

Can the Church of Christ establish schools, hospitals and similar institutions? –Part 2

Response to submitted questions, and my review of Bro. Oji O. Oji's presentation at MOG Webinar [Day 2 & 3]

– Asaolu O. S. (asaolu@yahoo.com)

Introduction: At the second day of the program, after Bro. Oji re-presented his affirmation that the church may establish the institutions under consideration, [due to network issues on Day1] I requested and was allotted 5 minutes to respond. My scrutiny of his claims are contained in this article. Written questions submitted by the audience via the temporary WhatsApp Group created for the event and verbal queries/ contributions on Day3 are also addressed in this treatise.

Interestingly, a member of the audience, Bro. Elijah Abire contributed on the second day that both Speaker's positions are extreme. He opined that though there is no scriptural authority for the church to establish and run Schools, Hospitals, Orphanages, Old Peoples' Homes, etc., Individuals may do such but *"the church should mobilize, encourage and supervise members to do such good works."* [I will return to this later...]

Thereafter, Bro. Oji asked him; *"Can a church have a First Aid kit in her meeting place and have a qualified Nurse to man (handle/administer) it?"*

Bro. Abire responded "Yes." Bro. Oji thereafter claimed that such First Aid may also be manned by a medical doctor, and improved to a clinic. Thus, the church may establish and own a hospital. Bro. Abire disagreed and Bro. Oji said Abire was contradicting himself, that having First Aid permits establishing the bigger kit, a hospital.

Unfortunately, I was not called upon by either of the duo or the Moderator to comment but promptly remarked on the WhatsApp Group as follows: *"Slide 19 of my lesson talks about First Aid and addresses Bro. Oji's question to Abire. He may wish to pose the question to me to address verbally. His conflating First Aid into church having clinic is like saying since the church serves food to those who attend its lectureship, the church should open a restaurant for the public and members for free meals."*

Additionally, is Bro. Oji positing that every church must hire a nurse and/or doctor to handle First Aid? Does he not realize that anybody can administer such? The good Samaritan stopped to assist the man who was robbed and injured, showing how to be a neighbor; displaying compassion, and Jesus says: *"Go and do thou likewise."* (Luke 10:33-37) Was the Samaritan a medical doctor? Must we be doctors before we offer care (First Aid) unto anyone in a medical emergency today? Did the Samaritan not offer First Aid, and thereafter got the man to where the injured could get proper care while he continued on his own journey to focus on his mission? Any Christian especially an expert in a field may offer his/her skills where needed in serving the Lord's church e.g. medical professionals or science students assisting with First Aid, Accounting students / practicing Economists assisting as church Treasurer or Financial Secretary, etc., that does not mean the church should establish hospitals or auditing firms in the community!

As to Bro. Abire's contribution, he is appreciated for acknowledging that the church cannot scripturally establish these human institutions but individuals could and should. However, the church encouraging Christians to do so does NOT require that the congregation must supervise such private businesses or philanthropic works. That would be stepping beyond reasonable or scriptural bounds. Every member should be exhorted to engage in legitimate deeds and enterprises (Titus 3:14) but the church cannot assume oversight of such ventures. No congregation coordinated Paul's personal tent-making business or Tyrannus' school or Luke's practice as a physician. Secular schools are primarily for academic or vocational skills training, some moral development and less effort on religious/devotional activities, if any at all. That is why parents should train their children at home to be grounded in faith (Prov 22:6, Eph 6:4, Heb 2:12-13) before sending them off into boarding or other schools. As noted in Part1 of my presentation, neither we nor our children can really avoid the world so the church cannot coordinate every interaction or business or service we need or offer in the world. The church need not create an exclusive, isolated city or camp for us to dwell in on earth as denominations and cults sometimes attempt to do for their followers.

Section 1: AUDIENCE QUERIES (I address all regardless of whether it was directed at me or at Bro. Oji)

Que: Please is a sin for church to establish schools and hospitals because I'm not getting it

Asaolu's Ans: When the church does not focus on the work that Christ has assigned to it, (namely worship, evangelism to convert sinners, edification of the saints and benevolence to needy brethren) but deviates into establishing schools, hospitals, homes for the old or the poor or orphans in society, she is sinning. As good as such works may seem to be it belongs to individuals, foundations, corporations, government, etc. The church is not authorized to venture into such. Those who ask where is the NT passage that forbids the church from building school/hospital are disregarding the specific commands on what Christ asked his church to do –preach the gospel, not human philosophy or computing or beverage-making. Once Jesus specified what to teach, it excludes secular courses for certification or skills for commercialization. Recall that many that disobeyed God in scripture thought they were helping Him; Nadab and Abihu would have reasoned that God did not prohibit using strange fire on the altar, Uzza -that God did not forbid his standing the ark of the covenant when the oxen stumbled, and king Uzziah - who was not a Levite yet entered the temple to burn incense upon the altar assumed no scripture prohibited his action though the Law was specific on which tribe or family could so minister! If transgressors do not repent, at judgment Jesus will tell many that profess to do wonderful works in His name: “*depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*”

Que: From the ACT 2:42-46 – “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had needs. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...*”

NOW

The "church" today doesn't have everything in common,... Just like the act of apostle 2, the church today can't sell her possessions to share with anyone who has needs Which brings about Division among the brethren today... If a local church contributes in building a hospital and my brother who is not a brother in the Lord church is sick... will he be treated the same way as a brother who is a brother ? if = No ...why ?

Asaolu's Ans: The church of Christ, at least many that I am familiar with STILL have things in common though it may not be obvious as that of the early church due to various reasons. The situation in Acts 2 was that many people, thousands in fact who came on a pilgrimage to attend a feast of Judaism were converted into a new religion (Christianity). Some possibly stayed beyond their initial plan, and had to be catered for. Thus, there were sacrificial contributions by the wealthy amongst them to ensure all needs were met. Today, brethren still deeply care for themselves, and make contributions to assist the needy in their midst. I have heard of an individual who sold his vehicle so that the church may procure land for a meeting place. I know a brother who sold his forex investment to assist others pay school fees and to rent accommodation. It is Brother Oji who would answer if his envisaged ‘church hospital’ (regulated by government & the Nigerian Medical Association) would treat/handle patients in a discriminatory manner, and whether it’s services would be free for all or differential charges would apply.

Que: Can members of church of Christ attend school established by denomination members?

Asaolu's Ans: If one does not know the source of the meat sold in the market place as to whether it was sacrificed unto an idol or not, such may more likely eat with a good conscience. Once you know not just the owner but the religious bent (if any) of a school -in its practices and teachings then you can decide for yourself whether you want to attend or enroll your child there. It is not by compulsion, is it? There are alternatives, see Slide17 of my initial write-up!

Que: Is it Sinful for a Church to organise Literacy Class for Members and prospective members to enable them read Bible

Asaolu's Ans: Where illiterates abound and elementary schools are scarce, interested educated members of the church could and should volunteer to do so in their personal capacity, and may use the church meeting place or any home or venue for such activity. In an enlightened society where many are educated, their children would typically be enrolled in school, and will only be encouraged and corrected during regular children Bible class in the church.

Que: Some denominations have hospital, petrol station, etc. not bearing their names? Does 1Cor.10:25-28 not apply? Will I be asking who own filling station before buying fuel?

Asaolu's Ans: Ordinarily, you would not ask since you are just interested in procuring a needed good or service.

Que: Any can respond. Can a church participate as a corporate member of a Community? Pay dues and join ☺ n Community development assignment?

Asaolu's Ans: Yes but in a limited sense because the society knows it is a religious entity, and cannot be expected to participate in all their activities except the expedient ones. For example, if the street where the church hall is, requires payment of levy for security, the church would be obliged to contribute as a tenant or structure owner.

Que: For Bro Asaolu. Can church establish School to train Preachers?

Asaolu's Ans: This discourse is primarily about secular schools and in particular schools subject to government oversight. If I may ask; "Can church establish School to train Elders and Schools to train Deacons too?"

The church is required to train its members and potential officers, and it could do so today as was done in the first century without establishing any special institution that award certificates to be recognized by government and organizations for employment purposes or further academic development. **The church is God's School for our spiritual education as stated in Part1.** Since many refer to the special class(es) held for various categories of brethren on the Lord's Day as "Sunday School", then special class(es) during weekdays for those intending to be officers in the church may be conducted for in-depth scriptural study without necessarily seeking the recognition and approval of the Federal Ministry of Education! It is denominational influence that makes many believe that a Preacher must be a graduate that is certified by a Bible College.

Que: Can a Church organise a Do-Good Project to gather people for Evangelical Purpose?

Asaolu's Ans: What exactly do you mean by 'a Do-Good Project'? If the aim is to do something that does not conform with scripture just to entice people, then it would not be pleasing to God though it may look good in human sight.

Que: How is the church supposed to coordinate a private business? That a business is owned by a brother does not mean the church has the right to coordinate such... If the church has the biblical authority to do so, kindly make the scriptures available to such act by the church...

Asaolu's Ans: I reckon this is directed at Bro. Abire's statement. I concur that the church can only encourage members to be enterprising and diligent in their work, not purport to coordinate private business endeavours.

Que: If a thing is not forbidden specifically, can that thing be undertaken in order to facilitate the performance of duties specified as Church duties?

Asaolu's Ans: It depends on that thing's expediency, something can only be expedient/useful if it is lawful and does not in any way detract from what God has stated. Consider the following example. Baptism requires much water, specifically enough water to submerge or wholly did a person in. We take note that in scripture, rivers, oasis, etc. were used for baptism. Since the command is to baptize without a specification as to what body of water **MUST** be used, we are at liberty to use any so long as the penitent will be fully covered momentarily when buried with Christ, for the remission of sins. This permits the church usage of a large bath-tub, private or public swimming pool or a lagoon front or a river, etc. to conduct immersions since none of these options is forbidden. It would therefore be expedient for proximity, logistics, safety, comfort, etc. for a church to build a baptistery at its meeting hall if it could but that is not a justification to start building swimming pools all over the land for the general populace, and to claim that doing so is "a method of evangelism"! Likewise, **the church can minister anywhere the opportunity avails be it at a hospital, gym, secular school, restaurant, orphanage, market, etc. or its own meeting place but that is not a warrant for it to establish hospitals, gyms, secular schools, restaurants, orphanages or markets.**

Que: If the church could have a clinic, how does the members of staff get paid and how does drugs get to the clinic pharmacy without violating the scriptures? Will the patients get free treatments?

Asaolu's Ans: Bro. Oji should answer this truthfully, and even tell us whether the drugs and equipment must be manufactured by the church, whether all the hospital staff and suppliers must be church members only.

Que: Do you know that Denominations established schools for Evangelism purpose? By it they are able to reach captures those that they would not have access to? Is that not part of "learning from the unrighteous mammon?"

Asaolu's Ans: Your questions are not clear. We are not to copy denominations but rather follow the New Testament [NT] pattern.

Que: Bro Oji. O, Were there no secular schools in the First century? Why didn't Church establish their own school then?

Asaolu's Ans: There were various categories of schools prior to and during the time of the early church. In fact, people were called disciples when they were being tutored or schooled to follow the teachings of a particular Master or named Group e.g. the disciples of John, the disciples of the Pharisees, the disciples of Christ, etc. There were formal schools too where different people taught various subjects, not just one person alone teaching his own ideas. An example is the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus where Paul held religious discussions and debates over a two-year period –Acts 19:8-10. Indeed, what could be regarded as one of the most advanced secular institutions of that period was based in the Areopagus of Athens, and may be equivalent to a modern "*Academy of Arts and Science*," wherein philosophers and the scholarly gathered to learn 'some new thing.' Paul was taken there to share his seemingly strange ideas about the resurrection, and some were converted upon hearing the gospel -Acts 17:16-34. The church did not establish a School back then because it identified itself as a spiritual educational institution.

Que: Peter and John healed the man at the beautiful Gate, was it the gospel? Did it not make many to accept the gospel that Peter preached later? Acts3:1ff - Bro. Asaolu

Asaolu's Ans: Performing miracles was initially part of the gospel since the new message from God was being revealed through his messengers, and He had to confirm its authenticity once and for all. The healing of the lame man was dependent on preaching since the act was based on "*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*" The astonished crowd were exhorted fully thereafter.

Que: In most cases the Miracle comes before the word is preached like in Acts 2. Did the speaking in tongues not aid the conversion of the 3000 souls in Acts 2? - Bro. Asaolu.

Asaolu's Ans: The performance of a miracle was often an intrinsic part of preaching and never independent of it. In Acts 2:11, the audience confirmed that what they heard via the apostles' speaking in tongues was a declaration of "*the wonderful works of God.*" In essence, the inspired men talked about divine acts that would range from creation to human redemption.

Que: Bros Asaolu and Oji do not agree that the Church has a role in mobilising the members to establish hospitals, schools and Orphanages due to good works, needs and the empowerment of members?

Asaolu's Ans: That is inaccurate, do NOT misrepresent us or my position. When the church teaches that individuals could and should venture into such things, so that it would neither be distracted nor burdened with something outside its divine mission, that is a form of mobilization. Or is it until the church appoints persons who must do such, and offers to coordinate or fund them that you will accept that the church is up and doing?

Que: Have you people shifted from Medical Services to Miracles? Is miraculous healing another form of medical services or supernatural signs to confirm the gospel? Is speaking in tongues a branch of Linguistics or supernatural signs to confirm the gospel?

When has miraculous healing at the Beautiful Gate become a proof for Church to operate and run hospitals? Is miraculous healing a medical act or a spiritual act?

We will digest all the points raised by both Bro Asaolu and Bro Orji as the programme progresses.

Asaolu's Ans: I equally wonder what the enquirer aim to ascertain with his queries about miracles.

Que: Thank you Bro Asaolu for your answer on miracle. The same way you cannot separate good works from the church today. Good work is part of nature of God and should be part of the life of his people the church.

Asaolu's Ans: Good works should definitely be done by God's people. However, the church and the individual Christians have their God-given mandates on the kind of good works to pursue to advance the kingdom of God.

Que: Is there anything unscriptural for the Church to mobilize members to provide foodstuff, drugs, clothes, etc. and donate them to Orphanage homes? @Professor O. S. Asaolu

Asaolu's Ans: When the church teaches that individuals could and should venture into such things, correctly interpreting James 1:27, Mt 25:34-36 as personal acts of piety, humanity and living out one's religion, it is following the scriptures. In fact, people should be taught to show love unto orphans by adopting any if one is willing and able to do so. The ideal thing is that such children be quickly adopted or taken into foster homes.

Do you agree or would rather mobilize your congregation to regularly make collection of money and materials for Orphanages?

Que: MY QUESTION FOR BRO ORJI

1. If there is no distinction between the Church's learning field and circular schools' learning field, how then is the founder of Christianity - Jesus described as "UNLEARNED (UNEDUCATED)" and why did Jesus distinguish his own form of knowledge from the one circular education offers which makes someone regarded as learned?

John 7:15-16 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, HAVING NEVER LEARNED? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

2. Every business has its own upturn and downturn. It is natural and expected that every business could have a period of financial struggle during which they take loans from banks to survive, can the Church's school or hospital borrow money from banks in such periods to survive or just decide to fold up for lack of liquidity?

3. You argued that anywhere learning is taking place, it is a school and so even the Church is a school. Did you say this because you don't believe in any distinction between spiritual school and circular school because the argument has always been, can the church establish and run a CIRCULAR SCHOOL? (Not Church Sunday School).

4. Again, you argued that Jesus gave us a command to go and preach but he did not command us on HOW to go and preach and for this reason, we can preach through running circular schools or hospitals. By this argument, do you mean that performing surgery is a way of preaching Jesus or that teaching Chemistry, Petrochemical Engineering, Zoology, aeronautics, pharmacology, etc. is a way of preaching Jesus or obeying the Great Commission?

5. You said that the manifold wisdom of God is made known by the Church and manifold wisdom means many wisdom and therefore, science, etc. are part of the wisdom of God. Do you mean that since the Bible does not cover fields such as aeronautics, Robotics, Mechanical Engineering, etc. which circular curriculum offers, we can conclude that the Bible is not complete since we are warned not to add to it or remove from it. How does teaching circular education curriculum qualify for the manifold wisdom of God of Ephesians 3:10 that you talked about?

I have other questions but answer these ones first.

Asaolu's Ans: I concur with the Enquirer's view.

Que: Can the church make a profit through all these establishments? If yes, then it's totally wrong.

Asaolu's Ans: It is not only about profit-making but whether Christ has authorized the church as a body to establish and operate human institutions in society for people's benefit. See Slide18 in Part 1. It is even wrong to leave undone or be poorly doing the real task the Master assigned while focusing on pleasing self just in an effort to be like the denominations. Such are making void the word of God by following the doctrines and commandments of men!

Que: There were many worship places in the first century, but no record of a local church building her own hall.

Asaolu's Ans: That is true and it shows that the church owning a building is not compulsory but is an optional thing that must be an expediency. The command is "*when ye (the church) are gathered together...*" edify one another, discipline the unrepentant erring believer, eat the Lord' Supper, etc. and, "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...*" –1 Cor 5:4-5; 11: 18-20, 33-34; 14:23, 26; Heb 10:25. Since God has NOT specified where the church must gather in any locality, it implies that any convenient and accessible place is permissible whether it be a rented or gifted facility or private school or a public space or a structure erected by the brethren. The important thing is that saints assemble regularly at an agreed venue especially on the first day of the week.

However, I wonder what is the relevance of the statement by Bro. Oji (about "a local church building her own hall") to the topic under discussion. It is not really related to the hospitals and schools he is canvassing for congregations to establish. He needs to provide scripture that mandates the church could and should build such institutions.

Que: Does 1 Tim. 5:1-10 assign roles to individual Christians and to the church in taking care widows? If so will it be scriptural for the church to take on the role assigned to individuals in this passage? @Oji O Oji, Ev

Asaolu's Ans: Unfortunately, the questions were not posed by the Moderator in the order which they were asked on the platform or all collated and directed at the Speaker identified by the Enquirer. This and some other written queries were not raised on Day 3 especially unto Bro. Oji. However, I took time to address several written queries meant for me. I have always affirmed that church role and individual responsibilities are not always the same.

Que: Dear Admin, I have read @Bro Asaolu Olumuyiwa's write up and I listened to @Bro Oji O Oji the other day. I intend to write a rebuttal to it. Am I permitted to do that?

Asaolu's Ans: Anyone is free to write his own lesson on the subject matter and circulate such. Whoever wants to specifically rebut my write-up should provide my entire article inside his own write-up or include my material title and download link [www.lainosint.com/download/faith] for his readers so they may directly access, and read my viewpoint. That is better and preferred than to just selectively cite certain portions of my write-up devoid of context. [See my review of Bro. Oji's write-up between page 11 and 14 of this material.]

Que: Meanwhile I have a question for Bro. Asaolu; Since data analysis and forensics can enhance the teaching and preaching the Bible message; is it right/wrong to teach preachers/brethren such subjects?

Asaolu's Ans: Secular knowledge is fine and anyone should get as much as he desires or feel that he needs. However, it does not mean the church must teach every course on earth in its services. I teach data science, artificial intelligence, etc. in the University and discovered/invented some concepts therein such as laughter as a biometric which is useful for forensics. It was inspired by my personal experience and my understanding of Genesis 18:1-15, wherein God identified that Sarah was the one that laughed. Students whom I supervised, conducted research at undergraduate and doctoral levels to earn B.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in this new technological area. Should I come and teach such scientific topic in detail on a Sunday morning during church service? How many brethren will understand or benefit from it if I should do so? Does the church where I have membership need to start a separate school to certify people in data science and forensics? Not at all! Anyone interested in such should pursue it outside the church.

Que: I have questions for brother Oji. Brother Orji said the church is to establish schools and other institutions because the bible said the church is to make the manifold wisdom of God known to the world, and the manifold wisdom of God includes all institutions. My questions are

1. If these institutions are part of the manifold wisdom of God that the church is to make known to the world, haven't the Apostles and early disciples failed woefully because it didn't establish these institutions?
2. Since brother Oji believes that the manifold wisdom of God involves these institutions, hasn't the present churches sinned because it hasn't established them? And won't the church sin if it cannot establish all?
3. Will the church, in the school, teach CRK and IRK as instructed by the government? Wouldn't it be a sin if the church teaches such things as against sound doctrine

Asaolu's Ans: I have posed similar queries especially the third one without getting a response from Bro. Oji

Que: I have questions for both speakers. Where is the source of creative knowledge? Who made some knowledge secular and others unsecular?

Asaolu's Ans: Though Bro. Oji asserted there is no scriptural classification for knowledge and that all knowledge is from God hence the church should teach on everything which he asserts to be the wisdom of God, I disagree.

Inspiration classified knowledge and wisdom in several passages of scripture. Daniel 1:4 mentions science while 1 Timothy 6:20 warns against false science. There is good knowledge aside evil knowledge such as the knowledge God gave unto Moses compared to that used by the Magicians of Egypt in their rod-turning-into-snake encounter. Ephesians 3 discusses divine knowledge and wisdom revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets which is contrasted unto natural knowledge which the unspiritual and even principalities did not know since it was a hidden mystery. Acts 17:18 and Colossians 2:8 mentions human philosophy and wisdom which we must not allow anyone to deceive us with while James 1:5 & 3:15-17 contrasts the wisdom from above with the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, devilish. This shows that there is secular (unspiritual) knowledge/wisdom, devilish wisdom as well as knowledge/wisdom that is of, and from God. What the church focuses on should be obvious. Many in the world have not the knowledge of God, and some did not like to retain God in their knowledge, trusting their own wisdom.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. -1 Corinthians 1:19 -21

*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of **man's wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in **the wisdom of men**, but in the power of God. Howbeit **we speak wisdom** among them that are perfect: yet **not the wisdom of this world**, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But **we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. **But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** -1 Corinthians 2:4 -13*

Que: There are Geography, Physics, Biology in the Bible, why are we denying them just to make a point?

Asaolu's Ans: Those terms are not actually in the scriptures. But there are natural facts about the universe therein. It is men that classify such things into various subject areas like Geography, Biology, Physics, Agriculture, etc. and conduct extensive or detailed study and research in such. The mentioning of selected facts in such areas in scripture are usually in passing or to reveal something God considers essential for our information, well-being, or salvation. For example, the mentioning of the rising and setting of the Sun is useful for how we track time while the mentioning of sowing and reaping is often used to illustrate action and consequences; a way of utilizing things people were quite familiar with to teach spiritual concepts as in the parables of Jesus. This does not imply that today, the church should establish Scientific Space Observatories, Institutes of Physics, Farms or Schools of Agriculture in the community.

Que: Please I have a question for Bro. Asaolu. If God will reject the church that established school at the end, which means that they have sin. Can you please explain Romans 4:15 as regards this subject?

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. - Romans 4:15

Asaolu's Ans: A church that decides not to focus on its divine mission (which substantially entails teaching the word of God) but decides to establish secular schools, following government-given curriculum (subjecting what it teaches to human regulation and approval) is sinning. They are teaching and doing what Christ has not commanded. If you allude to the Roman passage above with the assumption that there is no law on what the church should teach or that there is no restriction on whether she engages in education as a money-making venture, then you are wrong.

Que: Today we cannot heal people ill health miraculously but God has given us hospitals as aid to heal sicknesses and His presence is also there. Church can also establish hospital to help people either free or charges minimally not only members [but also] to non-brethren.

Asaolu's Ans: Physicians existed even in the Old Testament era but miraculous healing was always associated with God's scheme of redemption; its revelation and confirmation. Miracles were the exemption, not the rule in everyday living. Since God foreknew that such spiritual gifts of miracles and of instantaneous healings were temporary, he gave us PRAYER to use which, He responds to via divine Providence today. See Slide15 in my Part1 wherein James 5:14-16 was cited. Even while the revelation of the perfect word was near its completion, Paul prayed about his thorn in the flesh and the Lord responded that "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*" For Timothy's stomach infirmity, he was encouraged to 'drink a little wine,' not told that the church at Ephesus should establish a hospital for all and sundry.

For the Church to charge even little school fees or hospital fees (so-called not-for-profit) is unscriptural since Jesus told his followers sent out to evangelize that, "*freely you have received, freely give.*" If what any church is putting out in executing evangelism is commercialized, then it could not have been received from the Lord! Some would rather turn the house of God into a place of merchandise; seeking financial and other gain. Such serve their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Que: You can teach science subjects but they cannot take government examination

Asaolu's Ans: If while teaching from the Bible during a church program, you mention any scientific concept backed by the scriptures (which is infallible), or offer some non-too-technical insight as personal or researched opinion, that would be okay. However, if a church established an educational institution to prepare students for the popular Pry. or Sec. School Certificate (WAEC/NECO), JAMB, etc., the pupils have to take government approved examinations.

Que: Bro. Orji isn't answering this questions from the point of view of the scriptures, many has been more of his own opinions as against the scriptural views ...can he please be more specific in using proper scriptures to answer questions thrown precisely...

Asaolu's Ans: the moderator ought to take note of that observation. I wish the proceedings of this entire Webinar was recorded and actually requested for that before the program, unfortunately such is not the case due to technical hitches, and switching platform between Google Meet and WhatsApp. Nevertheless, people can read our write-ups.

Que: @Professor O. S. Asaolu should please focus and speak to the discussion and avoid personal attacks such as "it is interesting that someone who claims to..." Let us avoid going personal and maintain decorum as is expected of God's children.

Asaolu's Ans: Noted [When in response to Moderator's query, Bro. Oji claimed that he was not speaking by his own wisdom and human philosophy, I remarked that it is interesting for someone who avers the church should teach philosophy and all subjects, which he professes to be the manifold wisdom of God, to make such a claim.] Bro Oji too should refrain from casting aspersion on "some of the most educated amongst us" and Americans (his Page 3).

Que: Do we have shortage of schools or shortage of gospel preachers?

Asaolu's Ans: I reckon that there is no shortage of good private and public schools one may choose from for self or child/ward. However, it appears that these days, there is shortage of sound gospel preachers since many are not really trained or groomed in the church but in human certified institutions.

Que: I became a Christian in 1993 and since then till today, I do not see any school or hospital set up by these individuals who are teaching us that compassion, education and care of brethren are the work of individuals. Have we not failed our generation?????

Asaolu's Ans: One will only see what he sincerely looks for, recall Mt 7:7. There are several schools and hospitals established by one or more brethren in their private capacities all over the country but how many of those proximate to such persons or facilities amongst us patronize their establishments? Just for reference purposes that may be verified, a brother (Preacher) who shares my understanding on this topic and is on this platform, established a good School in Oworonsoki Area of Lagos while another (an Elder) owns one of the popular hospitals in Lekki axis. Neither called upon his congregation to dabble into church or hospital business. Even non-religious entities establish such institutions for patronage, and we don't have to interact with only Christians for all needed goods and services. Or do you only procure things made by or sold by the church [e.g. food (cooked or raw), electronics, books, building materials, etc.] and limit yourself to professional services offered as consultancy by the church [e.g. plumbing, vehicle repair, decongesting filled soak-away, broadcasting, publishing, hotel & restaurant, etc.] If not, why not? What makes Hospitals, Schools, Orphanages, and Old Peoples' homes so special that you advocate the church must take up the establishment of these particular institutions as "methods of evangelism" so-called?

Que: God should not have established the church because of the damage perversion of the Gospel have done to human soul??? Just a question.

Asaolu's Ans: I skip... based on 2 Timothy 2:23

Section 2: Bro. Oji's Write-up and Asaolu's Review

CAN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ESTABLISH SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS?

AFFIRMATION: YES, THE CHURCH IS AUTHORIZED TO ESTABLISH SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES AND ORPHANAGES AS PART OF HER GOSPEL DUTIES

by Oji O. Oji

TEXT: Ephesians 3:8-11 [NIV]

8 *Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given to me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,*
9 *and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.*
10 *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,*
11 *according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The many wisdom of God does not begin and end with the message of the gospel. In studying Christian Evidences taught in the church, some principles of Philosophy are used to prove that there is God. Historical approaches are employed which Roman historians confirmed that Jesus was here and that the Bible is true.

Geography and ancient maps are x-rayed to trace the true land of Israel as against the western fraud being fed to us. Archaeology is used to confirm some biblical truth. The Bible gave the hint that there are paths in the ocean which governs modern oceanography, Psalm 8:8; That the earth is a circle and not flat was traced to the Bible, Isa. 40:22. Creation as against the Big bang and evolution gives the true picture of the earth's existence. That the earth hangs on nothing is a Bible fact, Job 26:7. This has been confirmed by modern science'. That life is in the blood was penned down in Leviticus 17: 11 long before scientists confirmed that oxygen and nutrients are carried by the blood to all parts of the body. The same is the case with the atmospheric weight and pressure was long stated in the Bible before modern science traced it to be so.

DEFINITION:

I want to borrow the definition of School from my brother Sunday Akpore as: any organised learning situation and process which comprises a teacher (also referred

My remark on the temporary WhatsApp Group for the event after Bro. Oji's presentation.

"Can I respond to some issues Bro Oji raised? He has misused Bible passages, misrepresented facts, made unfounded assertions and veiled comments dodging some issues."

My verbal comments thereafter are expanded upon in this review by Olumuyiwa S. Asaolu

The text cited by Bro. Oji should be understood in its own context, the opening verses of the chapter should even be considered too.

Ephesians 3:1-7

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Evidently, Ephesians 3 is about revealed spiritual wisdom via inspired men in the church unto all mankind, and its consequent astonishment unto even celestial creatures. It is about spiritual knowledge proclaimed via the church, not the teaching of secular subjects therein. Paul affirmed this clearly in **1 Corinthians 2:6-14**

That natural facts are contained in the inspired word of God about Geography, History, Oceanography, etc. is not surprising but building institutions devoted to researching, teaching and awarding degrees or diplomas in such subjects is not part of the work of the Lord's church.

Oji's borrowed definition of school is just passable as it says nothing about an approving authority which may be God,

to as tutor, or trainer, mentor, coach, etc.); a learner (or disciple, pupil, apprentice, mentee, disciple, trainee); a course of study/curriculum (namely arts, painting, reading, mathematics, science, religion); also a learning environment (such as hall, online, outdoor); and learning outcome/measurement (in the form of test, practice, probation, interview). This school can operate in a church hall, or owned building (rented or custom built for the institution) or online. Government recognitions, custom building, rented, etc., none adds or removes from its essence as a school.

Understanding of this definition will greatly reduce the arguments over the concept. It will put to rest the idea that building schools will divert the focus of the church from the central work of preaching. The denominations who are deep into it still preach their doctrines.

Evil communication corrupts good manners, 1 Corinthians 15:33. Schools run by the denominations or other religions have corrupting effects on their students. In our schools, whether in church buildings or outside we teach skills and subjects that do not contradict the Bible and cannot be bound by the falsehood in some courses in the public schools. Just as we do organise seminars for youth empowerment, sex education, matchmaking and marriage, soap making, etc., the content of school syllabus should be as wide as the wisdom of God within our reach.

Teaching them to observe all I have commanded, Matt. 28:20 includes to believe that God created the universe. It did not come by chance among other false claims.

So also the church includes domestic science in which young women will be taught to prepare healthy dishes for their husbands and entire family, Titus 2:3-5.

How different fields of study attest to God's existence:

Psychology is one field that attests to God's existence if properly handled. One of such is

1. Innate Moral Compass (Moral Law)

It states that Humans universally demonstrate a sense of right and wrong, suggesting a moral lawgiver. Where does this shared morality come from? Biblical Connection:

Romans 2:14-15 – "The requirements of the law are written on their hearts..."

2. Desire for Transcendence in which Humans naturally seek meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than themselves. This universal desire

government, the community, etc. A school exists for peoples' benefit when it is accepted at an authority's pleasure.

I have not argued about whether a school must be in constructed building or be virtual or by correspondence, etc.

One can avoid schools run by denominations, Christians individuals also run schools and even strict public schools do not promote any religion. The choice is there for the parents or an individual on where to obtain secular education at whatever level. There is no way a church can establish a school today, get approval to prepare students for WAEC/NECO/JAMB or NUC programs, etc. without teaching controversial topics like Darwin's theory of natural selection, evolution and the big bang theory in Biology, Physics, etc.

Jesus did not mandate the church to teach the world courses such as Agriculture, Engineering, Arts and Science subjects, etc. but rather what he instructed his apostles as revealed in the Bible.

It is cunning to make this claim about teaching 'domestic science' in the church, on preparing dishes at home when the proposition you are advocating is that the church may establish secular institutions such as secondary schools, polytechnics, universities, etc. in the society to award degrees in such courses!

I do not dispute these facts. Bro. Oji did try to resonate with me by stating even Systems Engineering concepts, which I mentioned during my Inaugural Lecture at UNILAG!

points to the existence of something (or Someone) that fulfills it—God. There are many others.

An **Engineering Principle**: States that systems like engines, computers, or bridges require *all parts* to function. Remove one part, and the whole fails. This implies that a designer is behind the order. So does the order in nature suggest a designer, God.

Again, Systems Integration Engineering Concept states that different subsystems (such as electrical, mechanical, software) must work together in harmony.

In the same way Human body systems (nervous, respiratory, circulatory) are deeply integrated. The coordination suggests a master systems engineer, God. Just as an engineered product points to an engineer, creation points to a Creator.

Also in biology,

Bees and flowers pollination;

Birds' migration patterns; and

Cells that repair themselves are not random; they show intentional functionality pointing to the existence of God. But the ungodly twist these things and steer them away from God in their schools.

The same synergy exists in all the other known fields. Schools run by the church will spare our children from the corruption that goes with evil communication, 1 Corinthians.15:33.

I want to comment on a false slogan that has eaten deep into the fabrics of some members of our faith around here. That is that what an individual can do, the church cannot and vice versa. They often give instances of an individual eating fufu, paying tax, etc. without appropriate Bible passage to back it up. This slogan is completely misleading. Rather, what an individual can do in carrying out the evangelism charge, the church can do and vice versa.

The church can organize evangelism and edification channels. So also the individual or groups.

ON HOSPITALS, ORPHANAGES, ETC.

Pure religion is to be practiced by the church as a body, James 1:27.

Visiting widows and orphans means caring for them. This can be done in their homes if they have one, or in a central place chosen by the church, rented or custom built. There's no law against it.

As I have repeatedly stated, train your children well and put them in good schools of your choice. You may even decide to home-school them if you wish, and register them for renown examinations as external candidates. Even correspondence, and open/virtual secular educational institutions now abound at all levels.

You even misquote and misrepresent the slogan so as to aver it is false! What we actually affirm is: *"It is not everything that an individual can do that the church can do, and vice versa."*

For instance, an individual may beg for money from non-Christian family relations so as to publish a religious publication (tract/book) or to take transport in order to attend a religious program whereas a church cannot beg unbelievers for funds for its evangelism or other programs. Bro. Oji believes otherwise, and said that he supports the church taking loans for erecting its building, a school, or a hospital.

James 1:26-27 *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not **his tongue**, but deceiveth **his own heart**, **this man's religion** is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep **himself** unspotted from the world.*

One dangerous practice in our brotherhood is to kill a harmless idea in anticipation of possible corrupt handling. Instead of building safety measures, we clamp down on it before allowing it to roll off the ground.

Again, calling a church project a parallel institution beats my imagination. Of a great concern to me is when a single American or a group calls something evil from personal opinion, even some of the most educated among us will declare that the Lord has spoken.

The fear of profit making.

When I was sick you visited me, Matt. 25:35-40 refers to the church also. She can run a First Aid center, a clinic or full-fledged hospital not for profit making, but to carry out this highlighted need by Christ.

Yes, schools, hospitals, orphanages can be operated by the church, not for profit, but to obey relevant instructions. So also can an individual or group of Christians. The fear of possible apostasy sometimes by key players can happen either way. Such can have a devastating effect either way too. But it cannot make it unscriptural.

James clearly shows that religion is a personal affair –this man’s religion, tongue, heart, self... The scripture herein addresses the fact that an individual should care for any widow or orphan. The inspired scripture gives criteria for the kind of widow that a church should care for in 1 Timothy 5; such must have been married to one husband, be a faithful Sister in Christ, not under sixty years of age, etc. No one is saying the church cannot provide rented or built accommodation for such. We all know a typical Old Peoples Home is open unto all poor/desolate aged folks in society. It is not as if the Schools and Homes Bro. Oji is advocating for will admit Christians **only** so he should not try to be clever by half in his arguments!

Mt 25 cited is about individuals being rewarded at the final judgment, not congregations. Their benevolent acts were even done unto people the Lord identified as *brethren*!

What exactly does Bro. Oji mean by church hospitals, schools, etc. “*be operated ...not for profit*”? Does he intend such shall render free services without any charge or are to charge minimal fees only just to recoup some expenditure? Dabbling into unauthorized ventures is indeed unscriptural regardless of whether monetary profit is obtained. Other profit such as public acclaim, rubbing shoulders with denominations and self-adulation is obviously under pursuit.

Conclusion: On Day3, Bro. Oji openly said: “I agree with Bro. Asaolu that the church is a School.” The Moderator confirmed hearing that statement and equally concurred with it. Thereafter, I asked: “*Since you agree with me that the church is a School, why do you want the church to establish other schools to teach what societal schools are already teaching? Why spur the church to focus on certificated secular courses that needs human approval rather than remain devoted to imparting the spiritual education which Christ entrusted unto his body?*” Till now, I have not received any response.

I consequently made the following closing remark: “Those agitating for the church to establish Schools, Hospitals, etc. should name such after their own congregation whenever they do so e.g. ‘Church of Christ Satellite Pry. & Sec. School,’ not as ‘Church of Christ Pry & Sec. School.’ They should recall that local churches are autonomous, and should be easily identified when commending or condemning their works, as evident in Revelation 2-3. They should not give the false impression that their secular School or Hospital was established by the universal church, and agreed upon by every Christian.”

Dear reader, I thank God for the opportunity to teach His word with the ability that He graciously bestows. I appreciate the brethren who organized the Webinar, Bro. Oji O. Oji for presenting his view, and all other participants for spending time to listen and scrutinize the submissions made. We must not shy away from continual reasoning over the scriptures so as to better understand, obey and apply the word of God. This is imperative because of the inspired commands in 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15 and James 1:21-22. Unto God the Father be glory forever more through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen!