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NECF now opening up

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I REFER to the reports in your newspaper on the International Consultation on Globalisation entitled "Re-examining globalisation's benefits" (NST, Feb 2), organised by the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) of Malaysia, under the sponsorship of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

It is heartening to note that a formerly exclusive conservative Christian organisation like the WEF and its Malaysian associate NECF are opening up to get involved in such secular issues as globalisation.

Christians know that the NECF was set up for denominations like the Baptist and Gospel Hall and independent Bible-believing churches of Malaysia which are not keen to join the liberal Council of Churches of Malaysia.

The NECF and its international body, the WEF, had their roots in the fundamentalist wing of the Protestant church worldwide. For years, these organisations prided themselves on being "faithful to basic pure fundamental Christian doctrines" and had refused to associate with the mainline denominations because of their so-called liberal teachings.

Secondly, another indication that the WEF and NECF are now willing to accept pluralism in religion is their invitation to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a Muslim, to open the consultation, and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, a member of the liberal Methodist Church (a non-NECF church), to close it. Perhaps they are getting used to Malaysia.

It is obvious that the NECF has now become more open, accommodating and willing to compromise.

This is a good sign, given the plural nature of our multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society.

Thirdly, I wish to commend the New Straits Times for its extensive coverage of the consultation. The paper has done a wonderful job.