

## Chapter 4

### CHURCH MISSION AND COOPERATION

**“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus ...  
Ephesians 3:21.**

Volumes have been written by very able men concerning the origin, and perpetuity of the Baptist Church. If it should be your desire to obtain and study further such books, your pastor can assist you in selecting one or several. The subject of the church is of course a highly debated one, and I do not appear as a “know it all,” but rather quite the contrary. However, some things are so plain, a wayfaring man, though a fool should not err therein.

Jesus speaks explicitly of the Bridegroom being with the Bride during His personal ministry, Mark 2:19-20, and it was to this same group, His church, that He gave the commission in Matthew 28:19-20. This was not given to just a band of men. This was given to His church—the church that preached as the true Baptist church of today does. It is wonderful that a child of God should go out and tell another about the Lord though he himself is not a member of the New Testament church, but the masses are not obligated to spread the gospel. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth, I Timothy 3:15. To say that Jesus just told anybody and everybody to carry the gospel is to accuse the Lord of greater carelessness than you yourself would dare to be guilty of. Who of you would have a farm of hundreds of acres and working several men would call all the employes in and say, “Men, I am leaving soon. I shall be gone for a long time, and I want the work to be done well while I am gone. The soil should be properly cultivated, the terraces should be properly kept, the fences should be tended, proper seeds

should be planted, and proper marketing should be done. I don’t know when I shall return, but I want all done well when I return. Now some of you see that every thing is done. It makes no difference who, just anyone.” Would you do that? Of course not. You would return from your trip abroad to find not the farm well kept, but run down, uncultivated, and in all probability, someone had been hurt or killed over a dispute. You wouldn’t do your business that way, neither did Jesus do His business that way. He didn’t come to the end of the way and say, “Now I’m about to leave. I have come into the world and died that the lost might be saved. Now as I leave, I want this work of winning the lost to go on. I don’t care who does it, just so it is done. Just anybody who wants to will be alright.” No! No! a thousand times. This is not the work of cultivating a farm or managing a factory. This is the greatest business in the world—winning the lost. And Jesus did not so indifferently leave it in the hands of just anyone. He gave the commission to the church and she is not only privileged to carry the gospel, she is also **obligated**. In fact Jesus said, **“Ye shall be witnesses unto me.”** The early church at Jerusalem failed to go as they should, and the Lord allowed persecution to come against them, and they were forced to go out with the message of Christ and His love.

Some would say, “Yes, it’s alright to carry the gospel to the unsaved, but if those of other lands do not hear the gospel, God won’t send them to hell, because they never heard.” This is a prevalent argument, but a most unscriptural one. Concerning this argument, let us run down a little simple outline for a few thoughts.

- I. **If the world were not lost, or if they could be saved any other way:**
- A. **Would Christ have died on the cross? If one could be saved without the blood of Christ, could**

not all do it, and therefore the death of Christ was not necessary? Ridiculous isn't it.

- B. Would Jesus have given the great commission?**  
If the natives in other lands could be saved without the gospel, would Jesus have commanded His Church to carry the gospel to all the world? Of course not.
- C. Would the Apostles have spoken in tongues that nations might hear on the day of Pentecost? Were the men speaking in other tongues just to be jabbering? Of course not. The people marvelling said, ". . . we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God," Acts 2:11. This would not have been done if the people of other tongues did not need to hear of the wonderful works of God.
- D. Would Paul have hazarded his life in Mission work? Read again from II Corinthians 11:24-27. and note the suffering of the apostle for Jesus' sake. Did he do this for the fun of it? Of course not. But he did it that he might take the good news of salvation to those yet in sin.

**II. Are there any other means of salvation?**

Read carefully Romans 10:11-17. The answer is clearly that there is no other way. Now if there is no other way, how could DeoPle elsewhere be saved regardless of where they are? They, too, must come under the same plan as anyone else.

**III. Is sincerity sufficient for salvation?**

People have come with the answer to the discussion concerning those in other lands who have never heard, "They are just as sincere as they can be." Well is sincerity enough? To go to the medicine cabinet and in all sincerity think that you are taking your prescription, but instead you

take poison; will you be spared the effect of the poison simply because you were sincere? The answer is simple. Neither is God going to excuse a part of the human race on the grounds of sincerity.

**IV. Why did Paul say that he was debtor<sup>7</sup>**

What did he owe? What was he indebted with? It was with the gospel of Christ. Souls were out there unsaved, and he was obligated to carry the gospel to them. If they could have been saved without it, Paul would not have owed it to them. And as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are obligated to carry the message to the lost masses of people. We are a debtor to them. We owe it. We are inclined to criticize those who do not pay their debts to the local merchants, and rightly so. But, how very dishonest have we been in not paying the debt we owe the Master and the world. God help us to see the responsibility that is ours.

**V. If the people are safe having never heard, should we not abstain from telling them?**

Let's assume that there was a colony of one thousand persons in Africa who had never heard the gospel of Christ. According to the theory of some, they are safe. But a missionary is sent there and preaches to all of them, and wins fifty of them to the Lord. That is a wonderful number, but isn't the colony worse off than before according to the theory of some? If one thousand were safe before the missionary arrived, and then only fifty were saved, and the other nine hundred and fifty were doomed for hell, the missionary work should be stopped immediately and everyone should cease to tell others about Jesus. Absurd isn't it.

**VI. What did Jesus mean in John 3:14-18?**

He meant just what He said when He said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath

not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” That’s the only plan of salvation God has. It’s up to us to get the message of the gospel out to them through the mission work of the church.

Of course there are many churches that could do some mission work, but would not be able to put a full time man on the field without any help. Such a need for mutual assistance makes it imperative to have associational work as Missionary Baptist believe in. Here let us note an outline on Church cooperation.

## Church Cooperation

### I. What Is Church Cooperation?

- A. There must be plurality Of churches. This is a simple deduction and** by the Scriptures it is **found** to have been practiced. See II Corinthians **8:1, 18-19, 23-24**. This is the plan of the North American Baptist Association: churches cooperating together and equally sharing the responsibilities and privileges of the work.
- B. There must be equal participation. There could** not be real cooperation if the **participating parties** did not have equal rights and privileges. To tell a man that he and I are going to cooperate but that I intend to have two votes to his one is to stretch the use of the word cooperate. Equal participation is one thing that Missionary Baptist believe in and practice. It is first practiced of course in the local church, but that isn’t all. Some churches practice it in the local church, but leave the principle after that. The churches of the North American Baptist Association practice it in associational capacity also. If one
- church is allowed three messengers, so is the other regardless of the size. This makes for real cooperation.

### C. **There must be ACTIVITY or OPERATION.**

There can not be cooperation without operation. We must operate to cooperate. This is a simple deduction, but could well be remembered and applied. It can also be reversed somewhat and say that the church that operates is most likely to cooperate. A “do nothing” group is most likely to have trouble getting their nothing done. We rejoice that the North American Baptist Association is pushing her boundaries to larger and larger fields. No wonder there is such a spirit of cooperation.

- D. There must be kindred beliefs and practices.** Read I John 1 :1-3.. How could I cooperate with one whom I did not agree? The Bible in the book of Amos asked the question, can two walk together except they be agreed? If one group believed in salvation through baptism and another believed in salvation by grace (which the Bible teaches), could these have harmony in their plans of evangelism? Of course not. If one church believed in pastor dictatorship and another believed in church democracy (which the Bible teaches) could they have cooperation? No. there must be kindred beliefs, and this is had among the churches of the North American Baptist Association. Don’t let your mind get fascinated with the big “all get together” idea of all beliefs, because there must be agreements of beliefs to have cooperation.

### II. The Necessity for Cooperation.

- A. A need for strength received from fellowship. The Lord knew best** when **He told His children not to absent themselves from the house of the Lord. A person just can not bear to be away** from the house of the Lord. He needs the strength that comes from the fellowship with others of the Lord’s people as well as the Spirit

tual food. This is true even on a larger scale with people of churches of like faith and order getting together. Those who attend the associational meetings come home with new Spiritual strength, and a better understanding of the field that is white unto harvest. As a member of the church, you should not wait until you are elected as a messenger to go to an association. Plan to go anyhow. You owe it to yourself, your church, and to your God. You'll know better what the church and the association are doing. You will be more cooperative. Pastors' hearts have been broken oftentimes by those who opposed everything that was recommended, and many of these did it only because they just didn't know. Remove yourself from such ignorance of the work and become a supporting member for a progressive church and pastor. Just make plans to attend the association. Of course you don't have time, but let God have some of it anyhow. You'll be glad you did.

- B. A need for mutual understanding among the **churches concerning doctrine and practice.** This has been discussed somewhat already, but this added thought. Individual churches standing alone and apart from each and never cooperating, are likely to become more varied in their belief than they would be if they came together at appointed intervals to reestablish their united adherence to the age old truths of the Bible.
- C. A need for assistance of other sister churches in carrying out the commission in missions and Christian

education. A church may hold tenaciously to the doctrine that the commission was given to the church and not to individuals, yet feel that they are not able to put a missionary on the field themselves. Must they do none at all? No. There are other churches that are in the same condition. Let these of like faith and order combine their efforts and then send out missionaries. This is now being done by the North American Baptist Association. Churches meet together (by messengers elected from her body) and as churches equal with one another, they make plans for the carrying out of the great commission which is to win the unsaved, and teach the saved to observe the teaching of the Lord.

### III. Our Current Plan of Cooperation.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus gives the scope of the mission work as: Jerusalem (home); Judea (home state); Samaria (adjoining state or interstate); uttermost part of the earth (foreign). Missionary Baptist have this plan in operation by churches of a given area cooperating together on a local scale to do home or local missions; churches of each state cooperating to carry out state missions; and churches of all the states cooperating in the N.A.B.A. in carrying out interstate and foreign missions. (Note the following charts as an example of such cooperation among the churches. The chart shows the State of Texas broken down. This general pattern is carried out in all the states, but it would be impossible of course to print every state. (Texas is given simply because this writer is located in this state at this time and had prepared this chart for earlier purposes.)