

PETITION TO THE
Legislature of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Your Petitioners, THE CONGREGATION OF THE "DISCIPLES OF CHRIST," usually denominated CHRISTIANS, worshipping at _____ in the County of _____ and composed of about _____ members, being a constituent part of the Christian Church of Kentucky, would most respectfully represent:

That, in the year 1836, the Christian Church of Kentucky established an Institution of Learning at Georgetown, Ky., which was Chartered by the Legislature of Kentucky by the name of Bacon College, and was subsequently removed to Harrodsburg, Ky. In January, 1858, the Charter of Bacon College was amended, and the name was changed to Kentucky University. (See Session Act of 1857-8; pages 182 to 187.) By this amended Charter, thirty persons were named as Curators of Kentucky University, who were invested with the legal right to all the property and estate, real and personal, of said Institution, as Trustees for the Christian Church of Kentucky. The Board of Curators were not only authorized to fill all vacancies that might occur in the Board, but also to increase the number of Curators indefinitely, thus making them a self-perpetuating body.

By an Act of the Legislature approved the 28th of February, 1865, Transylvania University was consolidated with and merged in Kentucky University, and all its funds and property passed to it; subject, however, to be divested by the removal of Kentucky University from Fayette County. Soon after the passage of this Act, Kentucky University was removed to Lexington, Ky. The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky was established the same year by an Act of the Legislature, and attached at the will of the State to Kentucky University. Neither of the last named Acts changed or attempted to change the ownership of Kentucky University, which, by the Act of January, 1858, was vested in the Christian Church of Kentucky, through the Board of Curators, who, by its 8th Section, were constituted Trustees to own and control the University for them.

Since the passage of the Act of 1858, naming thirty individuals as Curators, the number has been increased by the Board to forty-one; and by filling vacancies and adding eleven new members to the Board of Curators, its constitution has been so changed that it has ceased to represent the will of the Christian Church of Kentucky and the Donors to the Endowment Fund. On the contrary, the majority of the Board have openly and deliberately disregarded the will and wishes of the owners and founders of the University, and placed themselves in direct antagonism to them. Besides this, they have, in managing the University, disregarded the plain enactment of the Charter, and acted in violation of its provisions.

We, therefore, respectfully and most earnestly **PETITION** your Honorable Body to enact such amendments of the Charter as will correct these abuses, and enable us to manage and control our own property as was contemplated by the original and amended acts of the incorporation. By this means, and by this means only, can the University command our confidence, sympathy and support, and the patronage of the Church and of the Donors and their friends, and a large portion of the general public. Without these, it will dwindle into comparative insignificance, and become merely a local institution with local patronage.

We do, therefore, most earnestly and urgently Petition that the Charter granted in 1858 be amended as follows:

1st. That the number of Curators be definitely limited to not exceeding thirty, and that the self-perpetuating power of the Board of Curators be taken away, and full authority be vested in the owners and founders of the University, through their regularly appointed delegates, to elect a new Board of Curators on the first Monday in May next, and every five years thereafter.

2d. That no member of the Executive Committee shall ever be eligible to the office of Treasurer. At present, the Treasurer is not only a member of, but Chairman of the Executive Committee, which is by the Charter required to audit his accounts and certify to their correctness; and is specially charged with the duty of watching over and guarding the Treasury.

In addition to these amendments of the Charter, we further Petition that the connection between the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky and Kentucky University be severed.

Whilst we hereby express our fixed determination to faithfully and fully carry out all the obligations imposed on us by the act establishing the Agricultural and Mechanical College, yet as its connection with Kentucky University has given great dissatisfaction to other religious denominations, and many good citizens, and has been a source of discord from the beginning, we do hereby express our entire willingness to surrender this trust, if it be the will of the Legislature that we should do so. If, however, your will is that the connection should continue, you may confidently rely on our earnest efforts to co-operate with the State in making the Agricultural College a success.