

Abiy's Medemer Coin: Political Synergy and the Cross

By Dr. Abdulfetah Khalil Abougn

In the advent of COVID19, the world is going through turmoil with no exception to Ethiopia. My deepest and heartily felt condolences to all families who lost their loved ones around the globe. As the world is under lockdown, quarantine and isolation to eradicate this common invisible enemy, life still goes on. So, do social, economic and political activities. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, has reached his two years in power on 2nd April 2020. With this anniversary, it is important that Abiy receives performance report from minorities about his synergy philosophy, governance and leadership quality. This report presents his political ambitions and factual contributions within the context of minorities, indigenous social groups and religious rights in the last two years.

Just wondering about his Medemer philosophy, if it is at all a healthy political concept. It appears to be a mixed ideological coin with both sides of the coin having the same sign. The PLUS sign. Is it political synergy (+) or imperialistic evangelism (+) agenda or is it both? Obviously, this is a person who crossed out two religions - abandoned both Orthodox Christianity (mother's side) and Islam (father's side). But, he finally converted to Pentecostal evangelism because of various educational and financial benefits rendered to him. His political journey has also two sides – the Oromo and the Amhara ethnicities. He became the Prime Minister because of his Oromo identity (father's side), and political affiliations at very opportune time; however, he plays the Amhara-Oromo two-sided politics at this time. What a mystifying character!

On the other hand, he has evidently neglected or subtracted the rights of 80+ social groups and the Muslims at large in the last two years. In Dubai, he down played the Unity and Oneness of Ethiopian Muslims and ignored the immense agonies of the Motta Amhara Muslims in *Gojam*, and *Walenea* Muslims in *Guragea* Zone. On the contrary, as a fleeting show he said that the Muslims are 'gem' and peaceful Ethiopians at a recent rally with *Silte Muslims*; as he tried to appease his Minister of Peace who belongs to this social group; not knowing that Muslims can easily identify his deceitful character that was filled with dazzling speeches and duplicity of actions.

Besech and Behold! He managed to immensely mesmerize the Amhara social group in the spirit of reviving the Orthodox-Amhara nation. In fact, this double-edged character identifies himself through his political propaganda that Ethiopia is a Spirit and that Spirit is indirectly Christianity. This is the flip side of Medemer coin, verifying his dual political-religious intentions. No wonder the Amharas are kneeling and religiously dying for his Medemer agenda. He has undoubtedly incapacitated them!

His multiple personalities are driven and filled with deceptions, opportunistic and hypocritical characters at his best. His so-called Medemer philosophy is within these premises, and uses political platform to indirectly promote the Cross; that is, Imperialistic Evangelism agenda as it is global and geo-politics of our time. The game is obvious – create a split among Muslims; mesmerize Orthodox Amharas and play Oromo ethnicity card with Muslim and Christian

Oromos. As usual, these divide and conquer strategies are existential threats to most minorities in Ethiopia!

However, do Orthodox-Amharas know this or are they blinded with the notion Ethiopia belongs to them only? Full of moral hazard, according to recent provocative research by Chief Ethiopian Orthodox Church Librarian, not condoning such unwarranted social research, his findings are that there are three main threats to Ethiopian *Tewahdo* Orthodox Church. He identified Imperialistic Evangelism (conversion of large number of Orthodox Christian youth by Pentecostals) as number ONE threat to the Church! However, as enlightening message to this subjective researcher and his entourage, “No religion is superior or a threat to any other religion as Ethiopia belongs to assorted religions. No religion should be existential threat to the other. Respect and equality are the pillars to coexist.”

Also, there was a backfire against Pentecostal Christians in Amhara Regional State. Various media outlets reported that extreme Ethiopian Orthodox Christian mobs burned Pentecostal Churches and attacked the priests in *Semien Showa Zone, Endewani* town with hateful messages and mob celebrations as was done in Motta town against Muslims.

Without the majority of the Orthodox-Amharas realizing it, it appears that Abiy’s Medemer mixed ideology is adversely working against Orthodox Christians as they anticipate the revival of Orthodox-Amhara nation! A political and religious imaginary Island that submerged about 50 years ago.

Abiy is two men; yes, I repeat, Abiy is two men – a man who wakes you up in dark and a man who makes you asleep in light. You would not know where you are, and whether he is with you or not! The man is a proven hypnotic political-preacher who does not promote true democracy nor acknowledge professional contributions. *From his egomaniac character of insulting professionals to praising corrupt and embezzling merchants are his hallmarks of arrogance and ignorance.* His two years contributions include neglecting the rights of the minorities, rule of law, the rights of Muslims and other religious groups. All vicious recurrent attacks of the minorities and religious groups have happened under his watch in the last two years. Actually, no celebration of freedom and rights for the minorities!

Ethnic conflicts and religious violence are at their peak in Ethiopia. Political and human rights abuses, and opposition harassments are everywhere as election was cancelled and being planned. The Prime Minister uses assorted political blame game and fear mongering tactics in covering up very high youth unemployment, economic turmoil, poverty and social unrest throughout the country. COVID19 has given him a good excuse to cover up these problems; not knowing that these problems continue to perpetuate the spread of COVID19 in Ethiopia.

The poverty stricken youth at large, university graduates and current students had experienced direct and indirect violence from law enforcement agents in classrooms, the streets, community arenas, homes and the prisons. The youth have come to realize that Abiy is not an upholder of law and human rights but as destroyer; not as protector but as persecutor, not as stabilizer and confidence-inspiring, but as an unjust leader and defensive reactionary. All these are the contrived system of Medemer (the synergy and the cross) that is endangering the country now, and in the coming years. Does he deserve Minorities Peace Prize (MPP)? Not even an iota of it. It is indeed disheartening that the minorities stretched their hand to Abiy to receive nothing; but it is even hopelessness that they stretched their full hand and find none to receive.

Mind you, diversity is beautiful and its fabric is peaceful! History has judged and condemned the previous regimes, Menilik to Mengestu, to ashes; hence, upholding and appropriately implementing Article 39 in the constitution, and this time with an objective of practical democratic federalism with minority bill of rights and protections will cure the all-time political ills in the country. Article 39 has resurrected the minorities from political suffocations of over 150 years. Truly, the seeds of minorities and multinationalism have already germinated, and will continue to mature in oasis of diversity. Stop Medemer from becoming political corona! Not implementing Article 39 is like spreading political COVID19 among Ethiopia's 80+ social groups, and depriving them equity, equality, justice and humanity.

Over 50 years of struggle was to gain democratic federalism with minority rights and equality of religions FIRST. Unless the Prime Minister comes back to his senses, the struggle will continue to free the minorities and to have equal opportunities for all social groups in Ethiopia; in fact, the goals are seeking equitable leadership, governance, social justice, equity and equality at all angles, sides and levels.

My last words to all. Keep social or physical distancing, avoid crowds, wash your hands and use masks. With lots of prayers and Du'aa for one another, be closer with spiritual distancing. Wishing all safe life until our political journey reaches its right destinations – equity, equality, justice and humanity.