

April 29, 2020

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

April 29, 2020 ADVANCE | step by step



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The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly changing our world.

Life is unlikely to return to the way it was - or if it does, it will take a while.

In these times it is good to take comfort in remembering that God knows everything about you.

Praying for you during this unprecedented time,

Jenny



Jenny Baxter

Tasmanian Baptists Communications Manager

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May Assembly for Tasmanian Baptists

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We were to have met as a Union on Friday/Saturday May 8-9.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, and the restrictions placed on us by government authorities, we cannot meet in-person, as normal. Secretaries have been informed of the process, outlined below.

This process allows for us to attend to the minimum necessary to enable the Union to function.

The proposed is a departure from our constitutional procedure. So the decisions made, and the process used, will be ratified at the next “normal” assembly, hopefully in October.



If you have any questions please contact **Chair, Peter Clark**; **Administrator, Rodney Marshall**; or **Mission Director, Stephen Baxter**.

NOTICE OF MEETING VIA EMAIL

- *The next Assembly of the Baptist Union of Tasmania will be held via mail and email during the week ending Saturday, 9 May 2019.*
- Churches are requested to nominate delegates for the Assembly. Registered Pastors as listed in the 2020 Handbook are also eligible to vote.
- The papers were circulated on April 3 to allow churches to ask questions and request additional information by April 24.
- Any answers or additional information will then be circulated by May 1, together with voting forms for the motions to be put to the meeting.
- Voting forms should be mailed/emailed back to the office no later than May 8.

April 3	Papers circulated
April 24	Questions or requests for additional information to Rodney
April 24	Nominated church delegates to Rodney
April 24	Pastors who will participate to Rodney
May 1	Responses to questions and additional information circulated
May 1	Voting forms circulated
May 8	Return of voting forms

Chair, Peter Clark
Administrator, Rodney Marshall
Mission Director, Stephen Baxter

History: Baptism in Tasmania

The Defining Factor



By Laurie Rowston
Tasmanian Baptists' Historian

Baptism used to define us as a denomination. So how did it begin? And what did outsiders think?

Baptists, and Our Once-Defining Form of Baptism

By Laurie Rowston

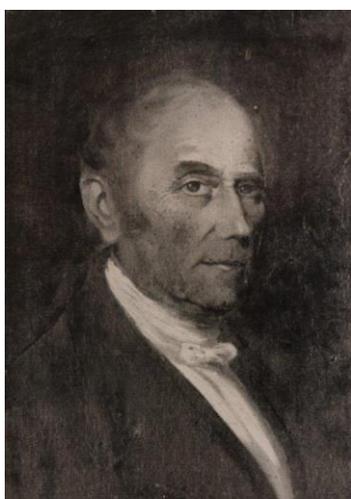
Up to the 1860s in Tasmania the Baptists were set apart up by their defining mode of baptism.

The first Baptist minister, the Rev. Henry Dowling, arrived in the middle 1830s and it was not until the 1860s that the English Brethren, who also practised baptism by immersion, arrived. The American Church of Christ too, baptised by immersion, but didn't arrive in Tasmania until 1870.

The first Baptist baptism in the colony took place on January 26, 1836, in the mill pond of Walker's Mill at the corner of Collins and Barrack Streets, Hobart Town. Baptist baptisms were often conducted in the open air. In Launceston at least one was conducted in a clay pond. At Constitution Hill, Dysart, they were conducted in both a lagoon and a sheep wash.

Oh, you naughty boys!

Because this form of baptism was unusual, its enactment would draw many spectators. Stories which spoke of Baptist baptism stayed in circulation for decades. One such story was still in circulation in 1898, recorded in the Launceston Examiner at the time:



Pictured above, "Daddy Dowling" was the Rev. Henry Dowling.*

"Speaking the other day to an old resident about the recent water-race action in the Supreme Court, he told me of an incident in connection with the mill that occurred towards the close of the forties.

"Mr. Yates, a Quaker, was the occupier of the mill at the time, and he had been exposed to a great deal of loss and annoyance by boys rolling down rocks and walking upon the shutes to their favourite fishing and bathing places. He had done all in his power to put a stop to the nuisance, but without avail.

"One Sunday afternoon my informant was taking a stroll on the hill at the back of the mill, and when somewhere about where the present bridge is, a troop of boys came running along on the shutes, daring and boisterous. In a moment all was changed! Concealed behind a rock the injured Quaker waited for his tormentors, and, springing out unexpectedly, he seized one of the

defiant group. The rest beat a hasty retreat, but when they had reached a respectful distance they paused to watch developments, which went on rather rapidly.

“Dragging his struggling and howling quarry to a place at which he could conveniently carry on operations, Mr. Yates took the boy by the collar of his coat and the seat of his pants and plunged him into the shutes, soucing him up and down several times until remonstrance was inaudible; then liberating him he said, 'Now go home and tell your mother that I have baptised you as well as Daddy Dowling could have done it.'”

Now go home and tell your mother that I have baptised you as well as Daddy Dowling could have done it!*

Baptism is key to Baptists



Baptist James W. McClendon, Associate Professor of Theology at the University of San Francisco sees baptism as a performative sign, that is “a conventional human act which although verbal has the quality not of describing but of doing something.” He sees baptism as the empirical key to Baptist experience.

But the days of public debate on baptism have passed. Back in the 1890s it was a reason for coming out in the evenings in such places as Latrobe as in the local community hall, Baptist debated with Congregationalist.

Above: Anabaptist immersion during a storm

When we Baptists in Tasmania began again in the 1870s, baptism was one of the hallmarks of who we were.

Publicly, and privately in the churches, it was asked whether the appropriate candidate could only be a confessing believer, what the proper mode was and who could administer the baptism, an individual Christian, or ordained minister. In all this the purpose of baptism was discussed.

Times change - Baptism continues

Obviously, there are ceasefire lines today as denominationalism has fallen away, and we have good reason to be at one with our fellow Christians in other denominations. But when we Baptists in Tasmania began again in the 1870s, baptism was one of the hallmarks of who we were.

Looking at the paucity of numbers of those being baptised in our churches today, should we ask whether we need to recover something of who we once were? In our churches, baptism should continue to be a passionate “Amen” spoken by the those undergoing entry into the Christian community.

Laurie Rowston

Tasmanian Baptists' Historian

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Be a Catalyst and Make a Difference!

By [Rebecca Oates](#)

Advocacy Manager, Baptist World Aid

Baptist World Aid makes a difference, and you can be part of it



Have you ever been confronted by poverty and felt helpless?

You are not alone ... *Here's a way to help: local Catalyst groups!*

In February Tasmania hosted two Catalyst launches at [Citywide Lenah Valley](#), and [LifeWay Baptist Church](#), Devonport. At these Catalyst launches we considered how to put our faith into action through advocacy, that we are not helpless, and that, in fact, we can raise our voice as Christians and make a real impact on global issues of injustice.

Catalyst is a movement of grass roots advocacy groups in local Churches that Baptist World Aid equips to raise their voice and take meaningful action to tackle poverty and modern slavery around our world.

Are you part of a social justice group at your church? Or simply interested in advocating on issues of poverty and exploitation? Now you, and your church, can join with Baptist World Aid and make a difference!

We encourage Catalyst members to form groups to mobilise and agitate for change in their community. But you don't have to be in a group to be part of Catalyst.

What you can do

This year we have a focus on building a relationship with your MP around issues like Australia's New International Development Policy Review. And how to engage your community around issues of ethical fashion.

During April and May we are encouraging our Catalyst groups to consider ways they can engage their communities and networks to utilise the Ethical Fashion Guide and build awareness around issues of exploitation in the fashion industry. (You can download a digital copy of the [Ethical Fashion Guide, 2019](#) [HERE >>>](#))

We will resource our groups with a framework that helps them identify the unique opportunities that exist for them to engage their community and raise their voice in preparation for our Ethical Fashion report to launch in October. ([Ethical Fashion Report 2019 >>>](#))

We would love you to join us, because we can't do this in isolation, we need your voice. We all have a part to play . . . and we'd love you to be part of the story!

Rebecca Oates

Advocacy Manager, Baptist World Aid

ACTIONS

1. Start a Catalyst Group

[Find out more about how to start a Catalyst group at your church HERE >>>](#)

2. Contact Your Tasmanian Catalyst Coordinators:

North [Kay Hunter](#), [Jeff Mckinnon](#)



North West [Denise Stephenson](#)

South [Joanna Sinclair](#)



CATALYST LAUNCHES - LENA VALLEY AND DEVONPORT

Stephen and Matt with Peter Keegan, Director of Advocacy & Bec Oates, Advocacy Manager



**Catalyst Launch Lenah Valley
Bec Oates presenting**



**Catalyst Launch LifeWay
Bec Oates Presenting**



**Catalyst Launch LifeWay
Brainstorming!**

