

INTRODUCTION

To The Subject of Religious Incorporation By The State

The immediate situation in this discussion actually began long ago when a group of conscientious Christians, under the leadership of a “de-frocked” Methodist Minister named Maurice Johnson (he thought he could “clean up” the Methodists, but got “cleaned out” instead), came to the conclusion that Christians today could and should imitate the early Christians and walk in all the truth that is revealed in the Greek Scriptures regarding the Church of Jesus Christ. The truth that Jesus Christ was *incorporating* His people into one body, by *embodying* Himself in them, through the Spirit of God, not only was freshly discovered again in the Scriptures, but also was looked upon as practical truth that they should Walk in—and not just Talk about. In other words, it was not viewed as mere “theological theory” but rather as beautiful, sober and practical truth. To walk in this truth would also solve the problem of sectarian division by believers still in man-made Christendom. This happened in 1927 and shortly thereafter. Consequently, they put away their new religious corporation and all other human traditions of Christendom. From then on they began to walk in the truth, in keeping with “The Unity of the Spirit...there is One Body” (Eph.4:1-6), and they called upon other Christians to do the same.

A serious test came in the 1950s and early 60s. The IRS stated that they would not allow deductions for contributions unless this group would religiously incorporate with the State. I happened to be standing near Maurice Johnson, with a large group of brethren, when the IRS lawyers offered to us the final opportunity to religiously incorporate either *churches*, *charities* or *ministries* in order to receive deductions that the United States government would allow for non-profit religious organizations.

This offer was flatly rejected on the basis that the church of Jesus Christ, which we were representing, was already Incorporated by Jesus Christ Himself, and would not submit, in any way, shape or form to human Religious Incorporation procedures—all of which required “a distinctive identifying name,” “written Bylaws,” “Board of Directors” and multiple organizational procedures other than what was in the Scriptures. That meant the creation of an artificial, man-made religious organization.

We went to court and won the case! The court recognized the Church we were representing. This was in January of 1962. In addition we continued a public testimony which had begun in 1927, that “***We are not building any man-made Religious Organization.***” Furthermore, our activities and meetings “**are only in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.**” We did not lie to the public but told the absolute truth. By “**religious organization**” we meant what the IRS law meant—any type of religious organization including “Ministries,” which was the last form of incorporation they offered to us. For some thirty years I personally gave out the following statement to people interested in our testimony,

“The Scriptures teach that all who believe the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16; Acts 16:31 & I Cor. 15:1-5) are saved from the guilt and penalty of sin and have been supernaturally baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into the Church which is His body (I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47 & Rom. 6:3-6). Christians

are commanded by the Head of the Church to “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...there is ONE body” (Eph. 4:1-6). Consequently, many of us have come out of a variety of man-made church denominations (I Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4 & II Cor. 6:14-7:1). We meet together only in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17 & Acts 11:26). We realize that this precious name is not to be used divisively because it is the common property of all believers everywhere (I Cor. 12:12,13). This all inclusive body of saved people is the true church that Christ alone is building (Matt. 16:18 & Eph. 2:19-22). We are only a small part of that glorious church or “Holy Temple in the Lord.” Realizing that we are embodied by Christ through the Holy Spirit, we should never seek to be re-embodied (incorporated) by the State. To do so would only produce a human creation in contrast to the Divine Creation.”

However, in 1999, under the leadership of the present ministry, who began incorporating with the State the man-made religious corporations called “Ministries,” many assemblies began functioning under these creations. Of course they did not advertise these religious corporations. In the incorporation documentation all the multiple activities of ministry in the local churches and finances were done in the name of, and under the auspices of, the “Ministry Corporations.” And yet they still advertise to the general public that they are “*NOT building any man-made religious organizations*” and were “*doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*”—which, in light of the facts, is a blatant LIE! In addition, it is a repudiation of our historic testimony.

The following letters amount to a record of my own testimony on this subject and an earnest plea to my brethren to realize what they are doing is not honoring to the Head of the Church. For those who may be interested in our historic testimony you will find these letters very interesting. From my perspective and contribution you will also find a lot of solid Biblical information about the Church of Jesus Christ.

In 1962 we published the record of our case and the trial in a book form entitled—“***A Federal Court Acknowledges Christ’s True Church.***” This depicted our testimony that was unique and Christ honoring. However, as a result of the human wisdom of Robert A. Grove and all the other ministers who followed him, this testimony to the government and sectarian world vanished. As of 1999, when they began creating their “Religious Corporations,” ***The Federal Government Acknowledges “Robert A. Grove Ministries, Inc.”*** instead of Christ’s true Church—“the Church which is Christ’s body” (Eph. 1:22,23).

Now the vast majority of professing Christendom today could “care less” whether or not a group of Christians incorporates with the State. “Everybody does it!”—“So, who cares?” This common attitude of indifference among the whole of “Church-anity” is actually a reflection of a drunken stupor from the Roman winery of “Mystery Babylon.”

As you may remember, Christianity was not authorized by the Roman government in the first 300 years of its existence. The Roman Empire itself was diluted with the wine of Pagan religion. Its very Caesars were intoxicated with the idea that they were, themselves, bona fide deities. Consequently, there was often terrible persecution against those who bore the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would not offer the incense before their pagan gods. Apparently Satan learned that he could not accomplish

his goals by this type of persecution. It seemed that the testimony of Christians under this persecution caused them to grow more than ever. Therefore, in the fourth century Satan tried another technique. Christianity received full State Authorization under Constantine. What has been called by historians "*The Imperial Church*" was created. In fact, since Constantine gave State authorization to Christendom he believed that he should have an important voice in its leadership and activities. The full mixture of State and Church began. Ever since, there has been what conscientious, God-fearing Christians have called "*The man-made Apostate Church*" in existence. Thus, Satanic confusion seemed to more effectively smother the testimony of true Christianity. In addition, through the centuries of the "Dark Ages" there were true Christians receiving severe persecution from the State Church. Whereas the Pagan Romans persecuted the Christians for the first three centuries—NOW it was "Pagan Christendom," acting in "the name of Christ," that was persecuting true Christians who opposed its unbiblical system. Isn't that an amazing twist of fate! Through the centuries, thank God, many true Christians came out of the pagan, man-made system.

I believe and walk in, right now, precisely what I learned and stood with back in 1961-2. I make no apology whatsoever for these letters. I made public the hypocrisy of one young minister in my area (a son of Robert Grove) who created such an organization. As a result, I paid the ultimate price of being "marked to be avoided." (This was the first time in my experience and association with these saints that I ever knew of a person being so disciplined for telling the truth!)

However, my love for my brethren has not changed.

Jack W. Langford