



WEEKLY NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
DAPTO ANGLICAN CHURCH

A NEW TEMPLE AND THE END OF SECULARISM

REV. DAVID RIETVELD

This week, a new temple opened in India. The Ram Temple is built on a sacred site where a mosque stood for 500 years, recently dismantled by the Indian government.

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The site is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram (aka Vishnu). This sounds like a dispute between Islam and Hinduism but is better understood as the undoing of secularism.

India was a predominantly Buddhist region from the 400s onwards. Islam arrived in the 700s, and the English colonised India in the 1700s. At the time of independence in 1947, India had Hindus (84%), Muslims (10%), Christians (2.3%) and Sikhs (1.8%).

Colonialism is presently a dirty word, but the English brought advancements in education, medicine, law and order, governance, and secularism to India. From the Christian tradition came the idea that the state could govern with justice for all people without favouring one religion. This is secularism – separating the state from religious institutions.

Of recent, we in the West imagine secularism and atheism are inseparable – as if secularism is the product of atheism. Not so – secularism comes from Jesus when he says render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.

The Indian Prime Minister (Modi) and the State are intervening in domestic issues with a biased religious agenda. To be Indian is to be Hindu. Erdogan is doing the same in Turkey, rededicating the Hagia Sophia as a mosque. Putin is making the Russian State more Orthodox, The Military Junta are making Myanmar more Buddhist, and Trump is pitching to Evangelical conservatives.

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What does all of this mean? Why is this happening? There are two insights to grasp. What is passing secularism? The notion that justice is for everyone (not just the majority religion) and that secular states exist to care for all citizens is running out of momentum.

In its place is (re-)emerging religious nationalism. Cultures need an over-arching story that binds us together (and against them). Secular Atheism lacks a compelling story, so the likes of Modi, Putin, Erdogan, (and Netanyahu and Trump?) are using the story-telling capacity of religion to gather the faithful around a cause. Seasons of instability give rise to insular nationalism.

Jesus does not fit this mould. We are known for our love, including love for our enemies. Everyone is made in God's image, including people from other tribes, tongues and religions. Another blessing of Christendom is fading.

Leaders in Training (LiT)



Please be praying for our youth and leaders who are headed off to LiT for the next five days. LiT is a camp for those in years 9-12 and is designed to be a three-year program, moving youth through different stages of learning and applying the Bible, then putting what they have learnt into practice. The whole week is about growing as a Christian, a leader, and a servant of Jesus and His people.

Please be praying for energy, wisdom, growth and more in both our leaders and our youth, and the hundreds who are on LiT this week!

Growth Group Sign Up

Each week, men and women of our church meet together to share in the joys and heartaches of life, open God's word and discuss how we might follow Jesus better, and pray together. Growth Groups are a highlight for so many people here at DAC!

This Sunday, we will have a signup opportunity for you to join a growth group. We ask that you pray about what Growth Groups might look like for you. We hope you may take this opportunity to foster a deeper relationship with God and connect with our awesome church community.

Growth Groups will return from Monday the 5th of February.





This week we will be finishing up our sermon series 'Reframe Rethink'. From next week, each of our 3 Sunday services will be looking at 3 different topics, for 3 weeks. We would love for you to join us!

Prayer and Praise Night

Please join us on Thursday, the 1st of February, from 7pm in the **Auditorium**, as we launch our year coming before God in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."



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



PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you; help us so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may faithfully serve you, whose service is perfect freedom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

EXPECTANT PARENTS

Lisa and Matt G.

HOSPITAL

Please continue to pray for Allan C (8am) who was in Orange Hospital, and has now been transferred to Wollongong Hospital. and recovering following leg surgery.

VILLAGES/NURSING HOMES

Please continue to pray for our people in Residential Care Homes: Jean W, Kath H, Phyllis D, Audrey & Alan R, Gae & Allen Q, Elsie N, Barbara L, Pamela B, Gordon M, Beth W, Betty B (Piper House, Dapto); Robyn K (Digger's Rest, Corrimal); Helen S (Marco Polo, Unanderra); Ella H, Trevor W (Warrigal Care, A.P.); Wendye C, Helen K (Farmborough Uniting, Unanderra); Cheryl T (Hammond Care, Horsley); Graham S (The Links, Wollongong).

8AM

Please pray for Jill S who fell recently and fractured her T12 vertebrae. Please pray for pain management and healing. Please pray for Deb P's brother, who is very unwell.

10AM

Please continue to pray for Ruby D, for mobility and pain control; Also please continue to pray for Andrew W, and his health issues; and also for Phillip P, for his health problems, and as he prepares to move from Dapto to Gwyneville.

6PM

Please pray for Christine L who has an insertional Achilles tear. Pray for healing and recovery.

CAFE CHURCH/CREATIVE CONNECTION

Please continue to pray for Lynne N and her family with health problems.