

DECEMBER 2023

TOGETHER IN MISSION



Northern Territory welcomed into Movement after unanimous Assembly vote

The 18th of November 2023 was an historic day, as the Assembly of Baptist Churches SA unanimously voted to adopt a new Constitution and new name, making us officially Baptist Churches SA & NT. We become a movement of 89 churches, from up in Darwin all the way down to Mount

Gambier. We are a diverse movement, with seven of our member churches Aboriginal communities, and eight Burmese congregations. We have city, rural, regional, and remote churches; large and small congregations; churches with histories going back...



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

What happened at Spring Assembly?

CONTINUED FROM COVER

...150+ years and brand new church plants. There are 12 member churches in the Territory, 11 joining from BUNT alongside Alice Springs who were already members of BCSA. There will be many things to figure out as we walk together into the future God has for us, but we trust we are better together.

Our Annual Spring Assembly was held at Knightsbridge Baptist Church. It was a morning full of celebration and praise, enjoyed by over 120 people from 42 churches.

Melinda Cousins inspired and encouraged attendees with reflections from Joshua 24. On this significant day in our movement, we can see God's faithfulness as we look back and remember, we can look around to who and where we are today and recommit to serving him, and we can look forward in hope and imagination at what God still has in store for us.

Three churches were welcomed into the Baptist movement: Stansbury Community Church, Adelaide Mizo Christian Church, and The Church on Albert. Matu Christian Church was also welcomed as an affiliate member.

After months of prayer, conversations and meetings, a much-anticipated vote was unanimously passed to amalgamate with the Baptist Union of the Northern Territory.

The new entity will be known as **Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory Incorporated.**

Look out for our new branding coming soon and be in prayer as we seek to serve, encourage, support and extend the diverse communities of our movement across SA and NT.

We were asked to pray for Baptist Care as they seek to serve the most vulnerable in the community on our behalf. There are many needs in the community service space and Baptist Care are facing significant challenges, financial and missional as well as being in search for a new CEO.

We welcomed Jasmine Berry to the Assembly board and re-welcomed Andy Edelsten, Linda Carrapiett, Nathan Walker and Kerry Davies for further terms in this area. Danielle Forsyth joined the Baptist Care Board and Marianke Thompson and Damian Garcia were also re-elected.

Melinda's DOM report was full of information – church and pastoral updates, staffing changes, Redress, the reconciliation taskforce and the new Aboriginal Ministry Support Fund, History projects, Company of Grace, ABM National Council, Baptist Insurance, Converge and changes to M&M camp.

After a delicious morning tea supplied by the folk of Knightsbridge and the Baptist Care AGM, those gathered were heartened and encouraged by stories from Knightsbridge Baptist, The Port Church, and Adelaide Mizo Christian Church. In our usual custom, delegates then gathered into small groups to pray and thank God for His never-ending goodness.

The whole morning was an informative, encouraging, and wonderful time of blessing and unity as we gathered and shared together. We hope you can join us next time for our inaugural Autumn Assembly in May 2024 as the Baptist Churches of SA and NT (BCSANT).

President's Address



with Rev. Scott Cadman

Power is not the currency, humility is.

The town of Devenish lies two hours' drive north of Melbourne. A small rural town, population under 100, its one obvious attraction a painted grain silo.

I was visiting Devenish because my great-great grandparents lie in the local cemetery, migrants in the 1840's from Britain. Humble beginnings.

Humble beginnings are not a bad thing to be reminded of, especially when at Christmas we celebrate the one born in Bethlehem, lying in a manger. It is as far from the comforts and power of Herod's palace as one can imagine.

Paul in Philippians expresses that Jesus, the source of all life, who is God himself, with all the power in the world and in heaven, humbled himself, gave up all glory, power, and influence, and took the nature of a servant.

The great challenge that Advent and Christmas always exposes is that

so much of me wants to go in the other direction. I want to ascend not descend. I want Adelaide not Devenish, Jerusalem not Bethlehem.

This temptation is as old as humankind itself. The temptation of power.

The sad thing about the human story – and the church's story – is that the temptation to use power – God's or otherwise – for our own use has always been fatally tempting.

What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible?

As Henri Nouwen explains, "maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life."

This hard task of love is why Philippians 2 disturbs me. Jesus emptied himself, humbled himself, and became obedient even to death on a cross.

I am not sure we like the sound or the

reality of that. We like status. We like positions of influence. We like the power that gets things done our way. We like the sound of our name being exalted.

Yet the call of the gospel, the pattern of the Christian life, is to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.

In the kingdom of God greatness is not a virtue, being the servant of others is. Power is not the currency, humility is.

When confronted with the choice between power and love Jesus didn't turn stones into bread, jump from tall buildings, or chase after the wealth and power of this world but gave himself to the hard task of love.

Maybe next time we are considering using power as a way of proclaiming and furthering the gospel we should take a breath and remember Bethlehem.

It may well remind us that for all the temptations and allure of power, it is a poor and powerless Jesus, committed to the hard task of love, that we follow and serve.

Baptisms...



Luke Dean

A few weeks ago, a young man named Luke Dean attended Playford Baptist because he needed to come to a church ten minutes from his house. After the service he spoke to Ps Ken Henderson and said he's thinking about baptism.

Ken met him at his home, spoke further about baptism and what it means, gave him the book "Taking the Plunge", and after speaking to him, understood he was genuine.

He attended Playford Baptist Church again on 22 October, during National Baptism Week

After the service, Luke approached Ken, and said, "I feel I need to get baptised". Ken asked when, and he said, "Today".

So he arranged with Luke to go to Semaphore Beach, and Luke was baptised soon after 2:00pm that afternoon!

A Baptism 25 Years in the Making!



Frances McFall

On 31 October, Frances McFall was baptised by Ps Darryl Bishop at Rostrevor Baptist Church.

She had waited 25 years for this opportunity. Struggles with health, ongoing COVID were just some of the obstacles she experienced.

However, through that time she had a faithful friend who continued to encourage her. A friend who never gave up on her. Coincidentally, her favourite hymn is "What a

Friend We Have in Jesus." As we sung that hymn prior to Frances' baptism, she joined in "signing it" for us as part of her testimony.

Owing to her physical frailty, we found a creative way in which she could still be baptised. Her response to the question, "Do you profess faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour" was a profoundly strong, "I do".

What a faithful friend we have in Jesus.

ISSUED BY
Baptist Churches of
South Australia
35 King William Rd, Unley SA
5061

Mailing Address
Baptist Churches of SA
PO Box 432
UNLEY SA 5061

08) 8357 1755
tim.sabaptist.asn.au
info@bcsant.org.au

EDITOR
Benito Carbone
bcarbone@bcsant.org.au

ARTICLES & ADVERTISING
In this publication are the
opinions of the authors, not
necessarily the editor or
publisher. The publishers reserve
the right to accept or decline any
advertising.



Waking Up to the Dream


crossover
 Helping Australian Baptists Share Jesus



An Advent Reflection The Missional Heart of God

“It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission- God’s mission.”

I had the chance to share this quote by Christopher Wright in a number of churches this year as I was invited to speak about Baptist Mission Australia around SA and NT. It is thought provoking and, perhaps a little startling as we ponder its meaning.

Is this how we see the church? Is this how we understand its role in God’s kingdom work, in the world, in the communities we live in?

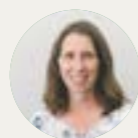
God’s missional heart is evident throughout scripture in his desire for those who live as prodigals to return to him. God’s chosen nation, Israel, was to live out God’s missional calling as “a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6b)

Now as we enter the season of Advent and prepare to celebrate and reflect on the birth of our Saviour, I pray that we are overwhelmed by the missional heart of God taking human shape in the form of Jesus, walking with, and teaching the leaders of the first church how to engage their missional hearts.

May the church today ponder deeply the love of God in action in the manger and long to work out its missional calling as it was formed to do.

May the missional heart of God that met us and invited us to His abundant life be the desire and continued work of the church until Jesus returns to call us into eternity.

Have a blessed, missional Christmas.



Lisa Cornish
 State Director SA/NT
 Baptist Mission Australia

I love my weekly parkrun, but I don’t enjoy running. I enjoy the challenge. What I really enjoy is stopping running.

During the fifth and final kilometre, as my brain struggles for oxygen, weird stuff begins to happen.

I talk to myself out loud without thinking, so it’s a surprise to hear “Come on Turner!” and realise the voice is mine. Time slows. The world shrinks until my sole focus is on that Sisyphian asymptote known as the finish line.

When eventually I get there, there’s a further strange few minutes where I’m conscious of sanity gradually returning. Reality reappears. A weekend begins.

It’s interesting how Christmas sits in the very final week of a long year. It’s meant to be about the breaking in of ultimate reality – the Word became flesh and dwelt among us – but by Week 52, the room can be swimming a little. Jesus gets lined up with elves and tinsel, fir trees and reindeer.

It’s called the Silly Season for a reason, and we’re ready to suspend reality for a week or three to taste an idealised world where work is rare and cricket plentiful.

So how can we be sensible enough to know we need rest, but also awake enough to the capital-R Reality of the inbreaking Kingdom? How do we keep it from just seeming like a dream?

One way is by Adventing well. Advent reminds us that the Kingdom has been coming in off the long run. It’s a dawning, not a random lightning flash that leaves

you wondering whether you only imagined it. Come, thou long expected Jesus.

Another is by Christmasing well. Read the story as a news story and pinch yourself – this has really happened. The hopes and fears of all the years are met – are met – in Thee tonight!

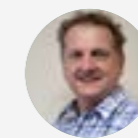
And finally, let’s New Year well. The return to school, work or other mundane rhythms are no longer a doom, because they’ve been put in a new perspective.

In Christ, we find that that Reality doesn’t bite, it kisses! Our Messiah comes not to condemn the world but to save it! Not to extort productivity out of us, but to offer an easy yoke! Not as a disgusting medicine only palatable if mixed with elves and tinsel, but living water! Not to mete out our wages, but to offer us gifts!

Christ is not blind to or immune from the world’s pain, nor should we be. (Lenting well is next.) But he shows us that it’s a passing nightmare, not our defining reality.

So we approach the new year driven by hope rather than dread, knowing that our Hope is not a Sisyphian asymptote, but closer than ever and certain to arrive.

Merry Christmas, sacred agents!



Rev Andrew Turner
 Director
 Crossover Australia

Australians, stretched by cost-of-living, torn on ethical fashion choices

70% of Australians want to shop more ethically but face cost of living barriers. Three in four believe their purchasing habits can help eradicate modern slavery.



Despite more Australians understanding the impact of their ethical fashion choices, cost-of-living pressures are making it difficult for Australians to put their values into action.

That's according to a new report from Baptist World Aid Australia and Be Slavery Free. The Australian Ethical Consumer Report, is the second in-depth study of Australian's ethical shopping attitudes and behaviours produced by McCrindle, with the first released in 2021.

Ethical awareness on the rise

The report revealed Australians are engaging with informative resources far more regularly with over two in five engaging with content relating to ethical consumption, compared to just one in ten in 2021.

The report found that 70% of Australians agree they want their shopping habits to reflect ethical practices over the next 12 months. Over half also agree it's important to consider the environmental impact of their purchases and over a third of Australians are likely to research the environmental impact of a product before purchasing.

These results are promising and reveal a unique opportunity for fashion brands to increase their ethical fashion offering to satisfy customer wants and needs.

The report revealed the top actions Australians are likely to take in the next year that focus on post-purchase behaviours include:

- Reducing the number of products they buy (52%).
- Researching how to responsibly dispose of

something they no longer need (51%).

- Learning how to repair something they already own (50%).

Sarah Knop, National Engagement Manager at Baptist World Aid Australia said it was positive that more Australians were in-tune with their ethical shopping impact on the eve of the peak shopping season, including online sales events Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

"This report shows that Australians are increasingly aware and care about the ethical practices of the brands they buy from," Knop said.

"We're pleased to see many aiming to reduce the impact of their wardrobes this year and invite them to buy differently, buy less and use their voice to help us put pressure on brands to do better for people and the planet."

The study found a high-level of awareness of the issue of modern slavery, with 80% having heard about situations of modern slavery before. Almost half of Australians strongly or somewhat agree they've probably purchased products that have been made with modern slavery and 75% agree to an extent that their purchasing practices can make a difference in eradicating it.

Fuzz Kitto, Director at Be Slavery Free said, "Awareness of modern slavery is on the increase amongst Australian consumers and they will demand 'slavery-free' products."

Australians weigh up responsibility for change

While Australians are becoming more aware of the impact of their purchasing decisions,

this isn't always translating into action. Concerningly, the number of Australians who would like to change their shopping habits to align with ethical practices in the next 12 months has decreased by 17% since 2021.

Australians are this year prioritising value for money, quality and price as the top three influences on their purchasing decisions. The report also reveals that Australians are making purchasing decisions based on personal benefit (82%) rather than prioritising the impact of their purchase on others (18%).

With modern slavery rife in supply chains and the environment burdened by poor resource stewardship, it's clear Australia has a long way to go to protect workers and the planet. While more Australians agree that they actively think about the impact of their purchases on others (39% compared to 32% in 2021); they believe governments and companies should be responsible to take action on the eradication of forced labour, child labour, and ensuring a fair living wage.

Baptist World Aid Australia is calling on fashion brands to do better in strengthening access to ethical fashion options for consumers.

"Consumption has driven economic growth over the last century, but this growth has come with enormous social and environmental impacts. Consumers are increasingly spending their time, attention and resources to better understand the impact of their purchases but need the government and brands to make this process accessible to all." Knop said.



Your support will make Christmas brighter for families

Baptist Care SA's Christmas Appeal for the WestCare Centre

Please donate





A new beginning in Mitcham



On Sunday July 23rd a full Church gathered to worship God and give thanks for His faithfulness as we celebrated the launch of 'The Church on Albert' at its new home in Albert Street, Mitcham.

This celebration marked the convergence of two separate stories, the first being Mitcham Baptist Church, a community that officially closed in February 2022 after more than 150 years of faithful ministry to the Mitcham community.

The winding up of Mitcham raised the question, "What's next?" for this historically significant church in our movement? Should it be sold, or could it be utilised for a new season of ministry and mission?

While this question was in consideration, Village-Melrose Park were reflecting on their future direction. Village had been planted by Blackwood Hills Baptist 12 years prior and since then had met each Sunday in the gym of the Edwardstown Primary School. After 12 years in a hired facility that they only had access to for a few hours each Sunday, the Village Church community were keen to move into a more permanent home that they could use 7 days a week.

Thus, we had a building without a Church and a Church without a building. The agreement for Village to move into the Mitcham facility coincided with Village sensing the time was right to become independent from Blackwood Hills, with the

blessing and support of the Blackwood Hills leadership.

The new beginning for the Church also led to a new name "**The Church on Albert**".

At the Spring Assembly it was with great joy that we accepted and welcomed The Church on Albert as a member Church of Baptist Churches of SA & NT. Please pray for their pastor Rev Nona Gregory, and the leaders and congregation of The Church on Albert as they embark on this exciting new season in their church.



Mark Sanders
Church Development
Facilitator



The internship is a leadership development pathway where emerging leaders of all ages can *grow* their discipleship, *stretch* their leadership, *explore* their spirituality and *live out* an adventurous faith.