



SPC News

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The 'election miracle' is behind us; can the Prophetic Economy be ahead of us?

Peter Whiting

As the recent election result unfolded, Ross Gittins, economics editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, wrote, 'The day may come when he [Scott Morrison] decides winning the election was the easy bit'. Gittins was doubtless referring to the many immediate challenges Australia faces economically, socially, and ecologically, and observing that the government was reelected on a platform of continuity, not change.

Proactive policies to address pressing needs like the growing inequities in our society and the impacts of climate change, while not addressed by the Coalition in the run-up to the election, will need considered action.

In contrast, just six months ago in November 2018, protagonists for a 'Prophetic Economy' met at Castel Gandolfo in Italy. They were not interested in continuity, but sought to establish a bold vision for change to build an improved future for the world. They were seeking ways to transition to a different prophetic economy at the service of people, the planet, and the future, with special attention to those excluded from the current system. What would we need to do in Australia to be bold visionary respondents to pressing local and international needs?

Andrew Hamilton makes it clear that the first need is a change in the priorities of Australian policies and politicians. His article, *Election is done; now to focus on what matters*, argues for governments to respond to needs at all levels of society. He notes that the 'difficulty of embodying concern for the common good and respectful relationships in government and Parliament is large', and observes that subjecting 'good governance to satisfying party-political demands has deeply eroded confidence in government'. His reference to concern for the common good resonates strongly with the call of those advocating for a prophetic economy!

Lorraine Lipson highlights a follow-up event to the prophetic economy meeting planned for March 2020 in Assisi. Pope Francis is inviting young economists, entrepreneurs, and change-makers for renewed economics, proposing new paths to a just, inclusive, and sustainable world, without leaving anyone behind.

The changes needed on the climate change front, while confronting in scale, are not without clear signposts as to how we might proceed. John Wiseman, writing in the *Conversation*, captures this idea in *2040: hope and action in the climate crisis*. He reviews a film by Damon Gameau on solutions to climate change and how a zero emissions world might unfold by 2040.

In painting a future when appropriate policies could respond decisively to climate change, many voices

around the world are demanding public leaders and politicians embrace real change in pursuit of the common good, rather than bowing to sectional interests.

The prophetic economy calls us consistently to give special attention to those excluded from the current system. Anne Doyle recounts an affirming story of her recent visit to Nairobi, where, with champion

wheelchair athlete Kurt Fearnley and his mum, she saw the positive difference love and enthusiasm can make to broken lives.

SPC Board member and Operations Manager for the Vinnies soup van, Danusia Kaska, invites us to rethink what we know of 'ice' addiction. A recent evidence-based workshop made her consider the problem in a different light.

Executive Officer of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network, Jessica Morrison, shares her reflections on why it seems Christian churches have been reticent to embrace the Palestinian cause for justice.

The idea of a Prophetic Economy which addresses the needs of all may seem something of a dream, with far too many hurdles to overcome, before it could become a reality. But is it so unreasonable an aspiration? Certainly, such an economy is envisaged in the Scriptural warrant.

Somewhat perversely, it would seem most opportune now to be bold in seeking world change. Issues like climate change and the shared perils it represents for all humanity, in an optimistic scenario, could well be the catalyst for national leaders to set aside local short-term interests in favour of international action. Movements like Prophetic Economy, if we continue to press for change, could find their prophetic message strikes a chord!





Election is done; now to focus on what matters

Andrew Hamilton

Most comment on the federal election has naturally concentrated on how it was won and lost: how votes were gained here and lost there, how people were consoled or devastated by the result, and how the parties will respond in future elections.

It is time to return to the more important question of what matters for the future good of Australia. This is what governments and political parties are bound by tradition and by their own official rhetoric to serve. This, not electoral success or failure, should govern their actions and our response as citizens to their governance. The most urgent claims, those by which our grandchildren will judge us, are first that we should pass on to them a habitat in which they can live without anxiety. This demands addressing climate change responsibly. It will require strong leadership endorsed by all parties and shapers of public opinion.



Optimism is an essential part of our climate solution.
GoodThing Productions.

2040: hope & action in the climate crisis

John Wiseman

It was framed as 'the climate election', but last week Australia returned a government with climate policies that make the task of building a zero-emissions, safe climate Australia even harder.

This result comes at a time when international studies are raising the real and imminent spectre of a mass extinction crisis and many communities are already struggling with the consequences of the climate emergency now unfolding around us.

Amid the growing strength of movements like Extinction Rebellion and climate activist Greta Thunberg's advice to 'act as you would in a crisis', Australian film-maker Damon Gameau's new climate change solutions film 2040 focuses on highlighting the huge range of climate action opportunities being explored and accelerated, not just in Australia but around the world.



The economy of Francis: Pope's invitation to Assisi

Lorraine Lipson

Pope Francis in a recent letter invited young economists, entrepreneurs and change-makers to come to Assisi in Italy to make proposals to renew economies around the world. He chose Assisi, the city of St Francis, for its significance as a symbol of humanism and fraternity, essential foundations for well functioning economies. Internationally renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs, a key speaker at the event, affirmed that a 'Prophetic economy means an economy that operates in the vision of meeting the needs of the poorest people and a vision of protecting creation. We need an economy in which prosperity is shared, that is socially fair and environmentally sustainable.'



Does guilt about historical anti-Semitism keep Christians silent on Palestine?

Jessica Morrison

Inspired by my grandmother's delight in visiting the Holy Land, I too made a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine eight years ago. I was profoundly moved by the places of my faith stories. This joy was overshadowed, however, by the reality of Israel's military occupation and its effect on Palestinian people.

I read of Jesus speaking against the occupation under which he lived, and had expected Christian churches to be united in vocal opposition to this current occupation. But this is not the case.

Seventy years ago, the United Nations drew up a plan to partition then-British-controlled Palestine, forming 'two states for two peoples', Israel and Palestine, Jerusalem becoming a shared international city. This plan was never implemented.



Surprises at a workshop on 'ice' addiction

Danusia Kaska

We may rarely come across someone high on ice, but more likely as they come down, agitated, tired, hungry, articulating poorly, etc. The most important thing I learned about dealing with someone coming down from ice is to provide food, hydration, and rest, and meet any other physiological needs. Even aggressive people can be de-escalated to feel safe and contained.

It is important to have compassion for people dependent on substances; they are often suffering emotional trauma and mental illness, using substances to escape. We don't know their stories, and can't judge them for their situation. Rather, we can learn about substance dependency and how we can respond as individuals in the community.

Knowledge from accurate scientific sources is better than fear instilled from misinformed media.



A Mosaic called Ruben: with Kurt Fearnley in Nairobi.

Anne Doyle

Travelling with us to Nairobi for the official opening of the Kurt Fearnley Special Needs Unit at the Ruben Centre were Australian champion wheelchair athlete Kurt Fearnley and his mother. In comfortable classrooms, well equipped with learning and therapy materials, it now educates over fifty disabled children from the Mukuru Slum. Kurt's dream is for some children to integrate into the regular classes of the Ruben School, just as he integrated into his own school, eventually graduating as a teacher.

After the opening ceremony, Kurt joined the children in their classrooms. He slipped out of his wheelchair to join severely disabled children on their mat, laughing and playing with them. Earlier, he spoke directly to the mothers of these children: 'When I see you, I see my Mum; when I see your children, I see myself'.