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2020 | Volume 4

The ad, which also misrepresented Adventists, predicted Muslims would launch a nuclear bomb on Nashville in July.



Newspaper Publishes Ad Distorting Adventism, Adventist Church Responds

The Southern Union Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) updates Waymarks readers on a recent crisis.

A paid advertisement in Nashville's Tennessean newspaper in June 2020 alerted readers to a supposed threat (fulfillment of prophecy) that Ellen White saw in vision while in Nashville. Placed by a group called The Future for America, the ad predicted that Muslims would launch a nuclear bomb on Nashville on July 18.

The group that paid for the ad is not a Seventh-day Adventist group, though mention was made of the Church. Their website shows videos of Sabbath School and very familiar Daniel and Revelation artwork posters, but the leader was disfellowshipped from the Adventist Church.

A social media outcry against the group who paid for the ad led to the Tennessean issuing an apology and retracting the ad. They will be donating

the funds acquired from the ad to the American Muslim Advisory Council: <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2020/06/21/tennessean-investigating-how-indefensible-ad-ran-print/3233003001/>.

The North American Division responded swiftly with the following statement.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is deeply disturbed by the two hurtful ads recently published in the Nashville Tennessean. The claims made against the Muslim community have caused pain and strife. We soundly reject these hateful and dishonest words. Further, we need to be clear: there is no connection between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and this group and their teachings, which serve to hurt and cause disharmony.

"One of the Adventist Church's Fundamental Beliefs states, 'In Christ we are a new creation;

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Christian Nationalists at Odds With Other Christians

During the riots and racial justice protests in early June 2020 which followed the death of George Floyd, President Donald Trump walked to St. John's Episcopal church near the White House while carrying a Bible. He held it up to emphasize his message.

The action was applauded by Christian nationalists, but decried by many other U.S. faith leaders who felt it was being used merely as a prop. Though both Christian nationalists have an additional government agenda, and it helps to understand the group's motivations.

Christian nationalism is Christianity-affiliated religious nationalism. They focus on passing laws which reflect their view of Christianity and morality, and the role they believe Christianity should play in politics and social life. They would

prefer a Christian state politically, as well as a blend of religious thought in school and state, and, according to a summary on Wikipedia, they "support Sunday blue laws in keeping with traditional first-day Sabbatarian principles."

Believers who do not consider themselves Christian nationalists, and particularly groups such as Seventh-day Adventists who are very aware of prophecy regarding church and state, are alarmed at the nationalists desire to merge the two.

Despite the good intentions of nationalists, they give new urgency to the words of James Madison in 1803: "The purpose of separation of church and state is to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries."

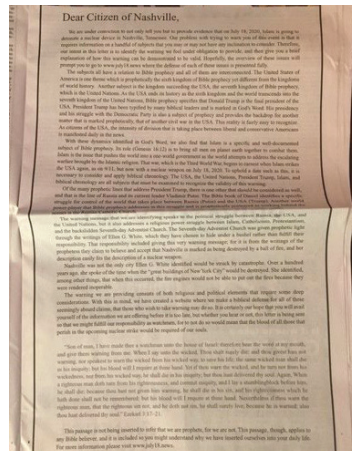
"...they 'support Sunday blue laws in keeping with traditional first-day Sabbatarian principles.'"

- Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee signed a broad anti-abortion law in July 2020 which protects the unborn as soon as a heartbeat is detectable. Described as a "heartbeat bill," the legislation also places new restrictions on the period of 8 to 24 weeks of pregnancy, and bans elective abortions based on sex, race, or Down syndrome. Pro-choice groups filed a lawsuit in June to block the legislation, but were unsuccessful. Activists have declared it unconstitutional, though, and promised to fight in court. Whether it will stand up to legal challenge is uncertain, though some pro-lifers are hoping a conservative majority U.S. Supreme Court could overturn Roe v. Wade.

- The Department of Justice filed suit in June, accusing Stafford County, Virginia, of violating the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) by creating overly restrictive zoning regulations which prohibited an Islamic organization from developing a religious cemetery on land it had purchased for that purpose. When purchased, the land complied with all of the state and local requirements for use as a cemetery, but the county amended its ordinance after hearing of the Islamic group's cemetery plans.

Newspaper Publishes Ad... (Cont. from cover)

distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation; (Fundamental Belief 14, Unity in the Body of Christ.)"



Southern Union PARL Director Amireh AL-Haddad encourages, "It is important to remember that we still believe in the Spirit of Prophecy. We know that we live in end times. We are faced with the challenges an increasingly secular world presents when we speak of prophecy. But, what good is prophecy if we fail to first bring people to Christ through love?"

Supreme Court Cases... (Cont. from page 4)

first Supreme Court appointee, Neil Gorsuch, who said, "Those who adopted the Civil Rights Act might not have anticipated their work would lead to this particular result, but the limits of the drafters' imagination supply no reason to ignore the law's demands." President Trump called the decision "very powerful" and said "we live with" it.

• **Private School Funding**

In late June SCOTUS ruled, in *Espinoza vs. Montana*, that religious schools in Montana can receive funding, finding that the state's exclusion of those schools from the state scholarship program funded by tax credits violates the U.S. Constitution. The state law let students apply for state scholarships, but

they could not use them at religious schools. The court struck down that exclusion in a 5-4 vote.

Montana had originally decided it couldn't treat religious schools differently from other private schools, and so removed the state aid completely. Parents went to the Supreme Court claiming violations of rights. Chief Justice Roberts stated that the state need not subsidize private education, but once it does, it cannot disqualify religious private schools simply because they are religious.

• **Ministerial Exceptions**

In early July the Supreme Court ruled 7-2 against two teachers at religious schools. The teachers, represented in *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Mor-*

Religious schools have authority to hire and fire their educators.

rissey-Berru and *St. James School v. Biel* cases, were suing two Catholic schools for employment discrimination. The court determined that constitutional language which protects religious freedom is part of the ministerial exception rule which

also protects religious schools, giving authority to hire and fire their educators.

"The religious education and formation of students is the very reason for the existence of most private religious schools, and therefore the selection and supervision of the teachers upon whom the schools rely to do this work lie at the core of their mission," wrote Justice Samuel Alito.

• **Birth Control Coverage**

Also in July, SCOTUS ruled that employers with religious or moral objections do not have to help provide insurance coverage for contraceptives under the Affordable Care Act. It ended the long battle by the Little Sisters of the Poor and other religious groups that did not want to provide coverage.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Church in North Korea Exists Underground

Fox News, with the aid of persecution watchdog groups, recently studied the situation of the Christian church in North Korea under the communist dictatorship of the Kim Jong Un regime, and found that, though they face threats of the death penalty, Christian believers remain, though they are hidden.

Likewise, the Seventh-day Adventist Church reports a quiet membership of 866 in 26 loosely assembled churches via the North Korean Mission, which was organized in 1934. Numer-

ous Adventist South Korean pastors have volunteered to minister in North Korea if the doors open. However, genuine religious freedom still does not exist. Those of the Christian faith are persecuted the most, and North Korea is ranked as the worst country in the world in terms of Christian persecution by international Catholic aid organization Aid to the Church in Need.

Various ministries have smuggled Bibles into the country for years, from bringing them by boat or car or on foot, to creatively at-

taching tiny bits of Scripture to balloons released over the border.

"The Kim regime in North Korea is more than a political machine or even an authoritarian military/police force. It is also, quite literally, a religion, which they call 'Juche,' or self-reliance," Todd Nettleton, spokesman for The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), a Christian persecution watchdog, explained to Fox News. "This religious aspect undergirds the entire regime and teaches that the Kim family members aren't just political leaders but

in fact divine beings."

The punishment for being a Christian or getting caught with a Bible can range from imprisonment in a concentration camp to immediate death. Because of the threat of Christianity to the regime, "the Christians' parents and children also would be put in camps, taking three generations to make sure Christianity doesn't spread," reports Nettleton.

Currently, Adventist World Radio broadcasts in Korean from China, in hope of sharing Christ and promoting religious freedom.

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Supreme Court Rules on Cases Related to Religious Freedom

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled on several cases during June and July 2020, impacting various religious liberty topics.

• *Religious Gatherings in California*

In early June, a rare late-night decision was made against a California church on *South Bay United Pentecostal Church v. Newsom*. The church had challenged the state's pandemic-related rules on religious services, and a 5-4 vote rejected their challenge.

California Governor Gavin

Newsom's order placed restrictions on the number of people meeting at one time, and many felt that the orders were less restrictive on secular organizations and businesses than on religious gatherings.

Dissenting from the majority opinion, Justice Brett Kavanaugh noted that, "The church and its congregants simply want to be treated equally to comparable secular businesses...The state cannot assume the worst when people go to worship but assume the best when people go to work or go

about the rest of their daily lives in permitted social settings."

• *LGBTQ Rights*

Mid-June brought a ruling that protects LGBTQ workers from job discrimination. In a vote of 6-3, the court determined that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which makes it illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of sex, also applies to sexual orientation and transgender status.

The decision was written by President Donald Trump's

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"The [United Pentecostal] church had challenged the state's pandemic-related rules..."