

# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

## Liberty of Conscience and Religion

Liberty is central to the ministry of Christ, as Christ announced: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19 ESV).

The Council takes up the ministry of Christ by advocating for religious liberty for all who are oppressed, especially for workers forced to choose between their faith and earning a living.

We stand in an ancient Protestant tradition, recalling that in the very “protest” document lending the name “protestant” to the Reformation, the German Princes declared: “in matters of conscience the majority has no power.”

Thomas Jefferson captured the spirit of religious liberty at the founding of our nation when he wrote the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom that opens with a profound insight:

“Almighty God hath created the mind of man free...that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or civil incapacitations tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion...”



A prominent founder of the Seventh-day Adventist church put it this way:

“The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government. He desires only the service of love: and love cannot be commanded, it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him.  
Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 22.



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The Council upholds biblical faith but does not contend for the supremacy of Christian beliefs in public policy. The Council’s goal is to protect the rights of all people to live and work in peace according to their own values and beliefs.



## Separation of Church and State

The Adventist Church has published Liberty magazine for more than a century. One of the magazine’s principles declares: “The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate.”

Although the phrase is attributed to Thomas Jefferson, the principle derives from the Baptists who cherished “soul liberty” and rejected government restrictions on religious liberty as well as compulsory tax support of religion.

Critics claim that the U.S. Constitution does not include the phrase – true but misleading – separation is what the Constitution does, not what it says. Indeed, when Jefferson invoked the phrase, he correctly observed that both religion clauses of the First Amendment erect such a wall. The separation of church and state is fundamental to protecting religious liberty.

By contrast, the union of church and state is central to the final apostasy preceding the return of Christ. The pursuit of political power by the church is contrary to the spirit of Christ, who taught: “he who would be great among you must become a servant.” (Mark 10:43 ESV).



CHURCH STATE COUNCIL

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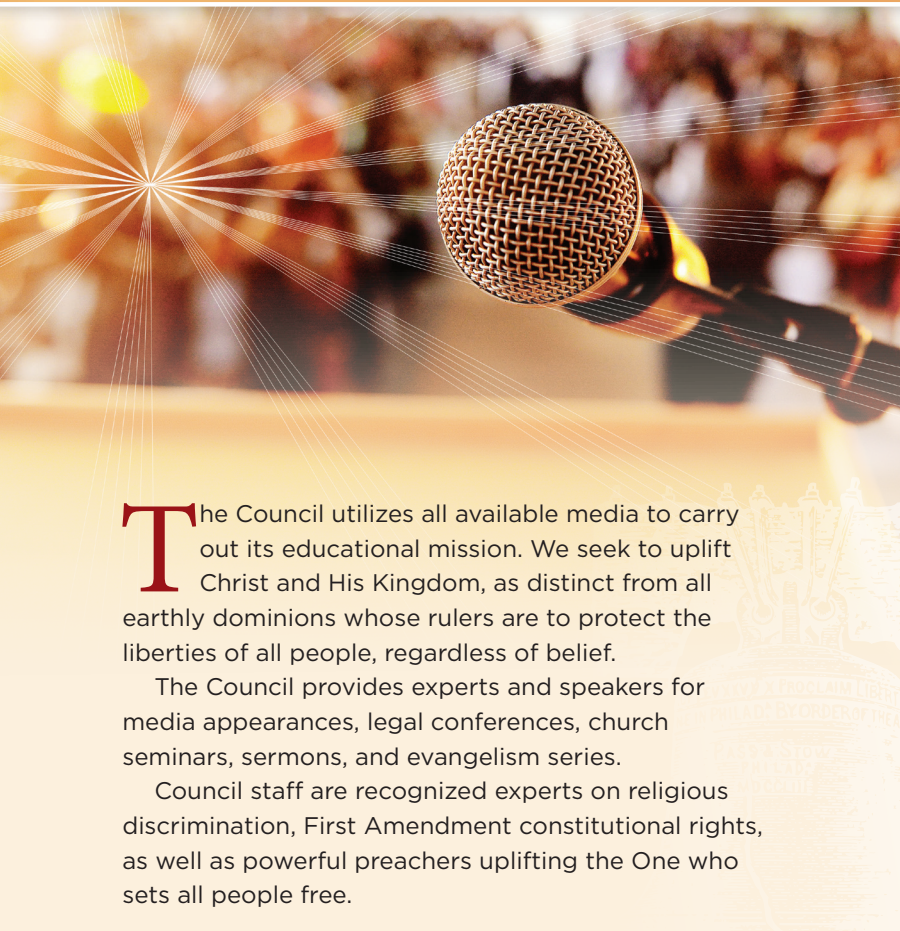


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# EDUCATION



The Council utilizes all available media to carry out its educational mission. We seek to uplift Christ and His Kingdom, as distinct from all earthly dominions whose rulers are to protect the liberties of all people, regardless of belief.

The Council provides experts and speakers for media appearances, legal conferences, church seminars, sermons, and evangelism series.

Council staff are recognized experts on religious discrimination, First Amendment constitutional rights, as well as powerful preachers uplifting the One who sets all people free.

## For More Information

To schedule a speaker for your church or community group, to receive legal consultation, or find out how you can help:



call (916) 446-2552, visit [www.churchstate.org](http://www.churchstate.org), or scan the QR code to contact us.

# LEGAL SERVICES

The Church State Council provides legal services to those whose religious freedom is violated, or who suffer some form of religious discrimination in the workplace. Consistent with the golden rule, we serve persons of all faiths. Assisting Seventh-day Adventist Church members with Sabbath workplace conflicts has always been at the core of the Council's mission.

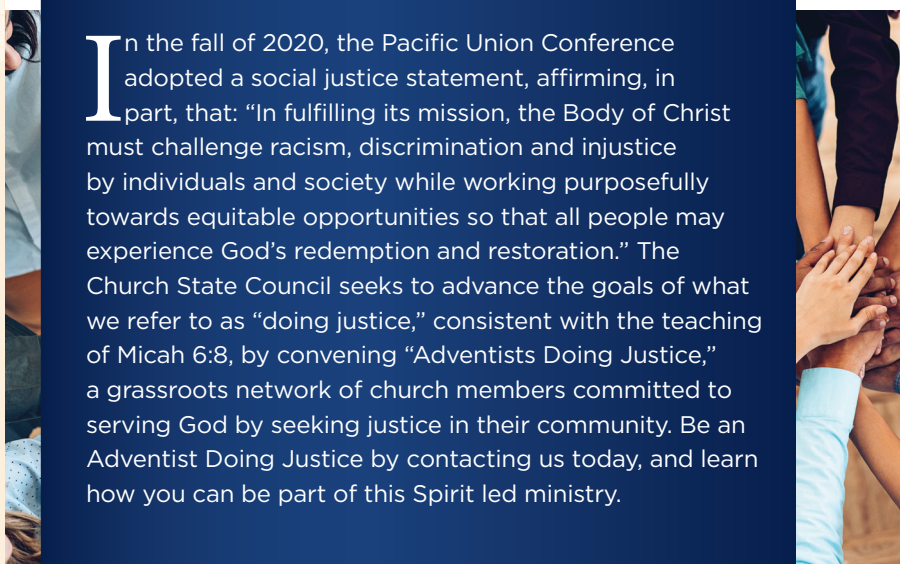
### Whom do we serve?

- A Jewish prosecutor who endured years of harassment in a county where Jews are few
- Muslim correctional officers whose accommodations to wear a beard were revoked
- A Mormon sales agent fired by an Evangelical business owner
- A Black Catholic prison nurse threatened with violence by coworkers on account of her race and religion
- Scores of Adventists denied accommodation not to work on Sabbath

Council staff are nationally recognized for their expertise in handling religious discrimination cases, and also work with a network of expert trial attorneys.

## ADVENTISTS DOING JUSTICE!

In the fall of 2020, the Pacific Union Conference adopted a social justice statement, affirming, in part, that: "In fulfilling its mission, the Body of Christ must challenge racism, discrimination and injustice by individuals and society while working purposefully towards equitable opportunities so that all people may experience God's redemption and restoration." The Church State Council seeks to advance the goals of what we refer to as "doing justice," consistent with the teaching of Micah 6:8, by convening "Adventists Doing Justice," a grassroots network of church members committed to serving God by seeking justice in their community. Be an Adventist Doing Justice by contacting us today, and learn how you can be part of this Spirit led ministry.



# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

The Council monitors legislation impacting religious freedom in its five state region, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah. It has been instrumental in securing broad protection for religious freedom and the rights of workers. It has helped to enact important bills, such as:

- State Religious Freedom Restoration Act ("RFRA") bills in Arizona and New Mexico.
- California Workplace Religious Freedom Act.
- California bill to provide unpaid bereavement leave when family members die.
- California bill protecting workers who request religious accommodation from retaliation.
- Other bills protecting workers against retaliation and harassment.

The Council has also opposed and helped defeat numerous bills that would restrict the freedoms of religious colleges and universities.

The Council is constantly working to expand its grassroots network "Adventists Doing Justice" to influence legislation. Voters are often surprised that legislators sit up and take notice when they hear from even a few constituents. We can help your voice to be heard.