

PM: No reason to fear each other

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TOKYO: Christians and Muslims have so much in common that there should be no reason for them to fear each other, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Speaking at the U-Thant lecture series of the United Nations University here yesterday, Abdullah told his audience, made up mostly of academics, that he once addressed a Christian gathering in Malaysia and told them there were very few differences in their beliefs from that of the Muslims'.

He also spoke about a similar discussion with a rabbi at an international conference and pointed out that Muslims also

believed in all the prophets - from Adam to Muhammad.

The Prime Minister had earlier delivered his lecture on "Islam Hadhari or Civilisational Islam - Promoting Good Governance and Cultures Internationally".

Asked what advice he would give to the world on promoting tolerance, Abdullah said in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Malaysia it had to be done from the "top down".

"Tolerance and moderation are principles that must come from the top as the ordinary people living in secluded and rural areas may not be able to see how it can be done."

Abdullah explained the 10

principles of Islam Hadhari and stressed that it was neither a new religion nor new religious order.

He said the 10 principles explained and summarised the "centrality of Islam in the lives of its believers, the way it should be appreciated and practised in these modern times."

Abdullah reiterated that terrorism should not be equated with Islam, as the extremists do not speak for the religion.

He reminded the world, especially the West, that the best way to combat terrorism was to find out and overcome the root of the reason why people become terrorists.