

# Ministers, ministry and...



CANBERRA  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH

September 2004



Clockwise from top: Sexton, King, Tutu, van Cott,  
Graham, Spurgeon

- Christian ministry today
- Changes in ministry needs
- Pizzas and ministers!
- Which call system is best?
- Was that a call I heard?
- Age profile of this church

and still more...

### Cover notes:

**Lydia Sexton (1799-1894)** was the first woman to be recommended as a Pulpit Speaker by the General Conference of the United Brethren Church. The Reverend Lydia Sexton was born in Rockport, New Jersey in 1799 to a Baptist preacher named Thomas Casad and his wife Abigail Tingley Casad. Her life was a rocky road but, in 1851, her class meeting voted to license her as a preacher. The General Conference, however, had decided to license no woman, for fear that they would ask to be elders and even bishops! Yet they could not deny Sexton's gifts and the validity of her ministry, so they "recommended" her as a preacher *for life* and gave her "credentials" as an approved "pulpit speaker" and a "useful helper in the work of Christ."

**Margaret Newton Van Cott (1830-1914)** was the first woman to be licensed to preach in the Methodist Episcopal church. In 1868 she received an exhorter's license which empowered her to conduct prayer meetings and to exhort; and in 1869, the quarterly conference of Stone Ridge, Ellenville, New York, gave her a local preacher's license. In her first year of itinerancy five hundred souls were brought to Christ and became members of the various Churches in the area. It is said that "She had the stature and bearing of a queen, and a voice of strength and sweetness, such personal gifts as impress and control an audience, and her word has always been attended with excellency of power."

## Editorial comment

This edition of the Newsletter has been prepared against the backdrop of a church in the throes of seeking a new senior minister. There is also a wider context, from which this church is perhaps largely insulated. There are many people and churches throughout the world looking at new ways of following Christ and doing his work.

There is a variety of contributions on aspects of ministry, 'calls' to ministers and changes confronting churches. I hope you find them stimulating and helpful.

Thank you to those who contributed. It makes the task of putting the Newsletter together much easier when we have so many people willing to express their views. ☘



# Christian ministry today

*Thorwald Lorenzen*



For Baptists it is important to recognise, to realise and to implement, that all members together form the ministry team. Every Christian is gifted and the divine invitation is, that in humility and with respect for the community, we exercise our gifts to give direction and vitality to the church. The church is us – each of us. Withholding our gifts means encroaching upon the Lordship of Christ. At the same time, imposing ourselves upon others would also distort the community ethos. Therefore in thanksgiving to God for what God has for us, we offer ourselves for the effective up building and ministry of the church.

It is more demanding to be a Christian in a Baptist Church than belonging to a church which is more hierarchical and more structured. In some churches, debating about liturgy or worship style or moral convictions or theological opinions makes little or no difference. They are given. Members are told what to think and what to do.

The Baptist movement, on the other hand, was part of introducing democracy into human history. I think it was Winston Churchill who said that democracy is not the be all and end all of political systems, but it is the best of what we have got. Democracy is important because it recognises the dignity of the individual as having a right to be part of shaping the community's destiny.

Yet, we in the church want to go beyond democracy. We want to seek and find the will of God. And the will of God is not simply identical with what the majority thinks. This places significant demands of maturity and tolerance upon us. In church politics we do not try to campaign for a majority. We seek to create space for the Spirit of God. But how do you do that? I think the way to do it, is for each of us to voice our opinion or conviction. At the same time we seek to create an atmosphere in which others are encouraged to do the same. We voice our opinion and conviction, not to get our way, but to make our contribution for the community to discern the will of God. In the sharing and discussions hopefully, if people are open to it, something new will emerge to which the majority can agree. Therefore to be a member of our community we

are challenged to be creative and give our opinion, but at the same time to be humble and place the group opinion above ours. ☩

St Paul to the Christians in Corinth ...

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ... Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole



body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God



has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts.

☩

# Changes in the ministry needs of churches

Anne Wilkinson-Hayes



*Anne originally trained in Development Studies and has maintained an involvement in international aid and development through various UK agencies, Baptist World Aid and BWAA. She was ordained in Britain in 1987 and has pastored 2 churches. She was the Social Action Adviser for the BU of Great Britain for 6 years and is currently Regional Minister for the NW Metro area of the BUV where she is also responsible for nurturing new missional communities. Anne is married to Mark, a social housing manager with the Salvos, and they have one daughter.*

## **A changed society**

The church model that we have inherited was evolved in a very different climate to that existing today. Throughout much of church history the church was very central to the social and political heart beat of society. Most people attended church; knew the Christian story; viewed themselves as 'Christian' people. The church did not need to be mission-centred. Today we are in a pluralistic environment where children are quite likely to ask why the baby in the manger was given a swear word for a name. For the majority of Western society Christianity is an idea that has had its day; a movement that did some good in the past, but that has little relevance today.

## **A changed mission**

In this society the church needs a new incarnation, as a missionary movement. She needs to reinvent herself in ways that continually surprise and attract people with the good news of Jesus. The attractional model of mission, whereby we expect people to come to us, has a limited shelf life. We need more incarnational approaches that encounter people in their comfort zones rather than ours. We need to think of mission less as that of gathered community and more as that of the dispersed church.

## **A changed church**

There need to be some major paradigm shifts in our thinking so that we stop thinking about how to maintain and strengthen the institution,

and start thinking about how we can support one another in revealing the Kingdom of God around us.

### **A changed congregation**

People live extremely busy and complicated lives, and whereas in the past the church was kept going by a host of deeply committed volunteers for whom the church was the primary place of social interaction and leisure activity. Today the church has to compete for time with a host of other demands and activities. Most congregations are made up of very tired and drained people who have little time and energy to invest in church activities.

...a church congregation needs to decide which way it is going to jump in this transitional phase of church life.

### **A changed leadership**

Previous models of church required good managers of a volunteer workforce. Ministers were people who others could feel inspired to work for; someone who could motivate and mobilize. There is still a desire for this kind of inspirational figure. In this era of declining status in the community, shrinking numbers and financial duress, churches are putting huge pressures on their leadership to turn things around. Many pastors are buckling under the weight of unrealistic expectations, and trying to maintain a model of church that is no longer appropriate to the changes outlined above.

In thinking about appropriate leadership a church congregation needs to decide which way it is going to jump in this transitional phase of church life. Below are three possible tracks.

#### **Track 1**

There is still life in the inherited forms of church, and they will still continue to sustain a 45+ generation. We will probably need to simplify the ministry focus, so that we develop a 'niche' mission, and do one thing really well, rather than trying to serve a whole range of needs, because we do not have the person-power to keep running a multitude of ministries. The ideal person for this model is a good preacher and pastor, and someone who has some community development skills, and can find ways to effectively connect with the wider community.

#### **Track 2**

We keep the inherited form of church ticking over, so that existing

members are well-cared for and served, but permission is given for a range of experimental groups to begin alongside the inherited core. These are resourced from the centre and supported in prayer. One group may develop a café style service at the church, another may meet at a local café. One group might focus on ministry in a local primary school, another might coalesce around a shared interest such as sport, carers' needs, fair trade. The aims of these groups would be to develop friendships and to make a difference in some way in the wider community. They would each be encouraged to find their own ways of worship and prayer that worked for that particular group and for those they grew to know. This kind of approach probably requires a team ministry. A part-time pastor to serve the established congregation and a part-time pastor to serve the new groups. The core skill for this person would be as an encourager and networker, so that groups were kept in touch with others and with the core congregation. Once a month the whole group might meet at the church for worship and a lunch together.

### **Track 3**

This is the more radical path that acknowledges that the current way of being the church has a limited life and rather than waiting until we *have to change*, we will begin intentionally working towards something quite different. It may be that there has to be a break with the old in order for the new to emerge. It may be that people have to join other community groups and activities in order to reflect on what questions people are actually asking, and what are the real needs around us. We will need to meet and share findings and reflections. We will need to be honest about what we miss and what we don't, and we will need to discern what God is saying to us.

The pastor we need for this process will probably be an interim. They need to be secure in themselves, and willing to wait for the right time. They need pastoral skills to assure those troubled by the process and they need to have gifts of spiritual discernment and theological reflection. They need to be able to encourage imagination and dreaming and to have an entrepreneurial spirit. They need to be a facilitator and highly relational.

Key words for future church are organic, fluid, and contextualised. Future church leaders need to be apostolic, adaptable, non-anxious risktakers, who can support, enable and encourage others in Kingdom risks. ☩

## What is Love?

*Contributed by Russ Holly from an unknown source...*

A group of professional people asked a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think.



*"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."* Rebecca - age 8

*"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."* Billy - age 4

*"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."* Karl - age 5

*"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."* Chrissy - age 6

*"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."* Terri - age 4

*"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."* Danny - age 7

*"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss"* Emily - age 8

*"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen,"* Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

*"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate,"* Nikka - age 6

*"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday."* Noelle - age 7

*"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you."* Karen - age 7

## The Appointment of Ministers

*Colin Gray*

I want to discuss some issues that have to be faced whenever a church has to seek a new minister and the inevitable influence that the traditions of the denomination and the situation of the particular church have on the process. My intention is not to tell you of the methodology but to invite you to think about what is involved and how difficult it is to make the right choice. I have been a member of a subcommittee that recommended to a congregation a minister who I later was convinced was a wrong choice. Yet I believe that we all did the best we could and maybe even the best that was possible in the circumstances.



It is important to recognise the incontrovertible fact that terrible systems have resulted in good appointments and conversely that good procedures have led to disastrous appointments. Of course this does not absolve us from the responsibility to do all we can to ensure the best outcome that is within our capability.

There is a certain similarity between the choice of a minister and a marriage partner. (I think that there are real and deep parallels especially as far as feelings are concerned. I mention some, I hope others will occur to you.) We long for the ideal –and so we should – but we realise that our ideal probably does not exist. If this ideal did exist would we be its choice?

Some denominations have a system that is something like an arranged marriage. Ideally those wiser than ourselves see the greater picture and arrange a union in which each partner shares similar views and background. They can therefore work together easily towards achieving their shared goals. Although this system may appeal to the logical or bureaucratic turn of mind it may not have the immediate support that a mutual choice made between the two parties can be expected to enjoy. Obviously this system allows the possibility that the over all interests of the denomination are better addressed; but what about the interests of the individual church?

We have the opportunity of choosing our own minister in a manner similar to that in which most marriages choices in the Western world are made. Of course there is a basic difference in that the decision is made by the couple themselves whereas who in the church makes the decision? We have given the primary responsibility to a small group who will undertake the search for us. It is most

unlikely that the church meeting will go against any recommendation that they make so we have indeed given them a most responsible task.

Some denominations have a central committee, which is informed or knows of ministers who may be interested in accepting a call and can put them in touch with churches that are seeking a new minister. I think our church is fortunate in having members who have a wide range of contacts in the Baptist fellowship and may therefore be aware of possible candidates unknown to ordinary members of the congregation. I am sure that those making the decisions and entering into discussions on our behalf will be striving for the best possible result. In many cases there is an advantage in these discussions being confidential to avoid embarrassment and misunderstanding. This is one of the advantages of initial assessments being made at arms length. (No one wants it to be widely known that they were an unsuccessful suitor.) However confidentiality and secrecy can also have their costs and can be seen as being unfair or even under hand.

In reality, courtship is not a choice between all possible partners. (We have a limited circle of friends and acquaintances. Sometimes our friends and family will be concerned about our choice.) It is also the case when a church seeks a minister. It is especially true if the minister chosen is in some way atypical. It is of course true that these choices are the very ones that offer the possibilities of great and unforeseen opportunities. However the prudent side of our nature recommends caution. The feelings that we have about "love" and "calling" also make the situation much more delicate than other negotiations where it is assumed that decisions will be made on practical considerations. These ideals lead us to under-estimate the importance of the mundane. Still we would all like to have a minister who feels that he has a real calling to serve our church and that our partner did not marry us for financial gain! (On a lighter note an American minister I knew observed "It is amazing how often the spirit leads to the highest paying church." After all ministers are human and share our needs.)

When the decisions have been made and the ceremonies are over; we will wish every success to the union, even if we are not sure of the choice and may know of some who have been hurt or disappointed. As with all similes the correspondence is not good at all points. It is obvious, though, that we are not just bystanders. We are all part of the congregation and will play our part in the success or failure as we work together with our new minister.

As a relative new comer to this church I some times think that, in general, we are unaware of the outstanding set of ministers who have served this congregation. I feel that if we are as fortunate in our next choice we will indeed be blest. ☩

## Pizzas and ministers

There seems to be a common thread affecting all of us that the moment – How do we replace Thorwald?

What I am fairly certain of is this, not very many of you realised that choosing a new minister bears a striking resemblance to choosing a pizza!



This enlightenment struck during the Young People's Sunday School discussions recently.

Some of us are looking for Thin & Crispy others for Deep Pan. Some like the regular styles like Hawaiian or Super Supreme and yet others prefer to design their own.

Design your own opened up a real discussion – do we want a tomato base or a BBQ base? Topping suggestions included anchovies, olives, mushrooms, capsicum, basil, rocket, fetta, chicken, bacon, onion, pepperoni, egg, mozzarella, cheddar, tasty cheddar, parmesan, pineapple, banana, kiwi fruit. No we didn't reach an agreement on the perfect pizza. Some of us refused to accept that there is any place for anchovies in the food chain let alone ruining a perfectly good pizza. Others figured, "well if the olives are small and cut up we could just flick them off." We did all agree that a half & half pizza doesn't work there is always encroachment of the toppings.

I have only attended a few of the preliminary meetings to discuss how we should go about finding a new senior minister, so far it seems to be a lot like our pizza discussions.

Our Sunday discussion decided to start at what we thought to be the basics. With the question "What does a Minister do"? The obvious answer of a sermon each week was agreed to by everyone. And....., is that all..... There was much thinking and then the comment "Well I'm sure they do more – I'm just not sure what"

So then we decided to make a list of our initial thoughts on what skill

sets are important to this group. On the basis that we would be hoping for somebody who is prepared to stay for a least 10 years and hopefully longer, thereby seeing this group into their twenties and hopefully Thirties and beyond.

So, much like our list of Pizza toppings we made a list of “Minister toppings”

Somebody who relates well with youth – doesn’t need to be young themselves.

Friendly

Outgoing

Good at informal chats/relationships

Able to take everyone’s differing opinions on board – Tolerance

Interest in community based work

Pastoral care – visiting people in need not necessarily church people

New ideas - creative



We decided that just as a half & half pizza isn’t the best idea, the same almost certainly applies to a minister. We decided that for our Pizza caramelised onion would need to be ordered as a separate side dish we also agreed that some skills we might like in a minister might also have to be a separate side order.

As we would need more than one pizza to go around the number of people it seemed the best way would be to order more than one pizza. We could have 2 different varieties rather than 2 the same. Coincidentally this seemed to the group to be the best plan for the new minister. One minister couldn’t possibly cover every ones wants and needs, what good luck that the Church has already recognised this.

We ran out of time before we could discuss the purpose of the pizza – is it a snack or a main meal. Perhaps, like the discussions on choosing a Minister, this should have been the starting point of the discussion.

We would be more than happy to allow the committee working on the selection process to use our pizza methodology.

P.S. I tried to find out from the younger children, (all those little girls in pink) what they thought however, they were too busy running, shouting, climbing, sliding, skipping and giggling to be interviewed. ☘

## **Interview with the Rev Rainer Schack ...**



*Rainer, you have been a minister in three different churches. Could you outline for each of these three churches, how the 'call' to go to them happened?*

My call to St Kilda Baptist Church was pretty much due to other people's work "behind my back." It happened while I was studying for my master's degree at Whitley College. I worked part time in a factory to earn enough money to pay the bills. Keith Dyer, the supervisor of my studies and good friend, knew that I was hoping to get ministry experience in Australia while I was studying. However, I lacked confidence due to my broken English and second thoughts about my master studies to make any moves on my own. Keith kept pushing me, talked to Merridie Costello, who was part-time pastor at St Kilda Baptist looking for someone to support her in pastoral work. I received an invitation to an interview from the diaconate, seemed to click with the deacons and received an invitation to work with Merriedie and the leadership team and accepted the call with a lot of trembling. I am still very grateful to Keith and the diaconate of the St Kilda Baptist Church for believing in me and for giving me a chance to build up my confidence. St Kilda was a very good ministry experience for me.

My call to the Stawell Baptist Church was almost imposed on me. While I was working at St. Kilda Baptist Church I had applied for ordination with the Baptist Union of Victoria. Since I had experience in a city church, the leadership training team of the BUUV encouraged me to gain ministry experience in a country church as part of my training towards ordination. The idea was that I would work in Stawell for two months. I was quite sure that I would only stay in Stawell for two months, because I felt that I would not fit into a traditional country church with my rather progressive theology. However, my two months work with the Stawell Baptist Church was such a positive experience for the church as well as for me, that my call was extended and I accepted the invitation gladly.

My call to the Footscray Baptist Church happened just after I had come back to Australia from my ministry in Indonesia. I was not sure whether I wanted to go back to Germany or stay in Australia. One day, the Rev Alan Marr, director of ministries in Victoria, invited me for a conversation about my future plans. I told him that I was not sure where God wanted me to go. He encouraged me to consider working with the Footscray Baptist Church which was looking for a pastoral team leader to work towards an intentional multicultural church. He gave me a five page document outlining the vision of the church and what kind of pastor they were hoping to find. When I read this document, I felt excited about the church's vision and I pretty much fitted their pastoral profile. I agreed

to an interview with the pastoral search committee and decided to test my sense of a possible call by challenging the search committee with some of my "rough edges." Having heard that the majority of the congregation came from a Filipino and a traditional evangelical background, I thought it might be a bit of a challenge for the search committee to hear that as a good German, I drink and that I smoke occasionally. While it really proved to be a challenge for some members of the search committee, they still felt that God was calling me to be their pastoral team leader and I too had the impression that God had prepared me for this church particularly by my ministry experience in Indonesia. My work with my pastoral team members at the multicultural Footscray Baptist Church has been an exciting experience. ☩

## Did I hear you call?



*Paul Falconer*

**F**rom the early days of our married lives, Shirley and I felt drawn to some form of 'full-time' Christian service. But was this the leading of God – the beginnings of a 'call' or just two people wanting to take their Christian lives seriously?

To explore the thoughts that kept coming up we attended a particular mission organisation - but left feeling unsure about how we would fit their requirements. We did not pursue this option further.

A few years passed but the thought of full-time service persisted. We began to ask others for advice. A Baptist pastor friend was unequivocal. 'Don't do anything unless you have a very specific call of God to do so.' But neither of us had a sense of a specific 'call'.

We asked our own pastor - 'You already have a call. We all do. It's called the Great Commission,' he said. 'That's all the call anyone needs. Once you've embraced that, it's simply a matter of letting your own passions and abilities take you where it's reasonable to go.'

Others played a part, even though we didn't ask for their input. Some older people asked us to do some tasks and assumed that we had the ability to do them taking the attitude that if we failed nothing much would be lost and practical experience would be gained. So I went off

to preach in rural churches. We led a youth group, taught in Sunday School, led neighbourhood bible studies and so on.

When we asked for feedback the response was always positive. Some people urged me to think seriously about pastoral ministry.

Eventually we agreed that I should resign from my job as a school teacher and apply to commence study at Morling College. In the more focussed environment of the college and the life that is linked to study, the matter of 'full-time' Christian service may resolve itself.

And that is what seemed to happen. There was no sudden revelation, no great turning point, no mystical experience, and no passage of Scripture that marked a call event.

At some point during the time at Morling we simply felt right about applying for and pursuing ordination to pastoral ministry.

So what can I conclude about 'the call to ministry' at least for me? First there is the element of passion – a desire to be involved in the mission of the Church. I could see need wherever I looked and I wanted to help meet it. Second, the counsel of people in the Community of faith and could be trusted to be completely honest with us were major elements in helping us make the big decisions. Third, Shirley was my primary consideration in all our decisions. Had she been opposed to or unsure about 'full-time' Christian ministry, that would have altered things dramatically. We made the decision together.

In the end, how the human and the Divine elements converge or diverge in the shifts and turns on the Christian journey remain mostly a mystery to me. You move forward with what you know or with what you are reasonably certain you know at a point in time. And later, perhaps you can say with reasonable confidence that you responded to a call. ☚

**Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long and the pay is low. But the retirement benefits are out of this world!**

*Quarterly Newsletter*



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## **The ministers in our midst.**

A personal view on the role and effectiveness of pastors

Having valued the friendship and pastoral care of all the ministers since our Church was established in 1929, I realize how fortunate we have been. This seems especially true when I become aware of the behaviour of some ministers and priests. (Yes, I did talk to some of my Catholic friends about their experience, and they voiced views similar to my own.)

The church needs to have a social structure and ministers are custodians and co-ordinators, conducting religious and social ceremonies in addition to giving individual support and counselling.

I suppose individuals will evaluate the importance of a minister according to how he/she meets their needs and expectations. The difficulty is that often people who need the most personal, emotional support feel too ashamed to let others know that they are not coping. So ministers are unaware of the situation unless informed by others. Hopefully, church fellowship will foster confidence in members to seek help when needed, rather than battle on alone.

Ministers of local churches need qualifications appropriate for the work required. The following appeared in The Canberra Times in 1970 when advertising for positions in the Mental Health Branch of the government administration:

The more important qualifications are personal ones. (Ministers) need to be concerned about people, effective in their relationships and emotionally resilient. (I have substituted 'Ministers' here for the original position title.)

Ministers who are prepared to take a stand on issues of social justice and morality play an important role by making people stop and think and, hopefully, make those in authority sit up and take notice. ☩

If you are used to the internet, you will know there is a lot of information 'out there'. There is a lot that is relevant to church and changing ministers etc. Here are some sites I visited recently – you might find them interesting.



[http://www.nhepiscopal.org/BishopSearch/leader\\_](http://www.nhepiscopal.org/BishopSearch/leader_questions.htm)  
[questions.htm](http://www.nhepiscopal.org/BishopSearch/leader_questions.htm)

<http://hrr.hartsem.edu/>

<http://www.futurechurch.org.nz/>

<http://www.emergingchurch.org/>

"THIS CHURCH WEBSITE IS SO GOOD. IT'S GOT EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE —EXCEPT HOW TO GET BAPTIZED ON-LINE!"



# CANBERRA BAPTIST PASTORATE SEARCH COMMITTEE PROCESS



*Jenny Boshier*

## **Beginning the process**

At the Church quarterly meeting in May this year, Rev Dr Thorwald Lorenzen our senior minister announced that he would be concluding his ministry in our church at a date to be mutually agreed.

The deacons considered the guidelines of the NSW Baptist Union on the Procedure for Calling a Pastor and the processes undertaken by the Church on previous occasions.

A special church meeting considered a recommendation from the deacons and agreed to the following:

- A pastorate committee, comprising the deacons, be formed to bring a recommendation to the Church on the appointment of a new minister after Thorwald Lorenzen's retirement;
- The Committee be chaired by Grahame Lindsay;
- The Committee to consult widely with church groups and individuals to obtain their views.

The Ministry Team is not part of the search committee but will be consulted and kept informed of the progress of the committee's work. The church is very fortunate that Grahame Lindsay has agreed to chair the committee. Grahame chaired the search committee some ten years ago when Rev Neil Adcock retired as Minister of our Church. Other members of the search committee have also been part of call processes for other churches.

## **Search Committee starts its task**

The Search Committee has met twice and has considered the

process to follow based on the Baptist Union of NSW document, and the Baptist Union of Victoria call process. In addition advice from a Church Consultant in New Zealand who assists churches with call processes was sought.

The committee will develop a church profile based on the previous church profile, the Church Life Survey information from 2002 and using our annual reports.

### **September meetings**

Among the first steps the Search Committee has called a series of meetings in September to ask the Church members what is important to them. The evenings will be structured and everyone's input will be sought and considered.

The purpose of the meetings is to:

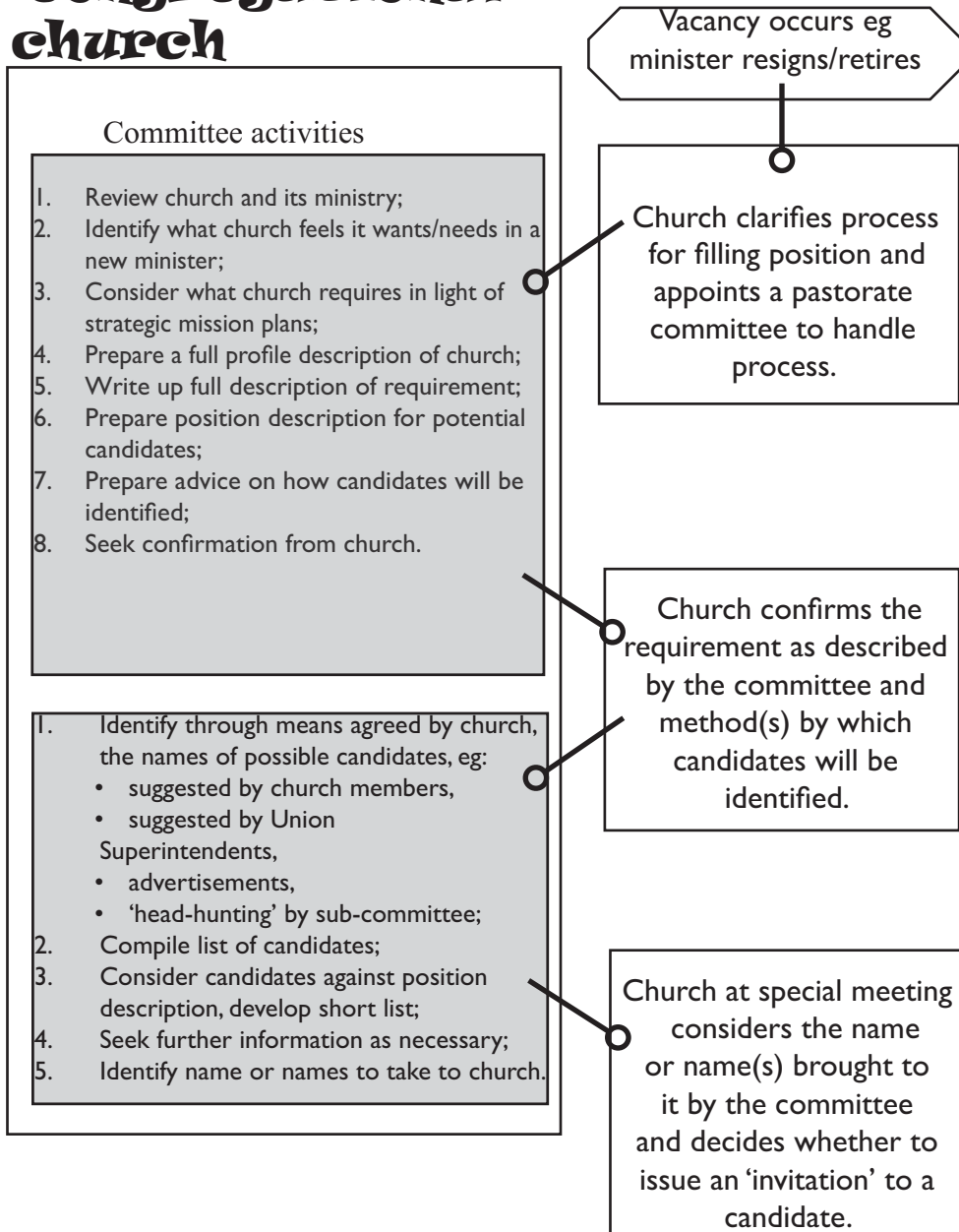
- open up the pastorate committee to the views of the whole church family
- gain the views of everyone about our church's ministry in the period ahead
- sense the qualities that the church might seek in its new minister
- pray for the pastorate committee and the church that we will all be sensitive to the needs of the church and open to the leading of the spirit.

### **We need your help**

As we start our work on behalf of the Church, we would ask for your prayers for this important task.

The search committee is always open to suggestions and ideas. Please send them to Grahame Lindsay who can receive them on behalf of the search committee. ☩

# A typical 'call' process in a 'congregational' church



## What faith holds dear

Written on the departure of a much-loved minister.

*Helen Wilson-Smith, 1963*

You came amongst us, and we felt that God was near;  
You spoke to us, but 'twas His loving voice we heard.  
Our minds became aware of what our faith holds dear –  
Your form we saw – yet each beheld the Living Word.

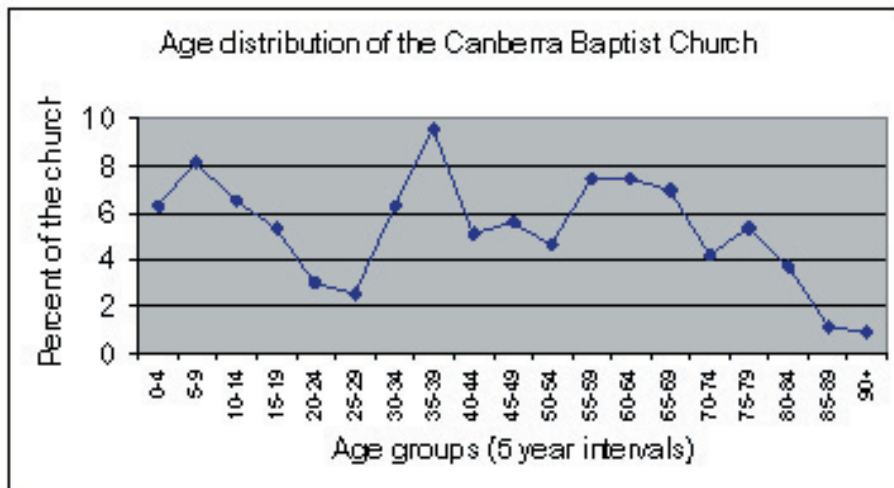
The sacramental bread in fellowship we broke –  
But with the Bread of Heaven our hungry souls were fed;  
The cup together supped, our Saviour's death bespoke;  
We joined in sweet communion with our Living Head.

You leave us now – yet still we feel you strangely near.  
God's love no barrier knows; but reaches Greek and Jew  
And covers land and sea; and each succeeding year.  
Until we share the Lamb's great Bridal Feast anew.

## Describing our church

One typical approach to describing an organisation is to prepare a demographic profile. A part of such a profile could be an age distribution. That is, we might depict the age spread of the church. Common sense, of course, would lead us to certain conclusions. But all of our conclusions (common sense) are peculiar to ourselves. A statistical count, however, shows more accurately exactly how the church is made up.

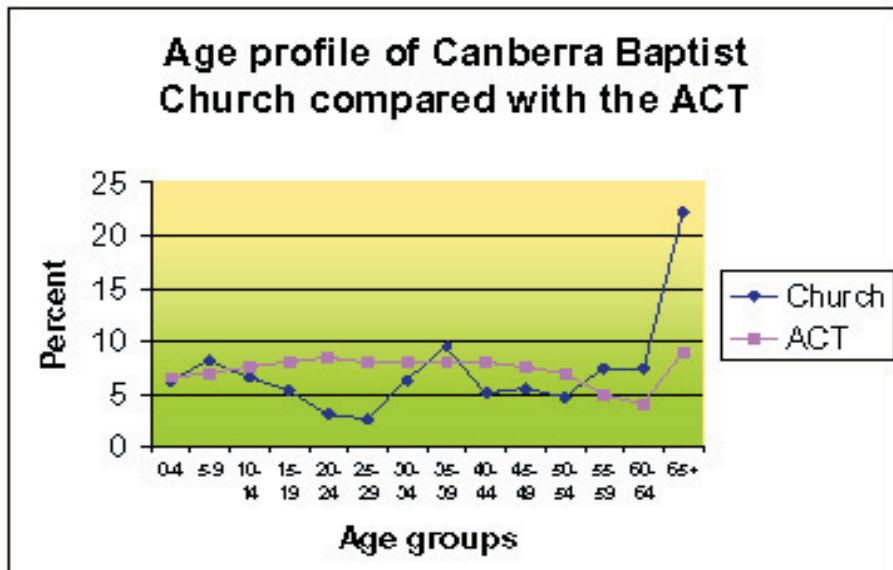
Age distribution, however, is only one demographic. Gender is another important and relatively easy one to measure. Ethnic origin is another. But the list of possibilities is almost endless. Our church has not been good on keeping statistical information, so to compile profiles takes a lot of effort. The age profile happens to be one that we can at the moment undertake relatively easily. The following graph shows the age profile of the Canberra Baptist Church.



Notes: The June 2004 Directory has been used as the basis but those who never attend have been excluded. Those who have come to the church since June have been included to give a total of 431. In 10% of cases, the birth year was not known and an estimate ( $\pm 5$  yrs) has been made. Thanks to Linley Huish for compiling the raw data.

The age profile for the ACT is also available and the following graph compares the church profile and the ACT profile. The age groupings from age 65 onwards have been lumped together in the report from the Chief Minister's Department from which I got the ACT profile. Putting them together like that can give a misleading impression, but it is useful for other reasons. Increase in life expectancy and the consequent growth in the number of aged people is a big problem for governments and the

nation. It also shows up starkly something that most of us knew about the church – that it has a very high proportion of older people - nearly three times more than the ACT as a whole – of people in the 65 plus age bracket.



There are possibly generational patterns showing. For example, it is possible that there is a connection between the 35 – 39 year old group and the high number in the 65 plus group. In this distribution are significantly different sociological groups – baby boomers, gen X gen Y etc

What do you think? What explanations would you offer for the shape of this graph - and what are the implications for our church and its future ministry?

John Clark and I are working on some more analyses – to give us a factual basis for projecting into the future. What will our age distribution be like in 10 years time? ☹



## **From the Church's Standing Orders**

### *Call of a pastor*

25. No set procedures are laid down for the calling of a pastor or the employment of staff. Such matters will be arranged in a manner appropriate to the circumstances and needs at the time.

26. As a general rule recommendations on such matters should usually originate from the diaconate and be placed before the members at a general meeting for consideration and decision. However, this is not meant to prevent a member from initiating a proposal through the diaconate or by proper notice at a church business meeting.

What constitutes 'proper notice'?

6. The agenda and other relevant documentation and notices of motions shall be published not less than 2 Sundays before church business meetings in a form determined by the diaconate, but so as to provide members with all of the information to enable them to fully consider and participate in the business of the meetings.

*The theme for the next issue of the Newsletter (around September) will be Messages of hope for the future.*

*Have a think now about whether you could (and would) write something for it and let Ross Gurney or Catherine Stafford know that you are thinking about it. They have some 'snappy starters' that might help.*

Thank you to those who helped in various ways to bring this newsletter to reality. Editorship has rested with Dr Ross Gurney. Catherine Stafford helps with gathering the ideas and opinions of the younger generations in our church.

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If you have material that you feel may be suitable for publication in future issues, please give or send it to Ross or Catherine.

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We endeavour through this newsletter to allow people the opportunity to freely express a range of views.

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The views offered are not necessarily those of the Canberra Baptist Church nor even those of a majority of its members.

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