

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“where’s your authority for your water fountain?”

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Jesus was asked, “*By what authority doest thou these things?*”. He did not respond with, “I don’t have to establish authority for everything I do.” Instead, He said He would tell his inquirers of the authority behind His actions, if they first answer his question: “*The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men*” (Matthew 21:23-25). If what we practice cannot first be established as having the authority of heaven, then we do not have the authority for the practice.

So, where do you find in Scripture the church having a water cooler in the church building?

Because of the nature of God’s commands, there is “specific” authority that can be established, and there is “generic” authority that can be established with Heaven’s approval. If someone asks the question, “What kind of music does God authorize for the church to use in worship?” We appeal to God’s word and notice that we are to be “*speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19). The type of music God wants is specified as

“singing” characterized as “speaking to one another.” God has “specified” the type of music, so we have “specific” authority for our practice of just singing.

God commanded his apostles to “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...*” (Matthew 28:19). God’s command to “Go” is “generic” in nature. The apostles in carrying out the command to “go” would have “generic” authority for going by ship, donkey or foot. Because God did not “specify” how they were to go, any means of travel would all be authorized.

A conscientious person in the first century might ask, “Where is your authority for going to preach the gospel by donkey?”. Not able to establish “specific” authority for going to preach by donkey, does not mean he lacks God’s authority for his action. Why? Because God’s command to “Go” is “generic” in nature and therefore allows for various authorized actions in carrying out the command.

God commands Christians to not forsake their “*own assem-*

bling together” (Hebrews 10:25). We have an approved example of the disciples in the first century who “*gathered together to break bread*” on “*the first day of the week*” (Acts 20:7). So, assembling, or gathering together for worship is commanded and therefore authorized.

Since God has not “specified” “where” we should assemble, we could provide a building in which to assemble. Facilities connected with life’s necessities when assembled such as toilets in rest rooms and yes, water for those when assembled would also be authorized. These facilities have not added to, nor have they taken away from the command to assemble, but are provisions needed to help expedite carrying out the command to assemble. A “specific” command may not be found for a water fountain, but in the command to assemble, we have “generic” authority to provide such a facility.

Now, where is the authority for “song books”, “pitch pipes”, a “baptistery”, “overhead” and “slide projectors”, etc. ? I leave these questions for you to think through.