

## **HONOURING PAUL SINAPPAN (1950-2021) – *Activist for the poor & in building alternative economy pathway through cooperative movement.***

Reflections by Denison Jayasooria (ASEC Chair)

ASEC hosted an online memorial service on Saturday, June 26, 2021 in honour of Bro Paul Sinappan (1950-2021). The late Paul Sinappan was a staff of the National Office of Human Development (NOHD). He worked with the Credit Union Cooperative of Batang Berjuntai, Selangor, Malaysia and was a community development trainer.

About 80 people participated in the online conversation to remember his legacy and contributions in building an alternative economic hope for disadvantaged Malaysians through his work and service for humanity.

### **Family & Friends who participated**

Among those who participated was Mrs Rebecca Paul (Paul's wife) and two sons (Selvam and Prakesh) along with Paul's twin brother Peter Rayappan.

From ASEC Dr Ben Quinones (Philippines) the founding President together with Pak Bambang Ismawan of Bina Swadaya of Indonesia.

Also present was the Malaysian Information Minister Hon Dato Saifuddin Abdullah, Datuk Yusof Kassim of COMMACT Malaysia, Bishop Julian Leow Beng Kim (Metropolitan Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur) and Prof Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria who moderated the session.

### **Reflections shared**

**Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah** in his speech recognised Paul as a true activists who worked to restore the dignity of the poor. Paul he said built not through loans but by savings mobilisation from among the poor.

**Datuk Yusof Kassim** recognised Paul as a towering personality and as a role model in his work in building the cooperative movement in Malaysia.

**Dr Ben Quinones** recognised Paul's role in building alternative financial services for the poor. He highlighted Paul's conviction that the Paul can organise themselves and can cooperate to create a future for themselves.

**Pak Bamabang** who first met Paul in the Philippines when Paul was only 24 years of age recognised his deep passion for the poor especially plantation workers. We were reminded that Paul devoted much time in building the capability of young people, a legacy we must remember.

**Ms Kiah Hui** shared of how Paul mentored her and other young people in working with the poor indigenous communities through community empowerment programs.

**Mr Onn Sein** recognised Paul as the friend of the poor, a man of humility and a true Malaysia in transcending race and religion in his service for the poor.

**Bishop Julian** reminded us of Paul's faith journey and in working with the poor. He closed the session in prayer remembering the family, friends and the poor communities.

### **Paul's Legacy & our response**

Paul Sinappan leaves us with the legacy which we must remember in working with the poor we must work with them in addressing injustice and inequality. To confront the unjust structures with hope and in partnership with the people themselves

As people shared their experiences, there is a call to remember Paul through some form of institutional memory of a foundation or a trust or a centre for people development or for training of young people. This is a matter which will be discussed over the coming months with Paul's family and friends.

ASEC therefore honours one of its members who has done well in service for the most disadvantaged in society. May his legacy continue to inspire new activists.