

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of [Church Member] as [he/she] is requesting to be exempt from the COVID-19 vaccine mandated by [his/her] employer. After this mandate was announced, [Church Member] requested to meet with me and discuss how [he/she] should respond as a committed Christian and member of [Name of Church].

It is true that, thus far, Christians have come to varying conclusions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, with many deciding to take it while others have not. Although Christians haven't all come to the same conclusion about the vaccine, what they all share is a biblically informed belief that every single person is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Part of being created in God's image is to be endowed with a conscience, a God-given internal faculty that guides moral decision-making. A role of our conscience is to convict us when we do something wrong. Our conscience inflicts distress, in the form of remorse, whenever we violate what we believe is a morally appropriate course of action.

Significantly, Christians believe that to willfully act against one's conscience is sinful. Romans 14:23 teaches that "For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." This admonition seems especially pertinent when the action involves something as personal as injecting something into one's body which, according to Scripture, is a "temple of the Lord" (1 Cor. 6:19). In other words, Christians believe it is sinful to do something that goes against their conscience and therefore morally wrong to force anyone to do something against their conscience. Christians believe sincere conscience objections should be respected and that no one should be forced to do something they believe is morally impermissible.

[Church Member's] request for a religious conscience exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine is influenced by the church's historic teaching on abortion (i.e., the intentional killing of unborn children in the womb). Fetal cell lines were used in the development of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, and fetal cell lines were used in the testing of the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines. Passages from the Bible—including Exodus 21:22-25, Psalm 51:5-6; 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:4-5, and Luke 1:39-45—affirm the personhood of the unborn. [Church Member] believes in the sanctity of the unborn and that receiving the COVID-19 vaccine would be a violation of [his/her] conscience, which prohibits [him/her] from even a remote complicity with the sin of abortion.

I can affirm that [Church Member] is acting in accordance with [his/her] sincerely-held religious beliefs in requesting a religious exemption. As [Church Member's] pastor, I affirm that I have spoken with and prayed with [Church Member] about [his/her] request for an exemption. I can affirm that [he/she] is simply trying to follow [his/her] conscience. Therefore, during these difficult times, I prayerfully request that [Church Member's] employer honors and respects [his/her] request for a religious exemption, just as I hope it would honor the beliefs of its other employees of faith who conscientiously object to receiving the vaccine.

Sincerely,

[Pastor's Name]

[Church Name]