



InterSections



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encounter & encouragement

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Editorial

Welcome to the August 2026 Issue of *InterSections*.

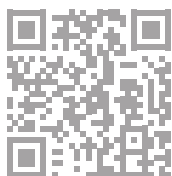
How did you feel the last time you had to wait for something – for a bus, for a child to get ready, for some news? Did you take it in your stride, or did it ruin your day? All too often it's the latter. Why do we struggle with patience? Perhaps it's because waiting reminds us of our dependence on others – something that our culture tells us to resist. Yet we know that patience is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Why is patience so important?

In our *Feature*, Dale Christensen considers the value of patience as a defining feature of the Christian life. As *Food for Thought* Graham Wall reflects on God's own patience and how it characterises all of his relationship with humanity. Joy Tabalujan reviews the book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer, which encourages us to slow down in order to open ourselves to God's work in our lives.

In *Race Finishers*, Jules Czeszkó gives a lovely tribute to his late mother-in-law, Ernestine Yancey. We interview Barry Hume, who has preached for many years in Launceston, Tasmania. And in our *News* section, we hear about the latest Macquarie Lectureship in NSW, and the recent singing workshops held in Perth.

May this issue be an encouragement to persevere in our faith and to learn to wait on the Lord.

The InterSections team



Feature The Eschatological Value of Patience

Hiding in the inner branches of the tree of life is the humble spiritual fruit of patience. In a list of virtues, it never gets headline billing alongside love or faith; nor is it much appreciated in the frenetic world around us. But I am increasingly convinced that there are few qualities more critical to cultivate for our lifelong walk of faith.

Raising four young children has made me only too aware that patience is not inherent. 'How many minutes until we get to Grandma's?', 'How long until dinner?', and 'When will it be my turn?' arise in near-constant chorus as soon as little ones progress past wordless crying. Sitting still, whether at church or in a doctor's office, is often learned at great effort. But learn we must, and most kids do – at least well enough to be functional citizens who can queue at the post office.

Even still, the adult world does not place a great deal of value on 'longsuffering' as the King James Version calls it. It's the early adopters and quick movers who seem to reap significant advantages in wealth and career. Songs have to grab your ear in the first ten seconds to avoid being skipped over, and AI software cheerfully offers to summarise any document more than a page long.

Certainly, the idea of being patient under trial is not a popular one even for Christians. Self-protective 'freedom of religion' rates quite highly in our collective priorities for something that barely rates a mention in the New Testament. James urges us to joyfully greet our inevitable trials as providential periods of growth in patience (James 1:2-4). The believer who can bear up under ill-treatment without caving in to bitterness or rage is one of the brightest lights witnessing the sufficiency of Christ to a dark world.

Another reason it is critical to pursue patience is that sanctification is not instantaneous. When we are baptised into Christ we are a new creation, but the process of transforming us into His image with ever-increasing glory takes the rest of our life (2 Corinthians 3:18). How wonderful it would be for the newborn in Christ to instantly be the perfect husband or the model employee! Alas, it is not so, and confronting this reality requires us to develop patience for ourselves, and for our brethren.

However, the reason I'm increasingly convinced of the centrality of patience is not rooted in being an upstanding citizen. It's not even about being reviled without reviling in return (1 Peter 2:23), or the torpid pace of sanctification. It's because in a broken, sinful world, justice and righteousness are often on the losing side. Our peacemaking does not end war; our sobriety does not end drunkenness; our compassion does not end abuse. The characteristics Jesus urges His followers to exemplify are received by the world as pitiful, enraging, or just plain odd.

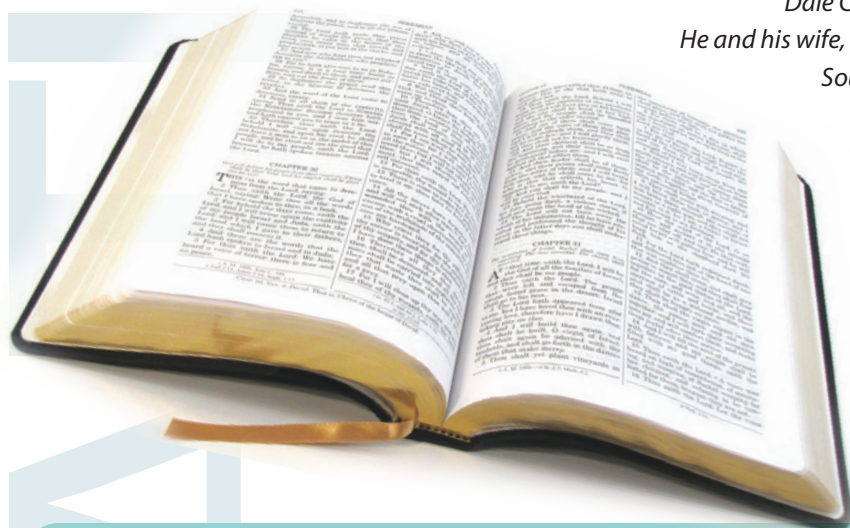
These less-than-optimal outcomes do not result from our less-than-perfect efforts. Even Jesus, though He was Prince of Peace, came to bring a sword, pitting mother against daughter and father against son. This conflict arose not from his own aggression but the sin-filled pushback of a world that didn't want a bar of His message. Why should we think that the efforts of disciples would be more successful than those of the Master? The reality is that if you are generous, you will often be taken advantage of; if you are humble, the proud will waltz right past you. And yet Christ insists that his followers exemplify these qualities.

Mature Christian patience is eschatological at its core. It is anchored in the hope of a resurrection where 'death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.' (Revelation 21:4) It assures us that growing in virtue is worthwhile, even against the evidence of our own eyes.

'How long, O Lord?', cry the souls of the martyrs in Revelation 6. 'How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'

'A little longer.' ◇

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The Patience of God: An angry cruel God, or a loving and patient one?

Many atheists and agnostics view the God of the Bible – especially as revealed in the Old Testament – as being angry, cruel, and vindictive. But when the Bible is read as a whole, with the goal of actually knowing God, what emerges is a being who is infinitely loving, gracious, and patient. There is a side to God you don't want to mess with — but his judgment comes from righteousness and justice, not evil intent. More often than not, what I read in the Bible is God holding back his anger, and delaying judgment, in the hope that people will repent.

If God were truly as cruel as people suggest, he could have destroyed us from the very beginning. Why give us a chance at all, if he is evil? The fact that he lets his world continue, tolerating human beings despite their evil, is to me a sign of His grace – and his patience.

But when we talk about God's patience, what do we actually mean? It is his ability to hold back, to wait, to endure calmly in the hope of a good outcome. It means restraining emotions and passions, not allowing them to quickly heat up and boil over. It means holding back anger and the desire for justice and retribution, especially in the face of great evil. This is why God is so often described throughout the Bible as slow to anger and long-suffering — as he describes himself to Moses: 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness' (Exodus 34:6, NIV).

The evidence for this runs throughout the Bible. Before flooding the world, God gave people possibly as much as a hundred years to hear Noah's preaching and repent (1 Peter 3:20).

What about the Canaanites – often cited as the starkest example of God's cruelty? The deeper question of how total that judgment was, and its morality, deserves its own article rather than a paragraph here. What I want to focus on is the timing, and whether God acted without warning. God gave the Canaanites 400 years to repent – while Israel was enslaved in Egypt — before acting, telling Abraham why: 'the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure' (Genesis 15:16). At Jericho, Rahab tells the spies the city had already heard what God had done and was living in dread of it (Joshua 2:9–11). Rahab and her household responded to that warning, and were spared. God didn't skip the offer of mercy – people simply didn't take it.

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Then there's Nineveh – capital of Assyria, a nation notorious for brutality. Jonah's warning was blunt: forty days, and the city would fall (Jonah 3:4). God gave the Ninevites time to respond. And respond they did. From the king down, the whole city repented, and 'God saw what they did... and he relented' (Jonah 3:10).

Israel and Judah tell the same story. Generation after generation they sinned – even sacrificing their own children – and generation after generation God delayed judgment, before finally allowing both kingdoms to fall.

Further evidence of God's patience: despite humanity's continued rejection, God sent his son to suffer and die for all who would believe. And still today, he waits, giving every person the opportunity to repent. As Peter writes: 'With the Lord a day is like a thousand years... He is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance' (2 Peter 3:8–9, NIV).

But God's patience isn't reserved only for those outside the faith — it's also his ongoing posture toward believers. As Paul writes of himself: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst... Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example' (1 Timothy 1:15–16, NIV).

Considering both God's patience and His judgment, three things stand out:

1. God's patience is long-suffering, not limitless. I need to regularly take stock of my life and be genuinely repentant. Rather than testing God's patience to see what I can get away with, as a Christian I need to value his patience as an opportunity to grow and mature in Christ.
2. God's patience is an opportunity for people to know Jesus. I need to be deliberate about reaching out to others.
3. If God is so patient with me, shouldn't I extend that to others? Delaying my own anger, holding on to hope for people to change – without abandoning healthy boundaries – means, I shouldn't be quick to write people off. ◇



Ernestine Yancey

On the 16th June, our church family farewelled a faithful member. Ernestine Yancey was one of those quiet, active Christians who sought no glory but bravely – and often silently – served and suffered.

I will never forget the first time I met her 36 years ago. It was a cool winter morning. Ernestine's daughter, Elonie, was to introduce me to her mother, father Jack and brother John at the Chermshire family home in Brisbane. We all understood this could be the beginning of lifelong relationships, and we wanted things to go well – bravery was called for. Ernestine, compared to her husband Jack, was of slight, petite build, with a tender face of Cherokee heritage. Hearing her Southern accent, we spoke few words personally, but I was immediately touched by her kindness and gentleness. These same qualities would influence me in coming years, when she was widowed and living with the family in Melbourne.

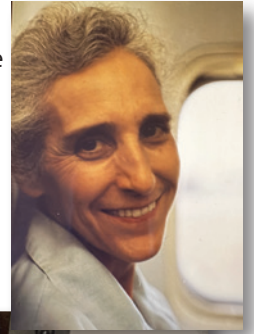
Ernestine Walker was born in Ellijay, North Georgia, in 1941, at the foot of the Appalachians, the youngest of 4 children. Growing up on the family farm amongst apples, animals and bluegrass, she played the banjo and guitar with twin cousins Hoss and Duck, her brother Roy on fiddle, and their father Ernest on spoons and harmonica.

When Ernestine was 4, her mother Doris heard a gospel preacher on the radio and called in to invite him over to their house. He shared the good news and baptised her parents, which marked the beginning of the Ellijay church of Christ (now over 300 in membership). Ernestine was baptised into Christ at the age of 13.

After meeting and marrying Jack Yancey at Forest Park church of Christ, Atlanta in 1961, they had two children: John and Elonie. In 1971, Jack decided they would bravely leave their American family and cross the ocean, free from the political tensions of Atlanta. They placed membership at Holland Park church, where Randy Baker and Claude Guile preached. They learned that Northgate church was closer, then began a quarter-century involvement there with the Smith family, Glenda De Nooyer and her father Gordon Stevens, who baptised Elonie at 14.

Ernestine loved God and people (Matthew 22:37–38). A worshipper with a deep, sincere belief that she belonged to God, she trusted he would always take care of her and her children. In her last year, unable to attend Belmore Road, she would worship every Sunday online, right up until she died. Not able to listen to music, with a crackly voice, she still sang and would spend a lot of time praying – especially while she ate, which took much time. She loved God's wisdom, shown by how often she would open her bible with us. A good steward, she loved God more than money, having learned this from a young age. She was content with little, sewing and mending clothes for John, Elonie and her dolls.

I, as well as others at Belmore Road, Greater Dandenong and Southeast churches, remember her loving spirit and bear hugs. They were strong and open-armed. She exemplified 'the unfading beauty of gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight' (1 Peter 3:4).



She was 'generous and willing to share' (1 Timothy 6:18) as someone who gave generously to her four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and donated to hospitals. She was a friend who cared about my mother Johanna and our neighbour George. She loved people and used things, not the other way around. Her legacy of faithfulness endures with her beautiful daughter, Elonie, and a God-loving son, Johnny.

I count myself blessed to have known Ernestine, considering her much more than just a mother-in-law. She was an exceptional individual because of her relationship with Jesus. I remember well our conversations about John 21:18 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–10. God used her life to show us his love; that's the life of a disciple of Jesus (1 John 3:16). Ernestine, purified over a lifetime of fiery trials, emanated a heart of gold – a reflection of her Lord. ◇

Jules Cseszkó

Gyula Cseszkó (Jules) and his wife Elonie are members of the Belmore Road church of Christ in Melbourne



The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to stay emotionally healthy and spiritually alive in the chaos of the modern world by John Mark Comer

I used to think being busy meant I was doing something right: Full calendar, full inbox, full mind – full life. Or so I thought.

When people asked, 'How are you?'; I almost automatically answered, 'Good – just busy.' It was as if busyness proved I was capable, needed, and keeping up.

But John Mark Comer's *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* challenged me to look beneath this busyness. A full life is one thing; a hurried soul is another. Busyness is having a lot to carry; hurry is letting the weight of it shape your soul. And hurry does not just tire us out – it hollows us out.

Comer's central question is simple and confronting: What if the greatest threat to our spiritual life is hurry? Drawing on John Ortberg's insight that hurry is not only a disordered schedule but a disordered heart, Comer argues that a hurried life fragments our attention, dulls our prayers, and leaves little room for love, God's presence, and the slow work of discipleship. Hurry is antithetical to love, peace, and joy. It robs us of being truly present with God, with others, and with the life God has given us. The danger is not necessarily that we will abandon our faith altogether, but that we will become so distracted, rushed, and preoccupied that we settle for a mediocre version of it.

The book's power is that Comer does not simply tell us to slow down. He points us back to Jesus who offers, not an escape from the weight of life, but a different way to carry it. To follow Jesus is not only to believe what he taught – it is to adopt his pace of life.

Comer offers four practical suggestions: make time for uninterrupted solitude and silence; observe the Sabbath; practise simplicity; and slow down. These are not productivity hacks, but ways to make space for God. Comer's treatment of the Sabbath is especially insightful. He frames it, not as a burdensome rule, but as a gift: A weekly act of worship, delight, resistance to the excesses of life, and a reminder that the world does not depend on us.

What makes the book so convincing and challenging is how ordinary and practical Comer's examples are: checking your phone first thing in the morning; filling silence with noise; buying more than you need; refusing to rest. None of these habits alone seem dramatic, but over time they train us in restlessness.

Against this, Comer invites readers to arrange their lives so that the love of God can grow – not by copying someone else's routine, but by discerning what faithfulness looks like in our own lives.

I experienced this personally during a recent two-month holiday in South America. One day a close friend asked, 'Joy, do you always have to have music playing, even in the background? Have you ever just sat in silence for a bit?' It was a small question, but it stopped me in my tracks. I realised I was not just filling the quiet; I was avoiding it. A non-Christian friend had named what I had been reluctant to admit: I was uncomfortable with stillness – and perhaps with what stillness before God might reveal.

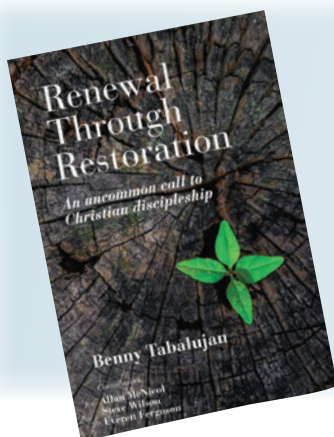
That is why Comer's book is not really about time management or even rest. It asks whether our lives are too noisy, too crowded, and too rushed for us to just be with God. 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10).

I expected Comer's book to be about slowing down. Instead, I found a mirror. Comer showed me that hurry is not just a pace I keep, but something I am being formed by. I now see how often I choose noise over stillness, striving over trust, and exhaustion over surrender. This discovery is confronting – but deeply freeing.

Jesus isn't asking me to carry more, move faster, or prove myself worthy of rest. Neither is he asking me simply to slack off and put no effort into life. Rather, he is inviting me to come to him to learn his pace, follow his rhythm and, through it all, allow my anxious soul to rest in him.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
(Matthew 11:28–30) ◇

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News Macquarie Lectureship, NSW

Did three West Australians travel to Sydney in the middle of winter for the Bridge, Opera House, and Shows? We saw them, but our 'Highlights' were at the Macquarie Lectureship 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel!'. Talks that provoked us to value the love of Jesus in dying for us, hold onto our trust in him, share Jesus' love and salvation to all people, and know the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always with the people of God.

We thank God for the encouraging time over 5 days (15–19 July), as we sang, prayed, ate, and shared our lives with each other. We were heartened equally by being reunited with brethren from a shared past, and meeting brethren for the first time. Our love and thanks to the hard work of the brethren involved and the amazing hospitality of those at Macquarie. God be with you all.

'I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ...' (Romans 1:16)

Roger Tyers



Singing Workshop, WA

A team of worship leaders visited the Malaga church in Perth from 8–12 August. The group was led by John Wiegand, editor of the "Praise for the Lord" hymn book, and included James Tackett (editor of the paperless hymnal) and David, Daniel, and Jeni Falkenheim from America. Joining them were John Cooper and Nancy WuWon from Melbourne. Saturday and Sunday were filled with wonderful congregational singing and eating together. Saturday evening, we had about 50 brethren welcome the team with a BBQ and singing.

On Sunday we had two singing sessions after worship, as well as a potluck luncheon. Monday and Tuesday the team fellowshiped with various brethren and led song leading classes both evenings. The whole congregation was built up and encouraged by the time together.

Eddie Legg



Barry Hume

Can you tell us how you came to faith in Christ and be part of his church?

I had no interest in religion, but when Jackie became pregnant with our first child, for some strange reason I was concerned whether we should have the baby christened. I reasoned that if we simply evolved, then it didn't matter, but if we were created, I wanted to know what that Creator wanted me to do with the baby.

I spent eight months researching evolution vs creation and came to the conviction that there must be a Creator, but how did I know that the Bible was God's revelation? So I spent another eight months researching 'Is the Bible God's word?' I came to the conclusion it was, so I purchased a Bible and knocked on the doors of many denominational ministers and asked them, 'Please show me where the Bible says I must christen my baby'. Unable to get a sensible answer from them, Jackie and I decided to find out for ourselves what the Bible required, so every night after dinner we spent two hours reading the Bible, beginning from Genesis 1:1.



My mother happened to tell a woman who was a member of the Newnham church of Christ what Jackie and I were doing. that led to Tommy Poarch, an American evangelist, knocking on our door. We studied the Bible with him for a considerable time, then began visiting the Newnham church, and were baptised one morning at 2am in a freezing cold church baptistry. Every Newnham member in attendance in their pyjamas, nightshirts, and dressing gowns.

What motivated you to begin preaching the word?

The Newnham church had a policy (that I now disagree with) that upon conversion the males were required to become part of a 'mutual ministry' preaching roster whereby I was required to preach a sermon every fifth week. Having to meet this requirement was disastrous for my marriage and family life, but it forced me to study the Bible for many hours every day.

I came to love God's word and wanted to teach others, so I prayed every day that I could become a full-time preacher. The way that God answered my prayer is an almost unbelievable story, and too long to record here.

The result of it all is that we had a well-known doctor from the U.S. stay in my home for three days, and when he returned home he organised and fully paid for Jackie and I to spend fourteen weeks in the U.S. I preached on fourteen consecutive Sundays in fourteen different states.

When we returned home to Tasmania I began receiving emails from church elders in the U.S. offering to fully support me to preach in Australia. I am now eighty years of age and I'm still fully supported by those churches.

What are some of the particular challenges faced by smaller or isolated congregations in Australia?

The greatest challenge I see for small congregations is an inferiority complex about being small, rather than seeing the blessings available. My personal view is that small congregations have more potential to be practising New Testament Christianity. What I've seen of large congregations in major cities is that because of distance, time, and lifestyle, members often only see each other for short periods during their church's worship meetings. In small congregations every member can develop a deep and personal love for every other member, because they have more opportunity to do things together almost every day.

I'm not saying, 'Let's stay small'. We desperately need to be seeking to increase our numbers, but the time should come for every large congregation to realise that distance and time constraints can hinder members from being a church like I described, and that congregation might need to divide into two or more smaller congregations.

Having said that, there are areas where small, isolated congregations do need assistance. Large, big city churches could implement programs whereby preachers regularly visit and preach for small churches.

Large churches can also provide small churches with sermon and Bible Class material. I've spent over forty years indexing every page of every book in my extensive library so that brethren can contact me requesting material on any given subject. All I have to do is go to my filing cabinets and take out the file on the subject requested, which tells me every page in my library where that subject is mentioned. I can then photocopy about fifty sermons, Bible Classes, articles, and comments about that subject to mail out. Sadly, though I've spent over forty years creating this resource facility and receive requests weekly from brethren overseas, I've never had any from Australian brethren. One preacher in Sri Lanka once contacted me and said, 'Barry, where have you been all my life?'

Have you noticed any changes in the church over the years, or how the Gospel is received?

People in Australia, just in my lifetime, have become less religious, more materialistic, and sport and recreation loving, and I believe that one of the reasons is because members of the church of Christ have become less serious and less committed to God's word being the central core around which every aspect of their life revolves.

Non-Christians notice that church of Christ members don't study their Bible every day, don't offer thanks before meals when non-Christians are present, their speech is worldly, their only religious action appears to be attending the worship service each Sunday (if it is convenient). Then if a dedicated member of the Lord's church tries to interest them in spiritual matters, they conclude that because so many 'church of Christ's' have such a lukewarm attitude toward God and the Bible, it must not be very important.

Sadly, too many people (Lord's church included) have a 'real life' and then a bit of religion on the side as an insurance policy, instead of their real life being following God's word every second.

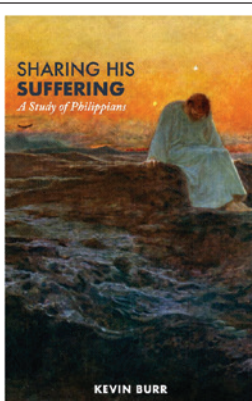
What advice would you have for anyone as they consider or prepare for a ministry of preaching?

The best advice I can give – before studying the Bible with someone you must first build a relationship with them, because people will more readily listen to a genuine friend than a stranger. This may take years, as it requires you to become a valued part of their life, and they a part of yours.

Thirty-two years ago I began attending games at the Hillwood football club. Their President was a stranger who I thought was so 'high' above my standing that I couldn't contemplate even speaking to him. As the years rolled on, that man became the secretary, then treasurer, then Head Trainer, then Head of the board of the club, and still too 'distant' for me to feel confident about approaching about religion. During those years, Jackie and I began to assist volunteers in the canteen on match days, then managed the canteen for many years, and then the club asked us to fill the role of 'Club Chaplains', which we've done for ten years now. All this time we grew closer to that man.

Two years ago his wife died, and he asked me to conduct her funeral service. Then early last year he shocked us all by walking in to attend Eastside's worship service. While I was preaching I kept looking at him and thinking, 'I cannot believe Bob McLean is sitting here today listening to me preach'. Bob is now a valued member at Eastside, and he often says to the other members, 'I believe that God sent Barry and Jackie to the Hillwood Football Club thirty-two years ago so that they could become my friend, and when my wife died God had Barry in place for me to become a member of the Lord's church and go to heaven when I die.' ◇

Barry and Jackie Hume are members of the Eastside church of Christ in Launceston, Tasmania, where Barry preaches full-time. barryhume@bigpond.com He was interviewed by Nathan Holyoak.



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