

NECF dismisses pledge claims

by Gertrude Pereira (18 May, 2011)

GoodTimes
THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION

Petaling Jaya: The chairman of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship, Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng, has dismissed allegations that Christian leaders had formed a pact with the DAP to usurp Islam as the official religion of the country.

Saying that “those allegations are baseless,” he lamented on “our society’s recent preoccupation with conspiracies and pledges”.

He was commenting on media reports that Christian leaders had made a pledge to respect the position of Islam in the country after a lunch meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on 12 May.

“The meeting with the Prime Minister on 12th May 2011 was NOT about the *Utusan* issue (though this was discussed in passing). The meeting was a follow-up to point 9 of the 10-point solution and this was arranged even before the *Utusan* fiasco came into play.

“This was no secret meeting. Our PM himself stated openly that he will be meeting us,” he said in an interview with GoodTimes.my.

On 7 May, the Malay daily, *Utusan Malaysia*, front-paged a story based on two bloggers’ postings that pastors had taken a vow to make Christianity the official religion of Malaysia and to install a Christian Prime Minister in an alleged conspiracy with the DAP.

The report triggered a storm of criticisms in cyberspace and when the Prime Minister’s scheduled meeting with Christian leaders on May 12 was reported, some media described the Christian leaders’ stand to respect Islam as a “pledge”.

This created another uproar, now mainly among Christians, with some perceiving the Christian leaders’ stand as a compromise.

Eu clarified that the details of the 12 May meeting was not made known as it involved “easily misunderstood issues”.

“The Prime Minister did say that he would highlight the issues as they are resolved and that he will meet with other religious groups as well, and this was reported in the front page of NST on May 13.



“What I would like to clarify is that *we did not go there to make or take some formal pledge*. Nor did the Prime Minister solicit any pledge from us,” he said.

“At the meeting itself, we discussed many issues concerning the Christian community, and how the Church can make meaningful contributions in nation building.

“And in the context of discussing unity in the nation and the worrisome trend of wild rants by some segments causing disharmony and the *Utusan* fiasco, the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) chairman, Bishop Ng Moon Hing, basically reiterated the Christian stand of respecting the position of Islam, as stated in the constitution, and stressed the Church’s duty and desire to work with the government to maintain peace and harmony.

“Unfortunately, in some reports it appeared as though we did nothing but ‘pledge and pledge’ in Putrajaya and this has led to a flurry of insinuations and accusations.

“There was no need to make any pledge, as we have always respected the position of Islam,” he added.

“We keep saying to non-Christians ‘there was no pact, pledge or conspiracy, only a dinner’ held in the Red Rock hotel in Penang.

“Now we have to tell some Christians ‘there was no pledge other than our duty to do our part in maintaining harmony, only lunch and discussions on important issues which affects the Christian community’, in the Putrajaya luncheon.

“I hope we all can see the funny side to this episode. People seem so obsessed with pledges!” he said.

Eu hoped that the people would not add to the current controversy by continuing to draw conclusions based on unverified accounts and asked the Christians to do the common sense thing, which was to verify the facts.

GoodTimes is a project conceived by a group of Christian individuals and organizations in Malaysia who want to contribute towards nation-building. Christians have always played a part in the nation’s history by sharing, promoting and developing good values in peoples of all walks of life, irrespective of their race, color, creed, religion and gender. They have played an active role in community development, education and social services. These are traditional on-the-ground efforts.

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