle of Conflict, he depicts behaviours that can be seen, while the underlying attitudes and contradictions that make up the ABCs may be seen at the bottom. B (behaviour) (words, acts, insults, etc.), A (attitude) (felt, irrational beliefs, etc.), and C, (context) are all shown in a triangle (on the sides).

Second Triangle of Violence. When racism and injustice are expressed via physical violence, it is a manifestation of both cultural and institutional oppression, according to Galtung. Those three forms of violence feed and reinforce one another, according to Galtung. While acts of physical violence are easy to see, institutional and cultural violence can go undetected.

Third, Triangle of Peace. According to Galtung, the three stages of intervention are peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, and they all deal with various aspects of the conflict triangle. First, peacekeepers must maintain control over the actors to ensure that they do not injure goods, other people, or themselves (B-oriented). Second, peacemaking involves

forming a few formations with the actors and changing the actors' attitudes and prejudices (A-oriented). Third, peacebuilding addresses the underlying disagreement that has led to the conflict's escalation (C-oriented). Building structural and cultural peace, according to Galtung, can be connected to peacebuilding efforts. It is necessary to perceive the non-articulated structural conflicts that exist throughout society, not necessarily to resolve them all, but to recognise them as a critical first step toward positive change.¹⁹

As a part of Malaysian churches and a peace studies student, it is interested in understanding more about the causes of religious and ethnic conflict in Malaysia and how to resolve it. The goal is to figure out what kind of theological perspective and peace effort may help change the situation. On the basis of the appropriate research, it has been found that scholarly attention in Malaysia from History, Economy, Psychology, Anthropology, Education and Sociology, etc., has shown the Malay political, religious or cultural hegemony not only has caused social polarisation and also become a risk to national unity, peace, stability and development. Their studies will also be illustrated in the coming analysis in chapter three. This study, therefore, used conflict analysis to identify the "Malay hegemony" as the epicentre of the conflict and how it manifests itself as a latent structural and cultural violence of Malaysia's ethnic and religious conflict. According to Peace and Conflict Studies, this is not just a source of latent structural and cultural violence, but also an opportunity for an outbreak of violence that might do harm.

Furthermore, research on conflict resolution approaches in Malaysian churches has revealed that they are controversial and difficult for all members to adopt in everyday life. As a result,

¹⁹ Johan Galtung, *Peace By Peaceful Means: Peace And Conflict, Development And Civilization* (Oslo: International Peace Institute, 1996), 271.

a process-structure theological approach to conflict transformation is appropriate and necessary for churches to transform conflict in daily life. Not only that, as part of the conflict transformation, the government's goal of "Satu Malaysia" is appropriate and acceptable for acceptance as a vision for Malaysia's ethnic integration.

To sum up, the aim of this thesis is to contribute theological thinking, reflective action and practises on peacebuilding to the ongoing search for how Malaysian churches can change the structural and cultural violence of ethnic and religious conflict so that we can achieve the highest level of conflict transformation in our thought, action, and behaviour.

1.6 Research Methodology

The transformation of ethnic and religious conflict has largely been overlooked in daily public life for the people of Malaysia who have the potential to change, and the effect of racial and religious hegemony is favoured. In addition, the conflict handling approach often excludes the practicableness of the general public, dismissing the greater population of participants in the conflict who are experiencing its effects first-hand. To address this gap, the Conflict Analysis Theory and Conflict Transformation approach will be adopted, to analyse how each Malaysian can resolve and transform the ethnic and religious conflict in daily public life.

It is because of its epistemological and ontological foundations that qualitative research methodologies are used. According to Sarantakos, the qualitative approach is effective when the study's goal is to "capture the meaning and regularities of social action".²⁰ The qualitative research methodology was the ideal option for this research project because it makes it possible for the researcher to gather and display data from the subjective realities of ethnic and religious

²⁰ Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 134.

conflict and the questions they attach to these realities. Moreover, qualitative research allows the researcher to look into various topics in ways that make sense to the people engaging with them. A significant amount of literature was analysed as part of the research methodologies, including books, journals, government documents, media stories, internet sources, dissertations, and theses.

Also, to gain a better insight into the possibilities for analysis of the latently structural and cultural violence, public and private documents such as newspapers, reports or annual reports, research papers, dissertations and theses were culled from the existing literature in Malaysian society. Theoretical study or academic documents from or for Malaysia was regarded as existing literature in Malaysian society. These works were used to select documents that belonged to the target of ethnic and religious conflict. For example, newspaper articles such as *Utusan Malaysia*, *TheStar*, *Malaysia Today*, *MalaysiaKini*, etc. Annual report Malaysia Racial Discrimination Report from 2015 to 2020, Report of the Federation of Malaya, Laws of Malaysia Federal Constitution and so on. By and large, Malaysia's ethnic and religious issues can be studied and measured through these documents.

In addition, the ethnic and religious conflict in Malaysia is especially multifaceted since it is impacted by historical, political, social, and economic aspects. Moreover, as the main goal of this research is to promote peace via the transformation of conflicts, two peace techniques will be used for its analytical work. First, the qualitative conflict analysis approach was utilised to investigate the socio-scientific aspects of ethnic and religious conflict in Malaysia and conflict transformation potential. Second, conflict transformation was done using a peace technique that included comparative and contextual information. This analytical strategy established a connection between the findings that were normative and practical. Also, this study's goal is

to look into the matter of the transformation in Malaysia's ethnic and religious conflict by using various primary and secondary resources to identify and explain these sorts of issues.

Essentially speaking, the goal of this thesis is to highlight the places where this ethnic and religious wisdom converges as a strategy for pursuing peace and resolving conflict. People from different ethnic and religious backgrounds can learn from one another and become aware that many of the specifics of their traditions are frequently shared with the conceptions of other traditions when they think and converse together while taking similarities and differences into account. As Malaysians seek for national unity and peaceful cohabitation with people from different ethnic and religious origins, comparative peacebuilding plays an essential role. With this methodological approach, it is very convinced that the possible ways for the people to practice in day-to-day public life to transform the ethnic and religious conflict are achievable.

1.7 Organization of Thesis

The study's setting was established in the first chapter. An argument for the benefit of doing this kind of study has been made. Additionally, the study's flaws have been addressed. In chapter two, I perform a thematic literature study to obtain insight into the history of Malaysian reactions and resolution approaches from several academic disciplines, including history, sociology, education, economics, and others. Furthermore, I perform a chronological literature study to get insight into Malaysian theological methods of dealing with tensions. This framework permits us to appreciate the grounds now captured in this specific area of investigation till we propose a new approach to conflict transformation.

By first presenting the situation, chapter three will enter the framework of Conflict Transformation established by John Paul Lederach. The patterns of how things used to provide

a backdrop against which the issues in controversy might be seen. As a result, in this chapter, I describe and analyse the current condition of ethnic and religious conflict in Malaysia separately from Article 153, *Bumiputeralism*, New Economy Policy, and Racial Islamisation, using John Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation paradigm. They have a complicated connection, but Malay hegemony is one thing they all have in common. This vision is certainly to build an unequal ethnic connection, to degrade the non-Malay ethnic group as an everlasting "outsider" or second-class citizen, which is poisonous to ethnic group separation. It is generally recognised that political concerns in Malaysia cannot be separated from "ethnic" and "religious" issues and that they are inexorably intertwined because the Malaysian Constitution requires Malays to be Muslims. Besides that, Johan Galtung's conflict analysis is adopted in this chapter, which assists in comprehending the underlying structural and cultural violence of Malaysia's ethnic and religious conflict. Galtung demonstrates the need to construct a typology of violence, suggesting that such a paradigm should not only give rules for describing various types of violence but also ideas about how they are related. In reality, a better conceptual understanding of violence will result in a more precise definition of peace.

Chapter four will investigate the future horizon and the goals before establishing the change system in chapter five. To have an image of Malaysia's ethnic integration, the government's vision of "Satu Malaysia" is sufficient and acceptable for adoption. Even though this vision includes some economic planning that will affect non-Malays, the spirit of "Satu Malaysia" can still be moved towards by the people, as this idea is primarily concerned with integrating Malaysia's many ethnic groups. The motto has had a significant influence on the people. Hence, this chapter will analyse and evaluate the "Satu Malaysia" vision, as well as go through theological perspectives on the meaning of "Ecumenism" to be used by Malaysian churches in achieving the "Satu Malaysia" future horizon.

John Paul Lederach's conceptual framework for the development of change processes of conflict transformation will be adopted and explained in chapter five. This chapter develops theological change processes. The notion of "daily life" is the theological approach for the churches to practice. In addition, this theological change process focuses on the four aspects suggested by Lederach. First, individuals' transformation is the first step. It is to reduce the negative consequences of social conflict in daily life and to optimise the possibility for personal growth and well-being on physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. Second, relational change in the manner in which individuals interact with one another. Its purpose is to improve interpersonal relationships by bringing to light and resolving emotional issues and dependencies. Third structural change. Church as a unit to understand and address the fundamental reasons and societal conditions that lead to violent and other destructive conflict manifestations. Promote peaceful methods that limit adversarial confrontation and, as a result, minimise and eventually reduce violence, stimulate the creation of institutions to satisfy fundamental human needs, and increase people's involvement in choices that impact their lives. Four, cultural change. Violent conflict manifestations in the church may be traced back to a lack of understanding of cultural inclinations by the church's leadership, as well as a lack of resources to address and resolve conflict in the church's unique cultural context. Overall, this chapter demonstrates that everything is part of a continuous cycle and that making a change that leads to new relationships and systems will influence what we are doing with our change processes, which will then affect both the future horizon and the current situation.

In chapter six, I summarise the research findings, identify areas for further study and discuss possibilities for improving existing services.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, Malaysian churches should be able to perceive throughout the text in this study is attempting to address the issue of ethnic and religious in Malaysia from peace and theological approach. To recapture, we now can answer the research questions that raised in chapter one:

(1) What kind of racial and religious conflict is in Malaysia? The racial and religious conflict in Malaysia can be discovered as attitude (A) and contraction (C) and identified as structural and cultural violence, also, the epicentre of the ethnic and religious conflict in Malaysia is *Bumiputeralism*, also known as Malay Hegemony, and racial Islamization.

(2) What approach to peace can be taken by Malaysian churches regarding to this kind of conflict? Peacebuilding is the approach that the Malaysian churches can apply as it is suitable in long-term peace and it is a multi-dimensional approach for transforming conflict, it implying that many people are engaged at once in multiple sectors, at various levels, on various time frames, and in various layers.

(3) Why the government vision of “Satu Malaysia” can be adopt by the Malaysian churches in transforming conflict? In any event, the government’s vision of “Satu Malaysia” can be said to be embodied in “unity”, “oneness”, it is suitable and appropriate for adoption to have an imagination on Malaysia’s ethnic integration. This vision are well known by all of the ethnic groups in Malaysia and it is also a common value between each other. In addition, toward “Satu Malaysia” without acknowledge other ethnic groups, especially the Malay people and Muslims, we would not be able to accomplish the ideal of “Satu Malaysia”.

(4) What is the theological meaning of “Satu Malaysia” for Malaysian churches in transforming conflict? The theological idea of ecumenism is pressed upon Malaysian churches as they react to the development of “Satu Malaysia” in this country. As the churches of Malaysia strive towards this goal, it entails the testimony of communion, living together, eschatology, and sustaining together. Theological ecumenism undoubtedly tests the church’s ability to accurately interpret God’s desire for the oneness of creation.

(5) What is the theological meaning of “daily life” in the way of peacebuilding and transform conflict? Building peace in daily life is a peaceful approach and action that anyone could take, and it has the meaning of holistic conflict transformation for everyone. Therefore, for *Bumiputeralism*, misused of the Constitution of 153 and 160 and other powerful “strategies,” the adoption of the everyday life could be a new “tactic,” a new way out for the Churches of Malaysia.

(6) How this theological approach can be develop as change-processes for the Malaysian churches in transforming conflict? The notion of “daily life” is the theological approach for the churches to practice, this theological change processes focuses on the four aspects: personal change, relational change, structural change, and cultural change. In general, peacebuilding in daily life demonstrates that everything is part of a continuous cycle and that making a change that leads to new relationships and systems will influence what are doing with our change process, which will then affect both the future horizon and the current situation. Hence, putting themselves in the centre of the conflict careers map, Malaysian churches are motivated to develop conflict skills at all levels.

Indeed, in the past, many in power have been using the Constitution to enlarge *Bumiputeralism* and even the inseparable religious identity to racial Islamization, all of which excluded other ethnic groups. Unfair policies and visions were frequently excluded from ethnic groups outside the Malay community, with the result that the Malaysian community, society, and all tensions that could trigger unity were all exacerbated. The major goal of this essay is to propose a peaceful pathway of conflict transformation in this context of the ethnic divide and to encourage ethnic unity via engagement in daily life.

As a consequence, the essence of Peacebuilding in Daily Life is to establish a reality of the aware transformation of the Malaysian Churches, in addition to analysing Malaysia's inseparable ethnic and religious conflict through a short path of peace studies, but also to promote Malaysian churches' cognition and attitudes toward daily life through a clear spot of establishing peace and transforming conflict. As a faith community, we are committed to promoting peace via daily interactions based on peace and communion and creating a more diverse and united society by generating new knowledge of Malaysia's religious society, beginning with Christians.

To summarise, Johan Galtung's conflict theories have assisted us in analysing the current conflict and identifying what possibilities for peace occur to minimise the conflict. First, through the conflict triangle theory, the attitude that the parties develop humiliating preconceptions about one another is Malay hegemony and ethnic Islamisation. These stereotypes generate cognitive and behavioural components, and such inconsistencies may be seen in economic, educational, and social studies. Even though the 513 incident appears to have been sparked by a political plot rather than a simple racial clash, there are still signs of behaviour. This incident will long-term influence Malaysian society as a possible ethnic war brought on by political concerns. Not only that, *Bumiputeralism* and also racial Islamisation have pushed the majority of people to the margins. Such contradictions have already been

evident in economics, education, and social research. Hence, we believe that Malay hegemony and Islamisation in Malaysia are already at a latent stage. Second, preconceptions of Malay hegemony and racial Islamisation, on the other hand, may be identified as cultural violence through Galtung's violence triangle. The consumption of the Constitution and unjust policies such as the NEP might be regarded as structural violence. Likewise, the 513 event, which resulted in ethnic conflicts sparked by political considerations, was a direct act of violence, and many casualties prompted the government to declare martial law. Third, according to Galtung's peace triangle, peacebuilding actions are related to the construction of structural and cultural peace. The peacebuilding element is attempting to overcome C, and conflict intervention is a conscious attempt to implement them. Certainly, to construct cultural and structural peace, which is connected to peacebuilding, there are components to respond to Malay hegemony and Islamisation, as well as the society's contradiction in a conflict scenario.

Besides that, as the spirit of "Satu-Malaysia" has had a significant influence on the people, the vision of "Satu-Malaysia" might be the horizon of future conflict transformation. As the Malaysian churches respond to the establishment of "Satu Malaysia" in Malaysia, the theological notion of ecumenism helps that "Satu Malaysia" doesn't become a closed system is urged. As the churches of Malaysia work towards this aim, it involves the witness of communion, living together, eschatology, and sustenance together. There are others who believe that God's desire for oneness in creation undermines the church's understanding of ecumenism.

As a result, implementing peacebuilding as a strategy in Malaysia entails multidimensional transformation, suggesting that many individuals are involved simultaneously in many sectors, at various levels, over different periods, and in various layers. John Paul Lederach's conflict

transformation assists us in changing the situation. The process structure change patterns provide us with a clear picture of how we can change in the ongoing structural progress of the conflict. From a personal level, personal development necessitates letting go of profound personal wounds from the past that have resulted in hostility against diverse ethnic groups and religious organisations, as well as a misguided idea that seeking spiritual progress just for ourselves will meet God's vision. The church could not simply use the resources of others as variables of the personal level of transformation, ignoring the fact that personal spiritual growth in a multi-racial, multi-religious environment necessitates attention to the context of spiritual life growth in a multi-racial, multi-religious environment, as well as seeking the great significance to Malaysia's peacebuilding on a certain level in daily life.

From relational level, Malaysian churches might start by concentrating on changing family connections, which is not just about family harmony but also the harmonious link between society, all ethnic groups, and all religious people. Ecumenical theology and a long-term objective to work for the horizon future of "Satu Malaysia" as part of Malaysia's churches are connected with compassion, peace, and tolerance for the Malay population and other ethnicities in daily life.

From structural level, churches would be concentrating the efforts on develop a structural system to provide basic human needs to prevent violent daily interactions. It is critical to recognise religion's dual nature: religion as a cause of violence and separation, as well as religion as a force for peace and good human connections. Hence, the goal of this long-term peacebuilding programme is not only to perform interfaith work from a church viewpoint but also to create structural system that will guide people to live in peace in the setting.

From cultural transformation level, as part of the Malaysian Church, we must foster an innovative culture; we cannot continue to label the powerful as “victims” and “second-class citizens.” As a result, reconciliation is the internalisation of the new partner relationship established through conflict resolution. It logically concludes such assumptions, resolving even the potentially deadly mismatched interpretations that began the debate in the first place. As a result, reconciliation as a relationship must be altered to one that respects the other’s underlying, existential yearning for identity to develop the culture for positive transformation.

It would also be interesting to see that the conflict theory of Johan Galtung reveals two levels in assessing those conflicts that occur in a scenario: manifest and latent. However, unequal appearance of conflicts or tensions may be neglected while analysing the context. To demonstrate this idea, the conflict in Malaysia may be said to be manifest at times but latent at others, for example the 513 incident. The incident is not a direct violent according to Galtung’s theory but it surely a communal violence to the Malaysian, however, it can still be interpreted in the theory of Galtung. This is to point out that we believe structural and cultural violence can sometimes be seen as direct violence, and that peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding can all be used in tandem. There is something that cannot be clearly and fully analysed from the shape of a triangle. As a result, at some point, Johan Galtung’s conflict theories show us the possibility of conflict, but we must review and frequently engage in the analysis.

In the meanwhile, John Paul Lederach’s theory enabled us overcome certain issues in a constructive way, which will have a long-term positive impact on Malaysia’s position. However, the interplay and result of changes from several sectors coming together to alter is a perplexing consequence. One should note here that what happens when several sectors

collaborate efforts to alter conflicts while having different perspectives about the conflict's epicentre? Due to the absence of information on how many sectors utilized conflict transformation as a tool collectively, Lederach's proposed method to constructive change may not be entirely constructive and broad enough. Nevertheless, the examination of the method used by Malaysian churches may still be understood using Lederach's theory. The Malaysian churches have unquestionably seen the epicentre and episodes in this research, and the theological approach has unquestionably taken their capacity into consideration. Lederach's theory predicts that there will ultimately be a constructive transformation, but we may have reached a point when diverse parties might discover it challenging to capture the constructive development in this country.

However, one can agree up to a certain point with, conflict theories and peacebuilding attempts, in particular, offer a new perspective on peace and conflict, as well as peacebuilding and conflict transformation approaches that seek to transform conflicts rather than eliminate violence. Peacebuilding aims to promote a strategy that emphasises the need to rebuild social relations to achieve long-term peace.

It should be noted that considering conflict is a multidisciplinary subject; all hands must be on board in the effort for peace. A few recommendations for the Malaysia churches to change are provided below in order to pursue conflict transformation:

- I. **Contextualises Peacebuilding in Daily Life:** The Malaysian churches, in particular, may offer a series of training in peacebuilding in daily life that is more in line with local context (rural and urban) and respective areas of expertise. This is to assist church members in more closely implementing the daily work of peace in their

circumstances. Not only that, but the church may also offer a peace studies education series to raise the church's understanding of peacebuilding and implement it in daily life programming for members in the workplace and other situations.

- II. **Reporting on the Change-Processes:** While peace and conflict transformation is not a static "end-state" but rather a constantly dynamic and developing relational quality, they can be measured and achieved. For this, Malaysian churches may develop a reporting system for how far they have improved their ability and attitude toward the issue of hegemony. Not only that, the conflict, violence, and peace triangle may also be evaluated according to the change and progress. Looking back in time and counting, the progression of change is in line with the long-term peace endeavour. From this point of view, Malaysian churches will not only contextualise peacebuilding in daily life but also be vividly evident.
- III. **Bridging the Gap:** As a testimony to the faith community, it is indispensable for outsiders, especially the Malay and Muslim communities, to demonstrate concrete peace work. It is worth mentioning that local wisdom that belongs to our land or that belongs to our different races needs to be discovered and valued, which is likely to be the greatest tool to connect all our races and all religious groups. From this, the Malaysian church can propose different specific methods and activities to connect more intimately and authentically with different ethnic groups, actively bridging the gap, which is not only the coverage of peacebuilding but also the essence of the church.

In conclusion, conflict transformation requires the combined efforts of all people; this study demands every people to meet the obligation of ethnic integration for the country's welfare, which is long but not impossible. Christians are naturally obligated as members of the Malaysian state to commit to the task of fostering ethnic unity, which is a component of the

faith's existence. On the whole, ethnic unity is achieved by a shared existence built on mutual respect and a peaceful building founded on the values of love, commitment, unity, and peace.



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