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THE CHURCH TREASURY AND COOPERATION

Bobby Liddell

Is There An "Exclusive Pattern?"

Walter H. Adams wrote: "It is wrong to waste the Lord's money; it is wrong to use ill-advised plans in doing the Lord's work when better plans can be devised."²⁰ Sometimes, doing the work of the church in the best possible way requires cooperation of congregations. H. A. Dixon observed: "Such cooperation is functional. Such plans seem to be the best within our reach to expedite evangelization in our generation."²¹

Brother Guy N. Woods, in debate with Roy Cogdill, in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1957, proved "there is no exclusive method of church cooperation taught in the Bible"; thus, to argue for one, exclusive pattern of cooperation is, as brother Woods put it, absurd.²²

Cooperation of congregations has been the case since the first century. There are some works, which are good and necessary, but which would never be done (and could not be done) without churches cooperating with one another. When a scriptural work is larger than that which one congregation can successfully accomplish, others may, and should, help. Otherwise, some of the greatest works ever carried out by our great brotherhood never would have begun. When a congregation is too small to support a missionary, it can, and should, join with other congregations to do so. Otherwise, it is powerless to do its part to help take the gospel to the world. John H. Banister made these points about ways in which congregations can cooperate. Congregations may cooperate in (1) benevolence; (2) in communicating and maintaining relations with each other; (3) in honoring withdrawal of fellowship; and, (4) in evangelism by joining to support an evangelist, a radio or television program, city-wide meetings, printing of tracts, teaching materials, advertising, and so on.²³

An important point to remember is this: congregations have the right to choose to cooperate with others, and in what ways to cooperate, and do not have to submit to demands, or commands, of other congregations or elderships concerning what works they will support. Local exercise of judgment and congregational autonomy must be preserved. When a church decides not to cooperate in a scriptural work designed to save souls, it should not impose its decision upon others, or make a law that others sin if they do cooperate--doing the work of the church.

We must also remember that the work of the church is not conducted through organizations such as a Missionary Society. Brother E. R. Harper wrote concerning the church's doing its work: "The Missionary Society [or any organization like it, BL] has **no right to do such things; it has no right to live.** That is what is wrong with it, it has no right to do these things."²⁴

Churches may cooperate in the area of benevolence, but such cooperation does not constitute an unscriptural "society." Hear brother H. A. Dixon's words.

Paul took collections, too, from churches of Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia for the needy saints in Palestine

on the occasion of another famine there....By such cooperation Paul demonstrates how Christians who have should respond to the needs of those who have not. (see II Cor. 8: 13-14) It is clear, therefore, that early Christians did cooperate in taking care of the needs of other Christians. They gave, as opportunity was afforded and ability extended, to all who were in need. (see Gal. 6:10) They cooperated in pure and undefiled religion. (see James 1:27)²⁵

Congregations may also cooperate in taking the gospel to the entire world as shown by the comments of Truman E. Spring and John H. Banister:

We as children of God need to co-operate in order to accept the responsibility placed upon us by opportunity. Those without prejudice, those not bigoted in their thinking know that Christians should work together. Though there is a negative school of thinking being promoted by a few that denounce and reject the co-operative efforts of the
(Continued on Page 3)

EDDY GILPIN (Class of 1985) 2009 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Dear fellow alumni and brethren,

Thank you so much for bestowing upon me the honor of "Alumnus of the Year" for 2009. Only those who have received this award can truly appreciate its meaning. I was deeply touched and humbled by your generous comments and kind words. I am thankful to a gracious and loving God, a supportive and faithful wife and family, a group of capable and loyal instructors, a constant and dedicated school, a devoted and serving congregation with which to serve, a tremendous brotherhood and a great group of friends, supporters, classmates and fellow alumni. I am greatly appreciative of and deeply indebted to each who is represented in these groups for the opportunities you have afforded, the encouragement you have given, and the instruction you have supplied to me along the way. This honor was as unexpected as it was undeserved; but I thank you from the bottom of my heart. May God continue to bless His church and each of you who serves faithfully in it.



Sincerely,
Eddy Gilpin

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MSOP ALUMNI AND FRIENDS DINNER

Mike McDaniel

The annual Alumni And Friends Dinner was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2009. There were almost 400 people in attendance. The crowd was so large that extra tables and chairs had to be brought in to accommodate them. The delicious barbecue and chicken dinner was once again superbly



PART OF THE OVERFLOW CROWD OF ALMOST 400 AT THE ANNUAL ALUMNI AND FRIENDS DINNER

catered by Leonard's. The students and their wives did a wonderful job decorating the room and cleaning up afterwards.

We celebrated the fact that the debt on the apartments had been eliminated to the glory of God. Garland Elkins spoke of the sacrificial giving of many to make this a reality.

Our treasurer, Keith Mosher, gave us his financial report. He spoke of those alumni who had departed this life in the past year and honored sister



RICK LAWSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE DISCUSSES THE ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jane McWhorter whose husband, honorary alumnus Don McWhorter, had recently passed away. During this time, we collected Alumni Association honorary dues in the amount of \$2500 (If you are an alumnus and have not yet sent in your \$25 honorary dues to brother Mosher, please do so).

The Alumni Association bestowed our Honorary Alumnus Award unto Greg Mangrum and unto Keith McAlister who had recently been appointed elders at Forrest Hill.

Rick Lawson, chairman of the awards committee, then discussed the bestowal of the 2009 Alumnus of the Year Award. Many worthy candidates were nominated. It was my pleasure to introduce the winner of the award who was from my class of 1985: Eddy Gilpin of Salem, Virginia. Service pins were then given by MSOP to Bobby Liddell (15 Years), Dan Cates (10 years), and Jan Kuehn (5 Years).

Director Emeritus Curtis Cates gave a report to us on the exciting work of The Gospel Journal.

Barry Grider, who preaches for Forest Hill, introduced George Bailey, our speaker for the evening. We appreciated his

exhortation to us very much.

In the board of directors meeting earlier that afternoon, I introduced a proposal to give money toward the acquiring and cataloguing of recently published books and whatever else might be needed to update the library. This proposal was approved and \$3400 was given by the association for this project. B. J. Clarke and I will serve as a committee to complete this work and will garner input from sister Cates, from the faculty, and from

interested alumni. The Forest Hill elders agreed to suspend the contribution for the Yokefellow at the dinner that we might have the opportunity to give toward updating the library. I am happy to announce that an additional \$2600 was contributed by those in attendance giving us a total of \$6000 for this effort!

Closing comments were offered by the capable Director of the school, brother Bobby Liddell, and by me. Kevin Beard led us in "I know the Lord will make a way for me" and the dinner was concluded as it had begun, with prayer unto our heavenly Father for His abundant blessings upon us. How grateful we were to have such a splendid Alumni And Friends Dinner.



KEITH MOSHER, DEAN OF ACADEMICS, PRESENTS THE 15 YEAR SERVICE PIN TO DIRECTOR BOBBY LIDDELL, AS MIKE MCDANIEL, ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, LOOKS ON.

As President of the Alumni Association, I would like to extend my personal thanks to the faculty, staff, and students of MSOP, and to those honored guests we invited to participate for everyone's gracious cooperation. We are also grateful for the tremendous number in attendance. It was of great encouragement to us!



MIKE MCDANIEL CHAIRS THE MEETING OF THE ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MSOP LECTURES A GREAT SUCCESS!

Sunday morning, March 29, with a building almost full, we began the forty-third annual lectureship with a stirring call to action presented by brother David Sain., as he spoke on "Evangelism: The Faith To Get The Job Done." From that moment, until the last exhortation given by brother Robert Taylor, on Thursday night, in his sermon "Go And Make Disciples," faithful brothers (and sisters who so capably taught and encouraged the ladies) spoke the Truth with love and enthusiasm on the timely topic: "To Seek And To Save." Many have commented on how much this study on evangelism meant to them, causing them to think much more soberly about their responsibilities, to look more optimistically at their opportunities, and to commit themselves more than ever before to the Lord's work!

Brother Keith Mosher did a superb job of directing the lectureship, and all the members at Forest Hill, the MSOP students, faculty, and staff worked together in harmony to accomplish the myriad of tasks required for such an undertaking. Thanks to everyone! We were joined by great crowds of hundreds of beloved brothers and sisters, both old friends and new, from many states and foreign countries, including a very large number of MSOP alumni. We were especially encouraged by the great number of alumni who attended this year.

The Forest Hill elders deserve our commendation for their foresight in having such a program. Who knows what good will come, and what the inspiring sermons will mean, and to how many, over the years to come, if this world continues. Surely, the efforts put forth will bring honor to our Lord, and will help souls to be saved, because they have encouraged us to get busy doing the work of the Lord's church.

Thanks to all who worked so diligently to make the lectureship successful. To God be all the honor and glory! We look forward to your being with us at next year's lectureship on: **"Jesus: A Family Album--A Study Of Types And Metaphors In The Bible," March 28-April 1, 2010.**

36TH ANNUAL METRO DETROIT BIBLE LECTURESHIP Curtis A. Cates

It was a pure delight for brother Barry Grider and me to have the privilege of appearing on the wonderful Metro Detroit Bible Lectureship this year. In the words of brother Barry, we were "overwhelmingly impressed!"

The 36th Annual Lectureship was made possible by ten congregations in the greater Detroit, Michigan, area. It was overseen this year by the Parkview Church of Christ, Warren, MI, Steve Woodhouse, preacher. It met in the beautiful facility of the Royal Oak congregation in Royal Oak, MI, Peter Morphe, preacher. The lectureship took place March 9-13, 2009.

The theme of the lectureship was "The Deity of Christ and His Preeminence." The speakers were: Monday, James Meadows; Tuesday, Larry Acuff; Wednesday, Curtis A. Cates; Thursday, Barry Grider; Friday, Victor Eskew. Those in charge of the service each evening were the following churches: Vandyke, Monday; Utica, Bryant Reynolds, preacher; Tuesday; Hazel Park, Tom Meade, preacher; Wednesday; North Warren, Allan Fraser, preacher; Thursday; Royal Oak, Friday. The audiences each numbered some 400, from many congregations for fifty miles around.

The Metro Detroit Bible Lectureship is growing each year, as more and more brethren in a wide area cooperate wonderfully to make it happen, to the Lord's glory. Indeed, it was very encouraging to behold. In 2010, Royal Oak will oversee the Lectureship.

WE EXTEND OUR SYMPATHY

In recent months, four alumni have gone to their rewards. John Hunt (1975); Jerry Catchim (1975); Bill Williams (1975); and Ed Allard (1972). The families of some of our alumni have also been, and are, in grief over the loss of loved ones. The Joey Davis family's newborn son died. The Davises graduated in 2004. Also, two of our alumni lost fathers. Tim Burrough's father, Willie, a faithful Christian, just recently died. Tim graduated in 2004 as did Matthew Crowe, who also recently lost his father. And Claude Ferguson, a former Knight Arnold member and the father of Howell Ferguson (who graduated in 1984) also left us this year.

May our Father hold each of the above close to Him, and all whom we do not know, who are also grieving over the loss of a loved one is our prayer here. Grief is unique to all going through it, and although no one knows what anyone else is feeling, it is certain that God does know and cares (Psa. 55:22). The alumni family suffers all of the pangs of life that all the world knows, but we do not suffer as those who have no hope (1 The. 4:13-18). You who have lost loved ones are in our prayers and thoughts. Please pray for us.

Keith A. Mosher, Sr. (for the faculty).

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children of God, I stand before you firmly convinced that as long as the autonomous feature of the congregation of the Lord's people is respected and is advanced that people from various congregations can and should work together in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ and providing for those less fortunate than ourselves... Why should there be co-ordinated effort among the children of God? Because the cause is one, the extension of the kingdom by the proclamation of truth.²⁶

The New Testament teaches that we, as Christians, are all members of the same (one) body or church. This is true in spite of the fact that we have membership in different congregations and are under the oversight of different elderships. While, in our congregational capacity, we recognize the oversight of elders, yet, we all recognize allegiance to Jesus Christ, the one supreme head of the church universal!... Today congregations of the Lord's people, if they choose, can scripturally engage in cooperative ventures to advance the cause of Jesus Christ. This principle is well established in the New Testament.²⁷

The Problem Of Consistency

Some, while not denying the scriptural authority for a church treasury, deny the scriptural usage of the treasury for certain works of the church. While some declare cooperative works have "deadly parallels to the Missionary Society," they have argued for putting "a box in the vestibule," into which contributions could be made for those very works!²⁸ It appears some can do all kinds of things, with the money in the church treasury, EXCEPT help a child in need. Let anyone of them produce a New Testament passage that shows the care of an orphan, or the way by which that care was given. As one brother, commenting on the inconsistency of such law-makers, said, the church can take money out of the treasury to buy fertilizer to feed a lawn, but not to buy food to feed a starving child (or any non-saint). Yet, God gives to both the just and the unjust, and we are to be "perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Mat. 5:43-48). Roy Deaver wrote:

Certain brethren are terribly inconsistent in their views with regard to the realm of expediency... When L.W. Hayhurst left the anti-Sunday school position he said: "I have decided that when I build a church building I do the same thing in principle which they do when they have a Bible class. How can I do the same thing which they do, and then condemn them for what they do?"²⁹

(More Next Month, BL)