

LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE

**A Study of Landmark Baptist
Polity on Church Constitution**

by

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PREFACE

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 old Landmarkism and church constitution. It is hoped this book will help supply that need. These facts are now made available so that anyone who wishes to consider this matter for himself will have the references made ready. Great numbers of these have been given so that no one can question what the writers quoted believed about church constitution. Most of the books on this subject have misrepresented the old Landmarkers claiming they taught mother daughter authority was essential to constitute a new church. But the old Landmarkers taught self constitution with authority directly from Christ. 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 self constitution 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 self constitution 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 important, I believe the Scriptures clearly teach the *self constitution* of churches. 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

This book may be ordered at the address below for \$9.00, postage and handling included.

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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? I fear 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* 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 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 was, a part of

¹ 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*. ²For 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!"

²

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 Hereafter EMDA. *Essential Mother Daughter Authority*. 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 the truth is, one church has no more authority to constitute another church, to mother another church or to birth a church than did Pope Leo III 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.

old 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 Divine church constitution⁵ is in full agreement with Baptist History.

I regret that Bro Cockrell was called home before I could finish this book. 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.⁶ Nor should anyone think that I am now seeking to take advantage of him because he is no longer in this world. It is to his position and to his book to which I respond, not to him personally.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹

In another book of his we have this statement:

⁵ This is also called "Divine Authority".

⁶ He did not say I was welcome to preach for him, however!

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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. Settlemoir." Taped message. Gladwin Conference, 2001.

⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *Sacerdotalism and The Baptists*, p. 63.

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 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 . . . ¹⁰

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.¹¹

Thus my thesis is that EMDA is a false doctrine not found in Scripture, 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 especially and have quoted them frequently.¹² 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."¹³ 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.

CHAPTER 2

OLD LANDMARKISM DEFINED

Contrary to what many think, including some Landmark Baptists, **Landmarkism never had anything to do with EMDA.**¹⁴ Bro Bob Ross gives this as an essential

¹⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *The Veiled Woman*. p. 55.

¹¹ Milburn Cockrell. *Sacerdotalism and The Baptists*, p. ii.

¹² In a few cases I have repeated quotes so the reader will not have to go back and forth for a reference.

¹³ See Bro Cockrell's quote given above. *Sacerdotalism and The Baptists*, p. ii.

¹⁴ EMDA is an acronym for *Essential Mother Daughter Authority*.

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 self-constitution not EMDA! When Bogard speaks of “links” of churches, he does not mean one church giving authority to another. The same is true of the other older writers quoted.¹⁶ This is easy to verify simply by comparing *The Baptist Way-Book*, p. 69.¹⁷

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* published by Calvary Baptist Church presents this same erroneous idea. Another book which sets forth this view is *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**

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

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

17 Cf. Chapter 9 for Bogard’s quote.

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.

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 claim. This is the first express mention of EMDA which 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.’” P. 10. Patterson is quoting Barnes. But, as we have seen, Barnes gives no source for this statement. Is this not using a “secondary source”?

other early Landmarker to prove his proposition!²⁴ I do not believe any such quote exists!

These writers all build upon what someone else says or what they assume Old Landmarkers believed. Why not let the Old Landmarkers speak for themselves?²⁵ Bro Bob Ross says it is Graves' position that "New churches must be granted authority by a 'mother' church...."²⁶ 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:

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.²⁷

Of course it is perfectly *illogical* for any writer to make such a claim!²⁸ 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!²⁹ 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 Bre Bob Ross, Tom Ross, Milburn Cockrell, and these other writers have done. They have **misrepresented J.R. Graves and Old Landmarkism** on this subject!

²⁴ Indeed, some of these writers assert Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, and others held to EMDA, but not one of them cites a single reference to prove their assertion!

²⁵ Cf. Chapter 13.

²⁶ Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*, p. 19.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, P. 36.

²⁸ 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?

²⁹ 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.

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."³⁰ If Bro Gilliland recognized this from Graves' writings these other men are inexcusable for not perceiving this 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 New Testament congregation. If this is the case, however, neither J. R. Graves nor J.M. Pendleton were Old Landmarkers.³¹

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 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.'³²

30 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 have made this journey *beyond* Landmarkism.

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

32 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.

Brother Downing then goes on to quote Jarrel “to set the issue of church perpetuity in the proper perspective ...,”³³ 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 Landmarkism in several articles.³⁴ 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 and then being voted out or given authority to form into another church;³⁵

He goes on to say:

Our thesis,³⁶ **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.³⁷

We have Jarrel's *Baptist Perpetuity* which stated the Landmark Baptist position on church constitution so concretely in his first chapter³⁸ 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*

33 *Ibid.* 133.

34 Wayne Camp. *Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* (Hereafter GPP), April 97; July 97; 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.

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

36 It seems the connective has been inadvertently left out – JCS.

37 *Op. cit.* p. 13.

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

appeared!³⁹ Then we also have the testimony of C.D. Cole in his *Doctrine of the Church*.⁴⁰ Thus just a cursory investigation by any seeker of truth could have, and would have, prevented 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!

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 took secondary sources, suppositions, implications, personal bias, hearsay or hope-so to prove 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 case 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.⁴¹

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

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

The answer is an unequivocal *no*!

With one voice they taught self constitution and this is so constantly stated throughout their books no one can be excused for claiming otherwise. Several of these pertinent quotes from these men have been published in various articles in *Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* (hereafter *GPP*) so no one who read those articles could

³⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*. p.16.

⁴⁰ C.D. Cole. *Definitions of Doctrine: The New Testament Church*, p. 7.

⁴¹ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 84.

misunderstand.⁴² Furthermore not one EMDA advocate, since the publication of these quotes, has made any effort whatsoever 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 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 non-ministerial 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.⁴³

⁴² 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.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator>

⁴³ William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*. p. 867-8.

Cathcart gives this biographical information concerning the unidentified author of this article: "The following sketch was written at the editor's request by one of the ablest Baptist ministers in this country. His account of the opinions of all landmarkers is entirely reliable..."⁴⁴ There can be no question as to the validity of this definition. The *Baptist Encyclopedia* was published in 1881.

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 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:

44 *Ibid.* Was J.M. Pendleton the author of this article?

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.⁴⁵

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 being in gospel order there is "...No church character, ministry, nor sacraments whatever." Landmarkers, then, do not recognize the ordinances or ordinations of any church not in gospel order.

45 R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 774-5. Note: I have broken up this long section into paragraphs for easier reading.-- JC.

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, mode or the candidate of baptism are not scriptural churches. This is what Landmark Baptists believe.

But let me give a quote by J.M. Pendleton to make this very plain.

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."⁴⁶

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 to it. EMDA is no more a part of Landmarkism than is the priesthood of the church⁴⁷ although some Landmarkers take that view. Not one of the leading men of the Landmark movement in the 1800s ever taught EMDA! No quote of any one of these men has ever been produced where they espoused 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 an essential part of Landmarkism is

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ Cf. Joe W. Bell. *God's Priesthood on Earth*, p. 91.

erroneous. This is a misconception and a misrepresentation of Landmarkism by EMDA advocates, and some of the opponents of Landmarkism.⁴⁸ 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 EMDA any part of Landmarkism!

In the next chapter we will consider specifically the teaching of old Landmarkism and church constitution as set forth by J.R. Graves.

CHAPTER 3

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.⁴⁹ Rather than infer what J.R. Graves believed about church constitution I will give his direct quotes on the subject from several different sources.

CHURCH DEFINED

Unlike so many today, Graves did not hesitate to define his terms⁵⁰ and he defined *church* and published his definition in every edition of *The Baptist* as a standing editorial for years!⁵¹ 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; Col. 1:1-5; Acts

48 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;

49 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.

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

51 See Appendix VI for terms used in this book and in Baptist History.

2:41,42; Matt. 18:20-23-28; 2 Cor.7:6-19; Philip. 26:27; 1 Cor. 5:12,13.⁵²

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!⁵³

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 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[ti]on. 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.⁵⁴

Graves here tells us that each particular Church receives its **authority directly from Christ**! This excludes presbyteries, associations, elders, bishops and *mother churches* as well and this leaves EMDA a begging orphan! It is assumed that Graves knew what Landmarkism was and if he did, then EMDA was 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*!⁵⁵ But as Landmarkism and EMDA are totally different, EMDA got its origin from some other source! Let them tell us who their mother was!

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:

⁵² *The Baptist*, May 4, 1867, p. 1.

⁵³ See *GPP* "Chain Link" Ecclesiology... p. 1, July 1997; "Constitution of Churches", April 1, 2000 and several other issues. Not one editor, writer or paper has ever attempted to refute a single one of these many quotes, so far as is known. <http://www.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator>

⁵⁴ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995-6. Cf. *The Great Iron Wheel*, p. 552.

⁵⁵ 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."

....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.⁵⁶

This is self constitution! And no man can mistake the meaning of Graves. Consequently the old Landmarker was himself a “neo-Landmarker” according to what some say!⁵⁷ How strange!

MEMBERS UNITE WITH CHRIST AND EACH OTHER

Graves did not leave us in doubt about how a church is constituted. He said:

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.”⁵⁸

“In covenant with Christ and each other...” is Graves’ direction for church constitution! 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. They thus put the church above Christ! This was not the doctrine of Graves.

CHRIST TAUGHT HIS SAINTS TO CONSTITUTE THEMSELVES INTO A CHURCH

Graves believed Christ commanded His churches to “voluntarily organize themselves by mutual covenant into a Christian assembly...”

⁵⁶ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 127. My emphasis.

⁵⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*. 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.

⁵⁸ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 125.

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.⁵⁹

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"!⁶⁰

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" 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, given directly to them and manifested in those who compose the new church by that desire to "gather together in His Name" alone!

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.⁶¹

Graves argues that the very term *ekklesia* implies its independency from mother

⁵⁹ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel* p. 127.

⁶⁰ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 127.

⁶¹ J. R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 134.

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:

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...⁶²

This is how Landmark Baptist churches are constituted—they covenant with Christ and each other. EMDA is no part of either Graves' doctrine nor that of Landmarkism!

THE SOURCE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

But what is the source of the authority for church constitution according to Graves? Does he teach this authority comes from a mother church? This is what EMDA advocates assert.⁶³ This is what the theory demands. This is the absolute essential of church constitution in their thinking 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."⁶⁴

The authority for the constitution of a new church, Graves says, is not from a mother church or 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."⁶⁵ 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 that he appeals to Mt.18:20 for his proof and this sets EMDA off from Landmarkism as the leper was set off from Israel. This is what the Old Landmarker taught!

⁶² J. R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 134.

⁶³ Cf. Tom Ross. *Resetting An Old Landmark*, p. 10; Milburn Cockrell, *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 29, 61.

⁶⁴ J. R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 135. The emphasis is Graves'.

⁶⁵ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 4; Tom Ross, *Resetting An Old Landmark*, p. 10.

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.⁶⁶

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!

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 constitute a church⁶⁷ and by this means they hope to throw out this text as far as church constitution is concerned. This text is a terrible threat to them and they seek to eliminate it from this discussion.⁶⁸ 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’.”⁶⁹

One can see at a glance that the doctrine of self constitution is not *apostate*

⁶⁶ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995.

⁶⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 36. Cf. *Benedict, History of the Baptists*, p. 643, Where Benedict recounts how Elders Miller, Thomas and the unordained John Gano constituted a church with three members. Apparently these old Baptists had not learned this rule of six as the minimum number.

⁶⁸ Bro Cockrell refers to this verse only once in *SCO*. p. 36.

⁶⁹ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 136; *Old Landmarkism, What is It?* p. 41. *Great Iron Wheel*. P. 554.

Landmarkism⁷⁰ but *orthodox* Landmarkism! This is where Graves stood.

SAVED BAPTIZED SAINTS CAN ORGANIZE THEMSELVES INTO A CHURCH

Graves in writing to the Methodists censors them because they do not believe in self constitution. They think they must have higher powers confer something on them to constitute a church. He 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.
2. In covenanting together to observe the laws of Christ in all things, and to watch over each other for good.⁷¹

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 HER SELF

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 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.⁷²

Again he said: “Sec[tion]. 6.—These powers, rights, and duties, cannot be delegated, nor conceded or alienated with impunity.”⁷³

⁷⁰ Milburn Cockrell, *Scriptural Church Organization*, pp. 7, 49 et. al.

⁷¹ J.R. Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 351.

⁷² J.R. Graves. *Intercommunion*, p. 161.

⁷³ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995-6.

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 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 alone 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.⁷⁴

Graves is not talking about EMDA here but about their knowing how to model churches after the apostolic churches.⁷⁵ The evidence of 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's 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.⁷⁶

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

⁷⁴ J.R. Graves. *Old Landmarkism*. p. 30-31.

⁷⁵ See Graves' method of constitution in Jarrel's *Baptist Perpetuity*, p. 1.

⁷⁶ J.R. Graves. *Great Iron Wheel*, p. 544.

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.⁷⁷

EMDA advocates try to wring from Graves their theory 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.⁷⁸

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 does speak 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.⁷⁹

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.’ ”⁸⁰ But EMDA was not one of these principles because it is no where to be found in this book nor in any other book Graves wrote! Furthermore, EMDA opposes *old Landmarkism*. EMDA opposes *Graves*. EMDA opposes *Graves’ Book*; EMDA opposes *Graves’ doctrine*! This writes Ichabod over the door of EMDA as a Landmark doctrine!

WHO CAN FORM A CHURCH

⁷⁷ *Op. Cit.* p. 552.

⁷⁸ Great Iron Wheel was written in 1855, when he was thirty five. In 1880 he published *Old Landmarkism*, What is it?

⁷⁹ J. R. Graves. *Old Landmarkism: What is it?* p. 139.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 141.

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.⁸¹ J.R. 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 covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ.⁸²

EMDA says a group of baptized individuals **cannot organize a Church—unless (!)** they have a mother church's 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. No matter who may be right here, Graves or the contenders of EMDA, it is easy to see that the old Landmarker and the EMDA advocates are not on the same page!

PRESBYTERY OR ELDERS 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 can be obtained in no other way. 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

⁸¹ J. R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. p.944. We too are accused of teaching the same thing, which is not true. Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 12. In this place Bro Cockrell refers to those who differ from him as "modern liberal Baptists..."

⁸² J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. p. 975.

presbyters to organize a Baptist church.⁸³

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 self constitution they also attack Graves and old Landmarkism!

When these brethren imply that we have been dishonest or that we have misrepresented these old writers,⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ This quote from the *Great Carrollton Debate*⁸⁶ was sent to both Bro Cockrell and Bro Pugh in July 2001 so there can be no question that from that time forward, at least, they knew this quote stood. Of course, Bro Cockrell probably knew this quote from his own reading.⁸⁷ Yet, while Bro Cockrell in the 2nd edition of *Scriptural Church Organization* called for an apology,⁸⁸ we have heard of none concerning this misrepresentation and perversion of the teaching of J.R.Graves⁸⁹ and Landmarkism! No apology has been made! Graves has been touted as a believer in EMDA without a single line of proof which is as unscholarly as misleading. Graves' books are available. The fact that *Old Landmarkism: What is It?* does not mention EMDA ought to awaken every EMDA advocate to their misconception! Could Graves write this book on Landmarkism and not 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*

⁸³ J.R. Graves, quoted in W.A. 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 taken from *The Baptist*.

⁸⁴ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, 2nd ed. p. 91.

⁸⁵ J.C. Settlemaier. "Constitution of Churches." *GPP*. April 1, 2000, p. 1.

⁸⁶ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

⁸⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, "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 the above quote in his book or BBB.

⁸⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, 2nd Edition, p. 98: "Therefore an apology is in order and I'm sure would be appreciated."

⁸⁹ Cf. Chapter 13.

Eclectic,⁹⁰ (which I estimate amounted to some fifty thousand pages!) and never mention EMDA if he believed it!⁹¹ The credulousness of EMDA advocates on this subject has driven them out of bounds!

Let me now ask some questions.

Is it not abundantly proven from these quotes that Graves' position on the constitution of churches was *self constitution* and that it is diametrically opposed to EMDA? Do not these quotes establish the fact that Graves taught *churches receive their authority directly from Christ without 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 these men contending Landmarkism is EMDA? How could such a misconception be published without checking the sources? Why have these writers and preachers pinned this theory on Landmarkism? Are not these documents abundantly available to every searcher of truth? Why then have they been overlooked? Why this misrepresentation? Why do these brethren still claim Graves believed in EMDA after they have seen these quotes? And why do those who claim EMDA is a doctrine of Landmarkism never give documentation for their claims?

Why do they call us *neo-Landmarkers*, *apostate Landmarkers* and the like? Why do EMDA advocates call those who believe in self constitution by less than flattering names? Why this animosity?⁹² Why do they claim we misrepresent Graves when we have given many, many, specific quotes proving what he believed?

Will these men who claim Graves and Landmarkism taught EMDA now set this matter right? Will the advocates of EMDA⁹³ 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?

90 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.

91 James Burnett in *Tenn. Pioneer Baptist Preachers* says this about Graves: "In this connection I may be permitted to say that while Dr. Graves was a successionist 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.

92 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. *Scriptural Church Organization*, pp. 7, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 62, 79, 80, 86, 89. He seemed to have an attitude of indignation throughout this book which I have not seen in any other book he wrote.

93 As well as those who oppose Landmarkism and who make the same claim.

How can honest men do less?

In the next chapter we will give a full definition of EMDA.

CHAPTER 4

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.⁹⁴ *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 fuzzy and indistinct.⁹⁵ Of the various articles which I have seen by the advocates of EMDA I have not found a single writer who defined his terms!⁹⁶ 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.

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.⁹⁷ 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 get this authority, this **permission to constitute** from a **mother church**, it is not, cannot be, a true

94 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.

95 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.

96 Cf. *GPP*, April 2000, p. 1. Art. "Church Constitution," where I defined their theory for them. In that article, I gave their position the name of "authority theory" but because some of them complained about this name I have changed it to EMDA in this book.

97 *7 Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*. p. 15, 35; *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 81.

church.⁹⁸ 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 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 often use the analogy of human lineage, or the lineage of animals, such as sheep, rams or dogs.⁹⁹ Elder Cockrell teaches that when a church gives birth to a new church Christ and his wife give birth to a baby girl!¹⁰⁰

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.¹⁰¹

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.¹⁰²

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

⁹⁹ Milburn Cockrell. SCO, EMDA advocates contend that churches are connected necessarily to a previous church in a sort of ecclesiastical biogenesis.

¹⁰⁰ 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.

¹⁰¹ 7 Questions. p. 34.

¹⁰² Tom Ross. Resetting An Old Landmark. p. 9-10.

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.¹⁰³ From these Scriptures [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.¹⁰⁴

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.¹⁰⁵

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 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

¹⁰³ 7 Questions, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ 7 Questions, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ 7 Questions, p. 35.

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....¹⁰⁶

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.¹⁰⁷

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

AN ELDER MUST BE PRESENT TO CONSTITUTE A CHURCH

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.¹⁰⁸

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 Calvinism¹⁰⁹ 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

¹⁰⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁷ B. H. Carroll. *Interpretation of The English Bible*. Acts. p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ *Scriptural Church Organization*. p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ i.e., Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints.

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! I am sure that Bro Cockrell did not have baptism from a church which held to the five points.¹¹⁰ We discussed this issue in 1980 and he told me then that he did not agree with the idea that a church had to believe the five points in order to be a scriptural church.

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—six laws—which are necessary 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 has ever been 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 be 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 is giving this authority and it is this act which gives birth to the new *baby* church.

Law # 2. *An organic link-by-link connection by which each ascending church got 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 a monstrosity! What unprecedented audacity! What vanity that men could conceive such doctrine and then publish such—all without *a thus saith the Lord*!

¹¹⁰ If I remember correctly, from what Bro Cockrell told me, when we discussed this issue, he was baptized by a NABA church. If this is correct, then he certainly did not have *five point baptism* as both ABA and NABA have always opposed these doctrines. At the time we discussed this (1980) I told him I did not agree with this idea. He told me he opposed Bro Joe Wilson's position (i.e., the five points were essential to scriptural baptism) on this subject and would welcome an article from me showing that position to be in error for BBB. I never wrote the article.

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 unnamed power, or communicates some sacramental influence which flows through his fingers because hands were laid on him. This theory denies that any number of saints in gospel order can constitute themselves into a gospel church without an un-baptistic hierarch and it is nothing but an Episcopalian in a Baptist skin!

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 elder re-ordained— why? Simply because they were originally baptized, ordained, or constituted by those who did not embrace all five points!¹¹¹

Law #6. *All those who are to compose a 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 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 which church never saw these *members*! Then they are given letters stating they are members in good standing for the purpose of constitution! This means that all those churches which had *helps* from several churches were not EMDA constitutions and are not true churches according to their own testimony!

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*,¹¹² as they are not in the Bible!) and that church, right in all of

111 A year or two back 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 because they had "Arminian baptism" and this made them question their constitution. I refused to do this and told them 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! Let the reader remember that Elder Cockrell came out of the NABA. These churches were one with the ABA for years and they all practiced self-constitution in the early days! These churches were also Arminian! What a crushing revelation this is for EMDA! What a quandary this creates for those involved! It undercuts their whole system by unchurching innumerable churches. It puts their whole backfield in motion. Let those who are involved check the records for themselves!

112 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.

these Laws but one, was formed without one of these essentials, then 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 formal authority or 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 was 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! Or if there was some abnormality in any one of these essentials, then the Holy Spirit never did come upon your church! Christ never indwelt your assembly!¹¹³ All the baptisms and all the acts of worship from the time this mistake was made, 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!¹¹⁴

Hiscox made this significant statement 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.¹¹⁵

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

....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

113 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.

114 See an excellent article by Bro Thomas Williamson in *PPP*, 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.gpp-5grace.com/graceproclamator/pp0404_complete.htm#Got%20Perpetuity

115 Edward Hiscox. *The New Directory For Baptist Churches*. p. 26.

ordinances of the gospel.¹¹⁶

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 wrong point, are nothing but error compounded.

We will in the next chapter consider these matters.

CHAPTER 5

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.'¹¹⁷

Two of the leading EMDA exponents have publicly admitted that EMDA is not *spelled out* in Scripture.¹¹⁸ So far as I am concerned, these men have conceded the whole issue by their candid admission! 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 church at Jerusalem organized them into a New Testament church."¹¹⁹ One can only marvel that such could be asserted with an open Bible! Some of these brethren argue that the group in Antioch, since it is not called a church in Scripture until verse 26, was

¹¹⁶ *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 referred to the constitution of a church.

¹¹⁷ Leonard Verduin, *Reformers and Their Step Children*, p. 204.

¹¹⁸ 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, *SCO*. p. 50. Bro. Cockrell said: "A thing may be taught in Scripture and yet not spelled out in terms we might use today."

¹¹⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*. p. 35.

not, therefore, a church until so called! This illusion entices them to go further. Building upon the first error, they then say the Antioch church was not a church until Barnabas went 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 and then, and only then, did the church at Antioch have a proper existence!

Actually, if this line of reasoning were valid, then the authority must have come from some other church, say in Tarsus, 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.¹²⁰ Of course he gives no proof of this. 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*!

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, 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 months¹²¹ and in fact, not until they got their first epistle.¹²² Ephesus had to wait until near the end of the century to get their status updated.¹²³ Of

¹²⁰ 7 Questions, p. 24.

¹²¹ Acts 18:12.

¹²² 1 Cor 1:2.

¹²³ Re 2:1.

course with this kind of hypothesis anything is possible!

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 just tainted 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 constitute churches among the Gentiles at this time, to say the very least, because they had no idea of preaching to the Gentiles at the time this church was founded, as this was not yet understood.¹²⁴

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, nor was there any need of such, 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

¹²⁴ See Acts 11:19 with 8:1.

Antioch he did not go in and say: "Where did 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 re-organized 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 13:22, 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 "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 constituted¹²⁵ 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, by the Vatican in Rome 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 for their theory. Those who handle Holy Scripture like this leave a blank check for heresy. Like begets like!¹²⁶ Just because you veneer a tradition with the Baptist name does not make it Scriptural. Here is a powerful case of adding to

¹²⁵ 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.

¹²⁶ This is a cliché by which the EMDA advocates lull their followers to sleep. Cf. Tom Ross. *Resetting an Old Landmark*, p. 10.

Scripture to justify a tradition. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”¹²⁷

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 Antiochian assembly, with perfect equality on every plane and with joy in what the 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.”**¹²⁸

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 an unorganized group, without any church authority, without a covenant, without organization, without an elder, and without the Holy Spirit, how could he see the grace of God in them and exhort them to continue as they were? Instead of this text being a defense of EMDA it is a battering ram against it. It literally knocks their wall flat!¹²⁹

Let the Scripture say what it wants to say!

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

¹²⁷ Mt 15:9.

¹²⁸ Acts 11:23.

¹²⁹ II Kings 23:6.

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.¹³⁰

Several brethren who hold to EMDA maintain that Acts 13 spells out church authority 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.¹³¹

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

¹³⁰ *7 Questions*, p. 26, Cf. also p. 11.

¹³¹ *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, p. 204, Art. Exegesis.

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 the 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 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.¹³² 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.*¹³³

2] *The angel of the Lord spoke directly to the apostles.*¹³⁴

3] *The angel of the Lord spoke directly to Cornelius.*¹³⁵

4] *The angel of the Lord released Peter from prison directly.*¹³⁶

5] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Philip.*¹³⁷

6] *The Lord caught away Philip and placed him at Azotus*¹³⁸

132 He 8:2; 10:11.

133 Acts 10:19, 20: 11:12. Note. The church had no knowledge of Peter's visit to Cornelius until after the fact, [Acts 11:1-3]. But when they learned of it, they did not throw a fit and cry “no authority” as brethren now do, but “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]. It would be a good thing if EMDA brethren could hold their peace and learn what the Lord is doing, rather than to condemn without hearing the case!

134

Acts 5:19-20, 29-32.

135 Acts 10:5.

136 Acts 12:7-11.

137 Acts 8:29.

138 Acts 8:39-40.

7] *The Lord spoke directly to Ananias sending him to Saul.*¹³⁹

8] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to the men who were fasting and praying.*¹⁴⁰

9] *Paul and Barnabas were expressly said to be sent by the Holy Spirit.*¹⁴¹

10] *Paul and Barnabas were directly forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia.*¹⁴²

11] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Paul in a vision.*¹⁴³

12] *Stephen saw the Lord standing on the right hand of God.*¹⁴⁴

13] *The Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision encouraging him.*¹⁴⁵

14] *The Holy Spirit spoke directly to Agabus concerning Paul.*¹⁴⁶

15] *The Lord directly commissioned Paul to the ministry.*¹⁴⁷

16] *The Lord directly warned Paul to get out of Jerusalem.*¹⁴⁸

17] *The Lord appeared directly to Paul in the night to cheer him.*¹⁴⁹

18] *The angel of the Lord stood by Paul on the ship assuring him and the others of safety.*¹⁵⁰

139 Acts 9:10-18.

140 Acts 13:2.

141 Acts 13:4.

142 Acts 16:7.

143 Acts 16:9-10.

144 Acts 7:55.

145 Acts 18:9-10.

146 Acts 21:10-11.

147 Acts 26:15-20.

148 Acts 22:18-21.

149 Acts 23:11.

150 Acts 27:22-23.

Here we have several cases 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 every thing 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 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 authorised 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.”¹⁵¹

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...”

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 anyone contends for this idea in this text is because the theory of EMDA demands it! If it 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 believed in self-constitution and not EMDA.

Some EMDA advocates also contend that Acts 13:3 was an ordination service and that Paul and Barnabas were here ordained. But if this was an ordination service for these two men the question then comes immediately¹⁵²—how could Barnabas constitute

¹⁵¹ Gill's *Commentary*, Acts 13:3.

¹⁵² I am indebted to a dear brother who first called my attention to this fact.

this church at Antioch when he was not ordained at that time?¹⁵³ 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.¹⁵⁴ But how then did the church at Jerusalem send the unordained 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 EMDA¹⁵⁵ 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 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 this passage is appealed to by EMDA advocates 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...¹⁵⁶

We note first of all this authority was not given to the *house*, as these brethren say,

¹⁵³ Cf. *7 Questions*, p.21.

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

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 31.

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 to *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 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 parable¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸

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)

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

158 Henry A. Virkler. *Hermeneutics*, p. 170.

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 are counseled by their elders, and we rejoice to be asked to participate but we all know that these things are not essential!¹⁵⁹ Every household, when it is so formed, is as much a household as any other. The same thing is true of churches. So appeal to this parable is made solely because of the word *authority* and it does not help the cause of EMDA but defeats it.

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

CHAPTER 6

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.¹⁶⁰ 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.'"¹⁶¹ 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. *Origin* is the point at which something comes into existence."¹⁶² 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 from the recognized meaning and jump to EMDA,

¹⁵⁹ My mother, on her dying 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.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. 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.

¹⁶¹ Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 50.

¹⁶² *American Heritage Dictionary*.

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*,¹⁶³ 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.¹⁶⁴

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.¹⁶⁵

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.¹⁶⁶

163 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 51.

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

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

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

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."¹⁶⁷

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 idea of authority, latent or conveyed. The book has neither hint nor scent of this 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 Catholick 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.'¹⁶⁸

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

¹⁶⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Grantham. *Ancient Christian Religion*, Second Part, p. 2.

according to his will.”¹⁶⁹

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 the church of God....”¹⁷⁰ Yet, Keach taught self constitution as can be seen in the chapter on Church Manuals, to which I refer the reader. 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....¹⁷¹

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

169 *Ibid.*

170 Benjamin Keach. *Types & Metaphors*, p. 695.

171 Benjamin Keach. *Types & Metaphors*, p. 696.

duly administered, according to Christ's Institution.¹⁷²

The EMDA advocates have jumped to the conclusion that any time a writer in history used the term *mother church* he meant EMDA! When they do so they are merely begging the question. For example. There are not 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.¹⁷³

What did Graves mean when he used the term *mother church[es]*? We know he did not mean EMDA because he believed in **Divine constitution**.¹⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁵

Thus when EMDA supporters appeal to a writer's use of the term *mother church* as proof he believed EMDA without any evidence other 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!**¹⁷⁶

Numbers of quotes have been published in *GPP* proving the old Landmarkers did

172 Mark Dever. *Polity* p. 64-64.

173 J.R. Graves. Intro. Essay to *Orchard's Concise History Of Baptists*, p. xxi.

174 See chapters 3 and 13.

175 J.R.Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 995, my emphasis.

176 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 84, par 3.

not believe this doctrine.¹⁷⁷ **Not one time has any writer ever 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!¹⁷⁸ When these old Landmarkers are quoted as if they believed in EMDA it does not change their real position of Divine constitution or self constitution 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!'¹⁷⁹

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..."¹⁸⁰

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 the EMDA advocate's attempt to build their whole system on this term is nothing but a hodgepodge of historical allusions by which they deceive themselves and attempt to fool others. This writes Icabod over their *mother church* idea!

To further verify this point I cite J.R. Graves whom Ford was quoting above. The quote is from *The First Baptist Church in America*:

....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, every one, 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!'¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ See GPP articles for several quotes by Graves and others.

¹⁷⁸ Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p 84.

¹⁷⁹ S.H. Ford. *Origin of the Baptists*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁰ W. A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ J.R. Graves. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 161.

So 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.¹⁸²

Graves says this church, the church of John Clarke, 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?

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.¹⁸³ And in his second edition he implies that we twist and turn the words of these old writers.¹⁸⁴ But we have documented everything we have quoted from these men so that anyone can verify for himself what these men believed—and we have done it numbers of times!

These quotes are irrefutable! And the 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

¹⁸² *Op. cit.* p. 180.

¹⁸³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89. "They don't tell the whole truth."

¹⁸⁴ Milburn Cockrell. *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."

brethren to make sure the men they quoted were using this term in the same sense they were before haling them in as witnesses. But it is evident they have quoted these authors on the *sound* of a single word or 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.

It [Sandy Creek church of NC] become the mother, grandmother, and great-grand mother 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.¹⁸⁵

Is this not EMDA?

No!

Nor can the EMDA advocates recognize this church as a Scriptural church! The fly in the ointment which makes this church stink for EMDA brethren 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.¹⁸⁶

It never was a scriptural church itself, nor are any of these thousands of churches which came from it, if EMDA is true! This account is quicksand to EMDA and the more they struggle the more desperate their situation!

“This was the first Separate Baptist church in Virginia, and in some sense, the mother of all the rest.”¹⁸⁷ Semple says this church pastored by Dutton Lane was in *some sense* the mother of all the rest. It was not EMDA but the *original* to which Semple referred.

¹⁸⁵ William Cathcart. *Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 1099.

¹⁸⁶ David Benedict. *History of The Baptists*. II, p. 384.

¹⁸⁷ Robert Semple, *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 17.

An EMDA church is not in *some sense* a mother but **is** the mother, **organically so!** **This organic connection is the heart of the theory!** But all can see that Semple did not mean to convey the idea of where **authority originated** and that this was then perpetuated church–vote to church–vote, mother to daughter and mother to daughter, because this church was only a mother in **some sense!**

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.¹⁸⁸

Johnson very clearly teaches *self constitution* in the same context with *mother church*! This proves the use of *mother* or *mother 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.¹⁸⁹ The reference here to Jerusalem above being the mother of us all, is by many commentators referred to the church.¹⁹⁰ Bro Cockrell quoted Gill on this passage but improperly.¹⁹¹ 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,

¹⁸⁸ W.B. Johnson. *The Gospel Developed*. 1846. Quoted in Dever's *Polity*, p. 187.

¹⁸⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50-52.

¹⁹⁰ e.g., *pro*, Calvin, Gill, Trapp, Alford, Barnes, Lenski, Bengel, et al; *con* BHC, Gal. p. 54-56, Broadman.

¹⁹¹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 51-52.

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.¹⁹²

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....¹⁹³

Calvin says:

The heavenly Jerusalem, which derives its origin from heaven, and dwells above by faith, is the mother of believers.¹⁹⁴

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 an 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.**"¹⁹⁵

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....¹⁹⁶

He also says of a gospel church: "It is this confederacy, consent, and agreement, that is the formal cause of a church..."¹⁹⁷ Also:

192 John Gill. *Commentary*, loco.

193 *Op.cit.* vs. 27.

194 John Calvin. *Commentary*, loco.

195 Gal. 4:26, 27, 31.

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

197 *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, ch. I, 6. p. 624.

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....¹⁹⁸

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!¹⁹⁹ 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! 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.

We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land.²⁰⁰

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."²⁰¹ This is the sense in which our Baptist forefathers used the word "mother" in reference to

¹⁹⁸ *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, ch. I, 3. p. 624.

¹⁹⁹ George Ella. *John Gill and The Cause of God and Truth*, pp.46-53.

²⁰⁰ Isaac Backus. *Your Baptist Heritage*, From a letter of Mr. Robinson and Elder Brewster. p. 21.

²⁰¹ John Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. 1, p. 386.

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 the United States!

MOTHER ASSOCIATION

“From this Association,²⁰² as from a fruitful mother, have originated most of the present Associations in Virginia.”²⁰³ 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 this body gave all other associations authority to exist and that such authority was essential to form an association?²⁰⁴

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 has about 2000 branches in the world. There is also a Mother Church of Scientology. EMDA advocates can see what 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.²⁰⁵

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

202 General Association of Separate Baptists.

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

204 J.R. Graves. *Old Landmarkism*, p. 205.

205 J.H. Spencer. *History of Kentucky Baptists*, vol. I, p. 182.

The illogical and inconsistent view concerning “mother church” is demonstrated when we ask, “Where is the Father?” For it is quite evident, that if you have a mother you 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,²⁰⁶ failing to recognize it is they who have run too far.

FATHER OF A CHURCH

It is just as scriptural to have a *father* of a church as it is to have a *mother* of a 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.²⁰⁷

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

J.R. Graves said of Roger Williams:

It is greatly to be regretted that any one was ever so mislead 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.²⁰⁸

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”

²⁰⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50.

²⁰⁷ David Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 412.

²⁰⁸ J.R. Graves. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 181.

and right next to it you will find the “catholic church.” Only in modern times has this term “mother” 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.

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.”²⁰⁹ 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 Church for his mother. . . . Where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away.’²¹⁰

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.*²¹¹ 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. 11:2.²¹²

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

²⁰⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO* p.52 .

²¹⁰ Thomas Armitage. *History of The Baptists*, p. 101.

²¹¹ 2 Cor. 11:2.

²¹² *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, how many we are not told, but he found them lacking in some way. He asked of them this question: "Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism."²¹³ 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 the total number, twelve or so were scripturally baptized.²¹⁴ In the other accounts we have of preachers in the New Testament meeting saints before unknown to them,²¹⁵ 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 self-constitution along side 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.²¹⁶

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 a challenge of EMDA.

CHAPTER 7

A CHALLENGE ISSUED

²¹³ Acts 19:3.

²¹⁴ Acts 19:7.

²¹⁵ *E.g.*, Acts 10:11; 28:15, etc.

²¹⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89.

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, 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.

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

217 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 84.

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

219 This was T.M. Bond, not John Bond, as was supposed in the first edition of *LUF*. A Republication of the Mississippi Baptist Association from its Organization in 1806 to the present. Hinton & Co. 1849.

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 this fact.

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 as given above without any disclaimer. They **recognized Salem Church as a true church organized without any 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.

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.

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,

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

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

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? Christ's Word says they were! Do these cases meet the challenge as given?

Here is another example.

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, 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.'²²³

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

²²² C. H. Mattoon. *Baptist Annals of Oregon*, 1905, p. 2. (via James Duvall).
to get them as soon as practicable. "

²²³*ibid.* At first, none had letters, but were

²²³ John T. Christian. *History of Baptists*, vol 2, p. 74.

of them were preachers.²²⁴ 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.²²⁵

Now what was wrong with this church? The principle thing was that it did not have authority, as Benedict, quoting others, tells us, but it was not EMDA but the authority from the Protestants!

It would take a volume, says Morgan Edwards, to contain an account of all their suffering for ten or twelve years.

The burden of all their complaints were 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.'²²⁶

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 mention this account censure them for what they did nor for the way they did it. This speaks volumes for the method of self constitution of churches among Baptists but it dooms the idea of EMDA. This idea is not mentioned because not even thought of by these writers.²²⁷ Why not?

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

225 David Benedict. *History of The Baptists*, p. 383.

226 *Ibid.* 383. Italics are Benedict's.

227 Cf. Isaac Backus, *History of the Baptists of New England*, Vol. 1, p.288; David Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. I, p. 383-384.

Again:

Soe that in the year of our ever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640) one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons,²²⁸ namely Goodman Atkins of Stapleton, Goodman Cole a Butcher of Lawford's Gate, Richard Moone a Farrier in Wine Street, and Mr 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 goe noe more to it, and with godly purpose of heart Joyned themselves together in the Lord; and only thus Covenanting....²²⁹

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 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.'²³⁰

Bro Baron Stow says this:

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.²³¹

First Baptist Church in Illinois is another example.

²²⁸ These saints had not read that you must have six people to constitute a church, but reading the Scripture, they were convinced that Christ's word of "two or three" were sufficient! Cf. Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 36.

²²⁹ Charles Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 116.

²³⁰ David Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, P. 393.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

During 1794-5 many new families from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee joined the American settlements in Illinois. Among them was Joseph Chance, an unordained Baptist preacher, or "lay elder." It was the custom in some Baptist churches to appoint such officers as pastor's assistants. The father of Richard Fuller, who for thirty years was a pastor in Baltimore, was a lay elder.

Another of the new arrivals in the spring of 1796 was Elder David Badgley, of Virginia; an energetic man of active mind and sincere piety. He was the first Baptist minister to make Illinois his home. On his arrival he held a protracted meeting of three weeks at New Design, and the Holy Spirit was present in power. On May 28, 1796, Fontaine creek was again visited and fifteen were baptized. On the same day, in the house of James Lemen, these, with those baptized before by Elder Dodge, and a number who had with them their church letters, twenty-eight persons altogether, were constituted a Baptist church. The names of the men as given by John M. Peck, were: James Lemen, William Whiteside, Larkin Rutherford, Isaac Enochs, Joseph Griffin, John Simpson, James Gilham, Thomas Todd, George Valentine, Solomon Shook, Mr. Teague, Joseph Anderson, Joseph Ryan, Joseph Chance.

The formation of the church was a simple proceeding. Elder Badgley and Mr. Chance read the scriptures and offered prayer. The purpose of the meeting was stated, and the nature of a Baptist church was explained. The names were taken of those who wished to unite in church capacity, and they formally voted to become, a gospel church for the maintenance of the ordinances, the edification of one another, and the evangelization of the world. No ceremony of prayerbook or ritual, no presence of bishop or priest, was required. Articles of faith were read, considered, and adopted. Perhaps also an agreement or covenant with each other to maintain a holy life. No authority save that of their Lord Jesus Christ was needed or recognized. And as the church was self constituted it was also self governed, since the authority that constitutes a body must be the authority that controls it. [Edward Brand, Illinois Baptists, A History. 1930. p. 27].

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN BENNINGTON, VERMONT

The *first* Baptist church in Bennington, was recognised April 11th, 1827.

For many years a number of baptist brethren had resided in the north and west portions of the town; the *former* belonging to the first Shaftsbury church, under Elder Mattison's care; and the *latter*, in the west part of the town, belonging to the church in Hoosick, N.Y.; then, and for many years, under the pastoral care of Elder L Beach. In the east part of the town there had never been any considerable number of baptist professors till about the period above named. Among the earliest settlers, who became permanent residents of Bennington East Village and vicinity, then familiarly called *Algiers*, that held to baptist sentiments, were brethren Isaiah Hendrix, Enoch Winslow, long a deacon of this church, and Aaron Grover. Brother Anthony J. Haswell, an older half brother of our Burman missionary, JAMES M. HASWELL, had long resided at the centre of the town, but there seemed to be no call in Providence for our brethren to "set up their Banner in the name of the Lord" till the time mentioned. The few brethren who had found themselves thus far from church privileges, began to meet for social religious worship, and were comforted together in their interviews. Increasing in numbers, and feeling the importance of regular public worship, there being no house of worship in the place, they obtained ministerial aid, occasionally, from surrounding pastors; and finally concluded to invite an Ecclesiastical council to advise with them, and, if thought best, recognize them as a church in gospel order. This occurred on the 11th of April, 1827, as stated above, "when 23 members of different Baptist churches, with *nine* persons baptised on the occasion, were organized into an independent church, under the name of the Baptist Church in Bennington, Vt. ²³²

Epworth Church 1599

2. 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.²³³

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 they only received “tidings” about Antioch which proves they had not given EMDA to the disciples 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! 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 authority but because he went in to men uncircumcised,²³⁴ When Peter rehearsed this before them they did not vote to give him retro-active authority!²³⁵

The Scripture says:

²³³ Christian. *Did They Dip?* P. 86.

²³⁴ Acts 11:1-2.

²³⁵ Baptist churches are now pretending they can do this as well as rescind what they have done years before! One church in the south 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 every thing the pastor had done. They rescinded all the ordinances, acts of worship, and every official act of the church while this man was pastor! Popery pleads for no more. It is just a step to rescind things which took place 1000 years ago!

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 did have came directly from Christ just as Christ Himself taught that it would!²³⁶ 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."²³⁷ 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.²³⁸ 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 this act by Peter, hence the authority could not have come through EMDA! The 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!²³⁹ Thus, what EMDA demands, this NT account excludes! These are simple facts plainly revealed.

In fact, I will go even further. There is not a 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 single instance of EMDA! Not one! The churches of Judea were constituted but nothing is said about EMDA.²⁴⁰ 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 them mentioned by name in Revelation, and we know they were true churches, 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 say such things do not have facts or testimony for support but only theory. They cannot give a "thus saith the Lord" but they forever trot out *thus saith this theory!*

236 Matt. 18:20.

237 Cf. also Acts 11:12.

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

239 Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 81; *7 Questions on Church Authority*. "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." p. 28.

240 Acts 9:31.³⁸¹ *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, P.270³⁸² *Op. Cit.*, p. 281.

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.²⁴¹

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 disapprove of multiplying churches by dividing those already established, without evident necessity; and also of any one minister by himself undertaking to constitute a church.²⁴²

Here 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 is another example:

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. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received at that age as invalid, whereupon most or all of them received a new

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baptism. Their minister was a Mr. John Spilsbury.²⁴³

This account sounds like EMDA and would be claimed by them as an example of their position but for one thing. What is that? This mother church was a Protestant church! Those who had become Baptists in principle, who wished to leave because they had come to see the essential nature of immersion for baptism, requested of the church they were then members of—the mother church(!) –authority to constitute a new church! But it is impossible, that they thought this was essential to constitute, but only they wanted to leave that church under good terms! This demonstrates how asking permission for a constitution has been misunderstood by EMDA advocates.

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.²⁴⁴

How many churches trace a history through this church!

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. 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, ABRAHAM

²⁴³ David Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 337. Cf. Ivimey, *Hist. Of Eng. Baptists*, vol. I, p. 138.

²⁴⁴ *Hist. of Bap. Ch. At Hill Cliffe*, p. 83. ²³⁹ Robinson, *Eccl. Researches*, p. 126, Q. By Ray, *Baptist Succession*, p. 189.

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. ²⁴⁵

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.” ²⁴⁶

“...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 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.” ²⁴⁷

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 worshipping 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

²⁴⁵ Ducan. A Hist. of Baptists in MO, p. 130.

²⁴⁶ Benedict, Hist Bap. P. 467.

²⁴⁷ Semple, p. 234-5.

another in our most holy faith; this 7th day of December, 1671.²⁴⁸

JOHN LELAND

“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.” *Hist. of Virginia Baptists*, Semple, p. 234.

THE ANCIENT CHURCH AT HILL CLIFFE ENGLAND

“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.” *H. of Bap. Ch. At Hill Cliffe*, p. 84.

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.²³⁹

Have I met the challenge set forth?

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

²⁴⁸ Isaac Backus, *Hist. Of Baptists in New England*, vol I, p. 325. From the Ms. of John Comer, Backus Hist. Soc. Library.

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!**²⁴⁹ 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 thirties 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 anymore 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 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.'²⁵⁰ Their position on EMDA in Scripture is about 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."²⁵¹

Nor have they found **any specific statement of EMDA by any 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 quoted to prove this theory not one of them before modern times ever specifically states EMDA. In order to prop up this idea that Baptists in History believed EMDA they have had to leave off fair reporting proper quotes, giving valid evidence and resort to suggestions, editing, adapting, hints, inferences, allusions and secret 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 given!** If such

249 Cf. Armitage. *History of the Baptists*, vol. I, p. 3. Also cf. Appendix IV.

250 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 50 ; Joe Wilson. Taped message: "My Reply to J. C. Settlemoir", Gladwin Conference, 2001.

251 Tract: "Learned Witnesses to Christ's Ordinances." Author unknown. No publisher data.

exists, why have they not produced it?²⁵²

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 after the 19th century!²⁵³ But many explicit statements by both Landmarkers and non-Landmarkers from the Reformation until the present have been published confirming Baptists have always believed in self constitution as opposed to EMDA!

They do give us inferences. But a thousand inferences does not prove a point. It is like a man giving quotes from John Gill which seem to indicate he was Arminian but ignoring the mass of his writings where he explicitly stated he believed in the doctrines of grace.²⁵⁴ 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 believed and taught self constitution!²⁵⁵ In this book, I have given quotes which make it clear what these men were writing about. We cannot be satisfied with inferences or illusory statements but want explicit statements to verify what they believed on this subject.

Let us now look at 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.²⁵⁶ J.R. Graves gave the Landmark Baptist position. Remember many well-known Landmark Baptists preachers were present at this debate. Listen to Graves' answer:

252 Cf. Curtis 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." Note. The author tries to lead us away from a 'thus saith the Lord.' We give much more than "precept and pattern!" We give Mt 18:20 which is what the Lord himself says!

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

254 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.'" George M. Ella. *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth*, p. 105.

255 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*; See references to Jesse Mercer, J.R. Graves, J.M. Pendleton, A.C. Dayton, Benjamin Keach, John Gill and Ben Bogard. Not one of these men believed in EMDA. Nor is there any quote from them which indicates they did!

256 Jacob 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.²⁵⁷

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*²⁵⁸ the author gives a quote from this debate²⁵⁹ 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!²⁶⁰ 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 his second edition²⁶¹ because he published a copy of my letter to Bro Curtis Pugh²⁶² which contained this quote. I found no correction as to Graves' position in the new edition of *SCO*. One can only wonder why.²⁶³

C.D. COLE

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

257 J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

258 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO* p. 29-30.

259 J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 971.

260 *Op. cit.* p. 975.

261 Second edition of *Scriptural Church Organization* was published 2003.

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

263 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71. Is this not a terrible misrepresentation?

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 well known Landmark Baptist and a scholar thoroughly acquainted with Baptist polity. Not only this but he was also associated with H.B. Taylor, A. W. Pink, J.B. Moody²⁶⁶ and many other leading Baptists in the early 1900s and up to his death. 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 EMDA territory such as Kentucky and Florida without believing this doctrine if it was then being taught? Is it not evident that a change has occurred? Who changed?

EDWARD HISCOX

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 have tried to make it out that 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

264 C. D. Cole. *Definitions of Doctrine: The NT Church*, p. 7,8. No Date .

265 Milburn 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."

266 C.D. Cole, *Bible Doctrine of Election*. p. 21. Bro Cole said: " Dr. J.B. Moody (one of my fathers in the faith) used to say, that if one waited to accept the doctrines until he could harmonize them, he would never accept them; the way to harmonize them is to receive them without question, and they will harmonize on the inside of the soul."

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

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

of which they are members, given *for the purpose of forming a new Church*.”²⁶⁹ But in spite of this claim there is nothing in this statement nor in any of Hiscox’s books to lead 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

Letters from other churches 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 others as to the standing of the bearer in the church which sends the letter. Letters convey no authority even if the church sending the letter thinks it does. A letter cannot ordain an elder, exclude a member, call a pastor, or dissolve a church—and it cannot constitute one!

HISCOX ON AUTHORITY

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

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

269 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 9.

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

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

272 Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, pp. 18-19.

273 Edward Hiscox. *The Baptist Directory of Baptist Churches*. 1859. p. 16.

What is the source of the authority of a new church? **“This authority is derived directly from God.”** Is this EMDA? Is this the position of Bro Cockrell? If these statements are found in Hiscox's book then why is he quoted as if he believed in EMDA? Hiscox has been summoned as a witness for EMDA but he gives unmistakable testimony for self-constitution and EMDA advocates are sorry they called him in!

He further says: “Its [the church’s] chief authority is given by Christ alone.”²⁷⁴

Again:

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 alway, even unto the end of the world.’– Mt 16:18; 28:19, 20. What He does not give is not possessed.²⁷⁵

If this were not sufficient to establish that Hiscox believed in self constitution as opposed to EMDA he also expressly denies *organic church succession* and if there is no organic church succession there can be no EMDA! He says:

Perpetuity. This has reference, not to a continuance of official administration, as in the previous note, but to visible and corporate Church life. And, strange to say, some Baptists have been courageous enough, and indiscreet enough to assert that an unbroken succession of visible, organized congregations of believers similar to their own, and therefore substantially like the primitive churches, can be proved to have existed from the Apostles, until now. Such claims may well be left to papal audacity. For those who learn from that storehouse of sacred truth—the New Testament—what are the spirit, doctrine, ordinances, and polity of a Church of Christ, and practice the same, it matters nothing whether the chain of organic perpetuity may never have been broken, or broken a thousand times. They are the true disciples of Christ who have His spirit; the true successors of the Apostles who follow their teachings, and imitate their lives.²⁷⁶

274 Edward Hiscox. *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*. p. 48.

275 *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

276 *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

Does it not seem strange anyone would quote Hiscox as one who taught EMDA when he expressly denies *organic church succession* and plainly comes down for authority directly from Christ?²⁷⁷ We have read what Bro Cockrell claimed Hiscox believed and we have seen what Hiscox himself says he believed. Hiscox emphatically states his position and it is absolutely contrary to EMDA. The two positions cannot be reconciled. In *SCO* we have Hiscox quoted as a believer in EMDA but we have discovered he clearly stated self constitution as opposed to EMDA in the very book quoted! How is it then that Hiscox is said to embrace what he opposed, and to oppose what he embraced?

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, and not from a mother church, from a bishop, or from a presbytery. Consider these examples.

...For hath not one regular Church as great Authority from Christ as another.²⁷⁸

In a 1749 essay on the power and duty of an association, Griffith began with a declaration ‘that each particular church hath complete power and authority from Jesus Christ.....’²⁷⁹

Mr. Canne 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 standing under any other ecclesiastical authority out of itself.”²⁸⁰

“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).”²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Milburn 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!

²⁷⁸ Benjamin. Keach. *Glory of a True Church*, Quoted in *Polity*, Dever, p. 81.

²⁷⁹ Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 157.

²⁸⁰ Canne. *Syon’s Prerogative Royal*. Amsterdam, 1641, 12mo. pp. 64. See also *Baillie’s Dissuasive*, pp. 15, 107.

²⁸¹ Griffith. *History of the Baptists of New Jersey*, P. 369.

“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.”²⁸²

“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....”²⁸³

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*.²⁸⁴ Dayton too has been claimed as one holding the doctrine of EMDA.²⁸⁵ 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 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*

282 A.C. Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 158.

283 W.A. Jarrel. *Church Perpetuity*, p. 3, [emphasis added].

284 William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*. Art. *Dayton*, p. 319.

285 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd. Edition, p. 89-91.

*his kingdom in his name.*²⁸⁶

Note especially that Dayton says: “meeting by his authority”! This is Christ’s authority, not that of a mother church! In the light of this quote by Dayton one can appreciate why Bro Cockrell said: “I would not be so bold as to say that I agree with all that Elder Dayton wrote or said on the church and kingdom.”²⁸⁷ Dayton *spells out* self constitution time after time in *Theodosia Earnest*, volume II but this is never mentioned by the author of *SCO* but he does suggest that we who oppose EMDA “twist and turn the words of our old Baptist brethren....”!²⁸⁸ He specifically mentions Dayton,²⁸⁹ but he cites no reference.

Dayton’s definition of a church precludes EMDA. These other churches did not derive authority from Jerusalem but it was the “model after which they all were fashioned.” **The source of the authority is from Christ, according to Dayton! It is not from another church!**²⁹⁰ “Meeting by his authority” leaves no place for EMDA! Dayton also concludes the ten days search for the church with a list of nine marks of a true church. The fourth is pertinent to this discussion. “It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.” No writer that I have seen dares to insinuate Dayton believed in EMDA.²⁹¹ Dayton will not say what they want him to say, hence he is relegated to the closet.²⁹²

W.A. JARREL

In this quote from Jarrel, the words are not his but those of J.R. Graves, but he quotes them because they state his own position and because it was the recognized practice among Landmark Baptists of that day.

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

²⁸⁶ A. C. Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 93.

²⁸⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd. Edition, p. 89.

²⁸⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Mt. 18:20.

²⁹¹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, gives not a line from Dayton. *SCO* 2nd ed. only mentions him on an irrelevant matter, p. 89-91.

²⁹² Cf. Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*, where Dayton is referenced, but only in passing, p. 164.

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.²⁹³

Even Bro Cockrell had to back away from Jarrel as being too much of a Landmark Baptist for the purposes of EMDA!²⁹⁴ He says Jarrel has three ways to start a church but this is incorrect. Jarrel knew only one way to constitute a church—by self constitution and this is not acceptable to EMDA!

Jarrel expressly denies EMDA when he says:

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....²⁹⁵

But EMDA teaches churches are organically connected essentially,²⁹⁶ even as are sheep, rams, dogs, apples and so on. But this is not the teaching of Landmarkism and Jarrel makes this so clear that EMDA advocates put *Baptist Perpetuity* on their list of banned books! These quotes are as welcome to the advocates of EMDA as a rock in a bite of beans.

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:

The first step necessary in the organization of a new congregation or church

²⁹³ W.A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p.1.

²⁹⁴ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 16-17.

²⁹⁵ W.A. Jarrel, *Church Perpetuity*, p. 3. Emphasis added.

²⁹⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 43: "While we have held to organic secessionism...." "A church should be able to go back to another true church." P. 53: "Strict Landmark Baptists hold to a visible organic succession of true churches from the time of Christ until the present time." Cf. P. 62.

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.²⁹⁷

There is no question where Bogard stood. His statements are concise, pointed, emphatic. He opts for self constitution. ABA writers who contend for EMDA as well as others have simply overlooked what Bogard says!²⁹⁸ 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 this quote proves.²⁹⁹

J. NEWTON BROWN

There seems to be little question that J. Newton Brown was the author of the New Hampshire Confession.³⁰⁰ 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 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.³⁰¹

²⁹⁷ Ben M. Bogard. *The Baptist Way- Book*, p. 69.

²⁹⁸ Robert Ashcraft. *Revisiting Landmarkism*. Bro Ashcraft refers to "Landmarkism as expressed by Dr. J.R. Graves or Dr. Ben M. Bogard..." But his book overlooks both Bogard and Graves as to their teaching on church constitution. p. 270.

²⁹⁹ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 74.

³⁰⁰ Cf. *Hiscox's New Directory*, p. 538-542.

³⁰¹ J. Newton Brown. *A Baptist Church Manual*, p. 46.

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 them 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 standing under any other ecclesiastical authority out of itself.”³⁰²

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

302 *A 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 Knollys Society.

Christ. This is a golden mark.³⁰³

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.³⁰⁴

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.³⁰⁵

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.³⁰⁶

Bro Moody's teaching here quoted, especially item 27, spells out self-constitution, establishes direct authority 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 find these facts when they read these old writers?

BUEL H. KAZEE

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

303 J.B. Moody, *My Church*, p. 58.

304 J.B. Moody, *My Church*, p. 63.

305 J.B. Moody, *My Church*, p. 62.

306 J.B. 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.³⁰⁷

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! Nor can a custom 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!

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 self constitution and have stated this in their books!**³⁰⁸ This brings every quote in this book into question! Men are quoted as if they believed in EMDA when it is well known they did not believe it but believed in self constitution!

This search for an express statement of EMDA before modern times continues but

³⁰⁷ Buel H. Kazee. *Church & Ordinances*, p. 105.

³⁰⁸ Milburn 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 of *SCO* does not say that everyone of these men quoted believed EMDA but with the exception of a very few, whom he admitted did not believe EMDA, one would think all the rest did. But this is far from the case. Those admitted exceptions are: Bob Ross, p. 14; Henry Clay Vedder, p. 14; C.D. Cole, p. 15; W.A. Jarrel, p. 16.

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,³⁰⁹ before the issue of the second edition, yet not one quote was found which explicitly stated 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. This means, then, it is reasonably certain there is no such quote and no such doctrine in Baptist History– at least the staunchest advocates of EMDA could not, with all their searching, produce just one! Why could they not find EMDA before 1900?

We will notice a few quotes from writers in *SCO* who are quoted in support of EMDA but who actually taught self constitution!

First I will mention Dargan. He is quoted as one who believed EMDA on p. 20 of *SCO*. What was the subject? Church constitution. What did Dargan say? Self constitution!³¹⁰ He does mention *mother church* but not in the sense of essential authority. There is not even a hint of EMDA 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.³¹¹

It is easy to see that Dargan does not have EMDA in view because these folk are given *letters* for the purpose of organizing not *authority*! They are not all required to unite with the mother church as EMDA demands.³¹² They are not *granted* authority. There may be, Dargan indicates, others who will join in this constitution from sources unknown, and that does not suit EMDA. If Dargan had said, "The mother church must grant authority to a new church 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

309 Op. cit. p. ii under "Acknowledgments".

310 Op. cit. p. 20.

311 E.C. Dargan. *Ecclesiology*, p. 195, Quoted in *SCO*, p. 20.

312 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 cases where there were members from several different churches represented in a constitution. Hence there is a great difference between Baptist practice and EMDA.

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.³¹³

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 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.³¹⁴

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

³¹³ Milburn Cockrell, *SCO* p. 20-21.

³¹⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 54.

believed in Baptist Succession, very few of them believed in EMDA!³¹⁵ 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.³¹⁶

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 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 Ray³¹⁷—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.³¹⁸ Attempting to go from *church succession*, which these men believed, to *organic church connection*,³¹⁹ 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 paper³²⁰ along with self constitution which he included as an editorial principle in every issue of his paper for many years. But he never once taught EMDA!³²¹

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

315 I cannot say for sure but I believe only Bro Mason, possibly Bro Brong, ascribed to EMDA.

316 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 57.

317 *Op. cit.*, pp.57-66.

318 *Op. cit.* pp. 57-61.

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

320 J.R. Graves began editing *The Tennessee Baptist* in 1846. He died in 1893, and was still one of the editors of the paper which by then (1889) had been combined with the *Baptist and Reflector*. Cf. Wardin, *Tennessee Baptists*, p. 246.

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

Association in 1811 about why they rejected Pedobaptist churches and their baptisms.”³²² 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....’³²³

Whatever apparent momentum was gained by quoting Jesse Mercer is quickly lost when we learn that Mercer believed in self constitution 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 a tendency to quote our Baptist forefathers on mere illusions without a careful investigation of what they believed concerning this subject. Hogue quotes this old Landmarker thus:

“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.”³²⁴

This is not EMDA nor even a kissing cousin of it! *Authority directly from Christ* is self constitution and so distinctly so, 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

³²² Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p 46.

³²³ *Op. cit.* p. 48.

³²⁴ L.B. Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 231.

found so walking together, they should be acknowledged and received as a true church.³²⁵

Of course this idea is damnable heresy to EMDA advocates! Mercer was a Landmarker according to Bro Cockrell. But this Landmarker believed the authority of constitution came directly from Christ! But if we did not have these other quotes from Mercer this claim of him believing EMDA would have been held up as evidence contrary to the facts of the case! EMDA supporters will not recognize Mercer as a Landmark Baptist any longer. They must continually exclude these old Landmarkers from their fellowship as they learn what they really believed!

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.³²⁶ Out of the many men quoted in this book only one is admitted to believe in self constitution, namely Cole!³²⁷ Even Jarrel whose statements cannot be aligned with EMDA is not identified directly as being opposed to EMDA! Cole is held up as being the only exception because his statement on self constitution was explicit. Yet not only did Cole believe in self constitution, but **the overwhelming majority of men quoted in this book believed in self constitution!** Outside of those who were associated with Bro Gilpin in the 1950s or after, I don't believe there is a single author quoted in *SCO* who believed in EMDA! Certainly none of them ever explicitly said so in print! So why are they quoted? They are quoted because they believed in *succession* or because they were *Landmarkers*! But neither succession nor Landmarkism is the same thing as EMDA! There is no essential connection between these ideas and that Graves did not believe in EMDA makes my contention ring like a silver bell. Thus the testimony of these men was irrelevant to the purpose for which it was given. They were quoted because they believed one thing to prove they believed another! They were quoted to prove something they did not believe. This is reprehensible! Not one of these men quoted said he believed in the doctrine of EMDA!

But look at some of these quotes I have given. They are quoted as believing in Divine constitution or self-constitution as opposed to EMDA.

Graves is quoted. What was the subject? Church constitution. What did Graves say? He expressly states self constitution.

³²⁵ Charles D. Mallary, *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer*, pp 456.

³²⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 54, 84. "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."

³²⁷ I do not here include men such as Patterson, Armitage and McBeth.

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

Take Hiscox³²⁸ What was the subject? Church constitution. What did Hiscox say? Self constitution!

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

Take W.A. Jarrel. What was the Subject? Church constitution. What did Jarrel say? Self constitution!

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

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

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

Let this testimony be carefully weighed!

We will now consider the testimony of Baptist Church Manuals.

CHAPTER 9

CHURCH MANUALS

The view of church constitution as taught by Baptists is not difficult to ascertain. We need only look at their histories, their Confessions of Faith, their Church manuals, their church and associational records. If EMDA is taught in these records, then that was the teaching of Baptists. If it was, we will find it clearly enunciated in these sources. If it cannot be found explicitly stated in such Baptist records, then it could not have been an essential doctrine of Baptists.

In the study of Baptist polity as to church constitution we seek to determine what Baptists considered essential in the constitution of churches. One of the best sources outside the Bible by which to determine essential Baptist polity is found in *church manuals*. The purpose of a manual is to *convey instructions*.

³²⁸ 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.

In the discussion of the essentials of church constitution these manuals are significant because they contain what was considered by the authors as essential to *gospel order*. What they do not include, they did not believe to be essential. We will not quote from all of these available but will only consider a few as representatives of the whole.

The first *Baptist* church manual of which I am aware is that published by Benjamin Keach– *The Glory of a True Church, and its Discipline Displayed* (1697). Keach loomed large in Baptist circles both in England and in America, in his day, and is still highly esteemed among conservatives. Here is Keach’s statement on the constitution of a gospel church:

Concerning a True and Orderly Gospel-Church.

Before there can be any Orderly Discipline among a Christian Assembly, they must be orderly and regularly constituted into a Church-state, according to the Institution of Christ in the Gospel.

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.³²⁹

This is Keach’s statement on how to constitute a church. He certainly does not say it is done with mother-church authority! It is not done with the sanction of a bishop. It is not done by some external authority of another church. The authority is directly from Christ.³³⁰ He also says under this heading:

What tends to the Glory and Beauty of a true Gospel Church: IX. In their having the divine Presence with them: Or when the Glory of God fills his Temple.

He then gives the Scripture references Ex. 20:24 & Mt 18:20, which shows how he thought the glory came upon a church, that is, directly from Christ the great Head of the church.³³¹ There is not a word in this manual about EMDA! But here he expressly tells

³²⁹ Benjamin Keach. *The Glory of a True Church*. Quoted in *Church Polity* by Mark Dever. p.64. All of these quotes from Keach are found in *Church Polity*, unless otherwise noted.

³³⁰ *Op. cit.* Keach says: “....For hath not one regular Church as great Authority from Christ as another.” Quoted in *Church Polity* by Dever, p. 81.

³³¹ *Op. cit.* 85.

Baptists that:

A Church of Christ...do by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, according to the Will of God; and do ordinarily meet together in one place..."

This was one of the earliest and most influential Baptist church manuals and it describes how churches in those times were constituted. If Baptists in Keach's day used his manual to constitute, they would have known nothing of EMDA for it is not found therein. Deweese gives the title of Keach's book taken from a 1697 edition slightly different than that quoted here. He gives it as: "The Glory and Ornament of a True Gospel-Constituted Church,"³³² that is, constituted by the gospel. This seems to express his understanding of the authority and that it comes to Christ's servants through the gospel.

The next manual I will introduce is Ben M. Bogard's *The Baptist Way- Book*. Bogard's Manual was not as famous as some other Baptist manuals but it is significant because Bogard followed in the steps of J.R. Graves and Landmark Baptists in general. The *Way-Book* was written in 1908.³³³ Bogard's book was pervasive in the ABA which was originally the Missionary Baptist General Association (founded in 1905-renamed ABA in 1924) and the NABA which separated in 1951 and became BMA. The churches of this association (one in the beginning) were started in accordance with the method laid down by Bogard. How did he say churches were to be started?

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.³³⁴

332 C.W. Deweese. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 121.

333 Foreman-Payne. *Life and Works of Bogard*, vol. I, p. 420.

334 Ben M. Bogard. *The Baptist Way-Book*, p. 69.

Bogard knew nothing, said nothing and intended nothing of a mother church for Baptist Church constitution! There can be no question that the churches which compose these two associations were originally formed in the manner Bogard describes. For our own times, I know this to be the case for I was personally present in at least two or three of these church constitutions up to 1963 and each of them was constituted following Bogard's *Way-Book*, and without EMDA. Nor did I ever so much as hear of any such doctrine as EMDA in those days. Thus we can be sure that all of the earlier ABA and NABA churches were self constituted. Of course Bogard read after and followed J.R. Graves.³³⁵ He was closely associated with J.N. Hall, S.H. Ford, and other leading Landmark Baptists of that day. Why would Bogard write a manual for Baptist churches and give a method of church constitution which the General Association, the ABA and Landmark Baptists of his day did not approve and did not practice? A method which went contrary to the History of Baptists in general? It is interesting that some EMDA writers quote Bogard's *Baptist Way-Book* or refer to him but never give a hint that he taught self-constitution.³³⁶

Another significant church manual was written at the request of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1796. This manual was prepared by Samuel Jones, D.D. He was "the most influential Baptist minister in the middle colonies, and probably in the whole country."³³⁷ Elder Jones says concerning his manual that he:

....availed himself of all the help he could derive from such writers on the subject as he had by him, or could find; and he hopes it will appear, he has bestowed some pains to render the work serviceable, both as to comprehensiveness of matter and plainness of manner, so far as the requisite brevity would admit.³³⁸

Of course if EMDA was operational among Baptists at this time, Jones would have been aware of it. If it had been the practice of this Association, then this Manual would have spelled it out! How can we account for the fact that he does not even mention what EMDA writers claim is *the* great essential of church constitution? Furthermore, this work was actually sent home with a committee of one person from every church in this Association and they revised it and returned it and then the Association approved it and

³³⁵ Foreman-Payne. *Life & Works of Bogard*, vol. III, p. 208.

³³⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *CSO*, p. 74; Robert Ashcraft. *Landmarkism Revisited*, p.265; Cf. Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and The Baptists*, p. 43. Bro Bob Ross opposes Landmarkism.

³³⁷ William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 619.

³³⁸ Samuel Jones. *Treatise of Church Discipline and a Directory*. Quoted in Dever's *Church Polity*, p. 139.

published it for their churches.³³⁹ Thus we know this Treatise expresses what those churches believed and practiced.

There are fifteen articles under the chapter entitled *Of a Gospel Church*. We need not quote all of these but five through eight are here given:

5. A number of believers are united together into a particular church, by an act of mutual confederation. "Gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." 2 Cor. viii:5.

6. Whether the requisite number should be twelve or thirteen, because our blessed Lord and his disciples, at the first celebration of the Lord's supper, made that number, or whether three will be sufficient, because of the promise in Matt. xviii:20, may be doubtful: but there ought to be so many, as to answer the end of that holy institution.

7. When such a number is found in any place, they ought to propose among themselves, or others may propose it to them to be constituted a church.

8. For this purpose it will be necessary to appoint a time and place, when they are to meet fasting. One minister or more should be present to assist, and to preach on the occasion. Acts viii:14. xi.22.³⁴⁰

Now there can be no question that if the Philadelphia Association had believed in EMDA they would have spelled it out in this document– but it is not there in any form! But we learn that disciples can and should constitute themselves into a church. But nowhere in this Treatise of twelve chapters will one find EMDA. How can this be? It is inexplicable if the Philadelphia Association believed and practiced EMDA!

PENDLETON'S CHURCH MANUAL

Pendleton was a Landmark Baptist and his Church Manual is said to be one of the most extensively used among Baptist churches since 1867.³⁴¹ Certainly, it is the most popular manual among Landmark Baptists of the present day. We may be sure that whatever Pendleton and Landmark Baptists conceived to be the scriptural essentials of constitution will be clearly enunciated in his treatment. He first discusses the materials and the definition of a church:

And as churches in all ages must be formed after the apostolic model, it follows that where penitent, regenerate, baptized believers in Christ are

³³⁹ Mark Dever. *Church Polity*, p. 139. These revisions were chiefly verbal.

³⁴⁰ Mark Dever. *Church Polity*, p. 140-141.

³⁴¹ Milburn Cockrell. *SOC*, p. 17.

found, there are scriptural materials for a church.³⁴²

Pendleton then tells his readers what a church is:

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 New Testament sense of the term, a church. Whether they are many or few in number, they are a church.³⁴³

Next, Pendleton goes on to discuss the act of church constitution itself:

Constitution of Churches

When the interests of Christ's kingdom require the formation of a new church the customary mode of procedure is about this: Brethren and sisters obtain letters of dismission from the church or churches to which they belong, for the purpose of entering into the new organization. It is well for this purpose to be stated in the letters. When they meet together at the appointed time, a Moderator and Clerk *pro tem* are appointed. The meeting is opened with devotional exercises. Sometimes a sermon is preached, especially when it is not intended to have recognition services at some future day. Reading the Scriptures and prayer should be considered indispensable. This being done, the letters of dismission are read, and the parties concerned resolve by solemn vote to consider themselves an independent church.³⁴⁴

Now here we have everything included which is essential to constitute a church and yet not a word about EMDA! While it may be *injected* into this Manual,³⁴⁵ it cannot be *extracted* from it! Some have actually maintained that the letters granted by the various churches from which these members came did in fact signify EMDA! Note Pendleton has these letters coming from "church or churches." This countermands the EMDA theory that this request for letters was granted to get EMDA. We know this is the case because Pendleton does not say these members should all unite with the *mother church* and then be lettered out and then be constituted with her authority. As it is here described, these members can, and often did, come from several "churches." But

³⁴² J.M. Pendleton. *Baptist Church Manual*, p. 14.

³⁴³ *Op.cit.* p. 14-15.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ This is exactly what Bro Milburn Cockrell does. Cf. *SCO*, p. 17.

according to EMDA a church can have only one mother. Pendleton was not writing about EMDA granted from some other church. Can anyone think that if Pendleton was trying to teach this idea he would have left this essential unstated? If one does not have EMDA in his mind when he consults this Manual, he will read the whole book and know nothing of it when he finishes!

HISCOX'S DIRECTORIES

Next we will turn to Hiscox's *New Directory*, another extremely popular work which has been used by Baptists for over a century. Hiscox gives the essentials for a true church and he tells how churches are constituted. Thousands of churches have been constituted using his directions. Did Hiscox teach EMDA as some have suggested?³⁴⁶ We shall see.

In 1859 Hiscox wrote *The Baptist Church Directory*. In 1893 he wrote a completely new volume called *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*. This latter volume, he is careful to tell us "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."³⁴⁷

In the chapter, of the *New Directory*, on the Christian Church there are twelve sections. Section 10 [x] is entitled "Churches Constituted." In his very first paragraph on this subject Hiscox writes: "Churches are constituted by voluntary covenant on the part of those who wish to become members." He then goes on to say:

"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 responsibility of its support."³⁴⁸

Then on the next page he says:

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

³⁴⁶ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 18-19.

³⁴⁷ Edward Hiscox. *New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 8.

³⁴⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 53.

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'.³⁴⁹

Let me emphasize some of the author's points.

Hiscox is here telling us what the **"Constituting act"** of a new church is.

It is not the authority of a mother church, formally or informally given.

It is not granting letters for the purpose of organizing a church which gives authority to constitute a new church.

It is not the delegated authority from another church whether in the hands of a pastor, elder, or elders which constitutes a church.³⁵⁰

It is not the power or authority of a presbytery which constitutes a church.

It is not the declaration or recommendation of sister churches, pastors, associations or any other voice which constitutes a church.

It is not the combined efforts of the mother church and the now- to- be- formed church. That is, it was not EMDA in combination with the action of the church being formed which constitutes a church.

Not at all! Nor does he leave his readers in doubt as to what does constitute a church.

He says, the "Constituting act" is *unanimously voting a resolution*—that is by the new group themselves— not that of a mother-church! Not by an elder! Not by some other officer! Then he gives a sample of such a resolution and there is no authority derived in that resolution from any other church on earth. But just to make sure no one misunderstands his words he restates his concept in other words, thus: **"Such an act makes such a company of disciples, *ipso facto*, a Church of Christ..."**³⁵¹

What makes a group a church? The act of *unanimously voting a resolution*!

³⁴⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 54.

³⁵⁰ In *SCO* the author says: "...I, acting by the authority of my church, constituted them into separate churches." p. 37. The difference between Hiscox and Bro Cockrell are significant.

³⁵¹ The emphasis is mine.

This voting is not that of a mother-church as in EMDA but it is that of those “covenanting together” to which Baptist history so often refers and it is simply the outgrowth of their faith in that promise of the Lord Himself in Mt. 18:20: **“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”**

Who does this? Who unanimously votes? Who makes this resolution? Who covenants? Who gathers together? Who constitutes this group a church? *The group themselves.* And this act makes such a company of disciples a church in fact! This is *self constitution* from the position of those who gather together and it is *Divine Constitution* from the position of Him who promises to honor such a gathering with His presence. Christ pledges His authority for and promises His presence to every church so constituted and I believe this is the essence of Mt. 18:20.

I am at a loss to understand how Bro Cockrell, with these facts before him, could write:

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. If the rules laid down by these two leading Baptist writers are unscriptural, then I must say that there are very few Baptist churches in America today. Most all of the churches with which I have fellowship were organized in this manner. In my forty years in the ministry I have organized some 20 churches in this manner. The church I presently pastor was organized in this manner.³⁵²

Hiscox says concerning the authority of churches:

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.³⁵³

Of course this excludes EMDA! Every trace, every vestige of it is expunged! He does not leave this doctrine a shadow of support! And let it be clearly understood. Bro Cockrell did not follow Hiscox’s Manual in the constitution of his church, or these other churches, for Hiscox insisted the “authority is derived directly from God,” and this idea is by Bro Cockrell repudiated in terms which admit of no exception!

But this is not all.

³⁵² Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 19.

³⁵³ Edward Hiscox. *The Baptist Church Directory*, p. 16 My emphasis.

Hiscox could not be describing or defending EMDA in his books for another very compelling reason – he denied any kind of **organic** church succession! Here are his words:

Perpetuity. This has reference, not to a continuance of official administration, as in the previous note, but to visible and corporate Church life. And, strange -to say, *some Baptists have been courageous enough, and indiscreet enough to assert that an unbroken succession* of visible, organized congregations of believers similar to their own, and therefore substantially like the primitive churches, can be proved to have existed from the Apostles, until now. Such claims may well be left to papal audacity. For those who learn from that storehouse of sacred truth–the New Testament–what are the spirit, doctrine, ordinances, and polity of a Church of Christ, and practice the same, it matters nothing whether the chain of organic perpetuity may never have been broken, or broken a thousand times. They are the true disciples of Christ who have His spirit; the true successors of the Apostles who follow their teachings, and imitate their lives.”³⁵⁴

Of course, if you do not believe in any kind of organic church succession, you certainly cannot believe in EMDA! Even Houdini couldn't pull off that kind of a trick. Thus we must recognize a considerable mistake has been made. These brethren have completely misunderstood Hiscox and Pendleton on church constitution!

C. D. COLE

We also have the statement of C.D. Cole. He says:

“It seems evident from the New Testament that Jesus gave no formal prescription for the organization of any church...”³⁵⁵ This is an absolute anathema to EMDA advocates but Cole is even more specific. He says:

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

³⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 34.

³⁵⁵ C.D. Cole. *The New Testament Church*, p. 6.

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.³⁵⁶

No outside help is essential for the constitution of a church according to Bro Cole. The Bryan Station Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky, prints this book by Bro Cole but with a reservation concerning in particular this statement on the constitution of churches.³⁵⁷

Imagine if you can, an issue in Baptist church polity so essential that no true church can be constituted without it and yet of the scores of Baptist Church manuals written over a period of **four hundred years** by leading Baptists **not one of them ever gives this essential!** Can anyone imagine a Baptist church manual not including immersion? We might also quote the manuals by Brown, Gill, Reynolds, Dargan, Johnson, Newman and Dag, not to mention those by several Baptist Associations which all say substantially the same thing. No manual I ever saw gives the EMDA theory. If such a manual exists, it is the responsibility of those who teach this position to produce it. This they have not done and the reader will understand why. Such are the problems of the EMDA system.

Church manuals have no authority. They do not pretend to have authority. They are not written to make churches conform, but to help them do things in gospel order. When a manual describes how to constitute a church, it is understood that the author is giving what he believes is a Scriptural method of constituting a church. We may be certain that a manual written at any given time in Baptist History will not suggest a method of constituting a church which is totally out of sync with the practices of that time unless the author goes to some length to defend his position.

In the next chapter we will focus on Baptist Confessions.

CHAPTER 10

BAPTIST CHURCH CONFESSIONS AND CHURCH CONSTITUTION

In *Scriptural Church Organization* Bro Cockrell quoted several Baptist confessions of faith to prove Baptists believe you must have baptism to have a church! He seems to

³⁵⁶ *Op. cit.* pp. 7,8.

³⁵⁷ *Op. cit.* Bro Gormley's Introduction. No page number; Cf. *SCO*, p. 15.

have had the idea that those who believe in self constitution think saved but unbaptized people can constitute a church! He says concerning the first church:

They were constituted a church by Christ Himself who had all the authority of Heaven (Mt. 7:29; 28:18; Mk. 1:22; Lk. 4:36; Jn 17:2). The first church was started by the authority of Heaven and consisted of baptized believers. It was not just a meeting of Christians; it was a company of baptized disciples.³⁵⁸

“They were constituted a church by Christ Himself”! This is exactly what we believe! We believe Christ had this authority then and we believe He has it now. He still constitutes those who **gather in His name!**³⁵⁹ But of course, Christ did not mean He would indwell “just a meeting of Christians”! Of course He did not mean that he would indwell “an unbaptized meeting.” Of course He did not mean He would indwell those who “did not meet in His name.” And to suggest that is what we believe is to misunderstand our position. Bro Cockrell proves the authors of these confessions required baptized saints to constitute a church. Of course they did! So far as I know, this was never a contested point among Baptists! What the purpose of this endeavor was I know not.³⁶⁰ But it is important to consider what these confessions taught on the constitution of churches. We will now examine some of these Baptist confessions to see what they taught concerning church constitution. Did they teach EMDA? If this was an essential of church constitution in the thinking of the compilers of these confessions, then they would have been careful to make that point conspicuous.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION

The first confession we will consider is the New Hampshire Confession originally published in 1833.

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and

³⁵⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 25-29.

³⁵⁹ Mt. 18:20.

³⁶⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 30: “Three baptized disciples who seek to constitute themselves into a church without the authority of Heaven are doing some foolish work.” Bro. Cockrell, by “without the authority of Heaven,” means without EMDA. But the authors of these confessions understood the authority came directly from Christ.

Titus.³⁶¹

Here, in this most widely used confession among modern Baptists, we have explicit statements concerning the constitution of churches. It speaks first as to what a church is. It is a congregation of baptized believers. How are they constituted? “[A]ssociated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them...” How did they receive these things? The express statement is given so no one need misunderstand: “[I]nvested in them by his Word”! This is no doubt a reference to Mt. 18:20. There is nothing in this confession which would countenance the idea of EMDA!

THE BAPTIST CONFESSION OF 1644

It is believed that among the authors of this “the noblest of all Baptist confessions” were Spilsbury, William Kiffin and Samuel Richardson.³⁶²

Chapter XXXIII.

That Christ hath here on earth a spiritual kingdom, which is the Church, which he hath purchased and redeemed to himself, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & 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 other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.³⁶³

They go on to say in Chapter XXXVI : “That being thus joined, every Church has power given them from Christ for their better well being....”³⁶⁴

This means the authority for constitution is given **directly from Christ** and that it does not come from another church, mother church, father church, sister church, grandmother church nor any other church relative but from Christ Himself! This does not sit well with EMDA– in fact the two positions cannot co-exist. Either self-constitution or EMDA is up. And if one is up the other is down. There is no question but that in this confession self constitution was uppermost!

³⁶¹ J. Newton Brown. *A Baptist Church Manual*, p. 22; J.M. Pendleton. *The Baptist Church Manual*, p. 55.

³⁶² W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 146.

³⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p 165.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

THE DORDRECHT CONFESSION

This Mennonite confession touches church constitution essentially. It says:

We believe in and confess a visible Church of God, consisting of those, who, as before remarked, have truly repented, and rightly believed; who are rightly baptized, united with God in heaven, and incorporated into the communion of the saints on earth.³⁶⁵

The visible church consists of those who in gospel order, are incorporated into the communion of saints. Nothing is here said about EMDA. But had they believed EMDA how could they have failed to include it?

CONFESSION OF THE WALDENSES, 1655

This Confession was issued out of bowels of the most bitter persecution by Roman Catholicism. Article XXV on the church is as follows:

That this Church is the company of the faithful, who, having been elected by God before the foundation of the world, and called with a holy calling, unite themselves to follow the Word of God, believing whatsoever he teaches them therein, and living in his fear.³⁶⁶

Note that they unite themselves to follow the Word of God. They do not say they had to obtain authority from a mother church to unite themselves together. Such authority they did not need, and, most of the time, couldn't have secured if they thought they had need of it! When their persecutors put them to flight, as they often did, causing their church to go out of existence, as soon as two or three could gather together they united themselves together and formed a new church by the authority of Christ.

SHORT CONFESSION OF FAITH-JOHN SMYTH

Smyth, who was a General Baptist, has been the subject of much discussion because he baptized himself in 1608 or 1609 and then his followers. But he later had second thoughts on this action and petitioned the Dutch Mennonites for baptism. He wrote a confession to the Mennonite church for the purpose of admission. The Mennonites

³⁶⁵ W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 71; Doctrines of the Mennonites.

³⁶⁶ Philip Schaff. *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. III, p.765.

apparently agreed with him and received him and his group. The article on the church says:

(12.) That the church of Christ is a company of the faithful; baptized after confession of sin and of faith, endowed with the power of Christ.

(13.) That the church of Christ has power delegated to themselves of announcing the word, administering the sacraments, appointing ministers, disclaiming them, and also excommunicating; but the last appeal is to the brethren or body of the church.³⁶⁷

How simple! How clear! How unencumbered they were with such traditions as EMDA. Note how easily they define a church and how true to Scripture this definition is. The power of Christ is that which he promises by His presence in Mt 18:20, and what more can a church desire or need? Smyth's definition is short but accurate. Certainly the noise of the EMDA hammer is not heard here.³⁶⁸

THE CONFESSION OF THOMAS HELWYS – 1611

This confession of the General Baptists is said to be the first Baptist Confession in English.³⁶⁹ This confession defines a church thus:

That the church off CHRIST is a company off faithful people 1 Cor. 1.2. Eph.1.1. Separated fro the world by the word & Spirit off GOD. 2 Cor. 6, 17. Being knit vnto the LORD, & one vnto another, by Baptisme. 1 Cor. 12:13. Vpon their owne confession of the faith. Act. 8.37. And sinnes. Mat. 3:6.³⁷⁰

But lest some think this does not clearly establish self constitution, we need only quote article 11. It says:

That though in respect off CHRIST, the Church bee one, Ephes. 4.4. yet it consisteth off divers particular congregatcions, even so manie as there shall bee in the World, every off which congregacion, though they be but two or three, have CHRIST given them, with all the meanes off their salvacion. Mat. 18:20. Roman. 8:32. 1 Corin. 3:22. Are the bodie off CHRIST. 1 Cor.

³⁶⁷ W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p.101. Cf. Thomas Armitage, *History of The Baptists*, p. 453.

³⁶⁸ Cf. 1 Kings 6:7.

³⁶⁹ W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 115.

³⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, p.119. Original spelling retained.

12:27. And a whole Church. 1 Cor. 14:23. And therefore may, and ought, when they are come together, to Pray, Prophecie, breake bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances, although as yet they have no Officers, or that the Officers houd bee in Prison, sick, or by anie other meanes hindered from the Church. 1: Pet. 4:10 & 2.5.³⁷¹

This article expresses the idea clearly that two or three can constitute themselves into a church! They “have Christ given them!” They have Christ and hence “everything!” I Cor. 3:22! They can constitute themselves into a new church! And mark it! **Even if there are but two or three!** And to what Scripture do they appeal for proof of this? They appeal to Mt. 18:20 to verify their proposition! Because of this presence of Christ promised, they come together and worship. Is this EMDA? EMDA says, “You can’t do it! It is impossible! You must have at least six people to constitute a church³⁷² and, **above all else, you must have a mother church—** only then can you constitute!” But the truth of self constitution shines through the haze of tradition as a beacon in a storm.

These confessions give a signal witness of self constitution which cannot be misunderstood without a considerable amount of prejudice.

ENGLISH SEPARATE-BAPTIST CONFESSION

In 1589 two preachers Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood were imprisoned. From prison they wrote a church creed entitled: “A True Description out of the Word of God, of the visible Church.” Lumpkin tells us “This work was an ideal sketch intended for use in connection with setting up the new church. The authors found the outline for the church in the New Testament, and for them the Bible was the final authority in all matters of doctrine and government.” How did they define a church? “The church itself was defined as a company of believers united in fellowship to Christ and one another.”³⁷³ Later this church, so formed, issued a new and fuller confession called “A True Confession” which was used by the framers of the 1644 Confession.³⁷⁴ Article 17 on the church says in part:

.....Christ hath here in earth a spirituall Kingdome....gatheering and uniting them together as members of one body in his faith, loue and holy order, unto all generall and mutuall duties, instructing & governing them by such

371 W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p.120. Original spelling retained. Cf. Jesse B. Thomas. *The Church and The Kingdom*, p. 125.

372 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 36. “In Matthew 18:15-19 a church would have to consist of at least six persons.”

373 W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 80.

374 *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

offices and lawes as hee hath prescribed in his word; by which Officers and lawes hee governeth his Church, and by none other.³⁷⁵

Now in this confession we have a church defined and then constituted— not by EMDA— but by disciples gathering together. This confession refuses to seat EMDA but it recognizes self constitution with full honors.

THE RECHENSCHAFT

This long confession³⁷⁶ of Peter Ridemann was written about 1540 while he was in prison.³⁷⁷ Ridemann's article on the church is summarized by Lumpkin:

Doctrine of the Church and of the Spirit.

An assembly of children of God who have separated themselves from all unclean things is the church. It is gathered together, has being, and is kept by the Holy Spirit.....³⁷⁸

This confession teaches a church is gathered together, has being, and is kept by the Holy Spirit. But according to EMDA the Holy Spirit does not go where EMDA does not go first! EMDA is not on the same page with Ridemann and those who entered into church capacity with him.

THE BAPTIST CONFESSION OF 1688

This confession was first published in 1677. It was issued again under the careful eye of thirty seven elders representing about one hundred churches in England and Wales in 1689. It also came to America later and became known as the Philadelphia Confession. Thousands of Baptists have embraced this Confession. Chapter 26 of this Confession pertains to the church. I quote here sections 4-8:

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner....

³⁷⁵ W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 87. Original spelling retained.

³⁷⁶ It runs to 110 pages in the original. Cf. W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 38.

³⁷⁷ W.L. Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions*, p. 37.

³⁷⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 39,40.

First, consider where the authority is according to this Confession. It is in Christ himself! Note here there is no consignment of authority to a mother church but “all power for calling, institution, order...of the Church” is invested in the Lord Jesus Christ. This authority is in Christ for constitution and is fixed in Christ – never to be moved. It is never relegated to a church, according to this confession! This is exactly what we believe. Again:

5. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his Word, by his Spirit, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience which he prescribeth to them in his Word. Those thus called he commandeth to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship which he requireth of them in the world.

6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto all that call on Christ; and do willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving them selves to the Lord and one to another, by the will of God in the professed subjection to the ordinances of the gospel.

In articles 5, and 6, we note the disciples are “commanded to walk together in particular societies or churches.” What Scripture commands this? EMDA has no answer to this question. They have no “Thus saith the Lord.” They say they can give precept; they say they can give example; they say they can give pattern — by the hour, but when examined these all fall to the ground. But commandment have they none and they claim none! But the authors of this Confession were not hamstrung in this manner. They had a “Thus saith the Lord,” and they give the reference as Mt. 18:20! How was this to be carried out? Not by EMDA for it is not in this Confession. Nor is there any commandment for EMDA in the Bible! Well, then how do they teach us to constitute a church? The answer is made abundantly clear in these words: They who “do willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving themselves to the Lord and one to another...” which is an excellent statement of self constitution.

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his Word, he has given all that power and authority which is anyway needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline which he hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the due

right exerting and executing of that power.³⁷⁹

Here we note that all the “power and authority which is anyway needful” is given to each of these churches thus gathered, by Christ Himself– “To each of these churches thus gathered...he has given all that power and authority which is anyway needful....” that is, according to Mt. 18:20, which the compilers had already referenced in the preceding section. Do disciples need authority to constitute a church? Of course they do. How do they obtain it? By EMDA? This is what some men say, but as we have seen, they have no “Thus saith the Lord” and do not claim any. But these men who compiled this Confession are not slow to tell us what they believed. All the power and authority which is anyway needful is given by Christ Himself! How anyone can read this Confession and attempt to put EMDA there is mystery not easily answered.

This Confession says that “all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the church is invested in Christ in a supreme and sovereign manner.” Christ then is He who is alone able to constitute a church. Here we find no reference to EMDA but rather the denial of it. This confession asserts the authority for constituting a church is in Christ while EMDA contends this authority is in a mother church! The two views are mutually exclusive. The one is the age-old Baptist practice which gives Mt. 18:20 and other references to prove the point. The other a modern theory, which has no “thus saith the Lord”, and admits it has none, but begs to establish a law of Christ without the Word of Christ, which is as dangerous as novel!

If the compilers of these confessions had believed in EMDA they would have been careful to spell it out, essential as it is to that position! They cover, in most cases, the most extensive range of subjects necessary to the proper worship of the Lord. But to think for one moment that there was among those churches a principle, a practice, so essential that no church could be constituted without it and yet not one of their confessions specified it or ever mentioned it for three hundred years is about as likely as an explosion in a print shop producing a Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, nicely bound in calf skin, embossed in gold with a matching slip case, ribbons, gilded pages and marbled end papers! This would be tantamount to Baptists leaving immersion out of their confessions for a third of a millennium yet believing and practicing it all the while!

Let it be noticed that not one of the confessions referenced by Bro Cockrell³⁸⁰ specified EMDA. Nor does he even suggest that they do. All he asserts is that they require baptism to form a church! But I have given quotes from the above confessions on the way of constituting churches, which is the proposition discussed. **These**

³⁷⁹ Philip Schaff. *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. III, p. 738-9.

³⁸⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, pp.26-29. He quotes from twelve confessions.

confessions spell out self-constitution by the authority of Christ! The doctrine of self-constitution is a powerful taboo to EMDA advocates and they must either repudiate every Baptist Confession or give up EMDA! Some of these confessions give Mt. 18:20 in reference to church constitution which is a banned text for them! **Not one Baptist confession in recorded history even suggests EMDA!** If there had been a confession that taught EMDA they would have played it like a broken record! Their silence indicates they have searched in vain for such a confession.

We will in the next chapter consider church covenants.

CHAPTER 11

CHURCH COVENANTS AND CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Baptist church covenants are important in the discussion of church constitution because in most churches the covenant is the first and often the only written statement by the church and it is usually prepared before the church constitutes. Many of these covenants express what the church considered as the essential of their constitution. We will survey some of these.

B. H. Carroll gives a good definition of a church covenant. He says:

What is the ecclesiastical meaning of the word [covenant] as used by Baptists?

It means that agreement between saved individuals by which they associate themselves into a local church, setting forth their mutual engagements as members of one body. It is usually appended to their Articles of Faith because a common belief is a necessary condition of fellowship and co-operation.³⁸¹

Baptists, Carroll, says “associate themselves into a local church”. Note they are not put in a church state by mother church, by presbytery, by letters granted or by powers bestowed by any other entity but rather the constitution, from the human side, is the action of the assembly— and of nothing else.

John Spilsbury believed the covenant was the true form of a church and not baptism, as some Baptists believed.³⁸² He gave as reasons five propositions. I quote three through five as given by Dewesse:

³⁸¹ B.H. Carroll. *Christ and His Church*, p. 245.

³⁸² Charles Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 26.

Third, a covenant is the relationship that gives being to a church and maintains that being. Fourth, a covenant is that which makes Christians members of a church and makes a church itself. Fifth, since the church is the greatest ordinance, it cannot be constituted by any lesser ordinance, but only by God's covenant.....Spilsbury further affirmed that 'baptism is one branch of the covenant, ' that baptism should succeed the use of a covenant', and that 'a people are a church by covenant, unto which ordinances are annexed, to confirm and establish the same.' ³⁸³

Spilsbury here teaches that **"Covenant gives being to a church,"** and **" a covenant....makes a church;"** that: **"A people are a church by covenant."** These express statements say much about how Baptists, in the time of Spilsbury, constituted churches. They met together in accordance with the Scripture and formed their churches by the authority of Christ. This covenant when made *makes a church*. This is the exact point for which we contend.

THE HEART OF CONSTITUTION IS COVENANT

Wardin says : "The local church was a covenanted body. The heart of its constitution was the covenant which the members pledged to follow."³⁸⁴

Church covenants express what Baptists do in constitution and what they promise to do as members. A covenant is essential to the constitution of a church although it may not be a written covenant. The covenant is essential because disciples who gather together in the name of Christ³⁸⁵ cannot do so without covenanting together to submit to Christ's word and to keep His commandments. "When this covenant has been entered into the church is fully organized. The covenant is organization."³⁸⁶ Thus there is no church constitution without covenant, nor is there any other essential of a scriptural constitution for those in gospel order.

John Gill makes this plain when he says: "A particular church may be considered as to the form of it; which lies in mutual consent and agreement, and in their covenant and confederation with each other."³⁸⁷ Here we see the essence of a church is in its covenanting together.

³⁸³ *Op. cit.* , p. 26.

³⁸⁴ Albert W. Wardin, Jr. *Tennessee Baptists*, p. 36.

³⁸⁵ Mt 18:20; I Cor 6:8.

³⁸⁶ Ben Bogard. *Baptist Way Book*, p. 69.

³⁸⁷ John Gill. *Body of Divinity*, p. 623.

John Clarke expressed this in his defense before the ministers and magistrates of Massachusetts in 1651. He says:

...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 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...³⁸⁸

The actual covenant Clarke and his church adopted May 4, 1727 says in part:

And in the presence of the great God, the elect angels, and one another, having a sense of our unworthiness considered of ourselves, and looking wholly and alone to the Lord Jesus Christ for worthiness and acceptance, we do no solemnly give up ourselves to the Lord in a church state, according to the prime constitution of the gospel church; that He may be our God, and we His people, through the everlasting covenant of His free grace.³⁸⁹

Here we have gospel order described and it consists of subjection to the scepter of Christ as a company of saints called out of the world and which are joined one to another. This is what a church does when it is constituted scripturally. The subjection to the scepter of Christ is what saints submit to when they covenant together in gospel order and this is constitution. And that constitution has nothing to do with any other church.

CHURCH COVENANT BY J.R. GRAVES

Thanking God for the light we have received, for the revelation of Jesus which we now enjoy; and hoping that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned our sins; and having been baptized on a profession of our faith in Christ Jesus into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we do, this day, before God and the world, with deep joy and great solemnity, enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.³⁹⁰

The most redundant factor in these Baptist covenants is that of "covenanting

³⁸⁸ Graves-Adlam. *The First Baptist Church In America*, p. 170.

³⁸⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 192.

³⁹⁰ Charles W. Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 170. Dewesse says this covenant was *probably*

written by Graves.

together.” They do not express any other authority than that received of Christ even though they often had other churches involved in their constitution. This was in accordance with Baptist usage.

PENDLETON'S COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.³⁹¹

There is not in this Covenant (nor anywhere in this manual) any reference to EMDA. It is quite clear that this covenant means to represent constitution as being dependant upon the blessing of God upon what these saints do— their coming together and covenanting together as a church. This is self constitution without any shadow of a mother church. The only authority involved is that from the great Head of the church, “There am I in the midst of them.” There is no place here for some essential authority outside that of Christ necessary for constitution. He promises to be in the midst of every church so organized. Any church so constituted as described by Pendleton is a gospel church.

Covenanting was considered by Baptists to be the essential element of constitution – not EMDA or anything like it. The London Association of thirteen Baptist churches resolved in 1704:

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.³⁹²

Again it is clear that these saints thought any competent number of baptized saints could constitute themselves into a church. And this is not an occasional note by an eccentric author, but the testimony of many renown Baptist churches and writers who

³⁹¹ J. M. Pendleton. *Baptist Church Manual*, p. 61.

³⁹² J.J. Goadby. *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 215.

published this unchallenged document. And this testimony of Baptists is constant throughout their history.

FORMATION OF A CHURCH BY W.B. JOHNSON

W.B. Johnson was one of the leading Baptists of South Carolina³⁹³. His treatment of the Church in *The Gospel Developed* is Scriptural, baptistic, concise.

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.³⁹⁴

Johnson says the Bible pattern is self constitution! How different the pattern of EMDA! Note carefully that he says “But no official act of the apostles beyond teaching, we learn, gave validity to its existence.” If there was no official act from the apostles, then certainly there was no such thing from other sources including churches. The essential matter in Johnson’s presentation is that a sufficient number of believers baptized, could, and should, unite together on the principle of one accord and mutual consent in the truth, which is the essence of a covenant.

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

393 Cf. Hortense Woodson. *Giant In The Land: A Biography of William Bullein Johnson*. Johnson was born in 1782 and died 1862.

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

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, 1671.³⁹⁵

Where did this church get its authority? What led them to the position that they could constitute themselves into a church if EMDA was then in vogue? Of course the answer is they had never heard of EMDA but it was normal Baptist procedure for churches to self constitute! Note Clarke's church, from which this group broke off, did not grant any authority to this group, nor did they censor them because they did not obtain any! The absence of authority on one hand and the silence of Clarke's church and the Baptist historians who record this account gives EMDA advocates a considerable amount of indigestion.³⁹⁶

ENGLISH BAPTIST COVENANT

We who through the mercy of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have obtained grace to give ourselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God to have communion one with another as saints in our gospel fellowship. Do, before God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy Angels, agree and promise, all of us (the Lord assisting) to walke together in this our gospel communion and fellowship, as a church of Jesus Christ in love to the Lord, and one to another, and endeavour to yield sincere and hearty obedience to the laws, ordinances and appointments of our Lord and Lawgiver in his church.

And also do agree and promise (the Lord assisting) to follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby the one may edify another; that so loving and walking together in peace, the God of Love and Peace may be with us. Amen.

To which we had the universal consent and Amen of all.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Isaac Backus, *Hist. Of Baptists in New England*, vol I, p. 325. From the Ms. of John Comer, Backus Hist. Soc. Library.

³⁹⁶ Incidentally, if "Like begets like" with reference to churches, as EMDA advocates intone with monotonous repetition, how is it that a Seventh Day Baptist Church came out of a First Day Church?

³⁹⁷ Joseph Ivimey. *A History of the English Baptists*, vol II, p. 195-6.

There is this prevailing theme in these covenants which always comes to the fore—**covenanting together is church constitution** and the authority for this action is invested in those who are in gospel order by the Lord Himself.

BAPTIST CHURCH IN HORSE FAIR, STONY BUCKS, ENGLAND, 1790

We whose names are underwritten do now declare that we embrace the Word of God as our only guide in matters of religion, and acknowledge no other authority whatever as binding upon the conscience. Having, we hope, found mercy at the hands of God, in delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, we think and feel ourselves bound to walk in obedience to His divine commands.

On looking into the sacred Scripture, we find it was common in the first ages of Christianity for such as professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily to unite together in Christian societies called churches. Their ends in so doing were to honor God and promote their own spiritual edification.

Having searched the written Word, in order that we may know how to act, as well as what to believe, and sought unto God by prayer for divine direction, we heartily approve of, and mean to follow their example. With a view to this, we now solemnly, in presence of the all-seeing and heart-searching God, do mutually covenant and agree, in manner and form following.³⁹⁸

These saints of God thought from their search of Scripture that those who had experienced repentance and faith and were in gospel order should , **voluntarily unite together in Christian societies called churches.** To accomplish this they did *mutually covenant and agree, in manner and form following.* Then follows a brief confession of their beliefs. Here is the simplicity of Baptist church constitution without the unproved EMDA armor! They acknowledged no other authority binding upon the conscience than the Word of God.

THE ANABAPTIST COVENANT

In an article in *The Chronicle* on Baptists and Anabaptists James D. Mosteller writes:

The church is 'gathered and led together by the Holy Spirit, which from

³⁹⁸ Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 127.

henceforth ruleth, controlleth and ordereth every thing in her, leading all her members to be of one mind and of one intention, so that they want only to be like Christ....³⁹⁹

These Anabaptists got no authority except from Heaven!

KEACH'S CHURCH COVENANT

And we do solemnly, in the presence of God and of each other, in the sense of our own unworthiness, give up ourselves to the Lord in a church state, according to the apostolic constitution, that He may be our God, and we may be His people....

Being fully satisfied in the way of church-communion, and the truth of grace in some good measure upon one another's spirits, we do solemnly join ourselves together in a holy union and fellowship, humbly submitting to the discipline of the Gospel, and all holy duties required of a people in such a spiritual relation.⁴⁰⁰

The essentials of church constitution according to Keach's covenant is "give up ourselves to the Lord in a church state" and "do solemnly join ourselves together in a holy union and fellowship." This manner of covenanting together to form a church is the same thing he teaches in his church manual.⁴⁰¹

WELSH BAPTIST COVENANTS

As many American Baptist churches came from and were influenced by the Welsh Baptists the Welsh attitude toward covenanting and constitution is important. They covenanted together by a simple verbal agreement to form a church. Dewesse explains:

Some Baptist churches in Wales in the 1600s approved the church covenant concept, and Baptists with a Welsh ancestry influenced the development of covenants in Baptist life in New England and the Middle Colonies of America. Early Baptists in Wales apparently tended neither to write nor sign formal covenants. Covenanting seemed to be no more than a simple verbal agreement to come together as a church.⁴⁰²

399 *The Chronicle*, Vol. XX, July 1957, p. 23. The quote is from Vedder's *Balthasar Hubmaier*, (N.Y.: Dutton,) 1905, p. 21.

400 Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 28.

401 Cf. Chapter 9.

402 Charles Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 28.

But the concept of EMDA is not to be found in Wales or in America.

BROADMEAD BAPTIST CHURCH COVENANT 1640

This early church covenant describes the formation of a church which would be denominated a false church by the advocates of EMDA because they did not have a mother church!

Soe that in the year of our ever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640) one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons,⁴⁰³ namely Goodman Atkins of Stapleton, Goodman Cole a Butcher of Lawford's Gate, Richard Moone a Farrier in Wine Street, and Mr 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 goe noe more to it, and with godly purpose of heart Joyned themselves together in the Lord; and only thus Covenanting....⁴⁰⁴

How beautifully scriptural is this little church with but five members and they mention no mother church, no presbytery, no approval from any source but the Lord Jesus Himself. Note this would have been impossible according to EMDA advocates, who contend you must have a mother church, you must have an ordained minister, and anything and everything else they choose to add on. For as they do not have Scripture for any of these claims, they can continue to add tradition upon tradition– as much as they like!

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOSTON 1665

Was the first Baptist church of Boston a scriptural church? Listen as they tell us how they constituted themselves into a church.

The 28 of the 3d Mo. 1665 in Charlestown [Boston], Massachusetts, the Church of Christ commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists were gathered together and entered into fellowship & communion each with other; engaging to walk together in all the appointments of their Lord & Master the Lord Jesus Christ as far as he should be pleased to make known

⁴⁰³ These saints had not read that you must have six people to constitute a church, but reading the Scripture, they were convinced that Christ's word of "two or three" were sufficient! Cf. Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 36.

⁴⁰⁴ Charles Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 116.

his mind & will unto them, by his word and spirit.⁴⁰⁵

This is taken from the minutes of the church. Of course, if there had been any such idea as EMDA their minutes would have reflected it. This perpetual silence on this subject cannot be a coincidence.

THE CHURCH COVENANT RECORDED BY MORGAN EDWARDS

This covenant which is from an unnamed Baptist church was prepared in 1732 and published by Morgan Edwards in 1774.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we do voluntarily and jointly separate ourselves from the world; and voluntarily and jointly give ourselves to the Lord, who hath promised to receive such, and be to them a God; holding ourselves hence forth as his, and no longer our own. We do also voluntarily and mutually give ourselves one to another, and voluntarily and mutually receive one another in the Lord; meaning hereby to coalesce into one body, jointly to exist and jointly to act by the bands and rules of the gospel; each esteeming himself henceforth as a member of a spiritual body; accountable to it, subject to its control, and no other wise separable there from than by consent first had, or unreasonably refused.⁴⁰⁶

In this covenant these saints “meaning hereby (their covenant) to coalesce into one body” and they give no evidence of gaining this authority from any other source than the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. Could they have stated self constitution any plainer? Could they have omitted EMDA it if they had believed it essential for constitution?

COVENANT OF THE CHEROKEE CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

As the Professors of Christianity are so Divided their principles and practice that they cannot hold communion together and passing by the several classes of pedobaptists. There are Several classes of Antepedobaptists, with which we Cannot agree. Namely, the Seven Day Baptists, the no Sabbath Baptists, and those that dip three times in Baptism, with all of which we cannot agree; therefore think it Expedient to covenant or Agree together in matters of faith and Order, yet So as not to Reject those Christians as only Differ from us in Contra essential matters; But as a

405 *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

406 *Op. cit.* p. 137.

distinct Society do Embody ourselves and the following Rules References and articles to our Several Names are annex. Yet as we do not Look upon ourselves infallible we Still Look to be further taught by the Word and Spirit of God into those Mysteries Contained in the Holy Scriptures.

The Solemn covenant of the Baptist Church on Cherokee Creek and the waters Adjacent, in the County of Washington and State of North Carolina Entered into the first Saturday in September 1783.⁴⁰⁷

These believers say we “do embody ourselves,” which is the way Baptists sometimes refer to their constitution. This was not an EMDA approved constitution nor was EMDA present but it was self constitution expressly so stated.⁴⁰⁸

BENT CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH COVENANT

This church was formed in 1785. This covenant says in part:

.....we do mutually consent and agree who to embody ourselves together as a religious society to worship God through faith in Jesus Christ
And being constituted into a Church....⁴⁰⁹

SAMUEL JONES COVENANT

Samuel Jones wrote his *Treatise of Church Discipline and a Directory* at the request of the Philadelphia Association in 1798.

We, whose names are under written, being desirous to be constituted a church of Jesus Christ, in this place and having all due knowledge of one another in point of a work of grace on our hearts, religious principles, and moral characters, and being desirous of enjoying the privileges that appertain to the people of God in a church relation, do, in the name of the Lord Jesus, voluntarily and freely give ourselves up to the Lord, and to one another, according to his word, to be one body under one head, jointly to

⁴⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁴⁰⁸ I have found numerous ways of referring to constitution but none of them include EMDA. Some of these are as follows: Set off, Founded, Arose, Gathered, Planted, Formed, Constituted, Embodied, and Convened. Most of these can be found in Benedict's, *General History of the Baptist Denomination*. 1813.

⁴⁰⁹ Charles Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 148.

exist and act by the bands and rules of the gospel....⁴¹⁰

How could one express more clearly the act of self constitution? How could one more clearly refute EMDA? Jones instructs baptized saints as to how to constitute a church. He does not tell them to find a mother church and unite with it! He does not tell them they must have authority from a previously existing church! He does not tell them they must be able to trace a viable church pedigree with attached EMDA all the way to Jerusalem! He does not tell them they cannot get the Holy Spirit unless they get a mother church which has it! He does not tell them they must get a mother church or Christ will not, and cannot, indwell them! But he tells them they are to covenant together in the name of the Lord Jesus and according to his word, become one body under one head. Did he tell them the truth? If not, how could this Association approve of these instructions as we know they did?

Is there any church covenant which expresses the idea of EMDA?

No church covenant in history that I have seen expresses EMDA. Let the advocates of EMDA find one if they can. It is quite clear that these churches mentioned in this chapter, from a wide variety of sources, did not speak nor practice EMDA. It seems impossible that anyone would maintain that so many covenants from so many ages of Baptist history could be found which not only do not mention EMDA but explicitly state self constitution and yet that these churches held to EMDA and opposed self constitution! But this is what EMDA advocates must claim or admit they are wrong! As they will not admit they are wrong and cannot find evidence for EMDA they are between the hammer and the anvil and the forging is frantic.

Now we wish to consider what actually constitutes a church.

CHAPTER 12

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?⁴¹¹ 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 the mother church does or what the group itself does? How does a church get *church-life*, *church-light* and *church-status*?

⁴¹⁰ Charles W. Dewesse. *Baptist Church Covenants*, p. 150.

⁴¹¹ 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"!

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 kingdom⁴¹² 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 Name when they do so.⁴¹³ Only when Christ takes up His dwelling in the midst of a group does it become a church.⁴¹⁴ This is church constitution. When a group so meets they are founded *on* Christ⁴¹⁵ and they are founded *by* Christ, Mt 18:20, and Christ is *in* 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.⁴¹⁶ The new church is not dependant upon any other church, presbytery, elder, or entity. They look solely to Christ. This is what I mean by *self-constituted*.

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 a stated purpose and in submission to Christ. Without such 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 prepared and prepare themselves because they are under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And from the Lord's side He indwells them in

412 That is, they are in *gospel order*.

413 2 Cor 8:5.

414 Rev. 2:1.

415 1 Cor.3:11.

416 Rev. 1:20.

accordance with this promise and they are placed as one of His churches⁴¹⁷.

Every other act, whether of elders, helps, association, presbytery, 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 Council⁴¹⁸ 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.⁴¹⁹

This is the Divine prerogative and is analogous to marriage. As the covenant between one man and one woman constitutes marriage, and it requires no other authority on earth except that given by Lord in the original charter of the home in Gen 2:23-24, yet the act of marriage is that of God and not of men. “.... It was the Lord’s act and deed, and to him Christ ascribes the act of marriage.”⁴²⁰ 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 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

417 Cf. Re 1: 12,13,20; 2:1.

418 A Council of recognition requested by the church–JCS. Edward Hiscox. *New Directory for Baptist Churches*, P. 56-57.

419 Edward Hiscox. *New Directory for Baptist Churches*, p. 57.

420 John Gill. *Body of Divinity*, p. 711.

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.⁴²¹

Now that Christ so assembled His disciples and that He constituted these disciples into a church without any authority from any other source 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.⁴²² 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."

⁴²¹ J.R.Graves. *Intercommunion*, p. 154.

⁴²² Mt 28:18; 11:17.

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 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.⁴²³ Such is the very essence of a NT assembly. The Greek for gathering in Mt 18:20 is related to the word used in Heb. 10:25,⁴²⁴ “Not forsaking the **assembling** of ourselves together...”⁴²⁵

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 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 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 owns them now and will manifest this at His coming—“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.’”⁴²⁶

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

423 Mt. 5:1; 6:12.

424 Mt 18:20, συναγω and ἐπισυναγωγή in Heb. 10:25.

425 I.e., ἐπισυναγωγή. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:1.

426 A. W. Pink. *Gleanings in Exodus*, p. 316. Cf. Rev 22:12.

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.⁴²⁷ 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.⁴²⁸

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 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 Word⁴²⁹, 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 any thing 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!

427 Rev 1:12.

428 Mt 18:20; Re 2:5.

429 This means it is "ratified in heaven, i. e., by God--unless, of course, the decision be in itself wrong." *An American Commentary on the NT*,

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.⁴³⁰

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.⁴³¹ *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, everyone 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 number He requires to constitute a church, do covenant, i.e., “in His Name,”—there He gives a promise which is as valid today as it was in AD 30.⁴³²

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.

430 Re 2:5.

431 Mt 5:1,11, 14-15.

432 2 Cor 1:20.

It [the church] gets its life from the Word and the Holy Spirit.⁴³³

In my name. That is, 1st, *By my authority, acting for me in my church.*"⁴³⁴

Similarly, their *sumphonia*⁴³⁵ must consist in being gathered together *in the name of Jesus*. If such be the case, 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 *ekkleesia*, or *Kahal*.⁴³⁶

A generalization of the term church (assembly), and the powers conferred on it...⁴³⁷

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....⁴³⁸

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 every thing 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*.⁴³⁹

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...⁴⁴⁰

433 H.B. Taylor, *Why Be a Baptist*, p. 50.

434 Albert Barnes. *Commentary*, Mt. 18:20.

435 Agreeing.

436 J. P. Lange. *Commentary*, Mt 18:20.

437 Henry Afford. *Greek Testament*. Mt 18:20.

438 Matthew Henry. *Commentary*, 18:20.

439 John Calvin. *Commentary*, Mt 18:20.

440 John Gill. *Body of Divinity*, p. 623-4.

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.⁴⁴¹ It does not take ten men to constitute a church as it did to set up a synagogue.⁴⁴² Nor does it take any other church or church approval except that of 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.⁴⁴³ As Matthew Henry says:

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.⁴⁴⁴

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,⁴⁴⁵ η ἐκκλησία...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),

441 Heb 6:18.

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

443 Mt. 15:9.

444 Matthew Henry. *Commentary*, Mt. 15:9. 4281.e., the first stage of this word.

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

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.⁴⁴⁶

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 **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 church. Each church is to 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"***.⁴⁴⁷ 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!

The self-constitution of churches 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 as to what they believed. 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!⁴⁴⁸

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 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

446

447 1 Cor 14:33.

448 Mt 16:18; 1 Cor 3:11; Mt 7:24.

valuable as the old churches.

Fourth, each church is just as Scriptural as every other church. No “mother churches” giving warnings to “daughter churches” 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 mothers 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 self constitution, or 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

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!

We will now turn to the misrepresentation of Landmarkism and Landmarkers by those who embrace EMDA.

CHAPTER 13

LANDMARKISM AND LANDMARKERS MISREPRESENTED

I believe the Advocates of EMDA, and others, have not only misrepresented Landmarkism but I believe they have also misrepresented the old Landmarkers and J.R. Graves in particular.⁴⁴⁹ Some of these misrepresentations to which I refer were published in *BBB* and in Bro Cockrell's book *SCO* and need to be corrected. *SCO* 2nd edition was just recently reissued,⁴⁵⁰ but without any corrections on these misrepresentations.

First, let me deal with the case in which one EMDA advocate changed what Graves wrote on the constitution of churches from *self constitution* to *EMDA*! Bro Cockrell printed this changed version in *BBB* and later defended it! This article made Graves *say what he never thought, what he never said and what he never meant!*⁴⁵¹ Graves' position was actually reversed.⁴⁵²

This changed version of Graves appeared in *BBB*, June 2001.⁴⁵³ Elder Curtis Pugh, a missionary to Romania and a foreign correspondent of *BBB*, published an article which he took from J.R. Graves' weekly paper, *The Baptist*, identified only as to the year, 1867. He did not identify Graves by name but said *The Baptist* was "Published by certain

449 Cf. Bob Ross, Robert Ashcraft; Tull; Patterson; Barnes.

450 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, 2nd edition, 2003. It was issued after Bro. Cockrell's death.

451 Cf. J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 346. Ditzler left out a word reversing the meaning. What would Graves have said if Ditzler had added several words to intentionally change the meaning?

452 Lam 3:36.

453 *BBB*. "Principles Policies & Practices Consistent with Biblical Baptist Doctrine", Adapted & edited by Curtis Pugh" p. 101.

influential members of the Southern Baptist Convention of those days.” Of course Graves and *The Baptist* are practically synonymous! This article which Bro Pugh *adapted & edited* was Graves’ Standing editorial in *The Baptist* which he kept before the world for many years!⁴⁵⁴

Bro. Pugh made many changes (I estimate about two hundred) in this document without giving the reader any idea of what he had altered, deleted, changed or added—and he did all of these! One of the most significant changes Bro Pugh made in this document was in “Six Important Doctrines” number 4, which was Graves’ definition of a church and how a church is constituted.

Because I had read this *standing editorial* of Graves before, I recognized instantly that in doctrine number 4, Graves’ position had been turned upside down! Graves was no longer speaking but Bro Pugh was! In fact it said something which Graves never believed, never said, never wrote! It had been altered from *self constitution* of churches which Graves believed to *EMDA* which Bro Pugh believes!

But in order to write the Editor of BBB and Bro Pugh to protest this change in item number 4, in particular, I needed a copy of the original so as to verify the exact changes introduced. I emailed Bro. Pugh and asked him for an original copy.⁴⁵⁵ He never replied to this request. I did not write Elder Cockrell, editor of BBB, because he was extremely ill at that time, and I would not disturb him during his illness. Thus, I made the trip to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Library, in Louisville, Ky., where they have *The Baptist* on microfilm. The editions from which I made copies were those of May 4, and April 27, 1867. The changes in Graves’ words in number 4 were almost exactly as I thought they were. Bro Pugh had so changed this doctrinal statement in number four that Graves’ meaning was completely reversed!

When I wrote Bro Pugh the second time⁴⁵⁶ about his changing Graves’ words, he responded telling me that he believed Graves changed his position later in his life but he did not have the books with him to prove it.⁴⁵⁷ Of course if proof of Graves’ changing his position exists, Bro Cockrell certainly knew about it and knew where such quotes could be found. Why were these quotes not published in BBB with the article? Why are they not in SCO 1st edition? Why not in the 2nd. edition? Why has not Bro Pugh ordered

454 Some of the papers Graves edited from 1846 to near the end of his life in 1893, are: *The Tennessee Baptist– The Baptist– The Baptist Reflector*.

455 June 14, 2001.

456 July 15, 2001.

457 “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.” I. e., in Romania. Personal letter of Curtis Pugh to the author, 7-27-01.

the books and located these quotes and published them in BBB? ⁴⁵⁸

If this was the case, Bro Pugh was responsible to give references to prove his proposition! In fact, if this was the case and he had such quotes, that would have made the reversal of Graves' position completely justifiable! He stated in a letter to me that he did this "Adapting & editing" while he was in Mantachie, MS. Of course there, he would have had access to all the books⁴⁵⁹ and he could have supplied these quotes.

Note: Bro. Pugh unintentionally admits:

1. He changed Graves' position in this article from self constitution to EMDA.

2. He admits he knew Graves' position was Self constitution – that two or three scripturally baptized members can constitute a church according to Mt 18:20, without mother church authority.

3. Without these references (which he has never supplied) he produced a false version of Graves, a version he knew was bogus when he submitted it for publication!

While I have not read the nearly 40,000 pages of *The Tennessee Baptist– The Baptist– The Baptist Reflector*,⁴⁶⁰ I am familiar with most of Graves published books and I have never seen a line which teaches EMDA in any one of his books and none of these men have produced one quote from J.R. Graves, from any source, to support the idea that he ever held to EMDA. Where is the evidence Graves changed his position from self constitution to EMDA? These men misrepresented J.R. Graves on this subject and their position is, as I see it, indefensible!

In this article Bro Pugh made Graves speak as if he believed EMDA, a theory which Graves did not teach! Thus Bro Pugh deluded the readers of BBB as to what Graves believed! He misrepresented J.R. Graves and falsified a document! Bro Pugh closed his article with these significant words:

These are not new ideas,⁴⁶¹ but are consistent with Biblical, Baptist doctrines that we believe are taught in the Word of God and have historically been embraced by sound Baptists.⁴⁶²

458 See Appendix I.

459 That is at the Berea Baptist Church. Bro Cockrell's Library, which contains several thousand volumes, is located there.

460 Cf. Albert W. Wardin, Jr. *Tennessee Baptists*, p. 246.

461 Referring to Graves editorial in *The Baptist*.

462 *BBB*. June 5, 2001, p. 112.

But these ideas (in the item discussed) **are new ideas!** These ideas were not the ideas of *The Baptist*! These ideas were not the ideas of J.R. Graves! These ideas were not the ideas of Landmark Baptists! Nor were these the ideas of Baptists historically! And because these ideas are so novel EMDA advocates could not find an old Landmarker who said what they wanted him to say they took Graves and compelled him to say he believed EMDA!

This is a plain example of making Graves' written words say something Graves never meant and which his words could never mean and so in order to make Graves say what Bro Pugh wanted him to say he had to add to them, and by so doing he falsified Graves' meaning. Bro Pugh knew that most readers of BBB would never be able to compare his version with the original editorial of Graves because of its inaccessibility! To verify these things I will now give these two versions side by side so the reader may satisfy himself as to my charges.

All can see Graves' article has been significantly and materially altered by adding two things which Graves never said and never believed: namely,

“been organized by an ordained man or men having authority from a pre-existing Church of Christ of like faith and order with the Jerusalem Church, believing in.....”

These are some of the hobby horses of EMDA and they never fail to trot them out, even if they have to alter the facts, as was done here.

After reviewing the original of *The Baptist* I wrote Bro Cockrell, the editor of BBB, and Bro Pugh, expressing my protest against this perversion of Graves. I was astounded but both of these brethren defended this misrepresentation of Graves! Bro Cockrell justified it by referring me to the meaning of *edit*. He said:

The article by Bro. Pugh said ‘Adapted and edited by Curtis Pugh.’ I suggest you get the dictionary and look up the word ‘edited.’ The one on my desk says: ‘to alter, adapt, or refine esp. to bring about conformity to a standard or to suit a particular purpose.’ Hence I plan no apology nor do I intend to do what you suggested⁴⁶³

What I suggested was that Bro Cockrell apologize to his readers for perverting the words of Graves and to publish both articles side by side, as I have done, so *BBB* readers could see what had been done to Graves. You can readily see why Bro Cockrell did not want to do that! For ought the readers of *BBB* know, from the pages of this paper, Graves believed in EMDA!

Isn’t it interesting that this “Adapting & Editing” never was used in *BBB* before, at least so far as memory serves me? Did anyone ever see any article in *BBB* besides this one by Bro Pugh which said: “Adapted & Edited”? It was obviously a new idea. It was an attempt to alter what someone wrote and to do it in such a way as to justify the change. I will not censor these men but state what they themselves admit they did.

Of course, if J.R. Graves had changed his position from self constitution to EMDA,⁴⁴⁸ this would have been the time and place for Bro Cockrell to bring forth the evidence of such a change. If Graves had changed his position Bro Cockrell could have replied to me as follows: “This “Adapting & Editing” was justified because Graves changed his position from self constitution which he once believed to mother church authority and here is the reference to prove it!” That would have made their case for changing Graves in *BBB*! Was this done? No. Has anyone seen or read of such a

⁴⁶³ Bro Cockrell did later publish my letter to Bro Pugh concerning this matter, *BBB*. August 5, 2001, p. 157, but the italicization was eliminated and thus the readers of *BBB* still could not know the changes made and how Graves had been completely reversed. ⁴⁴⁷Cf. Appendix I.⁴⁴⁸ As Bro Cockrell read the correspondence between Bro Pugh and myself, and as he did not at any time make the claim that Graves had changed his position, from self constitution to EMDA, raises the question, did these brethren know all along Graves’ position was anti EMDA?

quote in *BBB*? In *SCO*, 1st edition? *SCO* 2nd edition? Has anyone seen even an attempt to show Graves changed his position from self constitution to EMDA? These facts are a startling revelation as to what these brethren knew Graves believed and what they claim he believed!

Bro Cockrell thought it quite irresponsible for someone to say John R. Gilpin did not believe in a link chain of churches, or in one church organizing another church. He said: "First I would say that I personally knew John R. Gilpin, and I know this is a terrible misrepresentation of his views on ecclesiology."¹⁸ But why is it that changing the statement of John Gilpin is "a terrible misrepresentation" but to change the statement of J. R. Graves' is acceptable? Can the mere word *editing* justify this disparity? If anyone else changes what a man said it is a "terrible misrepresentation." But if they do it, is it right because they were *editing* or adapting! One can only assume that others have the same right to reverse a man's word as they do. Bro Cockrell was well aware of this need to make sure you represent anyone you quote correctly. He said, concerning quotes in *SCO*:

Also I have taken the liberty of putting quotes from Old English into Modern English. Great care was taken so as not to change the meaning intended by the original writer.¹⁹

Why this great care in one instance *so as not to change the meaning intended by the original writer* but a total disregard in another? Why be so careful in modernizing "Old English into Modern English" so as not to change the meaning but on the other hand to argue *you can completely reverse the meaning* as long as you are *editing*? Was it not editing when he changed ME²⁰ to Modern English?

Thou shall not bear false witness, is as much God's Law today as it ever was and if I mistake not, it pertains even to editing and adapting—if you change the meaning!⁴⁶⁴ You cannot change the meaning of what a man says or writes and give it out as his word and not violate the Law of God, editing, adapting, or what-have-you, notwithstanding. To do so is to make the commandment of God of none effect, Mt 15:6.

I will let J.R. Graves make his own defense. When he was debating Jacob Ditzler in Carrollton, Mo in 1875, Ditzler quoted the scholar Schleusner on *Baptizdo*, a work in

¹⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 71.

¹⁹ Op. cit. p. ii.

²⁰ OE is 7th century to 1100 AD; ME from 11th to the 15th century.

464 It is to this that T. J. Conant referred when he wrote concerning translation: " It is an axiom, and needs no proof. It is simply the rule, when one professes to communicate the words of another, to tell the truth as to what he has said. Any author, purposely mistranslated or obscured, is falsified by his translator. Just so far as this is done, the translation is a literary forgery; for it conceals while it professes to exhibit what the author has said, or it represents him as saying that which he did not say." *Baptizein*, Amer. Bib. Union, 1861, p. 158.

Latin. Graves knew the author and pointed out “... intentionally or through ignorance, he has, by suppressing a very important part of a sentence, made Schleusner say what he does not say, and what he never intended to say – he has suppressed his testimony, and put a lie in his lips.”²¹ Graves had Schleusner’s Lexicon with him and read from it and then translated the Latin into English. Graves then said – and I am not “editing” but Ditzler had been!

All can by this see that from the beginning to the end, Schleusner has been perverted by Elder Ditzler, to teach what he never said, and contrary to what he did say. I appeal to every scholar present, here are the books, and to every scholar on the continent, [passes them over to scholars, and to Dr. Talbert]. Such a course with an author is as unwarranted, as I believe, it is unprecedented in its grossness and flagrancy. If he has treated one lexicon thus, before our eyes, what have we not a right to expect of the many from which he has quoted here that we have not the opportunity to examine? I do therefore, as I am amply justified in doing, challenge every authority he quotes in this discussion, the full text of which he does not submit for examination. I cannot take what my opponent avers an author says, nor his translations, unless he submits the text of the author .²²

Now in this case J.R. Graves has been perverted by these brethren to teach what he never said, and contrary to what he did say! This is indeed “as unwarranted As it is unprecedented in its grossness and flagrancy” because *words were added which changed the meaning and put a lie in Graves’ mouth!* This is a crime against the Lord, against Graves, against the readers of *BBB*, against Baptists and other denominations for surely the religious world looks on aghast and repudiates such gross and improper handling of a quote!²³ There is not a fair and honest infidel in the world who will support such *editing!* Imagine! Baptist preachers materially altering a statement by Graves, or any other man, which reversed his meaning and then contending such alteration was justifiable!

To illustrate this kind of editing I have adapted and edited a quote from Bro Pugh’s book, *Three Reasons For The Baptists*:

‘Landmarkers’ or ‘Landmark Baptists:’ Baptists who maintain the historic Baptist (and we believe, Biblical) position regarding the nature, origin and succession of true churches *and which teach three or more scripturally*

1 21 J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 346.

2 2 *Op.cit.*, p. 350.

3 23 1 Pet. 2:12.

baptized members may constitute themselves into a Church of Christ are often called and sometimes call themselves ‘Landmarkers.’ — Adapted and Edited by JCS²⁴

Can Bro Pugh deny me the right to do this to him when he contends he can do it to J.R. Graves? Or is this a one way street? How did Bro Pugh like this editing? His silence states much!

WHAT PUGH MADE GRAVES SAY

You must have ordained men to organize a church – “Each true Church of Christ is a company of Scripturally immersed believers associated by voluntary covenant... *having been organized by an ordained man or men...*”²⁵

Bro Pugh forced Graves to say: “Each true church...having been organized by an ordained man or men.” Bro Pugh does not believe a church can be organized without an ordained man. Graves believed just the opposite. Is it right to make a man teach what he never said, and contrary to what he did say?

Is it right to put a lie in a man’s mouth? These brethren contend it is if you only say “Adapted & edited”! Powerful words! Pitiful argument!

WHAT GRAVES SAID

Here are Graves’ words concerning the need of an ordained man to constitute a church:

‘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*

⁴ 24My *editing* is italicized so the reader may see what I have done if he does not have the book, *Three Witnesses For the Baptists*, by Curtis Pugh, p 125. *Three Witnesses* is a good book.

⁵ 25 The emphasized portion was added by Pugh.

*presbyters to organize a Baptist church.*²⁶

RICE CHANGED SPURGEON

This handling of Graves by these brethren is comparable to what John R. Rice did in *The Sword of The Lord* when he changed the words of Spurgeon making him say what he never said and never believed. Rice wrote:

Some think that Christ died, and yet, that some for whom He died *and who trusted Him* will be lost. I never could understand that doctrine.²⁷

This change by Rice was censored by Bro Bob Ross in *The Baptist Examiner*.²⁸ Few men would defend this kind of thing. But according to Bre Cockrell and Pugh, the only mistake Rice made was he failed to say “edited” or “adapted”! Why would it be right for Pugh to change Graves but wrong for Rice to change Spurgeon? If it is wrong for the *Sword of the Lord*, how can it be right for *The Berea Baptist Banner*?

It is significant that Bro Cockrell made this charge against someone (he never told us who it was) who said Bro John Gilpin did not believe in EMDA. His words are:

Any person who alleges that either of these two men²⁹ did not believe in a link chain of Baptist churches has knowingly and deliberately misrepresented the views of these old brethren. To assert such denotes a degree of prove-something-at-all-costs unexcelled in the history of theological debate.³⁰

Suppose those who said such things about these men were only giving the words of these men after *Adapting & editing*! After all, one would think, other editors and writers have as much liberty as the editor and foreign missionary of *BBB*.

Have Landmarkism and the old Landmarkers been misrepresented?

6 26 J. R. Graves quoted in W. A. Jarrel *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1.
Emphasis added.

7 27 John R. Rice added the italicized words.—JCS.

8 28 *The Baptist Examiner*. April 13, 1957, p. 3; Cf. Also *TBE*, Feb. 29, 1957, p. 2. Column: *I Should Like to Know*.

9 29 John R. Gilpin and Roy Mason. Cf. Appendices II and III.

0 30 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71.

CHAPTER 14

THE ASSEMBLY OF SCRIPTURE

An assembly of Christ is an *ἐκκλησία*⁴⁶⁵ not merely a *collection* or *gathering* of people.⁴⁶⁶ And because it is a *duly summoned*⁴⁶⁷ *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."⁴⁶⁸ In Mt 28:18-20, He tells them that this authority is in Himself and then He tells them what they are to do after they constitute themselves into 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. In the meeting of Christ's assembly, this summons comes directly and immediately from the 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 mob⁴⁶⁹, or even a disorganized throng,⁴⁷⁰ it is not merely those who *journey together*,⁴⁷¹ nor yet a multitude⁴⁷²; it is not a popular

465 *ἐκκλησία* is formed from the two words: *ἐκ* 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.

466 *σὺλλεγω*. "at Athens, of any special public meeting or assembly, opp. The common *ἐκκλησία*." Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*.

467 Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*, *ἐκκλησία*.

468 This is expressly stated in the 1689 Confession, Chapter XXVI, par. 5.

469 Cf. Acts 19.

470 *οἶκος*. "If we want the exact opposite to *δημος*, it is *οἶκος*, 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.

471 *συνοδία*, Lk 2:44.

472 *πληθος*. "A large company, a multitude." *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. P. 421.

assembly. Nor is it merely a *festal assembly*⁴⁷³ 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.⁴⁷⁴ He called them out of the world as saints and He calls these saints into church status. They *gather together* for His glory by *His authority* and for their mutual benefit which they receive when they gather together according to His Word.⁴⁷⁵ 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 made that good confession⁴⁷⁶ 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, II Cor 5:8. They are *glued*⁴⁷⁷ together, Acts 5:13; 9:26 and other places.⁴⁷⁸ This joining is not accomplished by another church but by the power of Christ Himself.⁴⁷⁹ The Lord Himself *sets up* His churches⁴⁸⁰ and he *adds* to them, Acts 2:47,⁴⁸¹ and He disciplines them.⁴⁸² 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, into a church. 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

473 πανηγυρισ, He. 12:23. "The πανηγυρισ differs from the εκκλησια in this, that in the εκκλησια... there lay ever the sense of an assembly coming together for the transaction of business. The πανηγυρισ, on the other hand, was a solemn assembly for purposes of festal rejoicing." – Trench. *Synonyms of The New Testament*. #1, p. 6. Cf. also George Ricker Berry. *Greek English Lexicon*, p. 125. # 20.

474 L. 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.

475 Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 6.

476 I Tim 6:12, 13.

477 Κολλᾶω. 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 in which the two pieces were joined by hammering together at white-hot temperature. An ultrasound of a forge weld shows up as a straight line– that is, a lack of fusion.

478 κολλᾶω is found ten times in the Greek NT.

479 Mt. 18:20.

480 Mt. 5:1ff. with Mt. 16:18.

481 προστιθεμι is used 18 times in the NT. In this discussion it means *add*.

482 Re 1:5,16; 2:23; 3:3,16-22.

its authority directly. The church follows His will and receives the blessing from Him alone.

The authority which *summons* an ecclesia can also *dissolve* it⁴⁸³ 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, consequently no church has power to grant or authorize another assembly's constitution! Such power belongs exclusively to the Lord Himself!⁴⁸⁴ He never transferred or delegated such authority to any office, officer, person, society, or entity.⁴⁸⁵ 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.⁴⁸⁶ 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!⁴⁸⁷ 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.⁴⁸⁸ 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 censor in the Holy place!⁴⁸⁹ 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

483 Liddell & Scott. Art. ἐκκλησία; "ε. διαλυειν, αναστησαι, dissolve it."

484 Mt 28:18-20.

485 Steve Flinchum. *Fully After the Lord*, p. 320.

486 Re 2:5; Cf. Ex. 37:23. The source of the fire for God's altar always came from heaven.

487 Re 3:15.

488 Re 2:5.

489 II Chron 26:18.

hand", or say unto Him, "What doest thou?"!⁴⁹⁰ 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 fire to light a church candlestick anymore that Nadab and Abihu had fire to light God's altar. This is strange fire all around. No church has the power to bestow the Holy Spirit on an assembly.⁴⁹¹ One can only wince when Roman Catholics teach this but when Baptists take up the same error we are thunderstruck!

Christ alone has the key. He opens and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens.⁴⁹² 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 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 or to dissolve a church. This is power that he never has, and never shall, delegate.

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; Rev 3:7.

This key belongs to Him. The keys given to Peter and then to the other apostles, do not include the key of this text.⁴⁹³ 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 in the hands of any officer or society.

⁴⁹⁰ Dan 4:35.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. *7 Questions*. p. 35, par. 2; and Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 81.

⁴⁹² Re. 3:8.

⁴⁹³ Mt. 16:18; 18:18; Jn. 20:23.

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 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 Lord!

Christ alone can plant, root or fix firmly⁴⁹⁴ a church, giving it its base or foundation⁴⁹⁵ and only He can root out⁴⁹⁶ 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 this 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, 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.⁴⁹⁷

In this passage the figure is changed somewhat from the passage in I Corinthians 3. The foundation is here said to be 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 of the same kind. 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

494 ρηιζω. Col. 2:7. “To cause to take root.”- Vine.

495 *Liddell & Scott*. ρηιζα.

496 εκριζω. Mt. 13:29. “To root out or up.” -Vine.

497 Eph. 2:19-21.

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 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 thought to be in their *organic succession* did not have mother church authority! If that church was deficient relative to any law of EMDA, in their thinking, they lose 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!⁴⁹⁸ Their church status depends not merely on one essential, but on several things,⁴⁹⁹ 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 one of their ancestral churches got it right, their church may now be a church. If any one of those churches was wrong on any one of the laws of EMDA, then they are not a church. And in the negative case *what some one church, unknown and unknowable, did not 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 the door of their house. 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 knowledge⁵⁰⁰ 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

498 “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.

499 The number keeps changing as the tradition develops. Cf. Chapter 4. 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!

500 2 Tim 3:7.

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 previous church but stands upon the covenant it makes with the Lord.

This passage in Ephesians⁵⁰¹ 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 God⁵⁰² 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. The 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 every one 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.

We will in the next chapter consider how our fathers understood these matters in church constitution.

CHAPTER 15

Samples of Church Constitution

In this chapter I will give samples of Church constitution from records and representative writers.

⁵⁰¹ Eph 2:22.

⁵⁰² Κατοικητήριον 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.

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.⁵⁰³

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 Square. He was chosen pastor, and held that office till his death, in 1701...⁵⁰⁴

Questions which arise when reading such quotes with EMDA glasses are: Did they get authority from another church? Which one? Who says they did? Where are such records found? How could they give such accounts without ever indicating this essential on the one hand and expressing their faith that the authority for constitution was directly from Christ on the other?

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

⁵⁰³ John 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.

⁵⁰⁴ J.M. Cramp, *Baptist History*, p. 393.

were against him kept possession of the meeting-house. (A) 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.⁵⁰⁵

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 minority! Hence, if EMDA is true, Gill's church never was a church!⁵⁰⁶ 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, 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,⁵⁰⁷ but no question of EMDA was ever heard—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 of this time 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!⁵⁰⁸ 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 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? Let them verify this pedigree and tell us where to find this line!

JOHN SMYTH—TWO CAN MAKE A CHURCH

⁵⁰⁵ 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.

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. George 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 such an idea and, so far as the records go, the question never came up.

⁵⁰⁷ This letter was sent to the "Elders of the Baptized Churches". Six men signed this letter: viz. Thomas Crosby, William Deall, William Allen, Thomas Cutteford and John Thompson, *Op.Cit.*, p. 48.

⁵⁰⁸ Bro Cockrell in *SCO*, p. 89, admits there have been "liberal elements of Baptists" who have not practiced EMDA, but if EMDA was in practice in Gill's time, who were the contenders of it? Where were they found? What pastor contended for it? What confession stressed it? What covenant expressed it? What history mentions it? Let those who contend EMDA is the path the saints trod give us this information!

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.⁵⁰⁹

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 churchyet have power to assume the church..." I would not readily quote a General Baptist but as *SCO* quotes Smyth, I have been compelled to include him.⁵¹⁰ Nor do I approve of Smyth's application of this argument 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.

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 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 state⁵¹¹ (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? 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!⁵¹² Of course if Carey's church was not a true church (and if EMDA is true—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 were not formed with EMDA! Carey's position also means that the Baptist churches and the preachers in that time believed and practiced self constitution. The ripples of this fact wash every shore of Baptist life.

FIRST CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE

⁵⁰⁹ 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.

⁵¹⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 27. 2nd edition, p. 24.

⁵¹¹ 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 non-church 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?

⁵¹² S. Pearce Carey. *William Carey*, p 56.

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 Mt. 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.⁵¹³

While I do not agree with Benedict and his appraisal of this account, I quote this to show that as a representative Baptist writer, Benedict held to self-constitution without any kind of mother church.

J.R. Graves also disagreed with Benedict on Roger Williams. He discusses Williams and his church constitution in detail.⁵¹⁴ Of course, that Williams got no authority from any other church goes without saying.⁵¹⁵ If EMDA was a doctrine of Baptists, then how is it that neither Graves nor Benedict censor Williams and his group for not having a mother church? When Graves writes "His Abortive Attempt to Organize a Baptist Church without Baptism, 'Creed or covenant,' "⁵¹⁶ there is no mention of the lack of a mother church! Graves does not even bring up the idea. He does say that

⁵¹³ David Benedict. *History of the Baptists*, p. 450. 1848 Edition.

⁵¹⁴ Graves & Adlam. *First Baptist Church in America*, p.29.

⁵¹⁵ Williams was unbaptized and the unbaptized Holliman baptized him and he in turn baptized Holliman.

⁵¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

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—but Graves never mentions it. Did he forget this essential? Did some editor cut this sentence from his book? The EMDA advocates will be able to come up with some explanation. Of this I am sure!

JOHN CLARKE

...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....⁵¹⁷

But here we have Clarke giving the essence of church constitution and while there is not a trace of EMDA therein. He clearly defines a church as *being joined one to another* which is most likely an allusion to Mt 18:20. Graves approved of this method of constitution and of Clarke's defense of the Faith.⁵¹⁸

BACKUS ON JOHN OWEN

Isaac Backus gives this remarkable statement by John Owen and he quotes this 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.⁵¹⁹

But if this was not the position of Baptists why did Backus quote it? Here the

⁵¹⁷ Graves & Adlam. *First Baptist Church in America*, p. 170.

⁵¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 171-2.

⁵¹⁹ Isaac Backus. *The History of New England Baptists*. vol. 2, p. 35,36. Quoted from John Owen. *Original of Evangelical Churches*, pp. 291-297.

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 separate and independent organization. At the house of James Bowdoin in 1743 these seven individuals '.... solemnly entered into a covenant as a church of Christ.'⁵²⁰

Bro Baron Stow says this:

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.⁵²¹

There was no *mother church* there! There were no church letters transferring paper authority there! They were probably excluded from the First Church. They were called *New Lights* as were all at this time who had come under the power of the preaching of Whitefield. Not only was EMDA not requested at this organization but it sent no ordained men there, Stow is careful to tell us. He also tells us that if they had been there, it would not have been to convey EMDA nor to transmit authority 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, Landmark church constitution! Of course, for Benedict to record this for all Baptists to read confirms it was an orthodox constitution in his estimation.

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:

⁵²⁰ David Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, P. 393.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

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, 1671.⁵²²

Again we do not find EMDA. Nor do the historians who give these accounts ever censor those who formed churches without it, so far as I have seen. How could EMDA have been the stated doctrine of Baptists through the ages (as some claim)⁵²³ 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, 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.⁵²⁴

R.B.H. 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

⁵²² Isaac Backus. *History of the Baptists in New England*, vol. I. p. 325.

⁵²³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 89.

⁵²⁴ John T. Christian. *History of The Baptists*, vol. I, p. 22-23.

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.⁵²⁵

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."⁵²⁶

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.⁵²⁷

If EMDA was the usual Baptist practice, as some contend,⁵²⁸ 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?

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.⁵²⁹

W.B. JOHNSON

Now, as far as I can understand the New Testament, I see no authority

⁵²⁵ R B C Howell, *Terms of Communion*, p. 249.

⁵²⁶ L. B. Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 262.

⁵²⁷ Robert Semple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 234.

⁵²⁸ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 19, 89.

⁵²⁹ Robert Simple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, P. 65.

given to a church of Christ to transfer its power or authority to any other church or body of men on earth.⁵³⁰

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.⁵³¹

CHURCH IN WOODSTOCK, 1766

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.⁵³²

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.'⁵³³

CHURCHES FORMED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ANOTHER CHURCH

We find many examples in Church History where churches are formed with *assistance* from another church. Sometimes these assisting churches are called *mother churches*. 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:

⁵³⁰ W. B. Johnson. *Gospel Developed*, 1846, Q. By Ever, p. 173.

⁵³¹ W. B. Johnson. *Gospel Developed*, 1846, Q. By Dever, *Polity*, p. 187.

⁵³² Isaac Backus. *History of the Baptist in New England*, vol. II, p. 523.

⁵³³ J.B. Cranfill, *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, p. 140.

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....⁵³⁴

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, 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!

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.'⁵³⁵

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.⁵³⁶

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!

⁵³⁴ Isaac Backus. *History of The Baptists in New England*, Vol. II, p. 528.

⁵³⁵ L.B. Hogue, *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 222.

⁵³⁶ J. J. Goadby, *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 215.

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 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.⁵³⁷

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 dismission.

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.⁵³⁸

J.T. Christian on 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 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

⁵³⁷ <http://www.worldlynx.net/enbc/>

⁵³⁸ B. H. Carroll. *Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. 2, p. 243.

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.' ⁵³⁹

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. ⁵⁴⁰

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 the death knell to EMDA.

WEST UNION ASSOCIATION 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. " ⁵⁴¹

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. ⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ J. T. Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. II, p. 39.

⁵⁴⁰ J.T. Christian. *History of the Baptists*, vol. I, p. 13.

⁵⁴¹ *Minutes of the Twenty Seventh Annual Session of West Union Association*, p. 6. 1860.

⁵⁴² William Williams, *Apostolical Church Polity*, quoted by Dever. Polity, p. 544.

HISCOX ON THE SOURCE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

Its [a church's] chief authority is given by Christ alone.⁵⁴³

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 alway, 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.⁵⁴⁴

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.'

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."⁵⁴⁵

One cannot misunderstand this statement of Hiscox: *This authority is derived directly from God!* Does this sound like EMDA? Do they 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? No. It is impossible to make Hiscox mean this when he expressly says not only that *This authority is derived directly from God* but this authority 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!* I cannot conceive of how he could have more clearly expressed Christ's direct constitution of a church on the one hand or more fully refuted EMDA than he has.

⁵⁴³ Edward T. Hiscox. *The New Directory For Baptist Churches*, p. 48.

⁵⁴⁴ Edward T. Hiscox. *The New Directory For Baptist Churches*, p. 49.

⁵⁴⁵ Edward T. 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." *The New Directory For Baptist Churches*, p. 8.

In the light of these statements by Hiscox, I cannot explain how he is quoted as believing EMDA!⁵⁴⁶ There can be no question, however, that Hiscox has been misread and 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.⁵⁴⁷

Again:

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 it 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.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁶ Milburn Cockrell. SCO, p. 18-19.

⁵⁴⁷ Edward T. Hiscox. The Baptist Church Directory, 1859, p. 17.

⁵⁴⁸ Edward T. Hiscox. The Baptist Church Directory, p. 17-18.

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.⁵⁴⁹

Of course this exemplifies Hiscox's teaching that a church is given direct authority and depends on nothing on earth for its authority.

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 few accounts⁵⁵⁰ demonstrate the regular practice of self constitution.

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION

In this book I have tried to show that EMDA does not come from Landmarkism. It is not a Landmark Baptist doctrine. EMDA is a tradition which has attached itself to Landmarkism but 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 delusion. That the original men responsible for re-setting the old Landmarks never believed or practiced EMDA we have carefully documented. Can anyone question the evidence submitted? Thus it is high time for those responsible for this misrepresentation of Landmarkism to face this issue. In spite of the accusations by those opposed to Landmarkism and those who think EMDA is Landmarkism, the charges are false. Landmarkism never had any thing to do with this tradition.

Nor is EMDA specifically revealed in the Bible and its chief exponents admit this. All their arguments melt under the light of Scripture. The Scripture is as silent on this theory as it is on the baptism of infants! And because the 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! As far as this theory being found in Scripture reminds me of what Meyer's Commentary says on another subject. It "is an

⁵⁴⁹ Edward T. Hiscox. The Baptist Church Directory, p. 19.

⁵⁵⁰ These quotes could have easily been multiplied many fold. The original of draft of this chapter would have run to 38 pages!

entirely arbitrary assumption of exegetical helplessness.”⁵⁵¹ EMDA advocates have tried to find Scripture for EMDA, but like the magicians of Egypt, they are unable to bring forth.⁵⁵² *This is the finger of God!*⁵⁵³ Honesty compels EMDA advocates to admit there is no positive law for EMDA in Scripture!

Nor is EMDA found in Baptist History. The history of Baptists affords EMDA no relief. We have carefully searched the full spectrum of Baptist documents for four hundred years and instead of verifying EMDA, we have found not one single statement by a Baptist preacher, historian, writer or leader in any book, sermon, or church record presenting this idea until 1900! As far as Baptists are concerned History is silent on this theory until it was brought forth in the last century. This is a new idea among Baptists! It is a doctrine which still has a *new paint* smell. Hunting EMDA in Baptist history is like hunting the Phoenix in Arkansas.

For those who accept EMDA, or who may be considering it, we have demonstrated a great number of churches widely dispersed all across the Baptist family and deep back into our history which were not only started without EMDA but were statedly started with an appeal to Christ's direct authority as promised in Mt. 18:20. This makes the search, for a line of churches adhering to this doctrine in history and so essential to EMDA, not only unlikely but impossible! It simply cannot be done. None of these brethren and none of these churches who proclaim this doctrine as an essential for valid church constitution can give any line of churches which taught this doctrine before modern times! They are selling a bogus pedigree to others, a pedigree which they themselves do not have!⁵⁵⁴

Bro Jarrel Huffman said:

Fifth, 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!⁵⁵⁵

We have shown how these old Baptist writers explicitly state, define, defend, and

⁵⁵¹ H.A. W. Meyer. *Meyer's Commentary*, vol. 11, p. 154. The comment is by Friedrich Dusterdieck.

⁵⁵² Ex. 8:18.

⁵⁵³ Ex. 8:19.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Thomas Williamson's *Got Perpetuity* in *PPP*. April 1, 2004, for many good points on this subject.

⁵⁵⁵ Jarrel E. Huffman. *Church Truth At a Point of Crisis*, p. 13 .

enunciate their belief and practice of *Divine Constitution*, that is, churches **are self constituted by the direct authority of Christ Himself!** The authority comes not from another church but from Christ! No other church is necessary! No presbytery is essential! No ordained elder is required! This is the consensus of Baptist History. All the arguments, objections, and implications of phrases, customs, theories, and traditions amount to nothing in the light of this singular testimony of Baptist History! The Scripture itself which is above all practice, ancient or modern and outweighs all writers and settles all arguments as to doctrine, is not only devoid of EMDA, but expressly teaches self constitution by the direct authority of Christ Himself in Mt 18:20! And if this text does not pertain to church constitution, then what text in the New Testament does?

EMDA advocates rightly demand a Scripture mandate for all other **essential** doctrine but they beg the question on EMDA! They cannot, therefore, hold to EMDA and the authority of Scripture. To be consistent they must give up one or the other! EMDA, for all the claims of its advocates, is now seen for what it is. A mere facade. It is an attempt to put the **law of man** into place by tradition without any biblical foundation and without any basis in Baptist History! I close with these propositions. Let the advocates of EMDA do any or all of the following:⁵⁵⁶

- 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 teaches EMDA
- 4) Produce a Baptist manual which teaches EMDA
- 5) Produce any Baptist history which specifies EMDA
- 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

⁵⁵⁶ Of course, I mean before the year 1900.

10) Produce a reasonable explanation of why so many Baptist leaders explicitly stated the authority for church constitution came directly from Christ according to Mt 18:20.

11) Produce the lineage of any Baptist church which has an EMDA to EMDA succession up to 1600

Let the reader ask himself, why the advocates of EMDA have never before, and will not now, address these propositions?

Unless these men who defend EMDA will first respond to these propositions, especially numbers one, eight, nine and ten, I will treat their arguments just as I do those of a man who argues the world is flat! If they answer these propositions not only will I gladly consider all they say but I have a “.... perfect readiness to modify any statement which can be disproved, and to alter any error which can be demonstrated...”⁵⁵⁷ If they try to merely find fly specks of error in my treatment, they will find many.⁵⁵⁸ But I am not the least concerned they will be able to find any major error as to Landmark Baptist Church Constitution.

While EMDA claims it is Landmarkism it is in reality an attack against Landmarkism and the self constitution of churches! It claims to be a part of Landmarkism or even Landmarkism itself, but it is neither. It is no part of Landmarkism at all. Rather it is a parasite and it is attempting to do to Landmarkism what parasites usually do to their hosts. It also claims to be a friend of Landmarkism but instead it is an enemy of Landmarkism within Landmarkism and they direct all their firepower against Landmarkism and the old Landmark Baptists. Now that we recognize the real nature of EMDA for what it is, and where it is, we can effectively repulse this attack.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

DID GRAVES CHANGE HIS POSITION ON CHURCH CONSTITUTION?

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

⁵⁵⁷ Farrar, *The Life of Lives*, p. vii.

⁵⁵⁸ No one is more aware of my inabilities than I am. I would never have published this book but for the sake of the truth.

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.⁵⁵⁹

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."⁵⁶⁰ Unless these men give us references from Graves' own pen which states he changed his position to EMDA we will count this as a mere smoke screen! As these references have not been forthcoming, those who take this position are forced to admit Graves never changed his position but he held a position which they claim is heresy!

So I ask the question, *Did Graves change his position on church constitution from self constitution 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 1894⁵⁶¹ where he explicitly states Graves position was self constitution if Graves had changed to EMDA before he died! While I have not read all of the nearly 40,000 pages of *The Tennessee Baptist – The Baptist – The Baptist Reflector*,⁵⁶² I am familiar with most of Graves' published books and I have never seen a line which teaches EMDA. I challenge these men–**to produce one quote from J.R. Graves (in unedited form!) to support this contention!** These men have misrepresented J. R. Graves,⁵⁶³ as believing

⁵⁵⁹ Curtis Pugh. A personal letter to me, July 27, 2001.

⁵⁶⁰ Milburn Cockrell. SCO, p. 71. Let me emphasize Bro Cockrell never said Graves *changed* his position from self constitution to EMDA. So far as I know, he never admitted Graves held to self constitution.

⁵⁶¹ W.A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 2.

⁵⁶² Various names of Graves' papers 1846- to near the end of his life. Cf. Cathcart's *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Art. J. R. Graves, & Albert W. Wardin, Jr. *Tennessee Baptists*, 1779-1999, pp. 243-247.

⁵⁶³ Milburn Cockrell. SCO: "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 with church authority. According to them, no church ever dismissed members to form a new church until J.R. Graves and J. M. Pendleton came on the scene and invented the teaching of Landmarkism in the mid

EMDA for years, and they are misrepresenting him now.⁵⁶⁴ We believe Graves died holding self constitution as stated by Jarrel. This is the very view some EMDA brethren admit he held!

Furthermore Graves' son-in-law O.H. Hailey wrote a brief biography of Graves in 1929. If any man knew Graves' position, it was Hailey. In this book, written nearly forty years after Graves' death, he quotes this doctrinal statement, perverted by Bro Pugh, from *The Baptist* and not a word of a change concerning item number four, which is Graves definition of a church! Hailey does, in fact, state Graves changed his position on Communion in these words: "He modified as all know, later in life, and advocated strict church communion, to which change of view and its advocacy reference will be made more fully hereafter."⁵⁶⁵ This change had nothing to do with the definition or constitution of a church. Graves did change his view on communion and wrote and taught on this change⁵⁶⁶ but he never made any change on church constitution. How could Hailey omit this change if it really happened?

Whoever says Graves changed his position from self constitution to EMDA is responsible to give us an explicit statement of this change. If Graves did change his position, and wrote about it, it should be easy to find. But if this proves to be too hard – and I believe it is –he can remain silent on Graves position.

At any rate, no one should accept the claim that Graves changed his position from self constitution to EMDA from anyone unless they can give quotes from Graves' own works indicating such a transition. **JOHN GILPIN AND EMDA**

Bro Cockrell made quite an issue because someone "alleged that Elder John R. Gilpin did not believe in" EMDA.⁵⁶⁷ 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*⁵⁶⁸ for many years. There is no question that Bro Gilpin believed in EMDA in his latter 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 self constitution to EMDA? I believe he did and submit the following for

1800s. This is just simply not true." p. 84.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. Chapter 13.

⁵⁶⁵ O. H. Hailey. *Life & Times of J.R. Graves*, p.53.

⁵⁶⁶ See: J.R. Graves. *Intercommunion Inconsistent, Unscriptural*.

⁵⁶⁷ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 71.

⁵⁶⁸ *The Baptist Examiner* was started by T.P. Simmons, the editor. C.D. Cole was associate editor. The first edition was April 1, 1931. John Gilpin bought the paper in 1938 but I failed to take down the exact date.

consideration.

In *TBE* in 1947 the following article by Bro Gilpin appeared:⁵⁶⁹

What are the Real Prerequisites of a Missionary Baptist Church?

1. The organization must hold up the standard of a regular membership.
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.⁵⁷⁰

Such a statement on the organization of a church would have been decidedly 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 admitted as a true church. Whence this change?

Bro Gilpin answered the following question in *TBE's I would like to know* column: "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. 18:20.⁵⁷¹

In the same column 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."⁵⁷²

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

⁵⁶⁹ I took these notes October 14,15, 2003 from the bound volumes of *The Baptist Examiner* (hereafter *TBE*) in Calvary Baptist Church Library. Bro Chris Burke the present pastor of Calvary Baptist church was kind enough to let me do research in the Calvary Baptist Church Library where they have Bro Gilpin's library and most of the bound volumes of *TBE*. The bound volumes in this library are the only complete set, according to Sister Judy Rule, known. They should be archived and preserved for posterity. The following volumes were missing: 1933-34; 1935-36; 1937-38 ; 1954-55; 1956.

⁵⁷⁰ *TBE*. March 1, 1947. p. 1. "What Are the Real Prerequisites of a Missionary Baptist Church", by John R. Gilpin.

⁵⁷¹ *TBE*. March 30, 1940, p. 2.

⁵⁷² *TBE*. June 15, 1940, p. 2.

the persecution arising after the death of Stephen.⁵⁷³

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. 12:23.⁵⁷⁴

In 1949 J.G. Bow wrote an article for *TBE* on the subject of "What a Church is in the Light of the Word of God." He said:

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.⁵⁷⁵

In 1944 Bro Gilpin wrote an article entitled: "How can one distinguish a Scriptural Church?"⁵⁷⁶ His answer does not mention a mother church!

Here let me suggest that anyone who believes Bro Gilpin held to EMDA and published this position in *TBE* before 1950, give us references. We do not believe this can be done. I could not find a single reference of the essential of a 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!

APPENDIX III.

Did Brother Roy Mason Change His Position on Church Constitution?

Another strong advocate of EMDA was Bro Roy Mason.⁵⁷⁷ I first met Bro Mason in 1964 and was blessed by his preaching and his messages in *TBE*. His book *The Church That Jesus Built* is a standard among Baptists. Did Bro Mason always believe in EMDA? Bro Cockrell says: "Any person who alleges that either of these two men⁵⁷⁸ did not believe in a link chain of Baptist churches has knowingly and deliberately

⁵⁷³ *TBE*. July 6, 1940, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁴ *TBE*. March 4, 1944, p. 1. Note. One can hardly imagine Bro Gilpin making a statement like this in the sixties or seventies.

⁵⁷⁵ *TBE*. February 12, 1949, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁶ *TBE*. February 12, 1944, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁷ See Bro Mason's articles on this subject in, *7 Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*.

⁵⁷⁸ I.e., Roy Mason and John R. Gilpin.

misrepresented these old brethren.” But the question here is not did Bro Mason believe EMDA in 1964 but did he always believe it? I do not believe so.

Bro Mason wrote *The Church That Jesus Built* in 1923⁵⁷⁹, and when he deals with perpetuity he says not one single word about EMDA but he quotes the very authors who (it is now admitted) did not teach EMDA⁵⁸⁰ to define what he meant by church perpetuity! He quotes J.B. Moody:

2. Baptist do not claim perpetuity upon the basis of a successive and unbroken CHAIN OF BAPTISMS.....

3. Baptists do not claim perpetuity upon the basis of a chain of CHURCHES succeeding each other in the sense that kings and popes succeed each other.⁵⁸¹

Bro Mason then says:

What then is meant by perpetuity as used by Baptists? It will not be amiss for me to quote two or three well-known Baptists who have given this subject more than ordinary attention. In the writings of S.H. Ford, LL.D., of honored memory we find these words:

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

Here one learns that S.H. Ford's idea of perpetuity was not that of EMDA! And this is quoted by Bro Mason with approval. Ford expressly denies EMDA.

Finally Bro Mason quotes Bro Jarrel:

All that Baptists mean by 'church succession' or church perpetuity is: there

⁵⁷⁹ Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*. No date. See the introduction. Dr. J.W. Jent says the first edition appeared in 1923, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 16- 17. Bro Cockrell quotes Jarrel and says he has three ways to start a church (which is not true). But he does not quote Ford or Graves on how to constitute a church as does Jarrel. Why not? These quotes could not be missed in Jarrel's book and they are diametrically opposed to EMDA. Cf. W.A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1-3.

⁵⁸¹ Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 9. Bro Mason gives no reference but the quote is taken from J.B. Moody's *My Church*, p. 132.

⁵⁸² Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 10. Bro Mason does not identify his source, but he is here quoting from W.A. Jarrel's *Baptist Church Perpetuity or History*, p. 1.

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.⁵⁸³

It seems impossible for Bro Mason to quote a statement by Jarrel on church succession (which does not line up with EMDA in any sense), and yet mean to teach EMDA! This would mean that Bro Mason did not understand what Jarrel was saying as Bro Cockrell and others do! Jarrel's position denies EMDA.⁵⁸⁴

In June of 1948 Bro Mason wrote an article for *TBE*, "How New Testament Churches should be Organized To be Scriptural as to Practice."⁵⁸⁵ In this article he asks: "How should a church be organized?" His answer is:

It should be an independent, self-governing church, recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head. 'Headquarters' should be in heaven....The New Testament Plan of Organization. Each church, separate, independent, self-governing. (No church or group in N.T. times interfered with another church.)⁵⁸⁶

There is not only not a word of EMDA in this article, but it is diametrically opposed to it! How could anyone read EMDA into Bro Mason's statement? This is in agreement with self constitution as taught by Graves, Jarrel and others. Does this indicate a change of position from what Bro Mason believed and wrote in the sixties? I think it does.

Now these quotes from Bro Mason are not agreeable with the position of EMDA. EMDA advocates do not like these quotes and will not use them. In *7 Questions As to Church Authority*⁵⁸⁷ Bro Mason's answer in question number five seems at odds with what he wrote in his book in 1923. I think there is good reason to believe he changed his view between 1923 and 1964.⁵⁸⁸

APPENDIX IV

DID ARMITAGE WRITE ABOUT EMDA?

⁵⁸³ Op. cit., p. 10. This is a quote from Jarrel's *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁴ W. A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁸⁵ *TBE*. June 5, 1948, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ This booklet was from questions sent to *TBE* in 1964. It was published in 1966. See the Preface by Bro Gilpin.

⁵⁸⁸ *7 Questions and Answers as to Church Authority*. *The Baptist Examiner*, 1966. The articles from which the book is taken appeared in *TBE* in 1964. Cf. Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and The Baptists*, p. 103, where Bro Ross quotes a personal letter from Bro Mason on this subject: "I think you have the right idea of the thing that I try to express in my book- the continuous existence of churches, rather than the linked-chain theory." Sept. 1, 1964.

The statement of Armitage in his *History of the Baptists* concerning a *mother church*, is thought by some to be a reference to EMDA. Armitage says:

THAT CHRIST NEVER ESTABLISHED A LAW OF CHRISTIAN PRIMOGENITURE BY WHICH HE ENDOWED LOCAL CHURCHES WITH THE EXCLUSIVE POWER OF MORAL REGENERATION, MAKING IT NECESSARY FOR ONE CHURCH TO BE THE MOTHER OF ANOTHER, IN REGULAR SUCCESSION, AND WITHOUT WHICH THEY COULD NOT BE LEGITIMATE CHURCHES.

Those who organized the churches in apostolic times went forth simply with the lines of doctrine and order in their hands, and formed new churches without the authority or even the knowledge of other churches. Some of these men were neither apostles nor pastors, but private Christians. Men are born of God in regeneration and not of the Church. They have no ancestry in regeneration, much less are they the offspring of an organic ancestry. The men who composed the true Churches at Antioch and Rome were 'born from above,' making the Gospel and not the Church the agency by which men are 'begotten of God.' This Church succession figment shifts the primary question of Christian life from the apostolic ground of truth, faith and obedience, to the Romanistic doctrine of persons. and renders an historic series of such persons necessary to administer the ordinances and impart valid Church life. How does inspiration govern this matter? 'Whoso abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any man cometh to you and bringeth not this teaching receive him not.' Pure doctrine, as, it is found uncorrupted in the word of God, is the only unbroken line of succession which can be traced in Christianity. God never confided his truth to the personal succession of any body of men: man was not to be trusted with the Custody of this precious charge, but the King of the truth has kept the keys of the truth in. his Own hand. The true Church of Christ has ever been that which has stood upon his person and work....⁵⁸⁹

What is Armitage referring to? Some men have asked me if Armitage was here writing against EMDA as a tenant of Landmarkism. I do not believe this is possible for the following reasons.

His terms are opposed to EMDA. He says, all in caps:

⁵⁸⁹ Armitage, *The History of The Baptists*, vol. 1, p. 3.

That Christ never established a law of Christian primogeniture by which he endowed local churches with the exclusive power of moral regeneration ...

Armitage is clearly describing those who believed regeneration was essentially connected to the church!

2. No EMDA advocate (so far as I know) believes a *church is endowed with exclusive power of moral regeneration!* Do they not know what their own position is? How then can they claim this has reference to EMDA unless they take the position no one can be regenerated who is not a member of one of their churches! EMDA advocates have gone a long way from the truth, but I was not aware they had gone this far!

Armitage seems to mean that no church has the power to bring about regeneration as Romanism claims it does. Notice he says: "Men are born of God in regeneration and not of the Church."⁵⁹⁰ No Baptist ever believed this! But Roman Catholicism holds to this position and Armitage makes this clear when he says:

The men who composed the true Churches of Antioch and Rome were 'born from above,' making the gospel and not the Church the agency by which men are 'begotten of God.'⁵⁹¹

Again he says:

As it is not a Gospel truth that Christ has lodged the power of spiritual procreation in his Churches, so it is not true that all who come not of any given line of Church stock are alien and illegitimate.

4. The EMDA doctrine had not been developed at the time Armitage wrote, at least among Baptists! No EMDA advocate has ever produced a single Baptist document which sets forth EMDA at this early date. It seems unlikely that Armitage is describing a tradition not then developed.

5. No Landmarkers at this time⁵⁹² held to EMDA.

6. Armitage certainly knew what Landmarkers believed and not one of the leading men of the Landmark movement believed in EMDA! Consequently, it is unlikely that a man as learned as Armitage would attribute to Landmarkers a doctrine which

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹² Circa 1886.

he knew they did not believe.

7. He does not mention Landmarkers nor any other particular group except Catholics in this chapter. Those who say he is referring to Landmarkers must come to this position without any direct evidence.

8. When he does discuss J.R. Graves and Landmarkism, he is far from being caustic or censorious as others have been. He says:

Dr. Graves is endowed with marked qualifications for an editor. As a writer and speaker he is remarkably direct and copious, like all men in downright earnest, infusing his spirit and principles into the mind of his constant readers and hearers. Restless and aggressive, his pen is ever busy, not only as an editor, leaving his own stamp upon his paper, but as an author his works teem from the press perpetually in the form of books and pamphlets. His life has been devoted with quenchless zeal to the cause of higher education, and the literature of the Southern Baptist Sunday-School Union and Publication Society has been built up chiefly under his untiring labors. In the South and South-west the 'Baptist' is an indisputable power in the advocacy of the most pronounced Baptist principles and practices.....He [Graves] has been its vigorous editor in an unbroken connection for forty years, and stands at his post, at nearly three score and ten, the unfaltering advocate of the old landmarks of Baptist life, decided and distinct in all its denominational trends and interests.⁵⁹³

But, if, in spite of these facts, Armitage was writing specifically about Landmarkism and claiming Landmarkers held to EMDA, he was certainly wrong, just as wrong as Robert Ashcraft, Bob Ross, Milburn Cockrell, Tom Ross, Patterson, Tull and Barnes are, who all attribute EMDA to the old Landmarkism, yet not one of them has ever produced a quote of Landmarker who believed this doctrine!

The organic succession and the mother church of which Armitage wrote were tied to the mother church connection of Roman Catholics. It was a church which had regeneration under its control. Those who embrace EMDA are welcome to all the comfort they can find in Armitage. If this is EMDA which Armitage described, then it is a greater blight than I first thought it to be!

APPENDIX V.

"DYERSBURG, TENNESSEE TO JERUSALEM"

⁵⁹³ Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, vol. II, p. 884-5.

Just as Roman Catholics say they have a list of popes all the way back to Peter, some EMDA⁵⁹⁴ 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 give here 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*, p. 39.
- Link Four. Lima Piedmont church ordained Aaron Arlington in 940. See Jones' Church History, p 324.
- 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. Andromicus 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, pa. 318.
- Link Eleven. Turan church was organized by Tertullan from Bing Joy, Africa, A. D. 237. See Armitage's Church History, p. 182.
- Link Twelve. Tertullan 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

594 EMDA, i.e., Essential mother daughter authority.

In October, 2004 while I was with Bro Royce Smith in a Bible Conference in Choctaw, Oklahoma, he took me to the Southern Baptist Convention Headquarters in Oklahoma City. They have the bound volumes of *The Baptist Messenger* in their library and they allowed me to examine them. 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.⁵⁹⁶

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.

This *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list has been adopted, edited, amended, and adapted by several different churches and church groups⁵⁹⁷ since it first appeared in 1922 and was made famous by Bro Roy Mason's book.⁵⁹⁸ He says it also appeared in other papers about this time. Some competent 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

595

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.

596 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.

597 A wide variety of churches and denominations use this list for their own purposes. I have seen the following different churches use this list: Sovereign Grace Baptist Churches, ABA Baptist Churches, Middle Tennessee Baptist Churches, Primitive Baptist Churches, and Bible Churches. 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."

598 Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*.

without basis in fact.⁵⁹⁹

Is the *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list a fact or a fiction? Is it verifiable? I too 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. For the source it gives Armitage's *History of the Baptists*, p. 181. This reference is there and on the right page (the only reference in this list that I have been able to locate) but the things attributed to Tertullian are actually referring to Hippolytus!⁶⁰⁰ The unknown author transposes the information about Hippolytus to Tertullian!⁶⁰¹ Note that Armitage says it is the church at *Pontus* not *Partus*,⁶⁰² 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 seemed to think. No river has a *foot* so far as I know. The *Tiber* is in Italy, not in Africa, which was Tertullian's field of labor.⁶⁰³ 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 information given by Armitage concerning these two men thereby sending a clear signal that he was not a safe guide.

Yet, in spite of this significant error which cannot be reconciled with the facts, preachers and churches continue to publish this list!⁶⁰⁴ I believe some men have recognized the problems in this list and have tried to *fix* them as there are several versions of it. Some have changed the names. Some have changed the references. Some the dates—but no matter what they do they cannot find the quotes referred to in these various books! Some have edited and adapted it to try to make it more acceptable.⁶⁰⁵ Why were these changes made? Did those who made these changes have sources to

599 Cf. Davis Huckabee. *Studies in Church Truth*, p. 660; Douglas Moore, *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*, p.10-12 .

600 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. Also Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, pp. 95-98.

601 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."

602 Huckabee's copy has *Partos*. Davis W. Huckabee. *Studies in Church Truth*, Links iv & v, p. 659.

603 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.

604 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) as to whether it was reliable. He asked if the man had checked the references. He had not but said he would. This un-named man then wrote him a letter and stated in that letter, that these quotes were not there. A year or two later, this same man published this list as a history of his church!

605 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.

verify these changes?

J.B. Jetter is said to have organized the church in Dyersburg, Tennessee.⁶⁰⁶ Who was Jetter? Or was it Jeter? Some have changed *Jetter* to *Jeter*.⁶⁰⁷ 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 1812.⁶⁰⁸ J. B. Jeter was born in 1810 so it seems unlikely that he could have founded a church in Tennessee in 1812!⁶⁰⁹ Where does *Jetter* appear? He is not mentioned in the published minutes of the Philadelphia Association,⁶¹⁰ 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 the church at *Dyersburg*, Tennessee and that Jetter (or Jeter) organized this church is all made irrelevant when it is remembered,⁶¹¹ that the ministry of Graves, Hall and Scarboro, did not begin until long after this church was said to be constituted.⁶¹² Who made these changes? On what authority?

Another error in this list is reporting that the Hillcliff church is in Wales.⁶¹³ Actually the Hillcliff church was in England. The reference to the church at Hill Cliff being in Wales is certainly incorrect as Kenworthy informs us. The Hill Cliff church was near Warrington, which is just a few miles east of Liverpool⁶¹⁴ 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.⁶¹⁵ I have examined both of these references and find nothing in either source to support this contention. But at any rate, it is an easy

606 Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110. Link # 1. The original list (Oklahoma Messenger, 1922) had *J.B. Jetter* and *Dyersburg*.

607 I am convinced the original author of this list meant *J.B. Jeter* instead of *J.B. Jetter*. This would be natural due to J.B. Jeter's fame as an author and editor. Cf. Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*. But I wonder if those who made this change verified it from the original? Did they just assume the compiler meant J.B. Jeter? It is possible someone may have found Jeter's name in church records of Dyersburg and so have made this change. See next footnote.

608 Link 13. Elder J.B. Jeter, from the Philadelphia Association organized the Baptist Church at Dyersburg, Tennessee in 1812. "Minutes of Tennessee 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 Association. The date of Jeter's birth (July 18, 1802) indicates this reference is in error.—JC. Cf. Hatcher. *Life of J.B. Jeter*, p. 18.

609 William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Art. Jeter, p. 600-601.

610 The published minutes of Philadelphia Association are from 1707 to 1807.

611 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.

612 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.

613 Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 95, Link five; Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, Link two, p.110.

614 James Kenworthy. *History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliff*, p. 5, 13, 41, 46. Ch. Hist. Research & Archives reprint, 1987. Gallatin, TN .

615 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 95, Link 5.

thing to locate Hillcliffe on a map and it is not in Wales.

The quotes made in the *Dyersburg to Jerusalem* list also indicate this list is a hoax. Take the quote from *Jones History*.⁶¹⁶ Why is no volume number given to Jones History, which is usually a two volume set? Why can't this reference be found? Does Jones ever mention *Aaron Arlington*? The reference in Jones remains as illusive as Atlantis. Bro Moore says: "That statement does not appear on page 324, or anywhere else in *Jones' History*."⁶¹⁷ He also says:

Of the histories I have been able to check, not one 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.⁶¹⁸

I am aware of the argument that there are different editions of Jones and this is the reason the quotes appear to be incorrect. It is Bro Moore's testimony that not one of these quotes for links 1, 2, 3, 4, and 11 are valid!⁶¹⁹

What about the quote from the *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association*? What is *book three*?⁶²⁰ It is interesting that one of the lists given in *Scriptural Church Organization*⁶²¹ 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 or J.B. Jeter in the published minutes of this Association. Nor does my edition refer to either *book* or *item* numbers.⁶²²

Another link which does not fit the evidence is Link 10. "The Pontifossi⁶²³ 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*.⁶²⁴ It was written in 1922 and was only a brief treatment of 196 pages. The compiler refers to *volume two*, another indicator that the person who compiled this list was not reliable.

616 Roy Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, Link 4. "Lima Piedmont church ordained Aaron Arlington in 940. See *Jones' History*, p. 324."

617 Douglas A. Moore. *Old Landmarkism vs. The Pedigree Pushers*, p. 12: Link four.

618 *Ibid.*

619 *Ibid.*

620 A. D. Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707 to 1807*. The reference in the list is: *Book 3, item 1!* Cf. Link xi, Huckabee, *Church Truth*, p. 659; Mason. *Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110, Link 2; Cockrell, *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 96, Link 6. How is it that so many quote this without ever checking it?

621 Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p.95- 96, Link 6.

622 A. D.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.

623 The original list spells this name two different ways: *Pontafossi* and *Pontiffossi*, links 9 & 10.

624 Cf. Edward C. Starr. *A Baptist Bibliography*, vol. 17.

In Link five we have this statement: "Lima Piedmont Church was organized by Balcolao, A.D. 812. See *Neander's Church History*, Vol.2, p.320."⁶²⁵ 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? This is possible. But I do not believe Neander refers to this name, *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 Christmas day, 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 day⁶²⁶ with such a modern title⁶²⁷!

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 careless as in this case with Tertullian, everything is suspect. Thus in spite of this pretended historical array of quotes, the whole thing crumbles when examined. Most of the quotes cannot be found at all! The quotes in this list are simply not there! 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.⁶²⁸

Some of the men and places mentioned in this book are found no where else!⁶²⁹ In spite of the misinformation and bogus references in this list many men have published

⁶²⁵ Roy Mason. *The Church That Jesus Built*, p. 110.

⁶²⁶ 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.

⁶²⁷ Cf. Schaff. *History of the Christian Church*, vol. II, pp. 664-670.

⁶²⁸ Davis W. Huckabee. *Studies on Church Truth*, vol. II, p. 660.

⁶²⁹ 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; Lima Piedmont; Timto, Asia Minor; Darethea church; Pontafossi in France; Bing Joy, Africa.

this as a viable historical list of their own church history!

This raises the issue: was the list prepared as a mimic or merely by someone who was ignorant? Let that be as it may, we know from these facts, herein submitted, which any reader may satisfy himself about, the compiler has made false quotes. The list is a fraud, and those who use it perpetrate error. No church should publish this list until they can verify these quotes. But suppose, for sake of discussion, we accept every link 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 they only give him authority to baptize? Or were they more generous? Did they give him authority to constitute churches? Who said so? Where is this record found? Did they give him authority to give authority to this Association? 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 or a man transfer authority to an Association?** Did this authority apply retroactively to the churches already in existence in the Philadelphia Association? What about the churches constituted without EMDA⁶³⁰ 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 to these some forty churches⁶³¹ already in existence, but also retroactively to all the churches of this Association constituted long before? Of course that is impossible and the advocates of EMDA know it! This clearly demonstrates that even if this list were viable, it cannot help the EMDA argument.

It is a sham to put forth this list as a valid history of Baptist churches and I believe it greatly detracts from the real perpetuity of the Lord's churches.

APPENDIX VI.

TERMS

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 and as

⁶³⁰ Self constitution as opposed to EMDA was the method used by this Association. Cf. Chapter 10, and Gillette's Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, pp 18, 23. Also Griffith's *Treatise*, quoted in Dever's *Polity*, p. 95.

⁶³¹ A. D. Gillette. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association from 1707 to 1807*, American Baptist Pub. Society, 1851. Baptist Book Trust Reprint, 1976. p. 447-449.

found in Baptist History. In many cases I could find no definition of these terms in Baptist History 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 the other 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.⁶³²

Authority. "The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge. One that is invested with this power"⁶³³ 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 commanded the church to carry out His commandments but the authority still belongs to Him. All the "authority" any church has pertains to those who are or who wish to become members. This authority is given to disciples who are in gospel order directly by the Lord Himself when they covenant together according to Mt. 18:20. Where the membership of a church ends, there their power to command, determine or judge, ends. No church can project authority beyond its own members.

Branch. A *branch* is a company of the members of a church that hold meetings elsewhere, but are not regularly organized into a church.⁶³⁴ It is synonymous with *Arm*.

⁶³² Cf. Wendell Holmes Rone. *A Short History of the Davies- McLean Association*, 1968, p. 126 a.

⁶³³ Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed.

⁶³⁴ Robert I. Devin. *Hist. Of Grassy Creek Church*, P. 75, 1977 reprint.

I believe this practice is unscriptural.

DVA. Direct Vertical Authority. Cf. *Divine Authority*. This term is used by some for self constitution or Divine Authority for constitution.⁶³⁵

Divine Authority. *Divine authority* means the authority comes from the Lord Himself directly. 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."⁶³⁶

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, they exercise but the assumption of others is an unauthorized usurpation."⁶³⁷ 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 another church to constitute than it can authorize another church to ordain, baptize, or settle church trouble.

Church essential. A Church essential, refers to "so many as may act properly and orderly as a church, Mt. 17:15-17."⁶³⁸

Constitution. " 1. The act or process of composing, setting up, or establishing. 2. The composition or structure of something."⁶³⁹ In reference to a church this term means the beginning of a church.

Divine constitution. This term refers to the work of Christ in conferring upon a sufficient number of disciples church status. Christ personally confers the church state upon each new church directly by His exclusive power. This power comes from Christ directly and is bestowed whenever there is a sufficient number of disciples in gospel order, who gather together in Christ's name in covenantal union according to Mt. 18:20 for this purpose. 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,

⁶³⁵ 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

⁶³⁶ 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 the church. Cf. D.B. Ray. *Baptist Succession*, p. 10.

⁶³⁷ Mark Dever. *Polity*, p. 328. Dever is here quoting J. L. Reynolds from his *Church Polity*.

⁶³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁶³⁹ Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed.

and others, that there is an essential authority which must be given by a *mother 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. Thus it is taught 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 4.

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. Such churches receive these members by proxy and carry these *members* on their roles by proxy and letter them out by proxy! The church does not even *know* these members nor do these 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. 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!

Helps. *Helps* has two different meanings. 1. *Helps* has reference to those in a church who rule.⁶⁴⁰ 2. *Helps* may also refer to assistance given to individuals or churches. Due to its nature it conveys no authority. *Helps* refers to *assistance* given by churches, to churches, associations or to those who wish to compose a church, for the purpose of constitution, ordination, settling church trouble, advice, meetings or other gospel endeavors. *Helps* does not convey authority nor is it requested as authority but 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

640 B.R.White. *Association Records of South Wales to 1656*, p. 11.

essential. This term seems to be taken from 1 Cor 12:28.

Join. "to put or bring together so as to form a unit."⁶⁴¹ 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."⁶⁴² This is what disciples do when they unite with a church.

Gospel order. *Gospel order* means to do things according to the gospel. J.L. Reynolds puts it this way:

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' Supper.
6. That 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.⁶⁴³

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

⁶⁴¹ Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed.

⁶⁴² Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words: Join.

⁶⁴³ J.L. Reynolds. *Church Polity*, 1849. Quoted in Dever, *Polity*, p. 336.

ordinances of such churches are invalid and their ministers are not ordained.⁶⁴⁴

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 another 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."⁶⁴⁵ This term is equivalent to *organic church succession*.

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.⁶⁴⁶

Organism. This term is applied by many 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 a church is a living organism just as is 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 of exactly the same kind and in the same way. 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.⁶⁴⁷ The problem with this analogy is that churches do beget churches quite unlike themselves, sometimes willingly, sometimes unwilling. The Primitive Baptists came from Missionary Baptists, or if the reader prefer, vice versa. The Seventh Day Baptists came from the Particular Baptists. Are they the same? There are many other examples. The analogy is flawed.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. J.R. Graves. *Old Landmarkism*.

⁶⁴⁵ W. A. Jarrel. *Baptist Perpetuity*, p. 2, 3.

⁶⁴⁶ Cf. W. A. Jarrel's *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Davis Huckabee. *Church Truth*, vol. II, p. 661.

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.*”⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Link chain succession.

Positive institution. Positive law. All the **essential** laws relative to the constitution of a church, or its ordinances are positive institutions or laws. The Positive Law is contrasted with the 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 positive law unless it is revealed. 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.⁶⁴⁹ 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 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 comes directly from Christ 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 every one 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

⁶⁴⁸ W.A. Jarrel. *Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 2, 3.

⁶⁴⁹ Cf. *Polity*, p. 364; J.R. Graves in A.C. Dayton's *Alien Immersion*, p. vi; Davis Huckabee, *Studies on Church Truth*, Vol. I, p. 174-175.

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.⁶⁵⁰

Succession. See *Perpetuity* also. *Succession* and EMDA are not the same thing but are often used interchangeably by EMDA writers. *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* 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* may, but does not always, mean 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*.⁶⁵¹

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 and 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*⁶⁵² 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 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 a covenanting together (In my 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 VII.

Church Definition by Baptists

⁶⁵⁰ A.C. Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, Vol. II, p. 115.

⁶⁵¹ For example, Cf. Spencer. *History of Kentucky Baptists*, Vol II, p. 18 with 655-656.

⁶⁵² Cf. *Liddell & Scott* on καλλω.

A church definition which does not include the essentials of a church is a faulty definition. No definition of a church by any Baptist writer that I have ever seen gives EMDA as a part of the definition. 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.⁶⁵³

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.⁶⁵⁴

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 together by consent, yet we think not complete without a minister.'⁶⁵⁵

Hezekiah Harvey

A church, therefore, is a permanent organization with a definite design and a mutually obligatory compact; and it differs from an ordinary assembly of Christians in that it is organized under a divine constitution and according to a divine model.⁶⁵⁶

A Church is a Congregation of Believers in Christ, Baptized on a Credible Profession of Faith, and Voluntarily Associated Under Special Covenant

⁶⁵³ S. H. Ford. *Christian Repository*, 1899.

⁶⁵⁴ Luther Rice Burress. *Baptist Refreshments*, p. 24-5.

⁶⁵⁵ L. B. Hogue. *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 194.

⁶⁵⁶ Hezekiah Harvey. *The Church*, p. 36.

For the maintenance of the Worship, the Truths, the Ordinances, and the Discipline of the Gospel.”⁶⁵⁷

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.⁶⁵⁸

Broadmead Church, Bristol. 1640 – 1687

Mr. Canne published in 1632, at Amsterdam, “The Way to Peace, &c., at the reconciliation of certain brethren, between whom there had been former differences.” He calls himself “Pastor of the ancient English church in Amsterdam,” in 1634, when he printed “A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England,” which, probably, is the book referred to. 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 standing under any other ecclesiastical authority out of itself.”⁶⁵⁹

John Smyth

A visible communion of Saints is of two, three, or moe Saints joyned together by covenant with God & themselves, freely to use al the hooy things of God, according to the word, for their mutual edification, & God’s glory.....This visible communion of Saints is a visible Church.⁶⁶⁰

Dana

⁶⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 29..

⁶⁵⁸ Wayne Camp. *PPP*.

⁶⁵⁹ *The Hanserd Knollys Society*, 1847. Amsterdam, 1641, 12mo. pp.64. See also *Baillie's Dissuasive*, pp. 15, 107.

⁶⁶⁰ John Smyth as quoted in James E. Tull, *Shapers of Baptist Thought*. Judson Press. Valley Forge 1972, p. 19. Original spelling retained.

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.⁶⁶¹

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.⁶⁶²

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.....

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."⁶⁶³

J. L. Reynolds

J.L. Reynolds wrote the book *Church Polity* while he was pastor of The Second

⁶⁶¹ Dana. *Christ's Ecclesia*, P. 169.

⁶⁶² A.H. Strong. *Systematic Theology*. Judson Press. 1907. P.890.

⁶⁶³ T.P. Simmons. *Systematic Study of Bible Doctrines*, p. 366-7.

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 self constituted as this quote will demonstrate:

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. Its nature as a voluntary society, involves the right to admit and to exclude. Primitive Christians constituted a voluntary compact; they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to one another; and were always addressed as those who had decided for themselves on the solemn subject of adherence to Christ.

The fundamental principles of Church discipline are laid down in Mt. 18:15-18. Here the Saviour enjoins the course to be pursued towards an offending brother, and designates "the Church" as the tribunal of ultimate appeal. 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.....⁶⁶⁴

Reynolds also tells how the church state comes upon a new church:

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.⁶⁶⁵

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

⁶⁶⁴ J. L. Reynolds. *Church Polity or the Kingdom of Christ* (1849) Quoted in Dever. *Church Polity*, p. 238-9.

⁶⁶⁵ J.L. Reynolds. *Church Polity or The Kingdom of Christ*. 1849. Quoted by Mark Dever. *Church Polity*, p. 395.

the world; recognizing no head but Christ, and no book of law but the Bible.⁶⁶⁶

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.⁶⁶⁷

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.⁶⁶⁸

James P. Boyce

If there are several persons at Abbeokuta, why cannot a church be formed? The building, the pastor, the deacons, are not essential to a church, but only two or three members.⁶⁶⁹

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.⁶⁷⁰

A.C. Dayton

And it can do all that, in the Scripture, is predicated of any Church of

666 B. E. Antrobus, *Baptist History*. p. 3. Crawfordsville, In. Fourth edition. 1932. Note: Antrobus was Chester Tulga's father in law-JC.

667 J.G. Bow, *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It*, p.20.

668 *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

669 John Broadus, *Memoir of James P. Boyce*, p. 292.

670 John T. Christian *History of Baptists*. I, p. 13.

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 own⁶⁷¹

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 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...⁶⁷²

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.'⁶⁷³

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

⁶⁷¹ A. C. Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, II, p. 158.

⁶⁷² J.R. Graves, *The First Baptist Church In America*, p. 170.

⁶⁷³ J.B. Cranfill, *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, p. 140.

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.⁶⁷⁴

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 Eastcombe completed the first century of its existence.⁶⁷⁵

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.⁶⁷⁶

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 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.'⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁴ Drapes, Edward, *Gospel Glory*, p. 144. 1649.

⁶⁷⁵ <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/GLS/Eastcombe/ebc-notes.html>

⁶⁷⁶ William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*. Church Records of FBC of Augusta, Ga. p. 49.

⁶⁷⁷ John T. Christian. *History of Baptists*, vol. II, p. 39.

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.⁶⁷⁸

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 another in the Lord, according to 2 Cor 8:5, and had a right hand of fellowship as a sister church...⁶⁷⁹

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.⁶⁸⁰

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,

⁶⁷⁸ J.J. Goadby. *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 215.

⁶⁷⁹ *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 16.

⁶⁸⁰ James Kenworthy. *History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe*, p. 83.

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.⁶⁸¹

Hanserd 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 of God, 1 Cor. 11:2; according to the faith and order of the Gospel, Col. 2:5.⁶⁸²

OBJECTIONS TO SELF CONSTITUTION

Valid objections are always welcomed by honest men because they 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.*⁶⁸³

The implication in 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

⁶⁸¹ Bob Ross. *Old Landmarkism and the Baptists*, p. 94; Francis Wayland. *Principals & Practices*, p. xxi, Note by Hinton.

⁶⁸² Hanserd Knollys, *Parable of the Kingdom*, p. 6. Electronic copy.

⁶⁸³ Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 6.

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.⁶⁸⁴

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.⁶⁸⁵

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 they do not have a human founder. 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 from a previously existing church, churches or associations. None of these various entities can constitute a church although they have often tried! Christ alone directly authorizes every true church. He promised to be in the midst of every church founded upon 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 stated 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.⁶⁸⁶ It seems quite evident from the 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*. This fact of history shakes the EMDA house like an earthquake and leaves them with cracks which make them wary to enter it, properly so!

⁶⁸⁴ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 975.

⁶⁸⁵ Op. Cit. p. 995.

⁶⁸⁶ "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 church, the elders could not be necessary in this work." J. H. Spencer. *History of Kentucky Baptists*, vol. I, p. 485.

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 with His authority— those so gathered are a church and they have Christ as their foundation. They are built upon the apostles and Christ is the chief cornerstone. You don’t need a mother church which is nothing but a man-made requirement but you do need Christ in the midst and 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, presbytery or elders, nor 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 in NT times without any direct connection with the first church. See Acts 8:31. There is not a single instance in the NT where it says **one church gave authority to start another church!** If this was an essential of church constitution, why did the Lord 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 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 mother churches. They are not said to be birthed. But they were *modeled*⁶⁸⁷ after the churches which were before them. They were *patterned after* these earlier churches. EMDA is not there unless injected into these accounts. The Thessalonians were “followers of the churches in Judea,”⁶⁸⁸ says Paul. They were not the daughters of the churches in Judea! They were not *given authority by these other* churches. 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 horse shoes on a buffalo!

⁶⁸⁷ The term is Graves’. Cf. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 992.

⁶⁸⁸ 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 same 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"⁶⁸⁹. Because of this churches can "beget" non-like things and they do. We hear of churches all the time which are not what their 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 "like begets like" but I can certainly think of a dozen or so churches off the top of my head which will prove *like does not beget like* 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 it 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 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

689 Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Tenth Edition.

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 keep from dealing with 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.⁶⁹⁰ Some boldly contend the text has nothing to do with Church constitution.⁶⁹¹ 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.⁶⁹² Did he himself join himself to this citizen or did someone else do it for him?

For those who wish to consider some other passages where the verb *συνάγω* is in the passive,⁶⁹³ I submit a few examples. Mt. 22:41; Acts 4:31; Acts 20:8. Take this last passage: “And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.” Would anyone claim that this was a case where authority by a mother church was given and a new church was established? Was this a meeting where those present were gathered together by someone else?

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 whole concept is fatally flawed and no one ever would have thought of it if not looking for an out.

Again look at Mt 22:41, “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them”. Perhaps these brethren will claim that the Pharisees got EMDA to meet from some source! Wuest translates: “Now the Pharisees, having been gathered together...” Of course all of this merely proves these brethren are grasping at straws. That some call

⁶⁹⁰ Cf. Milburn 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. This last book has 297 pages.

⁶⁹¹ BBB. Sept. 5, 2002, p. 1 .Mt. 18:20 by Ronnie Wolfe. Also Bro Wolfe had this article posted on his web site <http://www.firstharrison.org>

⁶⁹² Cf. *Vines Expository Dictionary*. P. 334, Article, *Join*.

⁶⁹³ Cf also: Re. 19:19; Mt 27:17.

this text a *powerful pretext*,⁶⁹⁴ while others say if it referred to church constitution, it would require at least six people to constitute a church, and then another says, “Oh, yes! It refers to church constitution but it is actually teaching EMDA”, demonstrates my proposition that these brethren are somewhat like the Ephesians were—somewhat confused!⁶⁹⁵

7. EMDA is given when a church grants letters. Or EMDA is given by the granting of church letters.

This objection is made 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 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 they did recognize it, then how is it that they never state this was what they meant and this is what they were doing when they granted letters for constitution? But if they did not know they were doing it, then how strange that for 1900 years churches should practice something essential for their very propagation but without even knowing what they were doing! This essential was unknown and unstated by them! Who can imagine such a thing?

But let me go further and insist there is not a single case in the NT of one 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 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.

Even when churches are expressly stated to be self-constituted, the EMDA brethren

⁶⁹⁴ Ronnie Wolf. BBB, Sept. 5, 2002, p. 1, Art. Matt. 18:20.

⁶⁹⁵ Acts 19:32. “Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.”

are able to come up with some artifice to inject their theory into that constitution! Concerning the case of the Welsh Tract church which was organized in Wales just before sailing for America,⁶⁹⁶ EMDA brethren claim that the **advice** given to this group was EMDA! Imagine, going before a judge and telling him that some one *advised* you to do something and claiming that *advice* was *authority*! “Officer, I was advised to drive sixty-five miles per hour in this forty-five miles per hour zone, and that gave me authority to do so”! What a fallacious position which needs, and will attempt to use, such a crutch!

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.⁶⁹⁷

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 a way? Under the EMDA umbrella these churches actually vote to baptize these non-resident candidates, receive them as members without ever seeing them, 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 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 that is about as invisible a church as any Protestant ever desired! 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 some one into a church in England! Is not this *ghosting of members* unscriptural?

Graves raised this very issue in his debate with Ditzler:

⁶⁹⁶ 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.”

⁶⁹⁷ Milburn Cockrell. CSO, p. 36.

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.⁶⁹⁸

The old Landmark Baptists were not agreed on the subject. Graves believed men were baptized into the home churches. 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 viable 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

⁶⁹⁸ J.R. Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 809. See also pp. 950, 816.

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.

699

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 self constitution camp. Either way, the difference does not help EMDA!

9. *What about the quote of B.H. Carroll from his Interpretation of The English Bible in SCO?*⁷⁰⁰

While this may sound like B.H. Carroll believed in EMDA I do not believe that is the case. I have not searched the records of the church or churches B.H. pastored, but I believe this quote is just a misunderstanding of what Carroll meant. 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 divine constitution. 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.⁷⁰¹

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. This is as good a statement of self constitution as one could ask for.

699 A.C. Dayton. *Theodosia Earnest*, vol. II, p. 150.

700 Cf. Milburn Cockrell. *SCO*, p. 92.

701 B. H. Carroll. *Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. 2, p. 243.

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], what has been gained? What about the young preachers who have been offended? Is it worth the division it has caused?*⁷⁰²

The proof of how these men constituted churches is found in their doctrinal statements on how to constitute churches and in the church records and these are in unity. They did not use EMDA. And they did not teach EMDA. This objection sounds like Jay Adams, who with all the scholars and lexicons of the world before him yet contends that *baptizein* means to sprinkle⁷⁰³ and reduces his credibility to zilch! I have given many quotes in this book which will verify how the old Landmarkers started churches. Nothing more needs to be said. If this mass of evidence does not convince someone, it is because they refuse to consider facts!

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 their mistake to be at fault for division and offences! Those who introduce tradition as doctrine but who cannot give a “thus saith the Lord” for their theories are those 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 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 the 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!⁷⁰⁴ Paul rebuked Peter for his dissimulation. Was it Paul's fault that Peter refused to eat with Gentiles as he knew

702 Personal letter to author Sept 27, 2000.

703 Jay E. Adams. *The Meaning and Mode of Baptism*. P. 5, note 6.

704 Matt 13:57; Mark 6:3; Matt 15:12.

he should have done?⁷⁰⁵ Did Paul do wrong for rebuking Peter's error?⁷⁰⁶ 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 and accuse them of offending young preachers!⁷⁰⁷

This objector also fails to realize the magnitude of the problem of introducing a tradition and making it into a doctrine! It is not we who contend for self constitution 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 making this innovation and then elevating it into essential doctrine! The one who points out error and who thereby causes division is not the cause of that division but those who introduce the error! You will notice that this objector almost admits their teaching is but a tradition, but pleads that it should be continued lest we cause division!

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. We read the various letters from the churches. 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 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 pastor**—not the Presbytery! The presbytery **cannot** do it! The assisting churches **cannot** do it! An association **cannot** do it! **The ordination is done by the church**

705 How could Peter have forgotten the sheet and the Holy Spirit falling on the household of Cornelius?

Acts 10:11, 28.

706 Gal 1:11-14.

707 Cf. Le 19:17;. Gal. 4:16.

and is just as valid without the other churches as it is with it! The church does not derive any authority from the elders present, from the churches represented, or from the presbytery's recommendation. This belongs to the church under Christ. And they, in calling for helps, neither seek nor gain authority from those who are present. The ordination belongs to the church. And the analogy for church constitution holds. In exactly the same manner a new church, 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* because Christ commanded it so.

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 the elders as representatives of other churches nor by letters from another church or churches, as they sometimes contend⁷⁰⁸ but rather it comes directly and vertically from Christ! EMDA makes church constitution to be God's *ratification* of what men have done on earth, whereas we believe it is God's *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 for a constitution?*

Now this is a good question. And this is a fact, as many church

708 Milburn Cockrell, *SCO*, p. 17,18.

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 the mother church for a constitution, that is, to be dismissed for this purpose. 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, or where several churches were involved, or where there was a division and the division was then recognized as a church.⁷⁰⁹ But we contend this was not an essential of church constitution neither in the eyes of those who were the actors nor in the historians who recorded these events.

13. *Self constitution makes Adventists and Campbellites true Churches.*⁷¹⁰

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 never claimed any. Yet, the Redstone Baptist Association received them without a hitch! Is it not then evident 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. The next thing 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!⁷¹¹ Why didn’t this Association of Baptist churches object to the fact that this church started without a mother church if it was an essential of Baptist polity? How was this possible if Baptists held to EMDA at this time? These questions will not yield to an arm-chair solution for our EMDA friends!

13. *Everybody agrees a church organized by another church is a*

709 Cf. Sidling Hill; Hill Cliffe; John Leland’s church & John Spilsbury’s church and *The Baptist Encyclopedia*.

710 Milburn Cockrell. *Scriptural Church Organization*, p. 48.

711 Richardson. *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, I. p. 367; *Baptist Quarterly Review*, vol. X, 1888,

pedia, p. 1091, Art.

p. 335.

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 the manner it was produced is right. If a Methodist preacher is admitted to a Baptist ordaining council, and the candidate is recognized and ordained by the church, does this mean that we should always admit 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 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. In the same way churches must know, and preachers must recognize, that constitution comes directly from Christ and not through a church. And it is no approval of the false system of EMDA if we recognize a church constituted in this improper way. The Philistines may haul the Ark on a cart but that does not mean the Israelites can do it that way!

14. 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 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.⁷¹² Many were put to death for this very thing.⁷¹³ 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 or existence before modern times. Thus no one can claim they receive this doctrine on faith because there is no record of it– in the Bible or in history! Instead of taking this on faith, they must take it on tradition– and a very late tradition it is!

⁷¹² Cf. John T. Christian. *Did They Dip?*

⁷¹³ Balthasar Hubmaier was burned at the stake and his wife drowned in the Danube. Torsten Bergsten. *Balthasar Hubmaier...*, p. 379. Cf. *Martyrs Mirror*.