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Reverend: We respect all religious groups

KOTA KINABALU: Malaysian churches have always maintained a peaceful and good relationship with different religious groups in the country.

Sabah Council of Churches chairman Rev Datuk Albert Vun Cheong Fui said they were respectful of every religious group and were not forcing anyone to become Christians.

"Faith and conviction in the heart cannot be forced upon," Vun said when commenting on the recent controversy over the Selangor Islamic Religious Department raid at the Damansara Utama Methodist

Church (DUMC).

He said such action could cause misunderstanding and misinformation.

Vun, who is head of the Sabah Anglican church, said churches in Sabah invited local community leaders including Muslims for dinners and public events.

"Our previous Mayor (Datuk Iliyas Ibrahim) also attended our dinner. There is no misunderstanding because they came as a courtesy of our invite," he said.

He said such gatherings were common not only in Sabah but also

at other churches throughout the country.

Vun said that there were many events - like fund-raising for orphans, HIV patients and helping drug users - that Christians carry out with other groups, including Muslims.

If there was a need for the authorities to enter the premises of a church, Vun said that it would be better for them to communicate the need and inform them about their arrival.

"If there is any wrongdoing, they should obtain a warrant," he added.