DOING MORE

A STORY, A PLAN, AND A PATH TO REACH EVERY PLACE

ANDY ADDIS

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Prologue

The purpose of this work is to tell a story, recognize a need, and introduce a concept.

Story - CrossPoint Church started as a rural multisite born out of a 1970s declining rural neighborhood church. Some successes and most struggles are all too familiar elements shared in many of our church histories. Too often the conference speaker or the book author projects a model/ circumstance that is just nowhere near the reality of who we are, or what we're facing. Telling the CrossPoint story will hopefully resonate with small church pastors and rural ministries everywhere. It is intended to be an inspiration and an attainable model for the Jesus-loving, overworked servant who is doing the hard, grind-it-out ministry that happens in the out-of-the-way places. Rural ministry is never easy, but it can be simple. I hope the CrossPoint story will inspire you in that direction.

Need - There are more than 60 million people living in what is demographically known as rurality and there are millions more who live closer to town but still have a rural mindset. The reason these places are often called "flyover country" is because that is what the rest of the world would rather do. When it comes to rural places, the sentiment is often just "skip it." However, there are huge needs and massive opportunities in these small places, and it's time we value the work and the workers in those fields... literal fields. North American Mission Board President, Kevin Ezell, influenced this project by talking and praying with me (Andy Addis) about rural ministry and then challenging a group of people to find a way to reproduce what we do locally for any who might find it useful. Since that day, amazing things have happened and this is just part of a very real, purposeful and usable rural strategy.

Concept - One major piece of that rural strategy is something we call the RePlantHub.com. So much of the trouble in rural ministry is the lack of time and resources for the bi-vocational and co-vocational leaders. Imagine a one-stop portal with curated churches from across the country who are giving away everything they produce. Sermons, worship, and printing are just a few resources that would be made available because they believe in rural ministry and want to assist the rural pastor. Additionally, in places where there is ministry but no pastoral leadership, we can help temporarily or until Jesus returns. This is what the ReplantHub.com does.

At the end of our story, we'd love for you to check it out: ReplantHub.com

So, please take some time to be challenged, hopefully inspired, but most importantly appreciated for the work you have done, are doing, and will do! The hope is that this will become the beginning of a beautiful partnership.

Doing More Together

Chapter 1 Just Like You

His old late '90s pickup rolled up in front of their house and seemed to settle into place with familiar creaks in the suspension and pops of gravel still stuck between the treads from the dirt road that brought him home.

After he turned off the ignition, he sat for a moment, enjoying the quiet. A couple of bicycles littered the front yard, expressly left where they had been instructed not to be left just the day before yesterday. The kitchen light burned brightly, and then the silhouette of his amazing wife flashed past. Flashed past is no exaggeration as she seemed continually to move 90 miles an hour in that house.

She was super mom to two grade school-boys, part-time (more like fulltime) receptionist at one of those downtown boutiques, an experienced chauffeur to the block and chaperone to everything happening with those under 15 in that small town.

Add to that list the multi-page resume of experience in volunteer positions all over their church, ranging from mentoring to childcare to janitorial and anything in between; she was amazing.

He felt himself breathe out the words, "I wonder how long it's been since I told her that."

Hearing his own voice, he realized his internal conversation was making its way into the real world, and it jarred him into reality. Time to start his second workday.

He gathered his bag and jacket from the bench seat of the truck and left the worries of the day job behind, as much as he could, knowing it would start all over again tomorrow at 7 am.

Swinging the front door wide open (one of his favorite parts of the day), two boys paused a brutal smackdown via video game long enough to greet dad at the door, the younger with a hug and the older a fist bump. They stood there long enough to answer a question or two about their day, but dad knew what they wanted to hear. "Okay, good to see you, boys. You can go back to your game." No further urging was required as they both resumed their game without missing a beat. Their eyes were on the screen, but their voices were directed at him as they said as if in rehearsed unison, "Love you dad!"

As he stepped through the dark dining room settling against the doorway of the bright kitchen, he saw her, in all her frenetic energy.

Wearing an apron and armed with a spatula, he could see she had already taken care of dinner. He must be later than usual.

Her head was cocked to the left, pressing a phone to her shoulder as she bustled around. There was a 70-80% chance it was her mom or sister from back home, which she missed so much. She mouthed the words "I love you," then glanced at the clock before mouthing, "About 30 minutes?"

He kissed her on the forehead and then slipped off to get a head start on his other job. Maybe these thirty minutes would give him enough of a head start so he could go to bed at the same time as his wife.

He walked down the hallway to the spare bedroom they call an office and closed the door behind him. It was a third bedroom which was cleverly disguised as a bi-vocational pastor's office:

- A haven for free books from past conferences.
- A desk stacked with denominational fliers and church bills.
- A few knick-knacks and thank you gifts from over the years from church members (including that odd painting of Jesus whose eyes followed you wherever you sat that his father- in-law "found for him" at a garage sale).

It wasn't much of an office, but he wouldn't have to worry about that for too long because in about 18 months, when his oldest became a teen, he knew this office would become a bedroom once again. A fact his twelve year-old son, currently rooming with a nine-year-old brother, never failed to recall at all family meetings.

Turning on the desk lamp, he pushed away a stack of papers while glancing

at the bulletin board. There was a schedule pinned up for the current series at the church, reminding him he was already behind on his preparation for this weekend's message continuing through the book of Ephesians.

He knew he needed to pour into some study. He should read the passage in multiple versions, study some commentaries, try to figure out some original language stuff and, oh yeah, maybe pray about it.

That thought threw a quick shiver down his spine.

It's not that he didn't want to pray; he loved prayer. But it was a reminder to him that his own personal devotions had suffered at the hands of a schedule that could only be described as undoable: working 7am-3pm five days a week, coaching every afternoon, caring for a young and active family, and then trying to pastor a small rural church that had enough meetings to steer a church five times its size!

He hadn't even studied the passage, and he knew he still had to come up with a fantastic outline that was simple enough for the lost to hear the Gospel, yet deep enough to give something to sister Sally who'd been grading sermons for more than 50 years. He needed to produce argumentation, thoughtful exegesis, powerful (yet never before heard) illustrations, notes for the bulletins, PowerPoint slides for the screens, and direction for the song leader who wanted all this yesterday.

He likes preaching, but he doesn't love it. What he does love kept creeping in under the door to this makeshift office:

- The sound of his kids laughing.
- The smell of the dinner being made by the woman he cherished.
- The thought of togetherness just outside the door.

But, there was even more that he loved.

He was a bi-vocational pastor because he loved people, especially those in his little church.

He loved the community and wanted to give his life for that out of the way place. He loved mentoring, pastoring and holding that little piece of

ground for the Kingdom of God.

But it did not matter how much he loved it all, something was going to have to give. The pace, the energy and the work just were not sustainable. Something was going to have to give before he did.

He would die for his family and that little church... but he'd rather live for them.

He did not know what it was but he knew he needed something that would help him love and lead his congregation while opening that door to be with his family.

Part 1

Being multisite is a blessing because it provides rural churches with a network of skilled staff members who serve all locations.

- RACHAEL SACHS, CROSSPOINT PITTSBURG, PASTOR SPOUSE

The story in the first chapter is about no one, and yet it's about everyone. For most of us in ministry and leadership we quickly identify with a part of that story, and for some of us, we connect with nearly every word.

The weight of ministry is always too much to bear alone. Christianity has been, from the beginning, a team sport, and even more so for those trying to lead.

When a Christian leader feels isolated, under-resourced and not allowed to focus on what they believe their calling is, the result is weariness, frustration and what feels like a long, slow slide into somewhere or something they never wanted. This document's purpose and the resources that follow is to help stop that slide.

The hope is to unlock some ideas, practices, and resources that will help the stuck and struggling church and its ministers find a way to thrive once again!

However, to do that, we need to start with a history lesson and then discover a little bit of methodology coming out of that history. The point is to convince you there's a reason to listen to the story at all.

Chapter 2 The story of CrossPoint Church

Being multisite is a blessing because my family didn't have to worry about finding a new church home when we moved. Getting connected to a church was our first priority and CrossPoint helped make a very stressful transition so much easier. -TANA DAY, CROSSPOINT HAYS CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

On August 23 of 1970, in the rural town of Hutchinson Kansas, Gospel believing and community-loving members of First Southern Baptist-Church Hutchinson decided the best way to reach the unreached was to plant another congregation in their own town.

That pioneering spirit and selfless behavior of the congregation became a baked in character trait of that new little gathering.

Initially, that church met in an old farmhouse with services on the screened-in porch, Sunday school classes in the kitchen and bedrooms. That fledging congregation reached out to the community through Monday night visitation, weekend services, Bible study and prayer meetings.

God poured out on them greatly with growth, young families and early opportunity. Buying a little bit of land, they built their first structure that would end up being part of a three-phase building program so familiar in Evangelical America.

The first sanctuary became the gym/family life center years later. The second phase, which added education space, culminated in the third phase of a full 300 seat octagonal worship center with padded pews, brand new hymnals and stained wood rafters...Hallelujah!

Those years of growth were not just structural; they were changing lives, strengthening families and spreading the Gospel. In the early 90s, this

great little church planted by their sister church in the same town reached its pinnacle of nearly 400 in weekend attendance calling themselves Westbrook Baptist Church.

It seemed like the sky was the limit as this church became a pivot point for The Central Baptist Association, spanning three counties wide from the Oklahoma to the Nebraska border, owning the entire middle column of Kansas.

However, like so many churches in the region and across the country, things were changing. The oil market was drying up and the economy was shifting. Technology was on the rise, seemingly leaving them behind, and the typical gimme putt of new families attending as they moved to town wasn't happening anymore.

By the late 90s, Westbrook Baptist Church found itself pastorless and struggling to find anyone who would take the job. The robust congregation had dwindled to just over 100 people, making their worship center seem almost cavernous, causing them to remember when they were 75% bigger and couldn't get everyone in at the same time. Economic fears were starting to creep in as numbers went down, while the note for that final third phase of construction was still not paid off. The future was uncertain.

Here is where I get to enter the story: My name is Andy Addis, and I am the pastor of CrossPoint Church. My official title is Lead Teaching and Vision Pastor. In 2002 I packed up my family, made up of my wife, Kathy, and two toddler boys, Noah and Nathan, to move to Hutchinson, Kansas. I had recently graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where I had pastored Handley Baptist Church on the lower east side of Fort Worth, Texas, for the last few years.

I was a 31-year-old, fresh out of seminary pastoral graduate who had no notches on his belt to inspire a pastoral search team to look his way. Still, as you've already noted, things weren't going well for Westbrook Baptist Church, and their options were limited.

So, bonus for me, I guess!

Additionally, I was no stranger to Westbrook Baptist Church.

Growing up 60 miles away, I often attended associational events there and looked up to everyone there as a leader during my youth pastor days. This move was a homecoming for me, and the excitement of the change helped me escape the sadness of the church's current state of affairs.

The truth is that what took place over the next few years was much easier to see in the rearview mirror than it was through the windshield. Yes, I admit that most of what was "accomplished" was God's willingness to use those who didn't know any better. I've often described my first decade of work at Westbrook as riding a bull... You don't really steer, you just hang on, but if you make it for eight seconds, you call it a win!

However, despite my naivety and the desperation of the church, God started to move.

In the first year, we saw numbers climb back up to where they had been in its heyday. We had to start looking for more chairs to put out, move to multiple services and finally, start talking about building a building.

However, one look into the pricing structures for building a building and our little blue-collar country church decided we needed to find other options. We were growing, we were thankful, and we were clueless.

As we looked around for different economic avenues to allow expansion, we heard about a church in the big city (where I'm from, that's Kansas City) who was doing overflow at a strip mall across the street from their church.

They were doing a weird combination of live preaching in the church and video at the overflow site. They were creating a completely different worship experience and we had never seen anything like it, but that's the direction we went!

So in 2006, Westbrook Baptist Church bought an old Big A Auto Parts Center and cut a hole in the wall to create a "café." We set a triangular stage up in one corner and opened the doors for a Saturday night service. The very first night, 270 people showed up, and we were flabbergasted.

A couple of years later, in 2008, we noticed almost 200 people driving in from a community nearly 20 minutes away called Sterling, Kansas. We asked them to stay after service for a couple of weeks to have a meeting in which we told them we needed their seats and their parking spaces. We asked them if we set up shop at the high school gym in their town just like this, would they help us start there?

The answer was yes, and our first location outside our hometown became a reality.

We grew to almost 1000 people a weekend and started talking to people all across the state. To summarize the journey, we had to change our name to something that didn't reflect a neighborhood in one city and Westbrook Baptist Church became CrossPoint Church.

That same year in 2009, we put our arms around two struggling congregations in other parts of the state, and we planted another location in a community where some CrossPointers had moved and wanted to see a CrossPoint there.

While it wasn't our initial plan, it became our mission, vision, and passion to replant churches in struggling congregations and then plant new churches in communities with people who wanted that to happen. As I'm writing this in early 2022, that's who we are today.

Like everyone, numbers were a little stronger pre-Covid. Even still, we are a congregation with 12 locations, more than 2500 in weekend worship, and relationships with dozens of other churches and ministries across the country who are using our resources to help keep their ministries thriving. We continue our journey to promote the Gospel in rural places.

This 20-year journey we bumbled and stumbled through now gives us the gift of hindsight. Looking back, this journey exposed several things we paid the dumb tax on, and we hope you won't have to pay that same tax.

Our hope is to give the small church and rural pastor some tools in the tool belt, resources in your arsenal and some support for the journey. In the following pages, we want to give you the rationale for our model, some major principles we learned, and some stories of actual congregations and pastors on this trip with us.

My prayer for you is that you don't bail out too soon because of one part in this model you might not agree with. Eat the fish and spit out the bones, I always say. There will hopefully be something in this document for everyone. If it's just one thing that makes your ministry grow, your heart made secure, or your calling seem more fulfilling, then I am thrilled to be a part of that journey with you.

Chapter 3

Being a part of a multisite family of churches has allowed me to think about the big "C" church more often. I'm constantly thinking about the church outside the four walls of my location.

- SHAEN MARKS, CROSSPOINT HUTCH LOCATION PASTOR AND EXECUTIVE TEAM MEMBER

CrossPoint is a video-driven, rural, multisite network of churches.

There are words in the previous sentence that make many readers want to jump up and shout hallelujah. However, for others some words in there make you feel a little sick to your stomach.

I know that video, multisite, network, etc., are all words that stir different emotions in people and ministry types. So let me be clear from the beginning, the story I'm telling you is our story and:

- It is not the only way
- It is not the best way
- But, it is "a" way to do ministry

Why is this model a viable option? Well, let's talk about that.

Multisite

The practical nature of multisite has made it a standard structure in church planting/replanting over the last 20 years, but it's still a bit uncommon in rurality. One of the main reasons I receive pushback amongst my tribe of Southern Baptists regarding the multisite church is the issue of autonomy.

Autonomy is a valid concern, but a true multisite church considers its network one autonomous church in many places. In our context, we are not a franchise model expecting every location to look, taste, and feel like every other. Our hope is that our Location Pastors would contextually apply the ministry to their specific community. The advantage is they don't have to reinvent the wheel for so many things because they are part of a network carrying a heavy load:

- sermon production
- graphics and printables
- insurance policies
- accounting and payroll
- website development
- social media presence
- children's curriculum
- Grow Group/Sunday school resources
- A thousand other things

Location Pastors get to focus on discipling people, growing the church and making a difference in their community while not dealing with so much of the mundane. A multisite church is an autonomous church; they are just leveraging the strength of the network to expand their ministry geographically.

Another concern expressed regarding multisite ministry concerns the theological correctness of such an endeavor. The argument usually goes like this, "I've never seen the word multisite in the Bible." Well, you're not wrong. I've never seen anything in the Bible on the Internet, bipartisan debate, or empirical evidence either. However, I still firmly believe the Bible speaks to all these issues. We just have to look for them.

I would also argue that while we have never seen the word multisite in scripture, we have witnessed multisite work in the Bible. Almost every one of the epistles contain a series of geographic designations. Let's look at Colossians, for example.

Colossians 4:16 (ESV) 16 "And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea." Well, they didn't have a video, but in the medium of the day, it looks like the preaching of the apostle Paul was circulated between multiple congregations. (Doesn't it make you itch that they lost the letter from Laodicea somewhere along the way? It must've been a broken link or never correctly uploaded to YouTube.)

All joking aside, I believe sharing the epistles throughout New Testament churches is an example of multiple locations tied together by the same message and leaders. So, in a way, multisite is just mimicking first-century church logistics. Do yourself a favor, and just read the first few and last few verses of the epistles to see this pattern repeated again, and again, and again, and again.

The truth is there are aberrations of multisite that are not healthy. Creating cultures of personality worship, enhancing a church's ability to be territorial, and neglecting the opportunity for churches to help other churches because they only help themselves. These are all qualities of unhealthy multisite churches.

According to my good friend Jim Tomberlin, one of the original gangsters of the multisite movement, the vast majority (85%) of multisite churches never get past three locations. I believe that's because the primary goal of those churches is to expand the work they are doing as a local church, and that's great! But what about the 15% that remains, like CrossPoint?

I believe they have adopted multisite as a form of missiology. It's a way to plant churches and expand the kingdom and support church planting and replanting in a unique way. In our context, there are rural locations that statistically could never support an independent church in a traditional sense. However, in a network, they could be a robust and community engaging congregation as they lock arms with others. That is a healthy form of multisite, seeing their locations as opportunities to expand the kingdom and not just their church brand.

Video

Another criticism of this model of church planting and replanting is video preaching. The primary theological argument allowing for and even supporting the use of video preaching has already been stated. There is New Testament biblical evidence that messages of Paul, Peter and John were written and circulated amongst a variety of churches in different geographic regions. There would be a standing and a reading of the words as a time of teaching in local congregations, using the medium of the day to duplicate the same message in multiple places.

Again, let me reiterate that using video preaching today may not be the best way, but it is "a" way, and there are places and times in which it is exceptionally advantageous:

- In rural locations where gathered believers cannot afford or persuade a pastor to relocate
- During intentional interims where leadership is present, but preaching gifts are not evident
- With bi-vocational employees needing an opportunity to be out of the pulpit to care for the family and/or their other job
- In church startups where, leaders display gifts of administration, pastoral shepherding, benevolence and a variety of other gifts, but teaching and preaching is not readily present.

Scenario after scenario can be named in which video preaching, if it is a valid form of transmitting the gospel, would make church possible where it was not before. Video preaching might assist a local pastor in helping them do the work at a much greater capacity. How is that?

In my conversations with church planters, I've discovered they spend anywhere from 15 to 25 hours a week in message preparation and delivery. I'm glad they invest the time to study and prepare a message. If you're going to deliver God's word, you should do it right! Yet, how great would it be for that church planter to free up half of a workweek to spend time in one-on-one discipleship, pastor the flock, develop the church, and not be a minister to books, notepads and PowerPoint.

That's not to say that even those whose primary calling isn't preaching, or teaching should get a pass; if they are in leadership, they need to be ready in season and out. That's why the CrossPoint pattern of teaching ministry is not entirely carried by me, even though I am the Lead Teaching and Vision Pastor. I am assisted regularly by members of a teaching team who speak to our network from the same platform I use multiple times a year. There are Location Pastors who also fulfill this role.

Additionally, every Location Pastor must speak every other month,

even if they are not a part of the official "teaching team." This often stretches them in areas where they are not fully confident and releases some who enjoy the opportunity. Plus, it's a development time as the weekend they each speak at their location becomes a week of internal preparation and camaraderie. The following week is a week of evaluation at multiple levels helping them grow forward. Many have developed a personal preaching and teaching ministry at midweek services and other opportunities within their location.

Network

Finally, one of the significant objections to being a multisite church even in rural America is surrounding the issue of cooperation. The assumption is that any church with multiple locations is trying to become its own association, convention, or denomination.

There probably are some who are doing just that. Just as there are individual churches at singular locations that, after they grow large enough, choose to operate independently, separating themselves from the structures and organizations they used to support. However, that has less to do with their structure, and more to do with the choice of their direction. Churches with one location, five locations, or 100 locations must make decisions as to who they're willing to partner with or not.

CrossPoint has deliberately chosen to lean in on our cooperative relationships at every level. We are huge fans of the national entities of our Southern Baptist Convention and give cooperatively out of our general budget, learning to live on 89% of the offering, making sure 11% goes out in cooperation. The most significant chunk of that goes to our state convention, which goes on to larger SBC entities. A smaller percentage goes to multiple associations, ensuring every association in which a CrossPoint location exists receives gifts from that campus because it's a part of that region and a cooperating member of that association. Our state convention campground is even a part of our mission's budget!

Multisite networks don't make you uncooperative any more than being a traditionally formatted church makes you automatically cooperative. These are choices we need to make and priorities we get to choose.

I know there are probably a thousand more questions and arguments that could be made for and against this particular model. Still, I hope approaching these bigger issues helps you move forward and see what value there might be in approaching "a" way to meet needs in some hard to reach rural places.

In the next section, you may find some more of those questions, concerns, and objections dealt with as we share with you some of the core principles we have learned in the last 20 years of this journey. The ups and downs, the mistakes, and the great moments God seems to use us despite ourselves. Throughout the following few pages, we will take quick shots at some principles we've learned as we continue to become the church God has led us to become.

Part 2

Being multisite is a blessing because I have a multitude of resources at my fingertips. As someone who the Lord called into ministry as a location pastor from a government sector job it has been so reassuring to have experienced pastors to ask questions of, bounce ideas around with, and have prayer support/resourcing throughout the process of planting a new location.

- JAMESON BECKNER, CROSSPOINT TOPEKA LOCATION PASTOR

Although CrossPoint Church is a more than 50 year old traditional church, the transition from neighborhood church to rural multisite afforded some nontraditional lessons to be shared. Some of these were directional and intentional, and some were discovered in the rear-view mirror.

There's an expression we use a lot in rural ministry, since most things aren't made for us or intended for our best practices. That phrase is, "Eat the fish and spit out the bones." There's a lot of value in being able to see what is learned and important to someone else even if everything doesn't apply to you. I think that's the practice you should adopt when reading the next few pages.

There are several things worth chewing on, but what isn't, just spit out and keep reading. My hope is to keep you from paying the planting and replanting "dumb taxes" mentioned before, since that's a cost no one wants to pay again! You are welcome.

Chapter 4

Being multisite is a blessing because of the community the Location Pastors have. This blesses me because I know that my husband, as a location pastor, has accountability, sounding boards, friendships, and shoulders to rely on. Having the community of pastors also brings the wives together. I have been blessed with friendships, women who understand me and just a safe place to talk about all things!

- NOEL SANDERSON, CROSSPOINT HAYS PASTOR SPOUSE

Principle #1: Bible preaching, relationships and vision are the holy trifecta of a healthy church.

Too many times we look for some secret sauce, like those late-night television commercials that promise you can lose weight, change your financial future, or make a bass boat out of duct tape. The problem is, they're almost never the truth.

This first principle is actually one we discovered looking back in the rearview mirror. Our little band of approximately 100 people in a declining, indebted, rural congregation saw tremendous growth that led to nearly 500 in worship within the first couple years of our transition.

What was the secret sauce? There wasn't any. We simply did what you would expect any good church to do, and God blessed it!

Visitors turned into regulars, regulars turned into members and when they were asked why they chose to be a part of CrossPoint one of the main responses was, "You preach the Bible here." Personally, I internally questioned what in the world other churches were talking about for half an hour every Sunday morning?

What we've discovered is people just appreciate solid biblical teaching that's more clear than clever and they aren't looking for five easy steps to whatever, or a self-help series on how to be you 2.0.

Walking through books of the Bible, saying the hard things, and leading with love seemed to be just what the doctor ordered.

In addition to solid biblical teaching, relationships are something that can't be skipped if you're going to pastor a church. This meant lots of high school volleyball games, fried chicken dinners in people's homes, and late night hang out time in the church parking lot talking about everything from the NFL to the NRA to the SBC.

The final piece of this holy trifecta of biblical preaching and relationships was vision. Not just any vision, but a wild, join-us-on-animpossiblemission-and-let's-see-if-God-shows-up kind of vision. We decided the vision for our church was already cast in the Great Commission, but if we quantified it we could give ourselves a target to shoot at.

So, with no voice from heaven, but understanding that the tithe was 10%, we decided we would give him 10% of the city. Yep, 10% of 35-40,000 people meant we were going to be a church of 3500- 4000 people. It was such a preposterous proposition that we found a number of people who wanted to be part of it just in case it actually happened!

Some of you may object to setting a goal like that, with seemingly impossible standards. But, I ask you what happens if we only make it halfway? What a failure, right? A little neighborhood church only running 2000 people now?

I think you understand what I'm saying. The vision was huge and that compelled people to be a part of something bigger than they were. The goal was not to keep the lights on, or run a program one more year, or fill all the vacancies of the people who quit doing the roles from the previous year, it was to shake the town upside down and spread the gospel everywhere, handing back to God 10% of the city redeemed by the blood of Jesus!

That was the vision in the beginning, but now let me tell you an encouraging story. The location of the church's first campus is in Hutchinson, Kansas, and we became known for having some pretty exciting Christmas Eve services. As we grew, the number of services had to be multiplied each year and even extended to the day before Christmas Eve (affectionately called Christmas Adam services). In 2019, with seven services over two days, we saw 4,046 people attend that holiday celebration. We know Christmas and Easter are high points, but we saw what it could look like when we finally reach that vision and goal!

Now, some of our smaller locations have actually touched those numbers in attendance. Let me explain what that means. When a church reaches 10% of their city, it's no longer a church in that city, it's that city's church. When one out of every 10 people at the grocery store, one out of every 10 kids in school, one out of every 10 nurses at the clinic goes to CrossPoint, it's a tipping point that changes the community and it is fantastic!

Big vision doesn't scare people away, it draws them close. When you spend time cultivating relationships built on solid biblical preaching, you lay the groundwork for some great growth and ministry.

Principle #2: People follow leaders, not plans

One of the early lessons came in our scramble to find space for everyone. If you remember in our history section, we looked at constructing a building but decided it would be too costly, even though it was the traditional, sensible thing to do.

Innumerable committee meetings and business meetings led us to the place of trying something new. I had heard about a church using a strip mall across the street as overflow and wondered if that would be a solution for us. Not just a place to put more people, but maybe a place to try a different style of ministry.

I met with several of our leaders who decided they would step out and do some investigation. A couple of our deacons and their families made a trip to that newfangled church in the big city and I'm so glad I called ahead.

That church probably would've kicked them out if they didn't know why they were there. I told them our team would be coming to get a lay of the land, and when they showed up, they held a camcorder to their chest and gave us a first-person point of view for the entire service: from the parking lot to the greeters, to the coffee line to the worship and even the message on the drop-down video screen. I'm so thankful they turned it off when they needed to use the restroom!

They came back and showed their hard evidence of a church doing strange things called video services, and at a business meeting we watched that video at our church. Let me make sure you hear that: we watched a video of a church service using video and then debated whether we wanted to pursue that as a plan for us or not.

I remember the back-and-forth discussion and a couple of tense moments in a full house of people who were hopeful for the future but skeptical of some strange new practices. That's when a longtime church member, Fred, stood up and said "Pastor, I'm so tired of talking about this, if this is what God told you to do then let's just do it!"

I know I should've been overwhelmed with joy to have that kind of an endorsement from a long-time member, but in that moment I struggled. Why? Because God had not told me definitively to buy an auto parts store and start doing video-driven services. I couldn't blame Him for that!

So, at that packed house business meeting I hesitated for a moment and then said, "Thank you, but the truth is I can't honestly say God told me to lead us this way. I can tell you I know we're supposed to spread the gospel, we don't have money to do much else, and this seems like a good idea, but that's about as much as I can promise."

There was a thick, pregnant pause that hung in the air as Fred eyeballed me from across the room... then he stood up and waved his hand at me while he said, "Good enough for me Pastor, I'll follow you."

That was the beginning of some massive changes in our congregation, not because of the vote we took to pursue a new style of ministry. But because there was a congregation who had gone on record saying, "We don't know about the plan, but we do know you, Pastor, and we are all in." The confidence that gave me, and the direction that gave them, was priceless.

The principle I'm trying to communicate is not to orchestrate a meeting like that. You can't do it! The principle is this: pay your dues and be someone worth following. Make good decisions, love on people, be vulnerable, be honest and lead fearlessly. When you work hard in that direction you won't have time to turn around and count how many great people are following.

Principle #3: Leaders lead by stepping down/away

Sometimes it's hard to admit, but your church can outgrow you. I think that might be the reason there are such short tenures amongst church staff in many places and churches. However, I don't think leaving is always the right answer, even though the language of this principle may lend itself towards that thought.

Instead, what if a leader raised up replacements behind him, and was just willing to admit when they recognized they were in over their head? However, instead of moving on, they would use that preparation to make internal adjustments.

This happened to us in year four or five of our transition. We had grown, and things were good, but we finally hit a barrier and just could not seem to press through. Our little neighborhood church of 100 or so was now running close to 700 and we were doing multiple services in two locations. Primarily driven by volunteers, the staff had not expanded at all and everybody who was getting a paycheck was working two full-time jobs at the church in title and in effort.

No one was unhappy but we were all starting to get frustrated that the growth had seemed to stymie, so we started looking for solutions:

- Church growth conference suggestions please!
- Maybe we do that 40 days campaign again?
- Is there sin in the camp, let me see your hands.
- I don't think we're culturally relevant anymore.
- I think we're too culturally relevant.
- God's hand has left us, we're all going to die!

You've probably been to one of those staff meetings/retreats where every possible solution had to do with something that's happening... out there. However, on this occasion God gave me the grace to become self-aware. There were a lot of things that had changed but one thing that remained the same was me. I was out of my depth administratively, sinking fast regarding financial reporting and simply drowning in the new complexities of a church in multiple locations with a lot more people. Sure, I could preach, teach, relate, and inspire. However, logistically speaking, I should not be in charge of a church over 500.

So, we saw that one of our high-capacity volunteers who was excellent in administrative gifts and passionate for the church would be a great addition. We asked him if he'd like to quit his job so he could work twice the hours for half the money, and he said yes! Rod was the solution, but the question was how to move Andy out of the way so someone with the needed gifts can do the job.

Within that first year with Rod on the job, the lid was lifted, we broke through the 1000 barrier, and my sanity was being restored.

That wasn't the last time our growth slowed because I was the bottleneck. A few years later there was a need for me to raise up an executive team to help grow past another barrier. Soon after that we needed to bring in legal help to restructure for the security and safety of the church. Again and again, my role has often been to look around and see who could do my job better and give away that part of it.

It takes a minute to realize you're not going to be the hero of everything, and that kind of submission is one to both God and to your church.

However, the bonus is that every time you grow to a place where you need to step down, two things happen. First, God takes the reins from you in an area that needs to move forward in a big way. Second, you are now freed up to pour more deeply into your area of gifting and what truly benefits the church.

Don't be the bottleneck. But if you are, have the humility and vision to step aside and let someone who God provides lead you and the church in a healthier way. Then work even harder at what you're left to do!

Principle #4: If video works for farmers, video works anywhere

Probably the most controversial thing about our church is the fact that we use video teaching to connect our locations. And I get it. Kind of.

I understand there are many who are opposed to video teaching because they think it translates to a church without a leader or pastor, but that's just not the case in our context. In fact, we have some of the best pastors in the world. We simply supplement their ministry with video teaching.

It's important to remember one of our opening statements in this document: our means and methods of doing church are not the only way or the best way, it's just "a" way to do ministry. Plus, in our corner of the world where lots of preachers aren't clamoring to set up shop and give their lives to small town America, it's a pretty good plan. In fact, one of the objections people often give to this model of church multisite is, "Nobody wants to see a preacher on the screen."

I must admit I've heard those arguments several times myself, but I have noticed a pattern. They always seem to come from people who are already in church somewhere else. And, if I can be quite honest, they are not our target.

We are seeking the unchurched, the de-churched, the disenfranchised, and those who have no interest in the way things used to be as they knew them.

So, for us video is not that much of a stretch.

I remember one of the very few times I had a conversation with someone about their objection to video-based preaching. It was early on in our ministry, with an Athletic Director from a small community who was telling me (retroactively) he was upset his wife was making him go to a church where the pastor was on the screen.

The conversation we had began with an apology, and he said he was sorry for being, "That guy."

When I asked what he meant, he said he came begrudgingly to church week after week thinking how much he would hate having to listen to a recording. Then, at the end of the service when he bowed his head to pray, he would look up and, in his own words, "Feel foolish because I looked for you and forgot you weren't there."

I've read that at concerts with large screens, people sitting beyond the first six rows will never look at the stage. That is how video-based our culture has become.

So, if that's the case, here's a concert-goer pro tip: if you can't get seats within six rows just wait for the video. It's all you're gonna watch anyway.

Finally, you may be asking yourself, "Well video may be a thing but certainly not in rural America, right?"

Yeah, you would think that. But it's not true.

One of our rural locations was our first video-only site and often had unique gifts placed in the offering. Instead of cash or checks, we often get wheat shares from the co-op. Yep, that's farmers giving us a portion of their first fruits, that we can cash in whenever. That's a pretty sweet deal.

Now that's country my friend! And I would say this: If video works for farmers, video works anywhere.

Principle #5: DNA trumps personality

Throughout the early days of the pandemic, we kept hearing about first responders and essential workers. I was blessed in my community to be labeled an essential worker because of our role in inspiring the community and helping those in need.

However, the longer I've been in ministry and the more I've seen God do what He does in the church I realize I'm not really an essential worker, just privileged to be a part of it.

This becomes evident and clear when God takes the vision and mission He's been working on through you and, over the course of time, begins to make that the DNA of the church, whether you were there or not.

It's a little like that moment when you see your kids "adulting," whether it's something great like practicing good stewardship or sharing their faith, or a little on the negative side when you see them acting or responding just like you do. Sometimes you just wake up and your church grew up, and it's living out the vision it has pursued for years.

In 2009 we hit a bit of a setback. Not really the church, but me personally. As a fairly charismatic, up-in-front preacher who leads by steering the ship from the pulpit, we were up against a bit of an obstacle. I had brain surgery scheduled and was required to be off work for 18 weeks. (Spoiler alert: I lived, it all turned out great.)

However, there was some serious hesitancy about when to do this surgery, what it would mean, and how to prepare.

"Our fearless leader will be gone for more than a quarter of the year and all these Location Pastors will have to fill-in for preaching, leading, teaching, everything. How will we survive!?!?" I thought they would say. But they did not.

In fact, after two weeks of surgery and rehabilitation, followed by 18 weeks of being absent, one of my first weekends back was a business meeting in which the church was excited to propose some actions they had taken. At that meeting they were adding two locations to our network as revitalizations from within our association, and they officially adopted a new church plant we had begun months before.

Oh yeah, they also hired a new Location Pastor who was such a good hire he's now a part of our executive team and helping run the whole network. Yes, all that happened while my hands were off the wheel.

A little humbling? For sure. A whole lot of, "Thank you, Jesus!"? Absolutely.

One of the greatest moments in the life of a healthy church is when the church body realizes the vision and the mission and can take steps on its own while looking back at their leader and saying, "Look dad, we can do it!"

Principle #6: Partnerships are essential

I have preached this, lived it, and believed it for a long time: Christianity is a team sport! It's a sentiment I think most of us in ministry believe fervently, at least in part.

We absolutely embrace the reality that in ministry, if we don't work together, we can't get anything done. The Church is a body, and if the hands don't work with the feet, and the mouth doesn't communicate with the eyes, then we just have a diseased existence, which is an insufferable way to live.

Unfortunately, there are many of us who have experienced that level of dysfunction in the local church, and we have the scars to prove it. I've only pastored one other church in my life, and that was during the young and tender years of seminary.

Despite my gross lack of experience and brains, we still saw an inner-city church on the lower east side of Fort Worth, TX, turn around. The median age dropped by decades, the number in attendance tripled, and the baptismal waters were stirred regularly. But here's another fun statistic: I was up for a 'Vote of Affirmation' nearly half a dozen times in as many years.

What's a "Vote of Affirmation" you ask? It's basically a vote from the floor of a church business meeting where anyone can decide if they still want to keep you around (implication: Whoever made the motion doesn't want you around anymore).

They were beautiful and brutal years in ministry, yes, they were brutiful.

I have often wondered how much more ground we could have taken, advancements we could have made, souls we could have reached, and lives we could have changed if we had worked together instead of constantly having dissension and strife within the body. Kind of like a muscular disorder in which the brain tells the body what to do but it just can't do it!

We've all been there right? Sometimes the church seems to be fighting itself. However, we've also seen what it's like when the church is humming like a finely-tuned engine and tearing up the track crushing finish line after finish line!

Because of that, each one of us knows the value of the body working together like it should, but why does that seem to break down outside the boundaries (property line) of the local church?When Paul talked about us being the body, don't you think he meant all of us in every place?

It's amazing how kingdom-focused we can be in our annual business meeting but how that never seems to translate to the denominational meeting, the associational meeting, or the ecumenical meeting. What we have discovered in our journey as a multisite church looking into rural places is that partnerships are absolutely essential!

I remember wanting to reach into western Kansas, but being tapped out financially as our growing congregation had already stretched itself to the limit, struggling with the bandwidth issues running what we already had.

Then came the phone call from our director of missions (Central Baptist Association), who had the same heart to see a church in a new place. The difference was, he had some money and some time on his hands and already knew a few people on the ground. What he was looking for was a partner who would own it and lead it. It was a match made in heaven

(literally, I think)!

That scenario has played itself out time and time again when the state convention has a great facility recently vacated by a church that cares enough to not sell off its assets but donate them to whoever's next (in Salina, Ks). Or when the church planting catalyst, with God-given dreams bigger than his resources, sees a beautiful friendship that might change the world (By the way, his name is Ryan. I'll have to introduce you sometime).

Whether it's an association, a convention, another church, or a passionate planter, it's important for us to realize that we didn't invent the wheel, and we don't have to try to reinvent it. Partnerships are essential and we will link arms with quite a few partners so long as the work gets done!

Principle #7: Kingdom focus redefines wins

There have been many books, sermons and campaigns talking about being kingdom-minded, kingdom-led, and kingdom-focused. But what does that really mean?

We were challenged by this concept early on as we made it our policy to give everything away that we produced. At many a staff meeting we asked ourselves some questions:

- What would it mean if our "stuff" could help somebody else do what they were trying to do?
- What would it mean if somebody used our "stuff" and never gave us credit?
- What would it mean if somebody took our things, ideas, and plans and did even better with them than we did?

The answer we finally came up with was that it meant we were doing something right! Territoriality is tearing up the kingdom of God. If you're truly kingdom-minded then you don't spend your time tearing down those who are killing it for the kingdom. You simply applaud, give God glory, and move on!

In the same way, what if what you did was not just for you or the expansion of what you're doing, but it was used intentionally as a resource for the rest

of anyone else who bows their knee to the same Lord Jesus? Now, that's an exciting proposition.

Let me give you an example in real time of what I'm talking about. In the mid 2010s there was a congregation that was really struggling about a half hour from our largest location. Several of their members and leaders were traveling to be a part of our weekend gatherings, and that's never a win for us. We have no desire to see people leave one church to go to another especially if there are miles in between.

Eventually, a conversation occurred between their lead pastor and myself. It was a restorative and healthy conversation that ended up with him acknowledging that there were some things that might need to change. So, at his request, we started a partnership.

We started meeting as an alternative service at their location on Sunday evenings. For the course of a year, we trained their leaders, helped them restructure, and generally infused some of our CrossPoint DNA into their congregation.

At the end of the year, the assimilation process was coming to an end, and it was time to vote to dissolve their 501(c)(3) and re-incorporate under ours as a new multisite location of CrossPoint Church.

A week before that meeting there was a final conclave with leadership, and I sensed an uneasiness at the table. When a few moments of awkwardness had passed I simply opened the door and one of their great leaders acknowledged the hard truth: "We really appreciate everything you have done in the last year, and we feel like we are absolutely a better and stronger church now. In fact, we think we're healthy enough that we should do this on our own."

I know that some might think the normal response would be, "What! After everything we've done for you!" Or, "You think so? Not with everything we poured into you over the last year!"

I guess those responses might seem normative for some, but our leadership team simply looked across the table and said, "Yay God!"

We started to make plans as to how we could disconnect and help them stand on their own two feet. We also began to envision how we might still love each other at a distance in the near future, and to pray over one another for the amazing work that was ahead for both of us.

There was no wasted effort, energy, or resources. We simply had the opportunity to help another church stand on their own two feet. Sure, we thought for a while it would be an expansion of who we are. But does it really matter if they have our sign or their sign out front, as long as Jesus is the one to whom the sign is pointing?

Giving away resources, spending energy helping staff from other churches, and opening the doors to show other churches how things work on the inside when they're interested are all part of being on the same team. And I'm not talking about an individual local church, I'm talking about Team Jesus.

Principle #8: Buildings matter in rurality

There sure are a lot of things that should be right that are just not. I'm not talking about Scripture, that's the truth always and forever. I'm talking about things we've heard at conferences, or read in a book, or advice we received from YouTube videos passed around for many years.

There are things I've been told were ministry standards that just never held water. I hesitate here because what I want to do is give you a list of those things. But I can't do that, because I know I'd start a fight (and we have enough of those these days).

However, there is one that I do want to share with you, and you're just gonna have to trust me on this: Buildings matter in rurality.

Now, the truth may be that they matter in other places as well, but my context is in rural America, so, that's all I am willing to claim.

First of all, I know there are robust ministries that have no physical structure to call home. And there are seasons of ministry, growth, and preparation in which it's necessary to rent that school and haul everything in and out for a long period of time.

Believe me, I'm not saying that's not ministry. I'm not even saying it's not effective ministry. It's back-breaking, sacrificial, God-honoring ministry. What I am saying is that in rural America, you can't stay there and survive forever. (The truth is, I've never known anyone who loaded and unloaded a trailer every weekend who wanted to stay there). The best way for me to telegraph what I'm trying to communicate here is to tell you the story of our northernmost location in Concordia, KS. The small community has incredible potential with a community college, a spot on the highway and the Walmart that everybody in the surrounding area comes to see from time to time.

We began CrossPoint services inside a hotel. Yes, we went through the set-up and tear-down and the awkwardness of not really having a home, but we were in the community and getting things done. However, it did not take long for us to hit a wall and one of the things we kept hearing was, "We'll check you guys out once you have a building."

I don't think this will be new to you but if it is, let me tell you, buildings aren't cheap, and no one is giving them away. So, the next step for us was to move into a movie theater. Truth is, they had the best screen in the entire CrossPoint network, but children's ministry was a little difficult in the foyer. They tried to compensate by offering free movie popcorn to all attendees (No joke. Honestly, the comfort food of movie popcorn really does heal lots of wounds).

For whatever reason we did grow a little there, but kept hearing that same echo about needing to see us in a building.

Remember when I said there are things that should be true but just aren't, this is the issue I'm talking about. I know the Church didn't have a building or structure of its own for 200-300 years, and yet they experienced some phenomenal growth. I know that around the world there are house churches that are doing amazing things for the kingdom. But we couldn't seem to crack that code in rural Kansas. So, we started asking the people who said they would come visit us once we had a building just why they thought we needed a building.

Although we got a variety of answers, they all boiled down to one thing: "Until you have a building, you kind of look like a cult."

Are you serious? That can't be true. But it was. There was a collective belief that until we had our own building, there was something sketchy about us. Somehow not having a building made it seem like we were probably going to steal their children, steal their money, and try to serve some very questionable Kool-Aidid.

So, finding a permanent home became the plan. It was more expensive

than we wanted it to be, and didn't seem to make any theological sense. But to culturally exegete the community, we needed a permanent home. At first we met in a storefront on the main drag, and after a few years, we purchased an old school building that is now CrossPoint Concordia.

It's not the fanciest thing in the world, and it's definitely not traditional, but having a place where ministry can happen seven days a week, a sign in the yard, and a presence in the community made us "official."

It's one of those things that shouldn't be true, but it sure is. Buildings matter in rurality.

Principle #9: Learn from losses

While I am thankful for the incredible numbers I can share with you, and the story that God has given us, please don't think it's been an uphill trajectory the entire time with rainbows and unicorns. We've had some struggles, setbacks, and failures.

However, we are committed to owning, and more importantly, learning from those because, if you don't learn from your losses, then all you did was lose.

Over the years we have had a CrossPoint sign hung out in front of four locations that are no more. Yep, that means we've closed four places, and their story is worth repeating not only for you but for us. Those are some losses that teach.

Two of the losses are pretty easy to dissect, as they came at a time when losses were normal for all of us: The Pandemic. In fact, I struggle calling them losses because, while we closed the doors at two worship locations, we actually merged them with their closest geographic connections. Our hope is that in the near future they may be able to re-open.

So, those two are lessons in practicing good stewardship and making the hard call, but not giving up on something. However, we have two other stories that taught us some harder lessons.

We were asked to assist in a parachute drop leadership program in which collegiate students came into a community for a summer and used our model to establish a church work. It was a combined effort of a State Convention, a Local Association and our church (Sounds like the beginning of a bad joke, right?).

At the end of that summer the college students would leave, and we were supposed to "have a plan" regarding what we would do for the ongoing life of the church. The association was helping with the finances of the location, and we were desperately trying to raise up, find, or install leadership.

This three-headed monster of leadership was the brainchild of someone who left the program at the end of the summer. It was difficult to maintain, poorly executed on our part and, honestly, just not the right time or place.

We limped along for a couple of years, but eventually decided that we had to call it quits. A good leader, a good location, and a good idea just weren't able to get traction and pay the bills.

Well, you may remember that while we believe partnerships are essential (we still do), we learned here that partnership does not mean coleadership. Someone has to be in charge from the beginning, and that someone has to have the vision and passion to carry it through. There were three parties, all well-intentioned and interested, but once the work got really tough and we started having real costs, there needed to be one who saw it not as a project, but a calling.

We learned.

There was another occasion in which a good idea turned out to be a painful one. At a staff meeting with our leadership, we just looked at a map and asked where we would like to go next. There was great excitement in the room as we pondered numerous locations. One rose to the top, and everybody cried out, "Hooray!"

In fact, one of our best leaders decided they would step down from their position to lead that charge. It seemed like a true God moment.

But the work was harder than we thought. The community was not at all like any we had engaged in our rural work. Even though it received more support, attention, and dollars than almost any other start we had engaged in, the leader there eventually advised us we just needed to let it go. The autopsy on this and the other failures revealed something to us, and I believe it's unique to our congregation. We shouldn't pick places and just go plant. We're not good at it. Our sweet spot is responding to churches, ministries, and people who are asking for help and coming alongside. There are lots of churches and ministries that do demographic work, community studies and then go plant. But that's not us. At least that's not who we are today.

We are who God made us to be, so we learned.

Principle #10: Multiplication over addition

I love church planting, replanting, and revitalization. I love everything about the church. I agree with my brother in arms and Send City Missionary, Brian Bowman, who said, "Once you plant a church anything can happen."

It's because of this that we don't do other ministries. Instead we focus on planting churches, believing the churches and the leadership within them will do whatever that community needs in order to be Jesus in that place. Because I believe that, there's an urgency in my heart pertaining to church planting.

Our model is a little unorthodox, and by that, I mean a little scary. I know that well thought out plans, highly vetted leaders, strong ongoing training, and support is the best way to do healthy church planting, hands down!

However, out here in the weeds where resources are low, leaders are scarce and the work is still looming. We have to live a little more on the edge. We call it the open and the closed hand.

There are things we must tightly hold with a closed hand, never compromising. These things are our theological convictions, our orthodoxy regarding Scripture, our values of evangelism and missions, and several other things that no matter what, cannot be eroded.

But there are a large array of things we hold with an open hand very loosely. This means our multisite network is nowhere near a franchise, but more of a closely knit network with a fist full of constants and a world of contextual adaptations to meet needs wherever the congregation resides. We want our Location Pastors to be able to read their communities and do what they need to do, which means an open hand for lots of methodology. That leads us to a place of understanding the parable of the sower of the seeds. Modern church planting is like corporate farming that produces high yields and good products. They plant in straight lines, with topsoil protected practices, and the best of machinery to ensure nothing is lost in the harvest.

But, in the parable of the sower of the seed, isn't it true that seed was just scattered? Some made it to good soil, others to rocky, some to weedy and the rest ended up on the hard path. The point was the seed was just scattered!

When we plant in rows like a commercial farmer, we are practicing what is known as an addition mentality. It's effective at reproducing itself, but it's generally a one-to-one reproduction. Years ago, I was a part of a think tank with the group known as Exponential, and we were a part of the group because of our connection to the Southern Baptist Convention. We learned we were invited because church planting through the North American Mission Board was considered the most effective church planting organization on the planet.

After a moment of smug haughtiness, I was brought low with the next comment from our presenter. He said that if every church planting organization that existed were doing as well as the North American Mission Board we would still lose the culture by the mid-century. Why? Because our addition models could never keep pace with exponential population growth and annual church losses. We must shift to a multiplication movement.

Honestly, that is when we became very serious about our three-level system (more on this later) and offering all our resources to whomever was interested. We knew some would fall on rocky soil, some in the weeds and some in hard places, but we wanted to get as much seed in the good soil as possible. So, we decided to make a commitment that we would just scatter and pray that God would allow us to be a part of a movement, knowing what we were doing would be beyond our abilities and a step toward multiplication.

Please, don't misunderstand: Once we see something growing in "good soil" we do everything in our power to take care of that growth. We just pray it becomes more than we could ever hope to handle.

Principle #11: Multisite has pandemic advantages

It is always amazing what a crisis reveals. The times we each have lived through from 2020 forward has been an exemplary test of culture and church, so much so that we have referred to Covid as the great revealer.

We have the same story as everyone else. We were caught off guard and a little dumbfounded in March 2020 when the world seemed to grind to a halt. Everybody hunkered down and church had to be done a different way.

I'm not talking about the debate of masks and whether we were following the science or infringing on peoples' rights. What I'm saying is that during that period of time, every church had to find a way to function, and what we discovered is that multisite had some pandemic advantages.

As a church using video-driven teaching, we were already set up to do church online. In fact, the adjustment for us was really just switching our energy from in-person to the online platform we already provided. That being said, it was an interesting time to be a church that got to help other local congregations.

In fact, it was a little fun, even though it probably shouldn't have been.

I could show you a link to a very old article on a website that talks about the evils of video preaching, and how you shouldn't trust any church or preacher who practices that methodology.

Why would I have that link? Because one of my friends sent it to me. You see, the picture accompanying the article was of me on the screen at one of our locations. (Yeah, I might still be a little bitter about that.)

But, in the opening days of the pandemic shutdown, I was amazed at the number of churches that either had no connection to us (or even an adverse position towards us) who were willing to take instruction and equipment from us.

I must be honest that the carnal man inside me had a couple of giggles, but they were quickly replaced by the joy of seeing that we were helping other churches accomplish what they needed to in a very hard time by simply sharing what we had already been doing.

Financially, we were in a very similar circumstance. We already had online giving options that were bringing in 29% of our regular giving, and within one month that became the source of 71% of our giving. I was told 2020

ended up being one of our strongest financial years ever as people used online options to support the work we were doing to come into their homes and lives in difficult times.

It was very interesting to see how the life we had lived for the previous 15 years had prepared us for those days and prepared us to help other churches who had not been on that trajectory.

I've often wondered if this won't be part of our role for the remainder of our history (at least as long as I live).

What will the next pandemic be? Will the culture ever require us to be more online than in person? Is the world changing in such a way that we are ahead of the curve even in rural America? Did God prepare us for such a time as this?

No one knows those answers. But, being faithful to who God wanted us to be even when others did not "appreciate" who we were or how we did what we did prepared us to be a blessing to other churches in a time of need and to be a source of strength for our community when we were forced to distance.

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In no way do I think that any conference, book, or program from one church translates identically to another. However, I hope our story is inspiring for you in whatever scenario you face.

As we continue to look at using, sharing, and employing resources for church networking, multisiting, replanting, revitalization, and everything else, I would love to share a few stories about some of the churches in our network that found new life through partnership, video resources and the relationship of not doing it alone!

Part 3

"CrossPoint has taken the multisite model and turned it into a mission-focused model. When the conversation shifts from how big we can get to how far we can reach, God will do amazing things. Multisite has allowed us to maximize gifts, talents, experience, resources, and energy and packaged it in a way that lets us take vibrant churches to communities that are all but forgotten. Shedding the limitations of having to reinvent the wheel has freed us up to push back the darkness one local body of believers at a time."

-ERIC FRANKLIN, CROSSPOINT EXECUTIVE LEADER PASTOR

Ideas are great, and theories are good, but we are people of testimony. So, I'd like to dedicate a few pages to telling real stories of plants, comebacks and turn arounds in our network of churches called CrossPoint.

At the time of this writing, there are 13 locations at the top tier of Level Three partnership (which we will discuss later), meaning they are full CrossPoint locations. While there are many others who are connected, or just users of resources (as Level Ones and Twos), the stories featured here are limited to congregations who are Level Three CrossPoint Churches.

Let's dive in as I take you on a road trip through the state of Kansas.

Trust me, it's more exciting than it sounds!

Chapter 5

Being multisite is a blessing because I don't feel like I have to do ministry alone. CrossPoint network has made ministry easier/better by the use of sharing resources. I don't have to find, or create things on my own. It is like we are one big team working together using all our gifts and talents. -MICHAEL GRAY, CROSSPOINT STERLING LOCATION PASTOR

Church Name: Date launched: Community Size: 14,7333 Location Pastor: Scott Murphy Type:

CrossPoint Great Bend 2009 RePlant



History

By all definitions, CrossPoint Great Bend is a classic replant church that formed out of an almost 10-year-old small church plant called Extreme Hope.

Every church that transitions has a reason, and CrossPoint Great Bend Location Pastor Scott Murphy said, "Our church connected with CrossPoint as an interim measure, but quickly became aware of the opportunity we would have if we became a CrossPoint Church."

Murphy was not the first Location Pastor there, but he understands the original church had a significant ministry reaching out to individuals and their families who were struggling with all kinds of addictions.

But the original church suffered from not having a leadership development element in their DNA. This led to a long-term over burdening of the staff and an inability to keep up with growth.

"More and more people were coming into that original ministry who needed ministering to but there wasn't a track alongside the growth of people being built up and trained for the ministry side of things," Murphy said.

That led to days of frustration, roller coaster rides of attendance numbers, and the need to look for a solution. At that point, Director of Associational Missions, Keith Bryant, counseled them to step back for a period of intentional interim and focus on who they were and where they were going.

During that time, Bryant led them to use the resources of a church from 60 miles away called CrossPoint. They continued in their own direction, but intentionally looked at what their future should be. During this interim time, they were using the video teachings of CrossPoint.

"We were just using the CrossPoint resources because they were being offered, but then we quickly realized this was a viable opportunity, a really good option," Murphy said. "So, we decided to move into full-time campus mode, to become a part of CrossPoint Church."

"Our current director of missions had knowledge of what was going on at CrossPoint and when he matched us up at that very difficult time it was a huge, huge asset."

There was a learning curve for the existing church. In fact, even after deciding to become a campus, there was a mindset of continuing to be who they were, just under a different name. That proved to be a fruitless path, so their leadership began to embrace the idea of becoming something new.

"And now we're moving into a season of really redefining our DNA and digging new roots. We had to ask the question: who are we now as a part of CrossPoint? Moving forward, how do we do this?" said Murphy. "That has been where our greatest strengths and our successes have been in our most recent years, as we figured out who we could become as a part of this network."

Murphy said there were some who left the church as they changed their model and embraced a new direction. But, they were minimal and amicable, and the church worked to make sure they all found a safe landing place where they went next.

"But now we're in that growth phase of becoming healthy spiritually and redefining ourselves."

Murphy came on as a pastor from outside the network when they were already in the process of merging but credits the network's abilities for being a great tool in both aiding a church in transition and a new staff member to onboard with this framework.

"With me coming from outside of CrossPoint to inside, the weekly meetings we have as Location Pastors allows me to see how CrossPoint is lived out in different locations across the state. Then, I can look at it and say how do we live out CrossPoint here in Great Bend," said Murphy. "That's a huge help."

Murphy also said the structure allows them to be a part of something larger while maintaining their local flavor. CrossPoint affords a structure that gives support and direction but maximizes the local leadership's ability to do ministry in context.

Ups and downs

Murphy said their recent history as a replanted multisite has been pretty typical. There have been ups and downs in attendance, great moments of celebration of events, but also a few disappointments.

However, he does say that being a part of a network like this has been a bonus to him as a pastor and as a person. It has often overshadowed many of the ups and downs of CrossPoint Great Bend as a whole because of what the ministry has meant to him personally.

Murphy came to CrossPoint after a season of sitting out of regular ministry following the loss of his wife in a tragic accident. This has colored his ministry and life, obviously, but being a part of CrossPoint has helped him regain his footing and ministry.

"One of the huge pieces of this whole thing that should encourage others goes to one of our biggest strengths as a network," Murphy said. "For me personally, I came out of a very difficult personal time, devastating."

"Coming on as part of CrossPoint I knew that I was not alone in ministry! I knew that if I were unable because of the things that had happened, if I did not have the strength or the mental capacity, or the ability to do something in that moment there would be someone in our network," Murphy said. "They were praying for me. They were helping every way they could. And I knew they had my back."

Murphy said this experience has essentially been living out in real terms what Scripture said about the great cloud of witnesses. "I had always viewed that passage as limited to those who have died and gone before, examples of what to do or not to do. But, because we're part of a larger network of churches I knew people were praying for me, I knew there was a personal connection, and I knew that was all across the network. I knew people were in my corner, had my back, and that has been such a huge strength!"

"That is really why I am still in ministry."

Despite that personal backdrop, Murphy can also note some of the advantages CrossPoint has afforded their replanted church.

"What makes me most thrilled at being a Location Pastor for CrossPoint is seeing the depth of our congregation's individual relationship with Christ really beginning to blossom," Murphy said.

He said that pastors always hope they're making disciples, and we pray to make disciples, but until we see the fruit being born out in the maturing of a disciple making another disciple, it's a frustrating task. CrossPoint has a discipleship structure and resources shared that allow pastors to truly develop disciples and not just manage a church.

"Until you see people relying on God's Word instead of the news, focused on seeking answers through prayer instead of a horoscope, or whatever's popular that day, until you see people actually living out the disciplines of the faith, you only hope disciples are being made," said Murphy. "And we are finally seeing disciples being made."

Despite all the forward momentum Murphy said their biggest struggle continues to be dragging their past behind them as the church plant they used to be. In the past they had been focused on a very narrow subset of the community that was continually in need, and very often not able to pour back into ministry. Breaking that cycle/belief in ministry is a continual struggle.

CrossPoint believes that every believer is called to Love God, Grow Up, Serve All, and sometimes that "Serve All" part runs counter to the consumer-driven culture of modern church.

"The old mentality was that the leadership would do it, that the staff would do whatever. Instead, we are leading them in the direction of understanding that they are being equipped as ministers, and that God has put them in this place for this time in this task," Murphy said.

"This struggle is born out of the discipleship process that believers are to take ministry upon themselves, and I recognize that that is not just an issue at CrossPoint Great Bend. It's an issue for the big C church."

"Every member of the church has a vital role to play in advancing the Kingdom, something that they are to do," said Murphy. "And CrossPoint continually pushes people in that direction as a part of their discipleship path."

What it means to be part of a network:

According to Murphy, the benefits of being a part of a network multisite ministry are numerous, but the best way for him to describe what he has personally experienced is through metaphor.

He said each church is a lifeboat floating out on the ocean, trying to save as many people as possible and stay afloat at the same time. CrossPoint finds its strength by getting multiple lifeboats to lash themselves together and save even more people as they provide stability for themselves and keeping their own boat afloat as well.

"We were a lifeboat that was in danger of swamping. We were in danger of having people inside the lifeboat not finding healing. We were in danger of not being able to reach out and help those not yet in the boat, who are struggling and drowning," said Murphy.

"Yes, the waves are still crashing. Yes, the lost and dying are still all around us and we need to bring them in. Yes, we have hurting and broken people in the boats already who we need to minister to and work with. But there's a lot more strength to get all that done because we have lashed our boats together." Murphy said that if he looks around his boat and sees that he's missing an important element, all he has to do is look a boat or two over to see someone who is strong there and he now has a strength he did not have on his own.

"I can leverage their strengths for what we need here in Great Bend, and that's a true benefit all across the network."

Finally, Murphy said the same strength can also be a pothole if the individual leader isn't aware. It is possible to become dependent on others and too reliant. The truth is that there are times God is requiring a congregation and a leader to produce on their own, and sometimes that's for the benefit of them and/or others.

It's possible in a network where things are done well to allow others to produce for you, or to even be intimidated if something is being produced beyond your capacity.

"Because there is strength in other locations, if we take that too far, we can neglect our own growth," Murphy said. "Just because there is strength over there does not give me permission to not strive in my location, in my mindset, and my skill set.

Murphy encourages churches that might be stuck or struggling to consider the network opportunity as a part of the future. This is especially true regarding ministries where one of the assets is a shared teaching calendar, often relieving the weekly preaching duties from the Location Pastor.

"What would you do if a third to half of your work schedule were instantly cleared and now you're able to do all of those things from the back of your mind that you knew you needed to do, but don't have time to do?" asked Murphy.

Murphy referenced a Thom Rainer study showing that sermon production can take up to 22 hours a week. As a part of a network church, he is given those hours back for ministry, management and discipleship every week.

"That is what part of being a network does!"

Crosspoint Great Bend currently has two weekend services with just under

100 people in attendance, no full-time staff, three part-time staff and two volunteer staff.

Chapter 6

The best part of being a part of CrossPoint is the connection I can have with other wives in the network. I am able to put into practice in a greater way the Christian thought of mourning with those who mourn and rejoicing with those who rejoice. -KATIE MARKS, CROSSPOINT HUTCH PASTOR SPOUSE

Church Name:CrossPoint SalinaDate launched:2009Community Size:46,889Location Pastor:Ryan BoothType:New Church Plant

History

Eight people were huddled together in the living room of the on-site residence of the director of a campground making plans, praying, dreaming, and talking about the future and the past. These words may sound like the beginning of a novel, but they aptly describe the embers that would burn into a flame known as CrossPoint Salina.

Although the official start date of the congregation is September 2009, their history can be dated back six months prior to the launch with prayer meetings together and family meetings about what it would take to do CrossPoint in their city.

The desire to plant a CrossPoint campus was split between Salina natives and families who had moved to Salina from Hutchinson where they had previously attended CrossPoint Church. Location Pastor Ryan Booth was in those meetings, but it was long before he was the leader of that congregation.

As a young, newly married couple, the Booths were passionate about Jesus and just wanted their experiences at CrossPoint to be available for the new community where they were living in called Salina. "We spent six months praying about what God would have us do in Salina. We didn't know in the beginning it would even be CrossPoint, but several months into it we decided to reach out and CrossPoint was willing to partner!" said Booth.

Salina, Kansas is a community of nearly 50,000 people located on two major highways in the north/middle of the state. There were already 80 different churches meeting in that community, but the small group believed there was room for and even a need for something else.

"We felt like the city lacked good Bible teaching and intentional disciple making. We felt like we had a taste of that at CrossPoint and once you taste that then you experience the void of it, you know that's what you need," Booth said. "It wasn't that we were needing another church. It was a need for good Bible teaching and intentional disciple making."

From the very beginning CrossPoint Salina was a "different" kind of church, meeting at a campground on the edge of town in borrowed space, doing church on Saturday night because of the needs of the volunteers who were planting, and starting the first video-driven ministry in the city.

Those were tough start up days with lots of work that only those who plant churches understand. Dealing with the additional obstacles of a nontraditional ministry, and an out-of-the-way location lead them to start praying for a place to meet that would be easier for guests to visit.

One year later the courageous people of Bel Air Baptist Church, right in the middle of town, recognized that their church was in decline. Rather than continue a slow ministry until there was nothing left to do but close the doors, they generously made plans to gift their facilities and contacts to this young upstart church.

Working through their association and the state convention, this gift of a church building and quality location was just the life that needed to be breathed into a young church plant.

"That was a significant shift; at our one-year mark we were not only able to have our own space, but we were able to meet on Sunday mornings," Booth said. "With that change we saw a group of 50 grow to a group of 100!" The only leadership change for CrossPoint Salina occurred at the six-year mark when their founding Pastor, Eric Franklin, accepted a job within the CrossPoint network to leave daily pastoral life and start working as an executive for the entire CrossPoint Church network. That's when Booth was called back home from church planting in Nebraska to pastor the church he helped start six years before.

When Booth came to claim leadership, the church was running about 200 weekly and continued in ministry in their gifted facility for almost a decade while continually and steadily growing.

This led them to need more space once again, and the hunt was on!

The next jump for them would include some growing pains. There would not be another gifting of a facility. Rather, they would learn how to search, discuss as a congregation, lead with vision and clarity, and sacrifice to grow.

The end of the road for them was a massive industrial building with an exit right off the interstate and with renovations it had incredible potential!

To jump to the end of the story, for the last two years CrossPoint Salina has been meeting in a fully remodeled 60,000 square-foot facility with incredible children's resources, and enough office space to host the entire network staff of CrossPoint Central Services.

One of the amazing stories in the CrossPoint arsenal is the fact that this facility, which cost \$3.96 million to purchase and remodel, is already a debt-free facility thanks to the grace of God and passionate believers who are serving in and with CrossPoint Church.

Ups and downs

"Thinking about the top couple of stories I would share about CrossPoint Salina. Wow! That's hard to narrow it down," said Booth.

"It would be hard to leave out the facilities because there were major acts of provision from God. So, you could easily say that going from Saturday nights at a campground to having our own building was a major answer to prayer. I'm not sure what we would've done without that." Getting past the obvious blessings, Booth said the overall fruit of the ministry has been the real prize that God has given this ministry. The congregation has existed for 12 years, but in the last six they've seen more than 100 baptisms, there has been major growth in church membership and attendance, seeing weekends averaging more than 500, and several of the Location Pastor leaders throughout the network had their beginning in ministry leadership at CrossPoint Salina.

"Establishing that kind of culture is something you don't ever want to take for granted. Establishing a good disciple-making culture is hard," Booth said.

As an old church with its own stories and history, it wasn't always positive growth and upward momentum. Booth remembers that in the early days there was a difficulty in overcoming the stigma of being a video-driven ministry.

"The assumption was that video teaching must be shallow and hollow, and while trying to establish a disciple-making culture with people making those kinds of assumptions made for a perpetual struggle," Booth said.

"People really did not know what to do with this kind of model when we first came to town. But, now it's normalized," Booth said. "That was a very real struggle, but it can be overcome. And, we have overcome it wherever we are planted in Kansas. "

What it means to be part of a network:

The greatest advantages for both the pastor and the congregation to be a part of this kind of network model according to Booth is freedom and flexibility.

Freedom is expressed in the expected contextualization of ministry by every Location Pastor. The resources provided and standards expected by CrossPoint Church for every location are not stringent like a franchise. In fact, each location is instructed to be ministers to their community in the way that only they can know because that's where they live, serve and play. "Freedom in the sense that it allows pastors to focus on the local ministry. To know there's good solid Bible teaching that will take place that we are not having to spend 30 to 40 hours a week prepping. And that frees us up," Booth said.

"There's a blend of unity that we have across the board at all locations with a freedom to reach our city in a way that God is calling us to."

That freedom is what gives every Location Pastor the flexibility they need to do the job that God has called them to in the place that God has called them to serve. "That freedom and flexibility go hand-in hand," Booth said.

Another advantage of being in a multisite network is the ability to be resourced, and the contribution that individual locations can make in resourcing other locations. Booth said one of the greatest resources shared between all partner churches is camaraderie.

"Outside of freedom and flexibility, I would say the number one thing is camaraderie," Booth said. "We really do get together and we talk and we know each other and we pray for each other, so, personally, that's the biggest resource for me as a pastor."

Booth also said there are advantages for the church as a whole. One is just knowing you're a part of something bigger than what you're doing locally. That you're making a difference all around the state of Kansas, and in churches everywhere who are utilizing the things we are creating and giving away.

"I think that's really encouraging for people."

While there are many advantages to doing things through a network like this, Booth does warn that anyone who is headed in this direction needs to be reminded that this is not a cure all, and in fact there are no easy solutions to the problems plaguing good disciple-making in church planting.

"The quality of the church is not based on the quality of the model, but on the quality of the disciples that you make and the quality of leaders that you train." Multisite, video teaching, and networking are not band-aids that fix everything. They are, in fact, resources that can help passionate ministry, hard work and devoted followers who are truly wanting to see the Lord work through their lives.

"Even with a great network you still have to be the local church. The responsibility still falls on you," Booth said. "A network church is a battleship ready to go out to battle."

Booth reminds every leader that if a model is good, it's because its model for leadership development is good.

"If there's a hyperfocus on a model and not a hyperfocus on making disciples then it won't go well."

CrossPoint Salina currently produces two services each weekend with 550 in attendance. They have three full time staff, two part time and one high-capacity volunteer serving as volunteer staff.

Chapter 7

CrossPoint network has made ministry easier because of the shared resources. It affords smaller campuses access to tools we might otherwise not have. Not just physical tools but relational as well. There are always others willing to lend help when needed. We share in the hills and valleys together. -AARON NAPIER, CROSSPOINT WICHITA LOCATION PASTOR

Church Name: Crossl Date launched: 2009 Community Size: 21,116 Location Pastor: Micah Type: RePla

CrossPoint Hays 2009 21,116 Micah Sanderson RePlant



History

CrossPoint Hays grew out of a replant from a church formerly known as Agape Southern Baptist Church. In the late winter of 2009, they were seeking a new pastor, attendance was sporadic, and their future seemed up in the air.

The original church was planted by a handful of families in the 1980s who were saving up to build a church building as they met in a basement. However, the savings and loan scandals of the 80s and 90s robbed them of an early opportunity, and the best they could do was move into a storefront for several years. They continued to grow and by 1996 they moved into newly finished construction on a piece of property they had held for years. They still meet at this location today.

They decided to follow the path of an intentional interim to identify just what was causing their most recent struggles. CrossPoint Hays Location Pastor Micah Sanderson was a collegiate leader within the church during those days, and he remembers the heart-wrenching meetings trying to determine direction. "One piece of the puzzle for us was figuring out how to handle weekend teachings during this phase of prayer and discovery. We decided to play some DVDs from CrossPoint," Sanderson chuckled, noting how long ago it was as they were using DVDs.

Church leadership spent the majority of 2009 studying the past, dreaming about the future, and all the while using resources from a rural multisite from two and a half hours away. By September of that year, they decided the best course of action for meeting the needs of the community was to become a part of CrossPoint Church.

Sanderson was on-boarded as their Location Pastor at the same time.

He remembers part of the decision to move towards a multisite model was their most recent history including three senior pastors in less than six years. "The church was just really struggling to find a connection in a pastor, and someone we would do a good job of receiving," said Sanderson.

"We were at a pretty low point in which there was a lot of frustration on behalf of the people which just led to lots of conflict. Attendance was dwindling and we needed a new direction," Sanderson said.

Part of their process was an honest look at their history, an outside voice to consult, and a prescription written for the future. The first solution offered was a complete restructuring, moving away from the 32 member leadership team that was running the church of about 100. Sanderson said working with CrossPoint was the second potential solution on the prescription list.

"With a 32 person leadership team, there was not much success in bringing us together. We were in the same association with CrossPoint and knew what was going on there, and at the same time we were just at a real low point," said Sanderson. "I remember at one of our meetings, out of some frustration, someone just said, 'Well, the traditional structure with a lead pastor isn't working for us so we might as well try something else."

Again, Sanderson chuckled.

Since coming on board in 2009, "One of the biggest shifts we have seen has been moving away from an inward focus on taking care of wounds within the church to putting our eyes outside the walls of the church and meeting the needs of the community." Sanderson remembers a pivotal moment in which he saw the transformation taking place. They had always held an annual Easter egg hunt at the church, but during a staff meeting early into their transition there was a suggestion to move the Easter egg hunt away from the church property and do it at a local mobile home park.

"I can remember thinking in my mind, 'Yes, yes!' I didn't want to overreact, but we are finally starting to see things a little bit differently," Sanderson said. "That was really a pivotal point."

One piece of the ministry unique to CrossPoint Hays has been their connection to one of the six major state schools in Kansas called Fort Hays State University. Sanderson, who was a collegiate leader there before becoming a Location Pastor, has an obvious connection and desire to reach that part of their community. A small town of about 22,000 people which also sees a collegiate enrollment of more than 12,000, means it's a part of a rural city that no pastor worth his salt could overlook.

One way they stay connected to collegiate ministry is by hosting the Christian Challenge group for weekly meetings. They also focus on young families, which makes them demographically a young and family-oriented ministry.

With a transitory collegiate ministry as a major focus of their ministry, attendance numbers annually rise and fall, but generally see weekend attendance numbers around 200 since becoming a part of CrossPoint.

Ups and downs

While having a partnership with a parachurch ministry like Christian Challenge has its drawbacks and benefits, one of the things Sanderson says is, "They (collegiates) bring life and vibrancy into our church, especially in their interactions with other adults in our faith community."

"Even this last Sunday we had three college students leading our children's ministry!" Sanderson said. "I think sometimes that really challenges the other adults in your church when they do things like that."

Being a video-driven, multisite may have some advantages to drawing collegiates, according to Sanderson. He thinks the technology and the

interconnectedness are a draw for the collegiate generation and even the things that may be difficult for older generations to accept about this model are the benefits for them.

Sanderson said the church has really turned a corner with being an outward-focused congregation since becoming CrossPoint. They've always been interested in the community, but they've learned to put hands and feet to it.

"We've tried to be intentional about being in the community, and to be involved. Block parties, service projects, anything to help gain the reputation that we desired, which was our real heart's cry, that we actually care for the community," Sanderson said, "We want to be visible and available."

That DNA shift to be community-driven led to a strategic investment of volunteer time with an early childhood development center in town connected to the local school district that just happened to be across the street.

After years of faithful service to support the teachers, embrace that part of the community, and do whatever they could for the families connected to the early childhood development center, CrossPoint Hays was notified they were awarded the 2021 Excellence In Community Service Award presented by Kansas Head Start Association.

The state-wide award presented by a branch of the state government to a local church is a great example of the impact a church can have on their local community while being a part of a large network.

"That was a big thing for us in recognizing and helping people see the worth of what we do in investing into people, not just early childhood, but into our community."

Part of the learning curve for CrossPoint Hays, being a merger of an independent church becoming part of a multisite, was the mentality the language of us versus them. Initially, leadership heard lots of questions from the congregation about what "they" were going to do with, or for "us."

The transition to thinking in terms of "we" and seeing multisite not being a church "with" multiple sites but being a church "of" multiple sites. It just

takes time and experience to learn to become one church in many places.

"It was a challenge in the transition to get them to see that we are the church, and it isn't them versus somebody else." Once that is part of the congregation members' thinking, then the strength of the network is seen even at the level of the pew.

On the flipside, it's important for the multisite Location Pastor to keep the network as a focus even in the day to day. Sanderson says, "One of the struggles early on was to keep the network as a focus. It's really easy for me to be passionate about my place and my people, but there is such an advantage to keeping the "one church in many places" mentality in front of all of us as we do what we're called to do."

What it means to be part of a network

Sanderson noted a unique advantage to being a multisite network of churches that was not a part of the initial plan. He recognized the name of a student named NanaYaa Ababio who had been a part of their ministry while she attended school in Hays, but before that had attended CrossPoint Concordia while going to junior college. Now, she is working in Salina and serving at CrossPoint Salina.

When they heard her voice as the narrator for the sermon bumper video produced in Salina, they were overjoyed, said Sanderson.

Over the course of her young adult life, she had been in three different communities to be educated and start a career, and in each place she had a different CrossPoint community to call home.

"We've seen multiple times in which one person will come from one place and land in another. We currently have a staff person that was formerly a member of CrossPoint Hutchinson," said Sanderson. "You'd be surprised how small the state of Kansas is once you have these kinds of connections."

He said when somebody transfers communities and there's another CrossPoint there, it gives them a platform for trust and inclusion. "They can jump in right away!" Getting a little more personal, Sanderson says one of the advantages of being a part of network ministry is the community created in leadership. Whether it's weekly phone calls between Location Pastors where they catch up with each other, pray together and plan for the future, or triads (which are breakouts of Location Pastors in discipleship groups), "It's an amazing part of our personal spiritual journey."

"This model really lends itself to the ability of an individual to use their strengths and their gifts for a wider good," Sanderson said.

"I grew up in a pastor's home with a dad who did everything. Which is great, but this model allows me to be more of a pastor than a preacher, which is what I am," said Sanderson. "I can focus on people and my local staff."

Central Services pays the bills, sends the bulletins, and does so many of the things that would rob Sanderson of the time he now spends developing people and ministries, and he considers it one of the greatest assets to being a part of CrossPoint.

"You can focus on the people more, and usually that is the first thing we put to the side when things get too busy and caught up on a task."

He does think one of the challenges of being a part of the network is maintaining good communication. With more people comes more moving parts, and the larger the organization, the more important clear and regular communication becomes.

"If this is where you are serving you have got to be good at asking questions," he said. "Answers are there and part of the responsibility of the Location Pastor is to reach out and get those when you need them."

Finally, Sanderson encouraged anyone interested in replanting via a multisite model to, "Go for it! I love this model. I grew up in a small, rural western Kansas church, and it was good, but I always wondered what it would've been like if we had this opportunity or that opportunity. I'm still in rural western Kansas, but now as a part of CrossPoint we're able to enjoy some of those opportunities."

Crosspoint Hays has 2 weekend services and a weekly attendance of just under 200 with 1 full-time staff, 2 part-time staff and 4 volunteer staff.

Chapter 8

I so appreciate being a part of a multisite network because it helps me to see God working in big ways in so many places and is allowing us to be a part of it all. It's also nice to be in ministry with other wives who "get it" and who help carry my burdens and let me help carry theirs. That community has been life giving because I know I'm never alone.

- KATHY ADDIS, CROSSPOINT PASTOR SPOUSE

Church Name: CrossP Date launched: January Community Size: 5,005 Location Pastor: Matthe Type: New C

CrossPoint Concordia January 2012 5,005 Matthew Carder New Church Plant



History

CrossPoint Concordia began like many traditional church plants. It was a partnership between a growing/sending church, an associational director of missions and a group of people who believed God wanted to move in their midst.

Director of Missions for the Smoky Hill Association, Ken Beckner, personally launched the location, but quickly moved to finding a leader and a partnership with CrossPoint Church as a "way" of sustaining this rural work. Location Pastor Matthew Carder was an attender for months before he became its leader.

Concordia, KS, was a desired location to plant because in this community of 5,000 there was not a Southern Baptist work, and the community itself is a hub to several surrounding rural communities and townships. "Our hearts cry was that we would see God glorified through reaching the lost in our community and that this church could be a sending point for starting new works in other places around us," said Carder. There had been four other Southern Baptist Church plants attempted in Concordia over the years, but all had failed after months or a handful of years. Current leadership at CrossPoint Concordia credits the benefits of being in a network as the key to success where there had been multiple failures.

"When the church was planted, we had a leadership structure called CrossPoint that helped make decisions, and we were able to lean on the network during those tough times that come to everyone. We had a backing in CrossPoint to get us to a good, healthy place," said Carder.

A major part of the CrossPoint Concordia history is related to facilities. "Our location has been in transition it seems from the very beginning," Carder remembers. Humble beginnings in the conference room of a hotel just off the highway meant a first year of weekly set up and tear down with no real home, or place to be the church throughout the work week.

Later, they moved to a movie theater. While starting in one of the smaller theaters they eventually worked their way up to the biggest screen. Although they had the nicest projector in the video-driven CrossPoint network and free popcorn at every service (no kidding, they were allowed to use the popcorn machine), it never made up for the lack of space to do good children's work.

The lack of ability to minister to children and their families as well as no mid-week services pushed them to move to storefront property in downtown Concordia. "Even though it wasn't our property, but belonged to another church, that gave us a big boost because it brought us some legitimacy in this town, and made us visible all week long," said Carder.

"Then came Covid and that hurt us like everyone else, but I think CrossPoint was well- suited for that wave, already having a superior online presence and being able to produce things with quality online," said Carder.

But, after Covid the owner of their building decided to sell and CrossPoint Concordia was about to find themselves homeless once again. In the words of Carder, they started scrambling to find another location and stumbled upon a great opportunity.

An old grade school of 19,800 sq feet occupying more than a city block was offered and the church was able to raise the money to purchase the

property debt free in two weeks! As an added bonus, the property came with a couple of rent paying tenants using a portion of the building that is as yet unneeded by the church.

"That was February of 2021, now in 2022 we are just running and gunning, and the building is behind us!"

How did CrossPoint Concordia move from property to property only to find the perfect spot after years, and then come out in the black before they held their first service in the building?

Carder says the early days of evangelism were great, but over the years he identified the need to raise up leaders, committed to Christ and the church.That focus on leadership left them in a prime position to move sacrificially and generously when the time came.

"So, it took a while to get good leadership in the church, but because we were slow and intentional in what we did and who we did it with, we have a great core identity here of who we are and we are sold out for Jesus and CrossPoint!"

Coming out of Covid, CrossPoint Concordia had about 20 committed families who raised more than \$100,000 to get into their new home and now things are really moving!

The Ups and downs

Every church story has ups and downs, and while Carder said he could obviously recall the location and facilities journey as a great testimony, he'd rather focus on people.

"I started attending CrossPoint because I visited every church in this town when I moved here with one single question in mind: when I befriend someone who is far from Jesus would they be welcome here as they explore what this community of faith looks like? Overwhelmingly my answer was no as I visited churches until I hit CrossPoint," Carder said. "My wife came first, she loved it and brought me the next week. She was right, and I fell in love right away."

Enter a young woman named Tabby. Carder connected with her as he was

leading the collegiate Christian Challenge group at the local community college. She was very much her own person with a half-shaved head, multiple earrings, piercings in her face, large gauges in her ears and extensive tattoos.

"She didn't fit the norm for what would be accepted in most rural churches," said Carder.

After a full semester of encouragement, Tabby finally agreed to come to church. She dressed up for the occasion, because that's what she thought she was supposed to do for church, but quickly realized there was no set uniform at CrossPoint Concordia.

Add to that missed perception the fact that Tabby is not a touchy-feely person, when a greeter stuck out their hand to shake hers, she balled up her fist for a fist bump.

The greeter did the same and welcomed her, showed her where to grab coffee, donuts, and popcorn (during the movie theater days).

"It was a short interaction, but it was exactly what Tabby needed. She tells the story saying that 'Looking back nobody gave me that once over that you get when you walk into a room where you don't belong'," said Carder.

Another story is of a couple who struggled with meth addictions. They came to CrossPoint Concordia, gave their hearts to Jesus, were baptized (one during church and one right after since during the service he realized he needed to do that, too!).

"The devil doesn't often get people by making them to do bad things, but by getting them to do good things when God wants them to do great things," Carder said.

The same day they were baptized, she got a call and was promoted at work to manager, but this potential blessing would mean this new believer would have to work many weekends and start missing church and fellowship regularly.

Over a few weeks the circumstances changed, and even more responsibility was added, and after three months of disconnecting with the church she relapsed into her addiction and took her husband with her. The addiction turned to dealing drugs, legal trouble, losing their children to child services, and jail time, "But the church never stopped loving on them."

"The people of this church rallied around them and constantly sought them out, called them, visited them in jail, so, when they got out and started to sort their lives out, they still felt like they were naturally a part of this church."

Carder recounts that last weekend this husband got up in church to testify that they are four years sober. He said there are many great stories that come out of CrossPoint Concordia, but the stories of people like this are his favorite.

However, the work at CrossPoint Concordia has also had its share of hardships. "There's a lot of struggles being in ministry because you're dealing with people and people are messy," said Carder. "All my struggles have dealt with people, especially ones I've invested in."

Carder remembers the disappointment of being a small church that couldn't maintain its own student ministry, and because he had two teenage children, he had to encourage them to engage in youth ministries across town.

In that vein, Carder still hurts over a time when a good friend and leader in the church showed up to announce they were leaving the church for another.

When he asked if there was an offense, or a problem that could be corrected, he simply said the other church had a youth group for his kids. Carder challenged him to stay and help him start a student ministry at CrossPoint Concordia, but his friend said, "Why would I do that when they would do it for me?"

It was a heartbreaking moment. There have been several relational losses like that over the years. Carder does say there was a happy ending to this story because after a couple of years his friend and that family returned to the church citing the community they had missed.

And, just to finish the story, two weeks ago a member of the congregation stepped up to say they felt led to become a student pastor and Carder is developing him right now for that job!

What it means to be part of a network:

Carder warns the church leader of the rural, and often smaller church, to beware of the pressure to keep up. With conferences featuring mega church pastors modeling programs and efforts that could never be maintained in a normal-sized church, Carder reminds all leaders that you can't do it all.

"Figure out who you are, what you can accomplish and do what you do to the very best of your ability. It's one of the advantages of this network model; what we choose to do we can do with excellence," Carder said.

When you start a church as a plant there are a lot of things you can't do, but when you are a part of a network you increase the number of things you can do because you are not doing it alone.

Carder says the video preaching and teaching is done with excellence, and he only has to produce the message once every other month. The other seven to eight weeks out of those two months are completely focused on "Everything else that comes up in the life of the church: counseling, weddings, funerals, other needs in the community. When those things are pressing, they can have my full attention and the weekend preaching doesn't suffer."

Being a part of a network also affords access to rich resources. As a church that used YouTube worship videos for years, Carder loves the CrossPoint produced worship elements that are shared across the network.

But, probably the most important benefit to Carder is relational. "Being a pastor is lonely, period. That's just part of the life. But, within CrossPoint there is a huge lifeline."

Carder reflects on his weekly Location Pastor video calls that are not only meant to help the organization, but they also provide face-to-face time for camaraderie and help do life together as ministry partners.

"The Holy Spirit speaks to each one of us," Carder said. "I don't think

vocational ministry is for everybody, but I think that it is for more people than realize it."

If this kind of ministry is something you think the Lord might be leading you in, just start moving in that direction. Carder says the Holy Spirit will communicate more clearly to you on the way than if you just sit around waiting for God to move or speak.

CrossPoint Concordia currently produces one service each weekend with 90+ in attendance. They have one full time staff and six high-capacity volunteers serving as volunteer staff.

Chapter 9

CrossPoint network has made ministry easier by allowing and helping co-vocational pastors to use their passions and gifts in both their ministry and job. Having the ability to know the CrossPoint administration is great and having a brotherhood behind you going through similar days and weeks puts the co-vocational pastor at ease to serve in both capacities.

- ZACH SACHS, CROSSPOINT PITTSBURG LOCATION PASTOR

Church Name: Cross Date launched: 2007 Community Size: 2,585 Location Pastor: Micha Type: New C

CrossPoint Sterling 2007 2,585 Michael Gray New Church Plant



History

CrossPoint Sterling is a church birthed out of blessing. As CrossPoint continued to grow in Hutchinson, they noticed people driving in from this little town 25 miles away. And, after seeing more than 100 of the weekend attenders were regularly arriving from this small community, a decision was made to try seeding a new work in the town they were driving from.

"I just remember there was a huge need for CrossPoint Sterling," said Location Pastor Michael Gray. "I remember looking around and seeing people who I recognized from my time at college in Sterling, and then was excited to see that they were planning on launching a campus there."

Gray was not the launch pastor for CrossPoint Sterling but came in soon after its inception and has led that congregation for more than a decade. He moved back to the community he lived in, played college basketball for, and graduated from years earlier to become its Location Pastor. "There were quite a number of families driving to Hutchinson from Sterling to be a part of what was happening. So, we thought why not ask them to stay there where they can minister from a congregation in their own city," said Gray. "And the joke was, if you tithe your gas money income here, we can start something there!"

Gray noted that it was a discipleship move on behalf of CrossPoint to plant this location. Often, when you attend church away from your community you end up not taking the same opportunities to minister. This was a way to make CrossPoint attenders missionaries to their own home.

CrossPoint Sterling began in 2007 like many church plants: as a portable location in the local high school. It was their weekly pattern of set up and teardown for nearly 2 years before the congregation decided they had grown enough to warrant looking for a permanent home.

Very often the answer is to move into rental facilities, but the lack of available space in that small town and the current needs of the growing congregation meant that building a metal frame building on the edge of town was a better solution.

They were able to build and occupy a building by 2009 where they still meet today.

"The building went up just before I came on as pastor. I was attending CrossPoint Hutch and remember sitting in a business meeting and seeing that in one year we adopted Great Bend and Hays as replants, planted Salina, and opened the doors on a new building in Sterling. I was saying to myself, man stuff is happening at this church!" said Gray.

Gray had never been a pastor before, so he felt his first job was to dive into the community. He attended school events, started coaching kids' sports, and put himself in the pathway of people as often as he could.

"I knew that our church model was different, and it would take people a while to figure this out. So, I wanted to give them every reason I could to not think we were a fly by night, weird church thing that would only be there for a year or two," Gray said. "So it became my primary goal from the beginning to get myself and our church involved in the community."

This small community of only 2,500 people also houses a small Presbyterian college that averages about 700 students. Several people on the CrossPoint Sterling leadership team are employed at some level by the college so there is a natural connection with the school.

Gray says the number of students in that size of a community leads to what he calls "a two-people season" rhythm for the community. One of excitement and energy during the fall and spring semesters, and one a more laid-back, rural life when the students go home.

The church has learned to work with students and appreciate that rhythm as well. Gray jokes that when the students are in town worship is a little livelier and the congregation just feels different.

"We don't primarily focus our attention on college students, but we definitely don't ignore them. We have attempted to launch a hybrid kind of ministry that includes college students in the church as a whole."

The church features collegiate small groups in partner homes, announcements concerning the college in church announcements, and using college students to serve at every level of the church. CrossPoint Sterling desires to be a church that truly invests in college students.

So, being the first "out of town" church in the CrossPoint network, CrossPoint Sterling has a 15-year history to set the example of how to plant, meet community needs, and embrace collegiates. Their history reflects the future work for the entire CrossPoint network.

Ups and downs

"My first year as Pastor of CrossPoint Sterling we took eight children to camp, but for the last five years we've taken 20+ kids to camp each year," said Gray. "What I love about that number is that it's not all CrossPoint kids, it reflects that CrossPoint is the church that ministers to kids in this community."

This desire to meet family needs and minister to the kids of the community is probably one that is born out of the passion of this leader. One of his greatest joys of leading this work in Sterling is the memory he has of baptizing two of his own children. "I baptized two of my own kids in this church and I don't know that there are too many things that can top that," Gray said.

At the time of this writing, he also shared that his third and final high school son is also planning on being baptized soon.

Although the schedule is always busy for any pastor, and the challenges for rural works are always significant, the joy of being a part of the network like this is the ability to not only be in ministry but also care well for your family. Gray is the longest tenured Location Pastor in the CrossPoint network, and he models a work and family ethic for the entire network.

One of the difficulties of the effort in Sterling is also connected to one of his blessings, being a small college town. Because the college is seasonal, and by the very nature of what it means to be a four-year institution, Gray has struggled with transient membership, leadership and attendance, requiring them to be continually diligent in investing and inviting new relationships.

"Sometimes you have a lot of staff and sometimes you have no staff. That's just a hard struggle. There is just lots of turnover in this community," said Gray, "and there have been people who we've been very close to who have just felt the call to move on to other churches. It's a part of what doing ministry is like here in Sterling."

Another struggle for this rural community is trying to get people to understand what CrossPoint Sterling is. As a video-driven multisite, for many on the outside they don't understand how that would work and it is sometimes a barrier.

Gray said that it's not an issue inside the church at all, it's just a question for those outside the church and those in other churches. Every church has barriers to overcome, but the video-driven elements of a rural multisite are becoming less and less of an obstacle as the culture becomes more and more used to screens in every environment.

What it means to be part of a network:

This video-driven model is a godsend for Gray whose pastoral desires and abilities fit hand in glove with the opportunity it affords.

"This model gives me the time to reinvest in the community. I served on the school board, still coach basketball, I'm a part of the ministerial alliance, I get to help with a local nonprofit," said Gray. "If I was a full-time preaching pastor I don't think I would have the time to invest in those types of things and be fully involved in the community."

Gray continued, "And, because this is a small community being a part of CrossPoint as a network gives us access to resources beyond what we have at the local church level."

He reflected on a time in which giving was low at a hard time for the rural community, but because they were part of a network, they were able to continue to minister in Sterling and survived that bottoming out because of their partnership with the other CrossPoint locations.

"Had we not been a part of this network we probably would've seriously needed to consider closing the doors several years ago."

Being able to use creative pieces generated in other places in the network, relationships with other pastors, even being able to secure a loan for their church building which they never would've been able to do on their own are all elements afforded by the partnership in the network. "Man, I feel like I could go on and on with several things remembering why it's been so good to be a part of this network."

Relationships are one of the biggest advantages. "Our executive pastor Eric Franklin, I've called him several times to just say, 'Man I am done, I am out,' and that's all I needed. To have a sounding board. When you're in a small community like this there's not very many people I can call and say something like that with them not freaking out. Having those kinds of relationships is a huge benefit." One of the potholes Gray identified for any ministry is the feeling of isolation. "You're going to feel alone, but you're not alone. Even if you have a staff or team around you, oh, you're going to feel alone as a pastor. But just remember, you're not."

The benefits of working with people in a network are at their most valuable when you are at your weakest. "You're going to want to crawl in a hole, but don't do it!"

Finally, Gray encourages anyone in ministry but especially those in multisite networking to be persistent. He reflected on the time in which former executive pastor, Rod Sims, encouraged him, after listening to a few of Gray's ideas, saying, "Just try it, we'll see what happens. Do something on the Fourth of July even if no one has done it before. Start a food drive even if no one's done it before. Set up the infamous, no one likes to do, inflatables downtown, just try it and see!"

And finally, Gray reminds all pastors to get involved and put yourself in the path of ministry as often as possible, especially in small communities.

"I think every small town in any rural area has that place where that 'table of wisdom' sits at 6 AM, 9 AM and 3 PM every day drinking coffee. You just need to make sure you're there for one of those time slots to be seen and to be a part."

CrossPoint Sterling currently produces one service each weekend with 90+ in attendance. They have one full time staff and three high-capacity volunteers serving as volunteer staff.

Part 4

"Being a part of CrossPoint means a bigger impact. Being part of a multisite church requires a mindset that sacrifices local preference for larger impact. Personally, I have learned that God gives gifts with the intent that they are lived out in community and not isolation. We say often that we are better together because that's what we believe, but the blessing is actually living that out. Before I was part of CrossPoint I liked the idea of multisite, but now I understand the blessing of multisite. It's found in the community, camaraderie, and impact we make together."

- RYAN BOOTH, CROSSPOINT SALINA LOCATION PASTOR AND EXECUTIVE TEAM MEMBER

CrossPoint Church is as unique as any church, but it is also just like every other church. There are lessons to be learned from both our successes and failures.

More importantly, this document is meant to be an encouragement that challenges each of us to think outside ourselves and outside the box and reach for more than only surviving in ministry. There is the possibility for every minister and ministry to thrive, right where they are.

Dallas Powell, Church Planting Catalyst for the North American Mission Board, said in his paper called Trends in Rural Church Planting, "Several challenges have plagued rural church planters over the past 20 years, including resources, loneliness and vocational identity."

What if there was a way to chip away at all those obstacles for every church, everywhere without having to reinvent the wheel every time?

The aim of the next couple of pages is to open that door for you.

Chapter 10

Being part of the network is better for ministry because I'm not in it alone. I have brothers and sisters in ministry striving towards Jesus and pushing me forward. There is no room to be lazy when we are all putting our best foot forward and holding each other accountable. The best part of CrossPoint is watching God do amazing things.

- MATTHEW CARDER, CROSSPOINT CONCORDIA LOCATION PASTOR

The journey of CrossPoint Church has been a fantastic journey, but one that is still developing. That being said, there have been enough experiences, failures, successes and growth to warrant an offering. And that offering is something we call the Replant Hub.

It is based on a three-tiered system used at CrossPoint Church in which a LEVEL ONE church, ministry or individual can use any of the accessible resources they would like to help further their ministry as a free gift from CrossPoint.

LEVEL TWO connections include all the resources of the previous level, a few more resources and a staff relationship between your ministry and CrossPoint for further growth and development.

LEVEL THREE connections actually move from separate ministries to the same ministry. The CrossPoint network is made up of several people using resources as LEVEL ONE, a handful of relationships growing stronger at LEVEL TWO, and all of our official locations known as LEVEL THREE.

The Replant strategists of the North American Mission Board have evaluated this model and have created an online portal for any church/ ministry/person to enjoy the LEVEL ONE resources of a variety of vetted and committed churches, not just CrossPoint Church:

- · For existing churches who are stuck and struggling to find new life
- For existing churches who are doing fine, but could use a fresh assist to reach that next level

• For planters and groups who are starting from scratch and could use a network to partner with on their journey

So, what is the Replant Hub? Imagine all the resources our church shares between its different locations to make the ministry go further, better, farther:

- Video of weekend teaching
- Video of small group curriculum
- Graphics packages for series
- Printable documentation like series docs, bulletin inserts, small group leaders guides, etc.

Now, imagine all those resources being collected in one spot.

Now, imagine the spot with all those resources being not for just our church, but for any church.

Now, imagine once again that spot is filled with content from multiple churches who are willing to do the same thing and give it all away to any church for the sake of the Kingdom.

And, finally, imagine you have access to all that to use in any way that makes your ministry better.

If you can imagine all that, you can imagine the Replant Hub!

That's right! The Replant Hub is a singular portal on a singular platform housing up to a dozen different content producing churches from across the country and from different kinds of churches who are all willing to give away whatever they have created to help us all move the ball forward!

How could you use these resources:

- Plug and play by downloading a video and using it as your own
- Watching the video to give you the edge in preaching and teaching your own message
- Joining with a content producing church for the long haul

- Using a short series to cover you on a sabbatical, or summer vacay
- Implement a mid-week service with these resources to lift the weight off your back and increase your ministry band width

The way you choose to use the resources is individualized because you know your context and needs better than anyone else. Every one of the content producing churches has signed off on allowing users to use all of what is on the Replant Hub as if it were their very own.

Another exciting addition to the Replant Hub is worship. As the developer of the RePlant Hub shared the story, the intention and the trial versions it became abundantly clear that one of the major needs in churches all across the country was in the arena of worship. One of the things they were missing on a regular basis was quality worship and worship elements represented on the screens.

So, the content contributing churches were tasked with putting together royalty free worship that could be used as worship elements in other congregations. Stylistically ranging from one guy with a guitar to the full orchestration of a "big church."

The only limitation is legal, making sure that every song is a royalty-free piece. That being said, if a church entered into a formal relationship with a specific content producing church, they would be eligible to use everything produced and not just royalty-free pieces.

What we have learned since producing these resources is that churches love access to worship elements that help them do better right where they are, and the Replant Hub can help.

So, the next steps for you are easy. First, simply go to ReplantHub.com and sign up. Second, explore the resources and dream a little about what would benefit you the most. And third, dive in and get ready to enjoy the chance of partnering with another church that can help you go further, faster, better starting today.

It's a privilege for each of us to be called by the Lord for such a task as this. The ministry teams of CrossPoint Church and numerous other churches featured on ReplantHub.com also believe it's a privilege each and every time you allow us to partner with you!

Chapter 11

His old late 90's pickup rolled up in front of their house and seemed to settle into place with the familiar creaks in the suspension and pops of gravel still stuck between the treads from the dirt road that brought him home.

After he turned off the ignition he bounded out of the cab and jogged up the steps of his front porch. Pushing open the front door, his two boys stood there as if they had been waiting for dad to come home all day.

The younger wrapping his arms around dad's waist and a fist bump from the older, this young pastor was about to ask how the day had gone, but was interrupted by their question.

"Are we still going to the park to practice tonight?"

Their excitement seemed to be held in check by the echoes of answers they had heard before rattling around in their memories. Things like "Maybe later," or "After I study a little bit" would be met with disappointment, but understanding. They remembered that dad wasn't the only one called to ministry, the whole family was, right?

So, it was a full release of joy when dad's response was, "Of course! Let me just go and kiss your momma."

A sibling high five was followed by the extremely teenage move of shoving a fist high into the air before drawing it back quickly, throwing that elbow to the rear while yelling, "Yes!"

It made this dad one happy camper, too.

As the boys scampered off to get their gear for practice, dad moved through the dining room and into the kitchen, only to find an empty room with a microwave humming and something simmering on the stove.

"Honey!?!" Dad bellowed as he retraced his steps back toward the front of the house, by sidetracking down the hall to the master bedroom he found her with two open suitcases on the bed partially packed... one for them, and one for the boys. When their eyes met, she dropped a t-shirt mid-fold to meet him at the doorway for their standard hug and kiss greeting.

Then she pushed back and said, "I am packing for this weekend, we are still going, right?"

"Absolutely," this young husband said. "Just tying up some loose ends, but Friday at 5 pm you better be ready to hit the road!"

She giggled a little, struggling to believe they were finally getting away for a weekend. A road trip to the coast and the beach was just not in the cards for this bi-vocational family working paycheck to paycheck and serving the church, but things have been different for a while now.

He left her to continue packing and made his way down the hall ushering the kids to the truck so they could get in some practice before it got dark. But, halfway down the hall he pushed open the door to his makeshift office.

"Come on dad!" He heard bellowing from the living room, and he could picture them waiting at the front door.

"Just a sec," dad answered as he shook the mouse for his computer to wake up the screen. He typed in ReplantHub.net and clicked onto the series he was leading his little church through. After he found that week's message he simply clicked download and saw the buffering commence.

He had delivered the first four messages in this series over the last month and found great joy and relief in being able to tag team the teaching ministry in recent days. But, this weekend, the 'guest preacher' would continue the series on video, and the youngest deacon was already ready to get it from laptop to screen.

As he closed the door on the office and the download he smiled. He still had great responsibilities, and the bi-vocational ministry was still incredibly demanding. However, he knew he now had a partner in ministry in ReplantHub.com and that assist gave him the margin to play ball on a Tuesday night with his kiddos and make memories with a sweet young family on a road trip they will talk about for years. It was just what he needed.

They were no longer surviving. They were thriving.

"Something was going to have to give before he did. He would die for his family and that little church... But he'd rather live for them."

- Doing More Together, Chapter 1

Doing More Together is the story of a church, but it's actually the story of every church and every pastor. How do you move from merely surviving to a ministry that is thriving? Follow the journey of a church that knows none of us can do this alone and that reinventing the wheel week after week is not always the plan God has for us! Learn, grow, and find new doors to open ministry in **Doing More Together**.

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