

September/October 2021¹



9th September 2021

In this week's ADVANCE | step by step . . .

- **Church Profile** City Baptist Launceston moves ahead hope-fully
- **Brave New World** Reading the signs of the times – Stephen Baxter
- **Engaging with your Community** – Michael Henderson, Case Study Luminous Festival, Hobart
- **NEED TO KNOW (news)**
 - EmpowHer Walk – Saturday 18th September, Gravelly Beach
 - Stand Sunday – during September. Video now available
 - Calling All Artists – Gateway put out the call to fundraise for Haiti
 - BWA Ethical Fashion Report – QUIZ: What's Your Shopping Type?

The next instalment of **ADVANCE | step by step** will be released on Thursday 23rd September 2021.



Jenny Baxter

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CORRECTION: In the July/August 2021 Regional RoundUp Michael Ritchie (Westbury) was noted to be retiring at the end of 2021. In fact, he is not retiring and will still be available for pastoral appointments around Tasmania for the foreseeable future.

¹ tasbaptists.org.au/september-october-2021

our church:

Planning for the Unseen

Change is in the wind for City Baptist as they work on their "Makeover Vision"

City Baptist Church, in the centre of Launceston, is preparing to undergo profound change. You may have heard that the Frederick Street property is on the market. You may not have heard that the church has also just called two younger women onto staff. So what's going on?

Hard decisions and a faithful response



Sunday Morning at City Baptist

Last November the church faced the necessity of some hard decisions. The congregation's response once again has proved its courage and boldness. For some years they had sought to be a community of disciples based on the scriptures.

Serious discipleship led them to befriend those in greatest need - especially the street community and the refugee community. Mission, in turn, took the church into active advocacy for social justice. Local mission is now in the DNA of the church.

But how was this vital ministry to continue into the future, in a changing world? The Church Council prepared a vision in February, *The Makeover Vision: Our role is to be a welcoming Christian presence in the centre of Launceston, befriending those on the margins. To establish this on a firm footing for the future, with God's help we intend to become an intergenerational faith community, culturally relevant to younger adults, whilst remaining a Baptist Church with our particular values and priorities.*

Discernment about property . . .



Thus began a further four-month discernment process. From November 2020 to June this year, the church met no less than six times to pray, discuss and eventually decide.

So with sadness, the decision was made to place the current property on the market. The 180-year building is full of historical significance and beauty. There is a strong sense of grief in moving on. Yet for the future, we believe the gospel will be better served by a direct street frontage, more flexibility and lower maintenance.

ABOUT US

We seek to be a welcoming presence and people to whom one can turn in tough times in the city centre.

~

Our desire is to follow Jesus in ministering to those on the margins of society.

~

We believe Jesus is relevant to all of life.

~

Our heart is to work cooperatively with other local Baptists to see God's kingdom extended

~

CONTACT

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citybaptistchurch.net

The Pastor, Jeff McKinnon, and his Advisory Group - Kay Hunter, Garry Billing and Ivan James - were asked to oversee the 'makeover process'.

The property was listed for sale in July. Tenders were due on 1 September. It may be then a further twelve months before City vacates the property, because of the potential for a lease-back arrangement.

... and discernment about staff

The Church also appointed a Pastoral Search Committee, convened by Pastor Maddy Svoboda, who eventually brought two names to the church in August.

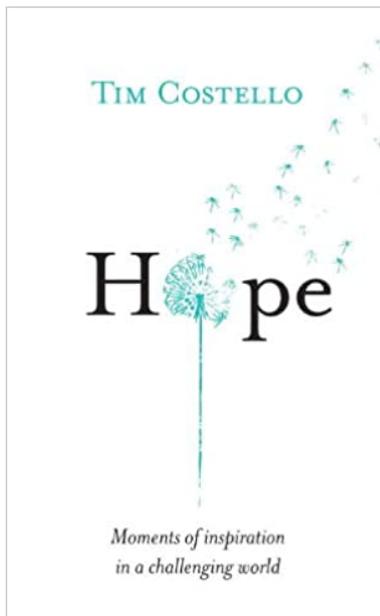


Pictured, are Anthea Maynard (Team Leader) and Jenna Blackwell (Leadership Development) who were commissioned on Sunday 5th September. Until December 2022, City Baptist will undertake a period of transition, as the new Ministry Team is formed and prepares to take over from Jeff's leadership.

Jeff will meet regularly with Anthea and Jenna (and eventually a third team member), until Jeff retires. It will be this new Ministry Team who will lead the church into its unseen future.

Unless a grain of wheat falls in the ground and dies, it remains a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds. John 12:24

Hope found in the smallest of moments



The seed head of a dandelion substitutes the "O" in HOPE on the dust jacket of Tim Costello's book of that title ([Hardie Grant Books 2012](#)²). From the beautifully formed orb of the dandelion, seeds are shown drifting off in the breeze to scatter new life abroad. Tim's compiled stories arise from his years of work as CEO of [World Vision Australia](#). They depict the hope that can arise within confronting settings of challenge and disruptive change.

Our circumstances are obviously different, but for me, as a member of City Baptist, this dandelion image has become evocative of both relinquishment and possibility as we anticipate a re-envisioned mission within Launceston CBD.

With fellow members, I value many aspects of our current church life - our traditions of corporate worship, patterns of community ministry, the beauty of historic architecture, and so on. The dandelion image stands as a metaphor for all of this, and there's a part of me that would like to keep it intact as it is. However, I realise that this is a transitory beauty, and that

we must now allow life to be disseminated in fresh ways. Current form will thus be yielded to life's wider potential.

² hardiegrant.com/au/publishing/bookfinder/book/hope-by-tim-costello/9781742703756

An Invitation

I sense God now inviting us to surrender the conventional comforts of our current congregational life. But in inviting his Spirit to "blow where he will", we offer our "seeds" to his breeze, confident of their germination in fresh earth. We open ourselves to strategic relocation, the formation of an enhanced leadership team and the seeking of more user-friendly facilities tailored to our distinctive city mission. We call this a "makeover vision".

God's gentle Spirit-breeze is evident in this new vision He is giving us, and in the harmonious decisions arising from our shared prayer and discussion. I've found that our legitimate sense of loss in relinquishing a conventional model dim as we anticipate with hope the possibilities of something excitingly new. I expect that the core values of our mission will be novel, life-giving expression in ways we cannot yet see, but for which we can confidently trust God.

This fills us with well-grounded hope, and encourages us to remain radically open to God's future.



Garry Billing

Advisory Group and Community Music Liaison
Officer
City Baptist Church

CITY'S HISTORY

*By Tas Baptist's Historian
Laurie Rowston*

City Baptist Launceston is the continuation of the Baptists of 1883, who were given the Launceston Tabernacle in Cimitiere Street in 1884.

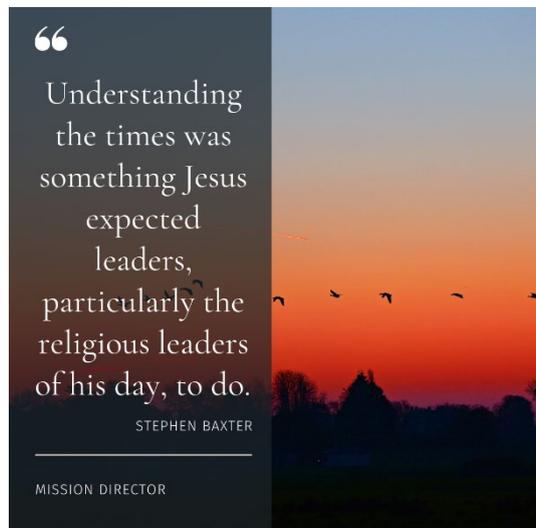
In about 1954, they moved to Central Church, and then to the Congregational Christ Church in Frederick Street with its Milton Hall next door. The Cimitiere Street church has been one of the leading churches of the Baptist Union of Tasmania. A steady work which has enjoyed many fine preachers.

comment:

Interpreting the Signs of the Times

Our future is unclear with the potential of a COVID outbreak only intensifying the uncertainty. But we need not be afraid.

By Stephen Baxter



We know we live in chaotic times, that's obvious.

Interpreting and understanding our times, well that's a different matter. There are so many voices in media and social media. Some are calm, some are far from calm, and all are trying madly to make sense of it all.

Understanding the times was something Jesus expected leaders, particularly the religious leaders of his day, to do. Although they could predict the weather, he was critical when they could not "interpret the signs of the times" (Matthew 16:3) and so missed their historical moment (Matthew 16:1-4). God's Messiah was among them but they "did not recognise the time of God's coming" (Luke 19:44).

'When evening comes, you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red," and in the morning, "Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast." You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.'
Jesus Christ, Matthew 16:1-3 (NIV)

A Very Long Cycle

So how are we to understand our moment in human history? While on leave recently, I read a couple of books exploring our context and the Church's place within it³.

One suggested that roughly every 500 years the Church, and the culture around it, undergoes a time of reformation and change. Jesus lived and ministered in such a moment, and so do we.

Yes, we live amid one of these 500-year shifts.

This change is a process taking about 100 years to settle. During that time, the Church engages in something akin to a "giant rummage sale". It's a process of deciding what to keep and what to dispose from the past, before it moves into a new period of renewal and new growth.

Change, change, change

September this year marks 20 years since the terrorist attacks on 9/11 by al-Qaeda against the United States. Much has changed in the years since--smartphones, social media, online streaming such as Netflix and even online churches. Today, nations and people contend with a surge in militant Islam; the threat of changing climate; the loss of faith in Western institutions, including the Church; and the rise of 'cancel culture'. Added to this is the increasing numbers of deaths due to the Covid-19 virus.

Putting all these together we can begin to appreciate the significance and chaos of our times.

Jesus wept over the people of Jerusalem because they did not recognise him as God's chosen Messenger (Luke 19:41). They were not bad people. In fact, the majority of the Jewish leaders Jesus criticised were

³ Quietly Courageous: Leading the Church in a Changing World by Gilbert R. Rendle (Rowman and Littlefield 2018); and Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why by Phyllis Tickle (Baker Books 2008)

good people – both God-fearing and God loving. People like Nicodemus, Barnabas and eventually Saul of Tarsus were among many of them who received the message and believed. (see Acts 6:7)

The majority of the Jewish leaders Jesus criticised were good people – both God-fearing and God loving.

Survival in this Climate

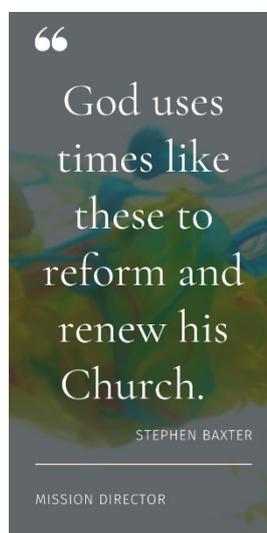
It's the same in our churches today. Every church includes people and leaders with good hearts, minds and hands, who work tirelessly and diligently. Yet, for all our hard work, often we see little fruit. There is a wide gap between our aspirations and reality.

Although we've tried innovation and creativity, toiled harder and longer, we've discovered that difference and efficiency are just not enough.

Is that a sign of the times? Is God trying to get our attention? Could it be that the gap between aspirations and reality is widening because of changing times, not because we've got it wrong?

One author made the bold claim that it is impossible for our inherited congregational and denominational structures to thrive in this current environment. Times have so changed as much as that. The challenges facing churches are not due to the Church gone wrong, but a world grown different.

Navigating the Waters



Troubling and challenging times are not new to God's people. We have been in similar, even worse, situations in the past and God has brought us through. Key to navigating these difficult times is the ability and willingness to "interpret the signs of the times" and be alert to what God is up to. This is what the religious leaders of Jesus' time failed to do. Within a generation Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

There is a job ahead of us as our Tasmanian communities and churches live amid this moment of profound change. Our future is unclear with the potential of a Tasmanian Covid-19 outbreak only intensifying the uncertainty. But we need not be afraid.

God uses times like these to reform and renew his Church.

Jesus Christ continues to build his Church. The march of history is towards the day when the nations will bow and acknowledge as Jesus Lord of all.

Our Tasmanian Baptist theme for this year is **Reengage, Reimagine and Realign**. It is a call for each church, and every person within, to reengage with God's mission in the world; reimagine God's call of what it means to be the Church in this hour; and realign our resources, structures, time and finances with that call.

May God enable us to be those who can interpret the times, to hear what God is saying to the churches, and allow God to do a new work within us.



Stephen Baxter Mission Director, Tasmanian Baptists
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community engagement:

Supporting churches to follow their call

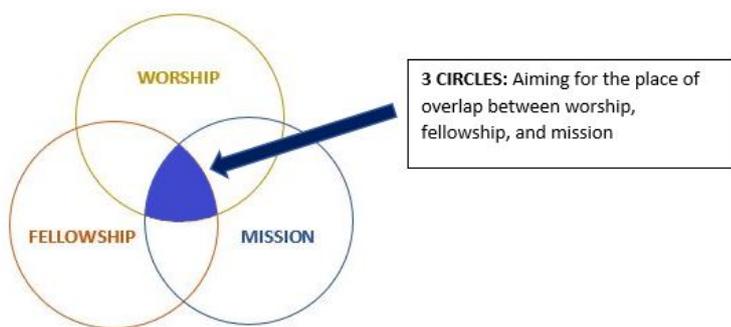
Do you want help with community engagement? Here's some ideas about where to start

By Michael Henderson

My role with Tasmanian Baptists can seem broad, but it really boils down to helping churches and leaders to be everything they are being called to be. Not what I think they should be, but me helping them to be what God is calling them to be. I support them to follow that call.

The sweet spot: Worship, Fellowship, Mission

Hobart Baptist Church and their [Luminous Festival](#)⁴ is a great case study. The Festival ran during June this year, and had very specific purposes. The leadership team wanted a mixture of events, targeting a range of ages and cultures, that could provide the three circles Tasmanian Baptists recently adopted in their strategic plan. The three circles represent *worship*, *fellowship* and *mission*.



Some of the events focused more on worship and fellowship, like the "Christmas in Winter" Carols, and Sunday Services. The measures against these events were about bringing people together, worship, and how people inside and outside the church responded.

Other events were targeted at fellowship and mission, like the panel hosted one

evening on the topic: "Does religion and spirituality have a part in Tasmania's future?" This was a conversation between Cassy O'Connor MP, Jacquie Petrusma MP, Paul Dare (as an indigenous Christian), Snr Pastor Stephen Baxter and hosted by Director of Citizen Tasmania, Grace Williams.



Another event brought people together to hear Ruth Burgess share her testimony, "From Hindu Guru to Follower of Jesus". Yet, another was my art installation, *Breathe, Shine and Seek to Mend*, connected to

⁴ hobartbaptist.org.au/luminous-2021

Dark Mofo. The measures here focused on the conversations we had with people during and after the events, the quality of the faith conversations, and on people who came to follow Jesus.

The Festival taken as a whole, brought together the three circles in a variety of ways over a two-week period, and helped to tell the story of Hobart Baptist Church.

Supporting by listening and amplifying

My role in the Luminous Festival, as it would be if I was supporting your church or leaders, was two things.

- I listen to what is on the heart of the leaders, where they think God is leading them in this moment, and what they want to get out of it. I help them clarify those thoughts.
- I help them to amplify what is on their heart, to work through what is involved in running the event, and what is needed to engage the community.

I am not the knower of all things, and I don't need to be. Most of the time, like with HBC, the church and its leaders know what they want to do and how to do it. They just want some support in thinking it through, discovering what it is, gaining some confidence to do it; and then some support to work through the best way to execute the plan.



Want some help?

If you would like to have a chat with me about how I can support your church and its leaders to connect with your community, then don't hesitate to be in contact with me via email.



Michael Henderson

Leadership Development, Tasmanian Baptists

michael@tasbaptists.org.au

news – what's going on:

EmpowHer Walk (North)

Saturday 18th September

ALL WOMEN WELCOME!



9.30am: Meet at Singapore Baker's Cafe Gravelly Beach for brunch/cuppa.

11am: Walk loop track to Paper Beach along the West Tamar, return. Total walk: 9km/2hours. Bring money for Cafe.

Invite your friends!

RSVP required. For more info or to register, contact Wendy Marston 0407 675 414 or Jenna Blackwell 0488 330 390

Pictured: Walkers at the last northern EmpowHer Walk, on their way to Badger Head

Stand Sunday during September

Supporting foster carers in Tasmania

Stand Sunday 2021 is on Sunday 12th September - although your church could focus on foster care any Sunday this month.

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STAND SUNDAY >>>](#)⁵

CONTACT MARY AT FOSTERING HOPE: mary@fosteringhope.community

[READ ABOUT FOSTER CARE - June 2021 ADVANCE | step by step >>>](#)⁶

The 2021 Stand Sunday video is now available. You can use it during your church service one Sunday in September, whether you host Stand Sunday, or not.



[Download video on YouTube >>>](#)⁷

⁵ standsunday.com

⁶ tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021/all-about-foster-care

⁷ youtube.com/watch?v=WztXn44U_6I

Calling All Artists!

Gateway Baptist Fundraiser for Haiti

Gateway Baptist Church in Launceston are holding a Fundraiser for the children in Haiti who live in the desperately poor district of Despuzeau in Haiti. All monies raised will be sent to Haiti, no expenses will be deducted.

They are **calling on all artists** who would like to consider being part of this exciting fund raiser by donating a small A5 (1/2 A4) unframed, unmounted drawing, painting, digital art or other which will be sold to the public at their Artway Gallery on 16th October.

If you are able to contribute, or know someone who may be able to, there are a few details to be aware of. The artwork needs to be something someone would love, all are being sold for \$100 each, please sign the back, not the front, and provide a little story about yourself. Artwork needs to be received before 24th September.

For more details, please contact *Ian or Lee Campbell*:

EMAIL imcampbell@bigpond.com | SMS Ian 0408 128 871 OR Lee 0477 039 771



Calling All Artists

We are looking for Artists who would be willing to donate a small A5 (1/2 A4 paper) size original piece of artwork in the medium of their choice (Paint, pastel, pencil, digital or other medium) that could be sold to raise money for the children who live in the desperately poor community of Despuzeau in Haiti.

If you are willing to be part of this exciting fund raiser artwork needs to be in by end of September, Art sale is on 16/10/21
For more info
Email: imcampbell@bigpond.com
Facebook/ Messenger Lee Campbell

Thank you on behalf of PAC Haiti & Artway Gallery, Launceston

Ethical Fashion Report

Australians value ethical fashion but struggle to take action

New consumer report reveals majority of consumers want to improve purchasing behaviour

Australian consumers believe ethical purchasing is important, but are failing to follow through on their own beliefs. While 87% want to change their fashion consumption habits to consume more ethically, just 46% indicate they regularly purchase from ethical/sustainable fashion brands.



The findings come from the new Australian Ethical Consumer Report, released by Christian aid and development organisation Baptist World Aid Australia (BWAA) in collaboration with social research company [McCrinkle](#)⁸. The report, which draws from national data, seeks to understand the attitudes and beliefs of Australian consumers towards ethical fashion consumption, and uncovers the key motivations for Australians when making purchases. It reveals that most Australians feel a sense of global responsibility and want to change their consumption habits, but cite awareness of ethical brands and expense as the two greatest barriers to doing so.

Accompanying the report is an online quiz which enables Aussie shoppers to identify their own consumer type from

Practical Purchasers, Intentional Individualists, Socially-Minded Shoppers, and Conscious Consumers. Those wanting to go one step further can score themselves on the Ethical Consumer Index, which measures their behaviour against the 5 A's of ethical fashion: attitude, agency, awareness, action and advocacy. The 5-minute quiz examines whether Australian consumers are more driven by their personal benefit or the benefit of others, and whether they buy thinking about current needs or future impacts.

'Aussies pride themselves on supporting a 'fair go for all,' and this couldn't be more applicable when examining the issues of injustice surrounding ethical fashion. We see younger generations, and women, more open to changing their habits to align with this value,' said Ashley Fell from McCrinkle. 'The 'My Shopping Type' online quiz gives consumers a chance to see how they compare against their peers on this important issue, as well as being empowered with steps towards aligning their purchases with their values,'

'This report reveals we have a long way to go when it comes to ethical consumption and understanding the impacts that our purchases have on the environment and people around the world,' said Peter Keegan of BWAA. 'But with tools like the Ethical Fashion Guide and My Shopping Type Quiz, we can take those next steps towards becoming more ethical consumers.'

The Australian Ethical Consumer Report is available for download [here](#)⁹.

The Ethical Fashion Report and Guide has been published by Baptist World Aid since 2013, and can be ordered [here](#)¹⁰.

My Shopping Type Quiz [here](#)¹¹.

About Baptist World Aid Australia

[BWAA](#)¹² is a Christian international aid and development organisation that publishes the annual Ethical Fashion Report, which grades clothing brands for their efforts to address worker exploitation and environmental degradation.

⁸ mccrinkle.com.au

⁹ baptistworldaid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BWA-Australian-Ethical-Consumer-Visualised-Report_McCrinkle.pdf

¹⁰ baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide

¹¹ myshoppingtype.com.au

¹² baptistworldaid.org.au

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