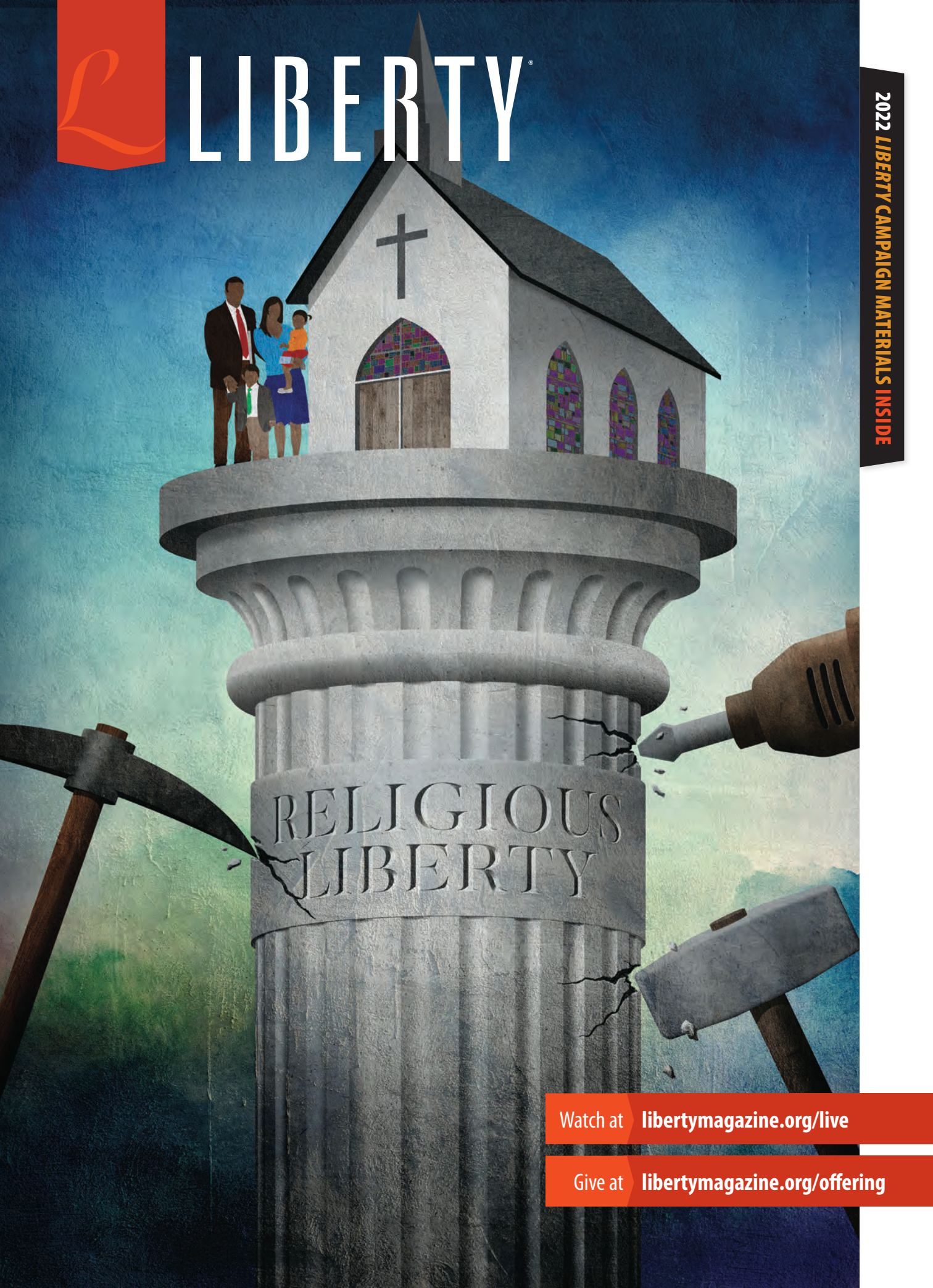




# LIBERTY<sup>®</sup>

2022 LIBERTY CAMPAIGN MATERIALS INSIDE



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E D I T O R I A L

## A CREEPING NORMALITY

I remember, as a 4- or 5-year-old, sitting at the front of church one Sabbath morning listening with rapt horror to a children’s story about “boiling frog syndrome.” In the late 1800s scientists in Germany and the United States undertook some rather unpleasant experiments involving frogs and hot water. They theorized that a frog exposed to a gradual increase in temperature will adapt, remaining happily in the pan of heating water until it is literally boiled alive. In the decades that followed, this idea of “boiling frog syndrome” entered popular consciousness, becoming a favorite metaphor—and children’s morality tale—to explain the way we humans can acclimatize ourselves over time to an ethically or morally intolerable situation.

Alas, “boiling frog syndrome” has since been thoroughly debunked. The scientific reality is that even if a pan of water is heated *very* slowly indeed, the frog will sense its impending doom and—very sensibly—try to escape.

But perhaps frogs are sometimes more sensible than humans.

“Creeping normality” is a similar idea that has been used by some sociologists to explain how massive, undesirable shifts in society can occur over time—shifts that seem utterly normal and acceptable if they happen slowly enough. As author Jared Diamond puts it: “If the economy, schools, traffic congestion, or anything else is deteriorating only slowly, it’s difficult to recognize that each successive year is on the average slightly worse than the year before, so one’s baseline standard for what

constitutes ‘normalcy’ shifts gradually and imperceptibly.”<sup>1</sup>

The result? We wake up one day and realize that “normal” isn’t what it used to be.

There is, undoubtedly, a “creeping normality” at work in this country—and internationally—that’s reshaping how religious liberty is understood, practiced, and protected. There’s a new way of thinking and speaking about what once was an indisputable and time-honored first freedom. As religious liberty has become entangled in today’s culture wars, a once unifying value has become fuel for ideological polarization. It’s frankly astounding, but distressingly common, to see headlines decrying religious freedom as “a cover for discrimination” or “legal protection for bigotry.” And the upshot is more than just a shift in language—this conflict is increasingly playing out in legislatures and courts nationwide.

And so the baseline of normality when it comes to religious freedom continues to shift.

How should we respond? James Madison, fourth U.S. president and primary drafter of the Constitution, saw it as the duty of every citizen to act quickly to resist threats to civil liberties. In 1785, in the midst of a fiery political debate over state tax support for Christian teachers, he urged action against efforts to compromise church-state separation, saying, “It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties.”

This year our *Liberty* campaign theme carries a message I believe has

never been more important: “A Time for Vigilance.”

As followers of Christ and people of the Word, we carry a special responsibility when religious and civil liberties are threatened. It’s a unique commission that Ellen White spelled out for us in words we know well: “The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with knowledge of His Word.”<sup>2</sup>

This is the mission of *Liberty*. With each issue that rolls off the presses, we hold high the banner of truth and religious liberty among our nations’ lawmakers and thought leaders. With each article that reaches the desk of a local, state, or national decision-maker, we resist the creeping normality that, if left unchecked, will steadily reshape our first freedom. With each visit to a legislator’s office, or legal case argued, our religious liberty leaders are working to revive a culture of religious liberty that’s firmly grounded on the God-given dignity and freedom of each of His created beings.

Each year your faithful and creative efforts keep this vital mission of *Liberty* before church members. As you prepare for this year’s campaign, please know that the financial support of church members continues to play an absolutely central role in the work of *Liberty*. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to this vital mission. May God help each one of us to remain



Experiencing religious discrimination? Call the Religious Liberty Helpline: 877-721-3700

both vigilant and faithful until the wonderful day of His appearing.

**PLAN YOUR LIBERTY CAMPAIGN**

This special promotion kit contains materials designed to help you run a successful *Liberty* campaign. Please review the TIPS for the campaign on page 4. Use the pullout poster in the center of the issue and put it on the church bulletin board. You can download and print additional copies of the poster from our website, [libertymagazine.org/campaign](http://libertymagazine.org/campaign). This year, as COVID continues to make in-person worship difficult in some places, we're also providing a full Sabbath program. It includes special music, a children's story, and this year's religious liberty sermon, which is by North American Division's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director, Orlan Johnson. The sermon is printed on page 6 of this campaign kit, and the video of the Sabbath program is available at [libertymagazine.org/live](http://libertymagazine.org/live). Thank you again for all you do to keep *Liberty* alive and well!

<sup>1</sup> Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), p. 425.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1925), p. 161.



**Bettina Krause, Editor**  
*Liberty* magazine

**2022 LIBERTY CAMPAIGN MATERIALS**

CAMPAIGN INSTRUCTIONS | PAGE 4



LETTERS TO PASTOR, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DIRECTOR, AND TREASURER | PAGE 6



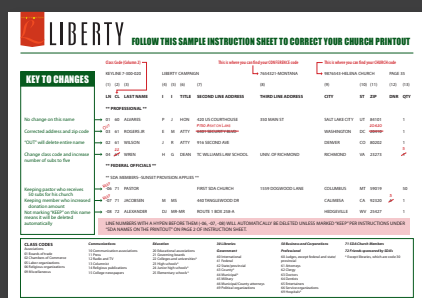
POSTER | PAGE 8



SERMON | PAGE 10



CHURCH PRINTOUT INSTRUCTIONS | PAGE 15



FREEDOM BOND BULLETIN INSERT | BACK COVER



# Tips

## for conducting the 2022 Religious Liberty Campaign

### 1 Plan & Emphasize the Religious Liberty Offering

1. Display poster in church foyer during January and February.
2. Present sermon by Orlan Johnson, on January 8.
3. Insert brochures in church bulletins on January 8.
4. Continue various religious liberty promotional events throughout the campaign season:
  - » Hold Sabbath afternoon panel discussion on religious liberty
  - » Feature a church member who has had a Sabbath work problem
  - » Interview a local attorney who specializes in religious liberty discrimination issues

### 2 Special Dates and Deadlines

#### JANUARY 8

Religious Liberty Sabbath

#### MARCH 15

Deadline for religious liberty leader to mail Corrected Printout and New Subscription Order Forms to your Union Public Affairs & Religious Liberty Office. (Please note: In Mid-America and Atlantic Unions, send forms to your conference PARL Department.) A self-addressed return envelope is included as part of your Religious Liberty campaign promotional kit.

#### MARCH 31

Deadline for church members to turn in religious liberty offering at church: please emphasize to your church members that their *Liberty* subscriptions will begin with the May/June issue.

### 3 Liberty Magazine website for Support Materials

Visit our website at [www.libertymagazine.org/campaign](http://www.libertymagazine.org/campaign) for online access to the 2022 Religious Liberty Campaign materials. These materials feature a very informative video giving up-to-date perspectives on the separation of church and state. And don't forget to use the sermon text from Orlan Johnson.

### 4 Filling Out the New Subscription Order Form

1. Use the New Subscription Order Form for church members who are not on the printout, but who have turned in a Freedom Bond and want *Liberty*. Also use the New Subscription Order Form for priority names you want to add to the printout. Be sure to always use full names and complete mailing addresses.
2. To add a priority name in an area where there is frequent turnover, use the position instead of a name (e.g., mayor, chief of police, pastor).
3. Please indicate your church and local conference codes which are listed at the top of your printout, as well as the name and phone number of the person filling out the order.
4. Donor codes should be completed as follows:

Amount Given	Donor Code
\$1,000 and over	1
\$500 to \$999	2
\$100 to \$499	3
\$50 to \$99	4

5. For new donors (\$50 or more) who do not want *Liberty* magazine: Add their names to the new subscription sheet and place a "0" in the quantity column. This indicates they are donors, but should not receive *Liberty* magazine.

# 5 Correcting and Maintaining Your Church's Current Liberty Subscription Printout

1. On your *Liberty* subscription printout are the names of people your church sent *Liberty* to last year. To be sure these names are correct, please review the list carefully and make all necessary changes. Draw a line through the incorrect portion only. Print all corrections IN RED in the space above the old information. To delete an entire subscription entry, write "OUT" to the left of the line number. If you do not have a printout, call your Union Religious Liberty director to request a copy. (In Mid-America and Atlantic Unions, please contact your local conference office.)
2. Your church priority list should include local government officials, attorneys, judges, clergy, and community leaders who you would like to see receive *Liberty* as a gift. The North American Division Priority List features federal and state government officials, so there is no need to add these names to your church's list.
3. Based on the offering total, determine the number of priority names your church can afford to sponsor. Your priority list should include any of the individuals listed below. (Numbers correspond to class codes.)

**43-44 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:** Include only municipal and county officials. Call city hall or local county office for a directory, or check the blue pages in your telephone directory.

**46 MUNICIPAL, COUNTY ATTORNEYS:** Check blue pages of your telephone directory or city directories.

**60 JUDGES:** Only local municipal judges should be on your list. All state/provincial and federal judges are on the NAD Priority List.

**30 LIBRARIES:** Law libraries, school, city, and county libraries should be on your list.

**10-15 COMMUNICATIONS:** Check city directories or blue pages. Include only local media personalities—newspaper, radio, and TV organizations and individuals.

**61 ATTORNEYS:** Check city directories or blue pages or the Martindale-Hubbell legal directory may be found at a law or public library. Specialties to include: labor, employment and land use.

**62 CLERGY:** Check city directories or blue pages, community directories, yearbooks published by various denominations (available in your local library), or church ads in newspapers.

**05 LABOR ORGANIZATIONS:** Check city directories or blue pages under "labor organizations" or "trade unions." Send to their president and/or legal counsel.

**20-25 EDUCATION:** Check city directories or blue pages or the state/provincial department of education directories found in the public library. Include local university administration, college, high school, and elementary

school principals (public and parochial); school board members, law professors, higher education political and social science teachers, and religion teachers.

**63-69 PROFESSIONAL GROUPS:** Check the yellow pages, various county and city directories published by specific professional organizations, and chambers of commerce.

**01 RETAIL ORGANIZATIONS and 02 CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE:** Check the yellow pages.

**45 MILITARY:** If military bases are located in your area, obtain a directory from them or consult the yellow pages. Include chaplains, base commanders, legal departments, intelligence officers, and libraries.

## COMPLETE LIST OF CLASS CODES

### ASSOCIATIONS

- 01 Boards of trade
- 02 Chambers of Commerce
- 05 Labor organizations
- 06 Religious organizations
- 09 Miscellaneous

### COMMUNICATIONS

- 10 Communications associations

- 11 Press

- 12 Radio and TV
- 13 Columnists
- 14 Religious publications
- 15 College newspapers

### EDUCATION

- 20 Educational associations
- 21 Governing boards
- 22 Colleges and universities

- 23 High schools
- 24 Junior high schools
- 25 Elementary schools
- 30 Libraries

### GOVERNMENT

- 40 International
- 41 Federal
- 42 State/provincial
- 43 County

- 44 Municipal
- 45 Military
- 46 Municipal/County attorneys
- 49 Political organizations
- 50 Businesses and Corporations

### PROFESSIONAL

- 30 Libraries

- 60 Judges, except federal and state/provincial
- 61 Attorneys
- 62 Clergy
- 63 Doctors
- 64 Dentists
- 65 Entertainers
- 66 Service organizations
- 69 Hospitals
- 71 SDA Church Members
- 72 Friends Sponsored by SDAs

# 6 A Note on SDA names on the Church Printout

The names of church members and friends of church members who received *Liberty* for the past year are listed separately, usually at the end of the printout, under class codes 71 and 72. These are automatically deleted unless you clearly mark "KEEP" next to the name and the printout is returned to your union or conference religious liberty director to be processed.

If any of the names on the Freedom Bonds that were turned in to you or your church appear on your printout, write "KEEP" to the left of the line number on the printout, and write the donor code number for the amount given in the column marked "Donor Code".

# 7 Liberty Subscription Facts:

- » The 2022/2023 subscription starts with the May/June issue of *Liberty*.
- » Campaign Subscription Rate: \$6.00 (U.S. and Canada) (Regular subscription rate: \$7.95)
- » Subscriptions to addresses outside the United States, Canada, and Bermuda cost \$8.00 (Cdn \$10.00). U.S. territories such as Guam, Micronesia, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico are not foreign subscriptions.



Presidential

Dear Pastor and Local Church Religious Liberty Leader:

**The annual North American Division Religious Liberty Offering is scheduled for January 8, 2022.** Every year we have an opportunity to highlight God's sacred gift of freedom of conscience, and make an appeal to church members to financially support the Public Affairs & Religious Liberty (PARL) ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Here are a few of the many ways PARL advocates for your religious freedom:

- Each year one million copies of Liberty magazine are put into the hands of thought leaders in the government and community across the Division.
- The Seventh-day Adventist Church defends you in religious workplace accommodation challenges. Many legal precedents have been set over the years on behalf of your right to uphold your freedom of conscience and keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy.
- We maintain a close communication with legislators at the state and federal levels to protect against legislation that might inhibit your free exercise of religion.
- The weekly "Liberty Insider" television program on 3ABN television network reaches to every corner of the United States and to a global audience.
- The North American Religious Liberty Association, our Church's member-driven advocacy organization, mobilizes church members for freedom action.

As citizens of this world and ambassadors for Christ, it is our responsibility to emphasize the meaning of religious freedom. It is our responsibility to keep before the thought leaders of our governments the importance of religious accommodation and freedom of expression.

Included in this packet are materials that will help you promote religious liberty in your church. Please be sure to visit the Campaign Resources section of our website [www.libertymagazine.org/campaign](http://www.libertymagazine.org/campaign) to view or download our 2022 Religious Liberty Campaign promotional video.

You will need to turn in your new and renewed subscriptions to your union Religious Liberty director (in Atlantic or Mid-America union, please send them to your local conference Religious Liberty director). Please check with your church treasurer for the list of individuals who are requesting a subscription to *Liberty* magazine. The deadline for turning in subscriptions to your union or local conference is March 15. \$6 must be remitted in the offering for every subscription submitted. If you do not have enough money to cover your subscriptions you must delete the appropriate number of subscriptions. Your church treasurer should remit the offering through the local conference, however federal tax code requires that the local church retain the Freedom Bond envelope. **The deadline for your offerings to be turned in is March 31.**

Offering deadlines and subscription deadlines need to be followed closely. Your union Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department carefully processes your subscriptions within the shortest amount of time possible. The turn-around time from March 15 (the deadline for your names to be sent in) to May (the beginning of the subscription mailings) is very short. In this amount of time close to 180,000 names are processed for *Liberty* magazine subscriptions!

Thank you for your commitment as you support and promote religious freedom!

9705 Patuxent Woods Dr.  
Columbia, MD  
21046 - 1565, USA  
[www.nadadventist.org](http://www.nadadventist.org)

Elder G. Alexander Bryant  
President



**Treasury**

Dear Church Treasurer,

**The North American Division Religious Liberty Offering Sabbath is January 8, 2022.** However, you will receive significant religious liberty offerings in February and March, and donations may be made throughout the calendar year. As treasurer of your church, you are greatly needed by your pastor and religious liberty leader to make the offering a success.

On Religious Liberty Sabbath when the offering is taken, all church members will be given a brochure with a tear-off envelope called a Freedom Bond. Church members should put their offering in the tear-off Bond and place it in the offering plate. After you receive these bonds, please do the following:

1. Make sure the 'Amount Enclosed' is correct and the money is enclosed.
2. Receipt the offering and give the Freedom Bond back to the religious liberty leader each week. **(Step 2 must be done in order for each church member who requests it to receive *Liberty* magazine. If you do not give this information back to the religious liberty leader, your church members will not receive *Liberty* magazine.)**
3. Send the offering to your local conference treasurer with your regular monthly remittance. You must retain the Freedom Bond at the local church level according to tax regulations. Your church *will not be billed* for subscriptions. **The deadline for your offerings to be turned in is March 31.**

Thank you for your part in making the 2022 Religious Liberty Offering the most successful ever. We pray that the message of religious freedom and the mission of *Liberty* magazine may reach its full potential!

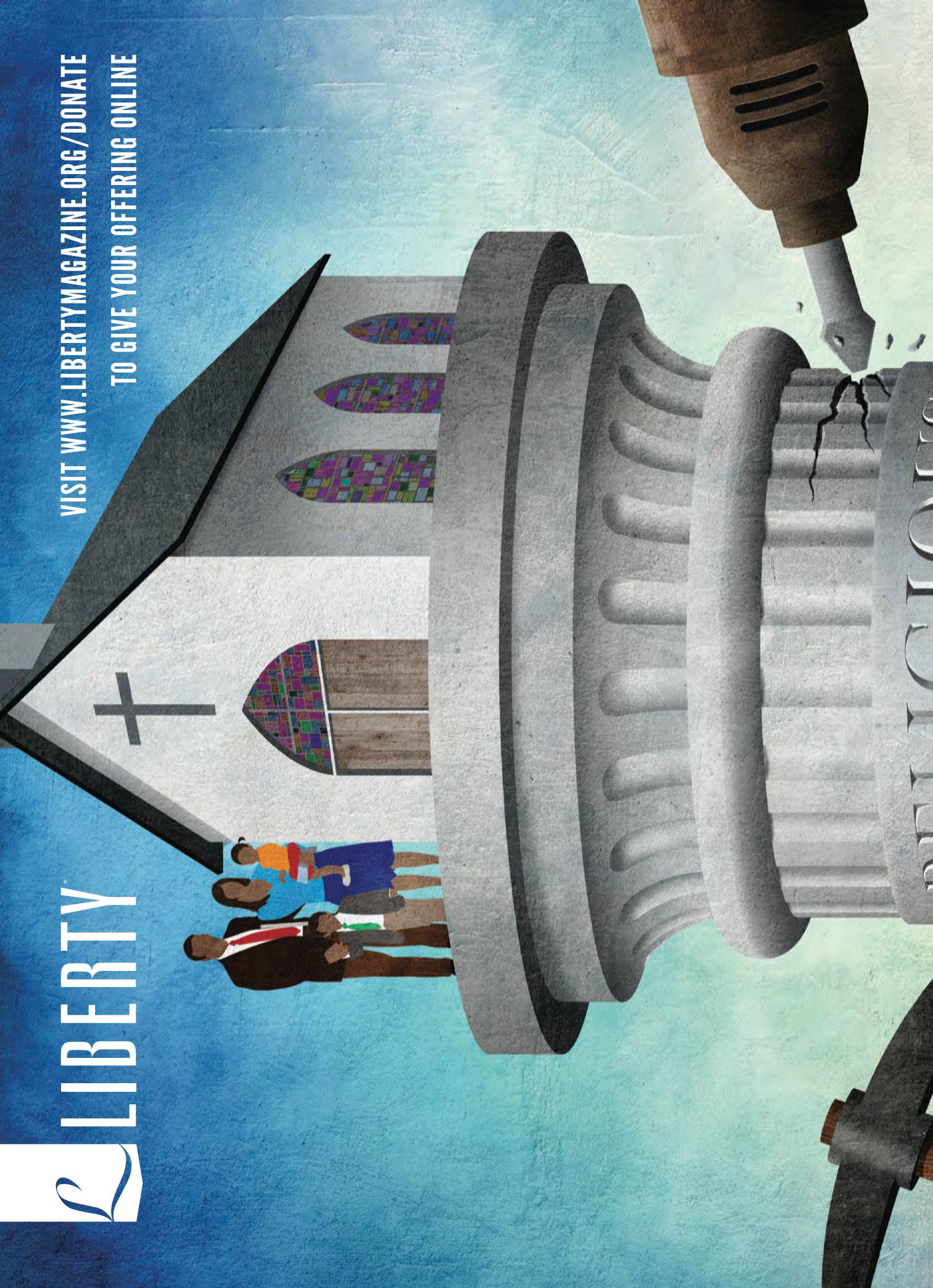
If you have any additional questions, please contact your union or local conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department.

Sincerely,

Randy Robinson  
Treasurer

 LIBERTY

VISIT [WWW.LIBERTYMAGAZINE.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.LIBERTYMAGAZINE.ORG/DONATE)  
TO GIVE YOUR OFFERING ONLINE







A TIME FOR

# AVGANCE

JANUARY 8, 2022

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING

WATCH OUR VIRTUAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY SABBATH SERVICE AT [LIBERTYMAGAZINE.ORG/LIVE](https://libertymagazine.org/live)

## The Miseducation of God's People

Turn with me in your Bibles to a familiar story found in the second book of Kings, chapter 20, and verses 1-6. The Bible says:

“In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.”’

“Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, ‘Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

“And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David’ ” ’ ” (2 Kings 20:1-6, NKJV).\*

Through almost six decades of life I’ve come to realize that we serve a God who “sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45, NKJV). It doesn’t matter whether you are rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, Protestant or Catholic, Republican or Democrat—we all live in one of the three continuums of life. We either are in a storm, just got out of a storm, or getting ready to go back into a storm again. And such was the story of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was someone who found himself in and out of storms on a regular basis, but he never lost sight of the fact that God, and God alone, was in control of his life.

The story of Hezekiah is a powerful one. It’s a story of two separate prayers, interposed between two major problems. And to understand where Hezekiah was in chapter 20 of 2 Kings, we also need to understand what’s going on in chapter 18. Here we see that Hezekiah was a remarkable king—in fact, after King David, he was

probably the most righteous and faithful king that had ever reigned in Judah. He engaged in remarkable service for the Lord. He impacted his community as king in a tremendous way. In other words, he was probably a great representative of public affairs and religious liberty. Everyone who saw Hezekiah knew who his God was.

There were many turning points in Hezekiah’s life where he could have gone astray, but God always put him right back where he needed to be. Hezekiah was continually reminded that victory comes only by staying connected with God, by praying without ceasing. And through this connection Hezekiah guarded himself and Judah against the “miseducation of God’s people.”

In the story we’re looking at today, Hezekiah was facing immense pressure from the neighboring nation of Assyria. The Assyrian king, Sennacherib, had turned his military sights toward the strategically important kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah’s first response was to place his faith in God. He understood there would always be dangers that appeared overwhelming when seen from a purely human standpoint. But living in the will of God is about more than resting in His sovereignty. It’s also about wrestling with your own uncertainties, and accepting that God is God, all by Himself.

This is the first point I want to share with you today: You will not be miseducated if you understand who God is and recognize that He sees each one of us through the lens of eternity. He doesn’t see us as we are now. He doesn’t even see us as He hopes we will one day be. God sees us as we will be in the final analysis with Him.

When we’re standing at the beginning of our own life’s story, there’s one thing we can know for certain about the future—there will be times we’ll come up short with God. But we can be equally sure of something else—the grace of God will always be there and, even when we come up short, His eternal gaze will never leave us.

Now, Hezekiah was only 25 years old when he became king. I have a son of my own who’s 25 years old and I love him very much, but I certainly can’t imagine him as a king, responsible for the well-being of a nation! But

Hezekiah had even bigger problems. The foreign nations he was dealing with wanted to dictate what he should do. They wanted to exploit his lack of experience, and they told him, “We want Judah. We want you to turn your nation over to us.”

When we're faced with a tough situation, do we always look to God? Why do people sometimes look the other way and find themselves following the devil? Well, the fact is that the devil has been doing his job for a very long time. His skills at persuasion are unmatched. Just think about it. While in heaven, Satan got one third of the heavenly host to walk away from a God whom they'd worshipped and whom they'd seen, face to face, every day. That's what you would call the miseducation of the angels. And then, when the devil comes to this world and encounters Eve, he begins her miseducation as well. He contradicts God's instructions and urges Eve to take the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He tells her, “You shall not surely die.”

Are there times in our own lives when we allow ourselves to be miseducated? Do we sometimes allow our politics to shape our faith, instead of allowing our faith to shape our politics? At the very moment when we get confused and start thinking that church has something to do with our elected leaders, or that church has something to do with what we should be doing at the ballet box, then that becomes the miseducation of God's people.

Hezekiah realized he was in a tough situation. Hezekiah knew he had no place to turn but to God. And he understood that unless his faith was strong and secure, he could not do what God had for him to do, and he would not be able to experience the power of God in his life.

My brothers and sisters, each of us has the ability to reach out to a God who is more powerful than anything we can imagine. Let us never lose sight of the fact that our God is an awesome God. Our God sees us through eternal eyes. Our God looks out for us no matter what Satan has said. I've been to the back of the book, and I know how the story ends: Jesus wins. The devil can cause all kinds of trouble. The devil can cause worries and fears. But when Jesus steps in, there's nothing that can slow him

down. I like the way Daniel put it when he said, “Michael shall stand up” (Daniel 12:1, NKJV). When Michael stands up, there's no power on this earth nor is there any power in heaven that can sit Him back down. My brothers and sisters, there is power in knowing that through prayer, everything can be changed.

Look at the first prayer Hezekiah prayed. In this prayer he declared that God would be glorified in the defeat of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. He said, “Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone” (2 Kings 19:19, NKJV).

The Bible tells us what happens next. Sennacherib sent 185,000 soldiers down to attack Jerusalem, and the armies of Israel were outnumbered more than 100 to one. But the Bible says just one angel came down in short order and wiped out 185,000 trained soldiers; soldiers who'd been confident they would take God's people down.

It doesn't matter what our obstacles look like. It doesn't matter what our circumstances may be. We serve a God who is able. And that is the next point I'd like to share today: we should never forget what God has done for us in the past. Sometimes we forget so quickly what God has done. The devil comes to us on a regular basis and give us the message that our God is not able. But prayer reminds us that we serve a God who is more powerful than anything that we can imagine.

The king of Assyria knew about the God of Hezekiah. He had even actually sent out messages to the people of Judah, telling them, “Oh, I know you have a God who says you have a land of milk and honey. But I've wiped out people who had gods before!” But in the end it was the Assyrian king himself who lost his life. His very own children rose up and killed him.

God is in charge. God will always be there for you. And sometimes the only thing He asks you to do is to pray, then to step back and to wait on your miracle. I'm just naive enough to believe that my God is so powerful that He's capable of performing a miracle every day in my

life. And so each day I wake up and wonder what will be my miracle that day.

Returning to the story of Hezekiah: he had two problems, and he needed two prayers. His first prayer dealt with the army of Assyria. His second prayer addressed something completely different—a health condition. Not only was Hezekiah sick, the Bible tells us, but he was sick to the point that the prophet told him, “Get your house in order; you are getting ready to die.” I can’t imagine what that must have felt like to the king. But he had enough faith to reach out to God and say, “Lord, I need more time. God, give me another opportunity.” We serve a God who is so powerful that He will come to us in whatever form we need. If darkness comes over our life, Jesus comes in as the light of the world. When our body is sick and racked with pain, Jesus comes to us as the Great Physician. He has more medicine in the hem of His garment than all the drugstores in the world. When we have spiritual pain, we serve a God who is the balm in Gilead, who can heal our soul.

Even if the devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, I’m not worried, because I’ve got my own Lion. The book of Revelation calls Him the Lion of Judah. The laws of nature tell me it doesn’t matter how many lions show up; only one lion gets to rule the pride, and it’s my Lion king, Jesus. They call Him the alpha and the omega. They call Him the beginning and the end. He is in charge of it all. When God looks at my life, He sees no problem that’s insurmountable. The miseducation of God’s people is the belief that our God is not able. And the miseducation of God’s people is also the idea that what happens on earth is actually what matters most.

My brothers and sisters, what we do here on earth is really focused on just one thing: the day we will finally see Jesus, face to face. It’s not about political parties. It’s not about who wants to be in charge. It doesn’t matter what presidential administration is in place. It’s not even about the work we do in public affairs and religious liberty. We know, in the end, that we’re not going to be able to change people’s minds. But our job is still to remind people who our God is. Our job is to let people know we serve a God who’s more powerful than anything and anyone. Our job is to let people know that “if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36, NKJV). No president can truly set us free. No governor

can set us free. No senator or representative can set us free. True freedom comes only through Jesus. And there’s nothing else that really matters.

So here we have Hezekiah understanding that he has a second problem, the sickness that will soon lead to his death. But he prays to God, saying, “Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.” And God responds by giving Hezekiah 15 more years of life.

Now Hezekiah can reflect on the destruction of Sennacherib and his army and be reminded of the power and faithfulness of God. God answered his prayers. God stepped in and not only granted Hezekiah 15 more years, but even granted Hezekiah something he did not specifically request—a successor. When Hezekiah was first getting ready to die, he had no heir. But at the end of the 15 years, when he finally died, Hezekiah had a 12-year-old son who would eventually be the king of Judah.

My brothers and sisters, if we follow our God, there will be no miseducation in our lives. And so the final point I want to share with you in this: just because something is happening to you, it doesn’t mean it’s all about you.

You see, God puts certain tests in our life. I have a physical every year, but my doctor doesn’t ever just look at me and say, “Hey, you look pretty good. See you again next year.” No, he runs tests on me, because it’s the results of those tests that determine how I’m really doing. The doctor needs to find out what’s really going on inside of me before he can prescribe what might be necessary.

The miseducation of God’s people is in this thought: *Because it’s happening to me, it must be about me.* My brothers and sisters, it is never about us; it is always about Him. It’s never about who I am; it’s always about who I am with. If we can keep that thought in mind, it will save us a lot of confusion.

We may find ourselves worrying about who’s in political power. You may have a problem with the Biden administration; that may just be your test. You may have had a problem with the Trump administration; that may have been your test. The bottom line is we can’t let ourselves

get caught up in the things of this world and start believing that what's happening here on this earth is more important than what God has for us in heaven.

The fact is that God has blessings in store for us. But those blessings require us to keep moving forward in His name. Sometimes it's not until we get to the other side of our tests that we will experience the blessing. Hezekiah had to wait for an angel to come down and deal with the army of Assyria. Hezekiah had to wait before he had a son who would live to be king. Sometimes our blessing is waiting on the other side of our test, and therefore it's not about us—it's only about Him.

I love the fact that the Bible always lets me know that my latter days are always going to be better than my former days, that my freedom in life is not tied to anything but Jesus. I've worked in all kinds of political administrations. I've worked for Republicans. I've worked for Democrats. And I can tell you this: the primary concern of all those parties is whether they will be reelected. But the fact of the matter is that I'm called to serve the King of kings, and Lord of lords. I don't care what administration is in place; it cannot be my Lord. It cannot be my king. I serve a God who, as the songwriter said, "has the whole world in His hands." And so that's why I don't have to be miseducated.

The devil will throw all kinds of spears and bullets at us and anything he can use to take us down. But our God has promised to be our protector.

I love this country we call America. I'm someone who gets choked up when I hear the national anthem. I love putting my hand over my heart. I love hearing "God Bless America." But I know that the American dream is not the Christian dream. The American dream is about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But the Christian dream is about love, faith, and the pursuit of holiness. And those two dreams, in the end, are going to be in conflict. And when they come into conflict, I've got to make a choice. And either I'm going to make heaven my home, or I'm going to make this earth my home.

I grew up in New York, and I loved going to visit my father at the World Trade Center. He had an office on the 76th floor, and I used to go up to that office, look

down onto the East River in New York Harbor, and see the Statue of Liberty. At the base of that statue there's some words written by a woman named Emma Lazarus that have signaled hope to many. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" Those words sound so powerful. Those words sound so free.

But those words will never compete with "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3, NKJV). Now, that's biblical. Now, that's truth, and that will eventually make us free.

My brothers and sisters, it's time to put the miseducation of God's people on notice. For the devil to succeed at miseducation, he simply has to change our thinking. And the moment our thinking has changed, the devil has won, and he can just go ahead and leave us to ourselves.

But God wants us to understand that it's not about us, it's about Him. He wants to make sure that we don't forget what he has done for us in the past. And He wants us to be secure in the knowledge that He sees us through eternal eyes.

Today I want to charge each one of you to go out and continue to do the work of the Lord; to go out and be impactful in your community; to do the work of public affairs and do religious liberty; to understand that there's no God-given job or assignment that's beneath your anointing. Whatever God calls you to do, do it to the best of your ability.

And no matter how tough things get, may we always remember that God is in charge and that, at the end of it all, we'll one day gather together with Him on that sea of glass.

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# LIBERTY

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"OUT" will delete entire name

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(8)

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- 05 Labor organizations
- 06 Religious organizations
- 09 Miscellaneous

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- 13 Columnist
- 14 Religious publications
- 15 College newspapers

### Education

- 20 Educational associations
- 21 Governing boards
- 22 Colleges and universities\*
- 23 High schools\*
- 24 Junior high schools\*
- 25 Elementary schools\*

### 30 Libraries

#### Government

- 40 International
- 41 Federal
- 42 State/provincial
- 43 County\*
- 44 Municipal\*
- 45 Military
- 46 Municipal/County attorneys
- 49 Political organizations

### 50 Business and Corporations

#### Professional

- 60 Judges, except federal and state/provincial
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