

# ***A Pastor's Note About Staff Certification***

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By definition, certification is attestation that one has been observed or examined and found in good order. Certification comes to each of us from God, rulers, and mankind. We are always being observed and discussed.

We MUST please God. When we please Him and others, it ought to give us a sense of accomplishment. If we do our best and do not mind being evaluated, we will eventually gain the patronization and charity of the community. This is exactly what is meant by Luke 2:52. Jesus openly worked, as Acts 2:22 states; and as He did, men began to approve of Him charitably.

The early church lived in favor with all the people (Acts 2:47). The apostles did not seem to mind being hailed to the magistrates to be examined (Acts 4:9, 13). As the apostles and their brotherhood lived openly for Christ, it was soon apparent to members of the Sanhedrin that to fight them was to fight God (Acts 5:38, 39). Gamaliel warned his fraternal magistrates that it was time to allow God to show the world what sort of ministry this sect of the Nazarene could be.

Whether or not we like it, we are always being evaluated by others. The only time we need to fear evaluation is when we know we do not measure up to good standards. The church where I pastor is always open to visits by public officials. From Senators downward, we have regularly invited government officials to visit, or to send a visitor, to see what we are doing -- and why. Those who have come have been impressed, and we got blessed. We ought to have open channels with those who rule us (I Timothy 2:1-3; Romans 13:1-6). Although we would not allow the government to run our program or determine our philosophy, we surely do not mind them observing our work.

When other believers with expertise examine us, we should be pleased to allow them to advise so that we can do a better job. That applies to every ministry of our churches and Christian schools. "No man liveth unto himself." The Apostle Paul was "examined" by some critics, and he did not seem very bothered about it as long as they allowed themselves to be evaluated in the same manner (II Corinthians 13:1-7). Those who understand a little of the Greek language ought to study that text to find the use of DOKIMOS and ADOKIMOS. It has to do with being examined for approval or

disapproval. Paul told Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God..." (II Timothy 2:15).

As these principles of Scripture are applied to staff at a Christian school, I believe we should be able to see the obvious.

Staff certification looks at the credentials of the personnel. It does not evaluate the staff by physically watching each person perform his duties. The Scriptures give many illustrations that when God calls one of His servants to do a task, that servant was prepared for the task. That preparation is checked when a certification program provides a professional, objective review, based upon a commonly held standard of preparation. This review is a valuable service to those responsible to God for the children entrusted to a teacher and school.

Certification should never be the sole criteria for hiring (or retaining) a staff member. Interviews, references, and past job performance are extremely important.

Responsibility accompanies receiving certification. One that gives a certification may revoke the same if an individual does not fulfill his responsibility of upholding the standards. Two illustrations are evident such as when a local church revokes an ordination to the ministry or when the state Department of Education revokes a public school employee's Certificate.

Preparation for a profession is not a task that has a stopping point. Any professional who stops learning and improving will immediately digress. The best way to improve your ministry is to consistently do your very best and to regularly allow others to evaluate your work and make honest and helpful recommendations for improvement. Anyone who shrinks from the possibility of being examined and approved usually has some things to hide or things that shame him about his own work.

We learn from each other. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). When we work with our friends in the faith and in education to examine us, to improve us, we are blessed and honest souls will be impressed. The certifier and the certified are thus edified and enriched.

# ***An Educator's Note About Staff Certification***

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The Apostle Paul encourages the church at Corinth by stating, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). This encouragement for the church to mature and change what it does as it grows has strong spiritual application for believers today. Likewise, the concept of growth and maturation must not be lost in the Christian school movement.

In the early years of Christian education, many schools were forced to use curriculum, facilities, and faculty that did not measure up to educational standards or biblical standards. Curriculum was selected and used that was not philosophically compatible with biblical principles until better curriculum became available. Facilities that were built for church use became the classroom until better facilities could be built. Hopefully, qualified teachers were hired to work under these conditions; but in some cases, well-meaning people were asked to do things that they were not trained to do.

Many of these early developments were easily overlooked in the name of expedience and lack of experience. That is no longer the case. Christian schools are no longer "pioneers." Christian schools must become mature, responsible educational institutions. Improving curriculum and facilities, without improving the quality of the instructor, does not make sense. The classroom teacher is the greatest resource that any school can have, regardless of whether it is a public or private school.

Many Christian schools are well into their third decade. KCEA's concern is that its affiliating schools across the state recognize their responsibility before God and man to be honest, open, and realistic in their public promotion of their school. Claims of quality education from within are not always the perception from the outside.

The KCEA certification program provides its affiliated schools with a tool by which its faculty members can be measured, encouraged, and rewarded based on their educational qualifications. These qualifications will be examined by a group of unbiased peers.

Teachers will be challenged to grow. Schools will be able to demonstrate accountability to its parents and community. But most importantly, the children in Christian schools will benefit from being taught by teachers who are growing.

# ***Criteria for Evaluation***

## Basic Definitions

- a. Certify - to endorse officially, to guarantee as good by a statement to that effect, to verify, to confirm
- b. Teaching - to cause to know a subject, to show how, to guide the study of

## Criteria for Evaluation

- a. Academic Preparation - degree or certificate from an approved program, courses in education, training in Bible, advanced training through graduate degrees, majors and minors, transcripts required
- b. Spiritual Qualifications - personal testimony of salvation, member in good standing in a local church, no ties to ecumenism
- c. Job Performance - currently employed in a KCEA school, recommended by current supervisor
- d. Professional Growth - graduate courses or degrees, CEUs, enrichment courses, professional seminars
- e. Professional History - years of experience in education, years of experience in Christian education, pattern of faithfulness, past employer's recommendations

KCEA recognizes that each individual within a ministry may have circumstances that prevent him/her from following a traditional road to teacher certification. KCEA is willing to consider alternative criteria for certification in these instances. The candidate for certification must show documented evidence of professional growth that addresses the following areas: biblical studies, educational philosophy, content area, or professional education supplements. Experience will also be considered as a factor in this alternative plan. The candidate will be certified by KCEA at the level that coincides best with the traditional certification program.

KCEA reserves the right to deny acceptance to the Teacher Certification Program to any applicant who does not meet the academic, spiritual, and/or professional criteria listed in this manual.