**Why We Are Nonchartered (by Keith Hamblen)**

**Education is inherently religious**, dealing with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; assumptions about God and man; morality (what is right and wrong), priorities (what is important), and social relationships. We do not “integrate facts into a void”! See Col 1:16-17; 2:3; Pro 1:7; 10:9; Mt 28:18-20.

**John Bunyan went to prison before accepting a license**, and there were many nonconformists (“non-chartered)” in his day who stood on the position of “no license to preach and teach.” But there were many more who saw a greater opportunity to serve God by getting a license than those pastors and other church leaders who took a “no license” stand. Pastors, administrators, parents, and others here in Ohio took a stand and paid a price in earlier days to gain this non-chartered relationship with the state, allowing us to operate legally without having a state license, and BCSO (CSO and BCSA) came into existence “to secure the[se] blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

An American founding father said, “Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.” Another said, “What we obtain too cheaply we esteem too lightly.” A congregational pastor (Mathias Burnett) said, “**Let not your children curse you for giving up those rights and prostrating those institutions which your father's delivered to you**.”

If a school takes a license (charter) from the state, then parents can access EdChoice dollars ($6,165-8,407 per child). Arguments to be chartered (licensed) by the state include “we can help parents by letting them access these dollars”; “parents have paid taxes, and they should be able to access these taxes to pay for their children’s education”; “we will lose students to other schools if they have to pay tuition at our school and they don’t elsewhere”: “if the state ever asks us to do something which we don’t believe in to continue being licensed, then we will give up our license.”

The problem is that **accepting a license violates the principle that church teaching ministries are not to be licensed by the state**. (A license is given by a higher power to a lower power; it is a permission to operate. Historically Christians don’t ask the state permission to teach their families’ children.) The church (and parents) are willing to notify the state of their existence and are happy for the public to come in and look at what they are doing (including standardized test scores), but they don’t ask permission to operate.

A second problem is that **giving up a hard-won position will not be easy to regain** (if even possible). To say that we will give up our charter if the state some day asks us to compromise convictions doesn’t mean that the non-chartered position will be available (once given up), and it doesn’t seem that these are “truly held religious beliefs.“

Three concluding thoughts: (1) BCSO continues to seek legitimate “redirecting of tax dollars” apart from state licensing. Tuition tax credits and the SGO program were made available to families interested in our schools through BCSO efforts and God’s blessing. (2) Should not churches that believe in Christian education provide so that no family ever is turned away because they “cannot afford it”? (3) As “gender confusion” (and other such issues) increases, a non-chartered position is a wise position. At the most recent meeting of the non-public schools with the Ohio Department of Education (8/17/23), it was announced that the Department is increasing its on-site inspections. Chartered (licensed) schools are required to undergo state testing and it continues true that “he who writes the test determines the curriculum.”