

What Exactly is “Congregational Autonomy”?

- A. In *Matthew 16:18*, Jesus promised, “*I will build my church.*” But what exactly was built? And how?
- B. “*My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” (*Acts 1:8*).

I. The Unfolding Plan of God as Revealed in the New Testament

A. “*I will build my church.*”

1. Proclaiming throughout all _____, “*The kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (*Matt 4:12-17, 23-25*).
2. “*He set his face to go to _____*” (*Luke 9:51; 18:31-34; John 7-11; Matt 23:37-38*).
3. “*That everything written about me...must be fulfilled*” (*Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1-4:5*).

B. “*You will be my witnesses...*”

1. “*In Jerusalem*” (*Acts 2-8:1a*).
2. “*And in all Judea and _____.*”
 - a. The regions: *Acts 8:1b, 4, 5-8, 12, 14-15, 25; 9:31*).
 - b. The cities: Lydda (*9:32*) and Sharon (*9:35*), Joppa (*9:42*), Caesarea (*10:1, 48*), Phoenicia (*15:3*), Tyre and Sidon (*21:3-4*), Ptolemais (*21:7*), Caesarea (*21:8*).
3. “*And to the end of the earth.*”
 - a. The church in _____ (*Acts 11:19-26; 13:1-3*).
 - b. The missionary journeys (*Acts 13:4-14:28; 15:36-18:22; 18:23-21:16*).
 - c. Paul’s voyage to _____ (*Acts 22:1-28:31*).

II. The Principle of Autonomy

- A. *Auto* (_____) / *nomos* (_____) — the right of self-government; freedom to live by one’s own laws.
- B. The principle modeled in *Acts 14:23* and *Philippians 1:1*.

III. Practical Wisdom Behind the Principle of Autonomy

- A. Local _____ can be made in the best interest of the local church, based on local conditions (*1 Cor 16:3*).
- B. A local church is able to be and remain accountable to the _____ (*Col 1:18*).
- C. The absence of bureaucracy limits the wasting of _____ (*Acts 11:27-30*).
- D. Local strife and controversy are naturally minimized to avoid _____ damage (*Rev 2-3*).
- E. _____ is glorified as the true, one and only head of his church (*Eph 3:20-21*).