

LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE

A Study of Landmark Baptist

Polity on Church Constitution

Revised Edition

By

J. C. Settlemoir

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Published by New Testament Baptist Church
839 W. US Highway 136
Lizton, Indiana 46149

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DEDICATION

To

Elder Wayne Camp

January 24, 1938 – June 17, 2015

This book is dedicated to Elder Wayne Camp who first challenged me to examine the subject of church constitution through his paper *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator*. He was one of the most able defenders of the faith that I have ever known. He earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. He stood for the Biblical standard of Direct Authority for church constitution among Landmark Baptists and Baptists in general. As Toplady said of Gill, he “never besieged an error which he did not force from its strongholds; nor did he ever encounter an adversary to truth whom he did not baffle and subdue.” (Christian. *History of Baptists*, I, p. 347.) Baptists are indebted to him for his defense of the truth. Re 14:13.

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FOREWORD

This old preacher considers it a distinct privilege to write a foreword for Brother J. C. Settlemoir's 2017 Revised Edition of *Landmark Under Fire*. This book shall, in my estimation, prove to be an invaluable asset to all Landmark Baptists in the years to come. Books like this one seem to live on and on because the truth is contained in them. Any book that points to the truth of God's eternal word is of great value to those who preach God's word. How many have been the excellent books written by good Baptist brethren which have helped this preacher along the way! And why is that so? Simply because the writers of these books believed the Bible and quoted it again and again in their writings. How many have been the times when a scripture was opened up to me through a good brother quoting it properly and contextually in his book!

Brother Settlemoir has spared no effort in gathering contextual quotes from old Landmark Baptists. Quotes from these giants of the faith prove for the truth-seeking reader that these preachers of the faith once delivered unto the saints believed the Bible taught that churches could be established with two or three scripturally baptized persons without the aid of a "mother church." Moreover, these quotes prove beyond any shadow of doubt that these men believed no preacher was required to constitute a scriptural church. For them, the Lord's promise that where "two or three are gathered together in my name" was sufficient. When two or three baptized disciples purpose to carry out the Lord's commandments and keep the ordinances, they become a church. Is this not a church according to scripture? This is not a mere congregating of two or three baptized disciples, but a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This preacher knows that the problem is one of "recognition" by other churches: that is, that some churches will not recognize these two or three scripturally baptized disciples as a true church. That does not change the truth. Thinking of this very thing, this preacher thought of how Landmark Baptists (of whom he has acquaintance) are very zealous to buy and distribute Carroll's *Trail of Blood*. Brother Carroll's history of Baptist churches through the ages clearly sets forth distinguishing marks of the Lord's true churches. I quoted these marks from the *Trail of Blood* and sent them to some of the Landmark Baptists I knew. I asked them if they would recognize a church which had these marks as a true church of Jesus Christ. Most said, "Yes - absolutely." One man said, "There must be a mother church." Carroll didn't list that - and neither does this preacher! Will we be hypocritical in pushing this good book of our history written in blood by adding "Mother Church Authority?" Not this preacher!

I commend Brother Settlemaier's good book to you!

F. Leon King, Pastor
Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church,
Willow, Alaska 99688

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

2017

This revised edition of *Landmarkism Under Fire* has been published by the New Testament Baptist Church of Lizton, Indiana. This book is a defense of the doctrine of Direct Authority (hereafter DA) for church constitution held by Landmark Baptists and Baptists in general. The arguments presented in the first edition have never been successfully answered although some have attempted to do so. So far as [my reading goes](#) [I am able to judge](#), *there is not an argument in opposition to the position of DA that has any real merit!*

[We-I](#) have added some new chapters to deal with some of these efforts by Bro Mark Fenison in two books he has written. I have considered what I believe to be the strongest arguments by all the writers who oppose DA and a list of these which I have seen will be found in the Bibliography.

As these arguments and the sources referred to in this book will be helpful to anyone doing research on the subject of church constitution, we thought it worthwhile to republish it. No labor has been spared in researching this subject.

After I wrote *Direct Authority: Biblical & Historical* (hereafter *DABH*) in 2012, one of the leading men, among those who hold the Essential Mother Daughter Authority (hereafter EMDA) position of church constitution, wrote me a letter concerning [this](#) [sat](#) book in which he said:

I have already read about 70 pages and it is very good. I am convinced you have proved your point about what Graves and other Landmarkers (and other old Baptists) believed concerning the constitution of churches...

So, I sincerely appreciate the work you've done on this subject...

Many others have also recognized that the real position of Baptists on this subject is DA through reading *LUF*. We trust this revised edition will also be the means of others recognizing DA as Baptist doctrine.

J.C. Settlemoir,
April 18, 2017

PREFACE TO 1ST EDITION

Several reasons compelled me to prepare this book and to publish it. I mention but three.

First, many preachers do not have the time nor the books to do the research necessary to ascertain the facts concerning the position of Baptists and the old Landmarkers on church constitution. It is hoped this book will help supply that need. These sources are now made available so that anyone who wishes to consider this subject for himself will have the references at hand. Great numbers of these have been given so that no one can question what the writers quoted believed about this subject. Most of those who have written on this subject have misrepresented the old Landmarkers claiming they taught mother daughter authority (hereafter EMDA) was essential to constitute a new church. But the old Landmarkers taught self-constitution with authority *directly from Christ*. (Self-constitution, Vertical Authority and DA are used in this book as synonymous terms). Because of this misrepresentation their real position is almost unknown. This old Landmark has been moved. This is my attempt to reset it.

Secondly, those who believe in DA are accused of being anything but Landmarkers. They have been ridiculed and belittled. They are excluded from conferences, fellowships, meetings and churches. I wanted to encourage these men in their stand for the truth of DA and to remind them of the great cloud of witnesses who embraced this truth in days gone by. I also want to take my stand for God's truth and with His servants, no matter what the cost. I hope I can say truthfully, *I desire the whole truth; dare to oppose any error and fear no man. Christ is my Judge!*

Thirdly, and most importantly, I believe the Scriptures clearly teach Direct Authority (hereafter DA). This should suffice for all who believe the Bible.

Let me especially thank those brethren who have read this book in whole or in part. Some have made helpful suggestions and corrections without becoming responsible for any errors it may contain.

J.C. Settlemoir
Sunday, March 20, 2005

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Old Landmarkism has never lacked opponents. The attacks against Landmarkism and those who believe it are relentless.¹ While we have learned to expect this from those who are not Landmark we are still a little surprised when these attacks come from Landmark Baptists! And the amazing thing about these assaults is that they are ostensibly made in defense of Landmarkism! How is it that *Landmark* Baptists attack Landmarkism? They do so because they do not know what Landmarkism is! They believe the theory that every Scriptural church must be given authority for constitution from a mother church and that such authority is the essence of Landmarkism and conversely that *self-constitution* or DA is not Landmarkism at all!² Because of this misconception, they actually direct fire on Landmarkism itself! **Landmarkism is under Fire**—both from those without and from *friendly* fire!

For example. A number of the books (pro and con) on Landmarkism have appeared in recent years.³ Several of these teach the *Essential Mother Daughter Authority*⁴ is an

¹ Cf. Patterson. *Baptist Succession*; Tull. *History of SB Landmarkism*; Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*; An Update. Duane Gilliland. *Landmarkism*.

² For example. Cf. *Voice in the Wilderness*, June 13, 2002, edited by Bro Mark Minney. On p. 66 the logo is: We believe in the 'link chain' succession of the Lord's church...We are Landmark Baptists!

³ Cf. Patterson. *Baptist Succession*; Tull. *History of SB Landmarkism*; Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*; Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*; Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*; Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*; 7 *Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*. I. K. Cross. *Landmarkism: An Update*. Duane Gilliland. *Landmarkism*.

⁴ Essential Mother Daughter Authority. Hereafter EMDA. That is, that every church must have the authority of a mother church before it can be constituted, and without this mother church authority no scriptural church can be formed. But

integral doctrine of Landmarkism. The advocates of EMDA unite with some opponents of Landmarkism in teaching this idea. The former also maintain this doctrine is revealed in Scripture and confirmed by Baptist History. This book is an attempt to defend old Landmarkism on Church constitution. *Old Landmarkism taught the doctrine that every church is self-constituted and receives all its authority directly from Christ without any other intermediary.* We will set forth the old Landmark position on church constitution and show how EMDA is *not only not Landmark, but it is not Baptist and it is not Scriptural!* It is my position that EMDA was not taught by a single old Landmarker in the 1800s. This doctrine is not now, and never has been a part of Landmarkism. The early Landmark leaders, and J. R. Graves in particular, not only did not subscribe to EMDA but specifically and consistently taught churches *are self-constituted being directly authorized to constitute by Christ Himself.* It is also my purpose to show that this Landmark principle of DA⁵ is in full agreement with Baptist History.

I regret that Bro Cockrell was called home before I could finish this book.⁶ He was an able defender of the Faith and was one of the most well-read men among Landmark Baptists. We were good friends. He preached for me and I preached for him. We were in many conferences together. I have never had any ill feelings toward him concerning our differences on EMDA and have none now. I told him the last time I saw him that he was welcome to preach in our church.⁷ Nor should anyone think that I am now seeking to take advantage of him because he is no longer in this world. It is

the truth is, one church has no more authority to constitute another church, to mother another church or to birth a church than Pope Leo III did to crown Charlemagne as Emperor! This took place on Nov. 24, AD 800 and was the inception of the Holy Roman Empire. Will Durant. *The Age of Faith*, p. 468, 469.

⁵ This is also called 'Divine Authority.' Hereafter DA.

⁶ Bro Milburn Cockrell died Sep. 14, 2002.

⁷ He did not say I was welcome to preach for him, however!

to his position and to his book to which I respond, not to him personally.⁸ That I differed with him on this subject is evident. But this does not at all mean that I counted him an enemy. He was a friend of mine and a brother beloved in the Lord. What I have written as to his views, and those of the other men referred to herein, is my effort to set forth the truth as I see it. I have named those to whom I refer so the reader will be able to make a valid judgment of the arguments presented. I have given references throughout, so the reader can compare the sources quoted. I have allowed the authors to state their own positions. I do not mean to impute anything to these men which they have not expressed in their own words.⁹ Yet I have not hesitated to examine their arguments or to check their sources. Bro Cockrell himself used this approach when he differed with any of the brethren. He said:

I have just finished writing a book that I did not want to write. You have just read a treatise which was written because I felt it must be done for the good of Christ's churches. I found it most grievous to have to expose the unsound doctrines of men I love and hold as dear brethren in Christ. I have sought only to admonish them as brethren, not as my enemies.¹⁰

In another book of his we have this statement:

I bear no bitterness toward those who may be persuaded to disagree with me on this matter. I could only hope and pray that the Great Teacher, the Holy Spirit, may be pleased to open many eyes to see this truth. Oh, that every reader would 'be fully persuaded

⁸ Cf. J. R. Graves. *Old Landmarkism*: What is it? Graves said: "I close by assuring the reader that in these pages he will not find one term of 'abuse or personality.' p. 26.

⁹ Another Brother, who took the view I oppose in this book, Elder Joe Wilson, has also passed on since I began this book. He too was a friend and a beloved brother in the Lord. Cf. Bro. Wilson's message: "My Reply to J.C. Settlement." Taped message. Gladwin Conference, 2001.

¹⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *Sacerdotalism and The Baptists*, p. 63.

in his own mind' (Rom. 14:5) ...I would appeal to ministers of the Word to preach this truth to their people. But, brethren, do so in fear and trembling. Speak the truth in love to the edifying of God's elect. Do not try to cram down the throats of your sisters this truth in an ungodly spirit...¹¹

Again, Bro Cockrell said:

I ask the right to be heard... I ask the reader to examine the facts and evidence carefully. Then search the Scriptures and see if what I say is so. If my book contains religious errors I ask my brethren to call these to my attention in a Christlike manner; no one will read the refutation of my writings with more consideration than I.¹²

Thus, my thesis is that these brethren have erred and that EMDA is a false doctrine not found in Scripture, Baptist History, nor in Landmarkism. This doctrine has been falsely charged upon Landmarkism and imputed to the old Landmarkers. In this study, I have examined the old Landmarkers carefully and have quoted them frequently.¹³ I have striven to give evidence of my position in the manner suggested by Bro Cockrell. I am but following his request, as I believe his position and his book contain "religious errors."¹⁴ Several other writers who have attempted to make EMDA an essential part of Landmarkism, have also been noticed. Whether my conclusions are correct or not, will be the domain of others to judge.

¹¹ Milburn Cockrell. *The Veiled Woman*. p. 55.

¹² Milburn Cockrell. *Sacerdotalism and The Baptists*, p. ii.

¹³ In a few places I have repeated quotes so the reader will not have to go back and forth to check a reference.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

CHAPTER 2

OLD LANDMARKISM DEFINED

Contrary to what many think, including some Landmark Baptists, *Landmarkism never had anything to do with EMDA*. Bro Bob Ross gives this as an essential element of Landmarkism in his book.¹⁵ He clearly misunderstands this aspect of Landmarkism. For example, he asserts that EMDA is an essential part of Landmarkism and quotes Ben M. Bogard to prove it. But Bogard himself taught DA not EMDA! When Bogard speaks of ‘links’ of churches, he does not mean one church giving authority to another. This is easy to verify simply by comparing *The Baptist Way-Book*, p. 69.¹⁶ The same is true of the other older writers quoted.¹⁷

Bro Milburn Cockrell takes the same position dubbing those who do not believe in EMDA as “Neo-Landmarkers” or “Liberal Landmarkers” and churches formed by them in less than flattering terms.¹⁸ Bro Medford Caudill in the tract “What is Landmarkism?” says: “If Landmarkism is to be so, it must rise or fall upon a link chain succession,”¹⁹ that is, EMDA or organic church connection. *7 Questions on Church Authority, Error! Bookmark not defined.* published by Calvary Baptist Church, presents this same erroneous idea. Another book which sets forth this view is

¹⁵ Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and The Baptists*.

¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 8 for Bogard's quote.

¹⁷ Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and The Baptists*. pp. 35, 36, 38, 43, 44.

¹⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 80. He refers to a church formed without EMDA as “This bastard church...”

¹⁹ Medford Caudill. “What is Landmarkism.” A Tract. No publishing data. This article is on line at:

<http://www.pbcofdecaturalabama.org/MCaudill/Misnomer.html>

Landmarkism Revisited by Bro Robert Ashcraft. This is the best book on Landmarkism since Graves' *Old Landmarkism*, which I have seen. It is scholarly, kind, fair and manifests a Christian spirit throughout—yet Bro Ashcraft. mistakenly teaches EMDA is a part of Landmarkism.²⁰ Bro. Tom Ross also makes the same claim in one of his books.²¹ We also have Barnes²² and Patterson²³ making the same mistake, one building on the other. All of these men have plainly misunderstood what J. R. Graves and Old Landmarkism taught on this subject. The proof of this is demonstrated by the fact that **not one of these writers gives a single quote from Graves, Pendleton, Dayton or any other early Landmarker that proves they held EMDA!**²⁴ I do not believe any such quote exists!

These writers all build upon what *someone else says* or what they *assume* the Old Landmarkers believed. Why not let the Old Landmarkers speak for themselves? Bro Bob Ross says it is Graves' position that "New churches must be granted authority by a 'mother' church..."²⁵ But where did Graves ever say this? Bro Bob Ross recognizes he has no support for his claim and attempts to salvage his allegation by logic:

²⁰ Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*. pp. 6, 35, 194.

²¹ Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 9.

²² William Wright Barnes. "The exponents of Baptist Church Succession have viewed the New Testament doctrine of the church primarily in terms of a local assembly. According to this theory, each 'congregation grows out of and is formed by the authority of another.' *The Southern Baptist Convention: 1845-1953*, p. 100. Barnes gives no reference for his statement. This is the first express mention of EMDA that I have found. This book was written in 1954. Is it possible that the EMDA movement began with Barnes misconception of Landmarkism?

²³ W. Morgan Patterson. *Baptist Secessionism*. "According to this theory, each 'congregation grows out of and is formed by the authority of another.'" [Pp.](#) 10. Patterson is quoting Barnes. But, as we have seen, Barnes gives no source for this statement. Is this not using a "secondary source"?

²⁴ Indeed, some of these writers assert Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, and others among the Landmarkers held to EMDA, but not one gives a single reference to prove his assertion!

²⁵ Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*, p. 19.

Irrespective of Graves' personal opinion on a theory of succession, it is perfectly logical to conclude that if authority comes only through the local church, then each baptism and each new church, must receive its authority from a previously existing church.²⁶

Of course, it is perfectly *illogical* for any writer to make such a claim!²⁷ Why? Because these men all taught that the authority to constitute a church did not come from another church but directly from Christ. When one does not have clear statements on what a writer believes, he ought to say so. No man should be represented as believing what bias wants him to believe! Why speculate about what Graves believed when he so clearly stated his position? Graves wrote, preached, debated and contended for his position for nearly fifty years! His books cover about two feet of shelf space. His papers ran to some 40,000 pages!²⁸ If men can't find a quote in this mass of materials to support their preconceived opinions, they ought to be honest enough to say so. But instead, we are given positive statements about what Graves (and the other old Landmarkers) believed—but without quotation marks! Landmarkism is tried and convicted of believing EMDA without a single witness! This is what Brethren Bob Ross, Tom Ross, Milburn Cockrell,

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, [Pg.](#) 36.

²⁷ Bro Bob Ross refers to Dave Hunt's imputing conclusions to others which they do not expressly affirm in the following: "13) His imputing conclusions and consequences to others when they do not expressly affirm them is contrary to the Hedge's "Rules of Controversy" and would not be allowed by responsible Moderators in a public debate. **From:** pilgrimpub@aol.com **Sent:** Tuesday, November 30, 2004 1:15 PM **Subject:** HUNT'S PLOYS AND DEVICES [11/30/2004]. Is this not what Bro Ross has done to Graves?

²⁸ J. R. Graves wrote many books. Cf. Edward C. Starr. *A Baptist Bibliography*, vol. 9, pp. 111-120 for a partial list of his works. Graves published at least one book not in this list, the *Graves-Watson Debate*. Cf. B. H. Carroll. *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. V, p. 139. Graves edited *The Baptist* which was a sixteen page weekly and *The Southern Baptist Review and Eclectic* which was a 64 page monthly.

and these other writers have done. They have **misrepresented J. R. Graves and Old Landmarkism** on this subject!

Highlighting this error is the fact that other writers have correctly understood Graves and Landmarkism on this subject. Bro Gilliland points out the dissimilarity between Graves and some modern Landmarkers who embrace EMDA. "Modern Landmarkism goes much further than Graves in conferring authority from a 'mother' church to her daughter, which Graves did not teach."²⁹ Bro Gilliland recognized this from Graves' books and therefore these other men are inexcusable for not recognizing the fact. Bro John Kohler on the Historic Baptist Symposium said:

What is the essence of Old Landmarkism? Some say the essence of Old Landmarkism is a belief that the Greek word "ekklesia" always refers in the New Testament to a local, visible assembly, but if this is the case, then J. M. Pendleton was not an Old Landmarker. Others say the essence of Old Landmarkism is a belief that a new church must be formally and officially voted into existence by a true church in an unbroken succession all the way back to the first church in order to qualify as [a] New Testament congregation. If this is the case, however, neither J. R. Graves nor J. M. Pendleton were Old Landmarkers.³⁰

Brother W.R. Downing says:

This concept of church succession necessitates the idea of a 'mother church' or 'proper church authority' for subsequent churches, i.e., a church must have been

²⁹ Duane Gilliland. *Landmarkism*. Electronic edition, p. 3. It is not Landmarkism which goes "much further", but it is the misinformed advocates of EMDA, and some of the opponents of Landmarkism, who go beyond Landmarkism.

³⁰ John Kohler. *Historic Baptist Symposium*. "The Essence of Old Landmarkism: Proverbs 22:28; Job 24:2," p. 1. Electronic copy.

started and have derived its authority and baptism from a proper New Testament church or its own authority and baptism are invalid. This is essentially the theory of 'Landmarkism' in its present form. According to this theory one church logically 'succeeds' another. It is common to hear of a 'chain-link succession' of certain churches or historical groups forming 'links in the succession chain' back to the New Testament era. Such thinking is at variance with New Testament church polity and cannot be proven from history. It is one thing to prove historically that New Testament churches have existed in every age since the apostles; it is altogether different to seek to prove a linked succession of such churches! This is what distinguishes historic Baptists from those who are ardent 'Landmarkers' or 'Baptist Briders'.³¹

Brother Downing then goes on to quote Jarrel "to set the issue of church perpetuity in the proper perspective..."³² which indicates he does not see EMDA as a part of Old Landmarkism. Bro. Wayne Camp has recognized and refuted the erroneous position that EMDA is a part of Landmarkism in several articles.³³ Bro R. E. Pound says concerning the Baptist writers of the 1600s:

Modern Missionism and Modern Landmark Baptist Concepts are not present. The succession is in baptism, not in a church voting on baptisms, but in qualified administrators sent out by a church. The succession is in churches being formed following baptism by mutual consent, not by being taken back to a mother church

³¹ W. R. Downing, *The New Testament Church*, p. 132. I think Bro Downing's adjective "ardent" is appropriate. However, advocates of EMDA are not Landmarkers because of EMDA but in spite of it, as it has nothing to do with Landmarkism.

³² *Op. Cit.* 133.

³³ Wayne Camp. *Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* (Hereafter *GPP*), April, 1997; July, 1997; Sept., 97 p. 5; Oct., 97, p. 1; May, 2000, p. 1, 3; Jan., 2002, p. 3; Dec., 2002, p. 7; Feb., 2001, p. 1.

and then being voted out or given authority to form into another church,³⁴

He goes on to say:

Our thesis,³⁵ **there is an unbroken succession of baptism, properly administered, between the old Waldenses-Anabaptists and the English Particular Baptists.** We are not talking about any church voting on baptisms, or churches voting other churches into existence, nor members being carried back to a mother church and then given authority to organize into a new mission or church. These, I feel, are all extra scriptural practices. Nor am I talking about a minister going back to receive a vote on new baptisms, nor new church constitutions. I am talking about the baptismal succession between the Particular Baptists and the old Waldensian-Anabaptists.³⁶

We have Jarrell's *Baptist Perpetuity* which stated the Landmark Baptist position on church constitution so concretely in his first chapter³⁷ that no one could question what the Landmark position on church constitution was. And it is diametrically opposed to EMDA. This book has been before Landmark Baptists for a hundred years, and so far as I know, without a single objection to it until *Scriptural Church Organization* appeared!³⁸ Then we also have the testimony of C.D. Cole in his *Doctrine of the Church*.³⁹ Thus, just a cursory investigation by any seeker of truth would have, prevented these men from this blunder of imputing EMDA to Landmarkism and to the old Landmarkers, had they only been willing to be guided by facts instead of their predisposition!

³⁴ R. E. Pound. *Particular Baptist Treasury*, p. 206. Electronic copy.

³⁵ It seems the connective has been inadvertently left out— JCS.

³⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 13.

³⁷ W. A. Jarrel. *Baptist Perpetuity*, pp 2-3.

³⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*. p.16.

³⁹ C. D. Cole. *Definitions of Doctrine: The New Testament Church*, p. 7.

These references show clearly enough that these men who contend that Graves and Old Landmarkism originally taught EMDA, have failed to consult primary sources. Instead, they assumed old Landmarkism included EMDA as an essential element. Both their method and conclusion are patently false. For example, Bro Cockrell said:

Liberal Baptists and apostate Landmarkers would have us to believe all the early Baptist churches in America were self-constituted by a few baptized members in some cases without a minister or missionary, without church authority. According to them, no church ever dismissed members to form a new church until J. R. Graves and J. M. Pendleton come on the scene and invented the teaching of Landmarkism in the mid-1800s. This is just simply not true.⁴⁰

Bro Cockrell here implied that Graves and Pendleton definitely taught that churches must have authority from an existing church to constitute a new church and that EMDA is essential to Landmarkism, yet he did not actually say Graves and Pendleton believed EMDA! Certainly, those who read his book would be led by this statement, and others in his book, to suppose Graves and Pendleton believed EMDA.

Let the question be asked, did Graves and Pendleton believe EMDA?

The answer is an unequivocal *no*!

With one voice, they taught DA and this is so constantly stated throughout their books, no one can be excused for claiming otherwise. Several of these pertinent quotes from

⁴⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 84.

these men have been published in various articles in *Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* so no one who read those articles could misunderstand.⁴¹ Furthermore, not one EMDA advocate, since the publication of these quotes, has made any effort to refute them!

Why not?

It is interesting how the very thing which these men, Bre Cockrell, Bob Ross, Ashcraft—and these other writers needed to prove concerning the Old Landmarkers—**that the old Landmarkers taught EMDA**—is skipped over! And with good reason. Bro Cockrell led his readers, in the above quote, to believe that Graves and Pendleton believed in EMDA. It is unfortunate, but many who read *Scriptural Church Organization* will never bother to check and see what Graves and Pendleton said for themselves but accept these implications without proof!

In the interest of clarity, the definition of Old Landmarkism in its essential and original meaning will now be given. We will let these old Baptists, and other writers of the 1800s, give the definition of Old Landmarkism. Cathcart's *Baptist Encyclopedia* gives this definition of Old Landmarkism:

The doctrine of Landmarkism is that baptism and church membership precede the preaching of the gospel, even as they precede communion at the Lord's table. The argument is that Scriptural authority to preach emanates, under God, from a gospel church; that as 'a visible church is a congregation of baptized believers,' etc., it follows that no Pedobaptist organization is a church in the

⁴¹ *GPP*. In addition to those issues already mentioned, see: "Kind of Old Landmarker I Am;" "Link Chain Ecclesiology," July 1, 1997; "The Church at Rome Self Constituted," Jan. 1, 2002; "Constitution of Churches," April 1, 2000; "The Only Scriptural Baptist Churches on Earth are Self Constituted," June 1, 2002. <http://www.gpp5grace.com/graceproclamator>

Scriptural sense of the term, and that therefore Scriptural authority to preach cannot proceed from such an organization. Hence the non-recognition of Pedobaptist ministers, who are not interfered with, but simply let alone.

At the time the ‘Old Landmark Reset’ was written the topic of nonministerial intercourse was the chief subject of discussion. Inseparable, however, from the landmark view of this matter, is a denial that Pedobaptist societies are Scriptural churches, that Pedobaptist ordinations are valid, and that immersions administered by Pedobaptist ministers can be consistently accepted by any Baptist. All these things are denied, and the intelligent reader will see why.⁴²

Landmarkism teaches there are only two essentials of a true church. One, it must preach the true gospel and two, it must practice the ordinances properly. In this definition, Landmark Baptists agree with other denominations. Because Landmarkers believe immersion alone is scriptural baptism and that scriptural baptism is essential to church membership, they believe those who are not scripturally baptized are not members of a Scriptural church. Churches composed of those who are not scripturally baptized are not in gospel order and therefore cannot give scriptural baptism, regardless of the mode. Nor can they execute properly any gospel act any more than a society not in legal order can organize a posse, pass legislation or appoint an ambassador.

Landmark Baptists do not question the salvation of those who compose such churches nor their good intentions, but believe because they are not in *gospel order*, they are not gospel churches. If scriptural baptism is essential to church status and church membership, it is difficult to see how anyone can deny the conclusion. This used to be the position

⁴² William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 867-8.

of Protestants as well as Baptists. They understood these issues in former times just as we do, but differed on the subjects and mode of baptism. To verify this, I will now quote from Dabney:

All parties are agreed, that baptism is the initiatory rite which gives membership in the visible Church of Christ. The great commission was: Go ye, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the Trinity. Baptism recognizes and constitutes the outward discipleship...

Now, if all other forms of baptism than immersion are not only irregular, but null and void, all unimmersed persons are out of the visible Church. But if each and every member of a paedobaptist visible Church is thus unchurched: of course, the whole body is unchurched. All paedobaptists societies, then, are guilty of an intrusive error, when they pretend to the character of a visible Church of Christ. Consequently, they can have no ministry; and this for several reasons. Surely no valid office can exist in an association whose claim to be an ecclesiastical commonwealth is utterly invalid. When the temple is non-existent, there can be no actual pillars to that temple. How can an unauthorized herd of unbaptized persons, to whom Christ concedes no church authority, confer any valid office? Again: it is preposterous that a man should receive and hold office in a commonwealth where he himself has no citizenship; but this unimmersed paedobaptist minister, so-called, is no member of any visible Church. There are no real ministers in the world, except the Immersionist preachers! The pretensions of all others therefore, to act as ministers and to administer the sacraments are sinful intrusions.

It is hard to see how intelligent and conscientious Immersionist can do any act, which countenances or sanctions this profane intrusion. They should not allow any weak inclinations of fraternity and peace to sway their consciences in this point of high principle. They are bound, then, not only to practice close communion, but to refuse all ministerial recognition and

communion to these intruders. The sacraments cannot go beyond the pale of the visible Church. Hence, the same stern denunciations ought to be hurled at the Lord's Supper in paedobaptist societies, and at all their prayers and preachings in public, as at the iniquity of 'baby-sprinkling.' The enlightened immersionist should treat all these societies, just as he does that 'Synagogue of Satan,' the Papal Church: there may be many good, misguided believers in them; but no church character, ministry, nor sacraments whatever.⁴³

Dabney understood these issues just as Landmark Baptists do. He did not believe you could have a scriptural church without baptism. He did not believe you could ordain a man to preach the gospel without a church. In the 1800s, very few men of any denomination believed the Quakers were in gospel order because they were without baptism. Nor would they admit them to communion without baptism. Protestants of those days uniformly agreed that Scriptural baptism was essential to scriptural church constitution, communion and the gospel ministry. Landmark Baptists agreed with them on this score and maintained there can be no scriptural church without scriptural baptism.

Today Landmarkism still embraces these conclusions and denies that those societies which do not have Scriptural baptism are Scriptural churches! Not being Scriptural churches, they have no authority from Christ. They may do much good—and they often do. They may hold forth many precious doctrines—and they do. They may have great scholars, preachers and writers and many of them do. But this does not mean that they are in gospel order, for, as Dabney says, without gospel order there is, "...No church character, ministry, nor sacraments whatever."

⁴³ R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 774-5.

Landmarkers, then, do not recognize the ordinances or ordinations of any church not in gospel order.

Thus, with due love and consideration to every brother or sister who may be a member of such a church, yet we cannot receive their churches as sister churches, nor their members as properly baptized until these irregularities are corrected.

We hold the ordinance of baptism to be the immersion of one who professes to have been saved by the grace of God before he was baptized by a gospel church. This ordinance cannot be given to those who cannot believe, nor to anyone who does not believe, and any society which does so is not a scriptural church. And its ordinances, even when given for the right reason, are invalid. Those who have, for any reason, changed the purpose of the ordinances of Christ into sacraments, or who make them essential to salvation or who change the purpose the mode or the candidate of baptism are not scriptural churches. This is what Landmark Baptists believe.

But let me give a quote by Pendleton :

The controversy was and is a strange one: In one sense, all Roman Catholics and all Protestant Pedobaptists are on the side of the "Landmark." That is to say, they believe, and their practice of infant baptism compels the belief, that baptism must precede the regular preaching of the gospel. This is just what Landmark Baptists say, and they say, in addition, that immersion alone is baptism, indispensable to entrance into a gospel church, and that from such a church must emanate authority, under God, to preach the gospel. All this is implied in the immemorial custom, among Baptist churches, of licensing and ordaining men to preach. But I will not enlarge: I have said this that my children and grandchildren may know what the "Old Landmark" was, and why I wrote it. Baptists can never protest effectually against the errors of Pedobaptists

while the preachers of the latter are recognized as gospel ministers. This to me is very plain."⁴⁴

Thus, it seems very clear, EMDA is not now, and never was, a part of Landmarkism! It is not now a part of it although some Landmark Baptists hold this position. EMDA is no more a part of Landmarkism than is the priesthood of the church⁴⁵ although some Landmarkers take that view. Not one of the leading men of the Landmark movement in the 1800s ever embraced EMDA! No quote from any one of these men has ever been produced in which they explicitly espouse this doctrine. **The old Landmarkers specifically taught self-constitution with the authority coming directly from Christ!** So, the idea that these men embraced EMDA or that it was any part of Landmarkism is erroneous. This is a misconception and a misrepresentation of Landmarkism by EMDA advocates, and some of the opponents of Landmarkism.⁴⁶ This misrepresentation has been so pervasive that multitudes think EMDA is the essence of Landmarkism. But now the truth is being reclaimed and the old Landmark on church constitution restored. EMDA is not Landmarkism nor is it any part of Landmarkism!

In the next chapter, we will define EMDA.

⁴⁴ J. M. Pendleton. *Pendleton's Reminiscences*, pp. 103-105. Published 1891. Quoted in *An Old Landmark Reset*, Published by *The Baptist*, 1976, no page numbers.

⁴⁵ Cf. Joe W. Bell. *God's Priesthood on Earth*, p. 91.

⁴⁶ Cf. other treatments of Landmarkism: J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, Vol. I, pp. 715-716; I. K. Cross. *Landmarkism: An Update*; Douglas A. Moore. *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*; J. J. Burnett. *Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers*, 1919, pp. 191-192. Elwell. *Elwell Evangelical Dictionary*. Art. *Landmarkism*. Also Cf. Bro James Duvall's web site for many articles and references to Landmarkism:

http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents/landmarkism.10.premises.html;

CHAPTER 3

EMDA DEFINED

One will look in vain to find the defenders of EMDA defining their terms. Elder Milburn Cockrell in his book *Scriptural Church Organization*, does not define his terms with but one or two exceptions.⁴⁷ *7 Questions* has not a single definition of the terms used in 45 pages! Bro Pugh in *Three Witnesses For The Baptists*, has a glossary of terms but many of the words pertinent to the discussion are omitted and some of those included are ambiguous.⁴⁸ Of the various articles which I have seen by the advocates of EMDA, I have not found a single writer who defined his terms!⁴⁹ While I assign no ulterior motive for this vacuum, I do contend this policy is against every rule of proper discussion. Without properly defining terms, a writer certainly invites misunderstanding and misapprehension even though unintentional. He clouds his propositions and makes it unlikely the reader will understand his meaning. Unless he seeks to deceive, his whole purpose is defeated.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*. He gives the meaning of mother, p. 50, but then did not use the word according to the definition given.

⁴⁸ Curtis Pugh. *Three Witnesses for The Baptists*. Cf. his definition of Church, which does not define his concept of church as used in his book and his definition of Landmarkers contains no definition at all! pp. 122, 124.

⁴⁹ Cf. *GPP*, April 2000, p. 1. Art. "Church Constitution," I defined their position for them. In that article, I gave it the name of *Authority theory* but because they complained about that term I have changed it to EMDA in this book but they complain about this term also!

⁵⁰ Hedge's in his rules of controversy puts as the first rule the definition of terms. "*The terms, in which the question in debate is expressed, and the precise point at issue, should be so clearly defined, that there could be no misunderstanding respecting them.*" *Elements of Logic*, p. 159. Why have EMDA men ignored this rule?

EMDA is a doctrine concerning *church constitution*. It maintains *authority* must be given by a *mother church* in order to constitute a group into a new church. It teaches the authority of Christ was transferred to the church and consequently only a church can pass this authority on to another group. Thus, if a new church does not obtain EMDA, the connection with the first church of Jerusalem is broken, and no new church can be formed. It is also claimed that the Holy Spirit was given to the first church at Pentecost directly by the Lord Himself only once. In all succeeding churches, the Holy Spirit is conferred only by EMDA.⁵¹ Thus without EMDA a church cannot get *church life*, *church light*, the *presence of Christ* nor the *indwelling of the Holy Spirit*! It is therefore essential for a *mother church* to give birth to a *daughter church*. This mother-to-daughter authority is essential, so essential, that if a group does not obtain this authority, this **permission to constitute** from a **mother church**, it is not, cannot be, a true church.⁵² It may be orthodox and Scriptural in every doctrine and point of order, but if this authority was not given by a mother church, it is a false church, no more recognized by Christ, as one of His churches, than a meeting of Mohammedans or a synagogue of Satan! EMDA, according to its advocates, is therefore an absolute necessity of church constitution. No EMDA, no church!

Those who contend for EMDA also often use the term *organic church succession*. By this they mean one church succeeds another church as one link of a chain succeeds another link. This is also known as *link-chain-succession*. They also often use the analogy of human lineage, or the

⁵¹ 7 *Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*. p. 15, 35; *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 81.

⁵² 7 *Questions*, p. 25, 34; *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 65.

lineage of animals, such as sheep, rams or dogs.⁵³ Elder Cockrell teaches that when a church gives birth to a new church, Christ and his wife give birth to a baby girl!⁵⁴

I will now give a few quotes to verify these statements from representative EMDA authors.

ARE ALL TRUE CHURCHES FOUNDED VIA EMDA?

Therefore, I believe that all true churches were founded or established on the consent of a mother church.⁵⁵

No church can claim to have Scriptural authority to administer the ordinances unless they have received that authority from an already existing Baptist church. Just as Jesus transferred authority to His church, each newly organized Baptist church must receive their authority from an already existing church. This is why you read in the Book of Acts that missionaries were sent out by a local church to establish other churches of like faith and order. Each church of the Lord Jesus is likened to a body (I Cor. 12). A body is a living organism that derives its life from another body that is already in existence and fully functioning. Like begets like in every realm of God's creation, therefore every Baptist church must be organized out of an already existing Baptist church.⁵⁶

A church must be established on the consent of another church. It is not merely a tradition or a custom, but rather it is a Scriptural fact.⁵⁷ From these Scriptures

⁵³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, EMDA advocates contend that churches are connected necessarily to a previous church in a sort of ecclesiastical biogenesis.

⁵⁴ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, "A husband and wife can have a daughter. In fact when one church gives birth to another church, Christ and his wife have given birth to a baby girl," p. 52. Cf. Chapter 6.

⁵⁵ *7 Questions*. p. 34.

⁵⁶ Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*. p. 9-10.

⁵⁷ *7 Questions*. p. 27.

[Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 13] I am sure we can be safe in saying that a church must be established from a mother church.⁵⁸

The reader will note here the assertion that EMDA is a Scriptural fact—but without any Scripture! In the second quote, there are two references given but neither of them mention a mother church.

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN ONLY VIA EMDA

Some of the advocates of EMDA are not aware of this amazing piece of tradition. But it is taught by some of their leading men and published without reservation. Let the following statement by Bro. Austin Fields be carefully considered:

It is impossible for the church to be alive without the Spirit and the Spirit was only given one time and this at Pentecost. Therefore, there must be the link that connects the church with the Spirit at Pentecost, as there is a connecting link with us as human beings with Adam the first man.⁵⁹

Of course, if one granted this supposition, there is nothing to say exactly what the connecting link is by which a church receives the Holy Spirit, according to this theory. It could be, as they contend, by the authority of a mother church, but it could also be by the laying on of hands. It could be by the succession of pastors or it might be by some other un-named link. Who is to say what this connecting link is? We are left with the idea that these men know and they will reveal it to us. One thing is certain – they give no Scripture for this tradition because there is none. But as some may object, that Bro Fields was not a qualified representative of the EMDA

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ 7 *Questions*, p. 35.

group and thus escape the horns of this dilemma, I quote Bro Cockrell:

There is no need for the spiritual power to be given directly from God each time a new church is organized, for it descends from one church to another across the centuries. This can only be if there is a link chain of churches that are organically connected.

...Is there a new Pentecost each time three baptized members form themselves into a church? If so, then there are many instances of baptism in the Spirit, not just two. Since a church is not to go out as a witness for Christ without this power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) that descends from one church to another...⁶⁰

The EMDA advocates never hesitate to assert such things or give us such analogies, but they do hesitate to give us any Scripture to verify these claims. We are expected to take these things on their word. If we don't we are censored and condemned without a trial.

B. H. Carroll believed the baptizing in the Holy Spirit was an initial and temporary thing. It did not continue. He says:

The baptism in the Spirit, after it had come in its diverse accrediting form, was transitory, ceasing with the sufficient attestation.⁶¹

This means the baptizing of the Holy Spirit was not continued. I believe this is the correct position.

AN ELDER MUST BE PRESENT TO CONSTITUTE A CHURCH

⁶⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 81.

⁶¹ B. H. Carroll. *Interpretation of The English Bible*. Acts. p. 44.

Some add yet another prerequisite to church constitution and that is that you must have ordained elders, or at least one ordained elder present, to organize a church. Elder Cockrell seems to lean toward this position as he describes the view he opposes:

Such a new church needs not secure authority from another true church in organizing, nor is it essential that a minister or missionary from another church be present with any authority from another true church.⁶²

Bro Cockrell is teaching here, I believe, that you must have an ordained man present to constitute a church. But this is not all. Several of the EMDA advocates insist and demand that a church must believe the five points of Calvinism⁶³ in order to give this authority. Any church which does not believe the five points is considered to be a false church. I know of several churches which have been reorganized and several preachers re-ordained and rebaptized and a number of people who have been rebaptized because the church which baptized or organized them, was not a five-point church! This is a strange thing! Bro Cockrell and I discussed this idea in 1980 and he told me then that he did believe that a church had to believe the five points in order to be a scriptural church.⁶⁴

THE SIX LAWS OF EMDA

Thus, while these brethren do not often give us the whole package, they actually believe there are six specific things—

⁶² *SCO*, p. 5.

⁶³ I. e., Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints.

⁶⁴ If I remember correctly, Bro Cockrell told me, when we discussed this issue that he did not agree with it and would welcome an article from me for *BBB* showing that position to be in error. I never wrote the article.

six laws—which are essential to constitute a church, assuming you already have people who are in gospel order, i.e., saved, scripturally baptized members of a scriptural church in good standing—not one of these six laws can be found in the Word of God! They are:

Law # 1. *Formal authority from a mother church must be granted.* This cannot be merely understood authority. It cannot be that obtained from a pastor of a church. It cannot be granted from a presbytery. It cannot be given by an Association nor can it come from several churches. It cannot be given generally in church letters from several churches, but it must be from one specific church which understands that she is the *Mother Church* and that she alone gives this authority and it is this act which produces the new *baby church*.

Law # 2. *An organic link-by-link connection by which each ascending church received authority from a preceding church, church to church, all the way back to the church at Jerusalem.* All is vain unless this linkage was operational in every single church constitution all the way up the line to the first *Mother Church*, for sixty generations!

Law # 3. *The Holy Spirit's presence in a church is only obtained by EMDA.* Any church without this organic connection all the way back cannot possibly have the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit only follows EMDA! Where EMDA does not go, the Holy Spirit will not go! The mother church is made the proxy agent of the Holy Spirit! And marvel of all marvels, these brethren admit they cannot tell whether the Spirit is there or not from any examination of a church's doctrine and practice but only by asking the all-important question: *Did your church have a mother church* and so on *ad infinitum*! What vanity that men could conceive such

doctrine and then publish it—all without *a thus saith the Lord!*

Law # 4. *An ordained man must be present in order to constitute a scriptural church.* In an EMDA constitution the elder is essential and without an ordained man, no new church can be formed. Apparently, they believe the ordained man conveys some power, or communicates some sacramental influence which flows through his fingers because hands were laid on him in addition to the mother church's grant as in Law #1. This theory denies that any number of saints can constitute a gospel unless they have at least one ordained man present!

Law # 5. *The church must believe the five points of Calvinism.* If it did not embrace the five points when constituted, then it is a false church. The members must be re-baptized, the church re-constituted, and the elders re-ordained. And lest some think this is merely theoretical, there are several churches whose members have been rebaptized, the church re-constituted, the pastor re-ordained —why? Simply because they were originally baptized, ordained, or constituted by those who did not embrace all five points!⁶⁵

⁶⁵ A year or two ago I got a request from a brother in the Philippines who desired our church to send me to re-baptize and re-constitute their church. This was a Sovereign Grace Baptist Church. When I enquired as to why they wished to have this done, I was told it was because they had learned that the man who had originally baptized and constituted them, (with EMDA, I might add!) had Arminian baptism. Some of our brethren had re-organized and rebaptized some churches there because they had Arminian baptism and this made him question their constitution. I refused to do this and told him the baptism they had was as valid and Scriptural as they could get. And it is my position that these who are going about selling five- point baptism and selling these six laws of EMDA do not have it themselves and are deluding themselves and deceiving those to whom they provide their goods. Furthermore, it is perilously close to striking the rock twice to baptize someone who has already been baptized!

Law #6. *All those who are to compose the new church must be members of the mother church.* That is where the authority is, and it can only be given to those who are members. Only one church can be the mother. Other members may unite with the new church *after* it constitutes, but they cannot be in the constitution if not members of the mother church. This Law is so much insisted on that churches formed on the other side of the globe from the mother church are none-the-less made *proxy members* of a church they never attended and the church never knew those *members*! Then at the constitution they are given letters stating they are members in good standing for the purpose of constitution!

If, for instance, (going along with EMDA thinking) your church had organic connection (as spelled out in Law # 2) for seven church generations up the stream of history but if one of the ancestral churches made a mistake (perhaps they had never heard of these *new laws*,⁶⁶ as they are not in the Bible!) and that church, submitting to all of these Laws but one, means your church falls down with Humpty Dumpty consequences! Your church cannot be a Scriptural church! If there was one case where there was no **formal organic church connection**, no mother authority, then your church status evaporates like dew! If somewhere up your church stream, some church was organized without an ordained elder present or if they did not believe in Limited Atonement, or if the members did not become members of the mother church, even if this took place over a thousand years ago, you lose your church status and there is no way on earth you can know it! There is no way you can find out! If there was some abnormality in anyone of these church

⁶⁶ Graves quotes Poither: "A law that is hopelessly obscure, has no binding force, and no person can be held responsible for obedience." *Intercommunion...* p. 191.

essentials, then Christ never indwelt your assembly!⁶⁷ All the baptisms and all the acts of worship from the time this mistake took place, in EMDA thinking, are as vain as is the worship of an idolater! The mere statement of these things will lead every thinking man to reject these propositions for being as fabulous as the phoenix!⁶⁸

What a crushing thing this is for those who embrace EMDA! What a quandary it creates for those involved! It undercuts their whole system by unchurching all churches. It puts their whole backfield in motion. What church line will bare up under the scrutiny of these laws of EMDA? Let those who are involved consider these things.

Hiscox asks this significant question in his *New Directory*:

Are there any marks, or signs, by which a true Church can be known? If so, what are they? If our ideas as to what constitutes a true church be erroneous or confused, we shall be likely to go astray as to all that follows, and misinterpret its polity, order, ordinances, its structure government and purpose.⁶⁹

Hiscox then quotes among other confessions, the Baptist Confession of 1689, which says in part:

⁶⁷ Perhaps EMDA advocates will develop a Limbo for churches which failed in one or more of these Laws so they will not be totally excluded from church blessings even though they did not rise up to full EMDA orthodoxy. That should be no more difficult than to make these traditions into laws in the first place.

⁶⁸ See an excellent article by Bro Thomas Williamson in *GPP*, April 1, 2004. Bro Williamson points out how one must be careful of these who offer mother church services: "The first step is to realize that there are some churches that claim perpetuity under false pretenses— they offer their church 'mothering' services, without being able to demonstrate that they have any kind of perpetuity."

http://www.gpp5grace.com/graceproclamator/pp0404_complete.htm#Got%20Perpetuity

⁶⁹ Edward Hiscox. *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 26.

...Those thus called He commandeth to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of the public worship which He requireth of them in the world. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing their obedience unto the call of Christ; and do willingly consent to walk according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the gospel.⁷⁰

This is one reason why the EMDA advocates have gone so far astray. The first point in their survey was wrong. Consequently, all of their subsequent measurements, from that mistaken point, are nothing but error compounded.

We will in the next chapter consider these matters.

⁷⁰ *Op. Cit.*, p. 30. This is Chapter 26.5, of the *1689 Confession*. One of the references given is Mt. 18:15-20, which shows the compilers understood this text to refer to the constitution of a church.

CHAPTER 4

EMDA AND SCRIPTURE

When we ask for Scripture for EMDA the advocates reply to us much as did the Protestants to the Anabaptists.

To escape from the Anabaptist argument, this Reformer cried out, "I know only too well that you keep calling 'Scripture, Scripture!' as you clamor for clear words to prove our point...But if Scripture taught us all things then there would be no need for the anointing to teach us all things."⁷¹

Two of the leading EMDA exponents have publicly admitted that EMDA is not *spelled out* in Scripture.⁷² So far as I am concerned, these men have conceded the whole issue by their candid admission! When this door of *not spelled out* is opened it lets in every kind of heresy! But as they sometimes appeal to a few Scriptures in support of EMDA we will examine them.

ACTS 11

Did the church at Jerusalem give authority to constitute the church at Antioch?

You will find this idea often stated by those who hold EMDA. Bro Cockrell says: "After a sufficient number were baptized the missionary acting under the authority of the

⁷¹ Leonard Verduin, *Reformers and Their Step Children*, p. 204.

⁷²—I refer to Bre Joe Wilson and Milburn Cockrell. Bro Wilson admitted this doctrine is not spelled out in Scripture in a taped message. Gladwin, Mich. Conference, 2001. Bro Cockrell admits the doctrine is not spelled out in Scripture, in *SCO*. p. 50. Bro. Cockrell said: "A thing may be taught in Scripture and yet not spelled out in terms we might use today."

church at Jerusalem organized them into a New Testament church."⁷³ Is this not adding to Scripture? One can only marvel that such could be asserted with an open Bible! Some argue that the group in Antioch was not a church until it was called a church in verse 26! This illusion entices them to go further. Building upon the first error, they then say the Antioch church was not a church until Barnabas got there! Then they bring in their pre-conceived conclusion—Barnabas was sent to Antioch with EMDA from the Jerusalem Church to constitute them a church. Barnabas had this power given him and he gave it to the saints at Antioch, and then, and only then, did they obtain church status!

Actually, if this line of reasoning is valid, then the authority must have come from some other church, say, Tarsus or Damascus or elsewhere, via Paul, because Barnabas was at Antioch for some time, (vs 24), and still they were not called a church, until Barnabas returned from Tarsus with Paul! (Acts 11:26). Then, and only then, is the coveted term given to this group.

We are told Antioch church had to wait until the church at Jerusalem learned of their existence and then wait until the church sent someone there with EMDA, and then wait until Barnabas constituted them into a church with the authority from the Jerusalem Church! Bro Cook says those at Antioch had gotten authority from Jerusalem prior to this account with Barnabas.⁷⁴ Of course he gives no proof. In the same way, we are informed, the church at Jerusalem gave authority to Barnabas so he could by their authority constitute them into a church! And without this authority they could not be a church! These things are stated *ex cathedra*!

⁷³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*. p. 35.

⁷⁴ 7 *Questions*, p. 24.

But how do these brethren know these things?

Does the text say this? No!

Does the context say this? No!

Is there some other passage which says this? No!

Well, then how do they know it? The answer is found in the maze of tradition!

As a matter of fact, if we follow this method of reasoning, that a church is not a church until expressly called a church, then it necessarily follows that the church at Jerusalem was not a church until Acts 2:47, for this is the first time it was specifically called a church! The group at Corinth was not a church for at least a year and six months⁷⁵ and in fact, not until they got their first epistle.⁷⁶ Ephesus had to wait until near the end of the century to get their status updated!⁷⁷

The church at Antioch was **not** established with authority from the Jerusalem church for the following reasons.

First, there is no such thing found in the NT. Not one case has ever been produced where one church constituted another with EMDA or with any other kind of authority! This is pure tradition.

Second, this was not the case for the simple reason Antioch was a full-fledged, full-orbed, and well-functioning church before Jerusalem sent Barnabas there. The church at Jerusalem—if we follow the line of illogical reasoning used by these brethren—certainly had not granted authority to

⁷⁵ Acts 18:12.

⁷⁶ 1 Cor 1:2.

⁷⁷ Re 2:1.

constitute churches among the Gentiles at this time, because they had no idea of preaching to the Gentiles at the time this church was founded, as this was not yet understood.⁷⁸

Third, when they learn of this church and they send Barnabas to go as far as Antioch, he is not given any authority to constitute an assembly, and brethren who say this was the purpose of his being sent there are adding to the Word of God! The text says nothing of the kind, let honesty testify. Please read the passage carefully and prayerfully.

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. Acts 11:19-25.

Please note what the text says Barnabas was sent to do. He was **not** sent to *constitute* them into a church! Rather he was sent to go "as far as", not go and *organize*. "Go as far as", not go and *authorize*! And this is exactly what he did. And when he got to Antioch he did not go in and say: "Where did

⁷⁸ See Acts 11:19 with 8:1.

you get your authority? Who was your mother church? You people are out of order. You have no authority! You must have a mother-church. You folks are all wrong. You are illegitimate. You must be reorganized by the mother-church at Jerusalem, otherwise you cannot be a Scriptural church! You must have an ordained man present to constitute a church! You can't have the Holy Spirit without a mother church nor will the Lord Jesus be in your midst without the formal authority of a mother church! Don't you people know "Like begets like?" Nor did he say, "I have authority to organize you into a Scriptural church, given me by the Church in Jerusalem, and I now pronounce you a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Fourth, it is high treason against the inspired Word of God to teach that Barnabas was given **unstated authority**, sent on an **unassigned mission** and instructed to do an **unmentioned task** in Acts 11:22, when the Scripture is as silent on this as it is on Purgatory!

Fifth, it is an exegetical sham to say that he found no church at all in Antioch but only scripturally baptized disciples dangling, with no church capacity, no church fellowship, and who were unknowingly in need of organizational constitution via the mother-church at Jerusalem when Barnabas proves this to be an error because he "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" that is, continue as they were!

Sixth, it is, furthermore, an adding to the Word of God when men say that Barnabas constituted Antioch a church without a single word in Scripture to intimate there was any constitution in Acts 11, or that any such authority was given to Barnabas. All of this is said without any evidence whatsoever! It is quite evident that the Antioch church was

already constituted⁷⁹ and in full operation before Barnabas ever went there! But if this idea that they were constituted by the Jerusalem church is not teaching tradition, what is?

This is the same method they use in Brooklyn at the Watchtower Society, in the Vatican and in Salt Lake City at Mormon headquarters to establish their heresies! This is how men make an invisible church or ordain women to the ministry. This is how they turn the wine into the actual blood of Christ and bread into His actual body. There are people who claim Scripture support for these errors just as do the advocates of EMDA do for their theory. Those who handle Holy Scripture like this leave a blank check for heresy. Like begets like!⁸⁰ Just because you veneer a tradition with the Baptist name does not make it Scriptural. Here is a powerful case of adding to Scripture to justify a tradition. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”⁸¹

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT ANTIOCH?

Without scent or hint of authority, without suggesting superiority, without elevating the status of the Jerusalem church in any way, on the one hand, nor without insisting on any kind of inferiority, deficiency, or subjection of the Antioch church on the other hand, without a single word about a mother-church or authority to constitute but with the recognition of the full church status of the Antioch assembly, with perfect equality on every plane and with joy in what the

⁷⁹ George W. McDaniel said: “Arriving there, he heartily approves the work as being of the Lord. Not an alteration or amendment does he propose.” “Antioch –The Missionary Church,” *BBB*, Oct. 5, 2004, p. 427.

⁸⁰ This is a cliché by which the EMDA advocates lull their followers to sleep. Cf. Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10.

⁸¹ Mt 15:9.

Lord had done there, the Scripture records what Barnabas did when he got to Antioch. **“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”**⁸²

Instead of authorizing, constituting, mothering, reconstituting, birthing, amending, baptizing, extending an arm, setting up a mission, changing, giving EMDA or anything of the kind, he exhorted the church to continue as they were! Read it again carefully: **“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”** But if Barnabas found them as the advocates of EMDA claim, that is, found them without church authority, without a covenant, without organization, without an elder, and without the Holy Spirit why did he not do what EMDA brethren do now? Why did he not re-baptize those who had no EMDA? Why did he not re-constitute them? Why did he not re-ordain those who had baptized these Greeks? If Barnabas was following EMDA order, then how could he do less? How could he see the *grace of God* in them and exhort them to *continue* as they were if they had no authority? This approval of Barnabas means he recognized them as a Scriptural church and that he approved what they were doing. They had all the authority that Heaven could give them. There is not one objection to this *church*! He tells them to continue as they were! Instead of this account being a defense of EMDA it is a battering ram against it. It literally knocks that wall flat!⁸³

Let the Scripture say what it wants to say!

⁸² Ac 11:23.

⁸³ Jos 6:20.

ACTS 13

Another passage which is appealed to in support of EMDA is Acts 13:1-4.

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

It is said with the utmost confidence that here the church sent forth Paul and Barnabas with the authority to preach, baptize and constitute churches. E.G. Cook said:

In Acts 8:26 the angel of the Lord spoke directly to Philip but in Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit spoke to the church. Why the difference? In the case of Philip, he was to witness and to baptize an individual. We have no record of Philip's ever instituting a new church. But as a result of the Holy Spirit's telling the church at Antioch to send out Paul and Barnabas new churches began to spring up throughout Asia, that is, the province of Asia, and over in Europe. Acts 13:2 was not written for their sakes alone, but ours as well. Here is specific, definite, concrete and undeniable proof that all these churches were instituted through the authority of the Antioch Baptist Church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ 7 Questions. p. 26, Cf. also p. 11.

Several brethren who hold to EMDA maintain that Acts 13 spells out this idea in the constitution of churches. They maintain, with Bro. Cook, that this passage teaches church action was in operation in sending out Paul and Barnabas. Is this the case? Let me give you the reasons why I do not believe this is correct.

In the study of Scripture, we must recognize that:

Exegesis is predicated on two fundamentals. First, it assumes that thought can be accurately conveyed in words, each of which, at least originally, had its own shade of meaning. Secondly, it assumes that the content of Scripture is of such superlative importance for man as to warrant the most painstaking effort to discover exactly what God seeks to impart through his word.⁸⁵

The church is mentioned in vs. 1, “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers...” and then it names them. The second verse says, “as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Certainly, it is possible that the pronoun *they* in vs. 2 could refer to the church in vs. 1 but I believe this highly unlikely. I give the following reasons for my position.

1. The word *church* is not the nearest antecedent, which it ordinarily would be if the pronoun refers to it.
2. The clause *in the church* does not describe the action of the church but the named individuals who were in this church.
3. Those ministering to the Lord and fasting are designated by name and therefore it was not the whole church which ministered or fasted else why call them by name? “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said”—said to

⁸⁵ *Bakers Dictionary of Theology*, p. 204, Art. *Exegesis*.

whom? It seems clear to me that the Holy Spirit spoke to those who were ministering and fasting, that is to those five men named. 4. This sentence “And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away,” refers, I believe, to the three who remained, namely Simeon, Lucius and Manaen, vs. 1. 5. Note also that these men are not said to minister to the church but they “minister to the Lord.” This is the kind of ministering that priests did in the Temple.⁸⁶ 6. In those days of miracles, the Lord often dealt directly with those men who were the instruments used to advance the cause of Christ. I will give some examples of this.

- 1] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Peter.*⁸⁷
- 2] *The angel of the Lord spoke directly to the apostles.*⁸⁸
- 3] *The angel of the Lord spoke directly to Cornelius.*⁸⁹
- 4] *The angel of the Lord released Peter from prison directly.*⁹⁰
- 5] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Philip.*⁹¹
- 6] *The Lord caught away Philip and placed him at Azotus.*⁹²
- 7] *The Lord spoke directly to Ananias sending him to Saul.*⁹³
- 8] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to the men who were fasting and praying.*⁹⁴
- 9] *Paul and Barnabas were expressly said to be sent by the Holy Spirit.*⁹⁵

⁸⁶ He 8:2; 10:11.

⁸⁷ Ac 10:19, 20; 11:12. Note. The church had no knowledge of Peter’s visit to Cornelius until after the fact, Ac 11:1-3. And when they learned of it, they did not say, “You have no authority” as these brethren do. “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Ac 11:18.

⁸⁸ Ac 5:19-20, 29-32.

⁸⁹ Ac 10:5.

⁹⁰ Ac 12:7-11.

⁹¹ Ac 8:29.

⁹² Ac 8:29.

⁹³ Ac 9:10-18.

⁹⁴ Ac 13:2.

⁹⁵ Ac 13:4.

- 10] *Paul and Barnabas were directly forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia.*⁹⁶
- 11] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Paul in a vision.*⁹⁷
- 12] *Stephen saw the Lord standing on the right hand of God.*⁹⁸
- 13] *The Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision encouraging him.*⁹⁹
- 14] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Agabus concerning Paul.*¹⁰⁰
- 15] *The Lord directly commissioned Paul to the ministry.*¹⁰¹
- 16] *The Lord directly warned Paul to get out of Jerusalem.*¹⁰²
- 17] *The Lord appeared directly to Paul in the night to cheer him.*¹⁰³
- 18] *The angel of the Lord stood by Paul on the ship assuring him and the others of safety.*¹⁰⁴

Here we have several instances where the Lord dealt directly with his servants! Were all of these men members of one of the Lord's churches? Were they laboring under the authority of a church? Were they subject to a church? I certainly believe they all were. Does this mean that in every one of these instances that the church authorized everything they did? Not at all. The Scripture plainly says the Lord Himself, His Holy Spirit or His *angel* communicated with them, encouraged them; that He warned them, commissioned them and sent them to their work as He desired. We have to recognize this, if we adhere to the Scripture, no matter what

⁹⁶ Ac 16:7.

⁹⁷ Ac 16:9-10.

⁹⁸ Ac 7:55.

⁹⁹ Ac 18:9-10.

¹⁰⁰ Ac 21:10-11.

¹⁰¹ Ac 26:15-20.

¹⁰² Ac 26:15-20.

¹⁰³ Ac 23:11.

¹⁰⁴ Ac 27:22-23.

supposed ramifications we may fear this will have on church authority.

John Gill gives this comment on Acts 13:3,

...but this was a gesture and ceremony used among the Jews, when they wished any blessing or happiness to attend any persons; and so these prophets when they separated Paul and Barnabas from their company, and were parting from them, put their hands on them, and wished them all prosperity and success; could this be thought to be an ordination, as it cannot, since both of them were stated and authorized ministers of the word, and one of them an apostle long before this... to do the work they were called unto; not in an authoritative way, but in a friendly manner they parted with them and bid them farewell.¹⁰⁵

Gill says that this was not the church who laid hands on these men and sent them forth but “these prophets...put their hands on them...”

It is also important to note that the word *sent* (απολυνω) in vs 3 is not a word of *commissioning* but rather of *letting go*. That is, these men named let Paul and Barnabas go for this special work designated by the Holy Spirit when they would have preferred to have retained them. Then in vs 4 it is the Holy Spirit who *commissions* (εκπεμπω) these two men. Nothing is here said of the Church specifically either *letting go* or *commissioning* Paul and Barnabas for this work.

But suppose my position is incorrect. Suppose the action here in Acts 13 was the action of the whole church, what then? Does this text then teach EMDA? The text certainly does not say so! The only reason men contend for this idea in this text is because the theory of EMDA demands it! If it

¹⁰⁵ Gill. *Commentary*, Acts 13:3.

was the whole church which sent Paul and Barnabas forth, there is still nothing here about EMDA. Graves and some other old Landmarkers believed this sending forth referred to the action of the church but they still maintained their position of DA, not EMDA.

Some EMDA advocates also contend that Acts 13:3 was an ordination service and that Paul and Barnabas were here ordained, because of the laying on of hands. But if this was an ordination service for these two men the question then comes immediately¹⁰⁶—how could Barnabas constitute this church at Antioch *when he was not ordained at that time?*¹⁰⁷ Remember EMDA tradition requires an ordained man to constitute a church! After all they say Philip could not constitute Samaria because he was not ordained so Peter and John were sent to do it.¹⁰⁸ But how then did the church at Jerusalem send the un-ordained Barnabas to constitute the church at Antioch? Or will they now say this was not an ordination service? One way or the other, the Laws of EMDA¹⁰⁹ will not square with Scripture in spite of the contentions of its proponents. It is loose threads like this which unravel their garment!

Mark 13:34-37

This passage also has been appealed to in support of EMDA.

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or

¹⁰⁶ I am indebted to a dear brother who first called my attention to this fact.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 7 Questions, p.21.

¹⁰⁸ 7 Questions, p. 21, 27. Cf. Acts 8:14-17.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Chapter 3.

at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mark 13:34-37.

I believe the only reason EMDA advocates appeal to this passage is because it contains the word *authority*. They never quote Mt. 24:44-48 nor appeal to it for this purpose even though it is approximately parallel. But no matter what their reason for appealing to it, it will not serve their purposes but defeats their intent as the following will show. Bro Cockrell says:

The interpretation of this parable is simple. The absent householder is Christ who took a far journey to Heaven at His ascension. His house is the New Testament church which He built while on earth (Matt. 16:28; I Tim.- 3:15; Heb. 3:6). The servants are the members of His household (Eph. 2:19-22). The porter is the pastor who has the watch over souls (Heb. 13:17), and who is to especially watch for the return of Jesus Christ...¹¹⁰

We note first of all this authority was not given to the *house*, as these brethren say, but to the *servants*! This is diametrically opposed to EMDA. Bro Cockrell goes on to say:

He delegates His authority to the servants of His house, the New Testament church. The Master of the house placed the authority there and it cannot be transferred.

Note how Bro Cockrell transposes *the servants* of His house into *the New Testament church*! But there is nothing in the parable to support this transfer from the servants to a church! If it belongs to the servants, then it does not belong to the

¹¹⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 31.

house. But if it belongs to the house, then it does not belong to the servants. As a matter of fact, this is the old mistake of trying to make a parable¹¹¹ go on all fours. The purpose of this parable is not to teach that authority is in the church, whether that idea is true or false. It is not to teach that one church must give authority for another whether true or false. It is not to teach that you must have an ordained elder to constitute a church. It is not to teach you can only get the Holy Spirit via church authority. These ideas are foreign to the NT in general and this parable in particular. The word *authority* in this parable, which has such a powerful attraction for EMDA minds, has nothing to do with the constitution of a church. *Authority* here simply means that the Son of Man has given every servant his work to do. The purpose of this parable is not to teach EMDA or that one house must get authority from another house or one church from another church! But the purpose is to teach us that as His servants we are to watch, to be in a state of readiness, laboring in our assigned places as we wait for the Lord's return.

This fact is emphasized when we remember the settled principle—parables were not given to teach doctrine. As Virkler says:

...orthodox expositors unanimously agree that no doctrine should be grounded on a parable as its primary or only source. The rationale for this principle is that clearer passages of Scripture are always used to clarify more obscure passages, never vice versa. Parables are by nature more obscure than doctrinal passages. Thus, doctrine should be developed from the clear prose passages of Scripture and parables used to amplify or emphasize that doctrine.¹¹²

¹¹¹ I recognize this may not be a parable but merely an illustration, but the implication is the same either way.

¹¹² Henry H.A. Virkler. *Hermeneutics*, p. 170.

Notice also that in order for this parable to have any weight for the purpose of EMDA it would necessitate the idea that no new household could be formed without the permission of a previously existing household! Thus, each new household, before it could be formed, would have to get the permission of another household (the authority) in order to set up a new household! How many would like to stake the validity of their marriage upon the supposed necessity of one household granting authority to the next all through the ages back to Adam and Eve? Who can tell what was done a thousand years ago? We know this is not true to life. When those who are of age choose to do so, they marry and form a new household. Of course, it is wise if children seek the counsel of their elders, and we rejoice to be asked to participate, but we all know that these things are not essential!¹¹³ Every household, when it is so formed, is as much a household as any other. The same thing is true of churches. So, the appeal to this parable is made solely because of the word *authority* and it does not help the cause of EMDA but defeats it.

Bro Fenison appeals to the idea of a *third-party authority* and the *marriage pattern* for church constitution:

Scriptures clearly set forth church constitution as an act, which is initiated and completed through the instrumental means of a third party, which is selectively authorized by the groom to bring the bride into covenant agreement (espousal). This authorized third party is the “ye” of the Great Commission (Mt.

¹¹³My mother, on her hospital bed told me, a young Marine, soon to ship out for duty in the Far East, “When you find the girl you want to be your wife, you bring her home and she will be my daughter, even if she is one of those girls from the Islands!” That meant a lot to me but it was not essential to my being properly married. Incidentally, I found my wife Esther, not in one of those islands in the Pacific, but in North Carolina. She has been a faithful companion now for almost sixty years. My mother never knew her but she would have loved her as I do!

28:19-20). Since marriage is the Biblical background (Eph. 5:31-32) for church constitution, Baptists have followed the marriage service as a pattern for church constitution services.¹¹⁴

My comments given above refuted his proposition before it was written—if he had only read it!

Now we will turn to the *mother church* idea.

¹¹⁴ Fenison. *ACC*, p. 21.

CHAPTER 5

THE MOTHER CHURCH IN EMDA

As *mother church* is an integral part of EMDA the advocates of this theory constantly speak and write on *the need* of a mother church.¹¹⁵ The *mother church*, as they use the term, is *a church which gives birth to a daughter church by granting it authority to become a church*. In their view a church must have this kind of a mother church or it cannot be a true church. Any church without such a mother is a false church. EMDA brethren will re-organize any church which does not have such a mother. Yet, not one of them, to my knowledge, has ever given the correct definition of *mother*, and then held to that definition in discussion of this subject. For example, Bro Cockrell does give the definition of *mother* (the only definition he gives in his book). “The word ‘mother’ means ‘that which gives birth to something, is the origin and source of something.’”¹¹⁶

Webster’s 10th Collegiate Dictionary gives four senses of the term: “mother....1 a: a female parent b (1): a woman in authority...(2); an old or elderly woman 2: Source, origin...3 maternal tenderness or affection 4: ...[vulgar].” Now it must be admitted by all that the only proper use of the term *mother* in reference to a Baptist church is the second sense: “source, origin.” “*Origin* means “the point at which something originates or comes into existence.”¹¹⁷ And this is the sense that most Baptists use *mother church* as we will later show. Yet, with this definition before them, these brethren, depart

¹¹⁵Cf. Ronnie Wolfe. “The Need For a Mother Church;” First Baptist Church P. O. Box 201 Harrison, OH 45030-0201; Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 83; 53; 44, 49, 50, 51, 52,53; Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*; p. 9-10. Bro. Tom Ross does not use the term *mother church*, but his idea is the same.

¹¹⁶Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 50.

¹¹⁷*American Heritage Dictionary*.

from the recognized meaning and jump to EMDA, as if somehow the word *mother* contained **essential authority** in it and all the tradition they have attached to the term!

Bro Cockrell quotes *An Appeal to the Mother of us All*,¹¹⁸ by Thomas Grantham who was a General Baptist. It is a mystery to me why Bro Cockrell would appeal to the General Baptists for proof of EMDA when it is a well-known fact that General Baptists held to the theory that anyone could institute baptism *de novo*! Of course, it is impossible to hold this view and EMDA at the same time. In verification of this Christian says:

Thus far, only the history of the General Baptists churches of England has been considered. This body constituted by far the larger portion of the Baptists of that country, and their history runs on in an uninterrupted stream from generation to generation. On the Subject of the administrator of baptism, Baptists held, as has been seen, that they had the power to originate baptism, but that it took at least two persons to begin the act; and that these two could institute the rite. This was the method of Smyth and was the general theory held by them.¹¹⁹

John Smyth's position on this is quite clear. He said:

A true church has the covenant, the promises, and ministerial power given to it, not through a carnal line of succession, but directly and immediately, by Christ. The church receives these “from Christ’s hand out of heaven.” This immediate authority is given, not to the pope, to the bishops, or to the presbytery, but to the body of the church.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 51.

¹¹⁹ Christian. *History of the Baptists*. Vol. II, p. 249.

¹²⁰ Tull. *Shapers of Baptist Thought*. p. 23.

It is utterly impossible to get EMDA out of Smyth! Furthermore, Armitage says Smyth ...renounced the figment of a historical, apostolic succession, insisting that where two or three organize according to the teachings of the New Testament, they form as true a Church of Christ as that of Jerusalem, though they stand alone in the earth.¹²¹

As this was the General Baptist position they could under no circumstances mean the same thing by the term *mother* as EMDA advocates do. Thus, any appeal to a General Baptist author to support EMDA is rather lame. Nevertheless, I will notice these citations given by Bro Cockrell. He said:

In the 1600s Thomas Grantham wrote a book entitled *Hear the Church: or an Appeal to the Mother of us all*. In 'To the Reader' he says: 'When I call the Primitive Christian Church at Jerusalem, the Mother of us all, I allude to that place, Gal. 4:26.' He often uses the term 'Mother church' throughout his book. The term 'mother church' did not bother the old Baptists as it does some modern-day Baptists.¹²²

What Bro Cockrell failed to do was ascertain the sense in which Grantham used 'Mother church' in his book. I have no objection to Grantham's use, but I object to Bro Cockrell's use. Bro Cockrell assigns to *mother church* the idea of EMDA. The idea of Grantham and that of EMDA cannot be reconciled!

There is not one word in Grantham's book which supports EMDA! The only reason it is quoted, I suppose, is because Grantham used the term *mother church*! But what did Grantham mean by the use of this term? He uses this term in its *proper sense*— not a mother church granting authority to a daughter church to constitute but as the *origin* without any

¹²¹ Armitage. *History of the Baptists*, p. 453.

¹²² *SCO*, p. 51.

idea of authority, latent or conveyed. The book has neither hint nor scent of that idea in it. Unfortunately for EMDA advocates, Grantham left his idea of the essentials of a Scriptural church in another work of his, *Ancient Christian Religion*, in which he says:

For the definition of the Christian Church, we shall not much vary from that which hath therein been done by the ancient or modern Writers. Lactantius gives this brief definition of the Church...‘It is only the Catholic Church which hath the true worship and service of God.’ Our modern Protestants usually define the Church thus, ‘Where the Word of God is sincerely taught, and the Sacraments rightly administered, there is the true Church...’¹²³

A little further on he says:

...the church is defined, A company of men called out of the World by the — [word is illegible] or Doctrine of Christ to worship one true God according to his will.¹²⁴

Grantham says these definitions he mentions are according to those of earlier times. He mentions Lactantius, by name and then he quotes some Protestant writers of his own day. But he never even suggests that a mother church must give authority to form a new church. I doubt that he ever heard of such an idea except from Catholicism. The idea for which Bro Cockrell contends is not in Grantham’s book *Hear the Church*. Of course, if that idea had been there, it would have been quoted.

Bro Cockrell also quoted Benjamin Keach in the effort to gain some kind of historical validity for the *mother church* idea. Keach says: “By Mother in these scriptures is meant

¹²³ Thomas Grantham. *Ancient Christian Religion*, Second Part, p. 2.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

the church of God...”¹²⁵ Yet, Keach held to DA. This proves that Keach is quoted to prove something which he did not embrace. Keach did not believe in EMDA and that Bro Cockrell quoted him as if he did, proves he did not understand Keach as Keach understood himself!

Keach also said in this same work:

The true Church teacheth nothing for doctrine, but what she hath received from the mouth of Christ. She doth not, like the Mother of harlots, teach for doctrine cursed fopperies, idle, ridiculous, and superstitious ceremonies, which are a reproach to the Christian religion...¹²⁶

Alas! This which Keach has just described is the very stuff EMDA is made of! But why would Bro Cockrell quote Keach from *Types & Metaphors*, to prove one must have a mother church when Keach expressly tells how a church is constituted in his book *Glory of True Church*? We let Keach express it:

A Church of Christ, according to the Gospel-Institution, is a Congregation of Godly Christians, who as a Stated-Assembly (being first baptized upon the Profession of Faith) do by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the Lord, and one to another, according to the Will of God: and do ordinarily meet together in one Place, for the Public Service and Worship of God: among whom the Word of God and Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's Institution.¹²⁷

The EMDA advocates have jumped to the conclusion that any time a writer used the term *mother church* he meant

¹²⁵ Benjamin Keach. *Types & Metaphors*-, p. 695.

¹²⁶ Benjamin Keach. *Types & Metaphors*-, p. 696.

¹²⁷ Dever, Mark. *Polity*, p. 64-65.

EMDA! When they do so they are merely begging the question. For example, there are a few cases where the old Landmark Baptists used the term *mother church*. It is only fair to ask what these writers meant when they used this term. A few examples will make the answer resound like a clap of thunder.

Graves himself writes:

...and it is an established fact that a majority of the churches planted in America, from the year 1645-1730, were organized by Welsh Baptists, and constituted upon articles of faith, brought over with them from the mother churches.¹²⁸

What did Graves mean when he used the term *mother churches*? We know he did not mean EMDA because he believed in DA or **Divine constitution**.¹²⁹ This is demonstrated over and over by Graves' own statements. Graves makes it abundantly clear that the authority for every church comes not from a *mother church* but—

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, **and receiving its authority directly from Christ**, it is accountable to him alone.¹³⁰

Thus, when EMDA supporters appeal to a writer's use of the term *mother church* as proof he believed EMDA with no other evidence than this term they only manifest their bias. I emphasize this point because some have supposed the use of this term by an author was evidence he believed EMDA, **when they know, or should know, this is not true!**¹³¹ Numbers of quotes have been published in *GPP* proving the

¹²⁸ Graves. Intro. Essay to Orchard's *Concise History of Baptists*, p. xxi.

¹²⁹ See chapters 3 and 13.

¹³⁰ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995, my emphasis.

¹³¹ *SCO*, p. 84, par 3.

old Landmarkers did not believe this doctrine.¹³² **Not one time has any writer attempted to refute a single one of these quotes!** The silence of their guns indicates the scarcity of ammunition. All the old Landmarkers taught the same thing Graves did on this subject and if these brethren cannot agree with Graves and the other old Landmarkers, they at least ought to be honest enough to admit these men did not believe in EMDA!¹³³ When these old Landmarkers are quoted as if they believed in EMDA it does not change their real position of DA but it is a misrepresentation!

S. H. Ford, quoting Graves, and speaking of John Clarke says:

And when Baptist history is better understood than it is at present, everyone, pointing to that venerable church which, on one of earth's loveliest spots he established, will say, "This is the mother of us all!"¹³⁴

Of course, Ford could not mean that this church was organically linked by EMDA to all the churches in America! Some Baptist churches came from England and Wales intact. But of the great mass of churches which were constituted in America, very, very, few had any direct link to this church. Ford himself expressly denies the whole idea of "a linked chain of churches or ministers, uninterrupted and traceable at this distant day..."¹³⁵

What then did he mean by "**This is the mother of us all**"? He meant this was the **first** Baptist church in America! Thus, it is easy to see that when EMDA advocates attempt to build their whole system on this term it is nothing but a hodgepodge of historical allusions by which they deceive

¹³² See *GPP* articles for several quotes by Graves and others.

¹³³ *SCO*, p 84.

¹³⁴ S. H. Ford. *Origin of the Baptists*, p. 11.

¹³⁵ W. A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1.

themselves and attempt to fool others. This writes Ichabod over their *mother church* idea!

To further verify this point, remember J. R. Graves, whom Ford was quoting above, took the same position:

...Baptists...will mention John Clarke as the real founder of our denomination in America. And when Baptist history is better understood than it is at present, everyone, pointing to that venerable church [Newport] which, on one of earth's loveliest spots, he established, will say: 'This is the mother of us all!'¹³⁶

Here Graves also used the term *mother* but he did not mean this church granted authority, or that this church was even connected by any direct link with the succeeding Baptist churches of America, I quote him again:

That but very few Baptist Churches in America or New England have any ecclesiastical connection with either the church in Newport or Providence.¹³⁷

This church, the church of John Clarke, Graves says is the *mother of us all* but just a few pages later says, "very few Baptist Churches... have any ecclesiastical connection with either" of these churches! Is EMDA not the very essence of "ecclesiastical connection"? But if the churches which look to Newport as the "mother of us all" i.e., —the Baptist denomination in America—then it would seem to be conclusive that EMDA was not involved, and could not be involved, in Graves' and Ford's use of the term *mother*! EMDA advocates have clearly misread these old authors. They have assigned a meaning to the term *mother church* which these old writers clearly opposed! Is this proper?

¹³⁶ Graves, *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 161.

¹³⁷ *Op. Cit.* p. 180.

When a man thinks a proposition is true but someone corrects him and demonstrates it is false, what are we to think if that man continues to restate the very same thing again and again after he learns it is false? I contend that these quotes of Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, Jarrel, Ford, Bogard, Cathcart, and others, on church constitution are so abundant, so clear, so unmistakable that any man who wants to know the truth can do so—yea, he cannot help but know it! Bro Cockrell has stated that we who differ with him on this issue are not telling the whole truth.¹³⁸ And in his second edition he implies that we *twist and turn* the words of these old writers.¹³⁹ But we have documented every quote from these men so that anyone can verify for himself what these men said—and we have done it numbers of times!

These quotes are irrefutable! And EMDA advocates have silently admitted this because they never deal with them! Yet, these brethren continue to refer to the old Landmarkers as if they believed their position! Bro Cockrell's second edition of *SCO* does not make a single concession concerning these quotes. Why not?

Surely everyone recognizes the fact that preachers, historians and others use the term *mother* who never believed EMDA. Then it would have seemed prudent for these brethren to make sure the men they quoted were using this term in the same sense they do before haling them in as witnesses. But it is evident they have quoted these authors on the *sound* of a word or a phrase and not on the *sense* intended. They have assumed much and complain because we do not accept their assumptions!

Another example is the Sandy Creek Church.

¹³⁸ *SCO*, p. 180.

¹³⁹ *SCO*, 2nd edition, p. 91, "But brethren, do not twist and turn the words of our old Baptist brethren to justify your departure from the faith."

It [Sandy Creek church of NC] became the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother of forty-two churches, from which 125 ministers were sent out as licentiates or ordained clergymen. And in after-years the power that God gave Shubal Stearns and his Sandy Creek church in its early years swept over Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina with resistless force, and brought immense throngs to Christ, and established multitudes of Baptist churches. There are today probably thousands of churches that arose from the efforts of Shubal Stearns and the church of Sandy Creek.¹⁴⁰

Is this not EMDA? No!

Nor will the EMDA advocates recognize this church as a Scriptural church! The fly in the ointment, which makes this church stink for them, is that it was self-constituted! As soon as they arrived, they built them a little meeting house, and these 16 persons formed themselves into a church, and chose Shubal Stearns for their pastor, who had, for his assistants at that time, Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, neither of whom were ordained.¹⁴¹

If EMDA is true, the Sandy Creek Church never was a scriptural church! And of these thousands of churches which came from it they too must be false churches because their mother was a false church! This account is quicksand to EMDA and the more they struggle the more desperate their situation!

Semple also uses the term *mother*. “This was the first Separate Baptist church in Virginia, and in some sense, the mother of all the rest.”¹⁴² He says this church pastored by

¹⁴⁰ William Cathcart. *Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 1099.

¹⁴¹ David Benedict. *History of The Baptists*. II, p. 384.

¹⁴² Robert Semple, *History of Virginia Baptists*: p. 17.

Dutton Lane was in *some sense* the mother of all the rest. It was not a mother church with *essential authority* but a mother as the *original* or *the first church* without any idea of authority, to which Semple referred. An EMDA church according to their theory, is not in *some sense* a mother, but she **is** the mother, **organically so! This organic connection is the heart of the theory!** But all can see that Semple had no such idea, when referring to the Sandy Creek Church. It did not give any authority for constituting new churches nor was that authority passed on church-vote to church-vote, mother to daughter and mother to daughter, because this church was only a mother in the sense of being the first in a line.

Another example is given by W. B. Johnson. He says:

In these scriptures, we have as satisfactory account of the formation of the mother church at Jerusalem. *One accord, mutual consent* in the truth as it is in Jesus, constituted the principle on which the church was formed. The apostles taught the disciples the duty, and the principle, of the church relation, and they complied with it. But no official act of the *apostles* beyond teaching, do we learn, gave validity to its existence. With the pattern thus clearly given, and the scripture record of numerous churches in different places, we are taught, that wherever a sufficient number of believers in Christ, baptized upon a profession of faith in him, live sufficiently contiguous to each other for the purposes of the church relation, they should unite together in such relation on the principle of ONE ACCORD, *mutual consent in the truth*. The Bible is their only standard of doctrine and duty.¹⁴³

Johnson very clearly teaches DA in the same context with *mother church!* This proves the use of *mother* or *mother*

¹⁴³ W. B. Johnson. *The Gospel Developed*. 1846, Quoted in Dever's *Polity*, p. 187.

church did not mean EMDA to Baptists nor did they practice it in constitution of churches!

Galatians 4:26, The mother of us all.

It is amazing, but this text has been appealed to prove EMDA.¹⁴⁴ The reference here to Jerusalem above being the mother of us all, is by many commentators referred to the church.¹⁴⁵ Bro Cockrell quoted Gill on this passage but improperly.¹⁴⁶ I give a portion of Gill's comment:

Particular respect may be had to the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, which consisted of persons born from above, were blessed with a Gospel spirit, which is a spirit of liberty, out of which the Gospel went into all the world, and from among whom the apostles and first preachers of the word went forth everywhere, and were the means of the conversion of multitudes, both among the Jews and Gentiles, and so might be truly said to be the mother of us all.¹⁴⁷

Gill and these other writers see the church as a *mother* not because she granted EMDA to other churches but because **she begot children by the preaching of the gospel!** Gill also says:

...which is cited to prove, that the heavenly Jerusalem, or Gospel church state, is the mother of us all, and has brought forth and still will bring forth, many souls to Christ...¹⁴⁸

Calvin says:

¹⁴⁴ *SCO*, p. 50-52.

¹⁴⁵ E.g., *pro*, Calvin, Gill, Trapp, Alford, Barnes, Lenski, Bengel, et al; *con* BHC, Gal. p. 54-56, Broadman.

¹⁴⁶ *SCO*, p. 51-52.

¹⁴⁷ John Gill. *Com., loco*.

¹⁴⁸ *Op. cit.* vs. 27.

The heavenly Jerusalem, which derives its origin from heaven, and dwells above by faith, is the mother of believers.¹⁴⁹

The context has nothing to say of begetting daughter churches but the begetting of disciples, "**...for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise...So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**"¹⁵⁰

Gill believed in self constitution:

A church of saints thus essentially constituted, as to matter and form, have a power in this state to admit and reject members, as all societies have; and also to choose their own officers; which, when done, they become a complete organized church, as to order and power...¹⁵¹

He also says of a gospel church: "It is this confederacy, consent, and agreement, that is the formal cause of a church..."¹⁵² Also:

All civil relations...are by consent and covenant; as that of magistrates and subjects, and of masters and servants, and of husband and wife; which latter, as it is by compact and agreement, may serve to illustrate the relation between a church and its members added to it, and the manner in which they be, by consent...¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Calvin. *Com. Loco.*

¹⁵⁰ Ga 4:26, 27, 31.

¹⁵¹ Gill. *Body of Divinity*. Bk. II, chap. I, 6. p. 625.

¹⁵² *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. I, 6. p. 624.

¹⁵³ *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. I, 3. p. 624.

Thus, the appeal to these writers in support of EMDA is ill-founded and their position, so plainly stated, cancels out any supposed support for EMDA.

This is another case of quoting a writer to prove a point which the author did not believe! Gill in his *Body of Divinity* covers the subject of church constitution and expressly declares a church is formed by a covenant of those who compose it. Gill never believed in EMDA. His own church was self-constituted as the minority of a church split without any kind of church authority!¹⁵⁴ Nothing in his writings even suggests this idea. But the phrase *mother church* has an awesome attraction for EMDA advocates and they are drawn to it even if it does to them what a flame does to the moth! And there is no question, but these quotes herein given have flamed their wings!

Thus, it is easy to see these men have been quoted to prove a proposition which they denied by voice and pen! What an unconscionable thing it is to misrepresent men in such a manner!

It will not seem too much if we look at the use of the term *mother* in other applications. Because so much has been made of this term, I want to give several examples of the proper use of *mother* and place this beyond question.

MOTHER COUNTRY

Mother country means the country from which the people of a colony derive their origin.

¹⁵⁴ Ella. John Gill and *The Cause of God and Truth*, pp.46-53.

We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land.¹⁵⁵

Fox, at the publishing of the surrender of Cornwallis in England, said in the House of Commons: “Thank God that America has resisted the claims of the mother country.”¹⁵⁶ This is the sense in which our Baptist forefathers used the word “mother” in reference to churches. It means *origin*. It had nothing to do with the EMDA! I suppose no one would be hardy enough to maintain these American colonies got authority from England to establish these United States!

MOTHER ASSOCIATION

“From this Association,”¹⁵⁷ “as from a fruitful mother, have originated most of the present Associations in Virginia.”¹⁵⁸ If the EMDA advocates are right, then here we have “Associational authority,” for the constitution of an association as well as “church authority” for constitution of a church. One is just as scriptural as the other. One just as viable as the other. Graves used the term “mother body” when referring to the Philadelphia Association. Could anyone suppose he meant that that body gave all other associations authority to exist and that such authority was essential to form an association?¹⁵⁹

This mother church idea is current among Catholics, Christian Science and other such groups. The “Mother Church” of the Christian Science Church is in Boston and it

¹⁵⁵ Isaac Backus. *Your Baptist Heritage*, From a letter of Mr. Robinson and Elder Brewster. p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. 1, p. 386.

¹⁵⁷ General Association of Separate Baptists.

¹⁵⁸ David Benedict. *General History of the Baptist Denomination*, vol. II, p. 33.

¹⁵⁹ Graves. *Old Landmarkism*, p. 205.

has about 2000 branches in the world. There is also a Mother Church of Scientology. EMDA advocates can see the kind of company they keep. They are welcome to all the comfort they can derive from these *Mother churches*!

MOTHER STATES

We also find reference to Mother States.

But now another difficulty, and one that assumed much larger proportions, began to afflict the young churches. This also came with the pioneers from the Mother States, or followed them to their new home in the western wilderness.¹⁶⁰

Perhaps some of the EMDA brethren would like to take the position that no state can be formed without the authority of a mother state!

HERE IS THE MOTHER BUT WHERE IS THE FATHER

The illogical and inconsistent view concerning the “mother church” is demonstrated when we ask, “Where is the Father?” For it is quite evident, that if you have a mother in the sense used by EMDA, you must also have a father. Of course, EMDA brethren do not like for this question to be asked and immediately protest that this is taking things too far,¹⁶¹ failing to recognize it is they who have run too far.

¹⁶⁰ Spencer. *History of Kentucky Baptists*, vol. I, p. 182.

¹⁶¹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50.

FATHER OF A CHURCH

It is just as scriptural to have a *father* church as it is to have a *mother* church! This proves EMDA has been run up to seed. Benedict writes:

Thomas Nelson, formerly a member of the first church in Swansea, removed to this place, then called Assawamset, forty years before the church [Second Church, Middleborough] was formed, his being the first English family which had ventured in this then uncultivated wilderness. He set up a meeting at his house, and must be considered the father of the church, although he died at the age of 80, a short time before it was founded.¹⁶²

The idea intended here can be grasped by a child. I am at a loss why those mature in years cannot understand.

J. R. Graves said of Roger Williams:

It is greatly to be regretted that any one was ever so misled as to proclaim to the world that Roger Williams was the first man to conceive and advocate the idea of religious liberty, and that he was the father and founder of the American Baptist Churches.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 412.

¹⁶³ Graves. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 181.

THE IDEA OF A MOTHER CHURCH IN EMDA IS UNSCRIPTURAL

Churches are societies. Societies **are not conceived! Societies are not born!** They are **constituted!** Thus, the idea of “like begetting like,” “begetting,” “birthing,” “bringing forth,” and other such terms, can only be used in a figurative sense in reference to churches. The term “mother church” is as unscriptural as is the term “catholic church” in the sense used by EMDA advocates. Give the verse that speaks of a “mother church” and right next to it you will find the “catholic church.” Only in modern times has the term “mother church” been pressed to these absurd lengths! Only Christ can constitute a church, and this is the teaching of Scripture and History corroborates this was clear to Baptists and they never embraced this idea of church propagation as set forth by EMDA.

Bro Cockrell goes so far as to say that Christ and the church have a new baby whenever a new church is properly constituted! “In fact, when one church gives birth to another church, Christ and his wife have given birth to a baby girl.”¹⁶⁴ Christ is not yet married to the church but only espoused to be married. We all know what people are who have children before marriage. In their zeal for EMDA these brethren have unwittingly gone further than they intended! Error always comes back like a boomerang on its perpetrators. We see this reflected in the following quote:

But the organic Catholic Church itself arose out of the ambitious scheme to sap the foundations of Congregational liberty, and to crush heretics. We read such folly as this from the pen of Cyprian: “That man cannot have God for his Father, who has not the

¹⁶⁴ Cockrell. *SCO* p. 52.

Church for his mother. . . Where there is no Church,
sins cannot be put away.¹⁶⁵

NO TRUE CHURCH CAN BE A MOTHER

A mother who gives birth to a daughter without a husband is an adulteress! Virgins do not have daughters! Some EMDA churches have mothered many daughters — but are not yet married! What kind of teaching is this? Scriptural churches cannot have daughter churches because they are not married but only espoused to Christ, *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*¹⁶⁶ Thus any church which is a mother in the sense of EMDA is an adulteress! H. Boyce Taylor said:

No church that has been married, whether a widow or not, has no part ["is no part"? — JCS] of the Bride of Christ; Rev. 18:7. Christ is not yet married, but only betrothed, II Cor. 11:2.¹⁶⁷

So, this whole idea of “mother” and “daughter” in the sense used by EMDA is not only unscriptural and illogical but it pulls more off the shelf than they can carry!

¹⁶⁵ Armitage. *History of The Baptists*, p. 101.

¹⁶⁶ 2 Cor. 11:2.

¹⁶⁷ *The Pioneer Baptist*. Bryant Station Baptist Church, Feb. 2003.

WHO WAS YOUR MOTHER?

When Paul was passing through the region of Ephesus he found some disciples and they were lacking in some way. He asked of them this question: “Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.”¹⁶⁸ We note that he did not ask them, “Who was your mother church?” He did not ask, “Where did you get your authority?” This means that EMDA was not in Paul’s doctrinal bag or he would have asked these very questions. Out of these disciples twelve or so were scripturally baptized.¹⁶⁹ In the other accounts we have of preachers in the New Testament meeting saints before unknown to them,¹⁷⁰ not one time do we ever hear this question, “Who was your mother?” It is not a Bible question! Nor can this question be found in Baptist History! Rather this idea is a modern sprout! If EMDA had been the practice of Baptists, Baptist History would be replete with it. But the silence here is a profound mystery for EMDA advocates because they admit there were “liberal churches” teaching DA alongside the orthodox EMDA churches. Bro Cockrell says:

I do not deny there have been liberal elements of Baptists who may have practiced otherwise. But let it be remembered that there has always been this Landmark element as well. It is wrong to merely present the liberal element and to give the impression that all Baptists agreed with the liberal element. Liberal Baptists, Reformed Baptists, and apostate Landmarkers delight in doing just that. They don’t tell the whole truth.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Ac 19:3.

¹⁶⁹ Ac 19:7.

¹⁷⁰ *E. g.*, Acts 10:11; 28:15, etc.

¹⁷¹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89.

But where is there any statement by any standard Baptist document of EMDA in history? This is a question EMDA advocates have striven to answer but it has proved as illusive to them as the Fountain of Youth did to Ponce de Leon.

In the next chapter, we will consider J.R. Graves and his position on church constitution.

CHAPTER 6

J. R. GRAVES, OLD LANDMARKISM AND CHURCH CONSTITUTION

That Old Landmarkism, in its essential ideas, and the views of J. R. Graves on the church are closely related go without saying. What did J. R. Graves teach on the subject of church constitution? He is often quoted as believing in EMDA, but only by inference.¹⁷² Rather than infer what J. R. Graves believed about church constitution I will give his direct statements on the subject.

CHURCH DEFINED

Unlike so many today, Graves did not hesitate to define his terms¹⁷³ and he defined *church* and published his definition in every edition of *The Baptist* as a standing editorial for years!¹⁷⁴ Note carefully what he says:

4. Each visible Church of Christ is a company of scripturally immersed believers only, (not of believers and their *unconverted children* and *seekers* on probation), associated by voluntary covenant to obey and execute all the commandments of Christ, having the same organization, doctrines, officers and ordinances of the Church at Jerusalem, and independent of all others, acknowledging no lawgiver in Zion but Christ and submitting to no law he has not enacted. Read Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1;

¹⁷² Cf. Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 84; Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*, p. 36; Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*, p. 194-195; W. Barnes. *The Southern Baptist Convention: 1845-1953*, p. 100; Morgan Patterson. *Baptist Successionism*, p. 10.

¹⁷³ I have never seen a single article or book by an EMDA writer who defined his terms on the constitution of a church!

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix III for terms used in this book taken from Baptist History.

Col.1:1-5; Acts 2:41,42; Matt. 18:20-23-28; 2 Cor. 7:6-19; Philip. 26:27; 1 Cor. 5:12,13.¹⁷⁵

How are they associated together? By voluntary covenant! What organization did they have? The same as the Church at Jerusalem. Did they submit to any law Christ had not enacted? None! Note he gives no place here for EMDA at all and EMDA advocates have recognized this embarrassing fact!¹⁷⁶

CHURCH AUTHORITY DIRECT FROM CHRIST

Of course, EMDA maintains the authority to constitute a church must come **not from Christ directly** but indirectly from Christ **through a mother church**. But this was not the teaching of J. R. Graves! Graves gives his definition of the term *church* as follows:

I will now define a Scriptural Church, as regards its polity and powers, and these define its character, whether Democratic or otherwise, whether legislative or executive only.

Sec[tion]. 1. Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.¹⁷⁷

Graves here tells us that each particular Church receives its **authority directly from Christ!** This excludes presbyteries, associations, elders, church letters, bishops and *mother*

¹⁷⁵ *The Baptist*, May 4, 1867, p. 1. There are errors in the Scripture references but they are cited verbatim. *The Baptist* is now on line:

http://www.sbhla.org/tb_archive/

¹⁷⁶ See GPP "Chain Link" Ecclesiology... p. 1, July 1997; "Constitution of Churches," April 1, 2000 and several other issues. No one has attempted to refute a single one of these many quotes.

<http://www.gpp5grace.com/graceproclamator>

¹⁷⁷ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995-6. Cf. *The Great Iron Wheel*, p. 552.

churches as well and this leaves EMDA a begging orphan! It is assumed that Graves knew what Landmarkism was and consequently, EMDA is not a Landmark doctrine in any sense of the term! Remember, then, EMDA did not come from Landmarkism according to their own dictum *Like begets Like*!¹⁷⁸ But as Landmarkism and EMDA are totally different, EMDA got its origin from some other source! Let them tell us who their real mother is!

A CHURCH IS DIVINELY INVESTED WITH POWER

Graves taught emphatically that every church is **divinely invested** with all the powers a church can have—but not by the instrumentality of a mother church:

...Therefore, each assembly was a complete Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was **divinely invested** with all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ.¹⁷⁹

This is DA! And no man can mistake Graves' meaning! Consequently, the old Landmarker was himself a “neo-Landmarker” according to what some say!¹⁸⁰ How strange!

¹⁷⁸ Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10. “Like begets like in every realm of creation, therefore every Baptist church must be organized out of an already existing Baptist church.”

¹⁷⁹ Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 127. My emphasis.

¹⁸⁰ Cockrell. *SCO*. The author has several different kinds of Landmarkers: Apostate Landmarkers, pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 94, 62, 79; hyper Landmarkers, p. 43; Strict Landmarkers, p. 53; Radical Landmarkers, p. 50; neo- Landmarkers, p. 86.

MEMBERS UNITE WITH CHRIST AND EACH OTHER

Graves did not leave us in doubt about the details of how a church is constituted:

From the above I am warranted in formulating this definition: “A Scriptural Church is (1) a local organized assembly, (2) of professedly believing and truly baptized persons, (3) consisting of the ministers and laymen living in or near the same place, (4) organized upon terms of equality in all Church privileges, and (5) in conformity with the governmental and doctrinal teachings of Christ and his apostles, (6) united in covenant with Christ and each other for the maintenance of his worship, discipline and ordinances, and the universal promulgation of his Gospel; (7) each body being complete in itself and absolutely independent of all other organizations.”¹⁸¹

“In covenant with Christ and each other...” is Graves’ direction for church constitution! No other church is necessary to make the act viable. EMDA teaches those who would constitute a church must first become members of the *mother church and then must be given specific authority from that mother church to constitute*. Without this, they teach, no new church can be formed. They thus put the church above Christ! This was not the doctrine of Graves.

¹⁸¹ Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 125.

CHRIST TAUGHT HIS SAINTS TO CONSTITUTE THEMSELVES INTO A CHURCH

Graves taught that Christ made it a duty for His people to “voluntarily organize themselves by mutual covenant into a Christian assembly...”

Then your ‘church’ (?) has never yet done one of the five or six distinct duties Christ commands and requires each of his churches to do, and the first among these is: — To voluntarily organize themselves, by mutual covenant, into a Christian assembly; and to eat the Lord’s Supper as a church, all assembled in one place.¹⁸²

Graves also says of the Methodists, that their members “...did [not] enter into mutual covenant for the purpose, nor are your societies organized by a mutual covenant...” Note that of the “five or six distinct duties Christ commands and requires” what Graves believes to be first: “To voluntarily organize themselves” “into a Christian assembly.” How is that done? “By mutual covenant”!¹⁸³

Graves is here teaching that Baptists did organize or constitute themselves into NT Churches by the process of mutual agreement and by no other manner or means. Whatever any “helps” (i.e., elders, supporting churches, associations, etc.) may have contributed to the organization, it is clear they had no power or authority essential to constitution as Graves saw it! His view was that the power required to constitute a church resides in Christ alone. That authority was given directly to them when they met together

¹⁸² Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 127.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

in His Name! This is not only the Landmark, but it is also the Baptist position.

*A CHURCH IS DEPENDENT UPON NO OTHER BODY
FOR ITS EXISTENCE*

The old Landmarker does not hesitate to exclude all religious organizations from any essential connection to a new church!

Each particular church, is a body of Christ complete in itself, and absolutely independent of all other religious organizations. This is so evident upon the face of the Scriptures I see not how to make it more manifest. The proof given that the very word *ekklesia* (an assembly) denotes a complete church, equally implies its independency, i.e., that it is dependent upon no other body for its existence or self-perpetuation, or the discharge of all the functions and trust of a Church of Christ.¹⁸⁴

Graves argues that the very term *ekklesia* implies its independency from mother churches, associations, boards, synods, presbyteries, ordained elders or what have you. An *ekklesia* must get its authority from Christ or it is not His church! This is the essential of Landmarkism. EMDA is rejected, excluded, refuted!

*A CHURCH IS CONSTITUTED WHEN MEMBERS
COVENANT WITH CHRIST AND EACH OTHER*

Graves gives the Baptist method of church constitution again:

¹⁸⁴ Graves. *Great Iron Wheel*, p. 134.

Nor can I learn, from any source, that your ministers and members covenant with Christ and each other for the maintenance of His worship, doctrine, and ordinances, the teaching of His word...¹⁸⁵

This is how Landmark Baptist churches are constituted—they covenant with Christ and each other. EMDA is not the doctrine of Graves nor Landmarkism! Nor is it any part of Baptist belief or practice!

THE SOURCE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

Graves hammers away at this idea that somehow authority must be transmitted from another church for constitution. He rejects this idea totally. Several modern Landmarkers assert Graves taught EMDA.¹⁸⁶ This is what the theory demands. It is the absolute essential of church constitution according to their theory but Graves denies their assumption at the threshold and states his position as follows: “Christ said, where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them.”¹⁸⁷

The authority for the constitution of a new church, Graves says, is not from a mother church nor from an elder sent with this authority as EMDA teaches! Graves does not bow to the pressure that this constitutional authority is obtained from a “mother church.”¹⁸⁸ Nor does he give any place for the idea that this authority is granted by the mutual permission of a mother church in conjunction with Christ, as some might have it. Rather, he teaches that **the authority is directly from Christ—and from Christ alone!** And to prove this he appeals to Mt.18:20 and this sets EMDA off from

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Tom Ross, *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10; Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 29,

¹⁸⁷ Graves, *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 135. The bracketed word is Graves.’

¹⁸⁸ Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 4; Tom Ross, *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10.

Landmarkism as the leper was set off from Israel. This is what the Old Landmarker taught! Why is it that these EMDA writers cannot understand Graves?

HOW THE AUTHORITY IS RECEIVED FROM CHRIST

Of course, some may question as to how the authority is received from Christ. Graves again sets this matter in noon-day light. He says:

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.¹⁸⁹

This is as clear as words can be. The source of authority in church constitution is a shot directly from Christ, not a ricochet from a mother church. Graves is upholding not only the Baptist, but the *Landmark* Baptist, doctrine of church constitution here! **“Each particular Church is independent...receiving its authority directly from Christ...”** How plain these words! Misunderstanding is impossible! EMDA and Landmarkism are necessarily and mutually exclusive! The two doctrines are diametrical opposites. A Landmark Baptist cannot hold EMDA nor can an EMDA advocate hold to Landmarkism! Those who contend Graves held EMDA are woefully mistaken and they ought to be honest enough to admit it!

THE NUMBER NECESSARY TO FORM A CHURCH

Bro Cockrell and others say if Mt 18:20 refers to church constitution then you must have at least six members to

¹⁸⁹ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995.

constitute a church¹⁹⁰ and by this means he hopes to throw out this text as far as church constitution is concerned. This text is a terrible threat to those who hold this theory and they seek to eliminate it from this discussion.¹⁹¹ But Graves will not join in their error. He quotes Tertullian with approval on this subject:

Tertullian [A. D. 150] says, “Ubi tres ecclesia est, licet laici.” ‘Three are sufficient to form a church although they be laymen.’¹⁹²

One can see at a glance that the doctrine of self-constitution is not *apostate* Landmarkism¹⁹³ but *orthodox* Landmarkism! This is where Graves stood and this is where the rubber meets the road!

SAVED BAPTIZED SAINTS CAN ORGANIZE THEMSELVES INTO A CHURCH

Graves in writing to the Methodists censors them because they do not believe in DA. They think they must have higher powers confer something on them to constitute a church. Graves censors Methodism and EMDA in the process:

You deny to your members any voice—
1. In organizing themselves into a Scriptural church—
in determining the formation of their government and
form of organization.

¹⁹⁰ Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 36. Cf. Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, p. 643, where Benedict recounts how Elders Miller, Thomas and the un-ordained John Gano constituted a church with three members. Apparently, these old Baptists had not learned this rule of six.

¹⁹¹ Bro Cockrell refers to this verse only once in *SCO*, p. 36.

¹⁹² Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 136; *Old Landmarkism: What is It?* p. 41. *Great Iron Wheel*. P. 554.

¹⁹³ Cockrell, *SCO*. pp. 7, 49, et. al.

2. In covenanting together to observe the laws of Christ in all things, and to watch over each other for good.¹⁹⁴

EMDA teaches those who are in gospel order cannot constitute a church without authority from a mother church! They manifest their opposition to Scripture and old Landmarkism when they take this skewed position. Graves will not buy their soap!

NO CHURCH CAN EXTEND HER RIGHTS BEYOND HERSELF

Graves taught that no church can delegate its powers. And if this is true, no church can give authority to another church! No church can ordain for another church. No church can receive members for another church. No church can baptize for another church. No church can call a pastor for another church. Graves drives home this truth:

4. We learn that all our church rights, privileges, and franchises are limited to the particular church of which we are members, as those of a citizen are limited to the State of which he is a citizen. Nor can one church constitutionally extend her franchises or privileges to persons without and beyond her jurisdiction, any more than one State can extend her franchises to citizens of other States.¹⁹⁵

Again, he said: “Sec[ti]on]. 6.—These powers, rights, and duties, cannot be delegated, nor conceded or alienated with impunity.”¹⁹⁶ This means no church can delegate any power, right or duty it has from Christ to any other entity! Thus, no church can delegate, confer, grant or impute church

¹⁹⁴ *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 351.

¹⁹⁵ Graves. *Intercommunion*, p. 161.

¹⁹⁶ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995-6.

constitution to another church! No church can grant such power because it is Christ's prerogative and His alone! The authority to constitute is given directly by Christ to each assembly and that power cannot be delegated to another. This is old Landmarkism!

THE PATTERN

What is the pattern of church constitution to which Landmark Baptists often refer? Graves says:

Christ enjoined it upon his apostles and ministers for all time to come, to construct all organizations that should bear his name according to the pattern and model he 'built' before their eyes; and those who add to or diminish aught, do it at their peril.¹⁹⁷

Graves is not talking about EMDA here but about their knowing how to model churches after the apostolic churches.¹⁹⁸ The evidence for my contention is found in one of Graves' earliest works. He said:

That these principles can be found together, embodied in specific Articles, in any one chapter in the New Testament, I do not claim; nor can the Apostles' Creed or the acknowledged Articles of Evangelical Faith; but, like these, they run through the whole body of the teachings of Christ and his apostles; and I do maintain that the principles of Church constitution, order, and discipline are as clearly and specifically taught as are the doctrines which Christian churches are to hold and teach. Therefore men—Church rulers— have no more right to invent forms of Church government to please their own fancy, than to invent doctrines, regardless of the teachings of Christ and his apostles.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Graves. *Old Landmarkism*. p. 30-31.

¹⁹⁸ See Graves' method of constitution in Jarrel's *Baptist Perpetuity*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹ Graves. *Great Iron Wheel*, p. 544.

But lest some question what Graves meant in this paragraph, I submit the following from the same source in a chapter entitled *Constitution*:

Article I.

Sec. 2. — a particular Church may consist of any number not less than “two or three” gathered together in the name of Christ.

Sec. 4. — Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.²⁰⁰

EMDA advocates try to wring their theory from Graves but by no means will he speak the desired shibboleth! Graves here is referring to Mt 18:20 as “two or three” confirm. This book was written in Graves’ early years.²⁰¹

The book *Old Landmarkism* is nothing but Graves’ conception of what a Landmark Baptist is—and he gives the indelible marks. Strange to say he never once speaks of “mother church authority.” Let EMDA advocates tell us why! In this book Graves lists ten marks, and the first is:

As Baptists, we are to stand for the supreme authority of the New Testament as our only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The New Testament, and that alone, as opposed to all human tradition in matters, both of faith and practice, we must claim as containing *the* distinguishing doctrine of our denomination— a doctrine we are called earnestly to contend.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ *Op. Cit.* p. 552.

²⁰¹ *Great Iron Wheel* was written in 1855, when Graves was thirty- five. In 1880 he published *Old Landmarkism: What is it?* His position was DA throughout his life. See <http://www.ntbaptist-lizton.org/ref/landmarkissues/graves-position-investigated.pdf>

²⁰² Graves. *Old Landmarkism: What is it?* p. 139.

What constitutes an old Landmark Baptist? Graves answers: “Not the belief and advocacy of one or two of these principles as the marks of the divinely patterned church, but the cordial reception and advocacy of all of them, constitute a full ‘Old Landmark Baptist.’²⁰³ But EMDA was not one of these principles because it is nowhere to be found in this book nor in any other book Graves wrote! Consequently, those who hold EMDA are compelled to oppose the book, *Old Landmarkism!* They also must oppose *Graves* if they are consistent! And this also means they are not Landmark Baptists in spite of all their contentions! This writes Ichabod over the door of EMDA as a Landmark doctrine!

WHO CAN FORM A CHURCH

In the *Great Carrollton Debate*, held in 1875 at Carrollton, Mo., Jacob Ditzler, the Methodist, debating with J. R. Graves, contended that Christian people, baptized or not, could constitute a church.²⁰⁴ Graves gave the Landmark Baptist position. Remember many well-known Landmark Baptists preachers were present at this debate. Listen to Graves’ answer:

Now I wish Elder Ditzler to know that there is a world-wide difference between originating an organization different from anything that can be found in the Bible, different from anything the world had ever before seen or heard of, and calling it a Church, and organizing a Christian Church. It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and

²⁰³ *Op. Cit.* p. 141.

²⁰⁴ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. p. 944. We too are accused of teaching the same thing, which is not true. Cockrell. *SCO*. p. 12. In this place Bro Cockrell refers to those who differ from him as “modern liberal Baptists...”

covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.²⁰⁵

EMDA says a group of baptized individuals **cannot organize a Church—unless (!)** they have mother church authority. Graves says “that two or three baptized individuals **can organize a Church**, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.” The apostolic model of government does not even hint at EMDA. It is easy to see that the old Landmarker and the EMDA advocates are poles apart!

PRESBYTERY OR AN ELDER NOT ESSENTIAL TO CHURCH CONSTITUTION

EMDA further maintains you cannot constitute a church without the presence of an ordained minister. Apparently, they believe there is some essential episcopal power flowing through the fingers of ordained men which is essential to the constitution of a church. Is this what Graves believed? Let him tell us.

‘Wherever there are three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches covenanted together to hold and teach, and are governed by the New Testament,’ etc., ‘there is a church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers in a thousand miles of them to organize them into a church. There is not the slightest need of a council of presbyters to organize a Baptist church.’²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. p. 975.

²⁰⁶ Graves, quoted in Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1. Jarrel does not give the source of this quote. I have been unable to locate this quote but suspect it is from *The Baptist*. **Update**. In June of 2011 Bro Wayne Wolfe and I found this quote while doing research in SBTS in Louisville. It is in *The TN Baptist*, May 15, 1880, p. 759.

This eliminates the necessity of an ordained elder for church constitution, according to Graves.

Now it is evident with these quotes before us that those who teach EMDA did not derive this teaching from J. R. Graves! It is also very evident that the advocates of EMDA do not know what Landmarkism is nor do they know what J. R. Graves believed and taught on church constitution! When they attack us for believing DA they also attack Graves and old Landmarkism!

When these brethren imply that we have been dishonest or that we have misrepresented these old writers,²⁰⁷ the reader will be able to see what the real situation is and who is responsible for misrepresentation. Furthermore, many of these quotes have been published in *GPP* on different occasions.²⁰⁸ This quote from the *Great Carrollton Debate*²⁰⁹ was sent to both Bro Cockrell and Bro Pugh in July 2001 so there can be no question that from that time they knew this quote stood. Of course, Bro Cockrell probably knew this quote from his own reading.²¹⁰ He called for an apology,²¹¹ because of our position. If we have misrepresented these men, then an apology is right and proper. But as these men,

²⁰⁷ Cockrell. *SCO*. 2nd ed. p. 91. "But, brethren, do not twist and turn the words of our old Baptist brethren to justify your departure from the faith. It would be wisdom to give up J. M. Pendleton and A. C. Dayton as men who espoused your new-light position."

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁰⁹ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

²¹⁰ Cockrell. *SCO*, "The view that I, the writer of this book, hold to in ecclesiology he has held for over 40 years. I have not embraced them due to some undesirable circumstance. After 40 years of diligent study of the Bible and thousands of books on church history I am convinced more than ever of the Landmark view of the church." p. 91. In *SCO* the author also quotes from this debate, p. 30. Yet, he never so much as mentioned Graves' quote referred to here in his book or in *BBB*.

²¹¹ Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd Edition, p. 98, "Therefore an apology is in order and I'm sure would be appreciated."

including J. R. Graves²¹² plainly held to DA, who needs to apologize? Graves has been touted as a believer in EMDA without a single line of proof, which is as unscholarly as misleading. Graves' works are available. The fact that *Old Landmarkism: What is It?* does not mention EMDA ought to awaken every EMDA advocate to their misconception as to Graves' position! Could he write a book on the subject of Landmarkism and not even mention an essential of it? Could Graves publish his many other books and never insist on this essential? Could Graves publish his writings over a period of nearly fifty years as well as editing *The Baptist*, *The Tennessee Baptist*, *The Baptist and Reflector* and *The Southern Baptist Review and Eclectic*,²¹³ (which I estimate amounted to some fifty thousand pages!) and never mention EMDA if he believed it!²¹⁴ The credulousness of EMDA advocates on this subject has driven them out of bounds!

Let me now ask some questions.

Do not these many quotes abundantly prove that Graves' position on the constitution of churches was DA? Are not these explicit statements, diametrically opposed to EMDA? Do not these quotes establish the fact that Graves taught *churches receive their authority directly from Christ without a mother church involvement*? Is it not true that Graves taught that two or three in gospel order could constitute a church without elders, without a mother church and without any other entity on earth? Now, how then can we account for

²¹² Cf. Chapter 13.

²¹³ Cf. Albert W. Wardin, Jr. *Tennessee Baptists*, p. 246. Graves published books occupy several pages in Edward Starr's *A Baptist Bibliography*, vol. 9, pp. 111-120.

²¹⁴ —Burnett in *Tenn. Pioneer Baptist Preachers* says of Graves: "In this connection I may be permitted to say that while Dr. Graves was a secessionist there is no evidence, I think, that he put undue emphasis on the fact of succession or on any sort of 'mother church' notion; he did emphasize church authority and with apostolic zeal contended for the recognition of the same," p. 194.

these men contending Landmarkism is EMDA? How could such a misconception be published without checking the sources? Why have these writers and preachers made such a blunder as to Graves' position and that of Landmarkism as well? Are these documents not available to every searcher of truth? Why have these sources been overlooked? Why this misrepresentation? Why do these brethren still claim Graves believed in EMDA after they have seen these quotes in his own words?

Why do they call us *neo-Landmarkers*, *apostate Landmarkers* and the like? Why do EMDA advocates call those who believe in DA by less than flattering names? Why this animosity?²¹⁵ Why do they claim we misrepresent Graves when we have given many, many, specific quotes proving he believed DA?

Will these men who claim Graves and Landmarkism taught EMDA now set this matter right? Will the advocates of EMDA remove this misrepresentation from Graves and from Landmarkism, making it abundantly clear in their churches, conferences, books and papers that Graves never believed in EMDA and that EMDA was never a doctrine of Old Landmarkism?

How can honest men do less?²¹⁶

In the next chapter, we will consider a challenge from Bro Cockrell.

²¹⁵ Bro Cockrell refers to those who differ with him by several terms, some not too becoming, e.g., Apostate Landmarkers, Liberal Baptist, Neo Landmarker. Cf. *SCO*. pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 62, 79, 80, 86, 89. He seemed to have an attitude of indignation throughout this book that I have not seen in any other book he wrote.

²¹⁶ Since this book was published very few have admitted they were wrong on Graves' position.

CHAPTER 7

A CHALLENGE ISSUED AND ACCEPTED

In the book *Scriptural Church Organization*, the author issued this challenge:

What they need to prove the new hypothesis is to show that three baptized members constituted themselves into a church with no connection to another church and without a missionary.²¹⁷

THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

This is quite a challenge. He requires us to find a case where a church was organized without connection to another church (he means EMDA) and without a missionary. While we do not argue that churches do not have connections with other churches nor that preachers or missionaries have no part in constitution, yet, we can supply this request and gladly do so. But before I do, let me emphasize two points. First, if I can supply just one case of a church constituted without EMDA, then that answers the challenge. For if a preacher was present at a constitution but EMDA was not given, then that is a false constitution according to EMDA defenders. And if a historian records such a constitution, without a disclaimer, that indicates EMDA was not considered an essential by that historian. Secondly, even if a preacher was present at the constitution of a church, that does not prove it was constituted with EMDA. EMDA cannot be assumed but must be proved to be the essential method of constitution among Baptists. This cardinal point has eluded EMDA advocates. Now for the gauntlet.

²¹⁷ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 84.

In Christian's *History* he quotes Bond's *History of Mississippi Baptists* concerning the Salem Baptist church:

This community was called the Salem Baptist Church; but it was constituted, not only without a presbytery of ministers, but without the presence of a single ordained minister. 'They simply agreed to meet together statedly,' says Bond, 'and worship God according to his Word, and to exercise good discipline over one another, and called Elder Curtis to preach to them...'²¹⁸

This is the position for which we contend. And this opinion of Bond²¹⁹ was not an isolated opinion. In spite of the constant animadverting about our position not being Landmarkism but "neo Landmarkism," "apostate Landmarkism" "liberal Landmarkism" or a "new hypothesis"²²⁰ we learn from this author that our position is the same as these old Baptists contended for! It is the same thing Jarrel, Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, Ray, Ford, Cole and Bogard, to name only a few, have plainly proclaimed with tongue and pen. It seems strange, but we have to keep re-stating this fact and giving quote after quote to prove it.

Now here is the dilemma for those who contend for EMDA. Neither Bond nor Christian say a word about Salem church being an unscriptural church for lack of EMDA or the lack of elders. EMDA demands both (and more)! This church had neither! Yet it is counted a true church by these Baptist writers. This account excludes the theory of EMDA and this is proved by these two Baptist historians recording this case

²¹⁸ Christian, *History of the Baptists*. Vol. II, 333.

²¹⁹ This was T.M. Bond, not John Bond, as was given in the first edition of *LUF*. *A Republication of the Mississippi Baptist Association from its Organization in 1806 to the present*. Hinton & Co. 1849. Cf. Settlement, *Direct Authority: Biblical & Historical*, p. 54. See Chapter 15, "Correction."

²²⁰ Cockrell, *SCO*, pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 53, 62, 79, 86, 89.

as given above without any disclaimer. They **recognized Salem Church as a true church organized without any earthly authority, without any ordained man present, without any link, except baptism, to any other church on earth and counted it a scriptural church from the time they first started meeting together!**

According to EMDA, Salem could not be a Scriptural church—and if EMDA is true—then that conclusion is inescapable! But as these two Baptist authors both recognized the Scripturality of this church and as they included it in their books, publishing this account before the world, proves more than enough for our purpose. This challenge was accepted, and the reader will be able to determine if it met the criteria stipulated or not.

It is also interesting that Bro Cockrell in *SCO* quoted this very account of the constitution of the First Baptist church in Mississippi but from a book by Leavell & Bailey²²¹ and they do not give this quote by Bond.

OREGON TERRITORY

Let me give another example. This from a church constituted in Oregon in the 1800s.

Oregon City, the terminus, was reached November 26, 1843. In the following winter, they located on the beautiful prairie of the West Tualatin plain, and true to genuine Baptist instinct, in February 1844, at the house of Brother David T. Lenox, established a prayer meeting which finally resulted in the organization of the church, May 25, 1844.

²²¹ Leavell & Bailey. *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists*, Vol. I, p. 24; Quoted in *SCO*, p. 88.

COVENANT

"Whereas: In the providence of God, a few names of us, the professed followers of Christ, who hold to one Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism, having been thrown together in these wilds of the West, and being members of churches in the United States, desirous of keeping the worship of God in our neighborhood, and in our families-- We agree that we hereby constitute and come into union, first giving ourselves unto the Lord. and then unto each other, we do covenant and agree that we will meet together to worship God and keep the commandments and ordinances of God's house, and are hereby constituted into a church."²²²

We note here they did not have any authority from any church. They did not even have church letters!²²³ There was no preacher among them! Yet they constituted themselves into a church according to good Baptist practice. Were they a true church? Mattoon thought so or he would not have included this church in his history. Christ's Word says they were!

FIRST BOSTON CHURCH

Of the formation of the Baptist church and the reasons for it Gould himself gives an account. A small section of his narrative is here transcribed as follows:

Now after this, considering with myself what the Lord would have me to do; not likely to join with any of the churches of New England, and so to be without the ordinance of Christ; in the meantime God sent out of Old England some who were Baptists; we, consulting together what to do, sought the Lord to direct us, and taking counsel of other friends who dwelt among us,

²²² Mattoon. *Baptist Annals of Oregon*, 1905, p. 2. (via James Duvall).

²²³ *Ibid.* "At first, none had letters, but were to get them as soon as practicable."

who were able and godly, they gave us counsel to congregate ourselves together; and so we did, being nine of us, to walk in the order of the gospel according to the rule of Christ...after we had been called into two courts, the church [protestant church at Cambridge] understanding that we were gathered into church order...‘The organization of this Baptist church caused a great noise throughout New England.’²²⁴

Please consider. This group did not have authority from any church. They did not have an ordained man among them. They did not have authority from the churches in England even though two of the men were Baptists before they came to America, neither of them were preachers.²²⁵ Remember EMDA advocates maintain you can’t organize a church without an ordained man! When this group determines to organize into a Baptist church, they do not send to England for EMDA. They do not send to Rhode Island to Roger Williams or John Clarke for it. Why not? They follow exactly what the Bible says. They congregate themselves together “*according to the rule of Christ.*”

Benedict discusses the constitution of this church also. He says:

But about this time, says this afflicted man [Gould], some Baptist friends from England desired to hold a meeting at his house. *They* well understood how to manage cases of this kind, from their own experience at home. The meeting was accordingly commenced, and on the 28th of May 1665, the church was formed, consisting of Thomas Gould, Thomas Osbourne, Edward Drinker, John George, Richard Goodall, William Turner, Robert Lambert, Mary Goodall, and Mary Newall.²²⁶

²²⁴ Christian. *History of Baptists*, vol. 2, p. 74.

²²⁵ Goodall came from Kiffin’s church; Turner and Lambert were members of a church in Dartmouth, England.

²²⁶ Benedict. *History of The Baptist Denomination*, vol. I. p. 383.

Now what was wrong with this church in the eyes of the Protestants? The principle thing was they had *no earthly authority*, as Benedict, quoting others, tells us. The burden of all the complaints against them was that they had formed a church *without the approbation of the ruling powers*.

‘This principle,’ says Mr. Neale, ‘condemns all the dissenting congregations which have been formed in England since the Act of Uniformity, in the year 1602.’²²⁷

They did not obtain authority from the “ruling powers” that is, the powers of the political system. But this is not all. Neither did they obtain any kind of authority from any Baptist church! It is also essential to consider that not one of the Baptist historians who mentions this account censures them for what they did nor for the way they did it! This speaks volumes for DA in constitution of Baptist churches, but it excludes the idea of EMDA. This idea is not mentioned because not even thought of by these writers.²²⁸ Let our EMDA advocates tell us why it was not mentioned if essential to Baptists in 1665!

Broadmead Baptist Church of Bristol, England

The Broadmead Baptist Church of Bristol, England in 1640 supplies another example:

So, that in the year of our ever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640) one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons, namely Goodman Atkins of Stapleton, Goodman Cole a Butcher of Lawford’s Gate, Richard Moone a Farrier in Wine Street, and Mr.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* Italics are Benedict’s.

²²⁸ Cf. Backus, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. 1, p. 288; Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. I, p. 383-384.

Bacon a young Minister, with Mrs. Hazzard, at Mrs. Hazzard's house, at the upper end of Broad Street in Bristol, they Mett together, and came to a holy Resolution to Separate from the Worship of the World and times they lived in, and that they would go no more to it, and with godly purpose of heart Joyned themselves together in the Lord; and only thus Covenanting...²²⁹

Epworth Church 1599

There is another account given in certain church records of the Baptist Churches of Epworth and Crowle in the Isle of Axholme, Lincolnshire, England. The church Covenant, dated January 4, 1599, is recorded in these words:

We, this church of Christ, meeting at Epworth, Crowle and West Butterwick, in the county of Lincolnshire, whose names are underwritten, give up ourselves to the Lord and one to another according to the will of God. We do promise and covenant in the presence of Christ, to walk together in the laws and ordinances of baptized believers according to the rules of the Gospel through Jesus Christ, so helping us. James Rayner, John Morton, Henry Helwise, William Brewster, William Bradford, elders of ye church.²³⁰

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

There are other examples of a churches constituted without connection to another church and without an ordained man present and this from the NT! The church at Antioch was so constituted. There was no connection with the Jerusalem church because it only received “tidings” about Antioch which proves they had not given EMDA to the disciples

²²⁹ Dewese. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 116.

²³⁰ Christian, *Did They Dip?* Electronic copy on Pilgrim's Hope Web site, Ch. V. No page numbers given.

there. But the case is even more revealing. There were no ordained men present in this constitution so far as we know. Even the advocates of EMDA must admit this position because they claim the church there was not a church but only a mission of baptized saints meeting together until Barnabas got there and he constituted them a church! But the catch-22 in this scenario is discovered when they take up Acts 13:1-4, and claim that was an ordination service in which the church ordained Paul and Barnabas! Thus, according to their own reasoning, Barnabas could not have been ordained when sent to Antioch by Jerusalem! Thus, this church was constituted without an ordained man present according to their own word! This destroys the EMDA argument. Of course, the truth of the matter is that, Antioch church was already constituted when Barnabas got there and Jerusalem, to say the least, could not have been the mother, in the sense of EMDA, because she knew nothing of its existence until after the fact!

THE CHURCH AT CAESAREA

Is it not interesting that EMDA advocates never mention the church at Caesarea as a case of EMDA constitution? We know little about this church, but it seems likely that it was formed with those Gentiles of the household of Cornelius as recorded in Acts 10 who believed. But EMDA does not like to mention this account because they know for a fact that Peter was not sent there under the specific direction of the Jerusalem church simply because they did not even know he went there until after the fact! And when the church did hear about it, they of the circumcision contended with him not because he did not have EMDA but because he went in to

men uncircumcised,²³¹ When Peter rehearsed this before them they did not vote to give him retro-active authority!²³²

The Scripture says: When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Acts 11:18.

Now here is an account of a church which did not get EMDA and was scripturally formed without it. They did not have mother-church authority but the authority they had, came directly from Christ just as Christ Himself taught that it would!²³³ The church did not send Peter but the Spirit said “Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.”²³⁴ Then when Peter got to the house of Cornelius as he preached unto him and his house the Holy Spirit fell on this group exactly as it did on the Jerusalem church on Pentecost (vs. 17) even before they were baptized! And there seems to be no question that this was the beginning of the church at Caesarea.²³⁵ Where was EMDA?

We carefully note that the Holy Spirit is not tied to EMDA as its advocates claim! For the church in Jerusalem is expressly said to be in ignorance of what Peter did, hence the Holy Spirit was not given by EMDA as some claim! The

²³¹ Acts 11:1-2.

²³² Baptist churches are now pretending they can do this as well as rescind what they have done years before! One church rescinded the call of a pastor who had been pastoring the church for about three years. Why? Because he did not believe in EMDA! Amazingly, they then called a man as pastor who had been baptized by the pastor whose call they rescinded! They failed to recognize, that even if a church could scripturally do such a thing—and I do not believe it can—their action made null and void everything the pastor had done. Popery pleads for no more. It is just a step to rescind things which took place 1000 years ago!

²³³ Mt. 18:20.

²³⁴ Cf. also Acts 11:12.

²³⁵ “And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.” Acts 18:22.

Holy Spirit fell on this group **before they were baptized** which destroys the idea that the Holy Spirit can only be given through an existing church via EMDA!²³⁶ Thus, what EMDA demands, this NT account excludes! These are simple facts plainly revealed. If EMDA was the Bible way of constituting churches is it not strange that the Jerusalem church did not censor Peter by saying, “You went without our authority!” Nor did they say, “Well, we will give you retroactive authority!” So, in this case, the authority did not come from Jerusalem. It did not come from Peter, for if he had this authority, the church at Jerusalem was totally ignorant of the fact! These brethren who accompanied Peter, were totally astonished not because Cornelius and this company received the Holy Spirit, but because He fell upon Gentiles. It is evident that these disciples knew nothing of the gift of the Holy Spirit being in the hands of a church! They had no idea that a church must be established by a mother church! It is quite evident that the authority for this church came directly out of Heaven. This is a marvelous example of DA!

Nor is there a single church mentioned in the NT which had EMDA as far as the biblical record is concerned. If they did, the Bible says nothing about it! The NT does not record a case of EMDA! Not one! The churches of Judea, Galilee and Samaria were constituted, as well as the churches all over the Roman Empire, but nothing is said about EMDA.²³⁷ The churches which Paul and Barnabas and the others helped to establish were not formed with EMDA as far as Scripture tells us. The churches of Asia, seven of those mentioned by name in Revelation, and we know they were true churches,

²³⁶ 7 *Questions*, pp. 28, 35, “If one establishes a church without authority from another church, he acts without Scriptural authority. Thus, he works in vain for the Holy Spirit is only given to a church on the consent of another church, as it was in Samaria.” Cf. Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 81.

²³⁷ Ac 9:31.

because Christ addressed each one of them specifically and personally tended their lamps, yet not one of them was constituted with EMDA as far as we know. The idea that these churches (and others in the New Testament) were formed with EMDA is hearsay and therefore inadmissible!

Those who affirm this is how churches must be constituted have neither Scripture nor pattern for support but depend entirely on theory. They cannot give a “thus saith the Lord” nor can they give any example of this doctrine in the New Testament!

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Another example of a church formed without EMDA is found In the *Philadelphia Associational Minutes* for October 5th, 1791:

The new constituted church at Sideling Hill, Belfast township, Bedford county, made application for admittance into this Association; but an objection arising, in consequence of a letter sent by Brother Powell, their admission was postponed until next meeting of Association, when the objectors will have opportunity to show their reason, why the request of said church should not be granted.²³⁸

Again, the next year the Association took up this matter:

An application was again made by the newly constituted church at Sideling Hill to be admitted into connection with this Association. After examining the objections which had been made, and not thinking them sufficient to ground a rejection upon, the said church was admitted. Nevertheless, the Association disapproves of multiplying churches by dividing those already established, without evident necessity; and

²³⁸ Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 270, 281.

also of any one minister by himself undertaking to constitute a church.²³⁹

This was a church division in which one section (probably excluded by the majority pastored by Powell) had formed themselves into another church. At any rate, there is no question of any authority by a mother church and had such been counted necessary by this body, it would certainly have been brought forward by the objectors. The Association opposes “multiplying churches by dividing those already established” “and of any one minister by himself undertaking to constitute a church.” But they recognize it as a church which eliminates EMDA as a doctrine of this Association!

John Spilsbury’s Church

The church, considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in those times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience and not from obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed Sept. 12, 1633... Their minister was a Mr. John Spilsbury.²⁴⁰

This account sounds like it could refer to EMDA and would be claimed as an example of that position, but for one thing—this *mother church* was a Protestant church! Some of the members of this church had become Baptists in principle and wished to leave because they had come to see immersion as the proper ordinance of the gospel. They therefore, requested this church—this Protestant *mother church*(!)—for

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 337. Cf. Ivimey, *Hist. Of Eng. Baptists*, vol. I, p. 138.

permission to leave and to form a new church on their own principles! This is what EMDA men claim is the **authority to constitute a new church** if given by a Baptist church! This was granted to them by this Protestant church! But this was not EMDA, because those who left this mother church, could have and would have organized a new church without it! Therefore, it is impossible, that this *permission* was essential to constitute. Spilsbury and his group made this request so as to leave under good terms! This indicates *asking for a constitution* even if from a Baptist church, does not mean that that *authority* was essential to constitute! This procedure has been totally misunderstood by EMDA advocates.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH AT HILL CLIFFE ENGLAND

Another example is the Hill Cliffe Church.

The result of these struggles was the departure of about thirty members of the church [at Hill Cliffe] who took with them the books belonging to the church. The remaining members obtained new books, and leaving out the names of the departed ones, constituted themselves a church, entering their names in the new roll.²⁴¹

Missouri Baptists

From the *History of Missouri Baptists*, we have another example:

The next year a Baptist church was organized a short distance west of Loutre Island, which was the first organization of the kind north of the Missouri River. It was organized after the following form “*District of St.*

²⁴¹ Kenworthy. *History of The Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe*, p. 84.

Charles, Upper Louisiana, the first Saturday in May 1810. “We, the Baptist members of the United Order, whose names shall be hereafter written, do covenant and agree to live together in a church capacity, and endeavor to hold up and be governed by the Old and New Testaments, believing it to be the only true rule of faith and practice. And as we have no opportunity to get helps to constitute, we do therefore form ourselves into a church, believing it to be legal and right, as we do not think it right for any human composition to be binding on the conscience of any, but that it is right to be governed by the Old and New Testaments. “SAMUEL BROWN, JOSEPH BAKER, JOHN SAVAGE, DELANEY BOLEN, WILLIAM SAVAGE, JOHN SNETHEN, ELISHA TODD, BENJ. GAMMON, ABRAHAM²⁴² GROOM, SUSANNA SAVAGE, ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, PRUDENCE SNETHEN, FRANCES BROWN, PATSEY BOLEN, MARY SAVAGE, MARGARET JOLLY, SALLY GAMMON, SARAH TODD, SARAH GROOM.” At the church meeting in the following September, Rev. Joseph Baker was elected pastor, Samuel Brown was ordained deacon. and William Savage was made clerk.²⁴³

Second Newport Constitution

This church [Second church, Newport] originated in 1656, when twenty-one persons broke off from the first church, and formed themselves into a separate body.²⁴⁴

Another example is given by Semple:

...The habits of the Baptists in New England and of those in Virginia respecting apparel were also much at variance. Mr. Leland and others adhered to the customs of New England, each one putting on such apparel as suited his own fancy. This was offensive to

²⁴³ Duncan. *Missouri Baptist Hist.* p. 145.

²⁴⁴ Benedict. *History of The Baptists.* p. 467.

some members of the church. The contention on this account became so sharp that on the 25th of July 1779, about twelve members dissented from the majority of the church and were of course excluded. The dissenting members formed themselves into a church, and sued for admission into the next Association, and were received.²⁴⁵

William Hiscox and Seventh Day Baptist Church 1671

This was a group which pulled out of John Clarke's church because of their belief in worshiping on the seventh day of the week. They express their covenant in these words:

After serious consideration and seeking God's face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children, so as might be for God's glory and our souls' good, we, viz., William Hiscox, Samuel Hubbard, Steven Mumford, Roger Baxter, Tracy Hubbard, Rachel Langworthy,...Mumford, entered into covenant with the Lord and with one another, and gave up ourselves to God and one to another, to walk together in all God's holy commandments and holy ordinances according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be his mind for us to be obedient unto; with sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another, did promise so to do, and in edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith; this 7th day of December, 1671.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Semple. *Hist. Baptists Va.* p. 234-5.

²⁴⁶ Backus. *Hist.*, vol. I, p. 325.

NOVATIAN

Another example was Novatian. In about the year 251 Novatian was excluded from the church of which he was a member at Rome.

Novation formed a church and was elected bishop. Great numbers followed his example and all over the empire Puritan churches were constituted, and flourished through the succeeding two hundred years.²⁴⁷

Have I met the challenge set forth?

In the next Chapter, we will take up Baptist testimony on the subject of church constitution.

²⁴⁷ Robinson's *Eccl. Researches*, p. 127. Quoted by D. B. Ray in *Baptist Succession*, p. 189.

CHAPTER 8

BAPTIST TESTIMONY ON CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Now it is my proposition that EMDA is a false doctrine. It has no Scripture basis and is a tradition of men and I believe it is a very late tradition. I do not believe **there is one written statement by a Baptist author who expressly states it is essential to have a mother church in order to constitute a church before 1900!**²⁴⁸ This date is somewhat arbitrary, but I give it as a working reference. While I am of the opinion that EMDA got started in the fifties of the last century, I have been unable to verify this. Let me also point out that it is not my responsibility to do so any more than it is my responsibility to determine the source of a bad check written against my account. I need only deny that it is my check. So, it is with false doctrine. I do not have to know when, where, how, or by whom it got started to know it is false. EMDA is not a Landmark doctrine, it is not a Baptist doctrine, and most importantly, it is not a Bible doctrine!

This means it is false doctrine!

NO SPECIFIC STATEMENT OF EMDA

As evidence for my proposition let it be remembered the advocates of EMDA, in their books, articles, and messages, have **never produced an explicit statement of this doctrine in Scripture!** They admit it is not “spelled out in Scripture.”²⁴⁹ Their position on EMDA in Scripture is about

²⁴⁸ Cf. Armitage. *History of the Baptists*, p. 3.

²⁴⁹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50; Joe Wilson. Taped message: “My Reply to J. C. Settlemaier,” Gladwin, Michigan, Conference, 2001; *7 Questions*, p. 12.

that of Thomas Chalmers on infant baptism. He said: “If the Scriptures gives us no other testimony in favor of infant baptism, they give us at least the testimony of their silence.”²⁵⁰ Nor have they found **any specific statement of EMDA by any Baptist writer before 1900!** They refer to many different men and documents but without a single explicit statement of their position! Of the multitudes of men they have quoted to prove their theory, not one of them before modern times ever *specifically* states EMDA. In order to prop up this idea that Baptists in History believed it they have had to leave off fair reporting of quotes and the giving of valid evidence and resort to suggestions, editing, adapting, hints, inferences, allusions and unique meanings!

They claim the old Landmarkers taught EMDA. Yet, in spite of this claim, **not one explicit statement of EMDA by any old Landmarker has ever been produced!** If such exists, why can’t they find it?²⁵¹ Nor have they ever produced **any specific statement of this doctrine which was held by any Baptist before modern times!** They can’t find it in any Baptist writer—Arminian, Calvinist, Landmarker, Independent or otherwise and they have ransacked all history in their search. They can’t find it in pre-Reformation or post-Reformation documents. The only place they are able to find it is in writers who lived in our own times!²⁵² But many explicit statements by both Landmarkers and non-Landmarkers have been given confirming Baptists have

²⁵⁰ Tract: “Learned Witnesses to Christ’s Ordinances.” Author unknown. No publisher data.

²⁵¹ Cf. Pugh. *BBB*. Feb. 5, 2001, p. 1. “How the First & Second Baptists Churches of New York City Were Organized.” Bro Pugh says: “We demand precept and pattern not the novel conjectures of men based on the silence of the Scriptures as to particular details in some Biblical instances.” Here the author tries to lead us away from a “thus saith the Lord,” because it is apparent he has none! We give much more than “precept and pattern!” We give Mt 18:20 which is what the Lord himself said!

²⁵² Cf. Cockrell. *SCO* throughout; & Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*.

continually believed in DA as opposed to EMDA but to no avail!

These brethren give us a whole truck load of inferences. But a thousand inferences cannot prove a point! It is like a man giving quotes from John Gill which, on the surface might indicate he was Arminian, but ignoring the mass of his works where he explicitly stated he believed the doctrines of grace.²⁵³ The EMDA advocates have done just this with those they have quoted! They have quoted men saying things which might possibly mean EMDA, when in fact, the men under discussion clearly stated their position to be DA or self-constitution!²⁵⁴ In this book, I have given great numbers of quotes from writers who didactically declare DA! We cannot be satisfied with inferences or illusory statements, such as EMDA men give, but we give explicit statements to verify what they believed on this subject.

Let us now look at some of these statements.

In the *Great Carrollton Debate*, held in 1875 at Carrollton, Mo., Jacob Ditzler, the Methodist, debating with J. R. Graves, contended that Christian people, baptized or not, could constitute a church.²⁵⁵ J. R. Graves gave the standing Landmark Baptist position. Remember many well-known Landmark Baptists preachers were present at this debate. Listen to Graves' answer:

²⁵³ A country man went with a friend to hear John Gill. After the service he was asked what he thought of Gill's message. He replied: "Please do not be offended," the man said, "but if you had not told me that he was the great Dr. Gill, I would have thought he was an Arminian." Ella. *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth*, p. 105.

²⁵⁴ Cockrell. *SCO*; See references to Mercer, Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, Keach, Gill and Bogard. Not one of these men believed in EMDA, but they are quoted as if they did!

²⁵⁵ Ditzler. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 944.

Now I wish Elder Ditzler to know that there is a world-wide difference between originating an organization different from anything that can be found in the Bible, different from anything the world had ever before seen or heard of, and calling it a Church, and organizing a Christian Church. It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.²⁵⁶

There is no way any man can misunderstand Graves' meaning! **This is Landmark Baptist church constitution**, but it cannot be reconciled with EMDA! Hence, it takes no great acumen to recognize that EMDA is not Landmark doctrine and Landmark doctrine is not EMDA! In *SCO*²⁵⁷ the author gives a quote from this debate²⁵⁸ which, on the surface, might seem to support EMDA. But had the author read only four more pages he would have found this quote where Graves explicitly states how a church is constituted!²⁵⁹ Bro Cockrell may not have known about this quote in 1998 when he first published *SCO* but I know he knew about it before he completed the second edition²⁶⁰ because he published a copy of my letter to Bro Curtis Pugh²⁶¹ which contained this quote. I found no correction as to Graves' position in the new edition of *SCO*. One can only wonder why.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

²⁵⁷ Cockrell. *SCO* p. 29-30.

²⁵⁸ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 971.

²⁵⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 975.

²⁶⁰ The Second edition of *SCO* was published 2003.

²⁶¹ *Berea Baptist Banner*. Aug. 5, 2001, p. 157.

²⁶² Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71. Is this not a terrible misrepresentation of Graves?

C.D. COLE

The testimony of C. D. Cole who is well-known among Landmark and other Baptists. He was associated with T. P. Simmons and was the associate editor of *The Baptist Examiner* when it was started in 1931.²⁶³ We can be certain that his views on this subject are orthodox. Cole said:

Baptist churches come into being today somewhat after this manner. A group of believers in a community wish to become a church. The members in conference will make this wish known to other churches, and these churches send messengers to counsel them in accomplishing their desire. For the sake of order and recognition these messengers will inquire into their belief, and if is thought wise, the visitors endorse their articles of faith and recommend their constitution as an independent church. These visiting brethren do not organize the church. Since the church is to be self-governing, it must of necessity and logically be self-constituted. And so those wishing to become a church enter into a covenant to that effect; and another church is born. The help from the outside is for the sake of order and fellowship and is not absolutely essential.²⁶⁴

Of course, Cole's words are so strong that EMDA advocates dare not claim him. They only take shots at him in retreat.²⁶⁵ But let it be remembered that Bro Cole was a Baptist scholar thoroughly acquainted with Baptist polity. Not only this, but he was also associated with T. P. Simmons, H. B. Taylor, A.

²⁶³ *The Baptist Examiner*, April, 1931, p. 5.

²⁶⁴ Cole. *Definitions of Doctrine: The N.T. Church*, p. 7,8. No date.

²⁶⁵ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 16. Cf. Bro. Gormley's disclaimer concerning the above quote by Cole, *Definitions of Doctrine*. Vol. III, p. ii. "Also, I had written him concerning one or two things in this volume...we will publish them with a reservation as to one or two points... In particular concerning the organization of a church; I believe, and the Bryan Station Baptist Church practices, that a new church being organized must have church authority."

W. Pink, J.B. Moody²⁶⁶ and many other leading Baptists up to his death in 1969. This objection to Bro Cole's position on Church constitution may be an indicator that EMDA was a relatively new development at the time of Bro Cole's death. There are no publication dates given in any of Bro Cole's books which I have except volume I.²⁶⁷ How could Bro Cole function in Kentucky and Florida without believing DA if it was then being taught? Is it not evident that a change has occurred? Who changed?

EDWARD HISCOX

Hiscox needs no introduction. He was recognized as one of the leading Baptists of America. On this subject he said:

The 'Constituting act' would properly and appropriately be the unanimously voting—perhaps by rising—a resolution like this: 'Resolved, That, guided as we believe by the Holy Spirit, and relying on the blessing of God, we do, here and now, by this act, constitute ourselves a Church of Jesus Christ to perform His service, and be governed by His will, as revealed in the New Testament...Such an act makes such a company of disciples, *ipso facto*, a Church of Christ with all the rights, powers and privileges of any New Testament Church,'²⁶⁸

It is true that some EMDA brethren *claim* Hiscox believed EMDA because he put this statement in his book: "Before the organization actually takes place, however, such persons as propose to constitute the body, should procure letters from the churches of which they are members, given *for the*

²⁶⁶ Cole, *Bible Doctrine of Election*. p. 21. Bro Cole said: "Dr. J.B. Moody (one of my fathers in the faith)..."

²⁶⁷ Cole. *Definitions of Doctrine*, Dec. 19, 1944, p. viii.

²⁶⁸ Hiscox. *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 54.

purpose of forming a new Church."²⁶⁹ But in spite of this assertion there is not one statement in any of Hiscox's books which would lead any one to suppose he was referring to EMDA. This is, I believe, a concrete example of being "head-bent on misrepresenting the views of the old Baptists."²⁷⁰ Hiscox expressly says on the subject of constitution:

"Resolved, That, guided as we believe by the Holy Spirit, and relying on the blessing of God, we do, here and now, by this act, constitute ourselves a Church of Jesus Christ..." and that "...Such an act makes such a company of disciples, *ipso facto*, a Church of Christ..."²⁷¹

The church letters to which Hiscox refers do not convey this authority. Presbyteries do not convey this authority. Elders present do not convey this authority—for this simple reason: they do not have that authority! All church letters do is to inform other churches as to the standing of the bearer in the sending church. Letters convey no authority even if the sending church thinks they do. A letter cannot ordain an elder, exclude a member, call a pastor, or dissolve a church—and it cannot constitute one!

HISCOX ON THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

But Hiscox discusses this issue fully, making plain his position on this subject. Concerning the authority to constitute a church, does he teach it comes from a *mother church* as Bro Cockrell suggests?²⁷² Hiscox says:

²⁶⁹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 9.

²⁷⁰ Cockrell, *SCO*, 2nd edition, p. 88.

²⁷¹ Hiscox. *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 54.

²⁷² Cockrell, *SCO*, pp. 18-19.

3. *The Authority of Churches*. The authority of a church is limited to its own members, and applies to all matters of Christian character, and whatever involves the welfare of religion. It is designed to secure in all its members a conduct and conversation ‘becoming godliness.’

This authority is derived directly from God; not from states, nor princes, nor people; not from its own officers, nor its members, nor from any other source of ecclesiastical or civil power or right. But Christ ‘is head over all things to the church,’ and also as of right, ‘the church is subject to Christ.’²⁷³

What is the source of the authority of a new church? **“This authority is derived directly from God.”** Can this statement by Hiscox be squared with EMDA? How can these brethren quote Hiscox as a man who held EMDA? As these statements are found in Hiscox’s book so plainly stated how is it that men still quote him as believing in EMDA? Hiscox has been summoned as a witness for EMDA but he gives unmistakable testimony for DA and it is irresponsible to quote a man as supporting a position which he so carefully denies!²⁷⁴ In a court witnesses must swear to tell the truth. What would be the result if a witness was asked this question:

Did Hiscox believe the doctrine of EMDA? Your answer must in each case be a simple *yes* or a *no*. What honest man would answer *Yes* to this question?

²⁷³ Hiscox. *The Baptist Directory for Baptist Churches*, 1859. p. 16.

²⁷⁴ Cockrell. *SCO*, p.18-19. Bro Cockrell says, “There is no doubt in my mind that most Baptist churches in America from the 1800s until now have been organized in the manner described by Pendleton and Hiscox.” Yet, there is no EMDA in either of these two authors!

To make sure the reader understands the Baptist position Hiscox also says: “Its [the church’s] chief authority is given by Christ alone.”²⁷⁵ Again, he stresses this point:

All rightful authority, therefore, is conferred by Christ, the king in Zion. He builds them: ‘On this rock will I build my Church.’ He commissions them: ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ He is personally ever with them, superintending, and giving them success: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’—Mt 16:18; 28:19, 20. What He does not give is not possessed.²⁷⁶

We have read what Bro Cockrell said Hiscox believed and we have produced what Hiscox himself said he believed. Either Bro Cockrell was mistaken or Hiscox did not know how to state his position! Hiscox emphatically states his position and that position was DA as plain as words can make it! How then is it possible that Hiscox could be misunderstood? How is it that he is quoted in support of what he opposed, and to oppose what he embraced?

AUTHORITY DIRECTLY FROM CHRIST

Now the reason why Baptists established churches without EMDA is not hard to find. They did so because they believed the authority for constitution came directly from Christ Jesus the Lord as stated in Mt 18:20, and not from a mother church, from a bishop, from a presbytery nor from any other source on earth! Consider these examples. Keach put it like this:

²⁷⁵ Hiscox. *The New Directory of Baptist Churches*, p. 48

²⁷⁶ *Op. Cit.*, p. 49.

...For hath not one regular Church as great Authority
from Christ as another.²⁷⁷

In a 1749 essay on the power and duty of an association, Benjamin Griffith began with a declaration “that each particular church hath complete power and authority from Jesus Christ...”²⁷⁸

Griffiths makes this clear statement:

While some Baptist churches spring from others, it is not a necessity. A Baptist church may exist far from another and be independent of either another or of ministerial offices. At first churches had an origin in Apostolic ministry. In later days, from the people who have the Scriptures only. The head of the church is Himself, the sole donor of power to be and to do. “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20).”²⁷⁹

A. C. DAYTON

A. C. Dayton, a leading Landmark Baptist, was associated with J. R. Graves and became associate editor of Graves’ paper, *The Tennessee Baptist*.²⁸⁰ Dayton too has been claimed as holding the doctrine of EMDA.²⁸¹ Dayton will speak in his own defense. He says of the church at Jerusalem:

It was ‘the Church which was at Jerusalem,’ and nothing more or less. It never became the Church of Judea. But it was surrounded by ‘*the Churches which were in Judea,*’ each of them as independent, each of

²⁷⁷ Keach. *Glory of a True Church*, Quoted in *Polity*, Dever. p. 81.

²⁷⁸ Gillette. *Minutes Phil. Association*, p. 60-61.

²⁷⁹ Griffiths. *History of the Baptists of New Jersey*, P. 378.

²⁸⁰ Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Art. Dayton, p. 319.

²⁸¹ Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd edition, p. 89.

them as much a Church, as it was itself. It stood isolated and independent, acknowledging subjection to none but Christ, as he had spoken in his word, or might speak through his Spirit. When other Churches were formed at Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Colosse, each of them was as independent and complete within itself as this one was. This was the model after which they all were fashioned. What, then, do we find the Church of Christ to actually have been? Simply a *local assembly of baptized believers, meeting by his authority to administer his ordinances, and transact the business of his kingdom in his name.*²⁸²

Dayton also says:

And it [a church] can do all that, in the Scripture, is predicated of any Church of Christ. But while it is independent of all other Churches or federations in its organization, and in the exercise of its functions, it so absolutely dependent on Christ its Lord and King, that it *can make no laws*, but only execute the law which Christ has made; and it can exercise *no authority*, but such as was specially delegated to it by Christ.²⁸³

W. A. JARREL

“Every Baptist church being, in organization, a church complete in itself, and, **in no way organically connected with any other church**, such a thing as one church succeeding another, as the second link of a chain is added to and succeeds the first, or, as one Romish or Episcopal church succeeds another, is utterly foreign to and incompatible with Baptist church policy...”²⁸⁴

²⁸² Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 93.

²⁸³ Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 158.

²⁸⁴ Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 3, [emphasis added].

In the following statement the words are not those of Jarrel, but those of J. R. Graves, and he quotes him because this is his own position and because it was the recognized Baptist position and it was the position and practice of Landmark Baptists.

The late and lamented scholar, J.R. Graves, LL. D., wrote: ‘Wherever there are three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches covenanted together to hold and teach, and are governed by the New Testament,’ etc., ‘there is a Church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers in a thousand miles of them to organize them into a church. There is not the slightest need of a council of presbyters to organize a Baptist church.’²⁸⁵

Even Bro Cockrell had to back away from Jarrel as being too much of a Landmark Baptist for the EMDA position!²⁸⁶ He says Jarrel has three ways to start a church but this is incorrect. Jarrel knew only one way to constitute a church—by DA and that was not acceptable for the EMDA position! Jarrel expressly denies EMDA! This is good Landmark Baptist evidence for DA!

BEN M. BOGARD

Ben Bogard was a Landmark Baptist very active in the formation of the General Baptist Association organized in 1905, and later was instrumental in forming this association into the American Baptist Association in 1924. He speaks expressly on church constitution:

²⁸⁵ Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p.1. This quote is taken from *The Baptist*, May 15, 1880, p. 759.

²⁸⁶ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 16-17.

The first step necessary in the organization of a new congregation or church is for as many as three baptized disciples to agree to meet statedly for worship, for mutual edification and united effort for the evangelization of the world. The object of a church is two-fold, viz., that the membership may be mutually helpful to one another and to work for God's glory in the evangelization of the world. The agreement to meet regularly for worship and work is commonly called a 'Church Covenant.' The word 'covenant' means agreement. This covenant should be in writing, lest some misunderstand the terms. When this covenant has been entered into the church is fully organized. This covenant is the organization.²⁸⁷

There is no question where Bogard stood. His statements are concise, pointed, emphatic. He opts for DA. ABA writers who contend for EMDA as well as others have simply overlooked what Bogard says!²⁸⁸ Bro Cockrell quotes Bogard but only obliquely, suggesting that because Bogard believed in church authority for baptism he believed you must have EMDA to constitute a new church. But this is a mistake as the above quote proves.²⁸⁹

J. NEWTON BROWN

There seems to be no reason to question that J. Newton Brown was the author of the New Hampshire Confession.²⁹⁰ In his *Baptist Church Manual* he gives the form of a letter for members to constitute a new church. It is as follows:

V. Letter of Dismission to Form a New Church the
_____ Baptist Church, during a regular church

²⁸⁷ Bogard. *The Baptist Way-Book*, p. 69.

²⁸⁸ Ashcraft. *Revisiting Landmarkism*. Bro Ashcraft refers to "Landmarkism as expressed by Dr. J. R. Graves or Dr. Ben M. Bogard..." p. 270. But he overlooks the position of both Bogard and Graves on church constitution.

²⁸⁹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 74.

²⁹⁰ Cf. *Hiscox's New Directory*, p. 538-542.

meeting on____,19____, received a request from the following brothers and sisters (the names are listed here), all of whom are now in regular standing with us, to be dismissed from us for the purpose of uniting in the formation of a new church at____. It was voted that we cordially grant them letters of dismission for that purpose, and when they are regularly constituted as a church, we shall cease to regard them as under our watchcare.²⁹¹

We cannot help but seeing here there is no authority intended, none granted! The church granting this letter does not suggest, indicate or say, these members *do receive authority from this mother church to constitute!* They simply dismiss these members to organize another church. Furthermore, when they are regularly constituted as a church, the church granting the letters says: “We shall cease to regard them as under our Watchcare”! This is exactly what is done when a church grants a letter to a member to unite with another church. No authority given, none intended. EMDA is taken *en passant!*

THE RECORDS OF THE BROADMEAD CHURCH 1640— 1687

Mr. Canne ... “Pastor of the ancient English church in Amsterdam,” in 1634, printed a book by the title of *A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England*. Between that date and 1640 he must have become a Baptist, as stated in the text. He returned shortly after his visit to Bristol to Amsterdam, where he published *Syon's Prerogative Royal*, to prove that every particular congregation hath from Christ absolute and entire power to exercise in and of herself every ordinance of God, and is an independent body, not

²⁹¹ J. Newton Brown. *Baptist Church Manual*, p. 46.

standing under any other ecclesiastical authority out of itself.”²⁹²

This “absolute and entire power” is what the church receives **from Christ!** This is how these early disciples in the 17th century formed churches. This is exactly what we teach but Canne’s position will not bow down at the sound of EMDA music!

J. B. MOODY

J.B. Moody was an able defender of the Faith. He says in reference to churches:

20. It Multiplied Like Baptist Churches. Acts 8;1-18; 9:31; 11:19-26.

Whatever the circumstances or cause of their scatteration, if they chose, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, they congregated and organized on the voluntary principle, and elected their own officers. Any Baptist church can divide; or any part of it for a good reason can pull out and organize when and where it pleases, because individual liberty is not destroyed or impaired by church membership. The churches of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, etc., thus organized, were recognized by the mother church and by the apostles and Christ. This is a golden mark.²⁹³

27. A Baptist church is composed of volunteers associated in congregational effort, each member in equal authority, and each church complete in itself and independent of all other churches and of all outside authorities. Thus, it was in the beginning.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Canne. *Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England*. Amsterdam, 1641, 12 mo. pp. 64. See also *Baillie’s Dissuasive*, pp. 15, 107. Published by the Hansard Knolly’s Society.

²⁹³ Moody, *My Church*, p. 58.

²⁹⁴ Moody, *My Church*, p. 63.

A Baptist church is not a branch of that trunk, nor any other trunk. It is the thing itself, all to itself. Its members live in Christ, the vine. He is life to the members, but head to the church. The member gets life from the vine, while the church gets authority from its head.²⁹⁵

In the sense of popes and kings succeeding each other, the word (perpetuity) is not to be used of church history, because one church does not take the place of another. Sometimes one church dies as an organization, and some of the members may constitute in the same or in another place, and thus one may succeed the other. But this is hardly involved in this discussion, except where churches may have been driven from place to place, or from one country to another. The church at Jerusalem was multiplied into the churches of Judea, Samaria, etc., but they did not succeed the Church at Jerusalem, because that church had not died, as when kings and popes succeed each other by death. That particular idea of supplanting, or taking the place of another, must be eliminated.²⁹⁶

Bro Moody's teaching here quoted, especially item 27, spells out self-constitution, establishes DA and spoils EMDA. Note that the mother church "recognized" these other churches! Jerusalem did not "authorize" them as EMDA teaches. Where does the church get authority? EMDA demands: "From the mother church!" Moody, says: "from its head"! Why is it that men cannot understand these facts when they read them?

BUEL H. KAZEE

Bro Buel H. Kazee was a well-known Landmark Baptist and his testimony on this subject cannot be overlooked.

²⁹⁵ Moody. *My Church*, p. 62.

²⁹⁶ Moody. *My Church*, p. 132.

In this day among Baptists there seems to be a prevailing custom of establishing churches through the ‘sponsorship’ or authority of a ‘mother. church,’ a very commendable practice, we think, although not spelled out in the Scriptures; but whether or not this has always been done is certainly another matter. It is very likely that back through history there have been many instances where Bible-believing churches thought that the ordination to preach carried with it the authority to judge confessions and baptize, yea, even to organize churches of these newly baptized converts. It is also likely that through these channels the baptism of many of us has come. For this reason, we will need to be reserved in our declarations.²⁹⁷

We note that Bro Kazee does not bow to the EMDA image! He says this method of starting churches is “a very commendable practice” but calls it a **custom**—not an essential! Now a custom cannot be an essential! He says it is ***not spelled out in the Scriptures!*** This is enough to get one excluded from an EMDA church! He says: “...whether or not this has always been done is certainly another matter.” He then goes on to suggest other ways churches may have been constituted without EMDA! If this were not sufficient to show he is not bound to EMDA, he then suggests these non-EMDA churches are the sources of our baptisms! “It is also likely that through these channels the baptism of many of us has come.” Consequently, “For this reason we will need to be reserved in our declarations.” Our EMDA brethren, according to Bro Kazee, had better be careful lest they cut themselves off from Baptist church perpetuity by claiming an EMDA succession! I believe this is precisely what they have done!

²⁹⁷ Kazee. *Church & Ordinances*, p. 105.

NO REFERENCE TO EMDA BEFORE 1900

Another issue which I must mention is in *SCO* the author gave many quotes in support of EMDA by several men and from several documents before 1900. He quoted some thirty or forty different men. But strange as it may seem—not one single quote expressly states EMDA! **Many of these men who are quoted in support of EMDA actually believed in DA and have stated this in their books!**²⁹⁸ This brings every quote in this book into question! Men are quoted as if they believed in EMDA when it is a well-known fact that they did not believe it but fully embraced DA!

This search for an express statement of EMDA before modern times continues but without success! *SCO* was written in 1998 and re-issued in 2003. Thus, there were four or five years, with several preachers helping in the search,²⁹⁹ before the issue of the second edition, yet not one quote was found which explicitly states their proposition, and they have had to fall back on allusions, conjectures, suppositions and speculations! Had there been an explicit quote found, you can be sure it would have made the front page of *BBB* and it would have been included in the 2nd edition of *SCO*.

It would have been touted as the holy grail of EMDA! The appendices added in the new edition do not address this issue. What this means, then, is that it is reasonably certain there is no such quote and no such doctrine in Baptist

²⁹⁸ Cockrell. *SCO*. I have counted thirty-six men who are quoted in this book who do not believe EMDA, and I left out a few because I do not have their books and do not know for sure their position. Of course, the author does not say that every one of these men believed EMDA but with the exception of a very few, which he admitted did not believe EMDA, one would be led to believe all the rest did. But this is far from the case. Those admitted exceptions are: Bob Ross, p. 14; Vedder, p. 14; Cole, p. 15; Jarrel, p. 16.

²⁹⁹ *Op. cit.* p. ii under “Acknowledgments.”

History—at least the staunchest advocates of EMDA could not, with all their searching, produce just one! Why can't they find EMDA before 1900?

Now I will notice a few of those authors who are quoted in *SCO* as supporting EMDA but who actually taught the exact opposite or DA!

First, I will mention Dargan. He is quoted as supporting EMDA on p. 20 of *SCO*. What was the subject? Church constitution. What did Dargan say? DA!³⁰⁰ He does mention *mother church* but not in the sense of essential authority. There is not a hint of EMDA in this term nor in Dargan's book. Dargan said:

Now, where a number of persons go out from one church for the purpose of organizing a new one, their names may all be included in a joint letter—that is, the mother church grants to the brethren and sisters named in this letter with a view of their uniting with each other, and with others of like mind, for the purpose of constituting a new church; or something to this effect.³⁰¹

It is easy to see that Dargan does not have EMDA in view because these folks are given *letters* for the purpose of organizing not *authority*! They are not all required to unite with the mother church as EMDA demands.³⁰² They are not *granted* authority. There may be, Dargan indicates, others who will join in this constitution from sources unknown, and

³⁰⁰ Dargan. *Ecclesiology*, p. 195, Quoted in *SCO*, p. 20.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² EMDA requires all the members who wish to compose a new church to unite with the mother church. I have never known of a single instance in which members from more than one church entered into an organization under an EMDA umbrella, but Baptist history is replete with such cases where there were members from several different churches represented in a constitution. Hence there is a great difference between Baptist practice and EMDA.

that does not suit EMDA. If Dargan had said, “The mother church must grant authority to a new group before it can be a Scriptural church,” then that would be good evidence for EMDA. But so far, all we have is the assertion that this is what Dargan meant! I hardly think this is the way to prove a point. But to remove all doubt Dargan tells us what is essential to constitution:

The constitutive elements of organization are essential. They belong to the very beginning of the church’s life. There is no organization without them. These necessary things are two—viz., covenant and creed.³⁰³

Is this not clear? What more could Dargan have said to make this clear? **How many things are essential?** “Two,” according to Dargan!

Then lest someone should come along and make one of these to be EMDA, he tells us what they are: **Covenant and creed!** Not covenant and EMDA! Not Creed and EMDA! Not covenant, creed and EMDA, or else Dargan couldn’t count! What was Dargan saying here? He was saying Churches are self-constituted just as did the other Baptists of his time.

FLIPPING THE RECORD

Several times in *SCO* the record was flipped in the middle of the tune. After referring to Armitage on page 54 the author then writes:

If you want to know what the liberals think about those who hold to Landmarkism and church succession back to Christ, then listen to liberal Southern Baptist

³⁰³ Cockrell, *SCO* p. 20-21.

professor W. Morgan Patterson: "During the period in which the successionist theory emerged, the Baptist community was composed primarily of people from the lower social strata. Economically, educationally, and culturally, Baptists were very modest." This liberal by such words has said all the early Baptist historians were poor, ignorant people who did not know straight up from straight down. According to Patterson, men like Rosco Brong, J. E. Cobb, Roy Mason, T. P. Simmons, D. N. Jackson, Ben M Bogard, J. R. Graves, J. M. Pendleton, Jesse Mercer, J. B. Moody, etc., were poor old dummies. Apostate Landmarkers have about the same opinion of those of us who hold to Baptist church succession today. They feel sorry for us poor dummies who have never studied Baptist history like they have.³⁰⁴

Here two concepts are lumped together as if they were the same thing, i.e., EMDA and *church succession*! While all of the writers listed in this paragraph except Patterson believed in Baptist Succession, very few of them believed in EMDA!³⁰⁵ Furthermore the author then refers to Armitage and Patterson again and says: There you have it from two leading stars of anti-successionist Baptists that the early Baptists historians sought to trace links of certain order of churches which they called Baptists.³⁰⁶

The amazing thing about this statement is that Bro Cockrell quoted two authors (Armitage and Patterson) to prove these other men believed EMDA when these two authors do not

³⁰⁴ Cockrell, SCO p. 54.

³⁰⁵ I cannot say for sure but I believe only Bro Mason, possibly Bro Brong, ascribed to EMDA. *Update*. After writing the above I received this email from a friend who states Bro Brong did not see EMDA as a law. He said: "I know for a fact that Bro. Brong did not teach EMDA because he told us, on more than one occasion, that there are circumstances where baptized believers can self-organize and form a legitimate church, even though this was not the preferred or optimal arrangement." "Rick Presley" richard.presley In southernbaptist@yahoogroups.com

³⁰⁶ Cockrell, SCO p. 57.

even mention EMDA here! He makes Armitage and Patterson sponsors for these men, who are not permitted to speak for themselves! These men are, by this strategy, denominated believers in EMDA—not because the sponsors said they believed EMDA, nor because the men themselves said they believed it— but because Bro Cockrell assumed succession and EMDA were the same thing! One must keep his eye on the subject! He has confused things that differ.

These men—namely Orchard, Jones, Christian, Graves, and Ray³⁰⁷— later referenced—did not believe in EMDA! Just because they believed in Baptist Succession did not necessarily mean they believed in EMDA. That is a separate proposition and requires separate proof! They are not the same thing! It is wrong to mix different things and assign them equal qualities.³⁰⁸ Attempting to go from *church succession*, which these men believed, to *organic church connection*,³⁰⁹ which these men did not believe, is a fallacy. In proof of this there is an example at hand. Graves championed Baptist church succession for nearly fifty years in his paper³¹⁰ along with DA which he included as an editorial principle in every issue of his paper for many years. But he never once taught EMDA!³¹¹

There is also the case of Jesse Mercer. Bro Cockrell says: “I take my stand with men like Jesse Mercer (1769-1827) who wrote in a circular letter of the Georgia Baptist Association

³⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 57-66.

³⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp.57-66.

³⁰⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 62. “Liberals and apostate Landmarkers do not like the term ‘church succession’...”

³¹⁰ Graves began editing *The Tennessee Baptist* in 1846. He died in 1893, and was at that time still a contributing editor of the paper, which by then (1889), had been combined with the *Baptist and Reflector*. Cf. Wardin, *Tennessee Baptists*, p. 246.

³¹¹ Cf. *The Tennessee Baptist*, April 27, 1867, p.1.

in 1811 about why they rejected Pedobaptist churches and their baptisms.”³¹² A little further on he quotes Mercer:

The APOSTOLIC CHURCH continued through all ages to the end of the world, is the only TRUE GOSPEL CHURCH ...Of this church, CHRIST is the only HEAD, and ministers, who originated since the apostles, and not successively to them, are not in gospel order; and therefore, cannot be acknowledged as such. That all, who have been ordained to the work of the ministry without the knowledge and call of the church, by popes, councils, & c. are the creatures of those who constitute them, and are not the servants of Christ, or his church, and therefore have no right to administer for them.

Then he gives four reasons for rejecting Pedobaptist churches and the baptism of their ministers: ‘I. That they are connected with churches clearly out of the apostolic succession and therefore clearly out of the apostolic commission. II. That they have derived their authority, by ordination, from the bishops of Rome, or from individuals, who have taken it on themselves to give it...’³¹³

Whatever apparent momentum was gained by quoting Jesse Mercer is quickly lost when we learn that Mercer believed in DA and, thankfully, left his testimony in no uncertain terms. That he is claimed as an exponent of EMDA, even though he was nothing of the sort, indicates this tendency to quote our Baptist forefathers on mere illusions without careful investigation of what they believed on this subject. Hogue quotes this old Landmarker:

“There is not even any direct scriptural authority for such an organization as an association. The church, on

³¹² Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 46.

³¹³ *Op. cit.* p. 48.

the other hand, receives its power and authority directly from Christ.”³¹⁴

I wish that Bro Cockrell had stood with Jesse Mercer—but it would have required renouncing EMDA to do it. Mercer was not, in this quote given above, setting forth EMDA. He flatly and specifically stated his position to be that of DA. So, this quote given by Mercer is not EMDA nor even a kissing cousin of it! *Authority directly from Christ* is so distinctly DA that it cannot be brought under the EMDA umbrella! But to go somewhat further let Mercer tell us more:

What constitutes, in our judgment, any number of believers in Christ a church, is their coming together into one body, according to the rules and faith of the gospel. And wheresoever any body of professed Christians is found so walking together, they should be acknowledged and received as a true church.³¹⁵

Of course, this idea is damnable heresy to EMDA advocates! Mercer was a Landmarker according to Bro Cockrell. But this Landmarker believed the authority for constitution came directly from Christ! But if we did not have these other quotes by Mercer this claim of his believing EMDA would be held up as evidence contrary to the facts of the case! EMDA supporters cannot honestly recognize Mercer as a Landmark Baptist any longer.

But this is not all. Most of the men quoted in *SCO* did not say they believed EMDA but Bro Cockrell *assumed* they believed it, just as he supposed Mercer believed it! Supposition is not proof but is close to conjecture. Out of the many men quoted in *SCO* the author admits only one

³¹⁴ Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 231.

³¹⁵ Mallary, *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer*, p. 456.

believed DA, namely Cole!³¹⁶ Even Jarrel whose statements cannot be aligned with EMDA is not identified specifically as being opposed to EMDA! He passes right over Graves' statement even though Jarrel quoted him out of The Tennessee Baptist. Cole is held up as being the only exception because his statement for DA was explicit. Yet not only did Cole believe in DA, but **the overwhelming majority of men quoted in *SCO* believed it as well!** Outside of those who were associated with Bro Gilpin in the mid -1950s or after, I don't believe there is a single author quoted in *SCO* who believed in EMDA! So why were they quoted? To quote a man as supporting what he rejects is reprehensible!

But look at some of these quotes I have given. They are quoted as believing in DA as opposed to EMDA. I have not quoted these men on succession, perpetuity or an oblique issue but on the express subject of *how a church obtains its authority*—is it from earth (this includes, churches, presbyteries, elders, associations, church letters, etc.) or is it from Christ Direct out of Heaven? This is the issue between EMDA and DA.³¹⁷

Graves was quoted. What was the subject? Church constitution. What did Graves say? He expressly stated DA.

Dayton is quoted. What was the subject? Church Constitution. What did Dayton say? DA!

³¹⁶ I do not here include men such as Patterson, Armitage and McBeth.

³¹⁷ Let me assure the reader on this point. At no time have I assumed a writer took my position, but rather, -I have carefully researched every author I have quoted to ascertain beyond any doubt his position on this subject, and I challenge anyone to produce any writer which I have misrepresented.

Take Hiscox.³¹⁸ What was the subject? Church constitution.
What did Hiscox say? DA!

Take Bogard. What was the subject? Church constitution.
What did Bogard say? DA!

Take Jarrel. What was the Subject? Church constitution.
What did Jarrel say? DA!

Take Cole. What was the subject? Church constitution. What
did Cole say? DA!

Take Dargan. What was the subject? Church constitution.
What did Dargan say? DA!

Take Mercer. What was the subject. Church constitution.
What did Mercer say? DA!

This is overwhelming testimony! It cannot be ignored!
Weight it carefully!

Now we wish to consider what actually constitutes a church.

³¹⁸ Hiscox was not a Landmark Baptist but I include him because he is quoted by Bro Cockrell as expressing the correct way to start a church.

CHAPTER 9

WHAT ACTUALLY CONSTITUTES A CHURCH?

Is it a *mother church* which *quickens* a church? Is it something done on earth? Is it the words spoken by an elder, a prayer offered? Is it the presbytery? Is it the act of a bishop or an elder? Is it when a preacher says, “I pronounce you a church of the Lord Jesus Christ”, as some brethren say?³¹⁹ Is it the mother church which actually constitutes a church? Is it the people themselves? Or is it something the Lord Himself does? Or is it a combination of what the Lord does and what a mother church does or what the group itself does? How does a church get *church-life*, *church-light* and *church-status*? What actually makes a group of baptized saints into an assembly of Christ?

CHURCH CONSTITUTION IS A DIVINE ACT

I contend the act which actually constitutes a church is a *divine* act. When some of the saved, baptized, citizens of Christ’s kingdom³²⁰ are led by the Holy Spirit to desire to form a church and they gather together in covenantal unity for this stated purpose, then, the Lord Himself constitutes that group a church. It is His prerogative alone, but it is manifested when these disciples gather together in gospel order according to Mt. 18:20. He led them to take this action by His Holy Spirit and it is an honor and a glory to His Holy

³¹⁹ While I have never personally heard this phrase used in a constitution, I am informed by brethren that it is a phrase often used. One brother told me that the pastor of the mother church at the conclusion of an organization said: “The umbilical cord has been cut. The daughter is now a sister.”

³²⁰ That is, they are in gospel order.

Name when they do so.³²¹ Only when Christ takes up His dwelling in the midst of a group does it become a church.³²² This is church constitution. When a group so meets they are founded *on* Christ³²³ and they are founded *by* Christ, Mt 18:20, and Christ is *in the midst of them*! Christ takes this action without any other requirement than what is given in this Matthean text. He himself constitutes the church and lights another church candlestick.³²⁴ The new church is not dependent upon another church, a presbytery, an elder, or any other entity. They look solely to Christ. This is what I mean by *self-constituted* or DA.

These disciples follow the Word of Christ and Christ keeps His promise, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” There seems here to be three things required: *first*, the gathering together. That is, they actually meet together. A non-assembling assembly is a contradiction of terms. *Secondly*, they covenant together. There must be this covenant, an agreement, an arrangement or a compact between them so they can function as a church and carry out the will of Christ. They “gather together” with this stated purpose and in submission to Christ. Without a covenant, there can be no church. I do not mean that this must be a formal or written covenant. It may only be understood, but it is necessary. *Thirdly*, this must be done in the “name” of Christ, that is *by His authority* for without His authority there can be no church. Of course, if they meet in His name, there are other things which are done, one of which is to have a *creed*, that is the doctrine of what the new church believes. When these things are done in gospel order, the Lord Himself constitutes a new church. The constituents of the new church are

³²¹ 2 Cor 8:5.

³²² Rev. 2:1.

³²³ 1 Cor.3:11.

³²⁴ Re 1:20.

prepared and prepare themselves because they are under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And from the Lord's side He indwells them in accordance with this promise and they are placed as one of His churches.³²⁵

Every other act, whether of elders, *helps*, associations, presbyteries, pastors, deacons, church or churches, singularly or in plurality does not, cannot, produce, nor can they prevent, the constitution of a church. Hiscox says:

If a Council should decline to recognize a newly constituted Church, deeming the organization unwise and uncalled for, still that Church would have the right to maintain its organization and to continue its work and its worship. The Council could not unmake it, and it would as really be a Church without, as with their sanction.³²⁶

This is the Divine prerogative and is analogous to marriage. As the covenant between one man and one woman is essential to marriage, it requires no other authority on earth except that given by Lord in the original charter of the home in Gen 2:23-24. And though it is contracted by those who wish to marry, the marriage is of God and not of men. "... It was the Lord's act and deed, and to him Christ ascribes the act of marriage."³²⁷ So it is in the constitution of churches.

In Mat. 16:18, Christ Himself tells us He **Himself** "*will build up His church,*" which I understand to mean the generic institution manifested in local congregations. This was not only the case while He was upon the earth in the days of His

³²⁵ Cf. Re 1:12,13,20; 2:1.

³²⁶ Hiscox. *New Directory*, p. 56-57. Hiscox here refers to a council of recognition requested by the new church *after it is constituted*. Of course, this precludes EMDA—JCS.

³²⁷ Mt 19:4-6. Cf. Gill. *Body of Divinity*, p. 711.

flesh but this “building up” shall continue to the end of the age, as He expressly declared in this text. Furthermore, Daniel 2:44 speaks of the inceptive form of His Kingdom, and plainly says, “*The kingdom shall not be left to other people...*” It will not be extinguished. It will not be taken over by another kingdom. Thus, He never delegated or passed on, but retained, **this authority** for the constitution of His churches. Every such assembly which meets in His name, by His direction and in gospel order, is one of His churches.

In Mat. 5:1 we have just such an assembly. J. R. Graves says concerning this meeting:

The first full church—meeting—a gathering together of his disciples into one place for general instruction—is recorded by Matthew (5:1). The disciples, in the **wider sense**, including those of the apostles already **called**, and **all** who had, either for a longer or shorter time, attached themselves to him as hearers.** **The discourse was spoken directly to the disciples.** etc. *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.* These ‘disciples’ were not the twelve apostles, nor yet the seventy merely, for **they** had not yet been chosen from the whole body, but the multitude of his disciples. So Alford:

Graves then goes on to say:

Here, then, is a **real church** meeting; a visible assembly of men, possessing certain qualifications, called out from the **oklos** (multitude) for a specific purpose, and this is the essential signification of ecclesia in Greek. We may add an organized assembly, since they recognized the supreme authority of Christ over them.³²⁸

³²⁸ Graves. *Intercommunion*, p. 154.

Now that Christ so assembled His disciples and that He constituted these disciples into a church without any authority from any other source than Himself whatsoever indicates **this is His pattern of church constitution to the end of the age**. He did not get authority from the high priest of Israel. He did not obtain it from the elders of Israel. He did not get it from some other assembly. He did not derive His authority from John the Baptist. He expressly tells us His authority came directly from His Father.³²⁹ Thus by His own word we know He was then, and ever shall be, the sole authority in the constitution of churches. And this simple act prepared His disciples for the future constitution of assemblies all over the world to the end of time, in the same manner. Nor did Christ leave us to guess as to how this act of constitution was here accomplished. Rather He tells what the minimum requirements of a church are in Mt 18:20. Nor do we believe He would constitute the first church one way but command His disciples to constitute succeeding churches in some other manner, especially *without giving explicit instructions*! Each local church is self-constituted by two, three, or more of His baptized disciples gathering together in His name, for these are His express words:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Thus, the first church was self-constituted because they “gathered together” for the purpose of worship in His Name and under His direction! Gathered together *in His name*, which has the same sense as “baptize them in the name of, that is, by **His authority** which He promises to all who do the same thing in the proper way. This is a covenantal, a purposed, a designated, and not a chance meeting. Nor is it

³²⁹ Mt 28:18; 11:17.

a casual thing but it is the stated purpose of these disciples to submit to the whole of the teachings of Christ and carry out His will in regular meetings.³³⁰ Such is the very essence of a NT assembly. The Greek for *gathering* in Mt 18:20 is related to the word used in He 10:25,³³¹ “Not forsaking the *assembling* of ourselves together...”³³²

This is **Christ’s authority** and it is given to those who follow His instructions. The simplicity of His ways is a mark of His wisdom!

THE INSTRUCTION OF Mt. 18:20

This is what Christ commanded and to such meetings He has given His promise. When a group of baptized disciples **covenant together** in His Name, that is, when they come to Him and submit themselves to Him to carry out His will in gospel order, there Christ Jesus is **in the midst** and this is how churches are constituted. Mark it well, that Christ is in the midst of every self-constituted assembly, no matter if they are refused fellowship, if they are shunned or rejected by others saying, “They have no authority,” Christ is there and **they have His authority!** They have the highest authority on earth or in Heaven, the authority of Christ Jesus Himself. They have His promise, His authority, His presence, His blessing, and His approval. This is all His disciples want and it is all they need! He will meet with them even if there are those who will not! If Christ is in the midst of a group of people, those people are a church and Christ recognizes them as belonging to Him and as constituted in His name according to His word. He recognizes them now as His own *ekklesia* and will manifest this at His coming—

³³⁰ Mt. 5:1; 6:12.

³³¹ Mt 18:20, συναγω and επισυναγωγή in Heb. 10:25.

³³² I.e., επισυναγωγή. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:1.

So will Christ in the coming Day. That which has been done in full accord with God's Word, though despised by man, shall be owned and rewarded of Him. His own words, in the final chapter of Holy Writ, are 'And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.'³³³

CHURCH-LIFE GIVEN BY CHRIST HIMSELF

Here then is Christ's own word on church constitution. Nothing outside of the text needs to be added nor can anything be Scripturally added. This is the positive declaration of the Word of God. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Whenever He leads men to gather together in His name by His Holy Spirit, then He promises to be in the midst of them. Another **church-life** is begun and another church-lamp is lit by the Lord Himself.³³⁴ This is how a church begins. He who walks among the lamps is the only one who can give a congregation church-light, and He is the only one who can extinguish that light, and He is careful to tell us how this is accomplished.³³⁵

Keep in mind that this text is in a passage dealing with the church and church authority! These are instructions for all time but given in the infant stage of the church and it will be one of those things which the Spirit will bring to the mind of the disciples of the Lord after He returns to Heaven and churches are multiplied. For this reason, it was included in the Scripture by the Holy Spirit. This is not one of those passages that *seems* to speak of the church. This text and context unmistakably deal with church issues! Note that he

³³³ Pink. *Gleanings in Exodus*, p. 316. Cf. Rev 22:12.

³³⁴ Re 1:12.

³³⁵ Mt 18:20; Re 2:5.

speaks of brother trespassing against brother—who are these brothers? They are members of the same church, vss 15-17. They are to settle their problems according to Christ's laws, between the two, if possible. But if they cannot, they are to get others to help. If this fails, they are to tell it to the **assembly**. And if the offending member refuses to hear the assembly, then they—the assembly—are to count him as a heathen and a publican, vss 15-17. Context is king and here it designates the church as the subject. Therefore, you cannot make Mt 18:15-17 refer to the church and deny Mt. 18:20 refers to the church.

But then the Lord goes on to speak of the binding of this **church-action**. It is bound in heaven or loosed in Heaven when done according to His Word,³³⁶ on earth, i.e., in one of His assemblies which is on earth. In vs 19 he says that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven, vs 19. But He does not stop there but adds: **For where two or three are gathered together in my name...**, vs 20.

Now we will look at this issue from the other side. How is a church dissolved? I have known of a few churches which dissolved. They voted to dissolve in the same manner they voted to constitute. Not one got EMDA to disband. Christ is the one who actually *snuffs out* the lamp-light of a church just as he is the one who *lights* the church lamp but he does this through the action of the group itself. Surely constitution is more important than dissolution, yet Christ is the only one who can dissolve a church!

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto

³³⁶ This means it is "ratified in heaven, i. e., by God—unless, of course, the decision be in itself wrong." Broadus. *American Commentary, Loco.*

thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Re 2:5.

Why did not Christ threaten Ephesus with her mother church? Because there was no mother church in the sense of EMDA! Therefore, if we reason from the lesser to the greater (removing and setting up), we can see that Christ is the only one who can constitute a church and he does this by leading His disciples to desire to covenant together for this purpose.³³⁷ *He* puts the candlestick in its place and He does so by His own direct action not by the proxy of any other entity in Heaven or on earth!

HOW CHURCHES ARE FORMED SCRIPTURALLY

Matthew 18:20

For means He is now going to give the reason why the action of such an insignificant gathering (in the eyes of the world) which agrees on earth has binding force—and that is because ***“Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.”*** This is His authority. This is how His churches are formed. This is His promise to come down and dwell in every such assembly formed in this manner. He did not say, nor did He mean that where two or three get authority from another church, from elders, presbytery, association, convention, or any such thing, there am I in the midst of them. In fact, every one of these have been appealed to and used in the constitution of Baptist churches, but Christ never authorized any of them. No Scripture states this. There is no church promise to a group so formed. But where two or three—this is the minimum

³³⁷ Mt 5:1,11,14-15.

number He requires to constitute a church, do covenant, i.e., “in His Name,”—there He gives both His promise and His authority, which is as valid today as it was in AD 30.³³⁸ The Lord Himself condescends to attend every such meeting and grace it with His abiding presence —“*There am I in the midst of them.*” That is, the first constitutional meeting and every other subsequent meeting to the end of time, if they meet in and with the same standards and for the same purpose.

Lest some may think this a private opinion I will submit a few authorities.

H. Boyce Taylor says:

It [the church] gets its life from the Word and the Holy Spirit.³³⁹

Barnes:

In my name. That is, 1st, *By my authority*, acting *for me* in my church.³⁴⁰

Lange:

Similarly, their *sumphonia*³⁴¹ must consist in being gathered together *in the name of Jesus*. If such be the case, He Himself is in the midst of them by His Spirit. It is this presence of the Shechinah, in the real sense of the term, which forms and constitutes His *ekklesia*, or *Kahal*.³⁴²

³³⁸ 2 Cor 1:20.

³³⁹ Taylor, *Why Be a Baptist*, p. 50.

³⁴⁰ Barnes. *Com.*, Mt. 18:20.

³⁴¹ Agreeing.

³⁴² Lange. *Com.*, Mt 18:20.

Alford:

A generalization of the term church (assembly), and the powers conferred on it...³⁴³

Matthew Henry:

The presence of Christ in the assemblies of Christians is promised, and may in faith be prayed for and depended on; *There am I*. This is equivalent to the Shechinah, or special presence of God in the tabernacle and temple of old...³⁴⁴

Calvin:

But we must take care, first of all, that those who are desirous to have Christ present with them shall *assemble in his name*; and we likewise understand what is the meaning of this expression... It means that those who are assembled together, laying aside everything that hinders them from approaching to Christ, shall sincerely raise their desires to him, shall yield obedience to his word, and allow themselves to be governed by the Spirit. Where this simplicity prevails, there is no reason to fear that Christ will not make it manifest that it was not in vain for *the assembly to meet in his name*.³⁴⁵

Gill:

This union between them is made by voluntary consent and agreement; a Christian society, or a church of Christ, is like all civil societies, founded on agreement and by consent...³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Afford. *Greek Testament*. Mt 18:20.

³⁴⁴ Matthew Henry. *Com*. Mt 18:20.

³⁴⁵ Calvin. *Com*. Mt 18:20.

³⁴⁶ Gill. *Com*. Mt 18:20.

A. B. Bruce:

...gathered as believers in me. It is a synonym for the new society.³⁴⁷

Marvin R. Vincent:

When two or three are drawn together *into* Christ as the common centre of their desire and faith.³⁴⁸

We call attention to the fact that Christ here (Mt 18:20) does not append any stipulations whether of a church giving EMDA, or a bishop bestowing, or a council commanding, or a presbytery presiding, nor the permission of any other entity on earth, for one is as essential and as necessary as the other—but He gives His Word which is as sure as His throne.³⁴⁹ It does not take ten men to constitute a church as it did to set up a synagogue.³⁵⁰ To set up a new assembly, it does it take any church approval nor does it require the imprimatur of anyone other than Christ Himself!

This is His direction as to the constitution of a church. All the essential parameters are included here. We dare not **exclude** anything He included nor can we **include** anything which He excluded as essential unless we wish to incur His displeasure and teach for doctrine the commandments of men, which is what the advocates of EMDA do.³⁵¹ As Matthew Henry says:

³⁴⁷ Ex. *Gk. NT*. Mt 18:20.

³⁴⁸ Vincent. *Word Studies NT*. Mt 18:20.

³⁴⁹ He 6:18.

³⁵⁰ Lightfoot. *Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 2, p. 89, 90.

³⁵¹ Mt. 15:9.

The commandments of men are properly conversant about the things of men, but God will have his own work done by his own rules, and accepts not that which he did not himself appoint. That only comes to him, that comes from him.³⁵²

THE MEANING OF EKKLESIA

The very word **church** in Greek, speaks of how a church is formed. **Ekklesia** is formed from two Greek words. As Trench puts it:

In respect of the first, **η εκκλησια**...was the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the right of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs. That they were *summoned* is expressed in the latter part of the word; that they were summoned *out of* the whole population, a select portion of it, including neither the populace, nor strangers, nor yet those who had forfeited their civic rights, this is expressed in the first. Both the *calling* (the **κλησις**, Phil 3:14; 2 Tim. 1:9), and the *calling out* (the **εκλογη**, Ro. 11:7; 2 Pet. 1:10), are moments to be remembered, when the word is assumed into a higher Christian sense, for in them the chief part of its peculiar adaptation to its august use lies.³⁵³

WHY SELF-CONSTITUTED

This is a good question and we seek the Lord's answer. First let it be remembered that the altar of God was fired from Heaven by what some are willing to call **spontaneous combustion!** They were to bring no strange fire, that is, man-made fire to God's altar. This was to be supplied by the Lord. We see this in the dedication of the Temple built by Solomon. This teaches us that we are to bring no man-made devices or doctrines into the House of the Lord, that is, the

³⁵² Matthew Henry. *Commentary*, Mt. 15:9.

³⁵³ Trench. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 1-2.

church. Each church must get its authority directly from the Lord Himself. He is jealous of His glory and will not give that glory to another, even to one of His churches. ***“Unto Him be glory in the church,”*** so the text runs and this does not mean that the church can legislate or extend its power to other groups. This over reaching generates confusion which is contrary to His purpose for His churches, ***“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints,” i.e., “In all assemblies of the saints.”***³⁵⁴ An assembly is a group which **assembles together in His Name!** They do this by His Word, not by the word of men. They must receive their constitution from Him, or else they are striking strange fire!

Receiving authority directly from Christ out of Heaven has many obvious advantages.

First, because each church rests on Christ as a foundation and not on the Scripturality of fifty or sixty churches, mostly unknown, and unknowable up the line of history. No searching dusty records, no trying to ascertain the records of churches long gone out of existence, as to how they were formed and how they were constituted. Just simply taking Christ at His word is an act of obedient submission. This is Christ’s own ordained method of founding a church. This is building on the Rock!³⁵⁵

Second, because each church is formed in exactly the same way—that is according to Mt 18:20. This is a church organization that has a positive command in the Word of God as to the heart of the issue.

Third, each church is just as important as every other church! There are no churches with clout while others are

³⁵⁴ 1 Co 14:33.

³⁵⁵ Mt 16:18; 1 Co 3:11; Mt 7:24.

considered merely “wart churches.” The *house churches* mentioned in Scripture were just as important as those with large memberships and the country churches as important as the city churches. The young churches were as valuable as the old churches.

Fourth, each church is just as Scriptural as every other church. No *mother* church giving warnings to a daughter *church* saying, “You had better listen to your mother,” or the like, because each church appeals directly to Christ and His Word for its authority.

Fifth, each church looks not to a mother church for her origin but to Christ whose promise they believe.

Sixth, this prevents boasting because every church must depend not on a long list of precarious mothers³⁵⁶ but on the firm Word of Christ. This is far better even if other methods were permissible.

Seventh, this passage, in Mt. 18:20, must refer to church constitution, that is DA, but if not, then there is no passage in the NT which tells disciples how to form churches!

Terms concerning church constitution and fellowship which are in harmony with this doctrine are as follows:

They gather together, Mt. 18:20

They covenant together, Mt 18:20

They are indwelt by Christ Himself, Mt 18:20

They are in gospel order, Mt 18:20

They give themselves to the Lord and one another, 2 Cor 8:5

They are laid on the one foundation, I Cor 3:11

³⁵⁶ See Appendix II.

They are built up as lively stones into the Lord's building, I
Pe 5:1

They are called by the gospel, Eph 4:4

They are glued or welded together, Acts 5:13

They are compacted, Eph 4:16—"knit together," Col 2:2

They are Fitted...together, Eph 4:16

They are a flock, Lk 12:32

They are joined together, Eph 4:16

They follow other churches, I Thess 2:14

They are perfectly joined together, I Cor 1:10

Yet in these many passages we have not one single
expression of anything that even sounds like EMDA!

CHAPTER 10

THE ASSEMBLY OF SCRIPTURE

An assembly of Christ is an *ekklesia*³⁵⁷ not merely a *collection* or *gathering* of people.³⁵⁸ And because it is a *duly summoned*³⁵⁹ *assembly* someone must authorize this summons and thus be responsible for calling it into existence, for one cannot think of a *called out* assembly without a *calling* and a *caller*. This was what put the Ephesians in jeopardy in Acts 19. There was no authority for their action. Their assembly was an *unauthorized* gathering together. No one had called them to gather together. The law directed when, where and how such assemblies were to meet. In the Kingdom of Christ His law directs how His assemblies are to be established. This is expressly stated in Mt 18:20. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”³⁶⁰ In Mt 28:18-20, He tells them that this authority is in Himself and then He tells them what they are to do as a church according to His authority. Any assembly which does not meet these criteria is not one of His assemblies, name and assertions notwithstanding. Any assembly which does meet these criteria is one of His assemblies, no matter what objections men may make to them. In the meeting of Christ’s assembly, this summons comes directly and immediately from the

³⁵⁷ *Εκκλησία* is formed from the two words: *εκ* and *κλησις*. Trench explains the connection in reference to the original meaning of the word: “That they were summoned is expressed in the latter part of the word; that they were summoned out of the whole population, a select portion of it, including neither the populace, nor strangers, nor yet those who had forfeited their civic rights, this is expressed in the first.” Trench. *Synonyms of The New Testament*. #1, p. 2.

³⁵⁸ *Συλλεγω*. “...at Athens, of any special public meeting or assembly, opp. The common *εκκλησία*.” Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*.

³⁵⁹ Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*, *εκκλησία*.

³⁶⁰ This is expressly stated in *The London Confession of 1689*, Chapter XXVI, par. 5.

Great Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ and it comes specifically. This is what Christ promised in Mt 16:18. He would continue to build up His church assembly by assembly. He promised to bless with His abiding presence every such assembly constituted in accord with Mt 18:20. In this passage we are not to think of an un-summoned mob³⁶¹, or even a disorganized throng,³⁶² it is not merely those who *journey together*,³⁶³ nor yet a multitude;³⁶⁴ it is not a popular assembly. Nor is it merely a *festal assembly*³⁶⁵ but an *ekklesia* which meets the criteria Christ mandated. This is a true church. It is an *ekklesia* which gathers according to the directions of Christ.³⁶⁶ He called them out of the world as saints and He calls them together in church status. They *gather together* for His glory by *His authority* and for their mutual benefit which they receive when they act together according to His Word.³⁶⁷ The business transacted is that appointed by the Head of the Church in Mt 28:18-20 specifically and the New Testament generally.

The assembly of Christ is composed of those who have been effectually called unto Christ, first in salvation and who have

³⁶¹ Cf. Ac 19:1-6.

³⁶² Οἷλος. "If we want the exact opposite to *δημος*, it is *οἷλος*, the disorganized, or rather the unorganized, multitude, (Lk. 9:38; Mt. 21:8; Acts 14:4)..." Trench. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, # 98, p. 344.

³⁶³ Συνοδία, Lk 2:44.

³⁶⁴ Πληθος. "A large company, a multitude." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. p. 421.

³⁶⁵ Παναγυρις. He 12:33. "The *πανηγυρις* differs from the *εκκλησια* in this, that in the *εκκλησια*...here lay ever the sense of an assembly coming together for the transaction of festal rejoicing." Trench. *Synonyms*. #1, p. 6; Cf. Berry. *Greek English Lexicon*, p. 125, # 20.

³⁶⁶ Coenen says: "Coming together (synago as in the LXX) must be reckoned an essential element in *ekklesia* (Cf. 1 Cor.-11:18). Hence the *ekklesia* can be thought of in purely concrete terms, and any spiritualizing in the dogmatic sense of an invisible church (*ecclesia invisibilis*-) is still unthinkable for Paul." This causes Editor Colin Brown to give a lengthy defense of the invisible church. *DNTT*, vol. 1, p. 299.

³⁶⁷ Trench. *Synonyms*, p. 6.

made that good confession³⁶⁸ before many witnesses and which also includes Scriptural baptism, by an assembly so called and so authorized, and who, have, in agreement with a sufficient number of others, obeyed Christ's command to form an assembly in gospel order in accordance with His plain direction in Mt. 18:20. They covenant together by giving themselves to the Lord and to one another, 2 Cor 8:5. They are *glued*³⁶⁹ together, Acts 5:13; 9:26 and other places.³⁷⁰ This joining is not accomplished by another church but by the power of Christ Himself.³⁷¹ The Lord Himself *sets up* His churches³⁷² and he *adds* to them, Acts 2:47,³⁷³ and He disciplines them.³⁷⁴ If we view this process from the Divine side, it is Christ who places them together, glues them or welds them together, forms them, sets them in church capacity. If we view it from the human side, it is the disciples who join together and in accordance with His Word and with the leading of His Holy Spirit, form themselves into a new church by a covenant. *They* gather together and do so under His immediate authority, *in my name*. The church is formed by Christ and He gives it all of its authority directly. The church follows His will and receives the blessing from Him alone.

Keep in mind, the authority which *summons* an ecclesia can also *dissolve* it³⁷⁵ as well as set it up. Only the authority which can *annul* constitution can *grant* constitution! But as no church has power to annul another assembly's constitution,

³⁶⁸ 1 Tim 6:12, 13.

³⁶⁹ Κολλάω. Glued or welded. Cf. *Liddell & Scott*. Let the reader keep in mind the welding known in ancient times was forge welding, which unlike modern welding, did not produce a coalescence of the two metals but was actually an adhesive process.

³⁷⁰ Κολλάω is found ten times in the Greek NT.

³⁷¹ Mt. 18:20.

³⁷² Mt. 5:1ff. with Mt. 16:18.

³⁷³ Προστιθῆμι is used 18 times in the NT. In this discussion, it means *add*.

³⁷⁴ Re 1:5,16; 2:23; 3:3,16-22.

³⁷⁵ *Liddell & Scott*. Art. ἐκκλησία; ε. διαλueiv, ἀναστῆσαι, dissolve it."

consequently no church has power to grant or authorize another assembly's constitution! Such power belongs exclusively to the Lord Himself!³⁷⁶ He never transferred or delegated such authority to any office, officer, person, society, or entity.³⁷⁷ Dan. 2:44 expressly states this kingdom: "shall not be left to other people..." That is, the authority of this Kingdom will never be put in the hands of men, churches, associations, conventions, popes, nor any other such thing but will ever remain in the domain of the Lord Himself and thus its perpetuity is insured.

Therefore, it is Christ and He alone who walks among the candlesticks! Only He can place them in that prominent position before the throne of His Father and only He can remove them. Both the *igniter* and the *snuffer* are in his hand.³⁷⁸ It is Christ only who takes a church into his mouth, as a drink of water, and He only can spit it out if it should become lukewarm!³⁷⁹ He needs no elder, bishop, presbytery, no plurality of elders or no church to authorize Him to indwell a church. He needs no one or no church to authorize Him to leave a church. He is not the servant of the churches but the Head! He sets up and He takes down. No church can enter into that sacred domain, though many have tried. The candlestick-Keeper allows no one or no society to enter into His province. He promises to indwell any two or three who gather together in His name. And when they do, He himself places a new candlestick in its place. When any church attempts to enter into this domain, whether by pretending to have the keys of Peter, by episcopacy, by EMDA, or some other method, makes no matter. A *mother church* is as incongruous and unscriptural as Uzziah and his smoking

³⁷⁶ Mt 28:18-20.

³⁷⁷ Flinchum. *Fully After the Lord*, p. 320.

³⁷⁸ Re 2:5; Cf. Ex. 37:23. The source of the fire for God's altar always came from heaven.

³⁷⁹ Re 3:15.

censor in the Holy place!³⁸⁰ More than good intentions are required for acceptable worship! The keeping of the candlesticks belongs to the Lord alone. He who attempts this attempts to “stay His hand,” or say unto Him, “What doest thou?”³⁸¹ Those churches who attempt to put a candlestick in place via EMDA are doing the same thing Uzza did when he tried to prevent the ark from falling off the cart! This improper handling of Divine things brought about his death. EMDA is a man-devised cart and clashes with God’s revealed plan for church constitution! Christ appointed no vicegerent on this earth. No church has the power to bestow the Holy Spirit on an assembly.³⁸² One can only wince when Roman Catholics teach this but when Baptists take up the same error we are thunderstruck!

STRANGE FIRE

Man-made fire, be it ever so consecrated, in the estimation of those who offer it, even when offered with much incense and devotion, is still *strange fire*! We have the account of the sons of Aaron:

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.³⁸³

Their great mistake was not in their desire to worship the Lord but pretending to worship Him *in a way He had not commanded*. That was their sin, and for it they died! *Whatever God has not commanded is strange fire, when presented as worship!* And this is the nature of EMDA—it

³⁸⁰ II Chron 26:18.

³⁸¹ Dan 4:35.

³⁸² Cf. 7 *Questions*. p. 35, par. 2; and Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 81.

³⁸³ Le 10:1.

is strange fire because God never commanded it! Bishop Hall said:

It is dangerous thing, in the service of God, to decline from his own institution; we have to do with a God, who is wise to prescribe his own worship—just to require what he has prescribed—and powerful to avenge what he has not prescribed.³⁸⁴

Gill said on this verse:

They had acted presumptuously. They had not, like Eleazar and Ithamar, waited for the Divine command, but, in their haste, they had irreverently broken the custom, which rested upon a Divine command, of taking the fire for the altar of incense from the altar of burnt sacrifice alone. The fact that this offense was the transgression of a positive rather than of a moral precept, would have made the lesson the more complete and emphatic. They—the newly ordained priests—had, with whatever good intentions, done what God had not commanded, and in doing it had done what he had forbidden. Like Uzzah afterwards, 2 Sa 6:7, they died for it, that others might fear to do the same. Will-worship, Col 2:23, received thereby an emphatic condemnation, and priests and people were taught, in a manner not to be forgotten, that "to obey is better than sacrifice,"³⁸⁵

The basic idea of strange fire is a *willful presumption*. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.³⁸⁶ The Word of God is very specific concerning the *essentials* of worship. He gives *specific instructions* for all essential worship. Believers and churches have great liberty as to how they worship in non-essentials. There are many areas which are left to time and

³⁸⁴ Smith. *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*, p. 136.

³⁸⁵ 1 Sa 15:22.

³⁸⁶ Pro 16:25

clime and the preference of the churches differ from one to another. But it is an attempt to suggest He is incompetent when men try to make anything an essential which He has not commanded! Churches cannot legislate for Him. They cannot invent ordinances. They cannot create sacraments. They cannot eliminate anything which He has commanded. They cannot make laws. But this is what EMDA attempts to do, because it makes a law where there is no law! There is *no positive command* for EMDA in the Word of God. It is not suggested there. There is no pattern for it there. There is no allusion to it there. As far this idea is concerned, we have no “thus saith the Lord but only, *thus saith the theory!* When anyone comes before God to worship Him with something He did not command, then they are offering strange fire! Instead of honoring the Lord, they dishonor Him! In presenting what He has not commanded they offer strange fire! Calling something a commandment, which is not commanded, then is the scriptural definition of strange fire! Beware of everything which men insist is a commandment of God if it does not have a positive directive! There is no positive command for EMDA therefore it is strange fire!

No church has the fire to light a church candlestick anymore that Nadab and Abihu could light their incense burners with their own fire. This is *strange fire* all around!

Christ alone has the key. He opens and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens.³⁸⁷ No one or no church has this key. No man or church tells Him when, where or how to shut. No man or church tells Him when He may constitute a church. No man or church tells Him if He is to be in the midst of an assembly. No church admits or prevents the Holy Spirit from dwelling in an assembly. No man or church tells Christ when

³⁸⁷ Re 3:8.

to fight against a church. No man tells him when to remove or set up a church candlestick. All of these things belong to the exalted Lord of glory exclusively and it is striking at His Headship and kicking at His sovereignty when any man or any society attempts to enter into that domain! This is what EMDA attempts to do. It is Christ who is the Great lawgiver and the supreme head of His churches. He alone is able to originate a church. This is power that he never has, and never shall delegate to others.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; Re 3:7.

This key belongs to Him. The keys given to Peter and then to the other apostles, did not include the key of this text.³⁸⁸ Those keys pertained to preaching the gospel and were used on the day of Pentecost, and at the house of Cornelius, and at other times and places. Those keys once used opened the gospel to the whole world and are no longer needed, the door being now open. But the key of authority to open or shut a church was never given to anyone at any time any more than were the keys of death and Hades given unto men. This key belongs to Christ and never has been put in the hands of any officer or society.

The churches which belong to Him are bound to obey His laws and to reject all others. For this reason, no church should submit to the laws of EMDA for these laws have no “thus saith the Lord.” But his disciples have His promise that He will Himself meet with those who gather together in His name and they believe His word. Thus, when they gather together in His name, they become a NT assembly and are

³⁸⁸ Mt. 16:18; 18:18; Jn. 20:23.

to govern themselves by the NT. They are to carry out the great commission, to administer the ordinances as the only religious entities on earth which He has called to do this work and they have this commission directly from the Christ Himself!

Christ alone can plant, root or fix firmly³⁸⁹ a church, giving it its base or foundation³⁹⁰ and only He can root out³⁹¹ a church or remove it from that foundation. No church can do either of these essential acts. It is a domain which belongs strictly to the Great Head of the Church and He never has and He never shall, relinquish that authority! The claim that He has delegated such authority to another is the foundation of Romanism! Grant it in one thing, and you can deny it in none!

The foundation which is Christ Himself, was laid by preaching the gospel to the Corinthians, not by bringing a mother church's authority according to I Cor. 3:11. To the Ephesians Paul says:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ep 2:19-21.

In this passage, the figure is changed somewhat from the passage in I Corinthians 3. The foundation is here said to be

³⁸⁹ Ρηιζωω. Col. 2:7. "To cause to take root." *Vine*.

³⁹⁰ *Liddell & Scott*. ρηιζα.

³⁹¹ Εκριζωω. Mt. 13:29. "To root out or up." *Vine*.

the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. This means that the doctrine of the apostles is the doctrine of Christ. The building of Christ and the building of the apostles is the same thing. But how significant vs. 22 becomes in this discussion is evident when we consider the apostle **does not say**: “On which mother church you are also builded together” which is what EMDA claims! For, if EMDA were the correct idea of church constitution then every church would be founded *by* and *upon* another church—that is, on its mother! While most EMDA advocates will deny this proposition, they constantly prove it by what they do when they find what they believe to be some *irregularity* in their church lineage. They immediately begin to tear down and start all over, baptizing, seeking mother church authority, re-baptizing, re-ordaining, re-constituting and re-doing everything! And why do they do this? Because they learn that some church which they supposed was in their *succession* did not have mother church authority! If that church was deficient relative to any law of EMDA, then in their thinking, they lost their church status! Thus, they are founded on some other church notwithstanding all their protestations! Whether or not they are a true church of Christ depends not on Christ but on what some church did a thousand years ago!³⁹² Their church status depends not merely on one essential, but on several things,³⁹³ all of them essential, all of them required, none of them specified in Scripture! Yet all of these laws must have been in operation continuously down to this present hour! If every

³⁹² “The total authority of organizing the church, lies with the sponsoring church or as some call it the mother church. They have a business meeting and vote to charter a membership of baptized believers, (the number of names vary) for the purpose of establishing a new church.” Raford Bethel Herrin. A manuscript. “How To Start a True Baptist Church”, p. 47.

³⁹³ The number keeps changing as the tradition develops. Cf. Chapter 3. And as long as essentials can be added without a positive command, there is no end. Anyone can add to the number whenever he pleases!

one of their ancestral churches got it right, their church may now be a church. If any one of those churches up their historical line was wrong on any one of the laws of EMDA, then they are not a church. And in the negative case *what some church, unknown and unknowable, failed to do* (even if this deficiency occurred during the days of Novatian) knocks them off the foundation of Christ and deprives them of church status!

This discovery writes Ichabod over their church. This one revelation deprives them of every church blessing which they supposed they had. Their doctrine was right. Their practice was right. Their message was right. Their ordinances were right. The only thing wrong was their *genealogy*. This is where the ship hit the sand! And strange as it all sounds, the Lord never gave His churches direction to keep any record of these things so that succeeding churches could verify their status. They must know—but they can't know! There is no “list” like the list of Popes of EMDA to EMDA churches among Baptists. Furthermore, all the churches which were in this failed lineage are also dug up and their bones burned, because they could not be true churches according to the theory! But surely, now since they have followed all of these traditions, and they have found a real mother church, they are a true church! But, no, for perhaps in a few years, they will learn of another glitch in their new lineage and then they must *go back to go* and start all over again—never able to come to any certain knowledge³⁹⁴ as to their church status but always looking for a “true succession” always living in uncertainty because someone may have failed to follow one of the laws of EMDA in ages gone by! This is not the case in proper church constitution for each and every church is built upon Christ Himself. A true church is therefore not contingent on any

³⁹⁴ 2 Tim 3:7.

previous church but stands upon the covenant it makes with the Lord. This passage in Ephesians 5:22, also precludes the idea of the Holy Spirit only coming upon a church through EMDA. “In Whom,” that is, in Christ, “you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” How does the Holy Spirit take up His place in a church? Is it through EMDA? This is what EMDA teaches, albeit without any Scripture! But here the Holy Spirit tells us how this is done. “You also are builded together for an habitation of God” is the same thing as “gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” The habitation of God³⁹⁵ means that God dwells in them; Christ is in the midst of them; the Holy Spirit is in them. This triune presence of our God is not obtained by bowing to traditions (this is what EMDA demands!) but by submitting to the clear command of Christ in Mt. 18:20. This founding, this placing, this establishing, this rooting, this setting up is the work of Christ. When we fail to found a church on Christ the Rock, we build on the sand of tradition! Our Lord said:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. Matt 7:24-27.

³⁹⁵ Κατοικητηριον του θεου, the dwelling place of God, is the same thing as “the holy temple” in vs. 21. This refers to the church at Ephesus who were, συνοικοδομησθε, being built together.

We will in the next chapter consider how our fathers understood these matters in church constitution.

CHAPTER 11

SAMPLES OF CHURCH CONSTITUTION

In this chapter, I will give samples of Church constitution from records and representative writers.

KETTERING CHURCH

But, at length, the Baptists having been rendered uncomfortable in their communion, by some particular persons, they were obliged to separate, with Mr. William Wallis, their teacher, and soon formed themselves into a distinct church of the Particular Baptist denomination, over which the Rev. Andrew Fuller is now, [1800] and for many years has been, pastor.³⁹⁶

These separations were frequently painful and usually could not obtain EMDA even if they had known of it and had desired it.

KIFFIN'S CHURCH

He had been five years a member of the Independent church, then under the care of Mr. Lathorp, when, with many others, he withdrew, and joined the Baptist church, the first in England of the *Particular* Baptist order, of which Mr. Spilsbury was the pastor. Two years after that, in 1640, a difference of opinion respecting the propriety of allowing ministers who had not been immersed to preach to them (in which Mr. Kiffin took the negative side), occasioned a separation. Mr. Kiffin and those who agreed with him seceded, and formed another church, which met in Devonshire

³⁹⁶▲ Rippon. Life and Writings of Dr. John Gill, p. 2. This church is also mentioned by S. Pearce Carey in William Carey, p. 74, 81. It was the church of John Gill's parents. Gill was baptized by this church.

Square. He was chosen pastor, and held that office till his death, in 1701...³⁹⁷

The questions which arise when reading this account are, did this group get authority from another church? Which one? Who says they did? Where are such records found? How could these Baptists record such an account without calling attention to this impropriety of constituting a church without EMDA if they knew of this law? Is this not a good account of a church formed with DA and without a mother church?

GILL'S CHURCH

This was formed about ninety-four years ago, in consequence of a division that took place in an ancient society that met for many years in Goat-street, Horsleydown. Mr. Stinton, the pastor of that church, dying in 1719, the late Dr. Gill was invited to preach as a candidate to succeed him in the pastoral office; but a difference of opinion arising in the society as to the propriety of electing him to that situation, a division ensued, when the majority who were against him kept possession of the meeting-house. Upon this, Mr. Gill's friends withdrew, and assembled for a time in Crosby's school room upon Horsleydown. They formed themselves into a church March 22, 1719-20, and on the same day; Mr. Gill was ordained their pastor.³⁹⁸

Let it be remembered that Gill's side of this faction did not get authority from any other church and could not obtain it from those they split off from at Goat Yard! They could not "take the authority with them" because they were in the

³⁹⁷ Cramp, *Baptist History*, p. 393.

³⁹⁸ Walter Wilson. *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster, and Southwark; Including the Lives of Their Ministers from the Rise of Nonconformity to the Present Time*, Volume IV, 1814, Pp. 212-213.

minority! Hence, if EMDA is true, Gill's church never was a church!³⁹⁹ Some of the sister churches in London, in the time of Gill, did question the procedure which allowed women to vote in the original church, but they never complained about any lack of EMDA. They never questioned but that Gill's church was a true church even though it was *formed without any semblance of mother church authority*! Why was not this second Goat Yard Church, of which Gill became pastor, not counseled to get authority to constitute from a mother church? The Particular Baptist pastors and churches in London were informed about this split, letters being sent to the ministers of the various churches,⁴⁰⁰ but no question of EMDA was ever heard—not from the unwilling mother church, nor from the several other churches in London! Both sides were recognized as churches by all the churches. EMDA was not held by any of these Particular Baptist churches or pastors or they would have denounced Gill's church in no uncertain terms! Let the advocates of EMDA tell us where EMDA was operative at this time!⁴⁰¹ Because there were only a few Particular Baptist churches in London at this time, and none of them held to EMDA, it necessarily follows that all the churches which came through these churches are false churches if EMDA is true! Thus, multitudes of churches today are doomed because they are descendants of these churches if EMDA is

³⁹⁹ Cf. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth*, pp. 46-54. Gill's church is the same church later pastored by C. H. Spurgeon. Of course, if EMDA is true Spurgeon's church goes down with all that implies! This is not only unthinkable from a practical point of view, but the Baptists of that day knew nothing of this idea and, so far as the records go, the question never came up.

⁴⁰⁰ *Op. Cit.*, p. 48. This letter was sent to the "Elders of the Baptized Churches." Six men signed this letter: viz. Thomas Crosby, William Deall, William Allen, Thomas Cuttford and John Thompson.

⁴⁰¹ Bro Cockrell in *SCO*, p. 89, admits there have been "liberal elements of Baptists" who did not practice EMDA. But if EMDA was the practice of Baptist in Gill's time, who were they? Where found? What church record mentions them? What confession mentions EMDA? What covenant expressed it? What history mentions it? Let those who contend EMDA is the path the saints trod give us this specific information!

the true position! And if these churches were false, to what line will EMDA advocates turn? Can they trace out a line which only flows through churches practicing EMDA?

JOHN SMYTH TWO CAN MAKE A CHURCH

Now for baptizing a man's self, there is as good warrant as for a man's churching himself; for two men are singly not a church; jointly they are a church, and they both of them put a church upon themselves: for as both these persons unchurched, yet have power to assume the church, each of them for himself and others in communion; so each of them unbaptized, hath power to assume baptism for himself with others in communion.⁴⁰²

There is no question but that Smyth here defines and defends self-constitution according to Mt 18:20. It appears this was then a recognized principle that a church could be constituted with two or more people and that baptized saints had this power. "...for two men are singly not a church ...yet have power to assume the church..." Here I am but following Bro Cockrell as he in *SCO* quotes Smyth a General Baptist.⁴⁰³ Nor do I approve of Smyth's idea as to baptism. But I quote this to show that General Baptists of this time believed Mt 18:20 pertained to church constitution and that two people could constitute themselves into a church.

We believe that a group receives these blessings 'from Christ's hand out of heaven.' A true church has the covenant, the promises, and ministerial power given to it, not through a carnal line of succession, but directly and immediately, by Christ. The church receives these

⁴⁰² John Smyth. *The Character of the Beast or the false Constitution of the church discovered in certain passages...1609*. Q. in Ivimey. *Hist. of Eng. Baptists*, vol. I, p. 117, 118, 119.

⁴⁰³ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 27. 2nd edition, p. 24.

‘from Christ’s hand out of heaven.’ This immediate authority is given, not to the pope, to the bishops, or to the presbytery, but to the body of the church.⁴⁰⁴

CAREY AND HARVEY LANE CHURCH

In this church, the second that William Carey pastored, there was trouble. So difficult was this trouble, and so hardened were some of the members, that Carey proposed the church should disband and then reconstitute on a stricter covenant, so that those who refused to be reconciled would be left out. This they did. There was no mother church sought to constitute them into a church, nor to provide them with EMDA. They could not project EMDA into a non-existent church state⁴⁰⁵ (had they ever heard of it or desired to do so) but they simply met and reconstituted according to Baptist practice. Is this *spontaneous generation*?⁴⁰⁶ If the advocates of EMDA try to slip their doctrine into this case they produce a most remarkable anomaly—a church became its own mother!⁴⁰⁷ Of course if Carey’s church was not a true church (and if EMDA is correct—it could not be a true church) then the churches in India established by Carey were not true churches. This also means that Rice and Judson and their churches were not true churches for all of those churches in India, Burma and the other countries where they labored

⁴⁰⁴ Tull. *Shapers of Baptist Thought*. P. 23; Quoting John Smyth, from W. T. Whitley, *Works of John Smyth*, vol. I, p. 403.

⁴⁰⁵ But in case some advocates of this position so argue, they will please furnish us with an explanation of why a church can project this authority to a nonchurch group of saints—that is those who disbanded—but Christ cannot give His authority to His baptized disciples to form a church! Do the churches have more authority than Christ?

⁴⁰⁶ Griffiths. *Hist. Baptists of NJ*. P. 369. “Thus, also, Baptists and Baptist churches are the spontaneous generation of the Gospel of the Son of God.”

⁴⁰⁷ S. Pearce Carey. *William Carey*, p 56.

were not formed with EMDA! Carey's position also means that the Baptist churches and the preachers in that time believed and practiced DA. The ripples of this case wash every shore of Baptist life.

FIRST CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE

This church, which is the oldest of the Baptist denomination in America, was formed in March 1639. Its first members were twelve in number, viz.: Roger Williams, Ezekiel Holliman, Stuckley Westcott, John Green, Richard and Thomas Olney...

As the whole company, in their own estimation, were unbaptized, and they knew of no administrator in any of the infant settlements to whom they could apply, they with much propriety hit on the following expedient: Ezekiel Holliman, a man of gifts and piety, by the suffrages of the little company was appointed to baptize Mr. Williams, who in return, baptized Holliman and the other ten.

Some of our writers have taken no little pains to apologize for this unusual transaction, but in my opinion it was just such a course as all companies of believers who wish to form a church in such extraordinary circumstances should pursue.

Any company of Christians may commence a church in gospel order, by their own mutual agreement, without any reference to any other body; and this church has all the power to appoint any one of their number, whether minister or layman, to commence anew the administration of gospel institutions.

This is the Baptist doctrine of apostolical succession, which they prefer to receive from good men rather than through the polluted channels of papal power.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 450. 1848 Edition.

Keep in mind that we do not quote Benedict because we agree with his appraisal of this Roger Williams account, but rather to demonstrate that Baptists of Benedict's time did not have any concept of EMDA. He was a representative Baptist author, and is quoted by those who hold to the EMDA position as well.⁴⁰⁹ He held to DA without any kind of mother church. For had he held to EMDA, he would have said it was not possible for Williams and his group to form a church because they did not have a mother church! But he says nothing of the kind!

Graves also disagreed with Benedict on Roger Williams. He discusses Williams and his church constitution in detail.⁴¹⁰ Of course, that Williams got no authority from any other church goes without saying.⁴¹¹ If EMDA was the doctrine of Baptists, as is now claimed, then how is it that neither Graves nor Benedict censor this group for not having a mother church? When Graves writes "His Abortive Attempt to Organize a Baptist Church without Baptism, 'Creed or covenant,' "⁴¹² there is no mention of the lack of a mother church! Graves does not even bring up the idea. He does say that Williams and his group could have been baptized into the church at Newport and then they could have been dismissed by letter and then they could have organized a church in due order. But due order did not, in Graves mind, have anything to do with a mother church. He does not even hint at EMDA! Had Graves believed in the essential of a mother church it would have been a slam-dunk in proving William's church was not Scriptural, which is his point—but Graves never mentions it. Did he forget this essential? Did some editor cut this sentence out of his book? The EMDA

⁴⁰⁹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 99.

⁴¹⁰ Graves & Adlam. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 46-51.

⁴¹¹ Williams was unbaptized and the unbaptized Holliman baptized him and he in turn baptized Holliman. Cf. Knowles. *Memoir of Roger Williams*, p. 165.

⁴¹² Graves & Adlam. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 46.

advocates will be able to wring out some kind of explanation. Of this I am sure!

JOHN CLARKE

We next turn to John Clarke's testimony concerning the setting up of a church:

...The first thing whereof, as touching order, was to be added or joined one to another in the fellowship of the gospel, by a mutual professed subjection to the scepter of Christ, and being a company thus called out of the world, from worldly vanities and worldly worships, after Christ Jesus the Lord, (which is the proper English of these words, and the Church of Christ is in other terms called the household of faith), should steadfastly continue together in the apostle's doctrine...⁴¹³

Here we have Clarke giving the essence of church constitution but while there is not a trace of EMDA therein, he boldly defines a church as *being joined one to another* which is most likely an allusion to Mt 18:20. This was the approved method of constitution and was Clarke's defense of the Faith,⁴¹⁴ before the magistrates. This is most significant because he does not mention EMDA and he is speaking of the formation of a new church and he was a staunch Baptist.

⁴¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 170-171.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

BACKUS QUOTING JOHN OWEN

Isaac Backus gives this remarkable statement by John Owen and quotes it with approval:

Therefore, Dr. Owen published a book in 1681, wherein he observes, that all the reformation that has taken place since the rise of Antichrist, was produced entirely by these three principles, viz., taking the Holy Scriptures as their only perfect rule in all religious matters; allowing each rational person to judge of their meaning for himself; and holding that all the power of office and government in the church of Christ is derived from him, by his word and Spirit, to each particular church and not by a local succession from any other power in the world.⁴¹⁵

But if this was not the position of Baptists why would Backus quote it? Here the EMDA advocates side with Rome but Baptists (like Backus) will not line up with them. EMDA maintains that you must have not merely a church to church trail, but you must also have a mother to daughter succession which is just as essential as it is to have a mother to daughter succession in human genealogy.

SECOND CHURCH OF BOSTON

This church was formed in 1743 of seven individuals who were members of the First Baptist Church in Boston pastored by Jeremiah Condry. Some of the members of this church objected to their pastor's teaching or lack of it. After expressing their concerns and receiving no consideration a few of them withdrew and started meeting together privately for about a year. After this they determined to form a

⁴¹⁵ Isaac Backus. *The History of New England Baptists*. vol. 2, p. 35, 36. Owen. *Original of Evangelical Churches*, pp. 291-297. *Banner of Truth* ed., p. 277.

separate and independent organization. At the house of James Bownd in 1743 these seven individuals ‘... solemnly entered into a covenant as a church of Christ.’⁴¹⁶

Bro Baron Stow tells us:

No minister was present to cheer them by a word of encouragement; no council was convened to extend the hand of fraternal fellowship. They stood alone in the presence of the Head of the church, and pledged themselves to him and to each other, that they would maintain unshrinkingly, and to the last, the standard around which they had rallied—the standard of evangelical truth and holiness.⁴¹⁷

There was no ordained man present! No *mother church* there! There were no church letters there! There was there no authority from any earthly source! What authority did they have? This was Christ’s authority! His promise to meet with them and that was present! We know these things because Stow fills us in on the constitution of this church! By this means he also tells us that if ordained men had been there, it would not have been to convey EMDA nor to transmit authority in any way but “to cheer them by a word of encouragement.” There was no council or presbytery there to “...extend the hand of fraternal fellowship.” But “They stood alone in the presence of the Head of the church, and pledged themselves to him and to each other...” This is Biblical, Historic, Baptist church constitution! Of course, for Benedict to record this for all Baptists to read confirms it was an orthodox constitution in his estimation. This is a powerful statement of Biblical church constitution!

⁴¹⁶ Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 393.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

ANOTHER BOSTON SPLIT

Because of Seventh Day sentiments among the membership of this church in 1671 a group of them split off. Their covenant says: After serious consideration and seeking God's face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us and our children, so as might be for God's glory and our Souls' good, we... Entered into covenant with the Lord and with one another, and gave up ourselves to God and one to another, to walk together in all God's holy commandments and holy ordinances according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be his mind for us to be obedient unto; with sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another, did promise so to do, and edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith; this 7th day of December, 1671.⁴¹⁸

Again, in this account we do not find EMDA. Nor do the historians who give these accounts ever censor those who formed churches without the requirements of it, so far as I have seen. How could EMDA have been the stated doctrine of Baptists through the ages (as some are so bold to claim without the slightest evidence)⁴¹⁹ without ever being mentioned in such accounts? Were these noted historians always ignorant, always silent, always writing about these false constitutions (in EMDA eyes) unaware of the real situation?

JOHN T. CHRISTIAN

The footsteps of the Baptists of the ages can more easily be traced by blood than by baptism. It is a lineage of suffering rather than a succession of bishops; a martyrdom of principle, rather than a dogmatic decree of councils; a golden chord of love,

⁴¹⁸ Backus. *History of the Baptists in New England*, vol. I. p. 325.

⁴¹⁹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89.

rather than an iron chain of succession, which, while attempting to rattle its links back to the apostles, has been of more service in chaining some protesting Baptist to the stake than in proclaiming the truth of the New Testament.⁴²⁰

R. B. C. HOWELL

Touching the validity of the ordinances administered by our clergy, it is wholly unimportant whether we can trace a regular succession of bishops up to the apostles. It is sufficient for us to know that we are organized according to the established laws of Christ, support the true doctrines of the gospel, that our constitution and practice agree with the rule prescribed by him, and which were strictly obeyed and enjoined by his apostles and that we keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto the saints. Such a church is Christ's representative on earth, and, according to his word, possesses all the requisite authority to create and ordain ministers, whenever the cause of Christ shall demand such a measure.⁴²¹

Howell defines a church as those:

“...who have united with each other for the worship of God, after giving satisfactory evidence of a change of heart.”⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Christian. *History of The Baptists*, vol. I, p. 22-23.

⁴²¹ Howell, *Terms of Communion*, p. 249.

⁴²² Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 262.

ROBERT SEMPLE

Mr. Leland [John Leland, the pastor] and others adhered to the customs of New England, each one put on such apparel as suited his own fancy. This was offensive to some members of the church [Mountponey]. The contention on this account became so sharp that on the 25th of July 1779, about twelve members dissented from the majority of the church and were of course excluded. The dissenting members formed themselves into a church, and sued for admission into the next Association, and were received.⁴²³

If EMDA was the law of Baptists in church constitution,⁴²⁴ how do we account for such cases? How is it that Semple records this without a disclaimer and that the Association received this church which had no EMDA? Did the association not know what Baptists believed?

Again, Semple records this:

We are not to look for regularity and method among a people whose only study was the prosperity of vital godliness. No church had been regularly constituted in Virginia at the time of either of these Associations. It would seem, however, that those two mentioned in the list were sufficiently numerous to exercise the privileges of a church, and were therefore admitted into the Association.⁴²⁵

W. B. JOHNSON

Now, as far as I can understand the New Testament, I see no authority given to a church of Christ to transfer

⁴²³ Semple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 234.

⁴²⁴ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 19, 89.

⁴²⁵ Robert Semple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 65.

its power or authority to any other church or body of men on earth.⁴²⁶

With the pattern thus clearly given, and the scripture record of numerous churches in different places, we are taught, that wherever a sufficient number of believers in Christ, baptized upon a profession of faith in him, live sufficiently contiguous to each other for the purposes of church relation, they should unite together in such relation on the principle of ONE ACCORD, *mutual consent in the truth*. The Bible is their only standard of doctrine and duty.⁴²⁷

CHURCH IN WOODSTOCK

We met as a society for more than a year, and then we thought that there were enough agreed to embody into a church; and in February 1766, we embodied, to the number of fifteen, and had the ordinance of the Supper administered, and God's blessing attended it.⁴²⁸

J. B. CRANFILL

A church is properly defined as 'a congregation of Christ's baptized disciples, acknowledging Him as their Head, relying on His atoning sacrifice for justification before God, depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, united in the belief of the Gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and cooperating for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world.'⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Semple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, P. 65.

⁴²⁷ Johnson. *Gospel Developed*, 1846, Q. By Dever, *Polity*, p. 173.

⁴²⁸ Backus. *History of the Baptists in New England*, vol. II, p. 523.

⁴²⁹ Cranfill, *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, p. 140.

CHURCHES FORMED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ANOTHER CHURCH

We find many examples in Church History where churches are formed with *assistance* from another church or churches. Sometimes the assisting church is called a *mother church*. EMDA advocates leap upon such cases with an air of triumph as if these examples prove their proposition! Unfortunately for their position this is another misconception. The proof of this is not far away. Take for example this case:

Mr. Ebenezer Farris, of Stamford...was baptized by Mr. John Gano of New York, in April 1770, as others were afterwards, until they obtained a regular dismission, and also assistance from the church in New York, and formed a Baptist church at Stamford, November 6, 1773, of twenty-one members. By a like dismission and assistance, a Baptist church was formed three days before on the borders of Greenwich, called Kingstreet...⁴³⁰

Surely, EMDA advocates exclaim, this is all the proof anyone needs to substantiate our theory! *Assistance* must be *church authority essential for constitution*, they remind us with glee! But this same assistance is also extended to ordinations, church trouble and the like, which turns their glee into grief. They like mother churches granting authority to constitute churches, but they can't swallow a mother church giving another church authority to ordain a man, or to settle church trouble authoritatively. But one is just as viable and just as scriptural as the other. If you take one, you can deny none! If you let the camel put his head in, you had better get ready to have both humps in the tent!

⁴³⁰ Backus. *History of The Baptists in New England*, Vol. II, p. 528.

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION

The visible church is defined as a ‘congregation of faithful persons, who have gained Christian fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another and have agreed to keep up a Godly discipline, agreeably to the rules of the gospel.’⁴³¹

GOADBY

That in case the minor part of any church break off their communion from that church, the church state is to be accounted to remain with the major part. And in case the major part of any church be fundamentally corrupted with heresy and immorality, the minor part may and ought to separate from such a degenerate society; and either join themselves to some regular church or churches, or else, if they are a competent number, constitute a church state by a solemn covenant among themselves.⁴³²

In this account EMDA is excluded because “a competent number” which “broke off” could “constitute a church by a solemn covenant among themselves.” It is easy to see that this *Bye-Path* in Baptist History does to EMDA what the sun does to frost!

NANTMEAL BAPTIST 1841

Whereas a number of the members of Vincent, Windsor, and Bethesda Baptist Churches residing in East Nantmeal Township, being inconvenient to the Meeting Houses of said churches, and believing that

⁴³¹ Hogue, *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 222.

⁴³² Goadby, *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 215.

forming themselves into a church, and building a meeting house at a place hereafter selected in said township, would tend to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, made application to the churches above mentioned for letters of dismission, whereupon they granted the same, stating that so soon as they formed themselves into a church capacity, they would be considered as regularly dismissed from them.⁴³³

It is cases like this which give EMDA advocates so much trouble. For they cannot fit these facts into their system any more than you can put a tiger in a cracker box. There was no EMDA expected, none intended and none given. You can have only one mother but here we have three churches granting letters—not as authority to constitute but what letters always are—letters of recommendation.

B. H. Carroll Says:

And the New Testament says, ‘Where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, I will be with you.’ Wherever a number of God’s people covenant themselves into a congregation, each several building groweth up into a holy temple for the habitation of God through the Holy Spirit.⁴³⁴

J. T. Christian on Roger Williams

Williams strictly followed the Baptist program laid down by the foremost Baptists of his day. ‘Neither Pedobaptists nor Baptists,’ says Dr. Babcock, ‘can, with any propriety, object to this procedure. Not the former, for on their principles Mr. Williams was already an authorized administrator of the ordinances of Christ’s house, and his acts strictly valid. Not the latter, for they have ever rejected as of no avail a claim

⁴³³ <http://www.worldlynx.net/enbc/>

⁴³⁴ Carroll. *Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. 2, p. 243.

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to apostolic succession through the corruption and suicidal perversions of the papacy. Nor, indeed, has any prelatical hierarchy of any kind ever found favor in their eyes; since each body of believers meeting in any place for the worship of Christ, and the discipline which his institution requires, they believe to be the highest source of Christian authority on earth and when acting and deciding according to the Scriptures, they doubt not, has the approval of the only Head of the Church.⁴³⁵

Christian gives the distinctives of a N. T. church:

The distinctive characteristics of this church are clearly marked in the New Testament. Such a church was a voluntary association and was independent of all other churches. It might be, and probably was, affiliated with other churches in brotherly relations; but it remained independent of all outward control, and was responsible to Christ alone, who was the supreme lawgiver and the source of all authority.⁴³⁶

The source of authority cannot come from two places at the same time. Christian is careful to tell us the authority is from Christ alone. The terms he uses are unacceptable with EMMA.

WEST UNION ASSOCIATION OF IOWA 1860

We find in the scriptures that Jesus Christ organizes his churches. That they were all formed after one model, with equal prerogatives, and all subject to him.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. II, p. 39.

⁴³⁶ Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. I, p. 13.

⁴³⁷ *Minutes of the Twenty Seventh Annual Session of West Union Association*, p. 6. 1860.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS

Our Saviour intended that his disciples could form themselves into a church; and when in Matthew 18:17, he says, 'Tell it unto the church,' he has in view the societies or churches, soon to be formed, and speaks by way of anticipation...For such reasons as these, our Lord has taught us that his disciples in any place should form themselves into fraternal societies.⁴³⁸

HISCOX ON THE SOURCE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

Its [a church's] chief authority is given by Christ alone.⁴³⁹

All rightful authority, therefore, is conferred by Christ, the king in Zion. He builds churches: 'On this rock will I build my Church.' He commissions them: 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' He is personally ever with them, superintending, and giving them success: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'—Mt 16:18; 28:19,20; I Cor. 3:11. What He does not give is not possessed.⁴⁴⁰

Again, he says:

3. *The Authority of Churches*.—the authority of a church is limited to its own members, and applies to all matter of Christian character, and whatever involves the welfare of religion. It is designed to secure in all its members a conduct and conversation 'becoming godliness.'

⁴³⁸ William Williams, *Apostolical Church Polity*, quoted by Dever. *Polity*, p. 544.

⁴³⁹ Hiscox. *New Directory*, p. 48.

⁴⁴⁰ Hiscox. *The New Directory*, p. 49.

This authority is derived directly from God; not from states, nor princes, nor people; not from its own officers, nor its members, not from any other source of ecclesiastical or civil power or right. But Christ 'is head over all things to the church,' and also as of right, 'the church is subject to Christ.' But the authority of the church does not extend to its own members even, in matters merely personal and temporal, and which do not affect their character or duties as Christians.⁴⁴¹

One cannot misunderstand Hiscox: *This authority is derived directly from God!* Does this sound like EMDA? Do our EMDA friends ever make such statements? "But is it not possible that Hiscox means this authority is directly from God yet given through another church, the mother church," someone may ask? No. It is impossible to make Hiscox mean this when he expressly says not only that *This authority is derived directly from God* but gives these exclusions: it is *not from states, nor princes, nor people; not from its own officers, nor its members, not from any other source of ecclesiastical or civil power or right!* There is no other source for it on earth. It must come from Heaven!

I cannot conceive of how Hiscox could have more clearly expressed DA for constitution of a church on the one hand or more fully refuted EMDA on the other!

In the light of these statements by Hiscox, I cannot explain how he is quoted as believing EMDA!⁴⁴² There can be no question, however, that Hiscox has been misread and

⁴⁴¹ Hiscox. *The Baptist Church Directory*, 1859, p. 16-17. Note: this is distinct from *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, first issued in 1894, but Hiscox tells us *The New Directory* "...is entirely in harmony with previous manuals, as to Baptist, polity, and neither abrogates nor antagonizes any of the fundamental principles announced or advocated in those previous issues." Cf. *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 8.

⁴⁴² Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 18-19; Fenison. *GCC*. p. 100.

misquoted as if he believed what he is careful to tell us he did not believe. Hiscox reiterates his position throughout his books. For example:

Churches Constituted.

When a number of Christians, members of the same or of different churches believe that their own spiritual improvement, or the religious welfare of the community so requires, they organize a new church. This is done by uniting in mutual covenant, to sustain the relations and obligations prescribed by the Gospel, to be governed by the laws of Christ's house, and to maintain public worship and the preaching of the Gospel. Articles of faith are usually adopted, as also a name by which the church shall be known, and its officers elected.⁴⁴³

Again:

III. B Churches Recognized.

It is customary for them to call a council, to meet at the same, or at a subsequent time, to recognize them; that is, to examine their doctrines, inquire into the circumstances and reasons of their organization, and express, on behalf of the churches they represent for their course, and fellowship for them, as a regularly constituted church of the same denomination. The calling of a council is, however, entirely optional with the church; it is a prudential measure merely, to secure the sympathy and approbation of sister churches, but it is in no sense necessary.

The council usually hear their articles of faith and covenant; listen to a statement of the causes which led to their organization; examine the letters held by the constituent members; carefully consider the whole

⁴⁴³ Hiscox. *The Baptist Church Directory*, 1859, p. 17. Cf. Settlement. *Direct Authority: Biblical & Historical*, pp., 127-130.

subject, and then vote their approval, if they so approve, or advise them to the contrary, if they disapprove. It is customary to hold some appropriate religious service on the occasion, when a discourse is preached, a charge given to the church, the hand of fellowship extended by the council to the church, through some one chosen by each for the service.⁴⁴⁴

But is not this recognition council the same thing as EMDA? Is this not really EMDA in action? We will let Hiscox tell us:

Note 3. — If a council should refuse to recognize a newly constituted church, still that church would have the right to maintain their organization, and continue the forms of worship, and would as really be a church without, as with the sanction of the council. It would seldom, however, be expedient to do this, against the convictions of churches and pastors expressed in the decisions of a council.⁴⁴⁵

Of course, this exemplifies Hiscox's teaching that a church is given DA and that it derives no authority from any earthly source!

These several accounts from representative writers and records make it abundantly clear the EMDA theory was not in operation among Baptists. What sometimes sounded like EMDA in Baptist historical records was not EMDA at all. It is believed these accounts⁴⁴⁶ demonstrate the regular practice of DA.

⁴⁴⁴ Hiscox. *The Baptist Church Directory*, p. 17-18.

⁴⁴⁵ *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁴⁶ These quotes could easily be multiplied. The original draft of this chapter would have run to nearly 40 pages!

CHAPTER 12

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Mt 28:18-20 is our Lord's final instructions to His church before returning to heaven. This is called the Great Commission. It is also recorded in Mk 16:15-18; Lk 24:47-48; Ac 1:8.

EMDA Not Found in Mt 28

Bro Fenison claims this passage gives a *commandment* for EMDA because those denominated *ye* refers to ordained preachers and those denominated *them* refers to those who are disciples. Therefore, churches must be formed with EMDA! Now this *application* (I cannot call it an interpretation) is one of the most astonishing efforts to fasten a meaning on a text, which it refuses to bear, that I have ever seen! There is no basis for it. It does serve one good purpose; however, I think it is one of the finest examples of eisegesis that I have ever seen! This is what we expect from Roman Catholic commentators.

They have *the mother church* and they derive all of what they are pleased to call essentials for membership in *The Church* through a special class and they appeal to Mt 28 for proof! For example, G. Van Noort says:

He [Christ] now transfers to the apostles the offices and powers which He had received in sending them [that is, the apostolic college-JC] forth to make disciples, to baptize and sanctify, and to regulate the moral conduct of the disciples (Mt 28:18-19)].⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁷ Van Noort. *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. II, p. 34.

Bro Fenison attempts the same thing for EMDA but unfortunately for both authors, there is no evidence for this novel idea. However, the Roman Catholic has a better defense of his position than Bro Fenison does! It is interesting that Alford recognizes and rejects this idea of Roman Catholicism which Bro Fenison embraces:

To understand μετη ηυμων only of the apostles and their (?) successors, is to destroy the whole force of these most weighty words. Descending even into literal exactness, we may see that διδασκοντες αυτους τηρειν παντα οσα ενετειλαμην υμιν, [teaching them to observe all things whatever I commanded you] makes αυτους [them] into υμειζ, [ye, or you] as soon as they are μεμαθητευμενοι. [discipled].⁴⁴⁸

These pronouns, as Alford indicates, are not static. The change is made as soon as the unbeliever is discipled. When he is enrolled as a follower of the Lamb he is then also sent to disciple others, some officially others unofficially. Even women can sow the seed unofficially as the Samaritan woman at the well did in Jn 4: 37-42. Those Christ calls are, changed, 2 Co 3:18, they are translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son, Col 1:13, consequently, a brother may be called to preach; a deacon may become a missionary and a layman may be an evangelist. Many men are called to preach when converted. Paul, a new convert, was made an apostle by the direct word of Christ out of heaven, as he himself tells us over and over! (Ro 1:1; 1 Co 1:1; 2 Co 1:1; Ga 1:1, etc.) He was called to be a preacher when he was saved and before he was baptized and before he became a member of any church! He was such before he got to Damascus! Whatever Paul was, he was from the moment he was saved on the road until they cut off his head! This indicates that pressing these pronouns, as Bro Fenison does, is a mistake. Alford has a

⁴⁴⁸ Alford. *Gk. NT*. Mt 28:20, p. 308; Bracketed words are mine—JC.

better grasp of the true meaning of this text than Bro Fenison does. Bro Fenison is *pressing for the purple*—that is Roman Catholicism!⁴⁴⁹

Hiscox makes this significant statement:

Because that in the primitive churches, though there was an apostleship and a discipleship, there was no such division into *clergy* and *laity* as afterward sprang up and now prevails. There was no official caste or class, save as the Holy Spirit, working in each, developed certain gracious capabilities, which the churches used for the edification of the body. It was neither *cleric* nor *laic*, but a common discipleship. All alike constituted a holy priesthood, ordained to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God.⁴⁵⁰

This stratification which Bro Fenison insists on is not Baptist doctrine and it is not Scriptural. For example, consider the woman at the well who was saved by the Lord, and who went into the city of Samaria and related her experience and declared who she believed Jesus was and consequently many of them believed on Him also because of her word, Jn 4:39-42. This is that same kind of witnessing which those who were scattered after the persecution of Stephen did, Ac 11:19, and this was not *preaching* in the official sense, but *speaking*. Vine has this note:

...in Ac 11:19, KJV, but what is indicated here is not a formal 'preaching' by preachers scattered from Jerusalem, but a general testimony to all with whom they came into contact...⁴⁵¹

We read of a young boy on a snowy Sunday morning popping into a chapel to escape a snow storm, and listening

⁴⁴⁹ Lu 22:26.

⁴⁵⁰ Hiscox. *The New Directory*, p. 367.

⁴⁵¹ *Vines' Ex. Dict. Of Old & NT Words*, P. 482.

to a Primitive Methodist layman *speak* from Is 45:22, and from this *speaking* C. H. Spurgeon said he was saved! Was this layman ordained? Was he a *ye* or a *them*? Was Spurgeon saved? Can a layman proclaim the gospel of Christ without being elevated to the position of a *ye*? Can a woman tell her neighbor about Christ and how He saved her? Or can people only be saved under the preaching of a *ye* who has been through whatever it is that Bro Fenison imagines is appropriate? Is this Baptist doctrine? Carson sets forth a better explanation:

The injunction is given at least to the Eleven, but to the Eleven in their own role as disciples (V. 16). Therefore, they are paradigms for all disciples. Plausibly the command is given to a larger gathering of disciples (see on vv. 10, 16-17). Either way it is binding on all Jesus' disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵²

Nor is there any priestly class among the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ which have these special powers imagined by Bro Fenison. As Jones says:

To all pedigrees of spiritual and priestly class, claimed by some Christians, we oppose the permanent presence and indefeasible priesthood of the great Melchisedec of our profession, without beginning of days or end of years; and we claim to come up out of the wilderness, stayed directly on Christ and leaning on our beloved. We touch, so to speak, his bare arm as our stay, without the intervention of the envelopes of any favored order or virtue running through a chain of spiritual conductors. Our graces are not transmitted, but taken direct from the Redeemer's own hand.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² Carson. *Ex. Bib. Com.* Matthew, P. 596.

⁴⁵³ Jones. *The Baptists*. p. 26-27.

When interpreting Scripture certain basics must be considered. Geisler makes a good point when he says:

The rule of thumb in the Bible is ‘The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things.’ This is called ‘perspicuity’ (clarity), of Scripture. If something is important, it is clearly taught and probably in more than one place.⁴⁵⁴

But EMDA is not clear! It is difficult, long, and must be hammered very thin. It takes Bro Fenison, a school trained preacher almost forty pages in *GCC* just to lay it out! Is that perspicuity? Is that clarity? Is that plain? His *explanation* amounts to *assumption* and then *assertion—nothing more!* It is more in line with the legalese of lawyers than with the commandments of Christ! The extreme length of Bro Fenison's argument, in a vain attempt to prove EMDA from Mt 28 indicates the obscurity of his theory.⁴⁵⁵ Graves said: “A law that is hopelessly obscure, has no binding force, and no person can be held responsible for obedience.”⁴⁵⁶ Bro Fenison's idea is so obscure that no one ever thought of it until our own times and no one can be held responsible for rejecting it!

I know of nothing that approaches Bro Fenison's *explanation* of EMDA from this text except Calvin's thirty-five pages to prove infant baptism!⁴⁵⁷ Both attempts, notwithstanding the waste of ink, the cost of paper and the galling of the reader's patience, are not persuasive. That it takes more space to obtain EMDA from Scripture than infant baptism indicates Bro Fenison has attempted to make the

⁴⁵⁴ Geisler. *Baker Dict. Ch. Apologetics*, p. 77.

⁴⁵⁵ Fenison. *GCC*, pp. 1-39.

⁴⁵⁶ Graves. *Intercommunion*. 191.

⁴⁵⁷ Calvin. *Institutes*. II, pp. 1324-1359.

Bible say what it does not want to say! In the same way, Protestants also appeal to Mt 28 for infant baptism and it teaches that doctrine just as much as it teaches EMDA!

EMDA is not in Mt 28 nor anywhere else in Scripture. Bro Fenison quotes some Baptists who mention this passage and the constitution of churches in the same context. From this incidental, he *pretends* that these men were enunciating this EMDA tradition! Of course, that is ludicrous and the proof of my contention is not far afield, for in fact, not one of the men he quoted stated that he believed EMDA—but Bro Fenison *assumes* they believed it! In fact, there is not one specific statement of EMDA until our own times! Bro Fenison has been challenged to present an *explicit* declaration of this doctrine before 1900 and he has not been able to do it! There has to be a good reason for this silence—and there is! This doctrine is brand new! So, to quote men such as Graves and Hiscox, who mention Mt 28 and the constitution of churches, as supporting a doctrine that had not been invented when they wrote is deceptive! That is like saying a Baptist who referred to Ac 2:38 in 1700 was supporting baptismal regeneration when that doctrine was not then invented among immersionists! It is like saying a Baptist in 1650 who quoted Is 43:10, “Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD,” was supporting the JW’s! Or it would be comparable to claiming J. R. Graves believed baptism was essential to salvation because he believed *water* in Jn 3:5 referred to baptism! We might expect such flourishes from a novice but not from a seasoned pastor?

Bro Fenison did not give one plain quote where, anyone of the men he referred to, said he believed EMDA! But some of those he referred to *expressly stated* their position to be DA! This indicates how easily one can deceive himself! As these men believed DA, whatever they may have meant by referring to Mt 28, they did not mean to say this text taught

EMDA—a doctrine which was unknown at that time! So, Bro Fenison arrives at his conclusion, as to what they believed, not from anything they said but simply because they referred to Mt 28 *generally as leading to the constitution of churches*! Surely this is one of the most unbelievable attempts to prove anything that I have ever seen! Bro Fenison is on the wrong side and all his efforts only make a bad matter worse! This effort of his is in the same category as that of Dale who wrote four volumes on baptism—but still did not know the meaning of word when he finished!⁴⁵⁸

We know that Graves, Dayton and the other significant Landmark Baptists (to whom he refers) of the 1800s, without a single exception, held DA! This means Bro Fenison's conclusion is false. He thrives on general statements and thinks he can take a single term or a phrase and draw from a man a position—a position which denies what he so plainly expressed elsewhere on that subject! We know he errs in many of these efforts because he claims these men believed the exact opposite of what they said they believed! He does this time after time and then suggests he has proved these men held EMDA even when they expressly state their position to be DA! This is beneath a first-year seminary student—on the first day of classes! This is the same thing as claiming Graves and J.B. Moody were Campbellites because they quoted Mk 16:16! Or that because Hodge and Warfield referred to Ro 6:4, they were Baptists!

For example, Bro Fenison appeals to Graves' reference to this passage and pretends he just could not help himself but unintentionally supported EMDA! Of course, the fly in the ointment here is that Graves plainly and consistently held to DA! Therefore, he could not support EMDA in his

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. D. B. Ford's refutation of Dale's books, *Studies on the Baptismal Question*.

statement, but this is just another mistake by Bro Fenison! This is what he has to do to maintain EMDA among Landmarkers and it is nothing but an exercise in futility! Furthermore Graves, who likely knew what he believed as well or better than Bro Fenison does, believed and practiced DA and did so throughout his whole life.⁴⁵⁹ The other Landmarkers to whom Bro Fenison appealed also believed in DA! This indicates that Bro Fenison strives to compel men to embrace what they opposed.

This passage which speaks of making disciples, of baptizing them and teaching them obviously and eventually *leads* to church constitution just as it leads to a host of other things which naturally transpire from doing the things here commanded but it does not tell us *how these things are to be done!* The specific way to constitute a church is not given in this text but must be learned from some other place in Scripture. ***Generals may be in specifics but specifics are not in generals!*** And it is a fatal flaw to try to put into this text what is not there.

If EMDA had been the Lord's doctrine, to borrow a phrase from Armitage on another subject, just **one sentence from his lips would have established it forever**⁴⁶⁰—but that one sentence, unfortunately for the theory, never fell from His lips and is not found in the Word of God! Mt 28 says not one word about it. Bro Fenison labors hard in *GCC* and *ACC* to find EMDA in this text but he fails for this reason—you cannot find something in a text when it is not there! He *claims* it; he *infers* it; he *assumes* it, but conjectures afford no foundation for a commandment of Christ.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Graves' "Lifetime Position on Church Constitution," <http://www.ntbaptist-lizton.org/ref/landmarkissues/graves-position-investigated.pdf>

⁴⁶⁰ Armitage. *Hist. of Baptists*, p. 143.

Not only this, but so far as my reading goes, no other man but Bro Fenison ever understood Christ to teach EMDA in Mt 28! If Mt 28 does teach it, then it is certainly one of the best kept secrets in the Bible! Is this not a significant objection to the validity of this theory? The cliché still holds, *if true it is not new and if new it is not true*! But EMDA is new, so new that no record of it exists until our own times! It is an American sprout and cannot be found before the last century! The novelty of it raises serious questions about it. We must remember this fact, that among the greatest Baptists who ever lived, not one of them ever discovered EMDA in Mt 28—or for that matter in any other text! For near two-thousand years, thousands of Baptists and others plowed in Scripture (and they plowed deep!) but not one of them ever found EMDA in this passage or in any other! If EMDA is anywhere in the Bible, then it seems unlikely that the most spiritual and scholarly men who ever searched Scripture did not discover it! But the history of Baptists from the beginning right up to our own time, contains not one single, solitary reference to it! Is such a thing possible? If so, then since the door is open, we must get ready, because others will also bring forth *spanking new doctrines* (which no one ever heard of before) and boldly claim they are Bible doctrines; they too can assert, with as much validity, that any newly discovered *law* has always been contained in Scripture—that such laws were always held by Baptists—but we just did not know about them until they were recently unearthed! Bro Fenison in this scenario joins up with Alexander Campbell.⁴⁶¹ Both are able to unearth startling new doctrines without any history and without Scripture proof!

APPEAL TO GRAVES

⁴⁶¹ Campbell claimed he unearthed the gospel. *Mill. Harbinger*, Vol. I, p. 4.

Bro Fenison appeals to Graves for support of his theory on Mt 28. He says:

Dr. J.R. Graves asks, *Has Christ given a law for the constitution of His church and the administration of its services, or left it to float upon every shifting tide of opinion?.....Is it not contained in the commission? If not, Where?.....* - James Robinson Graves, Jacob Ditzler. **Graves-Ditzler, Or, Great Carrollton Debate**, “*The Lord’s Supper*” The Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1876, pp. 815, 816 – Emphasis mine.⁴⁶²

Again,

We ask Bro. Settlemoir the same question Dr. Graves asked his opponent - *Has Christ given a law for the constitution of His church and the administration of its services, or left it to float upon every shifting tide of opinion?.....Is it not contained in the commission? If not, Where?.....* - James Robinson Graves, Jacob Ditzler. **Graves-Ditzler, Or, Great Carrollton Debate**, “*The Lord’s Supper*” The Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1876, pp. 815, 816 – Emphasis mine.⁴⁶³

We are happy to answer the question posed by Bro Fenison.

There are seven meanings of the term *constitution*. They are as follows:

1. the system of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, corporation, or the like is governed.
2. the document embodying these principles.
3. Constitution of the United States.

⁴⁶² ACC, p. 25, 54-55.

⁴⁶³ ACC. P. 60-61.

4. the way in which a thing is composed or made up; makeup; composition:
5. the physical character of the body as to strength, health etc.
 - a. *Medicine/Medical, Psychology.* the aggregate of a person's physical and psychological characteristics.
6. the act or process of constituting; establishment.
<http://www.dictionary.com/>

Bro Fenison has a penchant for assuming a word has a meaning which is miles from the sense in which the author used it. That is, I believe, the case here. He assumed Graves used the term *constitution* in its seventh meaning when in fact Graves used it in the first sense. This is just another example of how the terms *constitution* or *mother church* mesmerizes Bro Fenison! One must watch him very carefully because these terms send him over the edge! He jumps on such terms, whenever he sees them, and declares they mean EMDA! This is just another mistake of his. Careful reading is not one of Bro Fenison's strong suits!

Graves was not here speaking of how to set up a church but of *the laws which govern His church (generic)*—i.e., the principles by which it is governed *after it is constituted*. Note that it is not the plural as it would be if he were speaking of constituting individual churches. Graves is speaking of the order in which *the ordinances are administered*, not on how to establish a church!

But to remove all doubt and make this matter plain, I will give enough of the context of this quote so the reader can see how far Bro Fenison is from understanding what Graves said. The subject is the Lord's Supper and who has a Scriptural right to partake of it. We pick up on Graves' Third argument:

III. BAPTISM IS PREREQUISITE TO THE LORD'S SUPPER, BECAUSE THE DIVINE LAWGIVER PLACED IT IN THIS ORDER, AND HIS APOSTLES INVARIABLY OBSERVED IT IN THIS ORDER, WHICH IS EQUAL TO FUNDAMENTAL LAW.

1. Baptism preceded the institution of the Supper over three years and six months nearly.
2. The Savior invited only those who had been baptized to partake of it.
3. In his commission he placed baptism first, and commanded it to be observed in this order—can it be denied that the *order* of the commission is *Law*? My opponent must and will do so. I ask in turn. Is there, respecting the order of the ordinances, *any law*? Has Christ given a law for the constitution of His church and the administration of its services, or left it to float upon every shifting tide of opinion? If a preacher should first organize a church, then baptize its members, and then proceed to disciple them, is his course as lawful, or no more *unlawful*, than one directly the reverse? If unlawful, I ask WHY? How can it be unlawful and not contrary to the law? If Christ has given a law, what *is* the law? Is it not contained in the commission? If not, WHERE? If in the commission, does it not establish the necessary priority of baptism to church membership? If not, I ask does it establish the priority of faith to baptism? and, if it does, How? In any other manner than the *order* in which these duties are prescribed? If not, the order of the commission is a part of its *law*, and this law establishes the priority of baptism to church Membership, not less than of faith to baptism. It must be granted, because true, that the *order* in which positive laws are given is as important and as inviolable as the law itself. It may not be violated with impunity. It is openly and palpably violating the law itself and confounds and nullifies its intent. The Divine Lawgiver

had a wise design in the arrangement of that order of His laws. To invert them is to *pervert and subvert them*. He did not say go and baptize the sinner, then teach and then disciple, but, *per contra*. He also commanded his Apostles to baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He had weighty reasons which the thoughtful mind can see for this order. He wished to teach the great fact that officially in contracting and carrying into effect the Covenant of Redemption, the Father is superior to the Son, and the Son to the Holy Spirit. Would not my opponent or any other minister violate this command and justly offend Christ and receive his condemnation who would presume to invert the *order* and baptize into the name of the Holy Spirit, and of the Son, and of the Father? Let this congregation answer this?⁴⁶⁴

It is easy to see that Bro Fenison has misunderstood Graves! Graves is speaking of one thing and Bro Fenison another. Graves is establishing the fact that there is an order (i.e., in the *constitution of the church*—that is in the fundamental principles of it) in which the ordinances are administered. Baptism follows discipling and it must go before the supper! Remember Methodists (Ditzler was a Methodist) teach that you baptize first and then make disciples after you baptize. Ditzler also taught that you should give the Supper to all who attend services, to church members of any denomination, to the saved who were not members of any church, and to anyone else who wanted to partake of the elements including the unsaved! But the *constitution of Christ's church* set the order like this: Make disciples, baptize them, teach them—and then all other commandments! Graves said not one word

⁴⁶⁴ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 815-116. I have highlighted Bro Fenison's quotes.

about this Commission containing a law as to how to *constitute a church*—much less that it was to be done with EMDA! That idea was not in Graves’ mind. He never *thought it*! He never *wrote it*! He never *meant it* and he never *said it* and it is astonishing that any man could assert he did! How could a man read with any care this section of the *Debate* quoted and jump to that conclusion? This is just another example of Bro Fenison “twisting and turning the words of our old Baptist brethren.”

So, Graves is here referring to the *order of the ordinances*—and *that is in Mt 28*! Because baptism is the first thing after discipleship. Therefore, it necessarily precedes the supper—not because the supper is specifically mentioned in this text but because baptism is the initiatory ordinance—it must be first when scripturally administered. But EMDA is not in this text! A dozen different methods of church constitution could be in harmony with this text for it says nothing about this subject! Certainly, Graves did not think EMDA was in it for he explicitly states his position as DA in this very debate:

Now I wish Elder Ditzler to know that there is a world-wide difference between originating an organization different from anything that can be found in the Bible, different from anything the world had ever before seen or heard of, and calling it a Church, and organizing a Christian Church. It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶⁵

Even though Bro Fenison *thinks* Graves opens the door for EMDA in this quote he gave, nothing is further from the truth! Nothing is further from Graves’ meaning! Graves

⁴⁶⁵ Graves, *Great Carrollton Debate*, [Pp.](#) 975.

never said any such thing! It is only this “head bent” prepossession which drives Bro Fenison to such groundless extremes! If he ever finds support for *his idea*, he will have to get it from someone other than Graves.

Have I answered Bro Fenison?

THE GENERAL NATURE OF THIS PASSAGE

The specifics of this passage are the *going*, the *making of disciples*, the baptism, the *teaching* and the *promise* of the unending presence of the Lord with those who do the things commanded. It is “a summary of Christian teaching.”⁴⁶⁶ Christ does not here give any information about how these things are to be done. There is not one word said about how to make disciples. Nothing is said about how preachers are to be supported. You must obtain that information from some other source. There is nothing in this text about how preachers are to be appointed nor who is to appoint them. There is nothing here about how to keep the Supper. There is nothing here about what to do with a sinning church member. There is nothing here about how to send anyone to the mission field. There is nothing here about how to appoint a deacon. There is nothing here about how to replace Judas—or even if he was to be replaced. There is nothing here about Gentiles and circumcision. There is nothing here about how to add a person to the church. There is nothing here about what kind of government a church must have. There is nothing here about what to do with those who teach that circumcision is essential for salvation or any other heresy. There is nothing here about women being silent in the church. There is nothing here about how to constitute a church! These things are not mentioned here and are not

⁴⁶⁶ Chrysostom. Gospel of Matthew, *Homily* 90.2.

appropriate for discussion from anything found in this passage. It is a mistake to look for these things here because Christ never revealed them in the Commission and never meant for us to look for them there! Such specifics were revealed in other places in Scripture.

In the same way Campbellites cannot give a Scripture which says a man must be baptized to be saved but they can and do quote Mt 28 to prove their theory just as Bro Fenison does in the vain attempt to support EMDA! Protestants cannot give a verse which commands infant baptism, but they can and do quote Mt 28. This indicates that appealing to this passage for specifics which are not found in it is an error.

Now the saints of the Lord want to keep the word of the Lord. They strive in His grace and by the help of the Holy Spirit to keep everything He has called on them to do. They search the Scriptures. They are constantly hearing their pastor as he proclaims the Word. They carefully study the Scriptures for themselves. They submit themselves to Christ and His Word. But they know nothing about EMDA! They cannot find it in the Bible. They cannot find it in Baptist history. In fact, this doctrine is so new that it has no history!

So, the question must be asked, why would Christ give such an essential command, as EMDA is, in Mt 28, which says not a word about how to constitute a church? Why would He give a *commandment* in such a difficult manner which no one understood for 1900 years? I do not believe Bro Fenison can point to a single essential commandment of Christ given in this manner. Christ's commandments are so clear, so plain and so straight forward that any reader will be able to understand it when he reads it for the first time! His commandments are easy to understand. Take for example Ac 1:4:

And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

Now here we have a plain commandment. No one can misunderstand the meaning. They were to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. This is clarity! This is perspicuity! This is Christ's manner of making known His will! But we have no revelation of any command of EMDA in Mt 28! Why would He who is Wisdom incarnate give such an essential commandment in a manner that would go unnoticed for two thousand years? Why would He not give *just one sentence that would establish it forever*? Why not give His saints that sentence in language so plain that even a fool though a way-faring man would instantly understand it? (Is 35:8). This is exactly what our Lord did when He gave us *His method of church constitution* and it is as clear as a mountain stream:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them

Here in one plain sentence, that anyone can understand, is Christ's method of constituting a church. Here is a fool-proof text which describes what His saints are to do if they want to constitute a church. This is the very text which Baptists have appealed to in proof of that method which has been used by them from time immemorial. We find Landmark Baptists referring to this text, not in a general way, but *specifically* for church constitution, such as Graves, Dayton and many, many others. Our confessions give this verse for the manner of setting up a new church.

This is the passage to which Baptists have appealed for the act of church constitution, and again let it be repeated, not generally but *specifically*—which is a one sentence

statement of how to constitute a church! And this has been *understood* and *practiced* by Baptists from time out of hand. As Christ gave this plain statement, why do some men choose to reject it and instead attempt to set up instead a very new tradition for a commandment of Christ which is so complex that it takes *forty pages to explain it*?

Imagine if you can, that our Lord gave a commandment to His apostles, (as in Ac 1:2) which was so essential to the continuity of His churches in the world and the fulfilment of His prophecy, and yet those apostles never once mentioned it! Never once, in the multiplication of churches gave any indication of EMDA! They did not mention it concerning the constitution of any single church. Churches were very soon multiplied in Judea, Antioch, Caesarea, Rome, and throughout the known world and yet not one time was this doctrine stated or practiced! It is evident that those who established those churches knew nothing of this law. Those early disciples had no such notion of church constitution. They went out and established churches without even contacting the church at Jerusalem! If EMDA had been the law of Christ, then no such thing would have been possible. And if the apostles had in just one case recorded that the church of Jerusalem gave authority to constitute Antioch, or some other church, this would have indicated EMDA was Christ's law. But we have not one word of this idea in Mt 28 nor in any text, that it was the manner in which these churches were established. Did the apostles understand what He commanded them to do? Then why did they not make this plain? The only reason which we can conceive is because He never gave any such a commandment in Mt 28 nor in any other passage in the Bible!

Let me now turn to the practical application of Mt 28 as Bro Fenison claims it contains the way to start churches by EMDA. Let us for the moment grant him his theory, just for

discussion's sake. Suppose this is the law for EMDA. Suppose this is how the Lord gave His churches His commandment, what then? Look at it like this. Would any supervisor on a job give such important information about how to do a job in this manner? I have done considerable work in Millwright construction as a Millwright, as a foreman and as a superintendent. I have been on countless jobs in Michigan and Indiana. Never once in my experience did I ever give instructions in this way. Nor did any supervisor ever known to me, give his men instructions in this manner. Rather, they *always were specific and detailed* as to exactly what they wanted done. Whenever I gave a man a specific job I also gave him explicit instructions as to what had to be done and all the essentials of it *in plain language*. I told him exactly what the requirements were. I told him what was critical about it. Never once did I assume that he could derive what I wanted done from a general statement. To do so is to insure failure. Therefore, it seems most unbecoming of Bro Fenison to suggest that our Lord was in Mt 28 giving a *specific command* for EMDA *without the specifics* and that He expected His disciples to understand it when it took Bro Fenison thirty years to learn about it and forty pages just to explain it! This would mean Christ gave essential instructions to His people concerning how to constitute a church which they did not understand for at least 1800 years! Does this not detract from the wisdom of Him who is Wisdom incarnate? Would any of you give such an essential command in such a general manner so that the workmen under you had to figure out what you wanted done or would you simply and plainly spell-out exactly what you wanted them to do and exactly how to do it?

Graves said, on this subject:

Positive laws (as baptism and the subject of baptism, etc.) are not left to be inferred but in all cases require positive and plain commands or examples...

Every positive law, ordinance or practice, in the church, not expressly commanded or exampled, is positively forbidden—and these are all human inventions, and traditions as infant baptism, sprinkling, pouring, etc., now practiced for religious rights, for which no scriptural warrant can be found, and are therefore sinful.⁴⁶⁷

Thus, according to Graves, EMDA is not the institution of the Lord. It is not one of His commandments and therefore it is the invention of man and it does not bring his favor but His vengeance, Ps 99:8.

⁴⁶⁷ Graves. *Tenn. Baptist*, Oct. 6, 1857, Standing Editorial.

CHAPTER 13

GRAVES' THEORY AND PRACTICE

In the beginning of this chapter, I wish to inform the reader that these following articles which compose the next few chapters were written at different times and will contain some repetition as I do not have the time to rewrite them as I would like to do.

GRAVES HELD DA IN THEORY BUT PRACTICED EMDA

This is Bro Fenison's claim. What evidence does he give for this assertion? He does give a couple of statements by Graves and from these he suggests that Graves held DA in *theory* but in *practice* carried on with EMDA! We believe this is totally false. We examine Graves' position.

Graves claimed he **carried out in practice** the principles which he set forth—and that included DA for church constitution! The principles which he set forth in the *TN Baptist* and in his books on church constitution, was DA and this is what he carried out in **his practice**, if we allow Graves to state his own position! Graves in *Old Landmarkism*, said,

I think it is no act of presumption in me to assume to know what *I* meant by the Old Landmarks, since I was the first man in Tennessee, and the first *editor* on this continent, who publicly advocated the policy of *strictly* and consistently *carrying out in our practice those principles which all true Baptists, in all ages, have professed to believe.*⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Graves. *OL*, p. xiv. The emphasis belongs to Graves.

The reader can see at a glance that Graves' practice was diametrically opposed to what Bro Fenison assumed it to be—if Graves knew anything about his own practice!

Bro Fenison tells us what he *thinks* Graves practiced, but gives no proof! Graves tells us what he *did in practice*. If Landmarkism contained EMDA, as Bro Fenison asserts it did, in any sense, then how can he account for the fact that it is not found in *Old Landmarkism* in any sense? I can't speak for others, but I am just a little more inclined to believe Graves than Fenison, especially when I remember that Bro Fenison has demonstrated a proclivity to misrepresent Graves' and others on this subject. Furthermore, Bro Fenison can't make up his mind on Graves' position. For example, in *GCC* he claimed Graves was a strong believer in EMDA but suddenly in *ACC* he allows that Graves may have had errors in interpretation and this led him to DA!⁴⁶⁹ How can a man backflip from one position to another? Graves did not change his position. When a man writes a book on a particular subject and uses one man as the epitome of support for the theme of his book and does not know what that man's position was, it seems to indicate he did not do essential research or he would have discovered his mistake before he published his book! Bro Fenison *thought* Graves held EMDA *strongly* in *GCC* but that was Bro Fenison's mistake! This is no minor mistake for, in fact, Graves strongly embraced DA! Thus, Bro Fenison misunderstood and misrepresented Graves' position! And this was done even though Graves' position was clearly stated and the references proving it were given in *LUF* repetitively! How could anyone fail to know these plain facts of the case? But to excuse himself of his error, Bro Fenison in *ACC* opined that Graves had a *defect* in his interpretational abilities which caused him to take the opposite side of what he was touted

⁴⁶⁹ Fenison. *GCC*, p. 125-126.

as believing in *GCC*! Yet, Bro Fenison never admitted he made a mistake! Which time was he right? Was *GCC* or *ACC* true? How can a man write two books on Graves' position, in the one claiming he held EMDA, and in the other claiming he held DA and yet never be wrong? I have never seen anything to equal this in any book! Who would write a book, using a man as the poster boy of Landmarkism, without doing the research necessary to determine his real position? If he had done proper research, in his attempt to answer *LUF* (or if had read *LUF* without any other research!)— he would never have made Graves the epitome of EMDA orthodoxy, as he did, because Graves' proclaimed his position vociferously and I quoted him extensively! Will Bro Fenison tell us how he made such a mistake? However, that was, an author has a responsibility to his readers to explain his errors when they are discovered. I can plainly say that if I had written a book such as *GCC* containing a major error like this, I would pull it from publication! If the publisher would not agree to do it, then I would buy the whole edition and there would never be another copy sold!⁴⁷⁰ To continue to publish the error that Graves held EMDA in any sense is bearing false witness! (Ex. 20:16; Mt 19:18).

Still Bro Fenison tries another *rescuing device*.⁴⁷¹ This idea is that Graves held DA in theory *but he practiced EMDA*! This is a bold assertion and cannot be received without strong proof. Bro Fenison makes this claim, but what proof does he give for it? Well, he gave a couple of quotes which I sent him (!) in which he said proved Graves' practice was

⁴⁷⁰ Bryant Station Baptist Church, Lexington, KY, still sells this book. http://www.bryanstation.com/wp-content/plugins/bsbc_order_form/order.php ; Bro Fenison lists both of his books, *GCC* and *ACC* on line at this address: http://victorybaptistchurch.webstarts.com/books_by_mark_fenison.html

⁴⁷¹ "A rescuing device is a completely fabricated conjecture devised to save someone's theory from contrary evidence." Randy J. Guiliuzza. *Acts & Facts*, March 2017, p. 17.

different than his principle! What this means is that Graves did not have enough sense to know how to practice what he believed! This is the reason we call on Bro Fenison to prove what he asserts, because we have found his books full of unproved and, we think, unprovable assertions! Here is his statement:

Graves believed DA but practiced EMDA. Graves defended DA to be consistent with his errant kingdom/church theory. However, when it came to identifying what authority Matthew 28:19-20 was administered under, he consistently argued that it was inclusive of gathering churches under the administrative authority of the church. His theory had inconsistencies. However, in regard to practice, he regularly followed the customary practice – regular church order. For example, in response to an inquiry about the necessity of Church Authority ordained supervision in church constitution he affirmed that regular order was the practice of his day and that he recommended it.⁴⁷²

He then quotes the following from *The Baptist*:

An inquirer asks:

Is it indispensably necessary, in the constitution of a Baptist Church of Christ, to have two or more ordained ministers present to form a presbytery, in order to make such a constitution legal or Scriptural?

[J. R. Graves responded] *We find no law in our code touching the forms necessary to constitute a church; nor do we find in the New Testament any example or intimation that a presbytery of ordained ministers ever acted in constituting a church. Christ says the most about it, and it is but little: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them." When a company of baptized disciples, if only two or three, associate themselves as a church,*

⁴⁷² Fenison. ACC, 176.

*covenanting with each other to be governed by the authority of Christ as indicated in the New Testament, they are, to all intents and purposes, a gospel church under the constitution. A foreign missionary and his wife would thus constitute the essentials of a church; but, as we always should send forth by twos, two missionaries and their wives could constitute themselves into a church without a presbytery. **But as churches now are associated, it is a matter of proper caution, and for a presbytery to be called to see that the organization, at the very out start, is sound and orderly. An ounce of preventative is worth a pound of cure.*** [J. R. Graves. **The Baptist**. 1877. Month and date not legible but on page 661, probably Aug to Sept.; Electronic page 275]. Provided by J.C. Settlemoir by e-mail to the Author. – Emphasis mine.

Please notice the difference in what he said they *could* do versus what he ultimately said they *should* do. Here we have his interpretational theory contrasted with what he claimed was the more “*sound and orderly*” path to follow.

In another inquiry concerning church constitution, Graves responded that nine tenths of all inquiries about church constitution assume the need of the presence of an ordained man or presbytery in the constitution of churches:

*The ministry in one form or another is attempting to assume the prerogatives of the local church. **Nine tenths of the queries that reach us involve this assumption, just as clearly as the above involves it.*** [J. R. Graves. **The Baptist**. 1-17-1880, p. 486] –emphasis mine.⁴⁷³

Graves in this last paragraph was protesting this ministerial attempt to assume the prerogatives of the local church. This is exactly what Bro Fenison seeks to do with his *ordained-man-essential*. The preachers in Graves’ times were also

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

influenced by the *surrounding nations* and hence this eternal vigilance then and now is required to maintain NT simplicity!

There is no conflict between Graves' theory and his practice! Nor do these statements by Graves indicate any difference. Graves never swerved in his *practice* in spite of Bro Fenison's assertion. Graves denied the whole EMDA idea both with mind and hand! And in this quote, which I sent Bro Fenison, there is no change in Graves' position. Graves says not one word about *authority*, either mother-church-authority or ordained-man-authority nor does he make an ordained man or a presbytery *essential* to church constitution but *precautionary*—thus denying the essential nature of it. **There is a big difference between what is *essential* and what is *precautionary*!** Bro Fenison tries to run over these terms as if he does not know the difference between *them*! Let me illustrate the difference for him. It is wise to consult others when you are going into business, but not essential. It is a wise to ask the parents of the girl you hope to marry for their permission, but it is not essential. It is wise to put on leather gloves when welding, but it is not essential. It is wise when you have unresolved church trouble, to invite in other pastors and brethren to assist you, but these things are not essential but precautionary—and there is a major difference. It is precautionary to carefully read an author's book before you attempt to answer it, but it is not essential—and in fact it may prove to be a considerable embarrassment if you don't! This illustrates Bro Fenison's problem: he sees essentials in precautions. There are many precautionary measures in almost every endeavor which do not rise up to an essential. Bro Fenison confuses essentials with customs, accidents and concomitants. He misunderstands the essentials of NT church constitution! Dayton gives this warning on this subject:

That is self-evident, Mr. Courtney; but we must be very careful that we do not confound what was essential with what was accidental, and consequently, indifferent.⁴⁷⁴

Graves' statements are as clear as a sunbeam and prolific. Anyone who can mispresent Graves must do it with deliberate determination! A few examples will illustrate the matter:

The fact is, that a body of baptized disciples in any place can constitute themselves into a church, without an ordained minister, and then proceed to elect their own officers. The highest and oldest authorities sustain this position. Christ says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." – Matthew 18:20. Tertullian, who wrote in the year 150, 50 years after the lifetime of the last apostle, says: "*Where there are three*, there is a church, though they be laymen."⁴⁷⁵

"Christ said, where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.⁴⁷⁶

"Three are sufficient to form a church although they be laymen."⁴⁷⁷

SEC. 1. Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone."⁴⁷⁸

Here is another from the Querist:⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁴ Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*. II, p. 134.

⁴⁷⁵ Graves, *TN Baptist*, 12-22-83, P 8.

⁴⁷⁶ Graves. *NGIW*, p. 135. Emphasis belongs to Graves.

⁴⁷⁷ Graves. *NGIW*. P. 136. Graves is here quoting Tertullian with approval—JC.

⁴⁷⁸ Graves. *Graves -Ditzler Debate*, (1875) Pages 995-996.

⁴⁷⁹ *The Querist* was a column in Graves' paper in which he answered questions from subscribers.

Brother Graves: – There was a Council organized to take into consideration, the propriety of organizing a Baptist Church then and there. The council agreed to and advised the brethren to enter into the organization, which they did by covenanting together to be governed by the New Testament. The counsel advising the organization of a church consisted of orderly members of the Baptist Church – *four of them were ordained ministers of the gospel*; and the church was thus organized of Baptist Christians without letters from their churches. Now, is the Baptist church thus organized, a Baptist church according to the Scriptures? M. A. Gunter.

[Graves' Answer] Remarks. – Wherever three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches meet and covenant together to hold and teach and be governed by the New Testament, etc., there is a church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers within thousand miles of them. There is not the slightest need of a council or presbytery to organize a Baptist church...⁴⁸⁰

The fact that a large majority of queries that came to Graves' on this subject only indicates that these men and churches were influenced by the nations round about them! That is, the Methodists, Campbellites, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Episcopalians for they all have such hierarchies and such rules and regulations which cannot be found in Scripture. So, Graves was calling them to come back to *Baptist polity* and this included DA. He rejected what these groups advocated. The authority for church constitution comes directly from Christ out of heaven and is

⁴⁸⁰ Graves. *TN Baptist*, May 15, 1880, p. 759.

given by Him whether ordained men are present or not. This is Baptist practice!

Here is another example of Graves' practice. Graves and those who were eventually excluded from First Baptist Church of Nashville, pastored by R. B. C. Howell, had pulled out and said they were the legal church. Later they constituted themselves into a church. Would this not reflect Graves' practice? S. H. Ford explains:

While the course of the minority, and especially of Graves, in not squarely standing the trial to the end, was blamed by nearly all well-informed Baptists, and Graves and Dayton were soon made to see their mistake in this and a different, scriptural and rational course was taken. The minority formed themselves into a new church.⁴⁸¹

Does this not speak of Graves' practice? Incidentally, this also indicates that Ford approved of DA for the constitution of churches because he says when Graves, Dayton and their group formed themselves into a church that act was a *scriptural and rational course*. So, this was Ford's practice as well! Graves' practice was the practice of Baptists because Graves' church was received into the local association after this happened! That is, those Baptists of Middle Tennessee recognized this church as a church, without a mother church and without any authority of any kind except that of the Lord Jesus Christ in Mt 18:20! There was no church authority given and none requested by this new church. Thus, Bro Fenison's attempt to garner help from Graves was not only deceptive but it exploded in his face! These references prove Bro Fenison does not know

⁴⁸¹ <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/graves/biography-ford/chapter06.htm>

what Graves practice was. He is just twisting and turning Graves' words. Bro Cockrell said this:

But, brethren, do not twist and turn the word of our old Baptist brethren to justify your departure from the faith.⁴⁸²

But this is precisely what Bro Fenison has done consistently! What he has attempted to do is to make Graves embrace what he denied and to deny what he embraced! One can only be embarrassed at such illicit liberties taken with a man's statements! It reminds me of what Bogard said of those who did such to Graves' words:

...to weigh such a man's words in the scales of a nicely-balanced logic, and draw inferences contrary to all he believed and taught, is like measuring the winds with a yardstick, or charging some star with the sorrows of one's destiny, or blaming the light of the moon for the failing of a potato crop."⁴⁸³

Here is another quote in Graves own words on his practice:

It is certainly due to those who bear the name to be vindicated from these hurtful misrepresentations. I think it is no act of presumption in me to assume to know what *I* meant by the Old Landmarks, since I was the first man in Tennessee, and the first *editor* on this continent, who publicly advocated the policy of *strictly and consistently carrying out in our practice those principles which all true Baptists, in all ages, have professed to believe.*⁴⁸⁴

Here we have Graves stating that he consistently carried out in practice his principles! Bro Fenison tells us Graves held one thing in principle but in practice something entirely

⁴⁸² Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd, p. 91.

⁴⁸³ Bogard, *Pillars of Orthodoxy*, 1900, p. 207.

⁴⁸⁴ Graves. *Old Landmarkism*, p. xiv. The italics belong to Graves.

different! Bro Fenison makes Graves not only inconsistent but dishonest and hypocritical, for what is a man who holds one thing in theory but practices another? (Mt 23:3). But here we have Graves himself spiking Bro Fenison's gun! Graves says above he *consistently carried out in practice* his principles! Whatever Graves believed in his study, he carried out on the firing line! If Graves was anything, he was consistent—his practice matched his doctrine! So, we see Bro Fenison is wrong again!

Graves also said this concerning his practice in *Baptist Policy*:

To be in all things consistent with our principles, whether we gain or lose numbers or popularity. For the steadfast and uncompromising advocacy of these principles and this policy, this paper is especially devoted...⁴⁸⁵

Concerning Graves' principles, Hailey said this:

If anyone could ever think for a moment that this was mere twaddle with this valiant soldier of the cross, that were to wholly misunderstand him. He was a crusader with a martyr's spirit. To him the truth was as the light. He thought clearly. Like the rays of light to his loyal soul were the lines of truth. Jesus Christ was to him really the King. He could brook no compromise of his teachings.

He had a most logical mind, as all who knew him or read his writings confessed. His loyalty to Jesus Christ took the full length of obedience. Nothing half way or compromising could for a moment escape his challenge and opposition.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ Graves. *The Baptist*, Oct. 6, 1857. Q. in Hailey's *Life, Times, Teachings of J. R. Graves*, p. 58.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Now I do not speak for others, but I consider Hailey to be reliable on Graves' practice for he actually *knew* what his practice was. Bro Fenison does not know what Graves' practice was because any investigation would have prevented him from making these assertions!

We also have another source of information on Graves' practice. I refer to Ben Bogard's *Baptist Way Book*. Bogard was a disciple of Graves as he himself tells us.⁴⁸⁷ He read Graves' paper.⁴⁸⁸ He read his books and he imbibed his teaching as did thousands of other Baptist preachers. Here is what Bogard said on the subject of starting a church:

The Way to Organize Churches. The first step necessary in the organization of a new congregation or church is for as many as three baptized disciples to agree to meet stately for worship, for the mutual edification and united effort for the evangelization of the world...

The agreement to meet regularly for worship and work is commonly called a 'Church Covenant'...When this covenant has been entered into the church is fully organized. The covenant is the organization.⁴⁸⁹

This indicates that Graves' practice was the practice of Landmark Baptists all over the country.

Graves also said:

I appeal to my brethren, and all men familiar with my public life, if I have not, from the pulpit, and through the press, apposed what I have believed to be erroneous in Baptists, as severely and faithfully as I have the errors of other denominations; and have been

⁴⁸⁷ Bogard. *Pillars of Orthodoxy*, p. 290.

⁴⁸⁸ Graves' paper *The Tennessee Baptist* for years had the largest circulation of any religious paper in the world, Bogard. *Pillars of Orthodoxy*, p. 200.

⁴⁸⁹ Bogard. *The Baptist Waybook*, p. 69.

quite as intensely hated and as rudely treated and slandered by some few of them—the especial advocates of those errors—as I have by the advocates of other errors. I have opposed the advance of false teaching, and inconsistent practice among Baptists when I knew that I should lose personal friendships, and receive positive injury.⁴⁹⁰

Thus, we have Graves' own words that he opposed *inconsistent practice*—that is practice adverse to one's doctrine— and this would surely include holding DA in principle but practicing EMDA! But he says he carried out in practice just what he laid down in precept and Hailey insists that Graves did nothing halfway or by compromise. Let the reader answer this question? Does this sound like a man who held one thing in principle and something entirely different in practice? We contend that Graves held DA in both principle and practice. He never wavered in concept or execution. But the Graves—the Graves which Bro Fenison tried to introduce to his readers— never existed! This altogether clumsy effort to make Graves into a dunce is what we might expect from Tull, Patterson or some other anti Landmarker but when it comes from a supposed friend, then it is especially repulsive.

Graves Significant-Insignificant-Significant?

Apparently, according to Bro Fenison, J. R. Graves was just an insignificant player among Landmark Baptists! He did not have any concept of the real issue of church constitution and consequently, other men who were wiser and more able had to carry the banner for Landmark Baptists in the 1800s. He then suggests that there were other men in the Landmark movement who were more consistent than Graves and they

⁴⁹⁰ Hailey, *Life and Times of J. R. Graves*, P. 50.

were more consistent because they held EMDA in both theory and practice! What evidence does Bro Fenison give for proof? He gives not a crumb! Just who was the man, or men, who carried the EMDA ball for Graves? Why does he not give us their names, and tell us in what publication he found this amazing information? Why does he not give us the book which contains the account of even one man among Landmarkers during Graves' day who embraced EMDA? In my opinion, this is just another *rescuing device*!

What article gives this information? What book discusses it? In what paper was it put forth? We need information and it would only be reasonable for Bro Fenison to favor us with it as he is the only proponent of this idea that I have seen. We believe there is only one reason why he did not do so—there is no such information and he knows it. It never existed! If, at any time he gives the name or names of these men, with any evidence of his claim, we will be glad to consider it. Until he does so we consider this as another *fabricated conjecture*!

GRAVES DID NOT EMBRACE EMDA EVEN THOUGH IT WAS PART OF LANDMARKISM

It seems to be to be the most preposterous position to assert, as Bro Fenison suggests, that a man who codified the doctrine of Landmarkism and put it in logical order—yet he did not recognize one of the most essential points of it! In fact, Graves was recognized (on all sides) as the undisputed leader of the movement throughout his long life, as a preacher, writer, debater and defender of it! But what is even more astonishing, especially with Bro Fenison's scheme — is that Graves opposed EMDA to the utmost of his ability in every possibly way! That is, he openly repudiated it and instead set forth DA! This was not just some closet thing

with him, but it was explicit, it was public, it was direct and it was pronounced with special emphasis and the pages of *The Baptist* constantly rang with that clear sound. His books also state the same thing. In his debates he emphasized this position, so that no man who heard him or read him could ever misunderstand his position. Furthermore, his practice was in perfect conformity with his doctrine. He did not say one thing and do another but was consistent in both doctrine and practice.

Now in the light of these things for someone like Bro Fenison to come along and suggest that Graves was not the leader of the Landmark movement, that his doctrine and practice were poles apart, and that his position was inconsistent⁴⁹¹ or contrary to Landmarkism is probably the most unbelievable proposition that I have ever seen! If there is a medal for the most far-fetched theory ever put forth among Baptists Bro Fenison will win it hands down! It ought to be in the *Guinness Book of World Records*!

I need not spend any time in quoting men to prove Graves' standing among Landmark Baptists of his day—it was unchallenged and life-long! Bro Fenison did not produce a single author who challenged Graves' position simply because there are none. Bro Fenison recognizes this fact and when he needed the highest authority for Landmarkism in *The Landmark New Testament* he chose Graves over any other man! There has to be good reason for that!

⁴⁹¹ Fenison. ACC. P. 8. The "Direct Authority" position is a mixture of the big church theory with Landmarkism. It was founded upon the inconsistencies and interpretive errors of Dr. Graves, and those who embraced his inconsistencies."

APPEAL TO THREE MEN

Then he also attempts to construct a theory which he hopes might save EMDA by appealing for support from Graves, Pendleton and Hiscox—that is, he contends, these men *practiced* EMDA! What is this but to suggest these men simply did not have enough sense or enough grit to practice what they believed! They *wrote* in defense of DA. They stated this doctrine in specific terms. Bro Fenison has belatedly and reluctantly admitted this fact—yet he now seeks to convince us that even though they spelled out DA doctrinally, yet when they went out to start churches, they threw DA overboard and in the most astounding incongruity organized churches according to the EMDA model! If true, this also indicates they were deceitful men, saying one thing but doing another! I do not believe there is a word of truth in this scenario nor do I believe Bro Fenison can back up his theory and I challenge him to do it! But if he can do it, it necessarily follows that these men are unworthy of the confidence that has usually been accorded them. Those who are so duplicitous as to teach one thing in books and sermons but do the exact opposite in practice, should be rebuked for their inconsistency as Paul rebuked Peter at Antioch! This is a description of a hypocrite. Christ gave us this plain commandment:

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. Matthew 23:3.

This leaves Bro Fenison in a tight place. For either he can support what he says with proof, or admit this is just another spin of his! Such claims are generated by Bro Fenison like counterfeit money which he passes to unsuspecting readers as if they were the real thing!

But there is yet another problem for Bro Fenison. He indicates that he is responsible to reject and to refuse to fellowship those who are not orthodox in this matter of church constitution. What this means is that he refuses to recognize men who believe and practice DA as valid ministers and as true churches. But here he begins to waver again:

There are some [churches—JC] who in spite of what they teach were formed according to regular church order. Hence, these churches actually practice church authorized constitution in spite of their theological repudiation of it. Therefore, they must be regarded as regular constituted churches in error on that specific point of ecclesiology.

Moreover, their view demands organic church succession connected through baptism. This is undeniable as their view states a new church cannot be constituted apart from materials prepared by a previous existing New Testament church, which in turn was constituted out of the very same materials and etc.

Therefore, this is nothing but organic church succession where churches are directly connected with each other through baptism.⁴⁹²

These assertions, these absolutes, these decrees given in *ACC* with numbers of overbearing essentials are at last whittled down to *valid baptism*! For, if they have baptism, we are now informed, *then* they are true churches because they *have organic succession through baptism*!

As a consequence, even though some churches and pastors that believe in DA can be fellowshipped even if they repudiate EMDA because they get EMDA through

⁴⁹² Fenison. *GCC*, p. 262 with 169; Cf. also *DABH*, p. 87.

Baptism!⁴⁹³ But, one must suppose, if a church or a pastor insists on both DA in doctrine and practice, then they are to be disfellowshipped! This would certainly include Graves and Dayton. Now, if I am reading Bro Fenison correctly, and one can never be sure about this, it means that if these men were living today, they would not be welcome in Bro Fenison's church! It is alright to quote them. It is alright to hold them up as the quintessence of Landmark Baptists but if living today, they would not be welcome in Bro Fenison's church! Graves would not be asked to preach if present in their services! Is this not what Bro Fenison claims he and his church believes—and practices? I think it is. Yet, when he needs Graves, or when he can parade him as the essence of a Landmarker, he switches sides in a flash! For, in spite of these stringent efforts to exclude Graves and to put distance between Graves and himself, he is capable of an about face that is astonishing. I refer to his use of Graves in *The Landmark New Testament*. In the Introduction Bro Fenison is *guilty* of putting Graves the heretic back in poster boy light without a single demerit! Is this not an example of *garnishing* the tombs of the prophets? How does Graves go from a doctrinal reprobate who could not be fellowshipped if living today, to the very embodiment of a Landmarker in regular standing? Somehow, it seems that Bro Fenison can blow hot or cold with the same lips! Here is the case. He needed Graves—not Graves the heretic—but Graves the orthodox Landmarker and no one else could fill that bill as well as Graves,⁴⁹⁴ so like Saul, who when in dire straits at Gilgal, sought to call up Samuel from the dead, he attempts to bring up Graves as the orthodox Landmarker, to be

⁴⁹³ Cf. *GCC*, pp. v, 67,72,76; *ACC*. Pp. 169-171. In this last reference Bro Fenison tries to back away from the idea that baptism is the only essential connection.

⁴⁹⁴ Why did Bro Fenison not refer to some of the Landmarkers who he claims held the EMDA doctrine where they state his position in specific terms? Could it be that there were no such men?

welcomed in their churches! Saul got bad news and Graves
answers Bro Fenison in kind!

CHAPTER 14

MISTAKES-MISREPRESENTATIONS- MISQUOTES OF BROTHER FENISON

Bro Fenison insists that I need to read more carefully. He gives these instructions to me two or three times! But specifically, in this case he was speaking of my synopsis of what he said in *GCC*, pp 46-47, concerning the Church of Jerusalem and what he said it did. Here is my appraisal of what he said:

GCC claims the first church in Jerusalem sent out men to all the regions of the earth where there were disciples to constitute them into churches! That is, they followed up every report of disciples meeting anywhere in the world so they could give them authority and constitute them into churches! The church at Jerusalem must have had one extensive card file!⁴⁹⁵

Here are Bro Fenison's own words:

Luke makes it clear that the church at Jerusalem was monitoring its missionaries and responded to any abnormality. Whenever such abnormal cases came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem they dispatched authorized representatives to investigate and oversee such believers, P. 46.

Luke clearly shows in the Book of Acts that departures from normal Great Commission procedures were not left undone, but that the Church at Jerusalem followed up on such cases as they came to their attention.

Hence, the church at Jerusalem was committed to the Great Commission pattern and monitored any deviance

⁴⁹⁵ Settlemoir. *DABH*, p. 84-85.

from that pattern by sending out authorized representatives to ensure Christ's commission was obeyed in every particular.

Whenever questionable news came back to the ears of the church, they authorized and sent someone to investigate it; and what followed in each case was the mention of "churches" or a "church" as the result...P. 47.

The book of Acts demonstrates clearly that under abnormal and interrupted conditions it was the practice of the church to follow up any case of which they were uncertain, cases that did not seem to conform to all aspects of the commission. Whatever abnormalities came to their ears (Acts 8:14; 11:20), they followed it up. And churches were always the result of such follow ups (Acts 9:31; 11:26). P. 49.

4. Is there anything stated or implied that indicates the Church at Jerusalem took actions to conform all reported cases to full obedience to the Great Commission? (yes, see Acts 8:14; 11:22). P. 51.

Now I am not beyond misreading or making mistakes. I am not infallible. But if I make a mistake, I will correct it as soon as it is called to my attention by others or if I find it myself.⁴⁹⁶ While I certainly did not mean to misrepresent Bro Fenison's position, I sought to show how preposterous it is—as he stated it! Did I misrepresent him? Or do his words indicate just what I understood him to mean? After carefully reviewing these references again, I believe my appraisal of what he said is justly derived from his words! Let the reader carefully go over the statements given above and see if I was not correct in what I understood him to say. If this was not what he meant could it be that he needs to write more carefully?

⁴⁹⁶ See *DABH*, p. 54, for an example.

BRO FENISON MISREADING

Now let me set before the reader a misreading and misrepresentation the likes of which I have never seen before. This is a reference to what Bro Fenison said I wrote in *DABH*. How can a man misrepresent an author's position, not from a paucity of expression, but where he plainly states his position? I believe Bro Fenison has a penchant to misread, to misunderstand and to misquote those to whom he refers. To substantiate my proposition in this case, I will transcribe this passage in which *he did not even read what he himself quoted me as saying!* Here is the quote:

Furthermore, Bro. Settlemoir goes on to even further qualify Matthew 18:20. He insists that they are already a constituted church at the very "*moment*" they have this "*purpose in mind*" to be a church:

The actual constitution of a church takes place the moment a group of saved baptized saints meet together **with the purpose in mind to constitute.** – Ibid. p. 4 (Emphasis mine)

Indeed, he insists that this is true even though they may never actually "meet together" to be formally constituted:

The formal constitution is but a ceremony and the church would be a church without it as much as with it. – J.C. Settlemoir, **Direct Authority: Biblical & Historical.** p. 4 – emphasis mine— Fenison.⁴⁹⁷

Of course, I never said what he quotes me as saying! The words which I clearly stated include this phrase—**meet together**—which Bro Fenison totally ignores! He is blind to what I actually said, *deleting my words* and then assuming I

⁴⁹⁷ Fenison. ACC. P. 30.

said something which I did not say and did not mean! Even with my statement on his screen, he cannot see it! This is an indicator of his prepossession with EMDA which overwhelms his cognitive senses. As far as the reference to the *formal* ceremony, I was simply referring to what Hiscox and other standard writers suggest a church may do *after it has constituted*, which they call “recognition services.”⁴⁹⁸ This service has nothing to do with constitution and usually takes place after the church is constituted.

Personally, I have never seen such an egregious misrepresentation before! And he accuses me of not reading carefully! I am not the only one who has noticed Bro Fenison’s tendency to errors of this kind, for someone on his list admonished him about this very thing. Bro Fenison responded:

I know many times I react to something before I read carefully and make sure I know exactly what is being said. It might help if we have any doubt about what a brother is saying, to first clarify and make sure that is what he is saying before we infer things to him he did not say or mean, even if such conclusions seem logically unavoidable to us. Please feel free to remind me of this if I get off base. Thanks, Bro. Mark.⁴⁹⁹

Perhaps Bro Fenison should heed his own words!

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Hiscox. *New Directory*, p. 56; *Pendleton’s Manual*, pp. 15, 169; Crowley. *Church Member’s Manual*, p. 267, etc.

⁴⁹⁹ Mark Fenison. Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2007 8:31 PM. Subject: Fwd: HBS Policy. Note: This letter was sent to me by someone on this list. JCS.

BROTHER FENISON AMUSED AT *MY ERROR* ON MERCER

Bro Fenison attempts to poke fun at me. He says:

Amusingly, Bro. Settlemoir responds to these quotes in my book by saying:

There is not even any direct scriptural authority for such an organization as an association. The church on the other hand, receives its power and authority directly from Christ. - J.C. Settlemoir, **Direct Authority: Biblical & Historical**, p. 132.⁵⁰⁰

As to these words, which Bro Fenison assigns to me, he is mistaken. These are not my words at all, but those of Mercer! Bro Fenison misunderstands the whole purpose of these references in parallel columns. Here is the case. In *DABH*, I added two Appendices in parallel columns. In Appendix II, I gave in the left- hand column some quotes from various authors by Bro Fenison which he made in support of EMDA. In the adjacent column, I gave quotes from the same man showing the author referred to held DA, and this was done to demonstrate that these men were quoted as supporting the very opposite of what they believed!⁵⁰¹ Is it right to quote a man in support of a position which he denies?

Bro Fenison then goes on to say:

I say “amusingly” because Mercer was not speaking about the succession of an “association” but of churches.

Bro Fenison is wrong again.

⁵⁰⁰ Fenison. *ACC*. 217.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. *DABH*, pp. 93-111; I have reproduced this in Appendix V.

I never suggested anything of the kind. Bro Fenison quoted Mercer to prove he held EMDA. Whether he was quoting him concerning succession of churches or the succession of monarchs made no difference at all. If I proved Mercer held DA, that is all I meant to do. If the words by Mercer in the right-hand column prove he held DA, that means he did not hold EMDA in the left column! Is that not clear? He then says:

Bro. Settlemoir simply could not respond to this statement by Mercer and so tried to change the subject.

I had no need to respond to Mercer for we are in perfect agreement! In these references I merely let those men state their own position on the very subject of the debate, that is, did the writer hold EMDA or DA!

Bro Fenison then says:

Rather he goes on to quote Charles D. Mallary instead of Mercer.

Bro Fenison can't get it right!

I never quoted Mallary, not even a word! To make sure, I rechecked the source. Mallary has these five paragraphs, which I quoted in *DABH*, in quotation marks and the introduction to the appendix [vi](#) where they are found⁵⁰² says: *Memoranda of occasional remarks made by Mr. Mercer in his sermons, private conversation, &c.* So, if Mallary was any kind of scholar, the words I quoted *are the words of Mercer*—not Mallary's! Then, Bro Fenison's attempts to dodge my thrust in this manner:

⁵⁰² Mallary. *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer*, p. 455.

No one disputes that “*Church authority is from Christ, as Head and king alone...*”⁵⁰³

Bro Fenison is here saying that he believes Mercer’s proposition, but I do not believe he agrees with Mercer at all. Let me give his quote again with the italics, which somehow fell out of the quote in *DABH*. It is express and it says:

II. Differences.—1. Church authority is from Christ, as Head and King *alone*; but that of an Association is from the churches *only*.

Mercer argues that the authority of a church is from Christ, as Head and King—but he did not stop there—as Bro Fenison is compelled to do—but added the significant adjective *alone*! And the emphasis belongs to Mercer, not me. He says the authority of an Association is from *the churches only*. What does that mean? It means that there is no other source of authority for an Association. This excludes preachers, presbyteries, conventions or anything else you can put in the blank. In the same way, he says, the authority of a church is from Christ *alone*. What does that mean? *Alone* means *to the exclusion of all others*. For example:

De 32:12. *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

What other god helped the Lord in leading His people? Perhaps it was Baal or Chemosh. Could it have been Mercury or Jupiter?

2 K 19:15. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the

⁵⁰³ Fenison. ACC. 217.

cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

Is God *alone* or is there another?

Da 10:7. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Who else saw this vision besides Daniel?

He 9:7. But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people:

Who else went into the Holy of Holies with the high priest on the Day of Atonement?

Mercer meant that Christ Himself gives His authority without any other help! That is, no church, no preacher, no presbytery, no Bishop, no association, no convention nor any other officer or authority on earth *was essential* to constitute a church! Christ Himself is the sole—the *only*—authority in church constitution! If any other authority can be added as an essential, then *alone* has changed meaning!

But there is more. Mercer says that this power and authority is received *directly* from Christ!

The church, on the other hand, receives its power and authority directly from Christ.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁴ Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 231; Mercer, *A Dissertation on the Resemblances and Differences between Church Authority and That of an Association*, *Christian Index*, I, No. 22 (Dec. 10, 1833, p. 86).

Here Mercer informs us from *whence* church power and authority comes and in what manner. Authority does not come *from* or *through* a mother church, father church, sister church nor any other church relative, according to Mercer, but from Christ *directly*! It is not given *indirectly* via a mother church. It is not given *indirectly* through the hands of an ordained man, eventually trickling down to those who wish to form a new church but both *power and authority* are given *directly* out of Christ's own hand, *alone*! Is this not what Mercer said?

Furthermore, Mercer also repudiated the idea of an ordained minister as an essential for the constitution of a church, which Bro Fenison maintains is an essential of a valid constitution, and then spells out DA for church constitution. He says:

We have never seen one syllable on the subject of a presbytery for the constitution of a church or an association. And never till lately knew that it was *sine qua non* to either being received as orderly bodies. We have no objection to ministers attending the constitution of churches and associations, as a matter of expediency; but to make their presence and office indispensable, is to set up regulation nowhere to be found in scripture, and consequently to be prudent above what is written. What constitutes, in *our* judgment, any number of believers in Christ a church, is their coming together into one body, according to the rules and faith of the gospel. And wheresoever any body of professed Christians is found so walking together, they should be acknowledged and received as a true church.⁵⁰⁵

With such statements as these, made by Mercer himself, we are astounded that Bro Fenison could quote him as embracing EMDA, and then when corrected, as he was in

⁵⁰⁵ Mallery. *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer*, p. 455.

DABH,⁵⁰⁶ yet come back and insist Mercer held to what he plainly denied! Is this not “head bent”?⁵⁰⁷ what is it that prevents Bro Fenison from reading and understanding these statements? Does he agree with them? He claims he is in agreement with Mercer! He does not *read carefully* and when I point out his mistakes he still comes back with some rescuing device! If he ever sees his mistake, he will go out and shake himself!

While we are on the subject of amusement, let me give something that will produce more than is needed!

PLURAL PRONOUN IN MATTHEW 16:19

Bro Fenison says:

In the first passage (Mt 16:19) Jesus uses the plural pronoun (thee) indicating that it is more than to Peter such authority is being given.⁵⁰⁸

Strange! I cannot find a *plural pronoun* in Mt 16:19, nor even in the whole passage, (16-19)! The English *thee* was not plural when I attended school!⁵⁰⁹ Our amusement is turned to sadness when we reflect that a man with degrees can make such an error, publish it in a book and then censor others for not reading carefully!

⁵⁰⁶ *DABH*, p. 132.

⁵⁰⁷ The word is Bro Cockrell's.

⁵⁰⁸ Fenison. *GCC*. P. 150.

⁵⁰⁹ Incidentally, the Greek pronoun here is not *υμιν* (as it would be if plural in the same case) but *σοι*, singular. As far as the English is concerned, we use *thee* in the common wedding vows as, “With this ring, I *thee* wed...” which if *thee* were plural, would indicate polygamy!

MANUALS QUESTIONED

Bro Fenison complains about the church manuals which I quoted:

Most of the church manuals quoted by Bro. Settlemoir were written by universal invisible church advocates (John Dagg, H. T. Hiscox, William Crowell, etc.).⁵¹⁰

First, what Bro Fenison forgot to tell his readers is that almost all church manuals were written by such men.⁵¹¹ Very few were written by men who did not believe in the universal invisible church. Personally, I can think of only four or five exceptions—and I quoted some of those as well! Thus, if I quoted more than four or five *church manuals*—and I think I quoted twenty or twenty-five—it was necessary that many were written by men who held the universal church position!

Secondly, why does he care? I ask this question because he claims that *Baptists in general* held EMDA. If so, then this would include those who are universal church men. The universal idea of the church does not influence the way churches are constituted. I know some universal church men today who hold EMDA, so Bro Fenison's objection on this score is another flash in the pan! By this means he hoped to influence his readers against my arguments which overwhelm him. He does not like these manuals written by universal church men because they invariably state DA for church constitution in agreement with the manuals written by local church men! This is where the rubber meets the

⁵¹⁰ Fenison. ACC 145.

⁵¹¹ This is a fine example of *argumentum ad populum*, which "...consists in addressing arguments to a body of people calculated to excite their feelings and prevent them from forming a dispassionate judgment upon the matter in hand. It is the great weapon of rhetoricians and demagogues," Jevons. *Lessons in Logic*, p. 179.

road! Also, rather significantly, Bro Fenison has been *unable* to quote a single church manual written by *any kind of Baptist*, that sets forth EMDA!

Thirdly, Bro Fenison also quotes some of the very manuals I did! So, where's the beef? It seems that he cannot be pleased! If I quote these men, they are to be discredited. If he quotes them they are to be received!

DIRECT AUTHORITY GIVES CHURCH POWERS TO A NON-CHURCH

Bro Fenison objects that our position of DA gives a group, which is not a church, church powers because they vote before they constitute themselves into a church. But he forgets they do the same thing. Here is his statement:

Those being constituted were directed to adopt principles and a covenant and then directed to adopt a covenant and vote themselves into a newly constituted church.⁵¹²

So, what is the difference? Here he has a non-church adopting principles and a covenant and then voting themselves into a church, just as we do! The difference is in DA we receive our authority directly from the Lord while they claim to obtain it indirectly via a mother church and from an ordained man and then from Christ—but the action is taken by a non-church just the same! Compare that to Mt 18:20. Christ promises to meet with those gathered together in His name, and they must purpose to meet together—that means they agree to do it—before they actually meet together and then in this meeting they vote or agree to become a church. Christ's plain directions are of more value than page after page of this pseudo reasoning!

⁵¹² Fenison. GCC, 72.

FENISON VERSUS BRONG

After Bro Fenison squeezed the pumice stone in reference to Bro Brong, what did he get? Well, he tells us he was a student of Bro Brong and that is good but irrelevant. He complains that I reached my conclusion without reading all of Brong's books. Bro Fenison is wrong again. I reached no conclusion at all! I did not say what Bro Brong believed! All I did was to quote another student of Bro Brong's who said he heard him say, *on different occasions* that "there are circumstances where baptized believers can self-organize and form a legitimate church." Now this is either true or false. If true, Bro Brong did not believe in EMDA! Bro Fenison led us to believe that Bro Brong somewhere made an explicit statement in one of his books, to the effect that *you must have mother church authority* to start a new church! Was that the case? Did I miss that quote? Why didn't Bro Fenison give us the reference? Bro Fenison did give several quotes by Bro Brong but not one of them stated in plain terms that you must have a mother church in order to constitute a church! Then Bro Fenison winds up by admitting that Bro Brong did allow that churches could be formed without EMDA, but it was out of the ordinary! Somehow, the fact that a law operates at all times escapes Bro Fenison's understanding! It is a law that water runs downhill. If water ever runs up hill, then this law is no law. Hence, if EMDA is a law, no church was ever formed without it. Now given Bro Brong's position, it is as sure as it is possible to be that he did not believe that EMDA was a *law*! Are we not correct to suppose the reason Bro Fenison did not give a reference from Bro Brong where he said you must have a mother church to constitute a new church, was *because he could not do so*? I think it is fairly evident that Bro Brong never made such a statement or Bro Fenison

would have flaunted it in bold characters! All of this squeezing for nothing!

RAY ON CHAIN-LINK SUCCESSION

Bro Fenison claims D. B. Ray held to *link-chain succession* and that he used this term repetitively in his book *Baptist Succession*.⁵¹³ Is this true? Now I have read this book and I do not believe Ray uses this precise term even one time. He does use the term *chain* and *chain of succession* but the only instance which I remember that he came close to using the term *chain-link succession* of churches is in the following reference where the words are not his but those of an objector:

But in following up the Baptist succession, we are again met by the stereotyped charge, *that the American Baptists all sprang from Roger Williams, and their baptisms from his informal baptism; and consequently, their chain of succession is broken.*⁵¹⁴

Then on the following pages Ray speaks of *Baptist church succession* but refers it again to the succession of baptism—not EMDA!

It cannot be shown that any present Baptist church or minister has received baptism by succession from Roger Williams.⁵¹⁵

He received his baptism in Elder Stillwell's church, in London, and that church received her's from the Dutch Baptists of Holland..⁵¹⁶

None of its ministers, or **the ministers** of the churches formed from it, [that is, Olney's church—JC] received

⁵¹³ Fenison. *ACC*, p. 93; *GCC*. P. 49.

⁵¹⁴ Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p. 107.

⁵¹⁵ Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p. 118.

⁵¹⁶ Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p. 119.

their baptism **from Williams**, or from any one whose baptism descended from his.⁵¹⁷

But what Bro Fenison should have done—but did not do—was to determine in what sense Ray used these terms. Even if he used the exact term *link chain succession* this does not prove he held to the doctrine of EMDA. In fact, it often happens that we use terms in preaching and teaching which after some error arises, we no longer use because of the error attached it. But this does not mean that when we used it we were holding to that error! This is the case with several of the terms to which Bro Fenison appeals to prove the old Landmark Baptists believed EMDA! This is shallow stuff indeed! Rather let him give specific statements where the old Landmark men stated EMDA and we will be glad to look at them. But this he has been unable to do and with good reason, simply because they held DA!

These statements by Ray indicates he agreed with Graves on succession. All of the Landmark Baptists in Ray's day believed in succession. But it is a fallacy to equate *succession* with *EMDA*! This is a mistake that causes Bro Fenison to stumble at the very beginning of the race and he never is able to recover his balance. Incidentally, how does Bro Fenison account for the fact that Ray, who he suggests was a believer in EMDA, wrote this book on *Baptist Succession* but does not mention once in this book the most essential element of it, according to Bro Fenison? Not one time does he say that a church cannot be formed without a mother church! In this book, Ray has a chapter on the *Origin and Perpetuity of the church* (Ray uses *succession* and *perpetuity* as synonyms) and *The Nature of Church Succession*, yet he never mentions EMDA! Of course, given

⁵¹⁷ Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p.120. Ray is here quoting Graves from *Trilemma*, pp 121-124; For other instances of the term *succession* in Ray, see, pp 57, 62, 87, 88-89, 90, 121-124, 128, 150, 395.

the nature of EMDA, there is simply no way Ray would have, or could have, left it out of this book on this specific subject of *Baptist Succession*—if he held it! This book was first published in 1870 and went through 27 editions up through 1912. Ray said it had endured the “crucible of criticism and opposition as pure gold” for forty years. This would seem to indicate that no EMDA man had ever attempted to shoot it down—even though EMDA cannot be found in it! But if EMDA had been the Baptist way in Ray’s time, then there would have been no end to the criticism of it because it does not enunciate this doctrine! It is plain to see that Bro Fenison has grabbed the wrong end of the sword again!

GRAVES AND THE ATLANTIC CABLE

Bro Fenison jumped on this illustration by Graves before he knew what Graves believed and has ever since claimed that it proves Graves held the EMDA theory! Now Graves may not have been as far up the ladder as Bro Fenison is, but one thing I think all will admit, Graves knew the implications of his own illustrations and arguments. He did not use any argument that demanded EMDA because he did not believe it. The proof that his illustration of the Atlantic Cable, did not logically lead to EMDA, as Bro Fenison assumes it did, is evident because Graves took his stand as a believer in DA. To treat Graves as such a loon who could not see the logical implications of an illustration, is what we expect from men like McBeth or Patterson but for a Landmark Baptist to fall to such begging the question is a disappointment! Whatever Graves meant by this illustration of the Atlantic cable he did not mean EMDA but rather that there was a *continuity* of Baptist churches—and there is. But this does not mean there is any such thing as EMDA necessary for this continuity among Baptists! And it was Graves’ position that at any

given time there was at least one church in existence and therefore Christ's promise in Mt 16:18 had not failed. Graves never implied by this illustration that one church had to give authority to constitute another church any more than he meant that this text gave Peter authority as the first pope and that he had the right to pass that authority on to another and that it was continued from one to another until this very day! This shows to what impossible ends Bro Fenison is driven!

Again, Bro Fenison, after giving some illustrations used by Graves, asserts they *demand an organic continuity*, that is EMDA. He then asks if I would use the human race and its biological descent to illustrate my view of church perpetuity? I will gladly answer him.

First let me put before the reader this simple fact. When a man of Graves' logical acumen uses an illustration or some term one can be reasonably certain that it was in harmony with his position on whatever the subject happened to be. One might take some terms Graves used and from them argue that he was approving of Roman Catholicism. Or he might refer to his position that water in Jn 3 referred to baptism and hence imply that he supported Campbellism! Of course, such flights in fantasy indicate either a weak cause or limited ability! Furthermore, it is illogical to impute to anyone in debate a position he does not hold.

Let me set before the reader that J. R. Graves was a man like other men. He was not perfect. He was not infallible. He could be wrong. However, Graves was a learned man and could handle himself in any argument as he proved in his debates. Therefore, it is certainly questionable when anyone tries to make Graves into one who did not have enough sense to know what his various illustrations and terms implied. If there is any question about what Graves believed on any subject, the way to determine his position is not to take up

some illustration or some term and claim it proved Graves must have believed something which he was careful to say he did not believe.

Bro Fenison knows Graves' position on church constitution is DA, therefore it would seem to be wisdom for a man who wants to take these terms that Graves used, such as, *the chain of Baptist Church succession, the Atlantic cable, a river that runs under ground, the requirement of an existing church to administer baptism for those wishing to constitute, the human cycle of reproduction after its own kind* and other similar terms, to first determine in what manner he used them. Is it possible that one who holds to DA would use such terms? Well it is a fact that Graves did use some of these terms and he believed DA! Thus, it would seem prudent that before anyone assumed, that because of these expressions, Graves held to EMDA, or that he did not have enough sense to use these terms with his own position without committing a logical fallacy, one would be very careful in this matter. But we have learned that caution is not in Bro Fenison's tool box.

Now let me respond specifically. I will consider this question he poses to me *with four question marks!* Here is his question:

Would Bro. Settlemoir use the illustration of the human reproductive cycle after its own kind to illustrate his view of Baptist Church Perpetuity????⁵¹⁸

This indicates that he thinks there is no answer possible to this question and that anyone who holds DA would have to leave the field in utter confusion. My response is easy and simple!

⁵¹⁸ Fenison. ACC. P. 98.

There is a continuity of the human race and it can be compared to Christ's church and its perpetuity, as Graves has done in using it (and other such terms) without any logical fallacy. But this does not mean there is an essential church vote between one church and another as in the EMDA scenario. I can use this illustration without a moment's hesitation. Of course, if someone of Bro Fenison's persuasion is present when I make such a statement, I will have to point out I do not use it in the sense of EMDA.

What Bro Fenison needs to prove his idea is that each and every human pair from the beginning of time until this very day, *obtained permission to marry from their forebears!* And if that authority was not obtained, then their off spring were not human! This is his position! Each church must get the permission of a mother church in order to form a new church. Without this specific permission, no new church can be formed! If so, the off spring is an illegitimate church! Is this not what Bro Fenison believes?

This was not Graves' idea! Nor did he ever suggest it in any of the illustrations or terms he used. Bro Fenison assumes—he presumes—and then he declares Graves just could not help himself, but he had to bow to the EMDA music!

What Bro Fenison does to Graves and to Baptists is *to assail their distinctive principles* and one of those is church constitution by DA! Bro Fenison constantly reads into these various terms and illustrations something which the original authors did not mean and makes an illogical blunder that does not reflect well upon himself! All of these other terms and illustrations will yield to the same explanation, so I need not burden the reader any further. Have I answered Bro Fenison's question? Is there any doubt that Graves used these terms in perfect harmony with his position on DA? One must be sorely pressed to attempt to use such straw for ammunition!

THE FATHER OF DA

Bro Fenison can't make up his mind. In *GCC* he said Whitsitt was the father of DA,⁵¹⁹ but then in *ACC* he thinks otherwise.⁵²⁰ In this book, it is Graves inconsistencies that is the cause of DA. One would assume that meant Graves was the father of it. Then he makes the grandfather to be Bro Gilliland, Bro Camp and myself. How does he know these things? Was the sheet let down from Heaven with this information? It does not make any difference about what Bro Fenison *thinks* about the origin of DA, the water is deeper than that. His sounding line will never touch bottom until he reaches the New Testament. There he will find the true origin of DA and the father of it, the Lord Jesus Christ! We have Tertullian expressing DA and that puts its origin long before these who Bro Fenison has named. So, Bro Fenison is wrong again! How is it that this changes from one book to another? Which book is correct?

⁵¹⁹ Fenison. *GCC*, p. 121.

⁵²⁰ Fenison. *GCC*, p. 46; *ACC* . 174

LANDMARK BAPTISTS HELD EMDA

Bro Fenison asserts that Landmark Baptists held EMDA. As far as the Landmark position and that of Bro Fenison there is a slight problem and it is what someone called *one ugly little fact*,⁵²¹ that is the old Landmark Baptists clearly stated their own position on the constitution of churches to be DA—and they stated this so explicitly that even Bro Fenison was eventually forced to admit it!⁵²² So, he was wrong on this also. He claimed it throughout *GCC* and then in a crippled form he tried to make it walk in *ACC* but it was a pitiful hobbling indeed. This one ugly little fact refuses to bow to Bro Fenison's assertions and assumptions which is all he has!

BAPTIST HISTORY ASSERTS EMDA

Thus, all this running to and fro to gather up a panoply of *irrelevant* and *suppositional* references for EMDA did only one thing—it demonstrated in a most conspicuous manner that this doctrine was unknown before 1900! No amount of Scripture can join up the present day EMDA churches with churches of the NT because of this yawning chasm of 1900 years in Baptist history prevents it! Our history is as silent on EMDA, as it is on Campbellism! Can the Campbellite connect his churches to those of the NT? History forbids it! So, Campbell was more consistent than Bro Fenison, because Campbell claimed he dis-interred the gospel!⁵²³ It was dead and buried for over a thousand years but he found it, dug it up and gave it life! Bro Fenison claims EMDA was alive all through these centuries in spite of the fact that it had

⁵²¹ McDowell, *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 409. The quote is from Huxley.

⁵²² Fenison. *ACC*, pp. 8, 86, 125, 131.

⁵²³ Campbell. *Mill. Harbinger*, vol. 1, p. 4.

no *vital signs* for 1800 years! In 1881 D. B. Ray had a debate with J. W. Stein of the Brethren Church. This group believed in trine immersion. Stein contended that trine immersion had been practiced through the ages. Ray responded:

It is impossible to suppose, on principles of reason, that churches would practice three immersions for over a thousand years and leave no word in favor of it.⁵²⁴

This same argument strikes the EMDA house with devastating effects. It is impossible to believe that Baptists held to the EMDA principle of church constitution for near two thousand years, and yet, left no word of it! The finest hound in the world cannot follow the trail of EMDA back a hundred years! Proof is given for this proposition unwillingly by Bro Fenison because he is unable to provide a single explicit statement of this tradition before 1900—not one!

FENISON vs. DAYTON

Bro Fenison says Old Landmarkism denied Direct Authority and he quotes Dayton to prove his contention. Here is the quote:

Old Landmarkism denied “direct” authority and demanded that the Great Commission established an earthly authority that would continue until the end of the age. Dr. A. C. Dayton makes this clear when he referred to Matthew 28:19-20... A. C. Dayton, quoted by William M. Nevins, *Alien Baptism and the Baptists*, p. 156.⁵²⁵

⁵²⁴ *Stein-Ray Debate*. P. 391.

⁵²⁵ Fenison. *GCC*. P. 46.

Who said Landmarkism denied direct authority? Bro Fenison constantly confuses what he thinks with facts! Of course, Old Landmarkism did not deny “direct” authority in any sense but embraced it unequivocally and without a single exception, at least so far as Bro Fenison has been able to demonstrate! So why quote Bro Nevins on Dayton to prove Dayton held EMDA when Bro Fenison knows Dayton held DA? Had he *read* either Dayton himself or my quotes of him in *LUF*, he would not have made this blunder! Here is what Dayton himself said on this subject:

He made everyone a priest and a king. He invested every member with the right to execute his laws, but only when assembled with the brethren. As many as could conveniently unite came voluntarily together and by mutual consent were constituted an ‘*ekklesia*,’ or official assembly, of Christ. It was subject to *his* laws: it acted by *his* authority: it used *his* name to give a sanction to its acts; and as he had *authorized* it, and conferred on it all its authority, so he promised to be in its midst by his Spirit, and to ratify in heaven what it did upon earth.”⁵²⁶

The reader will understand the fact that Dayton is here referring to Mt 18:20. *They came voluntarily together* refers to this text. And by *mutual consent* were constituted an *ekklesia*, which is an assembly constituted *by Christ himself* and as stated in this text. This new church was acting *by His authority*—not that of a mother church! It used *His name*—that is, *Christ’s Name* to give sanction to its actions and again this refers to Mt 18:20! **He** (Christ) had *authorized it* by His authority alone and conferred on it *His authority*—not that of a mother church; not that of an ordained man; not as it is in an EMDA constitution which has two other authorities besides that of Christ! Then, just so Bro Fenison could not twist, warp, or misunderstand what Dayton meant,

⁵²⁶ Dayton. *Theodosia Ernest*, vol. ii, p. 115-116.

he tells us that Christ promised to be in its midst by His Spirit and to ratify in heaven what it did upon earth! This is Dayton's exegesis of Mt 18:20. How simple! How Scriptural! How Landmark! How easy to understand! How then can Bro Fenison pretend Dayton took the opposing position? How is it that a man can be so consistently in error and yet never see it?

I must emphasize what I have said before, Bro Fenison continues to call men in to support EMDA who deny it in every way they can and who set forth DA in such explicit terms, as Dayton has here, only to be misrepresented in the most irresponsible manner! If Bro Fenison had learned Dayton's position from his own words on this subject he would never have made such a mistake!⁵²⁷ Bro Fenison knows that these men he referred to held DA yet, he quotes them in an obvious demonstration of name dropping. I can think of no other reason for quoting men as holding a position which he knows they did not hold! So, Bro Fenison is still struggling to make these old Landmarkers appear in a uniform they refuse to wear!

FENISON ON GRAVES' POSITION

Bro Fenison has a hard time determining just where Graves stands on the subject of church constitution! Graves at first, held EMDA. Then in an email letter, he held DA. Then in *GCC* Graves is touted as strongly holding EMDA. Then in *ACC* suddenly Graves has an *interpretational problem* and this puts him in the DA camp. And lastly (we cannot say finally, because by now he may claim Graves believes something else!), in *The Landmark New Testament*, he is again a model Landmarker embracing EMDA! It is hard to

⁵²⁷ Cf. *DABH*, pp 93-138 for more examples of this misrepresentation by EMDA authors including Bro Fenison.

keep up with Graves as he is jostled from one position to another! Which time was Fenison correct?

FENISON'S CONCESSION

Bro Fenison publicly admitted that J. R. Graves, Pendleton and Hiscox all taught DA for church constitution! This concession was made on his list in an email:

However, Bro. Settlemoir does prove conclusively that Graves believed that any two or three baptized believers COULD IN THEORY organize a church apart from any presbytery of ordained ministers (Ibid., pp. 14-25). Also in "theory" both Pendleton and Hiscox supported this view.⁵²⁸

Bro Fenison is here referring to *Landmarkism Under Fire*, 1st edition, when he says "...Settlemoir does prove conclusively that Graves believed...." He here admits Graves, and he includes both Pendleton and Hiscox as well, believed that *Any two or three baptized believers could in theory organize a church apart from any presbytery of ordained ministers!* He says, it has been proved *conclusively*— that is that J.R. Graves taught DA and not EMDA! Of course, this means those who say Graves held EMDA are wrong!

You can be certain that no such concession would have been made unless the evidence was so overwhelming that it simply could not be denied. But regardless of the cause, I am always glad when brethren accept the facts, especially when they have been denying them for years! We heartily pray that all of these EMDA brethren will see what Bro

⁵²⁸ Fenison to Van Nunen. February, 2007. The page numbers refer to *LUF*. This letter was sent to me by someone who was on Bro Fenison's list at the time. I believe this interchange took place before his book was published, but I am not sure about this. See *GCC*, p. vii, which has the date the book was written as Feb. 20, 2007.

Fenison has seen!

The only mistake Bro Fenison made in this letter was that he added a phrase which can in no way be derived from what Graves and these other men said on this subject—that phrase is, *could in theory*... What these men believed was not a class-room theory but their *real-world practice*! Bro Fenison put forth *his theory* as to Graves' practice, apparently, off the top of his head because any investigation would have revealed he practiced exactly what he held in theory, as I have proved!

HIS RETRACTION

Now for some strange reason, Bro Fenison did not include this admission in *GCC* and one can only guess the reason for this omission. No one would ever know Graves' real position was DA from reading *GCC*! He quotes Graves betimes, contending his statements *imply*, *suggest*, or *demand* that he held EMDA.⁵²⁹ So between the time he wrote Bro Van Nunen and the time he finished his book he had a flip-flop! This means that in *GCC* we have Fenison against Fenison! Did he forget what he admitted Graves believed? Did he change his mind? Did he recant as Ditzler did?⁵³⁰ Did he fear to admit in his book what he had conceded on his list? Was he afraid that this admission would unravel his whole book? Whatever the reason, Bro Fenison did not even chirp about Graves' holding DA *in any sense* in *GCC*⁵³¹ but put him forth

⁵²⁹ Fenison. *GCC*, Front cover; pp. 90-93; 96; 109; 111,112; 117-119; 129-132; 134; 138; 146, inferred; 156; 170-173; 177.

⁵³⁰ *Graves-Ditzler, Great Carrollton Debate*, 1875. Ditzler in this debate gave up the OT as affording any support for infant baptism, p. 692. But we learn in *John's Baptism* p. 251, that Ditzler later claimed he had never done so!

⁵³¹ Fenison. *GCC*, p. 118-119, "It is undeniable that Dr. Graves, along with all major leaders among the Landmark movement, believed...They denied the so-called doctrine of 'direct'...authority..."

as the arch defender of EMDA! Which time was Bro Fenison correct?

HIS RE-RETRACTION

But when one reads *ACC* he is immediately confronted with another change in *Graves*! He has *interpretational errors* which led him into a mistake on church constitution!⁵³² So Graves did not have enough sense to know what he meant by what he said and we had to wait until Bro Fenison came on the scene to tell us what his real position was! So here Graves holds to DA but he does so in error!

HIS RE-RE-RETRACTION

But Bro Fenison is not through yet! In 2013, in *The Landmark NT* it appears to me that Graves is back on the EMDA side again, that is, on the opposite side of what he was in *ACC*! This is astounding! I have never seen such vacillation before! Wherever Bro Fenison thinks Graves is now, you can be sure he will put it forth in dogmatic terms and without any chance of being mistaken! Bro Fenison is on this score comparable to a man holding up Alexander Campbell as a sound Baptist and publishing it in a book supposed to set forth what Baptists believe!

Let me summarize these various positions Bro Fenison says Graves held:

1. Graves held EMDA.
2. He held DA (at least in theory), in an email letter in 2007.
3. He *held strongly* to EMDA in 2007, *GCC*.

⁵³² *ACC*. P. 131.

4. He held DA and was labeled as being confused because of his interpretational errors in *ACC* in 2012.
5. He is set forth as the epitome of Landmarkism, that is one who believes in EMDA, in *the Landmark NT* in 2013!

If Bro Fenison is right, Graves changed position on the subject of church constitution at least *five times*!⁵³³ If true, Graves was indeed one confused man! I cannot speak for others, but I am persuaded there is considerable confusion here—but it belongs to Bro Fenison not Graves! Graves was consistent in his position throughout his life time. He never wavered on his position that churches are established solely by DA. His books and his statements in *The Baptist* constantly and consistently set forth this position! No one who is even remotely familiar with Graves productions can be mistaken on this. Bro Duane Gilliland, who opposes Landmarkism, correctly understood Graves' position from reading his books. This indicates that any careful study of Graves' works will reveal his position as DA. How then did Bro Fenison get it wrong? He flips and flops like a fish out of water. This flipping back and forth indicates that he can take any side of any position and claim it is the truth and the next day take the exact opposite without any admission of error! Marvelous!

Let me also insist that Graves' position was not antagonistic to Landmarkism, as Bro Fenison is so capricious to suggest, but was agreeable to it in the utmost. Graves was the most able defender of it! If any man ever understood Landmarkism it was Graves! It is only when a man is "head bent" on making EMDA the essence of Landmarkism that he can conceive such an outlandish idea that Graves did not

⁵³³ I also remember on one occasion Bro Fenison also claimed that Graves changed his position from DA to EMDA. This was on Bro Moody's list. I do not remember the date. This would mean Graves' position was changed six times!

know what Landmarkism was and that his views were inconsistent with it, as Bro Fenison has done! This concept would make a dog laugh out loud! If not before, Bro Fenison here proves he does not know what Landmarkism is!

Let me ask a couple questions generated by the preceding paragraphs. Does this indicate careful reading? Or does it indicate a man who is in a hard place and is frantically searching for some way—anyway—out of his predicament? Does Bro Fenison ever admit he is wrong? Does he anywhere say, “in this statement I was wrong and I wish to correct that error here?” Is this not what one must do when he makes a mistake, especially when it is published in a book? Why have we heard no plain statement of error on his part as to Graves’ position when he has contended that Graves held these different positions—and always without a shadow of doubt! Whenever a man puts forth so many outlandish claims as Bro Fenison has in these two books, he advertises to all readers this plain warning—*don’t put any confidence in what I say*—but if you do you will be sorry!

What one would like to see in cases like this, is for Bro Fenison to write an article for *BBB* and in it set forth his errors on Graves and how he and others have misrepresented Graves and Landmarkism. Now we are not likely to ever read such an article, nevertheless, the responsibility for it lies squarely on his shoulder!

THE COVER- UP EXPOSED

Bro Fenison has finally (in a roundabout way) admitted that Graves did not believe EMDA but held to DA yet he did so in such a way that most people will never pick up on this concession but will go on believing that Graves was in perfect agreement with the error that EMDA was an integral part of Landmarkism when it never was a part of it in any

way! He did this by saying that Graves had “inconsistencies and interpretive errors” in his latest book, *ACC*. It was said in such a way that almost no one will know of Graves *new* position nor has there been any admission of error on Bro Fenison’s part! When any man makes a mistake, and attempts to correct himself, then I support that effort. If Bro Fenison admits his error, then I will welcome it. Surely, Bro Fenison does not mean to sail on as if he was right all along? Let me give this statement and remind the reader of the background. This statement is in Bro Fenison’s book, *ACC*:

The “Direct Authority” position is a mixture of the big church theory with Landmarkism. It was founded upon the inconsistencies and interpretive errors of Dr. Graves, and those who embraced his inconsistencies.⁵³⁴

This sounds like an admission—even a positive statement—that Graves rejected EMDA and embraced DA. And to go somewhat further, it seems that Bro Fenison is charging Graves with being the originator of DA! Keep in mind he has already given that credit to Whitsitt and others, as I mentioned above!⁵³⁵

If Bro Fenison was wrong on what Graves believed about church constitution (contending that he held EMDA), in *GCC*, and he was, is it not possible that he is also wrong on what Baptists believed on this subject? Graves’ statements were in plain sight, strewn throughout his books. The libraries are open. *The Tennessee Baptist*, the paper (under different names) that Graves edited for some forty years, are available. Other writers picked up on Graves’ *real position* on this subject as Brethren Camp, Downing, Gilliland and

⁵³⁴ Fenison. *ACC*. P. 8. The book is on line at:
[http://victorybaptistchurch.webstarts.com/uploads/Church_Authority_Final_Pri
nter_fix.pdf](http://victorybaptistchurch.webstarts.com/uploads/Church_Authority_Final_Pri
nter_fix.pdf)

⁵³⁵ Fenison. *GCC*. p. 121.

others so there could be no excuse for this mistake. This would seem to indicate that Bro Fenison did not really read Graves to learn his position but only for some semblance of support for EMDA. He also had my book, *Landmarkism Under Fire* 1st edition, in his hand and it has a whole chapter on Graves's position with numerous explicit quotes by Graves such as the following:

I will now define a Scriptural Church, as regards its polity and powers, and these define its character, whether Democratic or otherwise, whether legislative or executive only. SEC. 1. Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.⁵³⁶

Bro Fenison chose to reject these concrete statements but selected instead inexplicit statements which he thought *sounded* like Graves was in the EMDA camp. After seeing these statements by Graves, would not any man who was studying and writing on this subject refuse to go one step further until he had verified Graves' *actual position* for himself—in Graves' own words? How could a writer get a most important piece of information on a very specific subject not only wrong, but exactly opposite to the facts of the case, if he was willing to let the evidence guide him? I confess I do not know!

This scenario means a writer *assumes* the very position he sets out to prove. This is possible only when one refuses to do the research necessary to ascertain the facts and when he carelessly snaps up mere snippets of information and gives them a meaning contrary to what the author meant. But whatever the process, the fact of the matter is, Bro Fenison was wrong on Graves' position, so wrong that he put Graves

⁵³⁶ Graves. *Great C. Debate*, p. 995-6; *Great Iron Wheel*, p. 552; Cf. *LUF*. p. 18.

on the exact opposite side of what he really believed—and then flipped him back and forth like a weaver’s shuttle! Why did he do these things?

If this was the case, then Bro Fenison’s error was not a mere slip of the pen. We are not here dealing with some inadvertency, or some minor grammatical inconsistency, or leaving out a word in a sentence. These are mistakes all authors make. Bro Fenison maintained in very vigorous and with dogmatic terms in *GCC* that Graves held EMDA! This was set forth as if it were as certain as if this information had been let down on the sheet. He quoted Graves time after time in an effort to fix in the minds of his readers that Graves believed what he himself was careful to say he did not believe! And these quotes, even Bro Fenison must now admit, cannot support EMDA because Graves never believed that doctrine!

When a Christian author publishes some significant mistake, is he not bound to correct it? Is he not responsible to make his readers know, as far as possible, that he made a mistake and to correct that error? Does an author have a responsibility before God and man to make his correction as bold as his error? Is it proper to simply gloss over such mistakes? When an author writes a second book on the same subject and knows he published *a significant error* in the first, does he have any obligation to correct that error in the second volume? Was this done in *ACC*? Not that I could find. If J. R. Graves should rise from the dead and attend Bro Fenison’s church next Sunday with *GCC* and *ACC* in his hand, how would Bro Fenison explain this error to him? Lk 14:32.

GRAVES MUSTERED OUT

Bro Fenison's position on Landmarkism means that Graves was not merely reduced in rank, but mustered out with a less than honorable discharge. There is no question that Graves was the most important man in the Landmark movement, a fact which I think no informed man can deny. So, for Bro Fenison now to argue Graves was ignorant as to the meaning of Landmarkism (what else can he say?), is like saying John Owen was ignorant of the meaning of the doctrines of grace! If EMDA was a part of Landmarkism, then Graves embraced it. If he did not, then, EMDA had nothing to do with Landmarkism! So, the conclusion is, either Graves was not a Landmark Baptist or Landmarkism did not contain EMDA! Yet Bro Fenison pretends that all is quiet on the Western Front!

THE *LANDMARK NT* INTRODUCTION

One sees this anomaly when Bro Fenison writes the Introduction for the *Landmark NT*. This effort sticks out like a telephone pole broken off but still dangling on the wires! Because there is not one word in this introduction that Graves is anything other than a valiant Landmark witness for EMDA! Here Bro Fenison tries to present the *Landmark-EMDA* system as if it was the unified practice of Landmark Baptists and he mentions J. R. Graves in support of it! Here, according to Bro Fenison all the major actors are on queue when the curtain rises! Graves "inconsistencies" are nowhere in sight! Graves is now rather set forth as the most orthodox spokesman of that *Landmarkism* which has EMDA at its core! We are led to believe that the whole scene is a calm picture of the EMDA system held by the principle leaders of the Landmarkers in the 1800s without a single voice to the contrary. Graves is forced to bow to this

overweening program—even though he fought against it with all his power throughout his life!

ERROR MUST BE CORRECTED

Now if Bro Fenison is bound by the same laws, as other men are, then he is duty bound to make known his error as to what Graves taught about EMDA! And consequently, Graves is far from being a Landmarker in good standing. He is (in Bro Fenison's view of things) an arch-heretic, a veritable *apostate Landmarker* because he rejected EMDA and taught DA!⁵³⁷ He *could not be a member* of Bro Fenison's church and he could not preach there! And so far from being a Landmarker (under Bro Fenison's definition) Graves must be excluded, rejected, repudiated! Only by tossing over board this DA—Jonah, can the EMDA ship be saved! There is no painless way to do this and the cost is high, but the circumstances compel the crew to fall-to, otherwise, the whole ship will go down! Any attempt to keep Graves with his DA will send the whole crew into the deep!

WHY RETAIN A HERETIC

But why all this straining to retain a heretic? Why would anyone want to keep a man who embraced DA in history while rejecting those who believe the same thing in our own times? Is this not polishing the tombs of the prophets while stoning their sons? The answer is not far out of sight. And the solution is forthcoming with just a little reflection.

Bro Fenison knows that unless he can retain Graves in the Landmark movement, the whole EMDA cause will go down

⁵³⁷ Cf. Cockrell. *SCO*. pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 62, 79, 94; Fenison. *GCC*, p. 120.

with a Titanic whoosh! Graves, then—and that is an ominous *then*—must be retained! It may be in a most torturous manner but like radical surgery, it must be done! The reasons are obvious. First of all, the status of Graves' in the movement compels him to do it. The men most conspicuous in the movement were, Graves, Pendleton and Dayton. In this triumvirate neither Pendleton nor Dayton, mighty as they were, attained unto the stature of Graves (2 Sa 23:23). Barnes called Graves the Warrior, Pendleton, the prophet, and Dayton the sword bearer. The problem Bro Fenison has is this: it is absolutely impossible for EMDA to be a part of Landmarkism if Graves did not believe it!

Thus, when I sent Bro Fenison several pages of direct quotes from Graves proving by his own words that he held DA, it blew him out of the saddle! So, when he wrote *ACC* everything had changed and something had to be done. Let anyone read *GCC* and then read *ACC*. In the previous volume Graves is extolled and quoted profusely as holding EMDA but in *ACC* Graves has had a Humpty Dumpty fall! Yet, there is no admission of error. There is no apology to the readers of *GCC* who were misled by that false claim as to Graves' position. Without a backward glance, in *ACC* Bro Fenison touts the EMDA position but seeks to put some distance between himself and Graves. Then (in the *Landmark NT Introduction*) Graves is again paraded as he was in *GCC*, without informing the readers that Graves is really an *apostate Landmarker*⁵³⁸ who has fallen from EMDA grace! This indicates that Bro Fenison can take opposite sides of the same subject and yet never be in error!

⁵³⁸ Bro Fenison follows Bro Cockrell (*GCC*, p. ii) and Bro Cockrell assigns these titles to those who do not accept EMDA as *apostate Landmarkers*, and other like terms, pp.7, 42, 44, 45, 50, 63, 79, 94. How then is Graves received on such amiable terms?

Thus, the Graves image will require major re-chiseling. However, this can be done behind the scenes without too much exposure and the image, newly cut, will resemble the EMDA family! The *new Graves* will then be unveiled without making anyone aware of the switcheroo! This is a method of cover up used by politicians but unworthy of saints.

THE CONUNDRUM

Now it seems to me that Bro Fenison is in either one of two categories on this subject. One, he was ignorant of Graves' real position on church constitution, and this is bad—and this is the case as I see it. Or, two, he knew his position but chose to misrepresent him. And as he was wrong on Graves' position on this most important subject, I believe this error led him to the equally untenable position, that in spite of Graves' position, Landmarkers discounted Graves and instead held and practiced EMDA without him. He has striven hard to find support for this error just as he did as to what Graves believed. But in both cases, he had to come home empty handed! What he does do, is to give various spins by which he hopes to salvage EMDA, but the effort was doomed before it hit the road and there is good reason for this—no *Baptist* ever held EMDA! That is, no Landmarker, no Regular, no Separate, no Particular and no Arminian Baptist ever held this position before 1900! And the evidence proving this fact is overwhelming! Over and over I have asked Bro Fenison to give us just one *explicit statement* of EMDA from our Baptist forefathers. How many has he found? Not one!

If indeed, somehow EMDA was the doctrine of Baptists, then our forefathers were most reprehensible and their culpability astounding! Why? Because they failed to spell EMDA out (which is a major doctrine according to Bro Fenison and the EMDA position) in their sermons,

expositions, books, church manuals, confessions and so on, not for a decade or two or even a century, but for 1800 years they failed to publish this doctrine and that makes them censorable and they must bear the blame forever! This must be the fact of the matter, because none of these brethren and Bro Fenison in particular, have been able to give us one single concrete reference of EMDA from any age! I cannot speak for others, but I believe we should instantly reject any doctrine, if we cannot give explicit references to it from Baptist history! Not that any doctrine is established by history but rather history reveals what Baptists believed the Scriptures taught and they gave written testimony as to what they believed. But there is no record of EMDA in Baptist annals, hence we are forced to recognize it was not Baptist doctrine! How can a Baptist hold to a doctrine which has no more of a historical basis than baptism for the dead according to the Mormons or the tongue speaking as the evidence of salvation, according to some Pentecostals? As there is no basis for these errors among Baptists so there is none for EMDA! But if EMDA is the doctrine of Scripture, then Baptists cannot be true churches for they never believed or practiced this doctrine! *Q.E.D.*!

FENISON'S ERROR ON WHAT LANDMARKISM IS

Let me be very plain. Bro Fenison does not know what Landmarkism is! I do not make this statement off the top of my head but from carefully reading his books on this subject. This proposition is easy to prove from a few of his statements.

First, he maintains that EMDA is an essential of Landmarkism. We have proved this is false in this book numbers of times. There is no proposition that is more evidently false than that Landmarkers held DA! I do not

belabor the point here.

Second, he maintains Graves, because he held DA, was sidelined and other more Scriptural, more orthodox men had to step in and maintain the truth of Landmarkism! I believe these ideas which Bro Fenison has put forth are totally false. My contention is that any man who embraces these statements does not know what Landmarkism is!

FENISON MISTAKEN ON SPILSBURY

He said:

There is no question that Spilsbury believed in the historical continuance of New Testament Churches.⁵³⁹

By these words he indicates that Spilsbury held to EMDA. This is a glaring mistake. Here is Spilsbury's own statement specifically on this subject and it will not square with what Bro Fenison claims he believed:

I fear men put more in baptism than is of right due unto it, that so prefer it above the Church, and all other ordinances besides, for they can assume and erect a Church, take in and cast out members, elect and ordain officers, and administer the Supper, and all anew, without looking after succession, and further than the Scriptures; but as for baptism, they must have that successively from the Apostles, though it come through the hands of Pope Joan. What is the cause of this, that men can do all from the Word, but only Baptism? But we are to know this, that truth depends not upon Churches, nor any mortal creature, but only upon the immortal God, who by his Word and Spirit reveals the same, when and to whom he pleases. And for succession of truth, it comes now by the promise of God, and faith of his people, whom he as aforesaid, hath taken out of the world unto himself, in the

⁵³⁹ Fenison. GCC. p. 188.

fellowship of the Gospel: to whom the ordinances of Christ stand only by succession of faith, and not of persons.⁵⁴⁰

We do not quote Spilsbury because we agree with his position but to demonstrate that Bro Fenison does not know what his position was! Spilsbury makes his position so clear that we are puzzled how anyone could misunderstand. He says, *men can assume and erect a church, anew, without looking after succession other than in Scripture!* This is not EMDA in any sense! Spilsbury insists that truth does not depend *upon churches or any mortal creature!* Rather, he argues that succession comes *by the promise of God and the ordinances by succession of faith not of persons.* This was the Particular Baptist position. Bro Fenison has misread and misunderstood these old writers.

As I suggested before, Bro Fenison and I should publicly debate this whole issue of EMDA versus DA so that a full record will be left for posterity. All we need to do is set the time and place.

⁵⁴⁰ Spilsbury. *Lawful Subjects of Baptism*, p. 65.

CHAPTER 15

EMDA ON AUTO PILOT

If, as Bro Fenison contends, that Graves and Baptists in general, were carrying on EMDA unbeknown and even when in opposition to it, because of concomitants, such as church letters, the presence of ordained men and so on, and that by these accidents the Lord's churches were perpetuated and in the line of succession, then why is it that EMDA men now reconstitute all churches that do not have an *explicit mother church constitution*? Bro Fenison knows this is what they do and probably has done so himself. Yet, when he realizes that recognizing historical churches setup without a stated mother church, is the only way out of his predicament, he instantly crosses the line and approves of those *illegal constitutions* in order to save the ship! But if this manner of church constitution was possible in history so that it produced true churches then, why does it not do so now? What changed? Bro Fenison is trying to rescue himself from a bad position!

Bro Fenison's position requires him to strike the rock twice because he, and other EMDA men reconstitute churches now which were constituted exactly like those he approves of in history! For if those churches were true churches two hundred years ago, why are these set up today in the same way, not true churches? Whatever made them Scriptural churches then will do the same thing today. Does this not prove these men are attempting to snatch the scepter out of Christ's hand, who lights church lamps and snuffs them out according to His will? We know for a fact that very few churches are ever constituted without these concomitants and, if so, this means they are Scriptural churches! But EMDA men re-constitute all such churches on a regular basis. Is this not a dangerous business?

So, these brethren have reconstituted churches, re-baptized scores of people,⁵⁴¹ re-ordained numbers of pastors and, if Bro Fenison is correct, they were done for *no legal reason* according to the principle he uses when he looks at churches in history! This is an astounding revelation! There is an *inconsistency between his theory and his practice*! He is actually doing what he accused Graves of doing—but in his case, he really believes one thing but does something entirely different! Which time was he right? In history or now? He cannot have it both ways. He needs to make this plain! So, Bro Fenison is in error either in history or in the present! But like the Jews when confronted with a dilemma, I think he will respond, *I cannot tell*!

Bro Fenison seems to appeal to the idea that Baptists in history were keeping house for EMDA but did not know it! He is forced to take this position because he knows he cannot find EMDA in practice there! So, he claims that by obtaining letters from a church, or having an ordained man present and other such accidental things, but *without the express grant of a mother church*, they were actually carrying on EMDA in church constitutions! Is this possible? He would have us believe that for nineteen centuries this was done! We know they did not know they were carrying on EMDA for there is not one explicit statement of EMDA before 1900! Is it possible that such an essential doctrine as EMDA is, could be passed on for near two thousand years, church to church and no one ever express it? That is the load this theory puts on their wagon and it is like an elephant on a Volkswagen bug! Doctrines like this do not run themselves. They must be proclaimed. They must be

⁵⁴¹ I know of some who have been baptized multiple times, and yet still cannot satisfy the powers that be! Some preacher will always be able to find something wrong with the previous authorizing church. Then, the unfortunate believer must obtain another *authority* and do everything all over again, which is conducted as if it were a game!

emphasized. The must be made plain. The people must understand what they are doing and why they do it for it to be acceptable to Christ (Re 2 & 3). Every truth runs the danger of being forgotten, misunderstood, perverted or it just fades into a formality. Consider the purpose of Baptism and the Supper. Consider the doctrine of election. Could anyone claim that because people met and prayed that therefore the doctrine of election was believed if never taught? Is it taught in Arminian churches? Was it taught in ABA churches? Did the Freewill or General Baptists teach it? This is just another attenuated effort on Bro Fenison's part to rescue EMDA from annihilation!

He seeks to give the impression that Baptists, even when they expressed DA for church constitution were, because of these concomitants, that is the incidentals and the accidents which usually accompany church constitution, preserving EMDA unconsciously, unintentionally and even when they stated their opposition to it! And what is even more marvelous, they must have done this throughout their history because there is not one explicit statement of it until modern times! In other words, Bro Fenison wants people to believe EMDA was in history just slipped under the door! These churches, that is the people and the pastors did not know it, they did not believe it and they were opposed to it yet, unconsciously, they passed EMDA on from church to church! This proves that Bro Fenison has given up the grasping of straws and is now pretending to catch smoke! Let me illustrate the error of his position by an example from the organizational records of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Lexington, KY:

Organization of Ashland Ave Church
Lexington, Kentucky, 1916

Brethren from First Baptist Church, Calvary, Porter
Memorial, and Felix Memorial met at 3:00 P. M.

Sunday, January 30th, 1916. After singing of hymns and reading of Scripture by J. W. Porter a prayer was offered by T. C. Eaton of Calvary Baptist Church.

Organization was entered into. Upon motion, Dr. J. W. Porter, of First Baptist Church, was made moderator and W. H. Porter of Calvary Baptist Church, was elected clerk. Upon motion and second the Philadelphia Confession of Faith was adopted unanimously. Upon suggestion of W. H. Porter the council of sister Baptist Churches of the city retired for the purpose of discussing the organization.

Motion was made and adopted that this Church organizing shall adopt, as its rule of conduct, practices such as are usual to the Baptist Churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The council appointed to report on the organization made a report through T. C. Eaton that the organizing of the new church was heartily recommended.

Upon motion, it was voted by those present, who desired to enter into the organization, that they organize themselves into a Baptist Church. Motion carried to enter into election of officers. C. S. Vermillion, Grover C. Thompson, Ott Miller, Dr. E. F. Beard, and J. R. Wilcoxon unanimously elected deacons. J. R. Wilcoxon nominated and unanimously elected church treasurer. Grover C. Thompson nominated and unanimously elected church clerk.

Upon motion the church adopted as its name Ashland Avenue Baptist Church. The following were charter members of the new organization: C. S. Vermillion, Mrs. C. S. Vermillion, G. C. Thompson, Mrs. G. C. Thompson, Ott Miller, Mrs. Ott Miller, Dr. E. F. Beard, Mrs. E. F. Beard, J. R. Wilcoxon, Mrs. J. R. Wilcoxon, Wilson S. Hunt, Mrs. Wilson S. Hunt, Susie Hunt, Bessie Hunt, Mrs. J. Q. Compton, D. M. Case, Mrs. S. A. Williams, J. B. Stine, Mrs. J. B. Stine, Mrs. Annie Coil, Jessie T. Coil, Miss Lucy Munday, Mrs. Emma Darnaby, S. C. Eubank. Mrs. S. C. Eubank, Mrs. Sallie E. Branaman, Mrs. Nonie Hubbard, Mrs.

Chester Lowry, Mrs. Disney Delany and Sidney Delaney.

Adjourned to meet at 10:00 A. M. February 6th.

W. H. Porter.⁵⁴²

It is quite evident that there was no such thing as EMDA in this church constitution. It is not stated anywhere that X church gave authority for this constitution. The brethren from four churches met together to help in the organization but none of them thought they had any authority and none of them suggested they had authority, and those who wished to constitute the new church did not ask for any authority. No mother church voted to give them authority. But they—those who wished to be members of the new church—appointed a meeting day and asked others to meet with them for helps. They immediately entered into the organization service. A motion was made that Bro Porter was to be moderator, and Bro J. W. Porter was made clerk. Whence the authority? What church gave it? Who said so? It is obvious that there was no authority given.

Next there was a motion and second to adopt the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. No church had been formed at that point, so who made this motion and second? Can those who are not a church do this? If not, then who can?

Then Bro W. H. Porter made a suggestion that the council of sister churches adjourn to discuss the organization. The result of this council was that “the organizing of the new church was *heartily recommended*.” Please note that they do not say, “that you are by our authority (not the authority of any specific church; not the authority of a presbytery, nor by the authority of any ordained man present; not the authority of the Association; not the authority of several churches

⁵⁴² <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/ky.aabc.organization.html>

combined) now constituted a church!” Nor do they say, “we give you authority to organize.” Nor do they say, “the umbilical cord has been cut and the daughter is now a sister!” Nor does anyone say, “I now appoint you to be a church!” This compels us to recognize that this council did not claim any authority! Nor can *recommendation* be elevated to authority! But rather, they *commend* the organization—that is they believed it would be a good thing. They have neither the power to authorize it nor the control to prevent it!

Then there is a motion and upon that “it was voted by those present, who desired to enter into the organization, that they organize themselves into a Baptist Church.” Here we see no authority of a mother church sought and none granted. There is no way to fix these proceedings so as to wind up with an EMDA constitution. It is very obvious that no such idea was in the minds of the churches represented, nor the preachers present, nor of the members-to-be, of EMDA. The only way you can put EMDA into this organization is by literary force! You may twist or warp these words until EMDA can be forced into the account, but it will be a stressed document and it will never lie still. If EMDA had been the norm, the rule, the law in those days, then this whole account would have been entirely different. There was no authority given and it is an exercise in futility to claim that it was given even though not stated, as some will no doubt attempt to do! These people very plainly understood that church constitution was by DA and that it did not come from a mother church nor from an ordained man but from Christ.

Did these members-to-be have church letters? The answer is, we do not know. If they did, they contained no authority, for this was not something they thought important enough to mention. It is possible, that they did not have letters but purposed to request them after the organization which was a common method.

You cannot press this organization into the EMDA mold. It does not fit. There is an incongruity between this factual account which overrides and supersedes all the inferences and assumptions which EMDA men bring to such accounts. Let these records speak and they will tell you the truth! Incidentally, J. W. Porter who was pastor of the First Baptist Church and was the clerk at this organization of the Ashland Avenue church, said this on church succession:

Our contention is not for apostolic succession, or church succession, but for the perpetuity of Baptist churches, from the organization of the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem to the present time, and to the end of all time. J. W. Porter.⁵⁴³

So, Bro Porter was not attempting any kind of EMDA transfer to this new group. Bro Fenison tries hard to make such accounts (see previous chapters for examples) into the EMDA format. He fails utterly. The task is impossible!

Next, we give another church constitution.

THE SALEM CHURCH CONSTITUTION Salem, Mississippi

Concerning this church which I mentioned in the first edition of *LUF*, Bro Fenison says:

Bro. Settlemoir has grossly misrepresented this case. The whole truth of the constitution of this church is obtained only when both histories are considered together.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴³ *The Baptist Examiner*, March 9, 1957, p. 1. <http://www.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator/pp0698%20difference%20succession%20and%20perpetuity.htm>

⁵⁴⁴ Fenison. *GCC*. 200.

Apparently, he means by *both histories* Christian's *History* and *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists*, by Leavell & Bailey, published in 1904. He asserts the whole truth concerning the constitution of this church can only be obtained when *both of these histories are compared*. If true, then two things are patently clear. 1) No one knew or understood the whole truth about this church until 1926 when Christian published the second volume of his history! This means that the Salem Association did not know the whole truth! Bond, who wrote the History of the Mississippi Association in 1849, did not know the whole truth about this church! 2) Bro Cockrell did not know or present the truth on this church in *SCO*, ⁵⁴⁵either 1st or 2nd edition! Why? Because he did not even mention Christian's *History of the Baptists* on the Salem Church—and this means he could not have known the *whole truth* according to Bro Fenison! Also, the question is blurted out, why does Bro Fenison limit his criteria to these two histories? Has he surveyed all the other histories and found them of no value? Has he read the two histories which he says are essential to the whole truth? What about Boyd's, Newman's and McLemore's histories? What about the Salem Church's own minutes? Or, it is just possible that Bro Fenison has overshot the runway?

Bro Cockrell issued the challenge⁵⁴⁶ to find a church constituted with no connection to another church or without a missionary. Bro Fenison commented on Bro Cockrell's challenge:

Examples where pure 'direct authority' is involved in the constitution of a church are extremely rare in American Baptist History. So rare that Elder Milburn Cockrell in his book entitled 'Church Constitution' challenged his opponents to find cases where no ordained minister, or

⁵⁴⁵ *SCO*. 86-87.

⁵⁴⁶ *SCO*. 84.

letters of dismission, or mother church was connected to a constitution. Bro Cockrell was not denying it could be done, but it would be difficult to find.⁵⁴⁷

Now we know a law is in operation at all times. If someone says that water boils at 212 ~~130~~ degrees F, and you can boil it at ~~120~~ 120 degrees ~~F~~, you prove the theory false. Thus, Bro Fenison un~~inprove that theory false. It is no law at all! Thus, Bro Fenison un~~intentionally admits-proves EMDA is not a law because he recognizes ~~that~~ churches have been constituted by DA!

Bro Fenison said I could find **only one example** of this in *LUF*.⁵⁴⁸ Actually, *seven* were given.⁵⁴⁹ Incidentally, this is another indication that Bro Fenison does not read carefully.

Correction

But I did make a mistake in this section on the Salem church where I referred to the constitution of this church. I gave the author of the book Christian referred to (he gave only the last name of the author) as *John* Bond when in fact the author was *T. M.* Bond. I discovered this error when I examined the book itself. I wish to correct that error here.⁵⁵⁰

Note first that Bro Fenison claims there is only one church mentioned in this account.

In the meantime while they waited upon the “parent church” for authority to act, the unbaptized converts were recognized as candidates for membership “in the

⁵⁴⁷ GCC. 198

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁰ *LUF*. 60-66.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Christian. *Hist.* II. 333.

⁵⁵³ GCC. 198. The emphasis and the quotations marks belong to Bro Fenison.

⁵⁵⁴ Bond. *Hist. MS Baptist Association*, p. 4-5.

church” — referring to the **parent church** as no other church was yet constituted.⁵⁵¹

I believe this is a complete misunderstanding of this historical record. The evidence indicates that there are two churches in this account, one in South Carolina and the other in Mississippi. The *church* which was caring for those awaiting baptism was clearly the Salem Church in Mississippi not the church in SC! This means there are *two churches mentioned* here and if so Bro Fenison's supposition is incorrect. These candidates for membership were waiting baptism in the *Salem Church* in Mississippi—not the Pee Dee Church in SC! The proof of this is easy. They were baptized by Bro Curtis before he returned to SC! Even after he left, when others were saved, they were baptized by a man named Chaney.

While Curtis was gone, a number of persons desired baptism, and it was agreed that Wm. Chaney should perform it, and, accordingly, he administered the ordinance to a number of persons.⁵⁵²

How could these candidates in Mississippi have been *cared for and encouraged* by the church in SC? Does Bro Fenison think they had a Lear Jet at their disposal in 1791 so they could fly the SC pastor to MS to minister in Salem and then fly him back to SC for the next service there?

The question the church at Salem asked and what they communicated with the parent church about was not to obtain authority to constitute—which is Bro Fenison's idea and it is pure imagination—an idea which is totally contrary to the records! Why is that? Because **they had already constituted themselves a church in 1791!** It was some time,

555 GCC. 198. The emphasis and the quotations marks belong to Bro Fenison.

552 Bond. *Hist. MS Baptist Association*, p. 4-5.

at least several months after they constituted, before this question came up! The converts wanting baptism brought up the question. Thus, the question the church posed had nothing to do with constitution! You cannot obtain authority to constitute after the fact!

What the Salem church asked, was what to do about *baptizing converts*, since **they had no ordained man among them**—an essential as they understood it! They sought *advice* about baptizing without an ordained man; not *authority* to constitute a church!

This is not a difficult account! The language is not hard to understand. There are no foreign terms to contend with. How Bro Fenison could make the claim that there was only one church in this account without any evidence whatsoever and in face of the documents stating they constituted in 1791 is a mystery!

In historical matters, primary documents have more weight and take precedence over all other data. In this case we have the minutes of the Salem Church and I quote:

Original Minutes of First Baptist Church. October 1791. The Baptists of the vicinity of Natchez met by request of Richard Curtis and William Thompson at the house of sister Stampley on Cole's Creek, and formed into a body, receiving (or adopting) the following articles or rules, considering it necessary that such as have a mind to join the church are only to be received by letter or experience.⁵⁵³

Some questions are in order.

What did they do? They met together! When? October 1791.

⁵⁵³ Boyd. *Popular Hist. Bap. MS.* 18.

What the purpose of this meeting? To constitute a church.

How did they do that? They formed themselves into a body (“formed into a body”) and adopted the articles of a church.

What authority did they have? They had no authority from SC. They had no ordained man among them. The only authority available to them was found in Mt 18:20.

Did they have articles of Faith? Yes, they did. They adopted the articles listed in their minutes and covenanted together on the articles and rules which follow!

If this was not a church constitution, then these saints in Salem were mistaken! But one thing is certain—*they thought they constituted a church*—as these records indicate and this proves the EMDA theory was not known among them or they would never have proceeded as they did!

This makes it quite certain that Bro Fenison’s theory is flat on the rim simply because the church constituted in 1791 according to their own records! This means they constituted before it was possible for them to obtain EMDA according to Bro Fenison's theory! But then what are we to think when Bro Fenison tells us they wrote back to SC for authority to constitute? When did this church communicate with the church in SC? Not until sometime after their organization in 1791 when they had converts awaiting baptism according to their own records. The records of these historians mentioned agree with this account of the Salem church and what it did.

Christian says they were constituted in 1791.

Leavell and Bailey say this church was constituted in 1791.

Boyd says the Salem was constituted in 1791.

Bond, who wrote *The History of the Mississippi Baptist Association*, said the church was constituted in 1791.

The Salem church records say they constituted in 1791!
Did I *grossly misrepresent* this account?

Kittery Church Organization

Bro Fenison sent a letter to me (and perhaps a hundred others, May 21, 2008). In it he gave the following quote:

"On January 3, 1682, we find Humphrey Churchwood, one of the members, at Kittery, Maine, with a band of brethren gathered about him. These were organized into a regular Baptist Church September 25, 1682, with William Screven as pastor. He then made a trip all the way to Boston to be ordained BY THE CHURCH UNDER WHOSE AUTHORITY THEY WERE CONSTITUTED." J. H. Grime, *A History of Middle Tennessee Baptists*, p. 1.⁵⁵⁴

Bro Fenison has emphasized (in this case with capitals) some of the words of Grime without making the reader aware of this, a habit of his which is found throughout *GCC* where he constantly emphasizes words and sentences without informing the reader that the accentuated words do not belong to the original author.

This is seemingly one of the strongest statements for the support of EMDA that Bro Fenison has ever produced. But it is important to note that this statement to which Bro Fenison is so strongly attracted to in Grime — *by whose authority they were constituted* — is not that of the church

⁵⁵⁴ *GCC*, pp.108,109, 116.

records of the Kittery Church nor of the Boston mother church, nor of the original historian, but *a passing comment by Grime!* This then is not the idea of the mother church. It is not what the daughter church thought. It is not the word of Burrage (the author of the *History of Maine Baptists*) but this is a phrase that Grime used over two hundred years after this church was constituted! I ask the reader. Is this the proper way to prove anything?

If Bro Fenison had carefully read Grime on the very page he quoted he would have learned that the Boston Church (the supposed mother church of the Kittery Church in the sense of EMDA) was “thoroughly organized.” This seems to indicate Grime approved of the organization of the Boston church. Now it is important to ask how this church was organized? Was it organized with mother church authority? The answer is given in the records of this church. But before we look at the record of this church, let us think about it.

Suppose, for a moment, that the Boston Church **did not** have EMDA itself! What would this do for Bro Fenison’s proposition? Nothing could deflate his claims more quickly or more completely. Could Boston provide EMDA to the Kittery Church if it never had it? If the Boston church never had it, could this incidental phrase by Grime some two hundred years later supply it? Of course not! Both reason and EMDA exclude the possibility! You must have EMDA to give EMDA, according to the theory! The theory adamantly maintains *no EMDA no church!* This is the whole system in a nutshell. No matter what Bro Grime may have meant by the phrase *by whose authority they were constituted* and no matter what Bro Fenison thought he meant, no man can put EMDA into this Kittery account if it was not in the Boston church first! This is the crux of the matter and it brings us to the question, was the Boston Church constituted with EMDA?

No! It did not have EMDA!

How do we know this? Because we have the records of the constitution of this church!

The simple fact is that the Boston Church records state it was constituted without any such thing as EMDA and without an ordained man and consequently the church at Kittery could not obtain EMDA from Boston because Boston never had it! And whatever the church at Boston did for the Kittery group, they certainly did not grant them authority in the sense of EMDA, or if so, they were selling goods which they did not possess! These terms which Bro Fenison claimed as proof for EMDA, do not support it in any sense!

The records for this church clearly state the facts. Either Bro Fenison knew the facts and withheld them or he was ignorant of them. If he did not know them, (he certainly should have known them as the account of the constitution of this Boston church was included in *LUF*, 65, which chapter he indicated he read⁵⁵⁵. Either way his situation is not too good! Now to the records.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST CHURCH BOSTON

Of the formation of this church and the reasons for it Gould, one the original members, gives an account. A small section of his narrative is here transcribed as follows:

Now after this, considering with myself what the Lord would have me to do; not likely to join with any of the churches of New England, and so to be without the ordinance of Christ; in the meantime God sent out of Old England some who were Baptists; we, consulting together what to do, sought the Lord to direct us, and

taking counsel of other friends who dwelt among us, who were able and godly, they gave us counsel to congregate ourselves together; and so we did, being nine of us, to walk in the order of the gospel according to the rule of Christ....after we had been called into two courts, the church [protestant church at Cambridge] understanding that we were gathered into church order...

The organization of this Baptist church caused a great noise throughout New England.⁵⁵⁶

This constitution took place May 28, 1665.⁵⁵⁷

Please consider. This group (the First Church of Boston) did not have authority from any church nor from any other entity on earth! This throws a wrench in the EMDA works! Whatever Grime believed about the Kittery church and how it was constituted, we know it was not established with EMDA because no church constituted by DA has EMDA—but this *mother church* was constituted by DA without any other connection to any church on earth except baptism!

Will Bro Fenison now accept this church as a true church? If so, he must tear out at least one hundred fifty pages of his book! Furthermore, this church did not have an ordained man among them! Will Bro Fenison now accept this church as a true church, to have a valid constitution, when he has argued for pages that no church can be constituted without an ordained man present? There goes another fifty pages! Is the constitution of this church in line with this EMDA law?

When this group determined to organize into a Baptist church, they did not send to England for EMDA. They did not send to Rhode Island to Roger Williams or John Clarke

⁵⁵⁶ Christian. *History of Baptists*, vol. 2, p. 74.

⁵⁵⁷ Cf. Benedict. *Hist.* 383; Armitage. *Hist.* 705; Backus. *Hist.* I. 288.

for it. Where did they get their authority? They got it from Christ in Heaven according to Mt. 18:20; 2 Cor. 8:5; 1 Pe. 2:5; Re. 1:13; 2:5. They did not obtain **earthly authority** (which Bro Fenison claims is the essential thing)⁵⁵⁸ from any source! They followed the Bible not tradition! They congregated themselves together *according to the rule of Christ*.

Here it is most important in this discussion to remember that not one of the Baptist historians who mentions the account of this Boston Church constitution censures them for what they did nor for the way they did it—that is without any vestige of EMDA and without an ordained man! If these Baptist historians had believed EMDA (as Bro Fenison is so bold to claim) was the way to constitute a church and if that theory was operational in their day (and this is the claim), their silence is inexcusable, and it defies explanation! If EMDA was not the doctrine of Baptists, then this silence is perfectly consonant with Baptist polity.⁵⁵⁹

In this case, as we have shown, EMDA could not have been involved in the organization of the Kittery church because the *mother church* was herself constituted by DA without any one of the prerequisites the EMDA position mandates! The EMDA doctrine and practice excludes both of these churches from being churches of Christ—and how many more?

What would they say if this same kind of organization took place today? They would not recognize nor fellowship such a church! They will not support a missionary who accepts this as a true constitution! They will not grant a letter to such a church and will not receive their baptism! Yet Bro Fenison

⁵⁵⁸ GCC. 212.

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Isaac Backus, *Hist.*, Vol. 1, p. 288; Benedict, *Hist.* I. 383-384.

maintains that the Kittery church was the EMDA example of how Baptist churches were then constituted! But now we learn this Boston mother was not a satisfactory mother at all according to EMDA decrees but it was itself an illegitimate church!

Remember EMDA advocates maintain you can't organize a church without authority from a mother church and you can't organize a church without an ordained man! They easily make these *laws* up as they go and increase or decrease them as the exigencies demand but in this case their ship hit the sand in spite of all their efforts! They must either give up their theory (which would be right and proper) or they must reject both the Boston and Kittery churches! These ugly facts tear up the EMDA theory and leave it in tatters!

Bro Fenison missed his mark by miles. He took a mere phrase from Grime accentuated as if it were the *sine qua non* of Baptist church constitution. He transported this allusion to the Church in Kittery with no effort to ascertain the meaning of the terms used and then assumed they got EMDA from the Boston Church and that would have sufficed except for the facts—these contrary facts! What are we to think when a man takes a phrase out of a book without checking the facts, without carefully reading the account referred to and claims it has specific and concrete teaching concerning EMDA, when the records prove it had no such thing? This shows the prepossession of men to find EMDA somewhere, anywhere, even where it never was!

When I pointed out that the Kittery Church's mother was constituted without the laws of EMDA in operation, Bro Fenison tried to escape by saying "history does not record everything!" He meant that *history* left EMDA out of the constitution of this church! However, primary records outweigh all others in court or out! So, Bro Fenison's

theory flew up and hit him in the face like a rake handle! It is not what history *did not record* that is essential but what *it did record*! The facts of history of this church blew his theory out of the water! These records tell us they had no helps, no ordained men, no assistance from any source—yet they formed a church! If EMDA is a law of Christ then no church was formed in this account and this church was a false church and every church which came out of it is also false—including the Kittery Church, according to the EMDA theory! Theories weight little in the scales of evidence, traditions less, but facts weigh in like gold! These facts overwhelm Bro Fenison and his theory! It is such a pity when a man is forced to such extremes!

In this case, as we have shown, EMDA was not involved in the organization of the Kittery church because the *mother church* was herself constituted without any one of the prerequisites the EMDA position mandates! It is also obvious that the very terms to which Bro Fenison appealed are irrelevant! They cannot mean what he thought they meant! His whole appeal to this account was a leap in the dark! These terms instead of proving EMDA refute it! It is sad, but we know many EMDA men will fully embrace these errors and never bother to check the facts! This indicates the power of misinformation to deceive.

CHAPTER 16

PARANORMAL SILENCE OF EMDA IN BAPTIST HISTORY

The facts of Scripture cannot be flushed away at the whims of Bro Fenison simply because they do not fit in with his theories, but this is what he tries to do! His ideas must be brought into line with the evidence—and he does not like the evidence. Instead, he resists it by constantly constructing bypasses around Scripture and by rejecting the facts of Baptist history with a most cavalier attitude! This is wasted effort. Thousands of theories fall before one fact. The history of EMDA for which he contends is non-existent. Instead there is, for him, a most painful silence! And as Clark says, “Doctrine should not be based on silence.”⁵⁶⁰ But that is all Bro Fenison has!

THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture gives no commandment for the doctrine of EMDA.⁵⁶¹

THERE IS NO POSITIVE LAW FOR EMDA

Positive commands are not to be derived by deduction, inference or assumption but rather from terms expressly stated. A quote from Booth gives the meaning:

By a positive command, I understand an express declaration made by competent authority, whether concerning things to be done, or to be omitted.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Gordon. *The Atonement*, p.114.

⁵⁶¹ See chapters 3,7 & 8

⁵⁶² Booth. *Paed. Examined*. I. 3.

Again, positive duties must be based on the express words of the legislator:

Positive duties, having no obligation in the reason of things, can have no foundation but in the express words of the institutor, from which alone they derive their authority.⁵⁶³

The Scriptures used by advocates of EMDA give no express word or command for it and no one would think of EMDA from reading any text to which they refer.⁵⁶⁴ On the other hand, the positive laws of the Bible are stated in plain, direct and easy to understand language. No man needs anyone to explain the meaning.

In the London Confession of 1646, our forefathers expressly rejected all laws of men and received only those laws which were plainly recorded in the Word of God. EMDA does not meet these criteria. Listen to their words:

The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience, concerning the worship of God, in which is contained the whole duty of man, is (not men's laws, or unwritten traditions, but) only the word of God contained [viz., written] in the holy Scriptures; in which is plainly recorded whatsoever is needful for us to know, believe, and practice; which are the only rule of holiness and obedience for all saints, at all times, in all places to be observed. Col. 2:23; Matt 15:6,9; John 5:39, 2 Tim. 3:15,16,17; Isa. 8:20; Gal. 1:8,9; Acts 3:22,23.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Booth. *Paed. Examined*. I. 5.

⁵⁶⁴ They are: Mk 13:34; Ac 11:22-23, 26; Ga 4:26; 2 Jn 1:13; 1 Pe 5:13; Mt 28:19-20

⁵⁶⁵ *First London Confession of Faith*, 1646 Edition, Article VIII.

We give examples of positive laws:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten commandments are the epitome of brevity, clarity, simplicity and directness. Is this not how the Lord reveals His commandments?

The Way of Salvation

Take the way of salvation. Is this not plain? Ac 16:30-31.

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Preaching the Gospel in all the World

The command to take the gospel in all the world, Ac 1:8. Is this plain?

Baptism by Immersion

Take the question of baptism by immersion. Is that plain? Yes. The very word designates what is to be done.

The Lord's Supper a Memorial Ordinance

Take the Lord's Supper. It is a preaching ordinance. Is that plain? Very plain. See 1 Co 11:23-26.

The Law of Forgiveness

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Mt 18:35.

The Law of Love

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Mt 5:44.

The New Commandment to Love One Another

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Jn 13:34.

Is there any question about the meaning of these commandments? They are so plain a child can understand them! They are positive, transparent, specific. No one can mistake the meaning.

Now is this not how the Lord makes his commandments known? J. B. Jeter speaking of the laws of Christ says:

Statute law is specific and positive, not inferential and surely leaves no place for conjecture.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁶ Jeter. *Baptist Principles Reset.* p. 45.

But EMDA is only specific when announced by its advocates! The contenders for it give conjecture and assertion for *proof*! But when you ask for a specific commandment from Scripture for this doctrine, the slate is wiped clean. They have not one line, yea not even one word!

No man has a right to claim any act or ordinance *essential* to the proper worship of King Jesus which the Word of God does not clearly command. Nor should we have any fear for refusing to obey any *Law* which does not have a positive command. Thus, the law of EMDA, discovered only by a string of consequences as long a vacuum cleaner cord, cannot be a commandment of Christ! Whence then does this *law* come? It is *the commandment of men taught for the doctrine* of Christ, Mt 15:9.

NO LAW OF EMDA IN SCRIPTURE

If Christ or the Apostles had said you must have the authority of a mother church to constitute a new church—that would have been a clear positive law. But the staunchest advocates of EMDA cannot find this law in Scripture so we are asked to receive it on inference, allusion, or conjecture instead of a command! And finally, when all else fails—and fail it does—we are taken back to Genesis and treated to a lecture on *like begets like*! But this law is biological and does not pertain to assemblies, political or religious. It refers to animals not societies. But, even if this were true of societies, which it is not, there is nothing in that analogy to insist on *mother* church authority to constitute a church—or for that matter, any authority at all! Animals do not obtain any authority when they produce off-spring. And their offspring *cannot* be of a different kind than they are! In spite of all the EMDA claims of *like begetting like* when applied to churches, I know of several churches which are not what

their mother church was—and all my EMDA brethren know this fact as well! This proves the fallacy of this analogy. It is a fatal error for their position. In this case EMDA contenders have applied biological laws to ecclesiastical institutions with the result that if it were not so serious it would be comical! Therefore, we are *forced* to recognize *Scripture gives no command for EMDA* nor does it give any such analogy!

OBSCURE LAWS MANDATE DISOBEDIENCE

When a legislator makes a law, which is so obscure that the plain people cannot understand it, disobedience is not only possible but mandated! Of course, such a law, even in the laws of men, is reprehensible. Earthly kings make their laws plain and direct so their people can understand and obey them. But these men who contend for EMDA cannot agree on just what this *law* is nor where it is found! Admittedly, they have a hard time trying to explain just how they know EMDA is a law and the Bible refuses to help them! Bro Cockrell stated it was *not spelled out in Scripture*⁵⁶⁷—that is—it was not plainly stated. Of course, this means quite simply, that it is not the law of Christ but only a tradition of man! Mt 15:9. EMDA then is plainly against Christ's own word, John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

EXAMPLES OF FALSE DOCTRINE APPEALING TO SCRIPTURE

Appealing to Scripture in support of false doctrine is no new thing. Look at the Campbellites. Is there any false doctrine in the world that is more vain and far-fetched than what

⁵⁶⁷ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50.

Alexander Campbell developed? Yet they do have a few Scriptures which *sound* like they might refer to that doctrine. And no amount of Scripture, no argument, no vacuum in history will convince them of their error. They are *mesmerized* by that error and are swallowed up in it like a kitten in a whirlpool.

Protestants and Infant Baptism

The Protestant in much the same manner is *spellbound* with infant baptism. They have no positive command for the baptism of babies and they know this, but they will not give it up. With bull-dog tenacity they cling to this doctrine which has no commandment in the Word of God.

Mormons and Baptism for the Dead

The Mormons believe in proxy baptism and think to derive that teaching from 1 Co 15:29. Are they wrong? Surely. But this text sounds like it is *teaching* that doctrine. But there is nothing of the kind for EMDA!

Roman Catholics and the Primacy of Peter

The Roman Catholics teach the primacy of Peter as supreme bishop and from this they claim the power of the pope is universal. Are they wrong? I am convinced they are. But they do have some texts that sound like Peter was placed above the other apostles, such as Mt 16:18-19; Jn 21:16-17. But EMDA contenders do not have a shadow of a text for their doctrine!

Footwashing

Those who believe in footwashing as an ordinance we believe to be in error. But they do have a text which could

mean what they teach, Jn 13:14. But EMDA cannot find even a pretext of support!

Soul Sleep

There are those who teach soul-sleep. Are they wrong? Surely! But they do have a few texts which seem to set forth their doctrine. But there are no texts which seem to teach EMDA!

While these heresies do have some texts which sound like they might support these errors, there is no text which even sounds like EMDA! Nor is there a single text that even comes close to a positive law for EMDA! Nor is there any *pattern* for this doctrine! There is no *statement* of it; there is no *institution* of it; there is no *example* of it and there is no *practice* of it! It is pure tradition! They claim a few texts but these do not rise up to honorable mention, and their own writers have admitted this!

False worship is nothing but the tradition of men and God hates tradition! Mt. 15:9. All such worship, no matter how detailed, no matter how essential it is in the mind of its defenders, it is tradition still and must be rejected.

Let me sum up the position of those who embrace the tradition of EMDA:

- They cling to this doctrine although they cannot find it in Scripture!
- They claim EMDA is Baptist doctrine even though there is not one single reference to it in Baptist history!
- They claim it is a Landmark doctrine but not one Landmarker ever held EMDA!

- They ignore the fact that Landmark Baptists, held tenaciously to DA—not only in theory but in practice!
- They still publish the error that J. R. Graves and the Landmarkers who were associated with him in the 1800s, were contenders for EMDA. But this is false. Graves taught and practiced DA throughout his lifetime!
- Graves and his peers taught and practiced DA throughout the 1800s!

Earliest Specific Statement of EMDA

The first written statement of EMDA which I have seen was written in 1954. Barnes gives this brief statement:

Church succession—one congregation grows out of and is formed by the authority of another.⁵⁶⁸

Barnes is here discussing the various views of succession. He gives no references for his statement so we do not know how he arrived at this position.

The first pamphlet discussing this idea, that I have seen was published by Calvary Baptist Church in 1966. It was taken from questions answered in *The Baptist Examiner* in the summer of 1964.⁵⁶⁹ If there is any publication discussing this theory prior to 1964, I have never seen it.⁵⁷⁰ If anyone can give an earlier publication setting forth EMDA explicitly, I would welcome this information.

⁵⁶⁸ Barnes. *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953*, p.100.

⁵⁶⁹ 7 *Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*, p. 1. Calvary Baptist Church, Ashland, KY, 1966.

⁵⁷⁰ I have carefully researched the pages of *The Baptist Examiner* from its inception in 1931 up through 1955 and could not find one reference to EMDA before that date.

THIS IS NEW DOCTRINE

I have challenged those who contend for this doctrine to give *one explicit reference to it before 1900*⁵⁷¹ for nearly twenty years and my mail box is still empty! *If it is new it is not true, and if true it is not new* is a valid proposition, whoever said it.⁵⁷² EMDA is a new doctrine! It just sprang up out of the ground spontaneously in the same way a mushroom pops up overnight. One day there is nothing and the next day there you have it! From my research on this subject I believe it first met the light of day around 1950 to 55, at least among Sovereign Grace Baptists. Now, I cannot prove EMDA originated in the mid-1950s but this is what the evidence indicates. Two older preacher friends of mine (one of them has gone home to be with the Lord since he told me about this) were active in this time period and well acquainted with Baptist history and Landmark Baptists. They told me when they first heard of this doctrine, and one of them specifically gave the date as 1955 and told me that he first heard this idea from Bro Wayne Cox of Memphis, Tennessee. How could these men be ignorant of a doctrine which, we are told, was taught, not only among Landmark Baptists, but by Baptists in general?

The fact that Brethren C. D. Cole, Buel Kazee, T. P. Simmons, Ben Bogard, I. K. Cross as well as others, *never embraced EMDA*, and, apparently, Brethren John R. Gilpin and Roy Mason did not embrace it until the late 1950s, indicates that it is not a Landmark doctrine. For how could these men be recognized as orthodox, be used extensively in our churches, schools, revivals, conferences and be in full fellowship among the churches and pastors (as they were),

⁵⁷¹ I give this date for clarity and to be specific.

⁵⁷² These are said to be the words of Harry Ironsides.

by those which we are now told, held EMDA, when these men did not believe it? Can that be done now? Do EMDA churches have such men in their churches and conferences now? Of course not!

Could these men have been ignorant of this essential doctrine among Landmark pastors and churches if it was a Landmark doctrine? Furthermore, if J. R. Graves, J. M. Pendleton, A. C. Dayton and W. A. Jarrel, were *leading* Landmark Baptists of their time, and they were, and they all held DA — and they did — how could they have been active in churches which opposed DA and held EMDA? Is this possible? The only way this can be explained is by recognizing that EMDA was not a Landmark doctrine! This means that anyone who contends that Landmark Baptists held EMDA will need to bring something more than bare assertion (which is the sum and substance of Bro Fenison's efforts) as proof of his position! Has he been able to do this? Not that I have seen. And then to further manifest his error in this matter, and by the way, to give as fine an example of a flip-flop as I ever saw, claiming in *GCC* that Graves held EMDA tenaciously, but in *ACC* just the opposite! We hardly know which Fenison to believe!

NO CHURCHES RECONSTITUTED FOR THE LACK OF EMDA

If EMDA was the doctrine of Baptists generally (this is Bro Fenison's contention) and, yet we are informed by Bro Cockrell,⁵⁷³ that there were "liberal elements" among Baptists which did not practice EMDA, then how is that we have no record of the reorganization of these non EMDA churches, as the question must have been as prominent in history as it is now? So far as my reading goes, I have never

⁵⁷³ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89.

found one example of a church being reconstituted because it did not have EMDA. Let Bro Fenison give us some examples if he can. He tried to do this in *GCC* but utterly failed.⁵⁷⁴

STANDARD BAPTIST AUTHORITIES

By this term *standard* we mean those who are recognized authorities, such as Hiscox,⁵⁷⁵ Crowell, Dargan, Jones and Harvey. It cannot be that our standard writers were all in error on this subject. If they set forth DA in their books and manuals then that was Baptist doctrine and Baptist practice!

When they give the essentials of church constitution they agree that the authority was given by DA! In unity, they taught that any three baptized believers could constitute a church with direct authority from Christ without any authority from an earthly source! Furthermore, they specifically state that ordained men *are not essential* to the constitution of a church. This flies in the face of Bre Cockrell and Fenison and jerks the Baptist rug from under their feet! Such statements are not the isolated conclusions of some rustic preachers but these men were among our most outstanding leaders and were significant among Baptists. They were the standard writers and spokesmen of Baptists. Thus, DA was the age-old Baptist doctrine and we believe it is also the Scriptural doctrine.

Among church manuals which I have or have examined are the following: Pendleton, Harvey, Crowell, Jones, Hiscox, Dargan, Ripley, Keach, Reynolds, Soares, Griffith, Samuel

⁵⁷⁴ Fenison. *GCC*, p. 33. See my answer to his error in DABH, p. 72.

⁵⁷⁵ Fenison. *ACC*, p.11, 151, 164, 231, 254, 270. This article was not written by Cathcart but it was written at his request "by one of the ablest Baptist ministers in this country," p. 867, not otherwise identified. Possibly he refers to J. M. Pendleton.

Jones, Bogard, Fish, Dagg, W. B. Johnson, Baker, Mell, W. Williams, *The Charleston Association Manual*, Philadelphia Baptist Association's Church Discipline, Savage—and marvel of all marvels — *not one of them mentions EMDA!* However, those that do discuss church constitution, emphatically state DA! Yet Bro Fenison is bold enough to pretend that EMDA was not only Landmark Baptist doctrine but that it was *Baptist* doctrine! His problem — and it is a major problem — is that he cannot account for this anomaly! He attempts no explanation because there is none!

Fenison on Cathcart

What should we say of Bro Fenison's elaborate deductions from Cathcart's treatment of *Old Landmarkism* in *The Baptist Encyclopedia*?⁵⁷⁶ This is another example of how Bro Fenison can derive pages of information from what he *assumes* an author meant without any research. His error is easily discovered. For example, we need only look at how he attempts to derive EMDA from Graves' (and others) even when he knows Graves held DA! Thus, when we have explicit statements by men for DA, yet Bro Fenison claims they support EMDA by some term or some analogy which he pretends is proof they gave support to this tradition even in the face of their explicit statements for DA! Of course, with such tactics one can prove anything! He can easily make Gill an Arminian or Westley a Calvinist! This indicates Bro Fenison is always ready to force a man's words into the EMDA mold just to make it appear he has won an argument—and he does this times without number in his books! *Bro Fenison thinks he can see EMDA everywhere but he can find it nowhere!* This accounts for his deriving EMDA from the Cathcart article. Could the author be writing with EMDA in mind? Yes, that is possible. But it is

also possible that he was writing with DA in mind and we believe it not only possible but most probable that it was written from the DA perspective, because this is Baptist doctrine and practice, as we have proved numberless times in this book. One thing is certain, Bro Fenison does not know what Cathcart's position was! He did no research! Nor did he give a statement from the author in which he explicitly stated his position was EMDA! Now it seems that wisdom demands that a careful author will, if he does not know the position of a writer on a specific issue, keep silent on that subject until he can ascertain what his position was. But Bro Fenison has consistently claimed that men held EMDA without doing the necessary research to ascertain what they believed on this subject. So, when it came to Cathcart he simply *assumed* his position was EMDA just as he did that of Graves and others. And from the way he has perverted the words of these other writers, and the way he has quoted men as holding EMDA *when he knew they believed DA* makes me question every reference he gives unless he can give an explicit statement of EMDA by the author he is quoting! This he has never done and this indicates the reason he does not do so is because he cannot do so! Thus, until Bro Fenison gives specific evidence that the author of this article held EMDA, we will count his theory as just another spin of his!

That this is what Bro Fenison has done we need only consider his reference to Dargan. He claims he held EMDA and it sounds plausible from the quotes he gave. But we are shocked when we examine the very page he is quoting because there we find Dargan specifically stating his position as DA!⁵⁷⁷ Now it seems impossible that Bro

⁵⁷⁷ Dargan. *Ecclesiology*, p. 195, "...that is to say the church constitutes itself." This quote and the fact that the author gives *several different ways to constitute a church and none of them included EMDA*, throws much doubt on anyone who quotes Dargan as holding EMDA simply because he used the term *mother*

Fenison did not see this plain statement of DA—if he ever saw the book.

To suggest that EMDA was the consistent stated and practiced doctrine of Baptists through the ages and that yet not one of them ever stated it in specific terms is one of the most astounding absurdities which has ever been broached among Baptists! But this is what Bro Fenison and all EMDA men are forced to claim. The only thing which I remember which approaches this level of absurdity is that of Hitler's war time paper, *The Sentinel*, which was published in English, and it claimed Germany was waging a just war!

We now look at the summation of history on this subject:

Tertullian

Tertullian, who wrote in the year 150, 50 years after the lifetime of the last apostle, says: "*Where there are three, there is a church, though they be laymen.*"⁵⁷⁸

J. R. Graves

Graves insists on DA and uses Mt 18:20 for support:

The fact is, that a body of baptized disciples in any place can constitute themselves into a church, without an ordained minister, and then proceed to elect their own officers. The highest and oldest authorities sustain this position. Christ says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." – Matthew 18:20.⁵⁷⁹

church, which Bro Fenison put in all caps, as if Dargan used *mother church* in the sense of EMDA! I do not believe Bro Fenison ever saw this book. I think he took this quote out of *SCO*. p. 20, sight unseen! *GCC*, p. 101.

⁵⁷⁸ Graves. *The Baptist*. 1-17-1880, p. 486.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid*. 1-17-1880, p. 486.

Graves Quotes Hiscox

Dr. Hiscox, in his Church Directory, which is a standard authority with American Baptists, says:

It is customary for them [churches organizing] to call a counsel, to meet at the same time, or at a *subsequent time* to *recognize* them; that is to examine their doctrines, inquire into the circumstances and reasons of their organization, and express, in behalf of the churches they represent, approbation for their course and fellowship for them as a regularly constituted church of the same denomination. Calling the counsel is, however, entirely optional with the church, it is a prudential measure merely, to secure the sympathy and approbation of sister churches. BUT IT IS IN NO SENSE NECESSARY.⁵⁸⁰

Crowell

The proof is, therefore, complete, that the power which each and every church exercises is conferred directly by Christ, is continued on condition of obedience to his laws, and is withdrawn when that obedience ceases. It is also plain, that when a company of baptized believers assume these obligations in obedience to the plain will of their Master, and faithfully fulfill them, they become a church, authorized to perform all acts proper to a Gospel church. No bishop, no council of ministers, nor delegation from other churches, nor sanction of the church universal, can impart to them the least degree of church power. The reasons why it is a duty, in most cases, to call in the assistance of neighboring churches and ministers when the formation of new church is contemplated, is for mutual counsel and prayer; but they can impart no power to the new body, for they have none to spare; and what they possess is in its

⁵⁸⁰ *The Baptist*. 12-22-83, P.8. The emphasis in capitals belongs to Graves.

nature incommunicable by human agency. It must come from Christ alone.⁵⁸¹

S. H. Ford

Succession among Baptists is not a linked chain of churches or ministers, uninterrupted and traceable at this distant day...The true and defensible doctrine is that baptized believers have existed in every age since John baptized in Jordan, and have met as a baptized congregation in covenant and fellowship where an opportunity permitted.⁵⁸²

Griffiths

While some Baptist churches spring from others, it is not a necessity. A Baptist church may exist far from another and be independent of either another or of ministerial offices. At first churches had an origin in Apostolic ministry. In later days, from the people who have the Scriptures only. The head of the church is Himself, the sole donor of power to be and to do. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20).⁵⁸³

Harvey

A church...is organized under a divine constitution and according to a divine model.⁵⁸⁴

The church is in things spiritual independent of the state. It is formed under authority from Christ, and owes supreme allegiance to him.⁵⁸⁵

When a church is organized and takes the common name of community of churches, thereby claiming public recognition as one of them, the plain duty of

⁵⁸¹ William Crowell. *The Church Member's Manual*. 1847, p. 69-70.

⁵⁸² S. H. Ford. Quoted by Jarrel in *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1.

⁵⁸³ Griffiths. *NJ Baptist Hist.*, p. 369.

⁵⁸⁴ Harvey. *The Church*, p. 36.

⁵⁸⁵ Harvey. *The Church*, p. 64.

such church, if circumstances admit, is to seek the counsel of these churches, submitting to them a statement of its reasons for organizing, its material for membership, and its articles of faith and practice, inviting their approval...In both cases supposed, [organization and ordination] however, the withholding of recognition would affect only the external relations. It would not render the church less a church, nor its church acts less valid...non-recognition would simply leave the church and the pastor outside of, isolated from, the fellowship of the community of churches, and unentitled to bear their common name.⁵⁸⁶

J. H. Hinton

In this country (England), a Baptist church is formed by any number of Baptists professors who please to form one, and where and when they please. There is no power which pretends, or is able, to say, You may not, or you may; you shall, or you shall not. If the parties like to consult one or more neighboring ministers or brethren, the do so; if not, their proceedings are equally valid without it.⁵⁸⁷

R. B. C. Howell

Touching the validity of the ordinances administered by our clergy, it is wholly unimportant whether we can trace a regular succession of bishops up to the apostles. It is sufficient for us to know that we are organized according to the established laws of Christ, support the true doctrines of the gospel, that our constitution and practice agree with the rule prescribed by him, and which were strictly obeyed and enjoined by his apostles and that we keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto the saints. Such a church is Christ's

⁵⁸⁶ Harvey. *The Church*, p. 55.

⁵⁸⁷ Hinton, J. H., Intro to *Wayland's Prin. & Pract.* p. xxi, 1861. John Howard Hinton, M.A. was prominent among the Baptists of England. Cf. *Baptist Ency.* 527.

representative on earth, and, according to his word, possesses all the requisite authority to create and ordain ministers, whenever the cause of Christ shall demand such a measure.⁵⁸⁸

W. A. Jarrel

Jarrel quotes Graves with approval:

The late and lamented scholar, J. R. graves, LL. D., wrote: “Wherever there are three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches covenanted together to hold and teach, and are governed by the New Testament,” etc., “there is a Church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers in a thousand miles of them to organize them into a church. There is not the slightest need of a council of presbyters to organize a Baptist church.”⁵⁸⁹

W. B. Johnson

In these scriptures, we have a satisfactory account of the formation of the mother church at Jerusalem. *One accord, mutual consent* in the truth as it is in Jesus, constituted the principle on which the church was formed. The apostles taught the disciples the duty, and the principle, of church relation, and they complied with it. But no official act of the *apostles* beyond teaching, do we learn, gave validity to its existence. With the pattern thus clearly given, and the scripture record of numerous churches in different places, we are taught, that wherever a sufficient number of believers in Christ, baptized upon a profession of faith in him, live sufficiently contiguous to each other for the purposes of the church relation, they should unite together in such relation on the principle of ONE

⁵⁸⁸ Howell, *Terms of Communion*, p. 249. Howell was a mentor of Graves in Graves' his early years.

⁵⁸⁹ Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1. This quote is from *Tn Baptist*: Querist, May 15, 1880, p. 759.

ACCORD, *mutual consent in the truth*. The Bible is their only standard of doctrine and duty.⁵⁹⁰

Now, as far as I can understand the New Testament, I see no authority given to a church of Christ to transfer its power or authority to any other church or body of men on earth.⁵⁹¹

J. L. Burrows

As to organization, Baptist churches organize themselves. Wherever a sufficient number of converted and baptized disciples desire to become a church and to meet regularly for worship and mutual edification and usefulness, they simply enter into covenant with each other, appoint their officers and agree to meet stately for religious service. No outside permission or authorization is needed. They are now a church. If they wish for the approval and fellowship of neighboring churches, they ask such churches to send delegates to meet with them and give them the sanction of approval and fellowship—go give them approval and fellowship—to give them what we technically call recognition.⁵⁹²

T. G. Jones

Amongst their [Baptist—JC] sister churches they are related by sympathies and kind offices, but they own no subjection, and acknowledge no dependence either on contemporary churches of their own country, or upon the churches of other lands or other times, except as those churches have held the same truth, clung to the same Head, and have exhibited the same spirit...

They claim to hold directly of the ever-living, almighty, and omnipotent Spirit, and to lean, without the interposition of chains of succession and lines of spiritual descent, immediately and for themselves on

⁵⁹⁰ Johnson, *The Gospel Developed*, 1846, Q. by Dever, *Polity*, p. 187.

⁵⁹¹ Johnson, *The Gospel Developed*, 1846, Q. by Dever. *Polity*, p. 173.

⁵⁹² Burrows. *What Baptists Believe*, p. 8. 1887.

the bosom and heart of the Saviour, who pledged his presence to the end of the world, where two or three are gathered together in his name. To all pedigrees of spiritual and priestly class, claimed by some Christians, we oppose the permanent presence and indefeasible priesthood of the great Melchisedec of our profession, without beginning of days or end of years; and we claim to come up out of the wilderness, stayed directly on Christ and leaning on our beloved. We touch, so to speak, his bare arm as our stay, without the intervention of the envelopes of any favored order or virtue running through a chain of spiritual conductors. Our graces are not transmitted, but taken direct from the Redeemer's own hand.⁵⁹³

Buel Kazee

Certainly, the only precedent we have is the scriptural example of Paul and Barnabas or Paul and Silas, and none of us knows anything about just what procedure was involved in the organizing of constitution of these churches. It is our own view that most of these early churches were constituted without much form or ceremony. The necessity for more definite form of constitution would come with the crystallizing of church life, no doubt, but none of this was laid down in blueprint by our Lord.⁵⁹⁴

Benjamin Keach

For hath not one regular Church as great Authority from Christ as another.⁵⁹⁵IX. In their having the divine Presence with them: Or when the Glory of God fills his Temple.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Jones. *The Baptists*. P. 26-27. Electronic copy.

⁵⁹⁴ Kazee. *Ch & the Ordinances*, p. 104.

⁵⁹⁵ Keach. *Glory of A True Church*...Quoted by Dever, *Polity*, p. 81.

⁵⁹⁶ Keach. *Glory of A True Church*...Q. By Dever, *Polity*, p. 85. Footnote is: "Ex. 20:24. Mat. 18:20."

Jesse Mercer

In an article written for the *Christian Index*, December of 1833 Mercer said:

There is not even any direct scriptural authority for such an organization as an association. The church, on the other hand, receives its power and authority directly from Christ.⁵⁹⁷

J. B. Moody

And wherever two or three baptized disciples abide, there they ought “to gather together in Christ’s name,” and organize and co-operate.⁵⁹⁸

Pendleton

And as churches in all ages must be formed after the apostolic model, it follows that where penitent, regenerate, baptized believers in Christ are found, there are scriptural materials for a church. Such persons having first given themselves to the Lord, and then to one another, in solemn covenant, agreeing to make the will of Christ as expressed in his word their rule of action, are, in the NT sense of the term, a *church*.⁵⁹⁹

Churches formed according to the New-Testament model are not only independent of the state, but in matters pertaining to government they are independent of one another. They are interdependent only in the sense involved in mutual fellowship; and their mutual influence is not to be lightly esteemed, for it answers valuable purposes. But it must not be forgotten that every local congregation of baptized believers united in church worship and work is as complete a church as ever existed, and is perfectly competent to do whatever

⁵⁹⁷ Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 231.

⁵⁹⁸ Moody. *Distinguishing Doctrines of the Baptists*, p. 11.

⁵⁹⁹ Pendleton’s *Church Manual*, [Pp.](#) 14.

a church can of right do. It is as complete as if it were the only church in the world.⁶⁰⁰

J. J. Porter

I care nothing for the succession theory of churches in the sense that one church came out of another church.⁶⁰¹

Note that these quotes are specific and they are on the subject of the constitution of a church. They are from men who were renown among Baptists. These are not isolated statements, but they are the consensus of numbers of other Baptists who were scholars and well acquainted with Baptist church polity. Keep in mind, while we have given numbers of references from our standard writers for DA, our opponents have not been able to find *one single quote* from any Baptist author which explicitly sets forth EMDA! Our EMDA brethren would trade the farm for just one quote like these given above from Baptist history but they cannot be found!

EMDA MEN ON GRAVES' POSITION

Graves' position on how to constitute a church is now well known. Graves never believed EMDA for one moment in his life! He held tenaciously to DA in both doctrine and practice! We can thank Bro Wayne Camp for making this fact so well known that anyone who contends otherwise sets himself in the category of men who claim the world is flat! This raises questions which need to be asked.

If EMDA men knew Graves' position was DA, then why did they not make this known? Most SDAs know Ellen White

⁶⁰⁰ Pendleton. *Dist. Principles of Baptists*. p. 188.

⁶⁰¹ J. J. Porter. *Sumter Discussion*, p. 180; Quoted by Bob Ross in *Landmarkism*, p. 101. Ross Says Porter was a Landmarker.

was a plagiarist but not many of them publish this fact. Instead they continue to hold her up as a great prophethess. Is it wrong to conceal facts like these? Do our EMDA men not have an obligation to make known to their churches and in their conferences, in their books and periodicals that Graves did not believe EMDA but held tenaciously to DA? Is this not especially true when they have been holding up Graves and quoting him in support of EMDA for years? Are they not responsible to make their people aware of his position? How dare they continue to conceal this fact especially when they reject and refuse to fellowship those who believe and practice the same things Graves did!

When did our EMDA brethren know Graves' position was DA? I know Bro Fenison knew it as early as 2007. I think others knew it long before but very few have admitted it. Rather they continue to quote Graves in support of their position even as Bro Fenison has done!

If Graves and Landmarkism are practically synonymous, and they are, how is it that Bro Fenison is bold enough to try to make it appear that Graves was not a representative Landmarker at all? Should the leaders in the churches which hold the doctrine of EMDA not make this plain to their people and indicate who the man or men were that held up the Landmark flag so it would not be soiled when it fell from Graves' unworthy hands? Why has there been no word setting forth these facts for the knowledge of the churches, and the readers of their periodicals? Are they afraid to admit the truth?

When did the EMDA men know and how much did they know? Are they like a district attorney who knows there is contrary evidence on the case but does not give it to the defense? Is this honest? How can they withhold this information? Were they hoping to delude their readers into

continuing to believe what they know is false? Do they prefer a falsehood to the truth? What is the real motive which leads them to conceal this information? Is not truth paramount in all studies? Are we not duty bound to the Lord to be above board in all such matters? Are these men not bearing false witness when they quote Graves in support of their position when they know he did not believe it? Are they not bearing false witness by their silence?

Then why is Graves' real position of *direct authority* for church constitution concealed? Why did Bro Fenison conceal it in *GCC*? Why did he not make a full statement of his error in *ACC*. Why did he conceal Graves' real position in *The Landmark Edition of the NT*?

Why have these brethren never admitted this fact? Even when these facts were called to their attention, as they were in various articles in *GPP* and in *LUF* and *DABH*, very few ever made an admission of their error! Why has there never been an article on this subject in *BBB* or one of the other papers? How can a man who knows the truth withhold it from those who look to him for leadership? Let the reader ask, why these men do not set the record straight?

Graves' position as the undisputed leader of Landmarkism puts our EMDA brethren in a vise and everyone who goes by gives it another turn. And this is emphasized when it is revealed that Baptists, in general, took the same position as Graves on this subject. Our EMDA brethren are like the dove Noah sent out, they can find no place to rest the sole of their foot. Landmark Baptists never believed or practiced EMDA! The SBC did not! Nor did any other Baptists north or south! Neither did the Baptists of England! The question then is, where can they look for a line of churches that held EMDA? This question is one that most dare not ask, and those who

do receive no answer but are assigned names such as ‘apostate Landmarkers’!⁶⁰²

If any one of our EMDA brethren were called into court as a witness and duly sworn, how would they answer the following questions:

1. Did J. R. Graves teach the doctrine of the necessity of a mother church in order to establish a new church?
2. Did J. R. Graves hold the doctrine of DA?
3. Was J. R. Graves a Landmark Baptist?
4. Did J. R. Graves at any time change his position from DA to EMDA?
5. If so, can you give the reference where he stated this change?
6. Can you give a specific reference where any Landmark Baptist of the 1800s embraced the doctrine of the essential of a mother church to set up a new church?
7. What was his name?
8. In what book did you find this?
9. Can you give reference where any Landmark Baptist explicitly stated the doctrine of the necessity of a mother church to begin a new church?
10. Did Edward Hiscox teach the doctrine of a mother church?
11. Can you give the reference?
12. Can you give us the name of any Baptist in history who explicitly taught EMDA?
13. Who was the first Baptist known to you who explicitly stated the doctrine of EMDA?
14. Is it wrong to quote a man as holding EMDA when, in fact, he never held that position?

⁶⁰² Cf. Cockrell. *SCO*, pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 50, 62, 79, 86, 94, *et. al.*

15. Do you consider a man honest who knows a man does not hold EMDA and yet quotes him as if he does?

Would any of our EMDA brethren answer these questions in a deceitful way in a court of law? Would they be honest in giving their answers? If so, do they not have a greater responsibility to the Lord, to their churches, to those who read their books, to reveal the truth than they do to a court of law?

CONCLUSION

EMDA IS NOT A LANDMARK DOCTRINE

In this book, I have tried to show that EMDA is not a Landmark Baptist doctrine. EMDA is a tradition which has attached itself to some Landmark Baptists but it does not belong there, and it must be removed. It is a complete misunderstanding of Landmarkism to charge it with EMDA. Those who have attempted to superimpose EMDA upon Landmarkism, whether from within or without, suffer from a major misconception. The original men responsible for re-setting the old Landmarks never believed or practiced EMDA, and this has been proved—if anything can be proved! Landmarkism never had anything to do with this tradition except to reject it by contending for DA!

EMDA IS NOT A BIBLE DOCTRINE

Nor is EMDA a doctrine of the Bible and its chief exponents admit this. Scripture is as silent on EMDA as it is on the baptism of infants! And because Scripture does not teach EMDA, the case is settled beyond all question for Baptists. EMDA is not *for* Scripture, it is not *from* Scripture and it is not *in* Scripture! EMDA advocates have tried to find Scripture for EMDA, but like the magicians of Egypt, they are unable to bring forth. *This is the finger of God!*⁶⁰³ Honesty compels EMDA advocates to admit *there is no positive law for EMDA in Scripture*—hence it is not a law of Christ but only a tradition of man! There is *no allusion to it*. There is *no pattern for it*! There is *no practice of it in the NT*! There is *no positive law for EMDA in the New Testament*! *Just*

⁶⁰³ Ex. 8:19.

one sentence from His lips would have established it forever—but He never uttered that sentence!

EMDA IS NOT A BAPTIST DOCTRINE

Nor is EMDA found in Baptist History. You can as well claim Baptists held to speaking in tongues as a second work of grace as you can that they held EMDA! There is *not one single statement* by a Baptist preacher, historian, writer or leader in any book, sermon, or church record of this idea! It literally *sprang up out of the ground!* It has no history! EMDA is the most preposterous proposition ever conceived by Baptists! For men to claim EMDA is the commandment of Christ and the consistent practice of Baptists *without a specific command for it* and *without a single explicit statement of it by any Baptist who ever lived* defies comprehension! That anyone would infer that accidents, concomitants and incidentals of church constitution as proof that EMDA was practiced by Baptists for 1800 years, will strike the mind of every thinking man with all the force of a tsunami!

Bro Jarrel Huffman said:

... let us be slow to sanction, promote, or teach any doctrine that our Baptist forefathers knew nothing of. This is not to say that any man is now inspired, nor is it to declare that confessions of faith are inspired, but the point is this: IF TRUE BAPTISTS IN HISTORY KNEW NOTHING OF A TEACHING, AND DID NOT PUT SUCH IN ANY CONFESSION OF FAITH, IT IS *SUSPECT* TO SAY THE LEAST!⁶⁰⁴

We have shown how these old Baptist writers explicitly state, define, defend, and enunciate their belief and practice

⁶⁰⁴ Jarrel E. Huffman. “*Church Truth at a Point of Crisis*,” p.13. Emphasis belongs to Huffman.

of DA or *Divine* Constitution, that is, that churches **are constituted by the direct authority of Christ Himself!** The authority comes from Christ! And however valuable other churches are, and however important ordained men are, *church authority* does not come through these incidental instruments. No church approval is required to constitute a new church! No presbytery is essential! No ordained elder is mandatory! *Christ alone* is all the authority required and He gives His promise and His authority to every church so constituted! This is the consensus of Baptist History. The Scripture itself is above all practice, ancient or modern and outweighs all writers and settles all arguments as to doctrine and it is not only devoid of EMDA, but Christ expressly teaches DA in one plain sentence:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Mt 18:20.

I close with these propositions. Let the advocates of EMDA answer the following:⁶⁰⁵

- 1) Produce a quote from any Landmark Baptist who taught EMDA.
- 2) Produce a Baptist church covenant which teaches EMDA.
- 3) Produce a Baptist confession which specifically teaches EMDA.
- 4) Produce a Baptist manual which explicitly teaches EMDA.
- 5) Produce any Baptist history which specifies EMDA.

⁶⁰⁵ Of course, I mean before the year 1900.

6) Produce any Baptist Association which included EMDA as a requirement for membership.

7) Produce the record of any Baptist Association which refused to admit a church because it was not formed via EMDA.

8) Produce one church ever *re-constituted* because it did not obtain EMDA.

9) Produce a “thus saith the Lord” for EMDA.

10) Produce a reasonable explanation of why so many Baptist leaders explicitly state the authority for church constitution comes directly from Christ according to Mt 18:20 if Baptists held EMDA?

11) Produce the lineage of any Baptist church which has an EMDA to EMDA connection up to 1600.

12) Give the positive law for EMDA in Scripture.

Let the reader ask himself, why the advocates of EMDA have never before, and will not now, answer these propositions?

In this book, I have attempted to prove the following:

- There is no *positive* command for EMDA in the Word of God.
- EMDA is a new light doctrine never known until our own times.
- There is not one plain statement of this doctrine by any Baptist.
- No Baptist confession of faith mentions EMDA.

- The leading Landmark Baptists in the 1800s held DA.
- EMDA does not belong to Landmarkism.
- EMDA writers appeal to men who specifically held DA in support of EMDA. This is unethical and deceptive.
- EMDA men appeal to concomitants, accidents and incidentals of church constitution for the support of their theory and this is a delusion.
- EMDA men cannot point to one church re-constituted because it did not have a mother church.
- EMDA makes great numbers of churches in our history to be false churches because they did not have EMDA.
- EMDA men cannot agree on how to recognize a true church.
- EMDA is strange fire because it is not commanded in the Word of God.
- EMDA is the doctrine of men. Christ gave this test: Is it from Heaven or is it from men, Mt 12:25. These two are contradictory. If it is not from Heaven, then it is from men. Every doctrine of men is to be rejected, Mt 15:13.

The reader will judge if I have been successful.

APPENDIX I

TERMS DEFINED

The reader is informed that this glossary is not to be construed as authoritative. It is rather an attempt to develop a working definition of the terms used in this book as found in Baptist History. In many cases I could find no definition of these terms except in usage. I have attempted to glean the meaning from histories, church records, confessions, and other sources. I have given sources for some of these. If you detect any errors in my conclusions I will appreciate it if you will call them to my attention. If you know of any source for the definition of any of these terms included, please make me aware of them. Throughout these definitions italicized words or phrases indicate terms which are also defined in this glossary.

Assistance. *Assistance* refers to non-authoritative help which is given by one church to a group or to a church. **There is no authority in *assistance*.** We know this because churches sent *assistance* to ordinations, church trouble as well as constitutions. Assistance cannot in one case mean one thing and in another something else without specific statements to prove this. In Baptist history assistance was often called *Helps*. Cf. *Helps*.

Arm. An *arm* was, in Baptist history, a group of baptized believers who belonged to a particular church but being at a distance too great to attend the church where membership was held, met and functioned as an arm of the home church until such a time as they were considered *ripe* for *constitution*. They preached, baptized and partook of the supper but all their actions were subject to the approval of

the home church. This term has almost slipped from Baptist usage the *arm* being now called a *mission*. It is synonymous with *branch*. I believe this whole concept is unnecessary and unscriptural. It has no NT basis.⁶⁰⁶

Authority. “The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge. One that is invested with this power.”⁶⁰⁷ All authority is found in Christ, Mt 28:18-20. The question is often asked: "Did not Christ give His authority to the church?" We think the answer is "No." He still retains His authority. We believe Christ commissioned the church to carry out His commandments, but the authority still belongs to Him. This authority is behind every proper church constitution. Christ Himself commands disciples who are in gospel order, wherever they see a need, to set up another church. He Himself directly commissions them by His Word and when they covenant together according to Mt. 18:20, they are a gospel church and Christ is in the midst of them. No church can pass church-hood, church power or church authority to any officer, pastor, missionary or any other body. It must be obtained from Christ directly out of Heaven! Graves answered this question in his paper: “Has a church the right to designate one or more of her members whom she may deem fit to perform any services the cause of Christ may require?” His answer: “No, a thousand times no. All the powers and functions of a church are delegated powers; and it is a legal axiom, founded in eternal verities, that delegated functions and trust cannot be redelegated. Graves.”⁶⁰⁸

Branch. A *branch* is a company of the members of a church that hold meetings away from the designated meeting place,

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. Wendell Holmes Rone. *A Short History of the Davies-McLean Association*, 1968, p. 126 a.

⁶⁰⁷ *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed.

⁶⁰⁸ *TN Bap.* Sept. 14, 1887.

but are not regularly organized into a church.⁶⁰⁹ It is synonymous with *Arm*. I believe this practice is unscriptural. Graves said:

We can learn nothing from God's Word about church *arms*—a body that is not a church, and yet exercising all the functions of a church, and yet the attorney or agent of another body, is an anomalous organization. We know from the divine constitution of the churches of Christ, that each one is by Christ invested with all the ecclesiastical rights, privileges, powers and prerogatives. And we know that delegated trusts cannot be relegated to the ministry, to deacons, to committees nor to arms—a portion of the church acting for the whole church. It cannot be done except in violation of sacred and inalienable trusts.⁶¹⁰

Divine Authority. *Divine authority* means the authority comes from the Lord Himself directly for the constitution of a church.⁶¹¹ A "church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith and joined to the Lord, and each to other by mutual agreement in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances commanded by Christ, their head and king."⁶¹²

Church authority. "The New Testament, which contains the charter, constitution, and discipline of these voluntary societies of Christians, defines and limits their rights. Whatever powers have been expressly delegated to them,

⁶⁰⁹ Robert I. Devin. *Hist. Of Grassy Creek Church*, P. 75, 1977 reprint.

⁶¹⁰ Graves. *The Baptist*. 3-10-83, p. 8.

⁶¹¹ See Mark Fenison's article "Baptistic Churches Versus the N.T. Church," posted on Historic Baptist Symposium, 3-22-04, hosted by Elder John Kohler, Landmarker@aol.com

⁶¹² *The Baptist Confession of 1646* quoted in William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 223. Cf. Jarrel, *Church Perpetuity*, p. 13. Not one of the old Landmarkers ever put EMDA in his definition of a church. Cf. Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p. 10.

they exercise but the assumption of others is an unauthorized usurpation."⁶¹³ It is a misunderstanding of this term to apply it to a mother church which grants another church the authority to become a church. A church can no more authorize a group of its members to constitute than it can authorize them to baptize or observe the supper; or to authorize another church to disband or to ordain, baptize, or settle church trouble. It may help, it may assist, it may recommend, it may counsel, it may suggest—but it cannot command because it has no power or authority! This authority belongs to Christ. Cf. Re 1:12-20; 2:5,16, 23; 3:16.

Church essential. A Church essential, refers to “As many as may act properly and orderly as a church, Mt. 17:15-17.”⁶¹⁴

Constitution. "1. The act or process of composing, setting up, or establishing. 2. The composition or structure of something."⁶¹⁵ In reference to a church this term means the beginning of a church.

Divine constitution or DA. This term refers to the work of Christ in conferring upon a sufficient number of disciple's church status. Christ personally confers the church state upon each new church directly by His exclusive power. This power comes from Christ when these disciples gather together in Christ's name according to Mt. 18:20. *Divine constitution* and *self-constitution* refer to the same event but viewed from different sides.

EMDA. *Essential Mother Daughter Authority.* This is the teaching of some Baptists, and other denominations, that there must be an essential authority given by a *mother*

⁶¹³ Reynolds. *Church Polity*, Mark Dever. *Polity*, p. 328.

⁶¹⁴ *Op. Cit.*

⁶¹⁵ *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed.

church to a group of baptized believers (the daughter) in order for them to constitute a new church. These members must be members of the *mother church* in order for them to receive this authority. Without this authority from the mother church it is impossible to constitute a scriptural church. Some also teach the Holy Spirit was given only one time, at Pentecost. They believe Churches since Pentecost only receive the Holy Spirit via a mother church granting constitution authority. This means that this mother to daughter connection must have been repeated from one true church to another true church all the way back to the Church at Jerusalem. Some EMDA advocates also maintain you must have an ordained man present in order to constitute a church. This theory is believed to be of a modern origin. Cf. *The Laws of EMDA*, chapter 3.

False constitution. *False constitution* refers to the formation of a church made upon false principles. Any church which is not in *gospel order* when formed has a *false constitution*. A church formed out of those who do not profess to be regenerate, or who attribute regeneration to ordinances, sacraments, or works; or of a church formed of those who are not scripturally baptized, are examples of false constitution.

Ghosting members. *Ghosting members* is a term I have barrowed to describe a procedure by which some churches receive members who are not present, never have been present and never will be present in the assembly where they are supposed to be members. This is frequently done by missionaries. I have known of some churches who have use audio tapes to convey these church actions. Such churches receive these members by proxy and carry these *members* on their roles by proxy and letter them out by proxy! These members do not and cannot assemble with the church and this means they are not a part of the assembly! The church

does not even *know* these members nor do these proxy members *know* the church! They are therefore not under the discipline of the church. These *ghost members* have no voice in the church. *Ghosting members* is usually done for the purpose of granting EMDA to a group of saints who are a great distance from the mother church. The *Ghost* members will, at the time of constitution, be granted letters stating they are members in good standing (which is not true) and they will be lettered out to form the new church. Churches who can defend this as a scriptural procedure will have no problem baptizing a baby on the proxy faith of its god-parents!

Gospel order. *Gospel order* means to do things according to the gospel. J. L. Reynolds defines it like this:

1. We believe that the visible Church of Jesus Christ is a congregation of faithful persons, who have given themselves to the Lord, and to one another, by the will of God and have covenanted to keep up a godly discipline, agreeable to the gospel.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, the only Lawgiver; that the government is with the Church.
3. That Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Gospel ordinances, appointed by Jesus Christ, and are to be continued in his Church until his second coming.
4. That the immersion of the body in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the only Scriptural way of Baptism, as taught by Christ and his Apostles.
5. That none but regularly baptized Church members, who live a holy life, have a right to partake of the Lord's Supper.
6. That it is the privilege and duty of all believers to make a public profession of their faith, by submitting themselves as subjects for baptism, and as members of the visible Church.

7. That it is the duty of every regularly organized Church to expel from her communion all disorderly and immoral members, and who hold doctrines contrary to the Scriptures.⁶¹⁶

So here we see that Gospel order does not equal EMDA, as some contend but rather DA. Again:

We believe that the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful persons, who have gained Christian fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, and have agreed to keep up a Godly discipline, agreeably to the rules of the Gospel.⁶¹⁷

Helps. *Helps* has two different meanings. 1. *Helps* has reference to those in a church who rule.⁶¹⁸ 2. *Helps* may also refer to assistance given to groups of believers, churches, church trouble and the like. Due to its nature, this second meaning can convey no authority. *Helps* refers to *assistance* given by a church or churches, to other churches, associations or to those who wish to compose a church, that is, help in constitution, in ordination, in settling church trouble, in preaching, in advice, in meetings or other gospel endeavors. *Helps* do not convey authority. It is neither requested or supplied with the idea of authority, but it is requested for support, recognition, assistance and encouragement for the common good of the churches. *Helps* conveys no authority whether in ordination, church trouble, constitution, meetings or otherwise but is understood to be advisory only and thus not essential. This term seems to be taken from 1 Cor 12:28.

⁶¹⁶ Reynolds. *Church Polity*, Mark Dever. *Polity*, p. 509.

⁶¹⁷ Mercer. *GA Hist.* p. 26e.

⁶¹⁸ B. R. White. *Association Records of South Wales to 1656*, p. 11.

Join. "to put or bring together so as to form a unit."⁶¹⁹ The NT meaning of this word according to Vine is: (1. κολλᾶω NT:2853,) primarily, "to glue or cement together," then, generally, "to unite, to join firmly," is used in the passive voice signifying "to join oneself to, to be joined to," Luke 15:15; Acts 5:13; 8:29; 9:26; 10:28, RV (KJV, "to keep company with"); 1 Cor 6:16,17; elsewhere, "to cleave to," Luke 10:11; Acts 17:34; Rom 12:9."⁶²⁰ This is what disciples do when they unite with a church.

Landmarkism. Landmarkism teaches true churches must proclaim the true gospel and practice the ordinances scripturally. Those societies which fail to do either of these two things are not Scriptural churches. Landmarkers do not recognize those churches as Scriptural churches because they were not in gospel order when organized. Hence the ordinances of such churches are invalid and their ministers are not ordained.⁶²¹

Linked chain succession. This is the same thing as EMDA. *Linked chain succession* means that one church succeeds another church as one link follows another in a chain. Each church must be given authority from a mother church in order to constitute. This idea is not a part of Landmarkism. "All that Baptists mean by *church Succession*, or *Church Perpetuity*, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth."⁶²² This term is equivalent to *organic church succession*.

⁶¹⁹ Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed.

⁶²⁰ Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words: Article: Join.

⁶²¹ Cf. Graves. *Old Landmarkism*.

⁶²² Jarrel. *Baptist Perpetuity*, p. 2, 3.

Mother church. A mother church is a church which was the origin of another church or the church from which a church or churches came. The term has nothing to do with EMDA or the granting of authority as it was used in Baptist history. Indicative of this we also find mother states, mother countries and mother associations, where of course, authority could not be involved.

Organic church succession. Also Cf. *Organic succession* or *Organic connection and Link chain succession*. By these terms EMDA advocates mean that one church succeeds another church as one link of a chain succeeds another link and that every church could, if the records were available, demonstrate an EMDA to EMDA succession all the way back to the Jerusalem church. They also teach that without this organic succession or EMDA, there can be no true church. Landmark Baptists do not believe in organic church succession.⁶²³

Organism. This term is applied by some writers to churches. Some of these believe in EMDA. Some do not. The idea which EMDA advocates attach to the term in reference to a church is that it is a living organism just as a dog or a sheep. Then they bring in another idea. Because all living things beget after their kind they say churches must beget churches in exactly the same way and their offspring will necessarily be the same kind. The appeal is made to Ge 1:21. From this they then assume a sort of ecclesiastical biogenesis of churches organically connected all the way back to Jordan, necessarily so.⁶²⁴ The argument is made that *like begets like*, that is every creature brings forth after its own kind. Then this is applied to churches and EMDA men insist that churches will bring forth churches which are exactly like they are. Of course, the problem with this analogy is they

⁶²³ *Op. Cit.*, p. 1.

⁶²⁴ Cf. Huckabee. *Church Truth*, vol. II, p. 661.

attempt to make biological laws applicable to churches and other societies. This is a mistake, for everyone knows that churches frequently beget churches quite unlike themselves, sometimes willingly, sometimes unwillingly. The Primitive Baptists came from Missionary Baptists. The Seventh Day Baptists came from Particular Baptists. The Campbellites came from Baptists. Are they the same thing? I have seen a number of churches which came out of a mother church but turned out to be a child that the mother refuses to recognize as her offspring! There are many other examples which prove this theory is false.

Perpetuity. “*Perpetuity* is preferable to the phrase *Church Succession*.” “*All that Baptists mean by church Succession, or Church Perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.*”⁶²⁵ Cf. *Link chain succession*.

Positive institution or Positive law. All the **essential** laws relative to the constitution of a church, or its ordinances are positive institutions. A Positive Law is contrasted with a Moral Law. Moral Laws are commanded because they are right. Positive laws are right because they are commanded. No man can obey, nor is he responsible to obey, any law unless it is revealed in Scripture. No man was responsible to take the Lord's Supper before Christ instituted it and commanded it. Where there is no revelation of a positive law, there is no duty to obey that law.⁶²⁶ There is no positive law for EMDA.

Recorded Baptist history. By this term is meant Baptist History from 1600 to the present. We have few records

⁶²⁵ Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 2, 3.

⁶²⁶ Cf. Dever's *Polity*, p. 364; Graves in Dayton's *Alien Immersion*, p. vi; Davis Huckabee. *Church Truth*, Vol. I, p. 174-175.

before 1600. But since 1600 we have a considerable amount of church records, manuals, confessions, sermons and histories by Baptists.

Ripe. *Ripe* is used in the sense of *ready*, usually in reference to church constitution. This judgment was usually by churches left to the discretion of elders who would examine the saints desiring to be a church. Those so described were considered to be in *gospel order* as to doctrine, practice, and stability and thus ripe or ready for constitution.

Self-constitution. *Self-constitution* refers to the action of a group of baptized disciples in *gospel order* who believe it is for the greater glory of God for them to form themselves into a separate church by a covenant and thereby to carry out the will of Christ. They believe the authority for this action is given directly by Christ (DA) according to Mt 18:20; II Cor. 8:5. These who seek to constitute often invite other churches and pastors to send *helps* in this important work of *constitution* but they do not believe these churches or ministers are essential or that these churches or pastors convey any *authority* to the work. Cf. *Divine Constitution*. EMDA churches also use this term in reference to their constitutions but they believe they must have a mother church before they can constitute and that the authority to do so comes from a mother church. A. C. Dayton refutes EMDA and gives the correct view. He says: "He made everyone a priest and a king. He invested every member with the right to execute his laws, but only when assembled with the brethren. As many as could conveniently unite came voluntarily together and by mutual consent were constituted an '*ekklesia*', or official assembly, of Christ. It was subject to *his* laws: it acted by *his* authority: it used *his* name to give a sanction to its acts; and as he had *authorized* it, and conferred

on it all its authority, so he promised to be in its midst by his Spirit, and to ratify in heaven what it did upon earth.⁶²⁷

Succession. See *Perpetuity* also. *Succession* and *perpetuity* are not the same thing but are closely related and often used interchangeably. *Succession* means there has never been a day since the organization of the first church when there has not been a church in existence, Mt. 16:18; Eph.3:21. Some EMDA advocates use this term to mean *organic succession* or organic connection from one church to another via EMDA. This use of the term is not supported by Baptist writers before modern times.

Irregular. A church, or an act, is irregular when it is not done in a regular manner. *Irregular* sometimes means the same thing as *unscriptural*. A constitution, for example, may be *irregular* and yet not be a *false constitution*. Churches which are in *gospel order* may be *irregular* but not *unscriptural*.⁶²⁸

Covenanting together. The assembly of Christ is composed of those who covenant together. They have been effectually called unto Christ, first in salvation and who have made that good confession before many witnesses, which includes Scriptural baptism, and who, then, in agreement with a sufficient number of others, obey Christ's command to form an assembly in gospel order in accordance with His plain direction in Mt. 18:20. They covenant together by giving themselves to the Lord and to one another, II Cor 5:8. They are *glued* or *welded*⁶²⁹ together, Acts 5:13; 9:26. This joining is not accomplished by another church but by the power of Christ Himself. The Lord added to the church, Acts 2:47. If we view this process from the Divine side, it is Christ who

⁶²⁷ Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, Vol. II, p. 115.

⁶²⁸ For example, Cf. Spencer. *History of Kentucky Baptists*, Vol II, p. 18 with 655-656.

⁶²⁹ Cf. *Liddell & Scott* on καλλᾶω.

brings them together and forms them into a church. If we view it from the human side, the disciples join together and in accordance with His Word and the leading of His Holy Spirit, form themselves into a new church by covenanting together in His name. The church is formed by Christ and He gives it authority. The church follows His will and receives the blessing from Him alone.

APPENDIX II

CHURCH DEFINED BY BAPTISTS

I have never seen a definition of the term *church* by an EMDA author. No definition of a church by any Baptist writer that I have seen includes EMDA, nor do they give it any notice. And if EMDA is not included in the definition of a church, how can it be an essential of church constitution? A few examples follow.

S. H. Ford

A church of Christ is a company of baptized believers in faith and fellowship, united to edify each other, and to advance the cause and kingdom of Christ. Nothing else is a church.⁶³⁰

Luther Rice Burress

From these considerations, a New Testament church is readily defined as an independent body of penitent, believing, individual Christians, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, voluntarily banded together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to keep his ordinances and to proclaim his gospel in all the world.⁶³¹

The Broad River Association

The Broad River Association, asked in 1812: “What is a Church?” said in reply: “We believe a Gospel church consists of an indefinite number of saints joined

⁶³⁰ Ford, *Christian Repository*, 1899.

⁶³¹ Burress, *Baptist Refreshments*, p. 24-5.

together by consent, yet we think not complete without a minister.”⁶³²

Hezekiah Harvey

The church is in things spiritual independent of the state. It is formed under authority from Christ, and owes supreme allegiance to him.⁶³³

But we deny that an unbroken chain of succession is an essential mark of a true church.⁶³⁴

Wayne Camp

A church is constituted by a group of people entering into a covenant with one another to serve the Lord as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Regardless of what another church does or does not do, regardless of what a preacher does or does not do, regardless of what a missionary does or does not do, a church comes into being when the people themselves enter into a covenant with one another to work together as a church of Jesus Christ.⁶³⁵

John Smyth

A visible communion of Saints is of two, three, or more Saints joined together by covenant with God & themselves, freely to use all the holly things of God, according to the word, for their mutual edification, & God’s glory...This visible communion of Saints is a visible Church.⁶³⁶

⁶³² *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶³³ Harvey. *The Church*, p. 64.

⁶³⁴ Harvey. *The Church*, p. 96.

⁶³⁵ Wayne Camp. *GPP*.

⁶³⁶ John Smyth as quoted in James E. Tull, *Shapers of Baptist Thought*, p. 19. Original spelling retained.

Dana

Then in the light of the four facts unquestionably implied in the Great Commission, we may define a church thus: A church is a company of baptized believers, banded together in voluntary cooperation for the purpose of perpetuating the ordinances of Christ and of propagating the gospel to the ends of the earth.⁶³⁷

A. H. Strong

The individual church may be defined as that smaller company of regenerate persons, who, in any given community, unite themselves voluntarily together, in accordance with Christ's laws, for the purpose of securing the complete establishment of his kingdom in themselves and in the world.⁶³⁸

T. P. Simmons

XI. THE IDENTIFYING MARK'S OF THE CHURCH

If, as we believe, the church of Christ has been perpetuated then it is in the world today and been in the world since its founding. By what means, then, are we to identify this church in any age? In order to have a church, there must be-

1. A LOCAL INDEPENDENT BODY...
2. HOLDING THE TRUTH AS TO THE WAY OF MAKING DISCIPLES...
3. HOLDING THE TRUTH AS TO BAPTISM...
4. RECOGNIZING CHRIST ALONE AS ITS HEAD, AND SEEKING TO CARRY OUT HIS WILL AND COMMANDS...⁶³⁹

⁶³⁷ Dana. *Christ's Ecclesia*, P. 169.

⁶³⁸ A. H. Strong. *Systematic Theology*, p. 890.

⁶³⁹ Simmons. *SSBD*, pp. 366-367,

Simmons then concludes with this statement:

Wherever is found a local body possessing all of the attributes, there is a church. Without all of them there can be no church.

J. L. Reynolds

J. L. Reynolds wrote the book *Church Polity* while he was pastor of The Second Baptist Church of Richmond, Va. in 1849. He was a scholar and a professor. This work no doubt had a large influence among Baptists. There is no question but that he taught churches were constituted by DA as this quote demonstrates:

The divine constitution of the Churches is equally illustrative of the wisdom and the condescension of the Redeemer...

1. Every Christian Church possesses the right of discipline, formative and corrective. With its divine constitution in its hands, defining the qualification which entitle to membership, it is its province to determine as to the possession of those qualifications, in the case of every applicant...

What, then, is the Church? The context affords a satisfactory reply. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." This is the Church to which Christ alludes. It is gathered in his name, and blessed with his presence; and is, therefore, competent to decide a question involving the interests of his cause...⁶⁴⁰

Reynolds also tells how the church state comes upon a new church:

⁶⁴⁰ J. L. Reynolds. *Church Polity or the Kingdom of Christ* (1849) Quoted in Dever. *Church Polity*, p. 238-9.

Each particular church is a local society, composed of persons who have been baptized upon a credible profession of faith in the Son of God, and have solemnly covenanted to walk together in the spirit of the Gospel, acknowledging Christ as their Lord, and his word as their infallible guide. Upon such a church, Christ has conferred the prerogative of self-government, under his laws.⁶⁴¹

B. E. Antrobus

A local, visible, independent body of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, to keep the faith and ordinances as they were delivered, and to preach the gospel to all the world; recognizing no head but Christ, and no book of law but the Bible.⁶⁴²

J. G. Bow

Baptists believe that a church of Jesus Christ is a body of baptized believers, associated together in one place to preach the gospel, to keep the ordinances and represent the interest of Christ's kingdom in the world.⁶⁴³

The word used in the New Testament usually refers to a local assembly or congregation of the followers of Christ associated and covenanted together, for religious worship and work.⁶⁴⁴

James P. Boyce

If there are several persons at Abbeokuta, why cannot a church be formed? The building, the pastor, the

⁶⁴¹ J. L. Reynolds. *Church Polity or The Kingdom of Christ*. 1849. Quoted by Mark Dever, *Church Polity*, p. 395.

⁶⁴² B. E. Antrobus, *Baptist History*. p. 3. Crawfordsville, In. Fourth edition. 1932.

⁶⁴³ J. G. Bow. *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It*, p. 20.

⁶⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 21

deacons, are not essential to a church, but only two or three members.⁶⁴⁵

John T. Christian

The distinctive characteristics of this church are clearly marked in the New Testament. Such a church was a voluntary association and was independent of all other churches. It might be, and probably was, affiliated with other churches in brotherly relations; but it remained independent of all outward control, and was responsible to Christ alone, who was the supreme lawgiver and the source of all authority.⁶⁴⁶

A. C. Dayton

And it can do all that, in the Scripture, is predicated of any Church of Christ. But while it is independent of all other Churches or federations in its organization, and in the exercise of its functions, it so absolutely dependent on Christ its Lord and King, that it *can make no laws*, but only execute the law which Christ has made; and it can exercise *no authority*, but such as was specially delegated to it by Christ.

But while it is **independent of all other Churches or federations in its organization...**

3rd. It is a local organization, and independent of all others.

4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.⁶⁴⁷

John Clarke

...and having so received Him, should walk in Him, observing all things whatsoever He had commanded; the first thing whereof, as touching order, was to be

⁶⁴⁵ John Broadus. *Memoir of James P. Boyce*, p. 292.

⁶⁴⁶ John T. Christian. *History of Baptists*. I, p. 13.

⁶⁴⁷ Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 158

added or joined one to another in the fellowship of the gospel, by a mutual professed subjection to the sceptre of Christ, and being a company thus called out of the world, from worldly vanities and worldly worships, after Christ Jesus the Lord...⁶⁴⁸

J. B. Cranfill

A church is properly defined as ‘a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples, acknowledging Him as their Head, relying on His atoning sacrifice for justification before God, depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, united in the belief of the Gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and cooperation for the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world.’⁶⁴⁹

Edward Drapes

But to make things appear more plainly, I shall shew you what the true Church of Christ is; to which every believer being baptized, ought to be added. It is a company of people called out and separated from the world by the word of the Gospel to believe in Christ, being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; walking together in mutual agreement in the visible profession of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ their Head and King.⁶⁵⁰

Eastcombe Baptist Church 1802

On February 13th, of the same year, [1802] four persons were baptized in the village, and these with the pastor, his wife and daughter, making up the sacred number seven, formed themselves into a church. On February 13th of the present year the Baptist Church at

⁶⁴⁸ Graves. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 170.

⁶⁴⁹ Cranfill. *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, p. 140.

⁶⁵⁰ Drapes. *Gospel Glory*, p. 144. 1649.

Eastcombe completed the first century of its existence.⁶⁵¹

First Baptist Church Augusta, Georgia

First Baptist church in Augusta originated thus, to quote from the earliest church record... On the fourth Saturday and Sunday in May 1817, the society assembled in the courthouse, and were regularly constituted, by the advice and assistance of brethren Abraham Marshall, Matthews, Carson, and Antony.⁶⁵²

Goadby

That in case the minor part of any church break off their communion from that church, the church state is to be accounted to remain with the major part. And in case the major part of any church be fundamentally corrupted with heresy and immorality, the minor part may and ought to separate from such a degenerate society; and either join themselves to some regular church or churches, or else, if they are a competent number, constitute a church state by a solemn covenant among themselves.⁶⁵³

Great Valley church

In the year 1711, they were advised to put themselves in church order by themselves, for they were far distant from other churches, and especially from the Welsh Tract, where hitherto they belonged as a branch of that Church. Accordingly, in the month of April 1711, a day was set apart, by fasting and prayer, to accomplish this solemn work, having for their assistance Mr. Elisha Thomas, and others from the Welsh Tract Church, and after solemn prayers to God for his blessing they gave themselves to God, and to one

⁶⁵¹ <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/GLS/Eastcombe/ebc-notes.html>

⁶⁵² Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia. Church Records of FBC of Augusta, Ga.* p. 49.

⁶⁵³ Goadby. *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 215.

another in the Lord, according to 2 Cor 8:5, and had a right hand of fellowship as a sister church...⁶⁵⁴

Hill Cliffe Church

The result of these struggles was the departure of about thirty members of the church [at Hill Cliffe] who took with them the books belonging to the church. The remaining members obtained new books, and leaving out the names of the departed ones, constituted themselves a church, entering their names in the new roll.⁶⁵⁵

Hinton

In this country (England), a Baptist church is formed by any number of Baptists professors who please to form one, and where and when they please. There is no power which pretends, or is able, to say, You may not, or you may; you shall, or you shall not. If the parties like to consult one or more neighboring ministers or brethren, they do so; if not, their proceedings are equally valid without it.⁶⁵⁶

Hansard Knollys

What a True Gospel Church Is Touching the first particular, A true, visible Constituted Church of Christ under the Gospel is a Congregation of Saints, 1 Cor. 1:24; called out of the World, Rom. 1:7; separated from Idolaters and Idol Temples, 2 Cor. 6:16,17; from the unbelieving Jews and their Synagogues and all legal observations of holy days, Sabbath days, and Mosaical Rites, Ceremonies and shadows, Acts 19:9, Col. 2:16,17; and assembled together in one place, 1 Cor. 14:23; on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, Acts 20:7; to worship God visibly by the spirit and in the truth, John 4:23,24; in the holy Ordinances

⁶⁵⁴ Gillette. *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 16.

⁶⁵⁵ Kenworthy. *History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe*, p. 83.

⁶⁵⁶ Hinton, J. H., Intro to *Wayland's Prin. & Prac.* p. xxi

of God, 1 Cor. 11:2; according to the faith and order
of the Gospel, Col. 2:5.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁷ Hansard Knollys, *Parable of the Kingdom*, p. 6. Electronic copy.

APPENDIX III

OBJECTIONS TO DA CONSIDERED

Valid objections are always welcomed because we recognize there is no position which does not raise some questions and no error which does not seem to have some support, as someone has said “Every heretic has his text.”

Thus, we will deal with what we believe to be the strongest objections which EMDA has produced. If these can be answered, all the others of a lesser nature will be eliminated in the process.

1. *I do not want a human founder for my church.*⁶⁵⁸

The implication of this objection is that if a church does not have EMDA it must have a human founder. This is just unclear and unbiblical thinking. We agree with J. R. Graves who covered this well in his debate with Ditzler in 1875. He said:

Now I wish Elder Ditzler to know that there is a world-wide difference between originating an organization different from anything that can be found in the Bible, different from anything the world had ever before seen or heard of, and calling it a Church, and organizing a Christian Church. It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁸ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁹ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

Did Graves believe Baptist churches had human founders?
Graves also said:

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone.⁶⁶⁰

This is Christ's authority. Heaven sent authority. Divine Authority, and thus no church founded with this authority has a human founder! This is what Graves contended for and this does not equate with a human founder as Bro Cockrell suggested. When baptized believers covenant together the Lord Jesus Christ is their founder! He constitutes them. He is the Founder of all true churches—always has been and always will be. And this constitution does not depend on the vote, the authority, the arm, the helps, the elder or presbytery, nor on another church or churches, nor on an association. None of these various entities can constitute a church although they have often tried! Christ alone directly constitutes every true church. He promised to be in the midst of every church founded upon these Biblical principles and He has never failed to keep that promise. This is how churches in the Bible were founded and this is how Baptist churches in history were constituted.

Furthermore, there are great numbers of churches in history which are said to have been constituted by one elder or by two. Now these churches, it will be argued, had authority from a mother church and the elders were only acting for the mother church. Yet, these records were recorded by sound Baptists who were clerks, preachers, and historians. They found no fear in stating that a certain elder or two constituted a particular church.⁶⁶¹ It seems quite evident from the

⁶⁶⁰ *Op. Cit.* p. 995.

⁶⁶¹ "Tates Creek Association decided that one ordained preacher and two elders might constitute a church. But since one ordained preacher, with the advice of two judicious brethren (or without it, in case of emergency) could constitute a

information given, that they understood it was the Lord who constituted the church and the elders and others present were not there as essential authority but as *helps*.

2. We do not believe in “spontaneous generation.”

The creation of God was spontaneous by the power of the Creator! The sea brought forth abundantly by His fiat! Was that “spontaneous” or not? EMDA brethren say self-constituted churches spring out of nothing, as if evolution were in operation. But when Christ promises in Mt 18:20 to be in the midst of every group of disciples who gather together in His name—that is by His authority—those so gathered become a church and they have Christ as their foundation, 1 Co 3:11. They are built upon the apostles and Christ is the chief cornerstone, 1 Pe 2:6. He promises to be in the midst of every church so constituted! This is the word of Christ Himself. Therefore, you don’t need the authority of a mother church. You do not have to have a presbytery. You do not have to have recognition services, but you must have Christ’s authority. This authority does not come from a church, from a presbytery or elders, nor from any other earthly entity but directly from Heaven and it is Christ who tells us it is so according to Mt. 18:20. But the problem with the EMDA objectors is that they have introduced an unscriptural practice in church constitution and their prejudice prevents them from seeing that churches sprang up all over the Roman world in NT times without any direct connection with the first church. See Acts 8:31 and Ro 16. How did those churches get started? Why is there no record of Jerusalem giving authority for the churches of Judea and for those of Rome? There is not a single instance in the NT which says **one church gave authority to start another**

church! If this was a law of church constitution, why did the Lord not tell us so? Why did He give us Mt. 18:20 stating He would indwell every church so constituted and never mention EMDA?

But the formation of a church out of prepared materials—those who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, who have been scripturally baptized by a NT church, and who are following the leading of the Holy Spirit as to the constitution of a new church—is not “spontaneous generation” in the sense in which EMDA men use it but it is the *constitution* of a church in the manner commanded by Christ. We read of no EMDA given to those who formed the churches of Judea, Samaria, Antioch, nor of the churches Paul and his co-laborers formed. These churches are not said to be daughters of a mother church. They are not said to be birthed. But they were *modeled*⁶⁶² after the churches which were before them. They were *patterned after* these earlier churches. EMDA is not in these accounts unless injected into them. The Thessalonians were “followers of the churches in Judea,”⁶⁶³ says Paul. They were not the daughters of the churches in Judea! They were not *given authority by any other church*. Neither Paul nor the Bible ever speaks in the manner of the EMDA brethren. The world had to wait a long time before this idea was ever put forth in a Baptist suit and when done it was like horseshoes on a buffalo!

However, when we consider EMDA, all the evidence seems to indicate that it sprang up from the ground like a mushroom in a single night! We say this because there is no record of it before the mid-1950s and our EMDA brethren admit this because they cannot produce any plain statement of this doctrine before this decade specified!

⁶⁶² The term is Graves.’ Cf. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 992.

⁶⁶³ I Thess. 2:14.

3. We do not believe in evolution but we believe “like begets like.”

This cliché has been bandied about so long that it is difficult to get men to think about what they are saying. Churches are not organisms in the sense animals are. They do not conceive or give birth. Churches are societies. A society is “a voluntary association of individuals for common ends; especially: an organized group working together or periodically meeting because of common interests, beliefs, or profession.”⁶⁶⁴ Because of this, churches can “beget” non-like things and they do. We hear of churches all the time which are not what the parent churches were. This cliché pressed to this illogical extreme, would mean that no Baptist church ever went bad! No Baptist church could ever go into error if started by EMDA, according to this theory, because no animal can become another animal! When a pup is born, it will be a dog as long as it lives. It cannot be anything else. Yet, I can certainly think of a dozen or so churches, off the top of my head, which will prove *like begets like* does not apply when referring to churches!

4. I feel more comfortable using EMDA to start churches.

Comfort does not equate Scripturality. Comfort is not the criteria of obedience. It is not when we feel comfortable with some doctrine that we are right, but we are right when we believe what is taught in the Word of God! You may feel a considerable amount of discomfort when you first follow the commandment of the Lord relative to some particular doctrine. We must learn to be comfortable with what the Lord has commanded. When New England Baptists practiced the laying on of hands as a church ordinance and

⁶⁶⁴ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Tenth Edition.

other Baptists tried to show them this was not an essential ordinance, they probably felt more comfortable carrying on with this practice, even though it was unscriptural. But being comfortable with it did not make it right! The Pharisees were more comfortable following tradition than truth, but it was wrong just the same. Uzziah felt comfortable with his incense burner in the Holy Place, but it was wrong still. Nadab and Abihu felt comfortable offering strange fire, but it brought about their deaths just the same. David felt comfortable hauling the Ark of God on a cart, but it had disastrous results and cost Uzza his life. Peter did not feel comfortable eating the unclean creeping things shown him in the sheet, but it was right all the same. When the church at Jerusalem heard about Peter going into unto Cornelius they were not comfortable with it.

But when they learned it was the will of the Lord they adjusted their comfort zone to what God had commanded. Being comfortable or uncomfortable with something has nothing to do with whether it is the commandment of the Lord or not. First, let it be determined that something is taught clearly in the Word of God and then let the comfort zone adjust to that principle. EMDA is not taught in the Bible and those who teach it admit this. Being comfortable with error does not change it into truth. Comfort is not the criteria for acceptable service to the Lord. Obedience is! We can never be wrong when we do things according to the Bible.

6. Mt 18:20 is in the passive voice, and therefore it refers to believers being gathered together, rather than to them gathering themselves together.

It is quite surprising that an EMDA advocate admits this passage *does refer to church constitution!* I say this because most of these brethren will walk two miles out of the way just to avoid this text! In fact, most of the EMDA men will

not even discuss the meaning of Mt 18:20 when they write a book on church constitution.⁶⁶⁵ Some boldly contend the text has nothing to do with Church constitution.⁶⁶⁶ Still others (as this objector) contend this text is actually EMDA in disguise! It is easy to see that confusion is reigning unopposed in the EMDA camp. As to the grammar consider the following. The Prodigal in Lk 15:15 is said to “join himself” to a citizen of the far country and this is passive.⁶⁶⁷ Did he not join himself to that citizen?

For those who wish to consider some other passages where the verb συναγω is in the passive,⁶⁶⁸ I submit a few examples. Mt. 22:41; Acts 4:31; Acts 20:8; Re 19:19; Mt 27:17. Take this passage in Ac 20:8: “And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.” This seems to be exactly what we would expect for a meeting of the saints. Also, look at Acts 4:31: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Again, it is easy to see this is just what we have in Mt 18:20. Again, look at Mt 22:41, “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them.” Which translates: “Now the Pharisees, having been gathered together...”

But let us admit that Christ gathered them together by the leading of His Holy Spirit, then Christ reacts to them directly. They, being led of Christ and His Spirit, are

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Cockrell. *SCO*. In this book, Mt 18:20 is mentioned only once in passing, p. 36. Robert Ashcraft in *Revisiting Landmarkism*, does not mention the text at all, if my memory is correct.

⁶⁶⁶ *BBB*. Sept. 5, 2002, p. 1. “Mt. 18:20, A Powerful Pretext” by Ronnie Wolfe.

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. *Vines Expository Dictionary*, p. 334, Article, *Join*.

gathered together and Christ invests them with church-hood. *Bagster's Interlinear* translates it "For where are two or three having been assembled in my name, there I am in the midst of them." This is in perfect agreement with DA, but it will not line up with EMDA.

7. EMDA is given when a church grants letters. Or EMDA is given by the granting of church letters.

This objection is offered because these brethren cannot find EMDA stated or expressed in the church records of history, consequently they have fallen to grasping at straws—EMDA, they say, is given *through granting church letters* for the purpose of conveying the authority for constituting a church! Let me reply that this would then mean either, the church giving and the church receiving would both recognize this as EMDA or they would not. If those who requested the letters did not recognize this as what they were doing, and those who granted letters for constitution never said this was what they were doing, how can anyone think they were granting EMDA? It is easy to pretend this was what they meant, but we should like some verification that this was what they intended. How about general letters, which were not sent to any church but only stated the carrier was in good standing with the church which produced the letter? Now if those involved did not know they were doing it, then how strange that for 1900 years churches should practice something essential for their very existence but without even knowing what they were doing! But we know that no such essential was in church letters because, church letters have no power or authority in them, no matter what those involved believe. Church letters only state the person is in good standing. A church letter cannot ordain a deacon, or a pastor, nor can it constitute a church—even if it says so!

But let me go further and insist there is not a single case in the NT of a church granting letters to form a new church. This again is just some more tradition which is elevated into doctrine because they do not have any Scripture for their theory. A church letter is merely a recommendation to another church. A church letter cannot authorize anything. It cannot authorize an ordination, it cannot send a preacher to a mission field, it cannot disband a church. It cannot settle a church problem authoritatively. And it necessarily follows, that if a church letter cannot disband a church, it cannot constitute one. A group of saints in gospel order do not need a mother church to give them permission to constitute themselves into a church. Nor do they need a mother church to give them authority to ordain a pastor or deacon; they do not need a mother church to give them permission to preach the gospel; Why not? Because they have the authority of Jesus Christ the Lord, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mt 18:20.

Concerning the case of the Welsh Tract church which was organized in Wales just before sailing for America,⁶⁶⁹ EMDA brethren claim that the *advice* given to this group was EMDA! Imagine, going before a judge and telling him that someone *advised* you to do something and claiming that

⁶⁶⁹ Morgan Edwards who served as one of the early pastors of this church translated their minutes into English and here is his account: "In the year 1701, some of us, who were members of the churches of Jesus Christ in the counties of Pembroke and Carmarthen, South Wales, in Great Britain, (professing believers in baptism, laying on of hands, election, and final perseverance in grace), were moved and encouraged in our minds, to come to these parts, namely, Pennsylvania. And after obtaining leave of the churches, it seemed good to the Lord, and to us, that we should be formed into church order, as we were a sufficient number, and as one of us was a minister, that was accomplished, and withal letters commendatory were given us, that if we should meet with any congregations or Christian people, who held the same faith with us, we might be received with them as brethren in Christ." Christian. *Hist. Baptists*, II, p. 121. Cf. also: <http://www.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator/pp0199welshtractchurch.htm>

advice was *authority*! “Officer, I was advised to drive sixty-five miles per hour in this forty-five mile per hour zone, and that gives me authority to do so!” There is not one word about EMDA being bestowed in this account by Morgan Edwards. These people were members of at least two different churches. After they received their letters of recommendation, they then decided to constitute themselves into a church. This was not done with any authority found in these commendatory letters nor with any authority of any kind. These letters were for the purpose of fellowship with others they might meet in the new world. Where was EMDA mentioned in this account? This is the slender thread on which EMDA men hang so great a weight!

8. Into what church does the first convert get baptized?

This objection pertains to situations such as where a missionary is working in a new field. Bro Cockrell puts it like this:

Here goes a traveling ordained preacher. He preaches and one man is converted. This convert asks for baptism. Question: Into what church does this first convert get baptized? Is it the church that is hope-to-be born in some days in this town? If so, it is an invisible church, for at this point no church exists. If such a person is baptized he is baptized outside of the body of Christ, and he is not added to any church.⁶⁷⁰

This objection strikes as hard against EMDA as it does against our position. For example, how is it that members on the far strung mission fields are baptized into the church that is half a world away? Under the EMDA umbrella these churches actually vote to give the missionary the authority to baptize these non-resident candidates, to receive them as members and this missionary does everything as if he were

⁶⁷⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 36.

the church itself! Of course, they pretend that this is justifiable because the authority is given to this missionary. What more do the Roman Catholics do? They claim their bishops give the authority to the priests. So, what is the difference when a church in the states actually will vote to receive these members, without hearing their experience in grace, without even knowing them! These members never see the church into which they are baptized. They never visit that church and when these churches later grant letters saying these members are *in good and regular standing*, the church certainly does not tell the truth! These foreign members are invisible to the church and the church is invisible to them and they actually have an invisible church relationship just like the Protestants do! Let any man survey the history of our churches and see if he can find any such thing as a man in early America baptizing someone into a church in England! Is not this a tradition of man? Is it not unscriptural? See also *ghosting members*.

Graves raised this very issue in his debate with Ditzler. He said:

It is not a multitude that makes a church. Christ had fore-designated how few would be recognized by Him—"two or three are gathered in his name," under his authority, he would be present with them as their Head, *e.g.*, our missionaries to foreign fields are sent forth, two or more with their families, and on reaching their stations they organize themselves into a church, by covenanting to take the New Testament as their constitution, and Christ as their Head. Two males and two females generally compose Our first mission churches. These disciples were gathered under his authority, to obey his laws, and he himself was with them. They were a body "of faithful men, to whom the pure word was preached, and by whom the ordinances were duly administered, according to Christ's appointment in all things." How far soever we may fail to administer them, there is not one of us that doubts

they administered them just as Christ commanded, and how far soever our most renowned churches may fail in purity of membership, this was without doubt, the purest body of Christians that ever met on this fallen earth.⁶⁷¹

The old Landmark Baptists were not agreed on the subject. Graves believed men were baptized into the church. Dayton, however, believed that men were baptized into the Kingdom and then entered the church when it was formed. He said:

Then you do not claim that baptism is the door of entrance into the Church? Strictly speaking, it is not, sir. It is the way of entrance into the ‘visible *kingdom*,’ and through the kingdom to the Church. No one can reach the Church, except through baptism; but every baptized believer is not a Church member. The eunuch was in the visible kingdom as soon as he was baptized; but he was not a member of any Church. The Church consists of such baptized believers as have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the scriptural constitution, to administer Christ’s ordinances, and enforce his laws among themselves. But it is just as true that no one can be a Church member who has not been baptized, as though baptism were itself the door of entrance into the Church.⁶⁷²

Thus, it is important to recognize, whether we agree with Graves or Dayton, this issue does not mean one side must embrace EMDA for both of these men stood decidedly in the DA camp. Either way, the difference does not help EMDA!

⁶⁷¹ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 809. See also pp. 816, 950.

⁶⁷² Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, vol. II, p. 150.

9. What about the quote of B. H. Carroll in his *Interpretation of The English Bible in SCO*?⁶⁷³

While this may sound like B. H. Carroll believed EMDA I do not believe that is the case. I believe this quote is just a misunderstanding of Carroll's position. There are a few passages in Graves, Pendleton, Moody, Hall, Bogard, Ford and other Landmark Baptists which, on the surface, sound like EMDA (and many of these have been produced just for the *sound*), but when we examine the records where they expressly speak on the subject of church constitution they all to a man believed in DA as I have demonstrated throughout this book. I believe the same is true of B. H. Carroll. Note carefully this statement of Carroll:

And the New Testament says, 'Where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, I will be with you.' Wherever a number of God's people covenant themselves into a congregation, each several building groweth up into a holy temple for the habitation of God through the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷⁴

B. H. Carroll is here speaking about church constitution. He uses Mt. 18:20. He says where a number of people *covenant themselves into a congregation* they become a holy temple for the habitation of God. No EMDA writer dares to use this language! This is as good a statement of DA as one could ask for. So, this is just another case where our EMDA brethren have misunderstood the meaning of one of these old writers.

10. *There does not seem to be any proof that the men you have quoted [those who re-set the Old Landmarks in the 1800s] ever practiced any other form of church organization than we are practicing today [i.e., EMDA],*

⁶⁷³ Cf. Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 92.

⁶⁷⁴ B. H. Carroll. *Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. 2, p. 243.

what has been gained? What about the young preachers who have been offended? Is it worth the division it has caused?⁶⁷⁵

The proof of how these men constituted churches is found in their own statements on how to constitute churches and in the church records and these are in unity. They did not teach one thing in theory, as some have said, and then turn around and practice the exact opposite! They were unified in doctrine and practice. They did not teach EMDA, and they did not practice it. They rejected this doctrine in every possible way. They never varied on what they believed nor on what they practiced, and this means that those who say these things are not being honest with the records. This objection sounds like Jay Adams, who with all the scholars and lexicons of the world before him yet contends that *baptizein* means to sprinkle⁶⁷⁶ and reduces his credibility to zilch! I have given many quotes in this book which verify how the old Landmarkers started churches. Nothing more needs to be said to convince any man of the facts. If this mass of evidence does not convince someone, it is because they refuse to consider the evidence! But notice this objector attempts to put the burden of causing division and offending young preachers on those of us who have denied EMDA is scriptural! He half admits it is not scriptural but yet seeks to make those who have called attention to this error to be at fault for division and offences!

But it is those who introduce tradition as doctrine and who cannot give a “thus saith the Lord” for their theories who have caused the offence! Christ said: “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto

⁶⁷⁵ Personal letter to author, Sept 27, 2000.

⁶⁷⁶ Jay E. Adams. *The Meaning and Mode of Baptism*. p. 5, note 6.

the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” Matt 18:6-7. But he who points out an error is not the cause of that error but those who introduce it and especially those, who when that error is pointed out, still contend for it! Christ was not at fault because he pointed out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and their traditions, even though some were offended at Him!⁶⁷⁷ Paul rebuked Peter for his dissimulation. Was it Paul’s fault that Peter refused to eat with Gentiles as he knew he should have done?⁶⁷⁸ Did Paul do wrong for rebuking Peter’s error?⁶⁷⁹ Imagine a bookkeeper laying blame for his mistake on the auditor who discovered his error! Surely, it is the height of deception to blame those who call attention to an error, making them the cause of offending young preachers!⁶⁸⁰

This objector also fails to realize the magnitude of the problem of introducing a tradition and making it into a doctrine! Mt 15:9. It is not we who contend for DA who have caused this problem but they who maintain that if you do not practice EMDA you cannot constitute a scriptural church. The division to which the objector refers was not caused by our objecting to their innovation, but by their elevating it into an essential for constitution in the first place! The one who points out an error and who thereby causes division is not the cause of that division but those who retain that tradition rather than repent!

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Mark 7:9.

⁶⁷⁷ Matt 13:57; Mark 6:3; Matt 15:12.

⁶⁷⁸ How could Peter have forgotten the sheet and the Holy Spirit falling on the household of Cornelius? Acts 10:11, 28.

⁶⁷⁹ Gal 1:11-14.

⁶⁸⁰ Cf. Le 19:17; Gal. 4:16.

You will notice that this objector almost admits their teaching is only a tradition, but pleads that it should be continued lest *we* cause division! Astounding!

11. But you still constitute churches as we do, so where is the beef?

This objector is alluding to the fact that we have other churches come and help us, when possible, in church constitution. Isn't it amazing that some of these brethren claim we constitute churches in a false way while others claim we follow their methods! We do have elders *assist* in the actual work if possible. We read the various letters from the churches if we can. But there is a vast difference. We do this in the same way we do in the ordination of a pastor. We invite other churches to send their ordained men. We ask these churches to come and meet with us. We ask them to help us. We invite their ordained men to examine the candidate to verify his orthodoxy. They give their *opinion* on the qualifications of the candidate—but here is where the rubber meets the road—**the church alone ordains the man**—not the Presbytery! Not the churches represented!

The presbytery has no power to ordain anyone! The presbytery **cannot** do it! The assisting churches **cannot** do it! An association **cannot** do it! **The ordination is done by the church and is just as valid without the other churches, without a presbytery and without one ordained man as it is with it!** The ordination does not derive any authority from the elders present nor from the churches represented, nor from a presbytery's recommendation. This belongs to the church under Christ. And they, in calling for helps, neither seek nor gain any power from any source but Christ. All they seek is what we expect from other pastors preaching for us in a conference. There is no authority sought and none gained! The

ordination belongs to the church. And the analogy for church constitution holds. In exactly the same manner a new church-to-be, in its constitution, may ask for helps. Other churches may be involved. A presbytery may be invited to examine the proposed church for its orderliness, doctrine and Scripturality. But the organization is given directly by Christ alone and He gives this authority and status to the new church without any other intermediary! None of the helps, in whatever form, contribute anything at all to the *legitimacy* of the constitution of a church! The authority comes from Christ Himself! The church is *self-constituted* from the *human side* and *divinely constituted* from Christ's side. They do this because Christ commanded it! That is all we claim and that is what Christ said and that is how churches were set up in apostolic days and throughout Baptist history.

But, let me also say that the similarity between their constitution and ours is only in appearance. EMDA maintains you must have the mother-daughter authority and if you do not have it, you cannot constitute a scriptural church. It is, according to EMDA, the mother church which is the main actor in a church constitution whereas we believe **the main actor is Christ Himself**. We maintain that the only authority in a church constitution is from Christ. It is His promise and His direct authority which constitutes a church and you do not get this authority from a presbytery, from an association or from a mother church or from a father church or from elders. This authority does not slip in horizontally by the vote of a mother church nor by an elder or elders as representatives of other churches nor by a letter or letters from another church or churches, as is sometimes claimed,⁶⁸¹ but rather it comes directly and vertically from Christ! EMDA makes church constitution to be God's *ratification* of what men do on earth, whereas we believe it is God's

⁶⁸¹ SCO, p. 17,18.

declaration of what He has done. In our position, Christ constitutes! In their position, the mother church constitutes! That is the difference and it is a major difference!

12. *But what about the cases in historical records where members petition the mother church?*

Now this is a good question. And this is a fact, as some church histories reveal. We recognize that members of a church are under the authority of that church. And if they, as members, desire to constitute, it is right and proper for them to ask their church for a constitution, that is, to be dismissed for this purpose, but without any idea of essential power or authority. They also may ask the *mother church* for *help*. We know this was not EMDA in history, however, because of the records where there was no *mother church* involved, or where several churches were involved, or where there was a division and the division was then recognized as a church.⁶⁸² We also know that EMDA was not Baptist practice because we have Baptist church manuals which plainly state that churches are properly constituted by the people who wish to set up a new church without any other church connection. Therefore, we contend this request was not an *essential* of church constitution neither in the eyes of those who were involved nor in the historians who recorded these events.

13. *Self-constitution makes Adventists and Campbellites true Churches.*⁶⁸³

We will deal with the Campbellite part, for if that can be answered, the Adventist part will also go away. First, Bro Cockrell believes the Campbellites constituted themselves into a church. They got no authority for their church. They

⁶⁸² Cf. Sidling Hill; Hill Cliffe; John Leland's church & John Spilsbury's church and *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 1091, Art. *Spilsbury*.

⁶⁸³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 48.

never claimed any. Yet, the Redstone Baptist Association received them without a hitch! Is it not then evident that this Baptist Association, to say the very least, did not require a church to have EMDA? I have never read of any Baptist association that did. This proves that EMDA was not operational at that time, at least in the Redstone Association. For surely these Baptist churches would never have received a church which had been constituted without EMDA if they had believed it! Will EMDA churches now fellowship with churches formed without EMDA, exchanging members, and pulpits in conferences and revivals and receive their baptisms? Yet, these brethren would have us believe that the Redstone Association took in Campbell's church—and they knew how it was constituted—without a hitch even though it was constituted by DA!

The next thing to consider is the Campbellites were not excluded because they did not have EMDA! They were *forced out* for “disbelieving many of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures”—and this was sixteen years after their formation as a Baptist Church and sixteen years after being in fellowship with a Baptist Association!⁶⁸⁴ Why didn't this Association of Baptist churches object to the fact that this church started without a mother church if that was an essential of Baptist polity? How was it possible for a Baptist Association to receive a church which did not have this EMDA if they believed it? These questions will not yield to an arm-chair solution!

But to go somewhat further, let me make it clear that Christ's words in Mt 18:20 do not pertain to any group who are not in *gospel order*. Those who do not profess to have their sins remitted before baptism cannot properly meet in His name

⁶⁸⁴ Richardson. *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, I. p. 367; Cf. *Baptist Quarterly Review*, vol. X, 1888, p. 335.

because they are rejecting His revealed will. It does not pertain to those who believe they can fall away and be lost. It does not pertain to any group which does not believe that every member of the church is equal to every other member. These are things which no Campbellite ever believed, therefore Mt 18:20 expels and excludes heretics but it opens the door for those who are disciples indeed!

14. *Everybody agrees a church organized by another church is a true church. Then why not organize all churches in this manner?*

First off, let it be clearly stated that this premise is false. Just because something is recognized as valid, does not mean that it was produced in the right manner and that it should be practiced *ad infinitum*. If a Methodist preacher is admitted to a Baptist ordaining council, and the candidate is then ordained by the church, does this mean that we must always have non-Baptists in our ordinations? In an ordination where a church believes the power of that act is in the hands of the presbytery, the man may be recognized as ordained, because of what the church did, but that is not the proper way to ordain—the church is the only proper ordaining authority. So, we must insist that the candidate, the presbytery and the churches represented know that the power of the ordination is in the church—not in the hands of the ordaining council. This needs to be stated in every ordination so that the churches do not take up the Roman Catholic heresy that ordination is in the hands of the clergy. Eternal vigilance is the price for spiritual liberty! In the same way churches must know, and preachers must recognize, this fact and it should be stated in every constitution that the authority comes directly from Christ—not through or from a mother church and not through the hands of an ordained man! And it is no approval of the EMMA method of starting churches if we recognize a church constituted in this way. The Philistines

may haul the Ark on a cart but that does not mean the Israelites can do it that way!

15. You take it by faith that baptism up through the centuries has always been by immersion and in the same way we take the Mother church authority on faith.

It is true we accept by faith that baptism has been practiced from the times of John the Baptist until now by immersion. But our faith is based upon the Word of Christ in Mt 16:18—not on some tradition as EMDA is. Now the great difference between the case with baptism and that of EMDA is that we have consistent records of those churches in history and they did immerse.⁶⁸⁵ Many were put to death for this very thing.⁶⁸⁶ The subjects and mode of baptism among the Anabaptists has been a consistent and undeniable article of faith and monuments of it are found in every century. This is a clearly demonstrated fact. But when you look for EMDA there are no records of its practice, no statement of it exists before modern times. No one can claim they receive this doctrine on faith because there is no record of it—in the Bible nor in history! Instead of taking this on faith, it must be received on

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. John T. Christian. *Did They Dip?*

⁶⁸⁶ Balthasar Hubmaier was burned at the stake and his wife drowned in the Danube. Torsten Bergsten. *Balthasar Hubmaier...*p. 379. Cf. *Martyrs Mirror*.

unwritten law—just as infant baptism is, but with this difference, the EMDA tradition began after the opening of the twentieth century. It is a very late tradition!

APPENDIX IV

DID GRAVES CHANGE FROM DA TO EMDA

In spite of the constant but groundless claims that J. R. Graves taught EMDA, we have finally learned these brethren knew Graves did not teach this doctrine all along! How was this discovery made? Bro Curtis Pugh stated in a personal letter to me:

It is possible to quote from Graves in one era of his life and prove something quite different than what he came to believe with more maturity and study. I believe that Bro. Graves came in his later life to the position which I hold on the manner of church organization, but I have not with me the books necessary to prove this.⁶⁸⁷

Here he plainly admits Graves once taught a view of church constitution diametrically opposed to EMDA! Graves' repetitively published this view in his paper, *The Baptist* and in his numerous books. *Old Landmarkism* was published by Graves as late as 1881 without any hint of a change on the constitution of churches. For these brethren to claim Graves changed his position without giving the proof surely "...denotes a degree of prove-something-at-all-costs unexcelled in the history of theological debate."⁶⁸⁸ Unless Bro Pugh can give us references from Graves' own pen which states he changed his position to EMDA we will count

⁶⁸⁷ Curtis Pugh. Personal letter, July 27, 2001. Bro Pugh was, at the time of this letter, doing missionary work in Romania. He has been back in the states several years and we assume he now has access to the books to which he refers. Yet, so far as is known to me, he has published nothing in *BBB* or elsewhere to prove Graves' changed his position from DA to EMDA. Let the reader ask this question: why not?

⁶⁸⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71. Let me emphasize Bro Cockrell never said Graves changed his position from self-constitution to EMDA.

this as a mere smoke screen! As these references, have not been forthcoming, we can only assume Bro Pugh knows Graves never changed his position.⁶⁸⁹

So, I ask the question, *Did Graves change his position on church constitution from DA to EMDA?* I don't believe he did and I give the reasons for my position.

Jarrel published *Baptist Church Perpetuity* in 1894, the year after Graves died, and he quotes Graves' position exactly as it had been for nearly fifty years! Jarrel was a scholar and an associate of J. R. Graves. If Graves had changed his position on this subject, Jarrel knew it! I cannot account for Jarrel quoting Graves in his book in 1894,⁶⁹⁰ where he explicitly states Graves' position was DA, if Graves had changed to EMDA before he died! I have carefully examined Graves' books and I have never seen a line which teaches EMDA. Several of our EMDA brethren claim Graves believed EMDA but not one of them gives an explicit statement of EMDA by Graves! I do not believe they can find any such reference! I challenge them to find one statement by Graves for EMDA in *unedited* form. Have these men been misrepresenting J. R. Graves when they quote him as supporting EMDA? Are they not until this very day holding forth this false idea?

I believe these men have for years, misrepresented Graves on this subject and they are misrepresenting him now. Furthermore, Graves' son-in-law O. H. Hailey wrote a biography of Graves in 1929.⁶⁹¹ If any man knew Graves' position, it was Hailey. In this book, written nearly forty

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. my article: "J. R. Graves' life-Time Position on Church Constitution Investigated." <http://www.ntbaptist-lizton.org/ref/landmarkissues/graves-position-investigated.pdf>

⁶⁹⁰ Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 2.

⁶⁹¹ Hailey. *Life & Times of J. R. Graves*.

years after Graves' death, he gives his stated position as DA.⁶⁹² How could Hailey fail to mention it if Graves had made such a major change?⁶⁹³

Whoever says Graves changed his position from DA to EMDA is responsible to give us a plain statement of this change. If Graves did change his position, it should be easy to find. But if this proves to be too hard—and I believe it will—they can remain silent. At any rate, no one should accept the claim that Graves changed his position from DA to EMDA unless they give an *explicit* quote from Graves' own pen indicating such a change.

Let me give a few statements by Graves on DA:

Christ said, where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20.⁶⁹⁴

A body of baptized Christians can organize themselves into a church at pleasure, and no exterior body can organize them, much less can a Presbytery organize a body superior to itself. Can I stream rise higher than its fountain? ⁶⁹⁵

Wherever three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches meet and covenant together to hold and teach and be governed by the New Testament, etc., there is a church of Christ, even though there was not a presbytery of ministers within a thousand miles of them. There is not the slightest need of a council or presbytery to organize a Baptist church.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹² *The Baptist*. May 4, 1867, p. 1.

⁶⁹³ Cf. Hailey's *J. R. Graves: Life and Times*, p. 42, where he records that Graves changed his position on communion.

⁶⁹⁴ Graves. *The New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 135, 1884. The word in brackets belongs to Graves-JC.

⁶⁹⁵ Graves. *TN Baptist*, Sept. 3, 1885, p.8.

⁶⁹⁶ Graves. *TN Baptist*, May 15, 1880, p. 759.

...each assembly was a complete Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was divinely invested with all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ.⁶⁹⁷

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receives its authority directly from Christ.”⁶⁹⁸

Three are sufficient to form a church although they be laymen.⁶⁹⁹

This last quote was first used by Graves in 1855 and then again in 1884 which covers his most active years and without any change in his position. In 1885, he expressed the same sentiments in *The Baptist*, which indicates he never changed his mind on this subject. We give these references with the dates so those who claim Graves changed his position will know the explicit kind of proof they need to bring. Bro Pugh has never found one word of such a change! No one else has found any evidence of it. Could it be that this is just another effort to throw us off the track? Whatever the reason, these failures indicate Bro Pugh’s suggestion that Graves waffled on this subject and did not make himself clear, or changed his position, is just another attempt to cast some doubt on the subject. Whatever the reason, it totally failed! Graves’ position is rock solid for DA and it was constant and consistently the same throughout his life time. Let Bro Pugh give us proof that Graves changed his position if he can!

⁶⁹⁷ Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*. 125, 1884.

⁶⁹⁸ Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. 995-6, 1876.

⁶⁹⁹ Graves. *The New Great Iron Wheel*. P. 136, 1884, Graves is here quoting Tertullian. See the same quote in *The Great Iron Wheel*, p. 554, 1855.

APPENDIX V

JOHN GILPIN AND EMDA

Bro Cockrell made quite an issue because someone “alleged that Elder John R. Gilpin did not believe in” EMDA.⁷⁰⁰ We have no idea who made this statement, but I suspect it was made by someone who knew Bro Gilpin long before Bro Cockrell did. Bro John Gilpin was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and editor of *The Baptist Examiner*⁷⁰¹ (hereafter, *TBE*) until his death. There is no question that Bro Gilpin believed in EMDA in his later years. He was a strong EMDA advocate as his articles in *TBE* demonstrate. However, when he came to believe this doctrine is not so clear. Did Bro Gilpin change from DA to EMDA? I believe he did and submit the following for consideration.

In *TBE* in 1947 the following article by Bro Gilpin⁷⁰² appeared:

What are the Real Prerequisites of a Missionary Baptist Church?

1. The organization must hold up the standard of a regular membership.

⁷⁰⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71.

⁷⁰¹ *The Baptist Examiner* was started by T. P. Simmons April 1, 1931. C.D. Cole was associate editor. John R. Gilpin bought the paper in 1938 but I failed to take down the exact date.

⁷⁰² I took the notes for this chapter, October 14,15, 2003 from the bound volumes of *TBE* in the Calvary Baptist Church Library. Bro Chris Burke, the present pastor of Calvary Baptist church, was kind enough to let me do research in their library where they have Bro Gilpin’s library and most of the bound volumes of *TBE*. The bound volumes in this library, according to Sister Judy Rule, are the only complete set. They should be archived for posterity. The following volumes were missing: 1933-34; 1935-36; 1937-38; 1954-55; 1956.

2. The organization must have a proper conception of Scriptural baptism.

I am perfectly ready to grant that I would like for every church to be sound in 'all things' of God's word. However, though that organization might be heretical on some of these, if it is sound on regeneration and baptism, it is still a missionary Baptist church.⁷⁰³

Such a statement on the organization of a church would have been distinctly different in the sixties. EMDA (not the term but the idea) would have been definitely brought in and no such church as here described would have been recognized as a true church. Whence this change?

Bro Gilpin answered the following question in *TBE's I would like to know* column in 1940: "What is the least number that can be organized into a church?" He answered:

The Master started with four. Read Mt. 4:18-22. I think right there was the beginning of the first Baptist church, the world ever saw. Possibly it would be all right to organize with even two. Read Mt. 18:20.⁷⁰⁴

This same question and answer was also reprinted in *TBE*, June 18, 1955 p. 8. Let the reader understand that in the 1960s this answer giving Mt 18:20 would have been prevented by the EMDA theory. Does this not indicate a major change?

In the same column, in 1940 this question was asked:

Is a church scriptural that was organized by one man without a presbytery? We suppose a church could be organized by one man; but it isn't very orderly.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰³ *TBE*. "What Are the Real Prerequisites of a Missionary Baptist Church," by John R. Gilpin. March 1, 1947. p. 1.

⁷⁰⁴ *TBE*. March 30, 1940, p. 2.

⁷⁰⁵ *TBE*. June 15, 1940, p. 2.

Another question on church organization:

Who probably organized the first churches in Galilee and Samaria? Philip probably organized the first one in Samaria. I do not know who organized the first one in Galilee. They were both probably organized after the persecution arising after the death of Stephen.⁷⁰⁶

In an article on the Church and Kingdom Bro Gilpin wrote:

I understand the term 'church' here as referring to the church as an institution finding its only concrete expression in local bodies on earth and in the final gathering of God's people in Heaven, He. 12:23.⁷⁰⁷

In 1949 Bro Gilpin printed an article by J. G. Bow on the subject of "What a Church is in the Light of the Word of God." Bow wrote:

Baptists believe that a church of Jesus Christ is a body of baptized believers, associated together in one place to preach the gospel, to keep the ordinances and represent the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world.⁷⁰⁸

In 1944 Bro Gilpin wrote an article entitled: "How can one distinguish a Scriptural Church?"⁷⁰⁹ His answer does not mention a mother church!

Here let me suggest that anyone who believes Bro Gilpin held to EMDA and published that position in *TBE* before 1955, give a specific reference. We do not believe this can

⁷⁰⁶ *TBE*. July 6, 1940, p. 2.

⁷⁰⁷ *TBE*. March 4, 1944, p. 1. Note. One can hardly imagine Bro Gilpin making a statement like this in the sixties or seventies.

⁷⁰⁸ *TBE*. February 12, 1949, p. 1. This was probably taken from the book, *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It*, by Jonathan Gaines Bow, 1895.

⁷⁰⁹ *TBE*. February 12, 1944, p. 1.

be done. I could not find a single reference to the essential mother church in *TBE* before the mid-1950s. Certainly there was a shift from *no express statement* relative to EMDA in these several quotes given in these early editions of *TBE* and that of the mid-fifties and sixties where EMDA becomes very prominent. I believe this is an indicator of Bro Gilpin's changed position and may well point to the time of the origin of EMDA among Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptists.

On 2-25-2015 I received a call from a long-time friend. He was a student at the Missionary Baptist Seminary and Institute, Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1951 and just short of obtaining his doctorate when he was ousted because he did not believe associations were Scriptural. I asked him about the mother-daughter theory. He told me "We never heard anything about it at that time." Thus, in a Landmark Baptist Seminary in 1951 a student who was about to graduate with a doctor's degree had never heard of EMDA! Surely, if this doctrine was any part of Baptist life, then a theology student with several years of study under his belt could not have been ignorant of it! This indicates that no such doctrine was then afloat!

In *TBE* in 1955, another question concerning church constitution was asked. Bro Gilpin answered it⁷¹⁰ in the *I should like to know column*:

7. How can we go about securing letters to organize a new church?

⁷¹⁰ A Brother who holds the EMDA position, suggested to me, when I mentioned to him this statement by Bro Gilpin and the date of it, that it might have been written by Bro Bob Ross who was Bro Gilpin's son in law and also became the editor of *TBE*. I was sure this was not the case, but to remove all question, I called Bro Bob Ross and asked him about this. He was kind enough to check his journal and he gave me these facts. He did not meet Bro Gilpin until June of 1955—the very month this article appeared in *TBE*. It was several years after this before Bro Ross became co-editor of *TBE*. This proves Bro Ross was not the author of these articles in 1955.

Ask the church of which the individuals are members to grant the church letters for the purpose of forming a new organization. Four times during my long pastorate in Russell we did thus. When the churches of Raceland, Wurtland, Danelyton, and Coal Grove were organized from the members of the church of which I was pastor, we granted letters to these individuals so that they might become charter members of these various churches. In each instance the letters were granted before the church was organized in view of the fact that such a church was to be organized.⁷¹¹

Now I know that EMDA men will attempt to put EMDA in those letters which were granted for those members who wanted to form new churches. But we must recognize the fact that that idea was not stated by Bro Gilpin at the time this question was answered. Nor did he suggest that they gave authority for these churches to organize. There can be no question that if these questions had been asked in the 1960s, they would have been answered in a manner that would have accentuated EMDA. Why was EMDA not mentioned or even alluded to in these answers given before 1955?

We know Bro Gilpin did believe EMDA in 1964.⁷¹² The evidence submitted here leads me to believe Bro Gilpin did not believe EMDA before 1955. And if my position is correct, he did change his position sometime after 1955. What EMDA men need to prove my proposition incorrect is a plain statement of this doctrine from Bro Gilpin's own pen before 1955. If he believed EMDA throughout his life, that should not be too difficult for them to find. If they can do this, I will gladly retract my statement.

⁷¹¹ John R. Gilpin. *TBE*, June 4, 1955, p. 8.

⁷¹² 7 *Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*. These questions were answered in *TBE* in 1964 and the booklet was printed in 1966 by Calvary Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky. John R. Gilpin, editor. See Preface p. 3.

APPENDIX VI

TABLE OF COMPARISONS

FENISON'S REFERENCES COMPARED

In this appendix, I have tried to demonstrate that these quotes for EMDA are not only taken out of context, but in contrast to the author's stated position! Hedge's *Rules of Interpretation* says:

The design of interpretation is to ascertain the real intention of the writer; to develop the true meaning of his words...to determine what was his design...⁷¹³

It appears to me that Bro Fenison has totally overlooked this principle. Sometimes the author he quoted stated his position which reflected DA on the very page quoted—yet he still quoted him as if he held EMDA! Here I have examined the *Great Commission Credentials* by Mark Fenison. It is believed the juxtaposition of these references will make the errors conspicuous. My notes are indicated by italics.

⁷¹³ Hedge. *Elements of Logic*, p. 163.

Carroll, J. M. - Fenison

Saturday Sep-30-1837.

Elder Daniel Parker, Reported, That on the seventeenth day of September 1837, He exercised **the authority vested in him by this Church in Constituting a Church**. Said Church is Constituted on the East side of the Angeleny river in Brother Cook's settlement—On eight members five males and three females, one deacon Wm. Sparks and on the same articles of Faith that this church is constituted, acknowledging her relationship to and with said Pilgrim Church of Regular Predistinaran Baptist. [J. M. Carroll. *A History of Texas Baptists*, p. 64,65,66].

***Note:** Bro Fenison is quoting from an electronic copy of Carroll's book. The actual page number for the above quote is 48. The bold emphasis has been added by Bro Fenison without informing the reader of it. When one reads the whole account, as indicated in the adjacent column, the church expressly stated that this authority which it was granting was only **to assist** in constituting churches and ordaining officers! Whatever this authority was the deacons had it as well as the preachers according to the records of this church! Why didn't Bro Fenison quote this paragraph with this explicit statement that these men were to **assist** in constitutions and ordinations? Could it be that it does not agree with his position?--JC].*

J. M. Carroll

Saturday, July 4th 1835. After an Elapse of time from the 15th of November 1834 to the present. According to a previous notice or arrangement, the following named Brethren and sisters,***** Met at the house of Eder Daniel Parker's in Brunets Grant Jurisdiction of Nacogdoches Texas. Being in possession of the Church Book by consent of the Clerk, upon Examination Consider themselves legally and properly the Pilgrim Predestinarean Regular Baptist Church and therefore proceeded to business. Elder G. Greenwood moderator Protom, and D. Parker Clerk Protom.

At this meeting this further business was transacted:

2nd. The Church proceeded to clothe Elds G. greenwood and D. Parker or either of them and the deacons of this Church to assist in Constituting Churches and ordaining officers therein; if called on and they think it advisable to do so. [J. M. Carroll. *Hist. TX Baptists*, p. 47.]

***Note:** Original spelling retained—J C.*

The prayer-meeting was perseveringly maintained regardless of the hindrances. When a few weeks had gone by this devout group decided that they must have a church home. Conditions were not encouraging except in the light of God's promises. From no other source came any ray of hope. After days of earnest prayer to God and serious consultation among themselves, they unanimously agreed at once to enter into an organization, and here, in 1837, in the town of Washington, there was projected the small but momentous beginning of Missionary Baptist organized work in Texas. [J. M. Carroll. *Hist. TX Baptists*. p. 108].

Christian-Fenison John T. Christian quotes the letter from the parent church authorizing their constitution in these words: That there was no law against necessity, and under the present stress of circumstances the members ought to assemble and formally appoint one of their number, by election, to baptize the converts.’ This advice was acted upon and Richard Curtis baptized the converts. Thus the first church in Mississippi was organized without a presbytery of ordained ministers.” [Fenison. <i>GCC</i>, p. 200. John T. Christian, <i>A History of the Baptists</i>, Vol. II, p. 334].	Christian 1. This community was called the Salem Baptist Church; but it was constituted, not only without a presbytery of ministers, but without the presence of a single ordained minister. They simply agreed to meet together stately, says Bond, and worship God according to his Word, and to exercise good discipline over one another, and called Elder Curtis to preach to them...” [John T. Christian, <i>History of the Baptists</i>. Vol. II, 333]. The footsteps of the Baptists of the ages can more easily be traced by blood than by baptism. It is a lineage of suffering rather than a succession of bishops; a martyrdom of principle, rather than a dogmatic decree of councils; a golden chord of love, rather than an iron chain of succession, which, while attempting to rattle its links back to the apostles, has been of more service in chaining some protesting Baptist to the stake than in proclaiming the truth of the New Testament. It is, nevertheless, a right royal succession, that in every age the Baptists have been advocates of liberty for all, and have held that the gospel of the Son of God makes every man a free man in Christ Jesus. [John T. Christian. <i>History of The Baptists</i>, vol. I, p. 22-23]. The distinctive characteristics of this church [as found in Scripture—JC] are clearly marked in the New Testament. Such a church was a voluntary association and was independent of all other churches. It might be, and probably was, affiliated with other churches in brotherly relations; but it remained independent of all outward control, and was responsible to Christ alone, who was the supreme lawgiver and the source of all authority. [J. T. Christian. <i>History of the Baptists</i>, vol. I, p. 13].
Dargan-Fenison Taking all this for granted, the next step will be for the persons interested in	Dargan 1. The modes of procedure whereby this act of organization is publicly taken are

forming the church to obtain letters of dismission from the churches of which they are members. In such cases it is desirable that the letters should specify the purpose for which they are granted. Now, where a number of person go out from one church for the purpose of organizing a new one, their names may all be included in a joint letter—that is, THE MOTHER CHURCH grants to the brethren and sisters named in this letter with a view of their uniting with each other, and with others of like mind for the constituting a new church; or something to this effect. [Fenison. GCC. p.101. E. C. Dargan, *Ecclesiology*. p. 195].

Note: Emphasis is not in Dargan—JC.

various. In some cases it is taken by the church [*church in anticipation—JC*] alone. The brethren and sisters come together, appoint a moderator or chairman from among themselves, a clerk or secretary, and then proceed by the examination of letters and the adoption of a creed and covenant to vote themselves a church. Sometimes the presence of a minister or some well-known leader is requested, and he gives advice as to the steps to be taken. This is the simplest way of organizing a church. [Dargan. *Eccl.* 196].

2. Another way is for the church [*church in anticipation—JC*] to organize itself in the presence of an advisory council—that is, a council, or presbytery, composed of representatives of neighboring churches specially appointed by request [*of those intending to form the new church—JC*] for the purpose of witnessing and sanctioning the step. This council organizes itself and votes approval or disapproval, or postponement, as the case may require. But the constitution of the church is really independent of the action of the council and may have taken place before the council was called to recognize the body. In such cases the approval of the presbytery only endorses the church and gives it a standing among its sister churches. The disapproval of the council does not unmake the church, but simply leaves it to itself. [Dargan. *Eccl.* 197].

3. Another way [*to organize a church—JC*] is by an advisory council. Here there would be some difference in the procedure according to circumstances. Without having obtained letters, or being yet prepared to enter an organization, certain brethren might ask churches in the neighborhood to send members to sit in council on the propriety of organization, and then these brethren would take subsequent action according to the findings of the council, either proceeding to organize, or concluding not to do so. Or, having obtained letters, but not yet being organized, the holders of the letters before taking the final step may seek the advice of

	a council to help them shape their action. Should the council advise delay, or even disapprove the project altogether, the letters may be returned, but the holders are free to act as they please without reference to the judgment of the council. It will remain for other churches to recognize them or not, as may seem best to them. Should the council advise organization, this may proceed in their presence by the action of the church [<i>church in anticipation—JC</i>] itself, and then after the church has organized itself, the council may reconvene and formally give recognition to the church. [Dargan. <i>Eccl.</i> 197-8].
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Dayton-Fenison The administration of baptism is an official act, done by authority of the Church... They were addressed as the representatives of the Churches which they should establish, and the successors of those churches' to the end of the world.' To the Churches therefore, the commission says, Go ye and preach my gospel to all nations, baptizing them & c... A. C. Dayton, <i>Alien Immersion</i>, pp.212, 218-219. <i>GCC.</i> 93-94. <i>Note: The bold emphasis belongs to Bro Fenison not to Dayton—J C.</i>	Dayton 1. He made everyone a priest and a king. He invested every member with the right to execute his laws, but only when assembled with the brethren. As many as could conveniently unite came voluntarily together and by mutual consent were constituted an ekklesia, or official assembly, of Christ. It was subject to his laws: it acted by his authority: it used his name to give a sanction to its acts; and as he had authorized it, and conferred on it all its authority, so he promised to be in its midst by his Spirit, and to ratify in heaven what it did upon earth. [A. C. Dayton. <i>Theodosia Earnest</i>, Vol. II, p. 115; <i>Alien Baptism</i>, p. 167]. 2. The Church consists of such baptized believers as have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the scriptural constitution, to administer Christ's ordinances, and enforce his laws among themselves. [Dayton. <i>Theodosia Earnest. II.</i> 150]. 3. Is this a true church of Christ?...If it be, it has authority from the King to administer
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	his ordinances. [Dayton. <i>Alien Baptism</i>. 123-4]. 4. No one can reach the Church, except through baptism; but every baptized believer is not a Church member. The eunuch was in the visible kingdom as soon as he was baptized; but he was not a member of any church. [Dayton. <i>Theodosia Earnest. II</i>. p.150]. 5. He provided for all this before he went, by directing as many of the citizens of the kingdom as could conveniently meet together, to assemble and organize themselves into a “church,” which should in its corporate capacity attend to all these matters.... [Dayton. <i>Alien Baptism</i>. 167]. 6. There are no branches of the Church at Jerusalem, or any other Church. No Church is ever called a part of any other Church. Each ekklesia was complete in itself. It was the assembly which Christ had called out from the world, in the place where it was located. It was, therefore the 'ekklesia'—the assembly of Jesus Christ in such or such a place. It is this, and nothing more. [Dayton. <i>Theo. Earnest. II</i>. p. 76-77]. 7. Here, then, is the embodiment of the scriptural idea of a Church of Jesus Christ. It is an assembly of those who have repented of sin, believed on Christ, and then have been baptized; who meet together in regular order to break the bread and drink the wine in his remembrance, and to transact business in his name. [Dayton. <i>Theo. Earnest. II</i>. p. 76]. 8. What, then, do we find the Church of Christ actually to have been? Simply a local assembly of baptized believers, meeting by his authority to administer his ordinances, and transact the business of his kingdom in his name. [Dayton. <i>Theo. Earnest. II</i>. p. 93]. 9 Signs or Marks by which to recognize a true Church of Jesus Christ.
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	1. It consists only of professed believers in Christ 2. Its members have been baptized upon a profession of their faith. 3. It is a local organization, and independent of all others. 4. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but His above its own. 5. Its members have become such by their own voluntary act. 6. It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. 7. It began with Christ, and has continued to the present time. 8. It never persecuted for conscience's sake. 9. No apostate Church can be a true Church of Christ. [Dayton. <i>Theo. Earnest. II.</i> p. 480]. ...and we read in Acts 14:23, of churches which seem to have existed without any elders or presbyters, from which I infer that a Church may exist without any officers until it can choose deacons and its pastor, and have them properly ordained. It is not complete, but still it is a church, and has within itself the authority to perfect its organization by the election from its own members of a pastor to minister in the Word, and deacons to minister in its temporal affairs. [Dayton. <i>Theo. Earnest. II.</i> 186].
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Graves-Fenison	Graves
As you can plainly see, Dr. Graves believed that the vast majority of American Baptists were directly influenced by the beliefs and practices of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. In the previous chapter, we demonstrated that the Philadelphia Association was	An ekklesia of Christ "...is dependent upon no other body for its existence or self-perpetuation..." [J. R. Graves. <i>New Great Iron Wheel</i>, p. 134]. A question in the <i>TN Baptist</i>:

permeated by the beliefs and practices of the Welsh and English Particular Baptists. Among these Baptists, regular church order was not only their practice but their doctrinal belief. Church authority in the Great Commission was their doctrinal basis behind regular church order in the constitution of churches. [Fenison. <i>GCC</i>, p. 87]. <i>Note: Here Bro Fenison implies that "regular church order" is EMDA, which is a mistake.—JC.</i> It is undeniable that Dr. Graves along with all major leaders among the Landmark movement, believed three essentials that separates them from those today which Elder Milburn Cockrell identifies as "apostate Landmarkers." They denied the so-called doctrine of "direct" or "vertical" authority in the Great Commission. In the words of William Cathcart, they believed in – "scriptural authority UNDER God FROM a gospel church." [Fenison. <i>GCC</i>. 118]. <i>Note: The emphasis does not belong to Cathcart.</i> <i>Note: How Bro Fenison could make the statement that Graves denied direct authority when we have Graves explicit statements to the contrary in the adjacent column, will be one of those questions that will never be answered!</i> If the church alone was commissioned to preserve and to preach the gospel, then it is certain that no other organization has the right to preach it—to trench upon the divine rights of the church. A Masonic Lodge, no more than a Young Men's Christian Association; an 'Odd-fellow' Lodge or Howard Association, no more than a 'Woman's Missionary Board,' have the least right to take the gospel in hand, select and commission ministers to go forth and preach it, administer the	Has a company or number immersed penitent believers walking orderly, the right to constitute themselves into a church of Christ without the presence and approval of a Presbytery of ordained ministers of the gospel, under any circumstances? By answering the above in the Baptist, you will much oblige. R. N. Graves' Answer: Two or three baptized Christians can organize themselves into a church in a private house – where there is a need of a church, by covenanting together to be governed by the New Testament, discharging all the duties incumbent upon the church – without convening a presbytery; – and such a church can ordain its own officers. [Graves. <i>Tn Baptist</i>. 3-27-80. p. 648]. A body of baptized Christians can organize themselves into a church at pleasure, and no exterior body can organize them, much less can a Presbytery organize a body superior to itself. Can I stream rise higher than its fountain? On the other hand, a sovereign and independent church can dissolve her organization of her own good will and pleasure, and a presbytery can no more prevent then it could order it. [Graves. <i>TN Baptist</i>. 10-03-85, p. 8]. Therefore, each assembly was a complete Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was divinely invested with all the power and prerogatives of a Church of Christ. [Graves. <i>New Iron Wheel</i>. p. 125]. Christ said, "where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. [Graves. <i>NGIW</i>, p. 135]. <i>Emphasis belongs to Graves.</i>
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ordinances and ORGANIZE CHURCHES. [Fenison. GCC. Front cover & p. 118]. <i>Note: Emphasis in caps belongs to Fenison.</i>	“Three are sufficient to form a church although they be laymen.” [Graves. <i>NGIW</i>. P. 136]. <i>Note: Graves is here quoting Tertullian with approval—JC.</i> We can learn nothing from God's word about church arms— a body that is not a church, and yet exercising all the functions of a church, and yet the attorney or agent of another body, is an anomalous organization. We do know from the divine constitution of the churches of Christ, that each one is by Christ invested with all the ecclesiastical rights, privileges, powers and prerogatives that he allows to be administered on the earth, and it is made her bounden duty to faithfully conserve and execute these delegated powers and prerogatives. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. 3-10-83, p. 8]. We find nowhere in the Scriptures where a Presbytery had to be called to organize a church. Any number of Christians living in any neighborhood can come together, and by covenant, enter into church relations without asking the permission of any man or number of men. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. 12-4-80, p. 502]. The fact is, that a body of baptized disciples in any place can constitute themselves into a church, without an ordained minister, and then proceed to elect their own officers. The highest and oldest authorities sustain this position. Christ says: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” – Matthew 18:20. Tertullian, who wrote in the year 150, 50 years after the lifetime of the last apostle, says: “Where there are three, there is a church, though they be laymen. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. 12-22-83, p. 8]. FUNDAMENTALS OF A NT CHURCH
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	Now there are two principles fundamental to the New Testament and Baptist church polity, viz.: 1. That each church of Christ is an absolutely independent organization, complete in itself, and clothed with executive functions only. 2. That to the churches, as such, Christ delivered the ordinances, and constituted each one responsible for the purity of its administrations. I mean by fundamental, that a scriptural church cannot be constituted without them. An organization may possess every other feature; but not possessing these two, it is not a Christian or evangelical church, and should not be so called. [Graves. <i>Intercommunion</i>, p. 287]. It is not a multitude that makes a church. Christ had fore-designated how few would be recognized by Him "two or three are gathered in his name," under his authority, he would be present with them as their Head, e.g., our missionaries to foreign fields are sent forth, two or more with their families, and on reaching their stations they organize themselves into a church, by covenanting to take the New Testament as their constitution, and Christ as their Head. Two males and two females generally compose Our first mission churches. [Graves. <i>Great Carrollton Debate</i>, p. 809. See also pp. 950, 816]. "The absolute individuality and independence of each particular church having been fully established...the following conclusion irresistibly follows, viz.:- That each particular church was invested by its prime founder with all the functions, rights, powers and prerogatives necessary to its self-preservation and perpetuation, and for the discharge of all the trusts he
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	designed it to execute, until he should come again.” [Graves. <i>NGIW</i>, p. 143]. Now I wish Elder Ditzler to know that there is a world-wide difference between originating an organization different from anything that can be found in the Bible, different from anything the world had ever before seen or heard of, and calling it a Church, and organizing a Christian Church. It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ. [Graves. <i>Great Carrollton Debate</i>, p. 975]. I will now define a Scriptural Church, as regards its polity and powers, and these define its character, whether Democratic or otherwise, whether legislative or executive only. SEC. 1. Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone. [Graves. <i>Great Carrollton Debate</i>, (1875) Pages 995-996]. Querist. Has a company or number of immersed penitent believers walking orderly, the right to constitute themselves into a church of Christ without the presence and approval of a presbytery of ordained ministers of the gospel, under any circumstances? By answering the above in The Baptist, you will much oblige, R.N. Two or three baptized Christians can organize themselves into a church in a private house—where there is need of a church, by covenanting together to be governed by the New Testament, discharging all the duties incumbent upon a church—without convening a presbytery;—and such a church can elect or ordain its own officers. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. 1880. page 648. c. page 68].
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	Querist. Can a church go into dissolution without a presbyter, or without the unanimous voice of the church? Yours most respectfully, etc., W. H Lindsey. Conway, Ark. Answer:—The Church of Christ is an independent body, consisting of one single local congregation, depending on the will of no other body on earth for her being or her ceasing to be. In one respect, like her crown head, she has power to lay down her life and power to take it up again. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. 1880. page 668. April 8, 1880]. Epigram...a council has no right to organize or disorganize a church of Christ. If you think so tell us who gave a council such authority. [Graves. <i>TN Baptist</i>. June 4, 1887, p. 9]. What is the remedy for such a circumstanced body of men [and] women? [<i>A group of professed believers—JC</i>] Answer: Appoint a day for a general meeting, and then and there agree upon and adopt articles of faith which clearly set forth the fundamental principles of the faith and order of the gospel, and covenant with each other to walk, by God's help, in that faith and order, and to discharge all the duties devolving upon a church of the living God, a pillar and ground of the truth. [Graves. <i>Tn. Baptist</i>. Feb. 7, 1885, e. 45]. Remarks.—These and thousands of other questions touching church polity and discipline can be determined by referring to the divine prerogatives of the local church. 1. All the functions, prerogatives whatsoever a church is warranted in exercising are delegated powers, and delegated trusts cannot be alienated or relegated. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. Aug. 12, 1882].
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	Answer.—They [unjustly excluded members] can organize themselves into an independent church, or they can apply for membership to any other church in the State, and it would be the duty of that church to restore to them the rights of which they have been for righteousness sake, deprived. [Graves. <i>TN Baptist</i>. Dec. 9, 1882. p. 5]. It is evident, if a church must exist before her officers, and that she is absolutely independent of all other bodies, she must be authorized to elect and to commission her officers without being required to call upon some outside party. [Graves. <i>Old Landmarkism</i>, p. 47]. Question in The Baptist: Can a church delegate her authority or power to anyone, (even an archangel), under any circumstances, without disloyalty to Christ? Answer. --Quod deiigatur, mem delegation, est delegated—authority cannot be delegated. All the prerogatives of a church are delegated to her, and she cannot alienate them. [Graves. <i>The Baptist</i>. May 24, 1879, p. 214].
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Hiscox-Fenison Before the organization actually takes place, however, such persons as propose to constitute the body, should procure letters from the churches of which they are members, GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF FORMING A NEW CHURCH ." [Fenison. <i>GCC</i> p.100. Hiscox, <i>A New Directory for Baptist Churches</i>, pp. 53-53]. <i>Note: Emphases (italics and caps) do not belong to Hiscox.—JC.</i>	Hiscox The Authority of Churches.— the authority of a church is limited to its own members, and applies to all matters of Christian character, and whatever involves the welfare of religion. It is designed to secure in all its members a conduct and conversation 'becoming godliness.' This authority is derived directly from God; not from states, nor princes, nor people; not from its own officers, nor its members, not from any other source of ecclesiastical or civil power or right. But Christ 'is head over all things to the church,' and also as of right, 'the church is subject to Christ.' But the authority of the church does not extend to
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	its own members even, in matters merely personal and temporal, and which do not affect their character or duties as Christians.” [Hiscox. <i>The Baptist Church Directory</i>, 1859. P 16-17]. <i>Note: this Baptist Church Directory is distinct from The New Directory for Baptist Churches, first issued in 1894, but Hiscox tells us the New Directory “...is entirely in harmony with previous manuals, as to Baptist, polity, and neither abrogates not antagonizes any of the fundamental principles announced or advocated in those previous issues. New Directory, p. 8.</i> III.– Churches Recognized. It is customary for them to call a council, to meet at the same, or at a subsequent time, to recognize them; that is, to examine their doctrines, inquire into the circumstances and reasons of their organization, and express, on behalf of the churches they represent for their course, and fellowship for them, as a regularly constituted church of the same denomination. The calling of a council is, however, entirely optional with the church; it is a prudential measure merely, to secure the sympathy and approbation of sister churches, but is in no sense necessary. The council usually hear their articles of faith and covenant; listen to a statement of the causes which led to their organization; examine the letters held by the constituent members; carefully consider the whole subject, and then vote their approval, if they so approve, or advise them to the contrary, if they disapprove. It is customary to hold some appropriate religious service on the occasion, when a discourse is preached, a charge given to the church, the hand of fellowship extended by the council to the church, through some one chosen by each for the service. [Hiscox. <i>The Baptist Church Directory</i>, p. 17-18]. Note 3.– If a council should refuse to recognize a newly constituted church, still
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that church would have the right to maintain their organization, and continue the forms of worship, and would as really be a church without, as with the sanction of the council. It would seldom, however, be expedient to do this, against the convictions of churches and pastors expressed in the decisions of a council. [Hiscox. *The Baptist Church Directory*, p. 19].

The process by which new churches are constituted is very simple. The necessity for, and the practicability of, organizing one, must be decided by those who are to constitute it, and who are to bear the expense and the responsibility of its support. There may be persons belonging to some other Church or churches, who find themselves living where there is none, but where one is believed to be needed, and where the increase of population shows a need for increased religious privileges. Or such persons may be converts from some recent revival in a neighborhood where there seem both room and a demand for another Church. After mature deliberation on the part of such persons, meeting together for consultation, canvassing all sides of the question, taking counsel of wise and discreet brethren, with much prayer for divine direction--since such a movement is one of grave concern—general agreement being secured, a meeting is finally called for the organization...”

The ‘Constituting act’ would properly and appropriately be the unanimously voting--perhaps by rising--a resolution like this: ‘Resolved, That, guided as we believe by the Holy Spirit, and relying on the blessing of God, we do, here and now, by this act, constitute ourselves a Church of Jesus Christ to perform His service, and to be governed by His will, as revealed in the New Testament. And to this end we do hereby adopt and agree to the following Covenant and Articles of faith.’ Such an act makes such a company of disciples, *ipso facto*, a Church of Christ with all the rights powers, and privileges of any New Testament Church.” [Hiscox. *New Directory*, pp. 52-54].

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Jarrel-Fenison But these missions and their pastors continued under the care of the mother church. This gave the pastor of the mother church a pastoral care over all the missions and their pastors. This is the case now in quite a number of Baptist churches. [Fenison. <i>GCC</i>. 116].	Jarrel Every Baptist church being, in organization, a church complete in itself, and, in no way organically connected with any other church [Jarrel. <i>Baptist Church Perpetuity</i>. 1894. p. 2]. All that Baptists mean by church “succession,” or Church Perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth. [Jarrel. <i>Baptist Church Perpetuity</i>. 1894. p. 3]. In Mt. 18:20, Jesus speaking of the Church, said: “Where two or three are gathered together [it is not the middle voice—gathered themselves together; but it is the perfect passive participle--(sunegmenoi) in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” See Ep 1:18-23; where God fills His church. “Those three already formed the Christian Church.” [Jarrel. <i>Gospel in Water</i>, p. 182].
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T. G. Jones-Fenison He also wrote a book defending Baptist History. In that book he claimed that the Great Commission as given in Matthew 28:19-20 was a process that includes authority to constitute churches. He said: “In this simple analysis of the commission is presented the very process by which Baptists are now made, constituted into churches, and governed. That it was the process by which the first preachers made converts, and constituted churches, is beyond question.” [T. G. Jones, <i>The Baptists, their Origin, Continuity, Principles, Spirit, Policy, Position and</i>	T. G. Jones In the same spirit Dr. Ripley says: “A church that came into existence yesterday, in strict conformity to the New Testament principles of membership, far away from any long-existing church or company of churches, and therefore unable to trace an outward lineal descent, is a true church of Christ—for Christianity is not a religion of circumstances, but of principles—while a church so-called, not standing on the apostolic principles of faith and practice, and yet able to look back through a long line up to time immemorial, may have never belonged to that body of which Christ is the head.”.... “Amongst their [<i>Baptist—JC</i>] sister churches they are related by
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<i>Influence, a Vindication.</i> Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society) p. 27. <i>GCC.</i> p. 50].	sympathies and kind offices, but they own no subjection, and acknowledge no dependence either on contemporary churches of their own country, or upon the churches of other lands or other times, except as those churches have held the same truth, clung to the same Head, and have exhibited the same spirit...They claim to hold directly of the ever-living, almighty, and omnipotent Spirit, and to lean, without the interposition of chains of succession and lines of spiritual descent, immediately and for themselves on the bosom and heart of the Saviour, who pledged his presence to the end of the world, where two or three are gathered together in his name. To all pedigrees of spiritual and priestly class, claimed by some Christians, we oppose the permanent presence and indefeasible priesthood of the great Melchisedec of our profession, without beginning of days or end of years; and we claim to come up out of the wilderness, stayed directly on Christ and leaning on our beloved. We touch, so to speak, his bare arm as our stay, without the intervention of the envelopes of any favored order or virtue running through a chain of spiritual conductors. Our graces are not transmitted, but taken direct from the Redeemer's own hand." [T. G. Jones. <i>The Baptists.</i> p. 26-27. Electronic copy].
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Daniel King-Fenison Throughout the 1650's there were printed defenses of Baptist Church succession... Daniel King. <i>A Way to Zion Sought Out and Found for Believers to Walk in.</i> London,1650 and Edinburgh, 1656. [Fenison. <i>GCC.</i> p. 183-4].	Daniel King That Believers Convicted of The Truth, May Take Up An Ordinance Of God, As Baptism, Though It Have Been Intercepted, And No Baptized Person To Administer It. In this case He is to be looked upon as visible a Disciple, as if He were under the Ordinance Himself, and so by the motion of the Spirit, and the call of those convinced believers, intending to join themselves together in a Church, He may and ought to Baptize, as well as Preach the Gospel. [King. <i>Way to Zion.</i> p. 82]
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Mercer—Fenison	Mercer
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Our reasons therefore for rejecting baptism by immersion, when administered by Pedobaptist ministers is that they are connected with churches clearly out of the Apostolic succession, and therefore clearly out of the apostolic commission. Jesse Mercer, <i>A History of the Georgia Baptist Association</i>, p. 126. Notice that Mercer connected apostolic succession and apostolic commission 'with churches.' he flatly denies that institution can be called churches if they are 'clearly out of the apostolic succession'. In essence, he is claiming what English Baptists and the Baptists of the Philadelphia Association defined as 'regular church order' in regard to the great commission. This was the basis for taking a stand against the ecumenical practices that were invading the practice of Baptists in his day. Even earlier than this Jesse Mercer stated in 1811: 'That all churches and ministers, who originated since the apostles, and not successively to them, are NOT IN GOSPEL ORDER; and therefore cannot be acknowledged as such' Here Mercer uses the old phrase 'gospel order' to define his position on church succession and church authority in regard to the great commission. [Fenison. <i>GCC</i>. Pp. 107-108]. Note: <i>As to this second quote, Bro Fenison, does not identify the source. It is found in the Memoirs by Mallary, p. 146. Also, the emphasis does not belong to Mercer. Bro Fenison assumes that apostolic succession, regular church order and gospel order are synonyms for EMDA, a constant source of confusion for himself and his readers.—J. C.</i>	There is not even any direct scriptural authority for such an organization as an association. The church, on the other hand, receives its power and authority directly from Christ. [Hogue. <i>Antecedents of Landmarkism</i>, p. 231. Jesse Mercer, "A Dissertation on the Resemblances and Differences between Church Authority and That of an Association," <i>Christian Index</i>, I, No. 22 (Dec. 10, 1833, p. 86)]. What constitutes, in our judgment, any number of believers in Christ a church, is their coming together into one body, according to the rules and faith of the gospel. And wheresoever any body of professed christians is found so walking together, they should be acknowledged and received as a true church. [Charles D. Mallary, <i>Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer</i>, p. 456]. Church authority is competent to the examination of refractory members—to deliver them to Satan—to render them as heathen men or publicans; but an Association has no excommunicatory authority—no, not of a church! This belongs to Christ, as head exclusively. See Rev. 2:5.3:16. No church, Association, or ecclesiastical body, has any power to excommunicate, or injure, or unchurch a church of Christ; or even to dissolve one. This last act can only be done by the mutual consent of the members, by whose will alone they were constituted a church. [Mallary. <i>Memoirs of Jesse Mercer</i>, p. 456. Note: Italics belong to Mercer]. Church authority is from Christ, as Head and king alone; [Mallary. <i>Memoirs of Jesse Mercer</i>, p. 455. Note: <i>The italics belong to Mercer.</i>
J. B. Moody-Fenison	J.B. Moody

Among the Middle Tennessee Baptists were such men as J.B. Moody... demonstrates that church authority in establishing churches was practiced during this time frame...

“ ‘Continuity’ is not far from the true idea, as these churches were a continuation and extension of the first church. So out of continuity there came perpetuity, AS IN HUMAN HISTORY. These other churches did not spring out of the ground, but came from the first church [132-3]... This is true of our own species. I know I am in the succession, not because I can trace it, but because God originated the race with this law of self-propagation – a law we see in operation now, and so far as history testifies, it has thus ever operated; hence the proof and conclusion are irresistible. You may tell me I can’t trace it. You may urge variety of complexion and countenance, and customs, as unfavorable to one origin [160] ... I CLAIM TO BE IN THE SUCCESSION. Men may challenge the historical proof, and it may never be furnished, yet the proof, the right kind of proof, is abundant, and the succession is sure” [161] [Fenison. *GCC*, 135-136 ,160-136, Quoting J.B. Moody, *My Church*, pp.133, 160, 161.

Note: These references are taken from different pages without apprising the reader of where one starts and the other begins. I have inserted in brackets the page numbers from My Church. The emphasis throughout belongs to Bro Fenison, not to Moody. —JC.

And wherever two or three baptized disciples abide, there they ought to ‘gather together in Christ’s name,’ and organize, and co-operate. They should take Christ as their only head, and lawgiver, and teacher, and they should bind themselves to be governed in all things by his word and to his way... [J.B. Moody. *Distinguishing Doctrines of Baptists*, P. 11].

A Baptist church is not a branch of that trunk, nor any other trunk. It is the thing itself, all to itself. Its members live in Christ, the vine. He is life to the members, but head to the church. The member gets life from the vine, while the church gets authority from its head. [Moody. *My Church*, p. 62].

Prayer -meetings, Sunday-schools, social and benevolent gatherings are of divine permission, but not of divine organization. They are not the appointed guardians of laws, doctrines and ordinances, and they have nothing to do with them, having no authority in the kingdom of Christ. Privilege, permission and authority are very different things. When men mete out authority, they must meet with authority, and that means by authority. Authority does not spring out of the ground, but comes down from heaven. [Moody. *My Church*, 167].

Any Baptist church can divide; or any part of it for good reason can pull out and organize when and where it pleases, because individual liberty is not destroyed or impaired by church membership. The churches of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, etc., thus organized, were recognized by the mother church, and by the apostles, and Christ. This is a golden mark. [Moody. *My Church*. 58-59].

I believe the words of Christ in Mt 18:19 are true. I would render them thus: 'Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any business you crave to accomplish, it shall be done for them of my

	Father who is in heaven.' 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' The context compels the conclusion that Christ was speaking of church work. Wherever two or three persons live together, they should talk together and pray together and work together for the spread of the Kingdom and the upbuilding of the church. [Moody. <i>Distinguishing Doctrines of Baptists</i>, 103. <i>Note: This quote is taken from chapter XV which is entitled Church Constitution. These titles were supplied by the publisher—J C.</i> A Baptist church is composed of volunteers associated in congregational effort, each member in equal authority, and each church complete in itself and independent of all other churches and of all outside authorities. Thus it was in the beginning. [J. B. Moody, <i>My Church</i>, p. 63].
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Spilsbury—Fenison When John Spilsbury spoke of the Great Commission as given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 he regarded it as the “rule and order which Christ left...for the constituting of His church.” In other words, Matthew 28:19-20 was designed and given by Christ for the purpose of constituting churches according to a given “rule and order. He said: “Christ Left His Rule and Order For The Constitution of His Church, Faith and Baptism. And Lastly, I dare not go from that RULE AND ORDER WHICH CHRIST LEFT IN HIS LAST TESTAMENT, FOR THE CONSTITUTING OF HIS CHURCH, AND TAKING MEMBERS INTO THE SAME, WHICH IS BY FAITH AND BAPTISM.” John Spilsbury, <i>A Treatise Concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptism</i>. London, 1652, pg 53. Fenison. GCC, p. 189.	Spilsbury The Constitution of The Church This will be further cleared in the constitution of the Church, which now follows, which constitution is the orderly collection of conjoining of persons into the New Covenant or visible union with Christ their head, as their mutual faith and agreement in the truth to the practice of it, and so consequently into an orderly body among themselves; wherein the Saints are the matter, and the covenant is the form; from which these two concurring, the Church arises, and is by them constituted, as Ezek. 16:8; Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; Gal. 3:18, 29; Heb. 6:17; Zech. 1:3, 9; [<i>probably</i> 8:3, 9—JC] with Deut. 26:16, to 19; Deut. 29:12, 13; & Romans 9:8; with Gal. 4:28. By which it appears, that it is the promise, or the Covenant of Grace, that produces a Christian, and gives him a being in such an estate of grace, and so consequently the Church itself; for that which is true in a part, is the same in the whole.
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<i>Note: The emphasis belongs to Fenison—JC.</i>	The constituting causes which God ordinarily uses to effect this work are: Now for the constituting causes by which God ordinarily uses to effect this work, they are these: 1. The Word of God, which is to fit and prepare the matter for the form; 2. The Confession of Faith, which is to declare the fitness of the matter for the form; 3. The free and mutual consent and agreement of the particular persons, upon the practice of the same truth believed and confessed, as aforesaid. 4. And lastly, the Spirit of Christ, uniting and knitting up their hearts together, in and by the same truth...[Spilsbury. <i>Lawful Subject of Baptism</i>, p. 72]. Gospel Order Stands Firm Forever Unalterable The answer is, where there is a beginning, some must be first, and our obedience to God depends only upon His word, that gives being to all order of worship, and the Gospel order once instituted stands firm for ever unalterable, for all that believe to obey and submit themselves thereunto, by a practical profession of the same, Acts 2; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Rev. 22:18-20. Jesus Christ Makes His Own Into a Spiritual House and Holy Priesthood And so to enter upon it, as living matter upon the foundation, which is Jesus Christ, Who calls all that have faith in Him, as living stones to come unto Him, to be built upon Him, a spiritual house, and an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Him, Who has by His
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	own blood made a free and open way for all that believe to come with boldness unto the most holy place, and if so, then much more to enjoy all those privileges of grace inferior to the same, and when any lay short of their obedience to the holy rules of the Gospel, it is only the Spirit of truth, that brings up any man to the obedience of truth, by what instrument, or means He pleases, and such as God so works in by His Spirit, as to enlighten the understanding in the truth, the conscience convicted by it having faith in it, as a duty to obey it, with the way open to it, such by their mutual Agreement with truth, are by faith one together in the truth, which gives being to the practice of it, for the which Christ prayed, Heb. 10; John 17:20, 21. God approves, Matt. 18:19, 20; and believing hearts obey, Acts 8:12, to such Christ freely opens, John 10:3, 9, and receives them into the fellowship of His own body, I Cor. 1:9; Col. 3:15; I Cor. 12:12, 13, and 27. [Spilsbury. <i>Lawful Subjects of Baptism</i>, p. 75-6]. <i>Note: The headings in this copy of Spilsbury's work were added by Bro R. E. Pound and probably the emphases also—JC.</i>
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APPENDIX VII

DYERSBURG, TENNESSEE TO JERUSALEM

Just as Roman Catholics say they have a list of popes all the way back to Peter, some EMDA advocates, publish a list which attempts to show a link by link connection of churches all the way back to Jesus on the mount. This is frequently called the *Dyer to Jerusalem* list because Bro Roy Mason's copy gave the first link as *Dyer*, Tennessee. I append a copy of this list taken from Bro. Mason's book.

“BAPTIST SUCCESSION BACK TO CHRIST”

Link One. The Baptist church at Dyer, Tennessee, was organized by J. W. Jetter, who came from the Philadelphia Association.

Link Two. Hillcliff church, Wales, England. H. Roller came to the Philadelphia Association from the Hillcliff church. See minutes of Philadelphia Association, book 3, item 1.

Link Three. Hillcliff church was organized by Aaron Arlington, A. D. 987. See Alex Munston's *Israel of the Alps*,⁷¹⁴ p. 39.

Link Four. Lima Piedmont church ordained Aaron Arlington in 940. See Jones' Church History, p 324.

⁷¹⁴Alex Munston, *Israel of the Alps*, is actually, Alexis Muston, *Israel of the Alps, A Complete History of the Waldenses and their Colonies*, 1834 in French, 1852 Eng. Tr.

Link Five. Lima Piedmont church was organized by Balcolao, A. D. 812. See Neander's Church History, vol. 2 p. 320.

Link Six. Balcolao came from the church at Timto, Asia Minor.

Link Seven. Timto church was organized by Archer Flavin, A. D. 738. See Mosheim's History, vol. 1, p. 394

Link Eight. Archer Flavin came from the Darethea church, organized by Adromicus, A. D. 671, in Asia Minor. See Lambert's Church History, p. 47.

Link Nine. Adromicus came from Pontifossi. At the foot of the Alps in France. See Lambert's Church History, p. 47.

Link Ten. Pontifossi church was organized by Tellestman from Turan, Italy, A. D. 398. See Nowlin's Church History, vol. 2, p. 318.

Link Eleven. Turan church was organized by Tertullian from Bing Joy, Africa, A. D. 237. See Armitage's Church History, p. 182.

Link Twelve. Tertullian was a member of the Partus church at the foot of the Tiber, that was organized by Polycarp, A. D. 150. See Cyrus' Commentary of Antiquity, p. 924.

Link Thirteen. Polycarp was baptized by John the Beloved or Revelator on the twenty-fifth of December, A. D. 95. See Neander's Church History, p. 285.

Link Fourteen. John was with Jesus on the Mount. Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:12-13.⁷¹⁵

ORIGINAL SOURCE OF THIS LIST

In October, 2004 while I was with Bro Royce Smith in a Bible Conference in Choctaw, Oklahoma, we went to the Southern Baptist Convention Headquarters in Oklahoma City. They have the bound volumes of *The Baptist Messenger* in their library and while these papers were in a very fragile condition they allowed me to examine them and I found this original article in the April issue of *The Baptist Messenger* of 1922. The only biographical information given in the original article does not identify the author.⁷¹⁶

There are some differences between Bro Mason's copy and that in *The Baptist Messenger*. Two of the more significant differences pertains to the place and the person of the first link. Bro Mason's copy in link one reads "The Baptist church at *Dyer*, Tennessee, was organized by *J. W. Jetter*..." whereas the original reads: "The church at *Dyersburg*, Tennessee was organized by *J. B. Jetter*..." Also in Link nine this clause was in the original but not in Bro Mason's copy: "which church was organized in A.D. 584." Bro Mason also corrected some spelling errors and wrote out the numbers instead of using the symbols. He divided up Link 13 and thus the number was increased to 14.

⁷¹⁵ Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110-111. Bro Mason's book is on line at:

http://gracebaptistchurch1.homestead.com/files/X_Statements_of_Historians1.mht. Cf. also Buel Kazee, *The Church and The Ordinances*, pp. 101-107.

⁷¹⁶ The Editor's note says: "Dr. Putnam of Tuttle [OK—JC] gave this to Rev. J. E. Akins, who sends it to the Messenger. *The Baptist Messenger*. C. P. Stealey, Editor, Oklahoma City, April 26, 1922. Vol. X. No. 27. p. 3.

This *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list has been adopted, edited, amended, and adapted by several different churches and individuals⁷¹⁷ since it first appeared in 1922 and was made famous by Bro Roy Mason's book. He says it also appeared in other papers about this time.

IS THIS LIST FACTUAL

Some men, believe this list is a fraud. Bro. Davis Huckabee said:

Subsequent to obtaining this supposed succession there came into this Writer's possession most of the historical references supposedly proving this succession, and these were all checked for authenticity. Yet, in not a single instance excepting the first and last ones has this been possible. In all of the historical references, not one of them, nor any of the numerous other historical references possessed referred to a single one of the churches, places, or persons mentioned...

Thus, it appears that this supposed church succession is a fraudulent one without basis in fact.⁷¹⁸

Is the *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list factual? Is it verifiable?

⁷¹⁷ A wide variety of churches and denominations use this list for their own purposes. I have found the following different churches use this list: Sovereign Grace Baptist Churches, ABA Baptist Churches, Middle Tennessee Baptist Churches, Primitive Baptist Churches, Bible Churches and surprisingly, even a Pentecostal Church also uses it! One of these Pentecostal churches says this: "The Turtletown church is organized in Tennessee, a direct descendant of the Philadelphia Association. The Holiness church of Camp Creek in North Carolina is organized by R. G. Spurling from the Turtletown church. The Lebanon Church of God of prophecy is organized by Virdell Stafford, a direct descendant of the holiness church, January 1, 1952."

⁷¹⁸ Cf. Davis Huckabee. *Studies in Church Truth*, p. 660; Douglas Moore, *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*, p.10-12.

I also believe this list is counterfeit. There are several things about this list which indicate it is fraudulent but what most impels me to this conclusion is the *internal evidence* of the document itself.

For example, there is a reference in Link 12 to Tertullian. The source cited is Armitage's *History of the Baptists*, p. 182. This reference is on the right page (this is the only reference in this list that is on the right page, and the only reference which I have been able to locate) but strangely, the things attributed to Tertullian, are actually referring to Hippolytus!⁷¹⁹ The unknown author transposes the information about Hippolytus to Tertullian!⁷²⁰ Armitage also says it is the church at *Portus* not *Partus*,⁷²¹ and that it is at the *mouth* of the Tiber, not the *foot*, as this list has it. The *Tiber* is a river not a *mountain*, as the compiler of this list has it. No river has a *foot* so far as I know. So, was the author seeking to show the ignorance of Baptists, or was he ignorant himself? Furthermore, the *Tiber* is in Italy, not in Africa, which was Tertullian's field of labor.⁷²² There may be questions about Tertullian living in Rome, but I have never seen any information that would put him in Turan (Turin), which is in the north of Italy. The compiler garbled the

⁷¹⁹ Cf. Link 2. In some editions of this list this reference is in Link 11. This difference is the result of starting at opposite ends. Bro Mason's copy started from Dyer, Tennessee. Bro Huckabee's copy starts from Jerusalem. Cf. Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, pp. 95-98.

⁷²⁰ Armitage. *History of the Baptists*. p. 182. "The four men who figured most largely in this century were Tertullian, who labored for the purity of the Churches; Origen, who blended philosophy with revelation; Cyprian, who struggled for Episcopal authority; and Hippolytus, who as stoutly resisted clerical wickedness. We may speak more fully of the last. Hippolytus, A.D. 198-239, was Bishop, probably of the Church at Portus, at the mouth of the Tiber, and spent the most of his life in and about Rome."

⁷²¹ Huckabee's copy has *Partos*. Davis W. Huckabee. *Studies in Church Truth*, Links iv & v, p. 659.

⁷²² Coxe, however, quotes some who think Tertullian was not only educated in, but was also a member of a church in Rome. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, p. 5,6.

information given by Armitage thereby sending a clear signal that he was not a safe guide.

Yet, in spite of these significant errors found in this list which cannot be reconciled with the facts, preachers and churches continue to publish this list as a viable account of their own church history!⁷²³ I believe some men have recognized some of the problems in this list and have tried to *fix* them as there are several versions of it. Some have changed the names of the men and some have changed the names of the books referred to as sources. Some have edited and adapted it to try to make it fit history.⁷²⁴ Some have changed the dates—but no matter what they do, history refuses to give any support to this list! Why were these changes made? What sources were used to verify these changes?

JETTER OR JETER

J. B. Jetter is said to have organized the church in Dyersburg, Tennessee.⁷²⁵ Who was Jetter? Or was it Jeter? Some have

⁷²³ At a recent Bible Conference, this list came up in discussion with a brother. He told me he asked a man (whom he did not identify) if this list was reliable? He asked the man if he had checked the references. He said he had not done so but would. This un-named man then wrote him a letter and stated in that letter, that these quotes could not be found. A year or two later, this same man published this list as a history of his church!

⁷²⁴ For example: *Bing Joy* becomes *Bing*. *Timto* becomes *Tima*. *Partus* has been amended to read *Pontus*; *Balcolao* is *Balcoloas*; *Roller* in some lists has become *Holler*. *J. W. Jetter* has become *J. B. Jeter*. Cf. The list as given in Huckabee, *Studies on Church Truth*, vol. II, p. 659, links xii and xiii, with the list in Mason, *Church That Jesus Built*, p.110-111, as well as the two lists given in *SCO*, pp. 95-98. One of these lists (*SCO* p. 98; *SCO* 2nd edition, p. 85) gives the reference concerning Tertullian and locates the Partus church as being in *Bing, South Africa*! These anomalies indicate the limits to which men go to rescue this list!

⁷²⁵ Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110. Link # 1. The original list (*Oklahoma Messenger*, 1922) had *J.B. Jetter* and *Dyersburg*.

changed *Jetter* to *Jeter*.⁷²⁶ J. B. Jeter was a well-known Baptist. His field of labor was Virginia and briefly in St. Louis, not Tennessee. Yet, it is claimed by some, who have altered this list, that Jeter came from the Philadelphia Association and organized the church in Dyersburg, Tennessee in 1812.⁷²⁷ J. B. Jeter was born in 1810 so it seems unlikely that he could have founded a church in Tennessee in 1812!⁷²⁸ Where does *Jetter* appear? He is not mentioned in the published minutes of the Philadelphia Association,⁷²⁹ from which he is said to have come, Link 1. Where is this man mentioned other than in this list? Was there ever such a man in Tennessee? Of course, the claim that J. R. Graves, J. N. Hall and J. A. Scarboro were associated with this church in *Dyersburg*, Tennessee and that Jetter (or Jeter) organized this church is all made irrelevant when it is remembered,⁷³⁰ that the ministry of Graves, Hall, Scarboro and Jeter, did not begin until long after this church was constituted.⁷³¹ Who made these changes? On what authority?

⁷²⁶ Whatever the author's motive was in compiling this list, I am convinced he used the consonance of the initials and similarity of the name of *J. B. Jeter* because of his fame.

⁷²⁷ *Baptist Annual* in 1812. This Church still exists. *The Abstract of the First Baptist Church Dyersburg, Tennessee*. Mid-West Baptist Press 7801 E. Lincoln, Wichita, Kansas 67207. I do not believe J. B. Jeter ever was in the Philadelphia Baptist Association. The date of Jeter's birth (July 18, 1802) indicates this reference is in error. Cf. Hatcher. *Life of J.B. Jeter*, p. 18.

⁷²⁸ Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Art. *Jeter*, p. 600-601.

⁷²⁹ The published *Minutes of Philadelphia Baptist Association* are from 1707 to 1807.

⁷³⁰ Cf. Huckabee. *Church Truth*, p. 659, Link xiii. "J. R. Graves, J. N. Hall, J. A. Scarboro, were all affiliated with the First Baptist Church of Dyersburg, Tennessee. Church Minutes, First Baptist Church, Dyersburg, Tennessee." *Church Truth*, pp. 659-660.

⁷³¹ J. R. Graves began to edit the *Tennessee Baptist* in 1846. *Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 467; J. N. Hall was born in 1849. I do not know the date of J. A. Scarboro's birth, but he was active when the General Association was formed in 1905. Cf. *Bogard's Life & Works*, vol. II, p. 346. Jeter was born in 1802, Hatcher. *Life of Jeter*, p. 18.

HILLCLIFF IN WALES OR ENGLAND

Another error in this list is reporting that the Hillcliff church was in Wales. Actually, the Hillcliff church was in England, as Kenworthy informs us.⁷³² The Hill Cliff church was near Warrington, which is just a few miles east of Liverpool⁷³³ One edition of this list claims the Welsh Tract church was organized from the Welsh Baptist churches and the Hillcliff church, and gives Davis' *History of Welsh Baptists*, p. 7 and Benedict's *History of the Baptists*, p. 343, 1848 edition as references.⁷³⁴ I have examined these references and find nothing in either source to support this contention. But at any rate, it is an easy thing to locate Hillcliff on a map and it is not in Wales.

JONES HISTORY AND AARON ARLINGTON

The quotes made in the *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list also indicate this list is a hoax. Take the quote from *Jones History*. I am aware of the argument that there are different editions of Jones' *History* and this is the reason the quotes appear to be incorrect.⁷³⁵ Why is no volume number given for *Jones History*, which is usually a two-volume set?⁷³⁶ Why can't this reference be found? Does Jones ever mention *Aaron Arlington*? The reference in Jones remains as elusive as Atlantis. Bro Moore says: "That statement does not appear on page 324, or anywhere else in *Jones' History*."⁷³⁷ He also says:

⁷³² James Kenworthy. *History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliff*, p. 5, 13, 41, 46. Ch. Hist. Research & Archives reprint, 1987. Gallatin, TN.

⁷³³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 95, Link 5; Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, Link two, p. 110.

⁷³⁴ Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 95, Link 5.

⁷³⁵ Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, Link 4. "Lima Piedmont church ordained Aaron Arlington in 940. See *Jones' History*, p. 324."

⁷³⁶ There were at least five editions of this work. Cf. *Hist. Ch. Church*, vol. 1, p. xxvi.

⁷³⁷ Moore. *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*, p. 12: Link 4.

Of the histories, I have been able to check, not one of them has the entry that is cited. That fact leads me to this conclusion: that someone has fabricated this pedigree and it is as phony as a three- dollar bill.⁷³⁸

It is Bro Moore's testimony that not one of these quotes for links 1, 2, 3, 4, and 11 are valid!⁷³⁹

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AND H. ROLLER

Consider also the reference to the *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association*? What is *book three*?⁷⁴⁰ It is interesting that one of the lists given in *SCO*⁷⁴¹ has the year H. Roller came to the Philadelphia Association as 1809, which is just two years after the close of the published minutes. There is no reference to H. Roller, J. B. Jetter, J. W. Jetter or J.B. Jeter in the published minutes of this Association. Nor does my edition refer to either *book* or *item* numbers.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰ A. D. Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707 to 1807*. The reference is to: "Book 3, item 1". Cf. Link xi, Huckabee, *Church Truth*, p. 659; Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110, Link 2; Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 96, Link 6. How is it that so many men quote this without ever checking the references?

⁷⁴¹ Cockrell. *SCO*, p.95- 96, Link 6.

⁷⁴² Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association from 1707 to 1807*, American Baptist Pub. Society, 1851. Baptist Book Trust Reprint, 1976. There are in the records of each year numbers referring to the order of business. Cf. pp. 173, 217, 254, et. al.

NOWLIN'S CHURCH HISTORY

Another link which does not fit the evidence is Link 10. "The Pontifossi⁷⁴³ Church was organized by Tellestman from Turan, Italy, A.D. 398. See Nowlin's *Church History*, Vol. 2, p. 318." I can only assume the author refers to the Baptist William Dudley Nowlin, 1864-1950. Nowlin wrote several books but his only history was the *Kentucky Baptist History*.⁷⁴⁴ It was written in 1922 and was only a brief treatment of 196 pages.⁷⁴⁵ The compiler refers to *volume two*, another indicator that he was not reliable. Was he just spoofing Baptists?

NEANDER'S CHURCH HISTORY AND LIMA, PIEDMONT

In Link 5 we have this statement: "Lima Piedmont Church was organized by Balcolao, A.D. 812. See *Neander's Church History*, Vol. 2, p. 320."⁷⁴⁶ Those who have consulted *Neander's Church History* (not to be confused with his *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*) know that he treats church history in epochs. In the four-volume set the first volume covers from the beginning of the Christian era to AD 312. Volume two covers from AD 312 to AD 590. Thus, one can see that volume two *would not refer to AD 812*, which is the period to which Link 5 refers. Is there an edition in which volume 2 refers to A D 800? That is possible, but I do not believe Neander refers to this name,

⁷⁴³ The original list spells this name two different ways: *Pontafossi* and *Pontiffossi*, links 9 & 10.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. Edward C. Starr. *A Baptist Bibliography*, vol. 17.

⁷⁴⁵ Nowlin's *Ky. Baptist Hist.* was published in June 1922 it is almost impossible the author of this list was referring to this book as the list appeared in the *Oklahoma Baptist Messenger* in April 1922. This means that this title is also another unidentified book.

⁷⁴⁶ Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110.

Balcolao, nor to *Lima Piedmont Church* anywhere! Let him who can give the reference.

Link 13 gives a reference to *Neander's Church History*, p. 285 and says that "John the Beloved or Revelator baptized Polycarp on December 25th, A.D. 95." Neander gives no such information as far as I can find. He does not say that John baptized Polycarp at all, much less specifying the day!⁷⁴⁷

Thus, no confidence can be placed in such a list and every reference in the list must be rejected until verified because where one is so ignorant or so deceitful, as in the case with Tertullian, everything is suspect. In spite of this pretended historical array of quotes, the whole thing crumbles when examined. Most of the quotes cannot be found at all! Bro Huckabee does not put it too strongly when he says:

And it is a stretching of possibility beyond reason to think that every one of these references involved a miscopied page number, or a differing page number because a different edition was used, etc. In some of the sources, not even the remotest reference was made to the supposed church or person, though the whole section which covered that time and place in history was read.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁷ Neander does mention Polycarp a few times in volume one. He says on p. 109 that Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John. Again on p. 299 he says: "Polycarp alleged that he himself had observed a passover with the Apostle John, whose disciple he was." He mentions him in two other places, pp. 465, 651. In the other three volumes, Polycarp is not mentioned at all. I cannot find the quote from this list anywhere.

⁷⁴⁸ Huckabee. *Studies on Church Truth*, vol. II, p. 660. Cf. Schaff. *History of the Christian Church*, vol. II, pp. 664-670.

UNKNOWN PERSONS AND PLACES

Some of the men and places mentioned in this list can be found nowhere else!⁷⁴⁹ In spite of the misinformation and bogus references in this list many men have published this as a historical record of their own church history!

THE REAL PURPOSE OF THIS LIST

This raises the question, was the list prepared as a caricature or merely by someone who was ignorant? The fact that the author appeals to several well-known books and yet falsifies the references seems to indicate he was trying to spoof Baptists. Let that be as it may, we know from these facts, herein submitted, which any reader may verify for himself, that the compiler has made false quotes. The list is a fraud, and those who use it perpetrate error. No church should publish this list unless they can verify these references.

DOES THIS LIST SUPPORT EMDA

But suppose, for sake of discussion, we accept every link, every person and every reference, then the question becomes, does this list support EMDA?

The first thing to note is there is nothing—not one word—in this list about EMDA! Take for example Link 2. *H. Roller came to the Philadelphia Association from the Hillcliff church*. Did the church at Hillcliff give H. Roller authority? How much authority did this church give him? Did they only give him authority to baptize? Or were they more generous?

⁷⁴⁹ I have found no reference to the following men and places except in this list: J.B. Jetter; H. Roller; Aaron Arlington; Balcolao; Archer Flavin; Adromicus; Tellestman; Timto; Darethea church; Pontafossi in France; Bing Joy, Africa.

Did they give him authority to constitute churches? Who said so? Where is this record found? Did they give him authority to relegate that authority to an Association? How was that done? How does a church give authority to a man so that that authority can be transferred to an association? Was this specified? If not, could he transfer this authority to a presbytery, to a convention, to another preacher? What limits were put on this gift of authority? Did H. Roller ever appear in the Philadelphia Association in any year or at any time? Who said so? Where is the evidence? But even if we allow that Hillcliff did give Roller authority, the maximum authority a church can give a man (according to EMDA), and he did go to the Philadelphia Association with this authority, how was this authority transferred? How can a church delegate authority to an Association? How did Roller do this? What did Roller tell them when he got there? Did he say, you people are without church authority and I am sent here to straighten you out! Your churches are false churches and I have the authority to put you in gospel order and I do hereby consign this authority to your Association and to your churches! Did he bring with him some relic from Hillcliff? Did he deposit this in this association? Did this authority apply retroactively to the churches already in existence in the Philadelphia Association? Or did they already have Christ's authority? How did those churches get their authority? If they already had authority, then why would they need this authority from a church which they did not even know existed? What about the churches constituted without EMDA⁷⁵⁰ for over a hundred years before H. Roller got there? Did this transferred authority put in the hands of a man and sent half around the world flow out not only horizontally

⁷⁵⁰ DA was the method held forth by this Association. Cf. Sacks. *The Phil. Baptist Trad. of Ch. & Ch. Authority, 1707-1814*. "The local church, as the only seat of church power...receives authority immediately from Christ on the occasion of the covenant established among professed believers. Thus, all authority belongs to Christ," p. 590; See also Griffith's *Short Treatise on a Gospel Ch.*, in Dever's *Polity*, p. 96.

to these some forty churches⁷⁵¹ already in existence, but also retroactively to all the churches of this Association constituted long before? Of course, this whole idea is preposterous and impossible and the advocates of EMDA know it! The brethren who appeal to this list for a lineage for their churches are hanging on a figment as false as the Donation of Constantine! This clearly demonstrates that even if this list were viable, it cannot help the EMDA argument. They have attempted to turn these non-historical paper clips into a historical chain but the effort was futile!

Bro Fenison is fond of making general statements without the slightest support. In *GCC* he made an objection to my treatment of this list. He said:

This is precisely why Bro Settlemoir ... attacked the 'link' in the histories provide by The Mission[ary-JC] Baptist Church of Oakland, California and Twelve-Rayn Baptist Church of Warren, Michigan.⁷⁵²

As so often, he simply assumes whatever he chooses to say and counts that as fact rather than doing the research necessary to arrive at a proper conclusion. I said not one word about these churches which use this list. What I did was to refer to the two lists as given by Bro Cockrell⁷⁵³ as examples of how this list has been adopted and *edited* by various churches without any evidence for these changes in the source.⁷⁵⁴ I assume Bro Fenison is only guessing as to why I did research concerning this list—unless he is omniscient! Let him impute any motive for my research

⁷⁵¹ Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association from 1707 to 1807*, American Baptist Pub. Society, 1851. Baptist Book Trust Reprint, 1976. p.447-449.

⁷⁵² Fenison. *ACC*, p. 89.

⁷⁵³ Cockrell. *SCO*, pp. 95-98; *SCO* 2nd edition, pp. 83-87.

⁷⁵⁴ The second list given by *SCO* removes all references!

concerning this list and it does not affect the facts. The Truth is what I am concerned with and therefore I researched this list as far as I was able to go. I did not *attack* any church by examining the evidence. If so, this would preclude all investigation of Baptist history! By this statement, Bro Fenison has condemned himself, if he is correct, because he has examined several church histories! Was he *attacking* those churches? Furthermore, what I discovered is plainly stated in this appendix so that anyone can verify the evidence presented. Let Bro Fenison show where I made a mistake if he can. The reader will note that he does not point out a single error in my review! Nor did he do any research on this list. But he thinks that by waving his hand he has answered my arguments! I welcome any investigation based upon evidence. Also, concerning this Dyersburg—Jerusalem list, at least two other brethren came to the same conclusion that I did but neither of them did as much research on it as I have.⁷⁵⁵ Here follows some further notes on this list since the first edition of this book was issued in 2005.

EVERY REFERENCE FALSE

Philadelphia Baptist Association, book 3, item 1. While this book is easily identified, the references are not. There is no *book 3* nor *item number* in my copy of this book.

Munston, History of the Alps. The title refers to a known book but the author's name is incorrect. It is not *Munston* but *Muston*. There is nothing in either volume (there are two volumes) about the Hillcliff church in England, nor of Aaron Arlington. This volume, which pertains to the early accounts of the Waldenses in France, contains very little of the early history of these people before the first persecution which took place AD 1300. See Introduction and chapters 1 & 2.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Moore's *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*, and David Huckabee's *Studies in Church Truth*, p. 667.

The page number given in the list does not pertain to the subject in this book.

Jones' *History* reference is as allusive as ever. This is the same with the two references to *Neander's Church History* and to Mosheim's *History* as well. The Armitage reference is treated above.

BOOKS WHICH I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY

Lambert's Church History. If this book exists I have never found any reference to it. It is possible that the book referred to is: Burns and Lambert, *A Popular Manual of Church History*, 1861,⁷⁵⁶ a book which I have never seen. On Nowlin's *Church History*, vol. 2, p. 318. See the notes above. *Cyrus' Commentary of Antiquity*. I can find no reference to this book except in this list.

NAMES WHICH I CANNOT FIND

Following are the names of men in this list which I cannot find in any historical record. J. W. Jetter, H. Roller, Aaron Arlington, Balcolao, Archer Flavin, Adromicus and Tellestman. Now is it reasonable to suppose that in this list the names of all these men, excepting those in the last three links (i. e., 11,12,13) exist only in this list? How can we put any confidence in this list, when *every reference is false*? Is it possible that these men lived and yet they are not mentioned in any source? How then did the author of this list learn of them? I have never seen these names anywhere except in this list. This is rather strong evidence that they are bogus.

PHONY PLACE NAMES

Also, these places, Timto, Darethea, Pontifossi, Turan and Bing Joy, I believe are forged names. I have been unable to find them mentioned anywhere except in this list. Concerning *Turan*, it is possible that the author meant *Turin*. Turin is the capital of Piedmont, a region in the north of Italy. If so, then the spelling is wrong and this leads me to suspect that someone was imposing on our ignorance—and it worked! Also, Bing Joy, Africa is most elusive. Even the name sounds like a fabrication. Where is Bing Joy, Africa? When did it flourish? What book mentions it?

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS' GEOGRAPHICAL DEPARTMENT FOUND NO REFERENCE TO THESE PLACES

I wrote the Geographical Department of the Library of Congress and asked them to locate the names in this list. They could not find a single one of these names. This does not prove they never existed, but it does raise serious questions as to why they cannot be found.

The next question which those who use this list never seem to ask is this: Should anyone use a document when almost all of the references in it are bogus? How can we trust a document which is wrong in every reference? Would any preacher write an article, quoting books and giving references, which did not exist? Would he send that article to one of our papers and thereby publish what he knew was false? When we publish this list without verifying the references, is this not what we are doing? Is this not dishonest and reprehensible?

We do not believe that those who use this list as a part of their church history have verified the names of the men, the

places or the books mentioned in it. The supposed references cited in these books have never been found. If anyone has done so I would like to see the evidence.⁷⁵⁷ Furthermore, we are warned to avoid endless genealogies:

1 T1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.

John Gill has this comment on this passage:

Rather than godly edifying which is in faith. These inquiries do nothing to promote true religion in the soul. They settle no permanent principle of truth; they determine nothing that is really concerned in the salvation of men. They might be pursued through life, and not one soul be converted by them; they might be settled with the greatest accuracy, and yet not one heart be made better. Is not this still true of many controversies and logomachies in the church? No point of controversy is worth much trouble, which, if it were settled one way or the other, would not tend to convert the soul from sin, or to establish some important principle in promoting true religion.⁷⁵⁸

SHOULD CHURCHES USE THIS LIST FOR THEIR HISTORY

No one should use false information for any reason. I believe it is a sham to put forth this list as valid history or as the lineage of any Baptist church. It appears from the evidence presented herein that the whole thing is bogus and was probably put forth as a caricature of Baptist succession! Error always detracts from truth and is an attack on it. *Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.*

⁷⁵⁷ My contact information is: jcsettle3@outlook.com

⁷⁵⁸ Gill. *Com.* 1 T1:4

Appendix VIII

Wayne Camp's Offer Remains Unaccepted

Bro Wayne Camp gave this offer years ago and it still stands:

If there is one church out there somewhere that can show a chain-link succession that goes through churches that were scriptural in doctrine and practice that goes all the way back to Jerusalem I will be most happy to examine the evidence and if every link is validated church-to-church, arm-to-arm, and chain-link to chain-link then it will be printed in the pages of this paper (*GPP*) regardless of how many issues it takes. Links that are four hundred years long and name no specific church don't count. Neither do links that are associational rather than local church. I am asking for church-link to church-link to church-link, church-vote to church-vote to church-vote. I am sure that all our readers will be waiting expectantly for your chain to rattle across these pages. What a glorious document that will make for your church history libraries!

I made the offer to publish the chain-links of any church who could produce [the] same several years ago but the offer goes unaccepted. At that time, we were only mailing to a little over 200. Now, we are mailing to over 2,000 plus publishing this paper on the World Wide Web. The offer still stands. I would sincerely love to publish such a valuable document. I have seen some alleged chains published which have associations as links. That does not establish chain-link succession as many claim must exist. I want a church-to-church, vote-to-vote, link. I have waited patiently for ten years; how much longer must I wait? Will someone be forthcoming? If not, I must conclude that such an unbroken chain cannot be proven BIBLICALLY or HISTORICALLY.

I am willing to make another offer also. If there is a church out there that holds to the link-chain succession doctrine, and believes that any church established without the vote of a "mother" church is born out of spiritual adultery, and you will send me your chain of succession, I will be happy to help you research your history to see if your lineage is pure, or if there might be an "adulteress" in your church lineage. Are you willing to let me help you research your links? Needless to say, this research will take some time, if any desire it be done. I venture to say that most linked-chain successionists don't want their linkage checked too closely. I dare say, such a research would "unchurch" every church in America, if link-chain succession is essential to being a true New Testament Church.⁷⁵⁹

The brethren who claim this *chain link succession* have never given the lineage of any church with a link to link succession back to Jerusalem. Why do they not supply this record of one of these churches if they have it? Why are they unwilling to check their own church history in this manner?

⁷⁵⁹ Wayne Camp. *GPP "Chain Link" Ecclesiology: Is It Biblical? Is It Historically Demonstrable?* March 4, 2011. This article was first published 12/15/87. *GPP* is on line: www.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator/chain.htm

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