

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 19 September 2021

10.00am

Brian Robertson

Luke 12:13-21

"Unwise Priorities"

Sunday 26 September 2021

10.00am

Brian Robertson

Luke 18:9-14

"Unfounded Spirituality"

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.

Report from Last Sunday's Special Members' Meeting

At the Special Members' Meeting last Sunday, the church removed from our Membership Roll the names of six people – Mike Drewett, Tom and Rose Kenyon, Emma Paul, Katharine Robertson, and Glen Scott – who are no longer in attendance at our church.

The Meeting also heard an update on the proposed earthworks in the south-western corner of the church property.

The Meeting discussed the question of the start-time of our Sunday service and considered the responses to the mini-survey on this matter. It was decided that, as from Sunday 3 October 2021, the start-time for the Sunday service would be 9.30am.

Report from Last Sunday's Annual Members Meeting

At the Annual Members' Meeting last Sunday, the church received the annual reports from the pastors, the annual report from the chairman of the CCCC Inc Management Committee, the annual report from the Chairman of the Stewards, and the annual financial statements. A report from the auditors was also accepted. The church officially adopted a new Church Budget for 2021-2022. The Meeting also appointed one elder and four stewards. Harvey Job was affirmed as the chairman of the stewards, and Alison Peterson as the Worship Ministries Coordinator.

Congratulations on Being Appointed as Elder

Congratulations to Munya Clarence Bere on being re-appointed as an elder in our church, to continue to serve with Geoff Oakes in that role.

Congratulations on Being Appointed as Stewards

Congratulations to Rutendo Bere, Brian Chesson, Ken Meyer, and Colin Stollery on their appointment (or re-appointment) as stewards!

Announcement from Pastor Brian

At the end of the Annual Members' Meeting last Sunday, Pastor Brian announced his intention to conclude his ministry as Senior Pastor of our church at the end of 2021. This will be the conclusion of twenty-six years of pastoral leadership at Coral Coast Christian Church, and will necessitate the church embarking on a process to appoint a new pastor.

Stewards' Meeting

The next Stewards' Meeting will be held on Monday 20 September, beginning at 7.00pm. If there are some matters you would like the stewards to discuss, please speak with Jill Jennings, our Church Secretary, on 0411 800256.

Men's Time

The next Men's Time will be on Friday 24 September, between 6.00pm and 7.30pm at Ken Meyer's home (3 Rita Place, Coral Cove), with dinner and a time of sharing. All men are welcome to attend to share in this time of 'doing life better'. Speak with Ken on 0403 937421 to let him know if you will be attending (so that he can have sufficient food available, and so he can be certain that we do not exceed the allowed numbers).

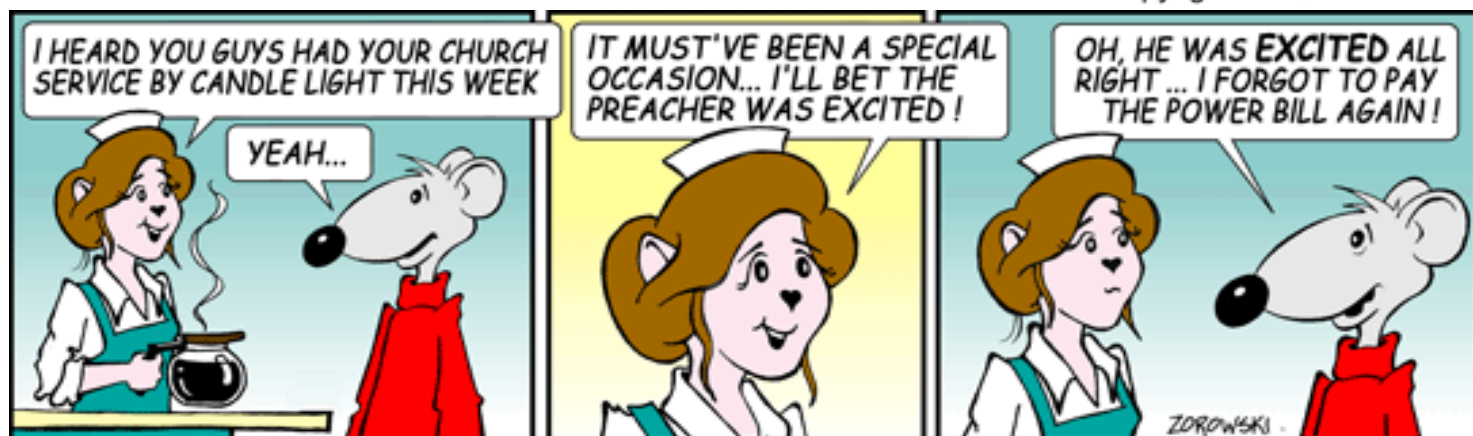
Market Day and Garage Sale

Coral Coast Community Care Inc will be holding a Market Day and Garage Sale on Saturday 25 September, from 7.00am to 12.00noon in the church grounds. There will be a bric-a-brac stall, a craft stall, a fresh produce stall, and second-hand furniture. Barista-style coffee will be available from the kitchen.

If you have items that you could donate – such as homemade cakes, biscuits, slices, jams, chutneys, produce, books, quality bric-a-brac, and furniture – or if you would be available to spend an hour or two to 'staff' one of the stalls, please speak with Ken Meyer on 0403 937421, Lynne Watkins on 0425 788289, or Maxine Stauffer on 0427 122736.

Church Mice

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Request to Appoint Additional Class 1 Members

The Management Committee of Coral Coast Community Care Inc is requesting that the church appoint Wal and Robyn Starr as additional Class 1 members to CCC Inc. Wal and Robbie are willing to accept this formal involvement in CCC Inc. If you are a church member, you will be asked to vote on these proposed appointments on Sunday 26 September.

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.

Birthdays This Week

Tuesday 21 September – Joan Marr

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

Newsletter from Andrew and Sandra Freeman

On 9 September, we received an emailed newsletter from Andrew and Sandra Freeman, who are serving God in Botswana in Africa. They wrote –

Dear faithful prayer partners,

Guess what? ... It rained!

You see, the rainy season doesn't normally start till late September at the earliest, and it has never rained in August in our entire 20+ years here ... but we had a good heavy shower at the end of August ... and got to see how the guttering on the carport wasn't doing the job it is meant to do! The rest of the house has no guttering at this stage. And we give thanks to the Lord for several thunder / rain storms since then. The garden is looking very happy with the frangipani trees bursting forth with new leaves and flowers starting to come on all kinds of other plants.

Life plods along here as we press on with settling into this new house. The only things left on the landlord's renovation list are painting the outside of the house and repairing of plasterwork as part of that. Our list is still long – such as flyscreens and various curtains to sort, paintings etc. to hang along with some extra kitchen cupboards and other bits and pieces. We thank the Lord for all that has been done so far and ask that you pray with us as we press on trying to get the tasks done that still remain.

Please pray for a ministry resources parcel that is en-route ... and taking extra-long to get to us. We are very much hoping it is not 'lost'! We give thanks that two other parcels which included meds, arrived safely!

We give thanks that Sandra's Dissertation was able to be provisionally submitted in time. Unfortunately the official on-line submission portal is temporarily 'down' and so she has to wait to submit it again on that, but we are grateful that the MA Programme Administrator was willing to receive an emailed copy, sent as a back-up, in case of any problems later! Please continue to pray for Kenosi as he works on his PhD, and as he and Sandra have many ongoing discussions, particularly on how honour-shame impacts understandings of sin and ethics – which relates to both their dissertations.

COVID update – We recently received a newsletter email from Crossway books in the USA which said 'The COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for churches around the world' because of 'difficulty gathering'. However, while the pandemic might feel 'past tense' for some parts of the world, here in Botswana it has been feeling fiercer than ever. The past couple of months, have seen cases and deaths rapidly rise across the country even out to the Kalahari Desert, with more and more people dying whom we know personally or are close relatives / friends of people we know personally. The strain on the country's hospital beds and oxygen supplies has been huge. More oxygen supplies were brought in as there was not enough available for the numbers needing it. It's a tough time. Please pray for those with responsibilities of decision making including a doctor friend of ours who is currently the acting 'chief' of Public Health.

We don't have 'full lockdown' and haven't had it since first half of 2020. But most businesses are still rotating staff, and restaurants are only allowed half numbers. Masks are still required by everyone at all times outside your home / yard, all gatherings except funerals were prohibited, but weddings and other meetings have been allowed again from 6 September. Churches can still meet but numbers are limited to fifty people two times a week and under strict enforcement of sanitising, distancing, and time limits. Curfew was increased to 8.00pm-4.00am, but is now back to 10.00pm-4.00am from the 6th. Where usually funerals are on weekends, the government has said funerals must be conducted within five days of a death in order to free up mortuaries. Because hospital beds are so scarce or just not available at all, new community home-based care systems were set up to be able to monitor patients at home and arrange oxygen and medication deliveries.



Andrew and Sandra Freeman

With so many deaths, it has felt in some ways like a sad re-run of the height of the HIV-AIDS epidemic in our first few years here. At one stage it was calculated that there was a COVID death almost every two hours. In our small population, at least 2,300 people are documented as having died so far. Pray for medical staff, families of the ill and deceased, and many who 'survive' but continue to report longer term effects. Our 'son' Kirk, who wasn't really very sick at all with it, is still struggling with headaches and fatigue months later. With case numbers coming down again now, hopefully the peak for this winter's Delta wave has passed with more people out in the fresh air getting more Vitamin D. We met some friends walking past our house who had recently had COVID, and they said they were out getting their Vitamin D as their doctor had done tests that revealed their Vitamin D levels were far too low.

Vaccines (of various sources) continue to be slowly rolled out in fits and starts. Figures are saying about 20% of eligible population have been vaccinated, but like around the world, there have also been those experiencing significant side-effects, and deaths are still occurring in the fully-vaccinated.

Here is a little interesting Botswana COVID fact and COVID 'praise point'. The local newspaper reported that weddings have increased during the pandemic ... because the pandemic restrictions on guest numbers and event time lengths has meant weddings are much, much cheaper events! So it seems many have taken advantage of having the government's 'State of Public Emergency' edicts over-riding cultural expectations. Many people get married here well after living together and having a family, mainly because of the cost of getting married that all normally rests on the couple (including many cows – or cash equivalent – for the bride-price, along with gifts for relatives, the traditional wedding event and attire, and the 'white' wedding event with multiple attires and reception). We would often wish for people to come up with a way to make it cheaper and easier for couples to actually marry and for relatives to reduce their demands, but it seemed cultural expectations were insurmountable! ... And along came COVID!

An extra prayer point also – COVID is hitting many places hard across Africa, including the wonderful Africa Christian University in neighbouring Zambia (where Conrad Mbewe is – he wrote one of the back-cover endorsements for our Highest Honour book), where so far two of their staff have died of COVID. One a lecturer and one is the guy who oversaw all the construction / building as the University gets established and grows. Conrad Mbewe wrote in the recent university newsletter, "We need prayer for the protection of staff and faculty. We also need more staff and faculty to fill the void Join us in prayer for this."

Please continue to pray as we seek God's 'next steps' and having to move toward 'applying' to a larger mission organisation. We are making progress and we will let you know more definite details as and when we can. But suffice to say we are encouraged thus far.

We continue to value your prayers as we look to the Lord to supply all our needs whether health, finances, parcel delivery, future ministry contexts or whatever is part of his plans and purposes.

With such great thankfulness for your prayerful partnership,

Andrew and Sandra Freeman



Goats hurrying past our front gate ... please help, does anyone know what this plant is called? ... the path to our front door where bulbine and lavender are in flower and the frangipani is putting out fresh new leaves

Issues of the Faith

“Replenish the Earth: Were Adam and Eve Supposed to Fill the Planet with Their Descendants – or to Refill It?”

This brief article was written by Dr Carl Wieland, a medical doctor who is the former Managing Director of Creation Ministries International. This article is from *Creation* 33(2):48-49, April 2011.



Carl Wieland

Were Adam and Eve supposed to fill the planet with their descendants – or to refill it?

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth ...” (Genesis 1:28a, KJV)

CMI’s speakers have noticed of late that in spite of the overwhelming array of biblical facts against it, the hoary old ‘gap theory’ (or one of its many variants) still occasionally rears its head in unexpected places. It basically involves the belief that the recent six-day creation in Genesis is really only a re-creation. This allegedly ‘second’ creation is supposed to have taken place upon an Earth that became empty, having once been filled.

To many people, this seems blatantly obvious from reading the verse above, which is from the King James translation. When I say I want to ‘replenish’ my kitchen cupboard, I mean that I want to ‘refill’ or ‘restock’ it. Which means that though it is now empty, it once was full.

By seeing the word ‘replenish’, people think (not surprisingly), “Isn’t God telling us that He wants Adam and Eve to refill the world? And doesn’t that mean that it had previously been filled, then emptied?”

But as any Hebrew interlinear Bible or Bible dictionary will tell you, the word translated as ‘replenish’ in Genesis 1:28 is the Hebrew verb מלא (mil’û), which simply means fill. Not refill. Which is why most modern versions translate the word in Genesis 1:28 as fill. But this does not necessarily mean that the King James translators made a mistake here. They seem to have known what the Hebrew word meant, as shown by the fact that in most other places it appears in the OT, they simply translated it as ‘fill’.

The key to unravelling the apparent confusion is the fact that languages continually change. Quite simply, the usage of this word has changed since the KJV appeared some 400 years ago (1611). Back then, people were more likely than nowadays to say things like ‘I am replete with happiness’, which is just another way of saying ‘I am full of happiness’. And replenish (fill) is the verb form of the adjective replete (full). People reading the KJV in earlier times would have likely understood replenish to mean exactly what the Hebrew word means, i.e. fill.

In defence of those who have held to the ‘refill’ understanding, the confusion is quite understandable. In today’s English, we have fill and refill, and there is stock and restock. In each case, the prefix ‘re’ means ‘again’. And to make it even more confusing, there is actually a word ‘plenish’ that means ‘fill’, though it’s a very old word, too – one that gets used even less nowadays than ‘replete’. Today, when we say or write ‘replenish’, we unmistakably mean ‘refill’. It’s no wonder people think that ‘replenish’ must mean ‘refill’ in Genesis 1:28. Except that when we examine the Hebrew, we know that it means ‘fill’ – the information about older English explains it all. If God had wanted to tell Adam to fill the earth again there were unmistakable ways of saying this in Hebrew.

So in future, when someone throws that word ‘replenish’ at you as if it is a knock-down, drag-em-out argument for some mysterious previous creation, you will be able to set them straight – making sure your words are ‘replete with grace’, of course.

The Gap Theory – Neither Viable nor Harmless

Gap theories in all their many versions propose that one can squeeze millions of years into Genesis before Adam – for example, between the first two verses of the Bible.

Rather than go through the many details of why the Gap Theory so comprehensively fails the test of straightforward biblical exegesis, interested readers are referred to Chapter 6 of CMI’s The Creation Answers Book. The chapter is also downloadable as a pdf at

www.creation.com/gap-theories.

In short, though, the gap or (ruin-reconstruction) theory:

- *Did not arise from any reading of the text, but was ‘discovered’ as a possible ‘answer’ to secular speculations of long ages;*
- *Was never biblically viable;*
- *Did not adequately deal with (in fact mostly failed to address) geological facts that were being interpreted as evidence for ‘millions of years’;*
- *Never persuaded even small numbers of the scientific establishment that it could reconcile science with the Bible, and*
- *Resulted in large numbers of young people being lost to the church during their higher education, as they realised that their supposed ‘answer’ didn’t work.*

Gap ideas have good intentions, but are not only wrong, they have done considerable damage to the faith. The classic ‘gap theory’, historically, served largely to lull the church into a false confidence about the dangers of compromise on the age question. Because of this, naked naturalistic / evolutionary proposals were permitted to take over the areas of higher learning largely unopposed – with the church thinking they ‘had the answer’.

YOUR CHURCH FAMILY BUSINESSES		
Bundaberg South Vet Clinic 67 Walla Street, Bundaberg South 41520009 vet@bundabergsouthvet.com.au www.bundabergsouthvet.com.au Munya Clarence Bere Rutendo Bere	ACTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY SOLUTIONS 222 Walker Street Bundaberg 41510106 Trevor & Andrea McLaren	Bundaberg I.T. Services For all your computer needs 25 Boston Street, Bundaberg 41535865 sales@bundyit.com.au www.bundyit.com.au Wayne Barrett

The Text of Pastor Brian’s Announcement

Last Sunday, Pastor Brian announced that he would be concluding his pastoral leadership ministry of our church at the end of 2021. Here is the text of his announcement –

Dear church family,

It is almost twenty-six years since the Lord led us to plant Coral Coast Christian Church.

As a church, we have been through the ‘highs and lows’ of doing church together. There have been some great achievements and there have been some disappointments. Through these twenty-six years, the Lord has faithfully guided and provided for us as a church.

In the last couple of months, I have increasingly sensed that it is time for me to conclude my pastoral leadership ministry at Coral Coast Christian Church. It is therefore my intention to step aside from the role of Senior Pastor at the end of 2021.

At this stage, Caroline and I are not certain what the future holds for us. It is possible that I may move into retirement from full-time pastoral ministry and it is possible that we might relocate to the Gladstone area (to live closer to our daughter), but these matters are not yet definite. We are confident that our God will guide us into the next stage of our on-going service, just as I am confident that He will guide the church as you begin the process of seeking a new Senior Pastor.

May you know His continued blessing!

Yours in Jesus’ name,

Pastor Brian Robertson

The church leadership now has the responsibility of determining the type of pastor needed to lead the church into its next ‘season’ and of establishing a Pastoral Search Committee which, in consultation with Queensland Baptists, will seek the person of the Lord’s choosing to take up the role of Senior Pastor.

World News – Chad

Uncertainty in Chad

Although Chad is officially a secular state, its politics are dominated by the Muslim majority, as are the armed forces, civil service, and business community. In spite of their apparent freedoms, Christians may suffer social discrimination from Muslims and hostility from followers of African traditional religions. Chad is also surrounded by countries where militant Islamic groups could easily penetrate the country and create chaos.

For thirty years, the President of Chad fostered good relations between Muslims and Christians (most of who live in the south). However, the President was killed on a recent visit to front-line troops, leaving Christians apprehensive about the future.

Christians in Chad similarly face persecution from followers of traditional African religions. Animists account for around one-fifth of the population. In 2018, a “Yondo” initiation year, hundreds of young Christian men and boys fled from their villages to avoid being abducted to undergo brutal, and sometimes fatal, initiation rites. As part of the ceremonies, the young initiates are compelled to praise animist spirits and to use a secret traditional language historically associated with nationalist anti-Christian sentiment.

Violence and Persecution against Christians Increasing in Chad

Christians in the Muslim-majority nation of Chad are facing increasing levels of persecution from local officials and violence from the militant Islamist group Boko Haram and militant Muslim herdsmen. Boko Haram activities are increasing around Lake Chad in the southwest of the country where many Christian farming communities live.

Another type of anti-Christian persecution comes through the imposition of diya (blood money) on Christians. Diya, a component of Shari’a law, is compensation given for injury or damage. It is payable to the victim, their family, or the Muslim community generally. It fundamentally disadvantages Christians, because non-Muslims are granted less compensation than Muslims for a similar injury. Also, it is not regulated by the state and is therefore susceptible to misuse. Some Muslims will make spurious claims against Christians, seeking diya payments for supposed injuries.

President of Chad Killed

On 21 April 2021, Idriss Déby, President of Chad for the last thirty years, was killed. He was visiting the frontlines of fighting against rebel forces. The military immediately named his son as interim president, although Chad’s constitution says the Prime Minister should take that role.

David Bogosian of Christian Aid Mission said it was a very tense time for Christians in Chad, whom President Déby had treated very well. “It’s not known what the intentions of the rebels are, in terms of how they will relate to Christians. But the uncertainty in the political environment is something that’s a real concern to Christians because he maintained the peace. And there have been civil wars between Christians and Muslims in the past. Many have been concerned that Chad could go the way of Sudan, which basically split between Muslims in the North and Christians in the South.” “It really was President Idriss that kept the country together,” Mr Bogosian emphasised.

President Déby’s death could also jeopardise counterterrorism efforts in the region. Mr Bogosian said, “Chad was an island of stability in the midst of all the chaos that is Central Africa. Chad is surrounded by Boko Haram on the West and surrounded by civil unrest in the East in Sudan. Then you’ve got Libya in the North. You’ve got chaos all over the place.” Chad had been mostly able to avoid extremist religious influences in its national affairs, but it is yet to be seen whether the new Military Transition Council will be able to continue this.

Chad’s Religious Leaders Remain Mostly Outside the Fray

This article was written by Dr Alex Thurston, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati in the USA, in response to the political changes happening in Chad. The article was published online on 14 May 2021.

How have Chad's religious leaders reacted to the dramatic events of April and May? So far, top Muslim and Christian figures have appeared vaguely supportive of the Military Transition Council (CMT) and uneager to rock the boat. In the aftermath of Idriss Déby's death, religion has not emerged as a major political cleavage, and indeed has not been in the past – although Chadian leaders do appear slightly concerned by a reported uptick in Muslim-Christian tensions over social media.

Religious identities are, at least on the surface, less salient in Chadian politics than they are elsewhere in the Sahel. Chad is not, like Mauritania, an "Islamic Republic". Indeed, like Burkina Faso, Chad is more religiously mixed than are Muslim-majority Mauritania, Mali, and Niger; Chad is approximately 52% Muslim and 44% Christian. Moreover, as in the other Sahelian countries with the exception of Mauritania, laïcité or French-style secularism is foundational to the Chadian state, mentioned no less than four times in the 2018 constitution. In other Sahelian countries, however, laïcité has not prevented religious actors from playing huge roles in public life. In Mali and Niger, and to a lesser extent in Burkina Faso, the meaning and value of laïcité has been vigorously debated. And one would be hard pressed to find a Chadian religious figure equivalent in activism and outspokenness to Mali's Mahmoud Dicko, the celebrity imam who was at the forefront of anti-incumbent protests through the summer of 2020.

The most prominent factors and forces in Chadian politics, since independence, have been region, ethnicity, and interpersonal rivalry. Some divisions within Chadian history and politics map loosely onto Muslim and Christian zones, but religion is not the decisive factor in mobilising political forces. Chad has lacked major oppositional Christian movements, Islamist parties, or much of a homegrown jihadist presence, aside from the relatively small numbers of Chadians who have been drawn to the Nigeria-centric Boko Haram or other regional jihadist actors. Throughout Chadian history, armed rebel groups have often used the language of "liberation" and "change" to justify their rebellions, while opposition parties in the era of multi-partyism have tended to use the language of "democracy" as they sought footholds within Idriss Déby's authoritarian system. Chadian identity itself remains something of an elusive and moving target. Ironically, Chad's Islamic identity may be stronger outside the country than inside – for example, just last year former Foreign Affairs Minister Hissein Brahim Taha was elected as the next Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and several Chadian institutions have strong ties to the Arab Gulf countries.

Neither the CMT nor the transitional government under civilian Prime Minister Albert Pahimi Padacké include overtly religious actors; the CMT is dominated by military and intelligence personnel who were close to Déby, while the transitional government includes familiar faces from Chadian politics, Déby regime stalwarts and (former) opposition figures willing to lend their stamp of approval to the CMT. The approximately 55 people with the most formal power in Chadian politics right now are all non-clerics. The junta's most outspoken opposition, meanwhile, in the form of the protest collective Wakit Tama ("the time has come") and other protesters, appear to draw primarily on more or less secular bases – opposition parties, labour unions, and civil society organisations – rather than on explicitly religious sentiments.

Yet religion matters in Chad. Several of the country's pre-colonial components were polities defined at least partly in religious terms, such as the Wadai Sultanate in what is now eastern Chad. The country's first president, François Tombalbaye, initially relied on a heavily Christian support base and in his last years in power he attempted, unsuccessfully, to promote a vision of "Tchatitude" that "embraced 'African authenticity' and rejected Christianity and Islam." Later incarnations of the Chadian state, particularly under Déby, had close relations with organised religious bodies, such as the state-backed High Council for Islamic Affairs (CSAI). Actors in



Alex Thurston

those bodies tended to be political loyalists, such as the CSAI's long-time president Hissein Abakar, who died in 2018.

It is not surprising then, that as the CMT sought to build its legitimacy, religious actors have figured among its bases of tacit support. Within two days of Déby's death, his son Mahamat at the head of the CMT met the country's top religious leaders – the CSAI's Mamahat Khatir Issa, the Archbishop Edmond Djitangar of the Catholic Church, and Batein Kalingué of the Evangelical community. That meeting took place on the same day (21 April) that the CMT met France's Ambassador Bertrand Cochéry; the CMT clearly considers religious leaders a key part of the central web of relationships, internal and external, that it is now attempting to manage. Significantly, Padacké also met with religious leaders just days after becoming transitional prime minister.

For their part, Chad's top religious leaders have mostly made vague statements appealing for dialogue and national unity. For example, the CSAI's Issa, following the meeting with Padacké, compared the country's situation to that of a boat that has lost its captain: "So we must join forces so that the boat does not topple over." Or to take another example, at an April 24 memorial service for Idriss Déby in the eastern Chadian city of Abéché, seat of the Wadai Sultanate, there was a show of unity as the Sultan, CSAI representatives, and members of the security forces all gathered at the regional governor's residence to pay respects to Déby and pray that "peace and stability may reign in the country." Such gatherings have both national and local audiences, especially given recurring farmer-herder conflicts in eastern Chad and beyond. Amid the talk of "unity" and "peace," top religious actors appear to be attempting to stay out of the political fray, as most of the country's religious leaders have typically done historically. Taking such a stance now, however, amounts to tacitly casting their lot with the CMT and the preservation of Déby's system under Mahamat, perhaps partly out of fear of what the alternatives to continuity might be.

Other religious currents in the country have also shied away from politicising Déby's death. For example, one significant Muslim constituency in Chad beyond the CSAI is the (non-violent) Salafi movement Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyah (Supporters of Muhammad's Way). Ansar al-Sunna is something of a rival to the Sufi-dominated CSAI, whose leaders have sometimes been openly hostile to the Salafis. Yet Ansar al-Sunna, too, addressed a warm and fairly formulaic condolence message to Mahamat Déby, referring to him as the president of the country. No major religious current has so far lent its rhetorical or institutional support to the anti-CMT protests.

The CMT has thus benefited from and inherited Déby's top-down and – at least from the perspective of authoritarianism – relatively successful management of the religious field. Yet there were moments of religious tensions under Déby, as well as longer-term zones of interreligious competition. Such moments include the 1993 national sovereign conference, where among other interventions, the CSAI's Abakar at least appeared to call for a greater role for Shari'a in Chad, prompting a backlash from Christians and others. Other moments of tension came in 2018 as the parliament approved changes to the constitution. In a rare political intervention in April 2018, Catholic bishops criticised the move, saying that changing the constitution without a popular referendum was dangerous. Their intervention elicited a public rebuke from the secretary general of the government. The next month, new constitutional requirements about religious oaths for cabinet ministers triggered a rare moment of open dissent against Déby by a direct subordinate, with one minister-designate refusing to swear on a Bible. More broadly, sectors such as higher education have witnessed ongoing struggles over language, identity, and religion. If the CMT has most religious leaders' allegiance, that nevertheless does not mean that the junta can expect religion to lie dormant in the new Chad.

Wisdom for Life

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by avoiding it today." Abraham Lincoln

Australian News

An Unfortunate Parting of the Ways

Several months ago, the Christian Democratic Party announced that Lyle Shelton – the former Managing Director of Australian Christian Lobby and a former Senate candidate in Queensland for Australian Conservatives – had been appointed to succeed Rev Fred Nile in the Legislative Council of the NSW Parliament.

Sadly, on 10 September 2021, Rev Nile released this brief statement

*Due to irreconcilable differences, Rev Fred Nile has dis-
endorsed Mr Lyle Shelton as his successor.*

*“I do not agree nor have supported many of Mr Shelton’s
opinions that he has shared on his Facebook Page and his E-
News. Lyle often acted without consultation with my team.”*

“Consequently, I do not feel comfortable that he succeed me.”

*“I had high hopes for Mr Shelton and am sorry it has come to
this. As a result of this division, I have sought God’s guidance.
Therefore, I will complete my democratically elected term as a
Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) of NSW until the next
State Election in 2023 “ said Rev Nile.*



Fred Nile

In response, Lyle Shelton released this statement –

*Today it was reported that The Reverend Honourable Fred Nile has chosen to withdraw
his endorsement of my candidacy to succeed him in the New South Wales Parliament in
November.*

*Since moving to Sydney at Rev Nile’s invitation, I have
sought to build on his legacy and help build a thriving
movement committed to the preservation of Christian values
in our parliament.*

*In just a few months, I encouraged more than 6,000
Christians to sign up to support the Christian Democratic
Party. Over 700 people have donated \$120,000 to see this
vision fulfilled and hundreds of Christians have joined the
party as financial members. This new lease of life was the
direct result of Rev Nile’s vision to secure a future for the
party. As the Christian Democratic Party emerges from
receivership and its present legal troubles, it has an opportunity to move forward.*



Lyle Shelton

*It is clear that over recent years, the party has been riven with factions and divisions that
should have no place in a Christian organisation.*

*A truly Christian political movement ought to look very different and behave differently
than the major parties. Yet sadly, the behaviour that has been on display in the party’s
organisational wing in recent years has fallen well short of the standard expected of a
Christian organisation.*

*In the coming weeks and months, we have an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and
put an end to disgraceful practices. To that end I pledge my ongoing service to party
members and supporters as we build a political movement that truly reflects Christ’s
character.*

*God bless,
Lyle Shelton*

Director of Campaigns and Communications

While the underlying issues of contention are not widely known, it is disappointing there is a ‘parting of the ways’ between Fred Nile and Lyle Shelton. The CDP needs new leadership and rejuvenated vision to take it forward, and Mr Shelton seemed to provide that.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the members of the Military Transition Council (CMT) in Chad to wisely guide the country in the process of choosing a new president. Pray that religious differences will not rise to the surface and the people of Chad will seek to live harmoniously with one another.
- Pray too that the gospel message will be proclaimed in Chad, and that people of Muslim or animistic background will come to a true knowledge of the Saviour.
- Continue to uphold the Christian believers in Afghanistan in prayer, especially as they face the very real possibility of being executed by Taliban extremists.
- Pray for all of the women and girls in Afghanistan, who will now have to conform to the Taliban's strict interpretation of Shari'a law and be fully covered and fully subservient. Pray that this loss of freedom and this forced subservience will result in many women questioning the truth of Islam and being open to explore the grace of God in Jesus Christ.
- The West generally, and the USA specifically, has been humiliated by the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan and the rapid collapse of the former Afghani government. Pray that this humiliation will cause Western leaders to grasp the need for Judeo-Christian spiritual and moral foundations to ensure social well-being and freedom.
- Canada will be going to the polls on 20 September 2021. Pray that Canadian voters will choose wisely as they cast their ballots, and for a government to be elected that will lead the country in godly truth and righteousness.
- Increasingly, evidence is emerging that the COVID-19 virus was not natural and was originally created in a laboratory in Wuhan in China. While the Chinese Government continues to deny this claim and has no doubt destroyed much of the evidence, it would seem that research into 'gain of function' in coronaviruses was happening at the Institute of Virology in Wuhan. Pray that the truth will be revealed, that those responsible for this development of a biological weapon will be brought to justice, and that steps can be taken to prevent something like this ever happening again.
- With the numbers of people in our country being vaccinated against COVID-19 increasing, our governments are now wrestling with the issue of so-called 'vaccine passports'. Pray that the right balance can be found between public health and personal freedoms. Pray too that people who choose to not be vaccinated (or cannot be vaccinated because of other medical conditions) will not be maligned or discriminated against.
- 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 BWAA special fundraising appeal to raise funds in support of Afghani refugees and Christians still trapped in that country will be well supported. Pray that assistance will be able to be provided to those in need.
- Uphold Andrew and Sandra Freeman in prayer as they serve in Botswana. Pray especially for the continuing delivery of the medications that Sandra needs, for Sandra's doctoral studies, and for progress on all that needs to be done to enable them to get established in their new house.
- Pray for our church leaders as they begin the process of appointing a Pastoral Search Committee to seek a new Senior Pastor (and perhaps also a part-time youth and children's worker). Ask for the Lord's clear guidance and for the Spirit to lead the Committee to the person of God's choosing. Pray too for His guidance for Brian and Caroline as they weigh up their next steps.