

FIRST CENTURY BIBLE CHURCH

PO Box 472 • Olive Branch, MS 38654 • firstcenturybiblechurch.org • sdllaw@protonmail.com

Addendum to the Articles of Incorporation

The Coadjuvancy of Church and State: America's Departure from the Founders' Vision

I, Scott Lively, apostolic trustee and founder of First Century Bible Church, write this addendum as a student of both biblical and constitutional law. Having practiced constitutional law professionally and applied biblical law in real-world contexts as a pastor, teacher, political candidate, culture warrior, columnist, and pundit, I offer this summary of the church's proper relationship to civil government and America's unfortunate departure from that relationship.

The Founders' Premise: Coadjuvancy Under the Sovereignty of God

The American founders established this nation on the shared premise that both church and state are under the sovereign authority of God. They envisioned coadjuvancy — two separate, sovereign spheres cooperating for the common good without either usurping the authority of the other.

This understanding was deeply rooted in the Christian Hebraist tradition that viewed the Hebrew republic as a model of limited government and distinct spheres of authority. A leading figure in that tradition was John Selden (1584–1654), the great English jurist and scholar whose monumental studies of Jewish law and Hebrew commonwealth profoundly influenced John Locke and, through him, the American founders.

This biblical model was powerfully reinforced by sermons such as Reverend Samuel Langdon's 1788 address, "The Republic of the Israelites an Example to the American States," which broke a critical logjam stalling the adoption of the U.S. Constitution by demonstrating the superiority of the Hebrew republican form of government.

Central to this tradition was John Locke's Two Treatises of Government (1689). In the Second Treatise, Locke argued that legitimate civil government is a fiduciary trust derived from the consent of the governed and limited by the law of nature, which itself is derived from God. He explicitly rejected the idea that the magistrate has any authority over the care of souls.

The church, Locke maintained, is a voluntary society under the direct headship of Christ, possessing its own distinct jurisdiction. Government's role is to protect natural rights and maintain outward order, not to govern religious conscience. Locke's ideas, shaped by Christian Hebraist scholarship, directly informed Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia and James Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments, both of which became foundational to the First Amendment.

FIRST CENTURY BIBLE CHURCH

PO Box 472 • Olive Branch, MS 38654 • firstcenturybiblechurch.org • sdllaw@protonmail.com

The Declaration of Independence appeals to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” and the First Amendment was written to prevent Congress from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This was not hostility to religion; it was protection of the church’s sovereignty under Christ while allowing its moral influence to shape the public square. This was true coadjuvancy.

America’s Illegitimate Judicial Coup

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, the federal judiciary engineered a profound and illegitimate shift from this biblical and constitutional foundation to a regime of secular humanism in which government presumes superior authority over the church. This turn violates the spirit of both the Declaration of Independence (which is literally the first law printed in the United States Federal Code, appearing as the first organic law in 1 U.S.C.) and the Bill of Rights which expanded upon it.

The transformation was led by Justice Hugo Black, a former Ku Klux Klan member and political ally of Lyndon B. Johnson. Black played a key role in shielding LBJ from exposure of the blatant election fraud that secured his 1948 U.S. Senate victory in Texas (the infamous “Box 13” scandal). In gratitude, Johnson later championed Black’s influence on the Court.

In 1954, Johnson pushed through the Johnson Amendment, which inserted the 501(c)(3) restriction into the Internal Revenue Code — a mechanism designed to silence churches from speaking on political and moral issues by threatening their tax status. This was the opening salvo in the judicial coup that followed. The pivotal Supreme Court cases that accomplished this transformation include:

- *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), in which Justice Black wrote the majority opinion. Everson imposed a test of supposed “benevolent neutrality” toward all religions in place of the founders’ open acknowledgement of the Supreme Being. It incorporated the Establishment Clause against the states and introduced Jefferson’s “wall of separation” metaphor in a way that began erecting a barrier against religious expression in public life.
- *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488 (1961), in which Justice Black again wrote the opinion striking down a Maryland requirement that public officials declare belief in God. In a now-infamous footnote, Black listed “Secular Humanism” alongside atheism as religions entitled to equal protection, thereby empowering militant atheists to dismantle the Judeo-Christian infrastructure of government and society — beginning with the removal of prayer and Bible reading from public schools (*Engel v. Vitale*, 1962, and *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 1963).
- These decisions, and the broader line of cases they represent (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 1971; *Roe v. Wade*, 1973; *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015), substituted judicially imposed secular humanism for the founders’ Christian-informed order. In my writings and public work over four decades, I have repeatedly warned that this constitutes a form of soft tyranny that presumes the state’s moral superiority over the church — a direct contradiction of Madison’s declaration that religion is “wholly exempt from [the]

FIRST CENTURY BIBLE CHURCH

PO Box 472 • Olive Branch, MS 38654 • firstcenturybiblechurch.org • sdllaw@protonmail.com

cognizance” of civil government and Jefferson’s insistence that government’s legitimate powers extend only to acts injurious to others.

The Pre-Everson Understanding

Prior to Everson, the Supreme Court openly acknowledged the supremacy of God over both church and state. In *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, 143 U.S. 457 (1892), the Court unanimously declared: “This is a Christian nation,” and affirmed that America’s laws and institutions presuppose a Supreme Being and a Christian people. That ruling reflected the original American consensus. Everson and its progeny overturned that consensus without constitutional amendment, constituting a judicial coup against the founding order.

First Century Bible Church’s Position

First Century Bible Church stands in deliberate and principled opposition to this illegitimate transformation. We maintain our apostolic independence, exercise our automatic exemption under IRC § 508(c)(1)(A), and refuse any entanglement that would imply government superiority over the church. We do so not out of hostility to lawful government, but out of fidelity to the original American understanding of coadjuvancy and, more importantly, to the biblical order in which Christ alone is Head of the Church.

This addendum forms an integral part of the governing documents of First Century Bible Church and shall guide the Board of Elders and any future apostolic trustee in preserving the church’s biblical sovereignty and its proper, limited cooperative relationship with civil authority.

Adopted on 4/11/2026,

Scott Lively

Apostolic Trustee and Founder
First Century Bible Church

FIRST CENTURY BIBLE CHURCH

PO Box 472 • Olive Branch, MS 38654 • firstcenturybiblechurch.org • sdllaw@protonmail.com

Cross-Reference Index

Governance (Articles of Incorporation: Article V; Bylaws: Article IV)

Tax Exemption (Articles of Incorporation: preface; Coadjuvancy addendum: First Century Bible Church's Position)

Doctrine (Bylaws: Article VII; Statement of Faith sections)