



**A network of
cooperating churches striving for**

**Social and Cultural
Transformation**

through

Christian Redemption

and

Christian Life Values

Christian Redemption:

**the restoration of the broken
relationship with God through**

Jesus Christ.

Christian Life Values :

**the demonstration in the
individual's life of the restored
relationship with God.**

OUR PURPOSE:

**TO ASSIST KINGDOM
MINDED CHURCHES TO
REACH**

BATON ROUGE,

LOUISIANA,

NORTH AMERICA,

AND THE WORLD.

OUR STRATEGY:

RELATIONSHIP BASED

EVANGELISM CENTERED

SERVICE ORIENTED

TRAINING FOCUSED

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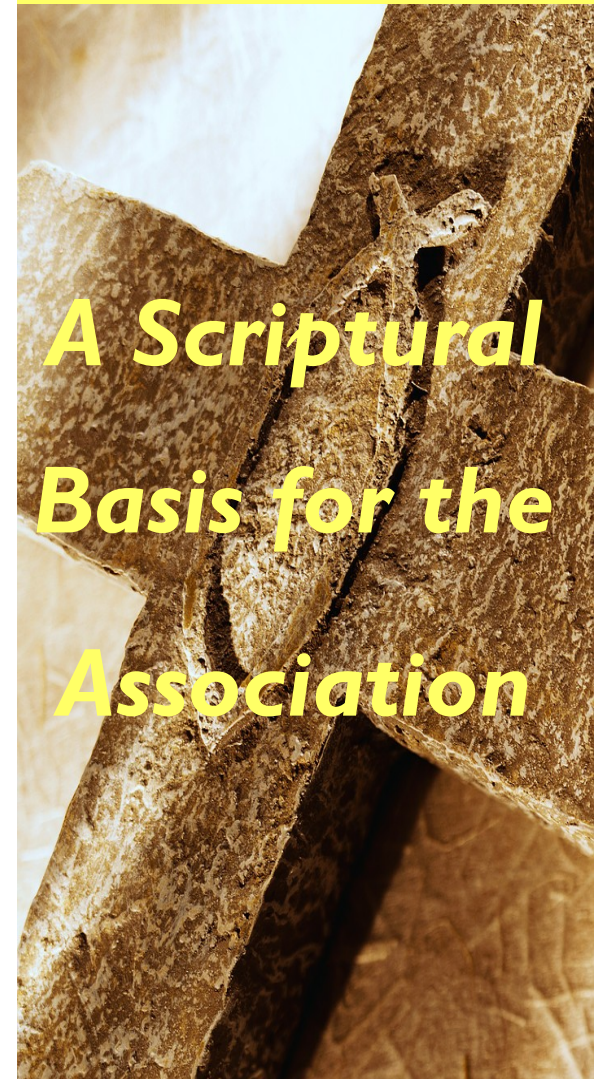
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BAPTIST

***ASSOCIATION OF
GREATER BATON***

ROUGE (SBC)



***A Scriptural
Basis for the
Association***

Biblical Basis for an Association

Although the New Testament should not be viewed as a “how-to manual,” some indications of how the early churches in the New Testament worked together in association with one another may be discerned. Scripture shows that a ministry of famine relief for the brethren in Judea was accepted by the churches in Antioch, (Acts 11:29), Corinth and Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1-3), and two groups of believers in Macedonia and Achaia (shall we call them churches?) (Romans 15:26).

Monies from the church in Antioch were collected and brought to a central point and placed in the hands of recognized and trusted men (Acts 11:30, Barnabas and Saul) for the distribution of those funds. However, in regard to the monies sent from the churches in Corinth and Galatia, Paul preferred not to receive personally the monies and deliver them. Rather, he gave instructions for those churches to accredit delegates by a letter from their respective churches so that they could carry the gifts from their churches to Jerusalem as they traveled with Paul (1 Cor. 16:3-4). The instructions by Paul for letters accrediting delegates from one church to another church indicate a formal structure for recognition of delegates among a group of churches. Scripture indicates that a relationship (shall we call this an Association?) existed between the churches at Antioch, Corinth, Galatia, Jerusalem, and the two groups of believers in Macedonia and Achaia.



Another indication of churches coming together in association with one another may be discerned in Acts chapter 15. One of the functions of the local Association is to deal with matters of the practical application of Christian fellowship. With the conclusion accepted by the early church that Gentiles could be saved without circumcision, practical problems of fellowship soon developed. The fellowship was broken by the refusal of some Jewish Christians to eat with the Gentile Christians. The refusal of fellowship reflected on the validity of the Gentiles' salvation and forced the early church to deal with the issue of salvation by grace or by observance of the Law.

Acts chapter 15 demonstrates that delegates from the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch came together to decide policies related to the issue of fellowship. Paul and Barnabas and others were appointed to go to Jerusalem (15:2) and were sent on their way by the church (15:3). In addition, along the way to Jerusalem this group of delegates passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting the conversion of the Gentiles, a report which brought joy to the brethren (15:3). An implication of 15:3 is that groups of believers (shall we call them churches?) existed in Phoenicia and Samaria.

As the delegates from the different churches came together in Jerusalem to deal with the issue (shall we call this an Association?), one of the most valuable strengths of churches associating together can be discerned. That strength lies in the capacity of delegates from different churches to council together and to bring a recommendation to deal with an issue.

Acts chapter 15 shows two churches in Jerusalem and Antioch and four groups of believers in Phoenicia, Samaria, Syria, and Cilicia. These six different groups had interest in and were affected directly by the recommendation presented by the gathering of delegates from different churches in Jerusalem.

Scripture highlights the process as follows;

First, the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider the matter (15:6).

Second, recognized leaders gave their opinions (Peter, 15:7; Barnabas and Paul, 15:12).

Third, a recommended by James, the recognized leader of the Church (15:13), was made to the group.

Fourth, the gathered delegates accepted the recommendation and established a policy to recommend to the churches (15:19-21).

Fifth, the policy, in the form of a letter, was sent to the Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (15:23). The implication of the naming of Syria and Cilicia is that groups of believers (shall we call them churches?) existed there.

Sixth, delegates from the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch (Paul, Barnabas, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, 15:22) went to Antioch; gathered the congregation together, and delivered the recommendation (15:30). The church in Antioch received the recommendation and rejoiced (15:31).

Thus, Scripture shows that churches in Antioch, Corinth, Galatia, Jerusalem, and the groups of believers in Achaia, Cilicia, Macedonia, Phoenicia, Samaria, and Syria cooperated together in a ministry relief effort for famine relief, and accepted a policy dealing with an issue that threatened fellowship between believers in the local church.

Thus, an Association of churches, for the purposes of ministry and deliberation on issues of fellowship resulting in recommendations accepted by the local churches, has scriptural precedent.