

## What's the purpose of a denomination?

**T**HAT'S A QUESTION congregations and even individual Christians have asked themselves over the years. Another way to think about it is "are there advantages in being part of a denomination?" Those are both good and important questions as we think about how to most effectively and efficiently serve the Lord in the 21st Century. With apologies to old school teachers, here are three R's that help to answer those questions: relationships, resources, and results.

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TO KNOW CHRIST AND  
MAKE HIM KNOWN

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# Better Together



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## Relationships

**W**E ARE CREATED to do life together. That means to live in connected relationship with others. We need interaction with fellow believers in order to grow and mature; to be discipled. The same is true for a local gathering of believers.

- A congregation benefits from being part of something larger than their own local fellowship. Denominational relationships make for healthier people and churches to help us serve more effectively.
- The inter-connectedness of a denomination provides for opportunities to interact and serve with people who may be very different from a homogeneous local church. We do not all look alike, we do not agree on everything, we have different gifts and graces, we may even speak different languages and yet we are the family of God and there is no stronger relationship.
- Through a connected denomination; pastors, lay leaders, and whole congregations can move beyond simply supporting relationships to actually expanding relationships as we pray, fellowship, develop leaders, evangelize, plant churches, perform acts of mercy, pursue justice, and celebrate God together.

## Resources

**T**HE STRENGTH of a denomination's resources is found not only in programs and material but in people. Take for example leadership development.

- Leadership development, training, and deployment are critical to our mission but many local congregations are not equipped to do that by themselves. As a denomination we value leadership to the point that we support a Pastoral Assessment Center and we join together to provide training for men and women prepare for leadership in our churches and communities.
- We work together with local leaders to identify and place pastors who will fit and flourish. Our denomination works cooperatively in identifying, credentialing, and overseeing the accountability of pastors.
- It is a blessing for our local pastors to know there are other like-minded leaders available for encouragement and support.
- In addition, shared resources provide vital ministries at home and around the world: camping ministries, a seminary, ministries to seniors, and a global ministries emphasis that now resources close to 500 churches in five countries, many of whom are now sending out their own missionaries.

## Results

**W**E JOIN TOGETHER as a denomination in the cause of Christ; what He's doing; His mission. Left to ourselves we tend to wander, to take our eyes off the goal. Local congregations can be that way too.

- Being part of a denomination helps to keep us focused. We benefit as we hold each other accountable to fulfilling the mission of God in our local communities and around the world.
- The relationships we have with other pastors, congregational leaders, and even denominational leaders help to keep us moving in the right direction, focused on the right things, and avoid distractions.
- We all need accountability. We work together within the denomination to help local pastors, leaders and congregations follow God's leading and direction for ministry.
- It is His mission – it is His church. We are the Evangelical Congregational Church: “evangelical” – people of the Good News; the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and “congregational” not in a sense of power but in purpose. We intentionally empower and support local congregations to use their unique gifts and graces in their local setting to pursue the mission of God.