

Alf and Hilary Cooper

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The call in action

Very dear friends and family,

Christmas 2021 will be different! We are in hybrid mode, of course, and our plans need to incorporate all we have learned about including people who have slipped away over the shutdown period. What better than Christmas celebrations to do this? As Hebrews 2:8,9 says, we don't yet see world or national events "under our feet", but we do "see Jesus" who does have everything under his feet! So, may we look at King Jesus continually as we remember how he was born into our reality, draws his Church together to teach us, and shows the way ahead in 2022.

These have been the two most remarkable years of our ministry. It started with the pandemic shutdown in March 2020, seven months spent on the coast, when we were able to steam ahead with so much online church work and ministry: services, Cursillo Online, EMOOnline, online Bible study, Bible college, weekly capsules (if you want to be put on the list to receive one-minute capsules in English, Spanish or both, please subscribe by sending your number to Alf on WhatsApp, 569 98748963, or email acooper@iach.cl). Then Alf was catapulted into the public sphere again (having left it all behind when he ceased the work of chaplain to the president in 2014), this time being named in September 2020 as protocolar representative of the Protestant and Evangelical churches by the president again in his much battled-for second term.

Just in the last two months, Alf has had to organise the Evangelical Te Deum, the National Day of the Evangelical churches, the "reparation" celebration at the Constitutional Convention and the nationwide Jesus march, all of which have involved the presence of the president or the highest authorities as well as Alf's participation. Why all this has been so demanding is that not only do the events need to be of the highest standard, but *they must be an opening to share the gospel*. And so it has turned out, thankfully. At the Evangelical Te Deum, the minister of health broke down weeping as we thanked him in the context of Christ's love. The following day at the military parade, several ministers thanked me for the Te Deum and the Christian values proclaimed to the nation. Then, after the Constitutional Convention declared that the evangelical flag was to be excluded before what was to be a lay Constitution, we raised such a hue and cry (16000 signatures, 2000 pastors) that eventually they capitulated and we were given "a ceremony of recognition" at which our flag was placed in the gardens of the constitutional palace with



Name: Alf and Hilary Cooper

Location: Chile

Our call: To spread the gospel and extend God's kingdom through church planting across Chile and the wider world.

Our role: Auxiliary bishop and rector of Trinity Parish Church.



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Alf with the organising team at the presidential palace!

Mapuche President Loncon present and at which Alf preached: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16). A document of what Christians expect the new Constitution to include, as well as 154 Bibles, were presented to the members of the Constituent assembly.

Alf flew to Temuco for the Jesus march and had to preach to 6000 Christians in a stadium: "Stand up on your feet", Jesus' order to Paul in Acts 26:16, upon which the crowd roared in victorious energy and we prayed fervently for Chile.

Then, the final service at the palace on Thursday 4th, with the president's farewell as he begins to close his period of presidency. It was sad to talk to him beside me, so pressured by the events taking place around him, including a vote of no confidence in parliament to be processed next week (at the time of writing) and which could impeach him.

A chapter closed at a recent funeral.... When Hilary and I were first called to start churches in the professional upper classes together with a team of missionaries, we started Spanish services in the English Community Church in 1978. A small apartment was rented for us on our return from furlough and we found we were next door to Nigel Cameron, one of three old boys from the Oratory School, which I attended from age 13–18. That led to visits to him and Madelaine, his French wife, delicious French cooking and Sunday visits to our fledgling church plant by Brigitte their daughter, plus Suyai and Michelle, her daughters. As many of you know, Suyai grew up a strong Christian, married Gerardo Gimple and is today serving as vicar of a church in Ireland! We said goodbye to Madelaine last week, who passed away at the age of 92 and who once said to me, "Don't bother with me... I am a French atheist!". However, Madelaine had been privy to the testimony of the children and grandchildren serving God and eventually Brigitte was able to lead her to Christ some years ago. So, her funeral closed a chapter that has given much church planting fruit down the years. Praise God for his faithfulness!

These last three months we have been broadcasting an FM radio programme called Escuchemos ("Listen") between 6 and 7pm daily. Topics include ecology, health, politics, whatever people are doing on social media. Now as we run up to the presidential and parliamentary elections on 21 November, with over 50 Evangelical Christian candidates for parliament and local government, it has come in useful to start a Christian conversation with the nation.

We are planning to visit UK from next April to end of August. Pray for these plans to be established!

We share with you all the love of Jesus,

Alf and Hilary Cooper



Photos from top to bottom: President Loncon; Alf after the final service of celebration at the palace; the team choir after the celebration with the president at the palace; relaxing with Jahnn and Ara on the coast

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You can give to Alf and Hilary at: churchmissionsociety.org/cooper

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