

CHRISTIAN CONVICTION OF CONSCIENCE

As Evangelicals, apart from any specific denomination, we believe that each person must individually put their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, believing He died for their sins, rose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to both indwell them throughout this life, and as the promise of their future life after death, when they will be united with their Savior for eternity. The moment one demonstrates such faith is when that one has a Spiritual birth, is born again.

Upon the new birth, received as a free gift of God's grace, the believer now seeks to live a life pleasing to the Lord in all things, including but not limited to the use of their time, their money, their talents, and their bodies. Fundamental to this new life is the Bible as God's written word, which is authoritative in all matters of faith and practice and daily life. Within the Bible itself, the New Testament holds priority for the Christian in our day.

On matters where the Bible speaks clearly, Christians are united. The prohibitions against adultery, murder, idolatry, bearing false witness and other such examples are not seriously debated today as to the applicability to the Christian's daily life. However, in areas that the Bible does not specifically address, Christians nevertheless are given clear instruction as to how they should live. They are to be guided as they personally believe Christ would have them live. We believe that guidance, in addition to the Bible, comes from the Lord through the witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit and in prayer. Other Christians may help in that guidance, or serve as confirmation, but ultimately the Lord will direct each of His children in a personal, specific way. That believer then will know both the conviction when going astray, or the assurance from the Lord as they seek to live life pleasing to Him.

Throughout history this fact has showed itself in a variety of ways. One Christian is convicted the Lord wants them to stay poor and give away all wealth except for the bare minimum of needs. Another is convicted the Lord would have them leave their home country to serve Christ in a foreign land. The fact that the Lord does not convict all believers to take a vow of poverty or serve as missionaries does not negate the genuineness of the conviction in that one life, nor the seriousness for that believer to do as they believe the Lord would have them. For example, one is convicted that marriage is the Lord's will, while another chooses a life of singleness. Both choices are certainly Christian, Biblical, and to be respected and honored. The examples that could be given are endless.

Christian conviction also involves a myriad of illustrations in daily living. One Christian may feel no conviction against having an alcoholic beverage, as long as it is in moderation. Others are convicted that the Lord would have them completely abstain from alcohol in all its forms. Some eliminate television or computers from their lives, doing so for the Lord's sake. Once more, countless illustrations could be cited. The key Biblical principle involved is the issue of freedom, with freedom's limitation to be that behavior of which the Lord personally might convict them. The Lord then commands the rest of the believers to show love by respecting the convictions their Christian brothers and sisters may hold, and living in such a way that demonstrates that respect.

The history of this country has likewise always shown respect to Christian convictions of conscience. That respect comes forth in the various religious freedom laws and exemptions in all walks of life, including the workplace. The foundation of all such legislation and regulation is of course the First Amendment to the Constitution, which not only protects Christian conviction, but all religions. For example, some believe strongly

that the Lord would never have them fight for the military in wartime. The term conscientious objector has been coined to note that the conscience is the key for that person's refusal, not cowardice, laziness, or inconvenience. Jurors may be excused from a death penalty trial who have a Christian conviction against the use of the death penalty, even if the laws of that jurisdiction allow it. Likewise, the vast majority of states allow for a religious exemption of conscience to the otherwise mandatory school vaccination requirements for minor children. The fact that many Christians, even if the vast majority, might not be pacifists, might not oppose the death penalty or childhood vaccinations, does not make the minority's Christian conviction of conscience any less valid. The fact that, in some wars, every able-bodied fighter might be necessary on the battlefield in order to secure victory and freedom, does not negate the pacifist's rights in the eyes of the Constitution. Nor can minority rights be violated simply because they are outnumbered. Whether the ones in authority share, or even understand, those convictions is irrelevant in the eyes of the law.

At the workplace, religious freedom of conviction is protected and discrimination illegal. For example, no employer who allows their employees to read in the breakroom during lunch can tell the Christian worker they are not allowed to read the Bible while others are reading their books and magazines. If employees are allowed to decorate their personal workspace cubicle with family pictures, sports logos or other personal interests, then the Christian cannot be discriminated against having a Bible verse or symbol like a cross at their desk. Once more, the examples are plentiful.

The Bible also is clear that all Christians are to obey both the laws of the government, and the rules of their employers, while as much as possible to live peaceably with all people, including those who do not share their beliefs. However, if the laws violate their conscience to the Lord, then they are to resist such laws. The 1960s Civil Rights movement provides a recent example of such civil disobedience, as many of those fighting against what was the law of the land at the time, were doing so from the foundation of their Christian convictions.

In resisting, whether the arm of government or a discriminatory employer, the Christian recognizes there could be consequences they may suffer. However, the Bible also is clear that Christians have a right to exercise every legal freedom and protection that their citizenship entitles them too. The Apostle Paul used his Roman citizenship on multiple occasions to fight for his personal freedom when he was persecuted in ways illegal to such a Roman citizen. While Christians in many countries do not often have specific religious freedoms, America is, and always has been, different in that regard, as discussed above. Therefore, every Christian American has the right, and some would add, duty, before the Lord to fight for freedom, using all the legal remedies available to them, including bringing litigation against employers, petitions before the government, appeals to their Congressman and so forth.

In conclusion, the conviction of conscience goes beyond American laws and lawmakers. It is sacred. God always has, and always must be first. It is also unique, as special and individual as the human being. No Christian should easily surrender such convictions of conscience on any issue. And all Americans should respect these convictions, if not out of love, then as under the force of the religious freedom laws of this great country.

RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION REQUEST FOR COVID VACCINE

As explained in the attached document, Christian Conviction of Conscience, I have a personal conviction against receiving the Covid vaccine. I am a Christian that presently does not believe receiving the Covid vaccine is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ for my life and body.

Name

Date

Signature

As a duly ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I attest that _____ is personally known to me and has affirmed his/her personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Name

Date

Signature

Cell Phone:

Email: