

Should the Church Support  
Orphan and Retirement Homes?

# Should the Church...?

- Is it lawful?
- Is it expedient?

# Caring for the Fatherless and Widows

- Four arguments FOR church support of orphan homes
- Four negative effects of church support of orphan homes
- The individual Christians responsibility towards the fatherless and widows

# Arguments for the Church Supporting Orphan Homes

1. The church can do any good work that its members can agree to do

# The Argument Examined...

- Can the church do any good work that its members can agree to do?
- No – 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Jn 9; Dt. 4:2; Heb. 8:5

# 1 Corinthians 4:6 ESV

I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that **you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

## Deuteronomy 4:2 ESV

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.

## Hebrews 8:5 ESV

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "**See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.**"



# Arguments for the Church Supporting Orphan Homes

1. The church can do any good work that its members can agree to do
2. The church is commanded to do this work

## James 1:27 ESV

27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to **visit orphans and widows in their affliction**, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

# The Argument Examined...

- Is the church commanded to do this work?
- No, individual Christians are – James 1:26-27

## James 1:26-27 ESV

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle **his tongue** but deceives **his heart**, this person's religion is worthless. 27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep **oneself** unstained from the world.

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3. Anything an individual Christian can do himself, the church can do collectively

# The Argument Examined...

- Is the church authorized to do collectively anything an individual Christian can do himself?
- No, an individual Christians clearly must do things that the church collectively must not do – Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:16

## Matthew 18:15-17 ESV

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, **between you and him alone**. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, **take one or two others along with you**, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

## 1 Timothy 5:16 NKJV

If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and **do not let the church be burdened**, that it may relieve those who are really widows.



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3. Anything an individual Christian can do himself, the church can do collectively
4. An orphanage or retirement home is equivalent to a Christian household in need

## Acts 11:28-30 NKJV

Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to **send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.** 30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

# 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 NKJV

- 1 Now concerning the collection **for the saints**, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:
- 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.
- 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

# An Orphanage is NOT a Christian Home...

- BECAUSE it is not Christian – the only truly Christian institutions are the church and the home, whose structure and operation are defined by the New Testament (Eph. 4:11-16; 5:22-6:4)

# An Orphanage is NOT a Christian Home...

- BECAUSE it is not a home – an orphan home is a dwelling for the residents and a workplace for the staff and volunteers, but it is not a home.

# An Orphanage is NOT a Christian Home...

- BECAUSE it replaces a Christian home – no orphan in a institution can be kept in a Christian home until they are released from the care of the institution

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# Negative Effects of Church Support of an Orphan Home

1. It converts the church's responsibility for an individual in need into a church's responsibility for an institution in need



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1. It converts the church's responsibility for an individual in need into a church's responsibility for an institution in need
2. It results in the institution, rather than the church, being responsible for key decisions that the church should be making

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3. It places the institution in the position of both soliciting for the support of a charitable need and soliciting for opportunities to increase that need

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4. It tends to replace and supplant the Christian obligation to visit widows and orphans in their distress

# Pure and undefiled Religion

James 1:27 - Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to **visit orphans and widows in their affliction**, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

# Do I Practice Pure and undefiled Religion?

- By helping the fatherless?
- By helping the widow?
- By keeping myself unspotted from the world?

# The Ross Family of Bowling Green, KY



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