

Friday, August 28 2009

Plan for United Cooperation Summary



Cooperation Plan Summary

August 5, 2009

The purpose of this document is to provide a structure for Regional and International cooperation among our family of churches around the world.

The Regional Families of Churches

For decades we, like the churches in the New Testament, have functioned as regional families of churches. This cooperation plan recognizes the existing families of churches worldwide and encourages their growth and continuation.

Churches participate in this "Cooperation Plan" by first identifying themselves with the circle of churches in their geographic region. These regional families of churches are expected to engage in humble and meaningful relationships with each other at the regional level. They are committed to mutual discipling, exchanges of full-time workers, and cooperation on church plantings, missions and working relationships and mutually respectful, agreed accountability with other church leaderships in their region. [1]

These regional families of churches are committed to cooperate in every way needed to advance the gospel and maintain doctrinal and relational unity. Leaders meet regularly to pray, coordinate, and strengthen one another. Regional groups work together to plant new congregations, plan regional conferences, camps, seminars, and events. Each region establishes regional committees as needed and works together to strengthen weak churches.

Matters of International Importance

Every year delegates from each of these regional families of churches [2] are committed to meet to discuss matters of international importance. [3] The regional families of churches send delegates to this meeting to act on the agenda put forward. [4] At this meeting questions are addressed concerning international conferences, our international web presence, mission work, HOPEww, etc. [5] The delegates have established committees to insure cooperation on global needs and these efforts have borne much fruit.

Evangelists, elders and teachers from around the world will seek counsel and consensus with each other to meet global needs, through our International Leadership Conferences and annual Delegates Meetings. Communication to connect the churches and individual disciples is through Disciples Today.

Who can participate?

The regional families of churches include all congregations that embrace sound doctrine and a desire to cooperate. Churches may be invited to join or request participation. Membership would be recognized by that regional family of churches and/or the international committee. [6] Following the New Testament pattern, if a congregation strays from sound doctrine [7] the regional family of churches will discuss the issues with the specific congregation and take appropriate actions; potentially including the exclusion of an errant congregation from the regional family of churches. Churches are also free to withdraw their participation. The International delegates are also able to exclude a church from participation if it is deemed necessary and appropriate.

Cooperation between congregations is the one another way of biblical relationships and remains crucial to our success in preaching the gospel to as many as possible. [8] May God bless all our efforts.

[1] If a church offers to join us, and is accepted, then they are also agreeing to close and meaningful fellowship with surrounding churches.

[2] We currently have about 30 of these “families of churches” worldwide.

[3] The last Delegates Meeting was held in Kiev in October 2008.

[4] The number of delegates sent from each family of churches varies according to size. Two delegates minimum. Larger regions have one delegate per 1,000 members. Observers are welcome.

[5] Any topic that is appropriate can be discussed.

[6] If a church asks to participate but has no ties to any neighboring churches, the committee heads can help steer them into an existing family of churches.

[7] The shared beliefs and practices described in the original Cooperation Plan detail many of these. We respectfully recognize that each church leadership may vary in implementation of practice in keeping with these listed Bible principles. Our complete normative doctrine is found in inspired Scripture alone.

[8] The Cooperation Plan has blessed our churches. God has enabled us to host dozens of conferences over the last few years, attended by thousands of disciples. It has brought together dozens of teachers, elders, women leaders, campus leaders, HOPE workers, and others for committee work around the world. It has enhanced our communication and coordination. We hope all congregations in our fellowship will join with us in affirming this summary document.

Written by Written by ICOC Chairmen Service Team

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