

Racism is a sin
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COMMENT Several years ago, the great Christian evangelist Dr Billy Graham made this very profound observation: "Racial and ethnic hostility is the foremost social problem facing our world today.

no_to_racismFrom the systematic horror of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia to the random violence ravaging our inner cities, our world seems to be caught in a tidal wave of racial and ethnic tension."

Racial prejudice is certainly on the loose and on the rise everywhere in this global village of ours, and we in Malaysia are not spared the onslaught of this evil viral malady.

Currently we are experiencing the vibration and trepidation of a high wave of racial tremor building up momentum into a possible deadly racial tsunami that could destroy the fragile harmony and peace among the people.

Many people are feeling that the evil of racism is increasingly dominating our socio-political arena, with irresponsible politicians and Little Napoleons in the civil servants vocally and visibly demonstrating their racial bias and discrimination in almost all areas of life -- religion, culture, education, politics, business, employment, and even in sports.

Like performers playing to the gallery, these racist politicians and Little Napoleons create scene after scene of what used to be inconceivable scenarios of postulated sequence of persuasive poisonous racial rhetoric in the very sensitive multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society.

Unfortunately, the government of the day has not only not done much to arrest the deteriorating race relationship trend, but has actually contributed to its rapid escalation with policies perceived as unjust and discriminating.

For example, the ban on the use of certain Bahasa Malaysia words in the worship, practice, teaching and publications of some non-Muslim religions is certainly a violation of the human, civil and constitutional rights of the non-Muslim community, as Bahasa Malaysia is their beloved national language and they have every right to use every word in its vocabulary for whatever purpose.

I will not harp on issues that had been resolved (sic), such as the decade-long unjust and unjustified bureaucratic restriction on the formation of non-Muslim religious clubs and societies in schools, but would like the powers-that-be to learn from the blunders created by some smart alec Little Napoleons, and ensure that such a serious lapse will never recur.

There is also a need for the government to act fast and decisively against those who are propogating the supremacy of any one race and, in the process, running down and offending the people of other races.

These people, like the racist principals who insult, outrage and hurt the feelings of their students with racial umbrage, should be harshly punished, including being sacked, or even charged for sedition or for disturbing the peace of the nation.

The government should also initiate legal action against irresponsible writers, like the

controversial Mingguan Malaysia columnist Dr Mohd Ridhuan Tee Abdullah who provokes the non-Malays with his weekly diatribe against them, saying that minorities who cannot respect the special position of Islam and the Malays should return to their "homeland", which he means China and India. He has also sneered that Malaysia should be renamed "Cinasia" or "Indiasia" if every demand by non-Muslims was accommodated. Tee should not forget his own racial root!

Lately, there have been many insensitive uncouth statements made by the insecure plebeians who are inferior in intellect and bankrupt in integrity, but are holding high positions in the academic circle.

Such unhealthy developments reflect a very sad state of the questionable quality of the intellectual and scholastic standard in our country. This is also reflected distinctly in the case of one person who wrote a doctorate thesis on the evil of the Internal Security Act (ISA), but embraced, supported and promoted the oppressive law when he was appointed to a high position.

We got many such shameless pseudo intellectuals in our midst.

Racial problems must be dealt with fast and decisively as they cause severe pain in our people and country. There are people who are deeply hurt, carrying within themselves the deep, painful, wounds that have been inflicted by the racial actions and attitudes of others.

The biblical illustration of the church community as one body is very apt in this context. If one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it. Similarly, if any community in the nation is hurt, the whole nation suffers.

Racism hurts and it takes a long time to heal. If our children are hurt by racist principals and teachers at school, it is not easy for them to forgive and certainly harder for them to forget. These children will grow up with a racial thorn in their heart and will live a life coloured by fear of racial slurs and stigma.

We need to know and understand that racism is not a skin problem. It is a sin problem. Racism has its roots in the sins of pride and arrogance. Racism is perhaps the most demonic tool for the destruction of a nation. It destroys the unity, harmony and peace of the nation by creating hatred, animosity and antagonism among the people of various races. It hurts the person who hates and the person who is hated.

Consider all the sins that have their roots in racism -- bitterness, anger, hostility, enmity, and even murder.

People tends to perceive and value or devalue each other according to physical differences and abilities, but as we, or least those of us who believe in God, know that we should not judge by external appearance another person whom we should accept and honour without any racial bias or discrimination, because he or she is a creature of God.

We should learn to respect and evaluate all individuals according to our common humanity, and conduct our relationship without any partiality and prejudice.

We should never look down on another human being, irrespective of colour, gender, creed, culture, and class, because we know that each and every human life is infinitely precious, created by God who loves and cares for him or her.

There is no place for racism in our nation, and as we celebrate the 53rd birthday of our nation, and join in the celebration of Hari Raya Aidifitri with our Muslim brothers and sisters, let us assign infinite worth to each of our fellow citizen, and take the lead in eliminating racism in our midst because we know that racism is a sin. — MySinChew.com

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