

**“God’s fellow workers”**

**Cooperation**

**1 Corinthians 3:9**

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**For we are God’s fellow  
workers; you are God’s field,  
God’s building.**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**“Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God.”**

**“Cooperation is not merely an administrative idea conceived in the modern business world. Cooperation doesn’t emerge from politics, sociology, or sentimentalism. Instead, our voluntary cooperation as Baptists is grounded in the fact that we share a common salvation and are called to common purposes that can best be accomplished by working together.”**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

## **Ephesians 4:4-6**

**4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

**5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**Ezra 2:68**

**When they arrived at the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings toward the rebuilding of the house of God on its site.**

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## **Nehemiah 2:17-18**

**17** Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” **18** I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.

**“God’s fellow workers”**

**Spiritual harmony and  
voluntary cooperation:**

**“Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. “**



# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**“Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.**

**Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people.”**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**Acts 2:42-47**

**42** They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common.

**45** Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**Acts 4:32**

**All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.**

**“God’s fellow workers”**

**Congregationalism:**

**“The belief that a local body of believers is directly responsible to God’s authority, not to a church hierarchy.”**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**“Two concepts are basic to the congregational scheme: autonomy and democracy. By autonomy we mean that the local congregation is independent and self-governing. There is no external power that can dictate courses of action to the local church.”**

**“By democracy we mean that every member of the local congregation has a voice in its affairs. They possess and exercise authority. Authority is not the prerogative of a lone individual or select group.”**

**Dr. Millard Erickson**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

## **Romans 12:4-8**

**4** For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5** so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.



**7** if it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; **8** if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**Cooperation for the Great Objects of  
the Kingdom of God:**

**“Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.”**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**“This warning explains why Southern Baptists do not join ecumenical organizations and church councils. We believe that true cooperation is grounded in a common commitment to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and a common obedience to the Bible as the Word of God.”**

**“Therefore, the Southern Baptist Convention, as a denomination, does not join with churches and other denominations that do not embrace and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ or that do not affirm the Bible as the Word of God.”**

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

## **Galatians 1:6-10**

**6** I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — **7** which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

**8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be eternally condemned! **9** As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be eternally condemned!

**10** Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

**“God’s fellow workers”**

**Carrying Forward Missionary,  
Educational, and Benevolent  
Ministries:**

**The Cooperative Program**



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## **2 Corinthians 8:1-10**

**1** And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. **2** Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. **3** For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

**4** they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. **5** And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us in keeping with God's will. **6** So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

**7** But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you — see that you also excel in this grace of giving. **8** I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

**9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. **10** And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

# **“God’s fellow workers”**

**“The Cooperative Program offers us today, as it has since the hour it was adopted, the surest method of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of all our people in the propagation of the Gospel.**

**It is simple, practical, and scriptural. It has won its way into the confidence of our people. It deserves our complete support in our prayers, our gifts, and our loyalty.”**

**Louie Newton (1947)**

# Applications

- **Our congregation is “in charge” of the church**
- **Southern Baptists must cooperate**
- **We cooperate voluntarily**

# Final Thoughts

## Ephesians 4:11-16

**11** It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, **12** to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up



**13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

**15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work