

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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WHAT THE CHURCH CAN AND CANNOT DO

#2

John Edwards

THE CHURCH CAN RELIEVE NEEDY SAINTS. In New Testament days, the church took care of the needs of its own members (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; 6:1-7), and sent to other churches with benevolent needs greater than their ability to relieve (Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9). This work of the church is very limited. There are some things an individual Christian can do that the church cannot do. A good example is: *“If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed”* (1 Tim. 5:16). Furthermore, there is no authority for the church to provide for the physical needs of non-Christians.

THE CHURCH CANNOT ENGAGE IN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES. Where is the Scripture authorizing the church to operate a business? 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 tells how the church gets the funds to do its work. Paul penned, *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the*

week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” In the absence of other teaching telling how the church is to get funds to do its work, this is the only authorized means of gathering money. By what authority do you collect money by business enterprises or other means?

THE CHURCH CAN ASSEMBLE FOR WORSHIP AND TEACHING. We are commanded to assemble together (Heb. 10:25). There are many references to the church being *“come”* or *“gathered together”* (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 11:17-18, 20, 33-34; 14:23, 26). As well as obligations of an individual nature, the word of the Lord enjoins upon us collective responsibilities. Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), praying (Acts 12:5; Phil. 4:6), teaching and preaching (Acts 11:26; 20:7), observing the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), and giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7) upon the first day of the week are authorized activities performed when the church assembles. The performance of these obligations necessitates a place, and since the Lord has not specified the place, the church is at liberty to provide any place expedient to the fulfillment of its duties. The church may not, however, provide for the accomplishment of other tasks

which the Lord has not enjoined upon her.

THE CHURCH CANNOT DISCUSS AND SETTLE POLITICAL ISSUES. The church of Christ is not a political agency. The discussion and settlement of political issues is not within the scope of the divine work of the church. God ordained civil government for that purpose (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

No man has the right to involve the church in any program of work other than that which the Lord has plainly authorized in the New Testament.

BAPTISM PREPOSITIONS

John Edwards

In grammar, a preposition is a word usually put before another to express some relation or quality, action or motion to or from the things specified. The prepositions connected with baptism show the place of baptism in the divine scheme of redemption.

“IN” THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. Jesus commissioned the apostles, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,*

and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt. 28:19). This the apostles did as Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5 all show. "In the name of" is equivalent to by the authority of. Baptism in any other name is without divine authority!

"FOR" THE REMISSION OF SINS. Peter preached, "Repent, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The function word "for" shows the object, aim, purpose of baptism — "the remission of sins." Baptism is no less essential than repentance for Peter connected repentance with baptism to indicate the same result — "the remission of sins." One can receive the remission of sins without being baptized, no more than one can receive the remission of sins without the blood of Christ (Mt. 26:28).

"BY" ONE SPIRIT. "By" is used to express agency or direction. We are baptized by the direction, or through the agency of, the Holy Spirit. "For **by** one Spirit are we all **baptized** into one body..." (1 Cor. 12:13). Matthew 1:22 mentions that

"which was spoken by the Lord **by** the prophet, saying..." The prophet was not the message, but the agency through which the message was directed. Even so, the Spirit is not the element of the one baptism, but the agency by which we are directed to be baptized.

"INTO" CHRIST AND ONE BODY. "For as many of you as have been **baptized into** Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into** Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3-4). This makes baptism essential to our being included in the things found in Christ (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Jn. 5:11). The same act that puts us into Christ puts us into the one body, "which is the church" (Col. 1:24). "For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**..." (1 Cor. 12:13). Thus, what is available to us in Christ is not found outside the church of Christ!

We plead with you "**in** the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt. 28:19), to be baptized "**for** the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), "**by** one

Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13), "**into** Christ" (Gal. 3:27) and "**into** one body" (1 Cor. 12:13), that the blessings and promises of the gospel may be yours.

SOME THINGS THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FALLING

Luke 8:13, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation **fall** away."

1 Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he **fall**."

Hebrews 4:11, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man **fall** after the same example of unbelief."

James 5:12, "...let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye **fall** into condemnation."

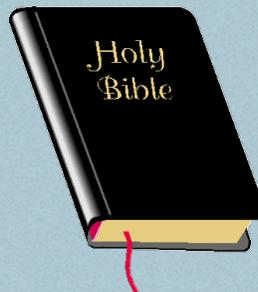
2 Peter 3:17, "...beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, **fall** from your own stedfastness."

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