



HUNTER**BIBLE**CHURCH

THE TIME HAS COME

GREG LEE

I resisted buying a building for Hunter Bible Church for sixteen years. I was never against a building but there always seemed more urgent things to invest in.

To begin with, we wanted to re-establish Unichurch as a force for evangelising students. Then we wanted to strengthen our ministry to families at morning church. Then we wanted to plant an afternoon congregation that graduates could invite their workmates to. We wanted to build a skilled pastoral team. We wanted to invest in MTS and the FIEC. We wanted to plant a congregation at Lake Mac. A building just never seemed urgent enough.

Now I'm convinced the time has come for us to bite the bullet and invest in a home for Hunter Bible Church. There are four big reasons:

A building will help us speak Jesus' message to the people of Newcastle and Lake Mac.

A building helps to anchor us in the community. It helps people to find us. It creates curiosity and interest... "Who are these people that meet here each Sunday?" Other churches in our FIEC network have found exactly this: a building helps us to build relationships for Jesus. We can invite Newcastle and Lake Mac into our home.

A building will help us love and teach people more effectively.

Have you ever lived in a home that just doesn't work? The kitchen is too small, the toilet leaks, the layout doesn't work. It's not just frustrating, it makes family life much harder. A Church home is the same. But imagine a building with safe, clean, secure kids' rooms. Imagine an auditorium with comfortable seats, good lighting and sound that everyone can hear. Imagine a venue that non Christians walk into and feel at home with us. We're hoping for a home that serves our family.

A building will help safeguard gospel preaching for the future.

Christians never think only of our own generation. We want to see the gospel preached to our children and grandchildren. We want to provide a home that God might use to proclaim the gospel in Newcastle and Lake Mac for a hundred years! Which leads to the last point...

Our culture is becoming increasingly hostile to Jesus' message and Jesus' people.

I'm personally convinced that our time in state schools is limited. This reminds us that our true home will always be in Heaven. But for the sake of our church family, we need a home that we can rely on here in Newcastle.

Over the years God has very kindly grown our church family from thirty people to over a thousand men, women and children. We'd love for God to entrust thousands more people to us, not for our glory but his. In fact, our prayer is that God will give to Jesus 30,000 people in Newcastle & Lake Mac... for a start.

I'm convinced that a building is the next step in this purpose. And I want to urge you to join us by investing as sacrificially as you can. Pray that God will surprise you with how much he enables you to give. For most of us, this is a 'once in lifetime' opportunity to do something like this. Grab this opportunity and help to build Hunter Bible Church's home with purpose.

- Greg Lee



THE PLAN FOR A HOME

It would be amazing if we were given land and a purpose-built facility ready to move into on Sunday... and God could do that! But that would also mean we'd miss out on learning to be more generous and more dependant on Him. We expect it will take a few phases over a few years to get a building.

Phase 1. Raising a deposit

Before we can start real negotiations for a property we need some money in the bank as a deposit. We have already started talking to lenders who are keen to help us once we have a deposit. Most lenders require at least a third of the total cost as a deposit. In basic terms, that means a \$3m property, will need a \$1m deposit.

Phase 2. Buying (when we find the right place)

The Building Acquisition Committee has also already started looking for suitable properties in and around Newcastle that are visible, have loads of parking, and are within 20mins drive of as many people as possible. Commercial property doesn't

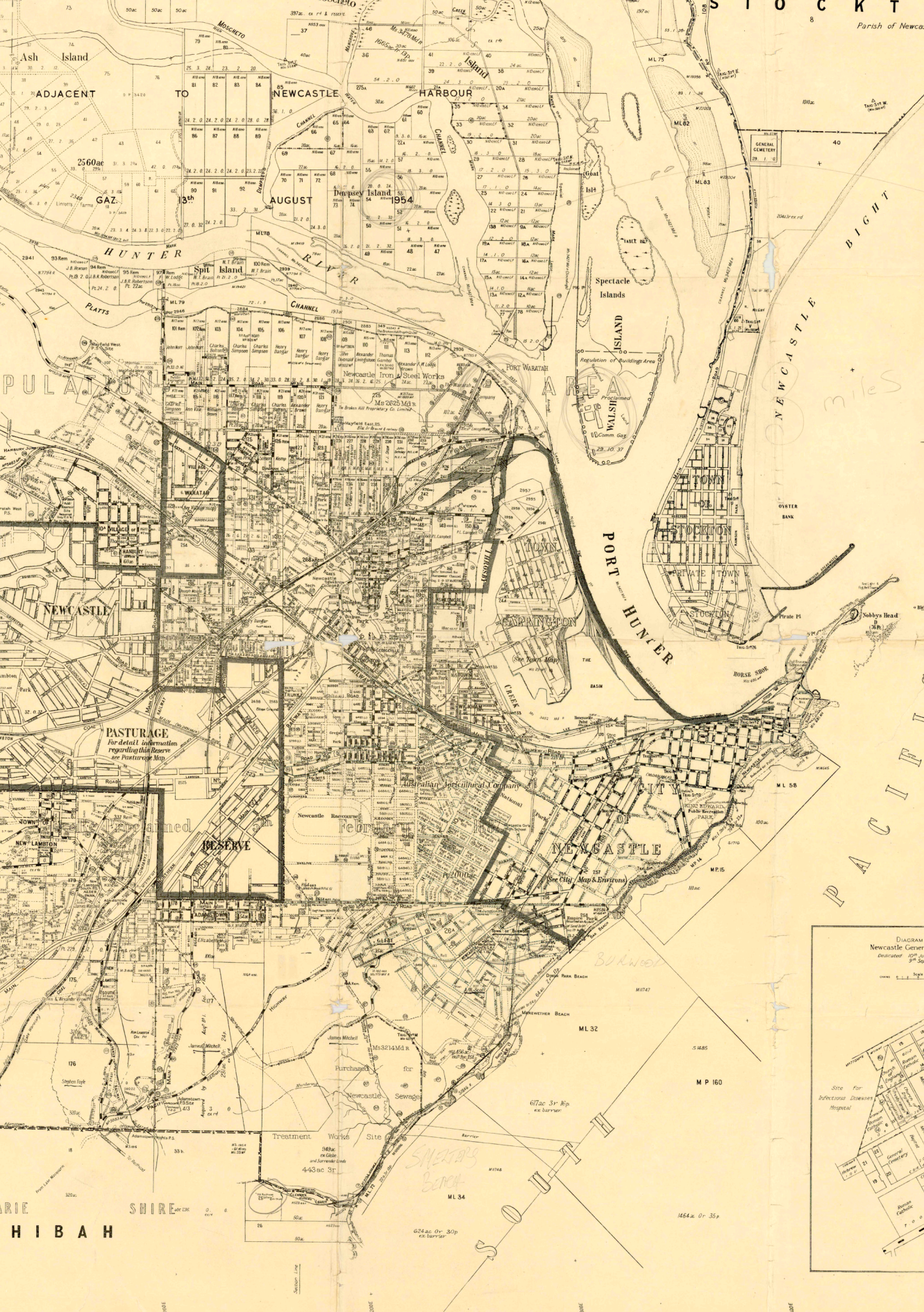
come up very often in Newcastle so it could be months or years before we find the right place. So please pray about this.

Phase 3. Developing (Finances & Plans)

Once we've bought a building, there is a good chance we won't be able to move in straight away. There might be existing tenants or construction work needed. We may still need to raise more money for renovations and furnishings. We hope we will also be able to earn rental income while the Building Acquisition Committee is working hard at developing any construction plans.

Phase 4. Renovating and Moving

When the time and finances are right, we will commence any building and renovations needed on the property. We really want a place that people feel is welcoming, clean, and a pleasure to be in. We will set a date when our public meetings will move there. Then by God's grace we'll have a Big Sunday to celebrate God's kindness and pray that he will use us (and the building) to reach the lost.



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PASTURAGE
For detail information
regarding this Reserve
see Pasturage Map

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SHIRE OF HIBAH



WHAT'S COMING UP?

A TIME-LINE OF EVENTS

Sunday 30th July

'A Home with Purpose' Sermon Series starts

This will include all our GGs, Kids' & youth events

Wednesday 9th August

Questions and Prayer Night

An opportunity to gather to pray and ask any questions about the building plans

Sunday 20th August

Questions and Prayer Arvo

Another opportunity to gather to pray and ask any questions about the building plans

Sunday 27th August

Big Sunday - bring your Donation Commitment Cards

All four congregations of HBC gathering together to prayerfully give

Sunday 3rd September

Announcing Donations at each Congregation

This is the day we will announce the total amount given and pledged



*Join us in praying
Father God, please give the Building Acquisition Committee
and the Elders wisdom and foresight as they make
crucial decisions.*

BIG QUESTIONS

Will a new building really help us make disciples?

Buildings themselves don't make disciples. But buildings help us make disciples because they provide a place to gather people, love them, and teach them God's word. Over the years we have gotten by in classrooms, community centres, schools and the Hub. But we are convinced that a home for HBC will help us love, reach and teach people more effectively. Anecdotally, other churches like ours have found that a home helps build relationships with more people and they have seen the gospel grow through it.

Can we really afford a building?

There is no hiding the fact that HBC building will cost a lot of money. By the end of the project it will probably cost more than \$6m. But that's not much when you consider the long-term impact this building will have, under God. Our hope is that the building will serve tens of thousands of people over the next fifty years. Can we afford it? Only with God's help. Can we afford not to try? No. Preaching the gospel to the lost is too important.

Should I give if I go to HBC Lake Mac or Unichurch?

Yes of course! It's your building. If you are at HBC Lake Mac or Unichurch you will use the building for all sorts of things, like LIFE, training events, the Connect Series, Youth, Rush etc. You may not meet in the building on a Sunday but you will use it.

But the building is yours at a more fundamental level. We are one big church family. That means all of our congregations share. Unichurchers teach Sunday school for our families. Musicians serve at other congregations. Equipment bounces between congregations. We share all of our finances so that poorer congregations can have the same care as richer ones. We don't know if we will ever get to buy a building for Lake Mac. But if we do, the other congregations will give to that. This is the brilliance of being one church family: everything is yours.

What happens if we don't get enough money?

We don't really know what how much money will be "enough" until we find a property that suits. But if we don't raise enough to buy a property in the next two years we might have to try and raise more money or reassess our project phases. But any money raised can only be used for gospel centred building projects.

Shouldn't the money be spent on 'more important' things?

Over the years we have invested heavily in staff who teach the bible & grow teams to love more people. That has allowed us to reach lots of people and grow to over 1000. But since there are still 300,000 lost souls in Newcastle and Lake Mac, we believe that investing in a well designed facility will help us take the gospel to more people. At one level, we are not excited about buildings, but at another level, we are really excited about what God might do through one.

We've had our building since 2010 and I can't commend enough the value of investing in a building. The return has been manifold. In pretty much every room (including the kitchen) people have given their lives to Christ. Because buildings are for people, and people matter to God.

- Ray Galea, Lead Pastor at Multicultural Bible Ministry, Rooty Hill.



Why can donations be Tax Deductible?

The Australian Tax Office has endorsed our building fund as a *Tax Deductible Gift Recipient* because most of the activities to be held in the building falls into their definition of religious education; Sunday Kids programs, the Life Series, the Connect Series, Women's Growth Group, Big Idea nights, AllNations, etc. These all provide what the ATO considers regular systematic instruction. However, there are some aspects of the building that we can't use tax-deductible gifts to pay for. These include furniture, landscaping, and things that are only used for church services. Therefore we do need some non-deductible donations to help cover the cost of these things. You can elect whether you want your donation to be tax-deductible on the Commitment Card.

What will it look like? Do we have any blueprints or designs?

We would love to be able to take everyone on a tour of the site and create 3D virtual walk-throughs of our plans but until we find the right property we simply can't be certain what it will look like. However there are a few things we are certain about. We want it to be in a central, visible, accessible location. We want it to feel welcoming, safe and nice to be in. We are looking for a place that will allow us to have ample parking, great kids' facilities, lots of break-out space, flexible areas for groups, lectures, seminars and fellowship. We imagine a venue with great acoustics, comfortable seating, and where people are constantly coming and going and growing.

What if I have more questions?

If you have more questions, we would love to hear them. Questions help the Building Acquisition Committee ensure we have considered everything. Please feel free to email us or come to one of the Q&A prayer nights in August.

Visit hunterbiblechurch.org/building or email building@hunterbiblechurch.org



Join us in praying

Father God, please transform us to see the world and our wealth through your eyes.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON GIVING

GREG LEE

Looking back over my 30 years as a Christian, giving has always been an area of growth for me. I feel the pull of possessions and money. That means it's something I've had to prayerfully wrestle through, with God's help. Here are two ideas that God has graciously used to transform my heart over the years.

I have so much to be grateful for.

Before we ever get the chance to give, we start by receiving. God gives us life, family, education, wealth and most of all his beloved Son. Our lives are lived in a

shower of God's kindness! When I find myself discontented it's often because I have lost sight how greatly I am loved by my Heavenly Father. I remind myself of God's blessings and my discontentment transforms into gratitude. I'm not badly done by, I'm a child of the most generous Father of all!

Gratitude also changes how I see 'my' possessions and 'my' money because without God I'd never have them. God gave them to me, or better said, God has loaned them to me. Everything I have is still ultimately his and so is something to be grateful for and use for his glory.

Gratitude also helps me trust God. God has already given me so much, it inspires me to trust him as I give to others. God has looked after me so I can trust him with my money and my future. As we have approached this building plan, I have been asking God to make Emma and I acutely aware of how blessed we already are.

Gratitude leads me to be generous.

As a Christian it's not duty that drives me to be generous. Christians give because we're inspired by God's generosity to us. The cross is the story of reckless, passionate, devoted generosity! God loves being generous - it's who he is. And reflecting on his generosity makes me want to be generous too. God may value prudence but he loves generosity. I'd love to be a kind of "reverse entrepreneur". An entrepreneur is always creating ways to make money but God's generosity makes me want to find ways to give money away!

As God's transformed my heart, I've found myself praying, "God, how can I give more? Can I sell something to free up more money? Can I extend or renegotiate my mortgage? What can I say 'no' to in order to be generous? How can I prioritise spending to devote more to giving?"

God may value prudence, but he loves generosity.

During the preparation for this building project, I've been praying every morning for God to give me a certain amount of money to give to the building fund. Over the months that amount has increased as God has opened my heart. And it's been great.

Would you pause, right now as you're reading this, and pray this with me?

Generous heavenly Father, thank you for everything. Thank you for your Son's death, for my salvation, for my church, for my possessions and my money. Please make me more generous than I already am. Make me generous like you.

Generosity is going to look very different to each of us at HBC. Someone with much might give thousands upon thousands but not be generous in their heart. Someone with little might give hundreds and be more generous than everyone combined. So while I've been praying that God would bless our church with a home, my deeper hope is that God would transform us into a people who are more grateful and more generous children of God.

To him be the glory,

Greg Lee



Join us in praying

Father God, please use us to save thousands of people in Newcastle and Lake Mac.

HOW TO DONATE

In order to raise the money needed to get a deposit, we are asking people to fill in a **Donation Commitment Card** at the Big Sunday on August 27. That card will give you the ability to make an upfront donation and/or make a 12 month donation commitment.

Upfront donations will make it easier to get a loan approved sooner but we understand that some people can only make a significant donation by spreading their gift over 12 months.

Please bear in mind that the day-to-day running of HBC depends on your regular giving. If you choose to donate to the building fund it should be in addition to your normal church giving.

If HBC is your church and you haven't started giving regularly yet, we would encourage you to set that up *first* as God would have you do, and then give to the building fund.

CHOOSING A FIGURE

Here are some suggestions to help you consider how to give generously...

Ask God to help you be generous. This might seem simple, but many find it a hard thing to pray. But don't fear, God may answer in multiple ways. He might reduce your expenses. He might increase your income. He might show you a way to use the equity in your home. You might be able to sell something valuable. Pray and be creatively generous!

Involve your kids. If you have children, talk and pray with them about our Home with Purpose. Talk about what you could sacrifice as a family; A holiday? A renovation? Could you do a garage sale and donate the profits to the building? Could you offer to match your children's donation? Make this a family project.

Ask your family. If you have Christian parents or grandparents, this might be something they would love to know about. If they have seen you grow at HBC, there is a good chance they would love to help your church to buy a building. Can you give them a pack like this one? Could you invite them to Big Sunday?

In the end, the figure you donate is not as important as the heart that gives it. Generosity is measured at the heart not the hip pocket. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a gospel investment that will pay dividends for generations to come. Take this opportunity and give in such a way that you can stand before God with a clear conscience and say, "I think this is a generous figure for me".

If you have any questions about the Donation Commitment Card, Tax-Deductibility, or how to donate please contact us. We would love to help.



Join us in praying

Father God, give us the joy of welcoming people into our home.



HUNTER**BIBLE**CHURCH