

Information and Reminders—

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing health battles or other trials, and our brethren who are travelling.

The men meet on the first Sunday of the month to discuss our work and duties. There is a sign-up sheet at the back for items needing their attention.

We need your help—

Are you willing to help keep various Scriptures on our signboard, out by the road, for one month? Sign-up!

Are you willing to help prepare the Lord's supper for one month? Sign-up!
- Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board at the back.

Our articles appear in *Arkansas Weekly* every other week (June 5, 19). Many past and current articles are available at our website.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelist:
David Halbrook 569-4491

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

May 26, 2013

WWW.QVCOC.COM

WHAT IS A "CHURCH OF CHRIST-AFFILIATED" SCHOOL?

David Halbrook

Just a few decades ago, the controversy over whether Jesus approves of churches donating money to schools and colleges was widespread. That this issue exists today is evident by colleges hiring individuals to direct and maintain the college's relationship with churches (for example, Harding University has a Vice President for "Church Relations"). Today, some Christians do not know, or have any interest in knowing, the passages, principles, immediate spiritual consequences, and logical future consequences of this practice. Does it matter to you?

In short, the issue revolves around the subject of the oversight of the church. If this issue is unimportant, then no objection may be made to the organization of Catholicism and their worldwide overseer, called "Pope." Yes, it matters because Christ is the head, the Chief Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit appoints overseers who are assigned the work of shepherding (1 Pet. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28). Overseeing the church includes oversight of the funds of the church. When the church's funds are donated to another group of people, such as a grade school or college, oversight of those funds is passed on to other overseers. The problem is that God never gave elders the right to pass their oversight to other overseers.

God Has Not Joined Churches & Schools Together

Since discussion of this issue has been absent in many of the churches of Christ, the consequences of past decisions are showing themselves today. For example, private colleges and grade schools claim to be "affiliated with the churches of Christ."¹ This requires us to ask—How does a school become affiliated, or associated, with a church of Christ? Has God joined them together? No. In the past this has happened in at least two ways. First, some of the churches of Christ have donated money to private

¹ http://church-of-christ.org/schools/united_states/s_united_states.htm

schools (not owned or overseen by the church). Thus, the school is “associated” with the church, in the work of general education (math, science, American history, etc). Second, some churches have owned and operated schools of general education.

In the first scenario, churches turn oversight of their funds over to another group of overseers (the school’s board of directors or other administrators). This is sinful because God gave elders, not school administrators, the duty of overseeing the work and funds of the local church (1 Pet. 5:2). In the second scenario, churches who own or operate a school of general education sin by devoting the money and time of the church to work God never assigned to the church. The apostles and prophets were not sent or supported to train people in tent-making or science. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the church are not sent or supported to educate the world in the principles of farming or pharmaceuticals.

Christ gave the roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher to equip and edify the church to bring them into the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:11). General education brings no one to the unity of the faith. The church has no permission from God to oversee or fund this work. Fathers and parents are to “provide” (by overseeing and funding) general education, of whatever sort is needed. Parents who fail to do so are worse than unbelievers (1 Tim. 5:8). Churches who step into this role, burden the church with distraction and sin (1 Tim. 5:16). This has been practiced for decades. The result of this association, or affiliation, is that churches are partakers in activities that they have no permission from God to participate in.

May Churches Serve Schools Who Serve Elephants?

According to “church-of-christ.org” there are several schools in the United States that are “affiliated with the churches of Christ” (though the nature of affiliation is not defined). How does that happen? Who did Jesus appoint that decides which schools may or may not be affiliated with His church (either universal or local)? Since schools serve a purpose that belongs to the family and not the church, then no church of Christ has permission to offer or seal such associations or affiliations. When they do, consider what the church could then become involved in.

In May 2012, *The Christian Chronicle* reported on a “mission trip” made by Fort Worth Christian School (North Richland Hills, Tx). The caption title of a picture read “Christian school serves people, elephants in Thailand” and the caption reported of a “mission team, which included 20 students, from Fort Worth Christian School in North Richland Hills, Texas...” and that “Beside learning about elephant care and conservation, the team worked alongside Christians, served with ministries and experienced Thai life,” which included pulling weeds, harvesting red peppers,

cleaning out an illegal trash dump, and planting coffee alongside a ministry that serves opium addicts (pages 3, 8). May the church be affiliated with all of these things? May the church be associated with, oversee, or fund groups who send people “into all the world” to learn about elephant care and conservation?

To be fair and clear, **YES**, a school may educate children in pachyderm pampering and preservation of any sort and there may be value in that to society, but the church may not so educate or activate anyone. This is of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (Col. 2:23). And if a church oversees, funds, or is associated or affiliated with a school, they abandon the leadership of Christ in this area. Then, they end up being partakers in activities that stretch far beyond realm of activity where God placed the church (Eph. 4:11-13).

Be sure you understand, that I am not charging this school with sin for sending students to Thailand to take care of elephants or plant peppers. Whether any church participated in this trip, I do not know. That is not my point. My point is that if schools are “affiliated or associated” with a church of Christ by oversight or funds, then those churches are going to be partakers in work that might be legitimate for the school but that the church has no permission to partake in. Examples could be multiplied of schools who are, or have been, funded by churches, doing things the church has no business funding or being “affiliated with”—Abilene Christian University’s decision to permit dancing, Freed Hardeman University once promoted a clown ministry, etc. These and other colleges claiming to be “affiliated with the churches of Christ” have accepted donations from some of the churches of Christ for decades. Neither Florida College (a college in Temple Terrace, FL) nor Just Chillin’ (a frozen yogurt business in Batesville, AR) are associated or affiliated with any church of Christ, though they have been owned and operated by saints. The church has no more business in the frozen yogurt industry than it does in the general education industry. Both are admirable occupations in which believers can find ways to do good to all men and to provide for their own households—but neither brings us to the unity of the faith for which Christ saved sinners thus building His church. Be vigilant, be watchful, and do not let the church be burdened!

Conclusion

At some point, every church who persists in looseness from the teachings of Christ, loses their “lampstand,” signifying Jesus’ approval (Rev. 2:5).

When submission to the oversight of Christ is again practiced, we will be another step closer to the unity Jesus prayed for and provided (Jn. 17:20-21; Eph. 4:11-16).