

Annual
Report
2015



Disciples that Multiply





Vision:

To see our city,
Nation
and the
Nations
Become Disciples of
Jesus

Our
mission:

Loving **God**

Loving **People**

Disciples that **Multiply**



**"In God we make our
boast all day long,
and we will praise
your name forever."**

Psalm 44:8



It is such an honour and responsibility to bear the name of Jesus wherever we go. In 2015 we carried the annual theme of Building a Discipling Culture and we have been leaning into God as we realise the mission of God is in the hands of ordinary people. I am so encouraged as I hear report after report of people who have begun to read the Bible with a friend with a view to helping them become a loving and obedient follower of Jesus.

In this report you will see a number of stories which highlight missional impact. You will read of people putting their trust in Jesus, being baptised, stepping into community and serving. Some are more missionally engaged and others have been sent to the far flung corners of the world. God be praised!

In 2015 we secured the global leadership of COACH and operate it in partnership with Mission Australia across Australia. COACH is now running in Britain and South Africa and the world is our oyster for the future expansion of this ministry.

Church Online was also launched in August 2015 and already we have 2000-3000 participants from 120 countries. In the closing 4 months of the year we saw 40 people indicate that they had put their trust in Jesus Christ through this ministry and we have now planted online Life Groups too.

In 2015 God also allowed for the fulfilment of a vision to see a Men's Shed open in our community led by Crossway men. Late in the year we signed a ten year agreement with Forest Hill College to run a Men's Shed out of their technical wing. This is a great opportunity which is now up and running. Great work was done by Ps Megan Stock and her team.

All of the preparations for the new South East Campus were done in 2015. The successful launch in January 2016 was a great reflection of the commitment of so many, especially Ps Bill Malcolm and a great team of volunteers. We also commenced the building of the new LifeCare and Administration facility to which so many have so generously contributed.

Crossway is well positioned to look to the future with confidence in a living God who does exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that we could ask or hope for.

**Dale Stephenson
Senior Pastor**



First Time Commitments

**"For I can do
everything through
Christ, who gives
me strength."**

Philippians 4:13

My name is Pang and I have been living with Parkinson's for eight years. In 2015 I came in front of God to ask for forgiveness and for repentance from sins.

I had been a successful business man since I stepped out from school and until recently I also had a beautiful family. I thought my plan would continue to grow until the end. However, several years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's and my family became broken. These last few years have been the most difficult time of my life. During my most difficult time, my Parkinson's got worst because of my depression.

God spoke to me many times during my dark period. I am so happy and so touched by His kindness. I often cry during prayer times and during church singing. I've met with Him on so many occasions and we are now connected. He found me. The tears of joy help to calm me and my heart is at peace.

God was with me while I was attending the Alpha course. He coached me and guided me on the right path and my brothers and sisters from the Alpha course also prayed for me during my most difficult times.

God has given me a new plan to move on. He wants me to focus on the wellbeing of newly diagnosed Parkinson's patients and help them to overcome the initial stage. When you are diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, you are lost and do not know what to expect and how to cope with it. God knows that it is an important time to help people overcome their anxiety.

God is in me now and I am with Him. In December 2015 I decided to commit further to Him by being baptised. Today I am a new person.



Pang

301 First Time Commitments

including 40 first time commitments
from Church Online

Baptisms

113 Baptisms

"I know God smiles when we choose to obey"

Daniel

I am enormously blessed that the seeds of my faith were planted by my mum, and that by age eight those seeds had taken root as my own. It was good to acknowledge publicly that Jesus is my Saviour. I made my own choice at that time to be baptised as a very young believer, by sprinkling, in the Presbyterian tradition.

At a similar age I developed a sense of mission for Australian politics which became deeply embedded in me. As best I can make out, that passion was the result of both a specific anointing and more generally of who I had been made to be. That passion had been my compass point and my identity for three decades when I was out walking and talking to God at 2am on Feb 21, 2011. I was pouring my heart out to Him on a number of things, and completely out of the blue was just struck with a realisation that I was to give up my pursuit of politics. That was a call to give up my identity. At the time I had no idea why God would call me into politics and then call me to put that on the altar. But I did have a deep sense of peace that God was calling me to obey, and it wasn't a negotiation. I spent eighteen months grieving the loss; but skipping past a few years of the story, the blessing that has flowed from that obedience has been awesome.

Since that time my conversation with God has shifted by necessity from "God, this is what we're doing [that was the politics bit], would you please help?" (If I'm honest I'd probably often add, "and would you hurry up?!") to asking, "God, what are you doing, and how do you call me to respond?" The shift came simply because I had no other prayer to pray. In hindsight, however, I've come to believe that the change was a significant part of why God called me to put on the altar the good things we'd planned together for my political ambition. I'm deeply thankful for the change.

Exploring that posture of obedience, I have had a growing nigggle about my sprinkling baptism as an eight year old believer. I am adopted by faith as God's child through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross – and no ceremony or act on anyone's part can add to that fact. But while I believe the mode of baptism is not worthy of the division it can cause, I am determined to lean in to all God has for me and so was baptised by full immersion in obedience to God's Word. I'm aware of no dramatic changes resulting from this baptism, but I know God smiles when we choose to obey, and that is what I seek.



Life Groups

220 Life Groups

34 New Life Groups Planted*

*net increase of 5 groups

"Through this whole experience we've been given hope by God."

Lachlan & Ellen

We came to Crossway tired, cynical and burnt out. We were stuck in a rut unable to grow. We longed to be encouraged, to hear God's Word in the present, to be around joyful people, and to connect with people our own age. God had also given us a heart for North Korea, and we needed to pursue that. We also knew that we wanted to learn the Korean language. We knew what we needed but we weren't convinced we could find it.

Crossway drew us in, which was very surprising as we'd never ever assumed or even considered going to a really big church. We decided to settle there for a short period and we were reticent to get involved, but we soon realised that if we didn't start meeting people it would be pointless. Crossway was such a large place and we assumed too large to provide Christian community. We saw an ad for the 'Taste & See' Life Group experience and felt we ought to try it out for six weeks as there was no obligation to join a group if we didn't like it.

Well, we did like it! We felt very welcomed by the leaders who were super friendly to everybody. We quickly got to know them and felt important and really cared for. They helped everyone form friendships and provided a place where we could trust one another and share significant things.

On the first night we were all introducing ourselves, and a very Aussie fellow in thongs called Jack (who we took an instant liking to) said that he had lived for a bit in Korea and had taught the language. Wow! We were totally blown away by this, as it seemed like an uncanny coincidence – he was the first person we met who had any connection to Korea, he was our age, and he also taught the language! We soon became good friends and he started teaching us Korean.

Our Life Group formed naturally from Taste & See, and we've met weekly for about two years now. Now, we experience deeper connections with our Christian community than we did in a very small church. Through this whole experience we've been given hope by God. Before that we were people of longing, but not of hope. God has shown us that He wants to provide all His people with joy, with friendships, and with a mission that He will equip them for and see to the end. God has shown that He wants to provide us abundantly with His loving Spirit.

Missional Communities

10 Missional Communities 1 New Missional Community

Our missional community journey began five years ago when we got to know some of the other parents at our daughter's kindergarten. The intentional building and nurturing of those relationships led us to work with another couple from a different church to run an Ask Anything series for a number of the parents.

Since those early days that group has seen people come and go. Some have come to faith and been baptized, while other openly atheist or agnostic members simply love having the "safe space" to be in community and discuss issues of faith. This community has grown to nearly 70 adults and children.

Our move to Croydon two years ago challenged us to repeat this intentional missional pattern in a new community. So began our journey to create another open, safe, challenging space for people to explore faith.

What does this early stage look like for our family? Well, fewer Christian meetings, fewer church commitments, conversations with our kids about how often we are at church events as opposed to with non-Christians, and more time spent deliberately with non-Christians simply building relational bridges of trust. These bridges have enabled new friends to begin to observe and question whether we have lives/values worth imitating and what lies at the core of those lives – namely, our relationship with Jesus.

We have spent time over the last two years focused on building relationships, this time with parents whose children attend the local drama group. In doing that we have begun to create a monthly rhythm of meeting for Sunday lunch, sharing our lives, building trust and openness, and setting the foundation with another Christian couple to host several other families through another Ask Anything experience.

We now have five additional families and their kids meeting each month.

Our pathway with both of these missional communities has been messy at times, filled with moments of fear, doubt and uncertainty about continuing, and yet interspersed with moments of great joy watching people taking baby steps towards meeting Jesus, handing lordship of their lives to Jesus, passing through the waters of baptism and becoming missionally minded themselves.

Through all of this we are learning a sense of intentional availability – to "be Jesus" to people; to invite them into our world whilst being invited into their spiritual journeys; to be committed to regular prayer into their worlds.

Jesus has challenged us all to be disciple makers, and to experience the renewal of watching others take steps to Jesus. Think about your worlds. Where is Jesus asking you to be intentionally missional in 2016?

"Jesus has challenged us all to be disciple makers, and to experience the renewal of watching others take steps to Jesus."



Tim & Nikki





Michael

My name is Michael and I really suffer badly from depression. This is a story that all men need to hear.

One day in August 2015 I landed on the doorstep of LifeCare. I was in all sorts of bother. I had low self-esteem and everything in life was just too hard to face up to. I was being badly bullied at work; this was taking a huge toll on me and my family. Through LifeCare and the Care Ministry of Crossway I was offered some counselling. I ended up having to take a month off work to reorganise myself.

During that time I came to Crossway two or three times a week and worked alongside the guys doing Community Service. One of the guys asked me "What did you do mate?" and I said, "No mate, I'm a volunteer." I explained that I suffered from depression and since I was going through a really bad time, I was better off keeping myself busy than being in a dark corner not doing anything. He said, "Really, you're here volunteering, does the church mean that much to you?" I said "Yes."

I was put into contact with Andy, a Life Group leader. I only went to one meeting of that Life Group, mainly due to logistics. Andy allowed me to ring him as a point of contact when I was really down and needing to talk.

Volunteers

"I had long felt that I needed to put something back into the community, where I have received so much help."

Another member of the group, Christian, promised me that he would ring every Tuesday until I felt confident again within myself. He kept that promise and I no longer need him to ring. The friends that I have made from this and another group run by Steve have been truly invaluable.

I had long felt that I needed to put something back into the community, where I have received so much help. I had been looking around for a while to find somewhere I could really make a difference. I had spoken to Megan, our Care Pastor, about starting a Men's Shed to help out men suffering from depression. Unbeknown to me the process had already started and they were in consultation with Forest Hill College. This is where I can use my manual skills to teach others how to use their hands, get dirty and have fun doing it. Disciples that Multiply.

I am so grateful to all of the people I have mentioned above, the Crossway community, my wife Leisa and my two boys, Douglas and Lachlan.



1601 Volunteers in Service

including 635 new placements

Membership

1807 Members

123 New Members



"We can feel that God is present in every aspect of this church and He is doing amazing work through Crossway."

Adrian & Sumi

Sumi and I were raised as Christians and both of us were active members of our previous church. When we first came to Crossway, we were on a journey to seek a new spiritual home where we could not only continue to grow as followers of Christ, but be able to contribute more to the society.

Crossway's vision "To see our city, nation and the nations become disciples of Jesus" and mission "Loving God, Loving People" – both of which are written on the wall outside of the auditorium – really resonate in our hearts because we believe they reflect the passion God has for the world.

Missions are something that we are passionate about. I personally have a great interest in geopolitics, what's happening around the world, and what God is doing in that space. Sumi loves the caring aspects of ministry and reaching out to people from diverse backgrounds. Seeing and being a part of what God is doing in the community in Melbourne, in Australia and around the world is really something that God has placed in our hearts.

When we decided to become regulars at Crossway, we started our involvement slowly, beginning by serving in the Welcome team, doing the Kairos course and joining a Life Group. We can feel that God is present in every aspect of this church and He is doing amazing work through Crossway. We admire the quality of the leadership team and Crossway's commitment to bless and see the city, nation and nations become disciples of Jesus Christ. Over time, we were convinced that we have found a place where we can plant ourselves and grow spiritually. We are blessed to be members and to be able to call Crossway home.



Missions

"Kairos showed me that we shouldn't just ask God to bless us but ask God to help us to be a blessing to others!"

Gordon

Between 2010 and 2015 I was employed in IT. Employment instability is common in the industry and during that time I experienced two redundancies and at one point worked part-time as a cleaner. I went through a lot of character growth and realised that a simple life is all that I need, and if I have more than that, it is truly a blessing. During this period, following a suggestion from my mentor, I joined a short term mission trip to Cambodia as an observer. A seed was planted and I became curious about missions. When my second redundancy occurred at the start of 2015, it was the perfect opportunity for me to sign up for Kairos to learn more about missions.

The first three weeks of Kairos shook my world and changed my thinking about what it means to be a Christian. Kairos showed me that we shouldn't just ask God to bless us but ask God to help us to be a blessing to others! Each of us has a spiritual gift and we all have a part to play in the body of Christ, to serve/volunteer and be a blessing to others. Also, Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." I realised this is OUR calling – for all Christians and not just a select few.

Just after I finished Kairos, I was employed again. Unfortunately, I was going through a personal issue and was quite stressed at the time and it affected my work performance. Due to that and other circumstances that were happening in the company, my employment was terminated. However, it was the perfect opportunity for me to do a short term mission trip!

The only suitable trip at the time was an outreach to the Hakka people in Taiwan. Being Hakka myself, with a Malaysian background, I was shocked when I found out they are the least reached people group in Taiwan. I felt challenged and there was a burden in my heart to reach out and help. In our small team we all had different skills and talents but we worked well together. Our focus was on children in the local schools. It was a great learning experience as it was the first time I had worked with kids and I saw God at work in that small community in many ways.

I am now considering long term missions either in Taiwan, Japan or China. I am open to any of these countries and I'm not ruling out anything or anywhere. When the Holy Spirit puts a burden in my heart, I will know what to do and where to go. Looking back, I can't stop thinking that every time I lost my job, God was working in my life and pointing me in the right direction! I am certain that even now I am on the right path. I don't know my destination, but I am going to enjoy the ride that God is taking me on!

76 Missionaries Supported
3 Commissioned and Sent Out





Praxeis

50 **New Disciples**
19 **Baptisms**

38 **Simple Churches Planted**
including 15 second-generation churches planted by people
discipled by Praxeis

I've been involved with Praxeis since early 2012. Our heart is to see a saturation church planting movement in this city, nation and the nations.

When I met Jarrod in December 2014, he had already started reading the Bible on his own, but for him it was just information. In no way would he have called himself a disciple, or even a believer. But he was keen to know more, so we continued to meet up and work out together what it meant to follow Jesus. We kept it really simple and reproducible – we'd read the Bible, work out how we could obey what we'd read and with whom we could share it (we also practiced sharing the gospel with each other), and then we'd pray for the lost. Then when we'd meet up the next time, we'd ask each other how we went with these obedience steps.

Bit by bit, Jarrod became more obedient to Jesus, and along the way, chose to get baptized. In looking at the book of Acts, Jarrod decided that if he truly wanted to follow Jesus, he had to live in the way that the early church did, which meant he of course needed to be sharing the good news of Jesus with others. Around the same time, Jarrod's girlfriend Alice also started following Jesus. But what happened next was really amazing.

Jarrod started doing with Alice exactly what we had been doing together. They'd read the Bible, work out how they could obey what they'd read, think of someone with whom they could share the good news, practice sharing the gospel and pray for the lost.

One time when we caught up, Jarrod told me of some of the obedience steps that Alice had been making, and that she had been sharing the good news with her pre-Christian friends and family – and she was even using the same language that Jarrod and I use together!

Just after Christmas, Alice also decided that to be obedient to Jesus, she needed to get baptized. To keep the whole discipleship process reproducible, we felt that we needed to keep it really simple. So Jarrod baptized her in the Yarra at Warrandyte, with just a handful of people there to witness, celebrate and pray with her.

In the last few weeks, one of Alice's friends has come to faith, and has decided that she needs to get baptized! She is starting to meet regularly with Jarrod and Alice to do church.

What I find the most exciting about this is that it shows that when we keep it simple and easily reproducible, the gospel really does reproduce and multiply. Jarrod is now sharing the gospel in his suburb, starting to go door to door, seeking to find more open households to start church with. Please join with us in praying for open doors!

"When we keep it simple and easily reproducible, the Gospel really does reproduce and multiply."



Scott



Darion

"I could sense that God was about to do something amazing through this ministry."

What an amazing experience and journey of learning it has been as a volunteer for Crossway's Church Online team under the leadership of Pastor Steve. When I was first approached by Steve and introduced to the concept of Church Online, to be honest, I was very apprehensive and yet curious about whether such a concept would work. Steve showed me some of the other online church platforms around the world, however, online church with live hosts at each service was a unique proposition, so without knowing what I was doing, I jumped right in.

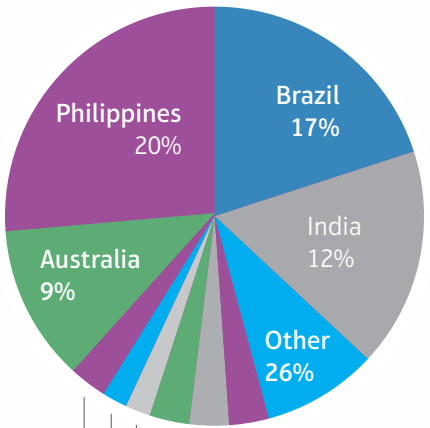
After a few weeks of hosting alongside Steve and other fantastic hosts, we were all blown away by the work that God was doing in such a short time! From the very first service at 9am on the 23rd of August 2015, I could sense that God was about to do something amazing through this ministry.

Week after week, we have been privileged to meet amazing people all around the world. Their stories are so encouraging and humbling. We were sent messages of how Church Online has provided people who are housebound due to physical disabilities with the opportunity to attend church. A family living in Tasmania without a local church nearby was enabled to worship and hear God's Word each Sunday as a family.

Church Online

One unforgettable moment was when I met a drug addict in the Philippines who was so challenged by the message that he repented of his ways and wanted prayer to make a fresh start in accepting Christ into his life. We prayed together and he is now walking the journey of faith through an online Life Group. What a privilege! There are also people in China and the Middle East who now call Church Online their home church and attend regularly each Sunday – talk about breaking down barriers in the name of Jesus right there! There are so many stories that I could share about what God has been doing through Church Online but I guess the best way to experience it is to come and join the team!

Speaking of team, I absolutely love the team that makes Church Online possible too – sharing stories and helping each other through technical challenges (yes, there have been a few "moments of learning"). The team are always ready to lend a hand, cover each other's services and pray for one another. Big thanks to Steve for the vision and opportunity to serve God in this technological capacity.



Participants from 120 Nations





Disciples that Multiply

"He was intrigued by my strong church background"

I had known Sam, my barber, for some time.

When Dale suggested the concept, I asked Sam (who owned a hairdressing salon at Melbourne Central) whether he would be happy to add an additional 30–45 minutes to my haircut so that we could have a coffee and read the Bible together. I had been aware for some time that he was intrigued by my strong church background and the fact that every Sunday Lois and I (and, separately, our children and their families) would attend church; he often asked me questions about that.

I knew Sam had a family background in the Greek Orthodox Church but although he went to church occasionally, he didn't understand what was spoken because he didn't speak Greek.

So, when he finished cutting my hair he moved straight to his diary and said "he'd love to" and booked in a further 30–45 minutes. And that's what we have been doing ever since.

193 "Disciplers" in Disciple One



David

"It has been an honour and privilege to walk alongside Leanne for the last two years."

I started attending Crossway several years ago after completing an Alpha course. Every time the COACH program was mentioned, I knew this was what God really wanted me to pursue. At the time, I was working four days a week, had three young children and was looking after my mother who showed early signs of dementia (throw a husband into the mix... I guess he needs a little time too!). I have to admit I ignored those early calls from God simply because I didn't feel I had the time, energy or experience. Eventually, however, I jumped in, did the training and began my COACH journey with Leanne (not her real name).

The minute I met Leanne, I knew that we would work really well together. She was very motivated to make changes to improve her life and her enthusiasm was infectious.

We spent the first few sessions getting to know each other and then focused on creating some goals while drinking copious amounts of coffee! Some of these goals included buying a house (she was living in government housing at the time), further education with a view to getting a job, improving parenting skills and starting her son in a sport. Leanne was raising her six year old son alone; his father had never wanted to be in the picture. Leanne also wanted to improve her fitness, so many of our sessions included long walks.

With each of these goals, we set up smaller objectives and tasks each week, and I was amazed at how much effort Leanne put into this. We had many discussions on parenting, delving into our own experiences to determine how we could both become better parents. Leanne researched training and job availability and she also spent many months looking at housing options, eventually buying her own home. Throughout this time, she also benefited from ongoing support from our counsellor and B-Empowered financial care worker.

There have been some tough times for Leanne, one of these times resulting in hospitalization. However, instead of letting that defeat her, she was very courageous and came out stronger than ever. She hasn't always had positive, encouraging people or role models around her, and I am hoping that she finds great friends and a supportive church community in Queensland, where she is now living. My hope for her is that she backs herself and has the confidence to make wise decisions - she is such a gorgeous person with a beautiful heart and has so much to offer the world.

This has been the most incredible experience for me in so many ways. It has been an honour and privilege to walk alongside Leanne for the last two years. I have learned so much about God, about myself, and about what it means to be a Christian. Life is so much richer when serving others and giving is so much better than receiving. Please consider becoming a volunteer for LifeCare, so that you too can help someone in a tough place flourish. You won't regret it!

**Shanta**

504 Received professional counselling from LifeCare

115 Kids, youths and families participated in COACH

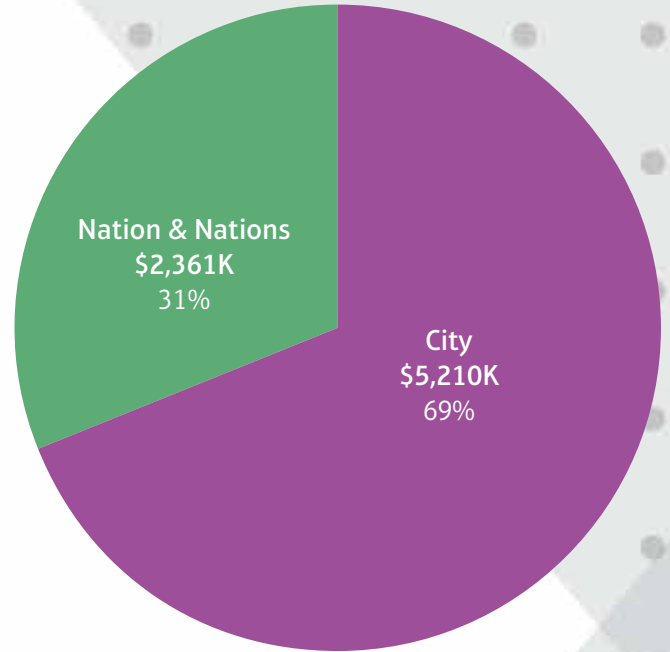
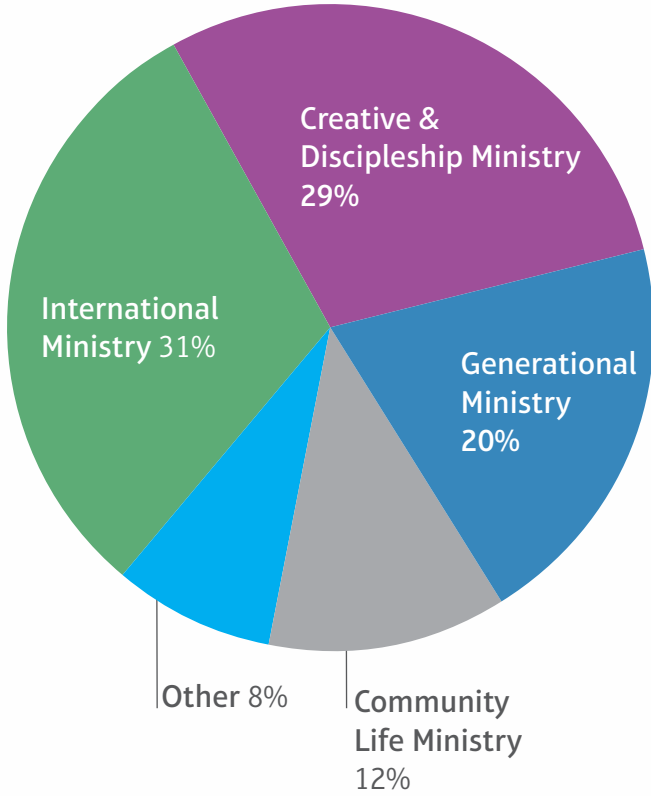
48 Participated in B-Empowered Financial Care

20 Attended therapeutic group at Women's Centre

66* Attended monthly B-Together Community Dinner

*Average per month

Finances



\$102,115 ↑ 4%
Average Weekly Tithes

\$241,874 ↑ 13%
Christmas Appeal Giving

\$7,655,525 ↓ 11%
Total Revenue



Our
mission:

Loving **God**
Loving **People**
Disciples that **Multiply**



Vision:

To see our city,
Nation
and the
Nations
Become Disciples of
Jesus



www.crossway.org.au