

PM Najib's change of strategy?

MalaysiaKini.com

June 5, 2015

By Stephen Ng

COMMENT When Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak launched the Residents' Representative Committees (JPP), aimed at tackling the issue of 'emotional disconnection' between city dwellers and the federal government, he used the word, 'grassroots'.

It is no surprise that Najib wants to set up the JPP, but not willing to introduce the local elections, which according to former civil servant Ramon Navaratnam, will be more useful in solving local issues.

The keyword is 'grassroots'. Propaganda is more important than empowering the local constituents to exercise their rights to choose their local councilors to represent them.

Why should political parties including Pakatan have the power to choose their own men as councillors, which is why Pakatan in both Penang and Selangor have been pushing for local council elections, but which has failed to take off due to the lack of political will at the federal level?

The keyword, if I may repeat myself, is 'grassroots' in the case of the Christians for Peace and Harmony Malaysia (CPHM) movement. It is not surprising therefore that CPHM has labelled itself as a 'grassroots movement initiated by a group of concerned Christians to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance among citizens of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds through fostering peace and harmony in the country'.

Noble as it is, but viewed in the bigger picture, it appears that CPHM is all part of the entire strategic plan. Note that when its president, Rev Wong Kim Kong spoke about the engagement in Segamat, he was also talking about "grassroots".

At the time of writing, it is learnt that the unit for the Socio-Economic Development of the Indian Community (Sedic) in the Prime Minister's Department has proposed a special funding scheme for Indian-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and skills training institutes for the upliftment of Indians in the low-income bracket.

CPHM an apologist for Najib?

Nothing is wrong with reaching out to the grassroots, because after all, we form the grassroots and if there is any funding from the government, it should benefit the grassroots instead of the cronies.

However, from a political viewpoint, this is important for a politician's support base. If you can win over the grassroots, you will remain in power for perhaps another 50 years.

This is the crux of the matter. CPHM has denied that it is a tool used by the federal

government to reach out to grassroots, and I give CPHM the benefits of the doubt that perhaps, the people behind CPHM have been innocently played into the entire scheme of things.

However, throughout his speeches, I have also noted that its president Rev Wong Kim Kong was dropping subtle hints such as: "Najib is a good man. We should give him a chance. The Bible teaches us to forgive and forget."

Does this sound familiar?

In *The Malaysian Insider*, Wong (photo) was again quoted saying: "Just like how we reject homosexuality but we love homosexuals." I have heard this in person during a meeting where Wong shared about his movement.

It only takes one to read between the lines, as former US ambassador to Malaysia John Malott would tell us in a recent article in *Malaysiakini*, and the pieces like a jigsaw puzzle would come together on what is really motivating Wong in his efforts to set up CPHM.

Perhaps he is not aware, which is why we take the trouble to caution him and his team and this is the reason why most people are sceptical about Wong's initiative.

Subtly dropping a hint or two, but when you put them together, it all adds up. This is the basis for saying that CPHM has the backing of the federal government as part of its strategy to win the grassroots, which will hopefully translate into votes for Barisan Nasional.

One particular reader, Dr KJ John, in his comment posting went as far as to say, which perhaps sheds some light into the question that we have all been asking: "Rev Wong was known to be an MCA supporter in my memory, and best I know, Stephen is a freelance journalist and writer!"

"What makes you think that Pakatan will form a better government?" is another statement made by 'apolitical' Wong during a meeting, which was not even a CPHM meeting, but according to *Malaysiakini* writer Koh Jun Lin, Wong claimed that I had "sneaked into" it as if I was spying on CPHM.

It is a sheer misuse of words which I forgive, of course, after straightening out the facts that it was never meant to be a CPHM meeting. CPHM did not fund the meeting, neither did it host the talk for pastors and grassroots leaders.

Be upfront

Despite the subtle hints dropped in Wong's speeches (repeatedly?), none of us are saying that Pakatan leaders are angels, but as I have always said, no matter how wretched Pakatan may turn out to be, we need a two-political party system in this country.

At least, I am being upfront. People trust me because I tell them what I would like to see

happening in our country's politics, which I have stated again and again that in order to have a 'matured' democracy, we need to have both sides equally strong, capable of taking over Putrajaya for a maximum of two terms.

Only then, as the rakyat, do we become the real kingmakers.

Without that, it can only be the abuse of power as we see it, because on the one hand, we have someone with all the powers there are, and on the other, we have the persecuted lot who are in the opposition.

There will be miscarriages of justice when double standards are being exercised. Without the upholding of justice, which is the core of the teachings in the Bible, peace and harmony can only be as fake as the plastic flowers in our modern homes.

Allowing one party to be too long in power produces a corrupt regime which will only drive our nation to a disaster, where billions of ringgit can be burnt away, yet no one knows what really happened.

Change of strategy

A change of strategy is obvious in the wake of attacks coming from Najib's own nemesis, Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

There is nothing wrong for Najib or his PR strategist to say that there is a change of strategy. Say it, and people will understand that there are concerted efforts to reach out to the grassroots.

In my opinion, even if people's suspicions prove to be true, CPHM should just be upfront about it. There is nothing wrong with being upfront.

People like me should not be made to appear to be unkind because I personally do not think that Najib makes a good leader.

In fact, there are not many good and sincere leaders in Umno. People like Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Ku Li, photo) or Saifuddin Abdullah are too 'weak' to take over Umno's presidency.

Therefore, the only person that I think have the moral standing and intellectual capacity to lead this nation is none other than Rafizi Ramli, along with people like Nurul Izzah Anwar, N Surendran, Dr Ong Kian Ming and Tony Pua. Khairy Jamaluddin would make a good leader, provided that he sticks to his principles.

It really does not matter if CPHM is a 'Putrajaya-backed' movement, as claimed by The Malay Mail Online, but at least, in the name of integrity befitting a reverend, Wong should have been more upfront.

The disagreement that I have with Wong is nothing personal, nor is it because I do not love peace and harmony, but merely a question of our personal beliefs of what is good for the nation.

It is strictly based on my personal observations that, unless Wong is transparent, CPHM will not have my support. God's ways are higher than our own thoughts and understanding; therefore, I have no doubt that He can even use CPHM towards achieving a good end, but as they always say, before the Final Judgment to come, in order to find out one's real motives, will CPHM pass the acid test?

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/300778>