

**Jesus: “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s; Render unto God that which is God’s.”**  
**First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”** The words of Jesus and the First Amendment have much in common.

Some opponents of Jesus approached him with a question about taxation—Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? However, his response, they thought, would pit him against the people or against Rome. Either way, he would lose. His response was profound in all respects: “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s; Render unto God that which is God’s.” Folks have a responsibility to civil government and on a separate track to their religious institution if they embrace religion. These two institutions should respect each other from a distance, with a wall—high wall—between them.

Those who crafted the First Amendment understood the efficacy of freedom of religion without government endorsement or interference.

Until recent decades, the three branches of government—state and national—had resisted the flow of tax money to religious institutions. Religious institutions were supported solely by offerings, fundraising, and tuition payments by adherents. The idea that citizens are entitled to have taxes rebated to them for their own private religious projects is contrary to the First Amendment.

Oil and water do not mix. (Water molecules are attracted to each other and oil molecules are attracted to each other.) Oil is needed for the crankcase. Water is required for the radiator. A combination of oil and water will not work for either the crankcase or the radiator, separate substances are required for separate functions.

A wall—a high wall—between church and state is essential and is a most efficacious policy. Financial and policy collusion of the two institutions is toxic—very toxic—for both the church and state. Government, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, has no responsibility/right to financially support religious institutions, including religious schools.

Logically speaking, religious leaders should be on the first line of resistance to the flow of tax revenue to religious schools. Dependence on tax revenue for the promotion of religious doctrine via schools or otherwise will result in declining support from constituent members and invite government interference with doctrinal matters.