

The Need for a Church Extension and our Approach

Dear BPCWAians, I thought it would be useful to recapture some salient points of our church extension project in the Pastoral letter to emphasis some of the key focus and actions moving forward. While the plans are still high level at this stage, it is important for everyone to know the progress, the needs, and the potential challenges so that you can pray for and support God's work. Moreover, for those who attended the recent update and for some who were not around, I hope that this write up will be a useful reference if any part of the presentation was not clear.

The reasons for a church extension. BPCWA must always remember the key principle that the church's aim is to continue to provide a conducive and supportive environment for the study of God's Word so that people will learn about Him and grow spiritually. We also aim to increase our covenantal family fellowship. With the growth that the LORD has brought to BPCWA, these have become a challenge. With the increases in attendance to Sunday School, Bible studies, fellowship meetings, and fellowship over lunch/dinner, just rebuilding a similar Nehemiah house can no longer meet this increase in numbers. Hence, this project has become a "Church Extension", rather than just "Rebuilding Nehemiah house".

The approach. The choice of the architect is extremely critical as this company will design our extension, manage the tender process for a builder, and project manage the building and the subsequent warranty period for us. The usual run of the mill house builder will not have the needed experience for church and public social space designs and requirements. In order to ensure that we have the right architect, we approached a range of companies, from high end architectural firms to smaller ones. This was to ensure that we covered our bases and was as comprehensive as possible in our due diligence for BPCWA. Though the high-end firm provided good suggestions, they declined to participate as our project was deemed to be too small. However, their concepts helped us differentiate between the smaller firms, when it came to assessing the ideas for the latter group. The Session designed objective spreadsheets for evaluating each architect. Each Session member awarded points in evaluating our key criteria as each architect was interviewed separately. We finally narrowed down to two architects from the four that we initially considered. God answered our Tuesday night prayers to Him in helping us ascertain which one to finalise on. God answered clearly in how He moved the heart of one to back out when we requested both to submit preliminary designs which will help us decide which architect to use. The one remaining will still submit his first pass design work for our evaluation. This has been reassuring to the Session that God is indeed leading us as we depend on Him.

The potential designs. In building a double storey multi-purpose room building, key design criteria were that it must solve both current space constraints and some foreseeable future growth, while ensuring easier and safer access for both young ones and elderlies between buildings. After assessing the available space at the existing Nehemiah house and the carpark space on Canning Highway side, architects generally recommended using the latter due to better usage of space. Furthermore, since the Canning Highway land has a smaller level difference, it would be more economical and easier to connect to the existing church building. This design choice would also give us more carpark space when Nehemiah house is demolished. This became the natural choice. Another key factor that will enable us to go ahead is getting the necessary approvals for the use of the Canning Highway side land for a multi-purpose building and the conversion of Nehemiah house's land for carpark usage. I do want to emphasise that while architects are excited at the "public street presence" of Canning Highway side (which of course benefits their publicity), we know that it has always been the LORD that draws people to notice our church building and brings them into BPCWA. We must never attribute His work to "street presence" lest we become carnal in our thinking and

hence decision making. Please pray earnestly for this as the architect begins to approach the relevant councils for approvals.

Building fund needed. After considering our reserves and setting aside some of it for urgent situations and support of needed ministries and mission work, we will still need to raise A\$1.3 million for the first phase of the extension. Phase one is the new building extension with multi-purpose rooms. Some may be wondering - why is it so expensive when you can get a regular home builder to build a good house at perhaps only a few hundred thousand Australian dollars? Well, we have to remember that this cost includes consultant fees (commercial use applications, the tender process and project management), design fees, demolition works, carpark resurfacing, and the cost to build the actual new building itself. Moreover, we have also tried to include some modifications to the existing church building to create a bigger fellowship hall. And unlike most homes, this is a 700 square metre double storey building, possibly at least double that of most homes. And since this is a public building, it means that the specifications must meet different building codes. Similarly, the quality of the materials used for carpets and floorings must handle high volume human traffic. There will also be many more rooms, which means that unlike normal homes, walls must have sufficient sound proofing so that they can be used for Sunday schools, Bible studies, preaching and discussion groups. More rooms also mean that classroom fittings for more tables and chairs are required. In addition, this building will need significantly more lighting and cabling work than normal homes. It will require a sound system too. Then, there are the expensive wet-works such as building more toilets. These alone account for the significant difference in price between a normal family home and a public building.

Hence, in case any are also wondering - why not just demolish and rebuild an entirely new church? You can now imagine why demolishing and rebuilding would easily cost A\$7 million at today's building and labour costs. This amount does not even factor in the need to rent a place for worship for more than a year, if indeed such a place can be found.

Next week, we will revisit the Biblical principles about giving to the LORD's work, and when and how the building fund will be collected. In the meanwhile, do approach myself or Deacon Eugene Leong for any questions you may have.

Yours in our Lord's service,
Pastor

教会扩建的须要与我们的处理方法

西澳笃信圣经长老会亲爱的会众们，我想在牧者信函中重温本教会扩建工程的一些重点会是非常有帮助的，藉此也强调未来进展的一些关键因素及行动。虽然目前的策划仍属于初步阶段，但大家必须知道当中的进展、须要及潜在的挑战，好让你能为神的工作祷告并支持。此外，对于那些已经出席最近的工程进展汇报的人以及那些不在场的人，如果汇报中的任何部分有不明之处，我希望这篇文章能作为一份有用的参考。

扩建教会的原因。西澳笃信圣经长老会必须常常记得这个关键原则，教会的宗旨乃是持续提供一个有利及支持学习神话语的环境，使人们能认识神并在属灵上成长。我们的目标也在于增加我们圣约家庭中的团契交通。因为神赐给西澳笃信圣经长老会的成长，这些都成了一个挑战。由于儿童主日学、查经班、团契聚会、午饭/晚饭聚餐等的增长，只是重建一栋与尼希米所类似的房子已无法达到人数增长后的需求。因此，这项工程已改变成“教会扩建”，而不再是“尼希米所重建”。

处理方式。设计公司的挑选是非常关键的，因为该公司将会设计我们的扩建、办理招标建筑公司的程序、为我们管理建筑过程及完工后的保修期。一般的住宅建筑商对于教会及公共空间的设计及要求缺乏所需的经验。为了确保我们雇用恰当的设计公司，我们接洽了一系列的公司，包括从最顶尖直到最小家的建筑设计事务所。这是为了确保我们涵盖我们的关键要求，并且竭尽所能地为西澳笃信圣经长老会尽上全面性的审慎调查。虽然高档的公司提供了一些良好的建议，但他们却谢绝了，因为我们的工程对他们而言太小了。然而，当我们之后评估小公司的设计时，他们的概念却帮助我们辨明小公司之间的差别。长执会设计了一份客观的数据表来评估每一家设计公司。在各别面试每一家设计公司后，每一位长执会成员便按着我们的主要准则评估给分数。我们从起初所考虑的四家设计公司最终缩小范围至两家公司。神应允了我们周二晚上的祷告，帮助我们确定哪一家公司。神清楚地应允我们的祷告，当我们要求两家公司呈交初步的设计来帮助决定应该使用哪一家公司之时，祂就感动其中一家公司退出。剩余的那家仍然须要呈交他们的设计以供我们进行初次评审。这使长执会得以安心，因为当我们倚靠神时，神的确在带领着我们。

潜在设计。若要建造一栋双层多用途的建筑物，主要的设计条件是它必须能解决现有空间的限制及未来可预知的增长，同时也确保它能提供年长者及儿童们方便及安全地在两栋建筑物之间来往。估计了目前尼希米所的可用空间及 Canning Highway 一边的停车位，各家设计公司大致上都建议使用后者以便更妥当地使用空间。此外，既然 Canning Highway 一边的土地之标高差距较小，若要与现有的教会建筑物连接也比较划算及容易。在尼希米所拆毁后，这个设计选项也提供我们更多的停车位。这自然而然就成了最佳选择。另一个能使我们继续前进的关键因素就是要获得必要的批准，将 Canning Highway 一边的土地之用途改变为多用途建筑物及尼希米所的土地转变为停车场。我也要强调的是，虽然设计公司对于 Canning Highway 一边于公路上的“街道外观”感兴趣（因为他们显然也可以宣传自己的设计），但我们知道神始终是那一位吸引人注意我们教会的建筑物并带领他们来到西澳笃信圣经长老会的。我们万不可将神的工作归功于“街道外观”，免得我们在思想及做决定时变得属肉体。当设计公司开始接洽有关当局申请准证，请大家恳切为这事项代祷。

所需建堂基金。估算了本教会的储备金并搁置一部分作为紧急情况之用和资助有需要的事工及宣教事工以后，我们仍然须要筹澳币 130 万元以供第一期的扩建。第一期工程乃是以建造一栋拥有许多多用途课室的新建筑物。有些人可能对此感到疑虑 - 为什么那么昂贵？你可以找一家一般的住宅建筑商盖一栋很好的房子，可能只需要几十万澳币？然而，我们必须记得，这费用包括质询费（申请商业用途准证、招标程序费、工程管理费）、设计费、拆卸工程、重铺

停车场路面，以及建造新建筑物本身的费用。此外，我们也试图对目前的教会建筑物进行一些修改以便提供更大的聚会厅。这不像一般上的住宅，这是一栋 700 平方米的双层建筑物，大有可能是一般住宅的两倍。既然这是一栋公用的建筑物，这也意味着其中的规格必须符合不同的建筑法规。相仿的，地毯及铺地面所使用的材料必须能适用于高流量的人潮。其中也会有许多的房间，这也与一般住宅不同，墙壁必须有足够的隔音设施以便供儿童主日学、查经班、证道及小组讨论等使用。更多的房间也意味着课室须要装置更多的桌椅。此外，与一般住宅相比，这栋建筑物将会需要更多的灯光及电缆敷设。它也需要影音设备。之后，当中还有昂贵的潮湿区工程，如建造更多的洗手间。这一切都是造成一般住宅与公用建筑物之间的巨大价钱差别。

因此，若任何人也琢磨 - 为什么不干脆拆卸并重建一栋全新的教会？按着今天的建筑费及人工费，你现在可以想象为什么拆卸及重建的费用轻而易举就要澳币 700 万元。这个数目还没算入超过一年的租金费用，倘若我们能暂时找到另一个地方来敬拜。

下一周，我们将会重温奉献给神的工作之圣经原则，以及几时及如何募集建堂基金。在此期间，若你有任何问题，请接洽我或梁嘉伟执事。

为主服事，
牧师