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| **From:** | Renata Bodner |
| **To:** | Preston Christie A |
| **Subject:** | Form 990 and religious non-profits |
| **Date:** | Friday, September 11, 2015 11:07:10 PM |

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to ask the IRS to limit the broad exemption granted to churches, which, unlike secular non-profits, are not required to file Form 990 each year in order to retain their tax exemption. The IRS estimates that the burden on non-profits filing a 990 return amounts to more than 25 million hours. Yet churches are automatically exempted from this onerous requirement under federal law. This discrepancy shields churches from accountability and amounts to government favoritism toward religion. Churches and religious organizations currently do not even have to send a notice to the IRS that they are claiming a 990 filing exemption. Any group that claims it is religious avoids all public transparency and accountability.
This is precisely the type of lack of oversight that allows for widespread abuse, preying upon vulnerable populations, and fraud -- all with public tax money that could be put to better purpose. I would like to ask the IRS to stop privileging churches at public expense.

In order to end the discrepant treatment of non-religious non-profits, which provide just as valuable causes and services as religious non-profits, I would like to suggest:

- All non-profit organizations should be treated equally, regardless of whether they espouse an atheist position, or a religious position. Currently the IRS singles out churches for privileged treatment by exempting them from the disclosure requirements all other 501(c)(3) organizations must comply with, or lose their exemption. Taxpayers, who are subsidizing tax-exempt groups, have a right to know what entities are exempt from taxation and to review general financial disclosures. The privilege of not being taxed must come with some measures of accountability.
- Please make churches conform to the same IRS requirements as all other 501(c)(3) groups. At a minimum, the IRS should require any organizations that claim to be religious organizations, to file an annual notice with the IRS that they are claiming tax exemption.

Thanks for your consideration,

~ Renata Bodner