

The church is a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship. We are continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God.

We are called to serve and witness in our local churches and to the communities we live in. When we do this we are sharing Christ's love and the good news of salvation.

The Religious Liberty Secretary, like other persons in leadership, is a servant of God, called to support the activities of the church specifically by promoting and advocating religious freedom. God promises to supply you with resources for ministry. These include the Scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy writings, information from the Church Public Affairs & Religious Liberty Department (PARL), and spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Activities & Events

Organise a local Religious Liberty Association.
See the Church Manual for more details.

Developing a file of Religious Liberty resources.
Articles, newspaper clippings and other resources on religious freedom issues. Provide a bibliography of books available at your church or city library.

Promoting Religious Liberty rallies or congresses.
Arrange for speakers or other events to raise awareness of the importance of religious freedom.

Organising letter-writing or petition campaigns on important issues, to local public officials or the editor of the local newspaper. (Consult closely with the pastor and Communication Secretary.)

Resource Materials & Help

For assistance with specific questions, call the Conference President who is responsible for Religious Liberty in your Conference.

Other materials on Religious Freedom can be found at the following websites:

<http://parl.gc.adventist.org/>
<http://parl.gc.adventist.org/documents/index.html>
<http://parl.gc.adventist.org/documents/interventions/index.html>
http://www.adventist.org/mission_and_service/religious_liberty.html.en
http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/other_documents/other_doc8.html

For resources and information on training, log into the members site at
sppm.adventistconnect.org
 or contact your local conference personal ministries director.



THE MINISTRY OF THE Religious Liberty Secretary

You may be reading this because you have been asked to serve your local church as the religious liberty secretary or perhaps you serve on a church nominating committee and are wondering what a religious liberty secretary is expected to do. In either case, if you understand the church as the body of Christ and understand the call to ministry as experienced by each member, this will help you see the role the religious liberty secretary fills within a local church.

sppm.adventistconnect.org

Created with Free Will

God's government is based on freedom of choice. This freedom predates Eden, going all the way back to heaven where Lucifer and his sympathizers were given the freedom to choose whom they would serve. God chose to create humanity also with the power of choice.

Religious Freedom threatened

Under the influence of Satan, freedom of conscience is trampled under foot. He attempts to force men and women to disobey God often under threat of persecution and death. Prophecy foretold that persecution would take place amid the resurgence of a church-state union. (Revelation 13, & 17).

Religious liberty to be Protected

Free exercise of religion is like a fragile flower; it must be protected in order to be enjoyed. True religious freedom is best enjoyed when church and state are separated and individuals have freedom to worship and believe according to their own choice.

What, then, are we to do about threats to religious freedom? The Spirit of Prophecy for our day admonishes, "It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavour to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience." (5T, p. 452)

The Role



- **Promote "Liberty" magazine**
At least once each year, encourage church members to subscribe to Liberty for themselves and give generously to sponsor the magazine to community and state leaders. Send subscription orders to the ABC.
- **Communicate**
Report on world or local religious freedom issues to the members (either in the church bulletin or in person). Also become the eyes and ears for your Conference, bringing significant problems of religious liberty to the attention of leaders.
- **Organise a Religious Liberty Association**
Each church may become an active unit in the community to protect religious freedom and advocate for freedom of conscience by representation to leaders and by petitions.
- **Get Acquainted with Public Officials**
Know the state and national members of parliament from your area. Write to them about religious freedom and human rights issues.
- **Help Church Members**
Watch for religious liberty issues from among church members. Especially new members who may have problems with Sabbath employment or trade unions, or students with Sabbath exams. Place them in contact with the pastor.

- **Promote the Principles of Religious Freedom**
Teach church members the importance of church-state separation and respect for freedom of conscience. Encourage the pastor to preach on this topic from time to time.

Skills and Spiritual Gifts

God has gifted each of us in unique ways. The following gifts and skills are valuable when considering a member of the church for the role of Religious Liberty Secretary.

- **Teaching:** The special God-given ability to impart knowledge and information to others so that they also understand the principles, meaning and implications of religious freedom.
- **Knowledge:** For researching, gathering and analyzing information about religious liberty.
- **Wisdom & Discernment:** To say the right thing at the right time and discern between true and false reports. Some reports of freedom violations are sensational, exaggerated or false.
- **Faith:** When approaching government or local public leaders about religious liberty issues, and when raising funds for Liberty magazine sponsorships.