



CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA (CFM) AND
NATIONAL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP (NECF) AND THEIR RESPONSES TO
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: AN OBJECTIVE STUDY
FROM A MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-religious state. The Muslims constitute 61.3%, Christians 9.1%, Hindus 6.3%, Buddhist 19.2%, Sikhs 0.9% and others 2.6% of the population of Malaysia. This study examines the stated position and views of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) of Malaysia on religious freedom, the Islamization approach in Malaysia and the use of the word 'Allāh' by Christians. This study argues that examination of the stated views and responses of non-Muslim citizens of Malaysia about issues of freedom of religion, Islamization approach and the use of the word 'Allāh' by Malaysia's non-Muslim citizens is important for the preservation and maintenance of religious and racial harmony and political stability in the country. The study used qualitative method of data collection. The study examined CFM and NECF online data official documents and newspapers and conducted in-depth interviews as main sources of data collection. The study found that the objectives of the CFM and NECF and the issues that led to their establishment and their focus/target group are different. Yet, both organizations are similarly concerned with the objectivity of their organization and want to honor the spirit of the Federal Constitution in their stated positions and responses toward issues that are related to Christian interests and rights to freedom of religion and the use of the word 'Allāh'. The study found that CFM and NECF have suggested interpretations of the Federal Constitution in such a manner that can preserve religious harmony, freedom of religion and respect for the rights of followers of other religions in Malaysia. The study also found that the CFM and NECF also suggest that one way to overcome religious differences and potential inter-religious conflict is to promote inter-religious dialogues among the followers of different religions in Malaysia. Finally, the study, among others, recommends that government agencies and religious institutions play a more pro-active role in making policies on propagating and engaging adherents of various religions in Malaysia.

خلاصة البحث

إن ماليزيا دولة متعددة الأعراق والأديان، ويشكل المسلمون 60.4% من سكان البلاد، والمسيحية 9.1%، والهندوسية 6.3%، والبوذية 19.2%، والسيخية 0.9% والآخرين 2.6%. وتبحث هذه الدراسة المواقف المعلنة وجهات نظر الاتحاد المسيحي الماليزي (CFM) والزمالة المسيحية الإنجيلية الوطنية (NECF) على قضايا الحرية الدينية ومنهج الإسلاميه واستعمال كلمة الله من قبل مواطنيها المسيحيين غير المسلمين في ماليزيا. وتوضح هذه الدراسة أن الفحص للآراء والردود من المواطنين غير المسلمين في ماليزيا حول تلك القضايا مهم لحفظ الدين وصيانة الانسجام العرقية والاستقرار السياسي في البلاد. ويتبع هذا البحث المنهج الاستقرائي بجمع البيانات من الوثائق الرسمية من الموقع الرسمي لـ CFM و NECF في الإنترنت، وكذلك الجرائد والمقابلات مع الأشخاص المعينة. ووجدت الدراسة أن أهداف CFM و NECF والقضايا التي أدت إلى تأسيسها ودعوتهم كانت مختلفة. ومع ذلك، تركز كلتا المنظمتين على أهداف منظمتهما وعلى تكريم روح الدستور الاتحادي في مواقفهما المعلنة والاستجابات تجاه القضايا التي تتعلق بالمصالح المسيحية والحقوق في حرية الدين واستخدام كلمة الله. ووجدت الدراسة أن CFM و NECF قد اقترحا إلى تفسير الدستور الاتحادي في الطريقة التي يمكن الحفاظ على الانسجام الديني وحرية الأديان واحترام حقوق أتباع الديانات الأخرى في ماليزيا. وكذلك قد أشار CFM و NECF إلى أن الطريقة الواحدة للتغلب على الخلافات الدينية والأزمات بين الأديان هي تعزيز الحوار بين أتباع الديانات المختلفة في ماليزيا. وأخيرا، فإن الدراسة عن الآخرين تشير إلى أن الوكالات الحكومية والمؤسسات الدينية في حاجة ماسة إلى لعب دور أكثر نشاطا في صنع السياسات على تعهد أتباع الديانات المختلفة في ماليزيا.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion).

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Haslina Ibrahim
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion).

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Ibrahim Mohamed Zein
Dean, Kulliyah of Islamic
Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mohd Faridh Hafez Bin Mhd Omar

Signature.....

Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All Praise and Gratitude to Almighty Allāh SWT May Allāh's Peace and Blessing be upon our Prophet Muhammad SAW, his family, companions and all those who follow him until the end of time. I thank Allāh SWT for His Infinite Mercy, for the Blessings and for giving me an opportunity to undertake and complete this research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia
CFM	Christian Federation Of Malaysia
NECF	National Evangelical Christian Fellowship
DAP	Democratic Action Party
GMM	Global Moderate Movement
IKIM	Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia
IKRAM	Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia
IRF	Islamic Renaissance Front
JAIPP	Jabatan Agama Islam Pulau Pinang
JAIS	Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia
JKMPKA	Jawatankuasa Mempromosikan Persefahaman Dan Keharmonian Di Antara Penganut Agama
JPNIN	Jabatan Perpaduan Negara Dan Integrasi Nasional
MAIWP	Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan
PAS	Parti Islam Semalaysia
UMNO	United Malay Nation Organization

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Arabic Transliteration Scheme (According to IIUM Thesis Manual)

Consonant

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration
ء	'	ز	z	ق	Q
ب	b	س	s	ك	K
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	L
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	M
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	N
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	هـ	H
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	W
د	d	ع	'	ي	Y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Vowel

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration
اَ	a	اَ + اِ	ā
اِ	i	اِ + ي	ī
اُ	u	اُ + و	ū
اي	ay	او	Aw

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multiracial and multi-religious federation and such diversity has remained intact up to the present time. The 2010 census recorded that the population of Malaysia was 28,334,135 making it the 42nd most populated country in the world¹. The census also reports that 61.3% of the population are Muslims, 19.8% Buddhists, 9.2% Christians, 6.3% Hindus and 1.3% practise Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions. 0.7% have declared as having no religion whom can we presume as being atheists and the remaining 1.4% practise other religions or have not provided any information. With the varieties of ethnic groups, ethnicities and religious beliefs, Malaysia has steadily grown as the most preferable country to live in.

Notwithstanding the peaceful co-existence that blesses the Malaysian people, it is interesting to note that there have been inter-religious issues particularly those related to Muslim–Christian affairs. The Christians in Malaysia belong to three major churches: the Catholic, the Protestant and the Evangelical. The Christians in Malaysia largely affiliate themselves under an umbrella organization which is the Christian Federation Malaysia (CFM). Another Christian organization is the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF). The effort to link with these Christian organizations is important and indeed crucial as it is through such linkages that inter-religious engagement is made possible. Indeed, to ensure the continuous peaceful co-existence in Malaysia it is important that there should be more effort made to enhance inter-religious engagement.

¹ Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia. (2010). *Taburan Penduduk dan Ciri-ciri Asas Demografi*. p.82.

This study therefore attempts to realize such engagement as it seeks to reach out to the Christians in Malaysia to attain their feedback on contemporary issues in Malaysia namely religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’ by the Christians in Malaysia². This study therefore presents the responses of two selected Christian organizations namely the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) on the abovementioned issues.

In addition, this research also attempts to study the history, functions and role played by the Christians in an inter-faith platform established by the *Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional* (Department of National Unity and Integration) (JPNIN) which is *Jawatankuasa Mempromosikan Persefahaman dan Keharmonian Di Antara Penganut Agama* (Committee to Promote Understanding and Harmony among Religious Adherents) (JKMPKA).³ At the same time, this research is interested to know whether the CFM and NECF uphold the very vision and mission of JKMPKA in shaping their position on the contemporary issues.

² The demand for the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’ was first made by the *Sidang Injil Borneo* (SIB), one of the Catholic churches in Sabah. The Herald Weekly Bulletin by the Catholic Church in Sabah has been using the word ‘Allāh’ in their bulletin since 1998, and thus the first letter of warning was sent to the Herald Weekly Bulletin from the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) that warned them not to use the word ‘Allāh’ in their bulletin. In 2002, the second letter – a show cause letter – received by the Herald Weekly Catholic, but the Herald was granted the use of the word ‘Allāh’ in its publication by the Cabinet after presenting an appeal, but conditionally, i.e cover page must have a “cross”, containing the words “A Christian Publication”, and for the Malay version it is stamped with the “cross” and the words “*Untuk Penganut Beragama Kristian*” [For Christians Only]. With five show cause letters to the Herald from KDN in 2006 to renew the publication license, the Herald seeks redress through the courts against the power of the Home Minister to set the conditions on the use of the word ‘Allāh’. In 2007, the Herald filed a writ of summons for a judicial review on the above conditions. In 2009, KDN granted the publication license to the Herald but conditionally without using the word ‘Allāh’ in the publication and it is stamped with the word “*Terhad*” [Limited]. Following a High Court decision on 31st December 2009 which allowed the Herald Weekly Bulletin to use the word ‘Allāh’ in its publication, and also in general occasions, the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Malaysia led to problems. <http://www.ismaweb.net/v4/2013/08/kronologi-penghakiman-isu-kalimah-allah/>. (Retrieved on 15th January 2014).

³ JKMPKA is *Jawatankuasa Mempromosikan Persefahaman dan Keharmonian Di Antara Penganut Agama*. Afterward referred to as JKMPKA.

It is hoped that this thesis would be able to explain the position of CFM and NECF in Malaysia on the issues identified – religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word Allāh. It is essential to highlight that the thesis remains in its objective to do justice to the Christian organizations, in particular those which have been cooperative in ensuring the success of this thesis.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Inter-religious engagement should be promoted and encouraged widely to all Malaysians regardless of their individual religion, race, colour and culture. Studying contemporary issues related to a particular religion, for example the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Malaysia, is pivotal. In addition, venturing on a study on the responses of religious organizations on contemporary issues is also urgent and indispensable.

The contemporary issues that are discussed in this study are religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’ by the Christians. The reason why these issues need to be studied is because they affect the sensitivity of the Christians in Malaysia as well as the Muslims. However, this research does not study any Muslim NGOs’ responses but some Muslim scholar’s opinions will be cited for comparison. For example, in the case of the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’, there have been many memorandums handed by both parties – Muslim NGOs and Christian NGOs - to the Malaysian Cabinet⁴ but problems in relation to the issue continue to exist. In March 2011, the Malay version of the Bible (*Al-Kitab*) was detained at Kuching Port despite the Cabinet’s decision in 2009 which allowed the use

⁴ The Malaysia Cabinet has issued a 10-point solution on April 2011 to commiserate the demand of Christians due to 5000 *Al-Kitab* (Malay version of the Bible) were detained at Kuching Port on Mac the same year.

of the word ‘Allāh’ in any publication on the condition that the publication is made limited to the Christians only. Nonetheless, inter-religious tensions continue to exist thus affecting the quality of life of the Malaysian pluralistic society.

Recognizing the importance of understanding the responses of Christian organizations on the contemporary issues, a number of studies have been done. Various studies on religious freedom, Islamization approach, and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’ have been explored for Herald Weekly Bulletin, but they were done in separation. Indeed, those studies were concerned in defining the problems and its implications but failed to incorporate a study on the responses of the Christians.

However, there is a need to investigate the responses of Christian organizations on selected contemporary issues. Even though we know that the Christians seemed to have the same understanding on the issues, they were discussed on the surface and not deeply explored. Therefore, this research endeavours to analyze the responses of Christian organizations on these issues. Consequently we are able to distinguish the similarities as well as differences in their responses on the said issues. The importance of knowing the similarities and differences of their responses toward the said issues is to see how they manage dissimilarities if they exist.

In 2010, the Malaysian government set up JKMPKA under the Department of National Unity and National Integration of the Prime Minister Office to assist the government in promoting understanding and harmony among followers of the different religions in Malaysia, thus continuing the efforts in fostering relationships and maintain peace as well as social stability. The JKMPKA consists of Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST), Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs (ACCIN), Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM), Department of Islamic

Development Malaysia (JAKIM), World Fatwa Management and Research Institute (INFAD, USIM) and Islamic Information and Services Foundation (IIS).

The question that arises here is whether or not that Christian organizations in Malaysia are guided by their role in JKMPKA, particularly in responding to the selected issues identified in this research. The CFM's and NECF's stands and views are studied in the light of the objectives of JKMPKA. Also, the question that needs to be raised is to what extent are the Christian organizations united in their responses or whether they have different opinions on the same issues. It is interesting for this study to examine and to postulate the possible reasons that lead to such uniformity or even differences of ideas.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The main objectives of this study are as follow:

1. To explore the background of establishment of CFM and NECF in Malaysia.
2. To explore the objectives, missions, roles and contributions of CFM and NECF in Malaysia.
3. To examine the position of the CFM and NECF on the conception of religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word 'Allāh'.
4. To analyse the responses of the CFM and NECF on religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word 'Allāh'.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. How did CFM and NECF come into existence and establish themselves in Malaysia?
2. What are the objectives, missions, roles and contributions of CFM and NECF?
3. What is the position of CFM and NECF on the conception of religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word 'Allāh'?
4. What are the responses of CFM and NECF on religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word 'Allāh'?

1.4 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

As far as this study is concerned no study has been done to evaluate the responses made on the issues by particular Christian organizations as they basically resort to the views of the Christian umbrella organization (CFM) rather than make independent responses to the issues. In doing so, this research examines if the Christians are generally united in their views on the selected issues. The thesis also explores whether the selected organizations have considered the national agenda in advancing their ideas on the selected issues.

Furthermore, it is hoped that this study serves as a point of reference for further discussions and debates on the nature of responses that are pointed out by Malaysian Christian organizations. Hopefully, it also contributes to enriching the field and further deepens the understanding of selected contemporary issues. In addition, this study also provides a useful overview of those selected contemporary issues and the responses under the banner of Malaysia's spirit of co-existent in nature.

1.5 RESEARCH SCOPE

In reality, the Christians in Malaysia belong to different denominations, churches and organizations. Since 1985, prior to the establishment of CFM, it has been identified by her affiliates to represent the Christian population in Malaysia. It is due to this reason that CFM was chosen to be one of the respondents for this research. In addition, NECF is selected to enhance research objectivity. In this regard, it is vital for the research to examine the similarities and differences between CFM and her affiliate, NECF on the issues selected for this research.

In addition, it is important for the research to remain focused in order to answer the remaining issues pertaining to the Christian-Muslim relation in Malaysia. Therefore, the research deals with three selected contemporary issues, namely religious freedom, Islamization approach and the adoption of the word 'Allāh'. It is hoped that by delimiting the issues, the research can avoid from indulging into extended polemics in Christian-Muslim relation.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

This research is comprised of two methods. Firstly, gathering the relevant data through textual and contextual methods that incorporate an extensive fieldwork study, for example, from unpublished thesis. Thus, collection of data involves library research in which materials such as books, documents, articles, theses, dissertations, seminar and conference papers, journals, online materials and reliable websites are referred to. In addition, the Library of Seminary Teologi Malaysia (STM) in Seremban has provided and assisted the researcher with some primary sources that are not available at any other libraries.

In-depth interview sessions have been held with main representatives of CFM and NECF in Malaysia. All issues were reported using a descriptive method and presented through a thematic approach that included religious freedom, the Islamization approach, and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’. Subsequently, the reported data were compared, analyzed, and examined. This is important to ensure that the research is able to answer the research questions stipulated earlier and thus achieve the research’s objectives.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

In connection with the topic of this research, a few studies have been consulted to discuss the Christian organizations in Malaysia, particularly the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF). However, not much research has been done in discussing the responses of each organization toward contemporary issues. This research is needed to explore in depth the Christian organizations and their responses on selected contemporary issues; religious freedom, Islamization approach, and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’. Therefore, this research hoped to provide a clear understanding on the said matters, and later distinguish their similarities and differences.

A useful finding on the Malaysian Christians can be seen in Robert Hunt’s *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*.⁵ The author introduces the history of Christians in Malaysia who were divided according to their respective denominations of Christianity. The divisions of denominations are the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and so on. It serves as a useful introduction since it discusses the background of Christians in

⁵ Robert Hunt, *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications Sdn. Bhd, 1992).

Malaysia who actively participate under the two organizations; the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF). This writing helps a lot in knowing the foundation of Christianity in Malaysia and its transformation throughout history. But still, it does not focus on the issues of this research seeking for. It only emphasizes on the organization and development of the Christians as represented by CFM and NECF.

One of the most reliable academic works about the Christians in Malaysia can be found in Ghazali Basri's *Gerakan Kristian*.⁶ The study profoundly describes the backbone of Christianity that planted its roots since the early period of imperialism and provides an interesting presentation using the historical, theological and psychological approaches. Beside that, it also responds with the Islamization approach and describes Christian establishments with special reference in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei. Ghazali Basri argues about Malaysian Christians' responses toward Islamization approach and stresses that dialogue is a needed step for solution. However, his work was published in 1995 whereas the word of 'Allāh' and its polemics was only instigated in 2002.

Another useful depiction on contemporary issues of Malaysian religions can be found in Tunku Abdul Rahman's *Contemporary Issues On Malaysian Religions*.⁷ Tunku discusses the roles of religion as a foundation of nation building by referring to Malaysia as a multi-racial and multi-religious country. In his view, there it is the duty of each Malaysian to ensure peace and stability regardless of time and religion. Apart from that, there is a discussion between Tunku and Tan Chee Khoon pertaining the Constitutional Provisions for Religious Freedom in Malaysia where both of them

⁶ Ghazali Basri, *Gerakan Kristian*, (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999).

⁷ Tunku Abdul Rahman, Putra al-Haj, et al., *Contemporary Issues On Malaysian Religions*, (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1984).

interpreted Article 11 differently. Article 11 of the Federal Constitution stated “*every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it.*” This research has taken into consideration their insights in accordance with today’s context in Malaysia. In addition, as mentioned in the book, due to the serious efforts in developing nation building which was based on religion as pointed by Tunku, the Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism was formed in 1984, which later included Taoism. Furthermore, the MCCBCHST basically was pun under the Department of Unity and Integration. This department is monitored by the Prime Minister’s Office which was set up in 1969 because of the racial riot specifically on May 13th 1969. On 20th January 2010, a Cabinet meeting decided to set up the Committee to Promote Understanding and Harmony among Religious Adherents. Hence, it shows that there is a long gap between the year 1969 until the Cabinet meeting on January 20th 2010. Interestingly during the gap, sensitive issues had not been discussed publicly⁸ and it is an irony that after the establishment of JKMPKA, many sensitive issues on religions have been publicized.

The article entitled *The Ethnic Implications of Cotemporary Religious Movements and Organizations in Malaysia*⁹ written by Raymond L.M Lee gives a

⁸ Education, history and family institution were major factors that underly the process of racial integration which started in the early 1970s until the late of 90’s in Malaysia. Religious issue is not a main topic of discussion among Malaysians. See in Mohd Ridhuan Tee Abdullah, “*Cabaran Integrasi Kaum Di Malaysia: Perspektif Sejarah, Keluarga dan Pendidikan*”, in Jurnal Hadhari (Bil.3, 2010), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; Bangi. p.61-84.

⁹ Raymond L.M. Lee, “*The Ethnic Implications of Contemporary Religious Movements and Organizations in Malaysia*” in Journal of Contemporary Southeast Asia, (Vol.8, No.1 (June,1986)), 70-87. Retrieved on 2nd October 2013.
<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/25797883?searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dchriatian%2Borganizations%2Bin%2Bmalaysia%26amp%3Bprq%3D%2528malaysian%2Bchristian%2529%2BAND%2Biid%253A%252810.2307%252Fi345456%2529%26amp%3Bhp%3D25%26amp%3Bacc%3Doff%26amp%3Bwc%3Don%26amp%3Bfc%3Doff%26amp%3Bso%3Drel%26amp%3BBracc%3Doff&Search=yes&searchText=chriatian&searchText=organizations&searchText=in&searchText=malaysia&uid=3738672&uid=2134&uid=376204301&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=376204291&uid=60&sid=21103103803991>

clear view of the establishment of religious organizations in Malaysia. The author emphasizes that there are two factors underlying the establishment of Christianity in Malaysia, namely church indigenization and ecumenical movement. To achieve these factors, the churches focus on Christianization program which mould the local churches. This has resulted in the establishment of Christian unity by the formation of Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM). Furthermore, the author defines clearly the non-Muslims' reaction to the Islamization efforts where they have indirectly contributed to the non-Muslims' heightened awareness of their rights. At the local level, the main concern is about the protection upon their places of worship. At the national level, there is a general sense of urgency to meet the Islamic challenge through the formation of a unified non-Muslim front. With the formation of MCCBCHST in 1984, it definitely helped as a religious mobilization among non-Muslims, especially between Christians and the government. It provides an idea how these aspects become an anchor in mobilizing Christians towards the issues concerned.

Ahmad F. Yousif¹⁰ has briefly explained in his work the response to religious freedom within the Malaysian experience. The author criticizes the western concept of religious freedom where he highlights some examples in some western countries which have prohibited Muslim women from wearing the "*hijab*". Contrary to the prohibition, he argues that even though Christians in Malaysia constitute 9.2% of population – a minority - yet their right to worship, practice rituals, celebrate festivals, build institutions and get religious education are preserved and guaranteed under the Malaysian Federal Constitution compared to other countries. However, the book's coverage on the Christians' position on religious freedom is only in general. Thus,

¹⁰ Ahmad F. Yousif, *Religious Freedom, Minorities and Islam: An Inquiry into the Malaysian Experience*, (Kuala Lumpur, IIUM Press: 2011), p.83-108.

pertaining to the subject of Islamization approach and the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’, further explanation based on Christian organizations’ responses is needed.

Another important point of reference on Malaysian Christians’ responses can be found in Sadayandy Batumalai’s doctoral thesis entitled *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia: A Malaysian Christian Response*,¹¹ which was later published as a book. The author defines the process of Islamization which he divides into two phases – from the Malacca Sultanate to 1969 and from 1970 to 1990. Under the topic of Islamization, the author attempts to give an authentic understanding on why the Christian organizations need to respond to such a process. According to the author, it is undeniable that as one of the groups which contributes to the nation building process, it is affected by the Islamization approach in another way. Furthermore, this book does not analyze in detail pertaining the Christian organizations’ standpoint on the adoption of the word ‘Allāh’. So, Batumalai’s work is indispensable reference for this researcher in uncovering the issues concerned.

In the second article by Raymond L.M. Lee’s *Patterns of Religious Tension in Malaysia*¹², he highlights the fact that Islamization has caused religious tension in Malaysia and he puts Islamic revivalism as the main cause for the tension. He points out that Islamic revivalism in Malaysia which started in the early 1970s has generated much fear and unexpected reactions among non-Muslims. Indeed, Islamic revivalism has greatly influenced the Christians to improve themselves for the betterment. This

¹¹ Batumalai, S, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia: A Malaysian Christian Response*, (Ipoh: St. John’s Church (Anglican): 1996).

¹² Raymond L.M. Lee, “Patterns of Religious Tension in Malaysia” in *Asian Survey*, (Vol. 28, No. 4, (April 1988)), 400-418. Retrieved on 2nd October 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2644735?uid=3738672&uid=2134&uid=376204301&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=376204291&uid=60&purchase-type=article&accessType=none&searchText=patterns&sid=21103164375711&showMyJstorPss=false&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dpatterns%2Bof%2Breligious%2Btension%2Bin%2Bmalaysia%26amp%3Bacc%3Doff%26amp%3Bwc%3Don%26amp%3Bfc%3Doff&seq=19&showAccess=false&Search=yes>