

OCTOBER 1, 2020

S T E P B Y S T E P
ADVANCE
Tasmanian
BAPTISTS 



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I'm sure you've noticed the way you relate to God is influenced by how your earthly Father related to you. For me, my Dad was a loving and faithful believer, and yet it was often difficult at home as he suffered from PTSD, which we didn't realise at the time.

The little encouragement to you, in this week's opening image (ABOVE), is a reminder that God is a perfect Father. No matter what sort of earthly Dad you had, God will be different. Better even!

It's a good reminder, and a great thing to tell lonely people, such as those that Kay Hunter writes about in this issue. Who do you know who is lonely and needs a friend?

As Stephen Baxter writes, "We all have a job to do". Our Father God is doing good things here in Tasmania. Don't miss out!

Be blessed,

Jenny



Jenny Baxter
Communications Manager, Tasmanian Baptists
jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au

profile:

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

Why I don't WORK with lonely women . . .

. . . and why you shouldn't either.



Kay Hunter is the Associate Pastor at City Baptist, Launceston.

She's been busy, developing relationships with a number of women who simply need a friend.

We asked her to tell us more . . .

I was asked if I would write an article about the work I do with vulnerable women in Launceston, and I decided that such an article would be inappropriate for a number of reasons.

First of all, I don't WORK with vulnerable women. Instead, I know some vulnerable people whom I am privileged to call friends. I am lucky my 'work' allows me more time to spend with these friends than I might otherwise if I had different employment.



Secondly, I don't do anything special that's worthy of note. So this article is not about my 'work'. Rather, it contains some thoughts I have about why there are so many vulnerable people remaining in our communities who don't have friends, when we in the church are called by no less than Jesus himself, to reach out to such folk.

Often these people are without friends because they are somewhat invisible. If you think there are not some really lonely and vulnerable people sharing your space (including your church) then maybe you're not really looking.

Good friendships take time

Who are the people who creep in and creep out without any more than one or two word interactions? Who are the people that no one has invited into their home for a meal? Look around you--who is it in your church that nobody really knows anything about?

Maybe it is these people, who have been so battered by life. They will never open up and let you see anything other than the superficial, because that requires a level of trust that can only be gained by long, often very long, friendships.

Nurturing such friendships can take years and years. So, one question we must all ask ourselves is, are we prepared to persevere to get to know someone even if it takes years, with very little in the way of reciprocal giving? Are our friendships only with people who have the capacity to give back to us at least a little of the caring we give to them?

Love, acceptance and forgiveness

I believe that another reason some people travel lonely roads is because their default responses to people are often very inappropriate. Some people have become so disenchanted with people and life generally, that they often believe their best defence is to get in and blame someone else before the blame falls on them. This blaming often comes in the form of abuse, even to the very people who really want to be helpful.

These are often the folk who have been turned away from services in our community because, when they feel they are not being heard or understood, they react by becoming verbally abusive. So, are we prepared to stand face-to-face with someone who screams abuse at us because they have jumped to the conclusion that we don't understand what they need? Can we hang in long enough with folk like this, for them to trust that we have their interests at heart?

Go and look

And if we are not identifying these folk—well maybe we should go looking? Are we prepared to sit in the gutter with that person asking for coins, and hear a little of their story? Would we take them out for a coffee or a meal? Will we go to the services where these people get cheap meals, and share it with them?



Will we make eye contact with that person walking up the street swearing to themselves, and ask if they need assistance?

Then, if we are prepared to do these things, we might be truly amazed at the calibre of the friends we can make. We may find ourselves astounded at a level of resilience that is truly awe-inspiring.

The women I spend time with are my friends, they are not my projects. And like all friends (and indeed family members) they can annoy me and cause great frustration. But as with all God's children they are worthy of my time, sharing my resources, and most of all my unconditional love.

Kay Hunter

Associate Pastor, City Baptist

news:

Tas Baptist NEWS - October/November 2020

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: [CHECK THE TASMANIAN BAPTIST CALENDAR >>>](#)

Anti-Poverty Week

October 11-17, 2020

It's not right that 3 million Aussies live below the poverty line



[Anti-Poverty Week](#) supports the Australian community to have an increased understanding of poverty and to take action collectively to end it. This purpose is shared by a diverse network of individuals and organisations. Since 2002, Anti-Poverty week has been held on October 17, [the United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#).

This pandemic year, it has been a year like no other. On September 25th, the Coronavirus Supplement [dropped by \\$300](#) a fortnight. More than 3.3 million Australians are directly affected by this cut, including 1.1 million children. A recent Australian National University analysis estimated an [extra 740,000 people](#) have been pushed into poverty.

JOIN IN ANTI-POVERTY WEEK, OCTOBER 11-17

- Light your church up in the blue and green colours of Anti-Poverty week (Tasmanian Catholic churches have already decided to do this.)
 - Make a 30 second video on your phone to say you're supporting the call to #RaisetheRateforGood and upload it on social media during Anti-Poverty Week.
 - Share Anti-Poverty Week materials or create your own - see the [Promotion Kit](#) page, including the updated [Poverty in Australia Fast Fact](#). Also see the [latest from the Raise the Rate campaign](#).
 - Add your activity or event to the Anti-Poverty Week [calendar](#).
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Tasmanian Baptist Pastors' Muster

One-day of inspiring input



on Tuesday October 20, all Pastors are encouraged to attend the one-day Pastors' Muster at Riverlands Longford.

The Muster is scheduled for 10am to 4pm. This is the long-awaited Muster, which was postponed from the annual *Pastors and Families Muster* at Camp Clayton in July. Leadership team members are also welcome if able to attend.

Dinner to follow in Longford for those who can make it—it won't go late!

For more info, please contact Stephen Baxter: stephen@tasbaptists.org.au

To register, please contact Karen Buckney: karen@riverlands.org.au

ABOVE: Some attendees of the Pastors' Muster, March 2018

Tasmanian Baptist Annual Assembly

Riverlands Longford, 6pm Friday to 4pm Saturday October 30-31, 2020

A weekend to look forward to!



ABOVE: Those gathered at Assembly, October 2019

Be encouraged by joining with other churches to hear something of what God is doing around the state at the Annual Assembly, coming up on the last weekend in October. We will hear from **Mary Dickins** of [Fostering Hope](#); Jenna Blackwell our Youth Leadership Development Coordinator; plus new opportunities Baptist churches are initiating across the state.

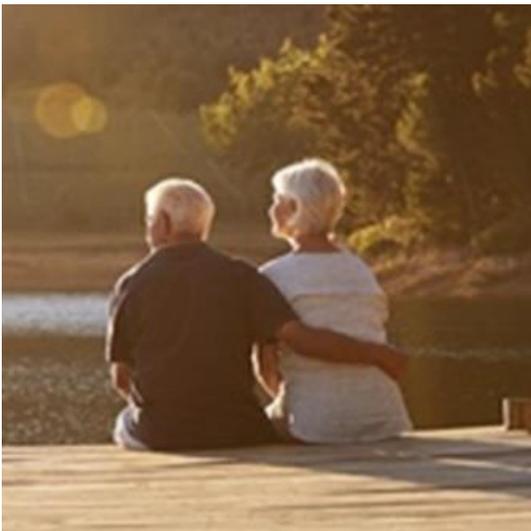
You may come to observe and take part in the workshops. Each church sends representatives and they, with the pastors, have voting rights. If you can make it for Friday night dinner that's great, but you can also attend for Saturday only.

If you would like to attend this year's Annual Assembly, please contact Karen Buckney:

karen@riverlands.org.au

Rethinking Retirement

Christian Management Australia



Society tells us that retirement is a time to sit back and enjoy the fruit of our life's work. However, at [CMA](#) we believe it's time to rethink retirement.

It's possible that our greatest contribution to the Kingdom of God still lies ahead of us--God didn't spend sixty years preparing us to do nothing. So, we have devised a seven-week, online study course called Engaging Q4 for those who are seeking to reimagine life in their retirement years.

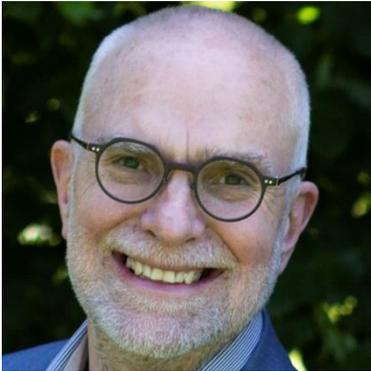
The course is built around seven spiritual disciplines or practices for life's Fourth-Quarter. Various groups will commence on different dates in October, and once you have registered, we will contact you to determine the timing that suits you. The cost is \$95, which includes the Engaging Q4 Handbook.

[You can find more details HERE >>> https://www.cma.net.au/q4/engaging.php](https://www.cma.net.au/q4/engaging.php)

WE HAVE A JOB TO DO

This COVID-19 Year is a Game-Changer

By Mission Director Stephen Baxter



As our fellow Christians and Baptists in Victoria begin to emerge out of lockdown and curfews, we Tasmanians have much to be thankful for. Except for closed borders that restricts travel and social distancing restrictions, life trundles along close to normal. So far, we have avoided many of the trials faced by much of the world.

Yet, it has not been without its challenges. We were not able to meet for our May Assembly. In fact, churches across Tasmania, Australia and much of the Western world celebrated Easter and Pentecost in their homes. Not since the early days of the church has that happened before.

Even so, God is with us. That's our theme for this year: "Emmanuel - God with us" and it has been our experience across our churches.

Truly, He is with us!

In Ephesians, Paul writes,

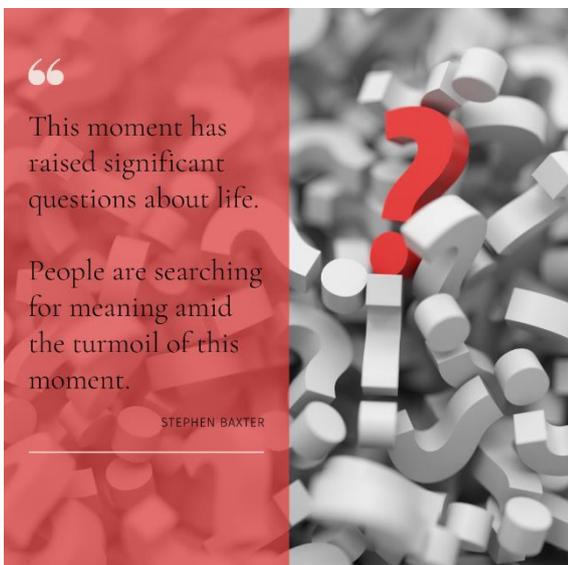
"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" ([Ephesians 4:6](#)).

Although God is above and beyond our world, God is also close, not only "over all" but "through all and in all." It is a mystery, yet God is intimately involved in our lives, moment by moment.

Jesus said, "You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, (as well as) famines and earthquakes in various places". But, he says, "see to it that you are not alarmed.... all these are the beginning of birth-pains" ([Matthew 24:6,8](#)).

Despite the difficulties and challenges of this moment, we are not to be alarmed and we are comforted to know God is with us.

Increased connection



Therefore, it is not surprising that our churches have fared well given the circumstances. It's encouraging to hear many churches have found this moment has opened ministry opportunities.

Some have responded to the needs within their communities with food distribution, financial support and increased pastoral support. Others have had people connecting with them either in-person or online for the first time.

This moment has raised, at least among some people, significant questions about life. People are searching for meaning amid the turmoil of this moment. What an amazing opportunity to introduce them to Jesus.

But it's not all good

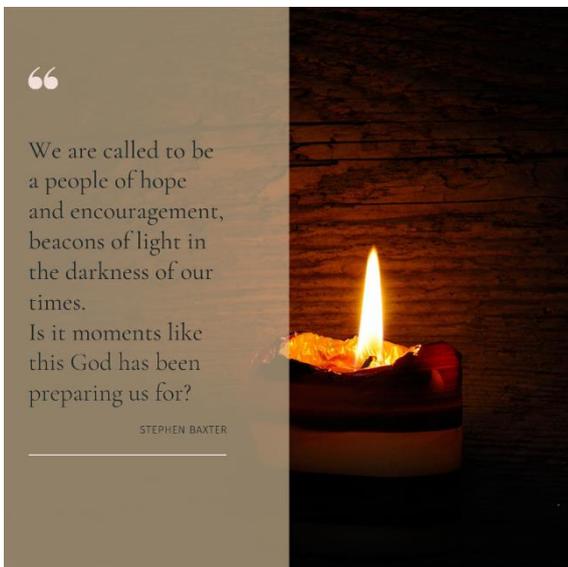
Although Tasmania can seem like a slice of heaven--we have the cleanest air and purest water in the world; we have beautiful parks, beaches, mountains, and forests; and world-class food, music and cultural festivals--there is another reality.

Key elements of our history, such as the [Black War](#) and our convict foundations remain unresolved. The number of children in out-of-homecare is [among the highest in our country](#). So too is our [youth suicide rate](#). Life is challenging and meaningless for many Tasmanians. The events of this year have only made things worse.

In many ways, we are just at the beginning. As we look forward, we can anticipate the future for many Tasmanians will be very difficult. We will see businesses struggling, government running deficit budgets for many years, unemployment rising, and anxiety and despair will no doubt increase. Our communities will have great need.

Our opportunity

We, the people of God here in Tasmania, have a job to do.



We are called to be a people of hope and encouragement, beacons of light in the darkness of our times. For over a decade God has been calling us to be a mission shaped movement that adapts to the changing environment and community. Is it moments like this God has been preparing us for? I certainly believe so.

The future will be challenging, uncomfortable and difficult. Yet, God is with us. This is not a moment to "shrink back... grow weary and lose heart" ([Hebrews 10:39](#)). Rather, it is a time to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us." So, let us "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" ([Hebrews 12:1-3](#)) and full of hope and confidence in God be the church we have been called to be.

Stephen Baxter
Mission Director
Tasmanian Baptist Union

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Comments and submissions to Advance can be sent to:
Email: jenny@tasbaptists.org.au

Website: www.tasbaptists.org.au/news

