

Headline
Date
MediaTitle
Section
Journalist
Frequency
Circ / Read

Ex-addict and HIV patient becomes pastor
10 Jul 2010
Daily Express (KK)
Nation
N/A
Daily (EM)
30,557 / 97,836

Language
Page No
Article Size
Color
ADValue
PRValue

English
10
117 cm²
Black/white
241
723



Danaraj at his ordination ceremony at the St Mary's Anglican Cathedral.

Ex-addict and HIV patient becomes pastor

KUALA LUMPUR: A former drug addict and HIV/AIDS patient, Danaraj Samuel, has been ordained as church pastor.

Danaraj's ordination by the St Mary's Anglican Cathedral yesterday was made so much sweeter when his doctor, former Malaysian AIDS Council President Prof Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, turned up to witness the event.

Danaraj said he first met Dr Adeeba when he decided to return to the church in 2006 after years of going in and out of prisons and rehabilitation centres.

"A church member brought me to see her for treatment. At that time, she was the only one who trusted me, and believed that I would be able to change into the man I am today. For that, I am forever thankful," he said after the ceremony.

Dr Adeeba said she wanted to come for the ceremony after hearing from Danaraj's family that he was finally getting ordained as a pastor.

"I'm proud of him. Not many people can be where he is right now. The journey was hard but he's strong and can overcome any obstacle in his way," she said.

Danaraj admitted that it would be an uphill task for people to trust him as a pastor as everybody knew about his past.

"There are people who doubted my ability to preach and I found it difficult to work. It was like a tunnel without light but I just have to go through it," said the optimistic 42-year-old, who first experimented with "weed" in college before he graduated to using heroin while working as a chef on a cruise liner in Britain.

"I was like a walking zombie for two decades. Rehab centres and prison were like my second home," said Danaraj, adding that he first found out that he had contracted the HIV/AIDS virus in a blood test in 1994.

Danaraj said he decided to return to the church, where he had worshipped with his family since young, because he wanted to take the first step out of being a "zombie" for the rest of his life.