

A coastal road with multiple lanes curves along a beach at sunset. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow filter. In the background, there are mountains and a calm sea. The text 'WOLLONGONG' is centered in a white rectangular box.

WOLLONGONG

CITY
ONAHILL



AUSTRALIA - THE NEED

WE LIVE IN A RAPIDLY GROWING COUNTRY WITH A DECLINING FAITH.

Australia is a growing, urbanised country. With the population growing by a million people every 2-3 years and 85% of the population living in cities. New churches are needed because while growing in number of people Australian cities are declining in number of Christians. In 2016, the National Church Life Survey calculated 16% of Australians go to church once a month compared to 44% in 1950. The most generous estimates suggest 8% of Australians attend church weekly (McCrindle Research 2013).

WE NOW LIVE IN A POST-CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, WHERE THE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS ARE NOT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS.

We live in a time where people have negative perceptions about the church, due to church abuse, corruption and judgmentalism. And yet according to research by Tim Sims, Australians are not as hostile to Christianity or churchgoing as people think, with 43% of Australians still believing Jesus rose from the dead, 45% believe in life after death and a staggering 74% still believe God exists.

**WE LIVE IN A NEW AGE WHERE YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE THE KEY
INFLUENCES OF CULTURE, ECONOMY AND EDUCATION.**

According to McCrindle's top 6 trends for 2019, from 2019, "there will be more Australians born since 1980 than before 1980". Meaning Generation Y (1980-1994) and Generation Z (1995-2009) will make up most of the workforce, outnumbering Generation X and Baby Boomers for the first time, becoming the key demographic for churches to engage with.

**OUR COUNTRY NEEDS GOSPEL MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE A HOLY
DISCONTENT FOR THE LOW IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL IN OUR COUNTRY.**

As Jesus promised, the harvest is plentiful, and a great opportunity lies before us. But labourers are needed. Servants are needed. Disciple makers are needed. Our generation needs men and women who will believe in Jesus' promise to build his church. To reach more people, existing churches need to multiply, and new churches need to be planted.

THIS IS AN INVITATION FOR YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Jesus is alive; the Holy Spirit is within you. How are you making a difference in our generation?

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS,
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF
THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM
TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND
BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE END OF THE AGE.”

- JESUS

WHY PLANT CHURCHES?

CHURCH PLANTING IS BIBLICAL

In the New Testament, church planting was the primary strategy for fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission. A new church is born when new disciples are made, new believers are baptised, and Jesus' words are studied in community (Acts 2:41-47). The book of Acts is a historical record of the church-planting movement; a movement that continues today.

CHURCH PLANTING RENEWS EXISTING CHURCHES

Church plants are the innovation department of the church. Older churches can be reluctant to try new ideas but will be encouraged to, once they see other churches try new ideas. In addition, new churches attract new people and produce new leaders, of which many eventually find their way into other churches within the city.

CHURCH PLANTING IS EFFECTIVE

As Peter Wagner says, "*Planting churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven.*" And as Tim Keller has argued based on research - new churches are 3-6 times more effective than established churches at reaching people with the gospel. This is most likely because new churches best reach new generations, new residents and new people by being new themselves and contextualising the gospel in a new way.

CHURCH PLANTING GENERATES NEW LEADERS

Church plants create energy, momentum, urgency and high ownership, challenging Christians to not just go to church but be the church, on mission for Jesus with the gifts, resources and influence they have.



WHY PLANT IN WOLLONGONG?

A GROWING CITY

About 300,000 people call Wollongong home, making it the tenth-largest city in Australia. In the next 20 years, Wollongong is anticipated to grow between 15 to 20%, seeing growth through an influx of students wanting to study at the world-class University of Wollongong and influx of families escaping the soaring house prices of Sydney.

A TRANSFORMED CITY

It is an affordable city that people want to live in, with an average age of 34. In the last 5 years, the city has been transformed after \$1.3 billion dollars was invested into the city. The region is diverse, with many immigrants, lower socioeconomic areas that are being gentrified and the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere. Wollongong is a tourist destination that people are flocking to see, with the Pacific Ocean to the east and the stunning Illawarra Escarpment to the west.

A CITY THAT NEEDS JESUS

It has a growing irreligious population (~30%), numerous lower socioeconomic suburbs, an ongoing crystal meth problem, and a large immigrant community.

A CITY THAT NEEDS NEW CHURCHES

The city has good churches but needs more. New churches are needed throughout the region, and the vision for City on a Hill Wollongong would be to plant churches throughout the region of Wollongong.

“The single most effective method for fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus gave us is to plant new churches! Two thousand years of Christian history have proven that new churches grow faster, and reach more people, than established churches. The growth on any plant is always on the newest branches.”
– Rick Warren



ABOUT CITY ON A HILL

OUR MISSION

We are one movement of many churches united around the mission of knowing Jesus and making Jesus known.

OUR STORY SO FAR

City on a Hill began in Melbourne in October 2007, with a small team and a big vision to make a difference for the glory of God.

Meeting initially as a small group bible study in a city apartment, throughout our journey, God has done incredibly more than we could ever think or imagine. We have seen hundreds of men and women find new life in Christ and enter the waters of baptism. We have celebrated with those who have reconnected back to following Jesus. We've seen God inspire leaders and volunteers to care for the poor and marginalised, pioneer new ministries, train leaders, equip and send out of missionaries near and far, and open many doors for the gospel.

Today, City on a Hill is a movement of 2,500 men and women who are gathered across seven local churches, in four cities, in two states, all united around one mission – “to know Jesus and make Jesus known”.

OUR VISION

*To reach 10 cities
with the beauty, truth and relevance of Jesus
by planting 50 churches.*

City on a Hill Wollongong will become the 8th City on a Hill church in the 5th city. The prayer is that it would be the first of many churches in the region of Wollongong. A vision we hope would awaken sleepy Christians, save souls, change the city and raise humble, courageous, sacrificial leaders to reach Wollongong and beyond.



OUR CULTURAL DISTINCTIVES

GOSPEL CONFIDENCE

Gospel confidence means that we will be by nature courageous and expectant. We will pursue big vision. We will engage in a movement of God's Spirit that is bigger than us. We will step up and out in dependence on God and his power, his redemptive plan, and his love for all would believe.

UNITY AND TRUST

Beginning with our leaders, we prioritise trust and unity, serving each other as we are called to do. From our members to our leadership alike, we will pursue a 'we'/together' mindset – a unity which begins in our church locations and extends to our broader movement of churches.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Our posture is to hold fast to the timeless message of Jesus while making the most of timely methods. The locations we meet in, the technology we employ, the clothes we wear, the language we use, the relationships we forge and the networks we are part of, are all means of grace to reduce cultural barriers and bring the message of Jesus to a lost and dying world.

INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Finally, City on a Hill has developed a unique strength in our creative mindset towards all elements of design. Our approach has been to invite the best of wisdom, technology and know-how of our time, and embed these practices where they help us better serve our people. While the pursuit of excellence is littered with idolatry, we also acknowledge that in our times, excellence is a means of giving glory to God, honouring the gifts he has given and holding up the beauty, truth and relevance of Jesus to a lost world.



THE DEACONS

OUR STORY

We (Emma and Joel) grew up in Southern Sydney. Both of us became Christians as teenagers after friends had the boldness to tell us about Jesus. After school, Emma studied journalism and creative writing, and worked as a conference producer, while Joel worked as a Civil Engineer before studying his Masters of Divinity at Sydney Missionary Bible College (SMBC) and becoming a pastor.

OUR DESIRE

Like our Saviour, we long to see our family, our friends and more people in this world know Jesus. For this to happen, we're convinced more churches need to be planted. Which, is why for the last decade, we have been praying that God would give us the character, wisdom, gifts, faith and capacity needed to plant churches and win souls for Jesus.

OUR LOVE FOR WOLLONGONG

We both studied undergraduate degrees at UOW, lived in Wollongong for Joel's civil engineering work and his first role as a pastor at Wollongong Baptist Church. We moved to Melbourne to join City on a Hill and are now moving back to plant. We have close friends in Wollongong; some who are believers and some who are not. We believe that not only is now a good time to plant, but we are a good team to send because we know and love the city.

OUR PARTNERS

Joel is applying to become an Acts 29 candidate, and Spanish River Church are gospel partners with Joel and Emma.



OUR VISION FOR CITY ON A HILL WOLLONGONG

① MISSION - A CITY ON A HILL THAT ILLUMINATES THE BEAUTY OF JESUS

Our heart desires to see more people in the beautiful city of Wollongong come to know the beauty of Jesus. Our prayer is that the church will be a sanctuary where sin is exposed, the grace of Jesus is proclaimed, and people respond with continual repentance and faith.

We will show radical hospitality and throw gospel parties.

We will equip evangelists, befriend sinners and engage culture.

② MERCY: A BODY THAT SACRIFICIALLY SERVES OTHERS

The church will be a diverse place where servants use their gifts for the good of the church and the city.

We will love the marginalised and the poor of Wollongong and have a heart to shine the light of love, justice, and hope to the needy in our world.

③ GOSPEL COMMUNITIES: A FAMILY BOUND BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

In the context of a lonely world, we will gather in community knowing we were designed to flourish in community.

We will gather in rows on Sundays and in circles throughout the week to encourage one another in the gospel and warn one another about the isolating dangers of sin.

④ KIDS AND YOUTH: A HOME TO ENJOY AND LEARN ABOUT GOD

The church will be a place where kids, and adults enjoy God and one another. Jesus loves kids and so do we.

Our plan is that our first appointment will be a City Kids Coordinator.

⑤ GOSPEL GATHERINGS:

A SANCTUARY

By the word of God and encouragement of the saints, the church will be a place where hearts are shocked into repentance and souls are stirred to worship.

We will be a place where seekers and sceptics are welcomed to experience God (1 Corinthians 14:24–25).

⑥ MULTIPLICATION: A CHURCH-PLANTING CHURCH

City on a Hill's vision is to plant 50 churches in 10 cities, which means City on a Hill Wollongong will be praying and planning towards being a healthy church that plants more healthy churches throughout Wollongong and beyond.

OUR PRAYER

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the Illawarra, so that we would see a movement of renewed affections, reformed minds, and revived souls.

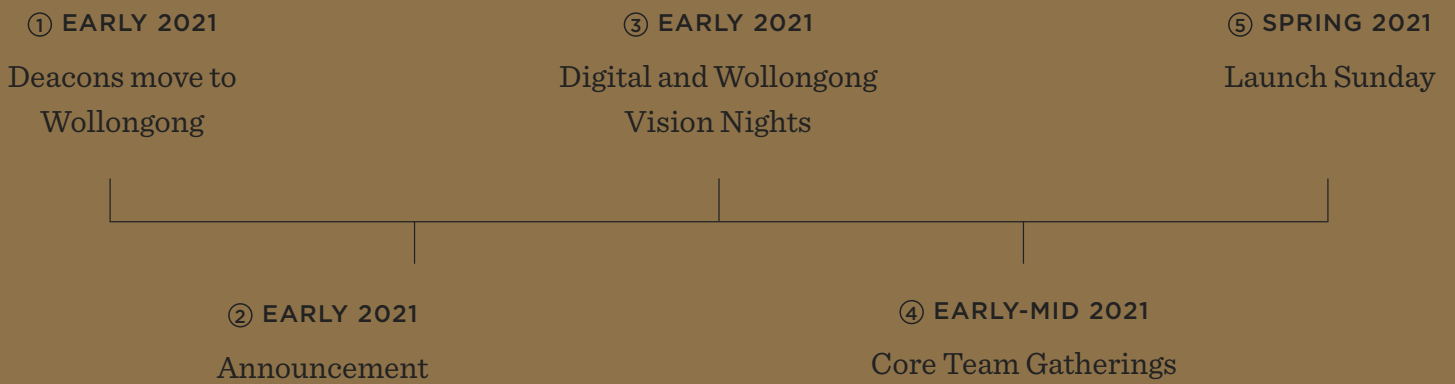
Our prayer is that the beautiful gospel of Jesus would be proclaimed and promoted so that we would see deep spiritual formation and the radical salvation of many.

OUR INVITATION

To reach this vision, we need gospel hearted leaders and servants who are willing to take a big step of faith in joining the church plant. We need men and women who are willing to use their God-given gifts, talents, treasures, influence and wisdom for building Jesus' church.

ROAD MAP TO LAUNCH

City on a Hill Wollongong is Launching Spring 2021. God willing the road map will look like:



“Joel has the character, competence and courage to plant a church. God has formed him to be a humble and hungry leader, who can cast vision, innovate, inspire others and preach the gospel powerfully. His ability to see the big picture and build well-designed systems is coupled with a warm and compassionate heart. Joel is generous with the time he spends with leaders and is intentional about building connections in his local community.

I have seen Joel effectively lead, equip and raise up teams of people to serve in many significant ways. Joel is able to inspire others, delegate tasks effectively and is passionate about seeing others flourish.

I have been personally enriched by Joel’s hunger to learn and the humility he has to be coached by myself and others. Joel is honest, self-aware and eager to grow.

I’m very excited to see how the Lord works through Joel as we step out to plant a new church in Wollongong. I have great confidence in GOD and his hand on Joel’s life and see many people coming to know Jesus as a result of this significant mission and ministry.”

– Guy Mason - Senior Pastor of City on a Hill



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

PRAY

Pray for salvations in Wollongong. Pray for people who can join, pray and give towards City on a Hill Wollongong. Pray for a diverse core team. Pray City on a Hill Wollongong would find favour with leaders, churches and other ministries in Wollongong. Pray for all churches in Wollongong.

Join our mailing list:

coah.co/wollongongprayers

JOIN

We are praying that God would provide people from a variety of cultural, socio-economic, and generational backgrounds for our launch team.

If you are interested in being a part of the City on a Hill Wollongong launch team, please contact Joel and come along to one of our vision nights.

Contact Joel:

joeldeacon@cityonahill.com.au

GIVE

Give towards the vision of planting City on a Hill Wollongong.

We feel called, trained and affirmed to plant this church; however, we can't do this alone, and we don't want to. We currently have support from the City on a Hill movement and a gospel partnership with Spanish River Church, however we need more.

With your help, we genuinely believe we could plant more churches in Wollongong and beyond. So, can I encourage you to consider giving, joyfully and sacrificially towards seeing new churches in Wollongong.

We are thankful and grateful for any contribution, however, if possible we would love you to consider regularly giving for 1, 2 or 3 years towards the establishment of the plant. You could give \$200 or \$100 per month, for example.

Thank you for your gospel partnership!

Give via:

EFT: BSB 114 879 | ACC# 479 853 266

Online: cityonahill.com.au/give and select 'Church Planting Fund' and 'Wollongong'



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