

**Not What I Am, O Lord***Horatius Bonar (1808–1889)*

Not what I am, O Lord, but what Thou art,  
that, that alone can be my soul's true rest;  
Thy love, not mine, bids fear and doubt depart,  
and stills the tempest of my throbbing breast.

Thy Name is Love, I hear it from yon cross;  
Thy Name is Love, I hear it from yon tomb;  
all meaner love is perishable dross,  
but this shall light me through time's thickest gloom.

Girt with the love of God on ev'ry side,  
breathing that love as heav'ns own healing air,  
I work or wait, still following my Guide,  
braving each foe, escaping ev'ry snare.

'Tis what I know of Thee, my Lord and God,  
that fills my soul with peace, my lips with song;  
Thou art my Health, my Joy, my Staff and Rod;  
leaning on Thee, in weakness I am strong.

More of Thyself, O show me hour by hour;  
more of Thy glory, O my God and Lord;  
more of Thyself, in all Thy grace and pow'r;  
more of Thy love and truth, incarnate Word!

**ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ***In the Nick of Time***Managing Paul's Entourage***Kevin T. Bauder*

As we have seen, Paul rarely traveled alone. Throughout his journeys he regularly recruited companions to accompany him. Sometimes he was joined for brief periods by messengers who were sent from churches. Other individuals traveled with Paul almost continuously.

Paul's companions came from a variety of churches. Barnabas and Saul were originally commissioned by the church in Antioch. Silas was from Jerusalem, Timothy from Derbe or Lystra, Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus (and Demas?) from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Tychicus from Asia (probably Ephesus). Trophimus from Ephesus. Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were all from Corinth. Onesimus was from Colosse. This sampling of Paul's companions illustrates the diversity of churches from which they must have come.

The book of Acts shows Paul and Barnabas reporting to their sending church at Antioch at the conclusion of their first missionary journey (Acts 14:26–27). This kind of accountability recognizes the central role that the New Testament assigns to the local church. Paul and Barnabas did not simply volunteer to be missionaries. Rather, the church sent them, and the church deserved an accounting.

Not long afterward, itinerant teachers from the Jerusalem church began to pester the Antioch congregation with false doctrine (Acts 15:1–2, 14). While the church at Antioch was fully competent to address the doctrinal issue, messengers—including Paul and Barnabas—were sent to Jerusalem. The embassy was sent to Jerusalem because that was the home church of the false teachers. These teachers were not accountable to Antioch, but to Jerusalem. When the Jerusalem church was made aware of the situation, it called these teachers into account and repudiated their teaching. Every church is responsible for what its members teach.

Presumably, this principle applied to all the individuals who traveled with Paul. Their primary accountability must have been to their sending churches. Certainly this kind of accountability was expected from those brethren who traveled with Paul for the purpose of financial oversight (2 Cor 8:18–



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22). More broadly, nothing in the text precludes similar accountability to the home or sending church of each of Paul's companions.

Nevertheless, as Paul and his entourage traveled, they did not typically consult their sending churches for operational decisions or even major choices about direction. One clear example of a major directional decision is presented at the beginning of Acts 16. Paul and Silas had revisited many of the churches from Paul's first journey. The Holy Spirit did not permit them to evangelize in Asia. Then they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit would not allow that, either. They ended up in Troas, where Paul saw a Macedonian man begging him to come into Macedonia.

It is not clear whether what Paul saw was a "vision" in the sense of a waking dream, or whether an actual man appeared to Paul and asked for help. If the second is the case, then the man may well have been Luke, which would explain why the first "we section" of Acts begins at this point. Even though it was Paul who saw the Macedonian man, the next verse makes it clear that "we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:10). The first-person plurals emphasize that this decision was both made and implemented mutually among the members of Paul's company.

In other words, Paul's entourage took on a life of its own. Scripture contains no hint that they appealed to their home churches for either strategic or tactical decisions. Wherever a record has been preserved, those decisions were made among the participants in the group itself. At best they were reported to the churches after the fact.

To say that the decisions were made by the group, however, is not to suggest that everyone in the group had an equal voice. Paul was, after all, an apostle, and these people together constituted *his* entourage. He had the main voice in any decision that was made. For example, we regularly read of Paul sending one of his group to accomplish some task. We never read of the group sending Paul. Within the group were leaders (especially one leader) and there were followers. Furthermore, membership in their local churches did not exempt any individual from accountability to the leadership of the entourage. Local church authority was never brought to bear in such a way as to limit the autonomy of Paul's group.

The longer we look at Paul's entourage, the less we can perceive it as a haphazard collection of individuals, each doing his own thing in his own way. It clearly had its own organization. Nevertheless, it was not organized as a church. Arguably, what we see in Paul's entourage is the first *para*-church organization, an organization in which each member is responsible to his own church, but which is not itself a direct ministry under the governance of any particular church.

What kind of parachurch organization was Paul's entourage? Of the various modern parachurch enterprises, the one that it resembles most closely is the missionary field council. In a well-ordered field council, each missionary arrives on the field under accountability to a sending church. Nevertheless, the missionaries' churches do not dictate policy for the field council. Furthermore, each missionary is held accountable under the authority structure of the council itself as well as under the authority of his sending church.

The New Testament clearly emphasizes the local church as the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). The local church stands at the center of God's work during this age. Nevertheless, no principled objection can be raised to the existence of parachurch organizations in general, or of missionary field councils in particular, on the basis of the New Testament. Indeed, the evidence of the New Testament points in the opposite direction. At least some forms of parachurch organization are biblically authorized. Of these, the missionary field council is the organization that can find its clearest and most direct antecedents in the New Testament itself.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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