

Third Response by Robert Grove, Dated 1/11/2006

In this response by Robert he quotes the whole of my last letter and make a few comments interspaced between the text of my previous letter. I will only reprint his comments.

Dear Jack,

I am sorry to be so slow in getting back to you. Since I like everyone else have a limited amount of time and energy I try to spend both doing what I think is the most important for me to be doing during a given time frame. I ask the Lord for wisdom in making such a judgment—but am not always sure I make the right calls.

I have your letter in response to my letter of apology to you (postmarked 8/11/05) in a digital format, will go through it and make response in this type face wherever I feel it might be helpful. My comments will be few because for the most part you seem to have misunderstood my letter to you. I guess because of that it seems that your letter is a repeat of thoughts and arguments you have presented before. I feel at this time you have enough information to understand why we made the decision we did six years ago (1999) to use 501 (C) 3 corporations to handle funds. Since that time most of the ministering brethren among us are handling funds that way. They have been doing this with increasing confidence that we made the right decision at that time. Your concerns and thoughts expressed to us have caused us to more carefully consider the reasons we made that decision at that time which has helped increase our confidence that the decision was a wise and Godly decision.

I doubt that anything I can add will be of any help to you and I feel like Nehemiah in Nehemiah 6:1-9 where an effort was made by Sanballat and Geshem who wanted Nehemiah to leave the work of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem and come and meet with them in the plain of Ono. Nehemiah knew he was doing a “great work,” and would not be distracted. While I would not use the term “great work” to describe what I am doing, I feel like there are so many demands on my time as well as the rest of us who are ministering that at this time I do not plan to expend any more effort trying to answer arguments that in my opinion have already been answered. With the material Bob Harrison has sent you along with my feeble efforts—as far as I am concerned you have the information necessary to understand why we did what we did, and be of one mind with us.

As I get older, the end of my life is in sight. In four more years I will have my “three score and ten”—how much strength I have for more years, I have no idea. This I know, I want to use the years I have remaining to the best of my ability, in the integrity of my heart to His honor and glory. This means I will do my best to focus on the situations and activities that I believe are consistent with that goal and try not to be distracted. After I complete this effort to write you, I feel I should move on to other issues and situations involving those who seem to want help, and who I believe I can be of some help to.

So, let me share a few thoughts.

Jack, as I said to some younger men in the Los Angeles area before the split in the 1980's, “*saying you ‘esteem one very highly...’ means very little if the one esteemed can NOT change your opinion or conduct.*” This was said primarily regarding their professed esteem for you among others of the older brethren at that time—whose advice and counsel they were ignoring to walk in their own opinion. As history has proven, several did not esteem you or others verily highly—they walked away. I feel I have little sway on your opinions and judgments so, I don't think “deep appreciation,” means the same to you as it does to me. Since you feel you had an “obligation to fulfill” in letting us know what your concerns are, I hope you are satisfied that you have fulfilled that “obligation.”

Jack, one of the characteristics of deception is that the deceived person does not realize they are deceived. I must look at the evidence in your life over the past years, relevant to allowing your brethren to change

your judgments and opinions and I can not avoid the concerns your track record causes me to have. I do not read hearts—God does—and you are the one who must examine yours and honestly ask God to help you in the examination. I hope that the concerns your track record brings to my heart and mind are not valid. I only shared my concerns with you, I do not have the ability to, nor do I feel a need to judge your heart.

I believe you are ignoring the basis upon which I asked the question (“**Jack do you have biblical reason to feel that the Holy Spirit is guiding you—and not us?**”) which you bold faced above. (Or possibly the question was not clear.) The question is based on what you and we see in your family’s life, and where you have recognized you are relevant to your place in the body of Jesus Christ. That cannot be changed based on what you consider to be biblical, and logical conclusions—which you spend the next several pages restating. To put the question another way, do you see fruit in your personal life, and the lives of your family members that would give you biblical reason for you to hold your judgment and opinions higher than that of the collectively judgment of your brethren? The issue is not the Biblical truths we hold in common it is how you would implement and apply them in a practical way (or to us an impractical way) in the world in which we live.

(Concerning his acknowledgments.)

This is a first for me. Never to my recollection have I ever written a letter to someone acknowledging that I was wrong in a statement I made, and asking their forgiveness for the inconvenience that I caused them and get back pages of explanation trying to refute what I said about my inaccuracy and my lack of completeness in my statement. It is as though my evaluation of my statement was said about something you said—which it was not. This is your statement copied from above:

“is not accurate as stated here, as it is not complete.”

It is as though you completely misunderstood what I said about my statement thinking it was said about your statement(s). From that point on you restate your position with increased intensity. There is no point (in this letter) in my writing page after page restating something that I have already offered to you for your consideration. We do not disagree on the fact that what we are using to handle money are organizations that were established by men, under the laws of the United States of America (Caesar) and are being used to support activity accurately described as religious. That makes them a religious organization (as contrasted to scientific, or educational, etc.) as defined by the IRS code and anyone else looking at what they support. However, the point of departure comes in that in our judgment this fact does not make them a “religion” using the term to describe what is condemned in God’s word. You don’t accept this judgment, but that is our judgment.

Again Jack, if I was not clear in what I wrote you, causing you to misunderstand I am sorry. All I can say is that it did seem clear to me what statement of mine (which you disagreed with in your prior letter) I was referring to as not being accurate because it was not complete. This confusion or misunderstanding accents to me the fact that I am not the one who can help you—it will require clearer communicators than I am—if any human can facilitate this.

(Concerning the subject of idolatry.)

If all this about idolatry is either spiritual or logical we are from different planets. It seems to me that you are so fixated on one aspect of truth to the point that you ignore all other facts that should be considered in a decision like we are discussing. Then you try to use words and their root meanings to make something to be what it is not. You started this section by saying “**Allow me to prove it to you from the Word of God**” and never mentioned God’s word again—this is the root of our disagreement. We agree on the truth from God’s word, we do not agree with your logic. Using your logic and definition of words a tape recorder, public address system, a computer, a bank, an insurance company, or even a printing press are all idols. Why? Because as you are using the words from which the word idolatry is made up, they are all a “*man-made creation (the form or idoleidolon)*” and we use them to facilitate or “serve,”

“Religious services (for service-latreia), hence, idolatry.” If they are or become something that stands between us and God, that takes the place of God, that is recognized as a god we might have a common basis to see them as idolatry or idolatrous—but they do not. Therefore, you are again demonstrating an inability or unwillingness to rightly divide between what is man’s (Caesar’s) and what is God’s. To me this type of reasoning hardly deserves comment.

(Concerning “membership.”)

Again, you are demonstrating a failure to see what to me is a simple distinction and that is the difference between being part of or a member of a board of directors and being members of an organization (club, church, or association) that has membership. If you can’t see it, you can’t see it. It seems that no amount of pages written by you or by me will change the understanding either of us have. To me it is a simple concept to understand. It is difficult for you, in my opinion, because you refuse to see that there could be a different way to implement truths we hold in common than the way brethren in the 1960’s decided to implement them—and we still be right in the sight of God.

Jack, as I said earlier in this letter, I am not going to address all of the arguments you restate with increasingly strong rhetoric. Since you wrote this, Bob Harrison spent a great deal of time and effort in trying to help you, and is much more articulate than I am. We want to be together with you, but we surely can not convince you by harsh words and severe statements. For the most part as I read this letter you are repeating what you have already stated. Stating the same thing in increasingly harsh or emotional words does not help convince me. I could take the time to restate what I have said with more severe and intense rhetoric and I doubt it would convince you or any one else of anything. Usually I conclude that when one recognizes weakness in their position they then feel a need to ramp up the rhetoric—it does not convince me of truth.

The difference between us on this subject to me is very simple—distinguishing between what is Caesar’s and what is God’s. We are honoring Caesar in his God given spheres of authority—one of which happens to be taxation and the things bought with money. In doing this we are honoring God. We are recognizing what is God’s and part of His church, which is people, their lives, their relationship with each other, and their testimony in the world as we live as best we can, consistent with what God has told us to do and not do. That is and has been our commitment to do. This is what we have been doing in this area of life for the past five years.

Our goals were at least three when we began consideration of this subject in 1998:

- 1.) To see if there was a way we could interface with Caesar to give IRS oversight as to how we are using money and avoid unnecessary expense in defending ourselves or the need to give up the tax deductions for contributions,
- 2.) To enable brethren to get tax relief from Revenue Canada for contributions (which is not possible without some vehicle to interface with the government in Canada),
- 3.) To do this without violating beautiful spiritual truths.

I believe we have accomplished this. It is my understanding that we have already avoided what could have been a costly challenge to contributions made by IRS because the recipient **had** implemented the decision we made in 1999. Also, there has been at least one situation where there has been financial loss as a contribution was made to a minister who was **still in the process** of following through on the decision we made in 1999 and a significant contribution was disallowed. Our goal was and is to be honest and open before IRS regarding what we are doing with funds **“not only for wrath but for conscience sake,”** and at the same time continue earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. This requires rightly dividing and distinguishing what is God’s realm and what is Caesar’s realm under God. The scripture says, **“A wise man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.”** Our goal was to be wise as brethren in counsel together in our investigation and judgment in

this matter. It won't be long (in the light of eternity) till we all stand before the Lord and we will then know for sure who is right and who is wrong.

I love you and your family, and I am deeply grieved by where you have placed yourself with your brethren relevant to this and other subjects. I have no personal hard feelings toward you—only grief. You are and will always be in my prayers and thoughts—I wish with all my heart that we were working together. We both know the identity of the author of the condition we find ourselves in—we disagree as to who he is motivating.

With Christian love and affection,

Robert Grove