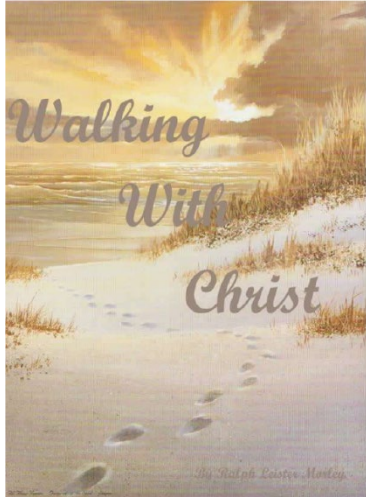


2019: News, Musings, and Exploring our APSC Artefacts



Monday, 11 March 2019

“Walking With Christ: The Story of Pastor Ralph Morley's Ministry” by Ps Ralph Morley

[Walking with Christ - The Story of Pastor Ralph Morley's Ministry](#)

This is an autobiographical account of Pastor Ralph's Ministry across the top end of Australia, from West to East Coast, including the Torres Strait Islands.

Sunday, 13 October 2019

“Pentecostalism in Australia”

ABC Radio Interview with **Prof Mark Hutchinson** (Alphacrucis College), **Dr Tanya Riches** (Hillsong College), and **Ps William Dumas** (Ganggalah Church).

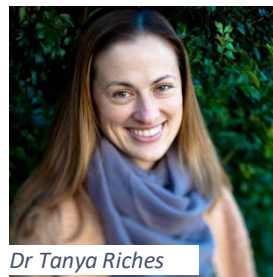
[Link to Radio Interview](#)

“To help us get our bearings, we hear from Professor Mark Hutchinson, who is a world authority on evangelicalism and a leading historian of Australian Pentecostalism.”

“And, we get a personal perspective of the faith from Dr Tanya Riches, who is a lecturer in theology at Hillsong College. She has been part of the congregation for most of her life, and has published a number of well-known songs through Hillsong Music, including the hit song Jesus What a Beautiful Name. Her latest book is Worship and Social Engagement in Urban Aboriginal-led Australian Pentecostal Congregations: (Re)imagining Identity in the Spirit (Brill).”



Prof Mark Hutchinson



Dr Tanya Riches



Ps William Dumas

“Finally, we hear from Indigenous pastor William Dumas, a Biripi man who is a senior pastor of Ganggalah Church in Tweed Heads, NSW. He tells us about his experience of the Holy Spirit, and how he sees faith in relation to culture.”

Tuesday, 15 October 2019

"The Peace-Making Pentecostal" by Stephen Fogarty (President, Alphacrucis College)

"Abiy Ahmed, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, was over the weekend awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Since taking office in April 2018, Ahmed has been instrumental in ending the 20-year territorial dispute with neighbouring Eritrea, reconciled internal religious tensions, released thousands of political prisoners, liberalised several key economic sectors, discontinued media censorship, dismissed leaders suspected of corruption, and raised the influence of women by nominating females for key cabinet positions as well as on the Supreme Court. These reforms put him narrowly ahead of New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern and teenage Swedish activist, Greta Thunberg.

The cornerstone event of Ahmed's rise was in 2006 when a mob of 300 extremist Muslims attacked a group of Christians, killing six and wounding 15, in the small town of Beshasha. This town happened to be the birthplace of Ahmed, who was an officer in the Defence Force at the time. He was posted back there and successfully defused communal tensions in the aftermath.

It was not long after that Ahmed entered politics and rose quickly, founding the 'Religious Forum for Peace', as well as completing his PhD on "Social Capital and its Role in Traditional Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia". His leadership embodies the role of a 'peacemaker'.

What Ahmed has demonstrated is that faith in leadership can actually be a powerful vessel for peace. Pentecostalism in particular has a number of features which illustrate why leaders arising from these communities may be unifiers rather than dividers.

Although some may balk at the suggestion, there is a direct and unique link between Ahmed and our own Prime Minister, Scott Morrison. They are both 'P'ent'ay'. This Ethiopian term was originally used in the 1960's as a pejorative to describe Christians belonging to the Pentecostal denomination.

You can count on one hand the number of leaders of nation states who are Pentecostal. Morrison is in fact the first of this ilk in the Western world, and so it is worth considering the significance and what impact such a background might have on leadership styles.

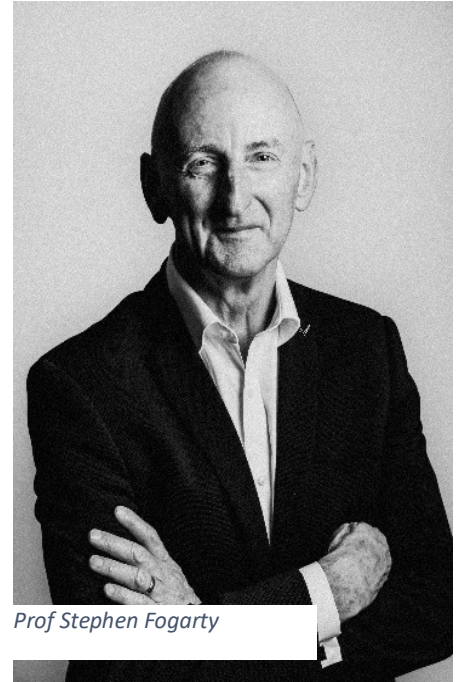
Faith is evidently a key driver for the young Ethiopian Prime Minister (he is only 43). In discussing Ahmed's leadership approach, a BBC reporter noted that "There is something of the revivalist preacher in the way he evangelises for his vision. He has the energy, the passion, and the certainty."

This description brings to mind similar descriptors used for Morrison in the election campaign, though perhaps in less positive terms. His speeches, for example, often took on the energy of a charismatic pastor pitching a message of faith to a lukewarm nation.

Ever since his rise to power, Morrison's faith has been treated as a target for suspicion. A number of journalists, politicians and even academics have insinuated that a leader of the Pentecostal faith is somehow tainted by association. They accused him of holding an 'us' and 'them' mentality that was supposedly grounded in Pentecostalism, with even his worship style being compared to a Nazi salute.

What Ahmed has demonstrated is that faith in leadership can actually be a powerful vessel for peace. Pentecostalism in particular has a number of features which illustrate why leaders arising from these communities may be unifiers rather than dividers.

Firstly, Pentecostal churches in Australia reflect a strong diversity, representing the greatest mix of ethnicities in their congregations with over 50% from non-Anglo heritage. Secondly, Pentecostals emphasise the more experiential and relational aspects of faith, which tend to encourage more pragmatic approaches to conflict. Lastly, the Pentecostal movement has historically led by innovation, with twenty of the first thirty-seven Pentecostal churches established in Australia led by women.



Prof Stephen Fogarty

Although the political, cultural and social cohesion in Australia is significantly more stable than that of Ethiopia, perhaps we need an Ahmed to help reconcile the fractures evident in our national and international landscape. At the policy level, debates around the definition of marriage, freedom of religion, the treatment of refugees, abortion, and climate change have all divided deeply. Over the last decade all the major political parties have experienced ideological and leadership schisms which have left gaping wounds. Even on the international stage the tensions between the US and China have been palpable with Australia caught in the middle of a relational rift.

At the bipartisan National Prayer Breakfast at Parliament on Monday morning, Morrison talked about how the act of prayer reminds us of our vulnerability and the need for humility, that there is something far bigger than each of us, and that the principles around prayer can bring us towards unity and cooperation.

“Prayer gives us a reminder of our humility and our vulnerability, and that forms a unity,” the PM said. “Because there’s certainly one thing we all have in common, whether we sit in the green or red chairs in this place, or anywhere else, and that is our human frailty. It is our human vulnerability. It is one of the great misconceptions, I think, of religion that there’s something about piety. It is the complete reverse. The complete reverse. Faith, religion, is actually first and foremost an expression of our human frailty and vulnerability and an understanding that there are things far bigger than each of us. And so when we come together in prayer, we are reminded of that, and we are reminded that the great challenges we face in this world are ones that we need to continue to bring up in prayer.”

It is still too early to judge how effective Morrison’s leadership style will be, and if his Pentecostal background will help him be a genuine peacemaker. Whatever reforms he makes however, he would be wise to take heed of the words from his Nobel Peace Prize winning brother’s inaugural speech:

“For peace, the foundation is justice. Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is an inviolable unity built on our common understandings. Peace is our confidence in each other. Peace is our common journey that continued to this day through our coming together in unity. Peace is our path and our goal that allows us to solve disagreements and conflicts in a civilised manner.”

--- *Eternity News*, 2019



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