



Welcome to The Pastors' Post, an update about life at Southern Cross.

Well this is a special AGM edition of The Pastors' Post. The following is what I presented to the church family, to those who were present at the AGM last Sunday. A member of our Committee of Management (COM) suggested it would be good to pass onto the church family, and I thought The Pastors' Post could serve that role. Therefore, this is longer than our weekly Pastors' Post that aims to be around 3-5 mins long. I pray this helpful for you all.

As I prepared for the AGM, I had been suggesting the AGM may be smoother and more time efficient as we were endorsing a budget very close to the one we approved in November for 2020 to enable us to make the appointment of Tim into the Families Pastor role and Eliza into an MTS apprenticeship.

My Bible talk was a little bit shorter last Sunday as I hoped to help explain some of the theological and pastoral reasons that drive our AGM. But let me begin with a reading from the chapter we skipped last Sunday 28th February as it was from Vision Sunday in 2020. This reading comes from Acts 18:

*5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia,
Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching,
testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.
6 But when they opposed Paul and became abusive,
he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them,
"Your blood be on your own heads!
I am innocent of it.
From now on I will go to the Gentiles."*

*7 Then Paul left the synagogue
and went next door to the house of Titius Justus,
a worshiper of God.
8 Crispus, the synagogue leader,
and his entire household believed in the Lord;
and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed
and were baptized.*

*9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:
"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.
10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many
people in this city."
11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half,
teaching them the word of God.*

Time and time again across Acts, the refrain of celebration and conflict seems to be the consistent soundtrack. And yet it is an exciting and electrifying and thrilling story to

read along to. Paul understands he is dependent on the Holy Spirit to be the mission strategist and power to enact real and lasting change through deep repentance. And yet he labours veraciously and with a purpose, and a passion because he knows his Father God has many in that city. He has no idea who they are and yet he goes across the road and he speaks.

Do you know there are many in this city? Women, children, men. Some of them live in Goonellabah, some in South Lismore, some just out of town. We don't know who they are and yet if we had 20 seconds of courage we might go part the way of finding out.

Well our Leadership Team and our Committee of Management team desire the news about the true and living God to go out. This is not culturally inappropriate or intolerant. Listen again to Acts 14:

*We are bringing you good news,
telling you to turn from these worthless things
to the living God,
who made the heavens
and the earth
and the sea
and everything in them.*

So we have aspired to release our resources as best we can in 2021 that we might go Across the World, Across the Nation, and Across the Road.

We want to continue to support our Global Mission Partners in their endeavours Across the World.

We would love to be in a financial position to financially support Jotham Booker with CMS to the tune of around \$3,000 if he required assistance. I should note we approved Jotham's financial support at the AGM last Sunday.

For a number of years we had supported David and Gae McDonald with PIM through their ministry across SA, and in more recent years in North West NSW. But due to health issues and other issues, you may have known they have stepped back from PIM.

You would know across 2021 at SCPC, we are aiming to run Christianity Explored. SCG have kicked us off in 2021. It is likely this will cost around \$2,500 in resources.

During the week, our COM Executive met for breakfast to consider future initiatives, one of which was our 2021 Carols. So last Friday 26th February, Peita and I met with the Lismore City Hall administrator to outline our desire to hold two sessions of Carols there on December 19, 2021 at 5pm and 7pm and to draw up a quote for SCPC. This preliminary investigation has included a quote from Quizworx to run two Carols programs for kids at City Hall, both at 5pm and 7pm. An organisation like that is not for profit and yet provides a guide like \$300-\$800 per show. I'd like to think, if we were able to, we would pay the top end as that is likely to be what is reflective of actual costs. A Carols in this form is likely to cost around \$3,000-4,000, not actually unlike the figure a more traditional Carols would cost.

People have asked about our Food for Thought Sunday. Can we do it again? They found it such a helpful way to invite a friend or family member along on to a Sunday Gathering and to finish it with a meal and continued conversation. Costs for that, once we deduct our weekly hall hires at Lismore High School and Invercauld House, still pushes us to a cost of around \$1,000 per Food for Thought Sunday.

And yet the BiGGest cost by a 'country mile' is our staff who, as the apostle Paul outlines in Ephesians 4, serves not to minister *to* the church (that is 'all of our jobs'), it is to *equip* the body; to facilitate, to train, to resource God's people to speak the truth in love, that we might see the body built up and come to maturity.

At times we may occasionally hear people suggest getting volunteers to perform the staffing and yet a huge part of our staff's time is coordinating the volunteers that are already volunteering.

Anyway, why am I saying this stuff for? My talk last Sunday was a little shorter in the hope to grab a little bit of time which seems so hard to do with the constraints of covid. But this was my attempt to provide the theological and the pastoral grounds to explain what we aim to cover in an AGM.

I wasn't asking anyone to find \$3,000 to fund Jotham. No, but simply making you aware of that opportunity and the potential cost to our church family which at the AGM someone moved to endorse. Therefore, \$3,000 was added to our 2021 budget.

Scott and Louise then spoke trying to explain our budgeted giving amount and the weekly increase from 2020, and the possible weekly increase to all of us in our giving, and any other figures that they felt were appropriate.

Is our budget appropriate for 2021? It is a deficit budget of around \$42,000 so you could argue it's not. And yet, we budgeted a deficit last year and a goal we have always tried to be open about was we were willing to use our cash reserves from generosity over previous years, particularly the double-your-giving-year, to enable us to enact our vision to plant churches as the proven way across the world to grow the kingdom of God.

Is there more we could be aspiring for? Yes! I believe our integration of newcomers is sloppy, our administrative staff are very stretched so it's difficult, if not impossible, for them to pick up the tab. And yet we pray and plan as best we can.

Please pray about how you can grow your generosity across 2021.

Thanks for tuning into The Pastors' Post.