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## Church of Israel

### In Our View

Allegations by a dissident minister about the use of tax-exempt Church of Israel property in Schell City for private, for-profit businesses and the church's endorsement of a policy of evading income taxes should raise eyebrows on the state and federal levels and prompt investigations.

Scott Stinson, who until recently had been chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Schell City church, told The Globe that at least two businesses — Paradise Press and Aqua Rain, a company that sells emergency water purifiers — operated in the church print shop and that no taxes were paid out of the \$30,000 to \$40,000 worth of sales by the church bookstore.

Officials with the Department of Revenue could find no record that the Church of Israel had ever had an exemption from collecting or paying sales taxes.

Stinson also said the leader of the church, Dan Gayman, treated church assets as his own and that donations to the church received through the mail went into an account solely under Gayman's control.

Gayman has denied the allegations made by Stinson. "One of the best-selling books we have is on the duties of a Christian citizen, and it is exclusively dedicated to reminding (believers) to obey all levels of authority," Gayman said. "And if privately we practice another lifestyle, why would we be engaged in making videos for the Department of Justice to be used in the Montana Freeman standoff? All I can tell you is that when someone asks us, 'Should we pay taxes?' the answer is emphatically 'yes.'"

As for use of church property for a private business, Gayman said that there was a brief period when a company did operate on exempt property.

But that property was removed from exempt status in 1999.

The Globe published a special section, "Ordained by Hate," Jan. 28 on the Church of Israel, including its history, beliefs and past associations with white-supremacist hate groups.

State and federal agencies ought to check into the tax situation of the Church of Israel.