

The History of CrossPoint Baptist Church

Prepared For Its 20th Anniversary Celebration

September 11, 2016

The history of CrossPoint cannot be separated from the history of the two churches from which it sprang – South Airline Baptist Mission and River City Baptist Church.

South Airline Baptist Mission

The story begins with Reverend T. W. Terral, the Director of Missions (DOM) for what was then the Judson Baptist Association (now BAGBR). He was very instrumental in the establishment of South Airline Baptist Mission. During the late 1980s, he began to believe that a Southern Baptist presence was needed at the corner of Airline Hwy and Highland Road because these were (and still are) two of the most heavily traveled highways in the parish and because there was no other Baptist church in the area. Under his leadership, land was sought on which church buildings could be constructed or existing buildings converted to support a church. He worked closely with Zeke Dunaway, then the chair of the Judson Association Properties Committee and a member of Parkview Baptist Church. Over time, the land on which CrossPoint now gathers became the site for South Airline Baptist Mission.

One acre of land on which the current Office/Fellowship Hall Building and Classroom Building 1 (CB 1; strip building) now sit was purchased from Fidelity Bank, which had repossessed it from the previous owner. This initial acquisition was made using \$100,000 donated by the Louisiana Baptist Convention (LBC) to the Judson Association, who then purchased the one-acre with buildings for the new church. The purchase of this tract of land (Lot C-2-A of the re-subdivision of the Camille G. Dixon property) was completed on June 29, 1989. On the same day, with backing from the Judson Association, South Airline purchased an additional 6 acres of land (Lot C-1-A), which adjoined the C-2-A tract, from Mr. Lawrence Gremillion for \$250,000. He had originally owned all 7 acres and lived in the house before selling the one acre with buildings to the previous business owner (a building contractor) who had used the structures for an office and storage. Mr. Gremillion self-financed this purchase at 9% interest and the church obligated itself to a monthly note of \$2,845 for 15 years. These land transactions resulted in the Judson Association and the South Airline church owning 7 acres of land.

Initially a mission church sponsored by Parkview Baptist Church, South Airline Baptist Mission began in the latter half of 1989. The first meeting of people interested in being part of a new church plant was small, only about 15. The very next week that number grew to about 25 and slow but steady growth continued. In their efforts to support the new church, Parkview sent Reverend C. Bullard Jones, then one of the Associate Pastors, to become the first pastor of South Airline. As sponsoring church, Parkview continued to pay Rev. Jones' salary plus contributed \$500 per month for several years. Ms. Connie Odom had been Rev. Jones' Secretary at Parkview and she continued in that role at South Airline with Parkview also paying her salary. Other support during 1989 came from the Judson Association and Zoar Baptist Church (\$1,200 each). Zoar

continued their support in 1990 and Florida Blvd. Baptist Church also provided support funds. In addition, the Louisiana Baptist Convention provided \$500 to \$600 per month for the first 2 years before reducing their support to \$200 per month in 1991.

With the land having been acquired, the first issue for the new church was worship space. A large tent was erected and saw dust was scattered on the ground under the tent. The church's first worship services took place in this environment, which was hot in summer and cold in winter. A capital fund campaign was immediately initiated to raise funds for permanent worship space. Meeting in the tent and raising funds continued for about a year until construction of an extension to and a renovation of the office building occurred. That extension, which is currently referred to as the Fellowship Hall, served as the Sunday morning worship space for the South Airline congregation. In addition, what is currently called CB 1 was previously a storage barn with 7 bays. It was retrofitted into the 7 classrooms CrossPoint uses today. Interestingly, during the 6 years of South Airline's existence, a borrowed piano, loaned to the church by a Ms. Kathy Starns, was used. The piano was returned to her in December of 1996.

South Airline's congregation grew to where the average Sunday worship attendance stabilized at between 50 and 60. Dale Seal came on as Minister of Education and Music at some point, which grew the pastoral staff to two. Rev. Jones remained as Pastor for about 2 years through the middle of 1991. During the time the church was without a pastor, several men from Parkview Baptist Church filled the pulpit on Sunday mornings, taught Bible studies, and filled in on Wednesday evenings. These included Ron Tyndale and Michael Paul, both pastoral staff members at Parkview and Steve Dietzel. On December 29, 1991, the Reverend Bud Goodwin preached in view of a call to become the church's second Pastor and the congregation voted to approve that call. Mr. Goodwin served from January 1992 until December 1995 when he completed seminary work at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) and moved back to Texas. This, once again, left the church without a pastor and Michael Paul was asked to serve as interim pastor. He served ably from January 1996 until South Airline combined with River City Baptist Church to form CrossPoint later that year.

Records indicate that in the early years, South Airline operated with two main committees plus the Deacon body. One was called the Administrative Committee and was chaired by Zeke Dunaway. Other committee members included Rod Goff, Archie Spring, Pat Hamilton (who also served as church clerk), Ellie Hollifield, and Rob Robin. The other committee was the Finance Committee, which was chaired by Rod Goff, the church Treasurer. Other members of this committee were: Don Cox, Mary Trevillion, and Connie Odom. By 1995, other committees had been added as follows: Building Committee, Building Maintenance Committee, Flower & Decorating Committee, Special Events Committee, Wednesday Night Supper Committee and Yards & Grounds Committee. Names of people serving on those committees that are current members of CrossPoint include James and Diann Thomas, Dianne Paul, and Patsy Earnhart.

A very important and interesting decision regarding the church property had to be made

by the church early in 1996. Albertson's wanted the 7 acres owned by the church for construction of a supermarket. The church was offered 7 acres at the corner of Airline Hwy and Barringer-Foreman Road plus \$250,000 in exchange for the current property. This offer was carefully considered by the Judson Association and by the congregation but eventually, the offer was declined. Albertson's subsequently built diagonally across the Airline/Highland intersection from the church.

River City Baptist Church¹

Meanwhile, several families in another part of Baton Rouge began to meet and to share their feelings about an absence of Christian fulfillment in their lives within their current church relationships. These meetings began on an unstructured basis in late-summer of 1992. On September 25, 1992, the first organized meeting of the various families was held in the club house of the Woodstone Subdivision on Highland Road. It was mainly a prayer and share meeting, but interest grew rapidly and more and more people became interested by word of mouth. In the days following the Woodstone meeting, at least five additional meetings were held in various homes. Arrangements were made to hold another meeting on Thursday, October 1, 1992, at Southminster Baptist Church on Perkins Road for the purpose of prayer and fellowship. The level of enthusiasm at this meeting was high and resulted in a group of men making arrangements to rent the Tucker Building on the campus of Jimmy Swaggart Ministries on Bluebonnet Boulevard for a new church plant. Thus, River City Baptist Church began as a spontaneous development led by the Lord.

The first formal worship service of the new congregation took place on October 11, 1992. Dr. Bob Anderson, Pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, delivered the morning message with 248 people attending. The new church address became the Tucker Bldg, World Ministry Ave, Baton Rouge. Volunteers sprang up from within the church body to provide for on-going church ministry. Sunday School classes were formed, choir work began, and RA and GA groups met. The church name had not been finalized at this time but soon the congregation voted to adopt the name of River City Baptist Church.

Sunday, November 8, 1992, was designated as the official founding date for the new church. Rev. T.W. Terral, DOM for the Judson Association, was the guest preacher for the morning worship service. That afternoon, a Founding Day ceremony and dedication service was held to formalize the organization of River City. An invocation was offered by Rev. Jim Richards, Pastor of Southminster Baptist Church, the dedication sermon was delivered by Rev. Tommy French, Pastor of Jefferson Baptist Church, a prayer of dedication and commitment was offered by Rev. T.W. Terral, and a benedictory prayer was given by Dr. Bob Anderson. These four Baptist leaders from within the city provided much appreciated encouragement and support to this new congregation.

A formal resolution read during the dedication service stated: *"Be it resolved, that we who are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, believing that it is God's will*

1 Much of the River City history was taken from a document written by Mr. Arthur Wheat.

for us to establish a church, do solemnly enter into covenant to become an organized fellowship for the purpose of worshiping God, witnessing to His saving grace, living as Christians in the world, and ministering to the needs of people wherever we observe such needs, to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Another resolution was presented to be signed by "all who desire to join" the new church. Signing this resolution indicated each one's affirmation and adoption of the Resolutions, Church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and church officers, effective November 8, 1992. The opportunity to sign the resolution remained open for 6 weeks and resulted in 247 charter members. The organization committee consisted of: Jeff Gould, Richard Green, Al Jones, Violet Lux, John Mullins, Bill Peters, I.M. Shelton, Tim Tullos, and Ron Vallee. An act of incorporation was prepared by Attorney W.R. Mullins and signed by John Mullins and Jeff Gould. The document was certified by the Secretary of State's office on November 13, 1992. Shortly thereafter, a request was submitted to the Judson Baptist Association for River City Baptist Church to become a participating member. This request was approved at the Judson Assoc. annual meeting held on October 12, 1993.

During the months of October through December of 1992, the church had several outstanding ministers and leaders fill the pulpit each Sunday. This list included Dr. Charles Draper who first came to preach on December 6. He returned on January 10, 1993, and each Sunday thereafter through February, when the church affirmed him as their interim pastor. He continued in that position until July 1993. Office space was secured at 2325 Weymouth Drive, Suite F, in the Drusilla area of the city. Ms. Lynda Van Kerkhove was employed on January 1, 1993, as church secretary. The office moved to 7909 Wrenwood Ave, Suite A, in June of 1994.

Two important groups were elected by the members in the early days of the church. One was called "The Management Team." It was composed of 8 members and was charged with overseeing the day-to-day business of the church. This group continued throughout 1993 until it was replaced by the "Pastor's Council." The other important group elected was a "Pastor's Search Team," which began the important work of seeking a permanent Pastor. Their work ended when Stephen G. Veteto was called by the church on June 13, 1993. Brother Veteto came to River City from Southland Baptist Church in Memphis, TN where he was a member of the church staff. At the time of his coming, he had completed all his work for his Doctor of Theology degree at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary with the exception of his final dissertation and oral exams. These were completed in December 1993.

In November 1993, a group of 11 persons was selected to serve the church as a Property Planning Team. This group worked hard for 2 years investigating several sites for the construction of new church facilities but was not able to locate a suitable, available site. In 1996, a site on Perkins Road near Siegen Lane that was being developed by the YMCA became a foreseeable option. This, however, was not God's plan for River City.

The Pastor's Council continued as the form of church government. This was the

recommendation of the original Management Team and was a departure from the traditional committee structure of many Baptist churches. The Council was comprised of 6 members elected to serve 3-year terms on a rotating basis with two elected by the congregation each year. The first Council served during the Year 1994.

Meanwhile, the church occupied several different worship locations; the first being the Tucker Bldg. on World Ministry Ave, off of Bluebonnet. The second location was in the Trotter Bldg. across the street from the Tucker Bldg. on Bluebonnet. Both of these buildings provided excellent facilities including nice worship space with piano, an adequate number of rooms for Sunday School classes from bed babies to senior adult, including a college class, and plenty of parking. On April 29, 1995, the church moved to yet another location – the facilities at Southminster Baptist Church on Perkins Road. This move necessitated an afternoon schedule on Sundays and mid-week services on Thursdays because the space was being shared with Southminster. Just 6 months later, the church moved again to a facility named The Glynnwood (now King Buffet) on Bluebonnet. Use of this space was more challenging because of the need to bring in everything that was needed for Bible study and worship services every Sunday. In spite of the lack of a permanent home, God blessed River City with new members and new ministry opportunities.

The pastoral staff of River City grew over time and changed as might be expected. Eric Hankins began serving as Minister to Youth in April 1994. He was ordained to Gospel Ministry by the church in April of 1996. Ryan Scott came on as Minister to College Students in September of 1994 and served in that capacity for 16 months before accepting a staff position in Ponchatoula. Chad Boudreaux was employed as Worship Leader and Choir Director in February of 1995 and Dinah Courtney was hired as Preschool Coordinator in May of 1995.

From its beginning in the fall of 1992 through the summer of 1996, God also blessed River City financially. Members of the church gave generously and faithfully. Tithes and offerings far exceeded expenses such that when the time came to combine with the South Airline congregation, River City's financial position was very positive.

CrossPoint Baptist Church

The idea of South Airline Baptist Mission and River City Baptist Church joining to form a new church actually occurred in 1994. By God's providence, River City's office on Weymouth Drive was in the same office complex as the office of Dunaway Realty Co. Early in 1994, Steve Veteto met with Zeke Dunaway and broached the subject of the two churches combining. At the time, South Airline had recently called a new pastor and the church was doing well so there was no interest in considering such a change. Steve and Zeke did, however, continue to talk casually in subsequent months about the possibility of combining the two congregations. Then, the River City office moved to Wrenwood Avenue and the conversations stopped.

In January of 1996, South Airline found itself without a pastor and Zeke remembered his

previous conversations with Dr. Veteto. Zeke approached Steve about the possibility of combining churches. At that time, River City was considering the purchase of property on Perkins Road near the YMCA so they were not ready to consider forming a new church. But when plans to purchase this property fell through, God's timing had arrived. Discussions between and within the two churches happened quickly and each congregation voted to form one congregation in August of 1996.

In the October 1996 Judson Association Newsletter, an article by Dr. Veteto was included which read in part: *“Since its inception, South Airline has had the vision of reaching SE Baton Rouge and Ascension Parish. Located on a prime piece of property, this church was poised to be a dominant lighthouse for Jesus. Earlier this year, their pastor was called to another church, and they began searching for God's replacement. River City has been searching for property since its inception 4 years ago. Every time a piece of property was considered, the Lord very clearly spoke that He did not want the church to go in that direction. Hence, South Airline had property and needed a pastor and people, and River City needed a home. To reuse the phrase, 'It was a match made in heaven'. To God be the glory.”*

The first order of business for the new church was to form a Transition Team represented by members of both previous congregations. This team was charged with identifying the necessary steps and the logistics required to combine the two congregations. Members of this team from South Airline were: Zeke Dunaway, Verna Fletcher, Tom Harrell, Connie Odom, Mary Trevillion, Ed Simmons and Dale Seal (Staff member); and from River City they were: Jay Curry, Clarence Dykstra, Richard Green, Ken Hornsby, Guy Miller, John Mullins, and Steve Veteto (Staff member). John Mullins and Zeke Dunaway were elected as co-moderators. The first meeting was held on August 25, 1996. Sub-committees were assigned to handle the following matters: a new church name, space for morning worship, restrooms, parking, educational space, money handling, additional land, staffing, long range planning, and legal formation. This team worked tirelessly and met often through the fall of 1996 into the spring of '97.

The two churches wanted to begin worshiping together as one body as soon as possible. The first joint worship service occurred on Sunday, September 1, 1996, at the Glynnwood building on Bluebonnet previously used by River City. That evening, the gathering took place at the South Airline location. Wednesday evening prayer meetings also were held at South Airline.

The Naming Team (Co-Chaired by Verna Fletcher and Jay Curry) worked quickly to solicit and consider the many new church names submitted by members of each congregation. They had been charged by the Transition Team to have suggested names ready for a vote on Sunday, September 8, 1996. Interestingly, there was discussion as to whether to include the word “Baptist” as part of the church name. In the end, 65% of the Transition Team said “Yes.”

The Naming Team recommended the newly combined congregation choose between

the two names listed and described below. When the vote was taken, the name CrossPoint was selected.

- CrossPoint – strong name that points to the cross and to our Savior, Jesus Christ. It represents both a decision point in one's life and descriptively locates us at a crossroads in our church lives, our personal lives, and in our physical location.
- Brookwood – a warm, pleasing name that matches our beautiful location. A smooth and appealing name that would be inviting to many people we are trying to reach as well as to those who simply drive by or see it in an advertisement.

Sunday, September 8, 1996, was a day of celebration. The only service held that day was a morning worship service of the combined congregations at Boudreaux's Catering on Government St. The focus was on the faithfulness of God and the purpose of the new church. Everyone also participated in a church-sponsored fellowship meal. The number of attendees for this time of celebration was 261. It was at this event that the new church name was selected.

Members from each of the parent churches were given the opportunity to become charter members of CrossPoint. To become a charter member, each person was asked to sign the charter document. The beginning of this document read in part: *"We, the undersigned, do hereby affix our names to this charter membership roll in the presence of these witnesses and do declare our faith and baptism in Jesus Christ and our intent to serve the Lord God and His risen Son with faithfulness, joy, and zeal through the ministries of CrossPoint Baptist Church in the city of Baton Rouge, LA."* Letters were sent out to ensure all members of both parent churches had the opportunity to sign the charter. The charter membership roll remained open until January 15, 1997, and ultimately, 220 people signed the document.

The initial CrossPoint staff was comprised of Dr. Steve Veteto, Pastor; Eric Hankins, Youth Minister, Chad Boudreaux, Worship Leader; Dinah Courtney, Preschool Coordinator; and Dale Seal, Discipleship Coordinator. Because of the limited worship space available at South Airline, the Transition Team agreed two worship services would be best. These began on September 15, 1996, with the first service beginning at 8:15 a.m. and the second service beginning at 11:00 a.m. Fellowship time occurred from 9:15 to 9:45 with a combined Bible study beginning at 9:45. The two services offered two benefits: 1) gave people a choice of service times and 2) provided the option for two types of worship services.

Education space in the short term was handled in the following manner. The front part of what is currently called the office/fellowship hall (then called the sanctuary building) was used for preschool. The upstairs rooms were used for young and median adults. Rooms 1 and 2 of CB 1 were used by the older men's and older women's classes. First through six graders occupied the balance of the rooms in CB 1. The Youth (7th - 12th grades) were assigned "the shack". Teachers for each class were supplied by River City

members. Space was tight but it worked.

Lack of sufficient restroom facilities was an immediate problem. On September 11, 1996, Tom Harrell presented to the Transition Team a joint recommendation from the Site Development and the Building Teams to consider obtaining a T-Building restroom facility. Other recommendations were to initiate development of a Site Master Plan for the construction of a worship center and a youth activity center. This included the recommendation to purchase two Sprung buildings to accommodate these needs. A contract with Lewis Reames to develop the Site Master Plan also was approved.

An Organizational Structure Study Team was assigned the responsibility of making recommendations regarding the general operating structure of CrossPoint. This team was chaired by Ken Hornsby and included Zeke Dunaway, Michael Paul, Verna Fletcher, David Woolridge, Billie Middleton, Walton Payne, and Dr. Veteto. The concept that CrossPoint not be organized under the traditional committee structure of many Baptist churches continued to be supported. In late September of 1996, the Team recommended that the church organize itself to address three critical functions that impact the life and health of the church. They are: Mission, Ministry, and Management. To guide the mission of the church, a Mission/Vision/ Purpose (MVP) Team was suggested to advise the Pastor and the Ministry and Management Teams on programs and strategic initiatives. To guide Ministry, the Deacons were charged with caring out the function of ministry to the church body. To handle management, a Management Team was proposed to organize the human and financial resources necessary to carry out the Mission, Vision, and Purpose of the church. These recommendations were approved by the congregation in October.

The purchase of two Sprung buildings was approved by the congregation and the order was made on October 2, 1996. To erect the buildings, however, required that two concrete slabs be in place upon delivery. A Building Team chaired by Al Jones and comprised of Lee Green, Kevin Clark, Art Hall, Tom Harrell, Dennis McMurtry, Steve Tatom, James Thomas, and Terri Woolridge worked feverishly to obtain the necessary permits so the slabs would be ready once the buildings arrived, which was scheduled for December 2. Dealing with the city permit office was tedious but eventually successful.

In October, the Transition Team also authorized that a new corporation be formed. Zeke Dunaway and John Mullins were named the incorporators with John to serve as President and Zeke to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. David Woolridge was the registered agent. David was asked to draw up the papers for incorporation and to get Team approval before filing them with the Secretary of State's office.

The Sprung buildings were delivered on December 2, 1996, and work to erect the two buildings began immediately. Lee Green agreed to coordinate the work and a number of church members worked diligently to erect the two buildings. The Sprung company sent only one man to provide guidance so it was a major effort by church members. The work took a number of weeks to complete, but before worship services could be held, carpet, chairs, video and sound system, lighting, HVAC, etc. had to be purchased and

delivered/installed. Also, landscaping needed to be designed and planted. All totaled, the final cost for the two Sprung buildings with all necessary amenities was \$321,520, which included approximately \$40,000 for the concrete slabs.

On December 3, 1996, CrossPoint purchased an additional 3.18 acres of property contiguous to and at the back of the 7 acres already owned by the church. This was referred to as tract E-2 of the re-subdivision of the Camille G. Dixon property. The cost for this land was \$70,000 and the money came from River City church funds. This brought the total church property up to the 10.18 acres owned today.

Sunday, April 27, 1997, was a milestone day in the life of CrossPoint. It was the first worship service of the new church in their new Sprung buildings. It was a joyous day of celebration to God for all He had provided and orchestrated on behalf of this local church body. There was much singing (both congregational and special music), testimonies were given and the message centered on the great things God had done.

Many other projects were completed during 1997 to provide the campus with the form and function it needed. These included the installation of the restroom T-Building, the installation of awnings and sidewalks to facilitate movement among buildings, the purchase of a grand piano for \$22,500, improved parking, and a church sign. There also was a requirement that the turn lane on Airline Hwy be lengthened at church expense (\$35,000) to provide safety for vehicles turning into the church from the north.

The first Management Team at CrossPoint began serving in 1997 with the following members: Zeke Dunaway, Richard Green, Mary Gayden Jones, Billie Middleton, I.M. Shelton, and Steve Tatom. Charles Rea served as the first church counsel and David Woolridge as the first Treasurer.

In September of 1997, CrossPoint began the Mother's-Day-Out (MDO) Program, which was then referred to as W.E.E Learn & Play. W.E.E. stood for Weekday Early Education. The program was so named because that was the name of the curriculum from LifeWay used by the program. Ms. C.J. Martin was hired as the first Director. MDO was initially housed where the church offices currently are located. There were three classes and three teachers in the beginning handling 18 children ages 6 months to pre-K. The program operated much as it does today with a Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Thursday option. In the second year of operation, the portable classroom T-building (CB 2, that still exists today), was brought in and the Program moved there.

By 1999, the church was running smoothly, but the pastoral staff had completely turned over except for the Senior Pastor. Dr. Veteto secured the services of Dean Morris and Tim Levert to be Music Pastor and Youth Pastor, respectively, in 1997. Don Pucik became Pastor for Membership and Ministry in 1999.

The year 2001 proved to be a significant one in the life of the church. New Building and Capital Fund Teams had been appointed in 2000 with the goal of raising funds for and

constructing a 2-story Children's Education Building (CEB). Both Teams began to work very diligently and by March of 2001, the Building Team was meeting with contractors. The construction bid was let to Peter Lee Green Construction and a ground-breaking took place on June 3, 2001. While the church Building Fund had increased to about \$425,000, this was still less than the \$630,000 bid price. The bid price included the cost of construction of the 2-story building but completion of only the interior first floor. It was agreed to proceed on a pay-as-you-go basis and God provided the needed funds. Ultimately, the CEB, with completed first floor, cost \$644,607.

Concurrent with raising funds for the CEB was the completion of payments on the land mortgage, which had been ongoing since South Airline made the deal to purchase the six acres from Mr. Gremillion in 1989 described earlier. A monthly note of \$2,845 had been paid for 15 years and was paid off in July of 2001. The decision was made to keep paying the same amount monthly to the church building fund to help raise funds for the new CEB. Paying off this land mortgage was another milestone because it meant the church was now debt-free. During Dr. Veteto's pastorate, a debt-free policy had been adopted by the church and at no time since the summer of 2001 has CrossPoint incurred debt.

The other significant occurrence during 2001 was that Dr. Veteto, the church's first Senior Pastor, was offered a position with Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary to be the Director of their Rocky Mountain Campus in Denver. Steve accepted. This meant that CrossPoint was without a senior pastor for the first time but, as has been done on three occasions since then, the church formed a Pastor's Search Team and began the process of seeking a new Senior Pastor. In the interim, Don Pucik and Tim Levert proclaimed God's Word each Sunday. Later, Wayne Jenkins from the LBC office in Alexandria drove down each Sunday morning to preach.

The church sponsored its first Mexico Mission Trip in the summer of 2002. Guy Miller led the initial effort, but many church members participated. The church partnered with Pastor Ramon in Monterey, Mexico. Each summer, a team of people would go down generally for two purposes: 1) to proclaim and teach the gospel, and 2) to engage in a construction project in support of Pastor Ramon's ministry. Church members would donate money each spring toward the Mexico Mission Trip and construction supplies would be purchased to complete that year's project. Getting across the U.S./Mexican border with these supplies was usually quite an adventure. Once on site, the group would divide up into teams with some doing construction, some doing VBS-type teaching programs to children, and some doing other types of evangelism work. God blessed this effort for many years. Unfortunately, concern for the security of church members crossing the border became so high, these trips could no longer be taken. The last one occurred in 2009.

With the new CEB and first floor now completed, the MDO Program moved again in 2002 but this time to a permanent location in this building. C.J. Martin had considerable input into the configuration and size of the first-floor classrooms, so it accommodated

the Program quite well. In January of 2003, C.J.'s husband was transferred by his work to north Louisiana, so she had to resign as MDO Director. By this time, the Program had grown to about 200 children and a kindergarten class had been added. CrossPoint was fortunate to secure the services of Ms. Gay Ann Tate to succeed C.J. as MDO Director. Gay Ann began working with C.J. in the fall of 2002 and became Director in January 2003. She has had a long and successful tenure as Director. Under her leadership, the program has reached its maximum of about 240 children with 40 teachers and support staff. Also, there are now three kindergarten classes. The School is well-respected in the area with a waiting list of parents desiring to enroll their children.

Dennis Mitchell became CrossPoint's second Senior Pastor on August 15, 2002. Dennis is a Louisiana native who came to CrossPoint from Kentwood, La. He had great strengths in pastoral care and relationship building as well as in administrative and personal accountability. He had to step down for personal reasons on July 31, 2004, but still lives in the area. During Dennis' tenure, a local architect (Jimmy Dodds) was authorized to proceed with drawings to complete the second floor of the CEB.

Dr. Allen Jackson, a NOBTS professor, served as interim pastor beginning in September 2004 and remained in that role for a year. He secured the services of Chad Moore to serve as interim youth pastor. Dr. Jackson was followed by Landon Dowden, who became CrossPoint's third Senior Pastor in October 2005.

Landon, originally from Leesville, LA, exhibited strengths in preaching and teaching while emphasizing biblical literacy. During Dr. Dowden's tenure as Senior Pastor, the church building fund had again grown to a level that allowed completion of the second floor of the CEB. The work went on from February 2007 to March 2008. Church members did some of this work themselves to keep the cost down, and Lee Green was again instrumental in ensuring a job well-done. The total cost was a little over \$400,000.

Landon received his Ph.D. degree in 2007. Under his leadership, CrossPoint embarked on international missions in Uganda. Byron Townsend was hired as Associate Pastor early in 2007 and tasked with establishing a missions focus. He and Landon were introduced to the Uganda Baptist Seminary (UBS) Dean in 2008 and the two of them made the first trip to Uganda that summer. The church began to provide budgeted support to UBS in 2009 and a team from CrossPoint went on the first Uganda Mission Trip in April of 2009. Several from this team also visited Rwanda. The goal in Uganda was to come alongside a young, rural Baptist church and provide ongoing monetary support while also making annual trips to conduct pastor's, women's, and children's conference's in the village to increase awareness of a local gospel presence. Bugiri Baptist Church was the first such church CrossPoint partnered with. Their leader, Pastor George, has done an excellent job and by God's grace and providence, and with CrossPoint's partnership, Bugiri Baptist Church is thriving and has replicated the outreach by helping several other local congregations in the area. CrossPoint has moved on to try to repeat what was done in Bugiri and is now partnering with Busembatia Baptist Church in another part of the country.

Also during Dr. Dowden's tenure as pastor, CrossPoint moved to an elder-led church polity (2010) and adopted a Church Membership Covenant (2011). Capital Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., their pastor, Dr. Mark Dever, and the 9Marks organization associated with that church had a strong influence on CrossPoint's polity during this time. Dr. Dowden left in the summer of 2011 to accept a call to pastor a relatively new church in Tupelo, MS.

The year 2011 proved to be a year of significant change for CrossPoint. During the previous two years, discussions with Grace Baptist Church had begun to occur relative to how CrossPoint might come alongside this shrinking, aging church in hopes of providing revitalization support with God's help. CrossPoint joined with Grace to host a Vacation Bible School on their mid-city location. There were Sunday night services led by CrossPoint pastors. The CrossPoint Elders met with the Grace Pastor and Deacon body to explore possibilities of how revitalization might occur. Ultimately, the CrossPoint congregation and the Grace congregation voted to approve what was referred to as a "replant." This involved an investment of both people and funds by CrossPoint. It also involved a commitment by Grace members to accept new leadership and an influx of new people. About 65 CrossPoint members were sent out with a one-year commitment to "replant" Grace Baptist Church. CrossPoint's Associate Pastor at the time, Byron Townsend, felt called to serve as Pastor of the replant effort and moved his family across town. CrossPoint committed, not only to send out the people who felt led to go, but also to pay Byron's full salary in 2011. CrossPoint also paid two-thirds of his salary in 2012 and one-third in 2013. As of this writing, God has greatly blessed the Grace replant. The church is shining Christ's light in mid-city Baton Rouge and many who agreed to the one-year commitment have stayed and made Grace their church home.

As stated above, Dr. Dowden accepted a call to pastor a young church in north Mississippi and departed Baton Rouge in the summer of 2011. This meant that within a six-month period, CrossPoint's Senior and Associate Pastors were no longer present. But, God was gracious. Kevin Whitfield, who had been serving as Youth Pastor for a short time agreed to provide the Sunday morning messages each week. CrossPoint was blessed to have Kevin, who was not only faithful to proclaim God's Word well, but also provided valuable administrative leadership working alongside the church Elders, Deacons, and Management Team. In addition, Byron provided much needed support for CrossPoint even while working on the Grace replant. It was a difficult but successful 12-15 month period and helped CrossPoint realize how blessed it is to have the kind of church structure God provided in the beginning stages of the church's development.

CrossPoint now has its fourth Senior Pastor, Nick Taylor. Nick is from Houma, LA, and a graduate of Nicholls State University and NOBTS. He began his pastorate in October of 2012 and also has emphasized biblical literacy and expositional preaching. He is strong in pastoral care, but he particularly stresses how the gospel impacts Christian living.

The CrossPoint campus has not changed since 2008. Immediately following completion

of the CEB second floor in 2008, members began raising funds to replace the Sprung buildings, which were initially said to have a life of about 20 years. They are now over 19 years old and still going strong. The church entered into contract with M² Design/Build of Lindale, TX to produce a new campus Master Plan. The new Plan was completed in 2014 at a cost of \$18,000 and approved by the church members on January 18, 2015. Upon its completion, the church formed new Capital Fund and Building/Design Teams with the goal of raising the necessary funds to construct a new, permanent multi-purpose building with kitchen to be used initially for worship and fellowship. The Master Plan also includes a second 2-story education classroom building. The Building Fund currently contains over \$1.2 million and according to the debt-free policy, no construction will begin until God has provided the funds. Possibly, the multi-purpose worship/fellowship building may be completed sometime in 2019.

Over the years, CrossPoint's philosophy has evolved. Its initial focus was more seeker-sensitive with a leaning toward the purpose-driven model. With changing pastoral staff and a turn-over in many of the original church members, the emphasis as time progressed has centered more on biblical literacy and expositional preaching. CrossPoint longs to see Christ's Church grow and we believe a healthy church is measured more by spiritual growth than by numerical growth. Our goal is to encourage and exhort God's people to unite with his Church and allow the gospel to shape them. CrossPoint is a corporate body that desires to use our gifts of service for the benefit of one another and the advancement of God's Kingdom. We believe Church membership is very important, so we guard church membership as carefully as we can.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary, CrossPoint has had over 20 pastoral and ministerial staff members (See Appendix 1) under four Senior Pastors, not including interims. We are thankful for each and every one of the leaders with which we have been blessed. God has used them all in unique and amazing ways. CrossPoint continues to minister to the people of East Baton Rouge, Ascension, and other parishes proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, making disciples, and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. We are so thankful for the 20 years of ministry God has entrusted to us and we wait with expectation to see what lies ahead.

Appendix 1.

CROSSPOINT BAPTIST CHURCH History of Church Staff Members

Steve Veteto	09/1996	06/2001	Senior Pastor
Chad Boudreaux	09/1996	11/1996	Worship Leader
Eric Hankins	09/1996	1997	Youth Minister
Dale Seal	09/1996	??	Discipleship Coordinator
Dinah Courtney	09/1996	09/2000	Preschool Coordinator
Dean Morris	08/17/97	03/2003	Worship/Discipleship Pastor
C.J. Martin	09/01/97	12/31/02	MDO Program Director
Tim Levert	09/21/97	07/31/02	Youth Pastor
Don Pucik	03/1999	03/2002	Membership/Ministry Pastor
Dennis Mitchell	08/15/02	12/31/04	Senior Pastor
Gay Ann Tate	01/01/03		MDO Program Director
Melanie Fuentes	03/2003	09/15/04	Interim Worship Leader
Carey Lowery	02/08/03	03/31/04	Youth Pastor
Don Kenaley II	04/15/04	06/30/05	Interim Youth Pastor
Randy Lee	09/20/04	06/30/08	Music/Children's Pastor
Melba Miller	09/16/04	01/31/07	Director, Educational Ministries
Allen Jackson	09/15/04	09/15/05	Interim Pastor
Chad Moore	07/2005	03/2006	Interim Youth Pastor
Landon Dowden	10/16/05	07/31/11	Senior Pastor
Charlie Turner	10/15/06	11/30/09	Youth Pastor
Byron Townsend	02/15/07	12/31/13	Music/Missions Pastor
Kevin Whitfield	06/16/10	08/29/13	Youth/Associate/Interim Pastor
Sherry Wilson	09/01/10		Minister to Preschool Children
Stephanie Menou	01/2011	05/2012	Worship Leader
Edward T Wright	08/01/11	07/17/12	Assistant Pastor, Admin/Teaching
Angela Franklin	05/20/12	07/15/13	Worship Leader/Children's Music
Nick Taylor	10/01/12		Senior Pastor
Drew Dilday	08/11/13	08/14/16	Associate Pastor (Music & Youth)
Andrew Hunter	07/01/16		Music Pastor

Wes McKay

08/01/16

Associate Pastor