

A GREATER PURPOSE

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



VISION

*To see our city,
nation & the nations
become disciples of Jesus*

OUR MISSION

*Loving God,
Loving People,
Disciples that Multiply*

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

In the pages of this report you will read about the extraordinary activity of God touching lives and changing hearts. These are remarkable days that we are living through and the living God is doing wonderful things.

Crossway is in the process of moving from being a particularly large church to being a more influential church. There are multiple fronts on which this is happening.

Church Online has people from 190 countries attending, led by Pastor Steve Fogg who has just moved back to England. With 108 first time commitments to Christ and an international team of volunteers being raised up, it is an extraordinary ministry.

revolutionising our ministry approach and has seen our generational ministries expand significantly. There are 106 churches across Australia using Think Orange and Pastor Margaret Spicer is part of the international think tank behind this movement.

Crossway LifeCare had a new facility built in 2016, which has just been officially opened. This ministry is an outstanding example of transformation by seeing people in tough places flourish. Gail Thannhauser provides the operational leadership of this ministry and has built an

serving God in the toughest quarters of the global community.

Our Care Ministry, led by Pastor Megan Stock, is an unsung hero which is causing many churches to rethink how this ministry can be done.

Led by Pastor Edi Stephenson, Life Groups grew by 10% in 2016 and Missional Communities has also grown significantly.

All of our non-English speaking congregations grew in 2016. Pastor Daron Himstedt provides broader team leadership for this diverse, gifted and committed team.

All in all, 2016 was an extraordinary year. There is no sense of the momentum slowing into 2017 either! I perpetually give thanks to God for every person who serves, prays and gives for the advance of this mission and all glory goes to God. I also give humble thanks to the Board who provide the spiritual governance to this whole ministry to ensure that everything is done transparently, accountably and in compliance with the law.

Please join with me in praising God and in praying towards the coming of everything that He has in store for us as we humbly wait on Him.



Dale Stephenson
Senior Pastor

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

EPHESIANS 3:20

COACH has grown by over 100% in the past 15 months under the leadership of Pastor Toby Baxter. It is being used by 55 churches across Australia and has an expanding footprint in England in partnership with Redeeming Our Communities.

Building a Discipling Culture is ably led by Pastor Tim Piesse and now has 150 churches across Australia and 30 churches in New Zealand involved in training. Think Orange has been



outstanding team.

Praxeis is led by Pastor Dave and Colleen Lawton. This ministry has been growing by 35-45% each year for multiple years now. Our vision is to saturate church plant Australia so that there is one church for every 1000 head of population.

International missions have had an explosive few years with literally hundreds of thousands of people putting their trust in Christ through this remarkable team of people who are

FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

Andy and I have been members of Crossway for over twenty years. It's been our spiritual home and our source of encouragement, supporting and inspiring us to follow Jesus through the various stages of our lives, from when we were dating in our twenties, to newly weds, to now raising four beautiful children. Recently another milestone was passed when our youngest child made her 'big step' and invited Jesus to be her 'forever friend' - also known as Lord and Saviour!

The Kidspace team have developed a beautiful rhythm in our calendar, making space on a few weekends every year for Big Step Sunday. This is a chance for the kids to pause and reflect and respond to a gospel presentation. It's in a very safe environment where there is no pressure and plenty of time and respect given to those kids who are not quite ready yet and still have questions. Our youngest fell into this category for about two years. We and her small group leaders journeyed with her, allowing her time to respond when she was ready. It was a

memorable day indeed as Big Step Sunday was approaching and our youngest indicated that she felt ready to invite Jesus into her heart. She was very adamant that the whole family should be there: her three siblings and Mum and Dad. It was a very special time for all of us to gather together during Kidspace to pray with her as she accepted Jesus into her heart. The Kidspace team also marked the occasion with a special wristband and a group prayer. Thank you to the team for partnering with us in making this happen in such a memorable way. I don't remember when I made my first commitment but I don't think she will ever forget that special Big Step Sunday!



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

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

INCLUDES PRAXEIS & CHURCH ONLINE

BAPTISMS



SIMON

My name is Simon. In 1985 I migrated from Hong Kong to Melbourne with my wife, two daughters and son. I really love Melbourne but I did not know any English so I relied on my children to help me live here. After my two daughters graduated from university, they moved back to Hong Kong where they worked and got married.

I said to my son, "I have seen a lot in my life, and lived through war time. I want to live comfortably in my old age, and I hope that you can help me by marrying a woman who can speak Cantonese and talk to me." Fortunately, my son did marry a Cantonese-speaking woman, who is also a Christian. My daughter-in-law is a devoted wife and mother. She loves God and shows respect to her elders. She brought my wife and me to church and encouraged us on our journey to Christianity.

I have observed Christians in their everyday lives showing kindness and mercy to their family and friends, caring for the weak, and being faithful and honest. They highly impress me. I thank the Holy Spirit for guiding me to the elder fellowship in Crossway Baptist Church. I began reading the Bible and striving to understand God's way.

"I thank the Holy Spirit for guiding me to the elder fellowship in Crossway Baptist Church. I began reading the Bible and striving to understand God's way."

I thank God, for I got baptised in March 2016. I was sorry to have only come to believe at the rather late age of eighty years old. In my whole life I have experienced God's grace, help and perseverance, and regret not recognising Him earlier. It was a great pleasure for me to get baptised. I thank God for His faith and perseverance towards me. The Lord deserves thanksgiving and glory.

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BAPTISMS
INCLUDES PRAXEIS



LIFE GROUPS

JONATHAN & SUZANNE'S LIFEGROUP

One of the things I love about our Life Group is that we get to know about each other's extended families, and can pray for them. We have been praying for many years for the elderly parents of a member of our group, that they would come to faith in Jesus. The father has always been particularly hostile to the gospel, and in the past, has been an enthusiastic and angry mocker of Christianity. Our Life Group got to know these parents over the past three years, as they are sometimes staying at their daughter's home when we meet for Life Group there. Last year (2016) the mother began to pray with her daughter and was slowly growing in faith and a love for Jesus. By the second half of the year, she started asking about being baptised. The father remained cynical, although less angry and hostile about faith.

Towards the end of 2016, a very close friend of the father became terminally ill and passed away. He was a very rough character who was also cynical about faith, but a few days before he died, he gave his life to Christ and was baptised. The father got to spend time with him in those last few days, and his friends' choice to submit to Christ had a profound effect on him. A few weeks later, seemingly out of the blue, the father also asked to be baptised. I contacted

Pastor John Strugnell, Crossways' Seniors Pastor, and arranged for him to meet with the lady from our Life Group, and then later with her parents. Over several meetings, John was able to talk with them about what it means to follow Jesus, and their steps towards baptism.

In mid January 2017, both parents were baptised at their daughter's home by Pastor John, with our Life Group cheering on. Those gathered that Sunday afternoon included four generations of family, most of whom had previously had no exposure to the gospel. It was an amazing privilege to be a part of these baptisms, and to hear the gospel presented both through the action of baptism, and the sensitive but clear message from John. I know that watching both parents' change of heart over the past year has had a big impact on our whole Life Group. We have seen God answer our prayers!



254 LIFE GROUPS

NET INCREASE IN LIFEGROUPS 23

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

RINGWOOD MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

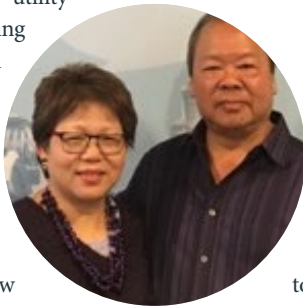
"I found myself witnessing God's miracles firsthand"

When I first started seeking a new platform or space to connect to non-believing Chinese communities, the picture was not crystal clear. With trust in God and a prayerful heart, I began the search.

On many Saturdays, I went with my husband to visit different areas and find out about local Chinese activities. We gathered information from grocery and utility shops, restaurants and shopping malls. I also wrote to the council for population statistics on Chinese immigrants. I reduced the number of areas to two for continued study, conducted parallel "test market" operations in both areas and trusted God to show the way.

Eventually, God spoke to me through a lady who mentioned that a big group of Chinese met at Ringwood Lake every Friday.

We began attending every week, in good and bad weather, to make friends with the people gathering there. We assimilated into the community and joined their activities. We showed our love and care by helping them with daily hurdles, such as explaining utilities bills. After some time, friendships developed. Some, who once were sceptical about Christianity, eventually opened up to Jesus and faith.



After this, the Lord opened more doors. Forty people came to the Crossway Christmas show in 2015. In February 2016 we started an English language class and over forty people attended; by December this had grown to a weekly average of over sixty students. In December 2016 it was a really great joy to see over 140 people from our Ringwood Missional Community attending the Christmas show.

The formation of the Ringwood Missional Community was by the leading of the Holy Spirit, with His step-by-step guidance. It took years of exploring, sowing and farming. There are many more challenges and much work to do in the days ahead, but I know "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Jesus said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When the disciples did this, they were unable to haul in their net in because of the large number of fish. In ministering to the Ringwood Missional Community, I found myself witnessing God's miracles firsthand in a similar way.

ZOLINER

**13 MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES
3 NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITY**



VOLUNTEERS

“We are all part of the body of Christ – we all have different parts to play and that’s how volunteering works at Crossway.”

KAJEWSKI FAMILY

At our first Crossway service in February 2001, a young lady sitting behind us asked whether our five and three year old boys would like to attend the kid’s church service – where they immediately settled in. (Thank you to that welcoming stranger.) Week after week they had the great, enthusiastic Kidspace staff and volunteers of all ages (from early teens) looking after them. These people knew them by name – which is significant in a church of Crossway’s size. During this time they committed their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When they attended high school they naturally wanted to lead at kid’s church – looking after primary school boys, knowing them by name and helping them to be part of the community at Crossway as they learned to follow the Lord.

During this time they attended Crossway Youth, where young adults ran small groups for their year levels, praying for them and showing interest in their lives. The boy’s leaders would even come and see them play in cricket

games or basketball games. These volunteer leaders of our teenagers could have been out with friends but gave up their Friday nights to influence and encourage our boys to follow the Lord and belong to a loving, fun, encouraging Christian community. Praise the Lord for those young men that looked after Duncan and Alec during their teen years – please know that we are grateful and thankful.

Now our boys are on the other side of the teen years and have chosen to serve at Crossway Youth both as leaders and in the worship team. They now have the opportunity to serve, encourage and influence those younger than themselves to follow Jesus and navigate their lives as Christians, following on from the example of the leaders they had growing up.

Duncan and Alec still have mentors who make a point to catch up with them and see how they are going.

Phil and I have also had the privilege of volunteering at Crossway over the years – at present, with registration of new families at Kidspace and Secure Dads, and Phil serves on the property board. We have had lots of opportunities to volunteer and become involved in the fabric of the Crossway community.

We are all part of the body of Christ – we all have different parts to play and that’s how volunteering works at Crossway. Some jobs seem big and some small, but they all make a difference and bring blessings to others and ourselves.

Thank you Crossway – Pastor Dale, all our wonderful, faithful leaders and the army of volunteers over the years – for helping us bring up our children in the way they should go.

I love Psalm 107:4-9 as our straight road is Springvale Road. We give thanks to the Lord for Crossway for he “satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

1669 VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE
INCLUDING 512 NEW PLACEMENTS

MEMBERSHIP

74 NEW MEMBERS
1881 MEMBERS

“I became a member because I wanted to be a part of a community of believers that are fruitful followers of Christ.”

I've drifted around different church communities for multiple years, never really identifying myself with any one group. When I moved to Crossway in 2011, the first message I heard Pastor Dale deliver was about church communities. Dale said that the only way to become connected into a church is to step off the travelator and serve those around you. Over the years that I've been at Crossway, I have continually seen people with servant hearts who volunteer

their time freely and with joy. I became a member because I wanted to be a part of a community of believers that are fruitful followers of Christ. Crossway is now my home and I want to do what I can to help it grow!

RILEY



“Today Goran's greater purpose is to witness to everybody and to call people to God's throne.”

Goran was a careless twenty year old into extreme sports. Pride, drugs, speed and fame were his idols. Although his grandmother prayed for him he would not consider God. One day Goran slammed his car at 170 km an hour into the parked international trailer. It was the graduation night of his friend, who passed away in this accident. Goran had massive injuries and was given no chance to live even for the next few hours.

God spoke to me and some other believers, prompting us to pray for him as he was God's chosen instrument.

Three months later, Goran was still in a coma. That day, as I sat with him in the intensive care unit, he responded to the Holy Spirit prayer through me and opened his eyes for the first time in my presence (see picture). My conviction was that Goran would be the leader of many like him in the future and he would be a great man of faith. Medical doctors did not believe in his healing. They said to me that Goran would be a 'vegetable' even if he lived. But my faith continued.

Today, Goran is regularly engaged in evangelism. As he learns to walk, talk, read and write again, Goran's greater purpose is to witness to everybody and to call people to God's throne. My belief is that he will be used in even greater ways in the future, calling self-destructive youth to Jesus. This is his one desire!

MISSIONS

LILLIAN IN SERBIA

Marko* is a normal Serbian man who loves to use his hands to build things. In partnership with his brother, he worked in the construction industry and was also trained as a sniper fighter in compulsory army training. Marko was bitterly disappointed by the legalistic church his parents went to. He could never meet their expectations and was no longer considering faith in God.

prayerfully engaged in rubbish collecting and recycling. He started to clean up rubbish, he cleaned out toilets, he repaired things, entertained children with worship songs on his guitar, managed night shifts, acted as peace maker between the various factions and managed PTSD crisis eruptions in children, in sub zero temperatures in the camp. This went on for five months. Marko eventually gave up

“Prompted by the vision of revival among the Muslims, Marko started going to the camp to share his faith.”

One day he walked into our church and experienced love and acceptance. Marko repented in tears and accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Soon he was deeply engaged in prayer, service and evangelism.

A greater purpose presented itself in mid 2015 as a myriad of refugees and immigrants streamed through the Balkan countries en route to Europe. At two camps in Marko's home town, thousands of Muslims waited. Prompted by the vision of revival among the Muslims, Marko started going to the camp to share his faith. There was a limitation on speaking the Gospel to Islamic people. Being a practical man, he

his position as a builder to take on a full time camp support role.

Marko's heart is to share Jesus. People noticed that Marko was serving them with love and wanted to know why. Under the ongoing discipleship of the local pastor and myself, Marko and his wife started to see fruit. In town and at the border camps, people were listening to the Bible verses and wisdom from these two servants of God. People began coming to faith. Although it is not 'safe' to do so, Marko continues to tirelessly serve and love people into the Kingdom even now.

*Name changed to protect privacy

**75 MISSIONARIES SUPPORTED
INCLUDES PRAXEIS**



PRAXEIS

40 SIMPLE CHURCHES PLANTED

One of the exciting ministries of Praxeis is that we reach sailors on ships in the Port of Brisbane. This story is from Trevor, one of our Praxeis workers.

Dave came to visit us in Brisbane and we were able to get him on board a ship stopping in the Port of Brisbane. The

crew of this particular ship is Filipino. I had been on this ship a number of times looking for a person of peace – someone who is spiritually hungry, open and shares with their community.

On one of my previous visits there was no spiritual openness amongst any of the crew, so when I took Dave onto the ship, I was expecting a similar atmosphere. We met the new captain, a man named Alberto. We had some general conversations with Alberto and

some of the other crew members whilst in the mess room. After a time, all the other crew members left the room and Alberto changed the conversation to one of a more personal and spiritual nature. He explained that he had

“With tears in his eyes, he talked about his desire to see the crew given help to genuinely follow Jesus.”

started to gather any of the crew who were interested, once each week, to pray and read the Bible together, but he admitted he was not much of a pastor! We were really excited to hear what God was up to on this ship! I was able to share with Alberto about the Discovery Bible Study process and we wondered if he would be interested in trying this with his crew. He was so happy to hear about Discovery groups. With tears in his eyes, he talked about his desire to see the crew given help to genuinely follow Jesus.

We exchanged details and since then have been in regular contact as I coach Alberto in facilitating a Discovery group. It has been a joy to hear of what God is doing on that ship and of more men coming to the group (around 12 regulars now).

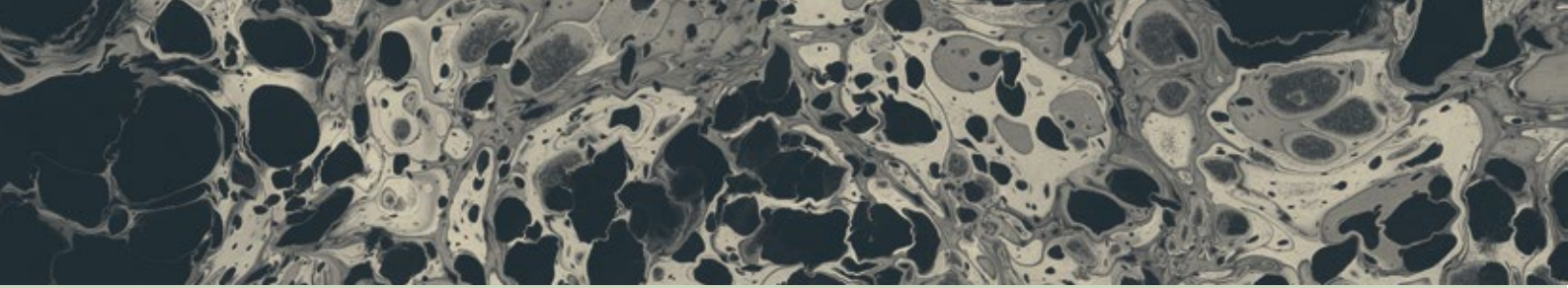
In our latest chat, Alberto said, “we do continue on with our fellowship on board and God is really good. We have new members joining us on our weekly fellowship... Please continue to pray that more members to be added in our Discovery group. God bless bro.”

Please pray for Alberto and the guys on this ship!

97 FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

18 BAPTISMS

300 PRE-CHRISTIANS DISCIPLED
THROUGH DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY



CHURCH ONLINE

*“Although there is
distance in terms
of land and sea,
there’s no distance
in terms of the
Holy Spirit!”*

PAULO



My name is Paulo. I was a kid who would open the door on Sunday morning for anyone who would tell me about Jesus. God gave me a desire to learn about Him. At a local mission, He gave me a place to learn biblical English, develop friendships with whole world and best of all, keep on being Christian. At eighteen, I started giving English classes in a private language school. I got lost at the age of 22 – wow, rock ‘n’ roll, no churches, many different religions, used to smoke and drink... then ten years later I begged God that I could be that kid I used to be.

Since then He has given me the opportunity to get back “home.” Four years ago I was baptised as a protestant. I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; I believe Jesus is the one and only way home – and home is communion with God! Since then I’ve been a member of the local church and have served in the praise group, as a kids’ leader, assisting the homeless, and many other things. Last year, God called me to give freely of all things. I started offering free English classes in different church communities as a way to gather people into the presence of God. I’ve been living by free offerings and I have definitely seen that God is our provider. 2016 was the hardest year ever because I slept without knowing whether I would have money to pay the bills. God conquered and I got by fine!

Aiming to keep updated with my English, and to see how people all over the world are preaching the Gospel, and also aiming to find a decent chat room for my English language students to practice, I found a link to Crossway

on Google. BINGO, BANG BOOM! This was what I was looking for – and so much more! People from all over the world were there, it was like God was saying, “It took years to bring you here, see it Paul?” I was really thrilled and started encouraging my students about going into all the world and preaching or helping with the Gospel!

At Church Online there is a sister called Monica (skilled in dealing with people) and she asked me whether I would like to become a service host. I met with Pastor Steve through Skype and since then have been meeting Crossway’s mates (and mates from all over) as God has prepared at the online service.

There are many people who ask for help with their English: a Brazilian called Jose, a Mongolian sister and many others. As we are hosting I help them understand the keys of the sermon and they are thankful for that; I love helping this way. People report that they love the praise songs and sometimes they ask for the name of the songs – been helping with that too; people need helpers and I’m glad to be there helping in any way!

I’m passionate for our Lord and want to share that – and you mates are spiritually and culturally close to me. Although there is distance in terms of land and sea, there’s no distance in terms of the Holy Spirit! I dance in the desert for the days are not always good, but God is! I dance and sing like David, because there’s no greater joy for me than taking part in the plans of the Kingdom of Heaven!

108 FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

DISCIPLES THAT MULTIPLY

*I'm looking for someone to read the Bible with,
I don't know whether you'd be interested?*

My name's David and for around four years I've been leading the Box Hill English Club, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). One evening one of the students, Danny,

said during our closing prayer time that he wanted to know more about Jesus (we ask each student what we can pray for them in the coming week). After the class I asked him if he would like to meet and read the Bible together to learn more and he said he would.

We started meeting in the upstairs Food Court at Box Hill Central. On the second week, Danny brought along his friend, Allen, to join our Bible reading time. After that, Danny found it difficult to keep attending but Allen kept coming along for a weekly Discovery Bible Study. After doing several readings on the miracles of Jesus, on about week six I asked Allen if he wanted to know how one could become a Christian. He said yes. So the following week, we went through the Four Spiritual Laws - quite slowly, as Allen still struggles with English. Of course, I wanted to be sure he understood each section.

*"After the class I asked him if he
would like to meet and read the
Bible together to learn more"*

At the end of that week, I asked Allen to think about what we had read.

The following week I simply started our study time by re-looking at the fourth law, which shows

in diagram fashion that we all have two choices. One is to have ourselves in charge of our lives and the other is to have Jesus/God in charge of our lives. I asked him who *he* wanted to have in charge of his life. Allen said he wanted Jesus to be in charge, so gladly I prayed with him there, and he became a Christian that day.

After that, I met with Allen for a number of weeks for Bible study, then he joined the small fortnightly Life Group I'm leading for younger Christians. Recently he returned to China, believing that it will be easier for him to secure employment. I have encouraged him to find a Christian fellowship there.

DAVID

79
NEW
DISCIPLES





LIFECARE

*"my sense of belonging, individuality
and peace is returning"*

I met a lady, Sarah, who brought me to Crossway Church. I was struggling to survive in all aspects of my life, financially and emotionally. I was alone and was going through a dark phase. I had no housing and my son wasn't with me. I had lost my inner will power and who I was as a person.

Crossway Church welcomed me with warm arms and with no judgement. I met extremely generous people within the church that brought me to their homes, made meals for me, clothed me, included me on outings and brought me to church to meet decent people.

Crossway LifeCare – also warm. I sought counselling for my emotional troubles and financial issues. I was given food packages, clothes, things for my child and glasses for reading. Not to mention the priceless privilege it has been to meet such a pure hearted community that holds only good intentions to help you without making you feel disadvantaged. I have met life friends within Crossway. In my 28 years I have never met such great people – loving, open, with so much care in their hearts. The religious involvement has been a blessing and learning. It has been an experience I will take with me.

Without Crossway's help, I would still be stuck in that dark place. I give full gratitude to Sarah (B-Together volunteer) for welcoming me within her community and bringing me back to life. I now have a beautiful home, my little boy reunites with me in couple of weeks and my sense of belonging, individuality and peace is returning. Crossway Church, LifeCare and the beautiful people are a part of our journey and are bettering our life.

GRACE*

*NOT HER REAL NAME

**794 PEOPLE STRUGGLING IN OUR COMMUNITY WERE
TRANSFORMED THROUGH HOPE, HEALING AND CARE**

54 NEW VOLUNTEERS

37 FIRST TIME COMMITMENTS

ATTENDANCE, FINANCE & NOTICEABLE GROWTH^{IN} MINISTRIES

ATTENDANCE

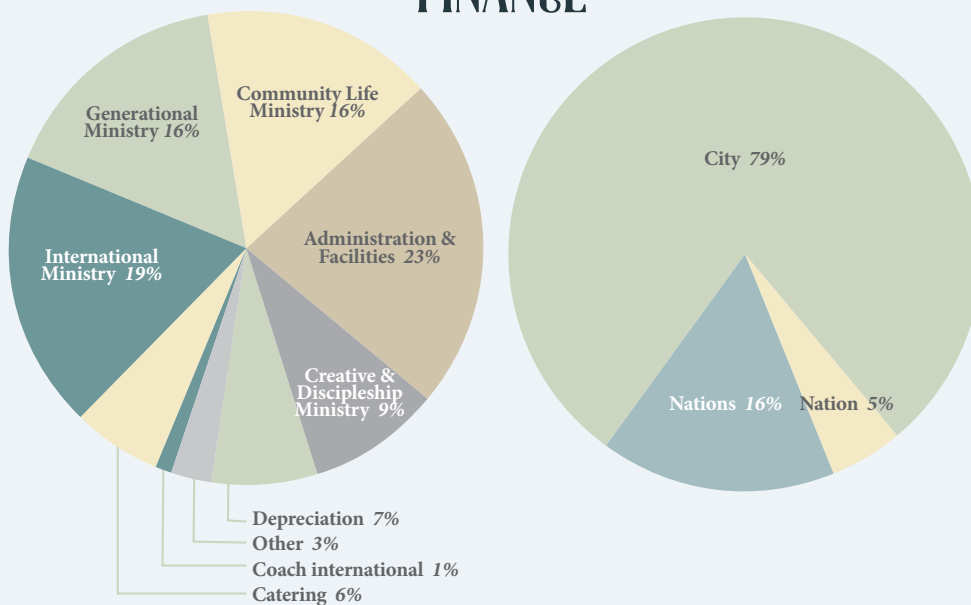
↑44% 6,675 OVERALL ATTENDANCE

(measured by average weekly physical and online attendance of all events including year-on-year inclusion of Easter and Christmas period attendees)

↓35% 3,481 EASTER PERIOD ATTENDANCE

↑6% 4,984 CHRISTMAS PERIOD ATTENDANCE

FINANCE



↑2.7% \$109,355 AVERAGE WEEKLY TITHES

↓5.7% \$7,461,764 TOTAL REVENUE

↓24.4% \$182,827 CHRISTMAS APPEAL GIVING

NOTICEABLE GROWTH^{IN} MINISTRIES

(measured by average weekly event attendance)

↑36% 2,589 CHURCH ONLINE

↑11% 163 MANDARIN CONGREGATION

↑9% 802 KIDSPACE

↑5% 54 INDONESIAN CONGREGATION

↑3% 219 CANTONESE CONGREGATION

↑2% 68 KOREAN CONGREGATION

↑9% 254 LIFE GROUPS

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them

HEBREWS 6:10

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

COLOSSIANS 3:17

