

# Operation: Cooperation

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Cliff L Christman

It is with great pleasure and high expectations that the Trinity Missionary Baptist Church (TMBC) would like to announce our opening of the Greater Lexington Branch of Antioch Baptist College. We are pleased to say that the Lord willing we will be prepared to begin classes in the fall of 2008.

As many of you know, I am now the pastor of the church that the late Dr. Carl Sadler had pastored. It was the desire and vision of TMBC to start a school; pre-school through college. This fall we began the pursuit of that vision. God has enabled us to start a school this past fall and now after being approached by Dr. Dan Ferrell we have decided to cooperate in this great endeavor of educating God's people on the college level.

The enemy of our soul has been engaged in war against God and His people since the Garden of Eden and it is not likely to let up, rather it will only increase until Jesus comes. With this in mind we understand the importance of sound Baptists working together to accomplish the will of God. For far too long we have been apart and unwilling to work together due to our independence. I firmly believe that every New Testament Baptist Church should be autonomous and indigenous; however we must not allow that to keep us from working together. It is my personal opinion that for too long we have been too independent and the lack of cooperation among Baptists has greatly hurt us.

My life's philosophy has come from the mindset of Nehemiah who understood the importance of *Building and Battling*. With a great spirit of cooperation Nehemiah began a task that his critics laughed to scorn and despised saying, "What is this thing that ye do?" (Neh. 2:19) In verse 20 of the same chapter Nehemiah gave them their answer, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem."

Nehemiah knew something that many Baptists have long forgotten; he knew that his primary purpose was building. There was no battling to be done unless the battle came to them, and when it did, they were prepared with sword and trowel in hand. Many have been content to battle and have long left the building.

My brethren, it is with deep regret that I say the walls are in need of our attention. The foundations are still there and many great men along with great churches have done a marvelous work in the past, but it is our turn now. Yesterday's manna will not suffice, it must be fresh daily. Our churches are filled with too many who have allowed their memories to become greater than their dreams and in doing so our churches are not threatening the gates of hell like we once had. Please understand my spirit, I have no desire to be critical, (I love God's people and His churches) only observant. What I have observed lately is far too many who are fighting in the wrong battle and even fighting each other.

Nehemiah stood and said, “Be not ye afraid of them [the real enemy]: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for [not against] your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.” (Neh. 4:14b)

There are not very many young men who are surrendering to preach seems to be the complaint of many. This is an accurate observation, but have you ever wondered why? My oldest son (20yrs. old) made a statement to me recently that burdened my heart greatly. He said, “Dad, I could be the next C.H. Spurgeon for all that anyone knows, but the squabbling over little issues among God’s people discourages the very thought.”

Needless to say this statement struck my heart. Like any father who knows Christ, I would love to see my sons surrender their lives to Christ. That is my heart’s desire, but will our attitudes and indifference squelch the fire that may have been ignited in their hearts? God help us. My beloved brethren, we do not always see things the same way, but we are children of the King who have been called into this great battle for His glory’s sake and we must remember who the true enemy is. As you enter this New Year why not ask yourself how you can personally get back into this building project (The Lord’s Churches and His Kingdom) and encourage others to do the same. Remember it is the building (ministry) that is most important, you will not have to look for battles, Satan will find you.

*Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch...*

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