Christian Cooperation

Intro: *Co* means “with”, *operate* means “to work”. Thus, cooperate means “to work with” and cooperation means “the act of working with.” In 1 Cor. 3:9 “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” and 2 Cor. 6:1 “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” Paul sets forth the principles of Christian cooperation. Let us notice what it requires.

I. WORKERS.
   A. Paul says, “We are workers, labourers.” People are to operate.
   B. We were created to work.
      1. Gen. 2:15 “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”
      2. Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
      3. Ecc. 9:10 “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”
   C. The Father and Son are workers.
      1. John 5:17 “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”
      2. John 9:4 “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
   D. The fact that God is a worker gives to work a wonderful dignity.
      1. We cannot fulfill our high mission in the world without work.
      2. We cannot attain the divine likeness without work; 2 Pet. 1:4 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

II. FELLOW-WORKERS.
   A. Working.
   1. Working alone is not cooperation.
   a. It is possible to work and not cooperate.
   b. That is not to say we should not work alone.
   2. Our text shows we are to work together or cooperate.
   a. This cooperation is truly a fine art.
   b. Tragically some never learn it.
   B. Some things that insure cooperation among men.
      1. Mutual love. It is a genuine delight to work with people we love.
      2. A common understanding about the work to be done and the plan to be followed. Unless brethren understand each other they cannot work together.
      3. The spirit of humility. Workers need to be willing to sacrifice personal opinion, fit into the plan, follow the leadership.

III. THE RIGHT THIRD PARTNER.
   A. We are to work together with God.
   B. Workers together without God. Examples:
      1. Judas and the chief priest worked together; Mat. 26:14-16 “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”
2. Ananias and Sapphira worked together; Acts 5:1-6 “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.”

3. These had the wrong third party, Satan.

C. We must have:
1. Supreme desire to do God’s will.
2. Supreme desire to follow the New Testament plan.
3. The world’s greatest partner.
   a. He is the one with all power.
   b. Phi. 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

IV. Examples of Cooperation.

A. Exo. 4:1-17 “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.”

1. Moses and Aaron.
2. By uniting their gifts and powers, they overcame natural weakness and became workers together with God.
3. Each worker had his limitations; but when workers unite their gifts and powers they can encourage each other and attain their objective.

B. Exo. 17:8-13 “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one
side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."

1. Moses, Aaron, and Hur.
2. War between Israel and the Amalekites. When Moses held his hands up, Israel prevailed.
3. Aaron and Hur would not stand by and allow Moses to bear the burden alone and the battle be lost.
4. By working together a weakness was overcome and victory won.

C. 1 Cor. 3:6 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

1. Paul, Apollos and God.
2. Paul preached, sowing the seed. Apollos revived that which Paul had sown. God was all the while giving the increase.

Conclusion: The church is joined in battle, engaged in a spiritual conflict. Any leader is too weak to win by his own power, he needs the united support of the brethren, with God helping us.