

Those to Serve

(B) Jack Wall
(FV) Kyle Stifflemire
(O) Doug Pruett
(A) Vernon Houts
1st prayer Keith Stifflemire
2nd prayer Calvin Burks
Announcements: Mike Mallett
Singing: Kevin Grant



Eloisa Garza March 2nd
Koh Stapp March 12th
Dennis Sheldon March 30th

Dates to Remember

February 24th

Noon Fellowship

March 3rd

Mission Sunday

March 10

Day light Saving

March 17th

St. Patrick's Day

March 31th

Noon Fellowship

Prayer List:

Mike Lovell
Letha Sheldon
Ruby Jones
Loyd Crownover
Pray for our Nation
Our Troops
Law Enforcement
Rescue Personnel

Dear brethren:

As we begin 2019, the Parker family wants you to know how much we appreciate your support, and your fellowship with us in the furtherance of the gospel. We pledge to our God and to you that we will continue to diligently work to spread the gospel in this area, and wherever we have opportunity.

This has been a challenging work and location. Denominational error is surpassed by a great majority who are barely religious if at all. Still, we do have Bible questions directed to us, and visitors from time to time. This year we will be targeting again select areas of our zip codes with mailers. They are postcard-sized with an invitation to study and join us for Bible classes and worship assemblies. We will keep you posted on developments here. We won't give up on evangelistic efforts, and we continue to look for open doors for the gospel.

On a personal note, Hannah and the grandchildren are hoping to move back here soon from El Paso. Tammy had a medical procedure that went successfully. Preston (our son-in-law) continues his studies in law school and preaches some each month. I still "make tents" by teaching Criminal Justice at Palo Alto College, having just started my 15th year.

Again, our thanks. We love you all in the faith and give thanks for you continually.

Brotherly, Lynn Parker

Edifier

Evant church of Christ

310 W Brooks Drive

Evant, TX 76525

254-471-5705

February 24, 2019



Attending church services regularly is like making a path through the forest: the more often you use it, the less obstruction you find in the way."

Sunday Worship:

Will Vann, Preacher

9:30 am Bible Study

863-899-0987

10:20 am Worship

Email: wvann@yahoo.com

12:30 pm Afternoon

www.evantchurchofchrist.org

Wednesday Night

6:00 pm

Church Cooperation

Acts 15:22-35

Possibly the biggest contention between those that are in favor of supporting manmade institutions (orphans home, schools of preaching, etc), and those that oppose the practice is on the subject of church cooperation. What is meant by church cooperation is when two or more congregations financially support a single work where one of the congregations has the oversight. For example supporting a missionary through a sponsoring church. One of these preachers said of this, "There is no authority for a church or churches to send to another church or other churches to do the work of evangelism. Shall we follow the New Testament pattern or not?" When discussing this topic the two main arguments against churches cooperating in this way are, "it's the same as the missionary society," and, like what was just stated, "it doesn't follow the New Testament pattern."

I will briefly touch on the missionary society before delving into our topic of discussion. The missionary society was something that arose at the height of the restoration movement in the mid 1800's. To sum up what it is, imagine four congregations, let's call them A,B,C and D. All four congregations are part of a missionary society. The topic under discussion at the society is whether or not to send brother Jones to Africa as a missionary. The elders at congregations B,C and D tell the delegates that they send to the society to vote in favor of sending brother Jones. The elders at congregation A tell their delegate to vote no. The votes are three to one in favor so the elders at congregation A have to support this endeavor anyway.

Obviously there is something that is wrong with this arrangement. The missionary society has become an authority that stands in-between the local congregation and Christ. This nullifies the authority of the elders at the local church and eliminates their autonomy. The New Testament clearly teaches that an eldership has the oversight of the congregation that they are part of and no other ([Acts 20:28](#); [1 Pet. 5:2](#); [Heb. 13:7](#)). Comparing the sponsoring church arrangement, or other scriptural types of church cooperation, to the missionary society is comparing apples to oranges. Yes, they both involve multiple congregations and the transfer of money in the support of a work, but this is where the similarities stop. Where the the missionary society necessitates the surrendering of autonomy, the sponsoring church arrangement does not, no matter how much some may say that it does.

The second argument that is used is, churches cooperating financially in the support of an evangelistic work where one church has the oversight is that it doesn't follow the pattern set forth in the New Testament. I have stated before that one of the marks of this ideology is, everything has a pattern and there is a pattern for everything. Are there patterns found in the New Testament? Absolutely, there are! All one has to do is look at the plan of salvation to see this. Does this mean that everything that we are to do as Christians must follow a prescribed pattern found in scripture? This is hardly the case as we will see when taking a look at [Acts 15:22-35](#).

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There are two important things to take notice of when looking at this account. One, the church in Jerusalem sent men to work with the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia for the purpose of evangelism. It is reasonable to assume in doing this that the church in Jerusalem supported the men they sent at least until they arrived. I say that this is a reasonable assumption because of what Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 9:1-14](#). Only consider, he mentions Peter, the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord as those who, not only had the right to marry, but also refrain from working, i.e. receive support from the church without working a secular job. Coincidentally, this is the same group of people that sent Paul and the others to do this work. Again, it seems reasonable that the church in Jerusalem supported these men at least until their arrival at Antioch. Now if one church can send another manpower for the work of evangelism, could it not also send money in support of those men?

Second, the church in Jerusalem sent written materials to the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia for the purpose of evangelism. No matter how little it cost to provide one scrap of paper and a pen, there was some cost that was incurred. On top of that, there was also the, presumably, even greater cost of sending men to deliver this written material. This shows us that it is ok for one congregation to send written materials to another congregation for the purpose of evangelism. Imagine a tract on necessity for baptism for salvation. If one church could send another church one of these tracts, could they send 100? If it's not expedient to send them the tracts, would it be possible to send them the money to purchase the tracts? If not, why not?

Despite the truth of this, there are still those that preach against churches cooperating in evangelism. Now, to be fair, they would not demand that we follow a pattern without providing said pattern. Some claim that [2 Corinthians 8:13-15](#) shows us a pattern for scriptural church cooperation. It is claimed that these verses allow one church to provide for the benevolent needs of another church, but they cannot provide for the evangelistic needs of another church. We will not get into this argument for the sake of space, but it is really not necessary anyway because of what we read in [Acts 15](#). Not only does it not show an exclusive pattern it, like the rest of scripture, only ever speaks of how to carry out evangelism in general terms. A congregation may send men, it may send material, and by implication, it may send money for the procurement of either of these.

As we have done from the beginning, let's consider the end result of this doctrine. Imagine for a moment that you have two preachers, preacher A and preacher B. Preacher A decides to go and visit preacher B in his office at the church building. During his visit preacher A tells of a young couple that has been visiting the church where he preaches. As he is talking about them, preacher A remembers that preacher B has a really well written tract on the necessity of baptism for salvation and asks if he has an extra copy so that he can give it to the couple. Preacher B says that he has quite a few extras, but they were paid for by the church, so preacher A can't use them or they would be cooperating in evangelism. This is where false doctrine will lead us!