

Churches Working Together

(Installation service for Pastor Douglas Daube)

Acts 20:1-6 on October 3, 2021

Pastor Jerry R. A. Johnson

Please read Acts 20:1-6 before going further in this transcript.

I can still remember a time about 15 years ago, when I had one of those AWKWARD “pastor conversations.” I was talking with a local businessman, and he was asking me to help him better understand the operational procedures within the local church. I was doing my best to answer his questions in terms that he could relate to. However, when I reminded him that the church is a “non-profit,” this just didn’t compute with his business-oriented worldview. Finally, I suppose in an attempt to summarize his understanding of local churches, he said something like this to me: “Ohhhh, so I get it, churches are COMPETING with other churches for market share...is that it?” As politely as I could, I responded, “well... no, that’s not IT, that’s not it at all!” Brother or Sister in Christ, local churches should not be competing with other churches. We should be WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL. Now unfortunately, the reality is, that sometimes we can’t work with a particular church or ministry. For theological reasons, or otherwise, there are times when we have to avoid certain ministry partnerships. But, generally speaking, it is our joy and privilege to work with fellow churches who are scripturally like-minded, and gospel centered. That’s exactly what we see happening in Acts 20:1-6.

In order to better understand this idea of “Churches Working Together” in Acts 20:1-6, it’s very helpful to look at a MAP that traces Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey (see *MAP #1 on last page of this manuscript*). About 3 years earlier, Paul had set out on his 3rd Missionary Journey, from his sending church in Syrian Antioch, on the east side of our map (GREEN ARROW). He headed west and once again revisited the churches from his 1st/2nd Missionary Journeys (1st YELLOW ARROW): places like Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, etc. Then he cut across west to Ephesus (2nd YELLOW ARROW), where he stayed for quite some time. Now, last week, Acts 19:21 told us that “Paul decided to go to Jerusalem,” which is WAY over on the SE corner of our map (RED ARROW). However, instead of immediately jumping on a boat and sailing SE across the Mediterranean from Ephesus straight for Jerusalem, Paul heads north, then west, then south in a counterclockwise semi-circle through Macedonia & Achaia (3rd/4th/5th YELLOW ARROWS). Luke doesn’t explain WHY Paul is heading to Jerusalem using this rather “scenic route,” but other NT books clarify that he is collecting an offering, for the benevolence needs of Christians living in Jerusalem.^{1 2 3} (Acts 20:2 mentions Paul’s “words of encouragement.”) In response to a plot against him, Paul then does a

¹ Acts 24:17 mentions “gifts for the poor” and “offerings.”; Romans 15:25-31; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8-9. *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2261 footnote on Acts 19:21.

² Darrell L. Bock suggests that “This collection is for the church in Jerusalem and NOT for general temple funds or for the Jewish poor.” *Acts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, top of p. 619.

³ Likely he is also strengthening and encouraging the disciples in each of these places toward greater Christian maturity, as is his regular practice. Acts 20:2 says that Paul spoke “many words of encouragement to the people.”

U-turn down in Corinth, in Achaia, (the YELLOW CURVED ARROW on the left side of our map) and then retraces his steps north, then east, then south again (those first three WHITE ARROWS). At this point, Paul decides NOT to pass back through Ephesus again; instead, he stops in the nearby city of Miletus⁴, where the Ephesian elders travel to see him ONE LAST TIME. Pastor Eric will be preaching about this when we get to the end of Acts 20. Paul then FINALLY takes the more obvious seaward route across the Mediterranean (those last TWO WHITE ARROWS) and ends up in Jerusalem, which is in Judea (the RED ARROW). Interestingly enough, Paul ends his 3rd Missionary journey, NOT where he started, in Antioch (GREEN ARROW), but rather, in Jerusalem (RED ARROW)... we'll learn WHY, later on in Acts... Alright, so that's a brief overview of our map; we'll come back to this in a little while. For now, back to our text.

Acts 20:1 begins, "When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia." Verse 1 is referring to the huge Gospel UPROAR in the city of Ephesus. Everyone has now gone home, and Paul decides it's time for him to move on to other ministry opportunities. To be clear, he's not being chased out, he's leaving as part of a strategic gospel plan. These first six verses of Acts 20 are packed with tons of places, most of which we know very little about. These verses are also packed with tons of names, most of whom we know very little about. So, WHY does Luke record these details here? Well, at least in part, it seems like Luke wants his readers to catch a glimpse of how the various local churches were working together."

Acts 20:4 mentions 7 men in particular, "He was accompanied by Sopater⁵ son of Pyrrhus⁶ from Berea, Aristarchus⁷ and Secundus⁸ from Thessalonica, Gaius⁹ from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus¹⁰ and Trophimus¹¹ from the province of Asia." Each of these men represent various local churches scattered all along Paul's various Missionary routes. We aren't given a lot of detail about these men, but we do know a few things:

⁴ "migh LEE thus" (Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 116). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

⁵ "**SOH puh tuhr**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 150). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁶ "**PURE uhs**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 133). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁷ "**ehr iss TAHR kuhs**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 28). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁸ "**sih KUHN duhs**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (pp. 141–142). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁹ "**GUY yuhs**" – personal preferred pronunciation based loosely on Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 69). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁰ "**TIK ih kuhs**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 160). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹¹ "**TRAHF ih muhs**" Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names (p. 159). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Sopater was the “son of Pyrrhus from Berea.”¹² And that’s about all we know about him.¹³

Aristarchus is from Thessalonica.¹⁴ He’s one of the guys who was in the center of the uproar back in Acts 19:29. He was dragged into the theater in Ephesus during the city-wide riot. Apparently, this experience did not deter him from his ongoing devotion to doing God’s work.

Secundus was from Thessalonica. We aren’t told much more about him.

Gaius was from Derbe. We don’t know much more about him. Although, since “Gaius” was actually a fairly common name at that time in history, he’s sometimes confused with other Christians who have the same name.¹⁵ (This Gaius from Derbe is different from Gaius from Macedonia in Acts 19.)

Timothy was from Lystra.¹⁶ We probably know the most about him. Not only is he mentioned in Acts several times, but we can learn much more about him by reading Paul’s letters to him, 1st/2nd Timothy.¹⁷ Timothy was a young man whom Paul was mentoring as a leader in the church. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul tells Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” Even though Timothy was from Lystra, he was also well-regarded in the surrounding area, and his influence and leadership was likely felt in many different local churches during that time in history.¹⁸

Tychicus was from Asia. He’s known for his faithful ministry and his encouraging spirit.¹⁹ (On par with Barnabas, “the son of encouragement.”)

Trophimus was from Asia, specifically from Ephesus.²⁰ Again we don’t know much more about him.²¹

Luke, the author of Acts, helps us to see that Paul is working with a diverse delegation of believers, both in terms of their ethnicity and their geography.^{22 23 24} Ethnically, this

¹² Acts 17:11 taught us that the Berean Jews were of more noble character because “they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” However, Sopater was probably Greek (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 618).

¹³ Although “Sopater may well be a shortened form of Sosipater of Romans 16:21.” Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 618.

¹⁴ Acts 27:2 calls him a “Macedonian from Thessalonica.” Also consider Acts 16:9.

¹⁵ This may or may not be the same Gaius from Acts 19:29. The Gaius in Acts 19:29, who was with Aristarchus, was said to be from Macedonia, not Derbe. Gaius was a frequent name at this time in history, so it’s quite possible Acts 19 and 20 are referring to two different people. See discussion by Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 618.

¹⁶ See Acts 16:1-2.

¹⁷ Note 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:14-17.

¹⁸ See *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1867 footnote on Acts 20:4.

¹⁹ See Ephesians 6:21-22 and Colossians 4:7-8.

²⁰ We learn this from Acts 21:29 which also implies that he was a Gentile. *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1867 footnote on Acts 20:4.

²¹ However, note Acts 21:29 and 2 Timothy 4:20.

²² By the way, Luke, the author of Acts, may have also been traveling with Paul and these 7 men at this time. This is indicated by the pronoun “we” in Acts 20:6. “Luke may have joined them at Philippi (‘we sailed,’ verse 6).” *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1867 footnote on Acts 20:4.

²³ The “we” passages in Acts that probably indicate that Luke was with Paul, begin back in Acts 16:10, the first of three sections when Luke “pops in and out” of the narrative. Notice Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16. *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1820 introductory notes on “Author.”

team was from various cultural backgrounds; these were not simply Paul's fellow Jews. Most of the men who were accompanying Paul, were Greek Christians, what we might call Gentile believers. In fact, based on the names in this list, Timothy may have been the only Jew in this delegation other than Paul, (and Timothy was only half Jewish, on his mom's side).²⁵ These men were traveling together, doing ministry together, and collecting an offering together, so that they could then deliver it to the church in Jerusalem, with mutual love as well as with full accountability for the funds.²⁶

To truly appreciate the geographical diversity of the churches who were working together, it helps to look at our map once again (see *MAP #2 on last page of this manuscript*). So, on the far left or west edge of our map, we see Sopater from the church in Berea. We also see Aristarchus/Secundus from the church in Thessalonica, (all within the region of Macedonia). On the right center of our map, we see Gaius/Timothy from the southern part of Galatia. They represent the churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and probably others as well. In the left center of our map, we see Tychicus/Trophimus from the region of Asia, which includes the church in Ephesus, among others. Each of these local church congregations are collecting and then sending along an offering for the church in Jerusalem, over in the bottom right-hand corner of the map (RED ARROW). So as we look at the big picture here, we see that these local churches, spread across a wide geographical area, hundreds of miles apart, are working together. Brother or Sister in Christ, churches are not competing with each other for market share. Churches are working together for gospel purposes! "Churches Working Together" is something that brings God GREAT GLORY!²⁷

Today, let's consider another way that churches work together, and this one may sound a little strange to us at first. I'm referring to the training and raising up of pastors. You see, it's pretty rare for someone to grow up in a local church, then feel called to pastoral ministry, and then stay at that same local church. The fact is, it's pretty common for pastors to fulfill their ministry calling, at a church other than their initial home church. For example, Pastor Douglas didn't grow up here in Bemidji. He was born in Urbana, IL, and grew up in Mahomet, Illinois. Pastor Douglas' first ministry experience was as a student-leader with Cru at Illinois State University and Western Illinois University. He then pastored at Grace Community Church in Kansas, followed by a ministry residency at Charis Community Church in Bloomington, IL. God has now called him to serve here, at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji as our Youth and Young Adults Pastor. So, in a way, we are blessed by this partnership of "Churches Working Together." All along the way, each of these ministries have invested in Pastor

²⁴ In fact, since Luke "is present with Paul on his journey to Jerusalem (20:5-16; 21:1-17) and again on his journey to Rome (27:1-28:16), Luke presumably stays with Paul through this whole period until the end of the book." *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2263 footnote on Acts 20:5-6.

²⁵ "As verse 4 indicates by the names, most of those accompanying Paul would be Hellenistic [i.e. Greek] believers." Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 618.

²⁶ Consider 2 Corinthians 8:16-24, especially verses 20-21.

²⁷ The collection and delivery of this offering for the church in Jerusalem, makes me think back to the Crisis Response Team that we sent to Lake Charles, LA back in March. Remember that ministry team? We raised up dollars and workers to go and serve the church and community there.

Douglas and trained him up so that he can now lead here. Today is a special Sunday in the life of our church. We are officially installing Pastor Douglas Daube as our Youth & Young Adults Pastor.

Here's one of my favorite Bible trivia questions about pastors: How many times does the New Testament use the word "pastor?" (If you were here 3 years ago, for Pastor Eric's installation service, you may remember the answer to this question.) Would you guess that the word "pastor" is mentioned in the New Testament... more than 10 times? 6-10 times? 2-5 times? Well, actually none of these options are correct. In fact, the New Testament only mentions the actual word "pastor" one time, in Ephesians 4:11. The Greek word is Ποιμήν which means "one who serves as guardian or leader, shepherd."^{28 29 30 31}

"Shepherd" is probably the best way to understand a pastor's role and responsibilities in the church. This flows right out of the Old Testament concept of godly leaders who shepherded God's people. And, since the NT refers to Jesus as our Good Shepherd and our Chief Shepherd³², it's more accurate for us to think of a pastor as an under-shepherd. So, a pastor is "one who serves and leads as an under-shepherd." Now, even though we view pastors as under-shepherds, we must remember that pastors are also fellow sheep. Certainly, they lead other sheep, but they themselves are sheep as well, who follow the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Just like every other Christ-follower, they are sinners who've repented of their sins and turned in faith to Jesus Christ for forgiveness.³³ Therefore, pastors are no better or worse than any other Christ-follower. They are equally in need of God's daily grace and empowerment for Christian living. This being said, pastors do have a particular role to play in the body of Christ, and they have particular responsibilities in leading the church.

²⁸ "of those who lead Christian communities/congregations/ churches...human leaders." Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed., p. 843). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁹ Even though the New Testament only mentions the official title "pastor" once, it also uses the word "elder" when referring to "pastors." And there is actually a lot more that we can learn about pastors, from the Bible's use of the word "elder." Πρεσβύτερος = "elder, presbyter." "among the Christians (for their use of the word as a title one must bear in mind not only the Jewish custom, but also its use as a technical term among the ἔθνη [people], in connection with associations of the 'old ones' ... and to designate civic as well as religious officials. Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed., p. 862). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³⁰ In our church, we have an elder board, made up of lay elders who serve right alongside of our staff elders, whom we call pastors. There is a significant overlap here and we won't have time today to cover all the nuances. For now, suffice it to say that we recognize 10 official elders in our church, 7 of whom our congregation has voted in as lay elders and 3 of whom our congregation has voted in and hired as paid pastors.

³¹ The New Testament here uses yet another word for pastors, "overseer" = ἐπίσκοπος." "In the Gr-Rom. world [overseer] frequently refers to one who has a definite function or fixed office of guardianship and related activity within a group... including a religious group... The term was taken over in Christian communities in reference to one who served as overseer or supervisor, with special interest in guarding the apostolic tradition." Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed., p. 379). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³² See John 10:11 and 1 Peter 5:4.

³³ In 1 Corinthians 11:1 the Apostle Paul urges other believers, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

In Titus 1:5 Paul says, “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.” “Elder” is a more common way of referring to “pastors” in the New Testament. So, it’s biblical for churches to appoint elders and pastors. Titus 1:5 doesn’t make it clear whether Paul meant for Titus to hire paid pastors or to elect lay elders. Quite possibly he had both in mind. Regardless, appointing “elders” as spiritual leaders in each church has been going on for 2,000 years now. This was something that Paul saw as one of the natural and healthy steps for every local church, “in EVERY town.” In other words, the Apostle Paul didn’t consider his work finished once he’d evangelized a town. There were other things that needed to be “put in order.” Appointing elders was a key follow-up function, for all of his missionary travels.^{34 35 36}

So, today we’re going to officially appoint or “install” Pastor Douglas as our Youth and Young Adults Pastor. Let’s begin with a brief overview of his job description. I’ll highlight some of the key points.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR – JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Qualifications:

- a. Character/Doctrine: The pastor shall be a man who exhibits the characteristics in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and Article IV, Section 2 of the church constitution. The pastor shall agree with the doctrinal statement of the church and abide by its constitution and by-laws. Have a ministry credential or be willing to pursue one upon hiring. Every pastor is part of the Pastoral Team and shall support the church’s mission of becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus together.
- b. Education: A 4-year undergraduate ministry degree is required. Seminary level degree is preferred.
- c. Experience: The pastor should be passionate and gifted in discipling teens and young adults individually and in groups for their personal and spiritual development. One’s call to ministry and administrative experience paid and/or volunteer will be considered. Must have a proven ability to work with adult and student volunteers.

2. Principal function: Oversee the church’s discipleship ministries from 6th grade to 30 years old.

3. Accountability:

- a. Responsible to Elder Board through the Lead Pastor, including an annual performance review with him.
- b. Member of and report monthly to the Elder Board.
- c. Provide an annual report to the congregation.

³⁴ See Acts 14:23. Consider also what may have been the very first Deacon Board in Acts 6:1-6.

³⁵ As a local church body here in Bemidji, we voted to hire Pastor Douglas as our Youth and Young Adults Pastor; we appointed him as an elder “in our town” of Bemidji. This word, “appoint” can “refer to direct appointment or to an election by the members.” *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* text note on Acts 14:23 on p. 2250, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015.

³⁶ Thorough training is one prerequisite for pastoral ministry. However, compare and contrast 2 Timothy 2:2 with Acts 4:13.

d. Work a salaried average of 50 hours per week and take at least one full day off per week.

4. **Ministry responsibilities:**

(Understanding some work may be delegated to others, the ultimate accountability for assuring that the following responsibilities are implemented rests with the Pastor of Youth and Young Adults.)

a. **Leadership** (50%, about 25 hours per week)

- i. Develop and carry out a long-range discipleship plan for youth and young adults.
- ii. Plan, carry out, and evaluate weekly ministry programming.
- iii. Recruit, train and supervise adult and student volunteers to serve alongside you in ministry.
- iv. Strictly adhere to Child Protection system guidelines, keeping all background checks current.
- v. Collaborate with the Kids Ministry Director in overlaps with shared parents and children.
- vi. Provide pastoral support and encouragement to the Kids Ministry Director.
- vii. Provide opportunities for youth and young adults to serve in the church, community, and world.
- viii. Participate in EFCA District and National Youth Conferences.
- ix. Oversee fundraisers, student accounts, and monthly spending reports. Stay within budget and follow all financial procedures. Evaluate and prepare your annual ministry budget.
- x. Hold occasional parent meetings.

b. **Teaching** (30%, about 15 hours per week)

- i. Teach at a majority of the youth and young adult ministry programs.
- ii. Research, purchase, and improve resources and training for volunteer teachers.
- iii. Provide church-wide visibility and communication regarding youth and young adult ministries.
- iv. Partner with parents, encouraging them how to communicate with and disciple their own children.
- v. Lead a Life Group and coach small group and Life Group leaders for youth and young adults.
- vi. Strategize and carry out a discipleship scope and sequence plan with the Kids Ministry Director.

c. **Pastoral Care** (10%, about 5 hours per week)

- i. Visit youth and young adults in the hospital, at home, etc. as needed.
- ii. Work with volunteers in counseling individual youth and young adults.
- iii. Intentionally engage with youth and young adults in the community, on campus, etc.

d. **Additional responsibilities** (10%, about 5 hours per week)

- i. Participate in the worship services as requested. **Preach** at least once a year.

- ii. Perform other pastoral responsibilities as requested by the Lead Pastor.
- iii. Participate in the **weekly staff meeting and other boards and committees** as needed.
- iv. Follow all personnel policies and guidelines of the church.

The Search Committee's Affirmation is not included in this manuscript. Nor is the Letter of Affirmation from Pastor Jon Bricker of Charis Community Church in Bloomington, IL. If you'd like to hear these affirmations, as well as the Installation Service charge to the pastor and the church, visit our website at <https://efcbemidji.org/sermons/> Let's close this sermon transcript with the Prayer of Commissioning that we prayed while laying hands on Pastor Douglas in the front of our church Sanctuary:

"Heavenly Father, we come to you in Jesus' name, and we thank You for Pastor Douglas and his family. God, we honor You today by officially appointing Pastor Douglas to his role as Youth and Young Adults Pastor in our town of Bemidji. We thank You for bringing Douglas to salvation and for growing him into a man who exhibits godly character. We pray that You will help him in his role of discipling youth and young adults. Please also give him favor with their parents and guardians. Please give Pastor Douglas deep wisdom and keen insight as he oversees the spiritual growth and development of others. We ask that you also bless him in his role as husband and father. Please watch over him and his family. May he and Emily have a strong marriage filled with love and respect. Together may they have great joy and success in parenting their children. Give them that perfect balance of tenderness and love, as well as firm guidance and steady discipline. Help Pastor Douglas to fulfill his ministry at the church with spiritual fervor and hard work. Help him also to enjoy time at home for rest and play. Heavenly Father, guide Pastor Douglas as a ministry leader. Help him to lead the ministry well but also to lead the other leaders well. May they enjoy working alongside Pastor Douglas and following his lead as under shepherd. Guide Pastor Douglas as he studies Your Word and prepares messages. May he rightly understand and rightly teach Your Word. May he begin by rightly living it out, in his own life. We ask for clarity for him in how to bring messages that will be relevant and applicable to the lives of his listeners. Give him insight as he oversees other teachers, as he guards against heresy, and as he sets a course for teaching the whole counsel of Your Word. Lord, give Pastor Douglas a tender heart for pastoral care. May he know how to love and listen to the sheep for whom he provides care. May he know how to encourage and build up those who are hurting and struggling. May he know how to bring accountability and godly exhortation to those who are wandering and going astray. And Lord, we also pray that Pastor Douglas, and Emily and their children, will never doubt our love and support for them. Give them a genuine confidence and a sense of security, that their Church Family is for them. May this mutual love and ministry partnership, bring incredible honor and glory to the reputation of Your great name and of Your beautiful bride, the church. We ask all these things in Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

MAP #1



MAP #2

