

Saturday 26th July, 2008



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Dear Church family,

I am writing to you on the eve of Cathy and I taking holidays and celebrating 30 years of married life. Our destination is Thailand. I will be visiting archeological cities, Hellfire pass and all the major historic WWII sites over the next two weeks, with probably a couple of hours shopping to keep Cathy happy thrown in!

www.familycentre.org.au

Seriously, we both do need a decent break as she was very ill over Easter, and I had a few aches and pains during my trip to PNG and central Australia.

I want to report to you after our Annual General Meeting that the Christian Family Centre is really doing great and our plans for the second half of this year are shaping up very well.

GOOD NEWS - FINANCIAL REPORT

We shared at our AGM that for 2007 just over \$3 million came in and out, which keeps the people in the little accounts room upstairs really busy. I want to thank Janet Norman and her volunteers under the supervision of one of our Elders, Milan Tompich for the fantastic job they do in this very important corporate aspect of church life.

We also reported that over the past few years **our tithes have been steadily increasing** and since we commenced our Expanding the Vision Stewardship campaign in November 2005, just over \$1 million has actually come in. When you combine this with our weekly missions giving for 2007, we have been **averaging \$18,769 per week** and I want to express my deep appreciation to you for your amazing generosity and faithfulness in supporting the church with your prayers, faith, attendance, involvement and giving.

Allow me to give you a detailed summary of our **Expanding the Vision** 3-year strategy that comes to a conclusion in November this year.

Our Stage 3 development goal in total, as outlined in the booklet we produced at the beginning of the campaign, was \$2,915,750. Actual commitments promised at the time were \$1,670,144 plus around another \$289,100 in what we call gifts in kind, where people volunteer/gift their skills, time, workers and materials.

Realistically, even though there is **\$638,248 remaining** of the pledged funds still to come in, there are quite a few people, including Cathy and I, who are simply going to continue their weekly giving until their commitment is realized, if it takes longer than November to complete.

Another **good news story** is that some people who have already finished their three year commitment are continuing to give to the project, which again speaks so well of their wholehearted support of the vision and what we are accomplishing.

Our Church Board is prayerfully reflecting about all of the future developments that are planned but not commenced, as part of Stage 3.

We have accomplished an enormous amount over the past couple of years by **refurbishing our main auditorium** (which still has a couple of things to do). **Carpeting** of the whole complex was completed last week, and of course we **dedicated our fabulous "Shed"**, which is helping to transform our children's, youth and young adults ministries. All of this has taken place at a time when building costs, inflation and interest rates are soaring.

Most of these developments have been done without us having to extend lines of credit with the bank because we have moved slowly, only as ETV gifts have come in. However, to complete the Shed on time for its dedication on our 32nd birthday and more importantly, to relaunch our children's Sonworld ministry, we have taken a **line of credit**, which is being paid off weekly as our ETV gifts are coming in. It would be awesome to finish this as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your gifts that are not just needed, but deeply appreciated. We have put a **moratorium on further ETV spending** until this is complete.

WHAT'S COMING UP

At our Leaders' Edge meeting last Wednesday 23rd, Tim Lochens and Chris Sanders shared about the spiritual progress of our children and youth. The **teenager's camp** a few weeks ago with nearly 100 youth was awesome and the young adults are planning their camp in a few weeks' time. **Sonworld** are planning a major **community outreach** utilizing the October school holidays, where we are looking to minister to over 100 community kids in a Monday to Friday programme.

Vicki Legg has commenced a new **Single Adult ministry** (CCC) that is reaching a significant number of unchurched people, and they had their first meeting last Friday night.

Cathy and I arrive back on the 15th August just before what could be our biggest Sunday night service for the year with the **Watoto Children's Choir** as our special guests. This is a 'must invite new people' event and I am letting you know weeks in advance so you can invite some of your unchurched friends and family. I want this night to be filled with the people we want to see come to Christ, rather than 100's of Christians from other churches! We are aiming to have our **Café open** so you can stay behind afterward and entertain those you bring.

I was so impacted by being with **Allen & Jill Steel** in Alice Springs and our trip to the Aboriginal lands that I have asked Allen to come down and spend a week with our leaders and ministry interns so we can be infected with the vision and heart he has for ministering to these beautiful people. His visit with

us will culminate with him sharing on Sunday 7th September with a Q&A time in the morning service.

Another special ministry weekend will be with **Allan & Helen Meyer** from CareForce Ministries in Melbourne on Friday 31st – Sunday 2nd November. We want to have a special seminar running from 3.00-9.30pm on the Saturday for all married couples. This amazingly gifted couple specialize in relationship building.

Right now we are in a series entitled “**Living Beyond Myself**” and my aim is to set off a volunteer revolution in the Christian Family Centre. I would love to see everyone who is part of our church family involved in some area of service, which suits their personality and gifting so that we can expand and commence new ministry outlets to our community and within the body. Please make every effort to be in Sunday church each week and attend a **Connect group** where we will be focusing on this theme.

I am so excited that I almost don't want to go on holidays!!! See you Sunday the 17th, with a tan, bags full of paraphernalia that Cathy will have bought and I carried all over Thailand!

Yours in Christ's Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Vasilakis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Bill Vasilakis
Senior Minister