



LOCAL TREAT: Abdullah getting guests like Metropolitan Gennadios (covering his mouth) and Archbishop John Onaiyekan to taste local fruits at the gathering in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. On the right is Tourism Minister Datuk Leo Michael Toyad.

Special prayer moves Pak Lah

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KUALA LUMPUR: The atmosphere at a gathering of international Christian leaders where the Prime Minister was a special guest was filled with emotion.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was clearly moved when the Council of Churches of Malaysia president Tan Sri Dr Lim Cheng Ean asked everyone to stand up and join him in a prayer at the start of yesterday's proceedings.

It was a special prayer seeking God's blessings and guidance for Abdullah and the country.

Dr Lim also prayed for the Prime Minister's wife, Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood,

who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

"Bless her with good health and with healing so that she remains as his constant companion and his tower of strength," he said.

The Prime Minister, who was standing with the rest, smiled after the prayer.

In opening his address, he thanked the World Council of Churches for inviting him to the meeting of its Faith and Order Plenary Commission.

It was an honour for him, he added, to be invited to address "such an important gathering of leaders of the Christian faith."

Abdullah spoke frankly and

from his heart when he expressed his concern for the state of the world, saying the lines of conflict today between religions and civilisations were evident.

"We hope to God that this world will be more peaceful one day," he said.

He received resounding applause at the end of his speech and was seen wiping away tears on returning to his seat.

Earlier, Prof David Yemba, moderator of the commission, observed that religions were under the scrutiny of people all over the world because certain parties committed violence in the name of religion.