

Today for my 2 cents, I want to look at a few questions and answers to this whole 501c3 dilemma. Should we be a 501c3 or not? and what does the Bible say about it?

As you look thru these question and answers my prayer will be that you will be able to see things as they truly are. Then, may God grant you the strength, repentance, and will; to do what needs to be done for His glory. Remember the prayer the Lord Jesus thught His diciples? *"Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done**, On earth as it is in heaven."* It is God's will, that needs to be done, not ours!

Something to think about!

501c3 Q & A

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, the flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- Hebrews 10:19-22

Most church members live so far below the standard, you'd have to backslide to be in fellowship. We are so subnormal that if we were to become normal, people would think we're abnormal.

- Vance Havner

Q. Why should a church refuse to be a 501c3?

A. Becoming a 501c3 grafts an assembly of believers into the World System. Their devotion to God is compromised. No matter how much they *claim* they are devoted to God, their *actions* in this matter betray that claim in some measure.

Q. What exactly is a 501c3 anyway?

A. The Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) is designed to incorporate an organization as a non-profit institution for the purpose of providing exemption from income taxes and protection from personal liability, as well as a variety of other benefits. In return the organization makes a vow to refrain from partisan political speech and conduct. Nearly every church in the United States is a 501c3, and certainly all of the highly visible "mainstream" churches are.

Q. In what way is a church beholden to the World as a 501c3?

A. A church that applies for 501c3 tax-exempt status must inform the government about a number of things it does or will promise to do to qualify, and it does so by filling out any of a number of specific forms. One of those it may complete is a 1023 form, which asks about how much money a church receives and how it gets it, how much money it gives out, who gets paid and how much that is, along with dozens of other probing questions. Smaller charitable organizations may fill out the simpler 990 form.

Whatever official notifications are utilized, the openly transmitted information reveals things about the assembly that the government does not need to know, *except* to the extent that the church wants to sign on to

government power over its affairs. This is similar to what Hezekiah did for the envoys of Babylon: he willfully showed them all his wealth so the Agency of Cain could make a claim of tribute on that wealth.

What makes this insidious is that the 501c3 church then places itself under the laws and bylaws of the issuer of incorporation. The assembly becomes a mere "God club," in essence a *state-church*. It is now under the presumption of living under the World System's law, coloring everything it does in every aspect of the assembly's life. True followers of Christ, however, live free from under the letter of the law that kills and is the power of sin. They are instead living in Christ's Truth and Grace.

Q. Does a church *have* to be a 501c3?

A. No. An assembly of believers can meet and worship God any time at any place they want to, as long as they are loving their neighbor in the process. An assembly wholly given over to Christ out of His love will have no problem in this task.

(Note: Some will say that in the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service, all churches are *already* 501c3's and that some don't even have to fill out a 1023. With this sales tactic the government may certainly seduce many into making it their lord, but the real question is who you are in *God's* eyes.)

Q. Doesn't a 501c3 allow the church to be exempt from paying taxes?

A. The First Amendment to the Constitution states that the federal government (embodied in the U.S. Congress in this instance) cannot establish a religion and it cannot prevent the free exercise thereof. A group of believers meeting together may do so *whether they pay taxes or not*. In other words, even if the church does *not* pay taxes, the government may not stop them - the assembly may still gather and live out the expression of their faith. This is beside the fact that followers of Christ, obedient to Him, are protected *by* Him in this task - whether or not the Constitution says so.

Q. Doesn't a 501c3 allow tithers and givers to claim contributions as tax deductions?

A. When asked about paying taxes, Jesus asked a question in return. "Who do the kings of the earth demand tribute, from the sons or strangers?" "From strangers," was the reply. "Then the sons are free," Jesus said. You may find this principle in the 17th chapter of the book of Matthew.

The federal tax code *must* make provision for those [free from tax liability](#), and it does so in a number of different places. For example, subchapter N, section 861 states that the only taxable income is that specified in the section, most notably foreign-derived income. Domestically-derived income is then *exempt from consideration as taxable income*. If a citizen obtains no income from a foreign source, and is not an employee of the government or a subdivision thereof, then he or she is not liable for paying federal income tax.

This is not a loophole or a trick, *it is the federal tax law*, codified by the U.S. Constitution itself (essentially stating that Congress cannot go beyond its duly entitled constitutional powers). However, many people pay income taxes by making themselves liable as non-resident aliens or government employees (which they do by *incorporating* their assemblies, whether commercial or ecclesiastical). No one is preventing them from doing so, not the least of which is the federal government.

This is beyond the more important fact that the reason people should be giving to the church is to sow kingdom work, not to get a nice discount on their taxes. Indeed one should probably think carefully about Jesus' exhortation against letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing when one gives and then announces the amount of that giving to the World.

Q. Doesn't a 501c3 allow the corporation's employees to have certain benefits, like a housing allowance?

A. Why does a pastor or other vested church laborer need such a benefit from the *government*? Why don't the people of the congregation they serve provide any such benefit themselves? In a real sense this reveals the bankruptcy of this tool of the System: people who should be trusting wholly in God's bountiful provision, living out of an impoverished mentality from which they believe the government must provide something they couldn't have otherwise.

Much of this comes out of a gross misconception about *value*. The value of a government discount doesn't just come from a vacuum. Caesar must confiscate value from another source to afford it to the 501c3 pastor. When you think about it carefully, isn't the mentality here, "Let's *get this* from the government so we can somehow have *more* than we could have if we didn't"? Sadly, the "more" is just a vanilla-frosted covetousness.

Q. Doesn't a non-profit get other advantages by proclaiming themselves as such, like eligibility for grants, bulk mail rates, exemptions from state sales taxes, and so forth?

A. By now it should be clear that *every single one* of these items can be provided by generously giving believers in an assembly. It should also be obvious that the very existence of all these "benefits" and "discounts" means that the government is actually *selling* something, and as such the church *does not have to buy!* Indeed it is feasible that *none* would be buying if it weren't for all the perks! This should make us think again about the meaning of being made merchandise of men.

Q. Isn't the essence of the non-profit exactly what it says - to prevent someone or some powerful group in the organization from unduly profiting from its success?

A. If the answer the 501c3 advocate gives to this question is, "There just aren't enough people out there who would really refuse to exploit people, so we'd better cover our backs," then I can't help but be terribly sad. If indeed true, then it is harrowing to think that when Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" he was speaking to so many. This is not rocket science: followers of Christ who are considered powerful or have influential positions should refrain from exploiting people because *they love them*, not because the government has a law against it.

Q. Isn't an advantage the accountability a church can have?

A. We seem to be convinced that a 501c3 contract somehow makes a non-profit reputable, on the "up-and-up," an organization *worthy* of receiving our donation. This concern sometimes comes with the fear that the money will be used for "non-charitable," questionable purposes. It must be asked again, *what* or even *who* makes an organization legitimate?

Establishing vigilant, visible, and responsible accountability relationships is certainly biblical, but note the difference in approaches. The godly institution asks for accountability by declaring, "Watch us, because as humans we may make a mistake." The worldly institution does so by saying, "Watch us, because as sinners we may exploit people." This actually reflects the condition of *avoiding* accountability and an admission one *needs* the law to keep things straight. Virulent Catholicist sentiments have convinced so many sincere followers of Christ that the excuse "I'm just a sinner" is a convenient way to put oneself under the power and force of the law. Maybe I missed something here, but didn't Jesus die to take out *all* of our sin? To get us to *love*, and in that, to live joyously together in grace and truth?

Q. Non-profits have always had the reputation of being right and wholesome. Isn't that a good thing?

What is so good about being "non-profit"? The World System has done an ingenious job of convincing people that *non-profit = good* and *for-profit = bad*. What many don't realize is that non-profits simply factor in all the benefits its leaders appropriate as part of its permitted cost configurations. Often it's a lot of money! Then they

can simply say "See, no profits!" If you could look behind the scenes, you'd find that they can be just as deceptive and exploitive as any other organization.

What's more disheartening is that most pastors and church elders don't seem to realize that when they sign the contract, they are violating Jesus' precise commands against making pronouncements regarding how good you are at giving. The form essentially asks, "What good things do you do to qualify you as a non-profit?" and "How much of your income do you give away?" There are even strict rules they must follow about their income and what they do with it in order to be officially classified "non-profit."

Didn't Jesus say, "When you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men"? Didn't He declare unjustified "the Pharisee [who] stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get'"?

Q. Won't terminating a 501c3 drive people away from our church?

A. Those who desire *genuine intimacy and fellowship with Him* will stay. People in a God club will want to stay in a God club, and if you turn your God club into a vibrant church many will leave to find another God club. *Many of Jesus' disciples left Him when He told them the truth about who He was.* What is the truth about who you are and what your assembly is?

Q. You don't seem to understand - this is the real world. People just won't give money to organizations that aren't 501c3. How will we sustain ourselves if we don't get funded?

A. Think about this in the simplest terms. If someone comes up to you and says, "Here's *x* amount of dollars for your ministry. How do I know you will use it properly?" What are you going to say? As it is, virtually every ministry holds up a piece of paper that says, "Here's the law we've obligated ourselves to - see, *we're legitimate.*" Why can't followers of Christ say "Jesus Christ is my seal of approval. I am accountable to *Him*, and as such you can fully trust that we'll do what we say we'll do with your money." God *tells you* to do as much in His word! Read the first few chapters of the second letter to the Corinthians to see it, it's right there.

Why *don't* we say this to people? It is because too many in the past have *claimed* that they were His when they weren't. Too many in the present do that too - they are *Catholicized*, pretending to be Christians but following another Jesus. As such *all* who say they're on Jesus' side can't be trusted.

Therefore, it is simple. It would take a lot of people *actually following Christ* to do the right thing with donations for those Christians to be trusted again. Being intractably aligned with a system that essentially declares "We can't be trusted and here's the document that proves it" *does not* engender that kind of a relationship.

"Oh, but what about *the money*?" you may cry, "Too many will still not give..." Think about it, if God really wants your ministry to go, don't you think He'll make it go? *Shouldn't we be doing what the Acts 2 church did anyway?* God is more interested in your faithfulness than He is about your running around trying to earn His favor making sure your ministry is funded. Or, to put it another way, what would you rather have, people seeing Christ and His love in what you do, or people seeing your ministry as just another one of the thousands of God clubs that tries to do really nice things?

I should briefly add a comment about the concern people have that the IRS will look unfavorably on large donations to non-501c3 entities. First, why would the IRS feel that way? Look at the issue about trust just addressed above. Secondly, is there a reason the IRS should be suspicious? Are you in fact laundering money in some way? If so then you should go to prison. If you aren't, then what is your concern? If indeed you are righteous by the blood of Jesus, *why do you so fear being lumped in with all those who do deceitful things?*

Q. You keep using the term "God club." What exactly is that?

A. I use the term to describe a Christian assembly that is so bound to the World that it is no different from any other club. The club may be engaging. It may be exhilarating. It may be a great thing - great people, great activities, great music and food and fun. Hey, it's a club! It may even say and do all kinds of God-oriented things. But as long as it is contractually beholden to the World, most notably as a 501c3 organization, it will never be a full-on God-filled life-changing *church*.

Please do not think I dismiss God clubs so readily. In many of them, the word is read and preached. Many members love God, and love another charitably. They love *a lot* of people charitably. Because of these things *people do come to Him*. I can't deny myself that I've come to Him, come to learn more about Him, and come to desire more of Him, *because of some significant things said and done in God clubs*. But this does not change the nature of *what God Himself desires of His people*. Seeing in the Bible how much He wants us to actually do what He says, how much He wants us *just to trust in Him*, I am convinced He does not want us to stay in God clubs as if they were churches.

The main reason for this is not hard to understand, especially for those who truly know what goes on in the darkness of God clubs - those who've seen it or even been wounded by it. People seeking their salvation from the World *are still sinners*, and still do things to wreck their lives and their relationships. A classic characteristic of the Catholicist church is the practice of doing horrifically manipulative things in the dark and doing cheerfully charitable things in the light. It is the mentality that a few more good works will cover for those bad things. This is the way of the World, of Rome, of the Catholicist Nation. It is not the way of God.

Q. Isn't a 501c3 an important part of financial stewardship, for both the church leadership and the flock?

A. This idea comes from the conception that it is the *World System* that is the one that makes your value. Now, for the intractable Catholicist, it's all he's got. But for the authentic follower of Christ, this is a lie readily embraced because it is so pervasive and they've been managing their affairs by it for so long. Many who claim to be Christians will declare their undying allegiance to the God who redeemed them, and then put their full trust in the law to check their fears about others exploiting their value in the financial arena. This is not characteristic of a loving body of genuine believers, all of them bought by His blood from His love.

Q. How, exactly, does a 501c3 commitment keep a pastor from saying what he wants about Jesus and the gospel from the pulpit?

A. Many times a pastor will add to this, "What do I have to worry about, I'm not going to do any of that political activity *anyway*." The problem is that when a 501c3 assembly signs on to the requirement that it avoid any partisan political activity, it is ceding to the government the decision about what to say. In other words, it makes no difference what you *plan* to say, you've put yourself under that authority of a power that has already dictated what you can say ("Jesus is Lord"), and what you *can't* say ("Vote for Smith"). You have given to Caesar what should be God's.

Q. How does a 501c3 make my church a *state-church*?

A. An incorporated organization is signing on to all the laws and bylaws of the issuing authority. It becomes a legal entity born of the state, a subdivision of the federal government. As much as that polity *allows* a church to say what it will, it can just as easily *prohibit* that. The deception that the state is neutral or that there is some sacrosanct "separation of church and state" does not change the binding nature of this contract.

What is so much more critically significant is that the follower of Christ lives joyously in His truth and grace, not fearfully under that law. The individual in a God club may have a beaming smile and sweet disposition, but

scratch him and you'll see he's deathly afraid of a threatening, imposing world. He clings to a 501c3 like a security blanket, and as such his contractual allegiance is with the state.

Q. Doesn't a 501c3 do the most for the church by protecting it from personal liability claims?

A. An unincorporated church *cannot be sued*. Yes, individuals are then subject to lawsuits, but any legal action against someone will be because of one of two things:

1. A genuine mistake that led to some accident. A follower of Christ not only would be transparently truthful about his role in any incident, but he would join with the entire assembly to industriously ensure that any individual hurt or injured gets whatever aid or help he genuinely needs.

2. An act of willful malice against another. A follower of Christ who disgraces Him may certainly confess and be forgiven, but restoration must include a costly restitution, and he should accept the place of Cain's rod of correction in this process. To hide from this is to refuse to acknowledge the severity of sin, much more the power of God's grace.

It must also be mentioned that in many cases the World will work valiantly to deceive - such as lawyers who cunningly vend unnecessary 501c3 obligations - but one who lives faithfully by the light of God's word is in great measure inoculated against that deception.

Q. Isn't an advantage of not incorporating the freedom to boldly and more effectively challenge the government and its evils?

A: This is one of the most troubling misconceptions about being a 501c3-free church. Most of them consider that now that the government can no longer regulate their political activity, they have carte blanche to let 'er rip: "The government murders babies and glorifies sodomy and sows a lot of wretched stuff to poison our souls and it is all the fault of Politicians Jones, Martin, and Brown" (they are usually Democrats).

The truth is that while the government is indeed evil, it was instituted by God as such so that it may effectively *prosecute evildoers*. An inherently good-doing government is impotent against the individual who does not have God and does not care to live in His righteousness. Caesar is assigned the duty of mitigating the violence that *that* man or woman will do. Yes, the government does entice, provoke, and tempt, *but one covered by the blood of Jesus* will not be taken in.

Furthermore, it is the government's *job* to manage the sin of those who ask it to do so, and how it does that is *none of my business*. I am out of systematized sin management, out of the World System, out of the despair and death that reigns there. I am, however, available as a reconciler to those who are tired of it and want to come out, who want to know my Lord - the One who loves with real love. I can't do that if I'm bitterly fomenting against Caesar, or worse, *trying to get him to do things my way*. He can't, he won't, and he'll even resent it to the point where he will deftly prey on my weaknesses to thoroughly marginalize me (if I'm lucky). The 501c3-free church that rages in the ministry of condemnation is doing nothing but blowing on the front of a speeding bullet train to try to get it to stop.

Q. What about recently considered legislation in Congress that would allow pastors to speak more freely about political issues? (In June of 2005 it was the Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act, H.R. 235)

A. This bill and any like it do nothing to change the plain fact that it is still Caesar who is dictating what a church can and cannot say. In H.R. 235, the requirements for 501c3 benefits are simply shifted around a bit. While this particular bill would allow pastors to endorse a chosen candidate for political office from the pulpit, it would prohibit him from doing it outside the physical church venue. It's simply an addition to the laws and bylaws that govern what a World System church does.

Q. (October 2008) What about the thirty or so pastors who brazenly defied the prohibition on partisan speech by unequivocally endorsing John McCain for U.S. president from their pulpits on a single given Sunday?

A. For this question I've devoted an entire page. [It is here.](#)

Q. Won't we be intimidated or pressured if we are not a 501c3?

A. Life would be boring without challenges. The question is, how do we respond to them? Do we do so Scripturally, or do we allow ourselves to get sucked into acting on our anxious desires to condemn others? If we are with Jesus, we must acknowledge with Him that our kingdom is not of this world.

Our answer to those who challenge us is then to do exactly what Jesus did: dine with them and show them love that they've never seen. They may be so flabbergasted that they'd actually allow Jesus to open their eyes, too, and to see Him and walk with Him as you do.

About the concerns of *government* intimidation? Yes, government frequently declares the unconventional actions of faithful disciples "frivolous." Really though, the very same rule of grace applies to individuals who work there, too - *they also need Him*. Can you love with such a love that the beholder of that love is wholly convinced you can do no harm to him whatsoever, in any way? *That you are expressing authentic love unlike any he's seen before*, and wholly desires to know more about where - indeed Who it comes from?

Q. Could it get to a point where 501c3-free churchgoers are actually put in jail?

A. Highly unlikely, unless you've given Caesar *reason* to put you there. This is beside the point that Jesus said if we did what He told us, we would experience persecution. The apostle Paul was unjustly thrown in jail a number of times, and each time he gladly did what he was redeemed by Christ to do: *he loved those around him*, from jailer to Roman governor alike.

Q. Isn't having a 501c3 simply the harmless purchase of a service, just as if the church were purchasing the service of a painter to give the walls a fresh coat of paint?

A. We have to look carefully at what we are buying, what the reason is for the purchase. We get a painter to do a job *because we need painted walls*. But what is *government* for? It is for the *regulation of evildoers*. I wonder, what part of our sin did Jesus' blood fail to take out? What part of us not covered by that blood does the government need to regulate?

That a follower of Christ may sin is another issue altogether, but briefly for our purposes here: it is the church's job to boldly confront and firmly rebuke, and then gently leading the offender to restoration. Only after he has not repented does the church hand him over to the government, and the government is *supposed* to prosecute, whether or not a church has a 501c3.

For the question at hand, an illustration may help: It would be as if the church, along with all its other reasonable expenditures, hired a brothel manager. Why on earth would it need one of those? Well, you know, people may go out and get one of those kinds of people and do those kinds of things, and with sexually transmitted diseases going around, it'd be best to have someone who really knows about protection and so forth to keep an eye on it all and help us out. This is nonsense, of course. It is even more ludicrous to think that we'd reconsider if he gave us a discount on the room rates! Terminating a 501c3 is the same as refusing to enlist the services of a brothel manager.

Q. What about considering 501c3 as a license, like a business license?

A. Again, this gets back to *who's authority is the church under, exactly?* Are the people in the church there because that place is *God's*, or is it the state's? 501c3 *makes it the state's*. Carefully review those first chapters of second Corinthians and discover what exactly is the "seal of approval" for the follower of Christ.

Also remember that for those in the World, that approval comes from signing those contracts. A 501c3 comes from the idea that an assembly must be incorporated, or *legally obligated to the state*. Any corporation, whether for-profit or non-profit, in whatever capacity, is rightly considered by the state to be a *subdivision* of government, and those gaining some privilege from such an entity are classified as federal employees. They have made themselves slaves to another master - and he is not Jesus Christ! The Christians who lead God clubs may *say* all kinds of wonderful things about God and church and saving people, but by their *action* they betray their words.

Q. If a 501c3 is so bad, why are so many churches in this country 501c3's - almost all of them!

A. I never said 501c3's were necessarily bad - they are perfectly fine for those who want to be a God club. In fact, God clubs are indispensable for those who insist on having their sin managed. The Bible even says that the ministry of condemnation is good. *But the ministry of reconciliation is vastly better*. For those who desire reconciliation, freedom, healing, grace, understanding, there should be people who love with His love to reach out to them.

It is harrowing that many of these people - many good, loving people desiring the things of God - have been told by brilliantly trained religious operatives, through the extraordinarily powerful influences of tradition, education, and the media, that they must do the 501c3 God club thing. With that much condemnation, there should be many more reconcilers.

I can't help but think that what God says to those who say they're His is the same as what God said to Adam and Eve after they tried to rationalize their disobedience: "Who told you that you were naked?" In the same way, an incorporated church is being asked, "Who told you to make a binding pact with the World? Who told you to be in debt to Caesar?" This is not owing what is owed him, which Jesus endorsed (proper understanding of government!); this is *making him proprietor of your value*, which Jesus denounced.

The Catholicist - in the strictest sense: a Christian willfully girding a 501c3 institution - simply isn't certain that Jesus loves and cares for him, and he shows it by living in fear contracted with the World System. This must in turn mean that anyone encountering such a Christian can *never be sure that this individual loves him*. In other words, if you cling to a 501c3 obligation, you cannot be fully convincing about the gospel and its life-changing power. If you don't believe Him, then they don't believe you.

Q. Are you saying in all this that the church today is apostate?

A. Many times this claim has been made to get Christians to engage in a cult. A charismatic leader will say something like, "The church today is apostate (meaning it has been led astray from its original biblical roots), so let's *restore* it." They then form an organization that operates just as far from the Bible as that which they've censured.

What I am arguing is that we make a more refined distinction of "the church." Rome has *always* had its church, and as long as there are people who refuse to believe on Jesus, it will be there to welcome its congregants. It is indeed, *a true church* - for the Catholicist. All 501c3 sects and cults, even the most Christian sounding ones, are merely Catholicist divisions of the Roman state-church, *very truly so*.

Followers of Christ can't do anything to that church, they can only love those in it with His love. And yet, throughout history and in every part of the world, tremendous amounts of energy have been futilely expended to change it. Think about the terms "Protestant" (protest it!) and "Reformation" (reform it!). People sincerely

striving to amend the Catholic Church have only made themselves liable to the influence of those forces that keep them in the Nation duly administered by the Rome they so revile.

So the question is not as much, "Is the church today apostate?" but rather "Which church are you in? The Great Roman Ecclesiastical Extravaganza, a registered God club, a cult, a place with some Diversion Jesus? Or are you in a vibrant assembly of those worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth?" You *are in* one of them. (Even the strict recluse is in the extreme cult of himself.)

Q. Here's a more relevant question: These *followers of Christ* who say they are fully devoted to Him, why would *they* so willingly sign on to a 501c3?

A. The answer to this question can be found simply by doing that one thing this website plainly urges all of its readers to do: look in Scripture. Many who say they are Christians are so biblically illiterate that it is not surprising they just can't inoculate themselves from the things that Rome's operatives convince them to do. (Yes, for review, the federal government that issues 501c3 contracts is simply the modern political manifestation of Rome.)

A specific place to look in this instance is in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts. There you'll see the people screeching about how Paul and those with him don't do what the Romans do. What was the significant thing Romans did as a matter of practice?

They worshipped idols.

So, Paul ministers Grace and Truth to the people, many see it and welcome it, and this threatens the idol makers' business. What do the idol makers say? Paraphrased, "These people [Paul et al] are messing with the divine majesty of *this god!* [it was Diana in this instance]"

Here's the key: After everyone got all hot and bothered, the city clerk stepped up to speak. Note this is the *city clerk*, a representative of the government that Christians today so fear if they didn't have a 501c3. Read it carefully. He says in verses 35 to 40:

"Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it."

The first thing that happens is the clerk appeals to their own belief that Diana (or Artemis as is the Greek goddess) is really important. If they are so sure of that, then why are they so fiercely protesting what Paul is doing? Do they have doubts about the fact that Diana is a mere idol and cannot save them, heal them, give them any reason for living? He then says very clearly, if they don't have doubts, then they should shut up and leave Paul and his cohorts alone, for they have done nothing to break the law.

Does Paul continue to minister with God's power? Of course he does! The fact that they were so riled up and the clerk had to calm them means that they *do* have doubts that Diana is anything, except as a means to make a living and to pretend to be like everyone else.

The point is that in today's Rome, Christians - those ambivalent about whether or not to be grafted to the World in whatever way that is - are saying deep in their souls, "We are afraid of what the idol worshippers are saying about us. [Anyone who does not genuinely follow Christ is by default worshipping some idol.] They think we

don't like their idols, and in order to appease them we must follow their rules and indulge their commercial activities. Ah yes, our signing a W-4 contract or being in a 501c3 assembly keeps them from being so agitated."

Of course it keeps them from being agitated - *it makes the follower of Christ a Romanist himself*. Not a "Roman citizen," or in today's world, a "U.S. citizen," but a *Romanist* who worships the civil religion's idols. 501c3 is merely the signification that the Christian is making himself responsible for the idol worshippers' feelings, and then enabling their behavior - this is the essence of codependency. It is not true authentic love in action.

If you share that vibrant, ungrafted faith with others, will they abandon their idols? When Paul shared, many did, and sadly many did not. That's the way it is today. But if many still don't, will you stop sharing Him with them? Furthermore, will you sign on to be just like them because you think they'll hurt you?

Q. So then a 501c3 contract, and being a "God club," is a pretty bad thing?

A. Once again, if a church is unequivocally committed to be a God club and to live out the Catholicist agenda, then it is extraordinarily *dangerous* to get out of a 501c3. It must be emphasized that a 501c3 contract is *beneficial* to an assembly that firmly desires to live under the letter of the law. To challenge that law as one not under the power and protection of Christ would amount to spiritual suicide, for a 501c3 contract is an important part of administering a non-profit in the World System. In the Scripture-living Christ-honoring assembly, however, it is an elephant on a bicycle riding through the crystal shop.

Consider the whole concept of institutionalized non-profit incorporated philanthropy. It lives off the existence of two distinct classes: the first, the exploiters, industriously strive in their grand crusade of "helping." The second, the exploitees, believe they have nothing to offer and are convinced they may survive only with that helping. The exploiters need their religion of "do-gooding," and 501c3 distends their rank pride. The exploitees make careers out of getting those goodies, and this covetousness simply calcifies their pride. *501c3 engenders codependency*, which by definition is the sustenance of relationship not based on love but on fear.

In other words, the exploiter lives his life bitterly saying "If it weren't for me, that guy would be dead." Worse than that is the attitude he has in his heart: "Thank goodness for that guy, because I may always do things for him that make me feel better about myself." The exploitee just as desperately says, "If it weren't for him, I'd be dead." His more brash underlying motivation is, "Because that guy feels so much guilt I can take advantage of that, *and I can be an exploiter myself*."

Needless to say, God will have nothing to do with this, *except to extend His grace and deliverance to those who want out*. Once in His Kingdom, everyone would use their God-given gifts to do marvelous things for God and for community, rejoicing through it all.

Q. What do you say to the pastor or ministry worker who just says, "It really *isn't* that big a thing"?

A. I simply ask them, "What is it that God *really wants from you*?" If it is to change the world for Christ, are you really doing that? They may reply that they are, and indeed they may be doing fine things in their God club, but the fact remains that the Catholicized church's work is so painfully stunted that most in the World perceptively observe that the "church" is no different from the "world." This should be the most harrowing thing any devoted follower of Christ can hear. In fact, I really believe that those who say that they are doing everything they can to win people to Christ still in their hearts have a profound insecurity about that - they still see what goes on in the darkness in spite of their efforts - and this is in large part because because of their association with an assembly grafted to the World.

I would also tell that pastor or ministry worker to simply look in their Bible. I believe someone who truly seeks the will of God would be blown away by how much the Bible says about contracts with the World, what they are and how to understand them. A great place to look is Jeremiah. He was a prophet who spoke forcefully to a

nation chosen by God and whose people contractually obligated themselves to the World System. At one point God said these amazing words: "The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?"

It is so important that the leadership of our communities understand the meaning and impact of this that I have a special introductory page set aside for a direct address to the pastor who is rigidly girding a 501c3 corporation. It is at "[A Letter to Church Pastor.](#)"

Q. How then do we really know whether or not we have a God club or a church? It is very difficult not to be deceived! And come on, all people in a church are just not perfect, many are still very immature spiritually. What about that?

A. God clubs can't help but be God clubs. Christian pundits (pastors, educators, administrators, writers) cry all the time about how bad Christians are when they're supposed to be good. This means far too many are hearers of His word and not doers - 501c3 is part of that condition. Just as many laments bellow forth about how much industrious Christian workers feel like they are running in place to stop horrors like abortion or destitution. Many God clubs certainly attend to Scripture and the commitment to honor God's words, but 501c3 is part of their ineffectiveness.

One may wonder, then, *how many* in a congregation must be holy or righteous for it to be a real fruit-bearing church? That's not really the question here. It has more to do with the actions of the leadership that will honor Christ and draw others to Him. If a church *does* become 501c3-free, it is not unlike offering a meal to a hungry family. *It is acting on belief*, and God will honor that - it is *His* work that makes us all holy and righteous. Jesus' use of the phrase "You shall be perfect" means "You shall be complete." The meaning is that He wants each of us to be all He made us to be! Why *wouldn't* a church jettison its 501c3 for that? Even more so for the immature among us!

Q. What is your key Scriptural support for this?

A. The entire breadth of Scripture speaks of God's people, both the Old Testament nation and the New Testament church, being set apart from the World and its influences. (This is not to say we must then isolate ourselves as recluses as many have foolishly done, but that's another subject.) I've laid out a number of Scriptural references on my "[Citations](#)" page, and assembled an [entire page of Scriptural passages](#) addressing the precise nature of the follower of Christ's relationship to the law. [Specific passages are here](#) regarding contractual obligations with the World.

I can refer you directly to one place that specifically admonishes us against signing on with the World. Read the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians, particularly verses 20 to 23. What is so phenomenal about these words is that the ones that follow, beginning in the third chapter, beautifully describe what an Acts 2 community actually is.

Q. Why really does the government offer this deal to begin with? What's in it for them?

A. The Agency of Cain is always working to sustain its legitimacy, and it can only have legitimacy if it can have control over sinners. Government, really, is all about *managing the sin of its citizens*. What better way to gain that control over religious communities than to constrain them under its laws and bylaws, and give them a nice tax discount to make it particularly appealing?

Q. Okay then, why is the government so deceptive? Why is it trying to trick us all?

A. While government does do deceptive things, it is no trick. Again, a 501c3 is a *legitimate service* for those institutions beholden to Rome and its dictates of conduct. It is a service that God clubs not only desire, but

accept as *necessary* for an essential part of its sin management. Without it, or without the saving grace of Christ, they would flounder in the horrible effects of their unchecked sin.

Q. What about other ministry opportunities that are not exactly church assemblies? What is their liability in all this?

A. There are a variety of different incorporation contracts the IRS can make with any organization. Each one must be considered separately depending on the nature of the organization. The key point for all of them is still critically valid: That a contract with the World by a Christ-following group severely debilitates - if not completely extinguishes the impact that group intends to have in honoring God, ministering to its members, and reaching the lost.

Q. Okay, let's get down to brass tacks. What, really, will we *get* by being 501c3-free when it is so costly?

A. Jesus does indeed encourage us to weigh the costs of any decision. What is the price, then, of your faithfulness? Churches have been doing things under 501c3 for so long they can't even imagine what would happen without it - *a state of complete abandonment to God*. This does not mean we shut off our brains and refuse to use prudent wisdom.

Will there be miraculous things happening? I don't know, just chucking a lie-contract doesn't make one perfectly faithful - a non-501c3 could be just as much of a cult as anything. And you certainly don't want to do it just to test Him or see what goodies He'll put in your trick-or-treat bag. One key reason for being 501c3-free is merely to say to God *through our actions* that we belong exclusively to Him - which is not so mere, really. In this genuine spirit of trust and devotion, do you really think God will dismiss you? When you ask for bread, will He give you a stone?

In very real terms, churches are deathly afraid that by being 501c3-free they'll have to sell off their properties, lay off people, or even completely dissolve. Again I emphasize, do you doubt so powerful and loving a God to provide what you need? Look at what Peter wrote in his first letter: "After you have suffered for a little while, [you may certainly be pressured stay in the World's club!] the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

Look also at what Jesus Himself said in the tenth chapter of Mark: "I tell you the truth, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields -and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life." He is unequivocal: When you give up what you think is so precious, such as a contract with the World, you will get what you've really always wanted, a *hundred-fold* as much, not just later *but now*. Oh, yes, you will get persecutions too, but is that a price you are willing to pay?

This is not to mention that all-in-all, *Jesus paid the price already*.

Q. But so many churches are 501c3's. So many - almost every one! Can't you see the good that comes from such an arrangement?

A. Is it good to have strict accountability for all of a formal assembly's affairs and finances? Yes! Is it good to have wise constraints against powerful people to keep them from being exploitive? Yes! Nothing in this treatise has questioned any of the proper behaviors we all should have. Yes, of course Christians should obey many fine things in the law (including many of the rules in a 501c3 contract).

The million dollar question is (as if the point hasn't been belabored already): Who is telling you to do these things? If you build your ministry on a 501c3 and fiercely refuse to abandon it, then your lord is Caesar and you

are lying if you say you are Christ's. For a pastor or a board member to shrug, "This is just business" or make any other excuse is to demonstrate that the assembly is through-and-through Roman Catholic.

Otherwise, those introduced to the Scriptural truth about the clear distinction between the Kingdom and the World can give only one response if they wish to be wholly truthful to Jesus: "Yes, we grieve over our double-mindedness and are praying about it and moving to fully honor God by taking the appropriate action with all deliberate speed." If God is God and does what He says He does, you would all do anything that is good in a 501c3 *without the 501c3*.

For those who'd defiantly insist that they are *not* Roman Catholic while still clutching a 501c3, I respond to that concern [here](#).

Q. How then does a church move on terminating a 501c3?

A. The very first thing that must happen is the leadership of the church must have a genuine heart for purity, for really meaning it when they claim they want to express 100% devotion to the Lord, 100% dependence on Him. All of those in church leadership must be grounded in Scripture and engaging in prayer with other believers. *This is critical.*

The second thing is to understand that while God looks at the heart of the individual, churches do influence what an individual says and does. In a real sense, *you are who you follow*. God will also judge institutions on the last day! Review [Being De-Catholicized](#) and [How to Have an Acts 2 Church](#). Much of what this entails is covered there.

Thirdly, meet with godly financial managers for guidance through the process. Many who are experts in these affairs, such as lawyers and tax accountants, have been trained by the World and have worked so long in and around the World that either they are nervous about this move or they will flatly argue against it. To a large extent, their material livelihood *depends* on your contracts with the World!

Finally, you don't have to announce it with a megaphone, apologize for it, or try to rationalize it. And don't boast about it! Just let your light shine in His grace and truth. As you boldly move down the route out of Babylon, He is faithful - He will speak to you and walk with you every step of the way. Make no mistake, God does not want His own making oaths of any kind, *right now*. Confess to the Lord *now*. It is true, however, that appropriate expression of grace may mean that you may not be able to terminate a 501c3 right away. Much of it may require tact and forbearing and a good bit of strategizing. As long as you are moving with all deliberate speed, though, God will see you through bountifully.

Final note

I am indeed convinced that when an assembly of believers does not plug into the World System with a 501c3 contract, when it wisely understands the role of government as Scripture lays it out, and when it is committed to following Christ no matter what the cost, then miracles will happen. Jesus said as much. He flatly said that all we need to do, *all we need to do* is believe in Him and *we'd* do even greater miracles - and I don't think He meant anything less than full physical and emotional healing, complete deliverance from demonic possession, and richly authentic intimacy with others. I am convinced those things *don't* happen in the church today, because I believe God says, "You want to get your provision from the Agency of Cain, then you are welcome to do so. I'll be waiting for you to be wholly mine. Believing in Me means exactly that: Believe *in Me*."

Even more importantly than healing and deliverance, the believer in an ungrafted assembly will actually see his name in the Book of Life, written in heaven, and will *fully* live in the joy of His creation, redemption, and fellowship - he will know how much he is loved and how much he can love. What's more, *others* will see how

wonderful that is, and they will want to be His as well. *This* is how the kingdom grows, not with emotionally charged "revivals" that only amount to noticeable movement between God clubs.

This concept is just not that hard to grasp. When Satan showed Jesus all the earthly kingdoms of the world, all domains under *his* authority, he told Jesus that He could have them as long as He worshipped him. Jesus replied that we should worship God and serve Him alone. Period. Why are we so willing to take just a *little* bit of Satan's World, hold on to it, and think we're wholly God's?

In spite of all this, in spite of the case I've laid out against being grafted to the World, maybe it is a certainty that too many God clubs are intractably beholden to Caesar. Maybe I am just too naïve. But I am just as certainly convinced that by the simple act of ending a 501c3 contract, genuinely devoted followers of Christ will experience stuff that would blow our minds and we'll live stuff that would rend our hearts - stuff that will dwarf all that we now think is so special and noble in our "churches." And it would happen *simply because He wants to share it with us.*

Do we *really* want that?