

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 28 November 2021

9.30am

Brian Robertson

1 Thessalonians 4:1-7

"Finally, Excel Still More"

Sunday 5 December 2021

9.30am

Jon Belmonte

Matthew 1:19-20, Luke 2:39-40,

and Matthew 2:13

"Joseph – Man of Faith"

Pastor:

Brian Robertson

0407 547 036

Elders:

Munya Clarence Bere

0429 389 076

Geoff Oakes

0409 891 802

Secretary:

Ken Meyer

0403 937 421

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.

If you have not yet downloaded the Check-In-Queensland QR code app to your smart phone, please do so ... after all, you are 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.

Bibles for the Persecuted Campaign

Each year, our church partners with Bible League Australia to raise funds for the purchase and delivery of Bibles to persecuted Christians around the world. This year, once again, we will be supplying each family or individual in our church with a cardboard moneybox and a 21-day prayer guide to enable you to pray each day for persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as making a \$2.00 per day contribution to the Bible League. \$2.00 per day is only a small amount, but your \$42.00 makes a difference in a persecuted Christian's life by facilitating the provision of a Bible in his / her own language.

We distributed the prayer guides and cardboard moneyboxes two weeks ago, and today (Sunday 28 November) is Day 15 of the 21-day campaign. If you are only just collecting your prayer guide and moneybox today, please begin praying with the listing for Day 15 in the prayer guide. The 21-day campaign will run until Saturday 4 December and the moneyboxes will need to be returned on Sunday 5 December.

Thank You

We thank everyone who contributed items, or volunteered time to work on a stall, for Coral Coast Community Care Inc's Garage Sale yesterday. Your efforts were much appreciated.

Religious Instruction Presenters End-of-Year Breakup

A morning tea will be held on Tuesday 30 November, beginning at 9.30am at the Novakoski Centre (in Woongarra Street, Bundaberg, behind the Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church) as an end-of-year breakup for the local State School religious instruction presenters. This will be an occasion to celebrate the ministry of RI in the local primary schools and to thank all those people who have faithfully taught RI throughout the year. If you have taught RI during the year, you are welcome to go along. Please take a plate of food to be shared.

Club 3:33 End-of-Year Breakup

From 3.30pm to 5.00pm on Thursday 2 December, our church's Club 3:33 will be holding their end-of-year breakup. If you would like to be in attendance to share in this time of celebration with the children and to meet their parents / guardians, please come along on the Thursday afternoon.

Working Bee

The next church working bee will be held on Saturday 4 December, beginning at 5.00am (before it gets too hot) and continuing on throughout the morning. The main tasks will be continuing the repair to the roof of the undercover area between the Hall and the Office, picking up small surface rocks across the recently-reconfigured paddock, and general cleaning and gardening work to tidy up the property in preparation for the Carols. Please come and 'lend a hand'.

Special Members' Meeting

There will be a Special Members' Meeting on Sunday 5 December, beginning at about 11.00am, to discuss some membership matters, a proposal from the elders regarding the appointment of an additional elder, and a proposal from the stewards in relation to the payment of leave entitlements to Pastor Brian. The Pastoral Search Committee will also present an update on their progress in searching for a new pastor. An agenda was made available last week, and all church members are asked to be in attendance if possible.

Bargara Carols by Candlelight 2021

Our church will present the Bargara Carols by Candlelight on Saturday 11 December in our church grounds (weather permitting). Food will be available and children's rides will be operating from 5.30pm, pre-Carols entertainment will be on stage from 6.00pm to 7.00pm, and the Carols program will commence at 7.00pm and go through until about 9.00pm. Our Carols have gained a reputation in our community as being an enjoyable evening and a quality presentation, and we hope that this year will be a good as previously.

If we have fine weather on the night, there are usually about 1,600 people here. So, plan to come along, and invite your family and friends to this special Christmas celebration.

Church Mice

Copyright Karl A. Zorowski



Birthdays This Week

Monday 29 November – Trevor Duffin

Thursday 2 December – Tracey Papirany, Debra Pearson

Church Morning Teas on Sundays

If you are willing to be a part of one of our four morning tea teams, please speak with Janine Maggacis on 0417 160965 and she will add you to a team. The teams of people provide food (including some gluten-free food items) and milk, put the cups, tea, coffee, milk, and sugar out on the table, and stack and unload the dishwasher afterwards.

The Morning Tea Roster

Sunday 28 November	Morning Tea Team – Sparrows
Sunday 5 December	Morning Tea Team – Eagles

Sponsoring the Bargara Carols by Candlelight

If you as an individual would like to donate to help present the Carols, or if your business would be willing to sponsor the Carols (a tax-deductible contribution for business advertising), please speak with our church bookkeeper Annette Hill on 0408 798965. All business sponsors will be acknowledged on the night of the Carols.

Donate Cans of Soft Drink for Carols Night

To help cover the costs of the Carols, our church will be selling barista-made coffees and cans of soft drink on the night of the Carols. If you would be able to donate a carton of soft drinks (either 10 cans or 24 cans), then this would help us maximise profits on the night. Please deliver the cartons of drinks to the Church Office.

Mission News

“Cure One Christmas Catalogue 2021”

The Leprosy Mission Australia has released its Christmas 2021 edition of the “Cure One Christmas Gift Catalogue” to enable supporters to purchase items – such as recipe books, tea towels, aprons, tea cups, mugs, plates, placemats, board games, torches, wallets, CDs and DVDs, fashion accessories, soaps and toiletries, cosmetics, children’s books and puzzles, stationery and cards, and books. The profits from the purchase of these items support the work of TLM.



If you would like to browse the catalogue, go to the website www.leprosymission.org.au (or telephone 1800 537767 to request a paper copy of the catalogue).

The catalogue also lists a number of projects to which supporters can make a donation as a “Life-Changing Gift of Love”. These projects include –

- funding contact tracing to test family members of people diagnosed with leprosy (12754 – \$5.00 per test)
- supplying sunglasses to protect the eyes of leprosy patients (11288 – \$10.00 per pair)
- providing packets of soap to improve hygiene (11574 – \$10.00 per packet)
- funding hospital laundry services to ensure clean linen (12846 – \$10.00 per set of linen)
- providing pairs of chickens (eggs improve leprosy patients’ diets) (11284 – \$10.00 per pair)
- funding physiotherapy sessions (12647 – \$15.00 per session)
- supplying specially adapted shoes to protect injured feet (11915 – \$15.00 per pair)
- providing walking aids (walking sticks, canes, crutches) (12622 – \$20.00 per item)
- funding occupational therapy sessions (12965 – \$20.00 per session)
- funding counselling sessions to support leprosy-affected people come to terms with their illness and with social discrimination (11573 - \$20.00 per session)
- supplying pairs of glasses to leprosy-affected people (13326 - \$25.00 per pair)
- supplying school uniforms so that leprosy-affected children can attend school and fit in with other students (12289 – \$25.00 per uniform)
- providing self-care packs for people with leprosy to clean and protect their skin (12623 – \$30.00 per packs)
- supplying farmer’s tool boxes to enable leprosy-affected people to grow their own food (12651 – \$40.00 per tool box)
- funding scholarships to enable children affected by leprosy to attend school regularly (11289 – \$45.00 per child)
- supplying goats to leprosy-affected people (11287 – \$50.00 each)
- providing packages of baby essentials to assist women who have leprosy as they give birth and care for their newborns (12966 – \$50.00 per package)
- supplying bee hives and equipment for leprosy-affected people to establish beekeeping businesses (12970 - \$60.00 per kit)
- funding eye surgery for leprosy-affected persons to restore sight (12291 – \$100.00 per operation)
- providing wheelchairs to facilitate greater mobility (11292 – \$100.00 each)
- funding the delivery of consistent supplies of Multi-Drug Therapy medications to remote village health clinics (12844 – \$100.00 for medications and delivery)
- assisting young people affected by leprosy with vocational training (11295 – \$100.00 per person)
- funding the manufacture of life-like prosthetic limbs (12624 – \$150.00 each limb)
- funding university scholarships to young people affected by leprosy (12845 – \$150.00 per person)
- funding the training of village health workers in leprosy detection and treatment (12841 –

\$200.00 per trainee)

- funding special leprosy reaction treatment for the 1 in 3 leprosy patients who have negative reactions to the Multi-Drug Therapy (12843 – \$200.00 per patient)
- funding reconstructive surgery to correct clawed hands or dropped feet (12652 – \$250.00 each operation)
- supplying water buffalos to assist in farming and to provide milk (11296 – \$250.00 each buffalo)
- meeting accommodation and food costs for young leprosy-affected people who are undertaking vocation training away from their home communities (12290 – \$335.00 per person)
- funding small kiosk business start-ups to enable leprosy-affected persons the opportunity to be financially independent (12967 – \$350.00 each start-up)
- providing leprosy cure packages consisting of diagnosis, treatment, and courses of the Multi-Drug Therapy (12649 - \$432.00 per person)
- funding the care of elderly disabled leprosy patients (12288 – \$445.00 per person)
- funding education programs for school children about sanitation and hygiene to reduce disease spread (12896 – \$500.00 per school)
- funding the construction of community toilet blocks to facilitate healthier lifestyles (12842 – \$800.00 per toilet block)
- funding the renovation and fitting out (wheelchair-access ramps, desks, chairs, beds, shelving, etc.) of healthcare clinics (12897 – \$1,000.00 per clinic)

If you would like to make an income-tax deductible donation to one or more of these projects, send your gift to The Leprosy Mission Australia, PO Box 293, Box Hill, Vic, 3128, or telephone 1800 537767.

Open Doors “Gifts of Hope” 2021

Open Doors Australia has its “Gifts of Hope” catalogue, with practical ways to support the persecuted church in some of the most hostile places around the world. Gifts include –



- supplying children with Bibles and providing basic literacy education (\$7.00 per child)
- funding gospel proclamation and Bible teaching ministry to young people in some of the world’s most dangerous places (\$10.00 per youth)
- providing Bibles in relevant languages for underground church leaders, evangelists, displaced people, children, new believers, and seekers (\$20.00 per Bible)
- providing cows to persecuted Christian families in Vietnam to enable them to generate income by selling milk and using the cows for farming (\$30.00 per cow)
- providing survival packs containing food, medicine, and clothing to persecuted believers in North Korea (\$50.00 per support package)
- helping to strengthen women by supplying emergency assistance and providing discipleship training (\$60.00 per woman)
- providing hand-crocheted Knot-Forgotten toys to children of persecuted Christian families (\$80.00 per toy)
- funding healthcare services for persecuted Christians (\$100.00)
- purchasing ‘The Gift Box’ through Good Day People; this selection of goodies is delivered to family members or friends, with the profit going to Open Doors (\$149.00 per box)
- funding emergency relief projects – including food, housing, medical support, and legal support – for Christians in disaster or persecuted situations (\$200.00 each)
- funding projects to support Christians in the ten most persecuted countries (including North Korea, Afghanistan, and Iran) through food, housing, medical assistance, legal aide, and income generation (\$1,000.00 per project)

If you would like to contribute to any of these projects, send your gift to Open Doors Australia,

PO Box 734, Penrith, NSW, 2751, or email info@od.org.au, or telephone 30777460, or go to the website www.opendoors.org.au/goh. Gifts through Open Doors Australia are not income-tax deductible.

WorldShare's "Harvest of Hope Gift Catalogue 2021-2022"

WorldShare, a Christian mission and development organisation that connects supporters with local Christians in developing countries, has released its "Harvest of Hope Gift Catalogue 2021-2022". Projects marked with an * are not income-tax deductible. Projects include –

- providing Bibles for people with hearing impairments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$20.00 per Bible)*
- providing better fruit tree seeds for farming families in Uganda to improve their food security (\$20.00 per batch of seeds)
- providing school supplies for children of families living in Cambodia's slum areas to enable them to get an education (\$25.00 per child)
- supplying Christmas gifts packages – consisting of toys, clothing, food, and household goods – for children in a number of countries (\$40.00 per gift package)
- funding hearing tests, supplying hearing aids, and teaching basic sign language for children with hearing impairments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$40.00 per child)
- providing shelter, medical care, and counselling for outcast young mothers – often the victims of sexual abuse – in Uganda (\$50.00 per person)
- funding basic medical costs for poor or vulnerable patients at the HEAL Africa Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$60.00 per person)
- supplying women at the Bangalore City Mission in India with sewing equipment to enable them to earn their own income and support their families (\$60.00 per person)
- funding a childcare centre in Bangalore in India where children can receive a daily nutritious meal, basic education, and a safe play space, while avoiding the risk of exploitation as child labourers in the rock quarries and farms (\$100.00 per child)
- supplying COVID-19 relief packs containing food, basic medical equipment, and home-schooling resources (\$100.00 per pack)
- funding the provision of clay water filters in urban slum settlements in Cambodia so that people can have access to safe drinking water (\$100.00 per filter unit)
- training medical caregivers in the Democratic Republic of Congo in sign language skills to enable them to communicate with hearing-impaired patients (\$125.00 per person per course)
- providing training for pastors in Uganda in ministry skills and evangelistic events (\$125.00 per pastor per training course)*
- funding safe delivery for expectant teenage mothers in Uganda (\$150.00 per birth)
- funding return-to-school support for young people in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo to enable them to escape criminal activity and gain an education (\$200.00 per young person)
- funding trauma counselling, mediation, and evangelism among people affected by the ongoing conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (\$200.00 per outreach activity)*
- funding community development initiatives for the people of Mafudu in Uganda to facilitate better farming practices (\$250.00 per project)
- supplying gospel gift bundles (supplying Bibles to hearing impaired people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, helping bring reconciliation and gospel proclamation to war-torn communities in DRC, and training pastors in Uganda) (\$375.00 per bundle)
- supplying global impact bundles (safe birthing in Uganda, school supplies for children in Cambodia, fruit tree seeds in Uganda, back-to-school for young people in DRC, training medical professionals in sign language skills in DRC, and sewing equipment for women in India) (\$580.00 per bundle)*



If you would like to support one or more of these projects, send your gift to WorldShare, PO Box 84, Chatswood, NSW, 2057, or go to www.gifts.worldshare.org.au to donate on-line, or telephone (02) 97128222. WorldShare is able to supply Christmas cards that match each gift, so that you can advise your loved ones that a gift has been purchased on their behalf through WorldShare.

“Gifts of Compassion” Catalogue 2021

Compassion Australia has its “Gifts of Compassion” catalogue, featuring opportunities to assist children in developing countries. Gifts include –



- providing drought-resistant fruit and vegetable seeds and basic agricultural training for poor families in Bolivia (\$5.00 per pack)
- providing chickens, whose eggs provide both nutritious food and a source of income, for families in Bolivia (\$15.00 per bird)
- supplying age-appropriate Bibles for children in Indonesia (\$20.00 per Bible) [not income-tax deductible]
- funding vaccinations for children in Bolivia (\$25.00 per child)
- supplying Christmas presents for children in Indonesia (toys, clothes, shoes, colouring books, or food supplies) (\$30.00 per present)
- supplying baby essentials kits for new mothers in Togo (\$40.00 per kit)
- providing goats, which provide both milk and meat, to Bolivian families (\$45.00 each)
- funding immediate care for children in the Philippines awaiting sponsors through Compassion’s child sponsorship program (\$48.00 per child)
- providing ten drought-resistant fruit and vegetable seed packs for families in Bolivia (\$50.00 per pack)
- funding clean water initiatives in the Philippines (borehole wells, water filters, or installing water tanks) (\$70.00 per project)
- supplying basic hygiene kits for ten children in Thailand to resource better health practices and reduce the risk of COVID-19 being spread (\$115.00 per kit)
- supplying start-of-life bundles (including pregnancy care, birthing attendants, and baby essentials kit) for women in Bolivia (\$260.00 per bundle)
- providing cows, which provide milk to drink and to sell at market, and animal husbandry training to enable families in Bolivia to become self-sufficient (\$300.00 each)
- funding vocational training courses for young people in Ethiopia to enable them to acquire trade skills and secure work (\$500.00 per person)
- funding the establishment of computer labs in poor communities in Bolivia to allow children to learn computing skills (\$800.00 per computer lab)
- funding business start-up to enable people in Tanzania to be trained in business skills and equipped to start new businesses (\$1,000.00 per project)
- constructing toilet blocks and wash stations, especially for women and girls in Kenya (\$5,000.00 per village)
- constructing houses for children and their families in Ethiopia to ensure a safe and dignified lifestyle (\$6,500.00 per house)
- funding the opening of new local-church-based Compassion Centres in Kenya (building and outfitting the Centres, training staff, and providing resources) (\$10,000.00 per centre)
- funding clean water projects for whole village communities in Togo (borehole wells, water tanks, water filters, plumbing) (\$12,000.00 per village community)

To take up one of these gift opportunities, contact Compassion, PO Box 1, Hunter Region MC, NSW, 2310, or check the website at www.giftsofcompassion.com.au, or telephone 1300 224453. Donations given to Compassion Australia are generally income-tax deductible, unless specifically given for Bible distribution projects.

Social Issues in the News

“Virtue Gone Mad – Victimhood Culture Scapegoats Its Very Source”

This article was written by Michael P Foley, an Associate Professor of Patristics in the Great Texts Program at Baylor University and the author of *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Christianity*. The article was published in the November-December 2018 edition of *Touchstone* magazine. Although some of Dr Foley’s points are no longer applicable with the ending of Donald Trump’s presidency, many of his comments are still very insightful and relevant.



Michael P Foley

It was Harvey Mansfield who voiced the notion that you can tell who is in charge of a society by noticing who is allowed to get angry and for what cause. Donald Trump certainly gets angry, but given the chilly disdain for his splenetic tweets and polemical rhetoric, it does not appear that he is allowed to by those “in charge of our society”. The US Catholic hierarchy and other Christian leaders, on the other hand, seem to be acutely aware of the Mansfield principle, and thus they avoid public displays of righteous anger unless the cause is likewise promoted by those “in charge” – for example, social justice issues.

*So who, then, is in charge? Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning provide a partial answer to that question in their 2014 article in Comparative Sociology, “Microaggression and Moral Cultures”, and in their 2018 book *The Rise of Victimhood Culture: Microaggressions, Safe Spaces, and the New Culture Wars* (Palgrave Macmillan). The authors’ thesis is that the embrace of victimology that began in the 1960s and 1970s has given rise to a new “culture of victimhood”. Like any other moral culture, victimhood culture offers a framework for resolving conflict and awarding praise or blame. But in crucial respects, victimhood culture is unlike any other, past or present.*

Honour and Dignity

To highlight its distinctive features, Campbell and Manning contrast victimhood culture with two other cultures from American history: the “honour cultures” of the American Revolution and antebellum South, and a “dignity culture” that reached its height in the Midwest in the 1950s.

In honour cultures, men are highly sensitive to insult (hence the prevalence of duels). They like to call attention to themselves, especially to their prowess or exploits in areas involving conquest or risk, and they like to do so not only with respect to virtuous acts of bravery but also with respect to vicious acts such as gambling, drinking, and philandering. Honour seekers do not hesitate to exaggerate their successes or even lie about them, for by maintaining the appearance of being a victor in conflicts, they maintain their status and intimidate competitors. Honour cultures are tight-knit communities where word of mouth and age-old custom prevail and where supervening legal authority is disdained. Men of honour may love their family and their country, but they scorn the government or the court system, for there is more glory in resolving conflict through one’s own skill or bravery than by invoking the help of a third party.

In a culture of dignity, on the other hand, individual dignity is seen as an inherent and inalienable good that one does not need constantly to prove or assert as in an honour culture. Consequently, in a dignity culture it is considered unnecessary and distasteful to draw attention to oneself. Insults no longer provoke wrath as they do in an honour culture: the phrase “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” nicely sums up a dignity culture but is unthinkable in an honour or, as we shall see, victimhood culture. Dignity cultures have a stable and powerful third-party legal system, but the goal is to use such a system as quietly, discreetly, and as rarely as possible. Self-restraint, toleration, and peaceful confrontation are the hallmarks of a dignity culture.

Competitive Victimhood

A victimhood culture, by contrast, is an almost perfect photographic negative of an honour culture. Like honour cultures, victimhood culture is highly sensitive to insult. Today this sensitivity is enshrined in the use of terms like “microaggressions” and “trigger words”, but the phenomenon predates the jargon. In the 1990s, Danusha V Goska was a leftist when she read a passage from Caroline Myss’s bestselling *Anatomy of the Spirit*. Myss, Goska later wrote,

... described having lunch with a woman named Mary. A man approached Mary and asked her if she were free to do a favour for him on June 8th. No, Mary replied, “I absolutely cannot do anything on June 8th because June 8th is my incest survivors’ meeting and we never let each other down! They have suffered so much already! I would never betray incest survivors!” Myss was flabbergasted. Mary could have simply said “Yes” or “No”.

Reading the anecdote was an epiphanic moment for Goska, who immediately recognised the same proclivity to outrage among her leftist friends and allies.

I felt that I was confronting the signature essence of my social life among leftists. We rushed to cast everyone in one of three roles: victim, victimiser, or champion of the oppressed. We lived our lives in a constant state of outraged indignation. I did not want to live that way anymore. I wanted to cultivate a disposition of gratitude. I wanted to see others, not as victims or victimisers, but as potential friends, as loved creations of God. I wanted to understand the point of view of people with whom I disagreed without immediately demonising them as enemy oppressors.

As Goska’s observation attests, while touchiness in a victimhood culture is as pronounced as it is in an honour culture, the content could hardly be more different. To put it in the language of our current President, honour culture extols “winning” while victimhood culture dwells on “losing”. Unlike a dignity culture, both honour and victimhood cultures encourage their members to call attention to themselves. But whereas people in an honour culture like to mention their own exploits, in a victimhood culture they prefer to mention their own hardships, to vocalise what they suffer at the hands of others on account of their race, class, or gender – and if they qualify as a victim in all three categories, they are eligible for an even more prestigious status according to the logic of “intersectionality”.

In such a cultural setting, so coveted is the status of victim and so despicable that of oppressor that there even emerges what Campbell and Manning call a culture of “competitive victimhood”, where individuals often exaggerate or lie about their level of victimisation or their membership in a historically victimised group in order to obtain the status they seek. Hence the rise of “hate crime hoaxes”, where individuals fabricate stories of being attacked by members of an oppressor group, as in the infamous 2006 Duke lacrosse case, where three white members of Duke University’s lacrosse team were falsely accused of raping a black woman. Hence also the proliferation of “phony memoirs”, fabricated or plagiarised accounts of oppressed people’s trauma written in the first person by relatively privileged whites whose identification with the oppressed often borders on the pathological. And hence the remarkable case of Rachel Dolezal, the woman who feigned being black and falsely claimed that she was the victim of nine hate crimes before it was discovered that she was a blue-eyed blonde from Montana. Dolezal received a good deal of criticism for her duplicity and was forced to resign from her leadership position in the NAACP, but her motives are understandable in a culture that privileges victims.

Victimhood cultures thrive in highly egalitarian societies, where the only kind of “deviance” left to be despised is not manifesting cowardice or moral depravity but speaking or acting against equality or diversity. Such cultures also thrive where there is a high degree of social atomisation, that is, where individuals are no longer tightly bound to family or clan or other stable groups that serve as intermediaries between them and the rest of society or the government. Like a dignity culture, victimhood culture requires a superior third party, such as

a college administration or the federal government; but unlike members of a dignity culture who would rather not “make a scene”, victimhood status seekers or their agents pursue a “squeaky wheel” policy, loudly pressuring a third party, through protests or public shaming, to side with the alleged victim group and condemn their ostensible oppressors. Indeed, while the honour-seeking man or woman can live without the interventions of a third party, members of a victimhood culture cannot.

Dangers of Victimhood Culture

Every arrangement for doling out recognition has its strengths and weaknesses. The obvious strength of a victimhood culture is that it embraces and consoles victims. Victims of rape, for example, might be inclined to “hide their shame” in an honour culture, but in a victimhood culture they are rightly considered innocent of any wrongdoing and encouraged not to feel any self-recrimination for the terrible ordeal they have suffered.

But victimhood culture also has its weaknesses. First, as in an honour culture, it is too easy in a victimhood culture to confuse a genuine desire for justice with the desire for self or group promotion. The temptation in a victimhood culture is to jockey for power and recognition by portraying oneself or one’s group as a victim regardless of important distinctions that are essential to civic justice. Keeping (transgendered) men out of women’s restrooms, for example, is not the same as keeping blacks out of white restrooms, even though both groups have been accorded victim status.

Second, defining oneself as a victim can prevent an individual from attaining self-knowledge, since he (or she) thinks he already knows who he is. But no matter how much a person has been victimised, he is always more than a victim – he is, as Goska intimated, an image of God. In victimhood cultures, self-knowledge is easily replaced with self-pity, and self-pity, as the novelist John Gardner is reputed to have said, is “the most destructive of the non-pharmaceutical narcotics; it is addictive, gives momentary pleasure, and separates the victim from reality.”

Third, and similarly, victimhood culture discourages a deeper quest for truth, because the painful, disorienting, and humiliating quest for truth is replaced with the desire to protect victims from all “microaggressions”, even the ones that may happen to be true. Hence, on many college campuses today, the older model of education as a challenging tournament of ideas, in which egos can get bruised, has been replaced by a newer model in which education becomes a comforting therapy session guaranteeing high self-esteem among the students.

Fourth, a victimhood culture encourages a heightened and untenable fragility. In an article entitled “Colleges Are Promoting Psychological Frailty and We Should All Be Concerned”, Dr Clay Routledge contends that “victim protection campaigns many colleges are engaged in not only underestimate human resilience, they may actually cause the problems they are designed to solve because they suggest to students who wouldn’t otherwise feel like victims that they are, in fact, victims.” This identification as victims undermines their natural capacity to remain “psychologically healthy in the face of offensive Halloween costumes, distasteful jokes or comments, and sensitive course material.” Or as Steve Maraboli is reported to have said: “The victim mindset dilutes the human potential. By not accepting personal responsibility for our circumstances, we greatly reduce our power to change them.”

Fifth, the combination of social atomisation, social media, and victimhood culture creates conditions that easily lead to witch hunts and other forms of hysteria that ruin the careers or lives of innocent people. Just ask Justine Sacco, who (in)famously became the object of mass hatred and lost her job because of one stupid tweet that went viral. Instead of protecting alleged victims, victimhood culture can create real ones.

Sixth, with its reliance on superior third parties, victimhood culture increases the power of those parties, further weakening intermediary groups and individual rights. Hence today we see the increasing power of college administrations and the decreasing power of faculty, the increasing power of the federal government and the decreasing power of counterbalancing associations such as churches, clubs, and so forth. The danger of giving these third parties,

which tend to be vast and impersonal bureaucratic organisations, so much power was expressed well by President Gerald Ford: “A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.”

Finally, as the power of these third parties expands, a phenomenon that sociologist Donald Black calls “legal over-dependency” may develop, in which individuals become increasingly unwilling or unable to use other forms of conflict management. A generation or two ago, Americans generally knew how to settle their differences among themselves, either by confronting each other directly or through the intervention of neighbours or a local clergyman. Today, it is more common to immediately take recourse to social media, the police, and the courts. Campbell and Manning note that legal over-dependency thrives especially in totalitarian societies such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, where citizens’ denouncing each other to the law became an effective if brutal way of resolving their private disputes.

The combination of an increase in government power with a decrease in other forms of conflict resolution is particularly dangerous when a third element is added: an increasing intolerance of views deemed microaggressive. According to a 2015 Pew poll, 40 percent of Millennials, the generation most imbued with the culture of victimhood, thought that it was proper for the government to prevent citizens from making statements that minority groups would find offensive. By contrast, only 12 percent of the so-called Silent Generation (Americans between the ages of 70 and 87) thought the same way. To put it cynically and I hope with exaggeration, victimhood culture makes tempests out of teapots and then requires the expansion of tyrannical powers to quiet the storm.

Trumpism versus Victimism

One of the advantages to Campbell and Manning’s concept of a victimhood culture is that it explains much of the animosity directed at President Donald Trump. I say “much” because I am in no way suggesting that Trump is above criticism; rather, I am suggesting that with phenomena such as the histrionic “buttercup” reactions to the presidential election, we are witnessing in American society not simply a disagreement over principles or policies but a fundamental clash of cultures.

The “braggadocious” Trump is in many respects a classic exemplar of the honour culture but with an American corporate twist. Hostile takeovers have replaced military conquests, and a gaudy display of wealth has replaced the badges and battle scars that once made others hold their manhood cheap; yet the distorted exaggerations about one’s exploits (including vices such as womanising) remain the same, and so too does an indifference to truthfulness. Trump’s own narrative of success and triumphant confrontation, which he exults in telling and retelling, is diametrically opposed to the victimologists’ narrative of exploitation and victimisation. It is as if Trump and his haters were speaking two different languages.

And there is an additional reason for promoters of a victimhood culture to oppose Trump’s presidency. As we have noted, a culture of this kind relies heavily on legal authority as a third party that can vindicate its grievances and award it the coveted status of victim. Trump’s victory in the 2016 election, however, means that the executive branch of the United States is now headed by someone who does not operate out of the same framework and who is staffing the federal government with others who share his point of view.

Victimologists rightly felt that Barack Obama was sympathetic not only to their claims but also to the concept of “dominance” as the only remaining form of deviance. Trump, on the other hand, delights in his dominance as a sign of his worth. Champions of victimhood culture are worried, and not without good reason, that one of the legs of their stool is being kicked out from under them.

Christianity and Victimhood Culture

As we will see in a moment, victimhood culture is especially congenial to the New Left and is now actively promoted by it, but the culture of competitive victimhood has become so intoxicating that it has even affected conservatives, such as the men who respond to feminist

denunciations with charges of “reverse sexism” or the Princeton student who in 2007 fabricated a story about being beaten for his right-wing views.

Such responses are not effective. As Campbell and Manning note, victimhood culture is concerned “with offenses against minority or otherwise less powerful cultures, not offenses against historically dominant ethnic groups such as whites or historically dominant religious groups such as Christians” – even when those groups are currently being victimised. Muslims qualify as victims because they are seen as the innocent targets of Western hatred and intolerance stretching from the First Crusade to Fox News – this despite the fact that Islam has markedly illiberal attitudes towards other “victim groups” such as women, homosexuals, and the transgendered, and despite the fact that Islam itself facilitates a virulent honour culture. Martyred Christians in the Middle East, on the other hand, do not receive the same sympathetic attention or recognition because even though they have been a persecuted minority since the Seventh Century, they are lumped in with white Christians as “historically dominant”. It also doesn’t help that these Christians are being slain by a group whom victimologists insist are victims and not oppressors.

But there is a twofold irony in disqualifying Christianity from victimhood status, and it is this: (1) there would be no cultural concern for the victim were it not for Christianity, and (2) the secular Left’s attack on Christianity for being oppressive is not only inaccurate as a whole but also a form of scapegoating.

Regarding the first point: Before Christianity, myths and the cultures that made them assumed that the victim was guilty and therefore never took the victim’s side even when, weirdly enough, they later worshiped the victim as a god. First Judaism and then Christianity changed all that. Many of the Psalms record the voice of an innocent victim scapegoated by an angry mob, and the Gospels proclaim the innocence of Jesus Christ, a fact known both to His disciples and to His persecutors, who sacrificed Him out of fear that the whole nation might perish (see John 11:50). Christianity exposes once and for all the satanic nature of scapegoating an innocent person or minority group for the sake of political vitality.

Scapegoating continued to exist after Christianity and was even perpetrated by Christians themselves, as the sad treatment of Jews in the Middle Ages attests. But because cultures influenced by Christianity acknowledge that scapegoating is wrong, those who engage in it must be more subtle and self-deceiving than they were before; they must convince themselves that they are not scapegoating when in fact they are.

Enter the New Left’s culture of victimhood and our second point. On one hand, the New Left has taken over Christianity’s concern for the victim; on the other, it has turned this concern against Christianity, heavy-handedly portraying it as oppressive. This, at least, is the position of René Girard in his powerful monograph *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Orbis Books, 2001). As Girard puts it, the Left’s new “totalitarianism” reproaches Christianity “for not defending victims with enough ardour. In Christian history they see nothing but persecutions, acts of oppression, inquisitions.”

This new totalitarianism “presents itself as the liberator of humanity”, but in fact it is trying to demonise the one religion that delivers humanity from the darkness. Girard goes so far as to call the Left’s new victimology a kind of Antichrist, for it apes the teachings of Christ while ushering in something quite different:

The Antichrist boasts of bringing to human beings the peace and tolerance that Christianity promised but has failed to deliver. Actually, what the radicalisation of contemporary victimology produces is a return to all sorts of pagan practices: abortion, euthanasia, sexual undifferentiation, Roman circus games galore but without real victims, etc.

Whither the Nation?

Even if Trump wins a second term as president, I doubt that his chest-thumping style of leadership is likely to impress #MeToo-ers and halt the advance of victimology in this country. The real drama will be between victimhood culture and mere Christianity. In its proclamation

of the one True Victim who has taken on our guilt and shame, Christianity has the capacity to create a culture that is based on neither self-pitying victims nor arrogant victimisers; and it can speak to the deepest concerns of a victimhood culture while purging such a culture of its shortcomings. The question is whether victimologists will see this as well and change their ways, or continue on their current path.

Christianity began with the recognition that Jesus was an innocent victim and that the many were guilty; the Left now increasingly teaches that the many are innocent victims and that Jesus and his followers are guilty. Beneath the current Christ-like slogans of tolerance, diversity, equality, and, above all, concern for the victim, does there lurk the cry of "Crucify Him"? It will be interesting to see what happens next if this new and unpurified paradigm of victimology is the only voice allowed to get angry.

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Wayne Barrett

World News – Haiti

A Remarkable Account of God’s Protection in Haiti

This account of God’s protective hand over a group of mission workers in Haiti dates from a couple of years ago, but the story is still amazing.

Amid a season of strife, a rising tide of gang violence turned some parts of Haiti into No-Go zones, even for the police. A group of Christian missionaries travelled to Haiti with supplies for a community centre they were helping to build. Shortly after leaving the airport in Port-au-Prince, things went terribly wrong. Fred Chalker, the founder of Living Waters Ministries was a part of the group. “About four hours outside of Port-Au-Prince, we came upon a gang of people stopping traffic,” Mr Chalker said. “We were the only ones there. I’ve been there a hundred times, and never had any major problems, so this is not a normal thing that happened,” he continued.

What concerned the missionaries most was that many in the crowd were armed. “The truck was swarming with men with guns and weapons. They pounded on the windows trying to break them to get in,” said team member Jackie Brandon. “One man’s standing there with his gun and he has two white lines down his cheek to his chin. It reminded me of voodoo,” she said. Team member Jeff Lee said, “We came around the corner and all of a sudden the road’s blocked off, there’s burning tires and debris, it’s a mass crowd of a hundred people well-armed with guns. As we approached they started shooting in the air. To be truthful, I thought we were going to die.”

Drew Pasler was driving the second vehicle along with the team doctor, Doug Burbella. “As we approached he said, ‘Slow down,’ so we cautiously approached as we saw these people swarming the vehicle in front of us,” Mr Pasler said. “It was then I saw a rifle come around the side. We thought they were going to execute us. So I started reversing and Doug’s yelling, ‘Go!’ and as I’m reversing that’s when we started hearing the guns firing that were pointed at us.” With their vehicle disabled by the gunfire, bandits quickly overtook the truck. “I could see there was a motorcycle next to us, and they had a machine gun and the window blew out behind my head.” After a couple of seconds I heard Doug yell, ‘I’m dying. I’ve been hit.’” Pasler said. As the gang emptied both vehicles, the situation continued to deteriorate. “I

looked back to see Doug's face covered in blood and I could see he had two visible wounds and possibly more just based on the amount of blood that I saw," Mr Pasler continued.

Then the gunman put his rifle up to Dr Burbella's head. But before he could pull the trigger, something extraordinary happened. Mr Pasler said, "A man on a motorcycle just kind of pulled up out of nowhere in front of me. And he looked at me and said, 'It's okay, it's going to be okay' in perfect English." "Not yelling," Mr Pasler continued, "but in a regular talking voice, he said something in Creole, and everybody around us that had the guns just kind of stopped." "Everything changed," Ms Brandon said. "The whole demeanour of the crowd just stood back. I don't know what they saw, but they stepped back and the tension was gone."

But the crisis wasn't over. Dr Burbella was slowly bleeding to death. "Once we arrived at the vehicle they said 'Hey, Doug's been shot,'" Mr Lee said. "I immediately jumped out of the vehicle. We picked up Doug; he said, 'My neck is broken,' so we picked him up, I had Fred get on the other, we picked him up and slid him into the back seat of the vehicle." Leaving their disabled vehicle, they rushed Dr Burbella to the nearest hospital, almost an hour away. Dr Burbella wasn't sure he would make it, so he asked his friends to record his last words expressing his love to his wife and son. Then he was evacuated to a hospital in Florida where surgeons removed bullets and bullet fragments from his neck and face. They said the fact he survived was a miracle. Upon release from the hospital and recovering, Dr Burbella wanted others to learn from his ordeal. "I want people to know that if God can carry me through this with no loss of any function, really, whatever problems you have, God can carry you through them too."

Criminals Targeting Churches in Haiti

Mired in poverty, crippled by corruption, infested with voodoo, dysfunctional and increasingly lawless, Haiti is a nation in crisis. In recent times, kidnapping for ransom has become a major industry. Previously, kidnap victims were nearly always doctors or wealthy business people, but that changed in April 2021 when churches were targeted in two mass kidnappings, one centred on a Seventh Day Adventist Church and the other on a Roman Catholic Church. All churchgoers are now living in fear of being kidnapped by one of the criminal gangs.

Two US Missionaries Killed in Plane Crash in Haiti

On Friday 2 July 2021, two US missionaries and four other people were killed when the small plane they were traveling in crashed.

Trent Hostelter (aged 35) and John Miller (aged 43), who were based in Haiti with Christian mission agency Gospel to Haiti, took a separate flight to that of their families, given there was not enough room on the earlier flight. They had gone home to the USA on furlough in June and were on their way back into Haiti, along with a mobile clinic team that travelled to Haiti with them. Due to all the unrest and violence going on currently in Haiti, they had been using an airplane or helicopter for transportation from Port-au-Prince back to the mission station. After most of the team had been flown in to the mountains, the last flight took off shortly after 6.00pm carrying six passengers, including Trent and John. The last known communication to headquarters was a distress signal and hours later the plane was found having crashed with no survivors.

"This is a very sad day for everyone at Gospel to Haiti," the mission said in a statement. "Trent and Erica and their family, who are the current administrative couple, flew back to Haiti after a several-week furlough. John Miller also flew with them to spend some time in Haiti as an evangelist for a mobile clinic in the area. Two months earlier, John Miller volunteered to go with a group of medical professionals going to Haiti on a two week Mobile Clinic Mission to take care of the evangelistic responsibilities. We feel overwhelmed by your support and care," Gospel to Haiti said. "Erica and the children plan to return to the States but they are unable to at this time due to the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse early yesterday morning. We are tentatively planning funerals for Trent and John in Wisconsin but are currently unable to finalise dates since we aren't sure when Trent and John's bodies and Erica and the family will

be able to fly to the States.”

Christian Organisations at the Forefront of Providing Aid in Haiti

On Saturday 14 August 2021, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck the Tiburon Peninsula in the Caribbean nation of Haiti. The earthquake had a 10-kilometre-deep hypocentre near Petit-Trou-de-Nippes, approximately 150 kilometres west of the capital, Port-au-Prince. The earthquake killed at least 2,200 people, injured at least 6,900 people, and destroyed the homes of as many as 1,500,000 Haitians across the southern peninsula, according to Haiti’s Civil Protection Agency. The Agency noted that the assessment remained “very partial”. Numerous church buildings were levelled in the wake of the quake while hundreds of people were missing. The quake also triggered landslides and damaged infrastructure, blocking roads and making it difficult for vital supplies to reach the impacted areas of the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

As the death toll rose across Haiti following the earthquake, volunteers with Christian humanitarian organisations like World Vision, Convoy of Hope, Operation Blessing, and the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team worked tirelessly to provide physical, emotional and spiritual aid to those suffering.

“The earthquake hit Haiti pretty badly. World Vision is working with the government and NGO partners to assess needs,” Fédorah Pierre-Louis, advocacy and external engagement director at World Vision Haiti, told *The Christian Post*. “And we have deployed a team right now on the field focusing on the areas of shelter, food assistance, child protection and also, of course, COVID prevention as we’re still going through the pandemic over here.” Ms Pierre-Louis said the international humanitarian organisation is asking for prayer to “ensure that vulnerable children and their families are protected during this time.”

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team sent a team of chaplains to provide emotional and spiritual support for this nation that in many ways has not fully recovered from the 2010 earthquake and 2016 hurricane. In both previous disasters, the Rapid Response Team deployed chaplains to minister to the broken-hearted and share the hope of Jesus. After the 2010 earthquake, more than 120 chaplains served for a total of twenty-two months, praying with more than 35,000 Haitians.

And as Tropical Storm Grace hit the country with rain on Monday 16 August, the window to provide relief efforts shrunk, Ms Pierre-Louis said. Grace was expected to strengthen into a hurricane. “We need to act very, very fast. Time is very critical in making sure that we’re providing relief efforts,” she stressed. “We’re working to rescue people still trapped under the rubble and clearing out some roads as well to increase access to care. So far, the humanitarian agency has sent nutrition kits and hygiene items for 6,000 people, she said. “Given the vulnerability in the country, we’re prioritising nutritional and emergency response support to as many people as we can,” she said. World Vision planned to help as many as 240,000 people through clean water access, tents, food supply, and child protection efforts.

Christian Mission Workers Kidnapped

On 16 October 2021, a group of Christian Aid Ministries workers were abducted while on a trip to visit an orphanage in Haiti. The group consisted of six men, six women, and five children, and they were kidnapped by the 400 Mawozo gang in the Croix-des-Bouquets area. The gang leader is threatening to kill the seventeen mission workers unless a ransom of \$1,000,000 is paid for each one of the Christians.

Christian Aid Ministries asked for “patience and prayer”, as the organisation continued to work to bring the hostages back home. Sixteen of the workers are US citizens and one is a Canadian citizen, and both the US Government and Canadian Government are involved in negotiations. “Many people, including CAM management and government authorities, are working diligently to bring our loved ones home safely,” the mission agency stated. “We are grateful for the assistance of those knowledgeable and experienced in dealing with kidnapping cases.”

Prayer Points

- Pray for the safe release of the seventeen mission workers kidnapped in Haiti. Pray that the criminal gang that seized the twelve adults and five children will come to realise that, although US and Canadian citizens are wealthy compared to Haitians, Christian mission workers do not have access to \$17,000,000 to pay the demanded ransom. Pray too that the mission workers will have opportunities to witness to their kidnappers while held in captivity.
- Thank God for the generous contributions from a number of Christian aid agencies to help the people of Haiti following the massive earthquake on 14 August and the devastating tropical storm on 16 August.
- Continue to pray that all of the teenagers kidnapped from the Bethel Baptist High School in Kaduna State in Nigeria on 5 July 2021 will be released or will escape. Thank God that a number have already been returned to their families, but pray that every single one of those school students will gain his / her freedom.
- China has been ramping up its military threats towards Taiwan. Pray that God's protective hand will be over the nation of Taiwan, and that these tensions will not escalate into war.
- 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.
- 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 again 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).
- Thank God that the Federal Attorney-General, Michaelia Cash, has brought forward a revised and improved version of the proposed legislation regarding safeguarding religious freedom in our country. While the legislation is not perfect, it is a step towards ensuring that people of faith and faith-based institutions (schools, hospitals, charities, etc.) will not be prosecuted under the anti-discrimination laws for seeking to live out their beliefs. 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.
- Pray for the ministry of The Leprosy Mission in its medical and rehabilitative work among those affected by leprosy and in its educational work in seeking to inform communities about better hygiene and treatments. Pray for God's guidance and provision for TLM.
- Pray for our church's Pastoral Search Committee as they prayerfully evaluate the applications that have been received from 'candidates' for our church's new Pastor. Ask for the Lord's clear guidance and for the Spirit to lead the Committee to the person of God's choosing.
- Be in prayer too for Pastor Brian and Caroline as they seek God's leading for their future service.
- Give thanks to God for His provision of sponsorship and donations to fund the Bargara Carols by Candlelight, with about \$9,000.00 having come in. Pray now for fine weather on the night of the Carols (and in the days leading up to the event) on 11 December. Pray too for many people from the community to come out for the event.