

Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923

- This Act of Parliament gave the Baptist Union of New Zealand its legal status as an umbrella organisation for the Baptist Churches throughout the country. The structure and rules are set out in the Baptist Union Constitution. The Act also provides the ability for the Baptist Union to hold property on behalf of the individual churches.

The Baptist Union

- By 1880, there were a number of Baptist churches around New Zealand prompting the Reverend Charles Dallaston to organise a conference in Christchurch to discuss the formation of a Baptist Union.
- The eight ministers and seven lay men who attended that meeting on September 23, 1880, decided it was desirable to form a Union among the Baptist churches in New Zealand.
- The Baptist Union's purposes would be to hold meetings of ministers and delegates, to promote the formation of new churches, and to help weaker churches.
- The Union's formation was formalised at a conference held in Wellington in 1882.
- From those beginnings, there are now over 240 Baptist churches and fellowships throughout New Zealand with local programmes and mission initiatives transforming the lives of others. Over 33,000 adults, 7,000 children and almost 5,000 teens attend a New Zealand Baptist church.
- This has resulted today, in a network of mutually supportive churches overseeing a significant number of ministries and social initiatives throughout our country. These include a wide range of programmes that impact the lives of every age, ethnicity, and social grouping in New Zealand.
- The Baptist Union has had many homes since its inception in 1955 and is now Baptist National Resource Centre relocated to the Carey Baptist College site in Penrose, Auckland

The Baptist Churches of New Zealand Logo



The Baptist logo symbolises many different aspects of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand. The three elements are representative of the Trinity.

The 3 colours are inspired by paua shells and represent the sky, sea and land (the great NZ outdoors).

The colours and shape are also symbolic of water and baptism.

The circular shape of the logo is representative of the globe and the great commandment.

The shape and "movement" of the logo is representative of both a coming together as a family and a sending out, into the community.

Annual Assembly and Assembly Council

The annual gathering of representatives from member churches is known as Baptist Assembly, aka 'Hui'. This group elects three governance bodies:

- Assembly Council - Life and work of Union itself
- Baptist College Board - Carey Baptist College
- Mission Council - Tranzsend

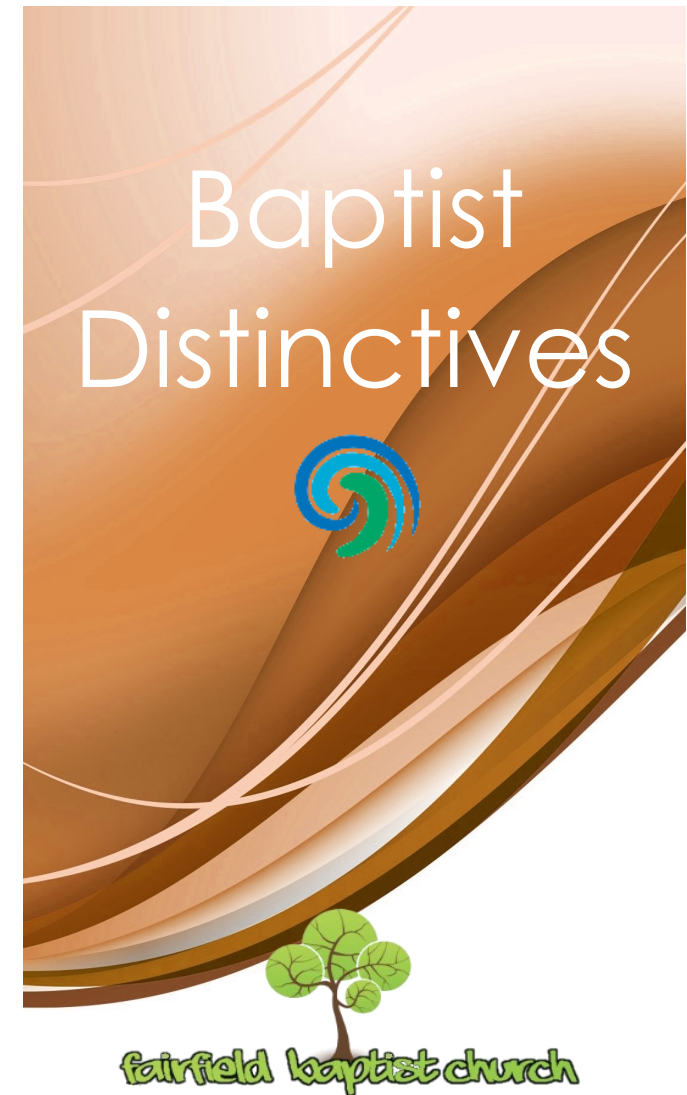
Assembly also appoints the three senior staff members who manage each of the above entities:

- National Leader
- Carey Baptist College Principal
- NZBMS Director

Assembly Council functions as the Assembly between the annual national meetings and meets quarterly. There are 8 elected representatives on Assembly Council.

Their responsibilities are to determine strategic plans and policies for the National Leader's role as well as administering the requirements of the Baptist Union Incorporation Act.

"Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others."
Romans 12: 4-5 (TLB)



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The Baptist Churches of New Zealand (formerly The Baptist Union) Mission Statement

Growing Healthy Churches - Thriving Through Mission

Background

The Baptist Church is a Christian movement of churches represented in most nations throughout the world.

At the heart of Baptist movement life is worship and the honouring of God through evangelical mission. Baptists believe the Good News about Jesus Christ and that His death and resurrection is a message which needs to be heard. They have accepted the biblical mandate to speak out this message in both word and deed.

While the churches vary greatly in style, and the Baptists who make them up come from many different ethnicities, cultures and economic groupings, all share four distinctive beliefs:

Biblical Authority

Baptists believe the Bible is the inspired word of God given to mankind for guidance and instruction on how to live life to its fullest.

Congregational Government

Baptists do not have a hierarchy of positions within their churches or their denomination. We believe all members are equal, all are able to hear the voice of God, and all have a contribution to make to the running of the church. We relate to one another and support one another, but each separate congregation makes decisions on how their church will function.

Believer's baptism

Baptists believe baptism is for believers; a sign of an individual's faith in Christ and their commitment to following Him.

Liberty of conscience

Baptists believe in the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

Statement of Faith

- We are a community of those who believe in God the Father, in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit - one God;

- who are repentant of sin and have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ, through His atoning death and resurrection;
- who publicly confess their faith and who are committed to the church's aims and functions.

What We Believe

- The true humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ
- The atonement made on the cross by our Lord for the sin of the world
- The person of the Holy Spirit as the one who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the church
- The inspiration of the Bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice
- Salvation and membership in the church by faith in Christ alone
- Membership of the church for the regenerate
- The immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism

Some years ago, a Church Life Survey found that among all the Christian traditions in New Zealand, Baptists have the lowest sense of denominational identity. Most people in our churches don't see themselves as Baptists. They don't even know what it means to be Baptist. So what does it mean? And why is it important?

A Radical Vision of Church

- The Baptist movement's one great distinctive is its vision of the church.
- When the Baptist movement began in 1609, the Protestant churches of Europe were state churches to which all citizens were forced to belong, whether or not they were Christians. Resistance could mean imprisonment, torture and even death.
- The early Baptists came to the conviction that these churches weren't reformed enough. A true church, they said, is a community of believers who, in response to Christ's call and under his direct rule, freely gather together in covenant relationship with God and each other.
- At the heart of this vision is a radical emphasis on "the immediate Lordship of Christ over every

individual human person and over every particular gathered church."

- Christ alone has the right to command the individual conscience, to call people into his church. No one else—not the government, not our parents— can usurp his place by forcing people to believe anything.
- And Christ alone commands each local church.
- Final authority over any local church rests not with a bishop or a national council, not even with a senior pastor or a group of elders, but with the risen Christ who promises to be present and make His will known whenever that church gathers together to seek his will (Matthew 18:20).
- This is the Baptist vision of the church, and it has profound implications for discipleship, leadership, worship and mission today.

The Early New Zealand Baptists

- 1841 saw the first notable Baptist, Henry Cooper Daniell, arrive in New Zealand and settle in Nelson followed by Joshua Robinson, who arrived in Auckland in 1842.
- Theophilus Mannering arrived in Canterbury/Otago ten years later.
- The first Baptist Minister, Decimus Dolamore, from Yorkshire, arrived in Nelson in May 1851, and played a part in the formation of the first Baptist Church in New Zealand - Nelson Baptist Church - in that same year.
- He also campaigned for a law change in 1854, which allowed Baptist Ministers to perform marriage ceremonies. Until then only Catholic and Anglican ministers had been allowed to do so.
- Over the last 400 years, then, Baptists have often been at the forefront of the fight against oppressive social structures.
- William Carey in India led the campaign to abolish sati, or the burning of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres.
- William Knibb, the Baptist missionary to Jamaica, played a crucial role in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire.
- Martin Luther King Jr, a Baptist minister, directed the campaign for civil rights in the USA. Mission.