

A BLESSED RECKONING

HOW DO WE CONSTITUTE OURSELVES, TRULY?

The New Wine-Skins/Vessels/Organizational Forms
for the New “Wine” that We Would Offer Up

NOTE: This reckoning/offering will be most relevant for churches, educational and cultural institutions that find themselves challenged to fulfill their mission, to grow and prosper. Otherwise, such vital matters need not concern them.

OVERVIEW

Friends, would you have jumped through all the non-profit (501c3) hoops through which many churches, educational and cultural institutions have been advised to leap,* if it turned out you were undermining your institution in the process, pulling (unwittingly) the rug out from beneath your feet, your aspiring labors?

I trust the answer is obvious — summed up by a minister, who acknowledged that, over these last years in particular, he couldn't speak from the pulpit about the concerns that lay deepest on his heart because he was afraid of the church losing its non-profit status. (Two masters we can *not* serve?)

Such a concern has been echoed by many in education and the cultural sphere at large. As such, can you imagine that the concern seeks to undermine the essential mission or calling of that cultural sphere, summed up in the words of the ancient prophet:

“Without a vision, the People perish.”

With the rare exception of a Lincoln, in the political sphere (otherwise devoted to partisan divisiveness) and a Robert Owen in the business sphere (otherwise devoted to the bottom-line), VISION is granted us from the cultural sphere. When, that is, it remembers its essential “calling” — has not become too “business-like” or “politically correct”.

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This heartfelt “reckoning” suggests that churches, educational, and cultural institutions have been the cause of many of their own unfilled ideals, not to mention their unfortunate and infamous administrative and political woes — if not their actual demise. For a reason, a fundamental, underlying reason.

That is, churches have signed up and incorporated themselves by the droves, claiming to be a “non-profit” 501 (c) (3) corporation: bottom-line, a **business** with their own (EIN), Employer Identification Number

This they’ve done — in order to avoid what (NOTE) they never otherwise would have owed. If, that is, they did *not* allow themselves to be bamboozled, driven by “The Almighty Buck,” in service to Caesar’s dictates.

Can one say?

The point being:

If such churches and cultural institutions (as opposed to corporations) had never incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) to begin with — thanks to their legal counsel? — they would never have owed, **legally**, any of the taxes that they sought to avoid, feared, in the first place. For such taxes only accrue “against” *incorporated* entities.

That is, churches and other cultural institutions jumped through the hoops noted, in order to incorporate and claim “tax benefits” — with respect to taxes that they otherwise did NOT owe as bonafide *unincorporated* fellowships.

Indeed, our nation was founded upon just this very division between church and state, in order to ensure actual religious freedom.

Not only that but, in such a sorry process, churches, educational, and cultural institutions have put themselves in a position where they could be threatened with the “loss” of the “tax exemptions” — that never needed to apply to them in the first place — if they act in ways that do not please the state and/or the business sector that often directs our politicians, “calls the shots”.

Taking to account the foregoing, can it be that such religious, educational, and cultural institutional have erred — not merely on the side of caution, “political correctness,” but on the side of the “bottom-line”? For they have not been able to “keep the faith,” remain true to their essential mission.

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“One has not learned the lesson of life, who has not each day surmounted a fear.”

Emerson wrote; Dr. King reiterated in his sermon: “Antidotes to Fear”

If the foregoing is clear, friends, the question arises: Are those who seek such *non*-“status” in their right and rightful minds? Otherwise expressed: What sense does it make (in the case of a church) to put what may be envisioned as “new wine” in old, ill-adapted and constrictive “wine-skins,” vessels, corporate, organizational forms?

As with the celebrated sale of Florida Real Estate (that is underwater nine months of the year, i.e. uninhabitable) churches, educational and cultural institutions have been sold “tax exemptions,” a sorry bill of goods that they do NOT, in fact, need.

As long, that is, as churches and cultural institutions do *not* incorporate; “play the sorry game,” do *not* insist on going along, in lock step, with the system . . . as long, that is, that they do *not* file taxes as corporations: do *not* keep state-approved records . . . remain true to their mission.

TOP-LINE, as long, THAT IS, that churches and cultural institutions do NOT allow such “state” franchises to impose upon them, to mind the churches’ and cultural institutions’ aspiring “business”. . . to overshadow their otherwise enlightened “calling”.

Needless to say, the consideration of such matters “tests the mettle,” convictions, mission of our churches and kindred cultural institutions, presenting them with problems-**challenges-opportunities** — otherwise little considered?

If the churches and cultural institutions spoken of recalled their vital roots, the Spirit of Fellowship, and (trapping aside) shed their corporate guise, many would be legions ahead of where they find themselves today. As we speak.

TOP-LINE, as opposed to being part of the ongoing *problem*,** (having rendered themselves subservient to the political system, to their public servants and the bottom-line that drives many a politicians), churches and kindred educational and cultural institutions would be poised to be part of the long-awaited *solution*.

Such churches and cultural institutions would not only fulfill their mission — by offering a future worth truly en-VISIONING — but do those who have kept the faith doubt, truly, that they would find themselves rewarded?

Old Ben (Franklin), one of our most *practical* and *accomplished* Founding Fathers (one “in the know”) noted that “**God governs in the affairs of men**” — that “Power” that is Greater than, and yet no less a part of, ourself, our self, rightly envisioned, our Very Self.

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Focusing on the church: It's legitimate "calling" — administering sacraments, keeping the faith, instilling moral, ethical values, and, above all, serving others, being their brothers' and sisters keepers' — such a calling is being systematically undermined on the unfortunate account of . . . the "political correctness" spoken of?

Driven by fear? Might one say? Truth be told.

Summarizing this reckoning: Our churches, and related religious, educational, and cultural institutions — all too many? — have given away control of their own destiny, their very conscience, in ways that few among their leadership appear to have considered.

As noted, many have made themselves subservient to the State and business sphere, Mammon, for the sake of avoiding taxes they wouldn't owe, if they'd simply dissolved such outer guises or never sought incorporated status to begin with.

Not only that, but churches can also claim considerable relief by accessing the remedy that is actually provided, in the spirit of the very First Amendment to our United States Constitution, which guarantees us "freedom or religion," our inalienable right, *and responsibility*. The remedy spoken of is outlined at the following link and summarized below ^: < <https://www.newvisionministriesonline.org/508c1a-free-church-vs-501c3-state-church/> >.

Until the leaders and members of our churches, and kindred educational and cultural institutions pause to consider these matters — how they may have been led astray from their essential mission, "calling" — many will continue to see not only their missions undermined but, in the process, good people harmed and their own self-respect eroded.*

For those with ears to hear, our churches, educational and cultural institutions are called to duly assert themselves as living communities of the Spirit, fellowships. Indeed, such were the original, vision, inspiration not only of the Church, but of our first male and female colleges: Harvard and Georgia's Wesleyan College.

Emerson, "The Sage of Concord," summed up this central *problem-challenge-opportunity* facing the religious and cultural sphere in his "Divinity School" and "American Scholar" addresses:

... *"let the breath of new life be breathed by you through the forms already existing. For, if once you are alive, you shall find they shall become plastic and new."*

"Our disciplines today, without that a primary faculty of intuition become but tuitions."

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* With all respects due to the legal counsel (“billing”) spoken of, would you be surprised to hear that that law profession’s multitudinous “grist” begins with an estimated 84 miles of shelf space, constituting rules, regulations, ordinances, advisories — you name it — for us to, indeed, concern ourselves with?

That is, would you be surprised to hear that, together, such “regs” provide the bounteous business for the mounting legal mill that enriches attorneys, while distracting such religious, educational, and cultural institutions from their essential mission by tying them up in red tape. *84 miles*]

** With respect to churches and cultural institutions undermining themselves in the face of trials such as the pandemic, I commend to you the following words of Dr. Benjamin Rush, Founding Father, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and personal physician to George Washington. Regardless of where one comes down on the pandemic issue, if churches and cultural institutions are unable to question and, if need be, stand up to the unconstitutional dictates of state and economic sphere, who will, can . . . What will keep the People, We, from, indeed, perishing?

“The Constitution of this Republic,” Rush noted, *“should make special provision for medical freedom. To restrict the art of healing to one class [vested interest] will constitute the Bastille [imprisonment and downfall] of medical science. All such laws are un-American and despotic* Rush goes on:

*Unless we put medical freedom into the constitution, the time will come when [BIG] medicine will organize into an undercover dictatorship and force people, who wish [to have] doctors and treatment of their own free choice, force them to submit to **only** what the dictating outfit offers.”*

Of note in this respect, friends, is the fact that, even though plagues plagued the continental army, Rush, Washington and our Founding Fathers, *public servants* firmly **resisted the temptation** to impose unconstitutional mandates on their “Masters,” the People, who they were meant to *serve*. That is, they resisted then the very temptation to which our public servants have succumbed today, due to the FEAR-MONGERING we’ve been subject to over these last years 25 hours a day.

***The Good Lord did not give us the spirit of fear,
but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.***

2 Timothy 1:7

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