THE STATE OF SELANGOR

The ancient Malay name for Selangor is “Selang Ur” or “Selang,” which means “Straits.” The word "Ur" means “city” in Tamil and the combination of these words means the “Straits City.”
Located in the central region of west coast, West Malaysia, Selangor is bordered by Perak to the north, Pahang to the east, Negeri Sembilan to the south and the Straits of Malacca to the west. Its capital, Shah Alam, is famed for its spectacular mosques.

Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, both Federal Territories, were once under Selangor’s sovereignty. They were ceded to the Federal Government in 1974 and 2001 respectively. Being in the heartland of Selangor, these two territories have contributed to the advancement of the state’s economy and administration. In view of the proximity between Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, the two are often referred to as a joint entity.

According to official statistics, the population of Selangor is more than five million, which makes it the state with the highest population in Malaysia. Its prosperity has attracted people from other states who come looking for jobs and to settle down. Immigrants (both legal and illegal) from Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, and China are also drawn to the state. According to the 2010 statistical report, there are more than 300,000 foreign labourers working in Selangor.
Since the 19th Century, lured by the abundant tin deposits in the state, many foreign traders, miners and colonialists had flocked to Selangor. In 1857, the Malay headman of Klang, Raja Abdullah, opened up access to the Klang River and recruited labourers from China to work the tin mines. Later, tin was found in Ampang at the upper reaches of the Klang River. Apart from tin mining, the Chinese set up shops at the confluence of the Klang River and Gombak River. This eventually gave birth to the development of Kuala Lumpur. At that time, Chinese leaders were appointed as Kapitans by Malay headmen to take charge of local Chinese affairs. Yap Ah Loy, the third Kapitan, was the most famous of them all. Under his leadership, Kuala Lumpur which means a muddy place, was gradually developed by the Chinese and became the capital of Selangor. Unfortunately, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were not spared from Japanese occupation during the Second World War, which lasted for three years and eight months. In 1948, Selangor became part of the Federation of Malaya, paving the way for its eventual independence.
ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

Situated in the central region of the Peninsular Malaysia, Selangor is a strategic entry point to the peninsula. The railroad system and the North-South Highway of the state provide a statewide and nation-wide link. The largest port of Malaysia, Port Klang, the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and the Klang Valley, the economic artery of Malaysia, are all within Selangor.

In addition to transportation and logistical convenience, Selangor has the most number of institutions of higher learning. Its infrastructure and telecommunication networks are the best in Malaysia. Furthermore, there are many mega shopping malls in the state, which has contributed toward the growth of the tourism industry. The diverse economic development of Selangor includes agriculture, industries, services and tourism.

MISSIONS IN SELANGOR

As the hub for commercial and industrial growth, Selangor has garnered many talents and elites from different Malaysian states as well as different parts of the world. The fast-paced urban lifestyle
has the effect of loosening the bond of interpersonal relationships, leading to the neglect of spiritual and emotional needs of individuals and families. This situation has served to mobilise churches and Christian organisations to focus on the urban harvest field in order to extend pastoral care and teaching to those in need. From 1887 to 1936, as more and more Christians from other countries came to work in Malaya, there was a corresponding increase in the number of churches, Christian organisations and mission agencies in the Klang River Valley.

In 1887, the Anglicans set up the first English church, St. Mary’s Chapel, to cater for the Anglicans in Kuala Lumpur. The church membership encompassed plantation owners, government officials, labourers, domestic helpers and clerks. As membership grew in size, a second church was built and dedicated in 1895, the St. Mary’s Anglican Cathedral. The cathedral is the oldest church in the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor region, and serves as a strategic base for the Anglican ministry expansion in West Malaysia. Subsequently, the Anglicans planted churches in various places in Selangor. They also started four schools in the state, St. Mary’s Girls’ High School which was established in 1912, the Pudu English School, established in 1914, a Tamil school in 1916 as well as the Yuh San Chinese Mission School, established in 1921. In 1953, during the Malayan Emergency, the Anglican Church worked together with the Church Mission Society.
and opened their churches as clinics for the Chinese who lived in the new villages. Through this outreach, many churches were built in the new villages. The continuous growth of the churches led to the development of autonomous missionary districts and parishes. The church that started meeting in a school classroom in 1956 eventually became the St. Gabriel’s Church. Moreover, St. Paul’s Church of Petaling Jaya, founded in 1960, soon became one of the largest Anglican parishes in West Malaysia.

The outreach work of the Brethrens in Kuala Lumpur first began in 1891, through the effort of a missionary, Mary B. Langlands, who started a school for girls. In 1893, she launched the first English school for girls, called the Chinese Girls’ School, after consulting local Chinese Christians. Her idea was very well received. The school expanded and moved to a new building in 1931, and was renamed Bukit Bintang Girls’ School. On the other hand, Thomas R. Angus came from Scotland to Kuala Lumpur to do mission work. A fluent speaker of the Hakka dialect, he focused on visitation and frequently visited people in the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital, old folks’ homes, prisons and also homes for lepers. He was often accompanied by Pastor Ma, the first Chinese full-time worker for the Brethrens, who was actively involved in street evangelism as well. Angus was succeeded by his son, David, who took over his pastoral ministry. From the 20th Century onward, the Brethrens had planted churches in
different parts of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

A British Methodist missionary, Dr. William T. Kensett, came from Penang to serve in Kuala Lumpur in 1897. Not long later, he purchased Petaling Hill from the government and set up a church and a school (now known as the Methodist Boys’ Secondary School) there. Many Indian and Chinese students went to the school. Dr. Kensett also began a chapel service in the school. Capably assisted by Rev. Samuel Abraham and other co-workers fluent in the Hokkien dialect, he expanded his ministry to Klang. In 1901, Rev. Horley came to serve in Kuala Lumpur and reached out to the Hakka speaking Chinese. The Methodist Church commenced their Tamil ministry in Kuala Lumpur in 1899 before embarking on ministries in other dialects and languages. The Cantonese Methodist Church was founded in 1904. The Methodist Church placed great emphasis on mission and education as well as literature ministry. The Southern Bell magazine was launched in 1928 while a prison ministry began in 1960 at Pudu Prison. In the 1970’s, their ministry spread to the leper settlement in Sungai Buloh. Out of their concern for the disabled, the Methodist Church initiated a ministry for them in 1993. This led to the establishment of the Beautiful Gate Foundation for the Disabled in Petaling Jaya two years later. The purpose of the foundation is to provide lodging, training and services for the disabled community. Since then, more centers have been set up in Kepong, Balakong in
Selangor, Kampar New Town in Perak, Seremban in Negeri Sembilan. To date, three of the Methodist annual conferences have planted many churches in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor – more than 50 churches and preaching points for the Chinese Annual Conference, more than 15 churches for the Tamil Annual Conference as well as more than 10 English speaking churches for the Trinity Annual Conference.

In 1907, Rev. T. Joseph from India began a Tamil Lutheran Church in Kuala Lumpur. As for the Evangelical Lutheran Church, it was founded in 1966 in Kuala Lumpur.

The English worship service of the St. Andrew’s International Presbyterian Church in Kuala Lumpur commenced in 1918. A Chinese worship service was added in 1953. Ten years later, the Chinese speaking Logos St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and the Klang Presbyterian Church were started. At the onset of the 21st Century, the Presbyterian Church has set up churches in Petaling Jaya, Cheras, Puchong and Setapak.

An Assembly of God missionary, Carrie P. Anderson, shifted her mission base from China to Kuala Lumpur in 1933. Two years later, the Jalan Brunei Chapel was established, which became the modern day First Assembly of God Church in Kuala Lumpur. In 1961, the Calvary Church in Damansara Heights started an English speaking congregation. In 1963, the Glad Tidings Assembly of God launched a Chinese worship service. Between 1966 and 1970, the Bible
Institute of Malaya trained a group of pastors to plant churches in Kuala Lumpur and other places. The growth of the Assemblies of God has been a rapid one. To date, there are more than 100 English, Mandarin and Tamil speaking Assemblies of God in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. They have also started Malay and Indonesian worship services, a ministry for the deaf and mute as well as reaching out to the migrants from Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar.

In 1950, a Baptist missionary, Lora Clement, began ministering to the Cantonese speaking Chinese in Singapore and Malaya. The following year, Jessie Green was sent to Kuala Lumpur. She opened a Baptist Gospel Centre at Jalan Pasar and led many people to the Lord. Subsequently, she started a Sunday School and conducted some training. In 1952, the Kuala Lumpur Baptist Church came into existence. When Herriette King, formerly a missionary to China, came to assist them with the Mandarin and English speaking ministries, the church was able to extend its ministries to Petaling Jaya in 1953. A gospel centre and clinic were set up there; this led to the establishment of the first Baptist church in Petaling Jaya in 1957. More Baptist churches were planted in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor from 1964 to 1966. The first English speaking Baptist church in Kuala Lumpur, the Bethel Baptist Church, was founded in 1970. Two other Baptist churches were opened in 1976 – the Klang Baptist Church and Canaan Baptist Church. Today, there are about 35 Baptist churches in
the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor region.

The United Lutheran Church of America commissioned their first missionary, Dr. Paul Anspach, to Kuala Lumpur in 1953. He was followed by Rev. & Mrs. Douglas Erikson, Clara Sullivan, Mr. and Mrs. George Frock, missionaries who had served in China and Hong Kong. They served in Broga, Semenyih, Cheras 9th Mile, Cheras 11th Mile and Balakong, reaching out to the Chinese in these areas. Then their ministry was extended to some new villages in Perak, and 29 preaching points were established as a result. The curfew and isolation policy imposed by the British colonial government created anxiety, boredom and frustration for the people who lived in the new villages. The missionaries opened their homes to the villagers, reached out to them as friends and endured hardship together with them. They provided medical services, organised tuition classes and outreach meetings for the villagers. Unfortunately after the emergency had ended, the clinics had to be closed because of the huge expenses incurred. Established in 1963, the Lutheran Church of Malaysia shifted its ministry focus to the urban areas. Churches were planted in Setapak, Salak South Garden in Kuala Lumpur as well as Kajang and Petaling Jaya in Selangor. In 1967, the church was renamed Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore. Since 1972, the church has been involved in the indigenous people ministry. There are about 22 Lutheran churches in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor today.
During the Malayan Emergency, the China Inland Mission (CIM) worked together with the Presbyterian and Methodist churches to evangelise the new villages in the southern and central regions of Malaya. In 1961, CIM founded the Rawang Christian Training Centre to train workers for the churches in the new villages. The Malaysia Christian Training Centre was set up for the same reason in 1972. When the Malaysia Bible Seminary was formed in 1977, the teaching staff and students of the Malaysia Christian Training Centre transferred to the seminary.

In 1976, the Christian Nationals’ Evangelical Commission began its student ministry in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The organization planted a church in 1989 in Kuala Lumpur and named it Christian Fellowship Centre. Owing to its proximity to two local universities, 99% of its members were students. CNEC ministry in Petaling Jaya commenced in 1953 with the establishment of a gospel centre. To date, CNEC has set up five Christian Fellowship Centres in Desa Melawati, Kuala Lumpur.

The Full Gospel Assembly started in 1979 as a house church under the leadership of Dr. Koh Eng Kiat and Elder Ang Chui Lai. Their first worship service was held in the living room of Dr. Koh’s home. They soon began a children ministry while their number continued to rise. Later, more than ten churches were established in the Kuala Lumpur – Selangor region.
The other churches in the region include the Evangelical Free Church of Malaysia, Full Gospel Tabernacle and other independent churches. There are also quite a few para-church and mission organizations doing all kinds of pre-evangelism ministries in collaboration with the churches to prepare good soil for the gospel seed.

In January 1986, the Protestant denominations joined hands with the Catholic Church to form the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM). Its role is to represent Christian bodies to convey Christian perspectives to the Malaysian government and other religious bodies whenever the need arises. The CFM comprises The Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), representing Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches; The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF), representing the evangelicals; and The Catholic Bishop Conference of Malaysia, representing the Catholic Church.

The CFM is an important church partnership. In March 2011, it played a key role in responding appropriately to the government on behalf of Malaysian Christians regarding the detention of Malay Bibles in Malaysian ports. Whether in Selangor or the whole of Malaysia, Christians make up only 10% of the population but they are indispensable as light and salt for the land.

Isaiah 54: 2 says, “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back.” The nations are already at our
doorstep; this could well be the kairos moment God has prepared for us to begin our cross-cultural mission!
Prayer for Selangor

1. Pray for the state government to be wise in managing the state resources, be transparent and effective in its policy making as well as prioritizing the people’s welfare and interests.

2. Pray for people of the state, that all urban dwellers, regardless of ethnicity, will have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

3. Pray for the churches to be a good testimony to the community as they serve in unity, and that they learn to respond appropriately to current social issues.

Profile of Selangor

Area: 7,960 square kilometers

Capital: Shah Alam

Total population: more than 5 million
Malays (53%), Chinese (27%),
Indians (13%), non-citizens (6%) and others (1%)

Religions: Islam (56%), Buddhism or Taoism (26%),
Hinduism (12%), Christianity & Catholicism (4%).
traditional tribal religions and others (1%),