

March 20, 2008

Lois G. Lerner, Director
Exempt Organizations Division
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Ms. Lerner,

I am writing to encourage the Internal Revenue Service to investigate Trinity United Church of Christ of Chicago, a non-profit religious entity that seems to have run afoul of federal tax law banning political campaign intervention.

Section 501(c)(3) provides for the exemption from federal income tax of organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided in section 501(h)), and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

According to a March 10, 2008 Wall Street Journal article titled "Obama Pastors' Sermons May Violate Tax Laws," Trinity United Church of Christ's current pastor, the Rev. Otis Moss III, and its former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Jr., both made direct or indirect statements in support of Presidential candidate Barack Obama from the pulpit during a sermon.

According to The Wall Street Journal article:

On Christmas morning, Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr. compared presidential candidate Barack Obama's impoverished childhood to Jesus Christ's. "Barack knows what it means to be a black man living in a country and a culture that is controlled by rich white people," he then trumpeted. "Hillary [Clinton] can never know that."

Also according to The Wall Street Journal article:

In some instances, the church's ministers alluded to Sen. Obama without naming him. During a Trinity sermon observed by a Journal reporter on March 2, the Rev. Otis Moss III, the pastor, preached, "There was a non-Babylonian, a young man who heard the word of God and said, 'I have the audacity to hope!' Now the whole nation says, 'Yes, we can! Yes, we can! Yes, we can!'" [This is a reference to Sen. Obama's campaign slogan]

In addition, the Trinity United Church of Christ web site (<http://www.tucc.org/about.htm>) includes campaign videos from Sen. Obama's Presidential campaign. The video includes a URL to the official campaign web site.

I have attached a copy of The Wall Street Journal article as well as a screen capture of the Trinity United Church of Christ web site. I urge you to take action promptly to address this issue. The address for Trinity United Church of Christ is 400 West 95th Street Chicago, Illinois 60628.

Sincerely,



Attachments:

3/10/2008 Wall Street Journal Article

Screen capture of Trinity United Church of Christ web site