

**CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA  
(PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)**

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**Press Statement**

The Christian Federation of Malaysia organized the 7<sup>th</sup> National Christian Conference on 20 – 22 October, 2005 in Corus Hotel, Kuala Lumpur to reflect on the Church's response to National Integration and Unity.

The conference brought together 125 leaders from the Catholic Church, the Council of Churches of Malaysia, and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship which together make up the Christian Federation of Malaysia.

The conference took the opportunity to reflect and review the extent to which national integration has been achieved after 48 years of Independence.

We appreciate the government for its efforts in seeking national integration. Considerable progress has been made in nation-building and in reducing inter-ethnic inequality; yet the issues of an inequitable society across many dimensions have to be tackled. The gap between the rich and poor regardless of ethnicity must be narrowed to further the cause of national integration. Some basic civil liberties have deteriorated over the years. Trust has to be built so that suspicion among communities can be reduced. There is ethnic discrimination in employment in both the public and private sectors.

We uphold the primacy of the Federal Constitution and reject any attempts to undermine it in favour of any other legal systems, which may not be widely accepted in a multicultural and multireligious society.

We call upon all Malaysians to openly and creatively discuss these pressing national issues that hinder national integration and unity.

We express our commitment to pluralism, respect for democracy, dedication to justice and solidarity with all in need to achieve national unity.

As Malaysians, we continue to commit ourselves along with others in participating in nation-building.



Bishop Paul Tan, SJ  
Chairman of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM)  
October 22, 2005

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Message to CFM Churches

October 22, 2005

Corus Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

We, the participants of the 7<sup>th</sup> National Christian Conference organized by the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM), gathered together in Kuala Lumpur on 20-22 October 2005 to discuss and reflect on "National Integration and Unity: The Church's Response."

We give thanks to God for the 20 years of existence of CFM - comprising the Catholic Church, the Council of Churches of Malaysia and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship - and express our gratitude for His blessings on our beloved country, Malaysia.

We acknowledge having achieved much unity and integration since Independence in 1957 for Peninsular Malaysia (1963 for Sabah and Sarawak), but there remains room for improvement to defuse communal and sectarian divisions. We recognize the value of Affirmative Action and social justice for the poor and marginalized, but its implementation has been divisive and not as effective as it could have been. Considerable progress has been made in nation-building and in reducing inter-ethnic inequality; yet the issues of an inequitable society across many dimensions have to be tackled. The gap between the rich and poor regardless of ethnicity must be narrowed to further the cause of national integration. Some basic civil liberties have deteriorated over the years. Trust has to be built so that suspicion among communities can be reduced. There is ethnic discrimination in employment in both the public and private sectors.

Recognizing that the Federal Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of all Malaysians, we uphold its primacy and reject any attempt to undermine it in favour of any other legal system, which may not be widely accepted in a multicultural and multireligious society. We need to safeguard, defend, and inculcate these Constitutional provisions so that the social contract ensures justice and equity for all. We need to engage courageously with lawmakers and be more vigilant about any future amendment that may be made. We also ought to identify more closely and reach out in solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

To achieve national unity, we express our commitment to pluralism, respect for democracy, dedication to justice and solidarity with all in need. We reiterate our commitment to this country by engaging more actively in nation-building, i.e. building linkages with other religious groups and civil society (incl. supporting the proposed Interfaith Commission), bridging differences, eradicating poverty, focusing on the marginalized and seeking avenues to participate in policy-making processes in order to strengthen national unity.

We are concerned about the interests of ALL communities in the country, where everyone should have a fair share. Given these realities and challenges, it is clearly critical that all our churches unite and pursue an open discussion with other sectors of society, including legislative bodies, on the issues that hinder national integration and unity.