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Adopt good values to become nation of great people

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AS a Malaysian nearing the twilight of his life, I have more time these days to reflect and think of the future generations of Malaysians.

I myself have few complaints because I have led a full life, growing up as a teenager in post-Independent Malaysia, earning a decent living, having friends from all walks of life and from various races. Some of my friends are gone now and, being mortal, I know it is a matter of time before I join them.

But I know I will go in peace because despite the problems, we have done well as a people and as a nation. I say this because, having retired, I have had opportunity to travel the world with my wife.

Whenever we see the racism and the broken-down living in Harlem and the Bronx, the absolute poverty and decay in many of our neighbouring countries, or the violence in Europe, we find reason to thank the Lord for having allowed us to live our lives in Malaysia.

Of course, over the years, people have expressed reservations and fears about the qualities of some of our leaders and the direction they are taking us. But inevitably, our sane society delivers sane people at the helm. We had the Tunku, we had Tun Razak and then Tun Hussein Onn. They had their Tan Cheng Locks, Tan Siew Sins, Sambanthans and Manickavasagams. Since 1981, we have had Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has shown us that Malaysia indeed 'Boleh' and we have seen progress and prosperity beyond our dreams in 1957.

Therefore, I find it heartening that people like Chairil Anuar (NST, May 19) and K.J. John (NST, May 19), have expressed their hope and prayers that we continue to have leaders like them. It was also heart-warming to hear what Dr Mahathir's successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi, said at the Umno assembly, on the need for Umno to be a party of Muslims and what constitutes a good Muslim.

Good values are universal and although Chairil Anuar says some in Umno may have viewed Abdullah's comments as a sermon, I believe that the majority will see it as the voice of reason.

As a Malaysian, and like Chairil Anuar, it is also my prayer that not only Umno members, but all Malaysians, heed the message conveyed by Dr Mahathir and Abdullah at the Umno general assembly. If we do, we will not only survive as a nation, we will also be a nation of great people.