

# Closer/Further

## Our Values

Nothing matters more  
Jesus is always front and centre

There's room for you  
Anyone can experience authentic community

Everyone gets to play  
The mission of God in the hands of ordinary people

Dare to dream  
Bold faith leads to innovation, influence and impact

We take nothing for granted  
We respond to God's goodness with gratitude and generosity

## Our Vision

To see our city, nation and the nations  
become disciples of Jesus.

## Our Mission

Loving God, loving people, disciples  
that multiply.

# Closer/Further



Once again the name of Jesus is to be praised with the information in this report. God is on the move and we have much to celebrate.

My eyes always go to the primary missional impact of a community of faith, namely, how many people put their trust in Jesus for the first time and were baptised. Every other impact flows from this primary impact. All of the good that we may do into the future, every act of justice, every embrace of the marginalised, every worker sent and person disciplined flow from the collective capacity of this community of faith knowing how to be disciples that multiply. I have long moved past the idea that God is pleased with any of His children allowing His work to stop with them. His will is not exclusively that we become a better version of ourselves. In John 4.36-37 Jesus said, "The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!"

With hundreds putting their faith in Jesus and hundreds being baptised I am encouraged by our growing capacity to steward the gospel. You may have heard me say that in Australia it takes 100 worshipping Christians a full year to help one person put their trust in Jesus for the first time. This is a terrible commentary on Australian Christianity. At Crossway in 2019 the figure was more than 10%. We have fluctuated between 8-12% for almost a decade now. For the last five years it was normal for more than 50% of these new believers to be over the age of 18.

Last year around 250 people read the Bible with a pre-Christian friend. Amazingly 30% of these people put their trust in Jesus within the same year. We ought to pause and be prayerful about that. It is a remarkable result. What would happen if a greater number of Crossway people were willing to prayerfully consider who in their world liked them, listened to them and served them. To this target group what could be if we had the courage to say, "I am looking for someone to read the Bible with; I don't know whether you would be interested?" Our younger generations had the highest uptake in this and I praise God for their faith, leadership and challenge to the broader congregation.

With the simple discovery of the capacity to be disciples who multiply within the Australian context, Crossway launched Building a Discipling Culture in 2019. You can see the report on this initiative within. Suffice it to say the wind of God is in the sails and there is now broad interest across Australia and also from overseas.

I praise God for Pastor Sam Taylor and our South East Campus team who led the way last year with 31% growth. They were closely followed by our Youth Team with 22% growth. Our giving increased by 9% and our overall attendance by 3%. I want to thank everyone who sacrificially honoured God to support the mission.

To everyone who serves on Team Crossway I give you my heartfelt thanks. To the Board who have governed diligently, the staff who have sacrificed so much and to the entire family who call Crossway their family, I thank God for each of you.

**Dale Stephenson**  
Senior Pastor

Further



# First Time Commitments

Since I was young I have felt there was a source of power around my life that could protect, lead and direct me, without knowing exactly where it came from. It was only recently that I realised this power was actually the God who created our universe, the only true and living God.

When I first came to Australia, it was a new experience and environment. I met a very helpful friend who assisted me to settle down with accommodation needs. Subsequently, I got to know that he was a Christian. Later, my good neighbour directed me to a language class at Crossway as my English was poor. I accepted her invitation and soon realised that she too was a Christian.

On my first visit to Crossway, I felt the warmth of family at the Sunday service. It was an exciting one as I raised my hand as a first time visitor in the congregation. Thereafter, I got to know Peter and was invited to his small group gathering, which I gladly attended.

From then on, I spent every Monday with Peter reading the Bible and sharing thoughts about it. This has continued as I slowly understand more about the Lord Jesus, the creation, and the sin of mankind which causes us to be separated from God. The Lord

Jesus died for our sin as He was nailed on the cross and resurrected after three days. If we confess our sin and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, our sins will be forgiven and we will be children of God. Hence, I wanted to surrender my life to God and follow Him. Even though there may still be weakness within me, I can rely on Him for victory to overcome my old self.

As I look back, it seems all smooth and natural. However, I truly believe that it was the Lord's will and plan. During my darkest days, it was the Lord who accompanied me with His grace and protection, enabling me to be here today.

Because of the changes in my life through Christ Jesus, my life is filled with more peace and gratitude. I have fewer complaints about life and have become more humble and eager to help others. When I first moved to my neighbourhood, I had an aged neighbour whose children had moved out. I had the initiative to talk to her and subsequently helped her to perform chores like gardening and moving heavy objects. Through little things I grew to know more about God's love as His seed within me grew and matured. Praise God for His grace.

481 First Time Commitments\*

*\*Includes 46 Praxeis Australia*



# Baptisms

Ten years ago I came to Australia as a backpacker and met up with some old friends in Melbourne. A very nice couple, Jimmy and Janet, showed me around. The first stop was a Crossway service where I first realised they were Christians. Even at that time I could feel peace and joy with this church.

By 2018, I was a resident here with two sons aged five and three. By chance I came across Melissa, who happened to be a Crossway member, and she invited me to come along to hear more about Jesus. We all felt it was quite a coincidence and now realise it was part of God's plan – God was going to show me His awe and wonder through a great occurrence in my life!

After a few visits to church early this year, my doctor told me that my x-ray scan showed a tumor and further diagnosis was needed. A week later, accompanied by my husband and friends, I was told the very bad news of my already spread lung cancer. What followed next was a period of grave darkness. I felt very confused, angry and heartbroken. I could not get to sleep and kept thinking about my death. I called out the ambulance service three times. Satan was killing me, not by taking my life yet but through my fear.

In hospital I was about to collapse as I lost

control of my breathing, then God suddenly showed me a beam of white light and asked what I wanted from Him. I answered Him: "Please give me breath and make me strong again; I want to live on well." In a matter of seconds I felt I was coming back.

God really saved me through my prayers. Now I really know God is so real.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Since that comeback I have been undergoing various treatments. My body has been weak but the Holy Spirit has been with me and keeps reminding me to stay with the church. I accepted Jesus and He became my Saviour, thank God! I pray daily for my own peace and faith. It will not be easy ahead but I know God will be with me. We are not by ourselves, God has a plan for every one of His children.

I am quite settled these days. Despite worries and hardship I know God will take care of me and He is using me to spread the Gospel to my mother and family. Thank God I was recently baptised, together with my mother, at Crossway. Indeed, for a long time God has been taking good care of me, even before I came to Jesus.

## 207 Baptisms\*

*\*Includes 23 Praxeis Australia*



"But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green and they never stop producing fruit."

- Jeremiah 17:7-8



"God is capable of using anyone to reach anyone, no matter how old or young you are."

## Team Crossway

I've been serving on Team Crossway in Crossway Kids for eight years, first as a small group leader and now as a worship leader and leading others as they lead their small groups. Being on Team Crossway is great! I love seeing kids of all different ages and stages learn about God and grow in their faith. The best bit is seeing kids who have grown and you've journeyed with give back and lead when they finish grade six and move into high school.

One of the best parts of my role is coming alongside younger leaders and working with them to help create an environment where kids can come and make friends, grow to know their leaders and learn as much as possible about God. It is a great privilege to be able to minister into their lives and play a part indirectly in seeing kids develop in their knowledge of God.

In recent years, I've had the opportunity to step up in the worship environments of our

primary rooms and alongside the Crossway Kids staff, expand the worship team and introduce live worship into our 5/6 space and on Big Step Weekend.

My biggest highlight has been leading a small group of boys from year one to year six and now on into Crossway Youth. I've seen many of them take the Big Step and choose to follow Jesus for themselves for the first time. I love seeing some of them now part of Team Crossway leading alongside me. It's a really clear example of God's work in their lives and in Crossway Kids as a whole.

One thing God has taught me through my years serving is that God is capable of using anyone to reach anyone, no matter how old or young you are. I have been encouraged by older leaders to be confident in myself and my ability to minister to kids and now, leaders. God can use me whether I'm leading a group, acting on stage or interacting with a child or another leader.

2013 Team Members in Service

542 New Placements

# Membership

We moved to Melbourne from Singapore with our two daughters, Caitlyn and Kyra, on 1 January 2017. Apart from settling into our new home, our priority was to find and settle into a church home.

We visited a couple of churches and loved the warm welcome and fellowship extended to us, but did not feel a strong conviction to be planted there.

We shared our predicament with long-time friends and they related how blessed their family had been since they had moved to Crossway, and they invited us to visit.

We will never forget the first message we heard at Crossway – while other churches were exhorting their congregations to be ready for the new thing God would do in the new year, the first message we experienced at Crossway was about “Suffering for Christ”!

There was no mincing of words or marketing the gospel in pretty packaging, but instead, the message challenged us to count the cost of being a true disciple. Instead of being put off, it stirred in us a deeper hunger to follow Jesus in the biblical sense. We knew that Crossway was where we would be challenged with fidelity to the Word, and we would be able to grow.

We experienced God in uncanny ways and He would meet us at every juncture of our personal lives. We were challenged to get involved by serving in church.

We were probably the only couple who attended Team Night in 2018 without already being involved in service, and Pastor Dale and Pastor Tim Heng took the time to speak with us and help us find areas we could be involved in.

We began serving in the worship ministry and Welcome Team, and our daughters also got the chance to serve at the café and at Crossway Kids. And what a blessing it's been to be involved and forge close church community relationships!

When Pastor Dale shared the church vision sermon series in 2019, it resonated with us and we really didn't have to think twice about making the commitment to become members of Crossway.

It is hard for us to fully express the joy and gratitude we feel towards God for planting us at Crossway. We don't have it all together, but God has blessed us with a church home where we feel accepted just as we are, and He has blessed us with a loving church family whom we can grow with together to love God and love others more authentically.

2134 Total Members

161 New Members



“God has blessed us with a church home where we feel accepted just as we are, and He has blessed us with a loving church family whom we can grow with together to love God and love others more authentically.”



"These people saved my life. They brought back my joy."

## Life Groups

In 2013 I was living the high life – travelling the world, meeting heads of state and putting together deals. As a toy and game designer my creations included the MasterChef game, the chocolate bilby and a maths game with a version in Braille.

I was overseas and about to finalise a deal when the relevant government delegate asked for a \$2 million bribe. Once the private investors got wind of this, they pulled their funding. The same day, my Mercedes was stolen and corrupt police arrested me on trumped up visa charges. My landlord then locked me out of my luxury apartment, inside which was my whole studio and all my possessions. I just felt like Job. All I had was the clothes on my back. I seriously contemplated jumping in front of a train.

Friends bought me a ticket back to Australia. Owing thousands in back taxes and with my company at zero balance, I lived with my daughter and spent almost five years depressed and alone in my room. During this time, a car accident left me temporarily blinded and my left Achilles tendon shredded. I was already using a walking stick from a birth defect in both feet.

In June 2019 I knew I really needed help. The Lord was there for me in 1989 when He took my wife suddenly home when my children were 7, 4 and 6 months. He sustained me through all those hard years whilst they grew. I knew I had to get back up on my feet (or crutches) and try.

I was driving in East Burwood when I saw

the Crossway sign. I knew I had to go. That first Sunday, no-one talked to me and I felt all alone. I went home sad but so uplifted hearing Pastor Dale. God cared for me. I filled in a form and asked for prayer.

I was invited to Life Group. I went along. I know I made a fool of myself. I slapped myself in the face all the way home. That's it! Not going back.

In July 2019 I had surgery on my left foot. It didn't go so well and I was feeling down when two angels walked into my hospital room – Peter and Juanita from Crossway. Wow, someone does care. I will give it another go. After I was finally discharged from hospital, Peter and Juanita faithfully picked me up and drove me to church. They introduced me to so many people and encouraged me to join Life Group again. I joined Amal's group.

These people saved my life. They brought back my joy. My humour is coming back. They tease me. They help me when I cannot stand up or get things for myself. They make me cry and laugh and sing and pray and rejoice. And praise. Thank you, Jesus.

Over Christmas Amal said they are breaking for the holidays. I put my hand up and said NO. Everyone agreed and we kept going. They even encouraged me in my business. I have three new clients – Christian clients – after five years of none. Now as if that is NOT God - come on!

Thank you Crossway. Thank you, Life Group. Thank you, Bill. Thank you, Jesus.

# Missional Communities

As a family with four children, three of whom have additional needs, Crossway has been a constant source of blessing and support through ministries such as MOPS, Crossway Kids and Crossway Youth. And now through the Additional Needs Ministry, there is an extra level of support and sense of community among other families with additional needs. The training and insights provided to both parents and to team members have been valuable in better understanding how to help our children. Knowing that our children are welcomed and valued, as they develop their own personal relationship with Jesus, gives us as parents a sense of peace in belonging to such a community because that is not always the case in the wider community during the week. Crossway is a safe environment for both our children and as a family.

In 2019, our eldest son was encouraged to

attend the Youth Winter Camp, along with one of his friends. During the camp they were supported by both the Youth Leaders and the Additional Needs Ministry. A few weeks after the camp, after Friday Night Youth, he got into the car to give the good news that he had accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour that night with his small group. Then in December 2019, I had the privilege of leading him in baptism. It has also been great watching him develop as one of the leaders in Crossway Kids, where he is encouraged to use his passion and abilities to worship Jesus.

For our children with additional needs, it is so important that they can feel safe and valued for who they are, a unique child of God. They have so much to offer when given the chance, which is what Crossway's Additional Needs Ministry is helping to facilitate. The wider community needs this safe and caring environment.

14 Missional Communities

1 New Missional Community

"Knowing that our children are welcomed and valued, as they develop their own personal relationship with Jesus, gives us as parents a sense of peace in belonging to such a community"







"It was such a simple yet profound way  
of reading the Bible"

## Disciples that Multiply

After having completed the Alpha course, my partner and I found ourselves wanting to continue our journey to learn more about Jesus. The conception of AlphaNext at Crossway came at the perfect time and has been nothing short of a blessing - God's divine timing.

AlphaNext gave me an opportunity to open the Bible and read it in a manner where I could listen to what God was saying to me in the passage. Ultimately, I was also presented with the question of what to do next. We would contain our discussion on the passage and it was such a simple yet profound way of reading the Bible.

I also made some wonderful new friends. We would meet together on a weekly basis, share a delicious meal, read the Bible and learn about Jesus' life in the New Testament. Utilizing the Bible Discovery Method, we would reflect on what we thought Jesus wanted to tell us through the passage, how

we could apply it in our lives and troubles, and then go into the week with fresh perspective and encouragement from our friends and community.

Meaningful heart-to-heart conversations are hard to come by in this digital day and age, whether it is with our colleagues, friends or even loved ones. It is rare and very special to have a safe space like AlphaNext where you can be inspired by the life of Jesus, have vulnerable and thought-provoking conversations, as well as share in each other's joys and hardships in life.

AlphaNext has had such a positive impact on my Christian journey, and I really believe that even within our AlphaNext group, it has helped many of our friends to deepen their relationship with Jesus. It's given me a tool where I can read the Bible with someone else, knowing that God will reveal himself to me when I'm seeking him.

246  
Read the Bible with  
a pre-Christian friend

74  
Accepted Jesus as  
their Lord and Saviour

# Campuses

As we look ahead, dependent on God and plan for Crossway's continuing growth we have developed over the past year an intentional Multi-Campus Strategy.

The strategy supports our current expression of being one Church in multiple locations and languages and establishes a growth-enabling structure for the further multiplication of campuses in the future, while also supporting the growth of Building a Discipling Culture across the nation.

Our campuses are at the front-line of our vision. They are where we gather for worship & teaching, experience community, find meaningful opportunities to serve and build leaders.

It is exciting to now have three campus pastors appointed, who report to me as Executive Pastor.

Burwood East – Pastor Mark Purser

South East – Pastor Sam Taylor

Asian Languages – Pastor Alex Ho

We hope in the future to appoint an Online Campus Pastor as we grow our online ministry.

Under our new strategy, pastoral staff now

align with our campus structure.

Campus functions include Care, Life Groups, Prayer, Children & Families, Youth and Young Adults.

Our campus teams will be complemented by a Central Services team, aimed at providing vital ministry support to our campuses.

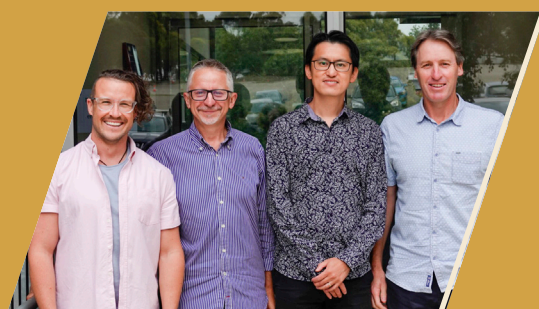
Central functions include: Creative Arts (worship, production, communications), LifeCare, Administration, Finance, People/HR, Governance and Infrastructure.

All staff ultimately report to our Executive Team, with all our ministries governed by a single Board.

While important, ultimately strategy and structure only exist to serve culture and vision and so it's exciting to see how this new model is supporting Kingdom growth and influence across our city, nation and nations.

Please join me in praying for our Campus Pastors and teams and our Central Service staff. They join with more than 2000 unpaid team members to make up our wonderful TeamCrossway – the ministry heart of our great church community.

**Scott Pilgrim**  
Executive Pastor



"it's exciting to see how this new model is supporting Kingdom growth and influence across our city, nation and nations."



#### BDC

52 Coaching Clusters

50 Churches

9 Denominations

7 Regions

#### COACH Network\*

768 Participants

1009 Mentors

74% Participants achieved a significant life goal

24% Increase in participant resilience

51% Participants engaged with their local church

118 Partners (with 11 locations in the UK)

## Further

#### International Missions\*\*

26 Churches Planted

753 First Time Commitments

127 Baptisms

405 Leaders Trained

25 DBM (Discovery Bible Method) Groups)

#### Praxeis

223 Groups (including teams, churches and Discovery Groups)

gathered around Australia and internationally

50 Discovery Groups in Aus & NZ which have birthed nine second generation groups

48 Discovery Groups in the nations which have birthed 50 second generation groups

772 People on a discovery journey towards Jesus

46 First Time Commitments

23 Baptisms

1000s of new believers in 100s of new groups in Central India

*\*COACH Network figures, including Crossway*

*\*\*These figures are a snapshot based on newsletters sent in by our international workers. The full picture of how God has been touching lives cannot be quantified!*



# Building a Discipling Culture

BDC is an initiative that springs from Crossway with a view to helping to influence the various tribes/denominations of Christianity across Australia. It is a two year process that involves a fortnightly online coaching session for the pastor together with a guiding coalition of six people from their congregation.

Up to twenty times per year for two years we spend an hour together online helping them develop their language and practices around how to build a discipling culture in their context and tribe. In addition to this, twice a year we bring an intensive to their capital or regional centre where they are further inspired and educated as a team and from which they leave with a game plan for the next six months which they themselves have created at the intensive. Their game plan becomes a framework of accountability for their coaching sessions.

Initially the coaching is to assist the pastor and their guiding coalition to learn how to be disciples who know how to multiply. We introduce them to biblical ideas of a person of peace and help to train them in Discovery Bible Method. If in the first six months the team learns some of these simple practices they will be well positioned to advance to the

next level, whereby they are able to coach clusters in their own church context as to how to be a disciple who knows how to multiply. This is the essence of the second intensive, as well as introducing the church to the idea of becoming 'impact focused' rather than simply 'process focused'. The primary measures of how many people are reading the Bible with a pre-Christian friend and how many people are putting their trust in Jesus for the first time are introduced. Intensives three and four move into Missional Communities and sparking movement more broadly.

Ultimately, our hope is to help Australian Christianity move from decline to growth in the next decade. By the close of 2020 we hope to be assisting 1% of the churches of the nation. We are currently working across nine denominations. Already we have interest internationally which we are entertaining for 2021 but currently our primary focus is Australia.

**"There is a way to purposely impact our  
community for Jesus."  
- BDC participant**





52  
Coaching Clusters

50  
Churches

9  
Denominations

7  
Regions







## Praxeis

A key focus for Praxeis is to see new groups begin - groups that gather together people who are spiritually hungry to explore the Bible and see what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. With new Discovery Groups as our focus, we have been praying and preparing for God to move in new ways across Australia and the world – and He is doing just that.

We are seeing growing groups and teams of workers in Queensland, WA, Sydney and Victoria. We are also witnessing groups rapidly growing in New Zealand and Indonesia, along with a number of other countries around the world.

People are catching the vision of what it is to be a disciple-maker who helps people draw close to God, like Hannah in New Zealand.

After attending training led by the Praxeis

team in New Zealand, Hannah met a person who was keen to know about Jesus. Hannah's first instinct was to explain the gospel to this person and pray with them. But remembering her training and seeing an opportunity to share the message of Jesus more broadly, Hannah suggested to the seeking-lady that she gather her family together and explore the Bible. That is exactly what she did!

Now this entire family is learning about Jesus and sharing what they are learning with others. There is already the potential of a second Discovery Group beginning. Through the power of God's hand in this situation and the expanse of movement thinking, many people have met Jesus. Hannah is now gathering other followers of Jesus together to learn more about Disciple-Making Movements.

**223 Groups**  
(including teams, churches and Discovery Groups) gathered around Australia and internationally

**50 Discovery Groups in Aus & NZ** which have birthed nine second generation groups

**48 Discovery Groups in the nations** which have birthed 50 second generation groups

**772 People** on a discovery journey towards Jesus

**46 First Time Commitments**

**23 Baptisms**

**1000s of new believers in 100s of new groups in Central India**

Further

# LifeCare

Crossway LifeCare continued to show the love of Jesus to those in tough places in 2019. We helped 1300+ people flourish by giving them a hand up rather than a hand out through our Community Mentoring, Financial Care, Counselling, Domestic Violence Recovery program and Community Connections gatherings.

Food parcel demand increased in 2019 as more and more people in our community struggle with food insecurity. Many of those who received parcels were able to be mentored through our Financial Care program, helping them to regain their feet and begin the journey to financial flourishing. A new missional community for those with financial issues was started last year, offering both financial education and peer support.

Our professional Christian counselling and psychology services continued to help those with a wide range of needs and a new therapy group ran for those who have a family member in the prison system.

LifeCare women's centre graduated eight women from the Courage to Heal program,

helping them and their children rebuild their confidence, self-esteem and lives as survivors of domestic violence.

Our community meals were a highlight of the month for many isolated and lonely people. We also started family outings each holiday period and were able to provide two sessions of Christmas celebrations for more than 170 of our participants, all of which created a caring community and a place of belonging for everyone.

Our COACH mentors walked alongside their participants, being a friend with a purpose to help them reach their goals. We were able to provide mentoring support for children and youth from three schools, with some of the children even referring their friends!


We truly appreciate all that our staff, volunteers and partners contribute. The dedication of those who give their time, effort, resources and prayers does not go unnoticed and we know that we cannot achieve all that we do without this support. Thank you for partnering with us in helping those in tough places to flourish.

**1311 People struggling in our community were transformed through hope, healing and care**

**2 First Time Commitments**

**41 New (first time) Team Members**





"The Kids Coach program is very highly regarded by both parents and students to the extent that I have had personal letters from students requesting a coach. They love spending time with their mentors and really appreciate their efforts."



Closer



Closer



"genuine friendships that are about growth, healing and restoration"

## COACH Community Mentoring

Simone met Miranda during a challenging time in her life. She has three special needs children, was homeless for the third time, and was going through a difficult relationship breakdown. They started meeting fortnightly and now her Mentor, Miranda is only an email away. Simone can call up to just have a chat, and knows that she has someone to talk to during the hard times.

Simone says she calls it "hope, instead of COACH, as it's a hope program."

Prior to joining COACH, Simone says she spent most of the day in bed due to her illness and not being able to cope with the stresses and pressure of everyday life, and that "having

a special needs kid has been isolating and it's been hard to maintain friendships". The COACH program and her relationship with Miranda have enabled her to find hope. She is now debt free and working in the café which has been a great confidence boost for her.

Miranda shares that COACH exemplifies the things she is passionate about, giving time to build genuine friendships that are about growth, healing and restoration. She sees COACH as a program that anyone can be involved in, mobilising ordinary people for extra-ordinary community impact.

768 Participants

1009 Mentors

74% Participants achieved a significant life goal

24% Increase in participant resilience

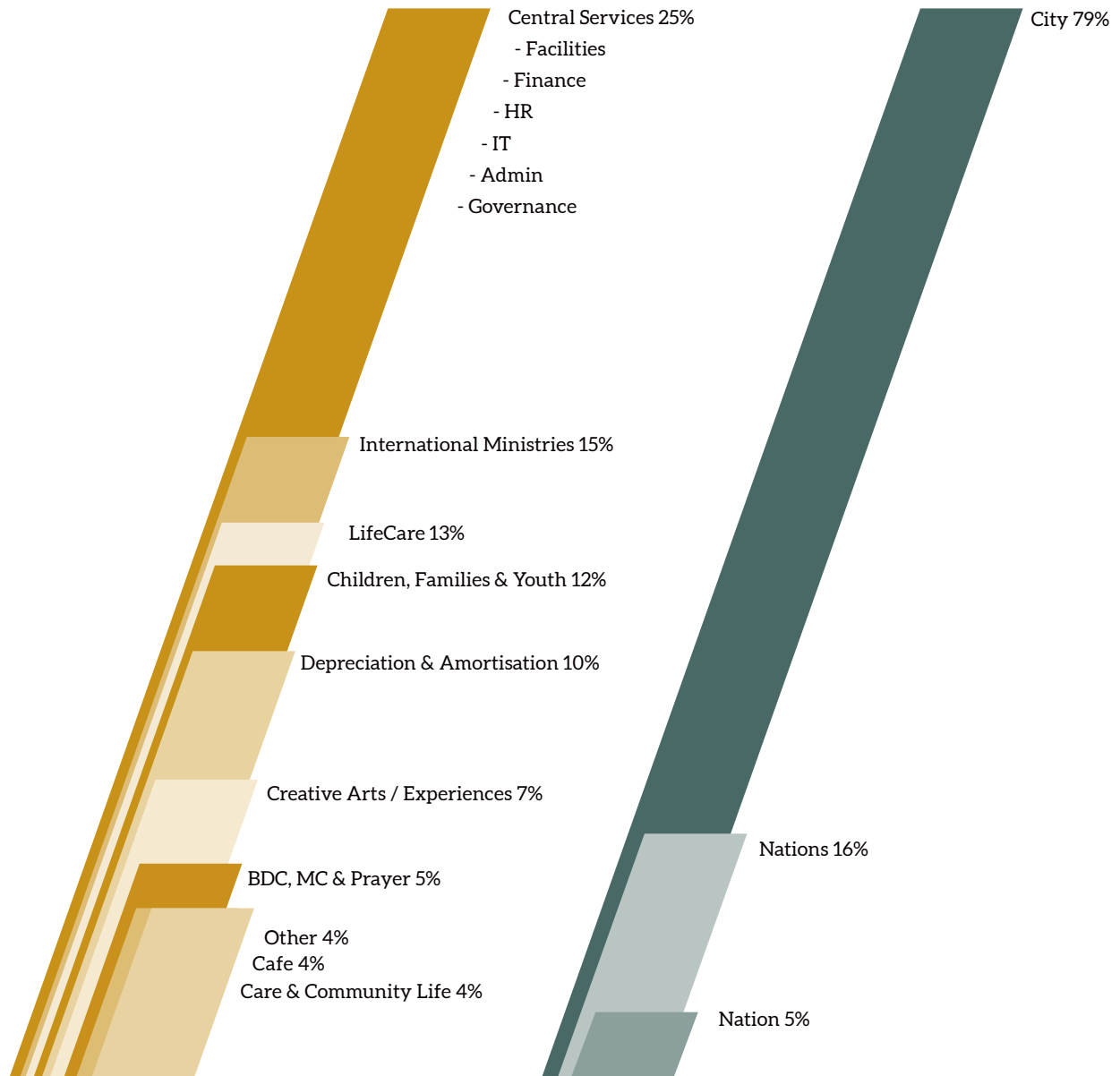
51% Participants engaged with their local church

118 Partners (with 11 locations in the UK)

# Attendance & Noticeable Growth in Ministries



# Finances



Total Revenue **\$12,378,998** ↑ 9%

Average Weekly Tithes **\$126,178** ↑ 9%

Christmas Appeal 2019 **\$304,374** ↑ 3%

“I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who remain in me, and I in them,  
will produce much fruit. For apart from  
me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

 CROSSWAY