

Interdependent Churches

by Anton Bosch

Local churches are interdependent and must maintain the unity of the spirit, which is based on the truth of the word of God.

Duration: 44:00

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 4:1-3, Titus 3:13

Topics: "Interdependent Churches"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity among believers based on the truth of the Word of God. He highlights the need for agreement and alignment in faith and purpose. The speaker also mentions the significance of having one Lord who controls our lives and the importance of not being controlled by materialism or other gods. Additionally, he mentions the concept of mutual learning and benefiting from one another's gifts and skills in the context of the church. The sermon references Ephesians 4, which speaks about the unity of the Spirit and the shared characteristics of true believers.

Transcript

John chapter 17, the gospel according to John chapter 17, and we spoke last week about the autonomy of local churches, that local churches are independent in the sense that they are financially self-sufficient, but also spiritually self-sufficient, self-supporting, and self-propagating. But at the same time, we said that we're gonna bring the balance this evening, and that is that local churches are interdependent. No local, no church is an island.

No church is totally on its own, and I think that this is one area in which we here have a weakness, and we, what the solutions are, I'm not sure, but we need to do and be obedient to the word. And so in John chapter 17, Jesus prays his prayer. This is the Lord's prayer, not Matthew chapter six, as we often quote, but this is his prayer.

And he says, and I'm gonna read from verse six. I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you. For I have given to them the words which you have given me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came forth from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them, I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you gave me, for they are yours, and all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am

glorified in them.

I'm no longer in the world, but these are in the world. And I come to you, Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name.

Those whom you gave me, I have kept, and none of them is lost except the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to you, and these things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth.

Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, and that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me, and the glory which you have given me, I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one, and I in them, and you in me, and that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world. Oh, righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you sent me.

And I have declared to them your name, and I will declare it, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. And so Jesus prays for a number of things, but one of the things he's praying for is for unity amongst the believers. And normally we would preach this and say he's praying for unity in the local church, but he is not saying, I'm praying for unity in the church in Jerusalem, or I'm praying for unity in the church in Burbank, but he is saying that all believers may be one.

And so in verse 20, he says, I do not pray for these alone, not just the 12 that were there with him, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. In other words, he's praying for all believers who will believe on the word. And he says in verse 21 that they all may be one, that they all may be one.

It's the will of God that all believers are one or be one, not just, and we say, oh, well, as long as we have unity here in this church, that's all that matters. Well, it has to begin here. If it cannot begin here, and if we don't have unity here, well, then how are we going to find unity beyond this church? But he's clearly not praying just for unity in the local church.

He's praying for unity amongst all believers in the whole world. In John chapter 10, Jesus makes a statement concerning the Jews and the Gentiles, John chapter 10 and verse 16. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold.

Now, he was speaking about Israel as being this fold and the other sheep as being the Gentiles. And so he says that other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring and they will hear my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd, one flock and one shepherd. Now, when he says there's gonna be one flock and one shepherd between Jew and Gentile, then clearly he is meaning that

there would also be one flock and one shepherd amongst the Gentiles, that all would be one and that we are one flock and that there is one shepherd.

Sometimes when we look at the way that local churches operate, we get the impression that each of us has our own Lord. Each one of us has our own shepherd and that we have the Lord and the other people down the road, they have the Lord, but somehow it's a different Lord and so somehow we end up going our own independent ways. But the Lord Jesus says this is my purpose that they all may be one, that there would be one flock, that there may be one shepherd.

Now, the problem is that we cannot bring this about in a human way and this is the problem is that there are many preachers today and leaders who have read these scriptures and said we have to bring unity to the church and the division that we find amongst believers is not good. And of course it is not good. The problem is how do we bring that unity about and we can bring that unity about by using human methods of consultation and discussion and compromise.

And that's the only way we can bring that kind of unity about. Here in Burbank, there is a ministerial association and I'm not part of that association because included in that association are Christian scientists and Wiccans and New Ages. Now, we cannot have unity on the basis of the fact that we all somehow believe in some kind of God.

The unity has to be based on the truth of the word of God and if we go to Ephesians chapter four, Paul has quite a lot to say and this is a whole message on its own but I just want to skim through this very quickly so that we just get the idea here. Ephesians chapter four, remember we've been speaking about these ministries but the ministries in Ephesians 4.11 is in the context of the whole of the chapter which speaks about the church. I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called with all loneliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

And so he speaks about the unity of the spirit. This is a spiritual unity. This is a unity which comes as a result of the fact that all true believers share seven different things together and he lists those things.

There is, verse four, one body. There is one body and we know that Paul says that by one spirit are we baptized into one body we are not baptized and when we baptize people here we do not baptize them into the body of this church. We baptize them into the body of Christ and of the body of all believers.

And we are part, so by the spirit of God we are placed into one body. Now he says this is the unity that we have to keep. It is based on the fact that we are one body.

Now those who are not saved and born again are not one body with those who are saved because they have not been taken by the spirit of God and baptized or immersed into the body of Christ. They may have joined the church, they may belong to the church, they may have been baptized, they may have had all sorts of, but unless God by the spirit in the new birth experience takes them and makes them supernaturally part of the church, they are not part. And so we cannot have unity, there is no unity for us to preserve between saved and unsaved.

Then he says there is, verse, where are we, four. There is one body and one spirit. And Paul says that we have all been made to partake of one spirit.

Now new ages have not partaken of the spirit of Christ. They have partaken of a spirit, but not the spirit of Christ, and this was the spirit of God. Wiccans have partaken of a spirit, but it is not the Holy Spirit.

And so we can have no unity with those who have not been partakers, who are not indwelt by the spirit of God. Just as you were called in one hope of your calling. We have one hope.

Now, folk, the reality is that many Christians, that the majority of Christians today do not share the same hope that I have. That's quite scary. My hope is the resurrection.

My hope is in the coming again of Jesus, when he will set up his kingdom. That is my hope. The vast majority of Christians today, their hope is that they will establish and that they are establishing the kingdom of God on this earth.

And many of them will mock you and me, and say we are not those Christians who have nothing better to do than to wait for the rapture. Now, we have, he says we have one hope. This, if we do not have one hope, how can we have unity? How can we be one? If we're going in, because my hope will determine.

Jesus says where your treasure is, there will your heart be. And if my hope is in the resurrection and your hope is in this world, we're going in different directions, because my hope will determine where I'm going. And when I learned to paraglide, one of the important things I had to learn was that I needed to look where I wanted to go, because you go where you look.

And so if you look down on the ground, you're gonna go down there. That's just a fact of life. And so wherever it is, and if you're driving the motor car, and I'm sure we've seen, we see people driving down the street and there's a pretty girl, and they look at the girl, and where's the motor car go? It goes to the curb.

You go where you look. You can't be looking over there and walking there. And if I'm looking for the resurrection, I'll be walking in that direction.

If you're looking for a kingdom in this world that is of this world, you're gonna be walking in another direction. How can two walk together unless they'd be agreed? And then he says that they, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Lord, who is our master? Who is our Lord? Not just our savior, but who is my Lord? Who controls my life? And if your life is controlled by materialism, if your life is controlled by some other God with some other master that controls you and controls your life, then we have no unity. One faith.

What are we saved in? Saved by? What faith is it? Is it faith in Christ and his work? Or is it faith in the things that I have achieved and I have done in my own goodness and my good works? And of course, here the parting of the ways comes with the Romanist, whose faith is in his religion and in his church and in the things that he has done. And yet my faith is in Christ and him alone. There is only one faith.

There is one baptism. One God. Not Allah and God, but one God.

And father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. Now if you add up all of those and we don't have time to go into each one of those in detail, you'll find that there are seven things that are the basis of our unity. And the basis of our unity you'll see is in the father and in the son and in the spirit.

In verse three, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And in verse five, there is, sorry, verse four, there is one body and there is one spirit. Verse five, there is one Lord.

And verse six, there is one God and father. Our unity is in the Trinity, in father, son, and Holy Spirit. Very, very important.

Our unity is not in the fact that we serve one God just like the Jews do and just like the Muslims do. But in fact, our unity is in these seven things and in the fact that there is father, son, and Holy Spirit. Now he says then, because we have this, we need to maintain that unity.

That is not something we can bring about. It is something which is a reality because of what Christ has done when he placed us into his body, when he made the father and the spirit part with us and these things that he has spoken about. And so we are placed in, and whether we like it or not, whether you like it or not, if you are born again, you are one with me.

And all I need to do and what you and I need to do is we need to maintain that unity, endeavoring to keep, verse three, the unity of the spirit. And so the devil is going to come to try and to destroy that unity, to bring division, and what we need to do is we need to keep it. Now he's also very realistic and he knows that we're not always gonna be successful.

That's why he says endeavoring to keep. Try to do this because he doesn't say, do it, because he knows that that would be an impossibility for us just to do this all the time. But he says try.

Now he then says, down in verse 11, he speaks about the ministry for the equipping of the saints, verse 13, until we all come to the unity of the faith. Now remember, we've spoken about these two little words, the faith. The faith is not the fact that I trust in Jesus.

The faith is the body of teaching that we hold. It's the doctrine that we hold, that we need to contend, Jude says, earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. And so we need to come to a point where we all believe the same thing.

When we all get saved, we don't all believe the same thing. We come from different backgrounds. We come from different traditions.

And so we have different, we believe differently on different issues. But if we allow the church to have its impact on our lives and the ministries to be working in our lives, and these things to, then we will come to a point where we will have the unity until we achieve. This is something we have to work towards.

We have to work towards believing the same thing. Our unity is not based on that. Our unity is based on what Christ did.

But now that we are one because of what Christ has done, we need to work towards a practical outworking of that spiritual reality. The same way as I am saved, not because of anything that I have done. I'm saved because of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary.

But now that I am saved, that spiritual reality needs to work its way out in my daily living. And so now I need to live like somebody who is saved. And the same with the unity.

Because we are one because of what Christ has done at the cross, that spiritual reality now needs to find a physical outworking in our relationships in the local church and in our relationships with all true believers. All right. Now let's go to the book of Corinthians, the first letter to the Corinthians.

And the, the Corinthians had many problems you may remember. One of those problems was that they were sectarian. Remember they said, some said we're of Paul and others said we're of Apollos.

And not only in the local church were they sectarian, but they were sectarian relative to other churches. They felt that they were superior to other churches in many ways. And so Paul dealt with this.

And this is a real problem, not just for us here, but for all true Bible believing churches. As we see the, the corruption that has come into the churches, we see error and deception happening all around us. It's very easy to get into a position where we feel that we are superior and that we have truth and that we have not fallen for the error and so become isolationists and become separatists and feeling that we cannot relate to anybody else.

And this was the problem here with the Corinthians. Now I'm gonna go through a whole lot of scriptures with you and let's just see how Paul deals with this. 1 Corinthians chapter one, and verse two, to the church of God, which is in Corinth, to those are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.

Now look at this, with all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. Notice what he's doing. He's saying, I'm writing to the church to those who have been saved, who are called to be saints, but he's reminding them that not only are you saints, but with all who in every other place call on the name of Christ.

So he's reminding them that they are not the only saints, but there are others also who call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and he's not just your Lord, but he's theirs also. Can you see what he's doing? He's reminding them of the fact that they are not the only true church, that they're not the only people to have a relationship with Jesus, but that he is our Lord, but he is theirs and ours also. We have one Lord.

He wrote to the Ephesians. 1 Corinthians chapter four and verse 17. For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church.

So again, he's reminding them that the way that they need to act is the way that he is expecting others to act, that they are not on their own. 1 Corinthians chapter seven and verse 16. Got the wrong scripture.

I write these by hand and then I read, then I type them and I can't always read my handwriting. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 16. I'll have to find out what that one was.

1 Corinthians 10, 16. The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? And so again, he's reminding them that everyone who is partaker of the blood of Christ, not in the cup on the Lord's table, but who've been washed by the blood of Christ are part of the same communion, are part of the same body. 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the churches of the saints. You can see how he's constantly reminding them about what happens in other places also. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse one.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, this is collecting money for the poor believers in Jerusalem or Judea. He says concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also. So get your act in line with the other churches.

Do as the other churches do. Verse six of chapter 16. And 1 Corinthians 6, sorry, 1 Corinthians 16 verse six.

And it may be that I will remain and even spend the winter with you that you may send me on my journey wherever I go. Now, what's he speaking about here? He's speaking about sport. And he's saying that you may support me so that I can go and basically preach to others.

He's not saying that I can go on a holiday to wherever, but so that I can go and preach and so send me on my journey. And so he's speaking about their responsibility to support him as he ministers in other places. Verse 19, the churches of Asia greet you.

Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord with the church that is in their house. Again, you can see how he's just reminding them of the fact that there are other believers and that they are in relationship to those other believers and that those other believers are concerned about them, sending love and sending greetings to them. And then 1 Corinthians chapter 14, and I'm going back now and verse 36.

And I want you to see this very, very strong statement that Paul makes here. 1 Corinthians 14, 36. He's speaking about order in the church.

And he says, or did the word of God come originally from you? Now, he's being very sarcastic. He says, were you the originators of the word of God? And then he says, or was it you only that had reached? Were you the only people who received the word of God? You can see he's being sarcastic. He's saying, the word of God didn't come to you first.

And in other words, there are other people around, there are other churches, there are other believers. And so you can see that he's very, very strongly urging them to be part of other churches, to be in relationship and in fellowship with other churches. Now, how did this work? And we can go through all scripture after scripture and deal with all of the theory, but obviously we need to deal with a practical issue.

How did this work? And how would we put this into practice? Of course, one of the connections those days between the churches, remember that they did not have the communication methods that we have today. They didn't have telephones and email and the mail was very, very slow, but they were able to write letters. And so one of the most important connections between the churches was the itinerant preachers.

And it's not that different today. And so these preachers would move from place to place and they would be a lifeline connecting these churches together. They would bring teaching and preaching.

They would bring greetings from one church to the other. As we read, Paul says that the churches in Asia, they send their greetings. And also the church that is in Apollos' house, I think it was.

And so they bring greetings, they bring news from one church to the other. Paul says that when somebody comes here, then I will hear how it's going with you. He says to another church, he says, I hear that there are disputes amongst you.

How did he hear that? Because people had come from that church and given him the news. And so news flows between the churches through these itinerant preachers. And not the only way, but this is the way it was there.

And of course, there was the letters that would flow between the churches. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and he says, you must read this letter in the Laodicean church. They must also read the letter.

And you need to read the letter that I wrote to the Laodiceans. And so there's the letters that go between the churches. There are financial gifts that flow between them.

At the hands, and I'm speaking specifically about the role of the itinerant or the preachers that moved around, many of them would carry the gifts from one church to the other. And we see that happen on a number of occasions. These preachers were expected to be received by other churches.

And Paul, remember, he speaks about diatrophies. I'm sorry, John, in John's third epistle speaks about diatrophies, who does not receive the brethren. In other words, he's closed the church off and he's not willing to receive outside ministry any longer.

And then of course, these preachers are to be supported financially, even though they are preaching in other churches and we'll see a scripture. In fact, let's go to Titus chapter three, just before Hebrews, Philemon, and then Titus going back. Titus chapter three, and verse 13.

Send Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. Now again, it's not that clear, but you can see that when he speaks about send them on their journey, this is just a way of speaking. It doesn't mean send them away.

It means give them something, give them some financial support as they go. Send them on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. You can see the explanation in the last part of that verse.

So make sure that they're looked after. Verse 14, and let our people also learn to maintain good works, and he's speaking about giving, and meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. Now you'll see this is in the context of Apollos and Zenos.

Apollos we know was a preacher and Zenos we presume is a preacher also, that they are now going to preach somewhere else. And Paul says, make sure that their needs are met when they preaching somewhere else. In other words, the local churches have a responsibility to support workers as they preach in other areas.

And that may seem as a foreign concept, especially to churches that are isolationist, and say, well, he's not preaching here, so why do we have to support him? But in fact, he's preaching in another area where they are maybe not able to support him. And so missionaries need to be sent out and missionaries need to be provided for as they travel amongst the churches. There is communication between the churches in the form of believers visiting those various churches.

And we see that in various letters of Paul, how that people are at one place and then they're in another place, and they carry news and they carry greetings and they build fellowship between those churches. You know some things about the churches in South Africa, simply because I am here and I've told you about them. And they know something about you because I've told them some things about you.

And so we know something about the church in Tijuana, because some of you have been there and have carried greetings and have carried news to them and have carried, and so a relationship is being built on that basis. Financial support flowed between the churches for two main reasons. The first was for famine relief, and the other was to support the itinerant preachers.

That was the only reasons why money flowed between the churches. There was the need to build doctrinal agreement between the churches. This is often the reason or the lack of doctrinal agreement, the lack of believing the same things is often the basis for division.

And yet in Acts chapter 15, you see that there was, there could have been a division because brothers came from Jerusalem and they said certain things concerning the law and concerning kosher and so on. And the guys said, no, we don't agree with us in Antioch. But then what they said is, no, we can't just divide and say, well, you know, you guys keep the law and we're Gentiles, we don't keep the law.

So you do your thing and we'll do our thing over here. No, in fact, they said, we have to resolve this issue and so they send brothers to Jerusalem and they have a meeting and they discuss the issue and they resolve the problem so that they could believe and teach the same thing. Paul does the same.

Paul says, you know, I didn't receive my message from Peter, I received it from Jesus. But he says, after a time, he says, I decided I better go to Jerusalem and check with those brothers that we're in fact in agreement, that we are preaching the same thing. Paul could have said, oh, well tough, you know, you guys in Jerusalem, you preach your message, I'll preach my message.

But no, the attitude is we are one and we want to make sure that we maintain that unity and that we are indeed preaching the same message. Now, that is something which I believe is a challenge to us because oftentimes you would say, well, you know, we don't agree with that church and so we just go our own way. But in fact, there needs to be an effort or an endeavor to try and resolve those doctrinal conflicts in order to build true unity.

Now, we will not always succeed at that, but it is something that we need to work at and we need to try and build on. In the letter to the Corinthians, you'll remember Paul on a number of occasions says, that's the custom in the other churches. And so he's saying, learn from the other churches, do it the way that they do.

Many times we have to reinvent the wheel when in fact somebody else has already gone through that experience and we can learn from them, we can see how they do that, how they do certain things. Now, sometimes we can learn by their mistakes. Unfortunately today, people copy other churches too easily because there seems to be some kind of success and this is one of the problems we have because suddenly there's big numbers and people are filling the church and so people say, well, let's see what they did and let's copy their methods without questioning whether these methods are indeed godly methods.

Remember, we still have a responsibility to make sure that we don't just take what others do and what others say without checking against the word of God, whether these things are correct and whether they are godly. But if we do that, we can benefit from the experience and from the experiences of other believers. We should learn from these things.

We have 2,000 years of church history and as you know, the only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history and so we're still making here in this church and every church still makes the same mistakes that churches have made for 2,000 years instead of learning from others and Paul says, learn from the other churches, see how they do these things. Now, there are real benefits of cooperation and of working together. Those benefits mean that we can share gifts.

Remember that Paul speaks about the body and it says that we are not all an eye, not everybody in the church is a hand, the eye needs the hand and the hand needs the foot, we need the different parts of the body and different churches have strengths in different areas and weaknesses in different areas and we should be able to help one another where we have strengths and other churches have weaknesses, the same as we're helping the church in TJ with material things primarily because that is a need that they have but at the same time, we help the churches in Nigeria and in Ghana with teaching because that's a need that they have and it is something that we have that we're able to help them with and so where we have gifts that we're able to share, we need to share those gifts and in fact, there needs to be a sharing on the other way. Many times, these third world countries and churches in poorer areas have much to teach us about grace and about gratitude and about simplicity in our relationship with Christ and unfortunately, most of the time, the stuff flows in one direction only and we don't learn from them and they do not benefit us except that we have the privilege of giving whether it's giving money or whether it's giving teaching or whatever it is that we give but in fact, there needs to be a mutual learning and a mutual benefiting as we share gifts, as we share ministries, as we share skills. I think I've told some of you about this crowd of people that we saw, Mary and Al we saw in Arkansas called, what were they? The Nailbenders and this is a whole bunch of retired people.

They're Baptists and they move amongst Baptist churches and they have their RVs and when the summer comes, they all get in their RVs and they go to a place and they go and help to build churches physically to hammer nails and erect buildings and so they'll work for the summer or if the church needs to be painted or needs to be fixed or repaired or whatever it is and so they move from place to place. They have skills, they're retired, they're independent financially and they're able to move around. They're able to say, this is what I have and so they're able to help and to build one another's churches.

I think that the Amish are a great lesson in the way that they raise their bonds and everybody comes together and somebody was telling me who actually saw a bond raising like that and the person was telling me it's absolutely amazing because there was no bond the previous day and by the end of that day, the bond is up because everybody has come and everybody has helped and contributed in different ways to be able to do that. Now, can you imagine if the churches were able to come together and able to support one another in doing that sort of thing? And so there's the sharing of ministries, of skills, of gifts and so on. Learning from others.

Fellowship and mutual encouragement. One of the hardest things in churches like this that you and I experience is the loneliness that comes from being a church on its own without any other churches in the immediate area. We don't go to district councils or to that sort of thing but when we do and have relationships with other churches, we're able to share that fellowship and that's very, very important that the leaders may be encouraged, that everyone may be encouraged.

Young people coming together in rallies and those sorts of things and being able, camps and being able to share their faith with others and able to see others. It's not just us here in this church who believe this way but there are others who also believe the way we believe and so these things are important. What are some of the joint projects that we can tackle as we seek to work together with other churches? Well, one of those is sending out missionaries.

Unless the church is very strong financially, it cannot afford to keep a missionary in the field on its own but we can get together with other churches and all partially support to build up, make up the support that is necessary to send a missionary out into the field. There is a desperate need for good Christian publishing,

printing of books. Again, this is not a thing that an individual church can take on but churches who stand together and who help one another to form some kind of publishing facility, to publish books, establishing Bible schools and training facilities.

Again, not one single church can do that often because of the resources that are needed but when several churches work together, this can be done. Evangelical crusades, the erection of radio stations, internet and other projects, youth programs, conferences and camp meetings, social responsibility programs and works of charity just like the Spanish department here is working together with other churches on the project in Tijuana. And so when we look at what we have on our own, it's not very much but when we're able to work together with others, we're able to make a difference, we're able to make an impact in some area or the other.

And so I believe that this is an area which is very, very important. It's very easy to say, well, we're not a denomination, we're not part of a denomination, we're our own church, we're under the headship of Jesus Christ. Yes, that is all true but at the same time, we're in the world and there are many other Christians, true believers, there are many other true churches and I believe it's very important for us to find those churches and to establish relationships with those churches and this is part of what we do through IFCB, this is part of what I do when I spend a lot of my time writing on the internet and writing emails and establishing and building relationships with believers and with leaders in other churches.

When I was able to go up to Michigan, we were able to preach in a number of churches and able to build relationships and in fact, I had a phone call from the leaders, from the pastor of one of those churches this last week and they have a problem and they say, we need some advice, we need some counsel, I don't have the answers and the issue is not about one person or each one of us having the answers, the issue is simply that we're able to talk together, we're able to listen to one another, we're able to give some ideas and we're able to pray together and we're able to stand together in a problem, they're facing a division and a split in their church right now and so they, because we've been able to try and begin to build some kind of relationship, we're not building a denomination, I'm not in charge of that church, I have no authority within that church but we are brothers together and we're working together and we're building that kind of relationship and I think that this is very important because that is the way it was in the book of Acts, it's very important that we support the mission to Tijuana, it's very important that we support the missions and the work to West Africa and by the way, I'm going again in September for three weeks and we will be having four conferences in Nigeria and one conference in Ghana, we're the first time in Ghana and we're going into three new areas in Nigeria that we haven't gone into before and we're trusting the Lord to reach a thousand pastors in Nigeria and 100 to 200 pastors in Ghana this time and these are very, very important jobs, it's not some glory trip for me, it's an important part of the work of this church as we seek to build relationships with others and as we seek to give because God has been gracious and he has given so much to us, amen. Okay, questions?

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