

Families under siege

You could be forgiven for thinking (especially if you read the mainstream media) that the government's upcoming plebiscite is simply an attempt to allow any two people who love each other to marry and be just like everyone else.

But make no mistake, the issues that surround the 'same sex marriage' debate are indeed simple... but they are distractions and misdirections from the real issue that has been around since a woman named Eve encountered a snake in a garden.

What we are seeing in our nation today is the ever-increasing outworking of the religion of humanism, which is personified in the serpent's words 'You will be like God' (Genesis 3:5).

Homosexuality is, in its basest form, humanist. It is a narcissistic attempt to have relationship with the person in the mirror, rather than taking up the specific mandates that God has given to both men and women separately.

When God made Adam and Eve and put them together in the garden, He gave them several directives:

1. Work and tend the garden (i.e. provide for your family)
2. Do not eat from the tree (i.e. obey my commandments)
3. Become 'one flesh' (i.e. give yourself up for your spouse, for the purpose of procreation and mutual enjoyment).

In the very first chapters of the Bible God has outlined for us His basic unit of society: the family. And this is under attack by the godless leaders of our day.

All three of these directives strike at the core of humanism. Work, obedience and submission are philosophical impossibilities for the humanist. After all, if I'm a 'god', why should I

need to obey anyone? Work is a means to an end rather than what God designed me to do, and marriage becomes an exercise in lust and selfishness, rather than the true selfless love exemplified in Christ's love for the church.

The end of the road for humanism can only be spectacular implosion. One only needs to examine the historical events surrounding the fall of the Roman Empire to see that hedonism, homosexuality, an overemphasis on celebrity and materialism set up Rome to be destroyed from the inside out.

BMI's statement of belief on marriage is as follows:

Bethesda Ministries International, in seeking to conform to a Biblical understanding of the marriage covenant, holds marriage to be the union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, entered into for life.

This current issue of 'same sex marriage' presents an oxymoron — 'marriage', according to the Bible (and biological fact) is between a man and a woman.

Rather than 'wringing our hands' let us redouble our efforts to do what God has set before us — to work, to obey, and to build our families and churches for the glory of God.

Remember God's words in Hebrews 13:5 — 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.'

God bless you as you continue to uphold God's word in these times of increasing trial.

Peter Frogley

Diary dates

Sat 2 Sep

South Australian State Gathering

Sat 28 Oct

NSW/ACT State Gathering

15–19 Jan 2018

BMI Summer School
Kiah Ridge, NSW

9–11 Mar 2018

Next-Gen Leaders Gathering
Sydney

4–8 Jun 2018

National Leaders Gathering
Grindelwald, Tas

3–7 Jun 2019

International Leaders Gathering
Bacolod, Philippines



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Powering Up the Nation

Luc Mulimbalimba's vision of a power station for Luvungi in DR Congo began in 2012 with the construction of a micro hydro power station.

Unfortunately it had technical problems and didn't supply any electricity. An engineer from Belgium who came to visit the hydro power station advised that the amount of sunlight in Luvungi would suit a solar power station and street lights better than the hydro project. A solar station would be cheaper, with simpler maintenance, and he felt sure that the project would be a success.

He connected MHCD with a Belgium Chinese company specialising in solar stations and street lights who were able to send the equipment directly from China. Three BMi electricians from the Sydney area (Pastor Darren Hessenberger, Dean Christenson and Steve Shaw) accepted Luc's invitation to train Congolese technicians and assist with the installation of the street lights and solar equipment. The team from Australia visited DR Congo in late April, working with the local technicians on a wide variety of topics and helping them assemble and install the solar street lights on the avenue. They also did the wiring for the mortuary and one of the hospital wards.



The Australian BMi team with Congolese electricians

Luc had realised that the project would require local maintenance, so he had previously opened an electrician training centre on the MHCD Compound. Two youths and electricians from different

villages and centres of Uvira came and trained fifteen students for three months as part of the National Institute for Professional Preparations (a government organisation that helps Congolese youth with technical training).

When the container full of solar equipment and street lights arrived, the Luvungi population danced around the container as it made its way to the MHCD Headquarters. Engineers from Australia, China and Belgium, together with the local technicians from Congo, worked together installing the solar station and street lights, and wiring the power for the hospital wards.



The container arrives from China

After 6 months of effort and training, Luvungi now has over 4 km of street lights and 24-hour electricity at the hospital. Doctors no longer need to operate using torches, and babies can be delivered at all hours. Women and children can safely travel to the hospital at night. The women and youth of Luvungi have been setting up their food and merchandise stalls under the street lights, allowing them to operate into the evening.



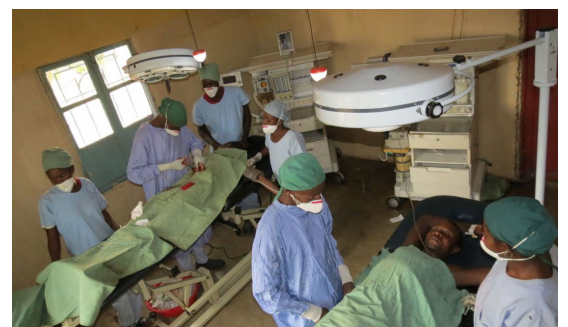
Luvungi's main avenue now has solar powered street lights

The solar station has allowed for the purchase and installation of much-needed medical equipment, including:

- a four-body mortuary freezer — the only one in the region with continuous power
- a radiography machine — for diagnosing and treating broken bones and accident injuries
- an operation light for the theatre — which means doctors no longer need to operate using hand-held torches, and babies can be delivered at all hours
- an ultrasound (echography) machine
- a blood bank fridge — allowing the hospital to perform blood transfusions.

The equipment and power additions have meant that the DR Congo Ministry of Health has now promoted the Luvungi Hospital to a 'General and Referral Hospital', making it the leading medical facility in the region.

Dr Luc and his team are extremely grateful to God and those who have supported and assisted financially and otherwise. We look forward to hearing continued stories of God blessing the people of DR Congo as they look to Him to supply all their needs.



Doctors no longer need to operate using torches

Making it Possible

The Mission Possible for Future Generations (MPFG) eighth annual fundraiser in July was an amazing night, raising funds for those in need in the Philippines.

MPFG reaches out to hundreds of children weekly through feeding programs, where volunteers meet in different locations to run a Sunday School program and provide a nutritious meal for the local slum children who attend. This has been run by Primrose for almost thirty years and we are glad to be able to help support this amazing opportunity to show God's love to those who are yet to know Him.

120 people attended our dessert and coffee night and were updated with the latest news of our fifteen MPFG sponsor children who over the past four years have graduated in the fields of mechanical and marine engineering, pharmacy, accountancy, graphic design and more. They heard the stories of our sixteen current university/technical college students, and 23 grade 11 and 12 students.

There was a slideshow displaying many of the 210 sponsored children attending elementary and high schools in the Bacolod area who are part of MPFG.

Another slideshow told of MPFG's Refuge Project, a new area where Pastors Joe and Primrose Chavez are housing eleven MPFG sponsor children who are orphaned or at risk. This will require ongoing financial support both to improve facilities and sleeping quarters, as well as the desperate ongoing need for food, clothing and vitamins for the children. Local Filipino BMI Churches are contributing to this urgent project, but there is greater need still to be met.

For the second year in a row we held a live auction with many generous donations from local business owners and community members. This



year included two-lot accommodation and even a 6 burner BBQ! The silent and live auctions combined raised over \$2,000.

Another feature of the evening was our annual Tree Of Hope, an opportunity for people to write letters or give financial gifts to their personal sponsor child.

But by far the evening's highlight was the spontaneous giving of people towards a beautiful young girl named Kiana.

Back in April 2016 when Pastor Maureen Shepherd met Kiana, she was the size of a six month old despite being two and a half years old. She had a hump on her back and it was thought that she had broken her back when falling from a swing. But after generous sponsors sent funds to get her medically assessed, Kiana was diagnosed with 'Potts Disease' — tuberculosis in her spine — which is a curable disease! Kiana was given six months of medical help, regular vitamins to help her growth, and regular medical check-ups.

At our 2017 fundraiser, we were able to share how she was growing beautifully and running around like a normal healthy toddler.

We auctioned a photograph canvas of Primrose with Kiana



taken in May this year by Nada Miller on her first missions trip to the Philippines, in the hope of raising some money for Kiana's ongoing medical costs. But God had other ideas! We raised a whopping \$4740 for Kiana and her family!



Vic and Helen Hinds with Kiana's photo canvas

The extra money will be used to look to improve their house and/or relocate them to a new home in a healthier environment because their house regularly gets flooded.

We are so grateful to God for all the generous sponsors who continue to support these beautiful children. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to get involved either by sponsorship, or giving to the Refuge Centre or other areas.

*Maureen Shepherd and Jacqueline Goelst
Tamar Valley Christian Church*



Jamari from Hilltop Christian Church adds an envelope to the Tree of Hope

Tamar Valley Christian Church in Tasmania has been sending regular teams to the Philippines for many years now. But more recently we've seen members of SouthernLife church on NSW's south coast catch the fire and spend time in Bacolod assisting Pastors Joe and Primrose Chavez with their various projects. **John Nardusso** reports on SouthernLife's latest visit.



The plan in my head

WHEN WE VISITED the Philippines in 2016, we fitted another layer of plywood to the floor in the front half of the church and extended and raised the stage at City Harvest Church in Bacolod.

Prior to our returning to the Philippines this year I spoke with Ps Joe about the possibility of us doing something for one of the other BMi churches in the area that he oversees. He immediately suggested that the church in Lantawen some 45–50 minutes 'up the mountains' needed a new building.



The steel made it to Lantawen

I immediately saw a picture of a hexagonal shape building that had steel columns and rafters and a raised section at the top to allow air to flow upwards. I thought we would be able to get the frame up and roof battens on in the two weeks we planned to be there. I also had planned to fit the roof and gutters.

My wife Jenny and Michele and Gary Tyrrell returned with us, as well as two young guys name Kel Gillies and Sam Steiner.

Our first day was spent visiting a huge steel supply factory. Jun Jun (Primrose's

brother) obtained a pass from the office, and the four Aussies plus Jun Jun and Joe proceeded to scramble over the piles of steel, in thongs and T-shirts, to find the materials I needed.

I had tried to get an engineer in Batemans Bay to design the building before we left Australia but the steel sizes he suggested were impossible to source, lift and work with. So, with only the picture in my mind, we picked out the materials we thought would work. This makes the process sound really simple... but it took hours! The size steel

I thought I might have used was in short supply, so I had to trust that the Holy Spirit wanted us to use the larger size steel.

We wanted the steel to be delivered to Lantawen — but the steel supplier really didn't want to deliver

to the mountains as it was outside their area. They tried to make the delivery cost prohibitive by saying it would cost a massive *three thousand pesos* ... but 81 Australian dollars didn't seem too much to pay in the end! The team headed off and arrived at Ps Roger and Ann's beautiful place in the mountains.

We marked out the hexagon with

a piece of string, a few sticks and a tape measure. The original size I had envisaged was 6 m but we could only fit 5.5 m on the site where Roger's house stood the last time we had visited. Roger and his friends had removed his old house in preparation for the new church to be constructed. They were planning to renovate the old church as their new house, but in the meantime they had to live in their tiny shop because they still needed the church for services.

With the help of the locals we hand-dug the six footings — some of which were huge as the site was unstable. We then had to hand-mix six cubic metres of concrete for the footings. In Australia this would be a huge truck, probably two, and this in itself was a huge task. Everyone from the village both old and young helped. Concrete is composed of three things: sand, aggregate, and cement. There was a pile of sand about 150 m away that had come from the river, and it had to be bagged and carried to the site. The aggregate was river rocks from the river several kilometres away and it had to be smashed into smaller pieces by hand. And the cement? We brought it up with us in the old van

that kept overheating and boiling every few kilometres.

With a four-inch angle grinder, a Makita battery drill and impact driver, and a small welder Kell managed to squeeze into his suitcase, we spent the



The footings were deep — they went all the way down to the bottom

next seven days cutting, welding and bolting the structure together. When I look back at the photos I am amazed at what we were able to achieve in the time we had and with the very limited resources available.

The one thing I could not find in the Philippines was a thing called 'Chemset' to glue/bolt the frame to the footings. Eventually I had to get Ps Marty to air freight six tubes and a gun over, which of course arrived on the afternoon of the day we were leaving. I was at least able to show Jun Jun how to use it. It would have been useless to not fix the frame to the footings in an area that can get Typhoons.

We managed to get the frame of the building completed and were able to pay a local Bacolod company to fit the roof and gutters. The team over there finished off the wall windows, doors and floors.



Three become one as the concrete is mixed

Satan really did not want this project to go ahead and tried everything to stop it. Everyone except me got sick and missed several days of work. I think the only reason I stayed well was God needed me on site to keep the project going. The locals kept asking to see the 'plano' and my guys said 'there is no 'plano' — it's all in John's head!'

In addition to the sickness, Michele and Gary had a disaster occur at home, and my safe in the hotel got jammed and would not open — with our passports, iPad, cash and about 110,000 pesos locked in it. On the morning of our departure two guys turned up at 6 am with an angle grinder and cut it open.

These are but a few of the adventures and difficulties we had to overcome but God was truly great throughout this whole project, keeping us safe and leading the way for us.

There is going to be a slum relocated to the Lantawan area, and I think Ps Rogers church is in for a big increase.

Without the help of Roger and Ann, their church members and especially Joe, Primrose and Jun Jun, we would not have been able to achieve what we did in such a short time.

Thanks to everyone who helped and supported us both financially and through prayer.

John Nardusso, SouthernLife Church



BMI Next-Gen Leaders Gathering is designed around a few big ideas – *servicing, story* and the *Father's voice*.

You have been **servicing** and offering your best to Christ's church. It's part of the way that you have decided to live — in servant leadership of the people God has joined you with.

Servicing is rewarding... but filled with challenges. Fruitfulness and a sense of purpose is dotted with disappointments and personal cost. There's a **story** there. Actually, there's a few stories that we could share that show us we're not alone in dealing with things that didn't go the way we thought they should have.

BMI has a story too. It's been written over the last few decades. God has used people like you and I to influence their generation for the Kingdom of God, and those people have a few stories worth sharing. It's the testimony of the faithfulness of God in all our seasons. These stories make up the larger story that the Father is writing today with people like you and me.

To **hear His voice** is life-sustaining. Just one word may be all you need. The Father speaks in many ways, and one of these is through the community of like-minded Christ-followers. The family is where we are identified, nurtured and vitally connected. This is the purpose behind our BMI Next-Gen Leaders Gathering.

It's 'on the move'. It's intense, relational, and cheap. It's forty-eight hours of full-on. Think: big bus, beach, borrowed accommodation, get-to-know-you interviews, interactive discussion, fireside chats with never-ending hot chocolate, intimate times of prayer and worship, and focused and intentional input from the BMI family. It's all centred around hearing the Father's voice and finding strength in connection with one another, so the story of God can be continued in our generation through people like us. It's designed to connect, nurture and develop the next generation of leaders within our churches.

If you are BMI next-gen and have your sights on leadership, you are invited to join us 9-11 March 2018 in Sydney. Numbers will be limited to approximately 30 people.

Darren Hessenberger, Highlands Christian Church

Please contribute to HeartBeat

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phone the office on (02) 6112 8527