



# Alumni News

Bringing together friends and former staff, for mutual support and encouragement.



## Scott's Update

Dear friends,

Welcome to the second edition of Alumni News for 2022! We continue to aim to produce these newsletters twice a year.

I am thankful for Ros Gooden and Dennis Brown's contributions to this Alumni News. Their pieces show us a God who worked through your lives on location, and that you have continued to be involved in mission and our community after returning. I am constantly encouraged by our alumni!

It was wonderful to have Clarrie Edwards come and visit us in the office recently. Clarrie has worked for the National Team, as well as being the first team leader in Central Asia. **Clarrie shared with our National Team during staff time, and it was a reminder of God's work through Baptist Mission Australia workers over many years.**

His love for God kept pointing us towards Jesus. Clarrie came in to share with us, and also to help make a video encouraging partners to leave a bequest – you can watch the video here:

[www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/GiftinWill](http://www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/GiftinWill)

When you want to get involved, or would even like to just come visit us in the office if you're in Melbourne, please do reach out. Emailing Jacque or Jane at [info@baptistmissionaustralia.org](mailto:info@baptistmissionaustralia.org) is the first place to start.

So far we've received positive feedback for Alumni News. People especially appreciated seeing the names of those who had gone to glory over the past few years. While we had limited space in Alumni News, we are planning on having an 'honour wall' on our website listing all deceased intercultural team members and where they served.

**This has been a year of changes.** We've seen intercultural team members like Jonno and Heather, Andy and Cathie and Kim and Craig finish up. We've also seen new intercultural team members join us, and new candidates coming on board. We are delighted with how God is continuing to bring people on board. Sarah and Gunther are heading off to Malawi. Daniel is now working in regional and urban NSW with First Nations people.

**We continue to be thankful for our prayer and financial partners.** We know Australians are struggling with cost of living rises, and the pressure of inflation. But we've kept seeing generous giving this year, staying on pace with last year which was a very good year.

I remain thankful for your support and prayer for the mission God has called us to.

Grace and peace,

**Scott Pilgrim**

Executive Director

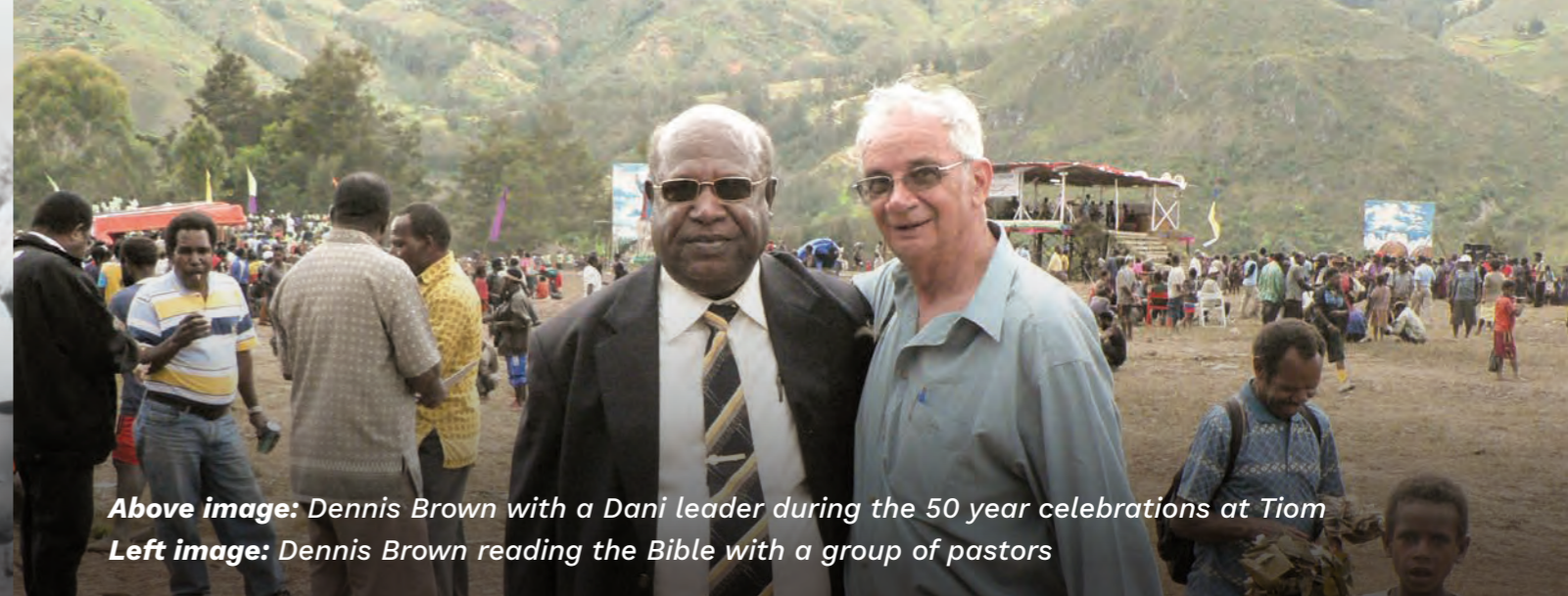
P.S. If you'd like to contribute or have feedback please feel free to get in touch with Tim at [tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org](mailto:tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org) or on 1800 329 165





# Answered Prayer in the High Country

Dennis and Helen Brown served in Indonesia-Papua from 1967-1983, and have been faithful partners in mission ever since. They live in NSW.



*Above image: Dennis Brown with a Dani leader during the 50 year celebrations at Tiom  
Left image: Dennis Brown reading the Bible with a group of pastors*

**It all began in Bible class at Yugwa, Papua. One of the pastors named Yabak asked, “Can we go and see Lake Habbema?”** There was an immediate and enthusiastic response from the whole student body. All were aware of this mysterious place hidden high in the mountains.

Excitement mounted. “We could go for some Bible study,” another volunteered, perhaps trying to persuade me, though I needed little convincing. Instead of our regular village visitation, we could have a retreat. It offered time away to study, have fellowship and see a new and exciting place.

A few weeks later we set off. The first day was a relatively short stroll of five hours to our mission station at Makki. The next day we climbed solidly, through thick jungle, high into the wild mountains. **Everyone was in high spirits for they were setting out on a grand adventure – a trip into the vast unknown!**

We were travelling through historic territory. This was the main trail over the mountain to the Ebele valley, the home of the Benega people who were traditionally seen as enemies.

**Back in September 1962, a group of new Christians were attacked at Makki near this very route by the feared chief Dianggwa and his cohorts. On that fateful day 39 people were mercilessly slain.**

Forgiveness, reconciliation and peace had long been established, but memories of those bloody days were still vivid. Our party relived those times through shared conversations. At last light we arrived at a remote village and were enthusiastically welcomed by these former enemies.

The next morning was an unremittingly hard upward slog. The thin air was biting our lungs and seizing our breath. We struggled through claustrophobic moss forests. Mud-like gooey porridge impeded every step.

**Suddenly we crested a ridge and rejoiced to see the blue-grey waters of a vast lake. Brooding over this immense panorama like a great fortress, was Mt Wilhelmina (now known as Puncak Trikora).** It is the third highest peak in the whole of New Guinea. It was dusted with a light mantle of snow.

In 1938 American explorer, Richard Archbold, searched this area in his flying boat called the “Guba” and landed on Lake Habbema. Soon 105 men had been ferried to the site and explorations made to the “Grand Valley of the Baliem” two days trek to the east.

**The isolated world of the Dani had at last been breached. Mission groups noted this discovery and were eager to go, but World War II delayed the outreach.**

Now 38 years later, our group of pastors came to this historic site. There was still evidence of the original visit. A line of rotting jetty posts led out into the water. Discarded jerry cans and rusted food tins lay by the shore.

We established our camp nearby, constructing a rough shelter of fir trees and built a roaring fire to keep warm in the icy conditions. There were daily devotions and Bible study and lots of exploration by our inquisitive group.

One morning I awoke to hear an animated discussion. I feigned sleep to listen in.

The voices said, “What shall we do? We have almost run out of sweet potato... It’s impractical to send men to fetch more... perhaps we will have to break camp... No we don’t want to do that – we are enjoying the teaching.”

**Suddenly, Yabak, a natural leader spoke. “When Jesus was on Earth he fed 5,000 people – There are only 32 of us. Surely He will help... Let’s have a prayer meeting.”**

One by one they prayed to God in faith asking Him to supply their needs. That day we went about our normal routine and had the morning study. Then some students went off to try and fulfil their prayers and hunger by hunting. They were unsuccessful.

**Yet that evening we sat down to a banquet of majestic proportions.** Unbeknownst to us when the prayers were offered, one of the small alpine streams that flowed into the lake was literally teeming with crayfish. These were absolute delicacies!

**The men believed their God had not only answered their heartfelt prayers, but had done so superabundantly.**

The cynic may say it was a coincidence, but to these pastors, it was confidence God had looked after them. They had asked and God was there for them. This was a lesson of God’s goodness that surpassed anything they had learned in class.

Later we set off on our three day return journey via a different route with full stomachs and net bags bursting with crayfish.

At dusk one evening we camped in a rocky outcrop. We bonded around a fire, ate crayfish and talked about our experiences and God’s provision.

**Above a satellite creased the clear night sky and our collective eyes turned towards the heavens and starry universe. It was a magical moment. All of us rejoicing in the glory of God.**



*Mountains of the Central Highlands in Papua (nearby to the location mentioned in this story)*



*Children from the Dani tribe in the North Baliem region of Papua*





## Who is Silas Mead?

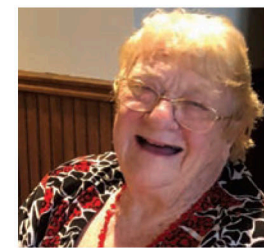
Ros Gooden served in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and also worked on the National Team, as well as being co-editor of the previous iteration of Alumni News, Binbilla.



Historical photos of Flinders Street Baptist Church in South Australia



*I acknowledge that I write this on Kurna Yarta (The Adelaide Plains country), at Tarnpanyangga (Adelaide) the place of the red kangaroo dreaming. I acknowledge Kurna elders, past, present and emerging, and pray that we Baptists may be guided with them to a better national future.*



The manuscript is done and in the hands of Morling Press. A COVID project completed! It's title is **Silas Mead (1834–1909) and his Baptist family: 'Learning, living, giving Christ'**.

Edited by Ken Manley, Stefanie Pearce and me, Ros Gooden, and joined by a great team of writers who love Australian Baptist history. Hopefully you can get your copy early in 2023.

But why write for the Alumni News? What has a book of Silas Mead to do with the alumni of Baptist Mission Australia in 2022?

Mead was one of the most significant Baptists during the colonial settlement of Australia. He arrived in Adelaide in July 1861, recruited by George Fife Angas, from Stepney College (Regents Park) in London to establish a Baptist church in South Adelaide.

**Mead was the glue that stuck Baptists together in South Australia, and as part of that process he formed the South Australian Baptist Missionary Society on 10 November 1864. Eventually this led to the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (as Baptist Mission Australia was then known) with the federation of the individual colonial societies in 1913.**

You can read that mission story in my chapter "Missions on Heart and Brain", as Mead consistently used his brain and his heart.

The significance of the book for this Alumni though, is not just our history but the people who collaborated in its writing, for all represent significant players in God's mission.

**Dr Ken Manley** needs no introduction. Not only was he one of the editors of the definitive history of the Mission *From Five Barley Loaves*, but he did all the chapters on the Australian side of our organisation. **Ken has long claimed that early overseas mission was what united Australian Baptists.** He ended that history in 2013 with this message:

*... the fundamental challenge that so gripped Silas Mead, the 'Five Barley Loaves' and the other pioneer visionaries among Australian Baptists remains... so our vision to see growing, vibrant faith communities engaging least-reached people groups with Jesus, remains a hope to set our sights on! This is the vision for 'this kind of day'.<sup>2</sup>*

That was true in 2013 and is still relevant in 2023 despite changes demanded by Australian and world events.

**Stefanie Pearce** (who is particularly gifted with technical editing skills), has served the National Team in recent years with personnel research and writing. Her chapter on Gertrude Mead, one of Silas' daughters, is brilliant.

Did you know that Mead Street in Canberra is named after Gertrude? Why did she deserve the honour? By the way Stef is the great-great-granddaughter of George Fife Angas.

**John Walker, with his wife Karen**, served on the newly formed team in Cambodia in 2008, so they represent our history in 'engaging with

1 Vision, August 2011, p.4

2 From Five Barley Loaves, p. 598

the least reached'. John is presently doing research into the bi-centennial history of South Australian Baptists.

**Frank Tucker** stands out in my mind for the wealth of colleagues in other missions who have blessed Australian Baptist missionaries around the world over the years; sharers of commitment, encouragers, friends. He and his wife Ann served with the Evangelical Church of Indonesia in theological and vocational training. Frank also represents the important cohort of Baptist pastors who endorse Baptist Mission Australia to their congregations with prayer, finance, and recruits.

**John Olley**, (who wrote on the aged Mead, returning to Western Australia), with his wife Elaine, were to be seconded to the American Baptists for theological education in Assam India in 1967, but when that door closed they went to Hong Kong and he lectured in the Divinity School of Chung Chi College before coming back to undertake theological education in Australia. They were also involved throughout several stages in the work among K people in the Silk Road Area. John represents long-term commitment to serving Christ with fellow Baptists, both in Australia and abroad and through the Mission Board and committees.

Another of the writers with some Silk Road roots is **Dr Pauline Tudball**, wife of Bruce, (who recently led the team at the National Office until Scott Pilgrim's appointment). Pauline has done so much needed research on our team members. Her task for the book was the story of Cecil Mead, son of Silas, and to explore the Mission archives, particularly for papers supplied by Cecil's daughters. She discovered some amazing old photos of missionary children in India.

One I particularly love is of Arnold and Dorothy Mead, with a poster announcing the arrival of sister Marjory.

We owe much to **Torrey Wilson**, great-grandson of Silas Mead, grandson of Silas' daughter, Blanche, son of Baptist minister, Bernard Wilson and one of the South Australian retired Baptist pastors. As associate pastor of Flinders Street Baptist Church, Torrey travelled to Bangladesh for the official handover of Baptist Mission Australia work to the Bangladesh Baptist Christian Fellowship. While there, he and his daughter visited Orakandi, and came back to FSBC with the challenge of reroofing the Mead Memorial High School. Torrey represents the inestimable generational commitment of supporters and of the family members of our Baptist workers.

Finally what of **Rebecca Hilton**, who wrote her chapters on Silas' daughters, Lillian, Blanche and Flora, while working on her PhD thesis on Australian Baptist women? She describes herself as the daughter, wife, mother and friend of Baptists, which I'll interpret in the Australian Baptist Mission language. One of her aunts was Annette Gilman, who served in East Pakistan in the turmoil that proceeded Bangladesh. Her husband Ian, has mission pedigree linked back to grandparents Harrys who are part of the Western Australian story, and are linked to the Crofts of Garo history.

So, there you have it: five men and four women, four who have served with the Mission, and five who represent the essential supporting elements of a denominational mission. **As our Baptist family in Australia changes, may we continue to be a people God can call to significant partnership with Him.**





# Merry Christmas

រីករាយថ្ងៃបុណ្យណូអែល

*Cisangalalo cakupagwa  
jwa Issa Messia*

สุขสันต์วันคริสต์มาส

## MERRY CHRISTMAS TEXT

**Khmer:** រីករាយថ្ងៃបុណ្យណូអែល

*Pronunciation:* Rikreay thngai bony nauel

**Ciyawo**

**(spoken in Mozambique and Malawi):**

*Cisangalalo cakupagwa jwa Issa Messia*

**Thai:** สุขสันต์วันคริสต์มาส

*Pronunciation:* Sūkhṣānt̄ wạn khriṣṭmāṣ

## Alumni Connect

We know people may want to be in contact with other alumni. Would you be able to help? We would love to have a contact person for each state. If this resonates with you please get in contact with Tim Collison at [tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org](mailto:tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org)

## Share Your Story

Our current plan is to publish Alumni News twice next year. If you would like to contribute a story, devotional thought, or Where Are They Now section, please contact Tim Collison at [tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org](mailto:tcollison@baptistmissionaustralia.org)

If you have feedback, questions or do not want to receive this newsletter you can also contact Tim.