

LIKE BEGETS LIKE AS APPLIED TO CHURCH CONSTITUTION EXAMINED

By

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LETTER I.

In a recent issue of *The Voice in the Wilderness* (Voice. Dec. 06) Bro William Stang refers to me and *Landmarkism Under Fire*, but does not use any names. He has not read *LUF* yet attempts to answer my arguments. In several cases he manifests erroneous ideas of the issues involved in this discussion of church constitution. [Cf. Bro Stang's erroneous notion that succession is equivalent to EMDA and that one cannot oppose link-chain succession without denying perpetuity, [p. 33. Col 3,4;], and if he does he is opposing succession, [p. 34, Col 3]. It is my intention, the Lord willing to answer him in those areas which I believe to be pertinent (and page after page has absolutely nothing to do with the subject of *Where is the Authority* so far as I am able to see) to this on-going discussion. This answer will be in a series of letters of which this is the first.

EMDA DEFINED

Essential Mother Daughter Authority (EMDA) means simply this: No true church can be formed unless a group gets *specific authority* to constitute from another church which is called the *mother church*.

MOTHER CHURCH SHIFT

Some EMDA brethren are now backing off the *mother church* idea and Bro Stang himself indicates a migration of major proportions in this very article. He says:

You do not need to call the church of Antioch the 'mother church' if you don't like. [P. 34. col 2, par. 6].

You do not have to use the term 'mother church.' Some use that term to facilitate teaching; perhaps it would be better if they did not. [P. 34. col 3, par. 3].

This is a most important shift concerning the term *mother church*. Let the reader keep in mind this is the only term which EMDA writers ever attempted to define in this discussion! [*LUF*. p. 46]. It is also the term to which they have held with bull-dog tenacity. Bro Cockrell used this term over and over and insisted it was a Biblical concept, SCO. pp.49-52. Just when we thought we were about to make some headway, because at least this term was defined, Bro Stang rises and tells us Bro Cockrell was totally wrong to use it! Bro Cockrell contended strenuously for that specific term and warned against those who rejected it. He said: "The term 'mother church' did not bother the old Baptists as it does some modern-day Baptists." [SCO. P. 51]. Bro Stang has just checked in as a "modern-day Baptist"! But this is not all. Bro Cockrell also said: "Apostate Landmarkers tell us there is no such thing as a mother church." [SCO. P. 49].

Bro Stang has now been demoted to the assembly of “apostate Landmarkers.” This is an admission of error on their part. To us it is “the sound of the going in the Mulberry trees!” [2 Sam. 5:24].

LIKE BEGETS LIKE AND BRAINWASHING

EMDA brethren often use the brain-washing technique of repetition to insemminate the doctrine of EMDA into their hearers. This technique repeats the same thing over and over and over. And whether true or not if it is repeated often enough, the subjects tend to accept it as true. This is true of *like begets like* and because of this brain numbing repetition it is seized on by them as if it were the *mother* of all arguments!

Bro Stang exemplifies this method of brainwashing referred to above [Voice. P. 33, col. 4] when he turns to biological reproduction laws [Ge 1:11, 21,24, 25;], for support of EMDA even after this was demonstrated to be false in *LUF*, [Appendix viii, objection 3, p. 205].

BASTION OF EMDA

This law repeated by them so often is considered to be a bastion of EMDA and the clincher of all arguments. Oblivious as to how illogical this law is when applied to church constitution, they continue to give it out like an endless echo. They are as fond of this law as the Campbellite is of Acts 2:38 and just as wrong. They never write, preach or mention this subject without bringing in this law. It is so pervasive among them that one would think this law was in Scripture applied to the constitution of churches! [LUF Appendix viii. Objection # 3.]. They are so enamored with this fallacious application they never bother to think it through or to analyze what they are saying! They seem to be totally oblivious of the fact that it makes absolutely no sense when so applied. It is a most blatant error of logic and the conclusion drawn from it is fatally flawed.

Is the law *like begets like* applicable to church constitution as they apply it?

Of course not!

It is mere child’s play to think so. In order to prop up EMDA these brethren willingly sacrifice reason on their altar without a backward glance! They are literally drunk with the euphoria of this false analogy!

Of course animals generate after their own kind!

But animals have both male and female forebears. You cannot (at least not until cloning was discovered) have offspring without both male and female parents. What farmer do you know who has no males and expects to increase his animals?

But they will reply, if they ever stop to think about it, “We do not mean *like begets like* literally when we speak of churches!” Then why do they use the analogy in this

manner? They certainly do use this application in a manner which is absolutely fallacious.

In this article Bro Stang contends it is applicable to the constitution of churches. How so? These terms *Like begets like* and *everything produces after its own kind* represent the concept that every species produces after its own kind and it is a known biological fact. But when Bro Stang and others apply it to non animate things we are shocked to say the least. I would not expect even a child of fourteen summers to think this law of the animal kingdom could be transferred to societies! These men maintain this law is as valid in reference to churches as it is to animals! Do we object? Of course! How could we do otherwise?

ANALOGY AWRY

Bro Stang literally compares the procreation of an animal to the constitution of a church as if churches have some kind of biological system which is *literally* passed on to its offspring! This is analogy gone awry! Surely everyone who reads this will think I am joking—but it is no joke! They contend for just such a ridiculous connection between churches! The following will verify what I am trying to say.

I visited a church for the first time in a Bible conference. I had not been in the building five minutes when a man introduced himself to me. He said something about the constitution of churches and implied that each church must be started from a mother church. He tried to get me to agree to his fantasia. I refused. He replied with considerable heat, that he had several dogs and they always gave birth to pups! One can scarcely admit that rational, mature men can so reason but they do as this incident reveals!

What is their proposition?

Their proposition is that Churches beget churches as dogs beget dogs!

EMDA brethren, defying common sense, take this law of reproduction out of the animal kingdom where it belongs and attempt to transfer it to churches where it does not and cannot belong! I also quote Bro Tom Ross lest some think I set up a straw man. “Like begets like in every realm of creation, therefore every Baptist church must be organized out of an already existing Baptist church.” [Cf. Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10. Cf. *LUF* p. 17. Voice. 12-06, Stang. P.33, col. 4].

I give another quote to reinforce what I am saying. Bro Cockrell in SCO says:

If I told you there was a ram sheep in England that suddenly appeared out of nowhere without a mother, would you believe me? What if I continued and said a ewe suddenly appeared in Europe without a mother, would you take me seriously? To make bad matters worse, I would add a lamb suddenly appeared in America where there had never been any sheep before. Would you believe that I told the truth? What if I argued strongly that there was no organic connection between the ram, the ewe, and the lamb? Would you think that I spoke according to the facts? No! Then why say such foolishness about the true churches of Jesus Christ who are called ‘the flock’ (Luke 12:30; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3)? People have better sense than

to believe this about sheep, but when it comes to the churches of Jesus Christ, they will believe the silliest nonsense. [SCO. P. 62-3].

INCONSISTENT ARGUMENT

Please note in Bro Cockrell's sheep example he presses this analogy beyond all reason. He does not want to include the ordinary pair for procreation. This requires a sire and a dam and then you may have a lamb. But this spoils the application. EMDA brethren do not argue consistently but by a knight-jump process. Ask them to explain, for example, why it is in their analogy there is no *father* figure? They are long and hard on a *mother*. They pretty well like the *daughter*, but they choke on the *father*! And they absolutely puke over the *son*. Why? Well because these terms illustrate the absurdity of their whole system!

Of course there is nothing wrong with appealing to analogies and applying them to things not absolutely alike if done properly. For example. One may refer to a church as a mother church, as Cathcart in his Encyclopedia:

It [Sandy Creek church of NC] became the mother, grandmother, and great-grand mother of forty-two churches, from which 125 ministers were sent out as licentiates or ordained clergymen.¹
William Cathcart. *Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 1099.

Nor is it wrong to refer to a father of a church as Benedict said of Nelson:

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

Again J.R. Graves said:

It is greatly to be regretted that any one was ever so misled as to proclaim to the world that Roger Williamswas the father and founder of the American Baptist Churches.¹J.R. Graves. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 181.

But when men insist churches beget in the same sense animals do and cannot possibly beget anything other than what they are, it means they have slipped a cog! In order to do this one must marry EMDA and divorce common sense! Then and only then can one take the position that every church must be exactly like the church from which it got its authority in the same sense that a poodle is like its mother and that this process is essential to constitute a scriptural church!

LIKE BEGETS LIKE DOES NOT PERTAIN TO CHURCHES

Like begets like is true in the animal kingdom. But the question here is, Is this true of churches in the same sense?

The answer is a thunderous "No!"

This law has nothing—nothing whatsoever—to do with church constitution! And it is a trick as delusive as that of any magician to so apply it! It is a mere slight of hand, a

deception, a farce, a sham coined off on the unthinking! The question “Does the law *like begets like* apply to the constitution of churches?” Of course not! Impossible!

In fact, this law has no more to do with church constitution than do the multiplication tables! This is not to question that 12×12 is 144 or that 9×9 is 81! Not at all. These facts are true because God is the source of Math and every other true science. But math has nothing to do with constituting a church. In fact, many sound churches were constituted by members who did not know math facts.

Like begets like is as irrelevant to church constitution as are the cases of solubility in Metallurgy. These are useful facts when alloying metals but these laws have nothing to do with constituting a church and a church may be constituted by those who know nothing of metallurgy.

Like begets like is as irrelevant to church constitution as are the laws of gestation.

These laws tell us that from insemination to the birth of a calf it will be 283 days; for a sow 115 days. Chickens hatch in 21 days and so on. These laws are most useful to the farmer. Yet they have absolutely nothing to do with church constitution!

Like begets like is as irrelevant to church constitution as are the laws of incorporation! These laws are used in almost all businesses and are most valuable in their place and some churches are incorporated. But the law of incorporation has nothing whatsoever to do with church constitution but it has as much to do with it as does *like begets like*!

Like begets like is as foreign to church constitution as are the four laws of thermodynamics, which can be applied to systems about which one knows nothing other than the balance of energy and matter transfer. There are many applications for these laws in Science but they have nothing to do with church constitution.

CHURCHES DO NOT HAVE GENETIC CODES

In the same manner I contend ***like begets like* has nothing whatsoever to do with church constitution.** There is no genetic code or DNA in a church. Churches do not have a body which produces replication (as used in biology) either by Meiosis by which gametes are formed resulting in cells with one set of chromosomes. There are in churches no such things as the Golgi apparatus, Mitochondria, Ribosomes or other cellular features. Churches are not conceived or birthed. A church has no organic connection with any other church on earth. A church receives all that it ever has in power, commission, and connectivity from Christ the great head according to Mt. 18:20. A church is not built upon another church but upon Christ the foundation, 1 Cor. 3:11. A true church does not depend on any thing outside of Christ and Scripture for its existence. Churches are composed of baptized saints and Christ has promised that those who are gathered together in His Name, will have a proper connection with Him. They are not placed upon another church as EMDA falsely claims, but are built upon Christ as the

living stone! They are a spiritual house, 1 Pe 2:4,5. Mt. 18:20 expresses this truth clearly:

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

In the next letter, Lord willing, we will look at some more of Bro Stang's ill founded conclusions.