

Parachurches

A Valley Bible Church Position Paper www.valleybible.net

Definition of parachurches

"Any ministry whose organization is not under the control or authority of a local congregation." (From Jerry White, *The Church and the Para-Church*, page 19).

Evaluation of parachurches

Parachurch organizations are not condemned nor promoted in the scriptures. However, their emergence, though offering the potential for positive benefits, also presents the local church with a significant challenge.

The church is challenged to make sure that the biblical role of the local church is understood and valued.

The church's role:

The institution of the local church in the New Testament era stands apart in the Bible as God's sole means of advancing the kingdom of God in the hearts of men.

The church's value:

If biblically patterned after the teachings of God's word the church provides mature, godly leadership committed to the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry while maintaining the moral, doctrinal, and directional purity of the church.

If biblically patterned after the teachings of God's word the church will provide a network of individual believers within the local church committed to stimulating one another to holiness in all areas of their lives, using all the means that the Lord has put at their disposal.

If biblically patterned after the teaching of God's word the church will provide encouragement for every member to take advantage of their own unique opportunities for outreach while enjoying the protection and support of the local fellowship.

If the role and value of the local church is not understood or appreciated God's ordained instrument for advancing His kingdom can actually be weakened by parachurch organizations.

The church can be weakened when members look to outside Christian influences for their nurturing and equipping. This may bring disunity if those influences lead those local church members to embrace doctrines and philosophies of ministries that would be considered detrimental by those men that Lord has entrusted with the oversight of the church.

The church can be weakened by its members becoming so involved with outside Christian influences that the healthy networking of believers within a local fellowship for the purpose of pursuing holiness is weakened or even eliminated except for attendance at worship services.

The church can be weakened when its members, without seeking the protection and support of the local church, commit themselves to formal outreach projects under the sponsorship of outside Christian influences. This may expose them to discouragement and rob them of the strength that comes to Christians when they are supported by a local fellowship.

Conclusion

Therefore, we would strongly encourage you to work through your local church when considering any parachurch involvement. In doing this you will give testimony to your understanding of the role and value of the local church and we believe bring blessing to your life and ministry.

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