

ADDITIONAL FIRST CENTURY CHURCHES

Introduction

- 1) There were numerous local congregations of God's people scattered throughout the Roman world in the first century AD
- 2) All faithful Christians were members of the one true universal church/kingdom of Christ
 - a) These same Christians were found working and worshiping in local churches that had their own independent organization (elders, deacons Phil. 1:1) under the one head, Christ
- 3) Other than the more well-known churches like Philippi, Corinth, Colossae, etc., these lesser-known churches can still offer us lessons and encouragement

I) THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

- A) The church at Jerusalem was the first (Acts 2:41, 47)
 - 1) Grew by teaching (Acts 4:4; 5:11-14; 6:7), compassionate benevolence (4:32-35; 6:1)
- B) Persecution moves gospel teaching into surrounding regions (8:1, 4)
- C) Later involved in the conflict over circumcision (Acts 15:4, 22)

II) THE CHURCHES IN JUDEA, GALILEE, SAMARIA, SYRIA

- A) When the gospel went into these regions, churches were planted (Acts 9:31)
- B) Saints in Lydda, Joppa, and other parts of Judea (Acts 9:32, 35, 42; 11:27-30 "elders")
- C) Many converted in Samaria (Acts 8:6, 12, 25)
- D) Saints in Damascus (Syria) – (Acts 9:10, 19)
- E) Gospel spread by teaching and preaching – produces disciples and local churches

III) THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH (of Syria)

- A) Gospel went into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19-22)
 - 1) Disciples first called Christians at Antioch (vv. 23-26)
 - 2) Brethren at Antioch sent benevolent aid to churches in Judea (vv. 27-30)
 - 3) Church at Antioch had prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1; cp. Eph. 4:11)
 - 4) Antioch church was an important base for the first three missionary journeys (Acts 13:3; 14:26-28; 15:35-36; 18:22-23)
- B) Churches should be active both in local evangelism and in other places domestic and foreign (Mk. 16:15)

IV) OTHER NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

- A) In addition to those mentioned in this survey along with Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea, Corinth, Colossae, Hierapolis, Galatia, and the seven churches of Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea)
- B) Brethren in regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet. 1:1)
- C) Church at Troas (Acts 16:6-10; Luke joins Paul at Troas)
 - 1) Paul and others stay and worship with the church there (Acts 20:4-12)
- D) Church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1)
- E) Churches in Rome (Rom. 1:7; 16:5, 14, 15) and Crete (Titus 1:5)

Conclusion

We can better appreciate the impact of Paul's statement "the churches of Christ greet you" (Rom. 16:16). In the eyes of the world, these Christians and churches were of little to no importance. Yet they were part of the kingdom of God on the whole earth sanctified as children of God just as we are today as a brotherhood of believers (Col. 1:23; 1 Pet. 5:9). In the history of Acts and the New Testament we are blessed to have inspired apostolic commands and examples of how churches were organized and did the divinely authorized work of the Lord. Let us hear and follow this pattern of sound doctrine!