THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR FILIPINOS

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The events that unfolded and the horrors that were recorded as a result of the Marcos’ attempt to take forever control of the country through martial law has left the whole nation extremely, but probably with good reason, agitated when it comes to changing the form and structure of our government. Then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo made such attempt but was stopped. During the 2016 presidential election, Rodrigo Duterte made a promise to have the government switch to federalism. However, debates on whether the problems of our country are associated with the type of government we have. If such a relation exists, what then would be best suited to be the form of our government?

If we are to view what we are now as a people, we will know that we have been abusing the freedom and rights that have been given to us. The abuse is so extreme that most of our brothers had less freedom to enjoy. Our national government, who had such a wide scope of responsibility, became helpless in addressing the concerns of everybody who needs help. And considering the geographical and cultural differences, where there are 7,000 islands, 81 provinces and 28 dominant ethnic groups, it is high time that we switch our government to a system that would best address the diversity that makes our country colorful but divides our nation into pieces.

A federal system of government is one that divides the powers of government between the national (federal) government and state and local governments. Federalism can be considered the middle ground--compromise--a way to distribute authority between the states and the national government. We do not want a national government
which is too strong nor a government which is too weak. We need a strong local government which can protect the interest of its own people without compromising the interest of the entire country.

A federal government would allow local leaders to establish order based on characteristics of its people. Each state can independently setup their defense, foreign and monetary policies and inter-state commerce. Unlike our current presidential system, the states can decide on their own with little or no interference from the national government.

The culture can be protected and the resources can be well-managed. The states will have fiscal autonomy and the new system will distribute the wealth evenly. In 2015, 35% of the national budget went to Manila even it only represents 14% of the Philippine population (Source: internet). That is probably the reason why poor people keep on pouring into Manila because they believe that is where the money is. Through this new system, Manila would be decongested and the needs of the other states can be addressed. The states will be self-reliant and would lessen its dependence to Manila. These states can keep what they earn alloting only a portion of it to the national government. They would not have to beg the national government for assistance anymore.

The unitary government that we have right now is not suitable to us anymore. Malacanang has become so powerful thus resulting to abuse of power and corruption. There are still many places in our country which seem to have been forgotten in time as they were forgotten by the government to begin with. We must consider that our cultural and geographical differences make no one law applicable to all of us. These differences should be addressed by the local government themselves as they are in the right position to understand the situation whatever it may be. Of course, there are cons. Federalism is not free from corruption nor of abuse of power. Nothing ever is. Yet with federalism, we
give those provinces, towns and barangays equal chance to be taken care of by a state which can immediately respond to their needs without waiting for the mercy of the central government.

We are a country of colors and we should be proud of it and truly, we should celebrate it. Yet, these colors could not be fully appreciated by one eye only. Each is unique and would need special care different than others. The federal system of government is not perfect but it is a good start if we want to keep moving forward as a nation.

References: