

SESSION II: HOW ARE WE PUT TOGETHER?

A. A SHORT HISTORY

The Beginning

The congregation had its beginnings as a mission of the First Baptist Church of Los Alamos in September 1968. A series of services under the pavilion in Piñon Park that fall were the first meetings of the new church and marked the hopes for an established presence in the growing community.

Early morning services were held on Sundays at Piñon School. The pastor of First Baptist served as its part-time preacher. Since he had to be on the Hill for the regular 10:30 worship time there, WRBC held its worship first and Sunday School afterwards. That order of Sunday morning schedule has continued to this very day.

In 1969, the congregation voted to become independent from its parent church. On November 4 of that year, the White Rock Baptist Church was dedicated with 84 charter members.

The church continued to meet in Piñon School until moving into its first multipurpose facility on May 21, 1971. This structure, built on six acres adjacent to the highway, was the first new church building constructed in White Rock.

Until 1975, two pastors, one part time and one full time, served the church. Under its third pastor (Guy Greenfield, 1975-1980), the church entered a second

building program. The church carried out its own capital fundraising program which not only helped secure funding for the project, but united the church through prayer and dedication to the mission of the church. Services began in the second building in December 1977, with a total church membership of 240. In 1979, the first music and youth pastor was hired.

The church sponsored a new Hispanic mission in Santa Fe in 1984, Iglesia Bautista El Buen Pastor.

The Dark Times 1984-1985

The first several pastors of WRBC were open-minded, innovative, and creative. They appealed to the spirit of a people who were disinclined to do church by sets of rules and traditional formulations. Then, a pastor came who was more "fundamentalist" in nature. A good man who cared for the people and ministered effectively to them, he nonetheless preached a message which seemed increasingly stifling and was perhaps a bit too bound to one particular denomination.

Some of the congregation chafed under this leadership and resented it. Others, focused on the pastoral ministry of the pastor, were supportive of him.

The division was exacerbated by the addition of a second staff person. Hired as an associate pastor, this individual had a great deal of charisma and a strong personality. He was the kind of person who either attracted or repulsed others. The congregation became even more polarized as the associate pastor pushed his agenda.

Both the pastor and associate pastor presented an air of spiritual superiority, claiming to speak for God on many matters. They declared that if the people were not with them, then they were against them and quite possibly against God. This served only to drive a wedge deeper between those who supported the pastors and those who did not.

People, sensing the tension and growing anger, began to leave the church. Small groups, formed originally for Bible study and relationships, became little caucuses on the current status of the "civil war". The emotion-laden discussions in these small groups helped exaggerate the problems and added to the anger and frustration. The deacons were in disarray; the church council was struggling.

At a church business meeting, a vote of confidence was called for. The vote failed to support the pastors. The pastors indicated they would leave the church. The next Sunday morning, however, they came together before the congregation and declared that God had told them not to leave. The remaining leaders of the church proceeded to "declare the pulpit vacant" (a term which means the pastors were in essence summarily dismissed). The following Sunday was to be yet another business meeting, called in order to conclude this item of business. Both "sides" called in all their friends and on that Sunday morning (sometimes referred to in later years as "Black Sunday") people who had not been in church in years showed up and the lines were drawn.

The pastors again stood up to speak. The chair of the deacons stood up to tell them they were fired. People from the audience began to speak out. Name calling,

derisive comments, and accusations of betrayal and deceit were literally shouted back and forth right there in the sanctuary. People began to walk out, some never to return. This sad and tragic era split the church, leaving a small group of hurting yet determined individuals who carried on.

Rebuilding

A new pastor, Charles McCullough, came in July 1986. The first ten years of his tenure were a time of recovery, healing, and restoring of the unique spirit that is WRBC. Along the way, pastoral care, deacon ministry, church organization, and numerous facility upgrades received attention.

In 1992, Sunday evening services came to an end. A new Wednesday night program called “BASIC” (Brothers and Sisters in Christ) was begun. It included dinner and programs for adults and children.

The budget in the early 90s steadily increased to over a quarter of a million dollars, a remarkable contrast to the 1968 budget of \$11,000.

Associate Pastor, Dave Fabry, came in December 1992. He was officially the “Family Minister” even though his wide range of talents and creative abilities led him into a variety of activities. His primary focus was on the youth. Dave left in January 2001.

A significant event occurred in August 1997. On a Sunday morning, the roots in the major sewer line that runs across the parking lot finally plugged it completely. When residents from the upper end of White Rock

flushed and showered that morning, raw sewage gushed into the building, flooding it completely. A Level 3 Biohazard situation was immediately created. The cleanup and decontamination required nine months.

The interesting thing about the flood is the timing! For over a year, the church had been debating whether to remodel the existing building or add on with new construction. The flood appeared to be a sign that we should go ahead and do both. The old building was remodeled and reconfigured: the sanctuary became the Fellowship Hall and the altar and baptistery became the new kitchen. The multipurpose worship center (The Great Room), the fountain baptistery, and the Gathering Space were built at the same time.

Over 300 people from 13 states came as volunteers to help with the construction.

Before the carpet was put down in the Great Room, the entire congregation gathered to write Scripture on the floor—we stand on that Scripture to this day. The new facility was dedicated on Easter Sunday 1999.

In April of 2000, the American Red Cross came to WRBC and arranged for the facility to be used as the Emergency Operations Center for our area in case of a major crisis and/or evacuation. Our facility seemed to be the best located and most suited for such a need. We were glad to be selected for this important service, but we really could imagine no such need arising in safe, secure Los Alamos.

The Cerro Grande fire occurred a month later. Thousands of LA and WR residents passed through our facility during the evacuation. Many people took up

lodging in the building. A first aid station, short wave radio center, and national media room operated in-house until the full evacuation took place.

The use of the facility was such a success that a decade later, during the next big fire, WRBC served as the central meeting and information dissemination place for the community. We also showed movies and served popcorn in the evenings to locals who needed a cool place to be during those hot, smoky summer nights.

The third Associate Pastor, Steve Bublitz, came in April 2003. His primary responsibilities were children and education ministries. Steve left in February 2010.

A young man who had grown up in Los Alamos came to be our youth intern in the summer of 2008. The next year he returned for a ten-month stint as youth minister. He then left for California and Fuller Theological Seminary. In 2010, he moved to Colorado Springs and was married. Later that year, Jesse Mark returned to be our full time youth minister. In 2014, he was also given the task of leading the worship ministry.

The White Rock Baptist Church has been in existence for almost half a century now. Thousands of people have been touched through its life and work. Many have come through this church seeking a quiet place of refuge, a safe place for connecting with others, a stable, healthy environment for their children, and/or a way to reach out to the world around them. The church has been a community resource, a community meeting place, and a beacon on a hill demonstrating the love and power of the risen Lord. The pivot points of life—birth, school, graduation, marriage, death—have been

recognized and observed and celebrated countless times.

The plan is to continue to serve consistently, to love deeply, to teach faithfully, and to worship fully until the Lord God is done with us here.

B. HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED

The following mission statements of various groups and teams in the church provide an overview of the means by which we carry out our mission and ministry.

1. Audio-Visual Team

The purpose of the Audio-Visual Team is to make the best use of audio and video technology

- To enhance worship,
- To provide A/V support for education/discipleship, and
- To provide A/V support for community events.

2. AWANA Club

The goal of the AWANA club is to reach boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and train them in Scripture memory.

3. BASIC

The goal of BASIC is to provide a good meal at an affordable price which

- Provides dinner for AWANA workers,
- Creates an atmosphere for fellowship and relationship-building,
- Contributes to the outreach efforts of the church, and
- Ministers to people by offering a break from cooking!

4. Children's Ministry Team

Our mission and purpose is

- To create a clean, safe, and spiritually healthy environment for all children at church, ages birth through 6th grade,
- To nurture and meet the spiritual, social, emotional, and physical needs of each child and family while at church, and
- To encourage each child to become a fully devoted follower of Christ by demonstrating the love of Christ and by being disciples ourselves.

5. Church Council

The council is responsible for the administration of the church finances, real estate, property and personnel other than the pastoral staff. The Council oversees the use and maintenance of the facilities and vehicles as well as the budget and capital expenditures. Programs and capital improvements which incur financial costs are processed through the Council and typically presented to the congregation by the council.

6. Deacons

The deacons help maintain a balance in the church body. This is accomplished by providing pastoral support and evaluation, assistance with conflict resolution, caring ministry to individuals and families,

and periodic evaluation of present and proposed ministries.

7. Facility Management/Set-Up and Take-Down Crew

- Ensure that the building and grounds are maintained as an excellent tool that supports worship, fellowship, and ministry as well as a wide range of other services; and
- Provide a clean, comfortable, safe, welcoming environment to visitors and the community for the glory of God.

8. Missions Team

To facilitate White Rock Baptist Church's involvement in outreach and missions by

- Meeting the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of people in our community, nation, and world,
- Organizing and implementing missions activities (trips, events, etc.), and
- Encouraging and assisting individuals who are called to missions endeavors.

9. Small Groups

The purposes of small groups are

- To deepen spiritual maturity (develop disciples) (Eph. 4:13-16),
- To develop and practice love for one another (create community) (Jn. 13:34), and
- To reach out to others (make new disciples) (Mt. 28:19).

10. Worship

Our mission is to create an environment in which

- God is honored,
- The spirit of believers is renewed and refreshed, and
- The name of Jesus is lifted up so that He may draw all people to Himself.

11. Youth Ministry

The goals of youth ministry are:

- To lead young people to faith in Christ,
- To disciple young Christians, and
- To assist young Christians to apply their faith to life

C. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the size of your church?

- We have 279 resident members. Our average Sunday morning attendance is 220.

2. What is the size of your children and youth groups?

- We have about 70 children, infant through 6th grade. We have about 40 active youth.

3. How long have the pastors been there? What are their backgrounds and leadership styles?

- The church, begun in 1969, has had 4 pastors and 4 associate pastors. The pastors and the church are equally accountable to God and work together as partners in seeking the direction of the church.
- The current pastor, Chuck McCullough, came in 1986. He is married to Karen, and they have three daughters: Sarah, married to Mike; Grace, married to Scott; and Joy, married to another Scott. He has an undergraduate degree in chemistry and an M. Div. and

Ph. D. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

- The youth and worship pastor, Jesse Mark, came in 2010. He is married to Zoe, and they have two daughters, Abbie and Cora. While this is his first full-time ministry position, he served as the youth intern at WRBC for one summer and one school year. He has a bachelor's degree in biology and a Master of Theology degree from Fuller Theological Seminary.



4. What is your worship style?

- Our worship is led by a group of talented musicians who perform a variety of music that ranges from traditional to contemporary. Our worship service typically includes a time for the children, some time for quiet prayer and meditation, and a biblically-based message.

5. What are some of the mission activities in which you are involved?

- We do community outreach through projects such as “Trunk or Treat” on Halloween and a booth at the community’s 4th of July event. In the fall we conduct a Block Party for the whole community.
- We participate in *Operation Christmas Child* (our AWANA clubs sponsor this) and *Angel Tree* (Christmas gifts to children of prison inmates).
- International Missions: We are part of a group of area churches assisting the Casa de Amor para Ninos Orphanage in Las Palomas, Mexico. We have sent multiple teams to assist mission work in Brazil and Mexico. We encourage and support individuals who participate in international missions.
- We give regularly to the mission causes of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

6. What are the strengths of your church?

- We are healthy in terms of consistent attendance, participation, and giving.
- We have a growing number of children and teenagers and young families.
- We have strong leadership among both men and women in the congregation.

- This is an open, accepting group of people. There exists a significant level of trust (in God and each other) that allows for freedom and initiative. There is a general willingness to explore change and permission to embrace it.
- We are quick to respond to the needs of hurting people.
- Our church is known in our area for being Bible centered, for love and caring, and for community awareness and cooperation.
- The church is generous and supportive of the pastors and their families.

7. What are the weaknesses of your church?

- We have a relatively broad-based (decentralized) structure—we practice congregational polity in the life and work of the church. This is a strength because many people are involved in decision-making. However, this strength also carries some risk: it can give rise to the occasional interpersonal conflict or “turf struggle”, which, of course, can be found in most churches.

8. What is your denominational affiliation?

- We voluntarily associate with the Baptist Convention of New Mexico. We contribute to the mission programs of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

9. How would you describe your theology/doctrine?

- Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God, Lord over all.
- Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- The Bible is authoritative and reliable, the objective standard for faith and ethics.

- The local church, under the Lordship of Christ, is locally owned and operated.
- Baptism by immersion is a symbolic statement of the believer's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- Every believer in Christ is a free and responsible priest before God.
- Every person is free before God to follow his conscience in matters of faith and worship.

