

THE EMDA FRANCHISE

By
J.C. Settlemoir
Letter # 4

So anxious are some brethren to defend the EMDA tradition they will grasp any straw hoping to keep it afloat. One such straw is the franchise. But they not only fail to receive any benefit from this straw but it actually sinks them more rapidly! The example to which I refer was put forth by Bro Stang in Voice in the Wilderness, [Dec.2006. p.35. Col. 2. par. 3].

Bro Stang gives us some information on franchises and then compares this to church constitution. This is a case in point. Bro Stang says:

No man goes out to erect golden arches to sell hamburgers without first obtaining a franchise from the parent corporation. If a man were to do so he would be found to be operating without authority, would he not? Who would risk such a thing when naught but material wealth is all that's involved? [Dec. 14, 2006. p. 35. col. 1. par.3].

It is a wonderful thing when you can agree with an opponent and when his proposition devastates his position and all you have to do is point it out! This is the case here. I agree with Bro Stang. He is exactly right. But he totally failed to see how obtaining a franchise is absolutely contrary to his position! These brethren have such a fixation on EMDA they lose sight of everything else!

Bro Stang states the correct procedure of obtaining a franchise for a McDonalds and where you get it—from *the parent corporation*. But then he attempts to make a quantum leap from securing a franchise from headquarters to getting one from a local McDonald's and falls fatally!

No sane man walks into a McDonald's and as he orders his hamburger, tells the girl at the counter, I want to talk to the manager. When the manager comes over, says, I want you to give me permission to start my own McDonalds! This is what Bro Stang must contend for in order to apply the facts to EMDA! Is this true to life? Far from it!

What's wrong?

It is wrong because no franchise can be obtained in this way even if a McDonald's restaurant claims they have it and will *sell* it to you! It is wrong because franchise authority does not belong to any McDonald's restaurant no matter what someone tells you! No McDonald's can give you this authority! No local McDonalds claims to have this authority if they are honest! And if anyone was stupid enough to go into a McDonalds and give money for a franchise, he deserves exactly what he got—a rip off!

Well, where do you get the authority for starting a new McDonalds?

Brother Stang had it right—From *corporate headquarters*—but his obsession with EMDA prevented him from seeing the plain facts of the case! His whole argument is that as you must get a franchise to open a McDonalds so you must get authority to constitute a church! And this is true. But his problem comes about because he does not know where you have to go to get the authority to start a new church! You do not go to another church to get constitution authority! And this is exactly what we who teach self constitution have been saying all along. The authority for constitution of a church comes from **corporate headquarters not from another church!** This is what the Bible says, Mt. 18:20; this is what our forefathers said. This is what Baptist history says. But EMDA brethren poke their heads in the sand and refuse to look at the facts! They can't even see it when they have it in front of them as this example proves. They continue to try to get **a church franchise from another church!**

Corporate headquarters for the Lord's church is not on earth! It is not in Jerusalem, Rome, West Virginia or Kentucky! It is not in a presbytery! It is not in a missionary! It is not in a pastor. It is not in an ordained man! It is not in a church, papal, Episcopal, Methodist or Baptist! It is not in church letters! Nor is it in *churches*! A church which tells you that you must get this authority, the authority to constitute a church, from a church is just as fraudulent as a local McDonald's that tells you must get your **franchise** from one of their stores! You must get the franchise for McDonalds from McDonalds corporate headquarters and the church franchise from corporate headquarters in Heaven—that is from the Lord Jesus Christ!

No McDonald's store has such authority even if they tell you they do! And in the same manner no church has such authority even if they tell you they do! Any church which tells you it has this authority to constitute a church is trying to sell you a phony authority! The authority for the constitution of a church is in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ and He is in Heaven! No institution on earth has this authority now or ever did have it!

This authority has been in Heaven ever since the Lord Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives. Anyone who thinks he got authority to constitute a new church from the Lord Jesus Christ because some church told him "We give you this authority" is just as deceived as the man who bought a McDonalds' franchise with his biscuit and gravy!

But when you get authority from the Lord Jesus Christ through His Word, there is no question about it. The franchise comes directly from the Lord Jesus and He is careful to tell us how He gives this authority to those who are in gospel order:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt 18:20

This is the word of Him who has all authority in Heaven and earth! Mt. 28:18. He never gave His authority away as some now teach. The franchise for a church is available nowhere on earth. It is obtained only from Heaven. No human hand has it! No human

body conveys it! No institution controls it! No entity can provide it! Every church founded scripturally is founded *by* the Lord Jesus Christ and *on* the Lord Jesus Christ, I Cor. 3:11. True churches are built upon Christ Himself, not on another church, Eph. 2:20, and that building so founded grows into a holy temple. Each true church is a habitation of God through the Spirit, vss 21-22. Christ promised this power, this authority, to every group which He gathers together according to Mt. 18:20 and that power works in them unto His glory in the church, Eph. 3:20-21. This is true church constitution. This is the essence of real church perpetuity! Mt. 16:18.

So Christ alone is the one who *franchises* every church. He begins the work and the saints (so described) fellowship together in the gospel. What Christ begins He will perfect, Phil 1:5, 6.

Did your church get its franchise *from men* or *from Heaven*? This question will be hard for EMDA brethren to answer, Matt 21:25.