

SENATE INQUIRY Q & A

Question: Senator Grassley has stated that he cannot refer anything to the IRS unless he knows that something is wrong. How do you react to that?

Answer: That's simply not true. Members of Congress can, and do, refer things to the IRS all the time, whether they have any factual information or not.

Question: Senator Grassley claims that he's not asking the church to do anything other than what numerous other organizations have done. Why is World Changers any different from the United Way or other churches, for instance?

Answer: World Changers, and the other ministries, are churches. We have certain First Amendment rights that other organizations don't have—including the right to worship freely. In recognition of these rights, Congress has given religious organizations several protections that other tax-exempt organizations are not entitled to, including exemption from annual filing and disclosure requirements, exemption from application requirements, and special procedural requirements the government must follow during any IRS examination. The Senator's request is not in accordance with these protections.

Question: Are you hiding something?

Answer: No, absolutely not. We're proud of our ministry. We are even happy to provide our members with access to our audited financial records. We have nothing to hide. We have decided not to provide any documents to Senator Grassley because we are concerned about the precedential implications of this investigation. We have to wonder how far this may go--will other churches be victimized by this witch-hunt as well?

Question: If you aren't hiding something, why not just answer the Senator's questions?

Answer: We are standing up for the First Amendment here. We will be happy to answer any questions the government has, as long as they occur in the proper context. The proper context for an examination of a church is in the course of an IRS audit. If the IRS wants to ask us these questions, we would be happy to comply.

Question: How far are you willing to take this? Would you, for instance, go to jail?

Answer: We will fight this to the end through the appropriate legal channels. If a court decides against us, we won't violate a court order—we always comply with the law.

Question: Why do you want the IRS to conduct this examination, rather than Senator Grassley?

Answer: There are two reasons—the first is that the Internal Revenue Code is very clear that an examination of a church should be conducted in accordance with certain procedures to protect the Church's First Amendment rights. Second, the Code guarantees certain privacy rights to taxpayers. We strongly believe that the procedural protections and privacy rules are crucial to protecting our rights to practice our religion. Because we have nothing to hide, we would be happy to comply with an IRS examination, but we have to do everything, we can to protect the rights of our Church and the congregation.
