

15<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Dear Pastor/Elder/Leader,

**Re: The Church in this season**

Greetings in the Lord Jesus!

The nation will enter into her 13<sup>th</sup> General Election on 5 May 2013. In the past year, the *Christian Federation of Malaysia, Prayer United* and *NECF* have issued advisories on how to pray and prepare for the election. These resources can be found at [www.necf.org.my](http://www.necf.org.my).

NECF is non-partisan but to assist churches in this critical period, we wish to share a general framework for the benefit of churches.

**The Church and Political Engagement**

The church is not a political entity but the body of Christ. As such, her engagement is informed by Scripture and premised on a Christian worldview. A consistent reading of Scripture would show that the truth of the Gospel must speak to *every* area of life, including the political. In the Book of Genesis, we are told to be stewards of God's earth and *everything in it*.

As stewards of God's creation, the church is commanded to be a blessing to the nation and the world. She is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Therefore, the church in this season is to be a moral voice and a public conscience to our political leaders, reminding them to be just and fear the Lord (Exodus 18:19- 21) and to hold them accountable to the standards God places on earthly rulers.

**Discerning with Integrity**

To be a blessing to the nation, the church must strive for what is true, honourable, just and commendable in the interest of all people (Philippians 4:8). This would require the church to not only be *non-partisan* but with discernment, speak and act on moral and spiritual issues affecting the nation. The Church is "obliged to declare the criteria by which the nation will be ultimately judged and [the] divine standards to which man and society must conform if civilization is to endure" (Carl Henry). In the Bible, this was what the Old Testament prophets did when they acted and spoke truth to the powers that be and to sinful nations, including the leaders of Israel and Judah on issues such as corruption, abuse of power and taking advantage on the poor and destitute.

**Vote with Truth and Wisdom**

While the institutional church is to remain non-partisan, individual Christians as citizens of the country, on the other hand, have every right to make a stand for the political party or candidates of their choice. In so doing, Christians ought to bear in mind their identity as God's witnesses in this sinful world. Christians must therefore vote with truth based on objective information as can be

obtained and to the best of their knowledge. There is a need for wisdom to vote according to one's conscience as guided and informed by the Holy Spirit.

For this purpose, Christians ought to be mindful of the various election strategies employed to garner votes. Such strategies are often politicised, abused or misused. Christians should not be swayed by such strategies but exercise the democratic right to elect men and women of righteousness, the persons of God's choosing who possess the moral and political will to serve and contribute effectively to nation building as well as to truth, justice and righteousness for our nation.

Upon conclusion of the election, churches must continue to hold our parliamentary, and state elected representatives as well as elected officials accountable to what God desires in them in line with their oath of office as political leaders of the country.

### **Worship Services to Facilitate Voting**

Since polling day falls on Sunday, it would be encouraging if churches could make the arrangements deemed appropriate to facilitate the participation of the electoral process. Holding Saturday services or early Sunday services may be wise. In East Malaysia, some polling centers close as early as 1pm, so this change might be helpful.

### **A Call to Righteousness and Prayer**

In this season where our nation is at the crossroads, let us as Christians engage one another, our fellow citizens and leaders with grace, compassion and mercy alongside the truth founded on Biblical principles that speak of God's heart for the nation.

It is for these reasons, churches and Christians ought to double all efforts to sound the trumpet, consecrate a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, and assemble the elders, the congregation and children to return to Him with all our hearts as acts of consecration (paraphrase of Joel 2:12-16).

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me." – Ezekiel 3:17

God bless Malaysia!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eugene Yapp', followed by a period.

Eugene Yapp  
Secretary-General  
NECF Malaysia