



NEWS, ARTICLES AND STORIES
FROM
BAPTIST NZ
APP & WEBSITE

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This newsletter is a print version of the latest articles published on the Baptist NZ website and app. The app now replaces the *Baptist* magazine and is available to download on Google play and App Store. For those in the Baptist family who prefer to read hardcopy, check out what God is doing in our faith communities in this newsletter, sent bimonthly to churches. If you have email and would like this document to be emailed to you, sign up to our newsletter at baptist.nz



RACHEL SANGSTER

Alpha on Sunday mornings!

We were at a stage as a faith community where we were starting to see new people, mostly new or discovering Christians, and our faithful group of committed Christians. We were in a rebuilding phase as a church. We sensed that the Holy Spirit was about to blow a new wind over us and that we had to prepare. As we prayed, we were reminded of the disciples fishing all night on the boat without catching anything. Then Jesus said, "Hey, throw your nets on the other side!" In other words, trust me and do it differently.

My crazy idea was for everyone to do the Alpha Course on Sunday mornings as our weekly gathering. The Alpha Course is an 11-week course that creates a space for a conversation about life, faith and Jesus.

I googled to see if I could find out if anyone else had done this, and the only church I could find was in the United Kingdom. Divinely, I was able to set up a Zoom with them, and they were blown away that we were thinking the same as them. They said they looked around when they did it three years ago and found no one else who had done it this way! They shared their journey, and we were so encouraged to hear that their outcomes were the same as the dreams we had written down:

- Activate new leaders
- Build unity and a greater sense of family amongst us
- Everyone grew in God, no matter how long they had been following Jesus
- Break the tradition of always having a sermon
- Encourage discussions and more voices to be heard
- More space for intergenerational connections
- Everyone involved (children – adults)
- New small groups formed



This free online training covers ten modules that we believe are markers of a robust leader and is suitable for anyone in leadership in the Baptist church.

leadership.baptist.nz

Do you have any stories of gospel renewal in your community?

You can share them by emailing stories@baptist.org.nz

Feedback

If you would like to give feedback on this newsletter, write to our Communications Director at the Baptist Support Centre: **P O Box 12 149, Penrose, Auckland 1642, New Zealand.**

So, we kicked it off right in the middle of another wave of COVID-19! Some may say that was crazy, but God has used this to His glory.

Each Sunday, we started with breakfast, having different teams responsible for this. What a fantastic variety we had! Everyone pitched in with set up, cleaning and dishes with a great sense of family. The breakfast time was a highlight as we gathered around tables, built friendships, welcomed visitors, and connected with people we may not have talked to much before.

During one of the breakfasts, a 9-year-old girl who comes fortnightly when she stays with her grandma wanted to share something with me. She said, “Grandma was making chicken fried rice during the week, and I told her that when it is our turn to bring food to OUR church, this is what we should bring.” This warmed my heart – this 9-year-old from a non-churched home has developed a sense of belonging to our Christian community.

I watched over a few weeks as one lady came for breakfast for the first two weeks and then left before the Alpha session started. On the third week, she stayed in the foyer, listened to the Alpha video, and then left. In the fourth week, she stayed and joined in a group discussion.

We had a couple of worship songs and then listened to the teaching using the Alpha Film Series. It was very easy to listen to, and we could download it with subtitles for our ESOL families. The children had their own group during this time that was on the same weekly topic. Each week we had a small card and gift for everyone that reminded people of the topic.

The structure of the Alpha course included a Holy Spirit Weekend in the middle. Due to COVID-19 and other factors, we decided to do “A Big Day Out” instead and spent the day together at our church venue. This was a wonderful day of connecting, relaxing, and seeing the Holy Spirit move on us in a gentle, deep and healing way.

The topic for the final week is “What About The Church?” All ages stayed together, wrote words describing church to us, and then put them up on a cardboard “church”. It was a very powerful moment for us as we sang “The Blessing” over each other. Then people prayed out loud in their cultural language. One of the 12-year-olds who recently came from another country and had limited English told me the following week that when this happened, she felt like her “heart was throbbing out of her chest” and was so happy and peaceful. The power of experiencing the Holy Spirit!

The hopes we had at the beginning were far

exceeded, and we are looking forward with expectation to what God will do amongst us next.

Rachel Sangster is a pastor at Riccarton Baptist Church.

KEITH HARRINGTON

Invercargill Central Baptist Church ‘Serves the city’

On Sunday, 11 September, Invercargill Central Baptist undertook a church-wide activity called ‘Serve the City’. It’s the second year that they have done it. The idea is that instead of a Sunday morning service, the church folk sign up for one of several service projects across the city as part of their worship of God and ministry to others.



These are the 11 projects the church whānau got into:

- Two gardens for clients of Jubilee Budgeting
- Barking the adventure playground of a middle school
- Gardening and rubbish removal at Waverly Park School
- Gardening, tree removal, and maintenance at No 10 Youth Centre
- Joining with others to plant over 1100 trees for Bushy Point Trust
- Working with City council planting 250 trees at McLennan's Flat
- Fixing donated bikes and sorting out donated linen for Red Cross
- Joining with South Alive volunteers to pick up rubbish in South Invercargill
- Sorting out beads and un-assembling bracelets for Canbead
- Assembling a prayer team to pray a blessing over the city

What’s it all about?

This year is the second year we have done Serve our City. We do it on a Sunday, as we see it as part of our worship. It is one of our five core priorities (serving our city). People think Christianity is just about spiritual things, but actually, we express love for God in practical, hands-on ways. We believe

God is passionate about making our city and the environment a great place to live.

Our congregation have got behind this project and loves being involved.

How did it work?

We met for a coffee and muffin and prayed before sending everyone out to their projects, which ran from 9 am to 12 pm.

Who did it?

All ages. Another core priority is being intergenerational, so we encourage all ages to be involved. Our youngest, three, and oldest, 82. 165 people in all. Last year we had just 100.

Feedback.

"It was cool what concerted teamwork could achieve in a couple of hours. Even better was the reaction of the recipient whose garden we transformed". - Sue, a team leader

"A really successful day. People appreciated it and gave the volunteers waves and toots. Many hands make light work". - Courtney Ellison, South Alive

"Best group we have worked with. Love to have you involved again". - Gordon, City Council Park Ranger

"It was amazing to see the community come together like this. They did everything we wanted and more. We are so grateful for your church's help". - Garden clean up recipient.

MONIQUE LEE

Manurewa Baptist Church celebrates Te Wiki O Te Reo Māori



On Sunday, 11 September 2022, our rōpū Māori, Te Kotahitanga, led our service at Manurewa Baptist Church to open Te Wiki O Te Reo Māori. We did this because we believe that supporting beautiful te reo Māori is a justice issue. We opened with a short mihi and karakia in te reo Māori. Then Marci led our worship (English translations were provided on screen). Most of these waiatas are on our regular rotation, so our congregation were familiar with them. We took up a special offering to go to a local kura (school) to support the kaupapa of schooling in

te reo Māori. I interviewed four of our Te Kotahitanga members about why learning te reo Māori is important to them and what is significant about this week. We heard their moving and challenging stories. Our kuia, Gail Hosken, shared a message in our Luke series. We finished the service with another waiata, corporate karakia (words on screen to follow along). We then moved through to have shared kai (fried bread with jam and cream). Our church is on a continuing journey of learning how to honour Te Reo Māori, and it's been a real blessing to us.

MIKE CRUDGE

The Elect Lady



Our college principal, John Tucker, said after the Queen's death: *"We [Baptists] have a complicated history with the British Crown. Baptists in England emerged in reaction against the union of state and church. But Queen Elizabeth, on a personal level, clearly had a deep faith in Jesus, which we rightly celebrate."*

A quick delve into the public digital version of the *New Zealand Baptist* newspaper shows that in the mid-twentieth century, we greatly admired the Queen, her position and purpose. In anticipation of the Queen's visit to New Zealand in early 1954, she made the front cover of the *New Zealand Baptist*!

Below is a reproduction of the main article from the January 1954 *New Zealand Baptist* (page 3). It ends with "a prayer on our Queen's going to her peoples" written for her 1954 visit, which could now equally be prayed as she has gone to her Creator:

THE ELECT LADY

The Queen is with us to begin the year. Her gracious presence lends courage to us all, and brings a deepened sense of unity within the Commonwealth. Such demonstrations of loyalty as have marked the Royal Tour have confounded the critics. Few facts are more significant in this age of conflicting ideologies and growing nationalism than the British Commonwealth of Nations. We believe the person of the Queen has strengthened the ties which bind all who owe allegiance to the Throne.

As she and her husband move about this furthest outpost of her Empire there will be loving hearts to greet her. Her solemn vow will be recalled: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service, and the service of our great Imperial family to which we all belong. But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you, too, join in it with me, as I now invite you to do. I know that your support will be unfailingly given." Such self-dedication, we feel sure, will be matched by the renewed loyalty of her people.

THAT OTHER PRESENCE

A Royal Visit is a rare event. It is soon past, leaving only a memory, albeit a pleasant one. But there is Another Who because of what He is, stands above all kings and queens and is omnipresent. His dedication also we recall, "For their sakes I sanctify myself", and His promise, "Lo, I am with you always". As we venture into the New Year may we each experience a sense of the accompanying Presence of the Saviour.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

This thought is uppermost as we face the days ahead. Of this we are certain: the Church's message to the world must still be Christ. The Queen with us ushers in a New Year. Christ's coming began a new era of hope and reconciliation. A royal person may unify a nation, Christ came to bring peace and brotherhood among all men, for in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, all are one.

Christ is the answer to the world's needs. There is no higher example, no more significant teaching, no greater power than Christ's, and He alone is able to offer men forgiveness.

We have faith to believe that Christ will outlive all evil and establish His kingdom. And we shall see the fulfilment of that promise, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

A PRAYER ON OUR QUEEN'S GOING TO HER PEOPLES

*Love is no burden, brotherhood no chain;
A living league of nations is most blest
Power eternal touching mortal brain,
Grant to this Sovereign lady as she goes,
Light, from Thyself, to kindle and remain
A fire of joy, a bracing in all test,
A gladness in all days and in all woes.
Guard her, and bless, and bring her home again.
(Prayer by John Masefield)*

CHRIS CHAMBERLAIN, CHARLES HEWLETT AND GLENN MELVILLE

A new chapter for Baptist Registration



We are so fortunate to have church leaders who want to keep their fingers on the pulse, and ensure our faith communities are safe. Last week our Assembly Council (the governing group for our churches) announced the outcome of an 18-month review of how we Baptists consider the registration of our leaders (pastors, chaplains, missional leaders). We have had registration for our leaders since 1996, and it had been a decade since any major changes. The review process involved wide consultation throughout our 250 faith communities, and has resulted in a number of significant changes intended to improve our movement of churches through the next decade.

Glenn Melville, who oversees the administration of Baptist Registration through our Centre for Lifelong Learning asks:

Why do we New Zealand Baptists have a registration process? The answer is that while there are some benefits to individuals, the main benefit is for us as a Union of Churches. Essentially, registration is a commitment to ensuring that we are developing robust leaders, who can lead thriving faith communities with integrity and competency. Thus, when a Baptist faith community, or entity, or approved body appoints someone who is registered, they can have confidence that the individual meets a recognised standard that involves a commitment to ongoing learning and growth, wider Baptist whānau engagement, external supervision support, and annual review.

Our National Leader, Charles Hewlett wrote in 2017 about the need then to encourage our leaders to be engaging in fresh ideas, supportive friendships, open-mindedness, and accountability.

Charles says today after this recent review: *Professional development cannot be an optional extra for leaders involved in Christian ministry and mission. And this is why the Baptist Union Registration process is so important to me and such*

an incredible gift! It will keep our leaders current in their thinking and practices, and introduce them to different and innovative ways of doing things. It will bring a healthy level of accountability to their thinking and practice, and provide friendship and support through such things as cohorts, supervision, conferences, and on-line groups.

Chris Chamberlain, Chair of Assembly Council, last week presented the following summary of the key changes to the registration system, including:

- A new name: Baptist Registration.
- A revised purpose: Registration is to ensure that those who minister in, or on behalf of the Baptist Union of New Zealand, Baptist entities, and churches, do so in response to the call of the Holy Spirit and actively maintain; a posture of holistic well-being, personal, relational, and professional integrity and accountability, ongoing growth and learning, organisational safety, and ongoing connection with the wider Baptist movement.
- Clarification of the benefits of registration for the Baptist Union of New Zealand churches and registrants e.g., ensuring that we are developing robust leaders who can lead thriving faith communities, confidence in the integrity and competency of our leaders.
- Revised Scope: Registration is an endorsement that the registrant commits to the ongoing development of the character, knowledge and abilities deemed necessary to minister in the name of the Baptist Union of New Zealand and is willing to uphold our core distinctives and values as New Zealand Baptists (as included in the Baptist Union of New Zealand Constitution and Baptist Administration Manual). The Baptist Union of New Zealand can only endorse leaders who are registered.
- Categories of Baptist Registration: Expanded from the current three categories to five:
 1. Pastoral
 2. Chaplain
 3. Ministry/Mission
 4. Kaiārahi Māori
 5. Baptist Entity
- Entry Criteria: A more robust list of entry criteria e.g., now includes police vetting and agreement to uphold the Baptist Union of New Zealand code of ethics.
- Annual registration requirements: The new Registration Development Agreement (RDA) consists of four components:

1. Personal growth and learning – Hours of learning required have been adjusted in proportion to hours worked. Includes a commitment to 2 hours of ‘Priority Learning’ formed each year through the Baptist Union of New Zealand Leadership Coordination office.
2. Baptist Whānau Engagement – Requirements are now tailored to fit the context of each of the five categories of registrant.
3. External Supervision Support – At the end of a 3-year phase in period all registrants will be required to have regular ongoing supervision with a Baptist Union of New Zealand approved supervisor who is qualified/trained in ministry supervision. A supervision training program will be established to ensure we have sufficient supervisors to provide supervision for all registrants.
4. Annual Review – From Sept/Oct 2023 a review of the RDA is to be undertaken within the faith community or organisation of the registrant with a view to both considering progress against the current RDA and identifying priorities and goals (e.g., learning options choices, whānau engagement, etc) for the upcoming registration period.

These changes will take effect from the 1st of November 2022, except for external supervision support (phased in over 3 years), and the annual review (from Sept/Oct 2023). Training and information on how to register will be provided online soon. The Carey Centre for Lifelong Learning will continue to administer Baptist Registration on behalf of the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

Our Constitution will need to be amended to reflect these changes. As there may be other constitutional changes to be considered, the Assembly Council will work towards presenting the 2023 National Hui with the proposed amendments.

In addition to the changes to the registration system, Assembly Council has made a commitment to re-evaluate whether New Zealand Baptists should have an accreditation or ordination process for people entering into pastoral leadership.

Assembly Council would like to thank all those involved in the review process, including the review panel and the stakeholders who took the time to provide feedback on the proposed changes. We believe the new registration system is a significant

step forward in enabling the development of robust leaders who can bring gospel renewal to people and places.

JULIE OSBORN

Connect Baptist Church brings gospel renewal to their neighbourhood.



In our Baptist family stories, we discover gospel renewal happening when action accompanies faith. Julie Osborn, pastor at Connect Baptist Church in Manukau, shares how action sparks relationships in their neighbourhood. This story was first published in the Northern Baptist Association July 2022 newsletter.

Since the lockdown ended, we have been trying different ways to show the love and joy of Christ in our neighbourhood. On July 16, we had our first community working bee. We wanted to help the sick, the elderly or those less-abled. We advertised in Manukau Grapevine and Neighbourly. A Hindu man responded to the ad. He just had a lung removed for cancer and was having chemotherapy, and needed trees topped, and gardens weeded. Eight of us worked on the property. This simple action has started a relationship. I was able to ask this man all about the Hindu idols in his home and learnt much about Hinduism. He and his wife are coming to our next monthly shared lunch and church service. Community working bees are such an easy way to share Christ's love with our neighbours.

KELLY ENRIGHT

Welcoming Arotahi



This article was first published by NZBMS on 27 September 2022 and is reproduced with permission.

Kelly Enright from NZBMS is "veeery" excited

to share some BIG news with us:

I wish I could sit down and tell each of you in person, as I have been able to with a few, that we will be welcoming a new name for our next chapter at NZBMS. We have a deep and rich history with so many stories of transformation, and we believe the name Arotahi is an exciting and bold next step in this story. In your story.

The same Spirit that inspired trailblazing Rosalie MacGeorge to journey to South Asia, inspires us today. This same Spirit challenges us and draws us into the new, the unfamiliar, and the exciting (Genesis 12:1-3, Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20).

Arotahi is our why, and the way we move forward: United, with our eyes fixed on Christ.

The meaning

Aro – 'to look in one direction', 'look steadily', 'focus on', 'zero in on', 'concentrate on'.

Tahi – (as a modifier) means 'together', 'simultaneously', 'as one', 'at the same time', 'concurring'.

Arotahi

carries the meaning of a focus in one direction, looking towards one horizon simultaneously, concentrating on one thing together. Although there are many different works and areas we are involved in, we have one common focus that unites us.

The reason

We have been working on a new strategy plan for the past few years, that will encourage and draw us into the future of cross-cultural work. Te Kapa Rautaki (our Māori governance leaders) have been working on the strategy with us. Our core values in this new chapter, ones that will guide and form us, are mutual humility, whakarongo (listening, sensing), and respectful relationships. We prayed for a name that could communicate the significance of these values and the heartbeat behind them.

We celebrate mission as God's mahi (the Missio Dei). God is already working in all people and in all places. Our part is to trust this work of God in others and ourselves by seeking to see, point to, join, and nurture the work of God in individuals, families, communities, and places. We believe in, seek, and are committed to gospel renewal that is inherently relational, is expressed in mutual humility and calls us to follow paths of risk and innovation in pursuit of God's mission. We feel that Arotahi beautifully communicates our heart, knowing that God's people can express, outwork, and share their faith in diverse ways; all of these ways unite us and are inspired by Christ.

We recognise that there has been many name changes in the past, and different names and arms

have sometimes been confusing. Some of these names have carried a difficulty of connection, particularly today with a younger audience. With a new strategic plan, signalling a new chapter, we are considering a new name that reflects the journey ahead.

The journey

As a team, we individually discerned and spoke about the values we wanted to communicate moving forward. We took time to reflect on the organisation we were a part of, the shoulders we stood on, and the aspirations we held as we looked forward.

A member of our team, Shayla, came to us with a suggestions of some beautiful Māori words that she felt reflected the heart of our work; all of us were drawn to 'Aro'. After discussing the meaning of 'Aro', we felt that the extended word 'Arotahi' brought focus and unity. After praying and taking time to rest on this word, our team loved the way we could communicate our 'why' through this kupu.

We spent time with Te Kapa Rautaki, who gave us a blessing to use this name with integrity. Te Kapa Rautaki reminded us that this name was a taonga (gift, treasure) with a rich meaning to carry with great care. We take this responsibility very seriously and will be continually seeking the leading of the Spirit.

Our global team loved the name 'Arotahi' - especially the way many of them felt it communicated the approach they took to living in, working in, and caring for their global communities.

Finally, we asked for the opinions of a diverse sample of our Baptist whānau, ensuring many voices were heard. We listened to and spoke about all feedback. We were particularly encouraged by young voices who felt excited and inspired by the name. We believe this is a step in the right direction towards seeing the next generation of global workers engaging with us.

The next step

We are so excited to officially launch this name at the National Hui in November. There is so much God is revealing of Himself in this season of change and movement. We are continually reminded of the faithfulness of a God who has walked every step of this haerenga (journey/trip) with us.

He goes before us now, calling us into the next chapter. With our eyes focussed on Christ, we step forward together.

SOPHIE

Discernment part 1: Grieving KTown

This article was first published by NZBMS and is reproduced with permission.



This is the first piece in a reflective series from our recently returned global workers, each sharing their personal discernment journey in choosing to return to Aotearoa New Zealand. The Missio Dei holds a unique place for each person. With the same missional heart, our returned global workers had a God-gifted time globally and now have a God-gifted time on our shores. Here is a glimpse into their amazing stories of trust and boldness.

We had been back in New Zealand for just over two months, and it was our fourth Sunday at our new church. The speaker that morning was a friend of ours; we'd worked and lived side by side in South Asia, a place he was soon to return to, while we were in the throes of resettling in New Zealand.

We were excited to hear him speak, this was familiar territory to us, we understood his experiences and could picture so clearly the scenes he described. However as he progressed through the text – Matthew 23:... – the joy I was expecting to feel was consumed by knot of despair rising in my chest.

Tears began to slip down my cheeks, and I shoved my cloth mask further up my face to absorb the flow. The wrenching loss of leaving a place I love hit me over, and over. I imagined the heat, the warm embrace of friends, the excitement of each day, the many details of a full and fascinating life that I had just recently left behind.

The message ended with a call to serve in South Asia, a prompt for people to examine their hearts, to ask where God may be leading them. "Yes, me, Lord!", I wanted to march up to the front and commit to pack up my life all over again. How could I feel this intense love and longing for a place and not want to be back here? More importantly, why was I feeling this? The decision had been made months ago. We would conclude our time overseas and spend the next season in New Zealand.

Someone new stepped to the front, asking that we sit a moment in stillness. I sensed my husband's body shaking beside me, and saw his hands cover his face. Was he feeling the same as me? I spent the final song dabbing at my face and imagined peeling a potato – my standard trick to distract from big, choking church sobs that I don't want to deal with.

Emotions well tamped down, I turned to leave our aisle, but my husband blocked the way.

“How did that make you feel?” he asked in a wobbly voice. I raised a warning finger and gave a weak shake of the head, signaling that if I even tried to open my mouth there would be waterworks. “Yeah, me too,” he said, tears filling his eyes. My hair-trigger empathy could not be restrained, and I started to sob. If you’re crying, I’m crying. We stood there, dripping and mumbling, shoulders shaking, wrestling with the same harrowing question: why do I still feel called to be there?

Our children screeched back into the auditorium, caught up in a joyful game of tag with their besties. Here they were. Our reality, our priority. I watched them, thinking, if it wasn’t for you two, we would still be there. I didn’t feel resentment at that moment, or regret, only the knowledge that returning to NZ was the right thing, even though it hurts.

I’m comforted by the fact that even though our time in South Asia was a complex mix of joy, hope, frustration and despair, our overwhelming desire is to be back there. Yes, it was hard, but we were not scarred by the journey. Our ties run deep, and that intense love and longing will impact our financial decisions, living arrangements, prayers and interests for the rest of our lives.

SARAH

Discernment part 2: What success looks like to me now



This article was first published by NZBMS and is reproduced with permission.

This is the second piece in a reflective series from our recently returned global workers.

Why and how did we choose to come back? We decided to return to New Zealand because we sensed the timing was good on a whole number of levels. I’m really thankful that God has a way of weaving everybody’s timelines together, so it did feel like it was the right time. It felt like the right time for my mental health. It felt like the right time for our kids as one was starting high school. And it felt like the

right time for the L-y-l crew as well.

Because of Covid, the local crew ran the workshop for six months without any foreign involvement, and they grew in their confidence and sense of responsibility during that time. When we returned to South Asia in 2021, we felt we needed to have a different leadership posture, or we would sabotage the ground they had made. It felt as though we were stepping into something sacred. We needed to be careful that we didn’t squash the incredible growth that our team had experienced. So actually, Covid kind of sped up the succession process.

There were about nine months left in 2021 for us to pass the business on, which was tight. We would have liked a little longer, but it felt like a good amount of time for staff to keep growing without Paul and I taking up too much space again. Even though it felt like the right decision, there’s a lot of letting go which has to be done. Letting go of certain dreams, ideals, my ego, the culture’s definition of what success looks like, and grieving that we would no longer be sharing our lives with our staff members on a day-to-day basis. It was tough on those fronts, but I also felt really hopeful that our staff had grown so much while we were away, which was a great reminder that L-y-l is God’s business and not ours. And sometimes, our presence can get in the way of other people’s growth. Sometimes as foreigners, we take up too much space. It can easily happen to the founders of a business or an organisation. It was beautiful to experience and watch our leaders grow when we took up less space.

I think a big part of deciding to leave came about from a change in how I defined what success and failure looked like. I used to think success meant picking up my belongings and my coffin, moving overseas and never returning. But now I think success looks like leaving - leaving in a healthy space. I think success looks like everyone growing in their freedom together, including the foreigners. If we are serious about being a freedom business, we all need to grow in our freedom. I think success looks like dying to our ego, handing things over to local staff, and being willing to lose control. Success looks very different to me now. And that change in perspective made it possible for me to leave. I used to think we would be abandoning our staff if we left, but actually, it’s kind of like the empty-nester stage. Except, instead of the children growing up and leaving home, our ladies have grown so much that we need to leave home and allow them space to keep growing. Yeah, that feels very healthy. Painful, but healthy. And that feels like success.

In the process of leaving well, we developed a

succession planning team that consists of nine people: five New Zealanders and four local staff. The purpose of creating the team was that they would help lead the significant changes the workshop was going through over the next three years. We meet quarterly with the meetings being held in the Bengali language - we've been making excellent progress. That team is helping to embed the changes into the culture of the business. We are intentionally raising local leadership at the core of the business and re-envisioning foreigners as value adds instead of essential workers.

This is a fantastic ideal. To be honest, it's been really tough on the foreigners even though we all agree with it. It is very challenging for our ego to become a value-added person rather than an essential person. That has felt tough and uncertain, but we still believe in what we're doing. That's the most sustainable way forward: that L-y-l wouldn't depend on foreigners for the day-to-day running, and that's what we feel committed to pursuing. God has been very gracious in this process, weaving the timelines of everybody's needs together. And it has felt as though God has carried us through the big changes.

While we were excited about many aspects of moving back to New Zealand, re-establishing our lives here has been challenging. But again, we really feel God's grace helping us to connect with the land and connecting with the people in our area. It feels like roots are starting to take hold, and that feels like a beautiful, gracious work of God.

NICOLA MOUNTFORT 2 new lecturers for our college!



This content was first published by Carey Baptist College on 27 September 2022.

Introducing **Jonathan Robinson**, new lecturer in New Testament at Carey Baptist College! Jonathan is currently pastor of Musselburgh Baptist Church in Dunedin and a teaching fellow in the Theology Programme at the University of Otago.

Jonathan completed his PhD in the Gospel of Mark under Professor Paul Trebilco at Otago. Before this, he was the senior pastor at Blockhouse Bay Baptist Church.

This appointment is something of a homecoming for Jonathan, who served previously as Coordinator of Internships at Carey. Jonathan brings to the role 14 years' experience in pastoral ministry, both in the United Kingdom and New Zealand.



Introducing **Emma Stokes**, new lecturer in Bible and Mission at Carey Baptist College!



Emma is currently Partnership Facilitator (South-East Asia) and Board Member for Bright Hope World, a Christian-based humanitarian organisation with a vision of seeing the poorest of the poor become spiritually and physically self-sustaining. She has worked for World Vision New Zealand and during her time as Youth Director for Global Connections in Mission developed and led Headspace, a missional discipleship program. To support and resource her missional engagement and teaching, Emma is completing a PhD in New Testament at the University of Otago.

An experienced practitioner and gifted academic, Emma shares Carey's deep commitment to the mission of God. She writes, "I am driven by the deep conviction that the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to transform lives and communities. This not only fuels my own participation in God's work in the world, but also the desire to be part of a learning institution that ignites that conviction and response in others."

NEW COLUMN

Getting to Know...

'Getting to know...' is a new column where we discover more about our Baptist whānau, meeting someone in our team of 40,000 in each post. Let's kick it off by getting to know Charles Hewlett, the National Leader of the Baptist Union.

CHARLES HEWLETT



What is something you think everyone should experience at least once in their life?

Visiting Rio de Janeiro in Brazil – it is spectacular! Copacabana beach, Christ the Redeemer statue, and Sugarloaf Mountain. Some of the most stunning things I have ever seen!

If you could be a pro at any one thing, what would it be?

I would love to be a professional squash player. I played a lot of squash in my early years – best game ever – concentration, hand-eye coordination, strength and fitness, mental well-being...I definitely need to start playing again!

What is a random interest that has completely nothing to do with your study or work?

Hmmm...I am struggling to answer this one – bad eh! My work-life balance is clearly not as it should be.

What is the oddest fact you know?

The Bible is the most stolen book in the world – so much for the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not steal,” Apparently, Bibles are regularly taken from hotels and hospitals etc. – I guess this is a good thing?!

What is the most boring thing you’ve ever done?

Once I went on a road trip with Carey Principal John Tucker. After explaining Baptist

history, he moved on to Baptist ecclesiology and then tried to justify preaching being a sacrament. Fortunately, we arrived at our venue just as the conversation turned to keeping in shape!

What is your favourite way of connecting with God?

Going for a very long walk along the beach, listening for the voice of God as the waves crash onto the shore. Psalm 93 always comes to mind, “Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea - the LORD on high is mighty.”

Can you describe a significant moment when you experienced God’s love?

Strangely, the significant suffering of my children has helped me to know God deeper. I remember one evening in Starship Hospital, holding my daughter as she convulsed from her brain tumour. It was at that time that I understood the God of Romans 8 and that nothing is able to separate me from the love of God. Even in the darkest moment of my life, I experienced God’s presence and love.

What is your favourite thing about the neighbourhood where you live?

My house is only 75 meters from Ellerslie village. I love wandering down the hill and walking past the many cafes and the many people spilling out on the street. The coffee, the food, the conversations, the smiles, the diversity...I love the sense of community - of belonging somewhere smaller in the big city of Auckland!

What do you love most about being Baptist?

I immediately think of four core things that come together to make Baptist: Commitment to the Bible (guiding us, directing us, giving priority), Uncompromising Discipleship (Jesus Christ and the Gospel are worth giving up your life for), Inclusivity (everyone has value, everyone’s voice matters), and Space to be Imaginative (having a radical edge and the flexibility to re-invent ourselves). I believe that when these four things come together, things will happen! Who doesn’t want to be part of that?!



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