THE BENEVOLENT WORK OF THE CHURCH

A study of the divine limitations placed upon the church in its work of benevolence
What Is “Benevolence”? 

• Webster:

  – 1: disposition to do good. 2 a: an act of kindness. b: a generous gift.

• As it pertains to the work of the church

  – Caring for and relieving the physical wants and infirmities of the needy. (Ac.2:44-45) (Ac.4:34-35) (Ac.11:27-30)
What Is The Issue?

Is The Local Church Authorized To Render Benevolent Aid To...

OR...

Saints AND Those outside the Body of Christ

OR...

Saints Only
What Is The Issue?

We Agree That...

– We must have authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17)
– Benevolence is an authorized work of the church (Ac.11:26-30)
– There is a distinction between the individual’s role in benevolence and the churches role in benevolence (1Ti.5:16)
– The benevolent work of the church is limited (2Th.3:10)
What Is The Issue?

We Disagree On…

– **Who** the benevolent work of the church is limited to

Parallel

– Christian Church and Music In Worship
  - **Agree** worship is limited - (no sacrificing animals)
  - **Disagree on What** the worship of the church is limited to - (singing or instrumental music)
Every Action Of A Local Church Must Be Authorized

• (John 4:24)
  – "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

• (John 17:17)
  – "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
Every Action Of A Local Church Must Be Authorized

• **(Matthew 7:21-23)**
  
  "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"
Every Action Of A Local Church Must Be Authorized

• (2 John 1:9)
  – Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.
How Does The Bible Authorize?

• **Precept** (direct statement, or command)
  – (Mk.16:15-16) (Ro.7:2-3) (Ac.2:38)
  ~ Jesus (Mt.19:16-19) ~

• **Approved Example**
  – (Mk.16:20)(Ac.2:41,47)(Ph.4:14-18)(Ac.20:7)
  ~ Jesus (Jo.5:36) ~

• **Necessary Implication**
  ~ Jesus (Mt.22:31-32) (Mt.11:1-6) ~
How Does The Bible Authorize?

All authority is either...

• **General**
  - **INCLUDING** any thing, method, or means of execution that comes within the class or order of the precept, example or thing commanded.

  OR

• **Specific**
  - **EXCLUDING** every thing, method, or means of execution in the same order or class which is not particularly specified in the precept, example or thing commanded.
How Does The Bible Authorize?

All authority is either…

**General**  Or  **Specific**
1. Wood  (Gen.6:14)  Gopher
2. Lamb  (Exo.12:5)  Male
3. Make Melody  (Ep.5:19) In Your Heart
How Does The Bible Authorize?

All authority is either...

**General**  Or  **Specific**

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel”

(Mk. 16:15)

• When authority is **General**, we have liberty within the realm that is authorized
  – The command to go is **general** and thus we are at liberty as to how we go. We may walk, run, ride, fly or sail.
All authority is either...

**General** Or **Specific**

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15)

- When authority is **Specific**, we have no liberty within that realm, but are limited to the thing specified only
  - The command to preach the gospel is **specific** and thus we are limited as to what we may preach... the gospel “only”
“According To The Pattern” (He.8:5)

• “The Pattern”...
  – Consists of the Totality of God’s instruction on any given subject (Ex.25:9)

  – We must consider the totality of God’s instruction on any given subject to know we have arrived at the truth on that particular subject (Mt.4:6-7)
### “According To The Pattern” (He.8:5)

The N.T. “Pattern” for Salvation

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“According To The Pattern” (He.8:5)

- The NT Pattern For Music In Worship
  1. (Mt.26:30) “sung”
  2. (Mk.14:26) “sung”
  3. (Ac.16:25) “singing”
  4. (Ro.15:9) “sing”
  5. (1Co.14:15) “sing...sing...”
  6. (Ep.5:19) “singing”
  7. (Co.3:16) “singing”
  8. (He.2:12) “sing”
  9. (Js.5:13) “sing”
“According To The Pattern” (He.8:5)

• The N.T. Pattern For Benevolence

1. (Acts 2:43-45) “all who believed”
3. (Acts 6:1-3) “the disciples”
6. (Rom. 15:25-31) “the saints”
7. (1Cor. 16:1-2) “the saints”
8. (2Cor. 8:4) “the saints”
9. (2Cor. 9:1,12-13) “the saints”
10. (1Tim. 5:3-16) “she who… trusts in God”
The Local Church Is Authorized To Grant Benevolent Aid To Needy Saints

- **Precept** (*direct statement*) ~ (1Co.16:1-2)
- **Approved Example** ~ (2Co.8:1-4)
- **Necessary Implic.** ~ (1Ti.5:9-10)

– **Note:** We do not believe that you must have an “example” in order for a thing to be authorized. You may authorize by any **ONE** of the scriptural methods shown above.
We Have The Proper...

• **Authority** The Bible
  – (2Cor.8:1-4)

• **Agent** The Local church
  – “the churches of Macedonia”

• **Action** Benevolence
  – “the gift… of the ministering”

• **Subject** Saints
  – “to the saints”
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”? 

1. By first proving your proposition  
   – We have done that - *The church is authorized to render benevolence to needy “saints”* (Ac.11:27-30 among others)

2. Then, ask opposition to prove their prop. 
   – Must have the proper:  
     • Authority ~ Bible  
     • Agent ~ Local Church  
     • Action ~ Benevolence  
     • Subject ~ Unbeliever (non-saint)

3. If they cannot, then the “only” thing that was proven is the “only” thing authorized (1Th.5:21)
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”?  

Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

- **Music in Worship**
  - I can prove “sing” in worship to God (Eph.5:19)
  - Can you prove “play” in worship to God? (?)
  - Then it is “sing only”
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”?  
Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

• The Plan of Salvation
  – You can prove the necessity of “faith” in salvation (Eph.2:8)
  – I can prove the necessity of “baptism” in salvation also (Ac.2:38)
  – Thus salvation is by “faith”, but NOT by “faith only”
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”? 
Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

• The Plan of Salvation
  – I can prove “hear, believe, confess, repent, and be baptized” for the remission of sins (Ro.10:9-10,14) (Ac.2:38)
  – Can you prove “pray the sinners prayer” for the remission of sins?
  – Then it is “hear, believe, confess, repent, be baptized only” for the remission of sins.
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”? 

Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

• The Lord’s Supper
  – I can prove the L.S. on the “first day of the week” (Ac.20:7)
  – Can you prove any “other day”? (scripture?)
  – Then it is “first day of the week observance only”
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”?  

Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

• The Lord’s Supper Elements
  – I can prove “fruit of the vine and unleavened bread” (Lk.22:1-20)
  – Can you prove “Pepsi and Doritos” or “any other element”? ( ? )
  – Then it is “fruit of the vine and unleavened bread only”
How Do You Prove “Saints Only”? 

Examples of Proving an “Only” (“exclusive”) Proposition

• The Benevolent Work of The Church

  – I have proven “church benevolence” to “saints” (Ac.11:27-30)
  – Can you prove church benevolence to “non-saints” (?)
  – Then it is “saints only”
The “Specifics” of “The Pattern”

• In the Totality ("Pattern") of God’s instruction concerning church benevolence, God has “specified” saints as authorized recipients of a local churches benevolent aid.

• When we “hold fast” this “pattern of sound words”, and we are consistent in our application of specific authority, we are limited to saints as the “only” authorized recipients of church benevolence.
The Law Of Exclusion

• Whatever is not authorized is prohibited
  – (He.7:14) (Ac.15:24) (Mt.28:20) (2Jo.1:9)
    • The Bible does not specifically forbid the praying of “the sinner’s prayer” for the remission of sins - but it doesn’t authorize such!
    • The Bible does not specifically forbid a mechanical instrument of music in worship to God - but it doesn’t authorize such!
    • The Bible does not specifically forbid the church to render benevolent aid to non-saints - but it doesn’t authorize such!
When Is A Thing Sinful?

• When it is disobedience to positive law
  – (1Jo.3:4) (Ge.3:1-6)

• When it is an omission of what is commanded
  – (Js.4:17) (He.2:2)

• When it cannot be shown to be authorized - and thus is “lawlessness
  – (2Jo.1:9) (Mt.7:23)
Conclusion

• A church rendering benevolent aid from it’s treasury to a non-saint (one outside of Christ)...
  – Cannot be shown to be authorized by God
  – Is Sinful

• Is This Your Practice?
A study of the divine limitations placed upon the church in its work of benevolence