



ALL THINGS NEW

CROSSWAY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

 CROSSWAY



THE
COVID
REPORT

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

Loving God, loving people, disciples that multiply.

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

Kintsugi - the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending broken pieces with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold. It treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to hide.

And the one sitting on the throne said,
“Look, I am making everything new!” And
then he said to me, “Write this down, for
what I tell you is trustworthy and true.”

— Revelation 21:5



All Things New

2020 was a set apart year in most of our lives and not in the positive sense. It was the year of the global pandemic. It was the year that Melbourne went into multiple lockdowns with the longest being 112 days. People worked from home where they were able to and home schooling was laid on top for those with younger children. Team Crossway, which has nearly 2000 participants, was largely suspended. This restriction suspended something in the order of 5000 people hours per week of service.

In response virtually everything that is Crossway organisationally was sent online. By God's grace we had already been doing Church Online for a number of years and were ready to make such a move. The fresh challenge was to move everything online and with great dexterity that is exactly what happened. So we have called this 'The Covid Report' because in the future when people look back they will have a context for this distinctive report.

Repeatedly in 2020 God surprised us. Whether it was financially with substantial funds flowing into the Kingdom Fund or whether it was with groceries when the call would go out, repeatedly the people of God responded. The challenge was to be the church scattered, loving those in need, being called to pastor our streets and to disciple people towards faith in Jesus via the digital platform. God opened an ongoing relationship with the local police, expanding our relationship with our local community. In 2020, 100 people put their trust in Jesus for the first time and 61 were baptised. This is lower than normal but 2020 was not a normal year. Other domains expanded significantly with Building a Discipling Culture growing from coaching 34 churches at the start of the year to 91 churches at the end. The ministry of LifeCare grew, as did the demand because of the hardship that people were experiencing, and more people came to church online than were previously attending physically!

So as you read through this report I pray you will be encouraged by all that God did in an extraordinary year. Thank you to each one who prayed, served and gave. To God be the glory!



Dale Stephenson
Senior Pastor

First Time Commitments — Amy

In 1992 I was caught in a life predicament that made me feel angry and upset. That week, I went to church. Despite my complicated mood, in church I immediately felt calm. I felt the presence of a force to support me, comfort me and give me direction. Subsequently I was able to calmly deal with the problem.

When the epidemic came in 2020, I entered a state of complete withdrawal and had nothing to do. I became anxious and worried and had trouble falling asleep, sometimes only sleeping for one or two hours a night.

Under the guidance of friends, in September I participated in an online Bible study. I knew I would gain something because in the past, whenever I was unhappy, just going to church would always make me feel safe and joyful. It was the same this time. Through Bible study, I realized that I was weak and incompetent, and I also deepened my knowledge of God. With faith in God, I can find rest, peace and joy! At present, my sleep condition is improving, thank God!

In the year of the epidemic, I decided to be baptised. I have a deep understanding: God is omnipotent, He is everywhere. As long as you approach Him with humility, He will give you confidence and joy!

I really like the atmosphere of the church and the mutual love of brothers and sisters. I testify that the Lord is in them! As long as I go to church, as long as I am with all the brothers and sisters, I feel peace and joy, because the Lord walks with me!

100 First Time Commitments

"With faith in God, I can find rest, peace and joy!"



Baptisms — Eliana

When I was around seven years old, my mum and I prayed the 'Acceptance Prayer' and I accepted Christ Jesus into my heart. From that day onwards I knew that Jesus would permanently be my best friend and that I was a follower of Jesus Christ.

Baptism to me is about making a public declaration, telling God and others that I have chosen to be a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, and that I want to continue on the next step of my faith journey.

During my Discover Baptism lessons over Zoom, I learnt what baptism is and the steps to being baptised. I also learnt that when I am immersed into the water, it symbolises that Jesus' blood has washed away my sin. When I rise up from the water I am a new person, cleansed and pure. Just like when John the Baptist baptised Jesus, and the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove and descended on Him.

In the days prior to my baptism, Pastor Andrew personally delivered a brand new inflatable pool right to our front door. On that day, 30th of May 2020, we setup the inflatable pool in our garage. We boiled many kettles of water and mixed these with cold tap water. Due to the COVID restrictions, we could not invite any visitors. So I asked my God Grandpa to come over and baptize me with my dad assisting, and mum being the camera/video tech crew.

I felt nervous at first but also very excited about passing through the water of baptism. When I came up, I felt spiritually alive, blessed and filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Then Grandpa prayed a blessing over me. It was a very uplifting day for the eleven-year-old me, and an extraordinary experience I will never forget. I wanted my baptism to be a memorial celebration.

I do not think that I will ever forget the year 2020: during the height of the COVID-19 season, getting baptised at home, in an inflatable pool, in our garage at the start of winter. I choose to follow Jesus and there is no turning back.

61 Baptisms

"I do not think that I will ever forget the year 2020: during the height of the COVID-19 season, getting baptised at home, in an inflatable pool"





Team Crossway – Alpha Team

The Alpha team, like all of our teams at Crossway, is family. In fact the manner in which we view it is more like family on mission together.

Over the years that Crossway has run Alpha, the team has grown not just in number but in having a real genuine pastoral heart for folk that attend, who we call guests. Almost 75% of the team came to know Jesus because of the Alpha course. As part of their discipleship journey, that love for God our Father has been expressed in the way in which they have loved others and the extended community that flows from just being in relationship.

Over the last four years, that discipleship journey has taken many expressions in terms of service opportunities within the Alpha team, including Alpha Next, serving meals and encouraging our guests after their Alpha journeys.

Other expressions of Team Crossway would be similar. The tasks may be different, whether Saturday, Sunday or on a weekday, however the vision remains the same. We all want to create an environment where the good news of Jesus is shared, and working together in teams just so happens to facilitate that.

1945 Team Members in Service*

320 New Placements

*During much of 2020, serving was disrupted by lockdowns

“more like family on mission together.”



Membership – Sherry

I’ve often had the privilege of attending conferences held by different churches, so I was no stranger to Crossway. But until 2017, I was just a passing visitor. That year, my life fell in a heap and I was plunged into crisis spiritually, emotionally and financially. I couldn’t get comfort from people and I felt rejected by God. Then, one day in October, I participated in the Crossway Mandarin service for the first time.

Through the song, “Dwelling in the House of the Lord Forever”, the Holy Spirit reminded me that God remembered the prayer I had prayed when I first believed in Him. Then, through an interpreter, Pastor Scott Mitchell shared ‘Hannah’s prayer’ that morning, reminding me that God would also hear my suffering. That worship made me feel that my Heavenly Father opened His hands and welcomed me home with His loving hug. So, I returned back to this big Crossway family.

Since then, I have attended Mandarin services on a regular basis. I have realized that Crossway is a church that is unified in truth and action, and is a church that is committed to living out the Christian faith. The church cares for its local community, supports other churches in Australia, and expands passionately through international missions to truly practice the vision of “Seeing our city, nation and the nations to become disciples of Jesus.”

In this big family, I feel the love among us. Our pastor, Pastor Huang, always treats members with a listening and caring attitude. After I fell ill in 2020, the care given to me by brothers and sisters in the church gave me a warmth as of my own family. I thank God for leading me to Crossway to meet everyone here, so we can get to know each other and love each other more in Christ. I am so proud to be a member of Crossway.

2190 Total Members

32 New Members

“From acquaintance to friend to family in love with one another”

Groups

Life Groups — Angela

I have been attending Crossway on and off for about eight or nine years. In a large church it's easy to hide; fellowship had become my hurdle. I did have some Christian friends through work and also through other spheres of my life, but the pastors kept saying to connect into a Life Group, which was something I'd never followed through on.

In commencing 2020, I was in my dream job teaching music and my schedule was packed, when suddenly it all stopped - lockdown! My world was reduced to Foxtel, Facebook and Netflix and I only got to see Mum and Aunty, both in retirement villages.

I loved what I saw Crossway doing with Lifecare and thought that maybe if I can't shop for Aunty then perhaps I could volunteer for something constructive. Then on the same page was 'Taste and See' Life Groups, so I thought perhaps now was the time to give it another shot.

Zooming into our first meeting with Pastor Bill and Jethro was fabulous! Meeting all the others was like a breath of fresh air. I was really enjoying this opportunity to connect with people who shared my faith, values and beliefs. There was a freedom in that which I had missed and forgotten.

When we are having a tough week, we message our prayer requests at any time into our chat group and follow up with praise reports for the blessings and breakthroughs that follow. We are not meant to journey through life alone but in choosing travel companions you need to check your navigation, destination and purpose. To quote an old song, With Christ in my vessel, I can smile at the storm as we go sailing home.

238 Life Groups
10 New Life Groups

"We are not meant to
journey through life alone"

Prayer Ministry

Over a number of years now, Crossway has been running a Prayer Ministry group. We have been meeting monthly to pray for people who are seeking a breakthrough in their lives. This group continues to see God moving as we minister to people and cover them in prayer.

The ministry happens across two separate spaces, with one team in the Chapel praying directly over people, supported at the same time by another team in the Prayer Room. It is amazing the words that God gives to the team in the Prayer Room. Even as the two groups stay apart, God is present in every place and those receiving prayer (as well as the prayer teams!) are always amazed and encouraged by the words, verses and pictures He gives.

Recently, a woman was seeking prayer for a very challenging situation. As she was receiving prayer in the Chapel, the support team (in the Prayer Room) were shown a picture and given verses that were absolutely for her. When they shared it with the woman, she was blown away by the way it fitted with her very personal experience. She was brought to tears with what God was showing her. Even some of the Prayer Team were crying. This gave her hope and encouragement and the assurance of God's very real presence in her situation.

The Prayer Ministry group is a very special and united team and it is a privilege to be involved with a group like this.

23 Missional Communities
9 New Missional Communities

"Even as the two groups stay apart, God
is present in every place"

Missional Communities

23 Missional Communities
9 New Missional Communities





All Things New

100	First Time Commitments
61	Baptisms
1945	Team Members in Service
320	New Team Placements
2190	Members
32	New Members
238	Life Groups
10	New Life Groups
23	Missional Communities
9	New Missional Communities
23	Read the Bible with a pre-Christian friend
23	Clusters
5	New Clusters
73	International Workers Supported

Praxeis

56	Discovery groups in Aus & NZ
114	Discovery groups in other nations
247	Total groups (Churches and Discovery Groups)
520	People involved in making disciples
1039	People on a discovery journey towards Jesus
129	New followers of Jesus

Explosive Growth in India:


900+ Discovery groups | 12,500 Baptisms | 20,000 in the movement

Building a Discipling Culture

85	Clusters
91	Churches
11	Denominations
8	Regions

LifeCare

1591	People struggling in our community were transformed through hope, healing and care
2203	Food parcels distributed
2	New Missional Communities formed



Campuses

Burwood East

Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown, while inconvenient, offered a great opportunity to engage with our neighbourhoods.

It was so encouraging to see our wider church community contributing to the mission and vision of Crossway and actively sharing the good news in diverse and creative ways. These included ‘Pastoring Your Street’, inviting a friend over to watch an online service, reading the Bible together, and offering practical assistance such as lawn mowing, meals and food hampers. We walked dogs together and shared the produce from our vegie patches. We met our neighbours and engaged with them at a deeper level. Some had the opportunity to share their faith story and pray for people. We learned more about our neighbours including their names, occupations and aspirations.

Right throughout 2020 the opportunities to shine the light of Jesus continued to present themselves, and we trust the seeds planted in lives will have eternal consequences in God’s Kingdom.

Mark Purser
Campus Pastor, Burwood East

Asian Languages

Throughout 2020, the unprecedented Covid challenge allowed us to truly experience God’s blessings. We were thankful for God’s protection and guidance that amid the pandemic we were more inspired and united in serving Him, witnessing how He has been doing new wonders – “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Roman 12:2)

We watched in awe as our online Alpha course seamlessly prospered right over this time, along with God’s provision of dedicated co-workers, targeted participants and eventually, more Christ followers. Covid restrictions could hardly stop the Gospel going around and our Alpha openings reached out as far as Sydney, Hong Kong, UK and Kenya, where individuals ended up committing to Jesus, becoming disciples and even being baptized. Amen!

The Greatest Commission is fuelled by the Greatest Commandment, whereas the latter without the former could just be stagnant. Let’s give glory to the Lord as He makes all things new in 2021, and as we keep loving God, loving people and making disciples that multiply.

Alex Ho
Campus Pastor, Asian Languages

South East

2020 – what a year! In the short life-span of the South East Campus, the pandemic that hit had the potential to have a campus-killing effect on the young congregation, but what we saw God do is what God does – using all things for His glory and the advancement of the gospel.

One of the exciting things to come out of the challenges of 2020 was the beginning of an expression of Lifecare into the local community through the South East Campus. A hamper delivery team was mobilised, with unpaid Team Crossway members delivering hampers weekly to local people in tough situations. Many significant connections were made, conversations had and prayers prayed that we dare to believe will have an eternal impact.

A partnership with Federation University (300m from where we meet) was created, with a “pantry” being setup for stranded and unemployed international students, with Lifecare providing food. The opportunity for Crossway South East to establish ourselves as an essential part of the community was grasped and taken hold of.

Great things took place in and through the South East Campus as a result of the pandemic, and God used ordinary people to advance His mission in the South East area of Melbourne. Jesus promised to build His church, and nothing will stop it, not least a pandemic.

Sam Taylor
Campus Pastor, South East





Missions — Scott & Sarah

The death of our beloved neighbour, “Grandfather Daa”, was shattering for us and our children. He and his family had taken us under their wing and had been our Thai family since we had moved into the small farming town in rural North-East Thailand.

His funeral was held in typical Thai Buddhist fashion and for five nights the area in front of our house was overflowing with friends, family and monks. What a great opportunity to share the Good News!

At the end of one of the nights a number of men were sitting around chatting. Some pressed me on whether I wouldn’t like to have a girl or two on the side. I calmly told them that I loved only my wife, before excusing myself for the night. A woman who lives on our street overheard the conversation and said to me a few days later “You are a good man”. “Oh no,” I replied. “I have a good God. Let me tell you about that.” The following week she told us that she was praying to Jesus, and her whole family gathered together to hear the gospel story and read Scripture with us.

As part of helping out with the funeral, I was asked to collect the monks from the temple and throughout the time I built something of a relationship with the head monk. A few days later I decided to visit him, bringing with me a bag of oranges.

“I’m not here to make merit” I said, “but to bless you. Can I bless you in Jesus’ name?”

I was able to pray for him on the spot before we said our farewells. A few days later a lady told us that the monk had spoken well of me. So I returned, shared my testimony and the Gospel, and blessed him again. The next time I visited I brought a Bible and prayed with him. The time after that we sat together reading Scripture and prayed for him.

Through this whole experience, we saw God turn a tragic event into Buddhists reading Scripture, praying in Jesus’ name, and starting journeys to know the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

73 International Workers Supported
0 Commissioned and Sent Out

“Can I bless you in Jesus’ name?”

Praxeis — Mike

Mike first came across Praxeis through his friendship with Grant, who worked with Praxeis. Mike says God ‘ruined his life’ as he learnt of movements exploding around the world.

Seeing Disciple-Making Movements as ‘biblical’ and ‘effective’ he soon formed a core team of six leaders who in turn led others. This team began to meet monthly with Grant for coaching and encouragement.

Their first step was to start a prayer movement, with lots of all night prayer meetings, inviting people around the world to pray for Hong Kong. The next step was to train people to read the Scriptures ‘with eyes of obedience’. Out of this prayer and training they began planting Discovery groups in the harvest. Hong Kong is primarily Chinese and also has a wide diaspora of immigrant peoples. So they planted groups among Sikhs, Muslims, and Brazilian and Spanish speakers.

Going through the Scriptures, many seekers have prayed, asking God to forgive their sins, and also for miraculous healings. In the first twelve months, these groups have begun to multiply as people have taken the message of Jesus and shared with others. Many have prayed for healings and God has answered their prayers. New believers taking ‘baby steps’, as Mike calls them. If this can happen in the first 10 months, we look forward to the future!

Planting Discovery Groups

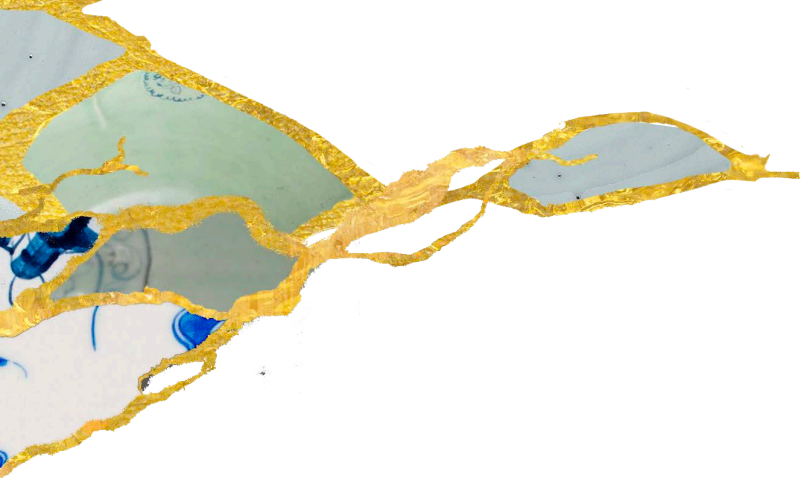
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247 Total groups (Churches and Discovery Groups)
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Explosive Growth in India

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12,500 Baptisms
20,000 in the movement

Making Disciples in the Harvest

1039 People on a discovery journey towards Jesus
129 New followers of Jesus



Disciples that Multiply – Jane*

Assad* and I are classmates from uni. We met on the first day of uni and we soon became very close friends. Assad grew up in a Muslim household and his family is very strict. His mum is extremely pious and she does five prayers a day (and more rituals). They are not allowed to eat non-halal food. As Assad and I became closer, I began sharing my faith with him. He was adamant at the start, but as we talked more about it, everything started to ‘make sense’ to him.

At that time I realised he didn't even know what Muslims believe in, so I started researching Islam and explained to him the difference between Islam and Christianity. One night as we were talking on the phone, I offered to pray for him. That night, the Spirit moved in him and he decided to abnegate his faith. In the next two weeks or so, we started reading the Bible. We started from John, to Acts, to Romans, etc. I also found out about a few Christian apologists who speak to Muslims and he watched quite a handful of their videos. He finally did the repentance prayer and accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour when he was ready to become a Christian. We then decided to start dating and he has since been connected with a Christian mentor I met on campus.

Ever since he became a Christian, he has been evangelising his family. His brother actually came to Christ after watching some of the videos and reading the Bible himself. However, his parents’ hearts are extremely hardened. The brothers are currently ‘undercover’ Christians and their parents don’t know about their conversions yet. Assad can only read the Bible on his phone and attend church services online. His parents are unaware of our dating relationship. Thankfully, we are connected with a Christian group at uni and our mentor helps us with our spiritual journey. A lot of prayers will be needed at this stage, but I believe God will sustain us individually through this journey.

*Names changed to protect privacy

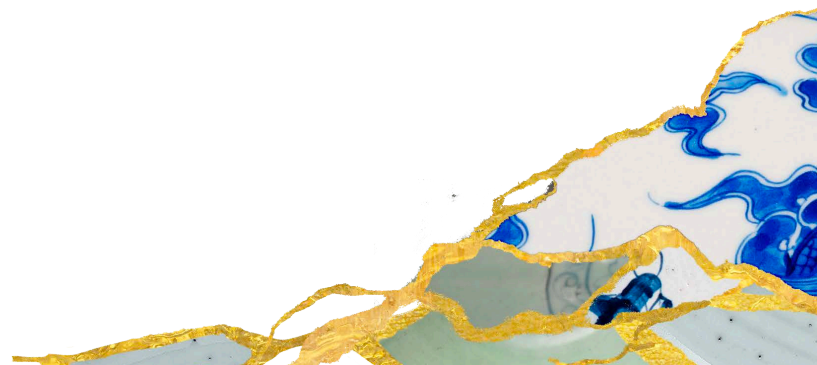
30 Read the Bible with a pre-Christian friend

11 Accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour

23 Clusters

5 New Clusters

“In the next two weeks
or so, we started reading
the Bible”



Building a Discipling Culture – Charlie

Being coached by the team at BDC has been absolutely invaluable for us as a young church plant. It has given us a language, heart and vigour for discipleship and disciple making right from the very get go. It has put the great Commission front and centre and inspired us in what it might look like for a church to be birthed with this vision mind.

At its core, BDC is simple, reproducible and replicable in any context. Its non-programmatic and absolutely any church irrespective of size, style or model can integrate its principles and high degree of accountability into its mission. Because after all, its God’s mission! It puts tried, tested, proven tools into the hands of everyday people. We have already started to see our people feel empowered and that they are a part of God’s mission, not just a consumer or observer.

As a church planter and denominational leader, I cannot recommend the process of Building a Discipleship any more highly! The simplicity of the tools, and the generosity of the initiative I truly believe is nation defining. For decades we have seen the decline of Australian Christianity, but because of Building a Discipleship Culture I am sincerely hopeful for the future of the Australian Church because of the power and prevenient grace of God. By its very definition: this is a game changer.

85 Clusters

91 Churches

11 Denominations

8 Regions

“I am sincerely hopeful
for the future of the
Australian Church”

LifeCare

Although 2020 was a challenging year for everyone, the vulnerable and isolated were especially hard hit. LifeCare was able to help these members of our community to flourish.

As lockdowns hit our communities, our pantry began delivering food parcels to those in need. Many of the Crossway Pastoral staff helped deliver the 2000+ parcels we packed, and were able to have meaningful conversations on the doorstep. This was all made possible by the amazing generosity of Crossway congregation members and new partnerships that were made throughout the year, including Oz Harvest, Aldi and Burwood Brickworks Farm. A generous donation enabled us to install a cool room and walk in freezer to store the large amount of food received. Over 60% of those who received a food parcel had not had previous contact with LifeCare.

Our counselling service moved to online delivery as face to face appointments were no longer allowed. Through this platform we were able to hold as many counselling sessions as we had done in 2019.

Clients and participants were kept from isolation through online gatherings, including fun games sessions held each week and personal phone calls. We also partnered with Stev Computers in refurbishing over 50 donated laptops to keep our participants in touch, with Optus generously donating data.

Although many other homeless services were unable to continue due to restrictions, our shower truck continued to serve the homeless, offering a place to shower and refresh at several locations each week throughout the year.

The COACH mentoring programs continued with limitations. We were not able to send mentors into schools, however our Kids COACH mentors were able to stay in contact with their participants through phone and Zoom, as did our Youth and Family mentors. Some of the Kids COACH participants were even able to graduate the program, albeit at the school gate!

The Women's Centre moved to an online format for delivery of the Courage to Heal program, providing much needed support and encouragement to survivors of domestic violence.

1591 People struggling in our community were transformed through hope, healing and care

2203 Food parcels distributed

2 New Missional Communities formed

“60 per cent of those who received a food parcel hadn't had previous contact with Life Care”

COACH Network

Sharon began engaging with an Empowered Faith Community in a circumstance of homelessness. At the time she was living in a shed in someone's backyard.

She is a survivor of family violence and when attending EFC in the early days, she had a terrible black eye. As Sharon describes her experience, she felt a sense of warmth and love on her first night attending,

“I was embraced by people, some of whom had problems like mine and after the meal, when we held a meeting around the couches and we started singing I was so overwhelmed by the love I felt, that that I began to sob. Those tears were good tears – a change from the tears I'd shed in my trauma.”

Sharon embarked on a journey in the Empowered Faith Community, moving from being a stranger at the meal table to an owner of her community. Her strengths were recognised and she developed a sense of belonging, being given opportunities to participate in hosting the nights.

She joined a weekly discipleship Coaching Cluster and learned about the words, ways and works of Jesus through the Discovery Bible Method, learning that she could be an agent of positive influence in her community.

Sharon engaged in the Alpha course, made a faith commitment, and chose to be baptised by two of the Empowered Faith Community Spiritual Parents, Alison and Lyne.

Like the Samaritan woman at the well who had the famous encounter with Jesus as described in John 4, she wanted to tell people in her own social space about Jesus. With the support of her friend Alison, Sharon was empowered to host the Alpha course – her motivation being her hope that others will experience the same journey she has been on. A number of people made first time faith commitments, some choosing to be baptised.

Sharon still has challenges from time to time with housing insecurity and yet she has clearly found purpose, moving from being a participant to an owner of her community. Sharon identifies as belonging to the Family on Mission. She wants to see Alpha held each year.

As we see in Sharon's journey, people can share the wealth of Jesus' love wherever they are, if they are empowered and supported to do so.





Weekly Attendance

	Average Weekly Attendance <small>(1/1/2020-14/3/2020)</small>	Average Weekly Online Views <small>(15/3/2020-31/12/2020)</small>
Crossway	4,124	7,399
Kids	872	434
Youth	261	278
Burwood East Campus	2,325	5,146
South East Campus	156	N/A
Asian Language Campus	511	1,537

Finances

Average Weekly Tithes	\$115,084
Christmas Appeal	\$222,024
Total Revenue	\$14,824,298
City	78%
Nation	13%
Nations	9%

