



WEEKLY NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
DAPTO ANGLICAN CHURCH

WHY IS #BLM SUCH A 'THING'?

REV DAVID RIETVELD

Statues that have stood for more than a century are being pulled down. People are turning out in their thousands to rallies around the globe. The murder of George Floyd has started something of a movement. And yet in China hundreds of thousands of Uighurs are in re-education or forced labour camps; in Burma Rohingya are murdered and their villages' burnt; and about two thousands migrant labourers have died in Qatar building stadiums for the 2022 soccer world cup. Somehow we don't get too upset by those wrongs.

Why is #BLM such a 'thing'? This is actually a complex question. Most people will respond with a simple – because it's wrong. It's unjust. Enough is enough. But injustice is not new. Racism of one form or another is and always has been. Slavery is universal and timeless. Why are we toppling statues that have stood for generations NOW? Why are we so distraught by THIS expression of racism, or evil? Why are we not as concerned for yellow lives?

How Western cultures decide what is right and wrong has shifted of recent. Pride, greed and lust are no longer the deadliest of sins. They have been displaced by abuse, discrimination, and intolerance. How did this happen? And what does it mean?

In the past a sin was an action that offended God. The Bible has been displaced by shared intuition. The goal is now the empowerment of others so they can flourish. The greatest sins are now those that prevent another from making free choices, and becoming all that they desire to be.

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Nevertheless, current Western shared intuition has a Christian heritage. Tolerance and the dignity of all humanity are historically Christian virtues. If slavery is the most offensive form of racism, only twice in human history has systemic slavery been reversed. Both times by Christians. William Wilberforce in the early 1800s, and before that in early medieval Western Europe.

Yet #BLM is not just an anti-slavery or anti-racism movement. It is not focused around Yellow lives, or disabled lives. It's only about Black lives. Why?

In addition to the dignity of all human life, Western morality is also about guilt and innocence. Have I done the right action? If so, internally I have a clear conscious. If not, I feel guilty, and the need to alleviate my guilt. Such feelings are not universal. Other cultures decide right from wrong within honour-shame frameworks (Asian and Middle-East), or within power-fear frameworks (Africa). Not us.

Westerners, even post-Christian Westerners, feel at ease when they have a clear conscious, and unsettled when they do not. There is something deep within our collective Western sub-conscious, our shared intuition, which feels guilty about the African American slave trade of the 18th Century. Our prosperity, both historic and present, was (partly) built by their labours. This, for us as Westerners, was the greatest of evils that we were party to. This is the part of our conscious that we feel the need to purge.

What now seems intuitively noble to woke middle class white folk, is the virtue of righting previous wrongs. The greatest acts of social justice now revolve around empowering those who were previously the most discriminated against. Blacks top that list, followed by homosexuals and women. To stand up for these causes is to be seen to be just. To stand against (symbolically, by dismantling their statues) the historically powerful, be they political, military, or religious leaders is the other side of the same coin.

If that is why #BLM is such a 'thing' for our culture, how do I respond? Speaking personally, my greatest dilemma is not should I be concerned about Black lives and ongoing remnants of dis-empowerment. My greatest dilemma is how passionate should I get about THIS cause? There are other evils that demand attention. #BLM is presently front and centre. Should I get on this bandwagon? If I do, have I let others drive my priorities? And if I don't, do I look dis-engaged with my culture.



Speaking as a sociologist, this is a fascinating moment in time. The world has been in lockdown. People are frustrated, voiceless, and feel powerless. Finally, a cause. Not in China, or Asia, but one closer to home. In this vacuum, western leadership has failed to delivered unity and hope. Hand clapping and virtual online choirs do not fill our urge to bring order out of chaos.

For me #BLM is good, but not good enough. It locates the problem over there, and in the past. It is but one face of a bigger problem. A problem that is both out there and in me, in us. Coronavirus has reminded Westerners that life is about more than work, and toys, and holidays. People are yearning for an invitation to be part of something bigger. #BLM will come and go. When it fades, do I just sit back and wait for the next #thing? Or does Jesus give us clues as to how to live the good life, in season and out of season?



RISE RETURNED

RISE met in person this week for the first time in a few months. We were not able to meet with the same structure or routine, due to social distancing restrictions, however we had a great time catching up. We chatted about what God is like and caught up on what each other has been doing in isolation.

We ask you to join us in prayer for our RISE participants during this time; for health and safety, for peace and understanding with all the changes to routine and programs, that they will always remember how much God loves everyone



TAX EFFECTIVE GIVING

June is tax time which means opportunities are fast running out to make tax-deductible donations to the Church. Donations to both the Building Fund and the Religious Education Fund are tax-deductible.

Donations to the building fund are used to cover our loan repayments. Currently, our loan balance is \$1.266M. Our monthly repayments are \$9,735 and monthly donations total \$6,000 which gives us a shortfall of \$3,735 per month or \$45,000 for the year.

Any shortfall between our monthly donations and the money raised in this appeal will need to come from our General Fund which will impact upon Ministries for the year.

Donations to the Religious Education Fund cover the costs of running scripture in our local schools.

How to Give

These are unusual times and due to public health orders we are not permitted to hand out giving envelopes or any other materials. So if you would like to give here are the ways to do it;

Bank Transfer to Building Fund or Religious Education Fund

Dapto Anglican Church Building Fund

BSB Number:	032686
Account Number:	162472

Dapto Anglican Church Religious Education Fund

BSB Number:	032686
Account Number:	301495

If you require a receipt for tax purposes please include your name and first initial (eg “J Smith”) in the reference field.

Cash or Cheque

Please put your gift, together with a note with your name & address, and the name of the fund that you are donating to, in an envelope and drop it into the Church Office. If you are attending a service you can put it in the can be put in the offertory.

To be eligible for a tax deduction this financial year, donations must be received by 30th June.



SAFE MINISTRY



Dapto Anglican Church is committed to Safe Ministry Practices. If you have a question or concern, we are here to help.

Please contact:

- Julie Houghton, Parish Safe Ministry Representative, by confidential email safeministry@daptoanglican.org.au or through our church office on 42611001
- Anglican Abuse Report line on 1800 774945

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PREGNANT WOMEN

Ainsley R. (7pm), Mel F. (7pm), Erin K. (7pm) and Katie C. (7pm).

THOSE IN HOSPITAL

Gordon M (8am). Brendan L. (37) son of Bonnie and Aaron L Royal Melbourne Hospital.

VILLAGES/NURSING HOMES

Helen S., Bruce M., Diana M., Kath H., Ella H., Jean D., Lorna B-W., Glenys N., Barbara B., Barbara L.

8AM/2PM

Diane L. treatment ongoing - waiting for Specialist. Mavis B. waiting for an operation, 3rd July. Pat W's son, Antony - ongoing treatment, Antony's fiancé, Sue K - ongoing chemo.

9:30AM

Deb P's brother John in remission.

10AM

Ronnie VK, Michael E, Janelle S, June C - all ongoing conditions and treatment.

7PM

Shaina J. son, Roman, waiting for appointment. Pray for good health while waiting. Billy Harvey - chemo treatment.

PRAY FOR TODAY

Lord we pray that your grace may always uphold and encourage us, and make us continually desire to complete all the good works prepared for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

