



BUILDING A DISCIPLING CULTURE

2013 Annual Report

“Our challenge is to move from personal growth to multiplication”

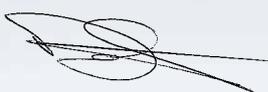
When the local church lives and breathes as God would have it live and breath it is a beautiful thing. When it falters it becomes an object of snide cynicism from the broader community. We have been living through an interesting time in Australia with the ongoing rise of the anti-Christian voice post 9/11. It is certainly a time where casual Christianity is being tested and those who really love Jesus are increasingly feeling what it is to carry the cross when they publicly identify with Jesus.

We have been mandated by God to be a healing agent and to carry the good news of Jesus to our world. With love as our highest value we commit to see our city, nation and the nations become disciples of Jesus. Our theme for 2013 was Disciple One with the statement “You make a world of difference by discipling one”. It is interesting to see the impact as we encouraged each other to prayerfully be led by the Holy Spirit to the lives that God was already working in with the invitation of “I am looking for someone to read the Bible with. Would you be interested?” Subsequently, the number of people who put their trust in Jesus for the first time increased by over 100% from last year. If there was ever an affirmation from God to press on, it is that one right there.

In this domain, our Praxeis teams around the nation, ably led by Pastor Dave and Colleen Lawton, have been the pioneers and significant contributors in making disciples. We celebrate them and learn from them as Crossway seeks to learn the ways of God for making disciples too. So our banner over 2014 is “Building a Discipling Culture”. We believe that God is encouraging us to continue to develop what it looks like to make disciples of Jesus. Our challenge is to move from personal growth to multiplication; from simply Jesus and me to my helping another person to be able to make a disciple.

I am particularly encouraged that the last three years have seen the highest volume of people witnessing to their faith in Jesus by being baptised in the Church’s history; may we press this even further into 2014.

This report is full of the activity of God. I pray that you have great joy in your heart as you read it and may Jesus be magnified in your heart as you read.



Dale Stephenson
Senior Pastor



FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

My Story

I grew up in China where atheism is common. Although my mother's family is Christian, I have always kept a distance from them, because my heart was very proud and I believed in my own effort and abilities. Unfortunately, despite all my efforts, I still encountered many disturbing issues in life.

In 2012, my family and I joined the Crossway Chinese congregation, and I attended the "JiaFu" (Mandarin Alpha) classes. With the help of others in the class, the Holy Spirit gradually opened up my heart.

Looking back, I stumbled on the road to believe God, so my life was also stumbling. As the Holy Spirit finally touched me, I realised that pride is not favoured by God, and human abilities are limited, therefore we should be humble. Romans 10:10 says, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your

faith and are saved." After reading this, I felt awake, as I finally understood that I am only an insignificant sinner; I have limited abilities; everything is in the control of a pair of invisible hands, and that is the Lord's almighty hands.

I decided to follow Jesus and actively participated in the fellowships of Bible study group and sister group. Through continuous learning, I have gained deeper understanding of the Christian faith.

Since knowing Jesus, I am no longer afraid of worldly troubles and physical pains. I trust that if I surrender myself and my worries to our Father and Lord Jesus, my burdens will be lightened. All I need to do is closely follow the Lord.

Acts 2:38 says, 'Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' On the special evening of Christmas Eve 2013, I was baptised and joined the family of Christ to glorify our Lord and enjoy eternal blessings.



472

**NUMBER OF FIRST TIME
COMMITMENTS**

BAPTISMS

My Story

Rarely even going to church, all I knew about Jesus was that he was a religion.

I was very reluctant to go to Surge youth. It seemed pointless. I thought it was a waste of time for bored or crazy people that had no life. But I had a thought so dim I could not feel it – one thought that would lead me to my salvation and joy in Christ. And it was simply, “Go.”

My first moment at Surge wasn't the greatest. I didn't think of much about Jesus on that night. But the continuous thought – “Go” – never left my mind. God was guiding me through every single moment towards him, and I was so blind I didn't even have a clue.

The big moment of me falling in love with Jesus was Surge camp. I can't imagine how my life would be now if I'd chosen not to go. Relentless thoughts kept going through my head the week before.

“Rick you have no friends there, what's the point?”

“Go.”

“Rick it's so expensive, what are you going to do there anyway?”

“Go.”

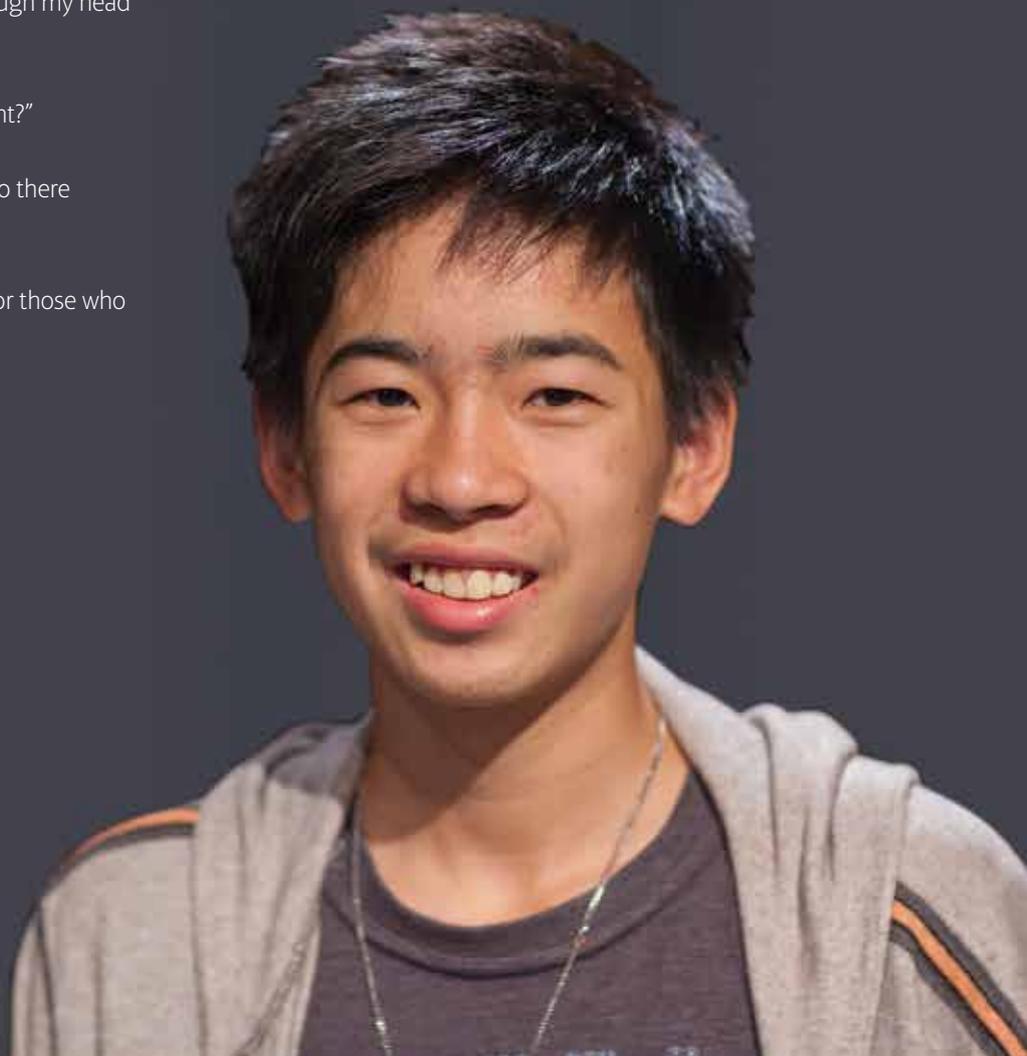
“Rick can't you see? You are worthless! This is for those who actually care about God!”

“Go.”

On the Wednesday of Surge camp, I felt it. The “bang.” The explosion of love that Jesus gives to us. Just as Jesus felt all of our pain in that one moment on the cross, that one huge wave of love rushing into our hearts. That was my journey to Christ.

And now my journey with Christ is continuously growing. Starting a Bible study at school, preaching a short sermon at Surge, and finding every opportunity to evangelize and disciple the hungry and open. My passion in his grace is continuing to grow. My passion in his love never stops. It's Jesus who has shown me life and joy. Praise Jesus for who he is. In him we have found life.

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NUMBER OF BAPTISMS



LIFE GROUPS

My Story

When I was 12 weeks pregnant, I found out that my unborn baby had possibly fatal issues. We were told that there was a 30% chance the child would not live outside the womb, and if he did, it was highly likely he would have physical or mental disabilities. Our child had an omphalocele, meaning that some of its organs were located outside of the body cavity.

My husband (Kenny) and I were very upset, we cried, and broke down. We found it difficult to continue life as normal, raising our two other children and going to work. As the issue was so distressing, we told as few people as possible. Any mention of it would send me to tears. It was difficult to come to terms with the fact that the baby inside me may well die before I held it.

The people we did tell, however, supported us completely. These people from the Crossway community were invaluable in helping us realise that God is always in control, no matter what happens to us, or to our children. Specially, the mothers at Crossway MOPs, the prayer teams, our Life Group and even the team of staff and volunteers that I worked with for Missions, all helped us, spoke to us, prayed ceaselessly for us. LifeCare also helped us through counselling. The worship services at Crossway were invaluable in helping us release our tears and grief to God.

Through their prayers, I was able to accept, even with tears, that our lives are in God's hands. We trusted that God has a purpose for our little baby boy to be in this condition.

However, at our 20 week scan, a miracle occurred. Our child had overcome all of his abnormalities. He was completely normal, and will be like any other child. Kenny and I both cried out loud, full of joy, for God had performed a miracle. We praise God every day for our little miracle, for our little bundle of joy was fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139:14).



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NEW LIFE GROUPS
FORMED

VOLUNTEERS

Our Story



I used to very much enjoy visiting people and couldn't do it anymore, when Megan and the Care team asked me if I would write cards to people. I really love writing cards, but my handwriting has become shaky and it's hard to read. When I met Jaslyn we hit it off really well. Now, I look forward to her visits. I've loved visiting and caring for others this year. I feel that God can still use me.

I tried to come and volunteer at church. Every time I tried to contact the church and offer to help, nothing happened. My kids even suggested God didn't need me! But then I got a phone call from Megan. We arranged to meet and she asked me about myself – about who I was and how I wanted to serve God. So I started with Care Ministry. Immediately, I felt like part of the team. We had a day retreat where we talked about how God wanted to use us as a team and how we could best care for those in the church. I was amazed at how much these people really listened and cared about what I had to say. At first, I learnt computer systems and participated in team meetings. But then one day, someone I knew needed looking after. Around this time, I was introduced to Dot. Dot and I totally clicked – she's become like a mum to me, and I've become like a daughter to her. She has even adopted my kids and husband as extended family! Together, Dot and I visited this lady I knew, who needed someone to come and sit with her once a week while her husband was out. I think Dot really enjoyed this time, too, because she used to love visiting people but can no longer drive herself there.

435

**NEW VOLUNTEERS
IN SERVICE**

78

**COACH — ACTIVE CASE LOAD
CARRIED**

MAKING DISCIPLES

My Story

It was September 2011 and the footy finals were well under way. However, for me it was a traumatic time.

I was taken to hospital with suspected appendicitis, only to find out that I had cancer – an aggressive type called Burkitt’s lymphoma. What followed was five rounds of aggressive chemotherapy and constant care from specialist doctors, nursing and rehab staff in hospital. My wife was constantly by my side at this time and her love and support helped me get through this traumatic period.

Shortly after my discharge, we attended an Easter show at Crossway where I went searching for an answer to the question that kept haunting me – “Why me?”

I turned to God, who came to me on two occasions, making it very clear that He still had work for me to do and that it was not my time.

It was about this time that I filled out a follow up response card at Crossway and ticked the box asking for spiritual help. This resulted in the development of a friendship with my Crossway mentor. I shared with him how I’d been too sick to take part in the village’s annual golf tournament and some golfers got together to pray for me before tee off. Many Christians in our village have shown my wife and I their love through prayer, cards, and encouragement.

During one of the visits I felt compelled to ask about a verse from the Bible, Luke 2:52, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.” This came back to me from communion preparation when I was in my twenties. God was bringing to mind links with past times when I walked closer.

Our reading that first day was a healing story from the gospels. I thought about the paralysed man who had been brought to Jesus and healed and said “That’s me.” I shared how God had told me quite emphatically that I would be healed, and how that experience had given me the yearning to grow in my relationship with Jesus.

Each time we meet now the passage chosen seems just right as I continue on my pathway back to God.



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**INTENTIONALLY HELPING
A PERSON BECOME
A DISCIPLE OF JESUS**

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

7

My Story

Jesus didn't compartmentalise his life and his mission; he lived a full time missional life.

That observation switched the light on for Colette and I. We realised we didn't have to go looking for our "missional community" – it was there on our doorstep. So we prayed, God bring your Kingdom in our street and opportunities began to present themselves.

One neighbour's car broke down, and a God conversation was sparked during a lift to the train station. A Christmas court party conversation where a struggling mum shared her struggles with her teenage daughter meant being available to answer those crisis calls and invite her into our lives to encourage her and share hope. Conversations and faith questions began happening frequently with our long time family friends across the road, and as we increased the level of invitation and access into our lives with them, they have done the same. We knocked on each door in the street with some Christmas baking, and one mother of a family that didn't even feel welcome at the court party, took the first steps into relationship with her neighbours for a very long time.

The people in our street, and those families in our closest orbit, are like our extended family. Yep, it's a bit messy, there's tension sometimes, but we share in each other's lives and love from the natural overflow of what Jesus is doing in our hearts.



MEMBERSHIP

My Story

My parents and grandparents have been at Crossway for many years, so from the time I was born I have always been part of the church – especially on Sundays because my mum had been involved in kids' ministry. I started to connect with God and come to my own understanding during primary school. It was around that time that I gave my life to Christ. From there, I got involved with the church through youth group, where I'm a drummer for the band and additionally at Sunday services.

During my secondary school years, I was stagnant about publicly declaring my faith. Reflecting on those years, I am able to say I had two faces - one that I'd show at church, and another in public. Over the years, I saw many of my friends getting baptised, but I always had the feeling I wanted to hold off until I could be sure I was making the decision on my own, and had the correct intentions. I waited to see where I was spiritually before making my own choice.

In late 2013, looking back on my first year at university, I'd discovered a new independence in terms of freedom and also in my spiritual life. It was during this time I felt free and confident in sharing my faith without fear. After getting baptised later that year, I also signed up for membership at Crossway. It was part of the process of formalising my faith and implanting myself at Crossway for the years to come. Wherever I serve, I'm committed to Crossway as my 'home base' and look forward to being part of the church's future growth and development.

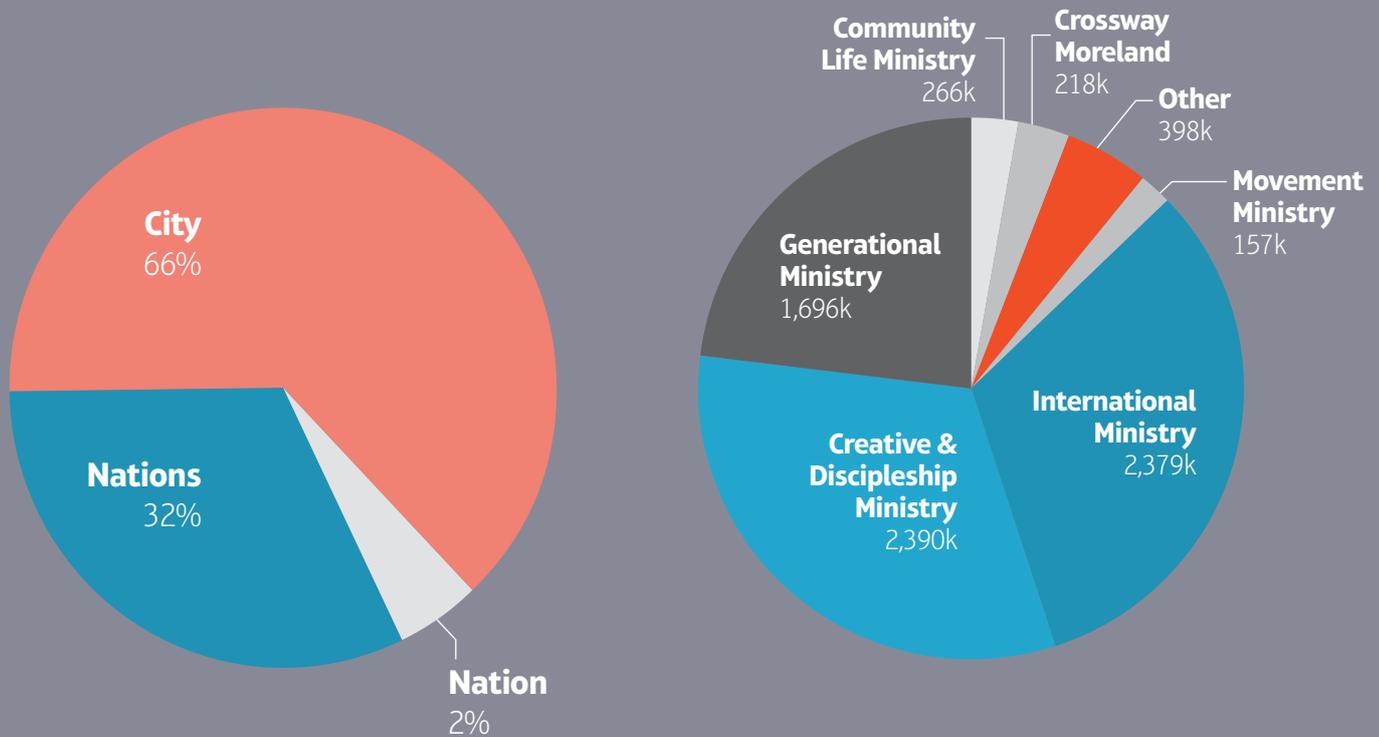
Since I made this commitment, I've had a clear mind knowing God has a direction for me to head in. I've been pushing myself to seek Him more through scriptures and prayer, wanting to know what He has in store for me next.



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NEW MEMBERS

FINANCES

How money is spent to support the vision



**CHRISTMAS APPEAL
GIVING**

\$277,116

TOTAL REVENUE

\$7,380K

AVERAGE WEEKLY TITHES BURWOOD EAST

\$93,587

Vision

**TO SEE OUR
CITY, NATION
AND THE NATIONS
BECOME DISCIPLES OF JESUS.**

Mission

**LOVING GOD,
LOVING PEOPLE,
MAKING DISCIPLES.**

