

Resonate

ISSUE 42

Baptist
Mission
Australia



Transforming love and peace

Families in Cambodia are experiencing newfound hope as our team shares the transforming love and peace of Jesus.

+ Stories of mending
Future directions
& South East Asia feature

hello



As we near the end of the year and start to look back on 2024, what are you thankful for?

Where have you seen God's Spirit at work in your life and community? What are you excited about when you look ahead to 2025? Let me encourage you to join me in writing responses to these three questions and be reminded of God at work in our everyday lives.

As I look back on 2024, I am very thankful to God for the wonderful partnerships Baptist Mission Australia has with faithful people and church communities across the country.

I have the privilege of visiting church communities across Australia, and I am always reminded of the joy of being part of a big mission-focused movement. I have met many people, each committed to playing their part in seeing others across the nation and the world experience the life-transforming hope of Jesus. It's so good to cheer each other on as we live as alongsiders in our neighbourhoods.

We join God in bringing the hope of Jesus to a world that is hurting and rapidly changing. You can read about this change in the centre spread of this edition of Resonate. **In the coming months, I look forward to sharing more with you about our Future Directions process and where we see God's Spirit leading Baptist Mission Australia in the years ahead.**

Like me, I am sure your heart is broken by the many tragedies in our world today. These include the war in Ukraine, the devastation in Palestine, Israel and Lebanon, famine in Africa, the terrible situation in Myanmar and the injustice we see in our own local communities. In such times we hold strongly to our faith in God, and we are called to live as people of shalom. **In this edition of Resonate, Graham Hill reminds us that pursuing justice and advocacy is core business for followers of Jesus.**

Across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Australia our teams and partners are sharing hope and expressing the love of Jesus, in a myriad of innovative and contextual ways. Read on and be inspired and challenged by some great articles in this edition of Resonate, including a **Cambodia feature**, a **South East Asia feature** and a reflection on the **importance of partnership** by Melanie Downes.

In the pages that follow we celebrate God at work across our world, and our privilege of serving together as partners in the good news of Jesus. Thank you for joining with us in God's restorative work!

Grace and peace
Scott

Transforming love and peace



Our Cambodia team is passionate about sharing the transforming love and peace of Jesus in relevant ways. In this inspiring article, Rachel and KimLean share what this looks like for their ministries.



Rachel is a Speech Pathologist with a heart to support children with disabilities to participate fully in community. She is now based in Australia following six years serving in Cambodia with her husband Luke and their children.

Being able to communicate is something most of us take for granted. It allows us to share our experiences, feelings, ideas and needs. It helps us to build connections with others. It invites others to see beyond outward appearances and abilities - to see who we truly are.

In Cambodia, disability support is under-funded, under-resourced and generally not well understood. Often the lack of understanding can result in a lack of acceptance and isolation for the person with a disability and their family, as well as a lack of access to basic services.

Yet we know that God values every person and has a heart for those who are marginalised or dwell on the outside of society.

In responding to this need and utilising my skills as a Speech Pathologist, we followed God's leading to establish a new ministry. In 2023, we opened a centre which we named 'Language of the Heart' or Pheasa Duongchet in Khmer.

Through this ministry our vision is to help children with disabilities and communication impairments develop ways that they can share who they are with others - to communicate from their heart.

Our vision is to work holistically, not only to support cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs but also spiritual needs.



Prefer to listen to Resonate?

We have recorded an audiobook style read through of this edition of Resonate.

Listen at: www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/ResonateRead



Baptist Mission Australia is the intercultural mission arm of the Australian Baptist Church. We long to see more people experiencing and expressing the transforming love and hope of Jesus.

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org | info@baptistmissionaustralia.org | 1800 329 165



The project provides opportunity to build relationships with parents - to build a support network and a community where it is safe to share the joys and hardships of life with a child with special needs.

And by providing a platform of understanding, acceptance and care our vision is to also share about God's love, acceptance and care for all.

Nikki's Story

Nikki is a seven year old girl. Her mum is a seller at the local market one of our Khmer colleagues, Maria shops at. Since opening Pheasa Duongchet, Nikki and her mum have been very regular attendees. When we first met her, Nikki was unable to speak using words but could make some sounds. **She would enthusiastically point to everything, showing others what she was interested in. Nikki loves people and is always wanting to connect with everyone.**

When she started coming to the clinic a year ago, she used some gestures to communicate, however these gestures did not have a clear and consistent meaning and were often difficult to interpret. She was trying to communicate but didn't know how. Her mother was shy and unsure about how she should interact with us.

After six months, Nikki had made good progress! She learnt to use some pictures and Khmer sign language to reliably communicate what she was thinking.

She preferred to use sign language, however her limited finger strength and movement, made this more challenging for her.

She kept persevering and worked hard to improve the ways she could move and shape her fingers so that she can now sign more accurately.

Nikki's mum grew in confidence as well! She now interacts with Nikki in ways that are helping develop her daughter's communication skills, she confidently models signs to her and she talks more to her about what they are doing together throughout the day.

Once when Maria was at the local market, she overheard a group of women talking about Nikki. They were saying how they could see the progress she was making. It is fantastic to hear that people in Nikki's community are noticing the gains she is making.

This is our main project goal - that the children (and their families) are able to participate more in their own communities.

Nikki and her mother have now attended regularly for more than a year. Nikki continues to improve her communication using Khmer sign language and refine her fine motor skills. She has worked hard to make new verbal sounds and is now able to use a few clear spoken words.

It is a blessing to be able to walk alongside the families that are part of the 'Language of the Heart' community. Please be praying for our team and local colleagues as we demonstrate and share God's love with Khmer families.



KimLean faithfully serves in our team with his wife, Catherine (Cate). They journey alongside Khmer men and women, living life together and sharing about the Prince of Peace.

Every week I meet together with a group of seven Khmer men. We share rice and life together - the happy, the sad and the hard.

Of this group, some are followers of our God of Peace and are continuing to mature and deepen in their faith. One of the men is a follower too, but still young in his faith and trying to work out his own faith and not the faith of other people.

The others are on a journey towards Jesus and have many questions. They are seeking to understand their own identity, their goals, whether there is a God, and if there is... what does that mean for them as Khmer people?

Each week we come together to build our relationship, eat together, share life stories, pray and be active. We read God's Word and discuss how we understand it, and what it means for our daily lives and relationships.

Each of these men has stories of hurt and broken trust. When we come together, we take time to talk, laugh, cry, sing, open our hearts, share our life experiences, our emotions, and to seek one other's encouragement and wisdom.



As people, we need one another. We need safe communities where we can be vulnerable. We are a creation of the Maker's hands. We need to be seeking Him, and to be learning and growing together so that we can thrive and share with our families and neighbours.

A guiding passage for Cate and me in our ministry is:

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."
Romans 12:1-2 (The Message)

Please pray for our group as we share together. Pray that we will continue to journey towards Jesus and to grow more deeply in relationship with Him.



Find out more and partner with our team and ministry in Cambodia:

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/Cambodia

The Gospel lived out loud



Graham Joseph Hill is an author, theologian, scholar and former Baptist Mission Australia WA State Leader. Here, he takes us through the biblical foundations of Christian advocacy and pursuing a more just world.

As followers of Jesus, we are beckoned onto a path that winds through the dense forest of injustice with the compass of the Gospel of Christ in our hands.

The Gospel, a story of God's love and redemption, encompasses far more than personal morality and individual salvation—it is also a blueprint for societal restoration. **For those who take their cues from Scripture, Christian advocacy and the response to injustice are not peripheral activities, they are central to the mission of embodying the Gospel.**

In the Old Testament, we find a God deeply concerned with justice, instructing Israel to be a society where widows, orphans, immigrants and the poor are protected. Leviticus 19:10 commands, “Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.”

Here, justice is not a human construct but a divine mandate, a reflection of God's character.

The prophets carry on this baton, with Micah demanding, “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

Moving into the New Testament, Jesus' mission is portrayed as a continuation and fulfilment of this quest for justice. The four Gospels depict Him as the one who brings good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed¹.

His advocacy was not an optional add-on but the essence of His ministry. The Epistles further reinforce this, with James sternly reminding believers that faith without deeds is dead². Christian mission, therefore, cannot be a disembodied proclamation; it must incarnate the love and justice of Jesus.

Our advocacy for the marginalised is rooted in faith, not politics. While it may intersect with political systems, it operates from a different source and towards another end.

It seeks not the triumph of a party but the Kingdom of God—a Kingdom where righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit reign³. When we stand for the vulnerable, we are not primarily engaging in political activism; we are living out the Gospel.

Christian mission must be understood as a holistic endeavour—word and deed together, proclaiming *and* demonstrating the Kingdom.

The story of the Good Samaritan serves not just as a call to individual acts of kindness but as a radical redefinition of social obligation⁴. The Samaritan's response was not simply a deed but a proclamation—a visible sermon of the neighbour-love commanded by Christ.

Injustice in the world is a stark contradiction to the order and peace of the Gospel. As such, Christianity cannot be mute or inactive in the face of oppression. Advocacy for justice is a prophetic embodiment of the future Kingdom we await, where “justice rolls on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” Amos 5:24

So, when Christians advocate for the poor and the oppressed, we do not merely offer charity, but we stand in the long tradition of biblical justice. We remember that Jesus said, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

In serving the least, we serve Christ. In advocating for justice, we are not straying into the secular; we are walking the path of Jesus—a path where word and deed are inseparably intertwined.

Christian advocacy is not optional; it is the Gospel lived out loud. It is not political; it is profoundly biblical. It is not secondary; it is central.

To live out the Gospel and follow Jesus is to walk in the way of justice—for it is in justice that the love of God is made manifest to a world in desperate need.

¹ Luke 4:18-19

² James 2:14-17

³ Romans 14:17

⁴ Luke 10:25-37

Mending!

Followers of Jesus in different contexts share what it means for them to join with God in mending a beautiful, broken world.

Jimmy | Queensland

“One way that our church is joining with God in His mending work is through a food pantry. **We are walking alongside people who are hurting and what they really need - what we all crave - is relationship, connection and love.** And so food is just the start. It has become a way of bringing about that connection we all need.”

Rachel | Cambodia

“The limited understanding about disability in Cambodia means that it is often linked with feelings of guilt, shame and isolation. At our Language of the Heart clinic, one parent shared that her extended family question why she continues to try and teach her son.

It is a blessing to be able to spend time with this mum, listening to her challenges, encouraging her as she perseveres and celebrating the gains her son is making. Visits are just as important for her as they are for her son. We get to share God’s love with both of them.”

Suzanne | Silk Road Area

“**One of the ways that God mends this world is through us relating to one another. We’re made for community!**”

Over the past year, it’s been really exciting to be able to deepen relationships with my fitness group, my neighbours up the road, local believing friends, and my culture and language nurturer. Pray for her as she helps me communicate here and is open to talking about stories of Jesus.”

Villy | Thailand

“I am inspired by how Jesus meets people where they are, and so our Beauty and Beyond ministry is now mobile. Instead of the women coming to me, I now provide free hair services in the communities wherever we go.

This is such a heart-warming ministry to me. As I cut women’s hair, we talk. And I sometimes get the privilege of co-mending with the Holy Spirit in mending broken relationships back to God.”

Paul | New South Wales

“It’s such a privilege to be able to come alongside international students at Macquarie University. **Every Monday afternoon, we play sports with the students and then have dinner together. On Tuesday we offer lunch, and across the week we meet up with students to talk about life and faith.**”

Through all this, we are endeavouring to show hospitality, build relationships and share the love of Jesus through word and deed.”

Liz | Thailand

“God has placed a new Thai friend in our path, and she is now using her professional background to help us run an income generation project with some of the local believers. **We keep learning that as we follow God and respond to His invitation to be co-menders, we can trust that He will never leave us unequipped.”**

Nathan | Victoria

“I have found that co-mending with God is often simply about being present. Our church has established a space for disadvantaged people in our community to come and experience hospitality and belonging.

We host lunches, events and recently built a community garden. **However, the most important thing we do is simply be present. Every time we show up, we build trust.”**

Melanie | Malawi

“I was sitting with a group of Yawo women and we were talking about God’s Word. We were listening to what God says about forgiveness and one of the women sat there wide eyed and said, *‘Do you mean this is real for us? God forgives me if I forgive other people? If that’s the case, we need to stop. I need to go home!’*”

And so she just left the group and went home straight away and restored relationships! She asked for forgiveness, she apologised and she made things right. It was just like how Zacchaeus immediately made things right after he spent time with Jesus. It was amazing and I was dumbfounded!

I felt convicted and so honoured that I got to be part of this journey of restoration and mending.”



Explore the full suite of Mending! resources:

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/Mending

Holding the ropes



Thanks for holding on!

These are our heartfelt words to those supporting churches, individuals and groups who have willingly stepped up to support and partner with us in our calling to serve in Malawi. **We shared our story and they believed in what God was doing, so much so that they promised to hold the ropes while we went over the edge.**



Melanie serves among the Yawo in Malawi with her husband Tim. After more than 15 years of ministry, she knows how vital supporters and partnering churches are!

It reminds me of abseiling, those who go over the edge and those who promise to hold the ropes. There is trust involved and long-term reliance as we venture into the unknown.

Hanging over the edge as an intercultural team member brings vulnerability in all aspects of our lives. It is emotionally draining, physically taxing, spiritually exhausting and mentally challenging yet we go because of obedience and we do it because we know we are not doing it alone. There is a strength that comes from our vulnerability because the whole process is a miracle.

Sometimes I question why people would want to hold our ropes. Rope holding is difficult in itself, especially as life in Australia is so busy and demanding with many distractions and pressures. "Perhaps they will forget about us?" I wonder, only to get a message the next day from someone prompted to pray.

The whole arrangement has God's fingerprints all over it. Since 2005 we have asked people to hold our ropes and as I look back over the ups and downs of our journey it brings tears to my eyes. They haven't let go!

Some of them remind me of the anchor position in a tug of war game, those spiritually strongest who lock themselves in and won't be moved.

This makes all the difference to the effectiveness of our ministry, to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the answer to our prayers. It gives me courage and boldness to head out into the village one more time and teach God's Word.

I feel it when I am praying over someone in hospital close to death, when I am approached by people struggling to find food and when I am confronted by an evil spiritual presence. **It renews my passion when I am tired and it reminds me that I am not alone; there is a great crowd of witnesses cheering me on.**

I delight in the arrangement so much that I have become a rope holder myself. I want to be part of the blessing of sending. And when I hear stories of faith, I know that my obedience contributed to it.

One day when we are all celebrating eternity together, there will be so much joy in connecting those who came to faith and those who held the ropes. When we're there remind me to introduce you to Rashid, Ishmael, Mama Fatima, Saidi, Twaibu, Che Amini, Issa, Habiba, Halima, Aisha, Hassain, Ikira, Ellard, Atewu, Hahimu, Junio, Ibrahim, Bilaya, Sifati, Esnatu... those Yawo who God chose to hear the Gospel from us who were sent by you. Thank you!

Do you want to hold the rope for a Baptist Mission Australia team member or ministry partner?



Contact our team:

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/Contact

The world is changing. The global church is changing. The Australian church is changing.

At Baptist Mission Australia we long to see more people experiencing and expressing the transforming love and hope of Jesus!

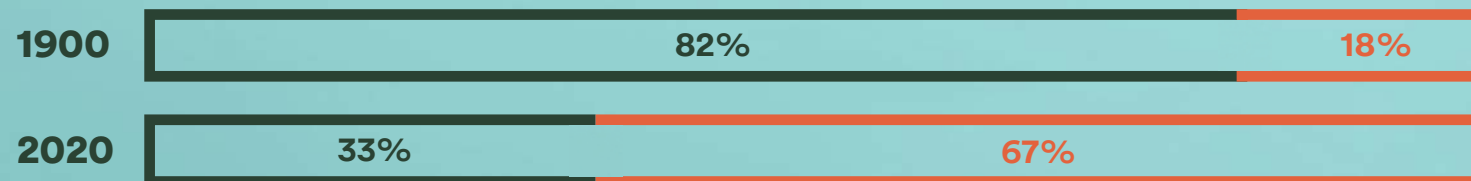
We know there are still 3.4 billion¹ people yet to hear the message of Jesus in a way that makes sense to them. And we know that God has called us to join Him in His restorative vision for the world through a ministry of incarnation (presence) and contextualisation.

Executive Director Scott Pilgrim writes, **“Our history as a faith-filled mission community is marked by our willingness to ask courageous, creative and prophetic questions. In our current strategic discernment, we are asking questions such as:**

- » *How does the decline of Christianity in the west influence the future of western mission agencies?*
- » *How can we generously offer our intercultural expertise and practice to others near and far?*
- » *How can we increase collaboration with the rapidly growing global church?*

In asking challenging questions throughout our 150-year journey we have demonstrated our willingness to adapt and innovate our practices, while being passionately committed to an incarnational model of presence.

Change for us is never for change’s sake. The goal is always that more people may know the love and hope of Jesus!”



Percentage of Christians in:

- Global North
- Global South

This graphic tells the story of the shifting centre of World Christianity over the past 100+ years. Then, as now, around one third of the world’s population identify themselves as Christian. However, where Christians live is dramatically different! From 1900, where 82% lived in the global north to 2020 where 67% live in the global south² (and growing!).

And this is just one area of change.

The world is increasingly urban, as 56% of the world’s population currently living in urban centres and by 2050 this is estimated to rise to nearly 70%³.

Our Australian neighbourhoods and churches are increasingly intercultural, and there is a growing negative impact of climate change across the world, particularly among those already experiencing disadvantage.

Responding to God’s world as it actually is, we can see that the world is changing, the global church is changing and the Australian church is changing.

How should all this change impact the way we participate in God’s mission, locally and globally?

We are on a journey of discerning the Future Directions of Baptist Mission Australia’s ministry. We look forward to sharing more about how we are responding to the Spirit’s leading in the midst of our changing world over the coming year. Stay tuned!

¹ www.joshuaproject.net/people_groups/statistics

² World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition
Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo

³ www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview

What happens when you teach a child to read?



In 2017 the team in South East Asia began running mini-libraries for economically and socially disadvantaged children in two provinces. We call them ‘Reading Gardens’.

In one province the focus is on assisting children living in large cities, on or next to garbage dumps where their families scavenge for recyclables or anything else they can sell. In the other province the focus is on helping children living in remote rural locations. For both communities the children live in rudimentary housing in impoverished communities.



Max and Ezzie (top), and Dave and Caz, passionately serve in South East Asia. Here they share how holistic community transformation is stemming from the Reading Gardens ministry.

South East Asia ranks as one of the lowest scoring countries in the world for literacy. Around 25% of children dropout of school and discontinue study after primary school. In the communities where we have set up Reading Gardens, the schools are poorly equipped and under resourced both in terms of teachers and funds.

The schools do not have libraries, and the children do not have access to books at home because their families don’t have the means.

Seeing this need, and with the support of the local government departments and community, our team established mini-libraries that give children access to books! We fill the spaces with colourful and fun books, and children from the community can then visit the Reading Garden after school. Our team members or local colleagues manage the spaces and read stories, play games and help with reading lessons.

But it doesn’t end there...

We have seen that the benefits don’t end with reading. **In this context, this is what happens when children have access to books:**

1. They stay in school longer

When children can’t read they are more likely to drop out of school early. The Reading Gardens help children grow in confidence in reading which provides them with greater confidence and motivation to keep attending school. This gives them greater knowledge and skills, and opens future opportunities, enabling them to break out of cycles of poverty.

In one particularly poor community where we have been for several years the children previously would not progress past grade six. In the past year they have seen the first children graduate from high school as a result of the input and encouragement of some local colleagues.

When we first started one Reading Garden, there were 20-30 children joining in. Year four students came who were not fluent in reading and writing. So, we motivated and helped the children learn to read from the story books that we had in our library in their language. Slowly by slowly, they became more fluent!

At the end of the year, one local teacher came and shared, “My students who regularly come to the Reading Garden have grown so much in their lessons at school. This is such a blessing to our community.”

2. The risk of teen pregnancy and childhood marriage is reduced

In many impoverished communities where children drop out of school at the end of primary school, girls often become pregnant as young as 13 or 14 years and in this culture, they are then forced to marry.

Numerous international studies have demonstrated that promoting literacy and education and keeping children, especially girls, in school for more years reduces the incidence of teenage pregnancy and childhood marriage, and contributes to communities breaking out of cycles of poverty.



3. Training in other areas can be provided

We have seen that as trust in the community grows, opportunities open to offer training in other areas. The residents of these communities typically live hand to mouth and are preyed on by people who offer loans at exorbitant interest rates.

Our team and local colleagues are able to provide training in budgeting and avoiding debt traps. We are also able to assist families with negotiating government paperwork that then provides them with access to health benefits and other kinds of assistance for which they qualify.

In one example, we are able to provide training through the Reading Garden on how to make hand sanitiser and manage organic waste at home, how to make eco-bricks, and educate the community on what we can do to better care for our environment. The training was practical and deeply appreciated. Running training like this also help to maintain connections and build relationships with the wider communities.

4. Trust is built with the whole family

The Reading Gardens are situated in highly communal societies. This means that our team and local colleagues quickly get to know parents, grandparents and other members of the extended family. We are able to develop relationships of trust with them over time as we seek to become alongsiders in their world.

They appreciate what we are doing for their children and they open up more and more about their lives and the struggles they are facing.

This gives us opportunities to pray with them and show that we are people of faith who are seeking to live by the values of God's Kingdom, pointing them to Jesus, the one who offers new life.



5. Trust is built with the government and wider community

In South East Asia, many community development organisations either do not receive government registration or their registration is rescinded after a short period of time. Our community development and creation care organisation is committed to operating professionally and with integrity. As a result, the government is pleased with the programs we are running in these communities.

Government officials are now requesting that we not only provide programs for children, but for adults as well. Other communities are approaching us and asking if we could open Reading Gardens in their community. Recently some high-level workers in the social welfare department began to open up to our team members about other community needs such as addressing the high divorce rate, domestic violence and sexual abuse. We are being invited to provide assistance in these areas as well. What a wonderful opportunity to join with God in His mending work!

Making Jesus meetable

As we humbly endeavour to become alongsiders in communities, we are seeking to make Jesus meetable for our friends and neighbours. The people in these communities have grown up in an Islamic context and know little about who Jesus is and why He came to Earth.

Being present in the community allows us to build relationships with people and to show them we care. It gives us a context for living out the values of God's Kingdom in ways that people hear, see and experience as we connect together.



Reading Gardens are an initiative of the Creation Care project. Find out more:

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/SEAccreationcare

Sowing seeds & driving change

Innovation comes in many different forms! Here are two stories of missional innovation from two very different contexts.



Cam has been serving in rural, northern Mozambique with Kath and their three children since 2012. He has a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) and a PhD in plant breeding.

One of Baptist Mission Australia's core values is that we foster innovation – taking appropriate risks and encouraging creativity.

These words sound great on a page, but what does that mean when the people we are walking alongside are from completely different cultural, education and socioeconomic backgrounds?

For our context here, what is an appropriate risk for someone in rural Mozambique compared to me, a young (ok...middle-aged) Australian bloke? It's not an easy question to answer but one worth grappling with if we are to engage in the important issues of life together, as anything worth tackling is probably going to involve some risk, and therefore innovation!

For a few years our team has identified an issue with rapid deforestation in our local area. This is a problem on two fronts: economic and environment.

It hurts the local economy because in the near future, firewood and building materials will be more distant and therefore more expensive in either money or effort to get those same commodities. Additionally, the environment suffers in multiple ways through biodiversity loss, increased erosion, increased wind damage and the list goes on.

We could have launched any numbers of projects, but we waited until the time was right. In relationship with a local village, we have started a collaborative agroforestry project.

It is usually the case that fostering innovation is best done in relationship, when we can each bring what God has gifted us with to find a solution together. In this case we got to bring training and connection, and the village bought land ready for agroforestry and a community committed to the vision of achieving a goal together.

As we worked together, we also got to talk with our Muslim friends and discuss that God gave us this area as custodians to farm and care for, so that future generations can also benefit from the gifts God has given us.

Looking after our environment and farming it well is legitimate Kingdom work – doing it from common spiritual ground gives us opportunities for future conversations about the gift God has given us in Jesus.

In an intercultural context it is always important to slow down, be in community with our local friends and allow time and space for innovation to reveal itself in relationship. In many ways the end solution is only a small part of the process – discovering the innovation and journeying together is just as important. And we are all richer for it!



Paul Rai is the coordinator of the Learner Driver Mentor Program and Pastor at Hobart Nepali Church, a thriving congregation of Citywide Baptist Church in Tasmania.

There are more than 10,000 Nepalese speaking people in Hobart, mostly from Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim backgrounds. We found the Nepalese migrants and students were coming to Tasmania without a driver's license, but because they were living so far from work opportunities and the Hobart public transport is limited, they struggled to get a job.

The Hobart Nepali church prayed about this and chose to support and bless our community by starting a Learner Driver Mentor Program. This driving program has been a successful ministry of Hobart Nepalese Church since 2018. 250 students have gotten their P-Plates since we started, and we currently have nine volunteer driver mentors.

Driving student Jasmine (pictured left page) speaks of her experience, "I've been living in Hobart for the past year. When I first moved here, I found out the public transportation is not very reliable. Then I got to know about the free driving classes that the Hobart Nepali Church provides.

I have had ten classes so far, and I would like to thank the whole team of Hobart Nepali Church for providing me this opportunity. Thank you!"

Baptist Mission Australia Executive Director, Scott Pilgrim reflects, "It's not always easy to respond to complex needs around us, but sometimes with the Spirit's leading we can come across simple solutions. It's so inspiring to hear this story of a local church seeing a need within their community, and responding with a simple, yet innovative, idea."

The main reason behind our community support work is to get alongside the people, serve them where they have need and share Christ's love.

We at Baptist Mission Australia have partnered with this practical yet profound expression of God's love. Do you have a story of your church is responding to the needs of your community with love and innovation. Let us know!

How did I get *here?*

Danny shares six key moments that have led him to serve in Outback Australia with Baptist Mission Australia.



ONE

From an early age, I was fascinated with those serving interculturally. I loved hearing them share their stories and challenge us at meetings. My parents often offered hospitality to those on home assignment. I prayed for them and understood their need for support. Some became good friends and mentors, and I was inspired by their biographies.



TWO

As a young adult, I grabbed every opportunity to experience other cultures, and started seeing my own lifestyle from their point of view. I was drawn to people from other nations. I visited other countries and went on many short-term team trips.

As a pastor I found myself caring for intercultural team members linked to every church I served. I understood more about the sacrifices involved and learnt about reverse culture shock.



THREE

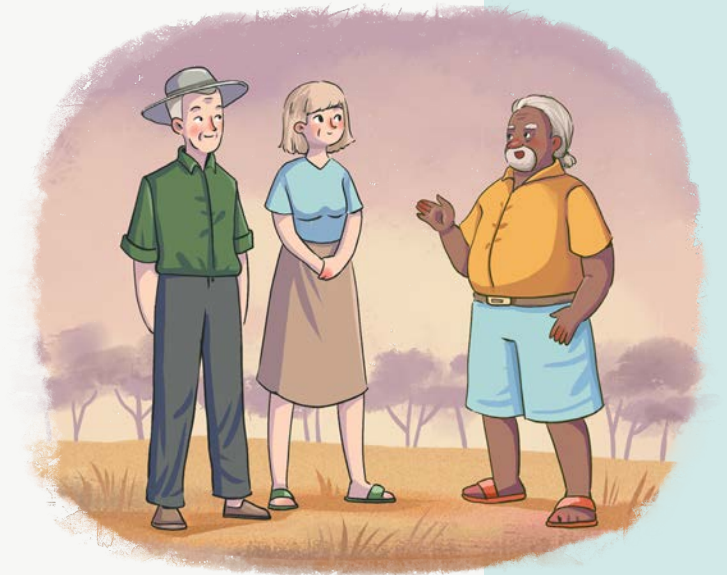
30 years ago I visited Yuendumu in the Northern Territory with a few others from our local church, which was connected to the Baptist mission workers there at the time. Concurrently, I became very involved in the Indigenous training college in our country town run by Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship, and loved getting to know some leaders.

20 years ago we made a family road trip to Central Australia. And then eight years ago I visited Yuendumu again.

FOUR

My wife Beth and I knew our days of full time work were coming to an end. We were ready to downsize and relocate. We wondered about an intercultural role in the next season. Was it overseas?

We talked with lots of people, including many working with various mission organisations. We knocked on some doors. We attended a discernment weekend run by Baptist Mission Australia. We wondered about our responsibilities for our aging mums. Was it fair to let others bear the increased workload caring for them?



FIVE

Three years ago a prayer call went out for team members to join the Outback Australia team. In ways only God could organise, many things lined up simultaneously and we soon felt peace to apply. Abraham's call in Genesis 12, Jeremiah's call in Jeremiah 1 and Jesus' declaration in Luke 4 each impacted us in a fresh way.

SIX

We were able to join an imminent visit to Yuendumu by Baptist Mission Australia national team members. I slept again in the same mission house I had worked on 30 years ago! We bonded deeply with Mat and Shannon who were serving there.

Now Yuendumu has become our base as we walk alongside the Warlpiri leaders and others. God wonderfully keeps building on our journey. Our story continues as we keep learning so much in the remote southern desert communities.



Father God,

We pray for our world.

Thank you that since the beginning of time you have walked alongside your people.

Thank you for your beautiful creation and the diverse places and cultures that you have established.

Help us to join with you mending our beautiful yet broken world. Help us restore your creation. May we find new ways to care for the environment and those affected by food scarcity and natural disasters.

God, we know that all are equal in your eyes. Be with those experiencing discrimination and disadvantage. Change attitudes and minds that all may live with dignity and hope.

We pray for increased access to healthcare and education in places where there is limited opportunity. May all people be able to thrive in their communities.

Jesus, we pray that children around the world will be able to grow, learn and play in safe and loving environments. May the children of Baptist Mission Australia team members continue to grow in faith, never forgetting that they can trust in you.

We pray for mission around the world. Strengthen our intercultural team members as they live life alongside people who are yet to encounter your goodness and love.

We pray for our country.

Thank you for the freedom we have to worship you and share the love of Jesus.

In the midst of our fast-paced culture, let us not forget to use the gifts you have given us to help others.

We pray for First Nations people across the country. We recognise the deep hurt felt by so many and long for healing and reconciliation. We pray that the wider Australian community will welcome honest conversations as together we listen and learn.

We pray for our country's leaders.

May they be wise in their decision making and lead with justice and compassion, lifting up the vulnerable and working for the good of all people.

Thank you for your love and care God. In Jesus' name we pray

Amen

Join in this prayer with other believers through the video version.



► Watch it here:

www.baptistmissionaustralia.org/WorldPrayer

What do we see?
As God restores the world,
we see *more people*
experiencing and expressing
the transforming
love and hope of *Jesus*.



Excited to join with us in this compelling vision? Find out more and connect with our team.

**Baptist
Mission
Australia**



www.baptistmissionaustralia.org | 1800 329 165

© Copyright 2024: All material appearing in Resonate is copyright.
Reproduction in whole or part is not permissible without the written permission of the publisher.

Editor and Designer: Teagan Dwyer-Riviere

Illustrator (pp. 13-16): Ben Sanders bensanders.com.au

Illustrator (pp. 19-20): Anastasia KHM