



EARTH MATTERS



Brian Swimme is a mathematical cosmologist who co-authored “The Universe Story” with Thomas Berry. The other day I came across an interesting question. He asks. “Why would life create biological death?”

Suppose we eliminated natural death! The first thing that would happen would be the need to eliminate natural reproduction. Existing humans would, of course, want to remain among the living, and once the continents were jammed, we couldn’t allow for any newcomers.

That sounds all right for a while. But what about a million years later? The same old humans still dragging around the planet, the same old animals! The sad thing is that the anxiety over death would be much, much worse than before for we could still die in accidents.

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ROHINGYA REFUGEE FINDS NEW LIFE IN ADELAIDE



[Akram Maungkyawmin with the Ayles family \(from left\) Holly, Jacob and Sarah with Schoonar the dog.](#)

[\(ABC News: Simon Royal\)](#)

A few weeks ago, Akram Maungkyawmin and his foster mum Sarah Ayles were sitting at the dining table at home in Adelaide. Mr Maungkyawmin's phone went off with a text from his brother back in Myanmar. "He sent me vision of our village burning down," Mr Maungkyawmin said. "People have lost everything they own, some have lost their lives. Our home has been burnt down." There was other vision too, of smouldering ruins and people fleeing through the jungle.

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NEW AITECE TEACHERS ARRIVE IN CHINA

Thanks to Michael Dredge for the note below:



The Columban-sponsored outreach to China has welcomed two new teachers to their appointments.

One, Fr Joe Deegan, has just completed a long term as Parish Priest in Ireland, and the other is an Irish retired primary Head teacher, Mary Cawley.

Both have arrived in Chongqing, to join the four other AITECE teachers already here.

Image: Michael with Mary and Joe about to explore the iconic Chongqing Art Museum.

GOODOOGA – LAST VISITORS LINING UP



As Patrick Lynch nears the end of his time residing in Goodooga, the question is will Peter Oxman be the last to visit him in this fairly distant part of NSW? Pat had Tony Whelan as a guest a few days ago and Peter is heading northwest in ten days or so to enjoy a spell of Goodooga (and Lightning Ridge) hospitality and the wide-open spaces.

At some time in the next month or so it's anticipated that Pat will be relocating to the Treacy community, a move that he will doubtless take in his stride.

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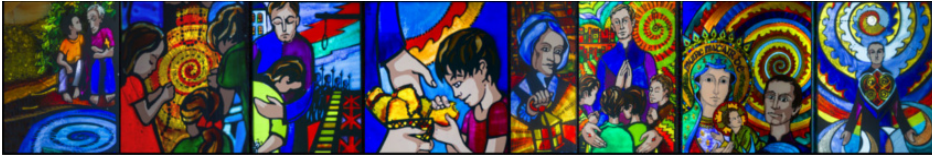
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EARTH MATTERS (continued)



You'd never risk a single step outside your house. Why risk an eternity of life on Earth for anything the least bit dangerous! The whale, the elephant, the majestic sequoia tree; they are not aware of their death.

What is gained for the Universe to include particular creatures – humans – who are aware of their own deaths, who can feel the stupendous, fragile beauty of the great black whale soaring through the ocean?

The whale is free from the anguish of awareness of its approaching death. But because of that, the whale cannot feel its own beauty, that is what the human must do, or our suffering is in vain.

“We were brought forth so that experiences of beauty could enter awareness” (Swimme)
Gerry McGrath cfc

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ROHINGYA REFUGEE FINDS NEW LIFE IN ADELAIDE (continued)

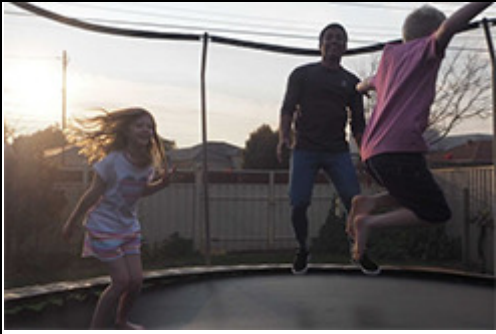


*Akram Maungkyawmin is now studying at Christian Brothers College in Adelaide and hopes to stay and work in Australia.
(ABC News: Michael Ewers)*

For Ms Ayles, it was shocking insight into the plight of Myanmar's Rohingya minority. "Akram said 'look at this Sarah, this is my house'," Ms Ayles said. "It was up in flames and his village was up in flames and I just sat quietly with him ... what do you say?"

The Rohingya are an ethnic and religious minority who live predominantly in Rakhine state in Myanmar's west. They have been persecuted by authorities and subjected to sporadic campaigns of violence for decades. "The government and the Buddhist majority, they don't like us," Mr Maungkyawmin said. "It's religion and politics mixed together. They don't want Rohingya people to live in Burma.

"They call us Bengali and say we migrated from Bangladesh, but that's not true. We have been living in Burma for generations." With the latest outbreak of violence against the Rohingya, the UN has accused the Myanmar government of ethnic cleansing. Mr Maungkyawmin calls it genocide.



*Akram Maungkyawmin on the trampoline with the Ayles children Jacob and Holly.
(ABC News: Simon Royal)*

'Suu Kyi responsible for unrest'

While there's some argument over just how much power the country's leader and Nobel peace prize winner Aung Sun Suu Kyi actually wields, Mr Maungkyawmin said she's ultimately responsible. "She was the most respected person in the world before this," he said. "She promised everyone she would make peace in Burma between ethnic groups, but when she got power she changed her mind into something else ... so yes, I do hold her responsible.

"She's not even using the name of the Rohingya people, she's just using Muslim or Islam."

Complexities aside, the situation is the simple underlying cause of why Mr Maungkyawmin fled. "My father died in 2008 from heart troubles and then my mother from the same in 2012. "When the authorities arrested my brother a few months later, my other siblings took the bit of money my mother left and sent me to Australia. "They didn't want me to be arrested too."

He was 13 years old at the time.

His journey, both by plane and on boats run by people smugglers, took him close to a year, through Bangladesh, Malaysia and then Indonesia. Another people smuggler's boat then took him to Christmas Island, where he spent 12 months in immigration detention.



'I had never been to a school in my country'

Now aged 18, Mr Maungkyawmin is on a bridging visa and doing Year 12 at Christian Brothers College. "I had never been to a school in my country. The government didn't give me a chance to go to school," he said.

"So being here at CBC, it means a lot to me. "But the school's principal, Noel Mifsud, said the education the young man was finally receiving was far from a one way street. "Akram comes here to be educated and by sharing his story about his background in Myanmar he educates us," Mr Mifsud said."

I think he teaches us about social justice and he asks us to question deeply what are we doing about those who need help in our society, and the broader global context."School counsellor Jane Gaynor is reminded of the old saying, "At the heart of education, is the education of the heart".

She said Mr Maungkyawmin has a good and strong heart.

"Of course he gets sad at times and he'll talk about that in his quiet way," she said.

"But the experience of everyone in our school community is that of an enormously happy young man.

"He's an example to us all of the capacity to be able to withstand so much."

Akram plans his future in Australia

Sarah Ayles said her family was learning things too.

"I put my hand up to host him because I wanted to help someone, I wanted to give my life meaning," Ms Ayles said. "I have young kids and I wanted them to see a different side to Australia. "We've had our ups and downs and our laughs and miscommunications at times and God knows what he thinks of us, but yeah, he's part of us now I guess."

If he's allowed to stay in Australia, Mr Maungkyawmin said he wants to become a citizen. For someone who's seen so little law and order, he would like to have a career dedicated to it. "I want to be a police officer in the future," he said.

"I want to give back to Australia because it has given me so much."

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