

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

May-June, 2005 ☆ Vol. 15, Number 3

Inside

Reorganizing Your Church in Accordance with the Word of God

By
Steve Atherton

Editor's Note: CAM is aware that Part I of this article has been controversial and made some people uncomfortable. We may not always agree with everything our contributors have to say, but we felt it was important to let you know about the move to un-incorporate churches. We have heard so often from so many pastors that the 501 (c)(3) has forced them to remain silent on certain subjects from the pulpit, because they did not want to risk the church's tax exempt status. So when a Vermont pastor and lawyer offered to show that it needn't be so, we asked him to write an article to enlighten us all. We welcome a response on the other side of the issue as well.

Killing Terri Schindler-Schiavo

A tragedy unfolds before our eyes

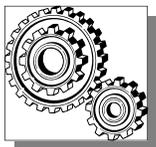
Page 3

Oregon Law

Common sense and some good news from Oregon

Page 4

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website (see back page)



In the Works

Physician Assisted Suicide

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

In Part I of this two part series, I took the church to task for incorporating itself and thereby joining itself to an unholy trinity that has arisen in our midst, akin to the unholy trinity that existed in Jesus' time and that was responsible for His crucifixion. To restate the argument in the briefest of ways for those that may have missed Part I, let me simply assert – as our forefathers did in our Declaration of Independence – that the Creator of a thing is the god of a thing. It follows that since the state is the creator of a corporation, that it is the god of that corporation, endowing it with such rights as it sees fit (i.e. limited liability) and exercising ultimate judgment over its doings. When that corporation then voluntarily submits itself, for purposes of the financial gains that it expects to receive, to the rule of the money changers operating pursuant to the authority granted unto them

under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code an unholy trinity is formed. Namely the church has separated itself from the Lord and brought itself into submission to the



state and the money changers, in just the same way the church of Jesus' day did. As promised in Part I, this final installment addresses how the church can disentangle itself from this unholy trinity and come, once again, unto obedi-

ence to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Before addressing the legal issues relating to organization, please bear with me while I delve a bit into some of the little known facts about the church leaders of Jesus' time for the light that they shed on our own time. Specifically, I want to talk about the Pharisees as they seemed to be His primary adversaries. The Pharisees, of course, was that strictest sect of the Jews, teaching zealous adherence to the law. Curiously, they were themselves usurpers according to the law for under the law of Moses, the Levitical priesthood was established. No mention was made of any other tribe serving at the altar and yet many of the Pharisees, as the apostle Paul himself of the tribe of Benjamin attests (*Philippians 3:5*), were not of Levi and yet they occupied Moses' seat as Jesus acknowl-



“Peace if possible, but truth at any rate.” Martin Luther

(Continued from page 1)
 edged (*Matthew 23:2*). Therefore the Pharisees themselves were usurpers, just like Lucifer was (*Isaiah 14:12-15*). That is why Jesus said unto them, “Ye are of your Father, the Devil” (*John 8:44*).

Thankfully, the Devil was not the Father of all the Pharisees. There were many, like Nicodemus and later the apostle Paul, who thought they were faithfully serving the Lord in their adherence to the doctrine of the Pharisees. When they were confronted with the truth, they rejected the doctrine of the Pharisees and joined themselves rather unto Jesus. They came to understand what Jesus meant when He said to the Pharisees who came against Him for eating with publicans and sinners:

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Matthew 9:13

What does all of this have to do with church organization, you might ask? Everything, for the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom and not a democracy. God establishes His leadership and in doing so He does not ask after the counsel of man. Did the Lord ask Peter and John whether Saul of Tarsus was fit to be an apostle? Did the children of Israel elect Moses? Were any of the prophets picked by His people? Obviously not. Rather, the Lord

Himself appeared unto those whom He chose, after the counsel of His own wisdom. He revealed Himself unto them and endued them with Power from the Holy Spirit. They are known by their Power as the Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth, warning them that “though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. . . . Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” *I Corinthians 4:14-20*.

Of course, there are lying signs and wonders and false prophets as well, just as Jesus forewarned, telling us that we shall know them by their fruits (*Matthew 7:15-20*). The key to telling the difference is made clear by the parable of the wheat and the tares (*Matthew 13:24-30*). The fruit of the wheat is golden in color and points toward our Heavenly Father, whereas the fruit of the tare is black and droops towards the earth. God’s leaders know that God is not a respecter of persons and the power that they walk in and the Word that they speak is not their own, but rather is His who sent them and is available to all who will believe. The false prophet, even though his prophecies come to pass and his miracles are real (in the same sense that a counterfeit

dollar is real), points the people away from our Heavenly Father. Most commonly onto himself – for example, he may allow the people to adulate him as some holy man of God that is above them, rather than acknowledging that he is a man subject to like passions as are they – or onto the things of this world (e.g. his education, his denomination, his discipline, or his holiness). The key to church organization therefore begins with the Lord and those that He has established in authority.

A properly functioning church has Jesus at its head and the people acknowledge the authority of the apostles and prophets that He establishes according to His Word and endues with the power of the anointing of His Holy Spirit. From the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, the church grows into a holy temple in the Lord for an habitation of God through the Spirit (*Ephesians 2:20-22*). In other words, we are the church and not the building, and thus if we reject the apostles and prophets that the Lord establishes to rule over us, then it is Him who we are rejecting and He will have no part with us no matter how frequently we visit a building that some may call a church.

Now for those who do acknowledge the leadership that the Lord establishes, it is quite easy to organize the church in a legal form to acquire property and otherwise conduct its activities in a legal

manner. The form that I prefer is the trust. It is an ancient contractual form, well developed in the common law, and accepted in our legal system. The trustee or trustees who control the corpus (a legal term referring to the body of assets comprising the trust) of the trust have what is known as a fiduciary duty (a legal term that can be defined in the trust instrument itself to accord with the stewardship duty that the Word of God requires) to employ the assets of the trust in accordance with the Word of God, the other members of the Body of Christ, trusting the Lord to guide and direct the leaders that He has established, rather than the State.

Now, I am aware that many of you reading this article are members of churches that elect their leaders. Despite the tenor of this article, I want you to know that the Lord does not condemn you for so doing. If you read *Ezekial 33*, you will find that while the Lord establishes His Watchmen, who will hear the word at His mouth, He also will honor the choice of His people when they choose a man of their coasts to serve as their watchman to warn them when He sends His sword against them. In either case, as you will see when you read *Ezekial 33*, the duty is the same and therefore I believe that the trust form works best in both cases.

What are the implications of reorganizing your church into a trust? In the Lord, I believe they are profound. In the world, at least in



“The greatest gift you can give anybody is to pray on their behalf. May Americans have prayed everyday and every week for those in authority, and I thank them for that wonderful gift.” *President George W. Bush*

this country, it is quite possible that you will see little or no impact, legally or financially, but a great impact in freeing your pastor to speak the truth from the pulpit. Under the Internal Revenue Code, in deference to our First Amendment, churches are the only entities that are automatically tax exempt. They need not make any application to the IRS nor do they have to file any informational or other tax returns. This may crimp the style of those churches that rely heavily upon professional fundraisers and/or charitable

foundations for their funding, as both will likely require a letter from the IRS recognizing your organization as tax exempt, but it should in no way inhibit your ability to receive tithes and offerings nor those giving from claiming the same as charitable deductions on their tax returns. The primary area of contention, insofar as the Lord has given me to see it, lies in the arena of the church engaging in activities disapproved of by the government. For example, the government may not approve of your refusing to ordain ministers based

upon their sexual orientation. For such matters, I believe we must stand where Peter and the other apostles stood when they were brought before the council, answering "We ought to obey God rather than men." (*Acts 5:29*) Under our Constitution, the First Amendment forbids the government interfering with such internal matters of the church. If our government chooses to exceed its bounds and seeks to impose its control over Christ's church, then may the Lord Himself judge it and may we be willing to suffer persecution, if need

be, for His name's sake.

I hope this article has been helpful to you and that you will prayerfully consider its counsel. The legal technicalities necessary to reorganize each church will differ. Should you desire this counselor to assist you, simply give me a call. May the Lord give you wisdom in such matters as you seek His face.

Steve Atherton is a Christian Minister and Attorney who lives in Northfield Falls, Vermont. He can be reached by phone at 802-485-5595, by email at satherton@thedigitallawyer.com or on the web at www.shalaw.com.

Killing Terri Schindler-Schiavo

by
Kay Trudell

The culture of death in America now has a visible face and name, unlike the 44,000,000 aborted babies who have died unseen within the womb. Her name is Terri Schindler-Schiavo. She has become the latest and most visible reminder of the "least of these" --- a physically and mentally disabled woman who was starved to death before our very eyes --- in the name of "death with dignity". She was not unconscious, nor unresponsive, nor on a respirator. Yes, she was being fed through a tube. Since when is food and water considered extraordinary medical treatment? Terri's only crime was in being what the doctors of not-so-long-ago Nazi Germany labeled "a useless eater". The mainstream media's reporting of her case was an appalling example of lazy (at best), inept (in the muddled middle), or deliberately euphemistic, propagandistic manipulation (at worst) in covering up the truth of her lengthy story and medical and legal history. Those in the courts, the media, and the medical profession who promote the secular-progressive, morally relativistic world view that will not recognize the sanctity of human life have taken us, in one giant leap, much farther down the slippery slope. In so doing, they have made of Terri a sacrificial lamb --- an innocent martyr, if you will --- on the road to relativistic nihilism where each man is his own god, and God's law and mercy are nowhere to be found. It is illegal in most states under animal cruelty laws to deliberately starve a dog or cat to death. That being so, how can we explain why it was apparently no problem to starve a disabled human being to death? There was no "living will" in Terri's case. In the absence of a clearly written statement from Terri that this was what she wanted --- in the face of testimony from a "husband" who had abandoned Terri long ago, was living with another woman, and who would be released from obligation in the event of her death --- common sense would dictate that the presumption must be in favor of life. God stated plainly in His Word: "...Those who hate Me love death". (*Proverbs 8:36*) To those who killed Terri Schindler-Schiavo either through acts of malfeasance or non-feasance, may God have more mercy on you than you could spare for Terri.

Let us be thankful that, during this shameful event, the voices of contemporary men and women of God were not silent in the public arena. The Vatican issued several statements. Cardinal Renato Martino stated: "When you deprive somebody of food and water, what else is it? Nothing else but murder." Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family said, "Every Florida and federal judge who failed to act to spare this precious woman from the torment she was forced to endure is guilty of . . . the cold-blooded, cold-hearted extermination of an innocent human life." He concluded by saying, "I grieve for the Schindlers . . . and I fear for the future of our nation."

Florida is not that far from Vermont. Our legislature has even now been grappling with bills to legalize both Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS) and the government takeover of our Vermont healthcare system (aka socialized medicine, Canadian style). The relentless marchers will not give up --- and neither should the prayers and action of God's people cease. Do not go gentle unto that dark and barbaric night. God-fearing people, stand up for the future of your own children. Be salt and light in a lost and death-embracing world.

Kay Trudell is a Board Member of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Community Bible Church.

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead
James 2:17

e-mail : camnet@surfglobal.net

www.christianactionministry.com

Common Sense and Good News

Today, America got a great civics lesson. The Oregon Supreme Court unanimously declared “null and void” the 3,000 same-sex “marriage” licenses issued last year by the radical local officials of Multnomah County, Oregon. In reaching its decision, the court cited long-standing state law that defined marriage as between a man and woman, but it also grudgingly acknowledged Measure 36, a marriage protection amendment, which the voters of Oregon approved at the ballot box by a double digit margin of victory. Here’s part of the court’s opinion:

“Today, marriage in Oregon — an institution once limited to opposite-sex couples only by statute — now is so limited by the state Constitution as well. We conclude that Oregon law currently places the regulation of marriage exclusively within the province of the state's legislative power.”

What’s the lesson to be learned from this decision? That ultimate power in our republic still rests with the people! The people of Oregon recognized the very real threat to normal marriage and the family, and they took action by passing a constitutional amendment to bind rogue judges. Had they not done so, the decision from the Oregon Supreme Court could have been very different. That’s why I strongly support these state efforts.

Gary Bauer—Campaign for Working Families 4/14/05

The **Christian Action Ministry Network, Inc.** is an educational nonprofit public charity supported entirely by volunteers and contributions from the public. Personal, church and business donations are encouraged and are tax-deductible under the IRS Code 501(C)3. The information provided herein does not necessarily reflect the views of any particular church or individual associated with the Christian Action Ministry Network.

✉ CAM Network, Inc.
PO Box 1067
Williston, VT 05495
☎ (802) 372-6442



Next Meetings

May 9, 7:00 pm
St. Mark's Catholic Church
Burlington, Vt.
June 13, 7:00 pm
Essex Alliance Church
Essex, Vt.

**Making A Difference
in
Vermont!**



NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BURLINGTON, VT
PERMIT NO. 165

Christian Action Ministry Network
PO Box 1067 Williston VT 05495
Return Service Requested