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I. SAVE THE PEOPLE'S MONEY CAMPAIGN

When I get to the polling booth this coming general elections, the question among others that I will ask myself will be: *Which of the two contesting political party coalitions will be more likely to move against those who have allegedly committed crime against the country by misusing the people's financial resources?*

This issue concerns me because, despite the fact that I myself may no longer be poor, it is unconscionable that so many Malaysian families are today still deprived of so much essential goods and services in their daily lives while some in positions of power or have connections with

those in positions of power seem to be able to live it up either by paying themselves exorbitant salaries, packages and bonuses or awarded contracts which are worth a lot.

Bona fide business must of course be given space to start and grow to create jobs and enhance taxes to increase the nation's wealth which in turn can generate work opportunities and more essential goods and services for all our people. But there must be opportunities for qualified Malaysians to bid for government contracts through openly conducted tender.

Issues of good governance are of great consequence because no country is so wealthy that it can allow an unmitigated drain on the people's resources and yet not have adverse effects on national development and impact on its people. If we have **"Save Water"** and **"Save Electricity"** campaigns which we as the people must take very seriously, can we as a nation afford not to have a **"Save the People's Money"** campaign?

In a **"Save the People's Money"** campaign, we should not just be so zealous about going after pick-pockets while neglecting to focus on those who go after very much higher stakes and whose targets are the country's resources no less. Call it *"gravity train"* or any other name, this is sinful by God's value and poor families are our constant reminder that we cannot allow this practice to continue.

It is no use comparing our country favourably with other peoples' countries. I don't want my country just to be better off than a country like

When I get to the polling booth this coming general elections, I will be asking myself *how much better off my country can be* and *how many more poor families can be alleviated from their daily hardship and anxieties* if only we stop powerful people from putting their fingers into the people's coffers.

The way to this desirable and necessary goal is that I join other Malaysian voters to return as the next government of Malaysia the political party coalition who is more likely to bring those guilty of sinning against the people's resources to book. Let the investigation and the subsequent trial be fair. Accord those accused proper and full opportunity to defend themselves. Let there be no lynching, libel or character assassination but a fair investigation, prosecution and trial.

But there must be guarantee that crimes against the people will face just retribution so that such crimes against the people will be stymied.

II. PROMOTING HARMONY AMONG ALL

When I get to the polling booth this coming general elections, the question among others that I will ask myself will be:

Which of the two contesting political party coalitions will be more likely to truly promote harmony among all Malaysians and show themselves willing to move against those who have incited hatred and fear against the multi-ethnic, multi-religious fabric of Malaysian society?

It is dangerously unhealthy that in our multi-cultural context we are now being subjected to news about non-halal (non-kosher) and therefore offensive items, animate or inanimate, being provocatively placed in places of worship or practised and served in public functions. This issue is not just about any one animal, colour (of gift packets) or religious sentiments or customs of any one religious faith or culture. At stake here is the very basis of our national integration. And no amount of semantics or cleverly-couched slogans will heal the fracture we are now being subjected to.

To be, in a political sense, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, or anti any other person's religion is unbecoming of any one individual or group especially when the perpetrators claim to be representing or defending their respective religion and culture. Nor should we be anti-Eurasian, Aborigine, Kadazan, Iban, Malay, Indian, Chinese, or for that matter anti-Semite or Arab or Palestinian. The Bible teaches that all human beings have been made in the image of God and therefore endowed with dignity to whom respect is due.

Thankfully, God needs no defender nor protection. A genuine faith will usually show and demonstrate itself through changed lives. And changed life is better expressed in one's love for one's neighbour. Love by its very nature cannot be represented by aggression but by genuine respect and concern for others.

When human beings try to politically defend or protect their respective faiths, more often than not they misrepresent the truths and values their respective faiths espouse. Those who want to safeguard the position of their own religion or culture can better do so by safeguarding religious and cultural freedom of others. Respect for all human beings is respect for our common Creator. By disparaging what others hold dear and sacred for the express purpose of promoting the supremacy of one's own culture or belief will only serve to place our faith and culture under question, even making it the scorn of others as is now the rampant case in our country.

Promoting harmony among all the people should be the urgent task of the next government of our country. Failure is not an option. Accordingly, when I get to the polling booth this coming general elections, my vote will not go to those who are likely to fail to truly promote harmony among all our people.

In this respect, the proper numerical for effective use in promoting real harmony is not “**one**” but
“**all**”

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