



**Partnerships that empower associations to resource churches and those who lead them.**

*Meet the future of associationalism*

## **What is the Network?**

**The Network of Collaborating Associations is an alliance of Baptist associations working together by sharing personnel and minimizing redundancy in order to more effectively resource churches with a focused strategy without sacrificing their identity or autonomy.**

**The Network assists associations to labor together for the benefit of local churches.**

**The Network better serves pastors by connecting them to broader array of relationships, growth opportunities and resources (the key in helping churches become and stay healthy).**

**The Network better serves churches through pastoral transitions through relationships covering a broader area.**

**The Network is simply a conduit for delivering practical help and spiritual encouragement churches and those who lead them.**

## **The Need to Network**

**We say that churches can do more together than alone. Does that apply to associations? How?**

### **Driving Forces for the Need**

- 1. Overwhelming resources required to staff and operate.**
- 2. Shrinking stream of mission gifts.**
- 3. Growing need to help pastors & churches.**

**Baptist associations today are facing unparalleled challenges. Many rural associations are going into survival mode just to keep the lights on. Is it time for associations to cooperate more closely with neighboring associations?**

**Collaboration gives associations advantages in serving their churches and those who lead them.**

**The Network is far more than a survival plan for associations. It is a pro-active plan that is shaping the future of associationalism. The question is not if associations survive but what difference they can make to advance and expand the work of God through local churches.**

## What are some advantages?

**Specialization.** Every associational missionary is expected to be a generalist. However, each has one or two areas of passion, experience, or expertise, which he seldom has opportunity to use. The network's staff would provide expertise with complementary skills to serve churches with a variety of challenges.

**Supporting and resourcing pastors & church staff.** The network would provide small group and team experiences for pastors as well as other context-relevant resources and leadership training. Special attention could be given to meet the needs of smaller churches.

**Stewardship for the future.** The network assists associations and their churches with developing future income streams for missions and ministry by establishing community partners and assisting families with wills can fuel future initiatives.

**Connecting current and future leaders.** Developing learning communities among active and retired pastors strengthens builds unity across the generations.

## So what?

**The bottom line** is that this network provides an opportunity for associations to reshape their purpose and **refocus** their resources toward helping churches accomplish their unique mission.

Which associations might benefit from some form of greater collaboration? **Yours.**

**The Network** offers a collaboration of autonomous associations to better serve local churches and those who lead them. It allows the association to continue doing what it deems most important. The network is portable, providing a simple way to opt out or join another network.

**Associations** share personnel, operating as a multi-staff organization under the guidance of a strategic lead team made up of officers (or designees) from each association.

**Associations** maintain their identity and autonomy. Each association sets its own strategy and budget.

## Now what?

If your association is open to improvement and aims to serve churches, why not start a conversation with your neighboring associations?

They do not have to be adjoining, but geographical proximity brings a number of advantages.

I will be happy to assist you to form alliances that facilitate collaboration. A strategic lead team with leaders from participating associations can work toward identifying and consolidating resources in order to simplify operations and better serve churches.

**Hal Bilbo**  
**704.985.3463**  
**halbilbo@gmail.com**

**Keith Dixon**

**Rick Astle**

