



COMPETITION vs. COOPERATION

The desire to “go it alone” has produced some of the most dramatic moments in history. Over the last several weeks, a world audience has witnessed a courageous (some would say lunatic) man attempt to circle the world, alone, in a specially equipped aircraft, without stopping for refueling. If he succeeds, he will make aviation history. It seems that this inner drive to showcase one’s lack of dependence on anyone or anything besides one’s own self is part of every human being. This inner propulsion for independence can be an incredible force for good, or a destructive force for evil.

In 1983, when commercial cell towers began springing up across this country, paving the way for a new technology called the “cell phone” industry, service providers raced to build their own individual towers to meet the market demand. By the mid 90’s, when communications giant AT&T’s monopoly was broken up, additional service providers entered the picture. Rather than simply manage tower sites, these providers focused on selling airtime for what is now known as the “wireless” industry. Because of community zoning laws, which were designed to prevent unsightly multiple tower sites on hillsides, the wireless industry began “sharing” tower sites. This “sharing” mindset prevented wireless providers from operating in an inefficient and ineffective manner.

In Luke 16, Jesus states that, “the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser (more shrewd) than the children of light.” How I wish that many of us in the Christian community could learn, what some in this world have learned, that COOPERATION is more effective than COMPETITION. As I have been privileged to travel this country and the world, I have been amazed to see how much of what is done in God’s name is done out of a spirit of competition. Churches split and new ones begin, not because of a commitment to truth, or a desire to evangelize, but rather as a result of an intensely competitive desire to prove that they are the one that is right. While I love Christian schools and colleges, I fear that many Christian day schools and colleges are started from an impure motive of competition rather than from a pure motive of obeying the Lord. I Corinthians 3, says that “we are laborers TOGETHER with God.” In my mind, it is one of the unique privileges of the ministry to cooperate with other like-minded men of God, who share a common commitment to truth and similar desire to reach this world with the gospel. We need not re-invent the wheel. We need not “build our own tower” simply because we are too arrogant to cooperate with another brother who loves and serves the same Lord. We ought to be thrilled when another Bible believing, Bible preaching church or individual is successful in what God has called them to do.

I remember how clear it was to me, as a high school student, that the competition against another Christian high school (and believe me, I am a competitor when it comes to sports), whether in sports, academics or the arts, ended when that particular contest ended. Really, we were involved in the same great cause: that of training the next generation of Christian leaders for God's glory. Some of my best friends were from the other school, our "competitors." In reality, we were "laborers together" (participants in cooperation) in a common cause. Life is too short and the opportunity too great for us to view other genuinely dedicated, Christ loving servants, as anything other than co-laborers with whom we ought to be in cooperation.

Dave Kistler

President,

H.O.P.E Ministries International
www.hopeministriesonline.com