From: brian@flockgroup.com
To: Preston Christie A
Subject: Form 990 for non-profit religious organizations/churches
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2015 3:06:40 PM

Dear Ms. Preston,

It is my strong conviction that religious organizations need to be accountable to their constituents/members on how they utilize finances. This exemption for churches allows many organizations to take advantage of generous people who mistakenly think that a large portion of their funds are going to charitable works. This is only possible because of the veil that the current IRS rules afford these organizations. This veil should be removed from all non-profits, including churches.

I grew up in the Mormon/LDS religion and donated much money to the church as required by it. Without any judgement on issues of faith, it is now very clear to me that there was serious deception by the Mormon organization to its members on how funds were used. In our twice-yearly "General Conference," the only financial disclosure that we were given was that the church's auditors had reviewed the books and found all to be in order without ANY explanation of quantities of funds received or how they were spent.

Further, the message constantly sent to the members was how much philanthropic work the church was doing around the world but no financial disclosure was ever given to put it into perspective. (I estimate such charitable donations to be a small fraction of 1% of Mormon income.) Additionally, the message was constantly reported that all church leaders are a "lay" (i.e. non-payed) clergy and most donors to the church have no idea how much is given to high-level leaders of the church in Salt Lake City and around the globe.

I believe that our tax revenues would go up to help solve our deficit if churches were forced to honestly and clearly account for their income and how they spend that money. Alternatively, tax payers can decide to donate to potentially more worthy or efficient organizations in order to better serve society.

Sincerely,

Brian Flock
Carlsbad, CA

Brian Flock
MBA, Broker, CIAS, SFR, CDPE (CA BRE 01870163)

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Phone: (760) 271-8761