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Bringing care to life

Message from the Chief Executive



It is now four months or so since what became known as the 'London riots' began in Tottenham and spread to other parts of that city and then to other parts of England. In the immediate aftermath of those events, there was a strongly asserted view that those riots and the associated destruction could simply be attributed to the moral character of the rioters and failures in parenting etc.

As enough of the courts' judgements were handed down, various researchers and commentators began to analyse those judgements to try and identify and describe any common themes in them.

My interest in this topic was further spurred when I heard a radio interview with prominent social justice advocate and author, Daniel Dorling, Professor of Human Geography at Sheffield University, in which he outlined his view that the riots were the symptoms of a new type of elitism that is 'infecting' Western societies, in which social inequality is increasingly promoted as innate and inevitable and as such, is becoming 'normalised'.

So, the question in my own mind was: which explanation sounds more plausible; that which attributed the cause to the individual moral failures of the rioters (and/or their parents), or that which looked more to structural causes in our societies?

Our brief survey of the analyses of the data suggested the causes were not simply attributed to individual moral failure. It suggested the causes were complex, with different groups of people with different levels of involvement, many of them overlapping. Whilst there were those with a more articulated political agenda, including those angry about police 'stop and searches', the view seemed to be that the looting was also about consumerism, about people taking the chance to grab both what they felt they needed and what they deserved. On top of that, sub-sets of older men who were failed by the 'trickle-down' policies of the 1980s had passed on negative attitudes to authority and society to a new generation, despite the fact that relations with police had improved immeasurably since then. An independent research report published by the British Cabinet Office identified four categories of factors responsible for young

people becoming motivated to be a part of a riot. These factors were categorised as "situational, personal, family/community and societal". Daily Telegraph Correspondent, Tim Stanley, published his concern that British authorities would simply blame the London riots on the character of the rioters, instead of on deeply rooted racism and classism in the United Kingdom.

Dorling argues that, whilst much progress has been made against the traditional 'social evils' of "want, idleness, squalor and disease", a new elitism is emerging which holds that, in effect, the limits of the welfare state are being reached and that five new tenets of injustice are emerging, that: "elitism is efficient; exclusion is necessary; prejudice is natural; greed is good and despair is inevitable."

So, without pretending to have much by way of answers, it seems clear to me that it is simplistic to merely attribute blame for such phenomena to the individual level; we must look for deeper causes.

At Christmas we celebrate a child born in a stable, who welcomed those shunned by those in society's mainstream, who taught "...there is neither Jew nor Greek...male nor female...", who railed against greed and who brought hope to all. These are the opposites of the 'new elitism'.



Jeff Davey
Chief Executive



Baptcare's Mission

Excellence in Christian care for individuals, families and the community.

Baptcare's Vision

Caring communities for all.

Baptcare's Values

Respect: We value the inherent dignity and equality of all people, regardless of their circumstances.

Justice: We value equality of opportunity and consistency of outcome for all.

Commitment: We value dedication to meeting the challenges of our mission.

Integrity: We value consistency between word and deed.




Accountability: We value the acceptance of personal responsibility.

Co-operation: We value working together toward our goals.

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Paintings by war survivor donated to home for asylum seekers

Recently a series of beautiful paintings were left as a bequest to Baptcare Sanctuary, a transitional supported housing facility for male asylum seekers. This facility is home to some of the most vulnerable people in the community, many of whom have fled their home countries in fear of their lives.

The artist of the paintings, Gerhard Werther, and his wife Hilde also share a special connection with many of the residents at Baptcare Sanctuary. The couple fled wartime Germany in 1939, a week before the war broke out. Their journey to freedom led them to Shanghai, where they and 30,000 other Jewish refugees spent the rest of the war. Finally, after a trip that lasted many years, they made it to Australia in 1947. Tragically, their parents died in the Nazi concentration camps.

After retiring in 1973, Gerhard renewed his earlier passion for painting, in particular Australian landscapes. When Gerhard passed away in 1983, his wife Hilde was surrounded by a large number of his beautiful paintings and eventually took some of these to Baptcare Hedley Sutton Community where she moved to at the age of 94. Hilde passed away peacefully this year at the age of 99.

This year, Professor George Werther, Gerhard's son, generously donated 19 of his father's paintings to Baptcare Sanctuary, which is home to 28 male asylum seekers living lawfully in the community awaiting the outcome of their Protection visa application. All of the residents have been forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution due to race, religion, political beliefs or ethnicity.



Pictured: George Werther and his wife Mary, attend a special celebration event to honour the late Gerhard, George's father, who bequeathed paintings to Baptcare Sanctuary.

They are survivors of trauma and unimaginable emotional distress.

George remarks fondly that his father was a true and caring gentleman, who with his mother, found sanctuary in Australia. George believes that his father would be delighted to know his paintings have found such an appropriate home.

We thank George for his thoughtfulness and generosity in donating his father's beautiful works of art to Baptcare Sanctuary, where our residents will enjoy them for many years to come.



Healthy habits promotes friendship making

The adult day centre in Tasmania, Baptcare Orana, continues to attract positive feedback for its Social Support Nutritional Program, a service designed to promote healthy eating habits and social engagement for individuals aged 65 and above and those with a disability.

The program is aimed at those who have been assessed as being at risk of malnutrition, who live alone and are responsible for their own shopping and cooking. Through this model, the Baptcare Orana Café Program was launched in 2011.

The Baptcare Orana Café Program enables participants to have a delicious three course healthy dinner, one evening each week at the facility. Before guests arrive, Baptcare Orana is transformed into a café like setting; tables are decorated with white tablecloths, fresh flowers, candles and complementing red serviettes. Soft background music is played to create a more intimate and welcoming atmosphere.

Victor Slavin is one of the many participants who has benefited from the Baptcare Orana Café Program. Since joining the program in September 2011, the 77 year old has already noticed numerous positive outcomes in his life. Not only has his eating habits and physical health improved, he's also generally happier; the regular social interaction and the opportunity to make new friends in the community was something he'd missed for some time.

"It has allowed me to break away from my four walls at home and the program helps me cope with my depression. It has made my lifestyle more exciting and I look forward to every Tuesday. The bus ride to and from Orana Café is fun and quite entertaining...many laughs are shared," said Victor.

Although the program aims to attract a total of eight clients (the maximum who can be offered transport), a regular group of dozen people are invited each week. Locals who have access to transport are encouraged to attend the dinner, as well as other Baptcare Orana clients.

For Victor, the most enjoyable part of the dinners is simple – saying "Grace" before the evening meal and making new friends.

"Because I live on my own I don't always eat or sleep well. Orana Café has improved my eating habits, my sleep has improved, therefore my energy levels have also improved," said Victor.

His positive attitude towards the program is also attributed to the Baptcare staff.

"The staff are so caring and sharing and they run the program very well. The meals are lovely and satisfactory to my personal dietary needs. I would recommend this program to other locals," said Victor.

Program inspires second chance for new migrants

As part of Baptcare's commitment to supporting Baptist churches, Baptcare distributes grants to congregations that are committed to enriching the lives of those facing significant disadvantage.

For the past year, Baptcare has supported Gateway Baptist Church in Launceston to launch a series of programs to assist newly arrived migrants, particularly those facing some level of disadvantage and social exclusion.

Most of the migrants that Gateway Baptist Church supports have spent time in refugee camps and have experienced poverty and uncertainty. On top of this, homesickness and the shock of adapting to a new culture can affect migrants' progress toward living independently in their new country.

Volunteers from Gateway Baptist Church have provided free driving lessons to participants to help them obtain their own drivers licences and become self-sufficient in their own transportation needs.

Baptcare's funding was also used to equip a sewing, craft and friendship group. Participants are empowered to learn home-based skills and are invited to undertake sewing classes.

Over time, participants have felt more confident to live independently in the community. They've made new friendships and have felt more engaged with their new home. Although the process of becoming fully sufficient in a new country takes time, these individuals are full of hope and excitement for a better future in Australia.

Engaging older people through dance

Aged care clients and residents in Melbourne's east were invited to an afternoon of dancing and delicious food at this year's Tea Dance.

Held at Oakleigh Hall, the Pippa Wilson's Swingtet Jazz band entertained guests with classic tunes. Clients and carers got into the spirit of the event on the dance floor or clapped along to the music at their table.

Baptcare Brindabilla clients, Tom and Norma Campbell, thought the event was "marvellous" – they had not danced that much for years!

It was a fabulous event where aged care residents, in-home support clients and day centre clients came together to enjoy each other's company.

The Tea Dance is one of the many activities Baptcare operates in an effort to keep older people connected to their community.



Pictured: in-home support clients and residents enjoy plenty of dancing at Baptcare's Tea Dance.

Seniors festival brings joy to older people



For the second year in a row, Baptcare has participated in the Victorian Seniors Festival alongside a series of other leading aged care providers, to deliver the Be Inspired campaign. This campaign is designed to demonstrate that age is no barrier to living life to the full and fulfilling life-long dreams.

Like last year, residents across Baptcare's residential aged care homes were invited to share their life-long wish. Baptcare's lifestyle team had the difficult yet exciting role of selecting and granting these wishes. Some of the wishes granted this year included special lunches and even Harley Davidson motorbike rides!

For resident Pat Goodwin from Baptcare Karana Community, the chance to visit the beach meant reconnecting with one of her greatest passions. Pat is wheelchair bound and is vision impaired.

"Pat's wish was really heartfelt. She wrote on her wish card that she wanted to walk on the beach and to feel the sand between her toes. Since Pat is unable to walk, the staff filled up buckets with sand and placed the sand over her feet," said Felicity Rentos, Lifestyle Coordinator at Baptcare Karana Community.

A group of seniors across Victoria were also invited to take part in the Be Inspired launch at Federation Square on October 3. These inspiring older Australians arrived in a procession of V8 cars!

The participants rode in waving black and white checkered flags; onlookers watched in amazement as the brightly coloured vehicles lined up beside Federation Square.

Bruce Wills, one of Baptcare's in-home support clients was one of the lucky individuals who took part in the festival.

Bruce's passion for cars began at the age of 14 when he started working as a mechanic. In 1946, the year Bruce returned home after serving in the Australian Air Force, he bought his first car, an Austin 7. Over the years, he worked as a mechanic for various car manufacturers. Only in retirement did Bruce manage to return to his first love, his Austin 7, which he rebuilt back to its original form.

The Be Inspired project is a collaborative initiative between leading aged care providers Baptcare, benetas, Southern Cross Care, Villa Maria, Cambridge Aged Care, TLC Age Care, ACSAG, Alzheimer's Australia (Vic), annecto, Arcare, Bluecross and Aged and Community Care Victoria.



Pictured: older people demonstrate that living life to its fullest is possible at any age.



Better Practice Awards recognise Baptcare's commitment to quality care

Baptcare has been awarded two prestigious Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Better Practice Awards for its delivery of the Ventriloquist Doll Therapy Program and the Schools Community Program.

The Ventriloquist Doll Therapy Program is a unique program designed to engage with aged care residents who have high levels of dementia, specifically those with restricted interaction skills; residents get the chance to speak and interact with the doll fondly named Gerry Gee. Many of the residents who have benefited from this program have little or no communication skills.

Some no longer respond to staff or even their own family. Yet when Gerry Gee entered their lives the results were remarkable – a spark returned to the residents' eyes, some smiled at the doll and others started conversations with it.

The Schools Community Program was also recognised as a stand out program for its innovation. The program promotes social interaction among elderly residents through regular and meaningful engagement with students.

Although this program has been operating for many years, it recently underwent significant

change to help the residents and students relate much better to each other. The changes to the program enable the residents to contribute more effectively to the students' learning needs and the students arrive much better prepared to understand and share time with the residents. This enables genuine two-way interaction between resident and student.

The Ventriloquist Doll Therapy Program operates at six of Baptcare's residential aged care homes and the Schools Community Program was an initiative devised at Baptcare Hedley Sutton Community.

Foster caring children an enriching experience for all

Baptcare is appealing to families and individuals to consider becoming a foster carer.

Anyone can apply to be a foster carer, so long as they have the qualities needed to look after children who cannot live with their parents. There is no maximum age limit for being a foster carer.

The type of support you offer is up to you – it could be 24/7 care for a short or long period or flexible care as needed such as part-time respite care to relieve other carers on a regular weekend, or emergency care in times of family crisis.

Every night, five children go without foster care in Melbourne's north and west regions because there are not enough foster carers available.

These five children are instead forced to live in residential facilities in our community.

You can change this alarming figure. The experience of foster caring is deeply rewarding – just ask Pam Lawrence, one of the many inspiring foster carers at Baptcare.

The amazing mother of three and her husband, Joe, have fostered 228 children over the past 23 years and they do not plan to stop any time soon, recently taking in a six month old baby.

In September this year, Pam received a Pride of Australia Award in the 'care and compassion' category for her commitment to helping kids in need.

Although Pam and Joe have naturally felt the challenges of raising their own three children, the couple knew they could extend their home and love to vulnerable children.

"We read a school newsletter about becoming a foster carer and I thought we could give it a go. We wanted to make a difference and felt that together we could," said Pam.

If you would like to know more about becoming a foster carer, please contact 03 9373 3800 or visit www.baptcare.org.au.

Baptcare's foster care program is located in the Brimbank and Moonee Valley regions of Melbourne.

Pray for...

- More families who can offer a loving home to children in need of foster care (page 5).
- Those for whom Christmas is painful.

Give thanks for...

- The growth in the pastoral care team – Bapcare now has Chaplains to support clients receiving in-home support across Victoria and Tasmania.
- The support Gateway Baptist Church in Launceston has been able to offer to so many migrants (page 3).
- Celebrating ageing as a normal part of life (Seniors festival page 4).



Contemplation corner

Many of us watch the news to stay up to date with what is happening in our neighbourhoods, nation and the world. If this was our only source of information, it would be easy to question God's presence in the world.

If we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear, however, there is another storyline we can tune into.

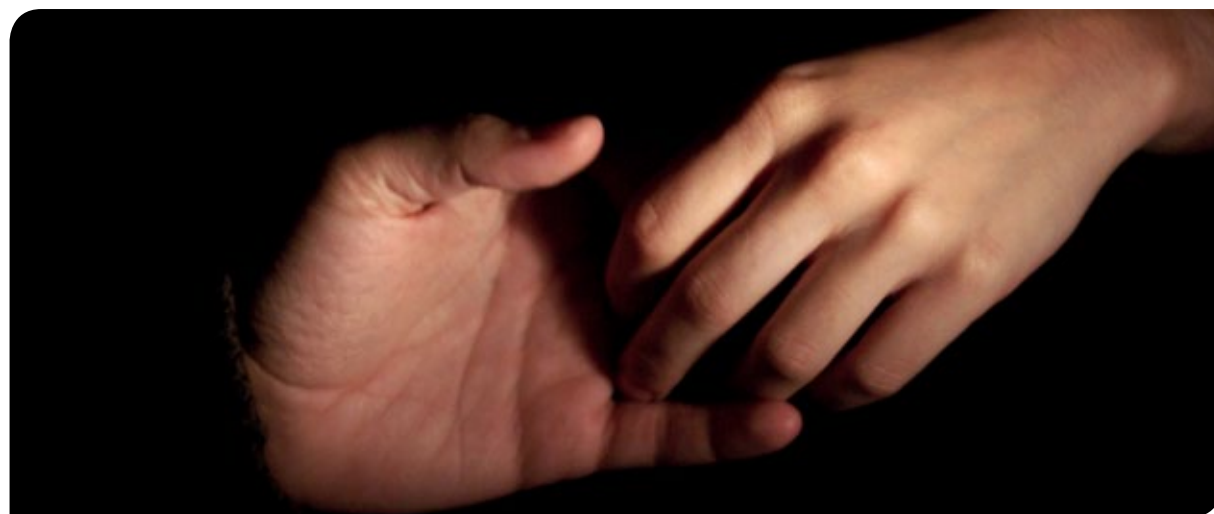
I heard a true story this week about Matthew, a man with nowhere to go and no means to support himself. Matthew was greeted by a stranger in the street in Melbourne. After they talked for a while, the stranger discovered Matthew's situation and offered his own house, food and friendship. Over time the stranger helped Matthew find his own place to live.

This is the sort of story Jesus calls us to not only tune into, but to participate in. Jesus is the

embodiment of God's action in the world, and he taught us how to recognise God's will in action. When the disciples of John asked Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come?" he replied, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them..." (Luke 7:18-23).

Bapcare's many programs are participating in this kingdom story. Instead of basing our world view on all that is failing and broken as we hear it on the news, let's open ourselves to seeing the ultimate Christmas storyline, of God's presence with us.

Ilsa Hampton
Pastoral Care Manager





“That’s what foster care is supposed to be about; giving a family life.”

—Pam Lawrence, Baptistcare foster carer and winner of the 2011 Pride of Australia Award in the ‘care and compassion’ category, pictured with husband, Joe, and foster child, Charlotte*.

The couple recently took in their 227th foster child, Charlotte*.

“She’s come from horrific circumstances. She didn’t ask to be born into a family of nine. Her bassinet was a drawer. It’s not her fault. She’s the innocent party; the kids are the innocent parties in these circumstances,” says Pam.

“We’ve had her 11 weeks today and just to see how much she’s changed is great.”

Over the years Pam and Joe have come across many heartbreaking situations. As Joe says, *“a lot of the kids don’t know what it is to have families...well, they have such broken families.”*

Your donation will go directly to our foster care program to assist us in finding, training and supporting foster carers.

Please donate to Baptistcare this Christmas, so that we can find more of the Pams and the Joes of the world and in turn bring more security, happiness and contentment to children who need our care.

In our community today, there are too many children living in circumstances that are not ideal; too many children are exposed to neglect, abuse or live in a family in crisis due to illness, addiction, financial concerns or other factors. Either way, there is no one in the family to take proper care of them. In these instances, foster care is needed.

As Pam Lawrence, a foster carer for twenty-three years, says, “until we started we didn’t realise how desperately it was needed!”

Baptcare has been providing foster care in Melbourne since 1981. While we receive government funding for the provision of basic care, **right now we need more funds to train and support new foster carers in Melbourne.**

Please consider making a donation today.

In September this year Pam received a Pride of Australia Award in the ‘care and compassion’ category for her commitment to helping kids in need. You may have seen her featured in the Herald Sun, on Sunrise or in Woman’s Day recently?

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

Donate now at www.baptcare.org.au/FosterCareAppeal. All donations over \$2 are tax-deductible.

If this article has made you curious about foster care and you’d like to find out more, please contact Ilana Gorovoy at igorovoy@baptcare.org.au or 03 9373 3800.

Yes! I will help Baptistcare support people like Pam and Joe.

Please accept my gift of:

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Please tick to receive Baptistcare’s email newsletter.

Date of birth*: _____/_____/_____

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Visit www.baptcare.org.au to make an online donation.

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