

# Who Pays for Religion?

anon.

1975

The costs of religion should be born by those who practice it! Whether you go to church or whether you stay away from it, if you believe in god and religion or if you don't, you are the one who pays for it in the end.

Every single family in the U.S. pays a minimum of \$200 in hidden taxes to keep churches free from all tax on real estate, businesses, income and on their enormous wealth in stocks and bonds. Churches pay no sales tax, no inheritance tax, and no income tax.

Through research, such bourgeois organs as

The Internal Revenue Service reports that cash donations to the churches, about \$6.5 billion a year, do not include the profits from their businesses, property rentals, money received in wills, or the yield from their stock holdings, or bond holdings.

Depending on what state is checked out, churches are permitted to own about 18% to 24% of privately-owned land. Of that, the Roman Catholic Church owns 56%. Most of the rest of it is divided up among 268 Protestant and 8 Jewish denominations.

From the federal government alone, churches are now receiving about \$8 billion annually. The Baptists asked for 1,000 acres of federal land in Washington, Tennessee, Florida, the District of Columbia, Texas and Arkansas, with 34 buildings on that land. They got it—for free.

The Roman Catholic Church demanded 61 acres in Chicago, and elsewhere a total of 725 acres with 250 buildings on it. The Seventh Day Adventists, who claim they are champions of state/church separation, demanded and received over one thousand acres and 331 buildings in Florida, California, Ohio and Arizona.

Using a special “legal gimmick,” the churches have made arrangements with certain businesses for what is called “lease-back financing.” A church “purchases” a business—which is then tax free—and immediately “leases-back” the business to the original owners.

Using this method, the Southern Baptist Convention has been able to “purchase and lease back” certain plants of Burlington Mills, Bemis Bags, Rath Meats, Mack Trucks, Borden Milk, Firestone Rubber, and Fruehauf Trailers. The Roman Catholic Church has such agreements with banks, hotels, steel mills, supermarkets, gasoline cracking plants, birth-control pill manufacturers (!!!), distilleries and television stations.

What do the churches do with all this money? In late 1968, the US government tried to analyze the charities of religious organizations. The Roman Catholic Church simply refused to report.

Protestant and Orthodox churches were spending a paltry 41 cents a month for everyone who belongs to a church in America on services to these church members.



Section of a cartoon by 19<sup>th</sup> century artist, Thomas Nast, who saw the organized forces of religion ready to devour a hapless public—little has changed in 100 years.

Meanwhile, taking care of their business interests, religious organizations print “trading stamps,” operate restaurant chains, office buildings, bowling alleys, laundries, department stores and finance companies. The Seventh Day Adventists are trying to corner the health-food market with the “Loma Linda” brand of that church—all tax free.

Churches own stocks and bonds in gas and electric companies, hotels, steel, oil, aircraft, theatre, television, radio, rubber, insurance, trucking, real — estate, even government bonds, and they don’t pay tax on the dividends which they receive.

Some religions oppose national and state lotteries, but in New York the church “bingo” take exceeds 450 million a year. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the Roman Catholic church takes so much money out of America that it sells gold in million dollar lots, and buys gold in larger lots, from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Slaves of god, men must also be slaves of church and state, in so far as the state is consecrated by the church. With all due respect, then, to the metaphysicians and religious idealists, philosophers, politicians, or poets; the idea of god implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind, both in theory and practice.

—from *God and The State* by Michael Bakunin

Information in this article was received from the “Society of Separationists, Inc.,” P.O. Box 2117, Austin, Texas 78767. Their founder, Madelyn Murray O’Hair, was the litigant in the famous case which removed bible reading and prayer recitation from the public schools.

# fifth Estate

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