

29 May 2013

Dear Pastors, Elders and Church Leaders,

RE: Pastoral Communique: Priorities for the Church Post GE

It has been an extremely challenging season both for our country and the Church throughout the 13th General Election. The election results may have been expected or disappointing for some. Regardless, there is much we can thank God for. Political consciousness and concern for the nation has never been greater and many have demonstrated their willingness to be involved in seeking the good of our nation. And the Church is now more united in her mission, resolve and willingness to glorify God in places where God has put Christians in.

While positive benefits have resulted, there is also much to do. Divisiveness, acrimony and many conflicting statements have left our nation in doubt and in need of healing. Much needs to be done on our part and we desire for the Church to stand out as a beacon of light in these challenging times in accordance to the mandate the Lord has given us.

Timing in Hands of the Lord

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that time is in the hands of our Lord. In His time and sovereign will, the government of the day and authority was provisionally instituted over the affairs of this nation. As Christians, we would believe that what God has so instituted would be for the greatest good for all in accordance with His eternal purposes to which the Church must respond in faith and obedience.

Prayer for the Nation

It is important during this season for the Church to be more ardent in prayer as we stand in the gap for our nation.

There is a need for deep repentance of our sins and for the sins of the nation, for forgiveness and for humility on our part before others. Christians must attend to church prayer meetings more regularly and our prayers must be more fervent. Let us take our prayers to our neighbourhood and communities so that the Lord's blessings may come upon all. In this respect, we urge all churches and Christians to participate in our Malaysia MyHome initiative, information on which may be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/MalaysiaMyHome>.

As we do so, we are reminded by the words of Scripture that a humble and contrite heart must take place first before Christians can contribute effectively and meaningfully to the welfare and well-being of our nation. (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Priorities

There are many things to be done and many challenges to face.

The Church must set priorities and begin to determine what needs to be done in terms of short and long-term goals. The priority is for the Church to be engaged in nation building and this is done through community/neighbourhood projects for the good of all, and through bringing major improvements to our structures and institutions and by being a positive influence on policy making.

Conceivably, we need to consider three areas:

1. Giving attention to the “mediating structures” of society and their role in strengthening the values inherent in any democratic society and in democratic institutions. These include Parliament, the Judiciary and public agencies like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the Election Commission. The goal is to ensure genuine independence and greater accountability. **In this respect, Christian participation in civil society movements should be encouraged.**
2. Bringing development and empowerment for marginalised and rural communities both in East and West Malaysia in holistic ways. For any development work to be meaningful, there must be a holistic integration between individual spiritual formation, community nurturing, education on civil and political rights, as well as economic empowerment programmes. **Churches from both East and West Malaysia should pool their resources together towards this end.**
3. Addressing religious freedom issues. Over the years, there have been conservative religious groups that want to dictate how other adherents of other religions ought to behave and conduct themselves. It is therefore imperative for **the Church and Christians to be aware and educated on such issues so that the fundamental liberties under the constitution are preserved.**

Listening to One Another

Let us during this season begin to listen to one another’s aspirations and desires, to each other’s hopes and dreams for the nation and together, carve out a new vision for this nation.

The prophet Jeremiah exhorts the Jews in exile in Babylon to seek the welfare of the city and to pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare we will find our welfare and be blessed (Jeremiah 29:7-9). The Church therefore needs to be in pole position in order for this to materialise.

God bless Malaysia!



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