

# The Corinthian Letters

Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches



# Sacrificing Network to Network

China India Illustration: 2 Cor behind it

First fruit of whole new taxonomy which emboldened our stepping away from foundations

Also: Abraham report

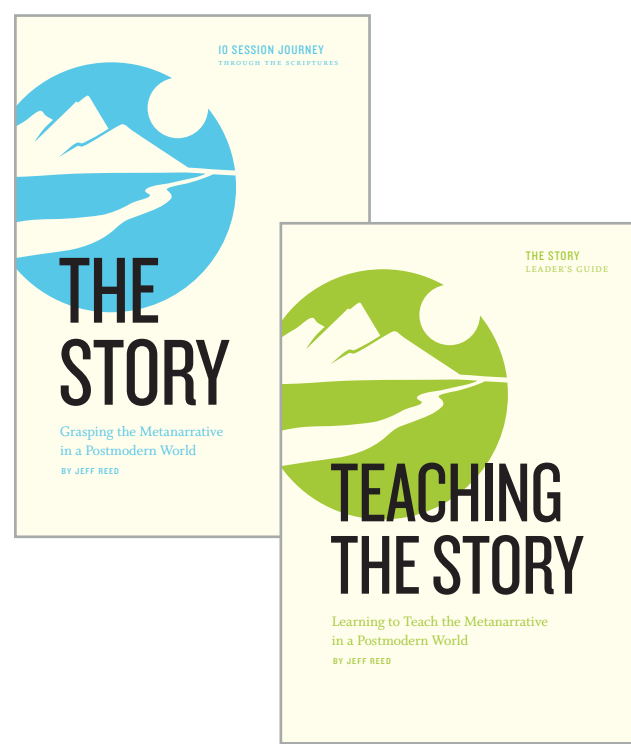
# Sacrificing Network to Network

Questions:

1. How would you describe Paul's perspective on networks of churches sacrificially contributing to the progress of the gospel?
2. In what way were the Macedonian churches a model to the Achaian churches?
3. Why were the Corinthian churches in danger of not fulfilling their commitment to the churches in Jerusalem?
4. What were the benefits to the Corinthian churches, both as a model and the personal benefits as well?



# The New Perspective on Paul





# The New Perspective on Paul



## The Later Letters

Book 1: Paul's Later Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches  
According to Christ's Design

Book 2: 1 Timothy: Ordering the Churches as Households of God

Book 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Book 4: 2 Timothy: Investing in Intergenerational Apostolic  
Leadership

# The New Perspective on Paul



## The Middle Letters

- Book 1: Paul's Middle Letters: Fully Revealing Christ's Grand Strategy
- Book 2: Ephesians: Revealing Christ's Grand Strategy—the Church
- Book 3: Colossians and Philemon: Implementing the New Church Paradigm
- Book 4: Philippians: Participating with One Mind for the Progress of the Gospel



# The New Perspective on Paul



## The Early Letters

Book 1: Paul's Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel

Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel



# The New Perspective on Paul

## Teaching Mastering the Scriptures

Session 1: The New Perspective on Paul: Rethinking Western Hermeneutics

Session 2: Canonical Structure and the New Perspective on Paul

Session 3: Paul's Traditioning Process: Schematic for Setting Churches in Order

Session 4: Paul's Process of Doing Theology in Culture Within the Grand Strategy Schema

Session 5: Paul's Letters as Tools for Building Complex Apostolic Networks

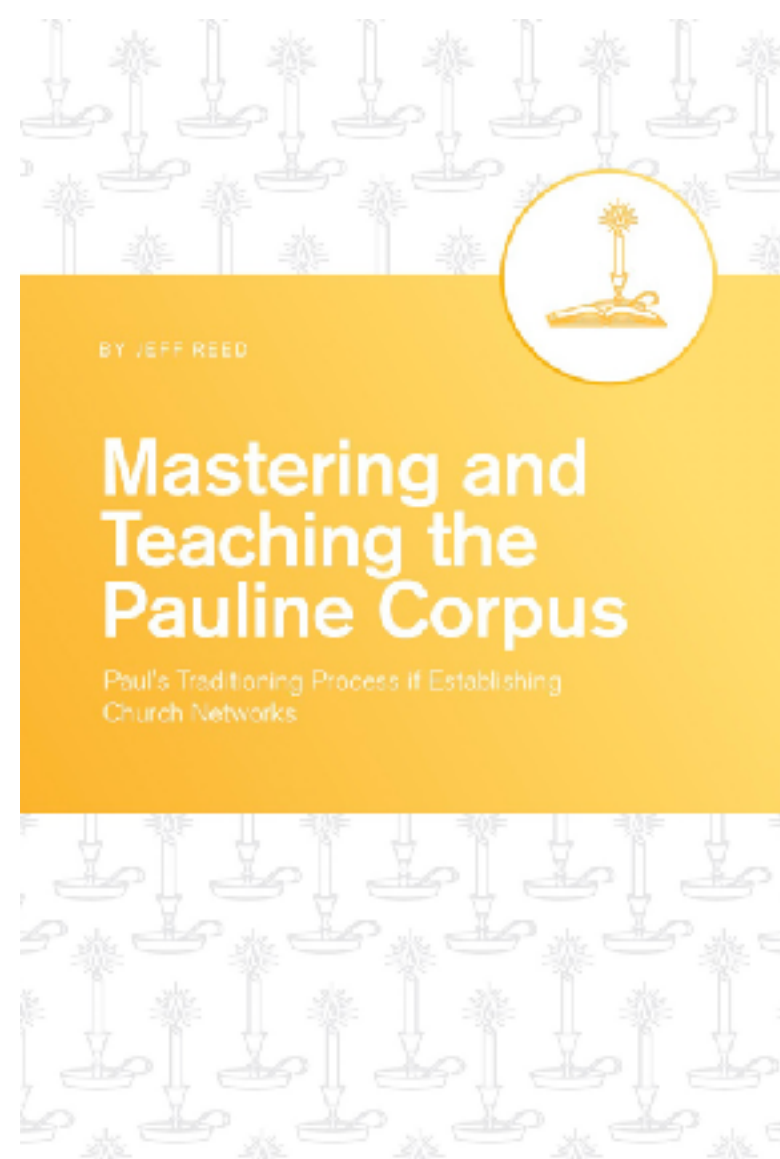
Session 6: The New Perspective on Paul and the Gospels

Session 7: Mastering, Teaching, and Using the Mastering the Scriptures

Appendix 1: Comprehensive Assessment of Complex Apostolic Networks

Appendix 2: Annotated Greco–Roman Research Library

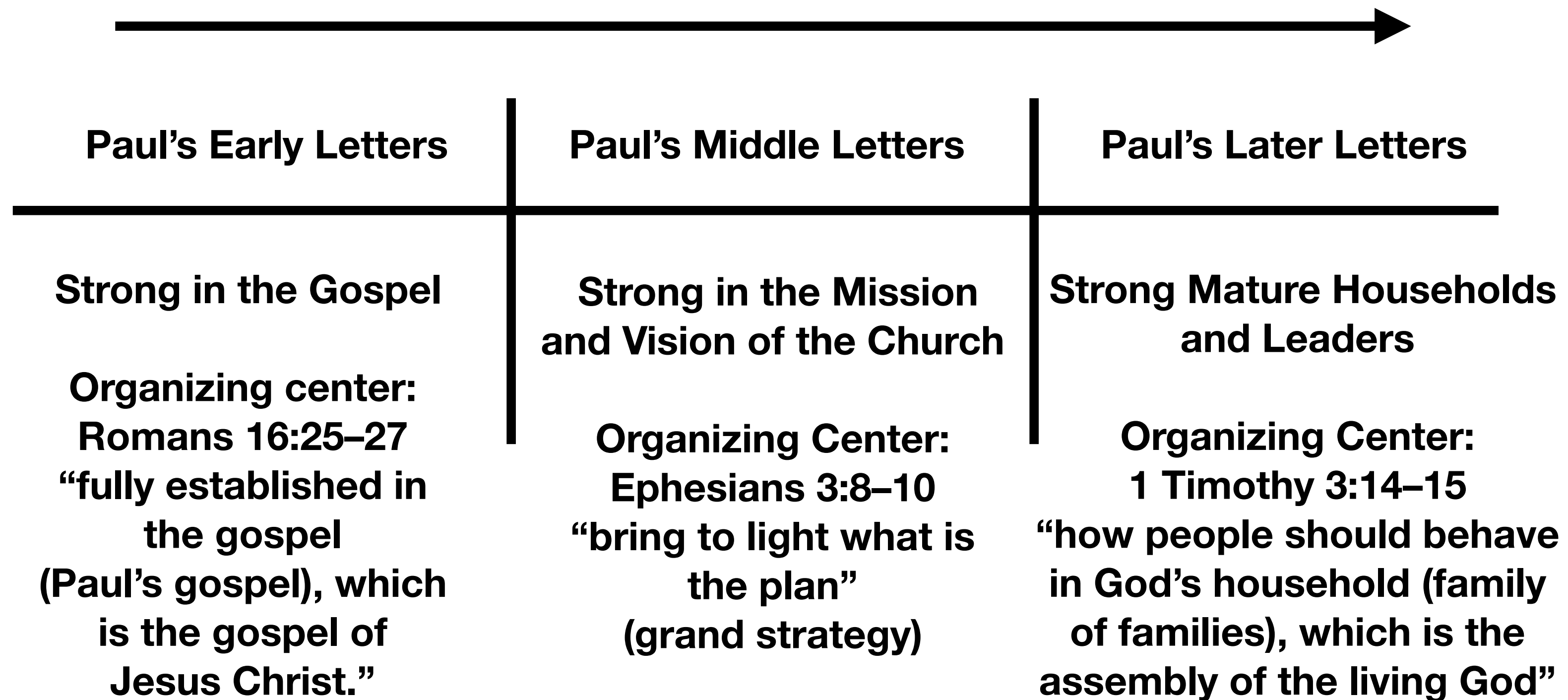
Appendix 3: Glossary of Key Biblical Terms and Concepts





# The New Perspective on Paul

Topos Schematic (Overall Framework): Establishing Church Networks (Traditioning Paul)



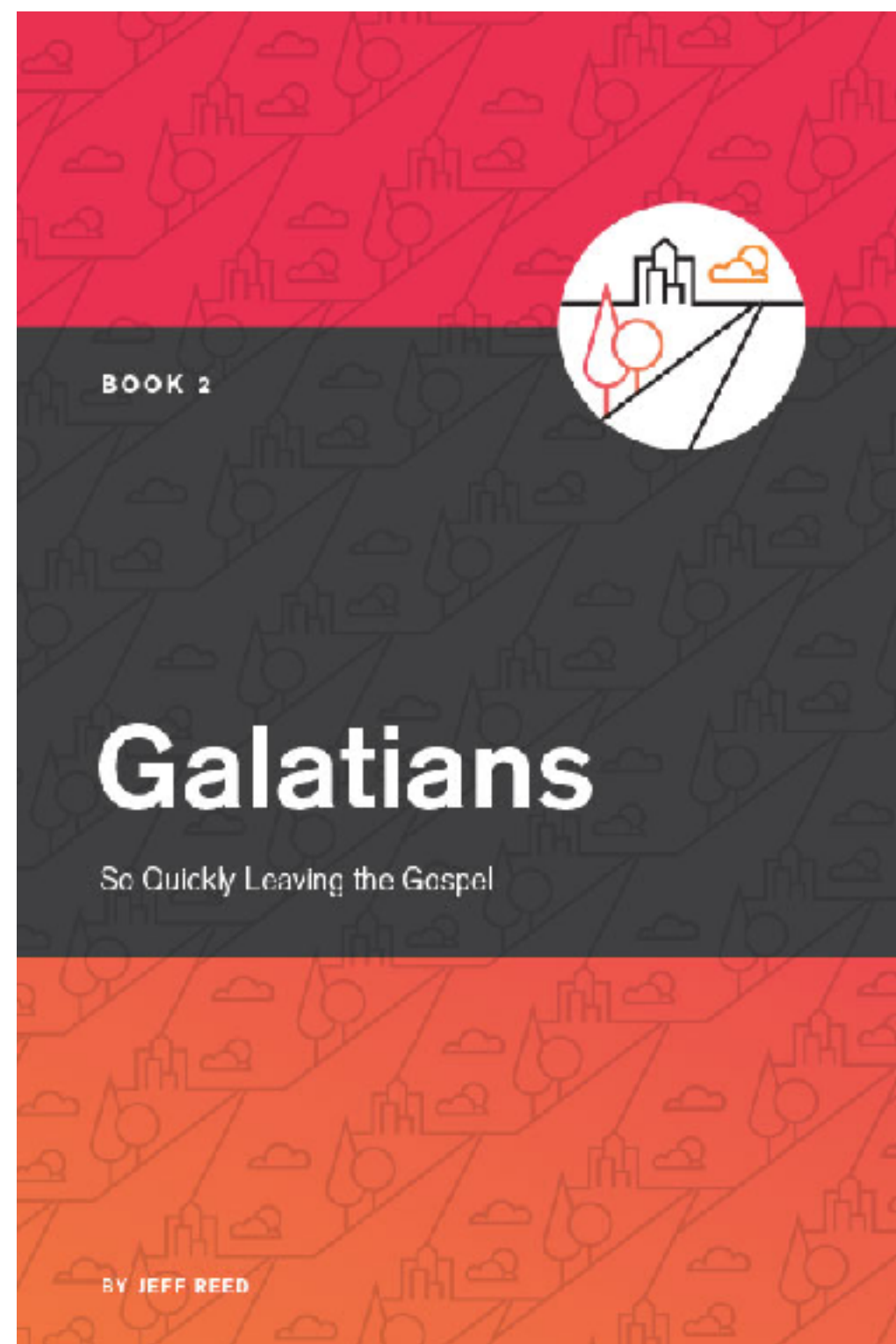
## Literary Design: Complex Network Establishing (Encoding) Benchmarks (Traditioning of Paul)



Paul's Early Letters	Paul's Middle Letters	Paul's Later Letters
The Gospel	Mission/Vision of the Church	Mature Households and Leaders
Gospel Formula: 1 Cor. 15:1–6 Peter's 5 sermons, Galatians	Christ's grand strategy Eph. 3:8–10	Churches set in order (household topos) 1 Timothy 3:14–16
Solid conversion: 1 & 2 Thess.	One mature church: equipping saints Ephesians 4:1–16	Solid senior eldership Titus 1:5–9 elders, deacons, women: 1 Timothy 3
"Now concerning..." List of schisms: 1 Corinthians	Household texts (family): Ephesians 5:22–6:9 Colossians 3:18–4:1	Household texts (family of families): 1 Timothy 5:1–6:2 Titus 2:1–21
Gathering Topos: Lord's Supper- Symposium: 1 Corinthians 11:17–14:40	Theology in culture: Philemon	Key, intergenerational apostolic leaders and teams
Perspective of ministry: conflicts without, fears within: 2 Cor. 2:14–7:5	Participation in progress of the gospel: Philippians' model (teams, finances)	Training process, stewardship responsibilities: 2 Timothy
Paul's complete treatise of the gospel: Romans	Network churches: hub (Ephesus), cluster (Lycus Valley), strategic (Philippi)	Leadership virtue/vice cluster lists: 1 Timothy 3:2–4, 8–12; 6:3–5; Titus 1:6–9; 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:2–5
"Pauline cycle" duly recognized gatherings		



# The New Perspective on Paul



Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel, Book 2

Session 1: The Galatian Problem

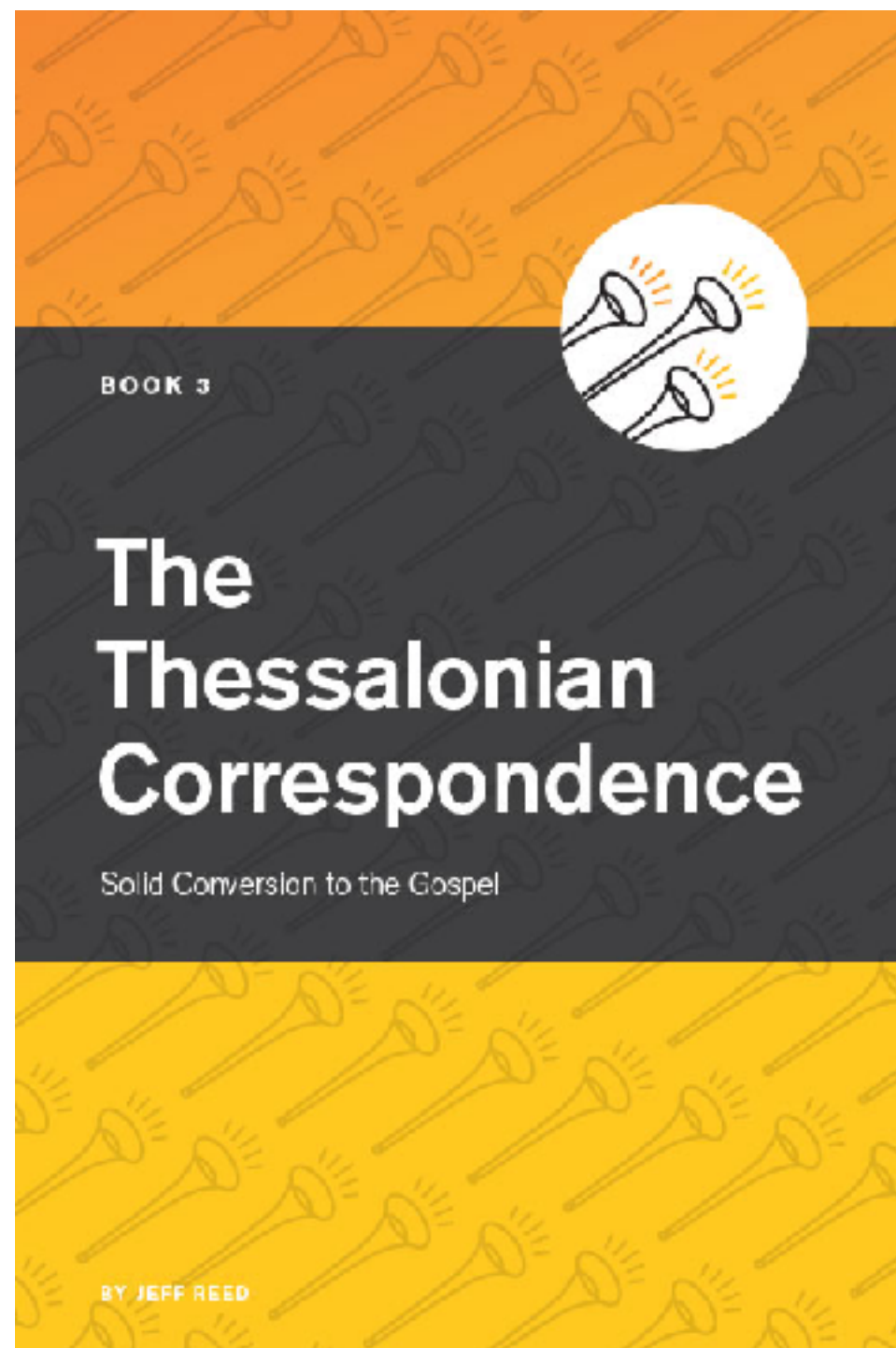
Session 2: The Pure Gospel

Session 3: The Gospel as a System of Living

Session 4: The Gospel and Walking in the Spirit

Session 5: The Gospel and Respecting Leaders

# The New Perspective on Paul



The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel, Book 3

Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians

Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion

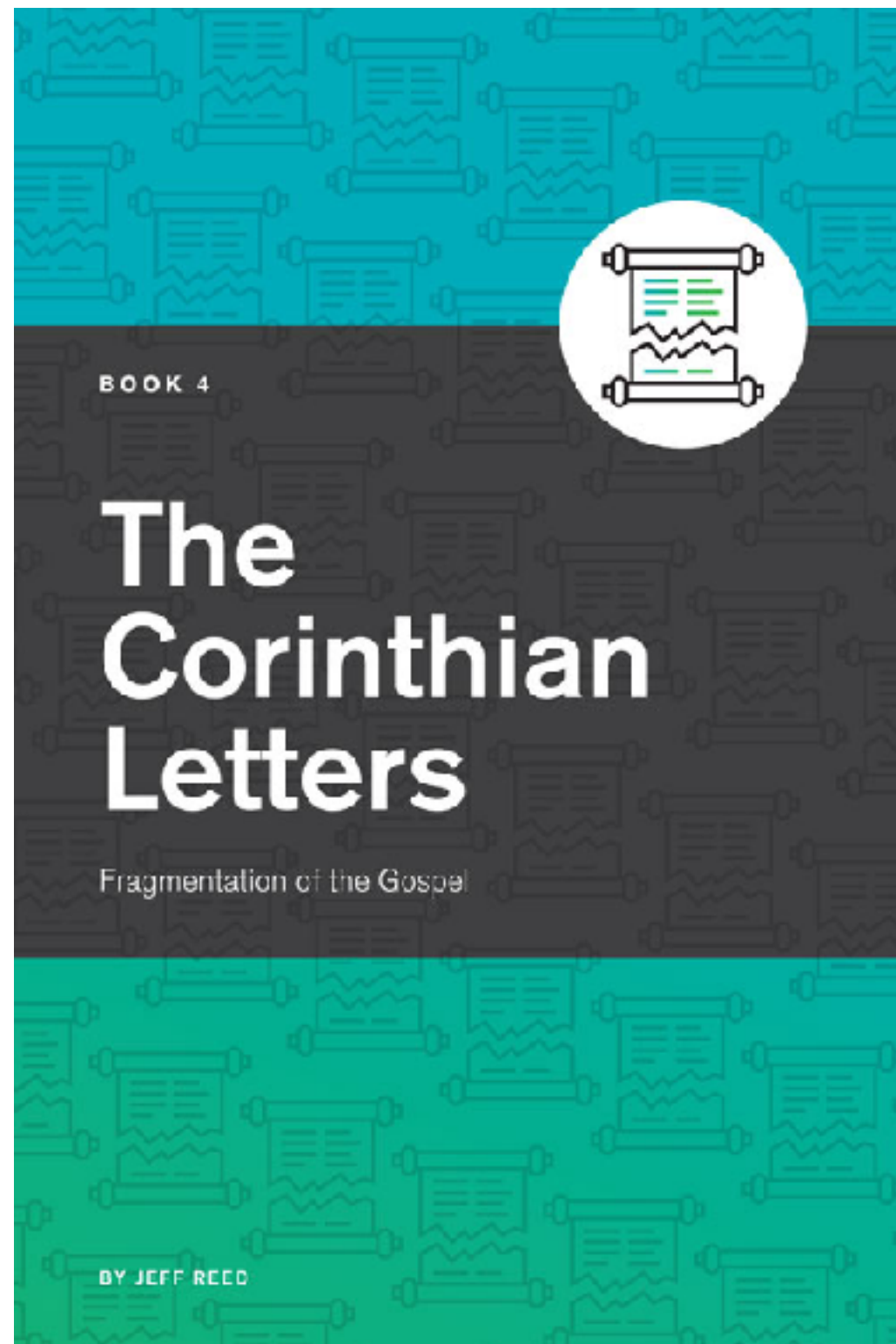
Session 3: Three Emerging Problems — Letter 1

Session 4: Further Clarification — Letter 2

Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion



# The New Perspective on Paul



The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel,  
Book 4

Session 1: The Fragmentation of the Gospel

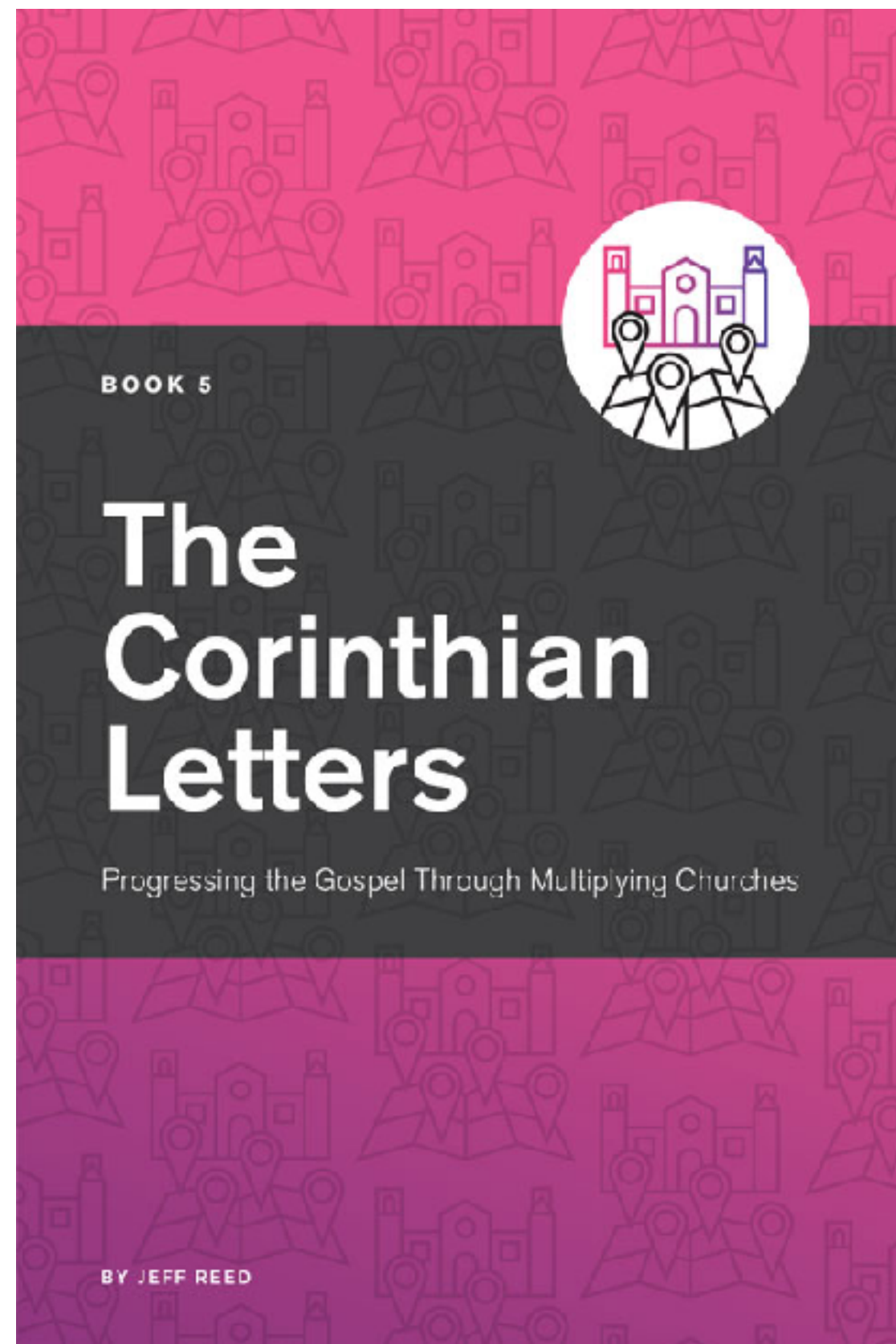
Session 2: Building on One Foundation: The Traditions

Session 3: Schisms in Their Community Life

Session 4: Schisms in Their Community Gatherings

Session 5: Back to the Gospel as Apostolic Tradition

# The New Perspective on Paul



The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches, Book 5

Session 1: The Pressure of Leading Church Networks

Session 2: The Ministry of the Gospel: Conflicts Without and Fears Within

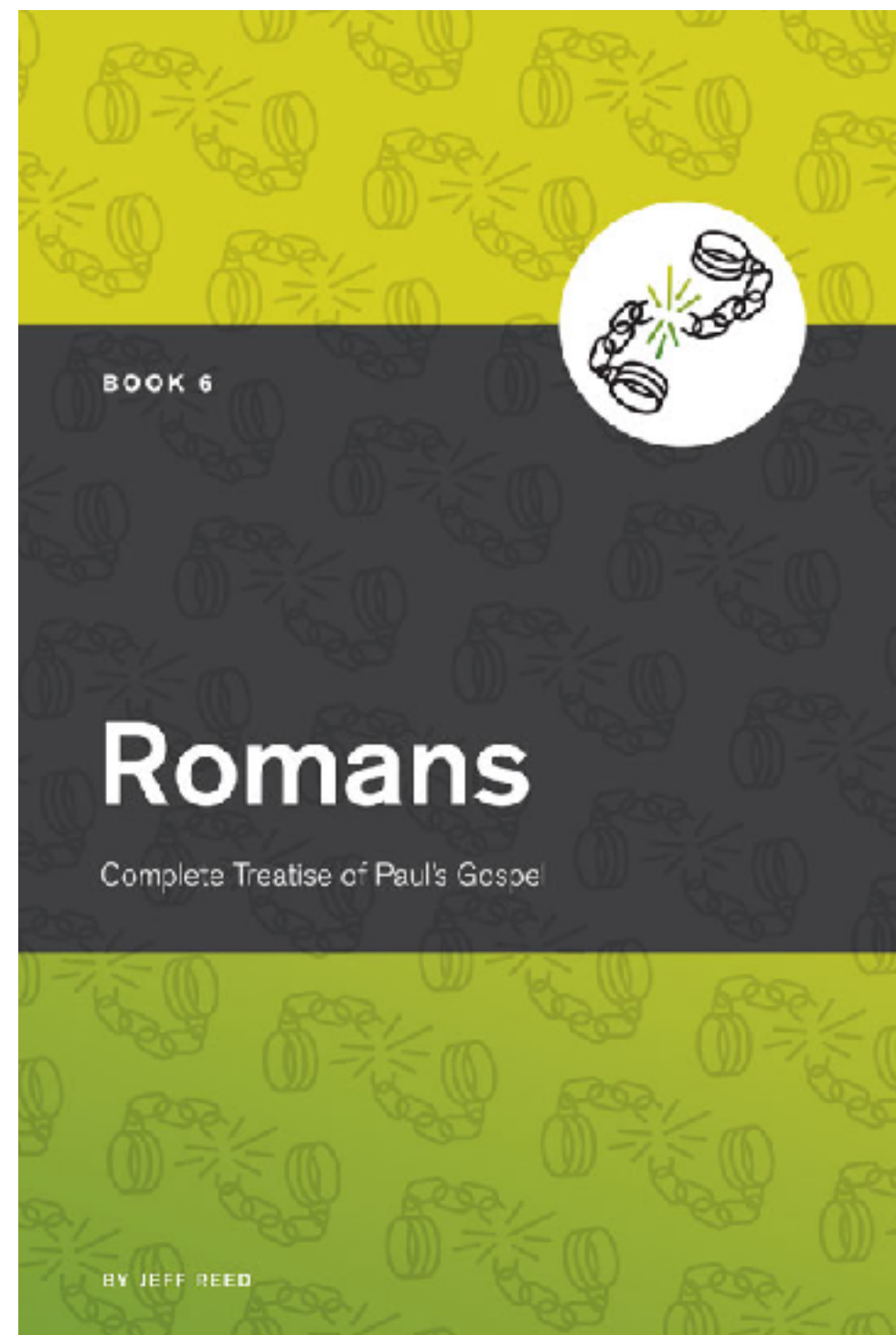
Session 3: Sacrificing Network to Network for the Progress of the Gospel

Session 4: The Importance of Apostolic Leadership

Session 5: The Appeal to the Corinthian Churches



# The New Perspective on Paul



Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel, Book 6

Session 1: The Intention of Romans

Session 2: The Gospel and The Story

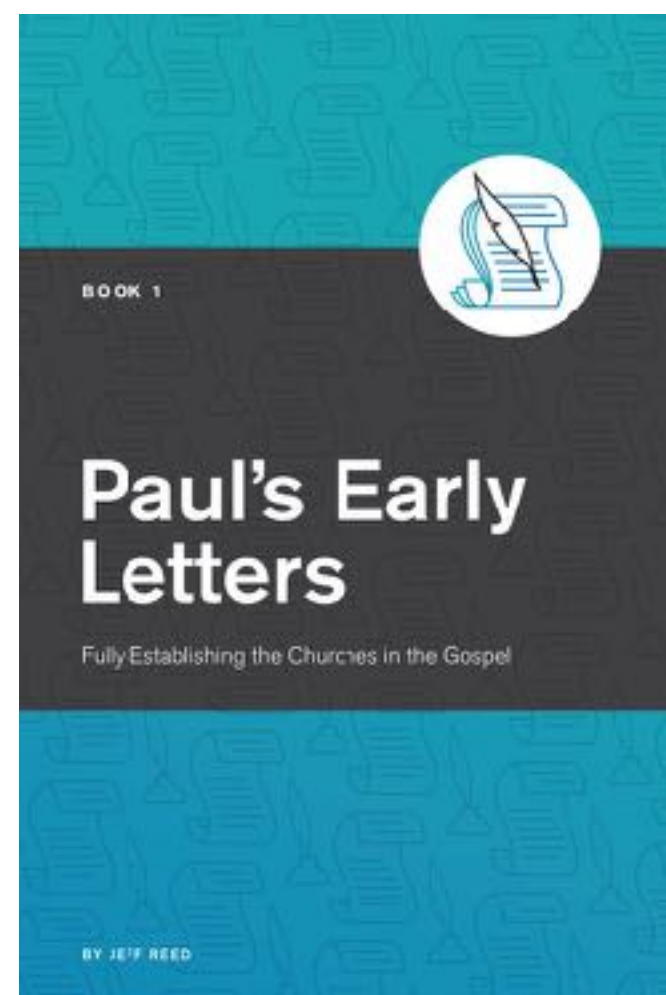
Session 3: The New Gospel Worldview

Session 4: Reframing the Jewish Story

Session 5: The Gospel in Transformed Community



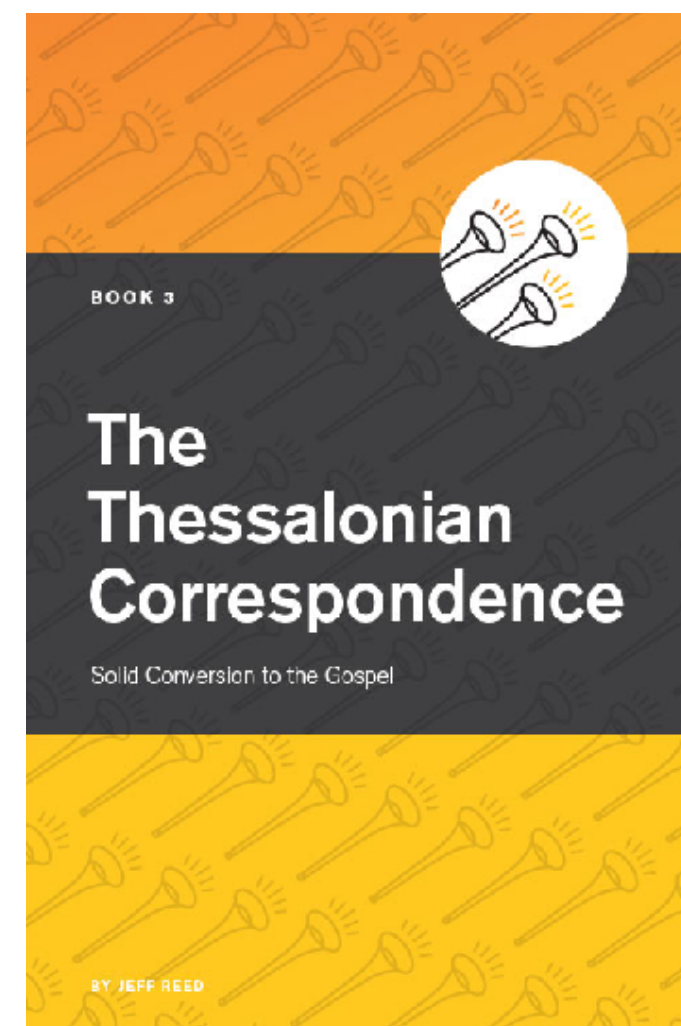
# The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel



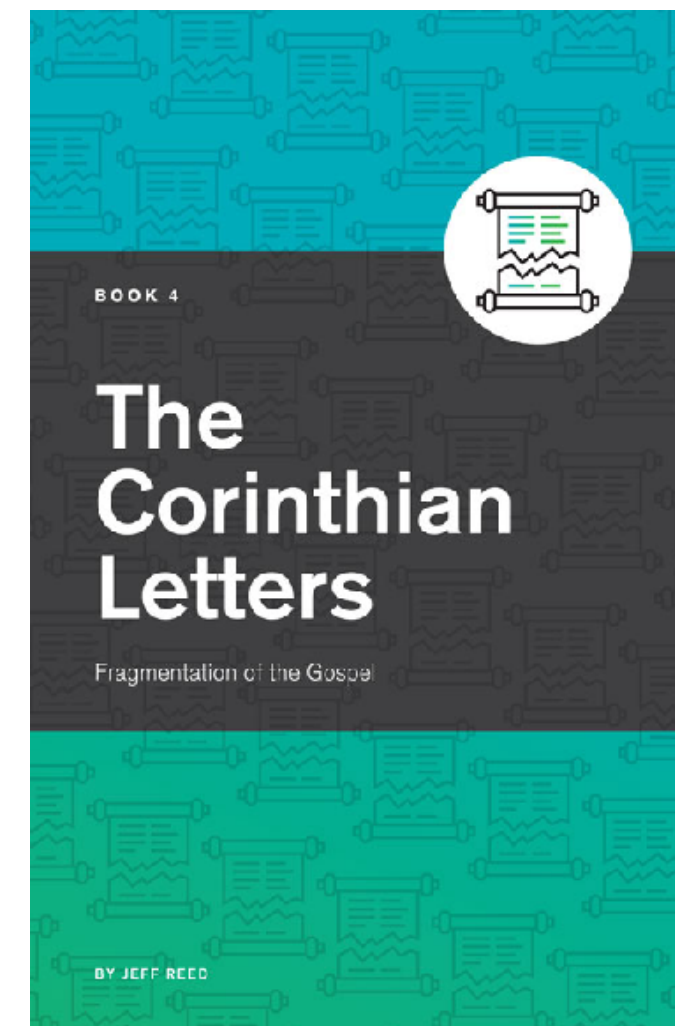
AD 49–56



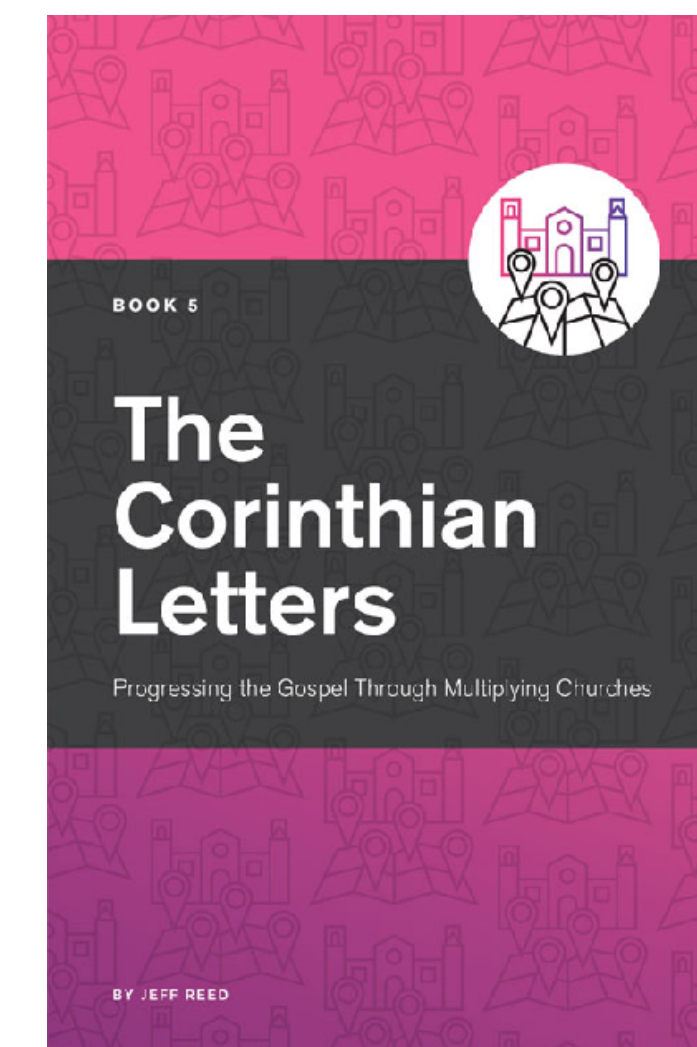
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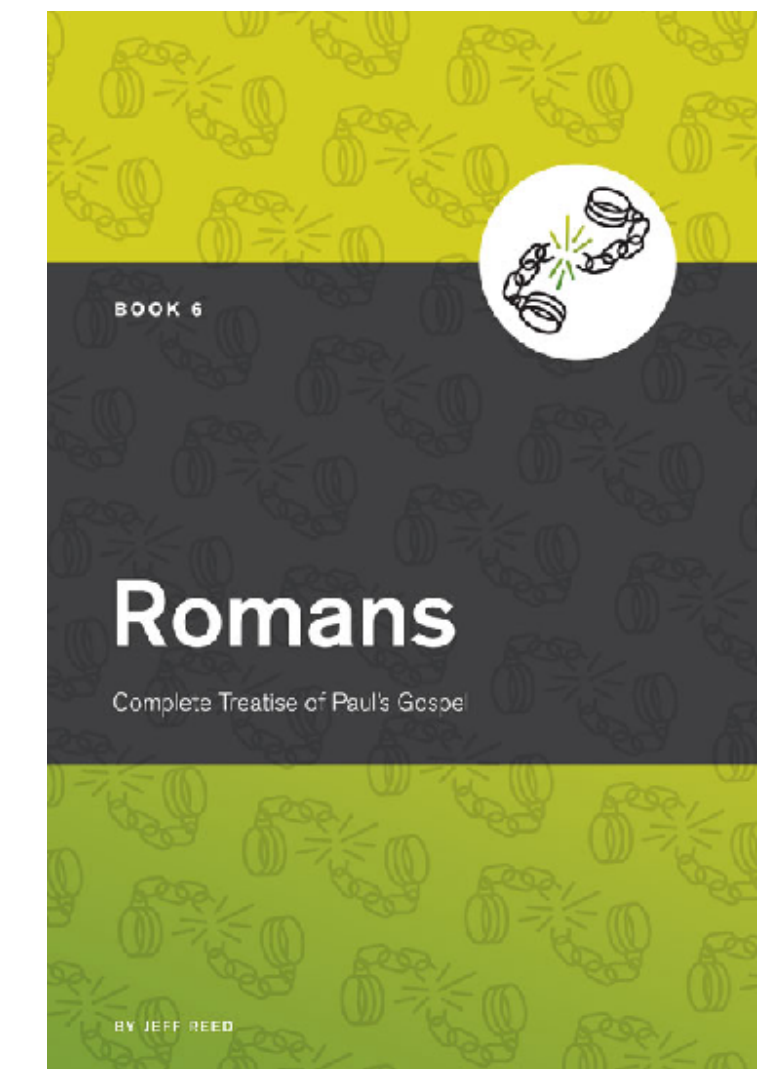
Winter/Summer 51



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# The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Let's return to our heuristic author's intention statement.

Intention Statement for the Corinthian Letters:

To defend his unique role of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles in the context of all sorts of rivals, keeping the Corinthian churches in his sphere of authority as he continues to build a network of churches committed to progressing the gospel among the Gentiles

by writing his second letter to deal with internal divisions, rooted in differing social status that were fragmenting the Corinthian churches. (1 Corinthians)

by writing his fourth letter to appeal to the Corinthians to remain under his leadership, despite attacks on his apostleship by rival leaders. (2 Corinthians)

# The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

## Intention Statement of 1 Corinthians

To deal with internal divisions, rooted in differing social status that were fragmenting the Corinthian churches, so the Corinthian churches would fully participate with him in the progress of the gospel

by applying the gospel to the core divisions that developed by factions within the churches

by specifically addressing factions in

- their community life and
- their community gatherings

by taking them back to the gospel as apostolic traditioning



# The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

## Intention Statement of 2 Corinthians

To defend his apostleship in the Corinthian churches, that they might remain in his sphere of authority and therefore participate fully in the progress amongst the Gentiles, for which he was uniquely commissioned

by describing his internal stress in carrying out his stewardship

by describing the heart of the ministry of the gospel as “conflicts without and fears within” as a context for victorious progress

by defending his apostleship and seeking the Corinthians as partners in that progression

# Reflections on 1 Corinthians

We learn a lot about how Paul built his network (movement) of churches:

1. He understood that building the foundation correctly meant that they, the Corinthian churches, were to be part of a network of churches progressing the gospel (open door in Ephesus).
2. The churches were expected to give towards the progress of the gospel (supporting Paul's team as needed, giving to other networks of churches in the complex network).
3. Paul's process of establishing churches involved extended personal visits, sending key members of his team, and cooperating with other legitimate teams working amongst his churches.
4. Paul worked hard to make his churches become a genuine network that saw themselves as an extended, empire-wide family of families. He did this through giving, serving, hosting, family greetings, etc.
5. Paul also saw the teaching he delivered (the didache, rule of faith, see Galatians) as common authoritative traditions (faith, deposit, sound doctrine).



# Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians

## Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians

1. Paul came to Corinth in the power of the authority of the gospel tradition, not as one asserting personal authority or demonstrating exceptional oratory skill.
2. Paul understood the foundational nature of the gospel in the form of a formulaic statement and framed much of his authoritative teaching on that base.
3. He saw that gospel as the starting point for solving all of the divisions in the Corinthian churches and foundational to building a one mindedness in the churches.
4. Paul delivered the traditions he received from Christ with confidence and authority, yet with a clear understanding that the Corinthians needed to learn how to think at a principle level, producing the cultural flexibility needed to preserve their unity at a practical cultural level.
5. Paul established a process for future apostolic leaders to follow by working flexibly at a principle level from how he dealt with the divisions in the Corinthian churches, a process we are calling the *apostolic traditioning of Paul*.
6. Paul will further model the importance of apostolic authority in 2 Corinthians; as we will see, he will establish the perpetual need for the functions in 2 Timothy.

# Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 1:1–2:11

1. Paul saw his apostolic authority including his key apostolic team members; e.g. 2 Corinthians was sent from Paul and Timothy to the church in Corinth.
2. Paul understood the authority he exercised in his letters and in necessary visits included those churches throughout Achaia, of which the Corinthian churches were a hub.
3. Paul saw suffering and persecution as part of the process of bonding them together with him in progressing the gospel as they were informed and prayed for each other in the progress of the gospel.
4. Paul was frank and straightforward and clear in his letters, not manipulative in revealing his plans to them; and when he changes his plans he gives careful, honest explanation.
5. Paul made his travel plans with full intention of completing them as shared with his churches, but he understood the problems and pressures of his churches might cause him to alter those plans in the context of carrying them out.
6. Paul called on the churches to discipline the person who was most likely a church patron whose church was creating the opposition but to not to make it a permanent rejection.



# Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 2:12–7:5

1. Paul saw setting difficult strategic ministry priorities and decisions as part of his apostolic authority, as illustrated by his inner anxiety over the churches in Corinth, causing him to leave a wide open door for the gospel in Troas.
2. Paul saw success in his ministry strategies not as the sharpness of his own strategic acumen but only in the fact that he knew he was part of a triumphal procession of Christ, unfolding His grand strategy (triumphal procession).
3. Paul knew his apostolic stewardship was short lived and that he was decaying outwardly and being renewed inwardly, so he was compelled to use all his time and energy as an ambassador for Christ and therefore laying solid foundations in his church networks and key emerging leaders.
4. Paul did not consider formal recognition (letters of commendation) as the proof of his apostolic qualifications but rather the transformed lives of the Corinthian churches and their commitment to sharing in the progress of the gospel, especially in Achaia.

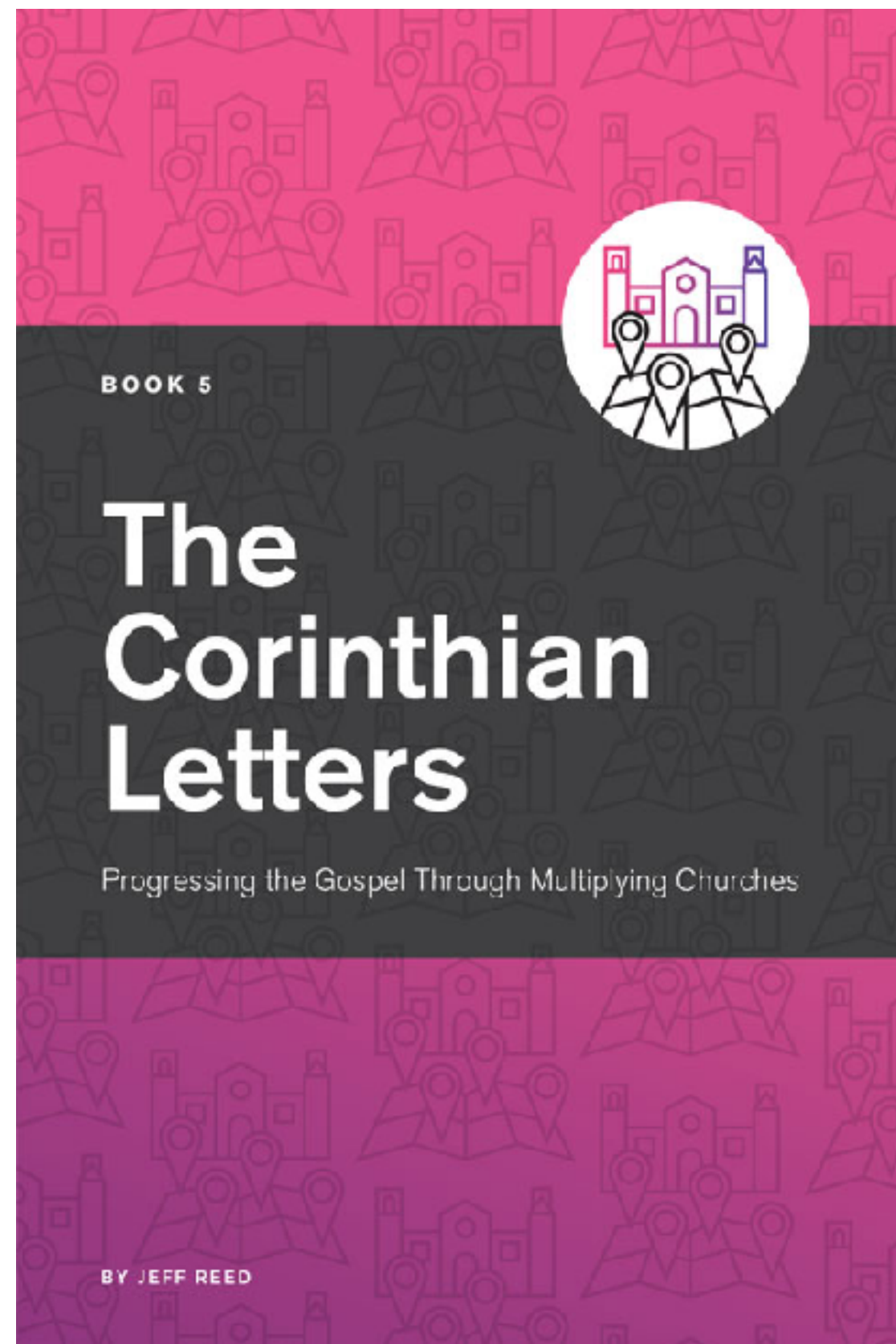
# Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 2:12–7:5

5. Paul's apostolic legitimacy was further cemented by both experiencing and handling conflicts without and fears within and by his ability to convince his churches to share in that perspective of ministry, which was contrary to the success of philosophical orators and successful associations of the day.
6. Ultimately, Paul considered his ministry to “not be in vain” but to be successful if his churches grasped the grand strategy of Christ and could carry the gospel with the power he experienced as he brought the gospel to them; then he would have succeeded in his stewardship.
7. Ultimately, Paul understood that “conflicts without and fears within” were key to his success in effectively carrying out his stewardship with eternal results and that his churches must learn to participate fully in that perspective of ministry.



# The Ministry: Conflicts Without Fears Within



The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches, Book 5

Session 1: The Pressure of Leading Church Networks

Session 2: The Ministry of the Gospel: Conflicts Without and Fears Within

Session 3: Sacrificing Network to Network for the Progress of the Gospel

Session 4: The Importance of Apostolic Leadership

Session 5: The Appeal to the Corinthian Churches

# Review of 1 Corinthians 16:1-21

Before we begin, let's go back and review our conclusions in Session 5 of *The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel*, 1 Corinthians 16:1–20, where we focused on how Paul was building his networks. Then we will attempt to build Paul's traditioning process of funding his team, networks, and churches into sort of a taxonomy by adding 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15.



# Review of 1 Corinthians 16:1-21

Here are his instructions (getting back to business):

1. Set aside money weekly toward your commitment to the large collection being taken by all the churches for Jerusalem, and appoint those who will accompany the gift.
2. Paul plans to spend the winter with them, if the Lord permits, after Ephesus where he has a wide open door for the gospel.
3. If Timothy comes, take care of him as he does his work, and send him on to me.
4. I tried to get Apollos to come but he has not agreed to at this time.
5. Assist the household of Stephanas and everyone who works with them.
6. The churches of Asia send greetings.
7. As do Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, who greet you warmly.
8. All the brothers and sisters everywhere send greetings.
9. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

# Review of 1 Corinthians 16:1-21

We learn a lot about how Paul built his network (movement) of churches:

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5. Paul also saw the teaching he delivered (the didache, rule of faith, see Galatians) as common authoritative traditions (faith, deposit, sound doctrine).



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Now let's turn our attention to 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15. Before he begins his first argument, let's review his instructions in 1 Corinthians 16:1–4

<sup>1</sup> Now when it comes to the collection for God's people, you should do the same as I laid down for the churches in Galatia. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of each week, every one of you should set aside and store up whatever surplus you have gained, so that when I come **I won't have to take an actual collection.** <sup>3</sup> Then, when I get to you, I will write formal letters to send the people you approve, whoever they are, to Jerusalem with your gift. <sup>4</sup> If it's appropriate for me to go as well, **we can travel together.**

1 Corinthians 16:1–4 N. T. Wright)

# Sacrificing Network to Network

The setting for 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15 was given by Paul's summary of a massive collection for the Jerusalem churches.

He evidently appealed to his networks of churches to contribute toward a large collection to assist the churches in Jerusalem.

We learn several things about the collection to be taken by the churches of Paul's network:

- The collection was for the churches of Jerusalem.
- Paul was building a network of networks; he refers here to the churches of Galatia (this refers to the example of the Macedonian churches in 2 Corinthians 8:1).
- The collection of each network was to be built over a several month period.
- It was to be accompanied by leaders from each network to assure accountability for the large gift.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Two whole chapters are devoted to this gift. Why?

Several practical reasons, but again, in the throes of driving their commitment to this massive gift for the Jerusalem churches, we see how Paul shapes the churches' theology of giving to the progress of the gospel.

As you will see, being founded in the gospel means being committed to its progress (Acts: Jerusalem, Judea, and the whole world).

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Here are a couple of further reflections:

1. “We can travel together,” a very relational thing to say, builds a partnership of a personal nature.
2. “Set aside and save on the first day of every week”—this is so Paul will not have to motivate a big one-time collection and look bad in front of the Macedonians who will be coming with him.
3. “I will write “formal letters” to send with the people they approve to deliver the money—this implies he carries a very real apostolic authority, though not a positional authority.

Note: Even though earlier in the letter he said he did not need letters of commendation to prove his apostolic authority amongst them, he knew the importance of sending official letters.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>1</sup> Let me tell you, my dear family, about the grace which God has given to the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup> They have been sorely tested by suffering. But the abundance of grace which was given to them, and the depths of poverty they have endured, have overflowed in a wealth of sincere generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup> I bear them witness that of their own accord, up to their ability and even beyond their ability, <sup>4</sup> they begged us eagerly to let them have **the privilege of sharing in the work of service for God's people.** <sup>5</sup> They didn't just do what we had hoped; they gave themselves, first to the Lord, and then to us as God willed it. <sup>6</sup> This **put us in a position where we could encourage** Titus that he should complete this work of grace that he had begun among you. <sup>7</sup> You have plenty of everything, after all— plenty of faith, and speech, and knowledge, and all kinds of eagerness, and plenty of love coming from us to you; so why not have plenty of this grace too?

2 Corinthians 8:1–7 N. T. Wright

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Theology of Giving as Part of Churches Being Established in the Gospel

1. Paul saw it as his responsibility to share the need for a sizable collection, and evidently he shared his specific expectations of the size of the need and asked for specific commitments from each network.
2. Paul used the sacrificial response of the Macedonian network to motivate the more wealthy Achaian networks to fulfill their previous commitment completely and ahead of time so he did not need to put pressure on them by holding a collection when he came.
3. Paul spoke directly to his networks about money and the privilege they had of sharing in his ministry by giving to this collection; and actually, he expected the networks to give more than they had committed.
4. Paul saw their learning to give significantly for the progress of the gospel and joining in a large giving need with other networks as a way of building network bonds with him, his team, and other networks.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>8</sup> I'm not saying this as though I was **issuing an order**. It's a matter of putting their enthusiasm and your own love side by side, and making sure you genuinely pass the test. <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord, King Jesus: he was rich, but because of you he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. <sup>10</sup> Let me give you my **serious advice** on this: you began to be keen on this idea, and to start putting it into practice, a whole year ago; it will now be greatly to your advantage <sup>11</sup> to complete your performance of it. If you do so, your **finishing the job** as far as you are able will be on the same scale as your eagerness in wanting to do it. <sup>12</sup> If the eagerness is there, you see, the deed is acceptable, according to what you have, not according to what you don't have. <sup>13</sup> The point is **not, after all, that others should get off lightly** and you be made to suffer, but rather that there should be **equality**. <sup>14</sup> At the present time your abundance can contribute to their lack, so that their abundance can contribute to your lack. That's what makes for **equality**, <sup>15</sup> just as the Bible says: "The one who had much had nothing to spare, and the one who had little didn't go short."

2 Corinthians 8:8–15 (N. T. Wright)

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Theology of Giving as Part of Churches Being Established in the Gospel

5. Paul did not see his frank conversation with them as an order (positional authority); but standing in the power and reality of the gospel, he seriously advised them to follow through with their commitment on the same scale as their original eagerness, and to finish the job.
6. Evidently Paul understood that the commitments of wealthier networks and churches can wane with time and can find it easier to back away from their commitments; that is why Paul so directly praised the poorer Macedonians.
7. Networks like Achaia (especially Corinth) that have a wealth of gifts and resources are not fully established if they do not excel in using their financial resources to progress the gospel.
8. Paul saw this collection as sort of “movement balancing” that takes place when churches that are wealthy support church networks and movements, which may be the case of wealthy networks in the future.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>16</sup> But God be thanked, since he **put the same eagerness for you into Titus's heart.**

<sup>17</sup> He welcomed the appeal we made, and of his own accord he was all the more eager to come to you. <sup>18</sup> We have sent along with him the brother who is famous through all the churches because of his work for the gospel. <sup>19</sup> Not only so, but he was formally chosen by the churches to be our traveling companion as we engage in this work of grace, both for the Lord's own glory and to show our own good faith. <sup>20</sup> We are **trying to avoid** the possibility that anyone would make **unpleasant accusations** about this **splendid gift** which we are administering. <sup>21</sup> We are **thinking ahead**, you see, about what will look best, not only to the Lord, but to everybody else as well.

2 Corinthians 8:16–21 N. T. Wright

# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>22</sup> Anyway, along with the two of them we are sending our brother, who has proved to us how **eager and enthusiastic** he is in many situations and on many occasions; he now seems all the more eager because he is convinced about you. <sup>23</sup> If there's any question about **Titus, he is my partner**, and a fellow worker for you. As for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the Messiah's glory. <sup>24</sup> So please give them a fine demonstration of your love, and of our boasting about you! Show all the churches that you mean business!

2 Corinthians 8:22–24 N. T. Wright



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Theology of Giving as Part of Churches Being Established in the Gospel

9. God put a special passion in Titus' heart and another brother's heart regarding the significance of this collection; their passion evidently intensified in light of the sacrificial giving of the Macedonians and the increase of their faith, motivating Paul to send them to help the Achaian churches finish their commitment.
10. Paul understood that, at moments like this, a collection actually becomes a real platform for churches and church networks to show that they mean business in following the gospel and participating in the expansion of the gospel.
11. Paul was very careful to put a system in place that avoided unpleasant accusations in light of the scale and public nature of this gift; therefore, he carefully thought ahead, setting accountability processes in place.

# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>1</sup> When it comes to the **service you are doing for God's people**, you see, I don't need to write to you. <sup>2</sup> For I know your eagerness, and indeed I boasted about it to the Macedonians, saying that **Achaea had been ready since last year**. Your enthusiasm has **stimulated most of them into action**. <sup>3</sup> I have sent the brothers so that our boasting about you in this respect may turn out to be true— so that you may be ready, just as I said you were. <sup>4</sup> Otherwise, imagine what it would be like if people from **Macedonia came with me and found you weren't ready!** That would **bring shame on us in this business**, not to say on you. <sup>5</sup> So I thought it necessary to exhort the brothers that they should go on to you in advance, and get everything about your gracious gift in order ahead of time. **You've already promised it, after all.** Then it really will appear as a gift of grace, not something that has had to be extorted from you.

2 Corinthians 9:1–5 (N. T. Wright)



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Theology of Giving as Part of Churches Being Established in the Gospel

12. The enthusiastic and evidently large commitment of the Achaian churches a year earlier stimulated the Macedonian churches to get fully involved themselves. (Paul's admonition: "you better be ready when they come, or you will undercut our authority and credibility and your role as a key network hub").
13. Remember you already promised it, so you do not want us or you in a position that looks like we are extorting it from you under pressure.

# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>6</sup> This is what I mean: someone who **sows sparingly will reap sparingly as well. Someone who sows generously will reap generously.** <sup>7</sup> Everyone should do as they have determined in their heart, not in a gloomy spirit or simply because they have to, since “God loves a cheerful giver.” <sup>8</sup> And God is well able to lavish all his grace upon you, so that in every matter and in every way you will have enough of everything, and may be lavish in all your own good works, <sup>9</sup> just as the Bible says:  
They spread their favors wide, they gave to the poor;  
Their righteousness endures forever.

2 Corinthians 9:6–9 N. T. Wright



# Sacrificing Network to Network

<sup>10</sup> The one who supplies “seed to be sown and bread to eat” will supply and increase your seed and multiply the yield of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way in all single-hearted goodness, which is working through us to produce thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup> The service of this ministry will not only supply what God’s people **so badly need**, but **it will also** overflow with many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup> Through meeting the test of this service you will glorify God in **two ways**: first, because your confession of faith in the Messiah’s gospel has brought you into **proper order**, and second, because you have entered into genuine and **sincere partnership** with them and with everyone. <sup>14</sup> **What’s more**, they will then pray for you and long for you because of the surpassing grace God has given to you. <sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for his gift, the gift we can never fully describe!

2 Corinthians 9:10–15 N. T. Wright

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Theology of Giving as Part of Churches Being Established in the Gospel

14. Paul also understood that when they invest in his network and the progress of the gospel, it is like they are planting seeds that God will use to bear greater fruit in their own lives; so they should freely give without worrying about the future.
15. Paul understood the completion of their great gift would do several things: supply what another network of churches needed so badly, resulting in thankfulness to God, and the strengthening of their faith.
16. Paul also understood that it would situate the giving network solidly in their faith (“established in the sphere and power of the gospel that Paul enjoys”) and they would be creating a sincere partnership that would last.
17. Churches need to understand (applies to individual households as well) that when we give in this way to the progress of the gospel we are “enriched in every way,” so the actual motivation to major giving by apostolic leadership to the churches is actually for their benefit.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Now let's look at Paul's traditioning process of funding his network and the spontaneous expansion of our churches today.

## Paul Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

1. It is part of the responsibility of apostolic leaders to assess and share network wide needs for occasional sizable collections; as networks of churches we should expect to be asked for certain commitments and eagerly embrace them to the best of our ability.
2. As we participate in a global network of networks, we should anticipate that the sacrificial responses of poorer networks will be motivating examples to us who are more wealthy to stay committed; apostolic leaders should challenge us with those examples.

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

3. As apostolic leaders, we need to speak frankly about money and the importance of churches and church networks viewing collections, small or large, as a vital part of sharing in the ministry of the spontaneous expansion of the Church through strong network partnerships.
4. As church networks, we need to learn to give significantly to the progress of the gospel, including meeting the needs of other networks as a way of building network bonds, bonds with key apostolic leaders and their teams, as well as strengthening our own network.
5. Paul did not see his frank conversation with them as an order (positional authority), but standing in the power and reality of the gospel he seriously advised them to follow through with their commitment on the same scale as their original eagerness, and to finish the job.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

6. We must recognize a tendency of wealthier, more prominent networks of churches to make a public commitment but then to let their eagerness die down; publicly praising poorer networks is part of the Spirit's natural convicting power.
7. Strong, strategic networks with a wealth of gifts, talents, and resources are actually not fully established in the gospel if they are not using their financial resources to progress the gospel and using their gifts locally.
8. Besides bonding the network of networks together, Paul saw this collection as sort of "movement developing and network balancing," which takes place when churches that are wealthy support church networks and movements; this may be the need of wealthy networks in the future.

9. Paul saw this whole collections as sort of "movement balancing"

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

9. We should expect God to put a special passion in some apostolic leaders for challenging churches to respond to large collection needs; other co-workers or church leaders must team up with the effort that goes into large collections of network wide resource needs.
10. Large network needs and collections are a platform for churches and church networks to demonstrate that "they mean business" in following the gospel, and in a commitment to the progress of the gospel.
11. Apostolic leaders and participating networks must be very careful to put a system in place to avoid unpleasant accusations in light of the scale and public nature of these gifts; therefore they must carefully think ahead, setting accountability processes in place.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

12. Large, early commitments to a collection by key networks or benefactors are a strong motivation for others, with far less to contribute, to passionately get on board to be part of something bigger that God is doing. But a failure to complete the commitment and the need to exhort them to finish the task is deflating and undermines apostolic leadership and key hub churches' leadership.
13. It is key for churches and church networks to not wait until the last minute to fulfill their commitments, requiring collection deadlines and exhortations from leaders to complete the goal; key apostolic leaders and coworkers must keep the collection moving towards its goal.
14. We need to develop the conviction as churches that as we invest in the progress of the gospel and share in the needs of other networks, it is like planting seeds that God will use it to bear greater fruit in our own lives, families, and churches.

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Paul's Traditioning Process of Funding Church Networks Today

15. We should expect several outcomes from all the effort that goes into a gift of network wide scale: first it will supply what another network of churches needs so badly, and they will be thankful to God, strengthening their faith.
16. We also need to realize that the completion of a large collection will benefit us, the giver, in several ways: it will situate us more solidly in our collective faith ("established in the sphere and power of the gospel" that Paul enjoys) and we will be creating sincere, lasting partnerships that will last long term as we partner together in the progress of the gospel.
17. As apostolic leaders we need to understand that when a church commits to and completes a large collection, we have actually set them on a course to be enriched in every way (including church families and individuals), so it is well worth the tremendous work of such collection endeavors.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 8:1–9:15

1. Part of Paul's apostolic authority was to think through building a network of networks into a network wide movement to progress the gospel across the empire.
2. Key to this was funding the spontaneous expansion of churches, of which taking a collection was a key part.
3. Paul laid out a plan for a large collection to be taken from his networks of churches both to meet the desperate needs of the poor in the Jerusalem churches, but also to build a serious partnership among his networks and hopefully with the Jerusalem churches.
4. Paul's apostolic authority was clearly seen; when it became clear that the Achaian churches were falling behind in their commitment, he used his apostolic authority (not positional authority) when he said, I am not issuing you an order but seriously advising.

# Sacrificing Network to Network

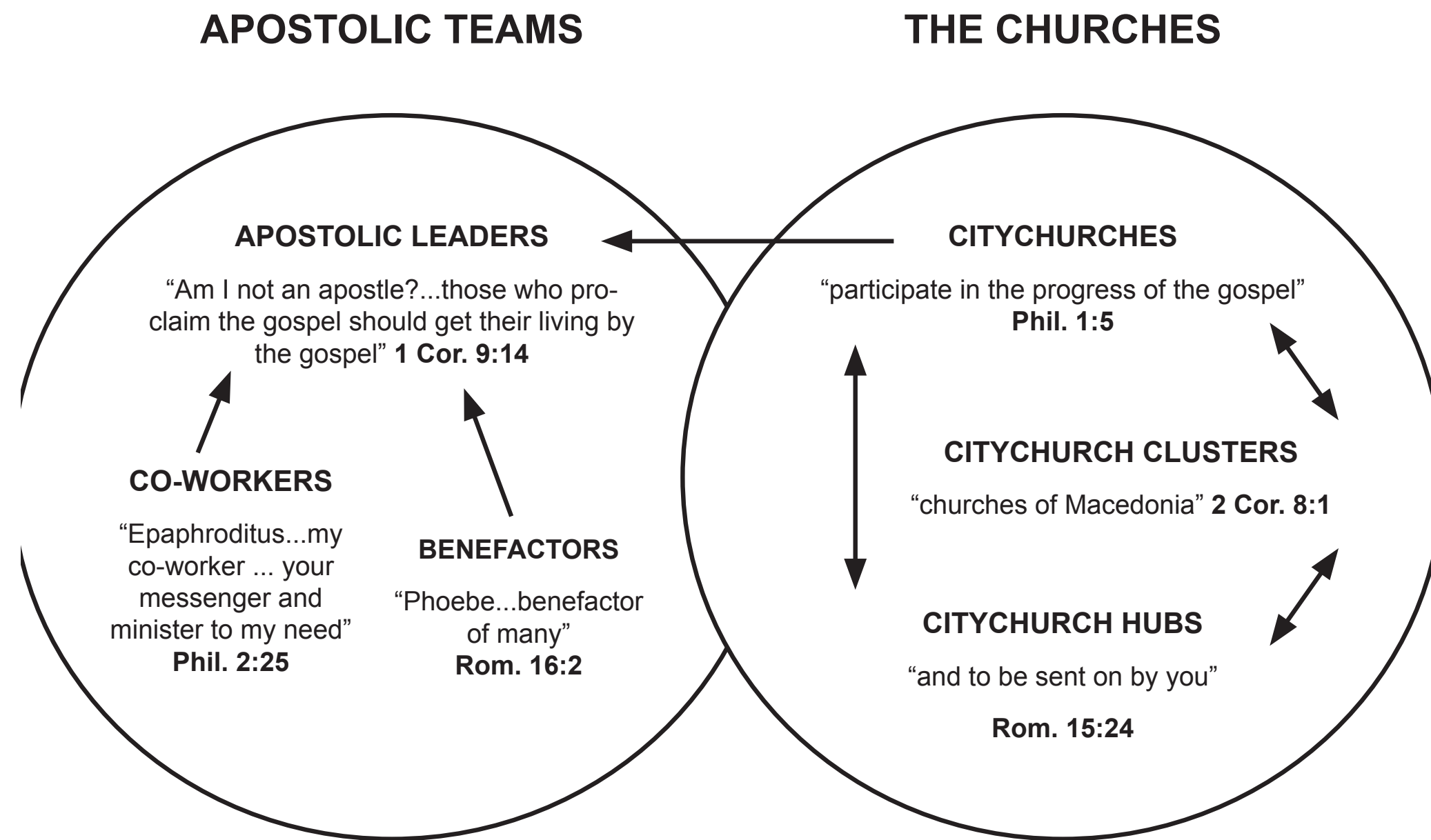
Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 8:1–9:15

5. The nature of his apostolic authority can also be seen by his planning to issue official letters to accompany those sent from the churches of each network to deliver the great gift; he did this in the power of the gospel he stood within and his stewardship, not some official positional authority.
6. He also demonstrated his apostolic authority when he commended Titus as part of his team and a key brother he was sending with him; and he instructed the churches to embrace and follow them and their challenges to complete their gift commitment.
7. He saw limits to his apostolic authority. He did not take responsibility alone for seeing the gift was delivered; he had all sorts of accountability built into the process, but he did establish and instruct his team and the church networks in the processes.



# Sacrificing Network to Network

## FUNDING THE SPONTANEOUS EXPANSION OF EARLY CHURCHES



From my encyclical: *Funding Spontaneous Expansion: Four Critical Success Factors of the Complex Network of the Early Churches*

**THE GENEROUS GIFT**  
 “I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem” **1 Cor. 16:3**

**STEWARDING OF GIFTS**  
 “appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking” **2 Cor. 8:19**

**THE FUND—THE CAMPAIGNS**  
 “arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift” **2 Cor. 9:5**  
 Cf. “churches of Galatia” **1 Cor. 16:1**;  
 “churches of Asia” **1 Cor. 16:19**;  
 “churches of Achaia” **2 Cor. 9:2**

# Sacrificing Network to Network

## Church-Based Fund Development Taxonomy (FDT)

Key Partner Churches	Benefactors like Phoebe	Apostolic Team	Network Partners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Churches like Philippi</li><li>2. Send periodic significant gifts to our team.</li><li>3. Commission own members as co-workers to our team and fund their efforts as needed, support ours.</li><li>4. Commitment to build this paradigm into your church or churches.</li></ol> <p>Our work: establish key churches</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Willing to participate on our team.</li><li>2. Willing to support individual members of our team.</li><li>3. Willing to use time and talents as well as money.</li></ol> <p>Our work: establish key benefactors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Tent-making like Paul</li><li>2. Team members develop a skill or small business with flexibility.</li><li>3. Several on team working together in business or trade.</li><li>4. Trade or business related to expansion in some way.</li></ol> <p>Our work: Life Coaching, Apprenticeship Academy, EQUIP plus FP, MTS, The Center, etc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Paul's Network Partners</li><li>2. Networks to Networks collections as needed.</li><li>3. Appeal for collections for network-wide pressing needs, projects.</li><li>4. Ask partner networks to participate in collections.</li></ol> <p>Our work: establish key networks, solicit collections for specific needs, facilitate network to network collections</p>



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Real Situational Document: China collection

Situation: India COVID “pyres” crisis (Zoom morning), China response

Document: China Church Networks’ Gift to Indian Networks

Part 1: Paul’s Collection—1 Corinthians 16, 2 Corinthians 8–9 (7 points for Paul’s apostolic traditioning process)

Part 2. Need in India Church Networks (4 major crisis needs)

Part 3: China Gift Processes (15 processes)

Part 4: Outcomes (5 major outcomes)

Outcome: \$500,000 gift to India

Obstacles: Never been done, foundations and mission agencies; some Chinese businessmen

BILD team facilitated

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Real Situational Document: Foundation crisis

Situation: Foundations stopped support, paradigm issues

Document: Church-Based Fund Development Taxonomy (FDT)

Part 1: Key partner churches

Part 2: Benefactors like Phoebe

Part 3: Apostolic team

Part 4: Network partners

Outcome: \$1.2 transition gift for BILD team; fully launch taxonomy, Michael's Global Dialogue paper

Obstacles: Never been done, foundations and mission agencies; some Chinese businessmen

BILD team facilitated



# Sacrificing Network to Network

Referring to last week, this section is the commentary on 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:8, but I could easily write a “no theology of Paul” essay “The Collection and the Fusing of a Global Network of Networks”

Traditioning of Paul Essays (*no theology of Paul*)

An Encyclical: *Funding Spontaneous Expansion: Four Critical Success Factors of the Complex Network of the Early Churches*, Jeff Reed

A Global Dialogue Paper: *Building Intergenerational Leadership*, Michael Vos

# Sacrificing Network to Network

Issue: Participating in the progress of the gospel through giving of time and resources

Questions:

1. What should our perspective be on our network of churches sacrificially contributing to the progress of the gospel?
2. In this time of great expansion of the gospel globally, how should Western churches think about giving? How should Global South churches think about giving (e.g. India, and China)?
3. What are we in danger of if we ignore this element of being established in the gospel? What about churches in the West? churches in the Global South?
4. What are the benefits to our churches today, both as a model and the personal benefits as well?