



Spring
Edition
2024



A deeply
encouraging
gathering for
pastors

Celebrating 140 years at Knightsbridge

Friends from Lajamanu studying the
Bible together

Together *in Mission*
Baptist Churches SA & NT



A deeply encouraging gathering for pastors

words by
Rev Elliot Keane



Plot twists, the gospel, chocolate ice cream, and fiery chariots were all part of the mix at Pastors Gathering. A growing gathering of pastors spent two days together in the Adelaide Hills, sharing encouragement, prayer, inspiration, worship, conversations, food, and fun.

This year we heard from experienced pastor, Allan Demond (New Hope Baptist Church, Melbourne), and Tim Patrick (Principal at the Bible College of SA). Allan served fresh insights on the stories of Elijah, Jezebel and Ahab, while Tim helped us determine what 'is' and 'isn't' the gospel.

Over dinner, we met virtually with Rev Jane Day (Baptist Union of Great Britain) who introduced us to Project Violet, and their

groundbreaking approach to research and supporting Women in Leadership in the United Kingdom.

In a new addition to the program, our regional and NT Pastors met for a 'pre-gathering' session and dinner. This was a great opportunity to encourage and invest in our pastors who serve churches in unique and isolated places.

We celebrated stories of what God is up to in our churches across the movement. We shared in the joys of seeing people seek and meet Jesus, find community and belonging, and contribute to the wider church and mission of God.

We also acknowledged together the difficulties of life and ministry, sharing in story and prayer in support of one another, and

reminding one another of God's presence with us in these seasons. The energised, friendly and supportive atmosphere left us with a deep sense of connection and friendship across the movement.

As we reflect on Pastors Gathering, we are thankful for who God has brought into our churches to serve and to pastor. Both women and men who love King Jesus, are sacrificial in their commitment to his cause, and are passionate in their love and generosity to the people they are called to serve.

We are also thankful that King Jesus is at work across our movement, in our local churches and their communities, in the lives of his people and in and through our pastors.



Above: Dan Fennell

As a Baptist movement we were deeply saddened by the recent passing of Dan Fennell, pastor of Norton Summit Baptist Church.

Dan grew up in Naracoorte in the South East and became a Christian while studying teaching at Flinders University. After completing his degree, Dan worked as a schoolteacher before sensing God's call to cross cultural mission work. This led Dan, his wife Dianne, and their 3 children to move to Jakarta in 1988, where they spent the next 20 years serving in Christian ministry.

In 2020, Dan and Dianne returned to Adelaide and Dan was appointed as interim pastor at Norton Summit Baptist Church. It reflected the congregation's respect and love for Dan and his ministry that when the interim ministry period concluded, the congregation were very eager to appoint Dan as their ongoing pastor, and Dan was inducted into this role in January 2022.



'The World of the Word' by Dan Fennell, explores the lands of the Bible and invites readers into discipleship

Saying farewell to a much-loved pastor and friend



words by
Mark Sanders

It was clear to all who met Dan that he was a man who loved the Lord, had a passion for teaching God's word, and had a deep love and concern for the church. Dan had a passion for biblical history and had the opportunity to lead many tours to the biblical lands, later writing the book "The World of the Word" about his experiences in the biblical lands. Dan was a dedicated pastor and a thoughtful, generous, caring and kind man and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Please be in prayer for Dan's wife Dianne and their children, Jordan, Haddon and Josiah. Please also pray for the congregation at Norton Summit, who have experienced several significant seasons of grief and loss as a church. As a movement we are actively seeking to support the church in this season.

We give thanks for the life and ministry of Dan. We are reminded in times such as these, that even in grief, we have hope, and a blessed assurance. Having served the Lord faithfully and proclaimed consistently the gospel of grace, Dan has now received the reward of his faith and is with his Lord in glory.

Together in Mission
Baptist Churches SA & NT

Sharing the latest news and stories across our movement of Baptist churches in the SA and NT.

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Friends from Lajamanu studying at Nungalinga College together

words by
Andrea Adams
Editor, *Belonging People*

Lynette Tasman, Mary K Lewis, Delveon Donnelly and Gerald Watson from Lajamanu Baptist Church were in Darwin for the month of May to commence studies at Nungalinga College. Lynette and Mary K have started Certificate 2 in Ministry and Theology, Delveon has been studying the new Children's Ministry Course and Gerald was working on Foundational Studies. Eddie Robertson from Yuendumu has been back at Nungalinga in June undertaking a Certificate 3 in Theology with a view to continuing to a Certificate 4. Eddie and his

wife Lottie have been regular visitors to Darwin in recent years as they pursue studies to assist them in their pastoral work at Yuendumu. Lynette Tasman found the studies very helpful, as they led her to look more deeply into the Old Testament. She says that they helped her to understand the plans that God has for his people and how the Old Testament showed the way to the New Testament with prophecies that were later fulfilled. Lynette believes that this time of learning will help her as she returns to her people at Lajamanu and passes on her new understandings

of God's Word. When asked if this was a difficult time living away from her community, Lynette said it was, in fact, a positive experience for the Lajamanu team as it gave all of them the break that they needed to concentrate on their new learning. The fellowship, meals and accommodation at the college made it a very good experience and she hopes that they can return to Nungalinga College next year to continue with their studies.

For more NT stories head to bcsant.org.au/belonging-people

In their shoes

Can you imagine fleeing as fast as you can with children in tow, to the jungle as soon as you hear the sound of jet fighters or drones? Can you imagine living like this for years on end, not knowing when the next occasion will be?

Sadly, airstrikes are a frequent occurrence that the people of Myanmar live with on a constant basis. Thousands of our Baptist brothers and sisters live like this every day. From January to March 2023 alone there have been at least 25 airstrikes by the military across regions in Myanmar.

On Monday 10th April, the Junta attacked the town of Waibula by airstrike resulting in many deaths, including a Chin Pastor and his wife. Chin pastors in our Victorian churches are grieving the loss of their community members. Other images we

received were too graphic to share. The next day another airstrike hit the town of Kanbalu with the death toll now from these attacks estimated to be well over 100 civilians.

In early April, we received a devastating text from a Pastor of one of our Baptist Burmese churches in Melbourne that we share (with permission)

"We are grieving at the tragic news of the killing of innocent villagers of Khuafu village, 5 miles away from Thantlang. Yesterday morning (Thurs 1 April, 2023), the Junta dropped bombs from a jet fighter on to the innocent peasant village killing 10 people and injuring 20 people. Some children were left by their parents in the incident. This little girl and her younger sibling (pictured) survived the incident in which their parents were killed."



Since the military coup in February 2021, more than 3000 people have been killed and 16,000 people detained. Almost 1.6 million people are displaced within Myanmar and 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar live in refugee camps on the Thai and Indian borders and within other towns in Thailand and India.

Please join us in praying, advocating and raising support for our brothers and sisters in Myanmar.



Celebrating 140 years with Knightsbridge Baptist

On Sunday 18th August, the congregation at Knightsbridge Baptist Church gathered to celebrate a special birthday – 140 years since the first meeting of

our founding members in their purpose-built hall on Glynburn Road. It was actually on the 15th June, 1884 that these families gathered for the first time, with the inaugural sermon preached by the Rev Silas Mead.

In celebration of this anniversary, we gathered to sing together, pray, hear from the Word, and of course share some delicious food. The morning was one of community and reconnection, with many former

members returning for the occasion – even from interstate! A special highlight was praying together to rededicate the building and people for the work of God, committing to glorify God in all we do. We remember with thankfulness the vision and dedication of those who came before us and, most importantly, the faithfulness of God in sustaining a congregation of believers in Leabrook.

A baptism that reminds us of the history of our movement

On Sunday July 21st, Flinders St Baptist celebrated the testimony and baptism of Derek Phillips.

At 96 years of age, Derek opted to be baptised by affusion rather than immersion. Graeme Pitt shared the following observation; “Derek’s unique baptism takes us back

to the beginnings of the Baptist movement around 1611. Thomas Helwys and John Smyth led a group of about 30 English people to move to Amsterdam to escape from persecution by the state church for their non-conformity. While there their reading of the Bible led them to believe that baptism was not for unaware babies (infant baptism) but for people who had made a Christian commitment (believers’ baptism). At that early stage, baptism was not by immersion in water, but by the touching of water on the head of the believer, as we saw last Sunday. Blessings on



Derek! Baptism by immersion was practised by Baptists some years later.”



Left: The Hutchinson Family.

Right: Cate Rodgers and KimLean Leng



Homecomings and visits

words by **Lisa Cornish**
State Director SA/NT



Hutchinsons settling into life in Adelaide

In my last article I wrote that the Hutchinson family were preparing to finish up their time in Cambodia after six years of service. Luke, Rachel, and the children are now settling back into Adelaide life and are finalising their service by visiting and thanking churches and supporters who have faithfully partnered with them.

Please continue to pray for the family as they find their feet. They are busy settling into school, work, social activities, church, and life in general. Pray also for Rachel as she returns to Cambodia in September and again in November.

During her visits Rachel will continue to oversee the Language of the Heart project, which she established in Siem Reap with Baptist Mission Australia.

On behalf of Baptist Mission Australia, I would also like to thank all those who prayerfully and financially supported the Hutchinson family. We know that we cannot do this work alone. It is only through the grace of God, and the partnering work of churches and folk in Australia, that we are able to support those who are led by God to serve in mission, and see the advancing of the gospel into new hearts.

Catch up with Cate and KimLean

I am also excited to let you know that Cate Rodgers and her husband, KimLean Leng, will be in Australia on Home Assignment from September to November in 2024. This is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with the couple and hear an update in person about their work in Cambodia. Cate and KimLean are keen to visit churches and mid-week fellowship groups while they are here. If you would like to make a time for them to visit, please get in touch with me (lcornish@baptistmissionaustralia.org, 0421 074 920).



Students sleep rough for homelessness



It's a cold winter's night as students settle into their sleeping bags in the courtyard at Baptist Care SA's WestCare Centre — a place of support for people experiencing homelessness. The students have given up their warm beds to participate in Rough Sleep Out, an Urban Education program that teaches students about homelessness by giving them a taste of what it would be like to sleep rough.

Hosted by Baptist Care SA in partnership with schools like Kings Baptist Grammar School and Emmaus Christian College, the program offers students the chance to gain a deeper understanding of homelessness by hearing from people with lived experience and those who journey alongside of them to provide support. It teaches that there are many reasons why someone may experience homelessness — they may have lost their job, be struggling to find a home, or have experienced a

relationship breakdown. Students also learn that the issues facing people experiencing homelessness are varied and complex and can span domestic violence, social isolation, hunger and food relief and health.

Earlier in the evening, the students gathered in the centre's dining room to share a simple chicken pasta dinner. The nutritious meal was similar to one of the 650 meals prepared each week by staff and volunteers with food donated by food rescue organisations or purchased with donated funds to provide free to the WestCare Centre community.

Before sleeping, the students joined in prayer at the WestCare Chapel and reflected on God's heart for all people, especially those in need. The students reflected on the Word of God and prayed for all members of the WestCare Centre community.

When they returned to school, the students reflected on their experience. One student said they learnt "to never judge people because you don't know their story or how they became homeless", with another saying, "homelessness doesn't define who you are". "I learnt to not take anything for granted", said another.

Students participating in Rough Sleep Outs are sponsored, with the donations going directly to Baptist Care SA's WestCare Centre. As the majority of services provided at the WestCare Centre are not funded by government, Baptist Care SA relies on the generous donations of its partners in mission and is grateful to those students who gave up their comforts to learn more about homelessness and partner in providing support.



Consent, Our Missional Gateway

Consent is the act of giving a free willed Yes to another's proposal or desire. Often consent is discussed within the context of sex, and rightly so – it makes all the difference between something loving and assault. But for us Baptists, consent is key to life and mission.

Our movement was sparked out of our consent being violated. Mandates were put upon the early Baptists around baptism, governance, and worship. This led to early Baptists being exiled and developing in Amsterdam before returning to England and advocating for the freedom of local congregations.

We Do Baptism Differently

The vitality of consent is shown in our decision not to baptize infants, nor force baptism upon others. We do not violate the free choice of individuals, as it is impossible to coerce faith. Jesus stands at the door of our lives and knocks Rev 3:20 – he doesn't kick it in. People must give informed and explicit consent – which is why the obvious questions are asked and answered immediately before each baptism. And so our movement is filled with individuals who want to be a part of God's mission.

Consent in Evangelism

This understanding of church flows through to our outreach. We can and should be pro-active with warm invitation, but it must be without pressure, coercion or manipulation. We share the reasons we have for faith – but always with gentleness and respect.¹ Pe 3:15 (What wonderful words in any conversation about consent.)

This is the power of holding the door open and welcoming people to meet God rather than demanding conformity. Even during the process of evangelism, it is both wise and a witness (in itself) to share a little and then ask whether our hearer/s would like to know more – rather than cramming as much in as we can until they make their escape.

Consent in Leadership

If we're leading ministries, we need the same gentleness in inviting others to give of themselves wholeheartedly without manipulating them, granting them freedom to accept or refuse as they need. If we're under leadership, it's important to be able to state clearly what we're willing and unwilling to do, for the good of both the ministry and ourselves as God's image bearers.

It reflects the character of God when those with power give care and dignity to those weaker. Gentleness and patience open spaces for genuine response. Let's keep working to respect and protect those with less power, ensuring they have space to advocate for their own desires, opportunities to speak their minds, and the chance to express their needs.

What remarkable good news that the all-powerful God is so humble, gentle and patient. In all we do – and in the way we do it – may we point people to Him and the freedom of his kingdom – in contrast to our world that is so full of manipulation and control.

Advertisement

Growing Together in Marriage

In 2024 we are inviting married couples, no matter what stage or age, to try to balance the busyness and prioritise their partner and marriage!

On the weekend, there is no group discussion or public sharing of your marriage! The Team couples share honestly and openly of their personal experiences and insights, sometimes out of pain and sometimes with humour, about different aspects of marriage. Following each session opportunity is given for couples to discuss their responses in the privacy of their room.

Retreat weekends in 2024:

- **September 20-22**
- **October 25-27**

This year all weekends will be held at Abbotsford Country House, Lyndoch.

For more information contact Steve & Val D'Arcy (0402 983 154) or Rob & Lee Allen (0438 892 980)

or see gtimsa.org for details and registration.



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