

A Review of the article: The Changing Landscape of Religious Liberty

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<https://www.southerntidings.com/suc/the-changing-landscape-of-religious-liberty/>

I want to thank the Southern Union of the SDA church and Amireh Al-Haddad for having the courage to address this topic and publish this article. As we unpack and discuss it, let us remember that it is not possible for an author to address every concern on such a wide-ranging topic in the limited space within a printed article, or cover every nuance. So, as we bring out additional points it may very well be that the author would agree with us, but was unable to explore those elements within the constraints of this publication. This article (*quoted in red italic*) serves as a wonderful opportunity to explore the question of religious liberty during the COVID crisis.

Looking back over the last two years of religious liberty challenges and triumphs has brought sobering thoughts about the work the Adventist Church does in this field. As Seventh-day Adventists we should all take time to reflect on the reality of where we are in history today.

Where are we in history? Do we see the formation of beastly systems, the rise of globalist agenda? What are some of the movements that are contributing to shaping the minds of people, undermining religious liberty, and preparing people to accept Satan's methods in how we treat others?

- A godless worldview taught and accepted by most leaders of the world, academia, science and medical authorities, and media—i.e. the experts of the world
- Fear messaging of an existential nature—the planet or the species is in danger (climate change, a viral pandemic, UFOs, depletion of vital resources, wars, economic collapse, others?)
- This constant fear messaging is from threats that you and I can do nothing about—they are ill defined, nebulous, outside of our immediate identification and control, designed to be unresolvable but constantly threatening to keep us in a state of fear and tension.
- All of this is happening in a world that increasingly doesn't believe in our Creator God and thus billions do not trust in God for solutions, and therefore look to worldly solutions that will use Satan's power, Satan's methods and eventually embrace Satan as the savior of the world.
- Currently the messaging is that the world needs to band together to fix the various threats—but not with volunteerism, not with freedom, but with coercion, with force, with compelling power—but it is for the "greater good."

- Have you seen the church looking beyond COVID to the larger issues in the great controversy and exposing how COVID is being exploited to advance policies and practices that undermine religious liberty? I haven't seen the church actively identifying the underlying methods and actions of Satan that are conditioning the minds of people to go along with the Satanic deception. In fact, during COVID I have seen many in the church who seem to embrace the philosophy of "the greater good" and that saving temporal life justifies supporting the state in using coercive methods.
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*In my early years of religious liberty work, I learned the importance of keeping the scales balanced when it comes to both the separation of church and state and the free exercise of religious liberty. One reason we as Seventh-day Adventists have valued religious freedom is because we recognize how quickly it can become unbalanced. To put it plainly, our right to religious liberty is not an absolute. **The Constitution does not guarantee that, no matter what our religious beliefs may be, they will be allowed.** Additionally, religious liberty does not operate in a vacuum. All these issues have been brought into focus during the pandemic.*

What do you hear from this paragraph? I think the author's point would have been more clearly made with the addition of three words: "to be practiced." "*The Constitution does not guarantee that, no matter what our religious beliefs may be, they will be allowed.. to be practiced.*" All beliefs are allowed because humans cannot control the beliefs of another, but not all beliefs are allowed to be practiced. Unless the author truly did mean that the Constitution is about policing thoughts of people—there are forces at work in our society today who are interested in making certain beliefs illegal, in punishing people for holding to and expressing beliefs different than their own. In Finland this week a member of parliament and a Lutheran Bishop are being prosecuted for "ethnic agitation" for preaching the Biblical view on marriage is one man and one woman. I hope the author was not endorsing that concept, but did mean "to be practiced."

So it is quite true that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee that, no matter our religious beliefs, we will be free to practice them. Pagan beliefs with ritual child sacrifice or cannibalism would not be permitted.

But another key was left out that would have been very helpful for us to discern the line between the church and the state and that is: The differentiation between God's law and man's law. Does God give us the freedom to not only believe but to *practice* our religious beliefs any way we want—and then suffer the consequences of what failure to worship Him, failure to harmonize with His design law causes?

- They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. (Je 2:5).
- Romans 1:18-34 rejecting the truth about God and worshipping anything else destroys the mind and character

The state is not concerned with right worship, the state is concerned with power and control. And thus the state is constantly changing what beliefs it allows to be practiced depending on which political forces are in power and what those forces believe will maintain their power and control.

Consider some of the beliefs that are allowed to be practiced in the US today, but were disallowed in times past and may be disallowed again in the future:

- witchcraft
- various forms of Sunday laws that come and go
- Abortion
- homosexual marriage
- Polygamy
- transgender individuals have the legal rights of their new identified gender
- and this week I saw a news article where certain groups are advocating for the legalization of pedophilia

Understand that The Framers of the US constitution did not seek to restrain individual practice of religious belief, but to restrain the state and the institutional church from interfering in one's personal religious beliefs and practices. These Constitutional lines of authority were intended to create a legal framework within which the greatest advancement of the human condition could occur—because it was designed to provide the greatest liberty for the people.

But as John Adams, second President of the United States and co-author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

This is because true freedom requires a certain level of maturity where we respect other individuals and don't act in ways that harm or injure them. Without self-control then order in society is only possible with coercive external control—just consider the level of supervision, oversight and enforcement needed to maintain order of a prison population. Heaven will be populated only by people with self-control.

In God's government we have absolute freedom to do any and everything we choose—but we **do not have absolute freedom from the consequences** of those choices, because those consequences are inherent, built into reality itself.

The church is not supposed to allow the state to define its standards for human behavior, including where the line on religious liberty is drawn; the church is supposed to stand for God's law, principles, practices and oppose the state whenever and wherever the state crosses the line and impinges upon the law of God—including in violating the consciences of people.

The Constitutional principle that we support is liberty—liberty of conscience, leaving people free to determine their own religious beliefs and practices, but restraining behavior that crosses the line of **actively injuring or harming other people**—such as human sacrifice, or parents beating children with rods to drive out demons etc. We do not restrain religious beliefs that actively harm the individual practitioner but not others, such as refusing blood transfusions—and we do not restrain or mandate people violate their consciences based on potential threats or theoretical benefits.

When it comes to the COVID question it is quite simple, the church had the responsibility to oppose any action of the state that coerces consciences in the bodily integrity and self-determination of the individual. The states only has a right to restrain those who are an active danger to others, **not people who are a potential danger to others**. Thus, quarantining those who are sick is legitimate, quarantining the healthy is an abuse of power and illegitimate. Further, forcing people to take medical treatments they don't want is also a violation of liberty, and the righteous approach would have been to say—and it is so simple—if you get symptomatic

you must quarantine for the appropriate time, period, getting the job is irrelevant because it doesn't prevent infection.

*A perfect example of the limits to religious liberty can be found in what happened last year with **church closings** in several states and cities. We experienced a changing attitude by the courts as the pandemic rolled through month after month, and judicial review garnered different decisions — even within the same courts — as time went by. The question remains: Can your church be closed down by the government? **The answer still is not a definitive “No,”** even though multiple churches won hard fought lawsuits, and some state legislatures have even passed laws in this last term prohibiting church closures.*

To clarify what the state can legally do: The state can legally close **a building** for an immediate threat—i.e. gas leak with risk of the building exploding, fire in the building etc. But the state cannot stop the group from meeting somewhere else on that same day.

COVID has never been an immediate threat, it is a potential threat. But even if it was an immediate threat the state had no legal authority to prohibit religious assembly and that is what states did, stopped religious congregations from meeting anywhere—and the church had a responsibility to oppose this.

But those same constitutional protections go far beyond closing buildings, they include the personal practice of one's faith. Participating in communion, being visited by clergy when sick, laying on of hands ceremony, anointings, deciding what one puts into their bodies etc.

The article notes that some churches filed lawsuits against the closings and won in court. Does anyone know if any SDA church, conference or institution anywhere filed lawsuits to keep their churches open? I am unaware of this happening anywhere. I know other denominational churches did, but does anyone know if the SDA church did? I would be so encouraged to find that they did. And **if it is true that the SDA church did NOT that should raise alarm bells for SDAs**—Ask yourself, **what just happened?**

Think about it, the SDA church has an entire religious liberty department; it takes up an annual special offering to fund religious liberty activities. It has a religious liberty journal, it constantly warns against state encroachment of religious liberty—yet **when the single greatest state intrusion into the free practice of religion just occurred, the church missed it**, didn't do anything, didn't stand up and oppose it, didn't file in court, didn't even write letters of protest, and in fact, much of the church leadership supported the violations of religious liberty. Let those who have eyes to see, see what just happened!

I can tell you if Come and Reason Ministries had a religious liberty department, funded by millions of dollars of annual donations we absolutely would have had lawyers filing lawsuits all over the place. We would have been opposing these unconstitutional mandates. So, SDAs everywhere should wake up and ask—how did our organized church, our paid leaders, our seminary trained theologians miss this? And what does this suggest about the future and whether we should trust the institution with our decisions?

What would have been the correct policy for the government in dealing with COVID and worship attendance that the church could support?

- To educate people on the known risks and leave people free to decide for themselves whether to stay at home or not
- What about other types of interference with worship—such as no communion services, no foot washing services, etc. because people are mandated to stay 6 feet apart? The state has no legal right to interfere and should have actively sought to make accommodations for this to occur wherever citizens want to engage in these activities.
- What about the state requiring people to dress in certain ways while at worship—like wearing a mask? Again, the state has no right to mandate such actions as part of worship. Individuals who don't want to be put at risk can voluntarily stay at home or voluntarily wear a mask if they believe the mask will help.

More was on the horizon. Transitioning from church closings to mandated vaccinations has meant the religious liberty department has been handed a double workload. While attention of late has been focused on the federal mandates, in truth, the first mandates issued came from employers themselves, especially medical facilities and universities — not the government.

It is true that employers were the first to make mandates, but what is the point they are making? Are they suggesting that because employers were the first to make such mandates that it wasn't a religious liberty issue? That because the state didn't mandate it then it is outside the bounds of the constitution? What about employers who have required Sabbath work for non-essential activity—hasn't the church gone to bat for people who want Sabbath off even though the requirement to work comes from an employer and not the state?

And were the employers making these vaccine and mask mandates completely free of government influence? Weren't the governmental agencies recommending such actions? Wasn't there governmental financial incentives to such actions? For instance, if a government agency like the CDC recommends mask wearing or injections and an employer doesn't mandate it for their employees does the employer open themselves up for liability, to be sued, if someone were to contract the illness on their property? So, is it completely true that the government had no role in the employer led mandates?

Is what a person puts into their body a religious liberty issue? What do you think the church policy would be if an employer suddenly required their employees either eat pork or drink alcohol? Let's say it is at the annual Employer sponsored and required team-building activity and alcohol is served and all employees are required to participate in a toast—any who refuse will be terminated. What would the church's position be on this?

Would the church take the position that it is a religious liberty issue for a member to refuse the small sip of alcohol? Would they write a letter of support? Can one make a case from the Bible that the Bible forbids all alcohol for all people and any consumption is a sin?

How about if it wasn't a sip of champagne but a liquid medicine prescribed for an illness that contained alcohol and the person objected on religious grounds, what do you think the church would do?

What is a greater violation of one's autonomy, and a greater potential threat to their health, and potential greater injury to their spirit temple, a sip of champagne, or being injected with an experimental RNA based biological agent with no long-term safety data that the government claims is completely safe?

What members want from their church is consistency in applying the principles of God. I think members would have been very pleased for the church to take a positive stand in support for any member who was convicted not to take the mandated injections. A simple letter from the church supporting their religious objection would have been well received.

Many have asked whether companies have the right to make employees get vaccinated. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has stated that employers have the responsibility to keep the workplace and employees in the workplace safe. So, how do we balance our personal freedom and/or religious freedoms when juxtaposed against a workplace requirement? We continue to encourage members to seek the help of the religious liberty department when faced with these challenges.

How would you answer this question of how do we balance these issues?

My concern with the article's answer is that it doesn't articulate the position of the church, but the position of the state. Their answer reveals an imbedded misunderstanding of the COVID situation. By citing the responsibilities of the EEOC to keep the work-place safe as an answer to the question about whether employers can mandate employees to get the "vaccinated," the author inadvertently endorses the idea that the mandated injection is a vaccine and it actually works to keep the workplace safe. But this is medically, scientifically, and factually false—and everyone knows it. These injections do not prevent infection, spread, or reinfection, so requiring people to get them in order to keep the workplace safe is a fraudulent argument.

It would have been more accurate to answer with something like this:

- There is no legal basis for employers to mandate employees participate in medical experimentation. The so-called COVID vaccines are experimental, with no long-term safety data, and do not provide sterilizing immunity. They do not prevent infection, reinfection or spread. Thus, they are not capable of meeting the EEOC mandate of creating a safe workspace because they cannot reduce transmission or spread of the virus in question. In fact, those most likely to spread it to others are the vaccinated, not the unvaccinated, in reality vaccinating the workforce with these injections makes the workplace less safe. So as a matter of medical and legal fact there is no justification for the employer to mandate these injections.
- But a second point, even if there was an approved vaccine with long term safety data there still may be legitimate religious liberty issues that warrant refusal and for which the employer may not mandate vaccinations—such as an employee not wanting to take products produced by fetal tissue etc.
- The principle is this. **Those who want to violate the autonomy of another person, to force some action upon others HAVE THE BURDEN to prove that 1) failure to take the action is harmful to OTHERS and 2) the action being mandated is effective in reducing that harm without causing greater harm.** In both cases, those who advocate

for the mandates have failed to make their case. In fact, the mandates have caused more harm and more deaths than the mandates have prevented.

Here is an example of a godly, or righteous use of power to limit the autonomy of another person: quarantining an actively symptomatic, sick, and identifiably contagious person. But it is a violation of God's methods and principles to quarantine (restrict the liberty) of a healthy person.

So this is not a difficult line to draw—yet the church seems to get confused why?

- Are they too indoctrinated in the imposed law worldview that it is hard to see the difference between rule-enforcement and God's principles for life and health?
 - Is it because there isn't a Bible statute that says "thou shall not allow experimental injections into thy body"?
 - Is it because the church's institutions—hospitals and schools are so deeply dependent upon government funding that they are afraid to oppose the mandates for fear of losing funding?
 - Is it because much of the leadership have believed the lies from the government about COVID being a threat and the mandates being helpful?
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Mandated vaccinations are nothing new. If you are a parent who has ever enrolled your child in public school or Church school, you had to present proof of vaccination to the school before your child could be accepted in the system. Yes, this mandate includes Seventh-day Adventist school systems.

What is the problem with this paragraph? It conflates two issues and perpetuates a falsehood. It is true that mandated vaccines are not new. However:

- historic mandated vaccines are sterilizing vaccines that provide immunity to the disease—these COVID injections do not provide immunity, prevent spread, or reinfection, and were never designed to do so. This was known from the very beginning, but we were lied to and told repeatedly that if we got enough people "vaccinated" that we would stop the pandemic, we would get herd immunity. We all now know this is not true. Sadly, this article's answer perpetuates the misconception that these mandated injections are similar to historic vaccines, they are not.
- historic mandated vaccines have long well-documented history of development, trials (including animal trials), with proven long-term safety data and known risks and complications—these COVID injections have no long-term safety data, no animal trials, and were rolled out as experimental injections under an EUA
 - Evidence is now emerging that the studies done to get the EUA were done haphazardly, willfully and knowingly fraudulently and violated many of the required standards of the FDA. Read the [introduction to a lawsuit](#) just filed in Texas outlining these alleged abuses.
- Historic mandated vaccines protect from a disease that has high mortality (COVID has very low mortality)
 - Initial fears of COVID mortality were purposely overblown and fraudulent—3.4% mortality. The 3.4% mortality was the initial reported deaths of those who were sick enough to **require** hospitalization, not the total number of people infected in the community, only those sick enough to be hospitalized which

means that 96.6% of the sickest of the sick survived—from the very first data!
And this was known from the beginning!

- But the CDC, WHO, NIH and others took those numbers, and purposely applied them across the population and created an intentional fraudulent claims that up to 3-4% of the general population could die. **This was never true and it was a known lie at the time and it has been proven to be a lie**—but the lie did its intended work to frighten and terrorize the world. The mortality rate for the general population is less than 0.1 percent and for people under age 20 is statistically zero percent.
- the manufacturers of the historic vaccines have liability for injury those vaccines cause—this is not true for COVID. The current mandates force individuals to bear 100% of the risk with infinitesimally small likelihood of benefit. The absolute risk reduction of the Pfizer injection is 0.84%. The risk of harm is still unknown.

The church is supposed to stand up for truth—thus the church, especially a church organization with a world leading health care system, should have been on the frontlines speaking the truth that these things are not vaccines, they are injectable therapeutics that are, at the very best, supposed to reduced disease severity and decrease hospitalizations and deaths—and then ask how effective, who is at risk?

- The church would then embrace truth and communicate clearly that children have zero risk of hospitalization and death from COVID and therefore have no need of this therapeutic injection. To inject children provides ZERO benefit and only adds risk. And given that children have zero risk from this illness, they have no need for masks, school closures or the other mandates that have been perpetrated upon them. Understand this clearly, **our nation has just committed the largest, broadest, most pervasive systemic episode of child abuse in history**. Millions of children have been affirmatively harmed by these actions—delayed or impaired language skills, developmentally delayed, lowered IQs, nutritionally compromised, social skills undermined, increased anxiety and mental health problems, not to mention any physical harm from injecting them with a medicine that provides no benefit to them. I am not the only one who understands it this way <https://aflds.org/news/post/psychiatrist-bans-child-masking-and-all-forms-of-child-abuse-in-his-practice/>
 - What would you say if parents stabbed their children with a sewing needle on purpose? Would you consider that abuse—why? Because it offers no benefit, it only injures. Consider, inoculating a child against a disease that they have zero risk from—thus the substance can provide no benefit but adds unknown potential harm for the rest of their lives in addition to the immediate pain of being jabbed.
 - Further, children almost never spread COVID to adults, so there is no need to inject kids to protect adults. But even if that wasn't the case—what is the Biblical principle—sacrifice others to protect self or sacrifice self to protect others? So, if you know your children or grandchildren are at zero risk from this disease, but you have a small, less than a 1%, chance of dying from it, and there is an injection you could give your grandchildren that puts them at risk of cardiac death, or lifelong autoimmune problems or many other health problems (recent data from healthy US Military population that were forcibly injected with the vaccines found that miscarriages rose by 300% and female infertility increased by 470%), but doing so could reduce your risk of contracting this disease—what would you do? What is the Christian approach to mandating all children get this? It is not only a violation of God's law it is child abuse to force these on children.
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Pandemic issues such as these are creating challenges for religious liberty. Clearly, partisan fighting has now become one of the biggest threats to religious liberty in the last 30 years. Partisan bickering and discord have changed the landscape of religious liberty in America today. But, it has also changed the landscape in many of our churches. We have gone from a group of believers who felt you should not become engaged in secular politics within the church, to a people who gift wrap our political stance so it looks nice when we bring it to Sabbath School.

Throughout human history, from a biblical worldview, there have always been three groups of people—those securely on God’s side and who cannot be shaken out of their faith (Job, Daniel and his friends, etc.), those hardened on Satan’s side—those who cannot be reached with truth (antediluvians, Sodomites, Pharaoh etc.), and those in the middle who are not sealed to God and not yet hardened beyond reach. Before Christ returns this middle group goes away as every person settles into either the sealed of God or the hardened beyond redemption.

What we are seeing in the world—is NOT politics as usual where local, regional, or national politicians fight for political power. No, this is a global event which has impacted essentially every single human being on the planet. It is a worldwide spiritual event that is requiring people to make a choice in what methods they apply to their own character in how they treat others. People are deciding over this issue what methods they value and practice and thus are moving into one of the two camps that are polar opposites, that are cosmic enemies. And those two camps are:

- Truth, love, freedom versus lies, fear-driven selfishness, and coercion

It is God’s government and methods warring against Satan’s government and methods, and people are deciding which law they will apply to their own hearts and the shaking is happening, and the church, the nation, and the world is dividing. God permits these events to occur to wake people up and to get people to open their eyes, to see, and to choose.

Thus far in this COVID crisis the forces promoting the vaccine mandates are utilizing all of Satan’s powers and methods—lies, accusation, intimidation, coercion, compelling power, imposed laws, restrictions of liberty, economic pressures, censoring evidence and seeking to silence those voices that expose their lies.

Those who advocate for freedom are not using these methods, but they will soon be tempted to do so—to take control of the power of the state and harm those who were harming them. It is part of Satan’s end-time deception.

I have a new blog coming out this Thursday entitle Prepare The King of the North is Coming, in which I describe how Satan uses these two opposing forces to seduce and deceive the people of God.

God’s people are not in either of Satan’s political sides, God’s people are in the camp of truth, love, and liberty and will not use the powers of the state to coerce the consciences of other people.

But just some data to support our position and enlighten on where the church should draw the line on the COVID question.

- A common principle that the SDA health reformers have applied over and over again is that the cure cannot be worse than the disease, the intervention cannot cause more injury than the illness itself. Unfortunately, this principle has not been applied to the governmental mandates to the COVID problem.
- More people have been injured and more people have died from the various governmental mandates than have been saved by the various mandates
 - John Hopkins study found that the government shutdowns and restrictions on normal human behavior saved at best 0.2% of deaths from COVID—which works out, if you accept the grossly inflated number of reported COVID deaths of 800,000, to about 1600 people, if we say 1,000,000 died from COVID then 2000 people were prevented of dying from COVID by the mandates
 - But the cost of preventing 1,600-2,000 COVID deaths was by actively causing hundreds of thousands to die from other causes, and that number will be increasing as time unfolds
 - Cancer deaths increased because people didn't get their chemo
 - new cancer deaths because people didn't get their screening
 - increased heart attacks and strokes because people didn't receive routine medical care and didn't go to ER when symptomatic for fear of COVID
 - Increased teen suicides
 - increased overdose deaths
 - increased domestic violence and child abuse, causing increases in mental and physical health problems and early deaths—and this cascades down 3-4 generations
 - hundreds of thousands of people pushed into poverty and poverty increases early mortality for a variety of reasons and cascades down the generations
 - And all of these increased deaths, that markedly outweigh the lives saved from COVID, doesn't even factor in the deaths caused by the injections and the CDC treatment protocols that obstructed early treatment and promote algorithms that increase death

The church should have stood up for openness, truth, and freedom. The church should have filed in court to oppose all mandates including on healthcare workers.

What has happened is that there is a real virus, no more serious than typical seasonal flu (less serious for children), but through propaganda people have been convinced to believe it is a global life ending threat. Having accepted this lie, millions have actively taken actions like mask mandates, business shut downs, church shut downs, school closings, injected into themselves experimental substances and mandated others do so as well. It is very important to those who have taken these actions to believe they have helped, and it is more important for them to believe that their actions didn't harm, so they resist the truth and evidence exposing they have been duped, that this virus was never virulent, and the interventions killed multiple times more people than those interventions saved.

*The delicate balance of religious liberty I mentioned earlier is both intricate and necessary to American life. True religious liberty means that everyone may have a different understanding of religious beliefs, but, in a diverse society, **one belief does not take precedence over others**. In the religious liberty department at the Southern Union, we believe that Americans can hold opposing beliefs, and society should not fall because of the differences. Yet, another truth about religious liberty in America is that **churches actually have the right to discriminate against differing religious beliefs**. Both these examples give proof to how difficult it is to keep religious liberty in balance.*

The biblical principle of freedom of religion or belief is that “every person should be fully persuaded in their own mind” (Romans 14:5). We present the truth but leave people free to accept or reject it.

Yet, while it is true that people are free to believe whatever they want, it is not true that all beliefs are equally healthy. Many beliefs are positively harmful and violate God’s design laws for life.

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of reality, of design law, and only believing and living the truth results in healthiest outcomes. Thus healthy beliefs and practices **do take a reality-based precedence over unhealthy or false beliefs**. Those who believe that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and live a healthy lifestyle experience a better reality-based outcome than those who party, eat primarily junk food diet, smoke, don’t exercise, hold to wrongs, remain bitter, refuse to forgive etc.

Likewise, those who have refused these injections and have recovered from COVID are healthier than those who have taken the injections. The only possible exception to this are people over the age of 70 or those with severe health problems already. Why? Because they are the only ones at significant risk of dying from COVID to start with, and their lifespan is so short that they will not live long enough to experience the multiple long-term problems these injection cause, so they are the only ones in whom the very slight benefit may outweigh the risk.

One of the ways we keep that balance is to defend the rights of those who believe differently from us. It is why the union conference religious liberty departments across the North American Division have assisted church members who claimed personal religious belief in asking for a religious accommodation against the mandated vaccinations. The Adventist Church does not teach a need to refuse the vaccine, but the religious liberty department believes you have the right to hold a personal religious belief separate from an official Church stance. And, if your belief can be vetted as true, you should be accommodated in the workplace — unless doing so creates an undue hardship, just as in Sabbath work accommodation. Defending differing religious beliefs is one of the best ways to defend religious liberty for all. But, when society starts to believe that there should be only one common belief to defend, there will be trouble ahead.

What did you hear from this paragraph? Have you heard of the Adventist church actively supporting and providing letters to help their members with personal religious beliefs not to get the jab? We have received numerous letters from church members who were told that their pastors and conference officials refused to write letters of support for their refusal. I haven’t

heard of cases where the church has stepped in and supported their refusal. I hope that they have, does anyone know of any cases where the church has stepped up and written letters of support for individuals refusing the mandated injections?

What I hear is that this paragraph is rationale that is designed to make the members who read it feel good about the church—the church supports us Yeah! But at the same time the church doesn't actually step up and officially take a stance for liberty of conscience on this issue because “the church does not teach a need to refuse the vaccine.”

So it is saying while the church supports your moral right to have your own private belief, the church will not support you when you get fired from your job for your belief by writing you a letter to support your refusal, because the church doesn't support vaccine refusal.

But this position is based on multiple misconceptions—one that these injections are vaccines the protect. and two, that the church needs to teach vaccine refusal in order to support members who don't want it. No, the church needs merely to affirmatively teach **opposition to mandates of conscience, especially when it comes to the individual spirit temple, bodily autonomy and forced medical experimentation.**

So, the church could support vaccines while writing letters of support that state something like:

“The SDA church teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and each person in to present their body to God as a living sacrifice and honor God with their entire being. This means that each person must decide in their individual circumstance what medical treatments are best for them to take. So the SDA church positively affirms their liberty to refuse any medical treatment they are convinced in their conscience is not what God would have them do with their body.”

Another threat also looms. The landscape is changing in how — and from whom — we defend the Establishment Clause, the portion of the First Amendment that gives birth to an understanding that church and state will be separate. As Christians feel they are losing ground in what they have always considered “Christian America,” the driving force for many politicians going forward will be to cater to those who believe America should be a Christian nation. Many Adventists also feel this diminishing of Christianity within our nation, but are concerned as we hear statements such as Michael Flynn made in a November 2021 speech: “If we are going to have one nation under God, which we must, we have to have one religion.” This rhetoric has become common and so dangerous to religious freedom. Adventists know, in light of our understanding of prophecy, that the more times people hear an idea such as this, the more likely they are to believe it and demand it. This is sobering.

Yes, this is the rise of the king of the north power, religious imperialism in response to the king of the south, godless liberalism. And the author is absolutely correct to warn against joining these forces. God's people are not in either camp.

As Christians we are commissioned to spread the Gospel to the world. We are to go and make believers of others. But, Jesus' command to us in Matthew 28:19 is merely to teach others, not to compel others to believe ... and certainly to never leave this task to the government.

Well said, compelling power is found only under Satan's government—that includes all compelling power, not just to believe, but to act, thus it also means the forced injections, why didn't the church official stand up against such compelling state power?

The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department urges you to stay aware. Remove all issues, left or right, from their political context, and evaluate them in the light of Bible prophecy. As the landscape changes, we continue to stand fast to the true principals [sic] of religious liberty — separate from political creed. Call us when you need help or clarifications with religious accommodations in the workplace. And, continue to love your neighbors into the true religious freedom of Jesus' arms.

We agree the political left is King of the South and the political right is King of the North and God's people are in neither group.