

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

ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN

John Edwards

God is a God of pattern. Whenever God gives man a pattern, He expects him to follow the pattern.

1) **THE ARK.** God’s plan for saving Noah involved building an ark. Genesis 6:14-16 shows God’s pattern for the ark. Noah built the ark according to the pattern as Genesis 6:22 records, *“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”*

2) **THE TABERNACLE.** When God’s people were to build the tabernacle, much emphasis was placed on building according to the pattern that God gave. Exodus 25:40 is a prime example as God said, *“And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”*

3) **THE TEMPLE.** There was a divine pattern to be observed as Solomon built the Lord’s house. David gave to Solomon the pattern and said, *“the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern”* (1 Chr. 28:11-19).

The New Testament contains God’s pattern for us

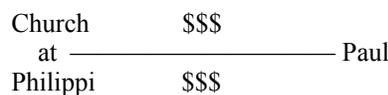
today. It is a perfect (Jas. 1:25), inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17), complete (2 Pet 1:3), and final (Jude 3) pattern. All things today must be done according to the pattern. Are you following the pattern?

THE PATTERN OF EVANGELISM

John Edwards

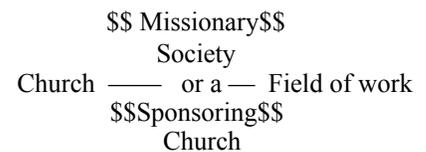
The primary mission of the New Testament church is to *“sound out the word of the Lord”* (1 Th. 1:8). There is a pattern to be observed in this work:

1) **THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.** A reading of Philippians 4:15-16 will show how the work of evangelism was done in New Testament days. Paul wrote the church at Philippi, *“no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”* The local church sent to Paul directly as the following diagram shows:



2) **NOT ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN.** Men, through

the years, have not been content with the Lord’s pattern as they have set up arrangements foreign to the word of God. A good example is the American Christian Missionary Society that had its beginning in 1849 in Cincinnati, OH, One Nation Under God in Cookeville, TN, in which at least 4,000 churches contributed to advertise the church in a comic strip, and Herald of Truth, a national radio/TV program sponsored by a church in Abilene, TX wherein a number of churches send their funds to preach the gospel on radio and television. It is beyond the scope of the pattern for the local church to turn its funds over to a human institution or a sponsoring church to do its work. If there is authority for such, where is the passage that authorizes it? Observe, from the following diagram, how these arrangements differ from the pattern.



What’s the difference, one might ask? The difference is that one is according to the pattern; the other is not. One is divinely authorized; the other is not. Does the church where you attend do evangelism according to the pattern?

THE PATTERN OF BENEVOLENCE

John Edwards

The Lord has given the church some responsibility in the area of benevolence. This writing calls us back to the New Testament pattern concerning the work of benevolence.

1) **THE CHURCH TO TAKE CARE OF ITS OWN.** By apostolic example, we learn that the local church is to take care of its own needy. Some good examples of this being done are found in Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 6:1-7.

2) **LIMITED IN SCOPE.** The Lord has limited the scope of the benevolent work of the church to those of the household of faith. In every case of benevolence, on the part of the church, we find it limited to “*saints*” (Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). There is no authority for the church taking money out of its treasury to provide for the physical needs of those who are not members of the body of Christ. If there is authority for such practice, where is the passage? This work

is further limited in 1 Timothy 5:3-16. There are some things that are not to be charged to the church.

3) **HOW THE WORK WAS DONE.** The New Testament pattern shows the work of the church in benevolence being done through the local church. In Acts 6, you have a case where the local church took care of its own needy. In Acts 11:27-30, you have a case where a church sent to another church that had a need greater than its ability to relieve. Men, though, have not been content with this benevolence pattern, as they have built and supported human institutions to do the work the Lord has ascribed to the local church. There is no authority for the local church to take money out of its treasury and send to support an orphan’s home, home for unwed mothers, or care center of some kind. If so, where is the passage that authorizes it?

The pattern of worship is clearly set forth in the New Testament.

1) **THE OBJECT.** God, the Father, is the object of our worship (Mt. 4:10; Rev. 22:9).

2) **THE DAY.** The “*first day of the week*” is set aside as the day of New Testament worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

3) **THE MANNER.** “*...in spirit and in truth*” (Jn. 4:24) is the proper manner of worship.

4) **THE ITEMS.** We worship God acceptably through preaching (Acts 20:7), singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (Acts 12:5), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and observing the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:23-34). To include a mechanical instrument, bead-counting, burning of incense, candle-lighting, and other acts that are not authorized in the New Testament, is to not worship according to the pattern! All worship that is foreign to the pattern of the Lord’s word is vain worship (Mt. 15:9).

THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP

John Edwards

The Terre Haute **SPEAKER** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

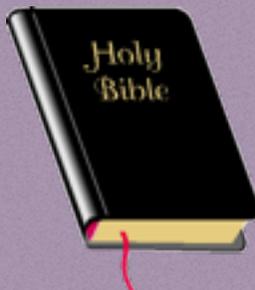
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