

February/March 2021, No. 1

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

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN

**I WILL NEVER STOP  
DOING GOOD TO YOU**

*Based on Jeremiah 32:40*

**JANUARY 28, 2021**

Welcome to the first **ADVANCE | step by step** for 2021!

- Mission Director **Stephen Baxter** sets the tone for the year.
- There's a little about our Assistant Admin, **Karen Buckney**
- And some encouragement for you from **Michael Henderson**
- **PLUS, don't miss the latest News.**

**Remember:**

**GOD NEVER STOPS DOING GOOD TO YOU!**

Blessings,

*Jenny*

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**Jenny Baxter**

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While summer is often a quiet time of year for churches in Australia, that doesn't mean God slows down.  
In fact, He never stops working!

**What good work has God done in your life lately?  
Or in the life of your church or community?**

If you have a great story to tell, [please connect with me](#). I'd love to hear what's going on.

comment:

## Winners and Losers

Or Something More Profound?

*As we begin 2021, the 24-hour daily news cycle reminds us we live in unsettling, even dangerous, times.*

By Mission Director Stephen Baxter

**Although somewhat removed in Tasmania**, technology connects us to the rest of the world. Recent events in the USA, the increasing bully-like antics of China, and a small virus that continues to bring the world to a standstill, are reminders of the unique moment we are living in.

The relative peace experienced in much of the Western World over the past 50 years or so makes it all feel somewhat "unprecedented". [Recent McCrindle research](#)<sup>1</sup> reveals only 10% of those over 75 feel any long-term negative effects on their mental health due of Covid-19.

Yet, among those aged between 18-40, more than half feel the affect has been harmful. McCrindle suggests those over 75 have lived through similar times, like WWII, and have a resilience not known in younger generations.

No wonder the younger ones are struggling more than the older generations.

## Stories make sense of the world

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Global interconnectedness, which many hoped would usher in a world of increasing peace and harmony, has delivered something like the opposite. The world is full of anxiety and fear, and social media has intensified the rage and polarisation. Now, as we begin 2021, we want to be hopeful, yet it looks like this year will contain as much disruption as 2020, and perhaps more!

In times such as these there are always different stories competing for the hearts and imaginations of humanity, endeavouring to make sense of our lives.

One such story, fuelled by fear and inadequacy, is a tale of "winners and losers".

Driven by a sense of scarcity, life is a competition and many take sides. The world is divided into oppressors and the oppressed, aggressors and victims. When one believes the path to peace, security and happiness comes by "winning", violence is an inevitable outcome.

## Love in our hearts and grace on our lips

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Sadly, the church is not exempt from the temptation. We too can retreat into an "us and them" mentality built on assumptions of scarcity, competition, and opposition.

Jesus told a different story. He did not view the world through the lens of scarcity, but of abundance. Instead of winning, he talked about serving, stewardship, generosity and sharing

where everyone is a winner--for there is enough for all. God, he taught, is a good God full of grace and provision who causes the rain to fall, and the sun to shine, upon all people, both good and evil.

Jesus did not divide the world into winners and losers. His vision for humanity was based on acceptance, grace, and forgiveness. He called every person to love their neighbour as themselves, and even to love their enemies! Life is not a competition fuelled by scarcity, but cooperative empowered by abundance.

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*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*  
*[Matthew 5:44](#) (NIV)*

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The result over the ensuing centuries was a slow, gentle revolution. As people believed in Jesus and lived by his teachings the poor were healed and empowered and society became more like the one Jesus envisaged. Life was not a competition, they no longer lived as victims. As co-heirs with Christ, and willing agents in the spread of the Gospel the world changed for the better.

Society was transformed not through their compliant submission to those who "lorded it over them", nor through violent revolution and revenge, but by their nonviolent resistance to scarcity, and "winning" through a life of service and self-giving, that transformed the world.

**Let's be Jesus' agents.** This is what our troubled and unsettled world of 2021 needs. Jesus still calls us to be agents of transformation and positive change in the world. His metaphors of salt, light, and yeast help us appreciate who we are called to be. We are those who do not believe life is a competition. We are those who do not withdraw from the world but are active agents within it.



We are not activists, but respectful, welcoming, loving, patient neighbours to everyone, including our enemies and call them to come believe in and follow Jesus. We don't set out to win but to bless.

May the Spirit empower us all to be witnesses for Jesus in Tasmania this year, 2021.

**Stephen Baxter**  
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<sup>1</sup> [Australia in the wake of COVID-19 - McCrindle](#), accessed January 26, 2021

news:

## 180th Anniversary, York Street Chapel

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Sunday December 27, 2020



City Baptist Church was filled on Sunday 27 December, celebrating 180 years of continuous Baptist life and witness in Launceston. A four-metre long timeline of the local Baptist history was on display.

With the organ resounding to great old hymns, representatives from each Baptist church in Launceston joined in, looking both backwards in our shared past as well as forwards into what God yet has for us. Pastor Jeff McKinnon spoke from Romans 10:13-15 on *Bearing Good News*.

Over morning tea, a massive celebration mud cake was enjoyed as sales in Laurie Rowston's history texts did a brisk trade, especially his latest--on the history of the York Street Baptist Chapel.

City Baptist continues to explore how best to continue to be a welcoming presence in our city centre.

[Read more in The Examiner >>>](#)

## Emergency Services Training Day

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Faith-based pastoral care in emergencies and disasters



This event is for those interested in caring for people during emergencies.

The training day covers Psychological First Aid and Emotional Spiritual Care.

Specific topics include:

- Introductions to the emergency setting and TCC Emergencies Ministry
- Impacts of emergencies on individuals and communities
- Stress
- Community and individual recovery after disasters
- Practical exercises around caring for people and practising Psychological First Aid

**Hobart:** 9:30-4pm Saturday February 13, 2021

NB. The northern training took place last December, but those from the north are welcome to attend the day in Hobart.

[FIND OUT MORE >>>](#)

## Penguin Baptist prepare to send books

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Penguin are 'hosting' a container for [Library Aid International](#), a mission to supply books to schools and other places where resources are scarce. The last container is in the process of being unpacked and distributed in Zimbabwe. The neatly labelled boxes are the final step in the next shipment. There has been a richness of donations to this work over the last few months. And what a blessing it is.

Amongst our congregation, many are beset by aging pains and other issues - and many in our extended families are doing it tough. We appreciate your partnership in prayer for our witness and fitness.

PICTURED: The neat container (top) is the one Penguin Baptist is hosting. The messy one (bottom) is yet to be unpacked, sorted, repacked and added to the neat container!



interview:



**Karen Buckney** is someone you may have spoken to or emailed, but may not necessarily know.

So, who is Karen, and where does she come from?  
Read on!

### Where were you born and what was it like growing up there?

I was born in Paddington Sydney, but became a ward of the state in Tasmania when I was 10 months old and lived in various foster homes around Launceston. I was eventually adopted at 2½ years of age and grew up on a farm at Clarendon, Nile. It was a great place to grow up.

### When and why did you move to Longford?

I moved to Longford from Launceston in 1990 because I missed living in a rural setting. I think it is a lovely little town with everything you need to raise a family. I am now living at Cressy, having moved from Longford in 2002 because our boys needed more yard space to play!

### What do you enjoy most about living in Cressy?

I love the rural landscape and the view of the plateau. It really is quite stunning, and it is only 10 minutes away from Longford and about 25 minutes away from Launceston.



### Tell us about your family ...

I am married to David and we have two adult sons, three dogs, nine hens and one cockatiel!

### How did you become a Christian?

I befriended a young Christian mum at a new mothers' group I was attending at the Child Health Clinic and she was very open about her faith without pushing it onto me. At the time, I was heavily involved in occult practices, yoga, Reiki, reflexology - stuff like that.

When my dad died unexpectedly in 2002 I started to wonder what is life all about. The "spiritual" things I was involved in couldn't help me in my grief and confusion, and by 2003 I got up the courage to contact my Christian friend stating that I wanted to know about God and could I come to her church (Riverlands).

Two Sundays in, I heard God's call in my heart and went to the front to pray the sinner's prayer after the service. For the first time in my life, I felt like I belonged, if that makes sense.

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

In terms of my Christian faith - keep it simple. Love God and love others.



When people ask you how you spend your time, what do you say?

I like to read ... a lot! I also love walking.

What is your role in the Baptist Church?

I am the Administrator for Riverlands *and* Assistant Administrator for Tasmanian Baptists.

What excites you most about what you do?

Ministering to others.

What challenges do you have as you do this work?

Keeping a tidy desk! Working at two roles simultaneously requires quite a bit of mental dexterity and so I have to keep lists so I don't forget to do tasks! I have a generalised anxiety disorder and so this can flare up during busy periods.

How can we pray for you and your work?

That I will keep my relationship with Jesus the main thing and that I will remember to depend on him.

## Short and Sweet

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**I am looking forward to** ... More of what God has planned for Riverlands and the future in general.

**I am worried about ...** My family members and friends who are not yet in a relationship with Jesus.

**I am confident that ...** God is sovereign.

**I am joyful about ...** Life! I feel so blessed.

**I would like to change ...** Some of my thinking is stinking. I am a perfectionist which can be a curse and a blessing.

**I am at my best when ...** I spend regular time in God's word and with His people. I am also pretty likeable when I am with our dogs . . . just ask them!

Here is a photo of some of my brood.



food for thought:

## Food for Thought is a new feature for 2021

*This special word of encouragement from a Tasmanian Baptist pastor or leader will now feature in each issue of **Advance | step by step***

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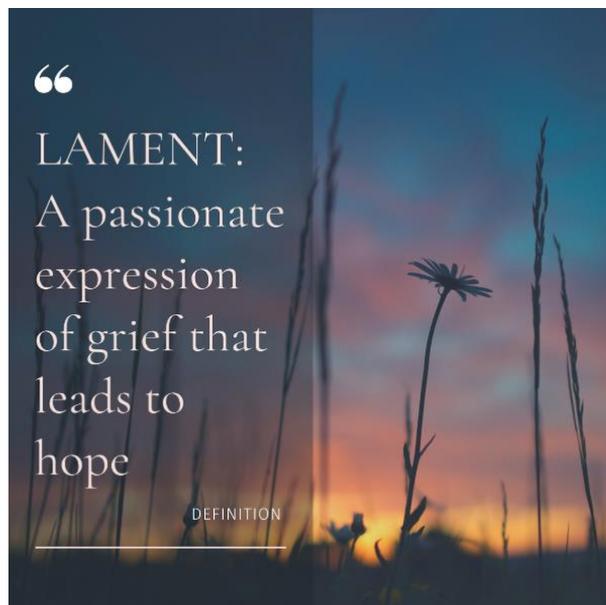
### LAMENT - Grief and Hope

*By Michael Henderson*

I don't value new year resolutions much. But I do try to reflect on the past and learn for the future, and 2020 has provided heaps for 2021.

**One of the key learnings for me has been the importance of lament.** Our Christian traditions describe it like this: a passionate expression of grief that leads to hope.

This understanding of lament is the centre of my art practice, and the centre of how I speak about my faith.



Two things to point out

### 1. Lament must be a passionate expression of grief

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**Lament must be from the heart.** It must give voice to the pain and grief. Think of [Psalm 42:3](#):

*My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
"Where is your God?"  
Psalm 42:3 (NIV)*

2020 has been heart-breaking for so many in our communities. And, I've heard so many of us join with people, listen to them, walk with them through some of their darkest moments, give them a voice to their pain, and love them. All, while we have faced your own fears! It's been difficult, and courageous, and beautiful all at the same time. If we carry this in to 2021 we will transform even more lives and communities!



But we can't stop in the pain and grief. It takes courage to enter the grief, and more courage to walk through it and into hope. Not by force, or tricks, or wishful thinking, but through carrying hope in to the darkness, and noticing the moments of hope in our midst. Think of [Psalm 42:11](#):

*Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.  
Psalm 42:11 (NIV)*

## 2. The speaking of HOPE

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**I have also heard HOPE spoken constantly through this past year.** It has been leaders describing where they see hope; where they have given and received courage from people around them; where they have noticed Holy Spirit moving in their people; their church, their communities, and even in our state and the world.

People have been looking for this hope, and I've heard many stories of how we joined with them and helped them connect with God. If we carry this hope and courage in to 2021 we will transform even more lives and communities!

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*If we carry this hope and courage in to 2021 we will transform  
even more lives and communities!*

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I have seen our Trinity so powerfully at work this year. Everywhere. And I've sat with people as they wept in front of me (or virtually in front of me), poured out their heart and pain, and then allowed me to lead them to connect with our hope in Jesus.

I am not running from 2020. But I am very much looking forward to 2021, and all that we can do with our Trinity in Tasmania.

Grace and Peace,  
Michael Henderson  
*Leadership Development Co-ordinator*  
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Are you interested in contributing a similar reflection to a future edition of ***Advance / step by step?***  
Please email [jenny@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenny@tasbaptists.org.au) to discuss further.

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