

CORAL COAST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



'Therefore, glorify the Lord in the east,
...in the coastlands of the sea.' Isaiah 24:15

A Baptist Church Family



CHURCH CENTRE
596 Windermere Road
BARGARA 4670

Phone 4154 7220

Website: www.coralcoastchurch.org

Email: admin@coralcoast.org

Sunday 29 August 2021

10.00am

Brian Robertson

Matthew 22:1-14

"Unworthy Responses"

Sunday 5 September 2021

10.00am

Brian Robertson

Matthew 25:1-13

"Unpredictable Times"

Pastor:

Brian Robertson 0407 547 036

Elders:

Munya Clarence Bere 0429 389 076

Geoff Oakes 0409 891 802

Secretary:

Jill Jennings 0411 800 256

Treasurer:

Colin Stollery 0425 272 298

WELCOME

to the

CORAL COAST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

If you are visiting with us today, we welcome you and invite you to sign our Visitor's Book. The restrooms are on the southern side of the hall, with entry off the veranda. There are baby-change facilities in the Toilet for People with Disabilities.

Checking-In on Sundays

The church has implemented the Queensland Government's Check-In-Queensland QR code system, for the listing of 'patrons' to the church buildings. This means that when you enter the church auditorium, hall, or office – on any day of the week – you are to log your attendance with the QR code. Coral Coast Men's Shed and Bubs'n'Kids have also set up the same system (and have adopted the same QR code as the church).

If you have not yet downloaded the Check-In-Queensland QR code app to your smart phone, please do so ... after all, you are now supposed to register your attendance using this app when you enter any indoor public space. If you do not have a smart phone, we will manually enter your details on an electronic device when you arrive on Sunday mornings and then submit that to Queensland Health's COVID-19 tracing section.

Mini-Survey on the Question of Our Service Start-Time

On Thursday 19 August, Pastor Brian emailed everyone whose name is listed in the church's email database a mini-survey on the question of the start-time for our worship service. Thank you to all those who have chosen to submit a response on their preferred start-time.

Coral Coast Community Care Inc Annual Meeting

Coral Coast Community Care Inc will hold its Annual Meeting, followed by a normal monthly meeting, on Tuesday 31 August, beginning at 7.00pm in the Church Office. All members of the CCCC Inc Management Committee are urged to attend.

Ecumenical Luncheon

The 18th Annual Bundaberg Ecumenical Luncheon will be held on Saturday 4 September, with doors opening at 10.00am, the presentation beginning at 11.00am, and lunch being served at 12.00noon. Tea and coffee and cold drinks will be available on arrival. The venue will be the Bundaberg Services Club (RSL, Quay Street, Bundaberg).

The speaker will be Karen Johns, founder and CEO of DARE Formal Wear Ltd. DARE (which stands for Domestic Abuse Recovery and Education) supports women who are experiencing domestic abuse and raises funds through the sale of donated formal wear and wedding wear.

The cost for the two-course meal and entertainment is \$40.00 per person, and there are only limited places available (because the venue cannot cater for more than 200 people). Tickets must be pre-purchased by Friday 27 August, either from Christ Church Anglican Church Office (59 Woongarra Street, Bundaberg) or from Pastor Brian who has a batch of ten tickets for places on one table. If you would like to attend this event to hear this inspiring speaker, purchase your ticket as quickly as possible.



Karen Johns

Father's Day

Sunday 5 September is Father's Day. Usually, we would have a barbecue or a fellowship lunch on Father's Day, but with the COVID-19 regulations about social distancing and food serving, it would not be easy to have our 'special' Father's Day service. So we will just have a 'normal' church service next Sunday.

But here's a thought ... perhaps you could invite some non-churched neighbours around to lunch next Sunday, and if one (or more) of your guests is a father, why not offer to pray for him sometime during or after the meal? This could be good fellowship and a good witness.

Women's Morning Tea

The first-Monday-of-the-month Women's Morning Tea will be held on Monday 6 September at the Windmill Bargara (12 See Street, Bargara), from 9.00am to 10.00am. The Windmill can cater for a group of up to twenty people, and Ros Loudon has made a booking for that number. Go along and share in a time of fellowship together. Speak with Ros Loudon on 41547747 or 0407 173969 for further information.

Church Mice

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Birthdays This Week

No one in the church family has a birthday this week (as far as we know).

Time to Update Your Listing in the Church Directory

We are hoping to publish the new 2021 edition of the Church Directory in a couple of weeks, so it is time to update your details if you have not already done so. If you are listed in the 2020 Church Directory but some of your details have changed, please advise the Church Office of the new information. If you are not listed in last year's Directory and would like to be in the new 2021 one, please fill out a "Directory Information Form" which is available from the Office.

We also include in the Church Directory a colour photograph of each family or individual. If we do not have your photo, or if you want a more recent photo this year, we will arrange for our photographer to take your photo. Alternatively, you can email a suitable photograph (in jpg format) to the Church Office at admin@coralcoastchurch.org.

Review of "Church Constitution and Guidelines"

It is many years since a complete review of the "Church Constitution and Guidelines" was undertaken to ensure that the document is current and reflects how we're 'doing church'. A small amendment was made in 2015, but there had been no other changes since 2002.

The church leaders have decided that a review will be undertaken in the next couple of months, with any proposed amendments submitted to a Special Members' Meeting later in the year. If you have any suggestions about possible changes, please pass your ideas on to Pastor Brian for consideration by a Review Group. Thank you.

Pens Marked with the Church Name and Address

If you would like to purchase a pen marked with the church name and street address, take one from the box in the side-table drawer in the foyer and put \$2.00 in the container inside the box.

Church Account Details

If you would like to have your weekly or fortnightly offering directly debited from your bank account into the church account, you will need the following information –

BSB Number 704 913
Account Number 400040010
Account Name Coral Coast Christian Church

Please reference you giving as "Offering" or "Tithe". Including your surname is optional.

Mission News

Fuel for Father's Day

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) operates in over twenty-five countries, and on average, MAF planes are taking off or landing every four minutes. MAF flights serve about 2,000 organisations, and bring help, hope, and healing into some of the most isolated and needy parts of the world.



MAF Australia is conducting its annual Fuel for Father's Day appeal. For \$25.00, you can 'purchase' a 10 litre jerrycan of aviation fuel, and \$50.00, you can 'purchase' a 20 litre jerrycan of aviation fuel. And there is a Kids Colouring-In Jerrycan gift card, worth \$10.00.

Our church has these 'jerrycans' – with cards and envelopes – available from today.

For further information, go to the website at www.maf.org.au/fathersday, or telephone 1800 650169, or write to MAF Australia, PO Box 7187, Baulkham Hills, NSW, 2153. Donations to MAF Australia are income tax deductible.

Global Recordings Network Building Maintenance in Thailand

Global Recordings Network Thailand (GRNT) is based in Chiang Mai. For nearly twenty years, they have been developing culturally relevant scripts and producing audio recordings in various languages spoken in and around Thailand. They partner with other missions and individuals with the goal of seeing God's kingdom expand in South Asia.



The Thailand centre plays an important role in the ongoing training of new recordists. The Motor Cycle Gospel Team (MGT) reaches remote villages and people, to provide spiritual and physical help. Presently, the Thai Centre seeks assistance in raising funds for two important maintenance projects for their facility in Chiang Mai. Firstly, GRNT would love to secure their premises with a perimeter wall that goes all the way round their property. They were able to build a wall at the back of the property last year, but the estimated cost of building the remaining wall is Bhat 180,000 (\$8,570). Secondly, there is an urgent need to install new roof guttering and replace the eaves of the building. At present, rainwater falls into the steps causing them to deteriorate; new gutters will channel the water away from falling unto the steps. And the eaves installed behind the building are deteriorating from rats and birds nesting in the roof. The estimated cost for these is Bhat 50,000 (\$2,380).

If you would like to contribute to this project, post your gift to Global Recordings Network Australia, PO Box 899, Seven Hills, NSW, 1730, or telephone (02) 98992211, or go to the website at www.globalrecordings.net/au. Specify that your gift is for the Thailand Building Maintenance Project. Gifts to GRN are not income tax deductible.

Wisdom for Life

"Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened."
Winston Churchill

"In a time of deceit-telling, the truth is a revolutionary act."
George Orwell

"The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it."
Flannery O'Connor

"People often claim to hunger for truth, but seldom like the taste when it's served up."
George R R Martin

"There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true."
Soren Kierkegaard

"If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth, only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair."
Clive Staples Lewis

"You don't believe things because they make your life better. You believe them because they're true."
Veronica Roth

Australian News

Chaplaincy Australia to Launch a New Help Line

1800CHAPLAIN will be an Australia-wide service that will provide a safe and confidential forum that takes a holistic view of the person's emotions, stressors and moral dilemmas, and where they need not shy away from deeper questions about their faith and sense of purpose.

Even before the COVID-19 spike in demand for various Helplines, Chaplaincy Australia identified the escalating need for industry-based chaplaincy to be available on-call and after hours. This need has been repeatedly relayed to the organisation by its national network of chaplains and over 1000 churches. Crisis services such as Lifeline have been fast-tracking volunteers and shortening their training program from fourteen weeks to four weeks, simply because of the rising demand for telephone support services.

It is hoped that 1800CHAPLAIN – which is scheduled for launch in November 2021 – will help ease the pressure on the services provided by Lifeline through earlier intervention, before people experience severe crises and suicidal thoughts. All Chaplaincy Australia's fully accredited chaplains have achieved at least a Certificate IV in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care or progressed to a Higher Education Diploma of Chaplaincy with 100 hours of a supervised placement. Chaplaincy Australia therefore has a well-equipped team of people to provide online or telephone support.

While the establishment of this new help line will require major investment and collaboration with a number of groups working together and considerable long term input, Chaplaincy Australia's National Director, Ralph Estherby, is confident that his organisation can make a beneficial contribution in helping people cope with the crises of life.

Australia's Indigenous People

Australia has about 200 indigenous tribes and language groups, with these people living on the continent and surrounding islands for thousands of years (although, if one accepts the Bible's description of a young earth, not for 40,000 to 60,000 years).

Many indigenous Australian Christians have amazing life stories that show how their Christian faith has positively impacted their lives, families, and communities. In a time when many pressures promote beliefs of the time before white settlement, an indigenous Christian ministry has set up a website to demonstrate the relevance of Christianity to today's people. The website contains forty short films of indigenous believers telling their life stories, in the belief that this will contribute to understanding, healing and reconciliation. The stories show how Christian faith makes lasting and positive change possible, even in difficult circumstances.

Australian MPs Urged to “Get Their Act Together” on the Issue of Gender Intervention

MPs across Australia must “get their act together” to protect more young people from the harms of gender intervention, argued FamilyVoice Australia. “In response to a growing number of confused children and teenagers receiving puberty suppression or cross sex hormone intervention in various States, FVA is respectfully urging MPs to get their act together and protect young people at risk from the harmful consequences of so-called gender identity treatment,” said FamilyVoice Australia spokesman David d’Lima.

Answers to questions recently raised in the West Australian Parliament by Hon Nick Goiran revealed a rapid increase in the number of confused young people in that State receiving hormonal intervention in response to gender confusion. “We commend Nick Goiran, but we need many more MPs to speak up and protect young people from life-long damage in the West and beyond,” David d’Lima said. FamilyVoice also applauded recent concerns raised in the New South Wales Parliament by Hon Fred Nile on the issue of gender intervention. “Questions raised by Rev Nile have confirmed that the NSW Coalition Government supports experimental gender intervention on children that may produce life-long infertility and other irreversible consequences,” David d’Lima said. “MPs who would not want such radical responses to harm their own young kids or grandchildren cannot sit back and allow confusion to somehow justify high risk prescriptions for young people in the mainstream community.”

Issues of the Faith

“God Doesn’t Help Those Who Help Themselves”

This article was written by Michael Horton, Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary in California. The article was published online by Core Christianity on 6 July 2018.



Michael Horton

Through the middle ages, Christianity became entangled with the vines of superstition, ignorance, and spiritual lethargy – that same thing we see all around us today. When Luther uncovered the theological scandal, the fragile

Roman scaffolding began to creak. The essentials of the Reformation were doctrinal. It was part of the Renaissance to call for a return to the original sources, so it made sense that Christian scholars returned not only to the great classics of Western civilization and to the early fathers, but to the biblical text itself.

The Reformation was the greatest back to the Bible movement in the history of the church since the death of the apostles. But they went back to the Bible not simply as an end in itself, but in order to recover the essential truths that the Bible proclaimed and that the church had either forgotten or actually rejected. Those essentials were Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone and to God alone be the glory.

Why Is the Reformation Needed Today?

What was so special about the Reformation in the first place that makes a second one so worthwhile?

Well, do you believe that the Reformation got these doctrines out of balance with other doctrines as the Roman church believed? Or do you believe that the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone to the glory of God alone and that this is the Bible’s central message from Genesis to Revelation?

If it’s the Bible’s central message, then it must be essential for us as it was for the Reformation in the 16th Century. The problem we’re facing as a church today is that our situation is even worse than it was for the medieval church. Now just look at each of those slogans in the light of today’s realities, first of all the so-called evangelical, Bible-believing Christians are supposedly the spiritual heirs of the Protestant Reformation, and yet according to their responses to recent surveys, their views are actually much closer to those of medieval people before the Reformation.

The battle cry, “Scripture alone”, is rarely heard even in these conservative Protestant churches today as pop psychology, marketing, and management principles, pragmatism, consumerism, sociological data and political crusades tend to have the greatest authority and weight in the churches. Christ alone is challenged by the voices of those who are following our culture of religious pluralism insist that Jesus is the best, but not the only way to the Father. In fact, two-thirds of the Evangelical Christians in America said that we all pray to the same God whether we’re Buddhists, Muslims, Jews or Christians – two-thirds! Grace alone has fallen prey once more to the moralism and self-confidence of the human heart.

The popular phrase in the medieval church was “God will not deny his grace to those who do what lies within their power.” A modern equivalent is “God helps those who help themselves,” and according to a Barna survey, 87 percent of today’s Evangelical Christians (the heirs of the Reformation) affirm that medieval Roman Catholic conviction. And as for the Reformation battle cry, faith alone, which was the central concern, how far has the preaching of justification by faith alone fallen from the priorities of the modern evangelical church as the major centres of evangelical power have now publicly acknowledged that the doctrine of justification by faith alone no longer presents any obstacle to fellowship with those who deny it?

Evangelical seminary professors now freely attack the doctrine by which as the scriptures teach, the church stands or falls. And as for the slogan to God alone be glory, well, religion today is human-centred rather than God-centred. We see it in worship; we see it in every

facet, in evangelism. Once again even the churches are focused on how God can make us happy and fulfilled.

Recovering the Gospel: The 'Solas' of the Reformation

The Reformers didn't sit down one day and come up with the sola sayings. However, these solas were still a significant emphasis of the Reformation. There are five solas (sola meaning "only" or "alone").

Sola Scriptura

The first is sola Scriptura, or "Scripture alone". This means that only scripture has the authority to speak from God because it comes from God. We can think of the church like a teacher. It teaches us scripture but must still submit to the authority and content of scripture. It does not have any authority in and of itself outside of the authority that teaching the Word of God gives it.

Solo Christo

The second is solo Christo, or "Christ alone". This means that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and sinful humanity. It is only by Christ that our sins are taken away and we have any righteousness or goodness before God. Only through Christ Jesus do we have reconciliation with God the Father. Christ bridges the gap between God and sinful humanity by taking on the debt and curse of sin for us.

Sola Fide

The third is sola fide, or "faith alone". This means that only by faith in Christ do we have any salvation. We cannot earn anything by our own efforts or good works. Instead, it is only by believing in Jesus and depending upon Jesus' righteousness that we can be saved from sin and death. Jesus earned good works in our place and gives them freely to us, like credit to our account.

Sola Gratia

The fourth is sola gratia, or "grace alone". This means that salvation is only by God's grace to us. That is, we do not and cannot deserve God's salvation by our good works. God sent His Son Jesus to do what we could not do and through Jesus offers us undeserved salvation for free.

Soli Deo Gloria

The fifth is soli Deo gloria, "God's glory alone". This means that everything we do and believe is for the glory of God only and not for the glory of self or men.

The fact that God comes near to us in forgiveness and in grace through Christ was really at the heart of the Reformation. We are made right before God only because of the work Jesus has accomplished for us. Good works follow as fruit grows from a tree.

Now notice how the modifier 'alone' appears in each of these slogans. After all, the medieval church still believed in Scripture, in Christ, in grace, in faith, and in God's glory. The church had never denied these articles of faith and has in fact forbidden others to do so.

Learning from the Reformation

At the time of the Reformation, the medieval church (what we now think of as the Roman Catholic Church) also believed Scripture had authority, that people needed to have faith in Christ, and that grace was necessary, but they missed the 'only' part. They added or defined each of these things to mean something not found in the Bible and this is why we need to recover the emphasis of the Reformation 'solas' to this very day.

It was that word "alone" that brought Rome and the reformers into conflict. Scripture is the only ultimate authority for faith and practice. Christ is the only mediator between God and sinners. Faith is the only instrument of our justification and God is the only one in this whole business who deserves any credit or praise from beginning to finish. These slogans formed the core of the Reformation.

Folks, we are very interested in the Reformation not because it's a thing that happened in the

past but because we're the same stew. We're not slavishly devoted to the 16th Century Reformation. They made mistakes just as we will, but we do believe that it was the single greatest recovery of apostolic Christianity since the death of the apostles themselves.

By God's grace, they returned God's Word to the stage in all of its authority, conviction, grace, and redemption, bringing that long-awaited renewal to the Body of Christ that so many had sought through more superficial avenues, and we're right at that place now where everybody's seeking renewal and revival through all of the avenues that were pursued before the Reformation, before they got to the doctrinal and theological heart of the crisis.

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World News – United States of America

Florida Protects Women's Sport

On 1 June 2021, Florida's Republican Governor, Ron DeSantis, signed a bill – *Fairness in Women's Sports Act* – into law to protect female athletes from having to compete against biological males.

"We believe in the State of Florida, of protecting the fairness and the integrity of women's athletics," Governor DeSantis said. "And I can tell you this in Florida, you know, girls are going to play girls' sports and boys are going play boys' sports, that's what we're doing. We're going to make sure that that's the reality. So the bill that we're doing today will ensure fairness for women athletes for years to come in the State of Florida. It says that athletic teams or sports that are designated for females are open to females. And we're going to go based off biology. We're also putting in statute ways to actually vindicate the rights of any women athletes who may be discriminated against. So moving forward, any student who's deprived of an athletic opportunity, as a result of a violation of this law will have the right to civil remedies. Any school or public post-secondary institution that suffers direct or indirect harm as a result of a violation of this bill, including by a governmental entity, accrediting organisation or athletic association, can also pursue civil remedies. Any student who is subject to retaliation as a result of reporting a violation of this bill can also pursue civil remedies."

Supporters of the legislation said it comes down to biological differences that "make it unfair for athletes assigned male at birth to compete on teams for girls and women. The law would not bar transgender girls and women from playing on boys' or men's teams. This bill is very simply about making sure that women can safely compete, have opportunities and physically be able to excel in a sport that they trained for, prepared for and work for," said State Senator Kelli Stargel, a Republican, who championed the bill. "This is nothing about anybody being discriminated against," she said. "It's solely so that women have an opportunity to compete in women's sports."

At the press conference of the *Fairness in Women's Sports Act* being signed into law, Governor DeSantis played a video showing biological males competing against girls in track races at the high school level and winning. Governor DeSantis said biological-males-claiming-to-be-females and competing in girls' sporting events was "blatantly unfair".

Attending the announcement was Selina Soule, a track athlete from Connecticut who fell one place short of being able to qualify for finals after losing to two biological males who were

competing as ‘females’. Ms Soule, a prominent women’s rights activist who used to be a high school track athlete in Connecticut, praised Florida Governor Ron DeSantis during the press conference for signing a bill into law.

25% of Regular American Churchgoers Not Planning to Return to Church

More than 25% of people who attended religious services at least once a month before the coronavirus pandemic have no plans to return to their church, synagogue, or mosque in the next few weeks as lockdown restrictions continue to be lifted across the USA, according to a nationwide poll conducted between 10 and 14 June 2021 with 1,125 adults.

While many people indicated that they were looking forward to reconnecting with friends and family, shopping for fun, and going out to eat as the lockdown restrictions are lifted, only 34% said they planned on attending in-person religious services in the next few weeks. And while a majority (73%) of people who attended religious services at least once per month said they planned on attending those services in person again, 27% had no plans to do so just yet.

While the number of worshippers who planned to attend in-person worship services as lockdown restrictions continued to be lifted had increased from about 66% a year ago, Lifeway Research’s Executive Director Scott McConnell said that it’s a cause for concern that many churches did not survive the pandemic, leaving some people in limbo. “That’s a lot of momentum to lose and a lot of people stepping out of the habit” of weekly worship, he said.

The data appeared to be in line with a new Gallup analysis highlighted by *The Christian Post* earlier this year, showing a marked shift of the still highly religious nation away from formal church memberships. The data showed that for the first time in nearly eighty years, fewer than half of American’s maintain formal membership in a specific house of worship.

The Southern Baptist Convention, the USA’s largest Protestant denomination, recently reported that they had a record single-year decline of 400,000 members in 2020. Mr McConnell noted at the time of that report that the decline was due, in part, to fewer additions through baptism and more deaths from COVID-19 and other reductions in the membership of individual Southern Baptist congregations.

Arizona Passed Bill Requiring Teaching about People Who Fled Communism

On Friday 2 July 2021, Arizona’s House of Representatives adopted a measure that will require students to be taught in schools about the dangers of communism and the incredible damage and tragedy caused by communists throughout human history.

State legislators passed House Bill 2898, requiring a new civics education class that will highlight the importance of democracy and educate children about the dangers of Marxism. It might sound like a radical change to the curriculum to some people, but this is something that used to be taught in schools, and something that children need to hear about now that communism and Marxism – which are one and the same – are being advocated in classes.

The new measure will specifically require that oral stories from people who have left communist countries to live in the United States will be given to students, allowing them to hear first-hand about the dangers of communism. It will also ensure that this isn’t just an exercise in making children read textbooks – they will be able to speak to people who have seen communism up close, and learn what might happen if the country adopts the kinds of policies advocated by far-left Senator Bernie Sanders and Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York.

Arizona political leader Judy Burges praised the passing of the new bill, saying that it will provide a “comparative discussion” about political ideologies, and explain how totalitarianism and communism are both in stark contrast to the principles of freedom and democracy that the United States was founded on.

Some Democrats took issue with the bill. Representative Daniel Hernandez said that the bill should be scrapped because white nationalism poses a bigger threat to the United States than communism does, despite the fact that there are no white nationalists in the US Congress ... and dozens of Marxists.

Christian University Launched Legal Action Against US Government

A Christian university – the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout in Missouri – has launched legal action against the US Federal Government over the Biden administration’s directive that requires religious schools to open their dormitories and showers based on “gender identity”.

The College of the Ozarks has filed a lawsuit in response to the February 2021 order from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that forces any entities that receive federal dollars covered by the Fair Housing Act to place transgender identified biological males into female dormitories and assign them as females’ roommates. The lawsuit argued that this directive forces religious schools to violate their religious beliefs and states that the order was issued “without notice or the opportunity for public comment.” The lawsuit contended that the policy was issued without considering alternative policies that “respect the interests of religious colleges”. Violators of this directive will potentially face fines and punitive damages.

Representing the College is the legal non-profit Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which argued that the directive violates both women’s sex-based rights and the school’s religious liberties. “The government cannot and should not force schools to open girls’ dorms to males based on its politically motivated and inappropriate redefinition of ‘sex’,” ADF senior counsel Julie Marie Blake said in a statement. “Women shouldn’t be forced to share private spaces, including showers and dorm rooms, with males, and religious schools shouldn’t be punished simply because of their beliefs about marriage and biological sex. Government overreach by the Biden administration continues to victimise women, girls, and people of faith by gutting their legal protections, and it must be stopped.”

College of the Ozarks President Jerry C Davis believes the Biden administration’s action constitutes a violation of the most basic freedoms outlined in the founding documents of the United States. “Religious freedom is under attack in America, and we won’t stand on the sidelines and watch,” Mr Davis stated. “To threaten religious freedom is to threaten America itself. College of the Ozarks will not allow politicians to erode this essential American right or the ideals that shaped America’s founding.”

Commenting on the lawsuit, evangelist Franklin Graham praised the College for its “bold stand”.

The HUD directive that reinterprets “sex” to include gender identity follows the Biden administration’s executive order signed on his first day in office, “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation”, which directed federal agencies within 100 days to adjust their policies to do likewise. The order cited the 2020 US Supreme Court ruling which held that firing someone on the basis of “transgender status” was a form of sex discrimination that is prohibited under Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act*, the section pertaining to employment. The Supreme Court ruled only on workplace discrimination and did not speak to other areas of public policy, such as housing or education.

Homosexual Men’s Choir Sang “We’ll Convert Your Children”

In a controversial video posted on YouTube and other social media platforms, a men’s choir – composed exclusively of homosexual men – from San Francisco in California sang, “We’ll convert your children ... we’re coming for your children.” And no, that was not an exaggeration – that was word-for-word what they repeated throughout the song.

Following a big backlash against the video, the video is now private (whatever that means), but is still able to be accessed for anyone who wants to see it.

Here were some more of the lyrics:

“You think we’re sinful. You fight against our rights. You say we all lead lives you can’t respect. But you’re just frightened. You think that we’ll corrupt your kids if our agenda goes unchecked. It’s funny. Just this once, you’re correct. We’ll convert your children. Happens bit by bit. Quietly and subtly, and you will barely notice it. You can keep him

from disco, warn about San Francisco. Make him wear pleated pants. We don't care. We'll convert your children. We'll make them tolerant and fair."

They repeated the words "We'll convert your children" and "We're coming for your children" over and over again.

Many people have pointed out that LGBT activists originally said they just wanted equal rights and that it's "none of your business what two adults do in the bedroom". Now, just a few short years later, these activists are singing about converting children and purposefully undermining the morality instilled in them by their parents.

Christian School Teacher in Virginia Publicly Resigned

On 10 August 2021, Laura Morris, a teacher in Loudoun County Public Schools, resigned in protest of the board's embrace of a "highly politicised agenda" that contradicted her beliefs.

At a school board meeting in Leesburg in Virginia, parents, community members and teachers expressed concern about what they believed is the county's implementation of critical race theory elements and other "woke" ideologies in the curriculum. They also voiced concerns about a trans-affirming policy that requires teachers to use students' preferred names and pronouns. Then, in a stunning announcement, Ms Morris spoke of concerns before tendering her resignation.

While she expressed excitement about the opportunity to follow her students from last year into fifth grade, Ms Morris acknowledged that she had "struggled with the idea of returning to school knowing that I'll be working yet again with a school division that, despite its shiny tech and flashy salary, promotes political ideologies that do not square with who I am as a believer in Christ". The teacher alleged that in one of her "so-called equity trainings", she was informed that "white, Christian, able-bodied females currently have the power in our schools and that 'this has to change'." "Clearly, you've made your point. You no longer value me or many other teachers you've employed in this county," she added. "Since my contract outlines the power that you have over my employment in Loudoun County Public Schools, I thought it necessary to resign in front of you." Ms Morris began to tear up as she declared, "School board, I quit. I quit your policies, I quit your trainings and I quit being a cog in a machine that tells me to push highly politicised agendas on our most vulnerable constituents – the children."

Noting that the school board "shut the doors to the public" who gathered to share opposition to proposed policies, Ms Morris lamented the school district's "lack of consideration for the growing population of concerned citizens in this division". She indicated that she had gained the impression that "a dissenting opinion is not allowed" on controversial matters, based on emails she received from the Loudoun County Public Schools superintendent last year. According to Ms Morris, the superintendent sent a form to her and her colleagues that they could fill out if they heard a faculty member "speaking against the controversial policies being promoted by this school board and adopted in this county." She maintained that she had understood that this ban on "dissenting opinions" applied to her personal life as well as her professional life. Ms Morris expressed confidence about her ability to find employment elsewhere and encouraged "all parents and staff in this county to flood the private schools."

New Bank in the USA to Support Pro-Life Causes

A few years ago, it came to the attention of evangelist Nick Vujicic that most major banks in the USA support Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the nation. "Most banks – 90%, in fact – give philanthropically toward abortion," the 38-year-old Life Without Limbs founder told *The Christian Post*, adding that an unthinkable amount of "God's money" has been used to fund the murder of pre-born children.

It was this sobering reality that prompted Mr Vujicic to partner with Betsy Gray, the executive director of Network Medical Women's Centre, a primary care medical clinic in Santa Barbara, California, to found ProLife Bank. ProLife Bank, Mr Vujicic said, is not a for-profit bank – it's a for-giving bank. The bank will give "50% net profits to Judeo-Christian-aligned-nonprofit organisations to further the Kingdom of God," he explained.

Prayer Points

- It is disappointing to hear that so many Americans do not plan to return to 'live' worship once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Pray that believers in the USA – and for that matter, here in our own country – will not so easily abandon the practice of faith and the regular involvement in the life of their local church community.
- Thank God for the moves in some US States to legislate to protect women's sports from men-who-think-they-are-women competing against women and girls. Pray that there will be a growing realisation that transgender 'rights' in sporting competitions actually undermine women's rights.
- Pray for the success of the legal action launched by the College of the Ozarks in Missouri against the US Federal requirement that dormitories and bathrooms be opened to students on the basis of 'gender identity'. This will allow males-who-claim-to-be-females access to female-only spaces (and again, it will be women who will suffer).
- The situation in Afghanistan – following the withdrawal of Western military forces – has quickly deteriorated into the collapse of the Afghan Government and the Taliban making spectacular advances and reasserting its power over much of the country. The Taliban is speaking of "peace", but they do not mean peace that respects freedoms of speech and religion and human rights; they mean "peace" that comes from submission to their interpretation of Islam. Pray for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit across the Afghani people, for their only hope is to step out of the bondage of Islam and find true peace in right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Continue to pray for the winding back of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are so often used to settle grudges against Christian people in Pakistan. Thank God that, despite a number of Christians on death row under charges of blasphemy, no one has been executed yet. Pray that these convictions will be overturned and that those who are imprisoned will be released and will be able to find places of safety to live and resume normal life.
- Keep praying that the Federal Attorney-General, Michaelia Cash, will bring forward a revised and improved version of the proposed legislation regarding safeguarding religious freedom in our country. Pray that this legislation will be passed through Parliament before the end of 2021, so that there will be an end to the increasing number of instances where people of faith face attacks and harassment for expressing their Bible-based views on marriage, family, gender, and sexuality.
- Pray that the Federal Government will also present the *Human Rights (Children Born Alive Protection) Bill 2021* – the private member's Bill drafted by George Christensen, Member for Dawson – for debate in Federal Parliament before the end of the year. If passed, this Bill would ensure that viable children born alive following an abortion procedure must be given life-sustaining medical treatment. Currently, only NSW mandates this requirement; in all other States, children born alive following an abortion procedure are simply left to die in a corner of the room. Pray that this bill will be passed by the Federal Government when it is presented.
- Pray that the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021* will be recognised as a flawed piece of legislation that, if enacted, would allow for the most open and liberal practice of VAD in the whole of Australia and would 'starve' palliative care funding and resources. The simple reality is that, wherever VAD has been legalised, funding for palliative care declines (after all, it's cheaper to arrange a lethal injection than to care for someone through the dying process). Pray that Queenslanders will rise up and speak out about the dangers of VAD, because, wherever it's legalised, the criteria for accessing it always expand and it never remains limited to rare cases.
- Likewise, pray that the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021* in NSW will not pass through the NSW Parliament. Fortunately, it is a private member's bill (rather than a government-sponsored Bill).
- Pray for the success of MAF Australia's Fuel for Father's Day Appeal. Pray that a sizeable amount of money will be raised to ensure that MAF planes will continue their vital humanitarian and missionary work.
- Pray too that Global Recordings Network will be able to raise the funds needed for the repairs and maintenance on its headquarters building in Thailand.
- Begin to pray for our church's Annual Members' Meeting on 12 September to be a time of the Spirit leading us as a church in the way that Jesus wants us to go.