

BAPTISTS IN AUSTRALIA:

A church with a heritage and a future

Philip J Hughes
and Darren Cronshaw



Endorsements

Darren Cronshaw has thoroughly researched and summarised both the history of Australian Baptists and where they are in the present. His book presents a good platform with which churches can engage in order to launch into a more missional future.

Pastor Philip Bryant

Church Health Consultant, Baptist Churches Western Australia

Philip Hughes and Darren Cronshaw show just what a diverse community Australian Baptists are, and what a rich variety of experiences and lives of faith have brought them to where they are. This book will help Baptists, and all who are interested in them, to understand both where they have come from and where they might be going.

Rev Tim Costello

CEO World Vision

The subtitle of this book, “A church with a heritage and a future” hints at a major challenge facing Baptists in Australia today: being a denomination in an increasingly post-institutional world. The influence of post-modernity on Australian culture means that many are reluctant to be aligned with Christian denominations. However, this concise and readable volume sets out the history and current state of Australian Baptists in such a way as to invite readers, of various worldviews, to understand and join the global movement of people who proudly wear the label “Baptist.”

Rev Dr Ian Hussey

Lecturer, Malyon College, Queensland

An earlier highly regarded version of this book (1996) by respected Uniting Church minister and social researcher Philip J Hughes is here updated and expanded in association with Darren Cronshaw, a Victorian Baptist pastor and educator.

This important book not only surveys significant aspects of Australian Baptist heritage and beliefs but also analyses contemporary Baptists’ identity and role in society. The history includes brief biographies of leading Baptist figures and an outline of distinctive beliefs and practices places them clearly in their ecclesial, global and national context. The second part carefully analyses census data and church surveys to offer a comprehensive picture of the social and religious life of contemporary Baptists. This most recent data is carefully interpreted and makes significant insights available to church leaders and students of religion in Australian society. This is where the “future” of Baptists may be suggested.

Baptists in Australia is warmly commended as a valuable resource that will challenge Baptists about many aspects of their life and mission. Denominational and local church leaders will want to reflect on its findings. Those from the wider community will find this a helpful guide to a small but influential denomination that has adapted to change perhaps more successfully than many other traditional denominations.

Rev Dr Ken Manley

Distinguished Professor Whitley College; Former Principal of Whitley College (1987–2000) and lecturer in Church History at Burleigh, Morling and Whitley Colleges.

Baptists in Australia by Hughes and Cronshaw is simply valuable research that will help us to understand ourselves in a world that demands we position ourselves better for mission.

Rev John Smith

Superintendent and Mission Team Leader, Baptist Churches of Tasmania

Whether to you Australian Baptists are a mysterious mob or familiar as family, this book is an excellent snapshot of the present, portrait of the past and glimpse of the future. Hughes and Cronshaw have dug deep with both historical and statistical research to expose the “whys” as well as the “what” of the Baptist movement in Australia. Their findings are both fascinating and challenging for leaders and the movement as a whole.

Rev Andrew Turner

Church Development Facilitator, Baptist Churches of SA

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A church with a heritage and a future

**Philip J. Hughes
and Darren Cronshaw**

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Foreword

In my faculty lounge at Morling College sits the old pulpit of Burton Street Baptist Church. The pulpit is the one from which the evangelist John G. Ridley preached his famous sermon on Eternity. The message so moved Arthur Stace, the reformed alcoholic and petty criminal, that he went into the streets of Sydney armed with nothing more than a stick of chalk and over the next decades wrote the word “Eternity” some 600,000 times on the streets of Sydney. This Baptist graffiti artist was greatly revered and his life and message touched many people. As a result, when the new millennium dawned, there on the Sydney Harbour Bridge amidst the fireworks’ haze was the word “Eternity” in Arthur’s unique script. It appears, as some say, Arthur Stace did in one word what Patrick White took 100,000 words to say.

This story says something about Australian Baptists. They have always been committed to mission beyond the four walls of the church. They have been committed to a ministry of transformation. No doubt there have been different emphases and theological groups across the ages, but Baptists have sought to make a Godly impact for the gospel. They are a people-focused denomination who have had an influence far beyond their numbers.

So it was with pleasure that I agreed to write a foreword to Philip Hughes and Darren Cronshaw’s new book, *Baptists in Australia*. Its subtitle, *A Church with a Heritage and a Future*, appropriately introduces one to the breadth of the monograph. I know no other book like this. It is a one-stop-shop book that seeks to cover facets of our European Baptist beginnings, how Baptists settled in Australia, the Australian Baptist story to date (including the influence of USA Baptists), Baptist beliefs, ecclesiology, and what the census, the National Church Life Survey and other statistics tell us about Baptists. And throughout the journey we are introduced to one memorable Baptist character after another. These include such contrasting characters as “disgraced” first Baptist pastor John McKaeg and the inspired ministry of Silas Mead.

This book does not seek to be the definitive work on all things Baptist in this country (see Ken Manley 2006), but rather it offers to churches, pastors and enquirers, a real insight into Australia’s Baptist community.

In my role as President of the Baptist Union of Australia I attended meetings of National Church leaders. At my first meeting I was asked to briefly say something about the Baptist heritage. I mentioned we were from the “non-conformist” line of the church. To my surprise most present had no idea what I meant by this or why such a description is such a rich heritage. Hughes and Cronshaw leave the reader in no doubt that Baptist policy, from separation of church and state to the freedom of conscience of the individual, are landmarks of “non-conformist” Baptist life. Yet they take us into the different political emphasis of those who have been attracted to moral stands as seen in the temperance movement and anti-gambling campaigns to more “left” radical disciples, such as Athol Gill and their justice concerns. However I believe such positions of “right” and “left” are

hard to find today as Baptists tend to focus on a holistic approach to ethics and life.

Pleasingly the book ended with a real challenge. Whilst it positively notes that Baptists are the third largest group of church attenders in this country it poses hard questions as to our future. Since 1933 the proportion of the population that identify as Baptists has not grown. Much of our keeping in touch with population growth can be put down to what we have gained numerically from immigration. And whilst there are some good stories, including the young age profile of Baptist pastors, there are real challenges to be faced. Do we still have the will and passion to follow Arthur Stace out into the streets to touch our nation?

We are indebted to Hughes and Cronshaw for this timely book. I pray all pastors and Baptists read it. They will be greatly blessed and challenged.

Rev Dr Ross Clifford AM

Principal, Morling College, NSW; President of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation; Vice-President, Baptist World Alliance

Introduction

Where do Baptists in Australia come from, who are they, and what are the challenges and opportunities they face? These are questions for Baptist church members and leaders, and for those who are new to or exploring Baptist church life.

The Baptist inner-suburban Melbourne church, AuburnLife, which I, Darren, serve as pastor, invited people to share their faith and life stories over a period of months. One week we had the privilege to hear from our church secretary David Hughes. David and his wife Joanna have helped hold the church together over their 40 years at Auburn, including a period just before I arrived when David was the sole deacon, secretary and treasurer. David shared about his significant formation moments; as a child at Ivanhoe Baptist Church, going to Carey Baptist Grammar School, going to university and living at Whitley College – the Baptist residential college of the University of Melbourne, serving at Auburn Baptist Church over the last four decades, and serving on the board of Whitley. As David narrated his Baptist formation and service, my daughter Emily lent over to my wife Jenni and asked “Mum, what’s a Baptist? Are we Baptists?”

What is a Baptist in Australia today? For those of us who identify as Baptists, what does that mean and to what extent are we connected with our heritage? How important or useful is that anyway? And what are the opportunities and challenges facing Baptists in Australia today? These are some of the questions we want to explore in this book.

In many ways Australia is a post-denominational country. Of those who do go to church, many are less concerned with denominational label and more interested in proximity, church style, or what services or mission opportunities the church has. Many members have more loyalty to their local church than their denomination. People in and outside the church sometimes wonder if there is one Bible and one Jesus, why there is a need for so many different church denominations and movements. Different denominations have a lot in common but also have certain different values and unique things to contribute. What is it to be Baptist in Australia today?

This is not just an academic question for us. I, Philip, was first ordained as a Baptist pastor in 1976 and served Baptist churches in inner city Melbourne and in Wangaratta. Now credentialed as a Uniting Church minister, I work full-time as the Senior Researcher of Christian Research Association (CRA) with an interest in what is happening across the whole Australian church. But I have maintained a particular interest in what is happening among Baptists.

I, Darren, have been a Baptist pastor and missionary for sixteen years. As well as leading a small inner-suburban local Baptist church at Auburn as pastor, work on the Mission Catalyst team with the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), and train and resource Baptist pastors and leaders to understand our context for church and mission.



Baptism at AuburnLife, Melbourne, Victoria
(Photography by Jennifer Cronshaw)

We are personally and professionally interested in exploring what are the challenges and opportunities facing Baptists, what is the heritage we draw on, and what is the future of Baptists in Australia? These are important questions that need to inform how Baptists might navigate that future.

Baptists are not a small religious group in Australia: 352,449 people (adults and children) identified as Baptist in the 2011 Australian Census. This included 270,124 adults aged 18+, and according to the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2009), 63 per cent of these, 170,178 Australians, attended a church monthly or more. In terms of people participating rather than just identifying, this makes Baptists the third largest church group in Australia (or fourth largest if Pentecostals are grouped together as a single group). Only Catholics and Anglicans as single denominations have more people participating monthly, although their proportion of people who identify and also attend is lower. Moreover, Baptists are one of the few denominations to be growing faster than population growth in Australia. The sources and limitations of that growth point in strategic directions for the future of Baptists in Australia which the book will begin to explore.

In some ways this is two books, or one book with two major sections. The book begins with a broad overview of Baptist origins and Australian Baptist history. It offers brief discussion of Baptist distinctive beliefs and how Baptist churches are organised. A selection of biographies of some Baptist heroes are included. Baptists do not tend to call them saints, but nevertheless have some inspiring characters in their heritage. So half of the book looks into the past at Baptist history to see what significant movements and people have formed Baptist heritage.

The second half of the book focuses on detailed national statistics of Baptist churches and discussion of their implications for the mission of Baptists in Australia today, and begins to explore challenges for the future. Thus the book explores the history and the current state of Baptists, in order to develop ministry and mission implications for the future of Baptists in Australia.

The subtitle “A church with a tradition and a future” is borrowed from a school in northern Victoria whose integrated pride in its past and hope for the future is reflected in its

motto, “a school with a tradition and a future”. That is the pride we see appropriate for Baptists as they learn from their past and their hope for the future as they look forward to cooperating with God in the mission opportunities they face.

This book had a past life as *The Baptists in Australia* (by Philip J Hughes, Canberra: Religious Community Profiles published by Australian Government Printing Service 1996) and then as a section in the *Australian Religious Communities CD Rom* (2010). This current edition has been updated, most significantly with input from the 2011 Census, the 2011 National Church Life Survey, and other recent denominational data. Further updates on Baptists and similar books about other denominations will follow. For now, we hope and pray this book will be a valuable resource for understanding the challenges and opportunities for Baptists in Australia today.

General History

Movements of Dissent



Baptism in the King River, Wangaratta, Victoria

(Photography by Hazel Hughes)

The “Baptists”, as the name for a Christian group, became commonly used in the 17th century. It arose as one of many movements desiring reform in the Christian church which developed in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (other Reformation churches include: the Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Reformed and Congregationalists).

There were two major dimensions of the Reformation movement in England. One was primarily political and had to do with the authority of the Pope over the kings and queens of England. Henry VIII reigned through the first half of the century. Conflict with the Pope regarding Henry’s marriages led to Henry’s assumption of the title of the Head of the Church in England and resulted in his excommunication from the Catholic church.

Henry had less interest in the second dimension of the Reformation movement: the issues of the faith and practice and the ordering of the church. During the reign of Edward VI, following Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer and other leaders in the Church of England introduced many Protestant reforms.

Elizabeth I, who reigned from 1558 until 1603, maintained some reforms but not to the extent many wished. Towards the end of her reign, some small groups of people felt that the Church of England would never reflect the teachings about the church in the New Testament as they understood them. Believing that the church should be constituted only by those personally committed to it, and should be responsible only to the community of such people, they felt that it was necessary to separate the church from the state. They became known as “Separatists”.

The next king, James I, also disappointed many people who wished to see reform in the church in England. James made it clear that there should be uniformity in the church. It is said that 300 clergy were ejected from the church in 1604 because they were not conforming to his demands. The Separatists were constantly persecuted for breaking the law requiring attendance at public worship in the Church of England.

This was part of the problem of Christendom, the era of history that assumed and enforced a Christian society and expected everyone to be Christian as the State defined it. Some saw this as a problem in the medieval Catholic church, and later some saw it still as a problem in the Church of England and other Reformation churches. Not everyone wanted to conform, or believed that was what Christianity was about. The first Baptists emerged as “non-conformist”, believing that the church should not be constituted simply by those who were born into a society which saw itself as “Christian”, but through personal commitment.

The First Baptists

John Smyth (1570-1612) was a clergyman who had graduated from Cambridge University. In 1600, he was appointed as “lecturer” or preacher of the city of Lincoln. Six years later, he separated from the Church of England and gathered a group of like-minded people at Gainsborough. He was appointed as the pastor of this group.

To escape persecution (at that time dissenters were being burned at the stake for ‘heresy’), the group emigrated to Amsterdam where they settled in a bakehouse belonging to a Mennonite, Jan Munter. In the next few years, the group sought to develop the church according to their understanding of the New Testament model. As they did so, there was a lot of communication, and argument, with other groups seeking to work out how to be the church. The group had dialogue with Mennonite groups, and through them came into contact with some of the ideas from the Anabaptist movement, the most radical movement of the Reformation.



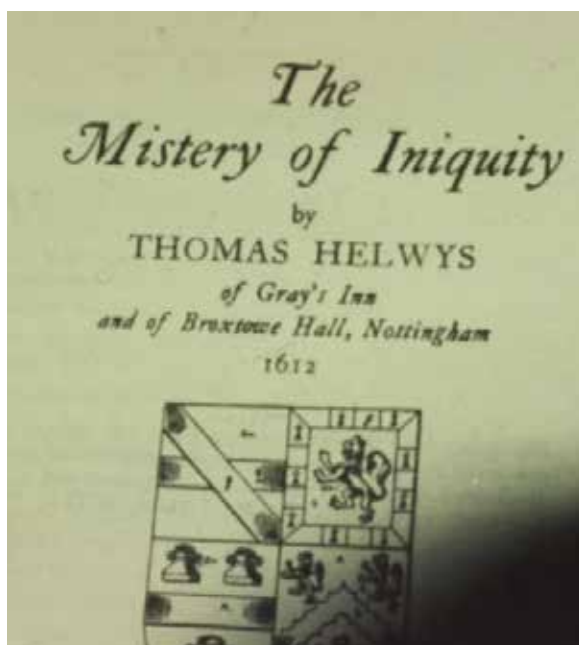
Drawing of the bakehouse in Amsterdam where Smyth and the first Baptists settled *(Photo by Philip Hughes)*

Smyth was concerned about the form of the Church and the ways it should act and worship. He stressed the necessity of a “person-to-person” confrontation with God, and placed secondary emphasis on liturgy and organisation in the church (Torbet, 1982, p.17). Worship was to be simple and spontaneous. But how should the Church discern the authority of Christ? Gradually, he clarified his ideas about the organisational structures of the church, recognising two kinds of officers, pastors and deacons, whom Smyth argued should be elected by local church members.

Smyth became convinced that membership should be of adults who had been baptised upon their profession of faith. He felt that the infant baptism his congregation had received in the Church of England was worthless since he was not baptised as a believer. Smyth baptised himself and then the other members of his community. Thus was the first Baptist church founded in Amsterdam in 1609 and Smyth is considered the founder of Baptist churches. Incidentally, the first baptisms were not by immersion but by affusion in which a handful of water from a basin was poured over the head.

Smyth argued strongly for the principle of religious freedom for all people. He believed that the State should not interfere in religion or in matters of conscience, and should not force or compel people to particular religious beliefs or doctrines. Stressing believer's baptism and advocating for religious freedom was important for Smyth in his historical context, and they have remained two of the major distinctive principles of the Baptists since.

There has been discussion about the extent to which Smyth's group were influenced by the Mennonites in Amsterdam. Smyth was sympathetic to Mennonites and adopted some Mennonite principles such as baptism only of believers but rejected others including belief in pacifism, non-participation in government, and opposition to taking oaths (Brackney 1983, p.15; Torbet 1982, p.24). Some Baptists, albeit a minority, since that time have adopted these other Mennonite or Anabaptist principles, for example seeing pacifism as central to following Jesus and seeking to live out the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in a literal way.



Smyth's group split into two. One of the groups eventually joined a Mennonite church in Amsterdam after Smyth's death. The other group returned to London, under the leadership of Thomas Helwys (1575-1616), and founded the first Baptist church on English soil close to London in 1612. Helwys is considered a joint founder, with Smyth, of the Baptist denomination. Helwys participated in drafting the first Baptist declaration of faith, and wrote what was probably the first book to be published in England appealing for universal religious liberty and the freedom of conscience for all. A copy of this book exists personally addressed to James I. He might have read it, but he would not have appreciated it. Helwys was thrown in prison and died there in 1616.

Other leaders emerged to continue the life of the group and other Baptist churches were established. Correspondence of 1626 shows that by that time, the church of Spitalfields near London which Helwys had started was working with four sister churches in England.

Particular Baptists

Another distinct stream of Baptists emerged in England around this time and became known as the Particular Baptists, to distinguish them from the former groups which were called General Baptists. The Particular Baptists held to Calvinistic beliefs, believing that Christ had only died for "the elect", the particular group chosen by God to believe. The General Baptists, on the other hand, believed that Christ had died for all people and it was up to the individual to respond to the offer of salvation.

The Particular Baptists emerged from a London church of Congregational separatists which had been founded in 1616. While details have been lost, by 1638 a group of six people had separated from the church over the issue of baptism, arguing against the baptism of infants. This group of people, under the leadership of John Spilsbury, became the first Particular Baptist Church.

Seventeenth Century Growth and Freedom

In 1630, Roger Williams, who had been ordained in the Church of England, sailed for North America in search of religious freedom. In 1639 he established what is generally considered to be the first Baptist church in the colonies. Today, Baptist churches have more members in America than any other single country. In 2010, the two major Baptist denominations in the USA, the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, had more than 25 million members and 30 million affiliates, a large portion of the total number of Baptists worldwide (Mandryk, 2010, p.862).



Earliest surviving Baptist chapel at Tewkesbury, near Gloucester, England
(Photo by Philip Hughes)

During the Civil War in England (1642-1651), the Baptist movement spread rapidly. There were a number of Baptists in the New Model Army of Oliver Cromwell. As the army moved around England, Baptist soldiers started many small groups. Cromwell, as Lord Protector, came to believe that religious toleration was beneficial for England. Baptists had the opportunity to express their opinions in printed form and through public debates and won many people to their point of view. By 1660, there were about 300 Baptist congregations, mainly in the south of England and in the Midlands, the Particular Baptists back at that time being more numerous than the General Baptists. The congregations were independent of each other and made their own decisions through free discussion among members. However the General Baptists were quick to form associations of congregations within a geographical area for mutual encouragement.

After Charles II took the throne in 1660, the English Parliament passed a number of acts that made the nonconformist churches, including the Baptists, illegal. This led to a fresh wave of persecution and from 1664 people over the age of 16 could be punished for attending a nonconformist service of worship and for not attending an Anglican service based on the Book of Common Prayer. Nonconformists were also excluded from public positions and municipal life. These regulations remained in force, with one brief period of respite, until 1687. Other churches impacted by the act included the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians.

John Bunyan, one of the most famous non-conformist Christians often associated with the Baptists, was imprisoned during this period. During his imprisonment he wrote one of the most famous Christian books of all time, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

In 1687 James II proclaimed a Declaration of Indulgence suspending all penal laws on church matters. Nonconformist prisoners were released. In 1688, William of Orange came to the throne, and in 1689 proclaimed an Act of Toleration in which compulsory attendance at the services of the Church of England was abolished and nonconformists were allowed freedom of worship.

The choice of which church to attend – or whether to worship at all – is something we take very much for granted in 21st century Australia. But this freedom was a new idea in the seventeenth-century.

Eighteenth Century Decline

Despite religious freedom, many churches went into decline over the next half-century. The Baptists did not have strong leadership. Ministers generally known as elders, and evangelists known as messengers, were neither trained for their work nor paid for it. They had to earn their living through other occupations. Many Baptist congregations met in homes.

There were contentious issues such as singing in services of worship. Some Baptist congregations forbade all singing. Others said that it was only permissible to sing Psalms. In 1691, the first hymnbook had been introduced, but most Baptists did not take kindly to it.

The General Baptists had always believed that children were innocent, and, in that sense, did not accept the idea of original sin. In the early eighteenth century, there was a generalising of these ideas towards the abiding goodness of human beings. Human reason was lauded and the advances of science applauded. As part of the liberalising tendency of the day, some General Baptists, along with members of other denominations, came to reject the divinity of Christ and the idea of the Trinity, a position known as Unitarianism.

The Particular Baptists also declined numerically. None of them moved into Unitarianism. But some of them took their Calvinism to such a point where they considered it inappropriate to proclaim the Gospel outside the church as it might awaken the consciences of the unconverted who were not among God's chosen people. This position, which became known as "Hyper-Calvinism", has been preserved in the Strict and Particular Baptist churches.

The New Connexion, Revival and a World-Wide Movement

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical revival including the Methodist revival was widespread in its influence. Many Baptists viewed the new enthusiasm with suspicion. (It is interesting that each new movement of God is often mistrusted by those who went before!) That the Methodists continued to baptise infants was also a point of contention.

The revival did affect some Baptists. Dan Taylor (1738-1816), a young English Baptist minister, became disillusioned with the Unitarianism and conservatism of Baptist churches. He began to build a new association of churches which he called the New Connexion. The churches in this association were General Baptists, but characterised by a strong evangelical zeal and corporate feeling. They encouraged congregational hymn singing and started Sunday Schools for children. They formed the General Baptist Missionary Society in 1816 to send people to proclaim the Gospel overseas. By 1817,

there were seventy New Connexion churches with a total of seven thousand members.

The old Assembly of General Baptist churches declined in numbers and significance. At the same time, the New Connexion, with its background in some of the emphases of the Methodist revival, was growing.

Revival also came to the Particular Baptists through some strong and open-minded leaders. George Whitefield was one leading Evangelical (not Baptist) figure who greatly influenced Particular Baptists. In 1792, with the support of several prominent leaders, William Carey formed the first Baptist Missionary Society which then commissioned Carey and others for missionary work in India. The Baptist Missionary Society, more than anything else, brought the Particular Baptists together with a common aim and purpose. Despite other differences, it is often a shared sense of responsibility for mission that brings Baptists together.

New colleges for training ministers were established in England around this time. Late in the seventeenth century, an elder at the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol left money to support the training of ministers. By 1720, effective work had begun under this bequest which developed into the Bristol Baptist College. In 1804 a second college was founded in the north of England, and in 1810 a college in London, which later became Regent's Park College (Oxford). The English Baptists realised early that the training of pastors and leadership development was important for the future of the movement.

The missionary program helped to make the Baptists a world-wide movement. Through the nineteenth century, Baptist missionaries extended their work beyond India. They established Baptist churches in Jamaica, the Congo and other parts of Africa, and in China, Burma and other parts of Asia. One missionary, William Knibb (1803-1845) who served in Jamaica, was influential in having slavery abolished in the British colonies.

Baptist churches grew dramatically in America with the First Great Awakening in the mid eighteenth century and the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century. People were attracted by the simple democracy of Baptist congregations, the informality of services, the simple language and enthusiastic singing. The Baptists were never part of "the establishment" in America and were in sympathy with the cause of Independence. Baptist preachers toured the rural and remote areas and established many congregations. Throughout America, but particularly in the south, the Baptist movement saw spectacular growth.

In 1834, J.G. Oncken (1800-1884), known as the "Apostle of European Baptists", founded a Baptist church in Hamburg, Germany. From this arose many Baptist churches throughout Europe, especially amongst German and Slavic speaking people. The Baptist movement reached Russia, where it has become one of the major Protestant denominations.

Nineteenth Century Unity and New Divisions

Through the nineteenth century, the Baptists in England expanded quite rapidly. In 1801, they had 652 buildings and by 1851, had 2789. The differences between the Particular Baptists and the General Baptists weakened. There was a decline in Calvinism among the Particular Baptists. While they might have spoken of “God’s elect”, the idea that there might be a precise limit to those deemed to be “the elect” was dropped.

Many Particular Baptists as well as General Baptists began to practise “open communion”, offering the Lord’s Supper to people who professed faith but who had not been baptised as adults by immersion. This is almost universally practised by Baptist churches today, at least in Australia, but it was an innovation in nineteenth century England. Australia followed a similar trend of opening up the Lord’s Table and welcoming all confessing Christians to celebrate communion.

Some churches among both General and Particular Baptist churches also advocated open membership, accepting people as members who had not been baptised as believers. They argued that the only Scriptural injunction for membership was that the person had a sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In contrast to open communion, this is still a contentious issue. Today Baptist churches are divided between those who practise open membership, those who are closed membership (insisting on believer’s baptism by immersion) and those with “modified open membership” (accepting another form of baptism).

Through the latter part of the century, there was increasing cooperation between General and Particular Baptists and frequent movement of ministers between the two groups. In 1891, the Association of the New Connexion resolved to accept the invitation to become amalgamated with the Particular Baptists. The two Missionary Societies were united and the Building Funds amalgamated. Local associations received New Connexion General Baptists in their midst. The adjectives “Particular” and “General” were dropped.

There were some new issues and divisions, however, which were to have some repercussions on the churches in Australia.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a prominent leader of Baptists in the south of England. Known as the “Prince of Preachers”, he was famous for his preaching which drew huge crowds. People appreciated his independence and outspokenness, his commonsense and unworldliness, and his deep conviction. At 20, he was called to New Park Street Chapel, the largest Baptist church in London of the time. When it outgrew its existing premises, the “Metropolitan Tabernacle” was built, with seating for 5000, an antecedent of today’s megachurches. He established his own college for training pastors which, during his lifetime, trained 900 men for ministry (now called “Spurgeon’s College”, England’s largest Baptist theological training college).

Spurgeon was concerned about “heresy” creeping into the churches in the form of ideas about evolution and a critical, scientific approach to the Bible. He wanted the Baptists to adopt a creed as a test of orthodoxy. The Baptist Union as a whole resisted Spurgeon’s demands and eventually Spurgeon left the Baptist Union.

While Spurgeon was concerned with philanthropy, another leading Baptist John Clifford (1836-1923) drew attention to the social implications of the Christian faith. At the start of the First World War, he defended conscientious objectors, and with great energy defended the liberty of conscience. While he was a strong evangelical, he was open to the new thinking of critical biblical studies and not afraid of a scientific approach to the Bible. He was convinced of the need to defend the Baptist heritage of religious liberty. Clifford visited Australia in 1897, although Spurgeon undoubtedly had greater influence (Manley 2006a, p.126).

Spurgeon and Clifford represented two patterns of Baptist thinking and practice: one more personal, pietistic and theologically conservative, the other more social minded and interested in academic scholarship. Although the former has dominated Baptist church life in Australia, the latter has also been present. Differences between the two have not tended to divide the Baptist Unions in Australia, but individual leaders (and churches and Unions) have often emphasised one pattern or the other.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were Baptist congregations in many parts of the world. In 1905 the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) was formed in London with the purpose of bringing unity and fellowship to Baptists and encouraging cooperation in their common mission of evangelisation, responding to global need and defending human rights. Australian Baptists have been a part of this alliance, and, in recent years, have played a significant role in it. In the year 2000, the Baptist World Alliance met in Melbourne. At the end of 2011, the Baptist World Alliance included 223 member bodies in 120 countries with 41.5 million members (<http://www.bwanet.org/about-us2/statistics>).

History of Baptists in Australia

Baptist churches have existed in Europe since 1609 and in America since 1639. There are few references to any Baptists in Australia until the 1830s, over forty years after the arrival of the First Fleet. There could have been some Baptists among the early convicts or soldiers, but they are not recorded as such. In the early days of the colony, the religion of arrivals was generally registered as Protestant, Catholic or “no response”. The earliest ministers were government-appointed Church of England chaplains and there was not much scope for ministers of other denominations for many years.

In 1828, a census was held in the New South Wales colony. In the white population of 36,000 people, only one person, an ex-convict, explicitly identified himself as a Baptist, although it is likely that there were other Baptists who identified themselves as Protestants.

John McKaeg

The first recorded Baptist service in Australia took place on 24th April, 1831. The minister was John McKaeg, and it was conducted in a room at the Rose and Crown Inn in Castlereagh Street in Sydney. McKaeg had been a minister of a church in Yorkshire. He came to Australia after his church divided and was expelled from the county association of Baptist churches.

McKaeg was probably the first to baptise new believers by full immersion in Australia. On Sunday 12 August 1832 he baptised two women in Woolloomooloo Bay, to the ridicule of seventy spectators. The baptism was followed by three more people three weeks later (Manley 2006a, pp.3-4).

In March 1832, John McKaeg attempted to build a Baptist chapel in Sydney. A committee was formed to raise the finance, and the Governor granted some land. However, the committee lost faith in McKaeg who was an impetuous and unstable character who attracted controversy. He had purchased a tobacco business, but the business was soon in considerable debt. He was imprisoned for debt and attempted suicide in gaol. That used to be the last record of him, but we now know he was rehabilitated after prison, became a spokesperson for total abstinence and died in Sydney in 1851.

John Saunders and New South Wales Foundations

In 1833, some Baptists in Sydney wrote to the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) asking for a pastor. BMS did not appoint anyone since they only served the “heathen”, but they suggested to Rev John Saunders (1806-1859) that he might go. In December 1834, Saunders arrived with his wife to pastor the Baptist church. Saunders was a very different person from McKaeg. While McKaeg had come to Australia alone and

without connections, Saunders came with the backing of the British Baptists. He took over the grant of land in Bathurst Street that had originally been made to McKaeg. On 23 September 1836, a chapel was opened on the site.



Rev John Saunders

(Original taken from Heads of the people (1847), reproduced in Manley and Petras, 2008)

John Saunders was a Particular Baptist, but with an open mind and liberal attitude about many Baptist practices. It was important to him that the church embraced not only Baptists, but served other non-conformists. He worked closely with Congregationalists, Methodists and others in the young colony. The church practised open communion and open membership. In other words, people who had not been baptised as adults were welcomed to participate in the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) and were accepted as full members of the church. Bathurst Street's practice in this was an early exception and few followed their example in the early days of Australian Baptist history. Saunders' church joined with other independents to support the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and the "German mission" to Aboriginal people.

Saunders was active in a variety of societies in Sydney which had been formed to uplift the life of the colony. He was especially interested in and received the highest public profile for his appeals for justice for Aborigines and his advocacy for temperance (Manley 2006a, pp.28-31).

As the colony fiercely debated the trial of the Myall Creek murderers – stockmen who had killed several Aboriginal people – Saunders preached on the Aborigines' behalf. He insisted Aboriginal people were fully human and worthy of full recognition of human rights. He acknowledged British wrongs in invading the land and brutalising

and fighting Aborigines, and called the colony to repentance and restitution! Aboriginal rights historian Henry Reynolds judges Saunders 1838 sermon as “one of the most eloquent presentations of humanitarian doctrine” from the period (Manley 2006a, pp.30-31; Reynolds 1998, p.24).

The other major public issue Saunders advocated was for temperance. Alcohol abuse and related domestic violence was an early big problem for the colony. Many Christians were concerned about the effect on individuals and families. But they were sometimes ridiculed and caricatured as fun-despising people. Far from criticising healthy enjoyment, those involved in the Temperance movement were motivated by their concern at the impact a drunken and permissive society had on families and children (Cronshaw 2006, pp.100-106).

Saunders was one of the early leaders in the Temperance movement. He became secretary of and a frequent speaker for the New South Wales Temperance Society. He edited a magazine for the society which developed a circulation of over 4000. The society received the support of Governor Gipps and grew quickly in the colony. It was distinct from the Total Abstinence Society, permitting its members to drink wine and beer, but not distilled spirits, except for medicinal purposes.

Saunders was also involved in the discussions about the development of schools in the new colony. He had wide interests in science and regularly lectured in the School of Arts on scientific subjects such as aerodynamics, chemistry and biology. He befriended newly arrived immigrants and served as a committee member on the Benevolent Society, which was the most significant charity in Sydney. He opposed transportation and was active in pressing the Governor for its abolition.

While Saunders himself was involved in these activities in the early colony, and while some of his followers joined him, the church itself did not participate. There are no notices of motion in church meetings, for example, about transportation or education. For Saunders and other early Baptists these matters were personal, and not seen as inherently the work of the church. The essential work of the church was seen as converting individuals, and building their faith.

Saunders maintained a strong distinction between the jurisdiction of church and state. This reflects a Baptist conviction about the importance of the separation of church and state which was quite different to Christendom assumptions and practice. In 1836, The Bourke Church Act was passed in New South Wales which offered support to churches, but only the major denominations took advantage of it and the voluntary religionists chose not to accept it. It provided a modest stipend for a minister, depending on the size of his congregation, and some money towards a church building and minister's dwelling if private subscriptions had been raised. While some Baptists applied for this aid, most rejected state help. Saunders himself accepted the granting of land and some government money for building a chapel. But Baptists had strong principles arising from the view of the church as a group of committed individual believers. They had long argued that the state should allow freedom of worship, but in the spiritual realm, the church should have total jurisdiction. Baptists, like Congregationalists, Quakers and some Presbyterians and Methodists remained largely “unofficial”, in contrast the

“official” churches: Church of England, Catholic, and most Methodist and Presbyterian churches (Manley 2006a, p.19).

The distinction between church and state also affected how Baptists operated in the wider society. Saunders’ church had a poor fund which it used to help many desperate people who were connected to the church. However, Baptists undertook other work for the development of the colony as a whole as private individuals and not as members of the church.

The idea of separation from those not considered to be Christian had other implications. Several women in the early days of the Bathurst Street church were reprimanded for marrying men who were not members of the church. This made life difficult for the women as their numbers far outstripped those of men in the church.

The independence of the Baptists and their lack of organisation was a weakness in their development in Australia. As Baptists met each other in other places in the colony, they gathered for worship, often in homes or in small meeting rooms hired for the purpose. Their primary objectives were usually to find and provide income for a minister and to build a chapel. However, with small numbers and with little or no outside assistance from anyone, both objectives were hard to achieve.

There were many applications to the central and better-established Bathurst Street church for help in starting churches in other places. Small congregations in Wollongong, Parramatta and Goulburn applied for help, and received small, one-off donations. There was no organisation to provide continuing assistance and little or no help from the churches in England.

While the English national Union of churches brought churches together, it had limited finances as a Union from which to offer help. The Baptist Missionary Society had more finance. However, it saw itself as “taking the Gospel to the heathen”, and did not consider that support of struggling churches in Australia was within its charter.

In 1836, the Baptist Colonial Missionary Society was formed in London with the aim of establishing “free religion according to Baptist principles in Australian and New Zealand colonies”. However, it lasted a very short time due to lack of financial support.

The Baptist cause in Sydney grew gradually. In 1846, a schoohouse was built to house a growing Sunday School. However, in 1847, John Saunders resigned because of ill health, and returned to England. His place was taken by Rev John Ham (1797-1870) who had migrated from England and first served as Melbourne’s first Baptist minister at Collins Street Baptist Church (1843-1847). Ham took over from Saunders at Bathurst Street Baptist Church in 1848, at which time there were 124 on the membership roll.

Beginnings of Baptist Communities in other States

Similar patterns of growth occurred in the other Australian states. Often, the first Baptists in an area worshipped with other non-conformists, such as Congregationalists and Methodists. As they grew in numbers they built their own chapels and called their own

ministers. In Ballarat, for example, which had grown dramatically with the discovery of gold, Baptists joined with Congregationalists and Presbyterians to form a Union church in 1856. In 1858, they separated to become a distinctive fellowship with their own minister.

In most states, the first church founded was often looked upon as a mother church for other churches which emerged in various centres. However, the links between these churches were dependent on the connections that individuals made rather than on the development of a hierarchical or authoritative structure. Each congregation remained autonomous.

In a few cases, groups of Baptist churches deliberately set out to open new churches in other places. South Australian Baptists had forged an association in 1863. In 1888, they took steps to send a minister to begin work in the Broken Hill district. In that year, a small congregation was formed in Broken Hill with 26 members.

The independence of Baptists led to many factions. Throughout the history of Baptists in Australia there have been strong disagreements about theological matters, many of which had their roots in differences in the English churches. During the time of John Saunders in Sydney, another Baptist group met just a street or so away in a chapel built by William Crawford in 1842. It is likely that this church distinguished itself from that of Saunders by having closed communion and closed membership, accepting only people who had been baptised as adults. The congregation dwindled, however, and the building passed into other hands.

The first Baptist service in Victoria was held in Melbourne in 1839 in a borrowed tent in Collins Street on land that an early settler Thomas Napier had acquired. There was no minister, just a group of lay people with widely differing backgrounds. In 1842, Rev John Ham arrived from England on his way to Sydney. He stopped in Melbourne and assisted the formation of a Baptist church. In 1845, the first chapel was built in Collins Street. With unfortunate splits and theological differences, by 1851 there were three Baptist churches in Melbourne! (Manley 2006a, pp.39-43).

Baptist congregations were formed as the population became large enough to support them. The Gold Rush in Victoria and New South Wales led to huge increases in population, and Baptists were among them. Baptist congregations were formed at Bathurst in 1863 and Orange in 1869.

With the early arrival of free settlers in Tasmania, a tentative start of an early Baptist work was made in Launceston in the 1830s (Manley 1996a, p.36). However, the first Baptist church in Tasmania was formally constituted in 1835 in Hobart. In later years, Tasmanian Baptists received the assistance of good leadership from people such as Rev Henry Dowling who began ministry there in January 1835. Thomas Spurgeon, the son of Charles Haddon Spurgeon visited Tasmania six times in the nineteenth century and influenced Baptist work in that part of Australia. He won the support of some wealthy Baptists, William and Mary Ann Gibson, who contributed large amounts of money towards the building of fifteen churches, the importing of trained ministers into the colony and ensuring their stipends were paid. By 1885, Spurgeon's College graduates were found in every pulpit in the Tasmanian colony.

The churches in Australia followed the English pattern of developing associations for their mutual encouragement. While in England, the counties each had their own association, in Australia these were formed on a state basis in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

- ◆ 1862 Baptist Union of Victoria
- ◆ 1863 Baptist Union of South Australia (now Baptist Churches in South Australia)
- ◆ 1868 New South Wales Baptist Union (now Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT)
- ◆ 1877 Queensland Association (now Queensland Baptists)
- ◆ 1884 Baptist Union of Tasmania (now Baptist Churches of Tasmania)
- ◆ 1896 Baptist Union of Western Australia (now Baptist Churches of Western Australia)

The Queensland Association was formed in 1877 with about nine churches and a number of unconstituted fellowships. In the following decade, several other churches started in places such as Townsville, Charters Towers and Maryborough. The development of early Baptist communities in Queensland owes much to Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, who spent twenty years travelling through Queensland, preaching, bringing Baptists together, and offering pastoral help as a kind of “Queensland Baptist Founding Father”(see Manley 2006a:88-92).

In 1862, Rev James Taylor was minister at the Baptist church in Collins Street. He used to hold classes for potential ministers at his church. In 1888, the Victorians established a fund for starting a theological college. In 1891, Rev William T Whitley (1861-1947) arrived from England to be the principal of the first Baptist Theological College in Australia, later called Whitley College in his honour.

There were many other developments in the latter half of the nineteenth century as the Baptists grew in numbers, strength and confidence. Baptist newspapers were founded to inform Baptists about denominational affairs. Whitley himself was editor of the Victorian Baptist and then its successor, *The Southern Baptist*.

Home Mission work, as Baptists described the development of new churches, was begun on a more extensive and systematic scale and some home mission superintendents were appointed by state unions. Rev F.J. Wilkin (1855-1940), for example, worked in the Kerang area, leading to the development of twenty-one preaching points and ten churches. Wilkin later became a home superintendent of the Victorian Union and strengthened the work by selecting specific areas for Baptist outreach.

South Australia was a migrant colony of free settlers. The planners of the colony envisaged a place where there would be “the most complete civil, economic and religious freedom” (Hogan, 1987, p.41). The envisaged freedom attracted many people unhappy about some of the privileges the Church of England continued to enjoy as an established church in England. Among them were Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and Quakers. The first known Baptists to reach the colony were a Mr and Mrs Finlayson, Scottish Baptists who wanted to minister to the Aborigines.

The most significant leader in the nineteenth century in South Australia, if not all of Australia, was Rev Silas Mead (Manley 2006a, pp.98-106). A graduate of Regents Park College and the University of London, he was an able leader.

Mead founded the Flinders Street Church in Adelaide, which grew strongly under his leadership. In particular, his weekly Bible study groups led by lay people were very successful. He advocated open fellowship, welcoming unbaptised members into his church, and was not interested in sectarianism. This caused some controversy. However, his church provided a model for many Baptists in South Australia.

In 1864, Flinders Street Baptist Church began what later became the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, supporting the work of Baptists in East Bengal. In 1882, the first Baptist missionaries, Marie Gilbert and Ellen Arnold, departed for Faridpur. Three years later another woman Martha Plested departed from Queensland for overseas missionary work. In 1885, Ruth Wilkin and Marian Fuller from Victoria joined the work in India. These women captured the imagination of the Victorian Baptists leading to the formation of the Victorian Baptist Foreign Mission.

Mead was involved in many other aspects of the work in South Australia. He opened new churches and trained young ministers. At various times he held the position of President, General Secretary and Finance Secretary in the South Australian Baptist Association. He started the first Christian Endeavour Society in the colony in 1888 and participated in temperance programs.

Baptists were slow to organise independent communities in Western Australia. There are some records of Baptist joining Churches of Christ and Congregational churches. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that the first Baptist churches were founded. One of the first Baptist ministers to work in Western Australia was the son-in-law of Silas Mead, Rev A.S. Wilson. A Victorian, Rev William Kennedy, also played a significant role.

In 1896, the Baptist Union of Western Australia was founded with four churches: Fremantle, Perth, Bayswater and Katanning.

Baptist Churches in the First Half of the 20th Century

The problems of the Baptists in the nineteenth century followed them in the twentieth. In particular, the stress on individual freedom of conscience in matters of faith led to a general individualism. It was not easy for leaders to motivate Baptists to united action.

A few voices, such as that of Rev Montague Cartwright, called for a social interpretation of the gospel that addressed the grave problems of unemployment and industrial conflict at the turn of the century. However, few were willing to take up the challenge. Most Baptists were wary of what they saw as “theological modernism” and the “social gospel”.

They were generally more concerned about moral issues than social issues. Many were active in opposing drinking, gambling, prostitution, contraception, mixed sea bathing, and dancing. The last two, in particular, reflected strongly conservative attitudes in relation to sexuality, or to anything that might tempt a person to have sexual feelings outside of marriage.

The Baptist churches were generally slow to involve women in positions of leadership. The role for women was seen in missionary work and in raising money for it, in Sunday School work with children, and in visitation of the sick and other women. Women’s Guilds worked against the moral evils mentioned above.

Debates over church membership continued. Most churches in New South Wales adopted closed membership. In Victoria there were a few with open membership, while in South Australia the majority had open membership.

Many Baptist churches, however, were wary of joining with other churches. They were slow to participate in inter-church councils at local or state levels, and many were opposed to the World Council of Churches. Many had a strong anti-Catholic stance, as did some other Protestant groups. The fact that Catholics were conducting worship in a particular area was often given as a reason why the Baptists should unite to oppose them through their home and foreign mission activities.

The primary focus for education was the Sunday School. There was some interest in the development of day schools in Victoria and New South Wales, but early momentum was stalled by the First World War. In 1923, a Baptist school for boys, Carey Grammar, was founded in Melbourne. Later it was joined by two girls’ schools, also in Melbourne: Strathcona opened in 1943 and Kilvington in 1948. Carey and Kilvington have since gone co-educational. In Adelaide, Baptists joined with Congregationalists to establish King’s College.

Some Baptist leaders worked hard to unite the Baptists across the country. The first Interstate Baptist Federal Conference took place in 1902 under the chairmanship of Rev Silas Mead. Australasian Conferences were convened in 1908 and 1911. The 1911 conference decided to form a standing Federal Committee to enable the States to work together on matters of common agreement.

The Federal Committee established an Australian Baptist Publishing House. In 1913, the *Australian Baptist* commenced as a weekly newspaper on denominational matters. For years the newspaper struggled to win acceptance, and it would not have survived except for substantial financial help given by one or two people. The *Australian Baptist* folded in 1991 leaving each state with its own denominational paper.

In August 1926, the Baptist Union of Australia (BUA) was inaugurated by representatives of each state union. For many years it was located in the Union headquarters of the state in which the President resided, the first president being Rev J. H. Goble (1863-1932), who was minister of Footscray Baptist Church, at that time one of the largest Baptist churches in Australia. However, more recently, the headquarters have been permanently located in Melbourne. It has had many boards which have had oversight of aspects of Baptist church life and undertaken various projects.

For example, the Home Mission Board, established in 1926 by the Baptist Union of Australia, was responsible for building the first Baptist church in Canberra, which was opened in 1929. In 1949, the Board appointed the first missionaries to begin work among Aboriginal people at Yuendumu in the Northern Territory. In 1957, work was begun in Darwin and at Casuarina. In 1978, however, the work among Aboriginal people was transferred to the Australian Baptist Missionary Society.

There were strong moves for joint theological training. The Baptist churches of New South Wales sent theological students to Melbourne for a while. In the end each of the larger states developed their own colleges: Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland (although the college in South Australia has since closed).



Morling College class

(Photography by Timothy Beasley, 24 May 2012)

New Influences in the Second Half of the 20th Century

There have been several significant movements within the Baptist denomination which have had an impact on Baptist churches in the second half of the twentieth century. One was the influence of Baptists in the United States, particularly the Southern Baptist Convention. Australian Baptists had looked with some envy at the high levels of activity and the numbers attending the Baptist churches in the southern states of USA and several Australian Baptist leaders visited America in the 1930s and 40s.

1946 saw the first of many crusades to be led by American evangelists in Australia. Perhaps the largest of them was the Missouri-Australian Crusade in 1964 when 160 Americans arrived in Australia for simultaneous crusades in many Baptist churches. 355 churches participated and it is estimated that nearly 50,000 attended the meetings. There were further partnership crusades with Texan Baptists in 1979, 1983, 1984 and 1986.

While the Australian Billy Graham Crusades were not exclusively Baptist, the Baptists played a significant role in their organisation and support. The 1959 and 1968 crusades were important events for many Australian churches, particularly the Baptists.

Since the mid-1980s there has been a movement away from large crusades to sustained evangelism in the local churches. Rev Harry Monro was appointed by the Baptist Union of Australia to co-ordinate and facilitate the efforts of local churches in evangelism.

The Americans brought many other influences into the Australian Baptist churches apart from their styles of evangelism. They introduced the idea of “All-Age Sunday School”, in which there were classes not only for children but also for adults, and in which Christian Education would be seen as a significant dimension of the church’s life for all people. All-age Sunday School was tried in many churches in the 1960s, but few continued the program for long.

The Americans also introduced the idea of committee systems of administration in Baptist churches. Up to this point, most administration had been conducted by the minister, the deacons and the church meeting. The idea of having committees or teams to plan worship, take responsibility for aspects of pastoral care and have oversight of youth work, was introduced into many Baptist churches in the 1960s.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, the charismatic movement has had a major impact, especially on styles of worship. A few Baptist churches have developed charismatic practices in their services such as speaking in tongues and prophecy. A great many churches, however, have introduced choruses and bands in the charismatic style into worship, and have been influenced by the charismatic movement in terms of greater informality in worship, greater participation by members of congregation, and a strong emphasis on fellowship and identifying and exercising spiritual gifts.



Worship at Morling College

(Photography by Robert French, 14 February 2013)

Other movements have had mixed effects on Baptist churches. The Ecumenical movement has been a divisive issue among Baptists. Some have argued strongly for working with other churches, while others have been equally strongly opposed. The Baptists of Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales rejected involvement with the World Council of Churches. Victorians voted for it, and, from the beginning were involved in the Victorian Council of Churches. However, after protracted debate, the Victorian Baptists withdrew in 1974.. Today, only the Tasmanian Union is part of the National Council of Churches (Ward and Humphreys 1995, p.122). The Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT is still associated with the NSW Council of Churches. There was some preliminary discussions among the different state Baptist Unions about union with the Churches of Christ, but there has been little interest in following this through. Only in theological training and in some cooperative church planting and new church development have resources been shared.

Another movement which had some impact has been the Radical Discipleship movement, which arose out of some branches of the “Jesus movement” in the 1960s. This movement emphasised commitment in the Christian faith, often expressed in living in community with other Christians and being involved in various forms of mission within the neighbourhood. The Radical Discipleship movement tended to be left-wing in its politics and combined concern for social justice with personal evangelism. The movement was led by Rev John Hirt in Sydney and by Rev Dr Athol Gill in Brisbane. In 1975 Dr Gill moved to Melbourne where he was an influential, although somewhat controversial, figure as Professor of New Testament at Whitley College until his death in 1992. Dr Gill began “The House of the Gentle Bunyip” in Melbourne, a rather different model of church life.

“Baptists Today” was a group of Baptists who met to address national social issues and wrestle with a distinctive? Baptist contribution. Conferences have always been held in Canberra, a symbol of national thinking. At the first conference the issues of aboriginal reconciliation, women in ministry, ecumenical participation and Baptist heritage were selected. A range of actions emerged from the first conference. They included the Baptist Union of Australia’s adoption of observer status in the (Australian) National Council of Churches. At a second conference these issues were addressed again, and during the conference a significant and moving reconciliation ceremony was held with Aboriginal representatives. In 1998 the issue of the environment was introduced to the agenda. The process continues, with significant networking in the group, which represents the left-wing of Australian Baptists, and involves some of the senior leaders in the state Unions.

At the other end of the political spectrum, many Baptists participated in the Festival of Light in the 1970s and 1980s, which sought to counter the permissiveness of the 1960s. It provided a new forum for Baptists’ traditional concerns about gambling, alcohol and sexual permissiveness. It added to those concerns issues such as homosexuality. Since 2000, many Baptists have supported the Australian Christian Lobby and the Family First political party and their conservative family-oriented agenda.

During the 1960s and 1970s the issues of conscientious objection and pacifism

divided Baptist churches. The majority of churches and individuals strongly supported conscription and were critical of conscientious objectors and pacifists at the time of Vietnam War. Some Baptists, however, supported conscientious objectors.

Alongside the divisions in political attitudes and attitudes to the ecumenical movement have existed divisions in theological views. (Attitudes towards the ecumenical movement reflect differences in theology). Many Baptists have held to conservative attitudes about the inerrancy of Scripture, and many are creationists, believing that creation took place in a literal seven days. However, most theological colleges and some congregations have espoused more theologically open, although still evangelical, views.

Women's ordination has been a contentious issue. In Baptist churches, women, traditionally, have been pastors' wives and Temperance workers, deaconesses and "Bible women", missionaries and sometimes preachers (Manley 2006a, pp.299-318). In the 1970s some Baptist Unions looked at ordaining women to ministry. The Baptist Unions of Victoria and South Australia have now been ordaining women for more than 30 years. New South Wales ordained its first woman minister, Rev Rowena Curtis, in 1999, although now it leaves the practice of ordination to local churches and many local NSW churches would refuse to consider ordaining a woman. Women serve as pastors in Queensland but are not ordained. In Western Australia, neither women nor men are ordained any more, which has, in some ways, circumvented a divisive issue. After an earlier reluctance to accept their leadership, in greater and lesser degrees in different states, women ministers are being increasingly accepted in Baptist churches in many areas (Cronshaw 1998).



Morling College students

(Photography by Timothy Beasley, 24 May 2012)

Today, many people "shop around" churches of various denominations looking for one which suits their interests and personalities. With the autonomy of Baptist congregations, some have been able to take advantage of greater mobility in the population and have built large congregations serving people from a wide regional area. In the process of adaption, however, some of these churches have moved considerably away from traditional Baptist practices and attitudes. For example, many have introduced elders who are not elected or responsible to a church meeting as leaders and decision-makers in the churches. Some Baptist leaders see this as a compromise of Baptist

heritage and the distinctiveness of congregational governance, while others see it as a necessary adjustment to larger group dynamics (Winslade 2010).

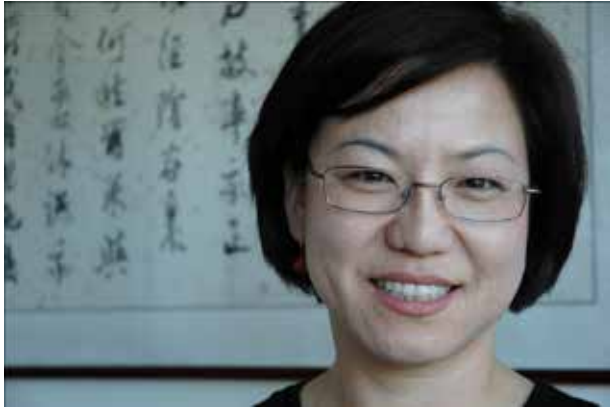
As patterns of worship and administration have changed, so has youth work and Christian education within the churches. Christian Endeavour trained young people in leadership and played a significant role in many Baptist churches to the end of the 1960s but has since largely disappeared. The Boys' and Girls' Brigade movement, paralleling Scouts and Guide, were found in many Baptist churches until the 1970s, but have disappeared from most Baptist churches. Their place has been taken by more informal and non-uniformed youth groups and youth-oriented Sunday evening services.

A mark of Baptist church commitment used to be attendance at the Wednesday weeknight prayer meeting and Bible study, which was usually led by the minister. This gave way in the 1960s and 1970s to home groups, taking a variety of forms and usually led by lay people.



The Romanian Baptist Church, Melbourne
(*Photograph courtesy of Geoff Holland*)

Post-war immigration boosted the numbers of Baptists, particularly with immigrants from the United Kingdom. However, Baptists have encouraged and sought to welcome and involve immigrants from many other countries. A variety of Baptist churches have been established conducting services in many different languages. In 1974, a New Settlers' Baptist Association of Australia was started to coordinate work amongst these non-English speaking congregations and the State-based New Settlers Associations. The new settlers work (biggest in the 1940s and 1950s) evolved into a focus on ethnic ministry (1960s and 70s) and now multicultural ministry (since the 1980s; see Munro 2010, p.231). Multicultural ministry is resourced at state levels with most State Baptist Unions staffing a position. The BUV, for example, has a Multicultural Ministry Group and Rev Meewon Yang is the full-time multicultural minister.



Meewon Yang at Baptist Union of Victoria Gathering, June 2007
(*Photograph courtesy of BUV*)

For many years, there were Dutch-speaking Baptist congregations in Australia. However, these have now amalgamated with English-speaking congregations. There remains a significant number of Baptists who have come from the Netherlands. There are also Baptist communities with their origins in many other parts of Europe: Yugoslavia and Hungary, for example. The Baptist Church is strong in Russia.

The first non-English speaking congregations in Australia were German. Some German Baptists settled in Queensland in the middle of the nineteenth century. Those congregations now use English and have amalgamated with the English-speaking congregations. Immediately after the Second World War, many Slavic refugees arrived in Australia, particularly from displaced persons camps in Germany and China. Some were Baptists and Slavic Baptist churches were started in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. An association of Slavic Baptist Churches was formed which became known as the Slavic Evangelical Union of Australia.

Spanish Baptist churches were formed in the late 1960s among Spanish-speaking migrants from South and Central America. Some of these migrants had lived for some time in Spain. Eleven Spanish-speaking Baptist churches have now been established in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

In the 1970s, large numbers of Vietnamese began to arrive in Australia. There are now nine Vietnamese congregations within the Vietnamese Baptist Association of Australia.

The Baptist Unions have encouraged migrants to form churches for people in their own language groups. In 1991, a total of 90 non-English speaking congregations were to be found in Australia. 75 of these were in New South Wales and Victoria, and mostly in Sydney and Melbourne. Some of the ageing Eastern-European churches are now struggling to survive. Many Ukrainian and Slavic young people have not wished to continue worshipping in the Slavic languages, for example. Other churches are younger, from more recent waves of immigration, and some are using a mixture of languages, particularly among children and young people.

Evangelism continues to be a major focus for Baptists. Crossover is a ministry which seeks to encourage Baptist churches nationally to undertake evangelistic activities and to establish new churches.

Some Baptist churches in the suburbs of the large capital cities have become large mega-churches. In 2012 Crossway, for example, which was originally Blackburn Baptist, has nearly 8000 people regularly attending its services (4000 on any given weekend), making it the second largest Protestant church in Melbourne. It had a full-time equivalent staff of 72 (102 including part-time staff) including 31 people with pastoral responsibilities (Stephenson 2013). Crossway has launched Crossway LifeCare, has several congregations in different languages, and has planted several Crossway satellite churches and dozens of more organic missional churches.

Baptist Beliefs and Practices

This brief account of Baptist beliefs and practices does not attempt to explain the theology which lies behind Baptist statements of faith. Nor does it deal with all aspects of belief. Rather, it focuses on how the basic elements of Baptist belief are reflected in the behaviour and practices of Baptist people and Baptist congregations. It concentrates on those aspects of belief which are important in understanding why Baptists live the way they do, and why their churches operate as they do.

Scripture Rather than Creed

From the very beginning of their history, Baptists have seen themselves as seeking to follow New Testament patterns of faith and church life. They regard the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, as the only source of authority for beliefs, practices and patterns of organisation.

Because of this, the early Baptists saw themselves as making a clean break with other Christian denominations, and particularly the Catholic and Anglican traditions. The traditions which developed through the history of the Church prior to the Reformation carried no authority for them. Baptists searched the Scriptures to discover how they should express their faith and worship.

The early leaders played an important role in helping people to interpret the Scriptures. However, decisions were made by the whole group. Every baptised member, they believed, should be open to the inspiration of God's Spirit in the interpreting of the Scriptures, and thus every member had a right to participate in interpretation. The importance of the Scriptures as the sole source of authority has remained a basic tenet of faith for the Baptists.

Baptists vary, to some extent, in how they interpret Scripture. Almost all Baptists have a high view of Scripture and its authority for life and practice. But some interpret it more literally than others. Those who are dedicated to interpreting the Bible in a literal way believe that the Bible is ultimately harmonious in all it says and that there are no discrepancies in it. However, there are many other Baptists who argue that the Bible was written within a variety of cultural contexts, and, in order to understand its implications today, the meaning within those original contexts must be understood. Results from the 1991 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) found that 28 per cent of Baptist attenders said that the Bible should be taken literally word for word and 51 per cent that the Bible must be read in the context of the times to understand its implications (Kaldor et al. 1994, p.48). However, it was also found that 60 per cent of Baptist church attenders believed that the world was created in seven days as described in the Bible while 27 per cent of Baptists believe that evolution and the Biblical account of creation can be reconciled (Kaldor and Powell 1995, p.69). There continue to be differences among Baptists around Australia, and within individual churches, as to how literally to interpret contentious issues, especially around Creation, end times and sexuality. But

most Baptists draw their convictions from how they understand and interpret Scripture as the ultimate authority for Christian life and church practice.

Baptists have generally been suspicious of creeds, arguing that no verbal formula can be a true indicator of faith. They followed the Protestant and Anabaptist emphasis on the Bible alone, and saw creeds as “inadequate substitutes for the Scriptures, and as dangerous limitations upon the Spirit’s leadership in interpreting the Scriptures” (Lumpkin 1969, p.18). Baptists have almost universally not used creeds in services of worship, as is the practice in many other denominations. Nor have they required members to indicate allegiance to any creed other than the simple formula that they “accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour”. They have argued that there are no creeds to be found in the Scriptures except that formula.

However, Baptists have produced many statements of faith to explain to others their understanding of the Christian faith and their practices. For the legal purposes of registering a trust fund, and as a guide to the Union, a statement of beliefs was considered by the BUV in 1888. After a long and serious discussion, the Annual Assembly adopted the Doctrinal Basis, as it was called, “on the distinct understanding that it was at no time to be used as a creed or dogmatic confession of Baptist Faith” (Heritage Task Force to the Annual Assembly 1991, p.33).

Doctrinal Basis of the Baptist Union of Victoria

- ◆ The Divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures or the Old and New Testaments.
- ◆ The existence of One God in Three Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
- ◆ The Deity and Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.
- ◆ The fallen, sinful, and lost estate of all mankind.
- ◆ The salvation of men from the penal consequences and the power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging Priesthood.
- ◆ The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men, in their sanctification, and in their preservation to the Heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ The necessity, in order to salvation, of repentance towards God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ The resurrection of the dead, and the final judgement of all men by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are of perpetual obligation: Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; the Lord’s Supper being a memorial, until He come, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This doctrinal statement was derived from one adopted by the Evangelical Alliance of Great Britain and Europe at a conference of delegates at Liverpool, England in 1846. Almost all parts of it would be acceptable to Christians of most denominations in the evangelical tradition and Australian Baptists have strongly aligned themselves with that movement. The 2011 NCLS found that 50 per cent of attenders said they identified with evangelical approaches as one of up to two descriptors of their faith (e.g. Catholic, Charismatic, Evangelical, Liberal, Moderate, Pentecostal, Progressive, Reformed, Traditionalist). Evangelicals lay special stress on the authority of Scripture, personal conversion and salvation by faith in Christ, and the importance of mission and evangelism.

Salvation, Sin and Baptism

Many Baptists make a strong distinction between those people who are “saved” and those who are not. They believe that salvation requires a specific commitment of faith. Thus, the act of making a commitment becomes an important sign, which leads to inclusion in the community of the church. Some churches are eager to be more inclusive of people who have not yet made their own faith commitment as they journey in faith and seek God for themselves, or are simply looking for a community to which to belong. But the hope is that participating and belonging in a church will lead people towards their own personal faith in Christ.

While there is a recognition of humanity as sinful until repentance occurs, a state of innocence is also recognised. Baptists consider that children, prior to their ability to make decisions about faith, belong to God. The BUV notes:

Baptists believe that infants are God’s little ones, whether children of Christian or non-Christian parents, and accept without modification the word of the Lord, “Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven”. This Christian view of the child makes the external act of “Infant Baptism” unnecessary (Lumpkin 1969, p.418).

Baptists do not baptise infants, even if there is the likelihood of death. They do have a dedication ceremony which usually takes place in the context of an ordinary service of worship in the church. Parents bring their babies to the church. There are special prayers of thanksgiving for the new life, a dedication of the child to God, and the parents make commitments to seek to bring the children up in such a way as will encourage later commitment to faith.

Older children and teenagers are encouraged to make commitments of faith for themselves. This may happen in services, camps or youth groups, through one-on-one relationship with a pastor, Sunday School teacher or youth leader, or through the young person seeking God for themselves. In church services, a preacher may speak evangelistically and explain Christian commitment. People who want to make a commitment are encouraged to make some sign that they would like to respond, such as coming to the front of the church when invited at the close of a service. They may be invited to speak to the minister, or join some classes which are preparing people for baptism.



Baptism in a Chinese Baptist Church in Sydney
(Photograph courtesy of Patricia Hayward)

After the initial indication of interest, there is often a period of preparation in the form of studies on the Christian faith that lead to baptism. Baptism is by full immersion in a baptistery which is built into many Baptist churches for the purpose or brought in in the form of a portable tank. Sometimes, people are baptised in a river or in the sea. It is common for the minister to lead the person into the water. The person is then asked whether they believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and whether they intend to follow Jesus throughout their life. The person is then laid back (or forward from a kneeling position) into the water, and raised up again, symbolising death of the old life and resurrection to a new one as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Following baptism, a person may be welcomed as a full member of the local congregation. This is an indication of belonging and making that church the person's church home, and gives people the right to vote in church meetings and to hold office in the church.

There has been a lot of discussion in Baptist churches throughout their history on whether to accept as members people who have not been baptised in that way (as a believer by immersion). Some congregations accept people who have been baptised as an adult by sprinkling, while others insist that full immersion is necessary and that it is the only form of valid baptism. Some accept those for whom infant baptism and confirmation were meaningful to them as a dynamic equivalent. Still others separate membership from baptism and encourage people to be both baptised and become members, but are comfortable if people decide to do one (baptism) but not necessarily the other.

Other Baptist Distinctives

Baptism is not the only distinctive characteristic of Baptist churches, even though it is the most commonly recognised Baptist practice because of the name "Baptists". Other distinctive principles have been part of Baptist heritage and history since its early

beginnings including congregational government, the importance of the Bible and the ministry of all believers. Stanley Grenz's acrostic is a helpful summary of distinctive Baptist emphases (Grenz 1998, p.82; Winslade 2010, pp.31-46):

- ◆ Believers' baptism
- ◆ Autonomy of the local church
- ◆ Primacy of Scripture
- ◆ True believers only in the church
- ◆ Individual competency and believer priesthood
- ◆ Separation of church and state
- ◆ Two ordinances – baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Note that in Grenz's list baptism is featured beginning and last, perhaps underlining its importance. But it is equally important for Baptists that the local congregation has autonomy to seek and understand God's will for themselves (through congregational governance that involves all members). As discussed above, Scripture is the primary source of authority and judges what Baptists believe and do. And a church is made up of those who themselves have believed in Jesus (rather than having only an inherited faith from their parents or a cultural expectation from society). Individual believers have free access to God and can freely represent God in ministry. Church should neither be controlled by nor seek to control the State. And there are two foundational ordinances for churches – baptism (as people follow Jesus in obedience as a one off step of commitment) and the Lord's Supper (as believers remember and celebrate regularly who Jesus was and is and what Jesus has done for people.)

Another Baptist distinctive is advocacy of human rights and freedom of speech and religion. Baptists have historically known personally what it is to live and worship on the margins and assert their own right to freedom of religion. They also have stood up for the rights of others to express their views and religion in their own ways, rather than expect everyone to believe and act in the same way.

Church and Group Involvement

Baptists generally have strong expectations about church involvement and the majority of members aim to be present at a church service most weeks.

In most churches, Sunday Schools are held for children. Decades ago, it was a common pattern for Sunday School to be held on Sunday afternoon. Now, it is often held on a Sunday morning, usually at the same time as morning worship service. Some churches are also experimenting with more intergenerational approaches to worship, including and celebrating the contribution of all ages of people in a church service as well as all

cultures and all stages of faith. NCLS 2011 showed 22 per cent of attenders selected ministry to children and youth as one of the most valued aspects of church life they most valued, and 19 per cent said they hoped their church would give more attention to children and youth in the coming year.

Tithing is encouraged in Baptist churches. This means that members are encouraged to give one tenth of their income to the church. However, people give according to their conscience. According to NCLS 2011, 35 per cent of attenders say they give 10 per cent or more of net income (i.e. after tax), 40 per cent give up to 9 per cent, and 18 per cent give a small amount whenever they attend. These levels of giving have changed little in ten years.

Up to the end of the 1960s, many Baptist congregations held a mid-week prayer meeting which was considered a sign of true commitment. Since the 1960s, the “small group movement” has developed in many churches. Instead of one central prayer-meeting, there are now often many groups meeting during the week. These groups take a variety of forms, although sharing of experiences, Bible study, and prayer together are common elements.

Baptists believe that the Holy Spirit is given to every believer. Thus every believer who has indicated that belief through submission to baptism has “some light” which enables or entitles them to participate in decision-making in the church. In seeking “the mind of God” all church members are entitled and encouraged to play a part. Baptists do not traditionally leave decisions up to leaders to make without consultation with the broader congregation. Thus the “church meeting” is an important central place for the church to seek and discern together what the church believes God is calling the church to do. The place of the church meeting has changed in many large Baptist churches.

Communion or the Lord’s Supper

People who are baptised members of a church are encouraged to participate in Holy Communion on a regular basis. Communion is not just for baptised members however. Most Australian Baptist churches encourage open communion, inviting “everyone who loves and wants to serve the Lord” to share in the symbolic meal.

Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, as it is often called, is celebrated by most churches at least once a month, and usually once in the morning service and once in the evening service if there is one. The minister of the church traditionally presides and deacons are involved in the prayers in the service and in distributing small pieces of bread and unfermented grape juice (or cordial) to the members of the congregation. Lay leaders and others in the congregation lead communion in an increasing number of Baptist churches, especially if the pastor is away or wants to share the responsibility.



Communion at Morling College
(Photography by Robert French)

Most Baptists view communion as a memorial service of the death of Christ in which the bread and grape juice are seen as symbols. It provides an opportunity for people to reaffirm their recognition of the authority of Jesus Christ. It is also seen as an important expression of fellowship and community within the church. In some (rare) churches, wine may be available instead of juice. Historically wine was always used for communion. Juice is more often used out of consideration for those who may have a problem with alcohol. Although the focus of communion has traditionally been on Jesus' death, it is now more common for leaders of communion to invite participants to reflect on Jesus eating with people on the margins (to encourage God's people today to do the same) and to look forward to his coming again.

There is an expectation within Baptist churches that members will live in such a way as will demonstrate the reality of their commitment to the Lordship of Christ. There is often some expectation that members will reject "worldly pursuits and interests". In the past, this has often been seen in the rejection of alcohol, dancing and gambling, although these expectations have been relaxed. Most Baptist churches teach that the Lordship of Christ is more all-embracing and relates to Monday-Saturday everyday life in family, community and work contexts and not just the private devotional sphere.

Special Events

Unlike some other denominations, the Baptists do not generally recognise any saints or celebrate any saints' days. There are two major festivals in the Australian Baptist year: Christmas, celebrating the birth of Christ, and Easter, celebrating his death and resurrection. Extra services are usually held on Christmas Day and Good Friday, the Friday preceding Easter Sunday. A special service on Easter Sunday celebrates the resurrection. Some churches have a dawn service on Easter day, or an extra service in the week prior to Easter.

Most Baptist churches also celebrate Palm Sunday and Pentecost. Palm Sunday a week prior to Easter Sunday, marks the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Pentecost, which occurs seven weeks after Easter, celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the first followers of Jesus and the founding of the church.

Congregations may have their own celebrations. Some have one Sunday each year on which they celebrate the founding of their own church, sometimes called the church anniversary. Some celebrate harvest festival, when items of food are brought into the church and prayers are offered in thanks for food.

There are few life-cycle rituals. In the service of dedication, the parents and church thank God for the birth of a child. In some cases, baptism may mark the taking of adult responsibility for faith. Marriages are celebrated in a simple service, as are funerals. Marriage and funeral services vary little between the various Protestant denominations.

Church and State

While Baptists have always made a strong distinction between the domains of state and church, they have been happy to acknowledge that the state has its own areas of authority for which it is responsible (ultimately to God, but in which the church does not expect to interfere). Thus, the state has the responsibility to maintain safety and security internally and in relation to external forces. Baptists will happily be responsive to the state's authority in its proper areas.

From the beginning of an organised Baptist presence in Australia, acceptance of government assistance has been a contentious issue. Should Baptist churches accept grants of land from the government on which to build their churches, or accept any assistance from the state towards ministerial stipends? Some Baptists have considered that it is wrong to accept assistance from the state in any form, even taxation exemptions. This was a major issue in the foundation of the first Baptist school in Australia, Carey Grammar, and has continued to be an issue from time to time in areas where government money is used in church sponsored projects or activities. The argument is occasionally raised that acceptance of government financing may give the state some improper leverage in the area of faith, where Baptists feel strictly bound by conscience. Australian Baptists are heavily dependent upon government funding for their welfare and educational arms.

Contemporary Baptist Influences

Baptist congregations have a considerable amount of freedom to determine their own patterns of life and activity. In recent years, there has been a growing variety of ways in which they have done this. Some churches have been influenced strongly by the charismatic movement. Others are finding fresh vitality in more traditional liturgy. There are new missional communities that are experimenting with innovative ways of expressing mission and church. Some churches are centering their life around community service and compassionate ministry.



Different Baptist churches and state unions are influenced by various movements or thinking about leadership and mission. Some state unions have invited North American consultants such as Paul Borden or Alan Roxburgh to help them think through organisational vision and reshaping for the future. Some leaders love the work of Mark Driscoll and his confidence in the gospel. Others have been more influenced by Australian Baptist pastor, Tim Costello and his passion for holistic mission and harmonising sacred and secular spheres. In a similar way, the UK Baptist writer and pastor, Steve Chalke is a key advocate for mission-motivated community engagement. He has helped leaders grapple with topical theological issues such as substitutionary atonement and inclusiveness, and leadership issues around reshaping church structures for mission. Another UK leader influencing more Baptist leaders recently is Mike Breen, Anglican leader of St Thomas' Sheffield and the 3DM movement of missional communities. Finally, but not least, two of the most influential voices in the missional church movement are Michael Frost (from New South Wales's Morling College) and Alan Hirsch (from Churches of Christ in Victoria and now based in the United States), who co-founded Forge Mission Training Network and wrote books such

as *The Shaping of Things to Come* (Frost and Hirsch 2003).

The reasons for the popularity of these different leaders and writers vary, but overall they are influencing Baptist churches to think afresh about mission and evangelism – two things that Baptist churches would almost universally say they value. Whatever other differences Baptist churches have, they would state they share in common a commitment to mission – both globally and locally. The challenge for Baptist churches is for their rhetoric and wide reading about mission to be matched by the reality of their missional engagement.

Baptist Organisation

The Congregation

The basic unit of organisation among Baptists is the local congregation. Each congregation is seen as an example of “the whole church”. The congregation meets weekly on Sundays for worship. In at least one service a month, the Lord’s Supper is celebrated. It meets regularly (often quarterly) in business sessions to make decisions about its directions, its property and finances and other matters.

Sunday services are often seen as a central event in the life of the church, and for most standard Baptist churches involve almost all who are involved in the church at other times. There are no set forms that these are required to take. They usually involve the reading of the Bible and sermons which reflect on the readings. Baptist churches are not required to follow the lectionary or plan of Bible readings used in many other denominations. The minister or other preacher usually decides on readings and themes for the services, although they may often follow a topical series or sometimes the lectionary.



“Sunday Stuff” at AuburnLife, Melbourne
(Photography by Darren Cronshaw)

A wide variety of music is used in Baptist churches. The traditional Baptist hymnbooks contain many hymns similar to those used in other denominations, such as those of John Wesley and Isaac Watts. However, the music of Sankey and Alexander from the American Revival Movement of the late nineteenth century has been influential in Baptist churches. In recent times, many churches have used charismatic choruses and other music from churches such as Hillsong. The electronic organ has given way to pianos, guitars and small bands in most Baptist churches. PowerPoint-generated presentations have largely replaced hymnbooks.

The use of written prayers has often been discouraged in Baptist worship. It is more common for leaders to want to be open to the inspiration of the Spirit and pray “as they feel led”. Sometimes, particularly in smaller services and groups, there are times of open prayer when members of the congregation are invited to participate. Yet other churches find inspiration in liturgical and responsive prayers, more commonly projected onto a screen than read from a prayer book. For example, one Baptist-written resource for congregational prayers that has been popular for three decades is *Be Our Freedom Lord* (Falla 1994). The “laughing bird” website of Victorian Baptist pastor Nathan Nettleton is widely dawn on in Baptist and broader ecumenical circles (<http://www.laughingbird.net/>).

Sunday evening services often take the form of a youth service, or an evangelistic service for people who have not made a commitment to faith. Such services may also take a wide variety of forms. Some churches are also adding additional services on Saturday evening or at other times of the week.

Many Baptist congregations operate their own social and educational projects. Some congregations have built and operate homes to provide aged care, although most of this work has been Union initiatives through Baptist Social Services. In the last decade of the 1990s a number of Baptist congregations have sponsored low fee parent-controlled schools. In 1995, there were approximately 60 Christian schools established by local Baptist congregations operating in various States. In 2013, it was estimated that there may be as many as 200 schools which are affiliated with Baptist churches. Some Baptist churches operate opportunity shops to raise money for Baptist social services. There are a variety of projects such as kindergartens, the provision of accommodation for homeless people, and counselling services. A number of churches engage in food and hospitality ministries with food banks or offering a shared low cost meal that brings diverse communities together, and some churches are developing mainstream cafés for fostering community.

Other Baptist churches are seeking to engage their community through shared interests in music, sport or art. For example, Dural Baptist Church in New South Wales redeveloped its property as a community sports facility. Box Hill Baptist in Melbourne has opened an art gallery “Chapel on Station Gallery”, designed as a space to which people can be invited to “wonder” (<http://boxhillbaptist.org.au/about/chapel-on-station-gallery/>).



Rev Dr Anne Mallaby, Pastor and art curator, Chapel on Station Gallery, Box Hill Baptist Church (Photo by Darren Cronshaw)

The Minister or Pastor

Historically, each state Baptist Union ordained people to ministry after an appropriate period of study and preparation. In all state capital cities, except Hobart and Adelaide, there are colleges responsible to the state Union of Baptist churches for training ministers. (South Australia had its own Baptist College, Burleigh College, but it closed in 2006.) The colleges co-operate to a varying extent with other denominations in training. Most candidates for ministry undertake a theological degree recognised across several or most Christian denominations.

The usual practice has been that following the completion of study, a board recommends the candidate to the state Baptist Union of churches, which then votes on accepting the person for ordination. The Baptist Union arranges the ceremony of ordination. Ordained ministers are entitled to use “Reverend” before their names, although many prefer the title “Pastor”. However, after rethinking the place of ordination and accreditation, Western Australia has abandoned the practice of ordination in place of accreditation and stopped using the term “Reverend”. New South Wales and South Australia accredit pastors but leave ordination to local churches. In Queensland a Ministerial Committee approves people for ordination, but they may be ordained either in their local church or at the annual Assembly. States such as Victoria now require their pastoral leaders (whether ordained or not) to be reaccredited every three years, incorporating a renewed Professional Development Plan. Queensland registration, which pastors renew every five years, requires a Personal Ministry Development Plan and a mentoring relationship.



An ordination service

(Photograph courtesy of Geoff Holland)

State committees advise congregations on ministers who may be available for a call. However, the local congregation then has the freedom to call whomever it chooses, whether the person is ordained or not. Calls have traditionally been for an indefinite period, sometimes until the minister receives a call to another church which he or she is willing to accept. More recently, five year renewable terms have become more common. The fact that authority to issue a call and authority to ordain lie in different hands can mean that some people may be ordained but not receive a call to serve in a church.

While the minister is ordained to the “ministry of Word and Sacrament and Pastoral Care”, in fact, she or he usually becomes the leader of the church. Usually the minister preaches at the Sunday services and is involved in pastoral visitation during the week. Sometimes the minister chairs the church business meeting. Ministers may also develop a variety of other activities according to their own experience and ability in counselling, leading Bible studies and teaching, in evangelism and administration. Ministers are frequently called “pastors”, reflecting what is seen to be a main task of “pastoring” or caring for the spiritual well-being of the people in the congregation.

In the context of Australia, however, some leaders are recognising the need for broader models of ministry. Morling College Vice-Principal Michael Frost and Forge co-founder Alan Hirsch have articulated the need for distinctly missional approaches to church. They argue churches need leaders functioning in apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic modes as well as pastors/shepherds and teachers. They describe this as “APEPT” or “APEST” as an acronym for Apostolic/ Prophetic/ Evangelistic/ Shepherding/ Teaching leadership, drawing on Ephesians 4:11-13 (Frost & Hirsch 2003).

Most larger congregations have teams of ministers. Usually one is recognised as senior minister and leader of the team. The other members of the team may have specialist responsibilities such as the care of small groups, youth work, specialist counselling or administration. Many congregations engage an employee or volunteer to assist the minister or team administratively.

The Baptist churches of Australia have not needed to look outside Australia for their ministers for many years. In the previous generation, a few specialist positions have been filled by people from overseas, such as some lecturers for the theological colleges, Christian education specialists, or ministers for non-English speaking congregations. Some consultants and a number of evangelists or church planters have come to Australia, mainly from the southern part of the USA, for short periods of time at the invitation of state Baptist Unions or groups of Baptist churches.

Deacons

The congregation elects a small group of people who were always traditionally called deacons but are now sometimes simply called leaders, to assist the minister in all aspects of the life of the church. The deacons or leadership team, act as an executive of the church membership, and usually include a secretary and treasurer of the congregation. They manage the finances and property of the church. They discuss the matters of pastoral care with the minister and may share in visitation and in discipline of church members. They make the plans for congregational initiatives which are taken to church meetings, and appoint other leaders to build and grow the ministries of the church.

Ministers have traditionally been seen as “elders”, having spiritual oversight of the congregation and responsibility for teaching and pastoral care. In recent years, many Baptist churches have appointed teams of lay people as elders to join with the minister in the spiritual and pastoral oversight of the church, while the deacons’ role has been redefined in terms of responsibility for the material aspects of the church’s life, its

finances and property.

Some churches, especially larger ones, appoint a leadership council to exercise overall governance and leadership for the church.

Committees and teams

In the last 30 years, many Baptist churches have introduced committees or teams to take responsibility for various aspects of the church's life. There may be committees for pastoral care and visitation, organising evangelism, arranging services of worship, encouraging the support of overseas missions, and so on. The form and nature of these committees varies greatly from one church to another.

State Unions

From the beginning, associations of Baptist churches were formed, following the pattern of the county associations of churches in England. In Australia, there was one association for each state. These associations became known as the "Baptist Unions". Each affiliated Baptist church is entitled to send to its own representatives to a joint meeting of Baptists, known as Assembly meetings, Convention (Queensland) or Gatherings (Victoria). States have a range of names for their assembly meetings. Each church pays an affiliation fee, usually in proportion to its membership numbers or income.



Pastoral leaders being recognised after completing their Professional Development Plans, BUV Gathering, October 2006
(Photograph courtesy of BUV)

The Assembly makes decisions about matters which affect all the affiliated churches. It takes responsibility for organising the training of ministers and their recognition in the service of ordination. It may publish materials for the use of the churches, including Christian education and leadership materials. Each Union has its own newspaper with some states towards an online publication to replace the previous paper format.

The Assembly makes decisions about involvement of Baptists with other denominations on an official basis. In general, Baptists have not joined with other denominations in ecumenical organisations such as the Councils of Churches. Two exceptions are that the Baptist Union of Tasmania is a member of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, and Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT is still associated with the NSW Council of Churches. The Victorian state Union was affiliated with the Victorian Council of Churches for some time, but withdrew in the early 1970s. One of the ostensible reasons for withdrawal was the growing involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in the Council of Churches. Baptists have given strong support to many non-denominational or inter-denominational organisations which have an evangelical orientation, such as Scripture Union, Youth for Christ and the Bible Society. Heads of Churches meetings enable Baptists to engage with leaders of other Christian denominations. Baptist leaders have also been involved in conversations with leaders of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) over issues of membership.

The Assembly may also make statements from time to time on matters of public interest or concern. Public Questions committees bring submissions on various public matters to the state assemblies.

The Assembly appoints its own staff to serve it, including a Director of Ministries, Mission Team Leader, General Superintendent or other titled leader (the role has a different title in every State). The Director of Ministries or equivalent has a pastoral and leadership/administrative role among the churches. Because Baptist churches are congregationally governed, the Baptist Union Director of Ministries does not necessarily have any special authority like the bishops or leaders in some other church denominations, but is often widely recognised as a wise leader and increasingly looked to for the broader development of vision.

Baptist Social Services

Through their assembly gatherings, Baptists at state level have approved the establishment and development of welfare initiatives and social service organisations, the major area of which has been aged care but has grown to include counselling, hospital chaplaincy, support centres, campsites and a growing range of community services.

As an example of the wide range of service, Baptcare (SA) provides community services across the state in the following programmes:

- ◆ Aboriginal Services
- ◆ Camping & Adventure Services
- ◆ Chaplaincy Services
- ◆ Employment, Education & Training Services
- ◆ Health, Wellbeing and Ageing

- ◆ Homelessness Services
- ◆ Mental Health & Disability Services
- ◆ Out of Home Care
- ◆ Refugee Services
- ◆ Welfare
- ◆ Youth Services.

The names of these groups are:



- ◆ Baptist Care (SA) Inc
- ◆ Baptist Care NT
- ◆ Queensland Baptist Care
- ◆ Baptist Community Services NSW & ACT
- ◆ Baptistcare Inc (Western Australia)
- ◆ Baptcare (Victoria and now also covering Tasmania)

Baptist Care in South Australia

These state-based organisations are networked together under Baptist Care Australia (<http://www.baptistcareaustralia.org.au/>), which also has as member organisations the more local Baptist Village Baxter (in Victoria), and Ashfield Baptist Homes and Maroba Living Communities (both in NSW).

Federal Activities: Australian Baptist Ministries, Global Interaction and Baptist World Aid Australia

A Federation of State Unions formed the Baptist Union of Australia which is now known as Australian Baptist Ministries (ABM). It operates through a national council which appoints some officers. Most major office-bearers are honorary, aided by a small secretariat. Rev Keith Jobberns is the current Director, appointed in 2012 having previously served as General Director of Global Interaction (GIA), Australia Baptists' overseas mission arm.

From time to time, various delegated bodies have been appointed to undertake joint action at the federal level in particular spheres. This includes Australian Baptist Insurance Scheme, Baptist Financial Services as well as Crossover Australia. Crossover Australia has the general task of fostering and resourcing evangelism throughout the Baptist churches of Australia. Other federally organised bodies included Australian Baptist Women and Baptist Youth Ministries.

Following the Second World War, a Federal Migration Committee was established to assist Baptist immigrants. It worked closely with the Baptist Colonial Society in Britain sponsoring Baptist families and arranging for them to be welcomed into churches in Australia.

Baptists also arrived from other countries and formed Baptist congregations conducting services in their own languages. National Language Associations were formed between congregations using the same language. The first Association was that of the Slavs, established in 1954. Since then, Romanian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Cambodian and Vietnamese associations have been formed.

In 1968, the non-English speaking churches banded together under the title: The New Settlers' Baptist Association of Victoria. The aim of the Association was to foster fellowship between the various fellowships and churches of New Settlers associated with the Baptist Union of Victoria, to encourage and support evangelism among New Settlers, and assist in the organisation of joint action by members of the Association affecting the life and faith of its churches and the community (Blackburn, 1991, p.72).



A group of new settlers with Rev Alan Marr, the superintendent of the Baptist Union of Victoria

The Victorian model led to the development of a national association. The New Settlers' Baptist Association of Australia which began meeting in 1974 was recognised as a Fellowship of the Union, reporting to it on multicultural areas of Baptist life. The primary purpose of the New Settlers' Association was to foster fellowship and help the New Settler churches evangelise their own people. In part, it sought to do this through coordinating and encouraging state associations. The State New Settler Associations were later formally disbanded and state unions have focused on developing multicultural models of ministry across the churches, not just in dedicated ethnic churches. Each state union has a Multicultural or Cross-Cultural Ministry staff person who resources the churches for multicultural ministry. These multicultural leaders meet bi-annually through ABM for networking and sharing ideas. Their first priority is to develop diverse models of multicultural ministry – mono-ethnic churches, bilingual churches, multicultural churches, and multi-congregational models (Yang 2012).



Chinese Baptist pastor, Zephaniah Yu
(Photography courtesy of BUV)

Over the years, the Australian Baptist Publishing House has published materials for use in Baptist churches and Sunday Schools. Between 1913 and 1991, the Australian Baptist newspaper was published. Since then, the Baptist Union of Australia has published a quarterly magazine, National Baptist. This has now ceased publication and the Australian Baptist Union website is the major means of communication.

Two major activities are organised at national level: aid and development and cross-cultural ministries of Australian Baptists. Baptist World Aid Australia is the major body through aid and relief for people in natural disasters and in places of war and other emergencies are distributed. It is now the largest Baptist Aid organisation in the world, and in Australia is the second largest church aid and development organization with a turnover of approximately \$13 million. In 2011-12 they worked in twenty countries through over 40 national partner organisations (<https://www.baptistworldaid.org.au/>).

Global Interaction (GIA), formerly the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS), and originally the Australian Foreign Mission Board, founded in 1864, was one of the earliest national Baptist initiatives. It followed the federation of its state missionary unions in 1913. Support for missionary work continues to be an important dimension of the life of most Baptist churches. In 2013 GIA celebrated their centenary of federation with 123 missionaries serving in 17 regions: Outback Australia, Cambodia, Central Asia, Hong Kong, India, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Papua, Papua New Guinea, Silk Road, South Asia, South East Asia, Thailand, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mission staff are focused on establishing and nurturing communities of faith within least-reached people groups. GIA workers are also involved in providing facilitation and support for locally-based development projects.. Its vision is: empowering communities to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus. (<http://www.globalinteraction.org.au/>)and its current annual budget is \$4,425,888.



The Tinsley Institute at Morling College

(Photography by Robert French)

Global Interaction together with State and Territory Baptist Unions support activities in isolated Aboriginal communities in central Australia and the Northern Territory.

Through Australian Baptist Ministries (ABM), Baptists are linked with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and its regional body Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF). BWA seeks to provide a basis for fellowship and mutual activity among Baptists throughout the world. Dr Noel Vose, the founding principal of the Baptist Theological College in Western Australia, was the first Australian to serve as president of the BWA between 1985 and 1990. After serving as an Australian Baptist missionary and Director of Ministries for BUW, Tony Cupit served on BWA staff as Assistant General Secretary, and Director for Evangelism and Education and for Study and Research for fifteen years, then for five years conducting international “Living Water” conferences on evangelism and leadership. Morling College Principal Ross Clifford is a current Vice President (2010-2015). Dozens of other Baptist leaders engage in annual BWA meetings and study commissions on strategic issues such as human rights, evangelism, theological education and environmental justice. APBF provides for the development of fellowship and combined ministry initiatives in the Asia Pacific region.

Groups of Baptist Churches not Associated with the State Baptist Unions

There are four groups of Baptist churches in Australia that are not associated with the state Baptist Unions.

1. Independent Baptists

Since the mid-1960s, teams of missionaries from some of the fundamentalist Baptist denominations in the United States have worked in Australia to plant churches. In 2013 there were 196 Independent Baptist Churches throughout the nation. Most of them were quite small, having congregations of less than fifty people and a total attendance of about 8000 people. The major growth of these churches has been in New South Wales and Queensland. There are also some in other States. They are supported by American churches and operate some small colleges to train ministers.

These churches have a strong commitment to Biblical inerrancy and usually hold a pre-millennial understanding of Christ's return when he will draw the saints up in the rapture. The churches are led mainly by part-time pastors and deacons – all men. Some of them call themselves "Bible Baptist churches". They insist on the total autonomy of the local church and oppose any structures such as Unions or Assemblies. (<http://ministryblue.com/baptist-ind.html>; Ward and Humphreys 1995, pp.123-124)

2. Baptist Reformed Churches

These churches hold firmly to the Calvinistic ideas that salvation was only for those chosen by God and not for everyone. In 1982, a number of these churches agreed to cooperate in the Baptist Reformed Fellowship. Most of these churches have very small congregations of fewer than 30 people and the ministers have secular employment. It was estimated in 1995 that these churches had a total attendance of about 400 people in 12 congregations (Manley 2006b, p.652; Ward and Humphreys 1995, p.125).

3. Strict and Particular Baptist Churches

These churches take the Calvinistic view that salvation is only for the elect to the extreme position, that they believe it wrong to proclaim the Gospel to people outside their own number, as this would imply salvation was by human effort and not a matter of God's choice. There were a number of such Baptist churches in Australia. Only four remain, with a total membership of 24, making it the smallest officially registered denomination in Australia (Manley 2006b, p.652).



A Strict and Particular Baptist Church in Hawthorn, Victoria
(Photograph by Philip Hughes)

4. Seventh Day Baptists

A small group of Baptists are committed to the idea that Saturday (Sabbath), the seventh day of the week, is the appropriate day for worship. There is a denomination of Seventh Day Baptists of sizable proportions in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Africa, Europe and Australasia, but just four Seventh Day Baptist Churches in Australia in 2013: two in Queensland, and one each in Melbourne and Sydney, and five other cell groups around the country. In total there would be close to 100 members in churches and cell groups in Australia. They are linked by the Association of Seventh Day Baptists Australia (<http://www.asdba.org/>; Alegre 2013; Ward and Humphreys 1995, p.126).

Biographies

John Smyth (1554-1612)

John Smyth is generally acknowledged as the founder of the Baptist denomination. He was born about 1554 and educated at Christ's College, Cambridge in England. He was ordained in the Church of England. Influenced by the Puritan movement, he began to feel that the only hope for the reform of the church was for the church to be separated from the state. He believed that the New Testament provided the picture of what the church should be like - and that it was rather different from what he saw in the Church of England.

In 1600, he was appointed Lecturer to the City of Lincoln where, for two years, he was able to express some of his ideas. In 1606, he decided to separate from the Church of England. He was ordained as the pastor of a group of Separatists in Gainsborough. Under much pressure from church authorities, the group under Smyth migrated to Amsterdam to find religious freedom.

Along with other groups of Separatists, John Smyth's group explored the New Testament to ascertain what the church should be like. Smyth advocated that the leadership should be elected by the majority vote of the members, and came to the decision that adult baptism, on profession of faith, was the New Testament method of admitting members into the fellowship of the church. Smyth baptised himself and then the other members of the group, thus forming the first Baptist church in 1609.

Smyth began to dialogue with a group of Mennonites in Amsterdam, known as Waterlanders, and along with 31 members of his group made an application to join their denomination. However, other members of his group were not persuaded, and in 1612 under the leadership of Thomas Helwys, returned to London where they formed the first Baptist church on British soil. Smyth himself died that year in Amsterdam. Many of his followers were admitted to the Mennonite group in 1615 and disappeared as a distinct group.

William Carey (1761-1834)

William Carey founded the Baptist Missionary Society and was influential in the development of the modern missionary movement.

He was born in 1761 to a poor family living in Northamptonshire, England. As a young man, he became convinced of the Baptist practices of faith and soon became a pastor of a Baptist church. At the same time, he supported himself as a shoe-maker, and taught himself several languages. Carey was fascinated by the travels of James Cook. He became convinced that Christians should travel to these places to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus to take the Gospel to every part of the earth.

At a meeting of ministers in 1792, he challenged his fellow ministers to form a society for proclaiming the Gospel among those who had never heard about the Christian faith. The Baptist Missionary Society was formed and Carey set sail in 1793. Carey wanted to go to the South Sea Islands, but was persuaded to go to India where he largely supported himself through his work in an indigo factory at Malda in Bengal.

This was Carey's base. However, he was convinced that people would hear the message primarily through the reading of the Bible. He learnt the language and within five years had translated the New Testament into Bengali. That translation was printed in 1801. The whole Bible was completed in 1809.

Carey also believed it was important to educate people. He was involved in establishing a printing press at Serampore and published the first newspaper in India. In 1810, he played a major role in founding Serampore College near Calcutta for teaching young people not only about religion, but also Western science. Carey worked primarily in the area of linguistics, translating the Bible, in whole or in part, into twenty-five languages or dialects. He also published many grammars and dictionaries. It was partly due to his agitation that, in 1829, the government prohibited the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands (the practice of suttee).

Carey died in India in 1834.

William Carey and an assistant in India



John Saunders (1806-1859)

John Saunders was not the first Baptist pastor in Australia. That place goes to John McKaeg. However, John Saunders was the first to answer the call of a young Baptist community in Australia to be a pastor, and consequently played a significant role in its development.

Saunders was born in London in 1806, and, as a young man was intent on missionary service in India. The Baptist Missionary Society did not accept him immediately for such service, but, upon receipt of a letter seeking help from Baptists in Sydney, suggested he go there. Saunders agreed and, after his marriage to Elizabeth Willox, set out for the colony where he arrived in December 1834.



He found temporary accommodation for services before building a large chapel to seat 400 people in Bathurst Street, opened in 1836. Saunders wanted to found a strong church to serve the Protestant community in Sydney, and membership did not require baptism.

Saunders maintained his interest in missions and directly supported the work, not only of the Baptist Missionary Society, but also the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Missionary Society. He had deep compassion for Aboriginal people and supported the German Mission to Aborigines and the Aborigines' Protection Society.

Saunders worked to promote the moral tone of the young colony and participated in several charities and philanthropic societies in the colony. He worked for the development of education and gave lectures in science. He pressed for an end to convict transportation, and served as secretary for the Temperance Society (which was distinct from the Total Abstinence Society at that time).

As Saunders' health declined, he arranged for Rev John Ham to succeed him as pastor in Bathurst Street before returning to England in 1847. Back in England, he resumed a legal practice and did some preaching. But his health did not fully return and he died in 1859. His widow and their daughter returned to Australia.

Matilda Jane Evans (Congreve) (1827-1886)

Mrs Matilda Jane Evans was a well-known novelist, poet and religious writer, a Baptist pastor's wife and deaconess.

Ken Manley says that probably her first published work had been a poem "An Australian Scene" about baptisms in the River Torrens, Adelaide, in 1858:

From manhood's prime to early youth,
The candidates stand forth at last.
Our southern sunshine never fell
Upon a holier, happier scene.

... Jesus! The sacred head has trod,
His people from their sin to save;
And in the footsteps of our God,
'Tis sweet to pass the liquid wave:
And those who now his name confess,
And boldly in those footsteps tread,
Will find that he is near to bless.

Evans was the first woman to publish a novel in South Australia, titled *Marian* in 1859. Under the pseudonym "Maude Jeanne Franc" she published fourteen novels and various poems and stories.

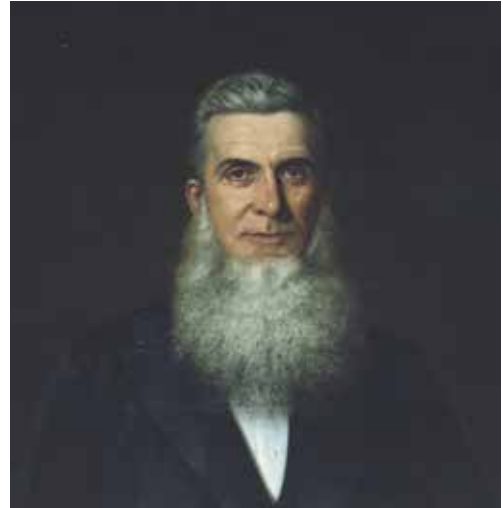
Matilda Congreve married a Baptist pastor, Ephraim Evans, from the Barossa Valley of South Australia in 1860. Ephraim's first wife died in 1858, leaving him with two children. Together they had two more children but tragically Ephraim died in 1863. Matilda, with four children aged from nine months to eight years, worked as a teacher to support her family, helped by her sister Emily. And she continued to write.

Vermont Vale was her second novel, first released as a serial in *Australian Evangelist* 1863-1864. This was a common genre of the times – a serialised story released in religious periodicals to teach about Christian faith and reinforce values. Her next novel originally appeared as a serial "Joys and Sorrows" in 1865-1866. Her tenth novel was *Emily's Choice*, a novel that reflected her own experience as a wife of a struggling Baptist pastor. Together the couple face financial challenges and difficult congregations.

Evans was a leading deaconess in North Adelaide, appointed with three others in 1871. (Manley 2006a, pp.231-232, 301, 305-306, 356)

Silas Mead (1834-1909)

The most significant Baptist leader in the nineteenth century in South Australia was Rev Silas Mead, who began ministering in North Adelaide in 1861. He was born in Somerset, England, in 1834. He studied at Stepney College in London before gaining his M.A. and LL.B. at London University. He proceeded to the University of London where he studied eastern languages in preparation for missionary work in Asia. When a group of Baptists in South Australia wrote to the principal of Regent's Park College asking for a suitable minister, Mead agreed to respond to the challenge and sailed to Adelaide.



Mead established the Flinders Street church in Adelaide in 1863, and it grew strongly under his leadership. By 1871, the church had 410 active members. In particular, his weekly Bible study groups led by lay people were very successful. He advocated open fellowship, welcoming unbaptised members into his church, and was not interested in sectarianism. This caused some controversy. However, his church provided a model for many in South Australia.

In 1864, Flinders Street Baptist church began what later became the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, supporting the work of Baptists in East Bengal. Mead was involved in many other aspects of the work in South Australia. He opened new churches and trained young ministers. He founded Union College in South Australia. At various times he held the position of President, General Secretary and Finance Secretary in the South Australian Baptist association. He started the first Christian Endeavour Society in the colony in 1888 and participated in temperance programs.

In 1897, he returned to England as principal of Harley College, London. But four years later he was back in Australia, this time co-pastoring with his son-in-law at a Baptist church in Perth. He died in Perth in 1909.

Rev Silas Mead from a painting in Flinders Street Baptist Church, Adelaide
(Photograph provided by Flinders Street Baptist Church)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Spurgeon was the most famous of British preachers in the Victorian era. He had considerable influence on Australian Baptists directly through his books and indirectly through his students and followers who came to Australia. Born in Essex in 1834 and baptised at the age of 16, he began his working life as a teacher at Cambridge. But at the age of 18, he began his ministry. University life was still closed to people who were not members of the Church of England, and Spurgeon was not able to study there. While he received private tuition, and was diligent in his personal study, including Hebrew and New Testament Greek, Spurgeon did not attend a university or theological college.



At 20, he moved to London as a minister of New Park Street Church. Almost overnight, his preaching became famous throughout London, and the church could not hold the crowds who came to hear him. Spurgeon had great gifts in oratory, in stating things simply, and in appealing to people of all levels of society. In 1861, the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built, and he preached there to congregations, frequently over 5000 in number, until the end of his life. Spurgeon's sermons were printed and translated into many languages. Over a hundred million copies of his sermons have been sold.

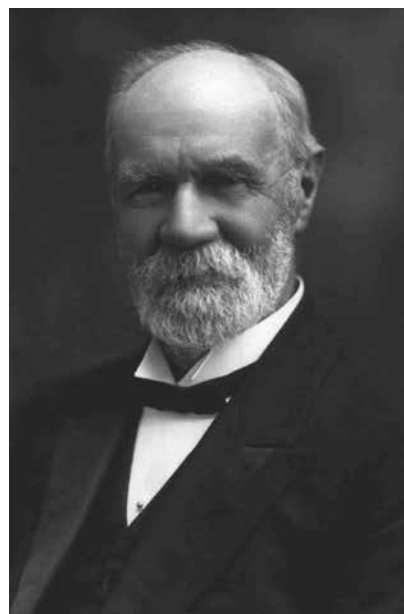
Spurgeon was first and foremost an evangelist, but he had a wide interest in other institutions in society. From the beginning, he held free evening classes at the Tabernacle. In 1856 he established a college for training pastors for ministry, and by the time of his death had trained 900 men, some of whom came to Australia to minister. He developed an association to circulate religious and healthy literature. Spurgeon had deep sympathy for the poor. He began an orphanage for the young and developed almshouses for the elderly. He gave much of his money away. He spoke often about social evils, but saw no need for radical changes in the structures of society. In 1887, Spurgeon began to publicly attack the "modern thinking" that he felt was creeping into Baptist churches in England. He, like many others, was concerned about the critical analysis of the Bible and ideas of evolution. He was concerned that the supernatural element in faith was being undermined. Spurgeon wanted a creed rather than a weaker "Declaration of Faith" in order to maintain the purity of faith. The Baptist Union of England did not agree and so Spurgeon resigned from the Union. While Spurgeon was deeply respected by many within the Union, he remained outside of it from that time on.

Through his printed sermons and other literature, through members of his congregation and those who were trained in ministry in his college, his influence spread around the world. His sermons were widely read in Australia. Spurgeon's son, Thomas, visited Australia six times to assist the churches. Many men trained in Spurgeon's college found their way into Australian pulpits. Spurgeon died in 1892.

Frederick John Wilkin (1855-1939)

F. J. Wilkin played a significant role in the development of the Baptist denomination in Victoria. Through his pastoral work and leadership, many Baptist churches were established in country Victoria. Later in his life, he served the Union through his work in theological education.

Frederick John Wilkin was born in England in 1855, but emigrated to Australia with his family when six years old. The family settled at Castlemaine where Wilkin attended the local Baptist church. He trained for ministry and served first at Eaglehawk, near Bendigo between 1877 and 1880. The Home Mission Committee, which was responsible for the planting of churches, asked Wilkin to go to Kerang. Wilkin used Kerang as a base for planting Baptist churches throughout the area with the assistance of lay people, some of whom later trained for ordained ministry.



Wilkin continued his own studies extramurally with Melbourne University, graduating in Arts first with a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in arts. In 1892, he was appointed as superintendent for all rural Baptist churches. In order to undertake this work more effectively, he moved to become the pastor of the Baptist church in Brighton in Melbourne. The church allowed him to travel extensively and he visited many rural churches throughout Victoria.

Between 1906 and 1911, he worked full-time as the Superintendent of the Victorian Baptist Home Missionary Society. During that time, he also edited *The Southern Baptist*, the official paper of the Baptist Unions of South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, and tutored ministerial students. For much of the time between 1911 and 1937, Wilkin served as a lecturer in the Baptist theological college of Victoria, while he continued studies, graduating first with a Bachelor of Divinity and eventually a Doctorate of Divinity. He served as the secretary of the BUV between 1914 and 1920, and as the secretary of the Educational Board of the Baptist Union of Australia between 1926 and 1929. In 1939, at the age of 84, he published the first major historical study of Victorian Baptists: *Baptists in Victoria - Our First Century*. He died in 1939.

(Based largely on Brown, 1999)

F. J. Wilkin

(Photograph courtesy of the BUV Archives)

Cecilia Downing (1858-1952)

Cecilia Downing was one of the eager and hard-working Baptist women who served on Baptist committees and as representatives to Baptist Union and Congress meetings. She became a leading Baptist woman, arguably the leading Baptist woman, of her time. At the 1911 Australian Baptist Congress in Melbourne there was attention given to the ministry of women, although it was in the context of a women's meeting. Downing addressed the meeting, arguing for women's involvement in public ministry as well as traditional "Dorcas type ministries" of "thoughtfulness, refinement and love". Furthermore, she encouraged all Baptist churches to start women's guilds in order to strengthen women's ministry, and she challenged women to actively engage in social reform: "If every Christian woman would array herself actively on the side of the reformer against the evils of drink, gambling and social impurity the battle would be won" (Manley 2006a, p.310).

Downing went on to serve on the BUV's Executive Council, helped found the Victorian Baptist Women's Association which she served as secretary (1932-1941), and founded and served as the first President of the BUA Women's Board. She also was active in civic leadership outside the church, as a member of the Victorian Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), secretary of the National Council of Women (1928-1936), Children's Court probation officer, President of Travellers' Aid Society, President of Melbourne's Housewives' Association, and she helped found the Women's Inter-Church Council. She was an advocate for strong family life, but also a strong feminist who advocated for the vote for women and argued for their equal representation on municipal councils. She was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in 1952, in recognition of her services to women and the underprivileged (Manley 2006b, pp.548-549).

Joseph Hunter Goble (1863-1932)

J. H. Goble has been described as “the outstanding Victorian Baptist minister”. For his extraordinary ministry in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray and his work in both Victorian and Australian Baptist Unions, he is warmly remembered.

Joseph Goble was born near Port Fairy, Victoria in 1863, but from the age of 8 grew up in poverty in Port Melbourne. He left school at the age of 11 and worked in factories before becoming an apprentice printer. He was converted at the Mission for Seamen when about 15, and soon began preaching.



At the age of 21, he was accepted as a candidate for ministry. He began as a student minister at Footscray Baptist Church while studying and supporting himself through printing. His health could not take the pressure, and for some years he withdrew, until Footscray called him, now married with two children, back to ministry in 1895. Two years later, his wife died of typhoid. But Goble continued in ministry. A new church was built seating 700 people. The church became the largest Baptist Church in Victoria with the largest Sunday School in Australia. He was known for his simple, direct and powerful preaching. He was greatly respected for his tireless visiting and his ability to share in the experiences of the people among whom he lived.

In 1908, he was elected president of the BUV and chaired the Advisory Board of the Union for twenty-three years. For some years he chaired the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Having played a significant role in the formation of the Baptist Union of Australia, he was elected as its first President-General in 1926.

Throughout these years, he continued as the minister of Footscray Baptist. His ministry there was brought to an end by his death in 1932, after 37 years as pastor of that church. He was greatly mourned by Baptists throughout Victoria, but also by the people of Footscray who erected a statue as memorial to his ministry. The statue still stands on the Geelong Road.

(Based largely on Brown, 1999)

Ellen Arnold (1858-1931)

Ellen Arnold emigrated to South Australia from England with her family in 1879. She attended Flinders Street Baptist Church where Rev Silas Mead influenced her to consider missionary work. Trained as a teacher and in medical work, she joined Marie Gilbert from Geelong and went in 1882 to the Baptist Zenana Mission in Faridpur, India. They were the first Australian Baptist missionaries to be sent overseas. Hundreds were to follow, but Arnold was to become, and still is, the longest serving Australian Baptist Missionary Society missionary with her 49 years of service (1882-1931).

She was 24 when she arrived in Calcutta and started language study, but had to return to Australia for health reasons the same year. Back home, after recovering her health, she preached widely throughout Australia's colonies and New Zealand and helped Australian Baptists get a vision for mission in East Bengal. She recruited four other women who returned with her in 1885. For their commissioning, Mead preached on the feeding of the 5,000 and referred to the women as the "five barley loaves" going in faith to face an apparently impossible challenge. They led the way in the tradition of Australian Baptist women taking significant and leading roles in global mission. Arnold worked mainly around the region of Pabna and preached, organised relief programs, established schools and dispensaries, and was formative in helping set up the East Bengal Baptist Union (Manley 2006b, pp.595-598).

Samuel Pearce Carey (1862-1953)

Samuel Pearce Carey was minister at the Collins Street Baptist Church in Melbourne, 1900-1908. He was a Baptist pastor's son and great-grandson of William Carey. After training at Regent's Park College and beginning his pastoral ministry and family in England, he emigrated to Australia in 1900 to be minister of Collins Street Baptist Church.

Carey was labeled "the Dr Clifford of Australia". John Clifford was a liberal and a leading advocate for the social gospel among British Baptists. Baptists tended to polarise between him and Charles Spurgeon in England. Being identified with Clifford did not always win him popularity among Australian Baptists. For example, one time he preached to the Baptist Union Assembly, Carey said he was not looking for absolute inerrancy of Scripture, which got him into trouble with some. At another time, in another Assembly, he preached about the final love of God he felt would "lie behind God's future judgment" (Manley 2006a, p.129). But most significantly he argued the teachings of Jesus should be applied to society. He advocated against unfair labour and promoted social reform. He became a regular welcome speaker at workers' meetings. However, he also attacked gambling and preached against Catholics, which alienated him from workers and Catholics. His most significant heritage is his engagement with public issues from the pulpit and in his civic engagement.

At his public farewell from Collins Street, on 22 December 1908, he spoke of doing a lot of work beyond his church pastoral ministry and that he had risked ostracising some members because of [socialist] groups he had identified with. But in conclusion he asserted his conviction about the importance of a faith that engaged public issues of society: "I believe in a Christ who touches every province of human life, and I believe we do not preach the Gospel fully until we set about applying the Gospel to every province of our life." (Manley 2002, p.381; this page draws largely on Lyons-Lee 2008)

Frank W Boreham (1871-1959)

Frank William Boreham OBE (1871-1959) is well known in England, New Zealand and Australia as a Baptist preacher and writer. Converted while working in London, and hearing the American Preacher Dwight L Moody in his youth, he trained in Spurgeon's Pastor's College (interviewed by Spurgeon himself), and ministered then in Dunedin, New Zealand from 1895. He started writing for the local newspaper, a habit he continued when he went to Hobart and then also Armadale and Kew Baptist Churches in Victoria. He formally retired in 1928 when he was 57, but continued to write for three more decades.

He wrote 3000 editorials for the Hobart *Mercury* 1912-1959, and later more for the Melbourne *Age*. His editorials established him as a public theologian, prepared to engage the issues and questions of his day. He published 46 books through Epworth Press. His writing led to a highly-regarded international reputation. Some of his most famous books were a series that he developed from 125 sermons themed around "Texts that Made History": *A Bunch of Everlastings*, *A Handful of Stars*, *A Casket of Cameos*, *A Faggot of Torches*, and *A Temple of Topaz*. As a widely read and respected local Australian leader and writer, Billy Graham sought him out for discussion in 1959 (Wikipedia; Pound 2003).

Arthur Stace (1884-1967)

In 1930 the evangelist John Ridley preached on “Eternity” in the Burton Street Baptist Tabernacle. In the congregation was Arthur Stace, a stretcher-bearer in World War I, before becoming an alcoholic and criminal, but who had been converted at St Barnabas’ Broadway and then joined Burton Street. Stace was illiterate and had a troubled background, but loved Ridley’s preaching: “I wish I could shout ‘Eternity’ through the streets of Sydney!”

The challenge captured Stace’s imagination. Leaving church that evening he felt called to use some chalk in his pocket to write “eternity” on the street. He used an elegant copperplate script to write it around the streets every night, and the word became a Sydney landmark. Stace was an early graffiti artist. His identity was anonymous until a fellow church member discovered he was the writer of the word, and encouraged him to tell his story in the *Daily Telegraph*. By the time he died in 1967 he had probably written *eternity* half-a-million times.

The climax of the new year and new millennium fireworks on 31 December 1999 was “Eternity” lit up at midnight on Sydney Harbour Bridge. As Manley noted, “the single word sermon of a Baptist layman was shared with the whole world” (Manley 2006a, pp.5-6).

Tim Costello (1955-)

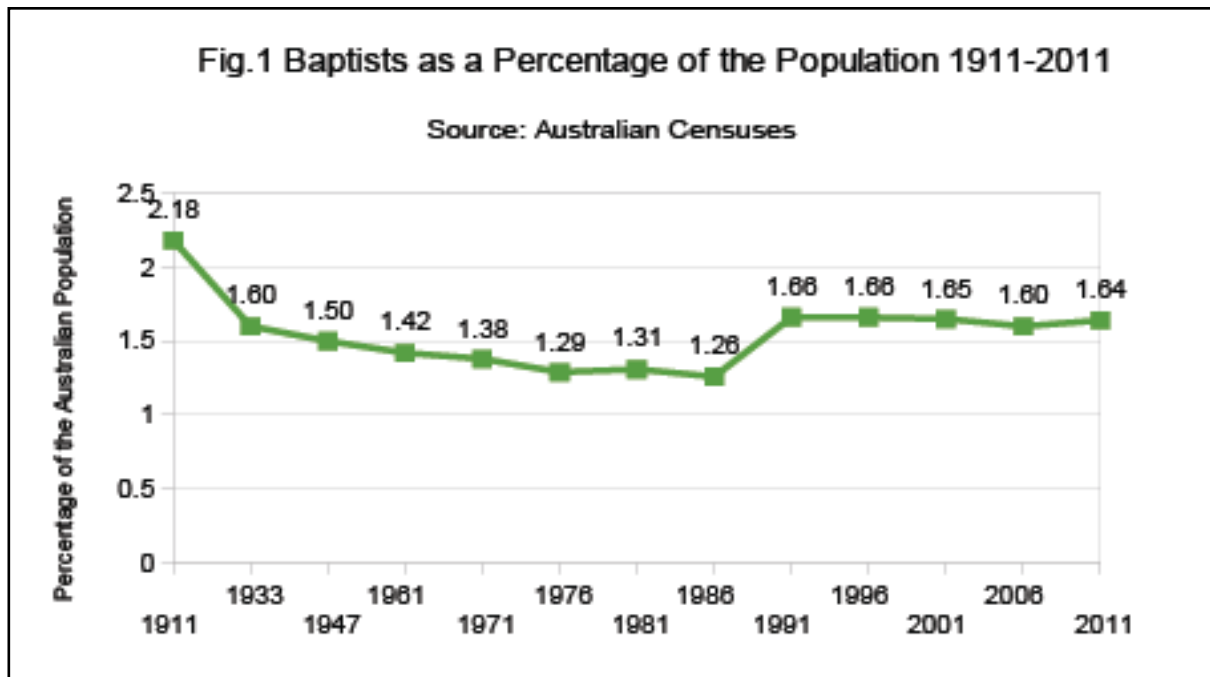
Today's best known Australian Baptist is Tim Costello, Baptist pastor and now CEO of World Vision Australia. Born in 1955, Tim grew up in Blackburn and attended the local Baptist church and studied at Carey Baptist Grammar School. The family enjoyed debating politics and religion over the dinner table, and the other Costello brother, Peter, went on to become Australia's longest-serving Federal government treasurer. Tim engaged in open-air evangelistic meetings as a teenager, and was a leader at Monash University Evangelical Union. He trained and worked as a lawyer, and after volunteering as a youth pastor felt the need for theological study which he pursued at Ruschlikon International Baptist Seminary in Switzerland. He wrote his thesis on John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* (1972) and developed a more radical approach to theology.

It is Tim Costello's social application of Christian faith for which he is best known, integrating an evangelical faith with social concern. He tested this first on return to Melbourne as minister of St Kilda Baptist Church from 1984. There he started a branch office of his old legal firm, Moore's, and offered legal defense advocacy to prostitutes, homeless people and troubled petty criminals. During his pastorate at St Kilda he entered local council politics and became mayor at St Kilda at a crucial time and regularly opposed the Kennett State Government positions on privatization, development and gambling. Tim broadened his public ministry further at Collins Street Baptist Church where he went in 1995 to develop the urban mission unit which became Urban Seed, and then again in 2003 when he went to lead World Vision (Munro 2010, pp.10-16).

Costello's voice is sought by reporters and politicians, religious and secular leaders, because he is recognised and looked to as a compassionate social reformer whose faith informs his engagement and advocacy.

Social Profile of Baptists in Australia

Change Over Time



According to Australian census figures, the Baptists reached their peak in terms of percentage of the population in 1901 when they constituted 2.37 per cent of the population. However, after declining to 1.60 per cent in 1933, the proportion of the population identifying as Baptist has not changed greatly since that time. There was a dip to 1.26 per cent in 1986 and in 1991 the reported figure rose back to 1.66 per cent.

In 1954 there was a small dip in the number of Baptists. This could have represented a real decline in affiliation with Baptist churches, which was reversed, to some extent, in the later 1950s and 1960s. The Billy Graham crusade of 1959 and other evangelistic crusades around those times had a significant impact on Baptist numbers. British immigration in the 1950s and 1960s also had a positive effect on Baptist numbers.

The sudden increase in 1991 is mainly due to the re-design of the census form. In 1991, the Australian Bureau of Statistics first listed specific boxes to tick, rather than asking everyone to write their religion. These boxes have included every group with which 1 per cent of the population or more identifies. The Baptists were one of the only evangelical groups on the list. It is highly likely that many other Evangelicals, looking at the list, considered that "Baptist" was closest to what they were, and ticked that box. That particularly refers to the Churches of Christ, and possibly some Brethren and other Evangelicals. It was also easier for those who might have not answered the

question previously to indicate they had some relationship to the Baptists – through schools, or family heritage or other. They might not have thought of writing in Baptist – but when the option was presented to them, it became a possibility. We are not able to identify developments in Baptist churches of that time which might have encouraged people to identify themselves as Baptist.

Between 1991 and 2011 the percentage of the Australian population identifying as Baptist plateaued between 1.66 and 1.60. However, alongside the total Australian population rising, the actual number of people identifying themselves as Baptist has risen almost every census, reaching more than 350,000 in 2011 (1.64 per cent of the population).

Table 1. Number of Identifying Baptists 1911-2011

Census Year	Numbers Identifying
1911	97,074
1933	105,874
1947	113,527
1961	149,628
1971	175,969
1976	174,151
1981	190,259
1986	196,782
1991	279,920
1996	295,178
2001	309,205
2006	316,742
2011	352,499

Source: Australian Censuses

While some other denominations have seen considerable decline in terms of the number of Australians who identify or affiliate with them, the Baptists have grown at a similar rate to the population over recent years. From 2001 to 2011, the Baptist rate of growth has increased as shown by the up-turn in the line in Figure 1.

There are three major sources of growth and decline as reflected in the numbers in Table 1.

1. Births and deaths;
2. Migration into and out of Australia;
3. Conversions or new identification as Baptists and departures from the Baptist movement.

The 2011 Census indicated that, between 2001 and 2011, 38,913 children were born in Australia who were identified as Baptists. These numbers reflect the fact that the age profile of Baptists in Australia is similar to that of the population and there are many Baptists who are of child-bearing age.

During that same period, it is estimated that around 22,700 Baptists died. The higher number of births than deaths means that the number of Baptists increased by around 16,000.

Migration was a much greater source of increase. Between 2001 and 2011, 42,000 Baptist immigrants arrived in Australia. Among these immigrants were more than 9,000 from Asia, including a number of Karen and Chin from the north of Myanmar and Thailand. Myanmar, or Burma as it was previously called, was one of the areas in which Baptist missionaries worked in colonial times.

Baptist immigrants also came from many other parts of Asia, including China, Philippines, Malaysia and Korea. Nearly 7,000 Baptists arrived from South Africa and a smaller group of around 700 from the Horn of Africa. Baptists also arrived from India, and the Pacific Islands, as well as from the United Kingdom, USA and New Zealand. A total of 28 per cent of those who identified themselves as Baptist in the 2011 Census were born overseas, and another 17 per cent had one or both parents born overseas. Because of the diversity of sources of immigration, there are many languages spoken by Baptists including a range of Asian, African and European languages.

Recent immigration builds on previous waves of Baptist immigrants. The first non-English speaking congregations in Australia were German. Some German Baptists settled in Queensland in the middle of the nineteenth century. Immediately after World War II, many Slavic refugees arrived in Australia, particularly from displaced persons camps in Germany and China. Slavic Baptist churches were started in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Spanish Baptist churches were formed in the late 1960s among Spanish-speaking migrants from South and Central America. Since the 1970s, Vietnamese congregations have been formed and there are now nine congregations (3 in Sydney, 2 in Brisbane, 4 in Melbourne) networked by the Vietnamese Baptist Association of Australia.

Between 2001 and 2011, a few Baptists emigrated from Australia to live and work overseas, in some cases, for temporary periods. However, their absence has an impact on the calculation of Baptist numbers in Australia. Figures can only be estimated from the percentage of the Australian population moving overseas. It is likely to be about 5,000 or 6,000 of those Baptists present in Australia in 2001. Hence, the net migration of Baptists to Australia between 2001 and 2011 was about 37,000 people.

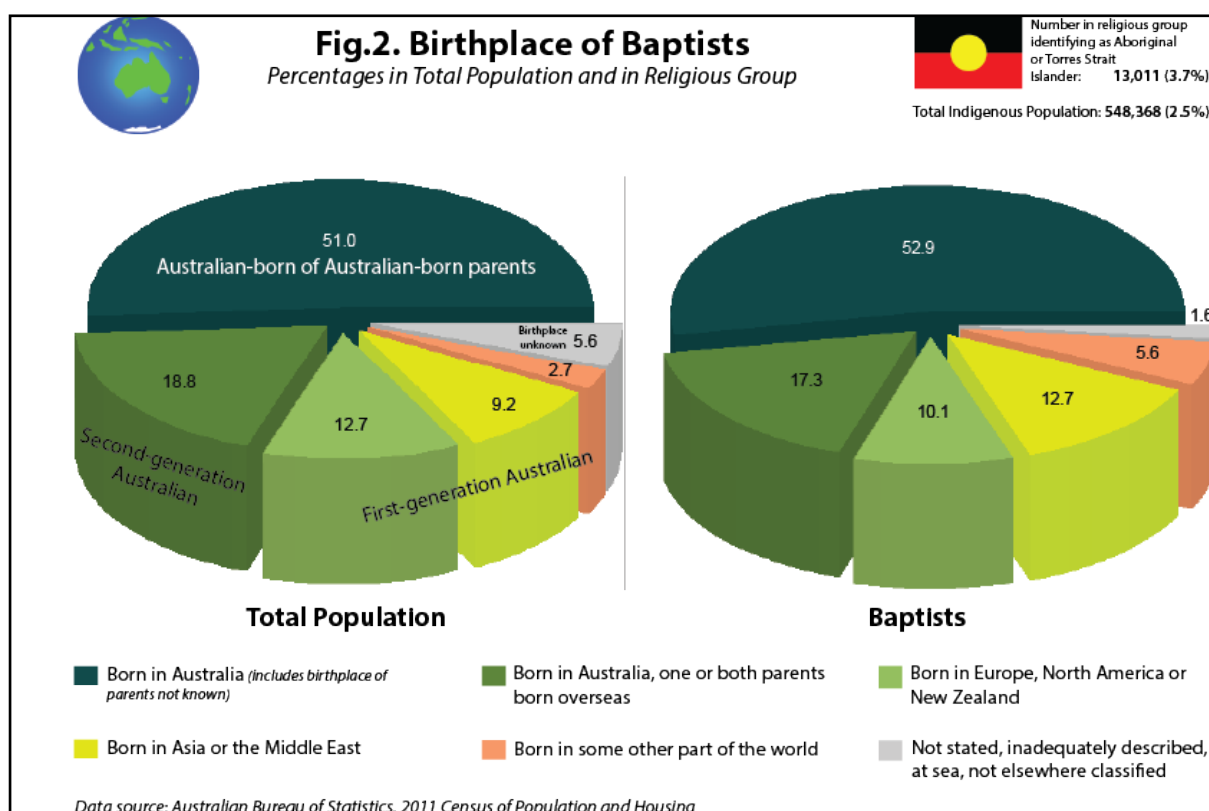
The remaining factor is the number of conversions and dis-identification. In 2011, the NCLS found that 3 per cent of all those worshipping in a Baptist Church were people without any previous church involvement who had started coming to the church in the last five years. In 2006, they found about 4 per cent of worshippers were newcomers without previous involvement in a church. Based on the monthly attendance figures of 170,000 (see Table 8), these figures would suggest that in the past ten years, across Australia 12,000 people without previous church involvement had joined Australian Baptist churches. (Note that as well as 3 per cent newcomers in 2011, there were also 4 per cent who were returnees after a long absence).

If we add the net increase between 2001 and 2011 from births over deaths (16,000), and from migration into and out of Australia (37,000), plus conversions (12,000), we

would expect that the total number of Baptists would be 374,205. In fact, the 2011 Census only counted 352,489. It would appear that close to 22,000 had ceased to identify as Baptists during that period. In fact, it seems likely that, over that ten-year period, significantly more people ceased to identify as Baptists than began to identify as Baptists – apart from those who grew up in Baptist families – over that period of ten years.

While the Baptist denomination grew more than most other denominations between 2001 and 2011, most growth came from immigration. A second source of growth was through children being born into Baptist families. What is likely, however, is that many children, identified by their parents as Baptists in the 2001 Census, did not continue to identify themselves as Baptists in 2011 when they completed the Census form for themselves. The number ceasing to identify was considerably greater than the number of newcomers to the Baptist church in that ten-year period.

Baptist Immigrants



As has been noted, the multicultural dimensions of the Baptist community in Australia have been significant. Over the years, Baptists have welcomed migrants from many parts of the world. In the 2011 Census, 70.2 per cent of Baptists were born in Australia, a similar proportion to that of the total population (69.8%). Of these, 52.9 per cent were born of Australian parents compared with 51.0 per cent of the total population. Slightly fewer Baptists were second-generation immigrants (17.3%) as compared with the total population (18.8%).

An increasing proportion of Baptists and, to a lesser extent, of all Australians, has been born overseas. In 2011, 70 per cent of Baptists were born in Australia but that rate is less than even five years ago when 74 per cent of Baptists were born in Australia. Thus, slightly fewer than one-third of identifying Baptists (30%) were born overseas: a total of close to 100,000 people. Of those who specified their year of arrival, 44 per cent arrived after 2000. In other words, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Baptist migrants arriving in Australia over the past 10 years.

- ◆ 286 Baptist migrants living in Australia arrived prior to 1940;
- ◆ 1,269 arrived between 1941 and 1950;
- ◆ 3,960 arrived between 1951 and 1960;
- ◆ 7,954 arrived between 1961 and 1970;

- ◆ 8,931 arrived between 1971 and 1980;
- ◆ 15,220 arrived between 1981 and 1990;
- ◆ 16,327 arrived between 1991 and 2000; and
- ◆ 42,416 arrived between 2001 and 2011.

The role of immigration in the growth of the Baptists parallels the significance of immigration in many other Christian denominations (Hughes 2012a, 2012b). Since 1971 the number of Australians identifying with a religion other than Christianity has increased from 100,000 to 1.5 million. Yet many migrants are Christian also, and they have swollen or at least stabilised the numbers of some denominations, Baptists among them.

Of the 1.8 million migrants arriving between 2001 and 2011, 767,000 were Christian. This is more than the 514,000 migrants of other faiths and more than migrants of “no religion”. The number of Baptist migrants in this period was 42,416, contributing to the 30 per cent of Baptists born overseas.

Religious groups, both Christian and others, with high numbers of immigrants are growing the most. The only religious category going against this trend is people who identify with “no religion”, which has grown by more than 60 per cent over ten years, mainly through people with both parents born in Australia.

If not for migrants, the number of people in Australia identifying with Christianity would have fallen 3 per cent rather than risen by 3 per cent. For Baptists specifically, without the influx of Christian immigrants, there would have been almost exactly the same number of Baptists in 2011 as there were in 2001. Migration can in fact account for 98 per cent of the growth of Baptists in this period (in contrast to accounting for 65 per cent of the growth of the Australian population)! As migration has brought fresh people and new life to Baptist churches, these figures show the importance of welcoming and integrating newcomers from other countries. This is especially important in the cities where 84 per cent of migrants live, and especially in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia where the majority of immigrants have settled.

According to the 2011 Census, of those immigrants arriving between 2001 and 2011,

- ◆ Victoria received 10,669 immigrant Baptists;
- ◆ Queensland 9,716;
- ◆ New South Wales 9,474;
- ◆ Western Australia 8,703;
- ◆ South Australia 2,369;
- ◆ Northern Territory 517;

- ◆ Australian Capital Territory 500; and
- ◆ Tasmania 467.

A challenge for Baptist and other churches is the nurture of the faith of children of migrants. The values of their parents and their religious heritage are often different from what the children learn from their peers and their new society, and this is a significant factor in the ways churches teach and include the children of migrants.

The figures also show the importance of giving fresh focus to reaching Australian-born people. Hughes wrote:

The decline of many denominations has been masked by the continuing inflow of immigrants. With immigrants making up more than 40 per cent of the attendance of people under the age of 65 in Christian churches across Australia, it must be concluded that the future of the churches, to a large extent, will be in their hands. But if the Christian faith is for all Australians, then the churches must increase their efforts to engage with Australians born in Australia. (Hughes 2012b)

No Christian denomination is keeping up with population growth in their proportion of Australian-born people who identify with their denomination. If Baptist growth had kept pace with that of the Australian-born population, 368,000 instead of 352,000 would have identified with Baptist.

Moreover, immigration influences the age profile of religious groups including Baptists, since most people come to Australia as young adults or young families, mostly aged 20-39. Migration has contributed therefore, to the relatively young age profile of Baptists.

Migrants also influence the levels of church involvement, since they tend to attend worship more frequently than Australian-born people. The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2009) showed that 26 per cent of immigrants said they attend religious services at least once a month, compared with 14 per cent of people born in Australia. Migrants tend to rely on churches for a community to belong to, and it is important for churches to welcome and make the most of the migrants' contributions and help them to stay connected.

Baptist immigrants have come from many countries around the world. Apart from the Chinese Baptists, the largest groups were from English speaking countries:

- ◆ 12,140 from England;
- ◆ 9,497 from South Africa; and
- ◆ 8,521 from New Zealand.

Another 3,906 were born in the United States. As shown in Figure 2, Baptists born in Europe, Northern America or New Zealand comprised 10.1 per cent of the Baptist community.

Overall, 13 per cent of Baptists were born in the Middle East or Asia, compared with just 9 per cent of the Australian population. The major countries in Asia from which

Baptists have come are:

- ◆ 12,410 from China or Hong Kong;
- ◆ 5,804 from Myanmar;
- ◆ 4,512 from the Philippines;
- ◆ 4,122 from Malaysia;
- ◆ 2,787 from Vietnam;
- ◆ 2,541 from Korea;
- ◆ 2,153 from Thailand;
- ◆ 1,766 from Indonesia; and
- ◆ 1,719 from India.

Approximately 80 per cent of Baptists spoke English at home according to 2011 Census. Amongst the other 20 per cent of Baptists, Chinese languages were most frequently used. According to the 2011 Census the ten most frequently spoken languages apart from English were:

- ◆ 12,071 Cantonese;
- ◆ 7,804 Mandarin;
- ◆ 4,495 Afrikaans;
- ◆ 3,977 Karen;
- ◆ 3,713 Tagalog or Filipino;
- ◆ 3,189 Vietnamese;
- ◆ 2,790 Korean;
- ◆ 2,618 Arabic;
- ◆ 2,324 Spanish; and
- ◆ 1,901 Burmese.

Census birthplace statistics reflect the existence of communities of Baptists from a wide range of places which arose as a consequence of missionary activity. They also reflect the fact that Baptists in Australia have encouraged the formation of non-English speaking Baptist communities.

Many Anglo churches have groups of non-English speaking people meeting in their

buildings, and some are developing more cooperative ministries. In many cases, non-English speaking groups have their own Bible studies or fellowship groups, while joining in worship services with English speakers. In Melbourne, there are Cambodians, Chin and Karen (from Myanmar), Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, Korean, Slavic, Spanish, Sudanese, Vietnamese and other groups with such arrangements. Filipino and Samoan groups worship in English and invite other Australians to join them. There is a growing diversity of models of multicultural ministry (Yang 2012).



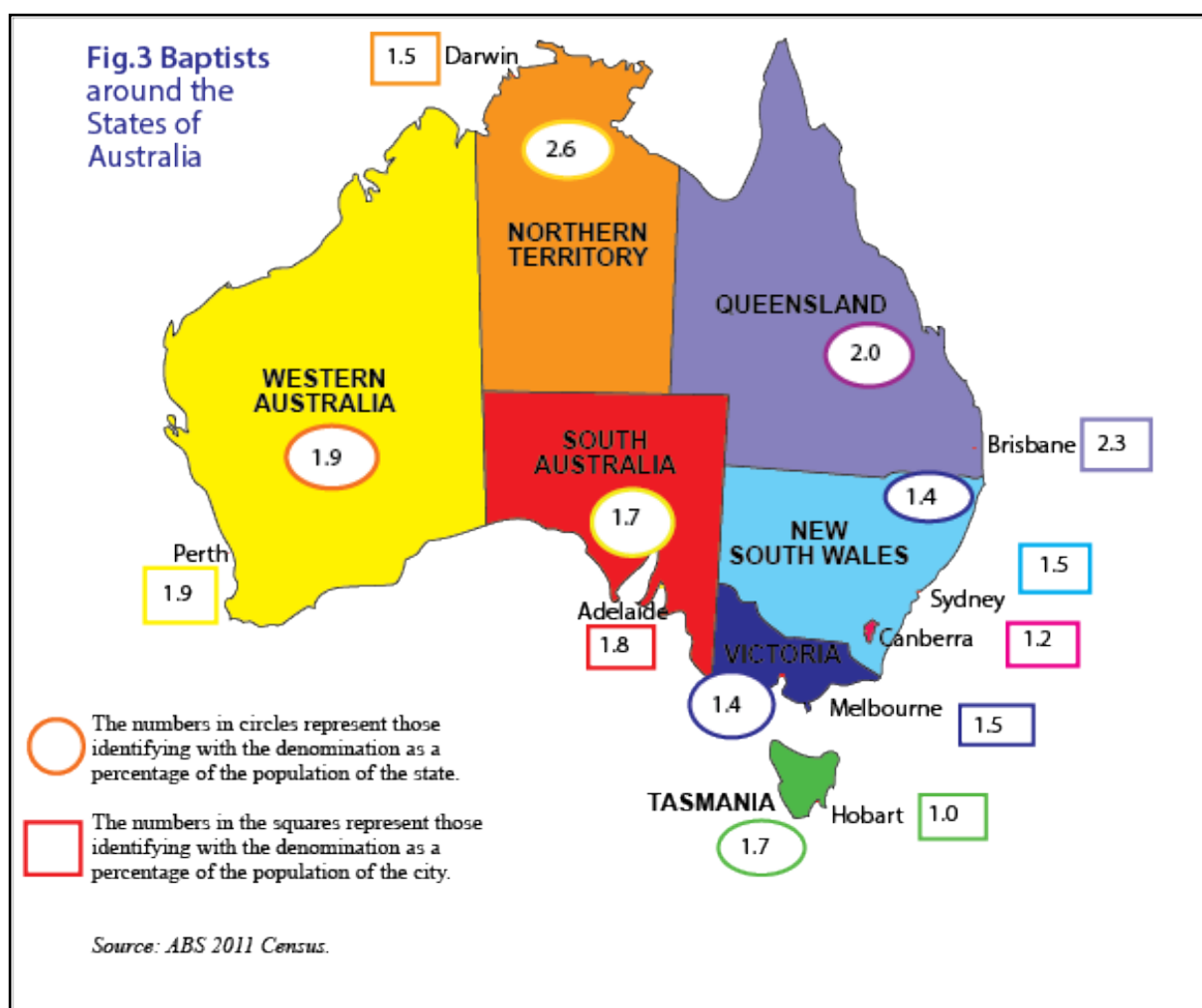
Whitley College Principal Rev Dr Frank Rees teaching a TransFormation class
(Photo courtesy of Jillian Stewart)

In some cases, leaders for culturally diverse “ethnic” churches have been invited to come from overseas. However, in recent years, more leadership has been found within Australia, and pastors have trained at the Baptist theological colleges. In 2003 Whitley College in Victoria developed a “TransFormation” program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students (www.buv.com.au/ministries/multicultural/transformation; Cronshaw 2011). In 2013, Whitley College had 100 students enrolled in the three-year program. Queensland and Western Australian colleges have developed similar programs which have greatly assisted migrant and other multicultural churches and their leadership development.

Gradually, the non-English speaking churches have been invited to take their place alongside Anglo churches in the affairs of the Baptist Unions.

Baptists across Australia

Figure 3 shows that Baptists are distributed fairly evenly through all the states and territories in Australia. In 2011, in terms of proportion of the population, Baptists were strongest in the Northern Territory (2.6%). Baptist work was slow to start in the Territory, but has since grown both among white Australians and among some Aboriginal groups. They were also strong in Tasmania (1.7%) where they share, with the Brethren, a strong heritage of evangelical non-conformity. This was developed through the influence on Tasmanian Baptists of C H Spurgeon, through his son and through graduates from his college in London.



While the number of Baptists across Australia grew by 43,000 (14%) between 2001 and 2011, the growth and decline of Baptists varied substantially between the states. Between 2001 and 2011, those identifying as Baptist in the Census increased by:

- ◆ 16,986 (24%) in Queensland;
- ◆ 11,436 (17%) in Victoria;
- ◆ 11,191 (37%) in Western Australia;
- ◆ 2,950 (3%) in New South Wales;
- ◆ 684 (3%) in South Australia; and
- ◆ 518 (13%) in Australian Capital Territory.

In that period, those numbers of people identifying as Baptists declined by:

- ◆ 385 (-4%) in Tasmania; and
- ◆ 128 (-2%) in Northern Territory.

To some extent, these various rates of growth and decline reflected unequal rates

of population growth among the states and territories. Between 2001 and 2011, the population of Western Australia grew by 23 per cent and Queensland by 22 per cent. Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory grew by 15 per cent and Northern Territory by 13 per cent, while New South Wales and South Australia grew by only 9 per cent and Tasmania by 7 per cent.

Baptist growth in Western Australia far exceeded general population growth, while the rate of growth in Victoria and Queensland was just above population growth. In the other states, Baptist growth was below that of the population.

The Census allows us to examine the three factors of growth and decline discussed earlier state by state: the natural growth from the excess of births over deaths, migration in and out, and the numbers of conversions over the number of dis-identifications.

Table 2. Growth and Decline in People Identifying as Baptists 2001-2011 by State and Territory

State	Baptists in 2001	Children Born Less Deaths	Migrants from Overseas Less Migrants Out	Balance of Internal Migration	Balance of Conversions Over Dis-identifications	Baptists in 2011
New South Wales	96,926	1,305	7,729	-2,426	-3,658	99,876
Victoria	66,421	3,564	9,473	604	-2,205	77,857
Queensland	70,285	7,212	8,451	2,152	-829	87,271
Western Australia	30,481	3,153	8,154	-562	446	41,672
South Australia	26,495	-159	1,891	446	-1,494	27,179
Tasmania	8,984	-78	305	64	-676	9,275
Northern Territory	5,778	738	413	306	-1,585	5,650
Australian Capital Territory	3,867	235	430	-6	-141	4,385
Australia	309,205	16,180	36,849	0	-10,144	352,489

Source: Australian Census 2001 and 2011.

Notes: Deaths have been estimated from the number of older people ceasing to identify. Migration out has been estimated from overall population numbers emigrating from Australia. Internal migration is indicated in the Census only for the numbers moving interstate in the last five years. The internal migration numbers do not balance out because some people did not indicate their address in 2006. The number of movements between 2006 and 2011 has been doubled for the estimate of movement between 2001 and 2011. The balance of conversions and dis-identifications has been calculated from the numbers in each state and territory from the difference in the numbers of Baptists given the other factors of growth and decline.

Table 2 shows that the number of those who ceased to identify as Baptists was greater than the number of conversions in every state except Western Australia.

Baptists were strongest in terms of per cent of population in the middle-sized cities: Brisbane (2.3%), Perth (1.9%) and Adelaide (1.8%) rather than in Sydney and Melbourne (both 1.5%). However, in terms of actual numbers, Baptists are strongest

in Australia's two largest cities: Sydney and Melbourne.

According to the 2011 Census,

- ◆ 63,838 Baptists lived in Sydney;
- ◆ 58,024 lived in Melbourne;
- ◆ 48,214 lived in Brisbane;
- ◆ 31,724 lived in Perth;
- ◆ 22,371 lived in Adelaide;
- ◆ 4,345 lived in Canberra;
- ◆ 1,954 lived in Hobart; and
- ◆ 1,893 lived in Darwin.

In all but the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, capital cities contained a higher proportion of Baptists than did the remainder of their respective states. South Australia was the most urbanised state with 83 per cent (up from 81 in 2006) of identifying Baptists located in Adelaide, whereas in Tasmania only 23 per cent were located in Hobart.

The proportion of Baptists living in the capital city of each state is as follows:

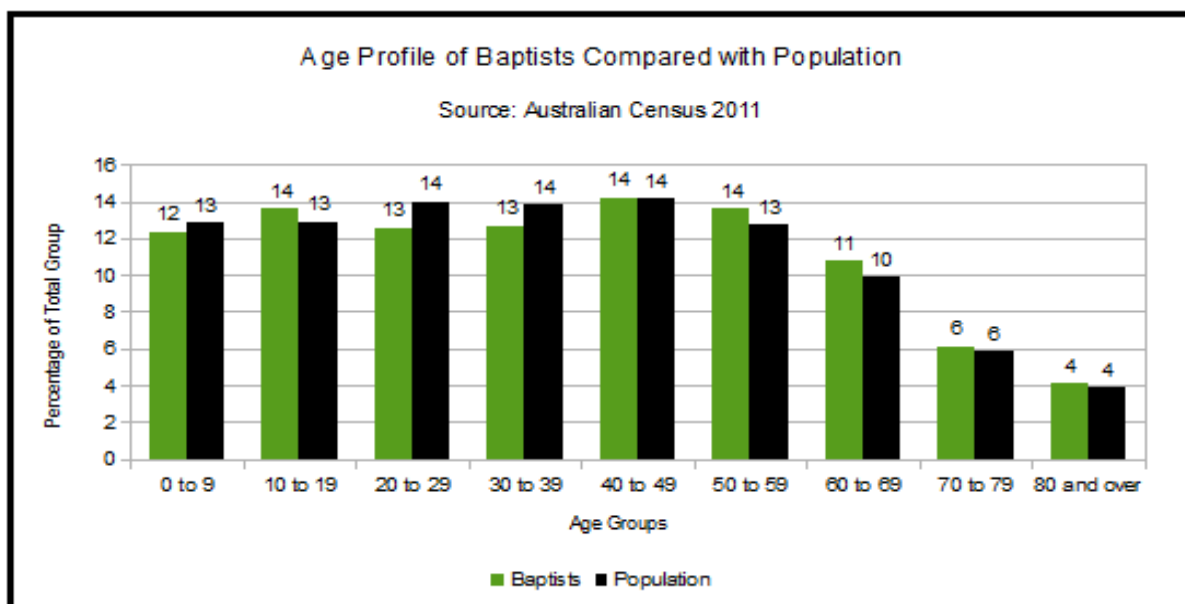
- ◆ 83% of South Australian Baptists live in Adelaide;
- ◆ 76% of Western Australian Baptists live in Perth;
- ◆ 75% of Victorian Baptists live in Melbourne;
- ◆ 64% of New South Wales Baptists live in Sydney;
- ◆ 55% of Queensland Baptists live in Brisbane;
- ◆ 32% of Northern Territory Baptists live in Darwin; and
- ◆ 23% of Tasmanian Baptists live in Hobart.

Overall, 66 per cent of identifying Baptists lived in a capital city, including Canberra or the ACT. This compares closely to 65 per cent of the overall population which lives in the capital cities. Baptists have not had a strong presence in small rural centres. Only in country towns of several thousand residents have there been sufficient Baptists to form a congregation. Baptists have not congregated strongly in particular areas in Australia, but are spread widely through the population. Thus, few Baptist congregations are found in sparsely populated areas. In many places, isolated Baptists have shared in the life of churches of other Protestant denominations. Denominations such as Brethren, Uniting and Anglican are proportionately stronger than Baptists in rural and regional Victoria

(outside the capital cities). Pentecostals and Catholics are slightly more urbanized: more Catholics than Baptists (as a percentage) are located in capital cities.

Age, gender and marriage

Fig. 4. Age Profile of Baptists Compared with Population



The age profile of those who identify themselves as Baptists is marginally older than the total population. As Figure 4 shows, people aged 0-29 accounted for 39 per cent of those identifying as Baptists and 40 per cent of the total population. 30 to 49 year olds comprised 27 per cent of those identifying as compared with 28 per cent of the population.

However, there is a skew in the age profile of those Baptists who attend a church monthly or more often: 32 per cent are aged 60 years or older, compared with 26 per cent of the population. Nevertheless, Baptist attenders are not as old as those in some other denominations. 62 per cent of Anglicans and 47 per cent of Catholic attenders are aged 60 years or older. The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) found the average age of Baptist attenders (aged 15 and older) in 2011 was 48 years and 6 months and had increased from 46 years and 9 months in 2006.

There are many factors which have encouraged the involvement of young people in Baptist churches. NCLS found that informal services with contemporary music and lack of formal vestments for the worship leader are more attractive to younger people. In general, Baptists have affirmed informal services and have not encouraged clergy to wear robes or vestments. In many Baptist churches, contemporary music has been used with bands and amplified instruments replacing organs. NCLS found a stronger affirmation of contemporary music in Baptist churches compared with the Anglican Church, for example, although not as high as in Pentecostal churches.



Easter installation at Eastern Hills Community Church, Croydon Hills, Victoria
(Photo by Emma Morgan)

Nevertheless, Baptist churches need to be aware of the need to give greater attention to connecting with younger generations.

Among those who identified as Baptist in the 2011 Census, there were slightly more women (54%) than men (46%). Among those adults (18 years and older) who attend a Baptist church monthly or more often, the variation was greater with 58 per cent of female attenders and 42 per cent male according to the International Social Survey Program.

There are many reasons which have been suggested for the over-representation of women (Kaldor 1987, pp.107-117; Hughes et al., 2000, pp.180-182). One reason is the emphasis the churches place on the value of family life.

The importance of family life in the Baptist denomination is also reflected in the data on marital status among those who identify as Baptists. In the 2011 Census, 57 per cent of identifying Baptists 18 years of age and over were married compared with only 51 per cent of the total population. Among other Baptists:

- ◆ 27% had never married, compared with 31% of the population;
- ◆ 6% were widowed, the same as 6% of the population;
- ◆ 7% were divorced compared with 9% in the population;
- ◆ 3% were separated similar to 3% in the population.

NCLS indicated that the married were much more likely to attend church on a typical Sunday. It found that 67 per cent of Baptist attenders were married and just 21 per cent had never married.

Only 5 per cent of people identifying as Baptist and 1 per cent of attenders lived in de facto relationships compared with 10 per cent of the adult population.

The proportion of attenders who were separated or divorced (6%) was substantially lower among those who identified as Baptists (10%). This suggests that some Baptist couples who separate or divorce cease attending Baptists churches.

The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2009) found that 36 per cent of people who identified as Baptists, compared with 2 per cent of Anglicans, 11 per cent of Catholics and 10 per cent of Uniting Church people, said that sex before marriage was always wrong. Other surveys have also shown that Baptists are less tolerant towards divorce than people in most other denominations. However, the Baptist Unions have no regulations prohibiting the remarriage of divorced people.

The 2006 Census showed that 64 per cent of Baptists were married to Baptists. This level of marriage within the denomination was higher than that of most other denominations and was particularly high given the comparatively small size of the Baptist community. Apart from marrying within their own community, Baptists from 2006 census figures showed a preference for Anglicans (9.4%) and Catholics (9.3%). Overall, then,

- ◆ 64% of Baptists were married to other Baptists;
- ◆ 9% to Anglicans,
- ◆ 9% to Catholics,
- ◆ 6% to people of no religion,
- ◆ 3% to people of the Uniting Church,
- ◆ 2% to Presbyterians, and
- ◆ 7% to people of other religions or to people who did not state a religion.

Education and Occupation

Table 3. Level of Highest Qualification among Attending Baptists, Identifying Baptists and the Australian Population Aged 18 and Over in 2011

Level of Highest Qualification	Baptists Attending Monthly or More (%)	People Identifying as Baptists (%)	Australian Population (%)
Post-graduate degree or certificate	12	7	6
Bachelor's degree	14	17	14
Diploma or Certificate	26	30	27
Total with post-school qualifications	52	54	47

Sources: Australian Census 2011 and Combined International Social Survey Program data for Australia 2006 to 2009.

In the 2011 Census, the education levels of identifying Baptists were slightly higher than those for the total population. 24 per cent of adults aged 18 and over identifying as Baptists had a university degree, compared with 20 per cent of the population. However, substantially more Baptists who attended a church monthly or more often had post-graduate degrees. According to the NCLS the proportion of attenders with degrees rose substantially between 2001 and 2011.

Slightly more identifying Baptists (30%) held diplomas or certificates compared with the population (27%) but the proportion of attenders with this level of qualification was similar to that in the population (26%).

The tendency for people with higher levels of education and higher socio-economic status to attend church more frequently is found throughout the churches. Kaldor (1987) argued that this has been a long-term trend in Australian and British church life and that the working classes have seen the churches as representing interests different from their own. He also suggested that the patterns of church life reinforce these tendencies. Church services often require high levels of literacy. In Baptist churches in particular, there is a high level of expectation that attenders would participate in the processes of decision-making.

Table 4. Workforce Participation among Attending Baptists, Identifying Baptists and the Australian Population Aged 18 and Over in 2011

Labour force Status	Baptists Attending Monthly or More (%)	People Identifying as Baptists (%)	Australian Population (%)
Employed full-time	34	39	40
Employed part-time	20	20	19
Unemployed	2	3	3
Not in labour force / not stated	44	37	38
Total	100	100	100

Sources: Australian Census 2011 and Combined International Social Survey Program data for Australia 2006 to 2009.

According to the 2011 Census, 59 per cent of people aged 18 years and older identifying themselves as Baptists participated in the paid labour force at the time of the 2011 Census compared with similar numbers in the wider population. Unemployment rates were also similar to those of the population (around 3%). However, according to the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes surveys (2006-2009), the proportion of Baptists who attended a church monthly or more often who were employed was lower: 54 per cent, and a comparatively high proportion of 44 per cent were not in the labour force.

The 44 per cent of attenders who were not in the labour force can be described as follows:

- ◆ 20% were retired;
- ◆ 12% were involved in home-duties;

- ◆ 4% were students;
- ◆ 4% were disabled;
- ◆ 2% were helping family members, and
- ◆ 2% did not state their situation.

Table 5. Occupation of Employed Identifying Baptists and the Australian Population Aged 18 and Over in 2011

Occupation	Baptists (%)	Population (%)
Managers	12	13
Professionals	27	22
Technicians and trades	13	14
Community and personal service workers	11	10
Clerical and administrative workers	15	15
Sales workers	7	8
Machinery operators and drivers	6	7
Labourers	8	9
Inadequately described or not stated	2	2
Total	100	100

Source: Australian Census 2011

The occupational profile of those who identified as Baptists in the 2011 Census was similar to that of the wider population. The major difference was the higher proportion of professionals: 27 per cent of Baptists in the work-force compared with 22 per cent of the wider population. There were fewer Baptists in those occupations which did not require tertiary education such as sales workers, machinery operators and drivers and labourers (21 per cent of Baptists compared with 24 per cent of the total labour force).

The differences in the occupational profile between Baptists and the wider population were less marked in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census. This is likely to be a result of the large number of Baptist migrants. Of Baptists who arrived in Australia between 2001 and 2011, 13 per cent indicated they were labourers. Another 29 per cent of immigrants were professionals, and 10 per cent were managers.

Table 6. Industry Sector of Employed Identifying Baptists and the Australian Population Aged 18 and Over in 2011

Industry Sector	Baptists (%)	Population (%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery	2	3
Mining	2	2
Manufacturing	9	9
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1	1
Construction	7	8
Wholesale Trade	4	4
Retail Trade	9	10
Accommodation and Food Services	5	6
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	4	5
Information Media and Telecommunications	2	2
Financial and Insurance Services	3	4
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1	2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7	7
Administrative and Support Services	3	3
Public Administration and Safety	7	7
Education and Training	11	8
Health Care and Social Assistance	16	12
Arts and Recreation Services	1	1
Other Services / Inadequate Described and Not Stated	7	6
Total	100	100

Source: Australian Census 2011

The major differences in the industry sectors in which Baptists were working in 2011 compared with the wider population were in health and education. 27 per cent of all Baptists worked in these areas compared with just 20 per cent of the wider population. Nursing and teaching have been two areas of Baptist concentration – both community service areas. In most other areas, the proportions of Baptists were similar to those found in the wider population.

Table 7. Weekly Personal Income of Identifying Baptists and the Australian Population Aged 18 and Over in 2011

Income Bracket	Baptists (%)	Population (%)
Nil or negative income	6	7
\$1-\$199	8	6
\$200-\$299	13	11
\$300-\$399	11	10
\$400-\$599	13	12
\$600-\$799	11	11
\$800-\$999	9	9
\$1,000-\$1,249	8	8
\$1,250-\$1,499	6	6
\$1,500-\$1,999	7	7
\$2,000 or more	6	7
Not stated	3	8

Source: Australian Census 2011

The income profile of Baptists was similar to the Australian population as a whole. Low income earners were slightly over-represented however, with 38 per cent earning less than \$400 per week compared with 34 per cent of the total population. They include students, those involved in home duties, and the retired.

Significantly, those identifying as Baptists in the Census had high rates of volunteering with 24 per cent indicating they participated in voluntary work for an organisation or group. Such volunteering would have included work for both church and community groups. This compared with 14 per cent of the population as a whole who were involved in such ways.

Participation in Baptist Churches

Table 8. Percentage and Estimated Numbers of Religious Groups Indicating Involvement in Public Religious Activities Monthly or More Often (of people aged 18+)

Religious Group	Percentage Indicating Involvement Monthly or More	Numbers Involved Monthly or More Often
Anglicans	6%	214,378
Baptists	63%	170,178
Catholics	18%	1,003,443*
Churches of Christ	47%	18,932
Eastern Orthodox	25%	110,750
Jehovah's Witnesses	87%	59,357
Latter-day Saints	80%	31,885
Lutherans	38%	75,756
Pentecostals	87%	148,914
Presbyterians and Reformed	20%	105,655
The Salvation Army	55%	27,189
Seventh-day Adventists	86%	40,919
Uniting Church in Australia	19%	167,715
All Christians	24%	3,120,863
Other religions	23%	355,657
Population	16%	3,476,520

Source: Percentages from the International Social Survey Program 2006-2009. Estimates of numbers involved are calculated using the percentages and numbers identifying in the Australian Census 2011.
 * The Catholic Church's own figures suggest a smaller proportion attend monthly than is indicated by the International Social Survey Program.

Of the 270,124 adults aged 18 years or older who identified as Baptists in the 2011 Census, it is calculated that approximately 63 per cent or 170,178 adults attended a church monthly or more often. These figures have been calculated from sample surveys which are part of the International Social Survey Program. This level of involvement is much higher than for mainline denominations such as the Uniting Church in Australia (19%), Catholics (18%) and Anglicans (6%). The only groups with higher involvement are Latter-day Saints (80%), Seventh-day Adventists (86%), and Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals (both 87%).

The high level of involvement arises out of the nature of the Baptist community. Baptists make an individual, adult commitment to their faith, and either maintain their involvement or drop out of the Baptist community, often relinquishing their sense of identity with the Baptists. The high levels of involvement reflect the understanding of the nature of the church among the Baptists: that the church consists of those who make a commitment to be part of the community, rather than those who happen to be born into a family which has a particular heritage. There are strong expectations about involvement in church attendance and in other groups and activities. People who fail to live up to those expectations may find that they are not quite so welcome in the church

community, at least in terms of taking positions of responsibility or leadership.

The high levels of involvement mean there are fewer “nominal” Baptists who do not attend, or “fringe” members who have infrequent contact, than in many other denominations, but this also means there are fewer people who identify as Baptists that can be invited to return to their denomination/Baptist church.

According to the 2011 National Church Life Survey, 85 per cent of the people attending Baptist churches on a typical Sunday said they attended worship services weekly or more often. Another 10 per cent said they attended “usually every week”. However, pastors would probably say these 95 per cent of attenders who attend “usually weekly” or more often have a higher self-assessment than church attendance rolls would suggest. Pastors report a contemporary trend for a majority of attenders to attend less regularly than weekly, perhaps most commonly two or three times per month when there is nothing else on or when they are at home for the weekend. The 95 per cent of attenders who say they attend usually weekly or more might be thinking they are at church every Sunday “unless there is something else on or I am somewhere else”.

Interestingly 3.6 per cent of attenders on the day of the NCLS survey reported that they were attending that church for the first time.

Membership is taken seriously in most Baptist churches. Only members are able to vote at church meetings and thus take an active part in the decision-making of the community. Yet the criteria for membership are stringent. Many people who are active in Baptist churches are not willing to go through the process of the public ceremony of baptism by immersion which is required prior to membership. This is particularly a problem for the many people who have come from other denominations which baptise infants. Such baptism does not satisfy criteria for membership in many Baptist churches. Thus numbers of attenders surpass the numbers of members. In 2011, Baptist churches associated with the various state Unions around Australia had a total of 62,719 members, just 37 per cent of the number who attend services monthly or more often.

In general, Baptist communities tend to be small, excluding people who are not willing to make the high level of commitment required of them. At the same time, they tend to have high levels of involvement and activity. According to NLCS, nearly three-quarters of Baptist church attenders (71%) were involved in groups during the week. Just over half (54%) of all Baptist attenders regularly attended a small group, prayer meeting, discussion group or Bible study group. These groups may take a wide variety of forms, but usually involve some prayer and Bible study. Many churches are experimenting with different approaches to encourage greater participation and to make groups more accessible to people without a church background.

Social groups are not quite as popular as small group Bible studies, although the NCLS reported that 37 per cent per cent of Baptist attenders also attended fellowships, clubs, social or other groups such as a men’s or women’s group at the church on a regular basis. This pattern is quite different from many other denominations in which social groups are generally more popular. Overall, the picture is that a large majority of attending Baptists participate in church groups other than Sunday services.



“Soup & Soul” small group, AuburnLife, Melbourne
(Photo by Darren Cronshaw)

Moreover, the NCLS found that 26 per cent of attenders were involved in evangelistic or outreach activities, and 26 per cent of attenders (not necessarily the same people) were involved in community service, social justice or welfare activities. These expressions of mission involvement also provide opportunities for members to build relationships with other people in the church community.

Congregations and Pastors

New congregations are formed in several ways. Some have been started through initiatives of a Baptist Union which has appointed people to move into an area and make contact with interested people. Others have been formed through lay people who have gathered a group of interested people around themselves. Others have been formed through division in an existing church.

In 1901, there were approximately 70 members per congregation. By 1962, it had decreased to 62 members per congregation. However, in recent years, the average size has grown. In 1998, there were 69 members per congregation. As members may only account for half the number of regular attenders, this means that congregations are substantially larger than they used to be. Based on 2006 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) estimates, the number of people, not including children, in attendance on a typical Sunday per congregation was 119. This makes the average size of Baptist congregations larger than that of most other denominations apart from Pentecostals, Anglicans and Catholics.

According to Australian Baptist Ministries (ABM) and State Union denominational data, in 2011 there were 959 churches with 62,719 members and 141,959 affiliates in the total Baptist community. So each church had an average number of 65 members and 148 in its community. However, the figures would average a little less as the number of churches does not include fellowships (new or different churches that have not yet been fully constituted). In 2003, for example, there were an additional 89 fellowships which had not been constituted as churches.

Table 9. Baptist Union of Australia Statistics 2011

	Numbers of Churches	Numbers of Members	Estimated Total Baptist Community
New South Wales / ACT	350	21,430	45,000
Northern Territory	14	435	1,260
Queensland	185	13,914	43,653
South Australia	71	4,750	11,600
Tasmania	31	1,565	1,839
Victoria	203	14,346	27,240
Western Australia	105	6,279	11,367
Total	959	62,719	141,959

Source: Baptist Union of Australia

The number of churches has grown from 659 in 1966, to 956 in 2004, and 959 in 2011 (Manley 2996b, p.644).

In general, the number of Baptist pastors has been a little less than the number of congregations. The traditional pattern has been one pastor per congregation. However, sometimes a larger congregation sponsored smaller congregations or fellowships in near-by areas, served by the pastor of the central church. After World War II, there was a dearth of pastors. Numbers have grown since then and have been supplemented by many pastors who are not ordained.

The 2011 Census found there were 15,701 Ministers of Religion in Australia, including 1,877 Baptists (Hughes 2008, p.13). This is the number of people who identified their major occupation as the care of a religious congregation. It does not include ministers who are working in administration or teaching. However, it would include people working in the care of congregations who were not ordained. This number rose from the previous three censuses:

- ◆ In 2006 there were 1,700 Baptist Ministers;
- ◆ In 2001 there were 1,520; and
- ◆ In 1996 the Census counted 1,346 Ministers.

Of those Baptist pastors in 2011, 415 were women (22% of 1,877). This is a significant increase from just five years earlier when 185 (12% of 1,700) were women. Some of these may be working as government school chaplains, a group which has increased dramatically with government funding, and others may be employed in subordinate pastoral roles in churches although not recognised as pastors. However, the proportion of women employed by Baptist churches is significantly less than in the Salvation Army, Uniting and Pentecostal churches, and a little less than in the Anglican Church and Churches of Christ.

Figure 5 shows the state of Baptist ministers and pastors in 2011. It shows that less than 30 per cent of them were employed outside the capital cities. 40 per cent of all

Baptist ministers and pastors were working in Sydney or Melbourne.

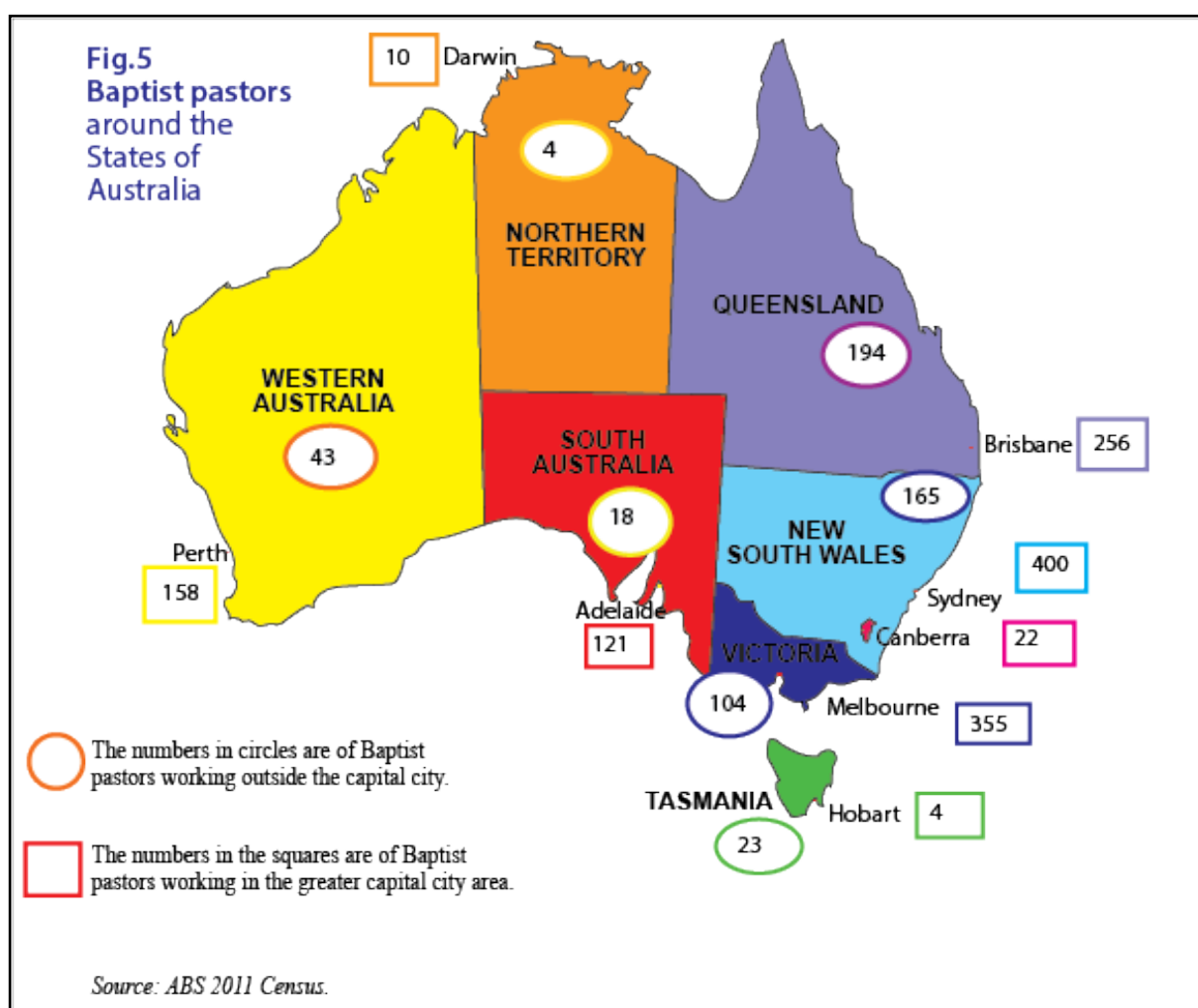


Figure 5: Baptist Pastors around the States of Australia

Baptist pastors had a young age profile, similar to that of the Pentecostals and Churches of Christ, with 30 per cent (32% in 2006) below the age of 40. However, 42 per cent (39% in 2006) were 50 years or older. On these trends, more than 40 per cent of current ministers will be beyond retirement age by 2026, and 69 per cent of current ministers will be beyond retirement age in 2036. There is an on-going need to recruit and train younger ministers to replace the current generation as well as a need for younger ministers to connect with younger generations of Australians.

According to the 2011 Census, 69 per cent (60% in 2006) of Baptist ministers had university qualifications – a much higher proportion than the Salvation Army or Pentecostals, but a smaller proportion than Anglicans, Catholics, Lutherans and Uniting Church. 21 per cent of Baptists had a Diploma or Certificate as their maximum level of education.

One third of Baptist ministers (33%) were born overseas – a higher proportion than in many Christian denominations, exceeded only by Catholics (37%), Presbyterians (49%) and in the Orthodox denominations. Some of these would not be ordained as many pastors are appointed to congregations without ordination by the state Baptist

union. Some would be undergoing part-time training and expect to be ordained in the future, while others have chosen not to undertake the recognised training programs of the Union. Some work in small rural parishes. Some are employed by the church part-time and may have other occupations. Others are employed in large congregations as part of a team under a senior minister.

There has been a long tradition of unordained lay people taking leadership in Baptist churches. Many churches have been established by active lay people. It has been common for such people to preach and sometimes to administer the sacraments.

National Church Life Survey Church Health Indicators

We have referred to a number of National Church Life Survey (NCLS) findings throughout, but we will conclude with a discussion of the NCLS core qualities of church life and their trends over the last decade. In 2011 NCLS surveyed 33,391 people including 1,101 children from 331 Baptist churches across all Australian states and territories. NCLS measures local churches and denominations and evaluates their self-assessment in terms of nine qualities of healthy church life: three internal core qualities (faith, worship and belonging), three inspirational core qualities (vision, leadership and innovation), and three outward core qualities (service, faith-sharing and inclusion).

Internal Qualities: Faith, Worship and Belonging

Among the internal core qualities, satisfaction with “vital and nurturing worship” is increasing. The number of attenders who say they always or usually experience inspiration grew steadily from 61 per cent to 70 per cent between 2001 and 2011. One question in the NCLS survey asked attenders to choose up to three items out of a list of 12 which described various hopes or priorities for their church in the future. The NCLS reported that 26 per cent of attenders hoped their church would give more attention to worship that nurtured people’s faith.

Interestingly, however, when asked to select up to three aspects that they most valued about their church, fewer attenders chose contemporary worship in 2011 than in 2001. In the NCLS 2001 survey, 35 per cent of attenders said they highly valued contemporary worship or music, but this decreased to 26 per cent in the 2011 survey. About 15 per cent of Baptist attenders said they highly valued traditional worship or music.

56 per cent of attenders strongly agreed and another 27 per cent agreed that music and singing were an important part of church worship, but other aspects of church life took priority in terms of what was most valued. Compared with previous surveys, it would appear that the preference for contemporary styles of worship has become weaker. Queensland Baptist leader, Ian Hussey, has commented that participants still value inspiration from worship, but as “worship wars” wind down attenders are clinging less to contemporary worship (Hussey 2012). A number of churches are experimenting with “alternative worship”, and finding enriching space for learning, expressing emotion

and experiencing God through worship stations and installations, without necessarily using congregational singing and traditional preaching.

However, there was little difference in the proportion of Baptist attenders indicating that they had an “alive and growing faith” (24% in 2006 and 23% in 2011). The proportion of attenders indicating they had a “strong and growing sense of belonging” was also similar (52% in 2006 and 50% in 2011).

Fig. 6. Summary of Core Quality Measures 2001 to 2011



Source: NCLS 2011, used with permission.

Inspirational Qualities: Vision, Leadership and Innovation

Of the three inspirational core qualities, “openness to imaginative and flexible innovation” is increasing. Those who strongly agree their church is always ready to try new things increased from 11 per cent to 14 per cent between 2006 and 2011. This may reflect the

encouragement of missional leaders to be open to innovation and change in the 21st century.

A similar proportion of Baptist attenders affirmed that their church had a clear vision to which they were committed (39% in 2006 and 38% in 2011). Eighteen per cent of Baptist attenders believed their church should prioritise creating a clear vision for the church's future.

The extent to which Baptist attenders affirmed that their leaders encouraged them to use their gifts within the church declined from 27 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2011. Fifteen per cent of attenders said their congregational leaders did this "not at all" (up from 10% in 2001). 36 per cent of attenders said they hoped their church would give greater attention over the next twelve months to encouraging people to discover and use their gifts. Of the twelve hoped-for emphases or priorities for the future, this was the most frequently selected.

This appears to parallel a decline in involvement in leadership among lay people. 47 per cent of attenders indicated they performed a leadership/ministry role (down from 51% in 2006 and 52% in 2001). Identifying and using spiritual gifts may have received greater emphasis in the 1980s and 1990s. However, styles of leadership that empower people continue to be important in order that lay people will be engaged in mission and contribute to church life.

Outward Qualities: Service, Faith-sharing and Inclusion

The proportion of Baptists indicating they have been involved in "practical and diverse service" increased between 2001 and 2011 from 55 to 60 per cent of attenders. Twenty-one per cent of attenders said that the wider community care or social justice emphases were aspects of church life they most valued. This had increased from only 11% in 2001 and 15% in 2006.

There has also been a small increase in the extent to which Baptist attenders said they would follow up someone drifting away from the church. In 2001, 7 per cent said they would definitely follow up someone, and in 2011, 12 per cent indicated they would do so. Another 58 per cent said they were likely or very likely to follow up someone drifting away.

However, there has been a decrease in "faith-sharing" as measured by the willingness of a person to invite someone else to church: down from 44 per cent in 2001 to 36 per cent in 2011. Corresponding to this trend, the number of attenders participating in evangelistic or outreach activities plateaued (26% in 2001 and in 2011). 35 per cent have *not* been involved in the past year helping non-Christians explore questions about faith. While "practical and diverse service" has increased, fewer people were involved in communicating faith verbally and inviting people to explore faith and church life. Baptist churches need to express witness in deed and word, not just deed and "maybe optionally" word (cf. Cronshaw et al., 2011).

Twenty-nine per cent of attenders would like their churches to give greater attention to ensuring new people are included well in church life, and 22 per cent would like greater

attention given to encouraging people to share their faith or invite others (the 4th and 6th of twelve highest hopes). Moreover, 16 per cent of attenders say what they most valued about their church was reaching those who did not attend church (but that is down from 19% in 2001). There is eagerness among attenders for their churches to grow in faith-sharing and inclusion, but leaders need to equip the attenders for this to occur.



Eastern Hills Community Church Baptism Service, Warrandyte, Victoria
(Photo by Darren Cronshaw)

Attendance changes – beyond growth and decline

The NCLS also gives some helpful analysis of three church attendance measures of attenders (aged 15 and over): young adult retention, newcomers and attendance change. These are helpful indicators beyond simply measuring growth and decline.

Young adult retention is significant in showing how many children remain as regular attenders as they grow up. Of all current Baptist church attenders, four per cent were retained youth aged 15 to 19. This was the highest of all denominations alongside Pentecostals who were also 4 per cent. Among other denominations the average was 3 per cent and Anglicans were lowest at 2 per cent.

The number of newcomers indicates the proportion of the attenders in Baptist churches on a typical Sunday that have started attending the church in the past 5 years and who had not been attending elsewhere immediately prior to that. The NCLS reported that 7 per cent of attenders in Baptist churches were not attending any church five years ago. Among these people, 3 per cent of attenders were newcomers to church without any prior involvement in a church and 4 per cent were returning to church life after an extended absence. Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of newcomers to the church declined. In 2001 newcomers constituted 9 per cent of all attenders; in 2006

it was 8 per cent; and in 2011, 7 per cent. Compared to other denominations Baptists were about mid-range: in Pentecostal churches 10 per cent are newcomers and in the Salvation Army 11 per cent. However, in Catholic churches newcomers only constituted 3 per cent of those attending, and in Lutheran churches, 4 per cent were newcomers.

Attendance change is significant to show how much inflow and outflow a church has had over the previous five years. In the surveyed Baptist churches, 31 per cent of attenders had switched or transferred into their existing church from another church or another denomination. 19 per cent switched denomination and 12 per cent transferred from another Baptist church. This level of movement between churches is much higher than in most other denominations, apart from the Pentecostals.

Church planting, evangelism and Baptists online

Some additional extra questions were commissioned by Australian Baptist Ministries to be added into NCLS 2011. These questions were designed to indicate the levels of openness among Baptists to new expressions of church planting and evangelism.

Attenders were asked where their congregation should put its greatest effort in order to connect with non-church goers. At one end of the spectrum, it was suggested that the church should be seeking to attract people. At the other end of the spectrum, it was suggested that the churches need to equip people to participate in God's mission in the world. About 28 per cent of Baptist attenders chose the response in the middle of the two options, but another 28 per cent indicated that they felt it was more important to attract people to the church. The largest group (44%) felt it was more important to equip members to share their faith outside the church.

This response reflects discussions in recent Baptist publications and conferences about the importance of the "scattered church" and the ministry of all Baptists in the community, society and marketplace. There is a growing sense that the Christian message of the church needs to be expressed in the ways that people act in the wider society, and that this is more important than simply making Sunday church attractive (see, for example, Frost and Hirsch 2003).

Another question asked Baptist attenders whether they had been directly involved in helping any non-Christians explore questions about faith:

- ◆ 12% of Baptist attenders indicated they had helped several people;
- ◆ 32% indicated they had helped a few people;
- ◆ 16% indicated they had helped one person;
- ◆ 35% indicated they had not helped anyone; and
- ◆ 5% indicated the question was not applicable to them.

In total, 60 per cent of Baptists had journeyed with one or more people to explore faith.

However almost 35 per cent of attenders had not done this with anyone immediately prior to the survey.

Baptist attenders were also asked, given the opportunity, would they support and or become active participants in planting a new church.

- ◆ 13% per cent said they would definitely support;
- ◆ 26% said they would probably do so;
- ◆ 39% were not sure,
- ◆ 20% said they would probably not do so; and
- ◆ 3% said they would definitely not do so.

Mission strategists working with Baptists denominationally have been eager to identify which local churches have the greatest degree of openness to becoming involved in starting new churches. It has been argued that church planting is one of the most fruitful church initiatives evangelistically. New churches tend to be more effective at connecting with and reaching people who were previously outside the church than many other forms of evangelism. NCLS has shown that churches started recently tend to have much higher levels of newcomers than churches which have a longer history.

Finally, in an increasingly digital world, it is appropriate to consider how connected Baptists are to digital media and social networks.

In response to asking if attenders had access to quality evangelistic resources in digital media format, how likely would they forward them to non-churchgoing contacts (e.g., via Facebook), the spread was very even. Just as many attenders were very likely as very unlikely (about 10% each) to distribute evangelistic resources this way. Around 35 per cent of attenders were very likely or likely to be ready to distribute evangelistic resources electronically.

In total, more than half (55%) of attending Baptists said they sometimes or frequently used internet social networks such as Facebook or twitter:

- ◆ 27% of Baptist attenders said they used it every day or most days;
- ◆ 12% used it a few times a week;
- ◆ 5% used it once a week;
- ◆ 2% used it once a month; and
- ◆ 9% used it occasionally.

It appears, like the general population, there is considerable variation in the numbers connected to online communities. For Baptists in Australia to cooperate with God's mission in the 21st century, this is likely to be a growing potential sphere for witness and influence.

Conclusion

In most places around the world, and throughout most of its history, Baptists have been a minority group, except in the southern states of the USA. The Baptist emphasis on the necessity for each adult individual to make a public commitment of faith in baptism has meant that most Baptists are highly committed to involvement in their churches. Baptists have tended to be a minority church partly because of the high expectations of members in terms of personal behaviour and involvement in the church.

Partly because of congregational involvement in governance and the importance given to Bible study and other such activities, Baptist churches have attracted people with a high level of education. Comparatively few members of high status professions, labourers or production workers attend Baptist churches.

Sociologically, the intense form of congregationalism with its high levels of involvement has been, and continues to be, the greatest strength as well as sometimes a liability of Baptists. In some situations it can lead to the formation of small groups, exclusive in their attitudes, particularly in terms of power-sharing. It is easy for those groups to remain insular and oblivious to external changes in the surrounding culture. This situation can provide a fertile ground for internal leadership conflict, both within the congregation and between lay leaders and the minister.

On the other hand, such congregationalism can foster warm, caring communities attractive to many people in contemporary, fragmented Australian society. The freedom of each congregation has enabled some to adapt their activities for their situation, to try new ways of expressing faith, and to be entrepreneurial in worship and service.

There have been some environments in which Baptist churches have thrived. This has been so in the USA, where Baptist principles have fitted comfortably with the strong division between government and religion that has long been part of American society. Perhaps this is also a factor in the growth of Baptist churches in Russia where, in a different way, religion is divided from politics. Here Baptist churches have grown in a situation where the Orthodox Church and Communism historically have dominated.

In Australia, over the last 40 years Baptist churches have not experienced the same attrition rates as other Protestant denominations. Some congregations have been free to adopt different styles of worship and activities which have attracted many people, and particularly younger people. The informality of style of worship and organisational structures has also been attractive to some (Hughes, 1994).

Baptist churches fulfill a significant role in Australian society in building community, encouraging moral values and spiritual searching. Through local churches and other Baptist agencies, Baptists play a leading active role in social welfare and in education through a growing number of schools.

The 2011 Census showed that, at a time when many of the denominations were experiencing decline in numbers, the Baptists have continued to grow in numbers. Furthermore, the 2011 National Church Life Survey shows that Baptist churches are

generally growing and showing signs of vitality. It will be interesting to see whether there will be continued growth in a culture which enjoys its informality, but at the same time has a strong sense of community developed through high levels of involvement.

The most significant feature of Baptist church life and trends, it could be argued, is the role played by immigrant groups. For many decades and especially the last decade, a large proportion of Baptist church growth and vitality is due to migrants. Welcoming and celebrating the contribution of newcomers from other cultures is a key challenge for Baptist churches which needs ongoing attention and development.

At the same time, Baptist churches need to think seriously and give fresh attention to engaging Australian-born people who are increasingly disconnecting from meaningful engagement with church life and faith. For Baptist churches to have a future, the long-held Baptist tradition of commitment to mission – locally as well as globally – is imperative.

Abbreviations

ABM	Australian Baptist Ministries
ABMS	Australian Baptist Missionary Society
AFMB	Australian Foreign Mission Board
APBF	Asia Pacific Baptist Federation
APEPT	Apostolic/ Prophetic/ Evangelistic/ Pastoring/ Teaching
APEST	Apostolic/ Prophetic/ Evangelistic/ Shepherding/ Teaching
BCT	Baptist Churches of Tasmania
BCWA	Baptist Churches of Western Australia
BHS	Baptist Historical Society of NSW
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
BUV	Baptist Union of Northern Territory
BUV	Baptist Union of Victoria
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
GIA	Global Interaction
MBE	Member of the British Empire
NCLS	National Church Life Survey
QB	Queensland Baptists
SABU	South Australian Baptist Union
SCD	Sydney College of Divinity
UCA	Uniting Church of Australia
VBHS	Victorian Baptist Historical Society
WCTU	Victorian Women's Christian Temperance Union

Glossary

The following explanations do not attempt to be “theological”. They describe how the term is used among Baptists rather than what it means, or the symbolism that is associated with it.

Baptism - The immersion in water of a person following a statement of faith as a symbolic identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Baptist churches, only persons deemed to be able to make up their own minds about faith - which usually means being teenagers or older - are baptised. Baptisms usually take place in a baptistery and usually within the context of a church service, although they may occasionally take place in the sea or in a river.

Baptistery - A tank built into a Baptist church for the purpose of baptism. It is usually placed at the front of the church and may be covered except when used for a baptism.

Baptist Union - A state association of Baptist congregations constituted by the regular assembly of representatives from those congregations.

Calvinism - Doctrines seen as emanating from the teaching of the Reformer, John Calvin. Within Baptist history, Calvinism has usually referred to the idea that people are saved totally by God’s grace and that human actions or attitudes do not affect God’s work of salvation in any way.

Charismatic - Charismatic comes from the Greek word for “gifts” as in the personal “gifts” of teaching, speaking in tongues, and administering. It has come to refer to the Pentecostal style of worship, particularly as that style has been adopted in non-Pentecostal churches.

Deacon - A lay person elected by a congregational meeting to serve the church on an “executive”, known as the diaconate, which handles, in conjunction with the minister, all matters of property, finance and pastoral care of the congregation.

Dedication - A ceremony in which a child is brought by parents to give thanks for the birth and to make promises about bringing the child up in the Christian faith. The ceremony usually takes place as part of a Sunday church service.

Evangelism - Speaking about the Good News (Evangel) of Jesus Christ with people who have not made a commitment of faith.

Evangelical - A stream of Christian theology and way of thinking about church-life and faith which emphasises personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and sees that salvation as having been made available to people through the death of Jesus. Evangelicals generally have a high view of the authority of the Bible. Most Baptists see themselves as Evangelicals.

General Baptists - A stream of Baptists which maintained that Jesus Christ died for all people and all people must be offered the opportunity of accepting the offer of

salvation. (See also Particular Baptists.)

Home Mission - Home Mission is distinguished from Foreign Mission. While the latter refers to evangelism, church planting and church development overseas, Home Mission refers to such activities “at home”. Most state Baptist Unions have had Home Mission departments to coordinate such activities.

Lord’s Supper (or Holy Communion) - A ceremony, usually held as part of a Sunday service, to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, following the pattern of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples before his crucifixion, and his instructions to them, as recorded in the New Testament. In the ceremony, participants eat small pieces of bread and drink tiny glasses of grape juice.

Manse - The home of the minister, often provided by the congregation.

Non-conformist - Non-conformist has been applied to those people or churches which refused to conform to the doctrines or authority of the Established Church in England, particularly in the seventeenth century. It was applied to Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers and others.

Open Communion - The policy of most Baptist churches that all Christians, whether members of a Baptist church or not, are welcome to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Strict and Particular Baptist Churches practise closed communion, admitting only members to communion.

Open Membership - The policy of some Baptist churches that all Christians may be accepted into membership upon confession of faith, whether they have been baptised as adults or not, or whether their baptism was by sprinkling or immersion. Most Australian Baptist churches have a policy of Closed Membership.

Ordination - A ceremony in which a person is set apart for ministry of preaching, administering the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and baptism, and pastoral care. Ordination usually follows a period of training which may include study for a university degree in theology. Ordinations are usually conducted by representatives of a State Baptist Union.

Particular Baptists - A stream of Baptists with a Calvinistic theology believing that Jesus Christ died only for those chosen by God to receive salvation. The two streams of Particular and General Baptists united in England in the nineteenth century, and the distinction has not been important in Australian Baptist history.

Pastor or minister - The person, or one of a team of persons, called by the congregation to be a leader. The pastor usually, but not always, has been trained at a theological college, and ordained by the state Baptist Union. The pastor usually leads and preaches at services of worship of the congregation, visits and counsels members and enquirers, and is involved in some administration of the church’s life.

Separatists - People who believed that the church and state (or government) should be separated in every way. In England, separatists such as the early Baptists opposed the

position that the Church of England had in relation to government, the roles of church officials in government, and the government regulations regarding church practice and attendance.

Strict and Particular Baptists - A small group of Baptists with a hyper-Calvinistic theology. Believing that Christ died only for the elect, they believe that it is inappropriate to seek to evangelise others.

Trinity - The Christian belief that God is “one in three persons”: traditionally referred to as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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Website: www.baptistwa.asn.au

Theological Colleges

New South Wales

Morling College www.morling.nsw.edu.au

Queensland

Malyon College www.malyon.edu.au

Victoria

Whitley College www.whitley.unimelb.edu.au

Western Australia

Vose Seminary www.vose.wa.edu.au

Historical Societies

Baptist Historical Society of NSW

(established 1974) <http://www.baptisthistory.org.au/societies/nsw>

Baptist Historical Society of Victoria

(established 1982)

<http://www.buv.com.au/2012-09-03-11-56-44/historical-society>

Baptist Heritage Queensland

(established 1984) <http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/bhsq.htm>

Baptist Historical Society of Western Australia

(established 1985) <http://www.baptistwa.asn.au/view/resources/historical-society>

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