

PeaceWise Ltd AGM 21 March 2018, Woy Woy (NSW).

Annual report from PeaceWise Chair Jeroen Bruins

Good evening and welcome to the 11th AGM of PeaceWise.
Before I share my annual report with you, allow me to pray.

Father in Heaven, may the meditation of my heart and the words of my mouth be pleasing to you. Amen.

I always feel honoured and it is indeed my pleasure to present to you the annual report of PeaceWise at this AGM on the 21st of March 2018 in Woy Woy. The annual report is not only a compliance requirement, but it is also to remember and to reflect for a moment on the past year. Aren't we all so very busy in the present to prepare for the future? I believe that looking back from time to time is a good and necessary exercise. Just to take a moment to stop and remember and reflect.

Off course we live in the present and we look towards the future, but we are formed, influenced and guided in part by our memories. Our memories connect our past to the present and form part of the base we stand on, looking into the future. In Scripture Israel was often reminded by the prophets of their past history and the great deeds of God, such as the Exodus from Egypt. These reminders refocused Israel on God, His faithfulness and their calling. Jesus said on the night he was betrayed and he broke the bread " This is my body, which is given to you. Do this in remembrance of me".

Theophan the Recluse said: "Into every duty a God-fearing heart must be put, a heart constantly permeated by the thought of God; and this will be the door through which the soul will enter into active life....The essence is to be established in the remembrance of God, and to walk in His presence".

Tonight I would like to share and remember events, activities, people, and achievements in 2017. These memories have three common threads.

Firstly God's faithfulness and His working through our ministry, secondly the impact of PeaceWise's ministry on the people we serve and how we serve and thirdly the actual numbers for reasons of public transparency and compliance requirements.

The first two threads, God's faithfulness and the impact of our PeaceWise ministry on people are aligned with the 10 marks of Christ-centered ministry against which we reference ourselves. These are based on Gary Hoag's book "The Choice". Let me list those for you.

1. Steward and Servant Leadership, that is submission to God, our Father and being filled, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit
2. Faithfulness-Focused Strategies through prayerful Strategic Planning and raising Kingdom resources, which is calling God's people to put to work whatever they have for the Kingdom.
3. Eternity-oriented Metrics. This means valuing what Jesus values and assessing work in order to foster faithfulness. This finds expression in Ministry Accountability and Transparent Financial Administration.
4. Relationship-based management, where leadership is focussed on service. That means serving people humbly and doing everything with love like Jesus.
5. Stewardship view of resources – that is to mobilize spiritually gifted people by helping them to find a place in kingdom ministry that matches the gifts God has given them. And secondly to practice radical grace-filled Christian Generosity and encouraging others to do the same.

These marks or trades of Christ-centered ministry are not easily quantifiable, if at all. However the third thread, the actual numbers, are measurable and can be quantified. I will share these with you as well.

During 2017 and the preceding 10 years I can only say that God has been faithful in every way and in everything. He is worthy of all the glory and honour for where we are with the ministry today and what has been achieved. He is the one who has led us through 2017, provided wisdom, strength to persevere, sustained us, gave us joy and heard our prayers. He is our provider and sustainer. His Spirit has guided us, comforted us and taught us.

2017 has been a great year for the PeaceWise ministry. We had the highest number of trainees at our National training events ever, a total of 459 people. National training was conducted in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Darwin and Launceston. We also conducted 21 dedicated training events in Christian Schools, Churches and other Christian organisations, reaching more than 600 people.

Our new “Everyday Peacemaking” and “Heart of Peacemaking” courses have received excellent feedback.

We are a non-for-profit organisation, but we do make a profit. The profit we make is the blessing we receive in serving people in training, in teaching biblical peacemaking, helping people to become peacemakers and witnessing lives being changed through the power of the Gospel.

PeaceWise also provides reconciliation services. Christian mediators are appointed by PeaceWise to conduct mediations between people in conflict. Because of confidentiality I cannot provide details but suffice to say that a number of reconciliation cases were conducted in 2017. I want to thank all the mediators, who often sacrificially serve and sometimes suffer hardship themselves. They have helped people to work through hard and heart issues, showing them the way to reconciliation and helping them to rebuild broken relationships. There is no doubt in my mind that God works in people’s lives through the conflicts, mediations and reconciliations.

I also want to say a word of thanks to all the people, who serve in and through PeaceWise. These are trainers, mediators, Hub leaders, Board members, staff, presenters and other helpers in a volunteer capacity. All gifted people, who show a radical generosity, because they go well beyond what can be expected. Sacrifices are made in time, energy, finance, preferences and life style. Why? Because these people love Jesus and want to serve Him and people in need. They feel called to be peacemakers and support the ministry of PeaceWise. On behalf of the Board, I want to say thank you! PeaceWise cannot exist or function without you.

With respect to Eternity-orientated metrics, which is ministry accountability and transparent financial administration, I am please to report that the Christian Ministry Advancement (CMA) Standards Council has accredited PeaceWise as a foundation partner. This means that PeaceWise is in full compliance with the CMA Principles and Standards of responsible stewardship and governance. This is also recognized by the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission), who has publicly stated that any organisation accredited by the CMA Standards Council is automatically deemed to comply with the ACNC’s statutory governance standards.

The Directors and Financial report of 2017 provides you with all the details of our financial management and results over 2017. A copy is available on request or can be downloaded from the ACNC website. Nevertheless, there is one thing I would like to highlight. By the end of 2017 we had a modest surplus of \$9100,- , which is an improvement on the previous two years that recorded a small deficit.

We give thanks to God who provides the resources. The Board and the National Director seek God constantly to wisely steward our resources. We are also deeply grateful for the financial support we receive from many PeaceWise friends who donate so generously.

During 2017 the PeaceWiseKids project has been an exciting and challenging journey. The project is an important part of our vision and calling. Our vision is to see vast numbers of people passionately living and sharing Jesus' promise: "Blessed are the peacemakers". Part of this vision is to offer world-class biblically based material for children on how to deal with conflict. It is becoming a reality. And this is not limited to Australia. PeaceWiseKids is interactive and web-based. It can be potentially accessed by anyone, anywhere, anytime in the world.

By the end of 2017 the first course (5) for year 7 and 8 was completed. Without the leadership, project management and many hours of hard work of Bruce Burgess and Viv Bat this would not have been achieved. I am sure that the first thing they would say that they couldn't have done it without God's provisions and the support of many, many gifted and talented people, both volunteers and paid. There is not the time to describe the complexity of the project with respect to content, technology, software and customer support, to name a few. Sometimes it looks impossible, but we know and trust God that with Him anything is possible. The PeaceWiseKids project is steaming ahead to develop and produce the next courses (4 & 6), taking into account what we learned in producing the first course. During 2017 we had sufficient financial funding to support the project, but looking forward more funds need to be raised to complete the project. The Board is considering a range of options to ensure adequate funding. Prayer is not an option, but a given. We plan and strategize on our knees, so to speak.

Having shared these memories and reflection from 2017 I would like to take a few minutes to look into the future. The bridge between the past and the future is the present. And on this bridge we pray, we thank the Lord for the past, we trust Him in the present and we seek Him in the future. Prayer is fundamental in PeaceWise and our ministry. All we plan, discuss, do, minister, relate, strategize,...we embed in prayer. We pray that all we do is born out of prayerfully seeking the Lord.

So, we are standing on the bridge, the present, and we look into the future. I can see three horizons. The first one is 2018. It looks like we will have more opportunities to train and teach people in biblical peacemaking than even last year. We will train more trainers this year and two new conflict coaching courses are ready for 2019. Courses 6 and 4 of the PeaceWiseKids project have been completed and are online.

More schools are actively teaching peacemaking using PeaceWiseKids. No doubt we will have many opportunities to serve people in conflict through our reconciliation services. I can see a growing number of people, who are involved in PeaceWise and peacemaking ministry.

Looking a bit further ahead I can see the next horizon, 2021. The PeaceWiseKids project is completed and used by many schools throughout Australia, providing enough income for ongoing customer support, maintenance, improvements and new developments. The mediation training courses are completely rewritten and new special topic courses are being developed. PeaceWise starts to become a movement as more and more people in Australia are being involved and practising biblical peacemaking in every part of society and the workplace.

PeaceWise has partnered with a wide variety of different Christian organisations to mutually support and bless in the mission of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. PeaceWise is the first port of call for any conflict resolution in Christian communities and organisations in Australia.

Finally I look even further into the distance and see the third horizon, 2025. More courses have been developed to cater for specific needs and requirements. Organisations have been trained to train themselves. PeaceWise is a peacemaking movement and significant impact is made in the public arena, even in the area of reconciliation between Aboriginal people and the non-indigenous Australian communities. Families, marriages, friendships, working relationships, communities, the young, the middle aged and the elderly are all being impacted by the message of biblical peacemaking through the power of Christ. PeaceWiseKids has expanded overseas and reaching many children throughout the world. The media reports that in schools that teach peacemaking through the PeaceWiseKids program bullying and harassment have dramatically reduced. PeaceWise is becoming a prophetic voice in the public domain, calling to consider a different perspective and approach to small and large conflicts.

Whilst looking at those three horizons, we walk forward in faith, trust and prayer. We squint and see someone walking ahead of us. He is beckoning us. We need to focus otherwise we lose sight of Him. We know that He is our Lord Jesus. The wind of the Holy Spirit is softly blowing through the trees, wherever our Lord Jesus is walking. We feel the wind in our back, gently pushing us forward. As we walk on the bridge of the present, the horizons change, but our Master stays the same, leading us forward. Our Father in heaven has told us what to do through the prophet Micah: To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

And John the Apostle wrote: “This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us”.

Led me finish with a prayer from St Patrick:

Lord be with us this day,
Within us to purify us;
Above us to draw us up;
Beneath us to sustain us;
Before us to lead us;
Behind us to restrain us;
Around us to protect us.

Thank you.