

First Response From Robert Grove, Dated 4/25/2005

Dear Jack,

I am sorry to be in receipt of your letter regarding the way most of us in ministry are currently handling funds contributed by members of the church which is His body for ministry. I am sorry that if you felt a need to express your concerns and conclusions, it waited until prompted by Alan Hemenway.

When I read the first sentence I was surprised as I didn't know I had written a "paper," to answer Alan Hemenway. I did send Jim Maurer (after we had a phone conversation about Alan's accusations) a note containing some of my first thoughts about Alan's accusations and conclusions. This was written to be an assist to Jim as he was responding to the paper, and was in no way intended to be a complete response to Alan's accusations or conclusions. I talked with Jim today and he told me that he had taken my name off of what I sent him and given it to a few people, John being one of them. He also said that John asked him who had written it. Since you received a copy from John, I assume that is how you came to believe I had written a paper to answer Alan Hemenway's letter. If that had been my intent, I would have tried to be more thorough.

The sad thing as I read your letter is that we agree on the beautiful truths you site regarding the church of Jesus Christ and the quotes from the tax book. Where we differ is in your conclusions and opinions relevant to the way things are, and how you make practical application of the truths we agree on. I believe brethren at the time of the tax case made a judgment as to how to handle the situation consistent with the way things were done financially at that time, the law as it was at the time the contributions were made by brother Morey, and the courts ruling which was consistent with those facts. Whether you realize it or not, everything is not the same today, and brethren in counsel and study together concluded that we could with a clear conscience, make a change in the way the funds are handled.

I believe we considered all the information you offer in your letter PRIOR to deciding to change the way we were handling our finances.

- On page 3 of your letter, you offer quotes from the tax case. We spent considerable time going over the tax case in our study together.
- On page 4 & 5 you give your recall of the suggestions made by the IRS and the response made to their offers. We were aware of these offers, and we discussed them together—we did not have the detail you provide, but the detail doesn't change the concept.
- On page 6 you give the history of corporations as a vehicle to do business. You also give a dictionary definition of the word corporation, and site Black's law dictionary. We went over all of this in our study. We didn't use Black's law dictionary, but did use a text book provided to me by the attorney we counseled with about setting up a corporation. **This actually demonstrates the difference between the two types of corporations. Where I feel that you err in this area is in that you fail to make a distinction between the corporation that Jesus Christ established and is The head of and a corporation established by Caesar to enable human beings to conduct business.** The fact that one could describe The Church of Jesus Christ as a corporation that joins people to each other and to Jesus Christ does not make illegitimate a corporation authorized by Caesar to do business. In several types of situations Caesar's corporation has some advantages over an individual doing business without using the corporation as a business vehicle. The corporation is a vehicle that can be used for a number of legitimate reasons by spiritually minded people.

Peter Kershaw—based on what you have recounted is commenting about Churches that didn't incorporate under Roman law. We have not incorporated any church—a fact which you recognize, but credit the devil with enabling "*No, the devil did not want you, Robert, and the brethren with you to form a church Corporation. He knew you brethren were to spiritually intelligent for that!*" It was and is our commitment not to incorporate a church—I am sorry we

don't agree, but I believe it was and is the Holy Spirit, not the Devil who gave us that commitment to, and enabled us (as you recognize) to accomplish that goal.

Again, we did consider the information that you have provided in this letter. The difference is that after considering this information, study of the scriptures, reviewing the tax law as it now stands, and evaluating all of this in light of the way we were and are doing business we did not come to the same conclusion you have.

Your statement about you knowing what brother Maurice would do I believe is truly your opinion, but I also believe it is based on a lack of information. You know what he did in the light of what he understood about the law, what he was doing and what he expected to be doing in the future. However, you don't know what he would do if he were dealing with all of the same considerations that we are dealing with today. So, I don't believe you, Alan Hemenway, or I know what he would do if he were dealing with the same facts we are. You make the same type of assumptions when you state that the reason Jeff did not put his real estate in Texas in the corporation is because you and Art Werner objected. You know it was discussed at a men's meeting. You know you and Art objected to it being done. You think you know it has not been done. However, you are wrong in stating that he would have put it in the corporation had you and Art not objected. Before you make assumptions and statements such as that you need to ask the ones who made the decision about something you objected to and determine what they did or didn't do and why they did or didn't do it. I believe you are making the same type of assumptions regarding what brother Maurice would or would not do if he had been with us in the meetings in 1999.

What brethren did in the fifties and sixties or would not do today is not really important—what is important is does God's word teach that what we are doing today is wrong? Or to put it another way, does God's word teach that the ONLY way to handle funds in this dispensation that is acceptable to God is the way brethren of the past decided to do it at that time? I have seen nothing that causes me to believe that their decision at that time is the ONLY Godly decision one could make.

What I read in your letter causes me to believe that the root of our disagreement (from a logical and biblical standpoint) is that you are failing to "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's...*" (Mark 12:17) All of the discussion about the church being a corporation really isn't relevant. When Caesar says "we will give you a tax deduction for money contributed for the benefit of the public—however, we have a right to make sure that the money is used for the benefit of the public"—that is Caesar's right. The judge in the tax case upheld that right from a constitutional standpoint—and I know of no place in the Bible where God takes that right away from Caesar. This leaves us with a decision:

- 1.) I either find a way to satisfy Caesar's right to know what the money is used for—or
- 2.) I/we stop taking a tax deductions for contributions.

We discussed these two options. The consensus of brethren in counsel together was that it would not be diligent or financially responsible to forgo the tax deduction for charitable contributions—**IF** we could give Caesar the oversight without violating biblical principles.

We then faced the question of how to interface with IRS, and not incorporate a church—and—not start or build a denomination. Our commitment was and is that if we could not do this we would need to forgo the taking of deductions. The consensus of the brethren was and is that we have done this. Whether the IRS offered what we have done as a solution prior to the Tax case and it was rejected really makes no difference. The decision brethren at that time made was based on the way they had been and were conducting business at that time, and the way they applied beautiful biblical truths relevant to The Church of Jesus Christ to a practical situation at that time. As I have said, things were not the same in several aspects as they are today. Let me give you some examples:

- 1.) The tax code 501 (C) 3 was **not** on the books at the time the contributions were made. **The Judge ruled that IRS could not apply it retroactively to the deduction Bro Morey took for his contributions.**

- 2.) The IRS was contending that money used for personal expenses and deducted from the donors taxes were benefiting the minister personally. **The judge ruled that the money contributed and used personally was like salaries paid to employees of any corporation or church.**
- 3.) The IRS was concerned that the money or assets purchased with such money would benefit individuals (as in the death of the minister). **The judge accepted testimony that established that there were no assets to speak of as the money was spent virtually on receipt. THIS IS NOT THE CASE TODAY.**
- 4.) We contended that based on the Constitution, Congress did not have the right to establish what constituted a church for the benefit of tax deduction. **The judge ruled against us on that point.**
- 5.) We contended that based on the Constitution, the Commissioner Of Internal Revenue didn't have the right to establish regulations to define a church for the purpose of tax deductions. **Again, the Judge ruled against us on that point.**
- 6.) Since that time IRS has ruled that contributors of amounts in excess of \$250.00 are to have a receipt from the recipient for that amount. Those of us who gave such receipts—by the giving of the receipt indicated that we in the eyes of IRS were authorized to give such a receipt—**which we were not.**
- 7.) Today, if I were to die, there is significant cash (necessary to have on hand to do business as we do today) and significant assets purchased with money and a tax deduction given to the donor that would pass to my heirs if I held them as personal property. IRS has a legitimate right to determine to it's satisfaction that this will not happen. **(Our mutual confidence in my integrity that I would not do this, for obvious and legitimate reasons does not satisfy the IRS.)**

In our study together we tried to recognize the IRS not as the enemy, but as an arm of the institution established by God to rule in human affairs—Caesar or Human Government.

*Romans 13:1-7 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

The same God who established Human Government is the God who established the “Church which is his body.” Therefore, we should joyfully “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.” It is my feeling that at the time of the Tax case, there may have been too much of the attitude that Caesar was trying to usurp authority over the church when really they were just trying to have oversight over tax deductions—which God says is their responsibility and privilege.

On page eight you are quoting a handout which you say states that we “have been meeting for years without corporate property.” I don't know what that means—if the thought is limited to real property, it is true, the writer doesn't limit it. If we include personal property in the statement, it is not true and really has never been true. This was an issue at the time Bob Thompson stopped ministering among us—I don't know what happened regarding the computers and other equipment when you stopped ministering. If that property was property purchased with money contributed by members of the Church of Jesus Christ, for the use in ministry, some of the donors received a tax deduction for their contribution. Unless in our minds this property becomes the personal property of the minister, it is corporate personal property. If we

consider it personal property of the minister, then the donors had no legal right to a tax deduction—as it went (from the perspective of IRS) to the benefit of an individual.

On pages 8 & 9 you quote and offer as confusion statements from several pamphlets from the past, and present. Your point is well taken—we needed to have been in the past, and continue to need to be more precise and accurate in the way we express the truth. I might add that in this context you make many severe accusations that are your opinions and they are very disparaging regarding the integrity of Tom Collins and Jeff Grove. They go beyond dealing with the issues and questions and deal with the character of the individuals you reference. I am sorry this is where you are.

You use expressions like “Jeff Grove non-profit religious corporation” (about 6 times on page 8). I don’t know of any of us who use that type of description for what we are doing, so I don’t know who you are quoting, when you put quotes around that description. In addition, the description is not accurate. From a legal standpoint the corporations we are using are described as “*An organization that normally receive a substantial part of its support from a government unit, or from the general public.*” This is in contrast to what is described as “*A church, convention of churches, or association of churches,*” which is a different type of organization. You can choose to recognize this difference or you can continue to insist on describing what we are doing as you have in your letter. If you choose to, you can insist on characterizing us, what we are doing, and how we describe it as follows “‘We are not building any man-made religious organization’ And this is a lie,” Jack, you’re saying it is a lie doesn’t make it so. You can shut your eyes to the difference between sectarian/denominationalism, and a corporation that is used to handle funds and provide accountability to Caesar for the things that are Caesar’s and feel you are on some high and holy ground, but there are significant differences. I think we went over many of them in your presence—if you want to see them, I think they are there. You can see them. Or you can continue saying “Tom is part of something man made in religion...”—it is your choice. However, remember that saying it doesn’t make it a fact.

You make several references to what I said and what I didn’t say in response to questions you asked me and how I did or didn’t answer to your satisfaction. I don’t know the timing of your questions—I assume it was 1999. However, I do know that I am not noted for being afraid to answer questions if I know the answer. Also, I think I am noted for saying “I don’t know” if I don’t know. There was a point in time when brethren were still studying the subject. During that time we did not want public statements made, we did not want handouts passed out, etc. until the brethren in leadership had concluded our study of the situation and decided the direction we should lead. In most cases I do not think it wise to tape meetings, or distribute notes from leadership meetings when brethren are studying TOGETHER with a prayerful desire to be together, and to demonstrate that as our goal to the saints as a whole. At times like that we may explore avenues that are not valid, statements may be made that are not accurate, and do not represent a conclusion—these, if repeated, could be misunderstood and/or contribute to confusion. I see this very much like parents discussing something on which they may not agree. They need to get the disagreements worked out between them and then present unity to the family.

In addition, as a result of our study and investigation, I came to believe that we were increasingly functioning illegally ever since the tax case was settled. I believe this was true until we established some way to interface with IRS. It seems that we thought “we won the case,” and therefore we didn’t adequately look at the law as it stood even at the time the final judgment was handed down in the Tax Case. In addition, over time the way we do business has changed. The amounts in the past have been small enough that we have not been **seriously** challenged by IRS. Also, I believe that those who have been questioned were able to convince the IRS that even though legally we may not have been in compliance we were not running a scam. This being true, the amounts being small enough IRS choose not to pursue it. (Our responsibility under God is to be in compliance for conscience sake.) I am not and was not interested in giving detractors information that could be used against us. Also, I am not interested in arming detractors with documentation (in the form of handouts) of areas where we may have been

vulnerable because we were not in compliance in years past. This is another reason why at times there were no handouts.

Jack, I know that you don't believe that just because Brother Maurice understood a passage of scripture or a doctrine a certain way or made a certain application that he could not have been in error. You yourself have lead us in reevaluating certain passages of scripture. One can take a hard line position based on one biblical truth that fails to take into consideration other aspects of truth—at a later time, this can be sorted out more accurately. At the time of the Tax case as I recall it, there was quiet a bit said about our constitutional rights being taken from us because Congress was defining what a church is. That Congress was overstepping its authority and was in violation of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Also, there was the issue of whether Congress had the power to give the Commissioner of Revenue the right to decide what a church was for THE PURPOSE OF TAX DEDUCTIONS. The judge ruled against us on both of those issues. The fact is, our constitutional rights have to do with politics not scripture. Also, the Bible teaches that government has the right to tax, and we should pay tax. The government that has the God given right to tax also has the right to say on what basis it will forgive tax. This doesn't take away our right to worship and worship as we choose, or to believe whatever we want. If we don't meet Caesar's criteria we won't receive the tax relief. It is not wrong for brethren to reevaluate some of the logic that was expressed at that time. If they concluded that the interface between what is God's and what is Caesar's can be handled differently that does not necessarily discredit the brethren at the time. It certainly does **not** bring their creditability or integrity in question. I am sure you felt this way when you began to see Acts 2:38 and 10:47,48 differently than Brother Maurice did. To my knowledge, you have not in your mind discredited brother Maurice's credibility or integrity because you came to see and apply certain passages of scripture differently than he did. I might add, that your brethren did not look at you as having lost integrity or credibility because you saw something clearer/differently than brother Maurice did. Why do you not grant us the same consideration?

I believe that what we are doing, gives government the legitimate ability to evaluate whether what we do with the money contributed to those of us who minister is such that they will grant tax relief or not. At the same time it doesn't deprive the church of the oversight that God has vested in the church as to what those of us who minister do with the money we receive. We are rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

On page 9 you reference some one by the name of Kershaw who wrote a book in which he deals with as you quote, "*Incorporating a **church** is an act of rendering unto Caesar, that which is exclusively Christ's.*" Jack, you know we did not do that—we did **not** incorporate a church, and you have already acknowledged that in your letter as quoted above. Why do you introduce this quote—it is not applicable to what we have done. On page 10, you say Kershaw writes his book primarily because the state has closed down what you describe as "*incorporated religious organizations*" because of what they preached in areas of homosexuality, abortion, raising children, etc. Again, **Kershaw is talking about churches**—also, without knowing I don't know but what the concern of the state may have been justified. There are many **Churches** that promote many things that are both illegal, and immoral to try to stamp out abortion and abortion clinics. There are undoubtedly many **Churches** who advocate a treatment of homosexuals that is also both immoral and illegal. In addition one of the things that a 501 (C) 3 organization (including **Churches** who want that designation) are not to do is promote or influence legislation. If we use funds contributed to the ministry to promote or influence legislation, and IRS becomes aware of it we will quickly loose our "not for profit status." However, **Churches** do **not** need to be recognized as a 501 (C) 3 corporation for their contributions to be deductible. I don't see that Kershaw's observations are relevant to what we are doing at all.

If Caesar decides that to meet the necessary criteria for taking a tax deduction for contributions we must curtail what we preach in certain areas, then we should be willing to give up the tax deduction—and I have no doubt that brethren would **quickly** want to do that. Until that time, interfacing with IRS with "**An**

***organization that normally receives a substantial part of its support from a governmental unit, or from the general public***” is an option that we feel is open to us.

There is no point in addressing all the conflicts you see between what we are doing and the beautiful truths you point out. We agree with the truths, we don't agree with you as to the confusion or contradictions you see as being caused by what we are doing. For me personally, it isn't to any advantage to use a corporation to handle funds. I need to keep complete records (we all should have been doing this anyway), and deal with another level of accountability (IRS). If we were to decide to stop taking deductions, and consider the money contributed as giving to an individual for tax purposes, it really would make my job easier.

On the other hand, I am here to serve the saints to the best of my ability—If brethren want the tax deduction, if Caesar will let us interface with IRS so that can be accomplished, and **NOT** start a man made church, that men put people in, men remove people from, that divides Christian from Christian, and joins Christian with unbeliever—and facilitate rather than inhibit our ability to *“earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,”* I want to do what I can to do that.

**Additional thoughts that have come to my mind and some that were suggested as additions or expansions by others who received this letter.**

- 1) You state that the ministers are incorporated or have incorporated. The fact is that people can not be incorporated. Individuals can go through the process of forming a corporation and using that corporation to conduct various forms of business. However, the corporation is an artificial person, not the person who formed it, or the directors who control it.
- 2) When interfacing with the IRS—AND ALL OF US MUST—there are three ways IRS views business:
  - I. Sole Proprietorship
  - II. Partnership
  - III. Corporation

In the past ministers were viewed and acted as Sole proprietors (In 1999 we used the term “Independent Contractors.”). To interface with IRS we filed Schedule C. From a spiritual stand point, the ministers are not Sole Proprietors—we are not sub contractors, and we are not employees. None of these descriptions or the forms filed with IRS (1040 with a Schedule “C” or 1040 with a W4) describes accurately the relationship ministers have with Jesus Christ and the members of His Church. However, members of the Church of Jesus Christ who are business men (not retired or employees), must use one of these business forms to interface with Caesar and the tax forms required to report income and pay taxes will meet the IRS requirements as far as paying tax liabilities. Neither business form accurately deals with the things that are God's—all will satisfy Caesar in dealing with the things of Caesar's.

The Sole Proprietorships and Partnerships business form is not acceptable to IRS, if the income comes from those who take deduction for the contribution. This is true even if funding the same activities would allow them to receive tax relief for contribute the money—if the business form were corporation. A member of the church which is Christ's body can use any one of the three business forms to conduct business and the business vehicle is neither a part of the church nor represents the church of Jesus Christ. However, God's standard of right and wrong should control the conduct of the “Individual,” the “partners,” or the “Directors,” regardless of business form we are using.

- 3.) To try to help with the distinction of a church and what we are doing. The IRS lists the following types of corporations taken from the 2003 990 form filed for RAGM:
  1. **A church, convention of churches, or association of churches. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii)**
  2. A school, Section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)
  3. A hospital or a cooperative hospital service organization, Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii)
  4. A federal state or governmental unite. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(v)

5. A medical research organization operated in conjunction with a hospital Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii)
6. An organization operated for the benefit of a college or university owned or operated by a governmental unit Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv)
7. An organization that normally receives a **substantial part of its support** from a governmental unit **Or from the general public** Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). Also complete the **Support Schedule** in Part (IV-A)
8. A community trust . Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
9. An organization that normally receives **(1) more than 33-1/3%** of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its charitable, etc. functions – subject to certain exceptions, and **(2) no more than 33-1/3** of its support from gross investment income and unrelated business taxable income (less section 5).....
10. An organization that is not controlled by any disqualified persons (other than foundation managers) and supports organizations described in: (1) lines 5 through 12 above; or (2) section 501 (c) (4) (5) or (6), if they meet the test of section 509 (a) (2).....

There are ten types of corporations listed. The first one is **“A church, convention of churches, or association of churches.”** The 7<sup>th</sup> one is the one we are using (highlighted in yellow). The fact is that what is commonly called religious activities are not a prerequisite to being this type of corporation. We could be providing feed for hungry quail. The key point is its funds do not come from an individual or a small group of individuals but from the IRS standpoint the general public. It is by the general public as it does NOT have members—and is not from specific individuals.

Possibly to help you see the point that a corporation is a business form that any of us can use to do any type of business, which to my understanding is the only one available to us (as a organizing a **church is not**) that can provide tax deductions for those who support it’s activities, can I offer the following: Two days ago I received a check from a company named **“Cars 4 Causes.”** On their letterhead, they give the following explanation, *“A not-for-profit organization designed to simplify the process of fundraising for charities and organizations through contributions, and sales of automobiles, boats, trucks, RV’s and other items of value.”* The cover letter states among other things the following: *“Our program is unique, as we do not exclusively assist any one charity, rather we are dedicated to offering an avenue for people to contribute. Through our program, a person can choose any non-profit organization they want to benefit from their donation.”* I know nothing about the company, and have never heard of it until now. In the letter they explain that someone donated something of value, and asked that the proceeds of the sale of this asset be donated to Robert A. Grove Ministries. They went on to say that they do not disclose the name of the donor unless requested to do so. I assume that someone among us had a vehicle they wanted to get rid of, wanted to get a tax break for contributing, and wanted the money to go to the support of the work of the Lord. In addition, they apparently wanted to save me the trouble of liquidating it (which we have done for others in the past)—so they donated it to “Cars 4 Causes.” Cars 4 Causes then sold it and cut me a check for the net amount after the expense of liquidating the property.

There is a brother among us who has set up his own 501 (c) 3 corporation, from which he distributes funds, under the umbrella of another corporation that does nothing but establish and manage such funds for individuals. There is in his judgment a variety of advantages to doing what he did—all of them business decisions, and none of them to my knowledge violating biblical principles.

We have one who has left their estate in a trust/foundation (couldn’t be a 501 © 3 because the funds came from one source) to be distributed over time for the support of the work of The Church of Jesus Christ. The founder chose that business form to do what was desired with the estate after going home to be with the Lord for whatever reasons—unknown to me personally. The founder did not violate any biblical principle that I am aware of.

I think you would agree that none of these corporations (bodies) are a church. Neither of them could be confused by anyone seriously considering the facts as a church. Neither of them have members, neither of them join saved and unsaved, neither of them name Christians apart. The first one is not even religious as far as the business it was set up to do—unless cutting a check to be used for a religious purpose makes it religious in someone’s mind. The second two are religious (using that word) **only** in the sense that they

are being used by the founder to contribute support (money) for the spreading of gospel of Jesus Christ and the function of His church. The founders of these corporations could never reasonably be considered to have joined with the directors of the corporation who manage the corporation in the sense of 2Cor 6:14 through 7:1.

If you receive this letter, it will be after a copy of your letter and this response has been shared with the brethren in leadership across the country. Jack, I don't and didn't feel in 1999 that a decision of the magnitude of the one in question should be done by an individual. I don't feel that I as an individual have all the wisdom and understanding necessary to make or defend such decisions independently—without the advice and counsel of my brethren.

Jack I wish with all my heart that you didn't have the self esteem required to be **unwilling** to bend your opinion to the judgment of your many brethren who love you and want to walk together with you. There is a growing list of subjects that we do not see alike. On none of them but one to my knowledge are you willing to bend. Please consider why this is the case—is it because you above all your brethren in leadership are **the** one that is allowing the Holy Spirit to guide in his life and bible study?????

- 1.) Some years ago, brethren studied and changed our conclusion regarding insurance. We stopped seeing buying it or not buying it as a test of faith in God, or trust in the Lord, but rather a business decision that may or may not indicate anything about a person's trust in the Lord. You to my understanding do not agree.
- 2.) Following your lead, we came to see the baptism of "repentance," "Christ's death," "the gospel," and "the Holy Spirit as spiritual baptisms. We later came to understand that it would be inconsistent based on the truth you first presented to us to see the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4 as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," but rather it is one spiritual baptism in contrast to the divers baptisms of Hebrews 9:9 & 10. You to my knowledge still do not agree with our conclusion on this.
- 3.) We studied the subject of Divorce and Remarriage together and concluded that when one was the victim in marriage of either Adultery, or abandonment, there was an allowance in scripture for dissolving the legal aspect of marriage (divorce) and remarry. You to my knowledge still do not agree with our conclusion on this.
- 4.) Then based on your study of the scriptures you determined that Jesus Christ would catch His Church away on a certain date and time. You would not bend your opinion to the efforts of your brethren to get you to give up the position. In the process of our efforts to help you see it different you accused me of being "anti-Semitic." But you would not give up your position. We waited—Jesus Christ did **not** return—and you **did** concede that you were wrong. This is the only issue where you have insisted on maintaining a position different from your brethren where you have been willing to concede and say—"I was wrong." Jack, does it take a refusal by God to submit to your time schedule for you to say, "I was wrong." No amount of appeal on the part of your brethren moved you.
- 5.) Brethren studied together the question of whether we were conducting business in a way that would ultimately put us at odds with IRS again because we were not in compliance with the tax code. We concluded that we were. Once we decided we were not in compliance then for conscience sake as well as fear of consequences we needed to make a change. We then discussed whether we should just give up the tax deduction. We decided it would not be wise to do so **IF** we could in some way give IRS the oversight of our use of funds without violating biblical truths. We decided we could, and have been for approximately 3 years. Your letter on this subject is evidence that once again—you Jack will not allow the reasoning and understanding of your brethren to change your opinion or viewpoint as to how to practically apply the beautiful truths we hold in common to our efforts today to serve the Lord and be a testimony to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In all cases, there have been efforts made with you to try to be of one mind. In all cases (except one) you will not bend. Jack, is it possible that you feel that if you changed a position held by you and brethren in the past—and you didn't come to the understanding first—that somehow you would have less value, or be less loved by God, or your brethren? Please consider this possibility. You are loved and valued not because you are a bible student, or a scholar, but because you are a brother in Christ.

Some years ago, you recognized that you were disqualified from functioning as a minister of Jesus Christ because of obvious discrepancies in your family. Things in your family were bad then, and they are worse today. You no longer are leading, (you apologize for this in the last paragraph of your letter) **but you at the same time refuse to follow**. You seem to make no connection between the fact as stated by you that you should “apologize and confess, and ask God’s forgiveness...” and the fact that this need **should shake your confidence in your own judgment and opinions**—as it should our confidence in your judgments and opinions. It seems to me that you have postured yourself to sit in the seat of the scornful, **being in your own mind** the final judge and jury as to the efforts of your brethren who are attempting with sincerity of heart to lead on “*earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.*” Jack, how would you evaluate **anyone else** with the events in your family, having properly stepped back from leadership as you have, having the growing number of issues in which you will not follow those who are still trying to serve the saints—would you say of someone else—“that man is proud?” I don’t want to say that of you, I pray it is not true—but I am very, very afraid for you. Please consider the following scriptures.

**James 4:5-6** Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: **“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”**

**1 Peter 5:5** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, **all of you be submissive to one another**, and be **clothed with humility**, for **‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’**

**Proverbs 13:10** **By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.”**

**2 Corinthians 5:9-11** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body**, according to what he has done, **whether good or bad**. 11 Knowing therefore, the **terror of the Lord**, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Jack, you are greatly loved. I don’t like getting this type of letter from you, and I don’t enjoy answering such. I sat down the day I received this letter (the 19<sup>th</sup>) and wrote my first thoughts. I asked the Lord for wisdom and guidance as I read and re read your letter, and today the 25<sup>th</sup> I sat down to finalize this response. I have copied it to ministering brethren along with your letter for their critique. The most important question to me is—why is the list of issues and subjects that we do not see alike growing between you Jack and those who love you—why? **Jack do you have biblical reason to feel that The Holy Spirit is guiding you—and not us?** What have we done to cause you to conclude this—if you have thus concluded?

With Christian love and prayers,

Robert Grove

P.S. I have included with this letter a paper put together by Bob Harrison, which addresses thoughts and questions he has been fielding primarily in Virginia, some of which are included in your letter. I pray the Holy Spirit will be able to use it to help bring us together in a common understanding.