

MEMBER'S HUB

John Finkelde: Hey hub members, great to be with you today, here interviewing Hartley and Nat Taylor, they're the senior Pastors of C3 Church Port Macquarie on the beautiful coast of New South Wales here in Australia. They recently relocated to Port Macquarie after serving as location Pastors at C3 Silverwater which is a location of Pastor Phil Pringle's church in Sydney. They were location pastors there for 8 years and before that served in the church for 4 years in an assistant role. They've been married for 18 years and they have 3 gorgeous children.

Welcome Hartley and Nat, how you doing?

Hartley Taylor: We're doing well.

Nat Taylor: Nice to be with you, thanks John.

John Finkelde: Great to have you guys in the hub, looking to do a 60 seconds lightening round just to find out a little bit of fun stuff about you.

What's your favourite food?

Hartley Taylor: Italian for Hartley.

Nat Taylor: Cheese for Nat, any kind except Blue.

John Finkelde: Any kind of cheese. That's good, I like that. What's the best book you've read in recent times?

Hartley Taylor: Spiritual Leadership by Henry and Richard Blackaby

Nat Taylor: The artists Way by Julia Cameron, as a bit of a creative I appreciate it.

John Finkelde: Okay, I haven't heard of that one but I've heard of the other one by the cloud, the boundaries guys.

Your dream holiday destination?

Hartley Taylor: Probably Italy again, done it once, didn't see enough of it.

Nat Taylor: Anywhere coastal, and now we're living coastal, so it's like a perpetual stay cation.

John Finkelde: Move to Port Macquarie to enjoy the vacation vibe!

Who's your favourite person in the Bible? Besides Jesus, we'll leave him out of this so you won't feel the pressure to say Jesus.

Hartley Taylor: I'll say Paul

Nat Taylor: I'll say Deborah, always appreciated Joan of Arc personality.

John Finkelde: *Yep agree with that.*

What's your favourite downtime activity? I know what you're going to say Hartley.

Hartley Taylor: Surfing, for sure. There we go John, there's the answer!

John Finkelde: *I knew that was coming!*

Nat Taylor: Walking the beach, love it.

John Finkelde: Aw man, and folks don't know but Silverwater is quite you know, it's in city environs. How far from the beach Hartley, from Silverwater where you lived?

Hartley Taylor: Oh 45 minutes to an hour it took me to get to the ocean from Silverwater.

John Finkelde: *Oh man, and now?*

Hartley Taylor: 2 minutes. Roll down the hill in the car. 2 minutes.

John Finkelde: *Oh gorgeous.*

Nat Taylor: I used to walk the block to pray in suburban Sydney and now I walk the beach to pray, it's just a little bit of an upgrade. Pretty happy with our situation.

John Finkelde: *I think that's more refreshing for the soul, no doubt about that.*

Coffee or tea?

Hartley Taylor: Coffee, strong.

Nat Taylor: Coffee, weak, we balance each other out.

John Finkelde: *Book or podcast?*

Hartley Taylor: Book

Nat Taylor: Totally a book, love the pages in my hands.

John Finkelde: *Beach or mountains?*

Hartley Taylor: Beach

Nat Taylor: Beach, easy.

John Finkelde: *Obvious one that one! Jog or bike or neither?*

Hartley Taylor: Oh jog

Nat Taylor: Jog, I ran this morning, I'm back at it. Love it.

John Finkelde: *Oh good one you, good on you guys!*

What do you love about Port Macquarie, the town? Tell us a bit about the town and what you love about it.

Hartley Taylor: Love the pace, coming out of Sydney you get used to the pace of Sydney, but when you're out of it you certainly enjoy a city that goes a lot slower. So that's been lovely and definitely the environment, with the beauty of beaches that are gorgeous and lakes systems, it's tremendous.

Nat Taylor: Definitely love the picturesque environment and the rhythm and these things mean that people have a bit more margin, they're less guarded, I've found. They're a bit more open to conversation, which, also means they're open to Christ, conversationally, which is great.

John Finkelde: *Yes, I was going to ask you about that. Environments affect us deeply and you would have seen just the difference in how people live their lives but also how they express themselves and I suppose there'd be a massive significant change from the pace of Sydney and the life of Sydney to Port Macquarie, so what's the biggest thing you've noticed about people that's different?*

Hartley Taylor: I would say what Nat says, people do seem to smile and actually greet you, at the beach, in the street, in the shopping centre, where a city of 5 million like Sydney, that is often not the case, it feels like people are just about their own business, head down, and is very different and it's quite refreshing to see smiles and people saying hello as you rub shoulders around town and where you go.

Nat Taylor: Yeah, we have a bit of a hybrid culture here, being the mid way point between Sydney and Brisbane and a regional centre point as well, so people are moving from both of those cities, they're coming in from regional areas and so it's quite a lovely mix of Brisbane influences, Sydney influence, the regional influence makes for a unique culture here in Port Macquarie.

John Finkelde: *That's amazing and look, the thing I want to bounce around with you guys that will help a lot of pastors and leaders in the hub is this massive change in your life both personally and pastorally, moving from being location pastors, you're now lead pastors, senior pastors of your own church.*

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You've moved from a city vibe into a regional town vibe and that's a completely different scenario, so hearing you analyse the differences is really cool, because, I guess coping with change, one thing you've got to do is to discern the new from the old.

I know that you've landed in a church that's had a bit of a rocky sort of recent history, what changes have you made since you arrived, and you only arrived less than 3 months ago, 3 or 4 months ago I think it was. What changes have you made in the church since arriving?

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, I think because it had that instability which was about a 14 or 15 month period, I think straight away we felt we could bring some stability and hope and faith, so we really just tried to encourage those that were there that it is a new day, fresh day, we're going to have a sound of victory throughout the church both corporately and individually, so we really felt to bring that early on, and just try and lift people, their eyesight up a bit after quite a rocky season.

So that is what we really felt to do. On top of that we definitely saw a few of the teams that were lacking and probably the two that we really saw was music and the kids area so we've really put some effort in. Nat's done a huge job working with both those teams, to really bring some strength and some good culture into them.

So they're probably some of the early, bigger things we've focused on.

I'd also say on top of that, our community, we really just wanted to give everyone a chance to spend time together, both with us and the church so we added in church picnics, we got young adults to do a lot of things to hang out, we've added a women's Thursday morning group that Nat's doing, we've been getting together every week to pray and have a team download.

So just looking at where we can give people an opportunity to spend time together and just bring some community back to the church, and then obviously encourage connect groups to get up and going because I think there was no connect groups when we arrived.

John Finkelde: I guess picnic in Sydney wouldn't be the go, but picnics in Port Macquarie would be more the go.

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, absolutely, and people do come, and they're not rushed as they would be in Sydney and you can get to a lot of places easily without having to think about what traffic might be and the commute, plus the beauty of the beach or a winery or just things like that that are just great to do those things at.

John Finkelde: Now Hartley, you mentioned about being involved in some of that area of change in the worship and the children's area, what are some of the specific things that you've done to bring that boost of hope and faith and a new day?



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Nat Taylor: I definitely invest in C3 culture, reinforcing with the culture in expression and in both those teams there'd been a really faithful remnant who were holding the line and probably serving a little beyond a point of refreshing so even reconfiguring and resting some people and allowing them to breathe a little bit.

There's been that bit of a ripple effect right across the life of the church, and just getting a read out where people are at, because they had been slightly over serving and refreshing and even shifting people from left to right in order to get them in their lane, move them out of obligation into their sweet spot.

And just adding new people, there's been quite an influx of new people into the life of the church and just being intentional and front footed in adding them into the kids team, adding them into the worship team and others to boost that faithful remnant and the teams across the life of the church.

John Finkelde: *Yeah, so you've given people who are a bit worn out a bit of a break, which I think is a smart move. But also, now you guys have been leading the church now for, how many weeks is it?*

Hartley Taylor: I think we've had 11 weeks.

John Finkelde: *11 weeks so that's not a long time, but I'm really fascinated with this, that you've had new people come in, and you've added them rapidly into 2 key areas, which are huge key areas on Sundays both children's and worship.*

What have you done in adding new people into that area to protect yourselves from getting the wrong people in that zone, or have you gone with the kind of 'Hey it's a fresh day, it's a new day, let's try some different things'. What's been your approach to kind of adding new blood into those 2 key areas so quickly?

Nat Taylor: I guess the release of people really coincides with plenty of one on one pastoral conversations to get a discerning readout on peoples maturity and character and gifting and also I'm currently attending all the worship rehearsals and there's my influence in song choice, there's my influence in whose leading what songs and sowing culture in little downloads in those worship gatherings.

I'm also very present in kids; there's some Sundays just being the nature of the season, where I'll step off the platform from me leading in the main auditorium and head straight up to kids, just to be a physical presence and to reinforce culture up there, and to support the team and encourage them also.

John Finkelde: *I think that's great Nat, I love the fact, I mean you guys haven't even got your first 100 days done yet, 11 weeks, I mean it's about 80 days, but you're making significant changes in key large areas of the church, so I think for leaders listening to this and thinking sometimes when you come into a situation that's been unstable and there has been demoralising thing going on, sometimes you're best doing exactly what Hartley and Nat have done and make the changes swiftly, but do them*

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personally, do them pastorally, get your fingerprints all over them, don't let things get too far away from your heartbeat or from your hands involvement.

I really like the fact that you've done, for what I would think; looking at this from a distance, significant changes in your first 100 days which is definitely one approach you can take when it comes to changing things.

Nat Taylor: And I think what works to our advantage is that because the church had been treading water for a period of time, when we did land, I was pleasantly surprised that there was a low level sense of apprehension and high sense of we're keen to follow your lead, please lead. And so that's what warranted our ability to move so quickly is that they were with us, and that there wasn't fear about what we were rolling out.

John Finkelde: Yes, it's so good and I think again picking up on that, in leading change, you've got to work out where people are at. If they're all timid and uncertain and just need comfort and care; give that, but if they're saying 'you know what, we're sick of just hanging around, we want to go somewhere, take us somewhere', you'd be wrong to offer comfort and care and just say everyone sit down and relax if people are saying 'no, no we want to go, we've been sitting around doing nothing for so long.'

So reading the environment, reading the people, well done guys, I think you've read the situation well.

Hartley Taylor: I think what also possibly helped us was the endorsement. Pastors Phil and Chris did a beautiful video that we played in the early weeks of the church, even some long term C3 people were involved, just in endorsing us. Just gave us that little bit of; we weren't complete strangers although we really didn't know more than just a handful of people in the church.

I think that little things, which is one of the great thing about being involved in a movement and taking on a church within the same movement, just gave us I think, probably a little bit of a head start and people wanting to sit back for too long whilst they're checking us out and seeing if they'll follow, so that helped us also.

John Finkelde: Getting authorised by authorities, I think really helps in change moments, that's awesome.

What changes have you made personally to your pastoral life, you were running a large church, a large location, C3 Silverwater in Sydney and you've moved into a smaller church in a regional town. What have had to change pastorally, moving from that larger scenario; part of a network of churches into a lead role in a smaller church?

Nat Taylor: In a large church, your primary attention is going to your key leaders. In a smaller church, it's grass roots again, and it's very much, lots of cups of coffee actually in regional culture, there's probably a little bit more margin and desire to hang out and have coffee. So I'm a little bit of an introvert so I have



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to keep ok about that. But being new on the ground I was probably splitting my time between connecting with people within the church, connecting with people within the community and connecting with other ministry leaders and pastors in the area, we're in a bit of an emersion thing whilst we got familiar with everyone.

John Finkelde: *Yeah, so that's quite a challenge also if you're more introverted as well Nat, it's kind of easier sometimes, in a larger church to kind of, withdraw and get your energy back. In a smaller church there's probably more demands so that's quite challenging if you're more introverted in nature.*

Nat Taylor: So we've been quick to profile people that are our pastoral care team and mobilising the team fairly early on so not all the emphasis is on us.

John Finkelde: *Okay, just give us an idea, what's your regular sort of Sunday attendance. I know things are still settling in there. Just to give folks who are listening a bit of an idea of the size of the church.*

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, averaging 100 on a Sunday, including kids.

John Finkelde: *Okay, great. That's gives people a bit of a barometer read if you like.*

How about you Hartley? What have you noticed in changing your pastoral leadership life from Silverwater to Port Macquarie?

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, I mean one of the things we just had to do was start off at a good rhythm. It had been a big season in Sydney, 12 years in the church arriving here in a smaller church context did give us an opportunity to pick a rhythm and a pace which we felt is a good opportunity for us to go at a pace that would work for us and this early little chapter that we may not get for a little while; we're not sure.

But like Natalie said, definitely connecting a lot, having those coffees. I've seen, even noticing the very strong collection of ministers in the region that do get together, actually quite frequently. But noticing that's a high value for them and not wanting to come in and not kind of be the ones not engaged in that, so putting time into some of their meeting, catching up one on one or with couples.

Running other churches in the area just seems to be a regional thing that we didn't really experience in Sydney. So that's definitely been a focus, which has been good.

And definitely trying to see who we can connect with, also just outside of the church and we had a meeting with the Mayor and just trying to see what we can do there, and just trying to really emerge ourselves in but just connect as broadly as we can in those early days I think has been good.

John Finkelde: *Yeah, I think you find when pastors are leading churches, especially in regional areas, there is that sense of; no one quite understands me as much as the pastor down the road. They go through the same sort of issues that I go through, so I think there is this natural kind of gathering that pastors enjoy. But I think also pastors need, especially in regional areas, I mean in city areas as well*

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but again location campus deals is completely different to leading your own church, so I think that whole more personal stuff goes on in smaller, medium churches than in large churches, just out of necessity.

You worked 12 years at C3 Silver water, 8 years leading that location, that campus. How have you processed the grief of leaving a long term pastorate?

Nat Taylor: Probably over the course of last year, there were sort of ways of letting go of different areas of responsibility, which I didn't collectively recognise as part of the transition until it had happened and we had moved away. And then there was an intense shift right at the end, it was only about a 5 week window actually between the decision being made and us moving. But at that point, like all the preparation that had happened in my heart over the course of the year, helped for closure.

It was not an easy transition we really deeply love that church and the people and there was no reason in that church, in terms of our week in week out experience that would make us want to go. It wasn't so much about leaving one place it was about moving towards another I suppose.

I think there's no short cuts in processing grief, when we landed up here there was quite a few weeks just walking the beach and praying, and even just this last week being at Presence and seeing some of the younger leaders that we'd raised up, I just remember; one moment, standing, talking with them and I just, you know, tears just sprung up out of nowhere because you've got that deep and longstanding love for these people, and obviously you don't have to shake that off, you're human and that's precious but I think that grief has a way of just, sometimes, catching you unawares, and it's good just to face it, be with it and allow it.

John Finkelde: Yeah, I think you're right, like you said, you love that church and you've got them in your heart, and then to leave them, and especially with that short window of 5 weeks of leaving, decision, leaving, going. I'm not surprised that coming back into connection with people there, that it would move you emotionally, that's completely, totally normal, and to be expected really.

How about you Hartley?

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, I think I've, it's amazing how your heart can focus on the new, the new people and I think that new focus generally helps me personally because you know it's straight away, you attach your heart to what God's doing in that new thing.

I guess I just hold on to know that there will be handful of very precious relationships that I know will be very long standing and actually I believe forever, so I think it's a little bit of just being very grateful for that.

Again being part of a movement that you do know there will be occasions you will come across, that's kind of nice, it doesn't feel like it was, for us, we're 4 and half hours out of Sydney, already we've had a

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lot of our most precious people that we dealt with a number of them have dropped in to Port Macquarie, either for a trip for that purpose or on their way through.

And we've actually had nice moments of actually having time to have them over and have meals, and some of them have stayed, so I feel like that's good, that's going to help me. We're still chatting to some on the phone. There's still that deep connection but the focus on the new, which I think God does sometimes to our heart is just a really great thing to help us.

So that's what's helped me, I don't think I've had a deep grief. It'd be interesting to see if it comes at some point or if just this is how I'm wired, and I can go to the new and I often hold onto relationships long term. Comments of the people I was in church with 25 years ago as a teenager, that I'm still in connection with some of those people. That's kind of how I do life sometimes, I think there'll be a handful from that beautiful season at Silverwater that I do still journey with. Although it'll be from a distance and see them occasionally, but I'm good.

Nat Taylor: There was definitely a distinct moment, in the thick of transition where we'd only been here a few weeks and I would say my heart almost felt pulled in two different directions. So at that point I realised really in order to focus forward I just needed to lay down what was and not look over my shoulder, as much as I love and respect what was, but really give the entirety of my attention, or as much as I can, forward.

And that's when I found my heart started to even out and a new joy comes when your heart is not divided also and so I felt more at peace in getting our hands into what God currently has for us here in Port Macquarie.

John Finkelde: *I think grief is a fascinating thing for people of faith, that if we're forward looking people, people who have faith in Christ, but also have an optimism about our future, grief is an interesting thing.*

7 years ago when we handed our church over to Jase & Em, our successor, there was a real interesting time of grief that was fascinating in some ways, and I remember someone saying that morbid grief that never leaves you but healthy grief, is grief that comes and goes over a period of time until it kind of wears its way out, if you like, or walks its way out of your life to some degree.

And I found that at times grief would be there, of, wow, that's gone, or that was great and now it's gone now and or I didn't get to do that, or that didn't happen, but as long as it's not relentless it's a really healthy thing for people of faith to wrestle with and look to the new while, being as you said Hartley, deeply grateful for the past.

Like you Nat, we live by the beach so walks along the beach, I find are very therapeutic. When I need to throw some things into the ocean that are not helping me. You get the Pacific, we have the Indian Ocean over here, which I regularly dump some things into that need to be carried away by the current, but that's a very healthy approach.



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What's your main goal in the church for the next 12 months and then I've put down, the thought of the next 3 years?

Hartley Taylor: I think, without a shadow of a doubt, we feel like we've arrived with a very strong calling to see the lost saved. I got a strong impression of a little term that Port Macquarie would know Jesus, so I think we're doing all we can to really have that as our true north. Which I think, obviously it'll be there for the church forever but we do sense and we've already seen as we've focused on these early days quite amazing fruit over that area so definitely that would probably be kind of that short term.

I think obviously continually building into those teams and there will be other teams that we're going to have to lean into and just get some structure. We've been handed what you would kind of call a core team, which was kind of handed to us from a previous selection, we would probably be looking at in the short term, looking at bringing our own team, some of those but making it a bit smaller and a bit more like an executive team of maybe those that we really feel have what we want to carry forward and meet with. So we'll do that.

Already I'd say if you'd be asking us 3 years down the track, we're not just thinking one location, we're already starting to think about where else we could expand and go and put in other services in some other regional areas within this region. That's what I would say.

John Finkelde: Awesome. Nat? Any thoughts?

Nat Taylor: No I think Harts said it well. We're just consolidating and mobilising, I think will be a big emphasis in the next season, of getting everyone in their lane, really running with us, not just looking for us for direction, but really raising those influential leaders to be able to head departments and carry load with us.

I recognise in this different regional areas that there is a traditional church blue print in a lot of these areas but not necessarily a move of the Holy Spirit, so as we look at multi sites, I think that'll be an exciting element to bring to some of those little pockets and to a lot of regional Australia actually, isn't an expression of the Holy Spirit which C3 church does so well.

John Finkelde: Well last question that I ask everyone I interview for the Hub.

You can invite any 4 guests from any time in history, except Jesus, we'll leave Jesus out of this again so no one feels pressure; to a dinner party. Who would they be and we can have 2 dinner parties going on here, so you can have 4 guests each, or if you want to do it combined, just have 4 guests. Who would you go for?

Hartley Taylor: I think we'll go separate, I'll go Billy Graham, Elon Musk, Jack Nicholas and Kelly Slater.

John Finkelde: Sso you've got the sports thing going on, Elon Musk the inventor and Billy Graham, Billy would lead them all to Jesus.

Hartley Taylor: Totally

John Finkelde: *If they weren't already there. But Elon Musk and you got a surfer obviously and the golfer.*

Nice! *And you've gone for Greg Norman the American golfer.*

Hartley Taylor: Yes, yes. And Natalie?

Nat Taylor: I'll say Hartley and the three kids, I love my immediate family. It is the soul of our family actually so dinner with them is fine!

Hartley Taylor: (laughing)

John Finkelde: *Aw Nat, that's just very nice.*

Hartley Taylor: That is very nice.

John Finkelde: *That's very nice. Hartley's having to rethink now, he's all desperate.*

Hartley Taylor: Yeah, how bad do I feel!

John Finkelde: *Aw man I missed that moment.*

Hartley Taylor: (laughing)

John Finkelde: *Well so good to have you guys in the Hub. Thanks so much for joining us and I know this will help many pastors and church leaders, just to think through change, and how to lead it.*

Thanks so much for joining us.

Hartley Taylor: Our pleasure John.

Nat Taylor: Thank you.