



# COVENANT of Transformation Ministries Churches

By yourself,  
you're unprotected.

With a friend,  
you can face the worst.

Can you round up a third?

*"A three-stranded rope  
isn't easily snapped."*

**Ecclesiastes 4:12**

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 transformation  
MINISTRIES  
more healthy churches  
more changed lives

Churches not previously affiliated with Transformation Ministries will utilize the process described in the document titled, *“Information, Procedures and Guidelines for Established Congregations Applying for Affiliation with Transformation Ministries.”*

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# COVENANT OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES CHURCHES

*Revised November 9, 2010*

Transformation Ministries is a partnership of many ethnically- and culturally-diverse churches, adhering to baptistic convictions. The churches and agencies partnering as Transformation Ministries covenant to walk together in a Biblical relationship, to enjoy each other's fellowship, to seek counsel with one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who are committed to growing a God-empowered movement of churches.

The New Testament portrays the people of God gathered in local congregations, each having a unique identity, life and ministry. Together, these individual churches comprise a larger whole, the body of Christ, the Church. New Testament congregations that had historical geographical, and cultural affinity developed familial relationships with one another that were expressed in sharing leaders, resources, and correspondence; seeking guidance together from the Holy Spirit regarding pressing issues before them, and hold each other accountable for faithfulness to the Gospel.

In this spirit, the churches of Transformation Ministries agree to walk and work together to advance Christ's Kingdom.

We will spur one another on towards love, good deeds, evangelism, Biblical justice, and faithfulness, and hold each other accountable to live by the commitments of this covenant. We will meet and fellowship together encouraging one another as we serve our coming Lord, Jesus Christ.

We will identify strategic mission objectives, developing resources and staff to advance our mission. We will contribute a "Church Faith-Share" to support this mission.

We will partner in preparing and participating in Transformation Ministries' conferences, seminars and pastoral groups as we find these beneficial to reach our church's ministry goals. We will, when asked, seek to recommend members for the Board of Directors of Transformation Ministries.

We will communicate with each other needs among us that are beyond the abilities of local churches to meet, and share together in alleviating those needs.

We will develop leaders among us who are gifted and called by the Lord for ministry, and commend such leaders to each other.

We will work with the staff and resources of Transformation Ministries in the pastoral selection process, and at other times in order to maintain the health and missional vitality of this congregation.

We affirm the *Convictions of Transformation Ministries* and *Core Values* as statements of our convictions and values. If at some future date we no longer agree with these statements, we will seek to reconcile our differences, and if we cannot reconcile, we will withdraw from Transformation Ministries.

In order to evaluate our mission effectiveness as a *God-empowered movement of churches*, each church will send an annual report describing mission accomplishments, blessings and concerns.

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHURCH** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_ **OFFICER OF THE CHURCH** \_\_\_\_\_ **PASTOR**

\_\_\_\_\_ **PRESIDENT OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CEO/MISSION LEAD OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES**

**COVENANT  
OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES CHURCHES  
ADDENDUM**

The following provisions are hereby incorporated within the *Covenant of Transformation Ministries Churches* signed by \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) and Transformation Ministries:

The terms “partnership” and/or “partner” as used in this Covenant are not intended to be used in the legal sense of creating a legal partnership. Instead, such terms are used solely to express the religious principle of associating together to strengthen each other in carrying out Christ’s mission.

Therefore, by entering into this Covenant, it is the expressed intention of both parties that this Covenant shall not create any legal relationship between the parties, including but not limited to a legal partnership, and that neither party shall have the right and/or privilege to bind the other party to any obligation or legal liability.

By entering into this Covenant, neither party assumes any responsibility or obligation other than those expressly set forth in the terms of the Covenant.

Either party may withdraw from this Covenant at any time by providing written notice by certified mail to the other party of the withdrawal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Church Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Lead/Senior Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES, COVINA, CALIFORNIA**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Mission Lead

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# APPENDIX 1

## CORE VALUES, VISION, MISSION AND CORE COMPETENCIES OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES

*Revised September 8, 2011*

### CORE VALUES

#### 1. Biblical Authority

Because we believe Scripture is God's infallible word, it is the supreme authority for Christ-followers and the Church.

#### 2. God-Dependent

Because we believe Scripture teaches that apart from God we can do nothing, we are a people of prayer, obedience, faith and risk.

#### 3. Mission of God

Because we believe salvation is found only in Jesus Christ, we are committed through word and deed to see all lost people come to Christ and grow into His fully devoted followers, and to multiply missional congregations.

#### 4. Mission-Empowering Relationships

Because we believe God is a relational being who created humanity in His image, and because the Scriptures call churches to interdependent relationships to most effectively carry out God's mission, we value building relationships both between pastors and between congregations.

#### 5. Church as a Mosaic

Because we believe all men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, we embrace and celebrate the multiplicity of generations, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural expressions within the body of Christ modeling reconciliation to the world.

#### 6. Generation to Generation

Because we believe each generation needs new life in Christ, we value the development of a new generation of leaders, and ministries that reach and serve next generations.

#### 7. Spiritual Leadership

Because we believe Scripture places critical importance on the quality of leadership, we seek and equip leaders called by God, sanctified and gifted by the Holy Spirit who serve in various capacities and guide the Church in fulfilling His purpose.

### VISION

We envision a God-empowered movement of churches:

- every pastor growing
- every church healthy
- every community transformed for Christ.

### MISSION

Transformation Ministries exists to build a movement of mission-empowering relationships by:

- deepening and developing pastors as spiritual leaders;
- coaching and networking churches toward greater health and missional vitality; and
- supporting and initiating viable church planting partnerships.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

- Developing Pastoral Leaders
- Church Health and Missional Vitality
- Church Planting Partnerships

## APPENDIX 2 CONVICTIONS OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES

*Revised September 8, 2011*

### A CONFESSION OF OUR COMMON FAITH

Confessions in the Baptist tradition declare the church's faith with conviction, joy and freedom. Baptists historically emphasize the right of individuals to interpret the Scripture as led by the Holy Spirit, the priesthood of the believer, and freedom of religion. However, these do not mean there is an absence of doctrines that we cherish and believe. It is incumbent on believers to clarify the non-negotiables of our faith. The following affirmations by Transformation Ministries are an attempt to articulate such essentials in the midst of a pluralistic religious landscape.

We wish to clarify that salvation is God's free gift of grace and is received through simple faith in Jesus Christ and repentance of sin. Salvation is not the result of cognitive assent to doctrinal statements.

Confessions do not replace or supplement the Bible and its authority. Nor are they a substitute for the living, dynamic relationship, which we have in Jesus Christ. This confession attempts only to confirm some of what is central to the faith, and by intent it is silent on less weighty matters. It is our conviction that what is written here represents a consensus of doctrine, which will aid in guarding the deposit of truth, which we believe is revealed in Scripture.

We believe:

1. That the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired Word of God, the final and trustworthy authority for faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the community of faith. The Bible clearly reveals the essentials necessary for Salvation and the basics of how to conduct our lives. It is the true center of Christian Union, and the supreme standard by which human conduct, creeds, and opinion shall be tried. (*Deut. 4:1-2, II Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21*)
2. That there is only one true and eternal God consisting of three co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Gen. 1:1; Duet 6:4; John 4:24; John 14:6-13; Gal. 4:6; II Peter 1:17; Psalm 2:7ff; Isa. 7:14; John 1:1-18; Heb. 1:8; Psalm 51:11; I John 4:13; Acts 5:3,4*)
3. That God created humankind in the Divine image. Through Adam's fall all became sinful, lost and condemned. Each human being by deliberate choice participates in sin and is in need of Redemption through Christ. (*Gen. 1:26-30; Eph. 2:1-22; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21*)
4. That Jesus Christ is God's Son, fully divine and fully human, the eternal and pre-existent Word. By His death Christ made full atonement for our sins, and by His resurrection showed Himself to be the Lord and Giver of Life to all who believe. (*Heb. 1:1-3, 4:14-15; John 1:1-3,14*)
5. That God offers forgiveness of sin and justification through faith in Christ Jesus apart from works. Such Redemption is received by human individuals as God's gift upon repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. Through Christ the believer becomes a new creation, whose mind and will are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit from loving sin, to loving the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind, and loving all people as we love ourselves. (*Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Eph. 2:8-22; I John 1:6 - 2:11; Matt. 22:37-38*)
6. That the Church is a community of faith consisting of regenerated believers with Christ as Lord. Such believers claim a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, follow the Lord in believer's baptism, share in the Lord's Supper, gather regularly for worship, and covenant for mutual edification and care-giving. (*Matt. 16:15-19; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 16:30-33; I Cor. 11:23-26; Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 10:23-25; I Cor. 6:19*)

7. That the Church is called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and God's reconciling grace in the power of the Holy Spirit, inviting persons to receive salvation and follow Christ as His disciples. As disciples, we seek justice for all persons and the reform of society. *(Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Gal. 3:26-28; James 1:27, 2:8)*
8. That Jesus Christ will return visibly, at which time He will raise the dead and judge all people. Believers will enjoy eternal fellowship with God as they participate in the fullness of His eternal reign, while unbelievers will suffer eternal separation from God. *(Matt.24:29-31; 25:31-46; I Thess. 4:14-18; Rev. 20:4-6,11-15)*

## **DECLARATION ON HUMAN SEXUALITY AND THE CHURCH**

Because we are all wounded and broken people in need of the healing power of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and being aware of the confusion of voices pertaining to human sexuality, the following statement defines our common understanding for sexual behavior:

Transformation Ministries affirms the Biblical ethic of compassion, love and ministry to all sexually broken persons and the availability of God's grace to all that repent (Luke 5:30-32; John 8:1-11; I Corinthians 6:11).

We affirm God's gracious creation intent for both faithful lifelong heterosexual union for married persons and for committed celibate behavior for unmarried persons as the only Biblical options for human sexual conduct. All other sexual unions are clearly identified in Scripture as being sinful and destructive of persons (Genesis 1:27, 2:24; I Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4).

We affirm that all alternative sexual unions outside of heterosexual marriage including homosexual/bisexual practices, adultery, and fornication are sin. Such conduct calls for repentance and openness to the transforming power of God (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32; I Cor. 6:9-10).

Therefore, Transformation Ministries will take leadership in supporting and resourcing church based ministries to sexually broken people including gay/lesbian and bisexual persons which express the grace and love of God, which minister to human needs, and which offer God's transforming grace to all; and further,

Transformation Ministries will not recognize for ordination or recognize the preexisting license or ordination of any practicing adulterer, fornicator, gay/lesbian/bisexual persons, or any person that affirms endorses and/or celebrates non-Biblical sexual practices such as those stipulated above; and further,

Transformation Ministries will not accept churches into fellowship who ordain or have in ministerial positions practicing adulterers, fornicators, gay/lesbian/bisexual persons or those who affirm, endorse, or celebrate non-Biblical sexual practices such as those stipulated above; and further,

BE IT RESOLVED, that any church affiliated with Transformation Ministries that endorses, celebrates, or affirms adultery, fornication, homosexual and/or bisexual practices, or celebrates non-Biblical sexual practices will be given the opportunity to counsel with the CEO/Mission Lead. Should a church choose to remain in a state of defiance to the Biblical ethic agreed upon by this Ministry, the church will be indicating their desire to sever their relationship with Transformation Ministries and will be notified of this Ministry's acceptance and affirmation of the choice to end their relationship with Transformation Ministries.

I am in agreement with this statement: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 3 SPECIAL OFFERINGS OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES**

*Revised September 8, 2011*

In addition to “Church Faith-Share Giving,” the Covenanting Transformation Ministries Churches are given opportunity to participate in the following special offerings.

- Pastor’s Emergency Fund (for TM pastors)
- Leadership Development Programs
- Scholarships
- Disaster Relief Offering (in response to specific disasters, e.g. hurricanes, fire, earthquakes, etc.).

## **UPHELD HISTORIC BAPTISTIC CONVICTIONS OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES**

*Revised September 8, 2011*

*(With roots reaching to 1869,  
Transformation Ministries remains true to its heritage:  
Commitment to historic baptistic convictions.)*

1. The individual accountability of every soul to God.
2. The distinct and separate roles of church and state.
3. The supreme authority of the Scriptures for Christian faith and life.
4. The baptism of believers by emersion as a sign of repentance and faith in Christ.
5. The equal standing of all believers before God through Christ.
6. The autonomy and interdependence of local churches.

## APPENDIX 4

### CHURCH FAITH-SHARE GIVING OF TRANSFORMATION MINISTRIES

*Revised September 8, 2011*

Transformation Ministries is a movement of churches committed to walk and work together to change their worlds for Christ. Working through a Board of Directors nominated by the churches, we identify strategic mission objectives, and develop resources and staff to advance our common mission.

What is “Church Faith-Share Giving”? Covenanting Churches, both individually and working together as Transformation Ministries, live by faith. We believe that as we follow the Lord and obey His instruction, He supplies the needs of our ministries.

Covenanting Churches agree to contribute a “Church Faith-Share” to support our common mission, together.

We invite all churches to share the same commitment of faithfulness, generosity, and sacrifice. Each of these is consistent with the Biblical teaching regarding our stewardship.

- **Faithfulness** involves the regular and consistent giving of the “Church Faith-Share” by our Covenanting Transformation Ministries Churches.
- **Generosity** is the commitment to give freely and joyously without compulsion or begrudgingly. The goal is to match the way God gives in abundance and to overflowing.
- **Sacrifice** involves stretching in faith that God will continue to provide for all the needs of the Ministry whether in the church or in Transformation Ministries as a whole. Sacrifice also means prioritizing the greater impact for Christ through Transformation Ministries even when it is not easy or convenient to do so.

The amount of the “Church Faith-Share” will differ, from church to church, based on size and capacity, but the commitment and participation will be the same throughout.

Churches often ask for a guideline for giving. If the total giving of all the Transformation Ministries churches, together, averaged between two and three percent (2% and 3%) of their operating budgets, this would provide a strong financial foundation for our mission, together.

If every church in Covenant with Transformation Ministries will commit equally to these three (3) principles/guidelines, the mission will be greatly strengthened and fully resourced.

## APPENDIX 5

### LEADERSHIP COVENANT OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

*Revised September 13, 2007*

**Believing** that Christian Leaders are to set the highest example for Christ's followers (I Timothy 4:11-16);  
**Committed** to fulfill Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission (Matthew 22:36-40; 28:19-20); and  
**Because** the reputation of Christ and His Church demands a public witness above reproach....

**Therefore**, I commit my thoughts, attitudes and behaviors to represent Christ through the following disciplines of my calling:

1. **Leadership:** By His grace and Spirit, I will lead God's people with the spiritual authority which issues from a servant heart, godly character, and gifted performance. I will develop disciples of Christ and empower spiritual leaders for the Kingdom. (II Timothy 2:2)
2. **Purity and Integrity:** I will conduct myself with sexual purity and integrity whether I am married or single. If married, in covenant faithfulness I will, in my thoughts, words, and deeds, love and respond toward my spouse as Christ loves and responds to me. If single, I will commit myself to celibacy until I enter marriage. I will not neglect my family: I will express my love for them in my time, attention, affection, and respect.
3. **Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical Health:** I will endeavor to pray daily; to read, study and meditate upon God's Word; and to maintain other spiritual disciplines such as solitude, reflection, and fasting. I will keep myself mentally challenged through disciplined reading, attending seminars, and peer mentoring. I will keep myself emotionally and physically fit through proper eating habits, regular exercise, vacations, recreation, and Sabbath keeping.
4. **Confidentiality and Pastoral Care:** I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or public except where in my practice of ministry I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that the parishioner/client will cause imminent, life-threatening or substantial harm to self or others, or unless the privilege is waived by those giving the information. Furthermore, recognizing I am in a position of relative power in my dealings with others, I will conduct myself as a servant to their best interests, with respect and responsible behavior. (Philippians 2: 2-5)
5. **Relationships in the Body:** I will avoid gossip, slander, and all such "evil speaking" in my communications. I will develop accountable relationships with one or more of my peers. I will speak well of fellow leaders within the Body of Christ. When concerns and conflicts develop, I will follow the admonition of Matthew 18:15-17 to bring all such matters to reconciliation and/or resolution. (Ephesians 4: 29-32, II Timothy 2:24-26)
6. **Financial Management:** I will handle my personal and ministry finances with honesty and responsibility. I will tithe to my church and its mission as an example of faithful stewardship. I will develop the saints under my care in their financial awareness and responsibility as stewards of God's resources. (Romans 13:7, Matthew 20:21)
7. **Facing my Failures:** I will risk exposing my own flaws and shortcomings as a fellow learner among the saints. When I fall short of this covenant, I will confess my sin, repent and depend on God's grace for healing and restoration. If such failure brings shame upon Christ, the church, or my marriage, I will withdraw from the ministry and place myself under the care of appropriate counseling and pastoral leaders until such time as it is deemed advisable by Transformation Ministries for me to return to professional leadership. (James 5:16; I Timothy 4:19-20)
8. **Departing in Grace:** When concluding service in a ministry, I will sever my leadership responsibility with the ministry, endeavoring never to interfere with the pastoral leadership of my successor or alienate people from the leadership of the ministry. I will agree to requests for pastoral ministry (e.g., weddings and funerals) among those I have previously served only after I have personally obtained permission from the current pastor.

As long as I am engaged in ministry with Transformation Ministries, I will be willing to reaffirm my support of this covenant, annually.

I am in agreement with this statement: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 6

### THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLE

(This Bible study, written by Dr. Dale V. Salico, is suggested for use in churches, small groups, leadership teams and classes.)

#### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS TO EACH OTHER?

- Matthew 16:18  
Jesus said, *"I will build my Church..."* He did not say, *"I will build my churches..."* Had Jesus used the word "churches," He would have given primary place to individual, isolated gatherings of believers. By saying, "Church," Jesus emphasized that His followers from all times and places form one united movement.
- I Corinthians 12:12-13  
Jesus' focus on His Church (singular), gave rise to the New Testament metaphor of the "Body of Christ," rather than "bodies of Christ." Including himself, as well as his readers, Paul wrote, *"We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body..."* including even people from ethnic and social groups that were far apart.
- John 17:11, 21, 22 and 24  
If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you pray about tonight? What do you see as the significance of Jesus' repetition of His concern for the unity of His Church the night before He died?

#### EXAMPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES WALKING AND WORKING TOGETHER

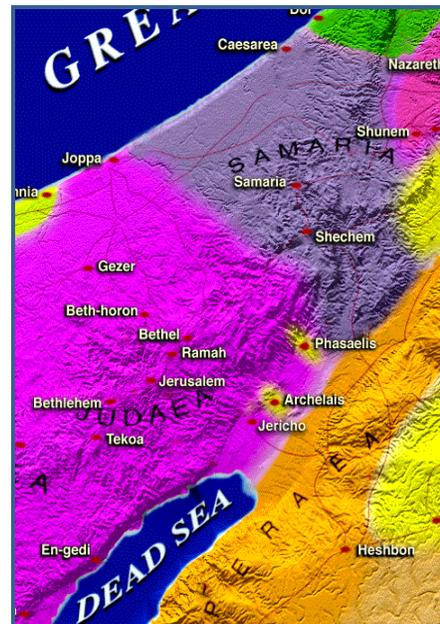
Groups of New Testament churches within limited geographical areas, sharing cultural and historical roots, strengthened each other in carrying out Christ's mission.

#### **The Churches of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria Acts, Chapters 1-9**

In the first few years after Jesus' ascension to heaven, thousands of Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea became His followers. Sharing a common language, culture and faith, they easily formed a united body of believers. Their cultural affinity was so great it became a confining box, out of which the Holy Spirit had to move them through persecution. (Acts 8:1, 4)

In Acts 8:1-24, Phillip proclaimed Jesus in Samaria, where many believed.

- Why do you think Peter and John were sent to Samaria?
- This is the only passage in Acts where a special delegation was used to bestow the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Why do you think God chose this method in Samaria?
- How do you think the people of Samaria felt toward Peter, John, Phillip and the church of Jerusalem following this?



## The Churches of Antioch, Cyprus and Galatia Acts 11:19-29, and Chapters 13-15

In Antioch, "a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." (Acts 11:21) The Church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas, to evaluate and oversee the rapidly growing congregation.

- What was Barnabas' role in Antioch? (Acts 11:22-26)
- How did the Church of Antioch feel about the Church in Jerusalem? (Acts 11:27-30)

The focus for the Church of Antioch turned westward, as these predominately Gentile believers sent Saul and Barnabas to bring the Gospel to Cyprus and the province of Galatia.

- How was the continuing concern of Antioch for these new congregations demonstrated? (Acts 14:28-29; 15:36, 40-41)

The close relationship between the Church of Antioch and the churches of Cyprus and Galatia is also seen in Paul and Barnabas' role at the Council of Jerusalem.

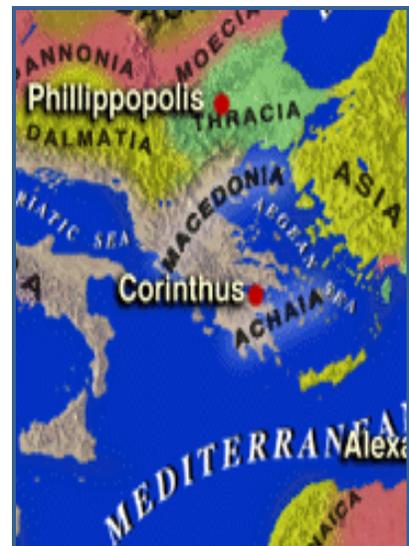
- Who appointed Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem? What was the issue? (Acts 15:1-3)
- What was the result of the representatives of the churches meeting to discuss this important theological issue? (Acts 15:28-29)
- How was the decision communicated? What was the reaction in the churches? (Acts 15:22-35 and 16:4-5)
- Paul also wrote the Epistle to the Galatians about this time, and it dealt with the same issues. (Galatians 1:2, 3:1-14, and 26-29)
- How do you think the churches of Cyprus and Galatia felt about Paul and the other leaders of the Church of Antioch?



## The Churches of Macedonia and Greece Acts 16:7 – 18:28

Macedonia and Greece were not part of Paul's vision when he left Antioch for a second visit to Cyprus and Galatia. Seeming to have reached a frustrating "dead end," Paul received a vision "of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:6-10)

Paul's letters to congregations in Macedonia and Greece reveal a lively and active associational relationship among them.



### I Thessalonians

- To whom had the church of Thessalonica become an example? (I Thessalonians 1:6-9)
- What Church did the Thessalonian Christians imitate? (Acts 2:14)
- In what ways do you think the Church at Thessalonica was showing brotherly love toward “*all the brothers throughout Macedonia?*” (I Thessalonians 4:9-10)
- Since this letter was addressed to the entire Church in Thessalonica (1:1), who do you think Paul may have had in mind when he wrote, “*...have this letter read to all the brothers?*” (I Thessalonians 5:27)

### I and II Corinthians

- The Church in Corinth was known for disputes and divisions. Why do you think Paul held up the importance and example of other churches to this Church? (I Corinthians 10:32; 11:16; 14:33, 36; and 16:1, 19)
- II Corinthians was a circular letter to all the churches of Greece. (II Corinthians 1:1)
- What group of churches did Paul use as an example for the Corinthians to follow? (II Corinthians 8:1-3)
- In what Church did Paul use the Corinthians as an example to follow? (II Corinthians 9:1-2)

The churches of Macedonia, as a group, commended and sent with Paul members of various congregations to oversee the offering he was gathering for relief in impoverished Jerusalem.

*And we are sending along with him **the brother who is praised by all the churches** for his service to the gospel. What is more, **he was chosen by the churches** to accompany us as we carry the offering...as for our brothers, **they are representatives of the churches** and an honor to Christ.* (II Corinthians 8:18-23)

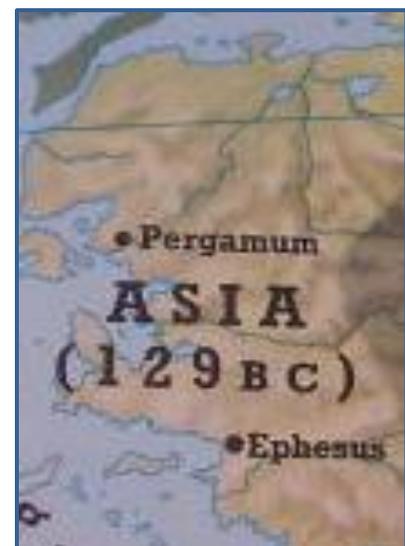
Thus, we see that the congregations of Macedonia and Greece shared teaching, financial, and even management resources in order to further the cause of Christ.

### **The Churches of the Lycus Valley**

The most interesting of all these New Testament church clusters is found in the Lycus Valley. The first was Ephesus, planted by Paul. (Acts 18:18-21; Chapter 19).

The Church at Colosse was planted by Epaphras, who likely came from the Church of Ephesus at the instruction of Paul. (Colossians 1:7-8).

- For what other churches did Epaphras provide leadership? (Colossians 4:12-15)
- What kind of relationship do you think may have existed among these churches that were led by Paul and Epaphras?



Revelation, Chapters 2-3, contains letters dictated by Christ to Apostle John, addressed to seven churches in this area. Because these letters were circulated together as part of the Book of Revelation, each congregation “read each other’s mail” from the Lord.

- How do you think members of the six “daughter churches” felt when they read that their “mother church” (Ephesus) had lost its first love?  
(Revelation 2:4)
- What did the other churches think of the congregation at Pergamum when they read that heresy and moral failure had so permeated this church that Christ threatened to come and “*fight against them with the sword of my mouth!*”  
(Revelation 2:14-16)
- Why would Christ allow all the churches to know that the Church of Laodicea was lukewarm and about to be spit out of His mouth?  
(Revelation 3:16)

It is clear that Christ intended these congregations learn from each other’s examples, both good and bad, and hold each other accountable to be faithful to Him.

### **PURPOSE OF “ASSOCIATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

We have seen that as churches walked and worked together in the cause of the Gospel, they discovered God’s purpose in “associational relationships,” including:

- Outreach (church planting)
- Theological discussion, particularly on issues related to the contextualization of the Gospel in new cultures
- To serve as examples (good and bad) to each other, learning by each other’s experiences
- To raise money for mission causes, such as the relief offering for the church in Jerusalem
- To commend ministerial leaders to each other (e.g., Acts 18:27 and Titus 3:13)
- To hold each other accountable for the apostolic instruction they received.

### **THINK ABOUT IT**

- Make a list of the benefits the New Testament congregations experienced by walking and working together.
- Could churches today experience the same benefits? Why or why not?
- Has your congregation been blessed by its relationship with other congregations that are committed to the same cause? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- What steps can your congregation take to increase its experience of walking and working together with other congregations to advance the cause of Christ?



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