Summary Report
TEBA ASSOCIATIONAL MINISTRY

2024 Revisioning Process ~ Prepared by Roger Yancey, Executive Director / AMS

Introduction

The TEBA has been committed to ongoing evaluation and adjustment of its ministry model for the benefit of its member churches. Previous evaluations were conducted in 2004, 2011, and 2017 which proved beneficial in expanding church engagement. Our current evaluation was facilitated by David Bowman of the Tarrant Baptist Association and by our own Association Leadership. A cross-section of ministers across the TEBA were invited to be part of the process with tenure in the TEBA ranging from 1 year to 25+ years and church sizes from church plants to some of our largest member churches.

The participants in this process included:

Alec Brunson of Pillar Church
Bruce Webb of FBC Woodlands
Chester Holloway of FBC Shepherd
Chris Gober of FBC Montgomery
Chris Stanley of West Conroe BC
Garrett Bowman of FBC Willis
Jay McIntosh of FBC Grangerland
Jeff Berger of FBC Conroe
Justin Dance of Hope Church
Mark Estep of Spring Baptist Church
Michael Nix of Dolen Baptist Church
Milt Eichler of FBC Magnolia
Richard Rogers of University Heights BC
Rob Ray of FBC Porter
Scott Young of The Fellowship
Steve Bradley of Stonebridge Church

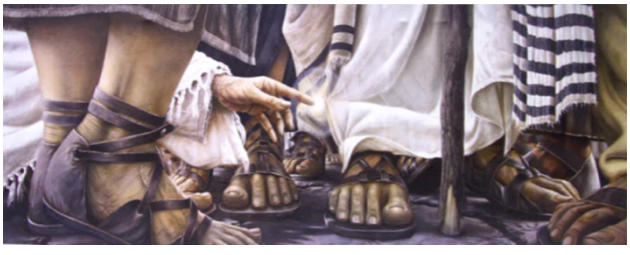
The team had ongoing meetings beginning in August 2023 completing in September of 2024. Through a series of exercises and evaluations, the team evaluated the ministry of the TEBA, the opportunities for strengthening the ministry, resetting its strategy, and formulated the Next Steps toward a stronger future for the TEBA.

Theological Reflection ~ TEBA Associational Ministry Basis

We examined the Biblical Basis and the Philosophical Framework of Associational ministry. Two key passages were examined the first being **Philippians 1:3-5** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Emphasis was given to the local partnership of churches working together for Gospel impact and cooperative endeavors.

The second passage is found in Luke 8:43-48 (also referenced in Matthew 9:20-22 and Mark 5:25-34) and tells the account of a woman who endured 12 years of hopelessness looking for relief who penetrated the crowd to reach out and touch the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed. The ministry of the TEBA is based on helping churches push through the crowd of voices which can hinder their walking in God's best and discovering renewal and growth in Christ.

This is illustrated by Daniel Cariola's painting **"The Encounter"** found in the Magdala Chapel in Israel. A copy of the print is found in the TEBA main office as a reminder of the focus and role of the Association in serving the churches.



In understanding the Philosophical Framework of the Association, we reflected on the differences between Associations, State Conventions, and the National Entities. The works of George Bullard and others were referenced as beginning points. Without becoming too rigid in creating a framework you can loosely breakdown the differences as follows:

Thought Model	**Association**	**State Conventions**	**National Entities**
Relational	**Family**	**Friend**	**Acquaintance**
Three Lane Highway	Family Van	Bus	Car Carrier
Organism / Organization	Organism w Organization	Organization w Organic Elements	Organization w some Organic Elements

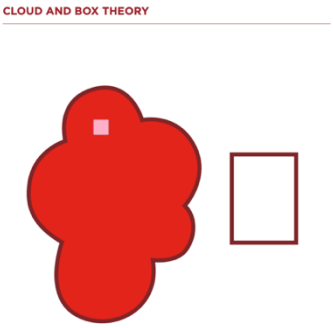
Because the Association is the closest to the local church, it has a natural opportunity for relational strength. In reflecting on how to summarize the understanding of Associational ministry, the foundational thoughts were captured in the phrases "We are a Church First Association", "We are a Church Driven Association", and "We are the Bridesmaid to the Bride".

We are here to help the Bride of Christ to reach her potential under the Lordship of Christ and for the Glory of God alone.

Process & Tools

Multiple tools were used to evaluate the present TEBA ministry and to envision what future ministry could be like as we move toward the future. A highlight overview of the tools follows with key findings included.

Cloud and Box Concept. The "Cloud" being the group of churches who come together to work in cooperation to form an entity "Box" or Association to facilitate the ministry assigned to it by the churches. The churches direct the objectives the Association is to focus on, and the Association is supported by the churches to achieve those goals.



The TEBA does not have a reason to exist outside of the services and ministries it provides or enables to its member churches.

Utilizing the Tool, "The Four Helpful Lists", the group assessed the present ministry of the TEBA.

What is Working **Celebrate**	**What is Broken?** **Fix**	**What is Confused?** **Clarify**	**What is Missing?** **Add**

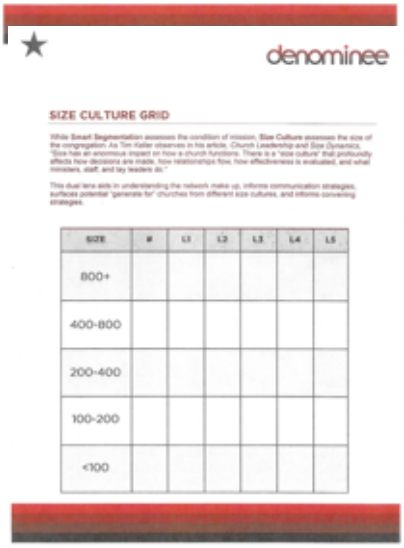
• Missional Engagement
• Staff Competency
• Church Planting
• Viability
• Church Strengthening
• Church Staff Training
• Staff & Pastor Connections
• Consistency
• Awareness
• Availability
• Resources
• Relationships
• Comprehensive Multi-Size Response
• Communication
	• Church Planting Catalyst
	• Staffing Pipeline
	• Stronger Sense of Cooperation
	• Common Cause Collaboration
	• Understanding TEBA Ministry
	• What does it mean to be a member of TEBA
	• Expectations for Member Churches
	• SBC/Denominational Interconnectedness
	• How to communicate Value of TEBA to individual member churches
	• Disconnect between Pastors who are engaged vs. disengaged with TEBA
		• Who is the TEBA
		• What is the Ministry of the TEBA
		• Aids to help churches understand the TEBA Ministry
		• Helps to Pastors demonstrating the value of the TEBA
		  ○ Video
		  ○ QR Code
		  ○ Other
		• Role of the State Convention and the Association
		• Attention Competition with Multiple Entities
		• Funding Perceptions related to source of Associational Gift.
			• TEBA Day/Week of Prayer
			• Associational Emphasis
			• Basics of Ministry
			• Clear Focus on Associational Ministry

The group summarized the **Core Issues** the TEBA needed to focus on including:

- **Segmented Response** – the TEBA needed to provide responses based on church size and need.
- **Purposeful Engagement** – the TEBA needed to engage churches and ministers strategically.
- **Perceptions** – the TEBA needed to help shape and inform the perceptions of Associational Ministry.
- **Connecting Staff Members** – the TEBA needed to help church staffs connect with other staffs.
- **Communication** – the TEBA needs to be intentional in its communication efforts.
- **Raising Up and Training Staff from Within** – the TEBA needs to assist churches by helping churches raise up future staff from within the local churches.
- **Networking for Ministry and Evangelism** – the TEBA needs to assist churches in connecting to work in meaningful partnership with each other in ministry and evangelism in and out of the Association.

Smart Segmentation is a means by which churches are understood as being either Leading (L1), Living (L2), Longing (L3), Lagging (L4), or Languishing (L5). Churches in the L1 and L2 quadrants tend to be healthy churches who are thriving, reaching their communities, and engaged missionally in an impacting way. Generally, an Association will have less than 20% of its member churches which are in the L1 and L2 quadrants. The L3 is a church which was once thriving but finds itself plateaued or feeling stuck. The leadership of the church wants to move forward and is hungry to do so. The balance of churches found in the L4 and L5 quadrants are not healthy and find themselves accepting their present reality as their probable future. They have normalized their decline. Many of these churches will need to be intentional in revitalization or replanting to have a strong future.

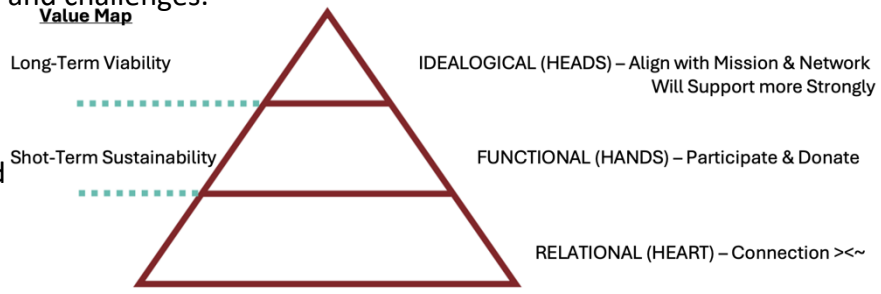
Size Culture Grid is a tool to assess the size of the congregations which make up the TEBA. As congregations grow to different sizes they process information, make decisions, staff, and program in different ways. For the TEBA to serve all of the congregations it is important to recognize those differences and to adjust as needed to meet the needs of these various size congregations. The churches were listed by size with the approximate break down being:



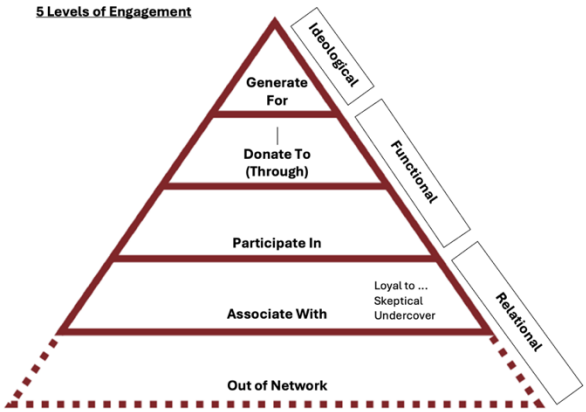
800+	10%
400-800	5%
200-400	13%
100-200	21%
<100	51%

Two observations worth mentioning are the majority of churches in America are less than 75 in attendance which is true for approximately 51% of the churches in the TEBA. It was also observed there is an unusually large number of churches in the TEBA over the 800+ mark for an Association of its size which brought both opportunities and challenges.

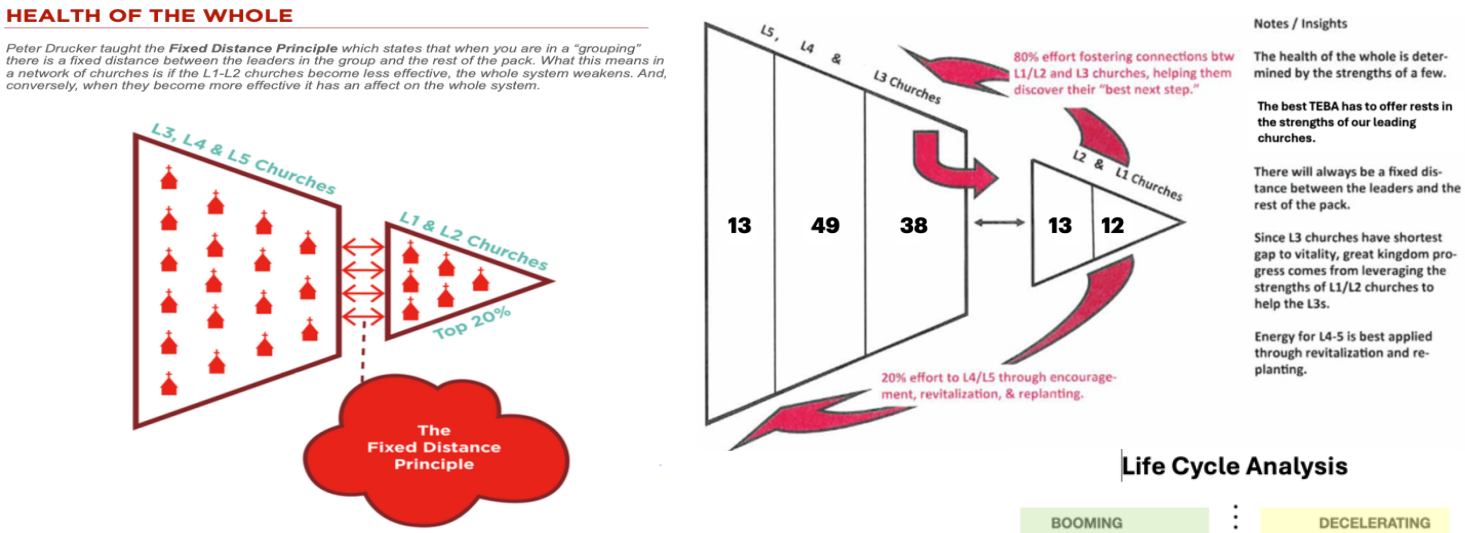
The **Value Map** helps us understand how a Church relates to the Association and how they relate to one another. Helping a church engage with the Association and each other on a higher level strengthens both of them.



The **5 Levels of Engagement** further define the ways churches work together as an Association of churches cooperatively engaged in Kingdom work. This tool is complimentary with the **Value Map Tool** and helps clarify where a church is in its engagement level.

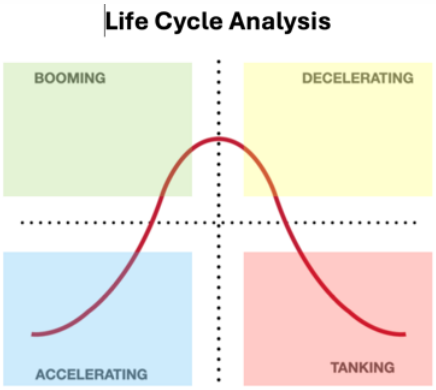


In pulling all these tools together it was determined churches in the L1 and L2 segments could be of great help to the L3 churches moving forward toward greater health and engagement. It was also noted the best way to help churches in the L4 and L5 segments would be to engage them to focus on revitalization and replanting. In some ways, this posed a shift for the ministry team of the TEBA in its focus and will take some intentional adjustments to achieve. This also provides a pathway of engaging the L1 and L2 segments into greater ministry impact in L3 churches.



The Life Cycle Analysis Tool was used to evaluate the ministries and efforts of the TEBA. The way the tool is used is to determine if a ministry or effort is in its lifespan:

Accelerating – ministry is beginning and taking shape – needs resourcing
Booming – ministry is taking off and sustaining growth – needs nurturing
Deceleration – ministry is slowing and wavering – needs resetting
Tanking – ministry is at the end of its run – needs releasing



Most of the areas of ministry or efforts of the TEBA were listed by area of focus and evaluated as to their present Life Cycle reality. While some were deemed in need of being reset, others were needing to be released.

One example is the present Ministry Network Meetings which meet every month except for June and July. It was determined the participation did not warrant the level of investment being made and they needed to be reset in 2025.

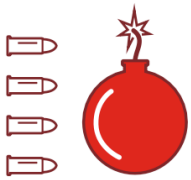
Snapshot

Communication	Strategies	Ministries	Facilitations	Resources	Other
Monthly NL	Church Plt	Ch Plt Strategy	Min Insights	Building	
Mid-Month NL	Leadership D	Ch Plt Training	Birkman	Training Cent	
Other W Update	Church Strgth	Ch Plt Coach	Disc	Sp Event Trail	
Texts	Missional Eng	Coaching	Build P Min Tm	Projectors	
Website	Mission Umb	Cohorts	PSC Training	Study Area	
Social Media	Partnerships	Affinity Grps	360's	Media Support	
Phone	Church Hlth	Min Net Mtg	Exec Search R	Demographics	
Mail	Church Revit	Pastor PP Ret	Staff Mapping	Secret Shop	
Rotator	Church Legacy	Ministry Cpl R	Missional Eng	Library	
Announcements	Church Replt	Min 101 & 201	Church Uniq		
Handpiece	Leader Care	Sabbatic Supt	God Dreams		
Ch Aniv Card	Church Visits	Covo Sab Supt	Vision Leading		
Wed Aniv Card	Spanish Min	Spec. Trng	Building Use		
Birthday Card	Select Interim	Living Sent	Staff Training		
Pulpit Supply	Mod Interim	Replant Conf	Ch Health Surv		
	Mobile Bldgs	Mthly Lead Sm	TJTA		
	Property Trust	Golf Tournmt	Prepare Enrich		
		Crisis Interven	Coach Training		
		Doc Review	Natural Ch D		
		Supply Listing	Trans Pastor		
			Demographics		
			Lng Range Plan		
			Ch Mergers		

Pilot Projects are a way of beginning with focused projects which can then build into proven ideas which can grow into bigger impact. The team identified multiple options to consider and then honed them down to an essential few to focus on in 2025:

PILOT PROJECTS

"Fire Bullets, Then Cannonballs is a concept developed in the book *Great by Choice*. First, you fire bullets (low-cost, low-risk, low-distraction experiments) to figure out what will work—calibrating your line of sight by taking small shots. Then, once you have empirical validation, you fire a cannonball (concentrating resources into a big bet) on the calibrated line of sight. Calibrated cannonballs correlate with outsized results; uncalibrated cannonballs correlate with disaster. The ability to turn small proven ideas (bullets) into huge hits (cannonballs) counts more than the sheer amount of pure innovation."
—Jim Collins



Collins, Jim. *Fire Bullets Then Cannonballs.*
https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/fire-bullets-then-cannonballs.html

Cross TEBA 2025 – Recruiting churches to work together to be missionally engaged across the Association in a focused manner to impact their communities

Affinity Groups – Bringing churches together geographically and ministry leaders based on focus of service

Ministry Network Meetings – RESET – Move to Leadership Connect hosted in part at member churches

Ministry 101 & 201 – Creating opportunities to train co-vocational leaders and ministers in ministry basics

Explore the Association – Discovering the opportunities and areas ready for church planting in the TEBA

Church Planting Center – Focusing on Training, Coaching, and Residency opportunities for Church Planters

In the coming months, the TEBA will focus on these 6 Pilot Projects as primary objectives to be initiated or developed as new ministries within the TEBA.

Additional Focus Areas Reviewed and Reconsidered

The present Vision, Mission, Short Phrase, and 1 Word Focus of the TEBA were evaluated to determine if it gave the greatest clarity to the ministry of the Association or if it needed to be revised. The team determined it would be helpful to simplify and reset the Vision, Mission, Short Phrase, and 1 Word Focus of the TEBA.

The present Vision, Mission, Short Phrase, and 1 Word Focus:

Present Vision	To be a partnership of healthy reproducing congregations cooperating together to transform our community and our world
Present Mission	To be a missional partnership of healthy reproducing congregations cooperating together to transform our community and our world
Present Short Phrase	Engaging Churches for Transformation
Present 1 Word	Engage

The groups proposed Vision, Mission, Short Phrase, and 1 Word Focus:

Proposed Vision	Helping Churches Thrive for Greater Gospel Impact through Gospel Saturation, Leadership Development, and Church Strengthening
Proposed Mission	Helping Churches Thrive for Greater Gospel Impact
Proposed Short Phrase	Helping Churches Thrive
Proposed 1 Word	Thrive

The proposed change brings greater clarity to the focus of the Association as it conveys its message to our member churches and those churches who will become part of the TEBA in the future. The team was very responsive toward this new language and believed it better conveyed the visions, mission, and purpose of the TEBA.

The **Vision Frame** of the TEBA was evaluated and found in line with the proposed ministry strategy with the revision of the Mission side of the Frame.

The **Governance Model** of the TEBA was evaluated and found to be more reflective of Associational Ministry of the past than the current realities which needed to be acknowledged. It was suggested the TEBA move toward a more streamlined model of governance and operation.

The **Formation Documents** of the TEBA were evaluated and it was noted there are areas of conflict with the present requirements for Non-Profit Organizations in Texas which would need to be addressed in future revisions.

Additionally, it was noted there are requirements in the present **Governing Documents** of churches in the Association to be in relationship with one of the Baptist State Conventions while no such requirement is reciprocated by either Baptist State Convention. It is also noted there are churches who relate to the Association who might not relate to either a State Convention or the National Convention but are faithful in Baptist doctrine and practice. As documents are revised, it will be important to rethink current practices and requirements to reflect convention and church realities.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Change of **Vision, Mission, Short Phrase, and 1 Word Focus** to the proposed wording...

Proposed Vision	Helping Churches Thrive for Greater Gospel Impact through Gospel Saturation, Leadership Development, and Church Strengthening
Proposed Mission	Helping Churches Thrive for Greater Gospel Impact
Proposed Short Phrase	Helping Churches Thrive
Proposed 1 Word	Thrive

Recommendation 2: Change of **Vision Frame** to match the wording above. (See Addendum 1)

Recommendation 3: Create and implement a **Church Engagement** process to strengthen and renew church relationships with the TEBA

Recommendation 4: Adjust the **Ministry Model** of the TEBA to more fully utilize L1 and L2 churches to assist and encourage L3 churches to a renewal of ministry and spiritual health

Recommendation 5: For additional focus to be put on **Church Revitalization and Replanting** so L4 and L5 churches can have the greatest opportunity for health and a solid future of ministry

Recommendation 6: For the **Pilot Projects** identified as priorities to be focused upon in 2025

Cross TEBA 2025	**Ministry 101 & 201**
Affinity Groups	**Explore the Association**
Ministry Network Meetings	**Church Planting Center**

Recommendation 7: For the ongoing use of the **Life Cycle Analysis Tool** in evaluating ministries and focuses of the TEBA to ensure continued effectiveness of the ministry

Recommendation 8: For the **Governance Model** of the TEBA to be reviewed and revised with the recommendations being presented to the Executive Board for final approval

To Include or Consider the following:

- To be in compliance with the State of Texas 2011 Requirements for Nonprofit Corporations
- To consider types of membership within the TEBA which could include voting and nonvoting status
- To consider relationship options with like-minded churches and ministries

Special Note: It is acknowledged that in the process of working through these recommendations, there can be other recommendations which may arise to be brought to the Association for consideration.

Next Steps

With the acceptance of this report and its recommendations, the TEBA will request the Associational Council, the Ministry Teams, and the TEBA Staff to determine the best way to move forward with the implementation of these findings, the adjustments to the ministry model, and bring proposed revisions to the documents in 2025.

Special Thanks

The efforts of all who participated in this process are deeply appreciated. Ministers of the TEBA gave up their time and brought wisdom to bear on how to help the Association thrive. The TEBA is blessed to have so many dedicated and gifted ministers leading churches and investing in the Association. We also thank David Bowman of the Tarrant Baptist Association for his work with the Team and his ongoing coaching throughout this process. The staff of the TEBA is also commended for their many efforts to ensure the work was supported and facilitated.

2024 Operational Vision Frame

Vision Statement: Helping Churches Thrive for Greater Gospel Impact through Gospel Saturation, Church Strengthening, and Leadership Development.