

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020

TOGETHER IN MISSION



Thinking about words this season

There are so many words that could be said, and are being said, about living in these difficult coronavirus times. We're learning new words and phrases like 'covidiot' and 'zoomed out', we've understood the meanings of 'pandemic' and 'flattening the curve', we've endured the unprecedented use of the word 'unprecedented'. A number of conversations and experiences over the past month have got me thinking about the power and importance of language in all this.

Some of the words we use no longer seem relevant, perhaps revealing the cavalier and even meaningless ways

in which we too often use them. Conversation starters like 'how are you doing?' and 'what are you doing?' sound jarring as we realise the answers are, respectively, everything and nothing.

Some of the words we share need to be more carefully parsed or compassionately toned. With different people and different places at different stages of response in my community, how do we avoid judgement and finger-wagging while sharing community wisdom and best practice? A friend

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Baptist Churches
of South Australia

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shared her challenge in knowing how to tactfully respond to someone asking her family over for dinner. Is it simply, 'No, we can't do that anymore,' or is there an opportunity to dig deeper and ask, 'what is the heart of what we're missing' and 'how can we do life together in new ways?' Online, the disparity between where people in different countries are at amplifies the need to use our words with grace and care.

Some of the aspirational words we have been using about our communities are now being tested in the fire of new situations. Or as my pastoral colleague says, now is our opportunity to live out who we say we are. Our church has been deliberately using the word 'gathering' rather than 'service' for a few years, how does this helpfully shape our choices in how we move online? What does it really mean to call our church 'family' in a time when we are advised to only have contact with those who live in our household? And on a global scale, how do we even begin to talk about the coming impact of this disease on poorer communities and recognise the privilege inherent in language like 'social distancing' or 'lockdowns'?

And then there are the words we pray in this season.

We continue to proclaim the truths we believe even when they are difficult to see. Last Sunday, I had one of the most awkward and yet beautifully profound worship experiences of my life, with our worship leader on my computer screen, an older member of our congregation on the other end of my phone, and me in my living room, all singing out of sync, and yet affirming the same words of hope and truth about the Cornerstone in whom we find hope through the storm.

Of course, there are many times when words simply fail us. In numerous settings over the last few weeks I have found myself starting a prayer with and for others with a simple, honest, 'I don't know what to say God...' as we sit in these unfamiliar and uncomfortable spaces and listen for his still small whisper. I wonder if naming that I have no words is sometimes the most significant language I have to offer.



Melinda Cousins
Director of Ministry Accreditation
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COVER IMAGE

Pastors Gathering 2020 at Serafino, McLaren Vale

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Pastors Gathering was a refreshing time for our pastors

This year has been tough on our Baptist pastors, and as such, Pastors Gathering focused on helping our pastors to retreat and connect.

Set at Serafino McLaren Vale, among wineries and coffee shops, our pastors were encouraged with reminders that 'we are all in this together'.

There was time for hiking, food tours, wine tasting, golfing, an art workshop and guided spiritual reflection, providing a much-needed break for our pastors.

Our pastors received video messages of encouragement from leaders around the world such as Tim Costello, Bill Brown, Rick Lewis, Karina Kreminski, Karen Wilson, Ed Stetzer and Keith Jobberns.

Tim Harris, a bishop at the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, shared a message, while Mike Mills updated pastors on news from our movement in our 'Family Chat' time.

Social distancing was an important contributor to the nature of the gathering, and was carefully observed throughout the three days.

Many of our pastors listed this time of refreshment as their favourite Pastors Gathering yet!



Living Jesus-infused lives

In our house we have a teapot infuser designed hold the tea leaves or herbs which are immersed in boiling water to allow the flavours to penetrate and give taste to the water.

Paul wrote to the early church exhorting them to live as communities of people infused with the mind-set of Jesus. It's worth us pausing to ask what is it about the way we live our lives, both as individuals and as faith communities, that might reveal this Christ-infusion?

An example of such a life is offered by Paul in his description of Epaphroditis. Paul painted a picture of a man living in difficult times who was infused with the mindset of Jesus. He served the church without reservation. He left his small faith community to travel and take gifts to help another believer in a different and difficult place. He helped Paul with his practical needs and is described as a co-worker and brother by Paul. He was trustworthy, dependable, and had a heart willing to

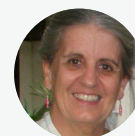
serve the church even to the point of grave illness and possible death. What a wonderful example we have been given in this man, someone ordinary, like us, who loved the Lord and served him by serving the church. As an ordinary believer Epaphroditis had allowed his attitudes and actions to be infused with the mindset of Christ.

The image of Jesus infusing us reminds us we are tasked with looking and tasting more and more like Christ.

I see among our diverse association of churches countless ways where the mindset of Jesus is infusing the actions and attitudes of our church communities. I see the tiredness that arises from the constant uncertainty and unpredictability of our present Covid-19 season. I also see the determination to remain living as communities of hope serving those within our faith community and those in our

wider community.

In this my final article as the President of BCSA I want to encourage all in our churches by the following words – let's sing them to each other as we live Jesus-infused lives.



Dr Karen Walker
President


the SERVANT SONG

MODIFICATION OF WORDS WRITTEN BY
RICHARD GILLARD

Brother, sister let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey
We are travellers on a road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load





Pray for Unley Park
God give us the insight
and energy to harness
our challenges as your
opportunities

What's happening at Unley Park Baptist

Our ministries

Much of what we do at Unley Park revolves around gathering people. This includes our Sunday services, Kids Church, Youth ministry, and Growth Groups. We value biblical teaching and generous service towards others. We engage with our community through our Playgroup and basketball club, and at our Christmas Street Party. Unley Park is great at providing care for people and we are growing in strengthening peoples' wellbeing through seminars and programs.

Our vision

We want to be a church where people grow in faith as they follow Jesus, strengthen communities through creating connections, and build belonging with all we encounter. Our focus is on our mission in the marketplace, serving our local area, and reaching young families and young people.

Current changes and challenges

COVID-19 affected our ability to gather people. Like others, we learned to live stream services, Zoom our growth groups, online resource our kids, and Google Hangout with youth. We struggled to engage children, young

people, and young adults with our online format. Hence, we regathered these groups in-person as soon as possible. Now we have returned to in-person services, around 40% of our Sunday congregation attends online. Plus we discovered live streaming our parenting seminars worked well. No babysitting required! We had over 400 people attend, an increase of 250% when compared to last year.

We know live streaming lowers the barrier for people to 'check out church' and we have been excited to see an increase in unchurched family and friends attending, through our online service.

Our volunteer numbers reduced dramatically, forcing us to reassess what we do and how we do it. There are benefits. Enforced simplification has improved our Kids Church. Our AV and worship team have more young people serving in key roles. There is also real challenge. It has been difficult to keep up with pastoral care challenges, with less people in the care team.

COVID-19 has shown we need to strengthen our church community. We have required programs, particularly Sunday services, to bring us together. When removed, the inter-connections

between people is fragile. We would love to see more of our community building community.

In this period, we have seen people leave our church. New people have also joined. Such changes are unsettling, but we hope all our people gain renewed commitment and energy for the church they want to belong to. The reduction in volunteers has meant staff have taken more on. We know our church should simplify further, but we are also keen to enable our people in their service.





DESPITE COVID-19,
God's mission continues

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of Australian life, and as consequence it would be easy to stop, pause, bunker down and look inward with regards to community participation, relationships, and resourcing.

This crisis has impacted globally focused Christian organizations and global mission. Travel is limited at present and will remain so into 2021. Many cross-cultural workers are finding themselves unable to depart Australia or finding difficulty in finalizing dates for returning.

In exploring the nature of the limitations and responses to the crisis, our SA/NT Global Interaction family provide some encouraging thoughts.

Despite COVID-19, God is still responding to people around the world who are seeking hope and a deeper understanding of love that can only be found in Christ. In difficult times people will often turn towards God.

Despite COVID -19, God is still involved in the harvest in Australia and beyond, raising up labourers from everywhere to everywhere. The Haydon family are still planning to depart early 2021, if possible. A Discernment Weekend, the first one in SA for several years, is planned to be held online soon. This program is the first stage for those seriously thinking about mission service.

Despite COVID-19 God is faithful, good, and active. Rob and Deb Griffith support this truth.

They were able to return to Cambodia on 25 July, a real miracle. So many factors made this journey possible, including reaching 100% support, provision of clearance to leave Australia and visa approval to remain in Cambodia.

Despite COVID-19, God is still near to our people groups, including the Khmer, to us, and to you. Those that remain in country are reporting good health within their teams and in their communities.

Even if we cannot travel, we can participate in God's mission through prayer, resourcing, and local initiatives with the nations here in Australia. Let us not stop now but persevere and push on resiliently under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If you would like to receive further stories or any of our publications, contact the State Office on (08) 8357 1755.



Dr David Turnbull
State Director
Global Interaction SA/NT



“A safe place to be myself and learn about recovery”

- HARRY, PAST TUMBELIN FARM RESIDENT

Harry* arrived at Tumbelin Farm with a heaviness in his heart that matched his struggle to regain control of his life. Prior to his stay at the farm, Harry would spend most days on the sofa scrolling through Facebook and most nights numbing his grief for his deceased father through cannabis use.

Gradually, after some encouragement from staff, he began to share his story and ask for help. Adventure Therapy played a significant role in altering his beliefs about himself, and - most importantly - helped him develop relapse prevention strategies by applying his learnings through rock climbing, kayaking and mountain biking.

Today, Harry is a changed man who has developed a new sense of hope for the future and is beginning to thrive in every aspect of his life. He has gained part-time employment and is continuing to build and engage in positive relationships.

Since this residential adventure therapy program opened in February, six young men, including Harry, have lived on the property and actively contributed to the running of the farm.

Adventure Therapy Manager Ben Hopkins said that while COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to the lives of young South Australians, Tumbelin Farm can provide a secure environment to help them find stability to get their life back on track.

“No doubt the months ahead will continue to be a testing period for vulnerable young people in our community. Increased levels of anxiety and stress - which we know are impacting already - mean drug and alcohol use is likely to increase as young people struggle to cope.

“It’s in times of great challenge like these that many people approach or even hit ‘rock bottom’. Some will be moved to reach out for help - perhaps for the first time - and when they do, we want them to know that Tumbelin Farm is here for them.”

If you know someone aged 16-21 who wants to embark on a journey of change to overcome their alcohol/or other drug issues, please get in touch with our Tumbelin Farm team by

T: 0455 345 427 or E: tumbelifarm@baptistcaresa.org.au

“Home is where one starts from”

- T.S. ELIOT

Having a safe, dependable home is fundamental to individuals and families finding a way out of poverty and disadvantage. Improved health, independence and stability are things we are all fortunate enough to take for granted most of the time.

Baptist Care SA currently supports a range of clients in more than 100 residential properties which is pivotal to their opportunity to thrive and move from adversity to opportunity.

Last month, the Baptist Care SA Board signed off on our Housing Pathway Strategy (HPS). This is one of the key investments we are making to advance our Mission and to align with our Strategic Horizons Plan.

This strategy supports

- The development of a ‘mix and multiply’ approach designed to foster healthy inclusive communities
- Partnerships and collaborations to address our clients housing needs and aspirations
- Initiatives that reduce living costs and contribute to environmental sustainability
- The growth and quality improvement of services
- Organisational investment into service-related housing projects.

Our priority client groups include

- Vulnerable children
- Marginalised young people
- Families at risk
- Aboriginal people experiencing social and economic disadvantage
- People living with disabilities.

Over the next few years, it is our intention to grow the number of properties under management through both ownership and leasing arrangements. These homes will provide safe, secure residences for individuals and families in our care.

While we anticipate that this strategy and the associated investment will dynamically evolve in line with the political and societal funding environment and the changing needs of our clients, our current aim is to deliver a balanced and sustainable residential housing portfolio of approximately 238 dwellings by 2025.

Matching the needs of families and individuals with appropriate housing options is challenging and requires a special blend of availability, financial management and a highly skilled approach to balancing the interface between tenancy management and support services. This work provides a social not a financial return.

In setting this course, we recognise that Baptist Care SA’s resources are finite and we are already facing competing demands from our various missional activities. We are always stretched.

Noting the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Baptist Care SA seeks to be a faithful steward of its resources and maximise outcomes for the benefit of others.

As we embark on the fulfilment of this strategy, we are excited by the prospect of working in Missional Housing Partnerships with local Baptist churches and faithful individuals. We will provide additional information on these possibilities in further editions of Together in Mission and across the variety of communication channels available to us. In the interim, if you’d like to know more about this life-giving work, please contact me by email ceoea@baptistcaresa.org.au or call Rebecca Carter on 8273 7100.



Michael Hynes
Acting CEO
Baptist Care SA



SPYING FOR JESUS

SACRED AGENTS

There is incredible power, transformative power in seeing people. Of all the tools that sacred agents have in our toolbox, of all the arrows we have in our quiver, this is one of the best. We could reach for it a lot more. But what is seeing people, and how is it powerful?

It's easier understood from the other side. It's an incredibly transformative moment to be seen. Think of a young musician or athlete who gets discovered. One moment they're busking in a back lane, next they're brought into a studio. One day they're playing in the D Team, the next they're training with the professionals. And subsequently they're walking 100% taller. Someone has seen talent, seen value in them, and immediately they lift. Do you have personal experience of this? Your shoulder being tapped, someone telling you that they've seen you, heard you, noticed you, and they want you?

Certainly, there's plenty of experience of the opposite – being overlooked, unwanted, invisible. Your efforts seeming meaningless and your story pointless. Your main position on the team being Left Right Out. That experience is powerful too – powerfully debilitating.

In the Scriptures, consider Hagar, Nathaniel and Zacchaeus – to name just a few. Each were stunned by the discovery that they were seen by God, spotted, known and valued. Think of the Parable of the Great Banquet, where the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame find themselves with an invitation, and 'invisible' people from the country back-blocks are wanted and sought out by the Master.

Whenever a sacred agent takes the time to see someone who's otherwise overlooked, unremarkable, lost in the crowd, left out – and to show and tell them that they're actually very important to God, known by Him and deeply wanted – we know we're telling the truth. It's something so very simple, but it begins with the spiritual discipline of seeing with God's eyes – something to prayerfully cultivate and practice each day.

What a great truth to instil in young people – watch them light up and step up. But it's hardly restricted to the young. How much more transformative, perhaps, for a person whose experienced decades of invisibility to discover being discovered? Of all the privileges of being sacred agents, isn't this one of the best? And perhaps even one of the easiest.



Andrew Turner
Church Development
Facilitator
sacredagents.net

Our May Assembly was cancelled for the first time in history

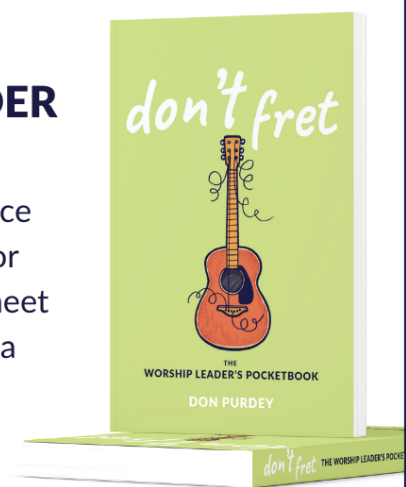
This year, for the first time in history, Assembly was unable to meet in a face-to-face context due to the Covid-19 restrictions. So we adapted and a detailed document outlining business that needed to be addressed was created and sent to all Members. Feedback and questions were encouraged before an online voting platform was presented and 53 valid responses were received. Taking into consideration the constitutional criteria for the number of votes entitled per church meant this number represented 100 eligible votes, roughly the same number we see at our usual face-to-face gatherings.

Thank you to all who took the time to participate in this process. We can confirm that all motions presented were overwhelmingly passed, including the new DOM position description and the extension of Mike Mill's term as SEM for a few more months.

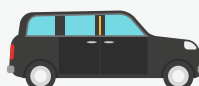
Our Annual Assembly is currently scheduled for Saturday 14th November – hopefully we will be back to face-to-face by then! In the meantime, God bless, and may you thrive as you serve Him.

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- Global Interaction: Praise God for those committed to journey with David and Susie among the Malawi Yawo in the future
- Pray for church officers
- Pray that our Lord will reveal His way forward for the redevelopment of facilities on the WestCare site
- Pray for Scott Pilgrim, the Global Interaction Executive Director
- Pray for our young people and their leaders
- Pray for our pastors
- Global Interaction: Pray for Rob and Deb's Home Assignment from Cambodia
- May we show the love of Jesus; in his Name we pray
- Pray for a Pastoral Support Worker at each school
- Salisbury: For the church to grow and be effective in making disciples and evangelism
- Pray for Andrew Turner, our Church Development Facilitator



Morialta Charitable Trust Fund

Morialta Charitable Trust Fund has been supporting disadvantaged Children, Young People and their families in South Australia through its annual program of Distributions for 40 years.

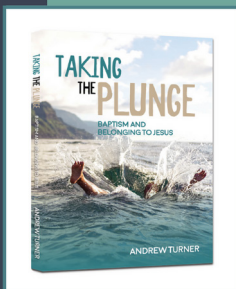
To enable the Fund to continue this support through Community Organisations in South Australia Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public.

Donations of \$2- and above are Tax Deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund at PO Box 92 Crafrers SA 5152.

BAPTISM:

Just what are you getting yourself into?

Andrew Turner shares what you need to know before you get wet



Learn more at info@sabaptist.asn.au

Fancy a tree change? Moore Park Baptist is looking for a pastor

The Moore Park Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a pastor who is discerning God's call in ministry and leadership to our church. Being suitably gifted to lead, inspire and nurture the church fellowship across a range of ages will be important. We believe training in a theological college with appropriate qualifications that suit a person in pastoral ministry and being eligible for registration as a minister with Queensland Baptists are essential.

The Church is located in Indooroopilly an inner western suburb of Brisbane and supports a range of ministries. Since the Church was established 60 years ago it has been committed to the promotion and support of Christian missionary work, both locally, across Australia and overseas.

For more information please email the Moore Park Baptist Church Pastoral Search Team at secretary@moorepark.org.au

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INSPIRE CONFERENCE 2020

Learn more at sabaptist.asn.au/inspire