

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 3 October 2021

9.30am

Brian Robertson

Luke 15:11-32

"Unprecedented Mercy"

Sunday 10 October 2021

9.30am

Keith Stevenson

QB Regional Minister for Wide Bay Burnett

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

"Living Off the Scent of an Empty Vase"

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.

Appointment as a Class 1 Member of Coral Coast Community Care Inc

Last Sunday, thirty-four members voted to appoint Wal and Robyn Starr as Class 1 members of Coral Coast Community Care Inc. We wish Wal and Robbie well in this role.

Change to the Start-Time of Our Sunday Worship Services

As from today (Sunday 3 October), our worship services will be commencing at 9.30am (rather than 10.00am). We hope that you noted this change in your diary, on your calendar, or in your electronic organiser.

Communion in a COVID-Safe Manner

Today, being the first Sunday of the month, we will celebrate communion. We will supply a small sealed plastic bag containing a gluten-free wafer and a small plastic container of grape juice to each person as he / she arrives at the church foyer.

Resumption of After-Service Morning Teas

Providing there are sufficient volunteers to provide food and milk, we are resuming after-service morning teas as from today (Sunday 3 October).

Women's Morning Tea

The first-Monday-of-the-month Women's Morning Tea will be held on Monday 4 October 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.

Destiny Rescue Advocates Dinner

Destiny Rescue Australia is a Christian mission seeking to stop the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in developing-world countries. DR rescues children trapped in exploitative situations and provides training and resources to prevent children being trafficked in the first place.



On Tuesday 5 October, Nerilee Sowter – Partnerships Manager for Destiny Rescue Australia – will be hosting a dinner at Les Chefs Restaurant (238 Bourbong Street, Bundaberg), from 6.00pm, to meet DR supporters, share exciting stories of DR's work, and 'recruit' additional supporters. If you would be interested in attending this evening, please RSVP by calling Nerilee on 0418 875291 or emailing admin@destinyrescue.org.

Screening of “Border Interception” Documentary Film

On Wednesday 6 October, beginning at 6.00pm at the Reading Cinemas (1 Johanna Boulevard, Kensington), Destiny Rescue Australia will be screening the documentary film “Border Interception”. This film is about the inspirational rescue work DR’s brave female agents undertake on the border of Nepal to rescue children from sex trafficking.

This event will be hosted by Stephen Bennett MP (Member for Burnett) who is an active supporter of Destiny Rescue. The guest speaker will be Paul Mergard who is the CEO of DR. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to admin@destinyrescue.org.

Pastor Brian on Holiday

Pastor Brian will be away on a brief holiday from Friday 8 October to Saturday 16 October.

Working Bee

The next church working bee will be held on Saturday 9 October, beginning at 6.00am (before it gets too hot) and continuing on throughout the morning. The main tasks will be repairing the roof of the undercover area between the Hall and the Office, as well as general cleaning and gardening work. Please come and ‘lend a hand’.

Guest Speaker Next Sunday

Our guest speaker at next Sunday’s service is Pastor Keith Stevenson, who is the Queensland Baptists Regional Minister for the Wide Bay Burnett Region. Keith served as the Senior Pastor of Hervey Bay Baptist Church from 1988 to 2015, and has been retired for the last five-and-a-half years. Keith’s message is entitled “Living Off the Scent of an Empty Vase”, based on *2 Corinthians 2:14-16*.



Keith Stevenson

Special Members Meeting

At the request of the stewards, after our worship service on Sunday 10 October, there will be a brief Special Members’ Meeting to consider an amendment to the Church Budget. All church members are asked to be in attendance.

Combined Churches Service

There will be a Combined Churches Service at the Bundaberg Christian College Assembly Hall (234 Ashfield Road, Bundaberg) on Sunday 10 October, beginning at 6.00pm. This service, which is organised by the Bundaberg Ministers Association, will be an opportunity for churchgoers to join together to celebrate our oneness in Christ. The focus of the service will be to highlight the ministry of religious instruction in the State Schools of our district. The Bundaberg Christian College worship team will lead the worship and an offering will be taken to support the Bundaberg Religious Instruction Cooperative.

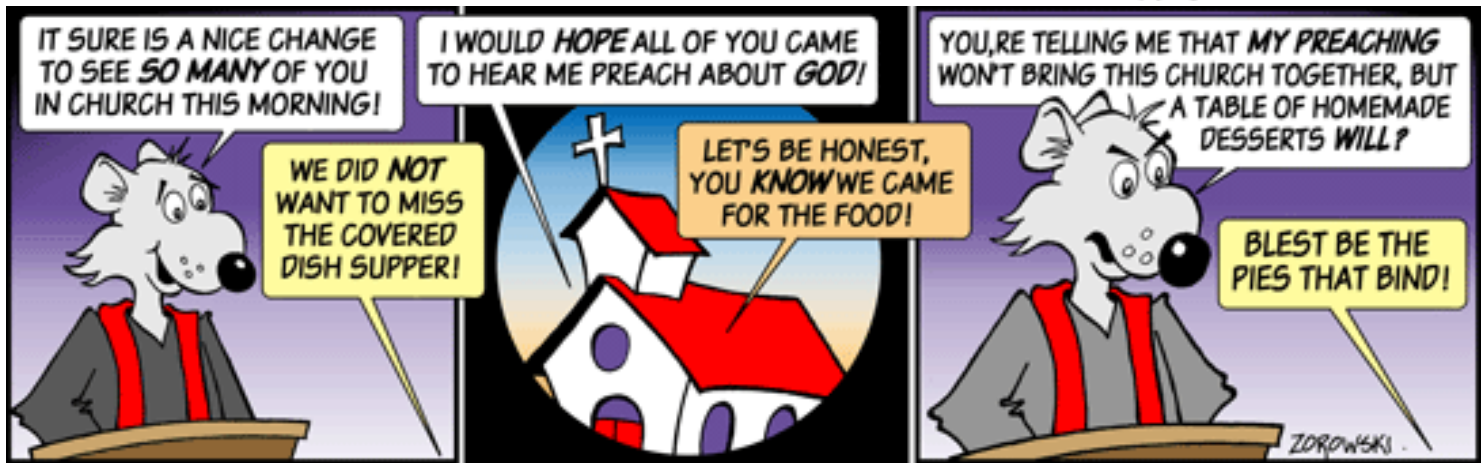
There will be a sausage sizzle from 5.00pm, and the one-hour-long service will begin at 6.00pm. Go along to share in worship and fellowship with other churchgoers.

“Forgiveness 70 X 7” Seminar

The Forgiveness 70 X 7 Seminar is a DVD teaching presentation by Dr Bruce Wilkinson, designed to enable participants to find peace through forgiving others and themselves. Dr Wilkinson is a renowned Bible teacher who formerly presented the Walk Thru the Bible teaching series. The Forgiveness 70 X 7 Seminar involves a total of eight teaching sessions, presented over two days (four teaching sessions per day).

Megan Kelly and Sharen Slater will be screening this DVD teaching seminar on Tuesday 12 October and Tuesday 19 October, from 9.00am to about 2.30pm both days. The venue will be our Church Hall. Participants are asked to bring their own Bible, a notebook, a pen, their own water-bottle, and a plate of food to share for lunch. Tea and coffee will be supplied. The cost of the workbook is \$10.00.

For further information or to register, please contact Megan Kelly on 0412 827028 or Sharen Slater on 0411 030166.



Birthdays This Week

Monday 4 October – Karen McBride, Ken Meyer

Wednesday 6 October – Serena Sibley, Rosalie White

Thursday 7 October – Lisa Fritz, Glenys Kropp, Ruth Nielsen

Wedding Congratulations

As a church, we extend our congratulations to John Sergeev and Katharine Robertson who are being married at 2.30pm on Sunday 10 October at the Coolibah Downs Private Estate at Mount Nathan on the Gold Coast. Pastor Brian will be officiating. We trust that John and Katharine will know the Lord's blessing and guidance as they begin their married lives together. If you would like to send a wedding card or gift, you can send it to 34 Bauhinia Street, Boyne Island, Qld, 4680.

Expression of Sympathy

As a church, we express our sympathies to the family of Joan Marr (aged 88) who passed away on Tuesday 21 September 2021. The funeral for Joan was on Friday 1 October at the chapel of Des Allen & Co Funeral Directors, with Pastor Brian officiating. Sympathy cards can be posted to Leanne Innes (Joan's daughter), Unit 2, 21 John Oxley Drive, Gracemere, Qld, 4702.

Another Expression of Sympathy

As a church, we express our sympathies to Frank and Lynne Metz on the death of Lynne's mother, Ellen Herrmann (aged 87), on Wednesday 22 September. Ellen died peacefully at home, only about eight months after husband Malcolm had died on 31 January. The funeral will be held in Brisbane on Tuesday 5 October. Sympathy cards can be posted to Frank and Lynne Metz, 8 Harmony Avenue, Mon Repos, Qld, 4670 or placed in their pigeonhole in the foyer.

New Church Directory Now Available

The new 2021 Church Directory is now available for all those who consider our church their 'spiritual home'. If you have a pigeonhole, your copy of the new Directory has been put there for you. If you do not have a pigeonhole, or if you need a second copy of the Directory, please pick up a spare one from the Church Office.

Returning the Old Church Directory

Now that you have received the new 2021 Church Directory, please return your copy of last year's Directory to the Church Office. The office staff can take these apart so that we can re-use plastic covers and spiral comb binders, and can shred the pages to protect the information contained in the booklet from inappropriate use. So, if you still have a copy of the 2020 Directory (or any earlier edition of the Church Directory), please remember to bring it with you next Sunday so that it can be 'recycled'.

Mission News

Baptist World Aid Australia “The Little Book of Big Hearted Gifts” for 2021-2022

Baptist World Aid Australia has released “The Little Book of Big Hearted Gifts” filled with suggestions for the support of BWAA projects around the world.

Suggested gifts include –

- providing bars of soap and training Cambodian and Kenyan people in basic sanitation and personal hygiene (\$5.00)
- helping to prevent malaria in the Solomon Islands (\$10.00)
- providing communities in Nepal and Kenya with training in environmental protection techniques and planting trees to reduce erosion, provide cattle feed, and develop forests (\$10.00)
- arranging children’s arts and crafts experiences in Uganda so that children develop resilience, learn skills, become creative, and avoid child labour and child marriage (\$15.00 per session)
- providing blankets for refugee children in various locations (\$15.00 per blanket)
- supplying face masks, gloves, other protective equipment, and hand sanitiser to families and frontline healthcare workers in the midst of the pandemic (\$15.00 per package)
- training for Nepali and Kenyan families in chicken rearing and providing them with chickens (\$20.00)
- training poor families in Bangladesh and Nepal in establishing vegetable gardens, and supplying seeds to enable vegetable gardens to be planted (\$20.00)
- providing hives of bees in Nepal and training families in beekeeping (\$40.00 per bee hive)
- supplying goats for families in Nepal and Kenya (\$40.00 per goat)
- assisting in the provision of clean water (water filters, arsenic testing kits, borehole sinking, and pond building) in Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, and the Solomon Islands (\$50.00)
- training in pig breeding for families in Nepal and Cambodia and supplying piglets to allow for the establishment of pig farms (\$50.00)
- training and supporting birth attendants in Nepal, and educating new mothers on better health care (\$60.00)
- supplying disease-fighter packs (which combine the fresh water gift, the anti-malaria gift, and clean-hands bars-of-soap gift) (\$65.00 per pack)
- supplying family nutrition packs (which combine the vegetable gardens, goat, and chickens gifts) (\$70.00 per pack)
- establishing eco-friendly fish farms in rural Nepal and training families to farm fish for food and to sell in the markets (\$80.00 per fish pond)
- supplying farm animal packs (which combine the goat, piglets, and chickens gifts) (\$100.00 per pack)
- educating refugee children and ethnic minority children in Lebanon and Nepal (\$100.00)
- funding “Change-a-Child’s Life 3-in-1 Value Packs” (which combine back-to-school, arts and crafts, and clean water gifts) (\$150.00 per pack)
- helping to prevent child trafficking in Asia by creating safe centres where children can receive shelter, protection, education, opportunities for play, and health care (\$300.00)
- constructing flushing toilets and training in better sanitation in Nepal (\$500.00)
- constructing emergency shelters and providing emergency aid following natural disasters, especially so that people have safe places to live and sleep (\$1,500.00 per shelter)

If you would like to make an income-tax deductible purchase of one or more of these items, send your gift to BWAA, Locked Bag 2200, North Ryde, NSW, 1670, or telephone 1300 789991, or email hello@baptistworldaid.org.au. You can also view further details about these projects at the website www.baptistworldaid.org.au/big-hearted-gifts. BWAA will supply you with Christmas cards that match each gift, so that you can advise your loved ones that a gift has been purchased on their behalf through BWAA.



Issues of the Faith

“The Pursuit of Happiness”

This article was written by Ken Myers, who is host and producer of Mars Hill Audio in Quince in Virginia and the author of *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture*. This article was published online by Ligonier Ministries on 1 September 2008.

When Thomas Jefferson selected the phrase “the pursuit of happiness” to describe one of the unalienable rights of man, he was appropriating an idea with a very long history. Since the time of Aristotle and before, happiness was understood as a condition to which all people properly aspire. But for the Greeks, as for the biblical writers, happiness was an objective reality, not just a feeling or an emotional state. The phrase “whatever makes you happy,” so commonly uttered today, would have been nonsense to Hebrews, Greeks, and Christians alike, since it implies no fixed moral order in which happiness resides.

Happiness is roughly synonymous with the biblical idea of “blessedness”. In classical and medieval Christian ethics, happiness referred to a state of human flourishing or well-being that aligned the life of a person with the truest good. Actions, thoughts, desires, and ambitions had to be ordered in light of the proper end of mankind for a person to be truly happy. Happiness was thus an ethical, not a psychological project. To pursue happiness was to pursue the whole reason for one's being, but that meant recognising that one's desires and actions were in need of correction. It meant accounting for the fact that human beings did not instinctively pursue the truest good, that some very attractive pleasures were not truly in keeping with the most essential contours of our nature. In Christian terms, the pursuit of happiness meant recognising that God had created us to flourish in the context of obedience to Him so that our image-bearing nature might display His glory. Since our sin and consequent waywardness alienated us from our deepest, truest identity, the pursuit of happiness was only possible by grace, since we cannot by our own strength resist the disordering effects of sin in our lives.

So happiness on this historic account is really a function of sanctification, of growth in holy obedience. That formulation would no doubt come as a shock to most of our contemporaries, perhaps even to many Christians, though it would have probably caused a nod of affirmation from most pagan philosophers. How has it come about that a nation often assumed to be Christian, a nation also obsessed with pursuing happiness, has acquired such an anti-Christian understanding of what it means to be happy?

*Part of the answer is tied up with the radical innovations in ethical thought that took shape during the Eighteenth-Century, the Enlightenment culture in which Jefferson was at home. It was a time in which philosophers were abandoning the idea of an essential human nature that defined human ends. It was, in a sense, an abandonment of the idea of sin, since these Enlightenment thinkers were quite willing to talk about (in Alasdair MacIntyre's words) “untutored-human-nature-as-it-is”, and base their understanding of ethics and politics on a picture of an intrinsically innocent human nature. This was a time in which the freedom of the individual was becoming the ultimate good, for individuals and societies. The philosophies of the time when our nation was founded were committed to the idea of the individual as sovereign in his moral authority (see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p62).*

In such a context, the venerable idea of the pursuit of happiness took on a whole new meaning. Happiness came to be understood as whatever any individual conceives it to be. Since it could no longer be objectively defined in terms of a fixed purpose for human nature, the pursuit of happiness soon came to mean the pursuit of pleasure, the relentless quest for fun, for an emotional state of carefree bliss. And this state need have no correlation to the ethical choices one has made, to the way one has ordered one's life. In fact, many Americans seem committed to pursuing this kind of happiness by means of making bad ethical choices: committing adultery, dishonouring their parents, killing their unborn children, abusing their own bodies. When happiness becomes merely a mood, the sustaining of which is the highest



Ken Myers

good, rules tend to get broken, like eggs in Lenin's omelette.

In the Twentieth Century, aided by the rise of mass media and ubiquitous forms of entertainment, the pursuit of happiness-as-fun came to be felt as a kind of moral imperative. Writing in the mid-1950s, psychologist Martha Wolfenstein noted the emergence of what she called "fun morality", an ethic that displaced the old-fashioned goodness morality "which stressed interference with impulses. Not having fun is an occasion for self-examination: 'What is wrong with me?' ...Whereas gratification of forbidden impulses traditionally aroused guilt, failure to have fun now lowers one's self-esteem." Not only has happiness been detached from objective human ends and identified uncritically with personal pleasure, the pleasures assumed to be the source of happiness are increasingly the most trivial and fleeting. Submitting to the dictates of fun morality makes the passive consumption of entertainment a more plausible road to happiness than subtler, more demanding pleasures like learning to play the violin, acquiring a love of literature, or cultivating a beautiful garden.

As it happens, the dominant assumption that happiness is a custom-built project with potentially instant payoffs does not seem to have made most people that much happier. In a recent essay entitled "The Pursuit of Emptiness", John Perry Barlow observes: "Of my legion friends and acquaintances who have become citizens of Prozac Nation, I have never heard any of them claim that these drugs bring them any closer to actual happiness. Rather, they murmur with listless gratitude, anti-depressants have pulled them back from The Abyss. They are not pursuing happiness. They are fleeing suicide." Barlow reports on an experiment in looking for smiles on the faces of people in the "upscale organic supermarket" in San Francisco in which he regularly shops. In eleven months, seeing thousands of faces, "nearly all of them healthy, beautiful, and very expensively groomed," he counted seven smiles, three of which he judged insincere. Instead, in supermarkets and elsewhere, he sees a characteristic "expression of troubled self-absorption [which] has become a nearly universal mask." Trying to find happiness on our own terms, rather than on the terms our Creator has built into our nature, is an exhausting and disappointing undertaking.

Carl Elliott, author of the book *Better than Well*, perceptively documents how many Americans use various "enhancement technologies" in the effort to feel better about themselves (which may be the working definition of happiness for many of our contemporaries). Elliot senses that the American project of pursuing happiness has become so desperate that it now seems to require "not only that I pursue happiness, but that I pursue it aggressively, club it into unconsciousness, and drag it back bound and gagged to my basement." The lengths to which people go to nab happiness are astonishing: the drugs they take; the fantasies they sustain; the money they spend; the relationships they poison.

There is something of a backlash against this militant happiness-seeking, this regime of relentless perkiness. Earlier this year, Eric Wilson's slim manifesto, *Against Happiness: In Praise of Melancholy*, was greeted by a chorus of sympathy. Wilson questioned the virtue of striving to be perpetually upbeat, reminding readers that it is sometimes quite emotionally healthy to respond to the tragedies of life with darker sentiments. Other recent books have questioned the tendency to treat sadness as a mental illness. These protests are fine as far as they go, but they are still working with the assumption that happiness is a subjective state.

The recovery of a richer vision for human happiness is a project for which Christians are uniquely situated. We believe, unlike most of our contemporaries, that we are made to delight in the knowledge and love of God, to find our fulfillment as creatures only as we walk in His ways. Knowing also that we live in a world disordered by sin, we recognize that true blessedness will often, until Christ returns, involve suffering, persecution, and sacrifice. Our happiness is not a right, but a gift from one who was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. To the best of our knowledge, Jesus never asked the disciples: "Are we having fun yet?" But He did teach them that faithful servants would enter into the joy of their master. Happiness is the fruit of aligning our lives with God's purposes for us. "If you keep My commandments," Jesus promised, "you will abide in my love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments

and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:10-11). The pursuit of such single-minded faithfulness, not simple-minded fun, is the true road to human happiness.

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

World News – Myanmar

Christian Crisis Looms in Myanmar

Most of Myanmar’s 9% Christian minority comes from the long-persecuted Chin, Kachin and Karen ethnic minorities. A humanitarian crisis looms, as Myanmar’s army moves its frontline outwards from the Burman-dominated regions of the central plains to the predominantly Christian regions of the highlands.

In addition, China actively influences Myanmar’s military government, partly because it does not want a democratically free Myanmar on its doorstep – something that would interfere with its corridor to the Indian Ocean. China has warned that its army may take “drastic action to protect its interests” in Myanmar.

Aware that the Christian regions support the democracy movement, Myanmar’s armed forces have stepped up their attacks by land and air on the Christian hill tribes. Thousands of displaced Christians are now sheltering in churches and church-run institutions.

Myanmar Army Bombed Kachin Villages

On 4 May 2021, it was reported that at least two people were killed, ten injured, and thousands forced to flee their homes due to military strikes on villages near Momauk Township, Kachin State, Myanmar. An estimated five thousand people were forced to leave their villages, seeking shelter from the ongoing attacks in church buildings in Momauk.

“The military has been bombing our villages for four days. Usually they carry out three or four airstrikes a day,” said a local man. “There is shooting all day and night. No one dares to stay in the villages,” he added. Up to nine villages in the region were attacked, with residents reporting that many houses had been destroyed. “We did not have time to take our belongings when we fled,” said one of the displaced from Kone Law village. “Now, most of our homes have been burned down and destroyed in the bombing by the military. Everything is gone.”

These attacks occurred amidst ongoing tensions in the region and across Buddhist-majority Myanmar since the army seized power in a military coup on 1 February. The Myanmar army – also known as the Tatmadaw – has for many years persecuted the Christian-majority Kachin, Chin, and Karen ethnic groups. An estimated 95% of Kachin people are Christians.

State Brutality among Myanmar’s Tribal People

Most of Myanmar’s tribal people are nominally Christian. While some of these tribal groups, such as the Kachin and the Karen, have well organised armies that oppose the central government, other tribal people are not so militant. For them, the only way to defend themselves from unprovoked military attacks is to flee for shelter.

However, the country’s military rulers, making no discrimination, are using overwhelming military violence against hill tribe people. Since mid-May, 40,000 predominantly Christian ethnic Chin have been displaced as the junta expands its brutal war. Hundreds of thousands

throughout the hill tribe regions have been displaced, churches destroyed and camps attacked. Thousands in the forests are without shelter, food, or medicines, with all humanitarian aid having been blocked by the junta.

Thousands of People in Chin State Forced to Flee

On 13 June 2021, it was reported that about 5,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Chin State in Myanmar were again been forced to flee after the Myanmar Army launched further attacks on villages and IDP camps.

The army – the Tatmadaw – began artillery strikes against IDP camps in the Mindat region of Christian-majority Chin State on 5 June. The camps and nearby villages were sheltering thousands who were first displaced after a Tatmadaw offensive in the region on 12 May. “The IDPs are tired of running,” a spokesperson said. “They are also facing food shortages as the junta has cut off the transportation of aid.” The blocking of humanitarian aid to the region prompts the real possibility that IDP camps will run out of food and other supplies.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has warned of “mass deaths from starvation, disease and exposure” in Kayah State, a region with a large Christian population, after “brutal, indiscriminate attacks” against civilians, which have displaced an estimated 100,000 people. The Tatmadaw has repeatedly attacked church buildings in Kayah, on one occasion killing four and injuring eight in artillery strikes against a church in Loikaw, the state capital.

This UN warning came amidst ongoing tensions in Buddhist-majority Myanmar since the army seized power in a military coup on 1 February. The Tatmadaw has for many years persecuted the Christian-majority Chin, Kachin, and Karen ethnic groups as well as the Muslim-majority Rohingya.

Pastors Arrested for Leading Prayers for Peace

On 28 June 2021, three pastors from Kachin State in Myanmar were arrested for organising prayers for peace on 3 March.

After having acquired approval from the Putao military authorities to charge the three Christian leaders on 14 June, the chairman of the Rawang Literature and Culture Committee (RLCC) brought a lawsuit against them for conducting an inter-denominational prayer service in Naungmoon township of Putao district. Pastor Koshan Singsar, Pastor Z Kaw Htinah, and Pastor M Hawng Di were then arrested. Under the penal code, they faced a possible three years’ imprisonment on charges of incitement to cause fear, spreading false news, and agitating for criminal offences against government employees. The RLCC chairman, Marip Yaw Shu, is a member of both the military regime’s administrative body in Putao and the military-linked Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). The pastors were detained in Naungmoon township ahead of a court hearing scheduled for 12 July.

The Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) called for prayers for the immediate release of the pastors. Serious concerns have been raised about the pastors’ health. Pastor Hawng Di, in his 70s, has high blood pressure and suffers from stomach problems. A Putao resident expressed the fear that his condition might deteriorate: “It is difficult for him to move. As he is in prison, his stomach problems might get worse because of the prison food.” Another of the pastors is recovering from a stroke.

Myanmar Soldiers Killed Christian Pastor

A Chin Christian pastor was shot dead and his wedding ring was looted by Myanmar junta soldiers who cut off the pastor’s finger during an urban clash with civilian resistance forces in Thantlang Township, Chin State on Saturday 18 September 2021.

On the day, a six-hour prolonged firefight between junta forces and a combined force of the Chinland Defence Force-Thantlang (CDF-T) and the Chin National Army (CNA) occurred in Thantlang. Nineteen houses were set ablaze when junta soldiers opened fire randomly into the town with heavy weapons and explosives. Pastor Cung Biak Hum was shot dead by the junta forces when he went outside to help put out the fires caused by the military’s artillery fire.

The Chin Baptist Convention (CBC) issued a statement condemning the army’s atrocities.

Australian News

A Statement from Dr Donna Purcell, President of Cherish Life Queensland

This statement was issued by Dr Donna Purcell, President of Cherish Life Queensland, on 19 September 2021 following the Queensland Government's decision to pass the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021*.

It is with great sadness that we all witnessed the victory of the anti-life forces within and outside Parliament last Thursday. Whilst my work prevented me from viewing the debate in person or on the parliamentary website, I know that several MPs gave very fine speeches, and provided a clear and concise counter argument to what was mainly an emotionally-driven and ill-informed debate from the other side. Unfortunately, it was passed unamended.

I mainly wish to thank everyone for their efforts, but in particular Teeshan [Johnson, Executive Director of CLQ] who has planned and conducted our written responses to the government committee's processes, represented our case to parliamentary committees, ran rallies (one of which had to be cancelled after all the advertising had been done), attracted and responded to media and all the other numerous tasks essential to a campaign. Thanks also to Alan [Baker, Vice-President of CLQ] who has assisted her, especially in the polling which was done to target aspects of the Bill, edited our public statements, and wrote many letters to the papers as well as organising others to do so as well!

Those of you who have been involved for some time will know that we started into this campaign already at a disadvantage owing to the big win for the government last year. We lost some pro-life MPs then, but more so, it was always a government Bill which the Premier personally supported and the committee process was always geared to delivering her some form of legislation. For those who don't know, the final committee report back to parliament last month, presented to the public as "committee support for the bill" was actually a tied vote-3 for (including the Chair Aaron Harper), 3 against; so Harper got to vote again in support of it. That is the way it is constructed, so it was always a question not IF we got a Bill but what form it would take. Even before then, it was clear that the government would adopt the model put forward by Wilmott and White, two QUT lecturers, previously also from the QLRC and long-time proponents of euthanasia. There were some minor modifications put forward to it, but the essentials were there, except the Committee went further to exclude institutional conscientious objection and reduced the likelihood of professional input and assessment in the application process.

We have experienced the legalisation of both abortion and euthanasia in the last three years, and since the whole process began, it has been five years that we have been constantly in action. To lose so much despite immense amounts of money and hard work is not easy to bounce back from. I can well understand that morale may be low amongst our branches and supporters, and also COVID is affecting our freedom to work, to connect with others and quite possibly closer to home in families and livelihoods. For this reason, I would like to thank you all for all you have done. Some of you are in electorates where the chances of changing the minds of pro-euthanasia MPs were very low, despite approaches from us and other quarters. It was not surprising then that only three of the ALP MPs voted against the Bill.

We will have management committee meeting soon to help start the process of discerning the way forward and working in a totally alien political landscape to that of only five years ago. I welcome any ideas and suggestions as to what we should focus on. Teeshan will be writing a more detailed analysis of the campaign for us in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Purcell



Donna Purcell

Cherish Life  .org.au
Queensland

A Comment from Damian Wyld, Director of Australian Family Coalition

This comment was issued by Damian Wyld, Director of the Australian Family Coalition on 17 September 2021.

“A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him saying, ‘You are mad, you are not like us’.”

I’m pretty sure I’ve shared that quote before, but you can only imagine what the early Desert Father, St Anthony, would make of our times after his words above.

Today, we’re meant to be the strange ones:

- *We believe that biological sex is real.*
- *We believe that marriage is between a man and a woman.*
- *We believe that human life matters.*

And perhaps the widest gulf at times: we believe in facts over feelings.

With much of the Western world in a rush to redefine, legislate, and basically will away its foundations, those who don’t “go with the flow” will seem increasingly weird.

We don’t even need to look beyond Australia – or the past week – to see how rapidly things are changing:

- *The ARIA (Australian Recording Industry Association) awards announced an end its decades-old prize categories of “Best Male Artist” and “Best Female Artist”. And why? To create a new category called “Best Artist” so that “non-binary” performers feel comfortable.*
- *In the midst of restrictions and lockdowns, Queensland’s Government saw fit to push through a shocking bill for euthanasia and assisted suicide – with no exemptions for faith-based hospitals – and all in a mere couple of days. Strangely, I seem to recall governments having a lot to say about saving lives recently (?)*
- *The Victorian Government has announced it will undermine faith-based schools’ ability to actually uphold their faith. Religious schools will be banned from hiring and firing with regard not only to sexual preference, but also “gender identity”. And this, the Victorian Government says, “will strike the right balance”.*

And this is just a snapshot. We certainly live in strange times.

So, how should we react? I thought it might be useful to take another leaf out of St Anthony’s book: “Whoever hammers a lump of iron, first decides what he is going to make of it, a scythe, a sword, or an axe. Even so we ought to make up our minds what kind of virtue we want to forge or we labour in vain.”

It’s no use simply worrying or, conversely, busying ourselves for the sake of it. Unless we want to “labour in vain” we need to take action as effectively as we can. And act we must.

Victorian State Government Attacking Christian Schools Again

The Victorian State Government has announced that new legislation will be introduced to allow courts and tribunals to determine who Christian schools can employ.

If enacted, this would mean that Christian schools in Victoria may be required to hire staff members who openly disagree with the school’s religious beliefs. Although political parties would retain the right to only employ staff who support and adhere to the values of that party, the Government wants to strip this right away from Christian schools.

Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia, asked, “Why is the Government trying to dictate to a Christian school who it can employ or in what role?”

However, the ALP in Victoria has been trying to enact this anti-Christian legislation for about fourteen years. It is designed to prevent Christian schools supposedly discriminating against potential employees who do not hold to biblically-based views on faith, sexuality, gender, and other cultural issues.



Damian Wyld



Prayer Points

- Continue to pray for the non-Buddhist ethnic minorities in Myanmar – the Chin, Kachin, Karen, and Wa peoples (many of whom are Christian) and the Rohingya people (most of whom are Muslim) – to know greater freedoms and to be protected from the ultra-nationalistic actions of the military (which is mainly drawn from the Buddhist Burman people group).
- Keep praying that the military in Myanmar will step back from its actions of seizing control of the government and re-introducing a military dictatorship. Pray that the senior military officers will realise that this 'pathway' is not what Myanmar's people want and brings international condemnation upon their country. Pray that a peaceful 'path' can be found to restore an elected civilian government.
- Continue to uphold the Christian believers in Afghanistan in prayer, especially as they face the very real possibility of being executed by Taliban extremists.
- 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.
- The recent elections in Canada have returned a minority Liberal Party [equivalent to Australia's Labor Party] Government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Pray that being in minority will prevent the government pursuing some of its more socially radical ideas.
- 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.
- The Federal Government has decided that Australia needs closer military ties with the USA and the UK, as well as a submarine fleet of nuclear-powered vessels similar to those operated by the USA. While our Government is still committed to not using nuclear weapons, nuclear-powered subs will have a greater cruise range, will be able to stay submerged for longer, and will operate more quietly than diesel-powered vessels. Pray that this step will enhance our nation's military capacity.
- Pray that the Victorian State Government will not implement its proposed legislation to force faith-based schools to employ staff members who do not hold to the schools' biblically-based ideas on faith, sexuality, and gender.
- Pray for the ministry of Religious Instruction in the State Schools in our community as school resumes for Term 4. Pray that there will be sufficient RI presenters to cover all the classes, and pray that the ministry will have favour with school principals and with Education Queensland.
- Pray for the right people to step forward to fill the numerous school chaplaincy vacancies across the SU regions under Lisa Hardie's and Adam Hardie's areas of responsibility.
- 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.