

Mutual Cooperative Funds

by Gail Blanton

Characters:

Investment Counselor: Well-dressed businessman (or businesswoman)

Mrs. Money: Elderly lady who always holds her purse with two hands, up close to her body. Play her for comedy; work hard to create a unique comic character through speech and mannerisms.

Setting:

Investment Counselor is seated behind his desk, finishing his lunch. There is a large pottery ash tray or dish, bright-colored and rather Mexican looking, on the front edge of his desk near the client's chair. Mrs. Money sits some distance away as if in a waiting room where she cannot see him.

Mrs. Money: *(Calling)* Sonny boy, are you ready for me yet?

Investment Counselor: *(Calling Back)* Almost, Mrs. Money. I'm just finishing up my lunch.

Mrs. Money: Oh? What is it?

Investment Counselor: Nachos.

Mrs. Money: What?

Investment Counselor: Nachos!

Mrs. Money: *(She thinks he said, "Not yours.")* Not mine? I know that! It's yo's—I mean Yours. I just wondered what it was.

Investment Counselor: *(Comes to the door, wiping his mouth with napkin, explaining)* Mexican.

Mrs. Money: Who is?

Investment Counselor: *(Gestures for her to come in his office as he speaks)* No ma'am. I mean Mexican-

Mrs. Money: *(Interrupting as she enters his office)* I don't speak it.

Investment Counselor: No! It's a Mexican dish!

Mrs. Money: *(By this time she is at the edge of his desk in front of her chair; when he says "dish" she examines the dish on his desk)* Oh yes. Very pretty. *(Pause; she looks up at him, down at dish, back at him.)* Did you eat out of this ash tray, Sonny?

Investment Counselor: No ma'am. *(Mrs. Money sits)* Now, you want some advice on your investments?

Mrs. Money: Yes, and it sure is nice having an investment counselor as a member of our church. I need to know how to vote on that budget proposal at the church. I feel I can trust you.

Investment Counselor: I appreciate that.

Mrs. Money: But you might have told me you were Mexican. I don't mind, you know.

Investment Counselor: I'm not-

Mrs. Money: *(Quickly)* I'm not either.

Investment Counselor: Not what?

Mrs. Money: Not sure how to vote. You know, if I'm gonna hand out more of my money, I wanna know what I'm buying.

Investment Counselor: Certainly.

Mrs. Money: In this mailout *(she shows him a piece of paper)* they show this budget pie and say they want us to pay more to increase the size of this slice right here. But I don't know anything about the company. All it says is "COOP Program." *(Pronounced "coop": one syllable)* You ever heard of 'em? Sounds like something to build chicken coops for underprivileged poultry. Or it could be that surgeon that used to be a general—that Everette Koop guy.

Investment Counselor: No ma'am, that's not-

Mrs. Money: He was a good man, a good U.S. surgeon. Was he Mexican?

Investment Counselor: I don't think so. But I can tell you about this chart. That stands for Cooperative Program. They just didn't have room on there to spell it out. Cooperative, you know, like when people co-operate. *(He emphasizes the "co".)*

Mrs. Money: Like two surgeons doing an operation together?

Investment Counselor: Not exactly. Let me explain it this way. Do you ever let me buy individual stocks for you?

Mrs. Money: Absolutely not. I want all my money in mutual funds.

Investment Counselor: Well the Cooperative Program is sort of like a mutual fund.

Mrs. Money: It is?

Investment Counselor: A lot of Southern Baptist churches have mutually agreed to pool some of their money together so they can make larger, wiser investments. The difference is the money is used mainly to minister to people and win souls rather than to make a profit.

Mrs. Money: "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?"¹

Investment Counselor: Precisely.

Mrs. Money: Cooperative Program, huh? Am I taking a risk?

Investment Counselor: Well of course. There's always a risk that people will accept our help but not our gospel. Or maybe helping in Jesus' name is the gospel. But you minimize your risk in this fund because it is highly diversified.

Mrs. Money: I don't like poetry.

Investment Counselor: No, I mean it's invested in many different areas. Like health and medical funds, education, construction, relief work, missions, publishing, preaching and so forth.

Mrs. Money: Well, that sounds pretty good. How does this fund's railroad track look?

Investment Counselor: You mean its track record? Impressive.

Mrs. Money: Is this Baptist Fund cooperative only to Southerners?

Investment Counselor: No, some of the money goes to our national and foreign offices. I'd say it's a global fund.

Mrs. Money: Oh, that's real trendy.

Investment Counselor: Yes ma'am.

Mrs. Money: Bought over the counter?

Investment Counselor: I'd say over the pew. Most Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their regular offerings to share in this mutual ministry. I highly recommend our church increase its shares. Of course, it's strictly a long term investment. We won't receive many returns on it until we get to Heaven, but I have a hunch the dividends will be phenomenal.

Mrs. Money: Sounds good to me. One more thing—is there a commission for this mutual fund?

Investment Counselor: Yes ma'am, a large one. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."²

Mrs. Money: Sounds reasonable. *(She stands)* Well, guess whose money I'm going to invest in this Cooperative Program Fund?

Investment Counselor: Whose?

Mrs. Money: Nachos! *(She laughs hysterically and hurries off)*

Investment Counselor: *(As she goes)* No ma'am, I plan to invest a few of my dollars. *(By the end of this sentence she is gone. He picks up the ash tray, shakes his head, and chuckles.)* Or pesos.

1 Luke 9:25

2 Matthew 28:19-20

END