10 Sep 21

MEMORANDUM FOR XXXXXXXX/CC (Rank name)

FROM: Rank Name

SUBJECT: Religious Accommodation Request for Immunization Waiver

Reference: (a) DoD Instruction 1300.17 of 10 September 2020.

 (b) AFI 1-1, 7 August 2012, *Air Force Standards*.

 (c) AFI 48-110, 7 October 2013, *Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the*

 *Prevention of Infectious Diseases.*

 (d) AFPD 52-2, 28 July 2020, *Accommodation of Religious Practices in the Air Force*.

 (e) DAFI 52-201 23 June 2021, *Religious Freedom in the Department of the Air Force.*

1. I, XXXXXXX, Unit, AFSC,, DOD ID 1XXXXX with this letter request an administrative immunization exemption for religious reasons from the mandatory SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) vaccine policy IAW the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the above references, and other applicable laws, regulations and guidance.
2. I have two primary religious objections to receiving the vaccine. The first is that it is tied to the abortion industry and the leveraging of abortion for medical gain.
	1. As a Christian, my life belongs first and foremost to God. He has bought my life for Himself and for His glory, setting me apart for holiness and righteousness, and has freed me from the power and the penalty of sin. All disobedience to God’s righteous standard is sin, and it is my intention to live my life without sin because He has called me to obedience; obedience is my expression of worship. There are sins of ignorance (doing the wrong thing while not knowing it is the wrong thing) and sins of presumption (doing the wrong thing while knowing it is the wrong thing) (Psalm 19:12-13). An extensive amount of research and engagement of this issue over the past eighteen months has led me to the awareness that I have been guilty of a sin of ignorance because I have previously received into my body medical injections that have been developed in conjunction with the abortion industry (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). My response to awareness of sin in my life is always to repent and sin no more. That is one reason why I am seeking a religious accommodation the COVID-19 vaccine. My religious convictions do not allow me willingly sin (1 John 3:4-6).
	2. Abortion (infanticide; the murder of unborn persons; the cutting short of a helpless, vulnerable human life that is created by God, acknowledged by God, and bears the image of God) is sin, and to receive the vaccine is to participate in this sin, implicitly condoning this evil practice and incentivizing the killing of more babies. The Pfizer vaccine used the aborted fetal cell line HEK 293 in the testing phase of the vaccine. Moderna used the HEK 293 line in both the design and development of the mRNA technology and in the testing phase of the vaccine. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine used the PER C6 cell line in the testing, design, and development phases.[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) (Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-16; 1 John 3:15; Genesis 1:27; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:13)
	3. The use of the cells of human beings without their consent is theft. This means that to receive vaccines that are developed in conjunction with either aborted cell lines or any other cells that were not obtained with informed consent is to participate in this sin. The CureVac vaccine uses HeLa cells, which were unethically obtained (i.e., without informed consent) cells.[[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4) (Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28)
	4. There is no amount of time after which murder or theft ceases to be murder or theft and becomes something neutral. To participate in this activity would be a sin of presumption or defiance. To live in willful sin is simply not an option for me. To mandate I take this vaccine is to mandate me to sin. I simply cannot do it. I understand this position will require me to closely scrutinize all medical procedures and products from this point forward. If this means I must forgo a lifesaving treatment that was developed or tested utilizing aborted human cells, then that is what I am prepared to do. (James 4:17; Hebrews 10:26-27; Numbers 15:30)
	5. As a Chaplain endorsed by Bible Churches Chaplaincy (BCC), I refer to the statements made by the Independent Fundamental Churches of America (the governing body of BCC) in opposition to abortion. See attached letter from my endorser for reference.
	6. To receive this vaccine is to participate in these sins of murder and theft. (Exodus 20:3, 13, 15)
3. My second religious objection is that my taking of the vaccine would defile my body, which is the temple of God’s Holy Spirit, is a member of Jesus Christ, and belongs to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:13, 15, 19). Human beings are embodied spiritual beings and bear the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). My body is the vehicle by which I live out my faith in Jesus Christ and by which I worship God, offering it as a living sacrifice to God in order that I may glorify God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:20).
	1. This principle of not defiling my body is fundamental to my Christian faith and my religious expression (Romans 8:9-13). What I eat and drink, the exercise I do, and the amount of rest and relaxation I integrate into my life are not simply physical activities, but spiritual disciplines intrinsically tied to my spiritual life, religious beliefs and expression of my religion. For example, my father taught me how to study my Bible and pray using a daily journal when I was approximately 10 years old. I have now been practicing this very physical activity of journaling to support my prayer and study for over 35 years on almost a daily basis. This is a bodily activity, but it is also a spiritual/religious activity. The deliberate actions I take that affect the health of my physical body are inseparable from and must be informed by my religious beliefs. My decision not to take the vaccine is based on my desire to protect the health of my body and to not defile it by injecting it with products derived from aborted cell lines that unnecessarily alter my body’s naturally functioning processes (1 Thessalonians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
	2. The Bible teaches the importance of blood. In the Old Testament we learn that “the life of the flesh is in the blood” and that blood is given as the atonement for sin (Leviticus 17:11). Blood is sacred and it is the one physical component of our bodies that can attest to the health of the whole. My doctor can ascertain the health of my whole body simply by taking my blood and analyzing it. Her analysis of my blood shows where my body is deficient. By taking in (ingesting) supplements or ceasing to take in unhealthful substances (like refined sugar), I can increase the health of my body, and this increased health is reflected in a subsequent analysis of my blood. The sacredness of blood is also affirmed in the teaching of the New Testament. The Jerusalem Council explicitly instructed Christians to abstain from “what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:20). This is an affirmation of the dietary restrictions based in part on the sacredness of blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17, 7:26; Deuteronomy 12:16,23; 1 Samuel 14:34). For this reason, no injection into the body should be taken lightly (and injected medicine should be distinguished from ingested medicine). I regret my previous ignorance regarding ingredients in the vaccines I have received during my Air Force service. These not only include fetal cells, but toxic chemicals (like formaldehyde and polyethylene glycol) and neurotoxic heavy metals (like mercury and aluminum)[[5]](#footnote-5).
	3. Furthermore, I and my household have not ceased researching SARS-CoV-2 and the Covid-19 vaccines for the past eighteen months. During this time, we have prayed daily for God’s wisdom to understand the truth (John 16:12-13). God has given us his wisdom just as he has promised he would, and true faith always acts on the wisdom God gives (James 1:5-9). I believe God has revealed and directed me not to inject my body, which is already designed by God to fight off infections of various kinds, with a substance that causes my body to do something it was not designed to do, i.e., create the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein; and doing so is a direct violation of the wisdom God has given to me and expects me to act upon, and is an act of arrogant defiance against the God who created me. The mRNA technology is brand new, with no long-term safety data, nor has it displayed efficacy in the prevention or transmission of SARS-CoV-2. (This is one of the reasons I object now when I have not previously objected to vaccines. The other vaccines I have been required to receive all have long-term safety and efficacy data available. The “FDA approval” that has been granted to Comirnaty has been granted without long-term animal or human trials.) It is particularly unwise and arrogant to do so for a virus with a survivability rate of 99.95% for my age demographic[[6]](#footnote-6). I am not communicating fear of adverse reactions, I am communicating a Biblical fear of offending a Holy God.
	4. The Bible warns that “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death,” and that the “wide, easy way” leads to destruction. When God gives us wisdom, we must not ignore it or deliberately turn away from it, even if doing so means that life will be easier for us. Only by living according to what we have learned will we grow to be more like Christ. (Proverbs 14:12; Matthew 7:13-14; Philippians 3:14-16)
	5. In my well-rounded and comprehensive Christian worldview there is no separation between “sacred” and “secular” aspects of our lives, or between “spirit, soul and body.” There is no “medical” objection that exists on its own apart from “religious” objections, because body and mind are inseparable, and we are to love God with the whole of both. It is my firm religious belief that to accept the vaccine is a direct mistreatment of my body and an affront to the very God that made me, died for me, has given me a unique work to do, and will welcome me into his eternal presence at the end of this life. My body has been given to me to steward faithfully as a husband, son, brother, minister of the gospel and a servant to my country as a Chaplain. But my body is not owned by my wife, parents, siblings, my church, or the government. My body is owned by God. I cannot violate my religious commitment to God or presume upon his forgiveness. It is my sincerely held belief based on the word of God and the wisdom he has given to me that it is sin to receive this vaccine. (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 4:5-7; Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 3:20-4:1)
4. This policy, which places me in a position to sin, places a substantial burden upon my religious convictions to live with a clear conscience before God and to obey God in all things. Obedience to God is in fact the essence of my worship of him (1 Samuel 15:22). This request is founded on sincere convictions developed over the past forty years of living out my Christian faith in every sphere of my life and is consistent with who I am and who I have always been. This is not the first time that I have taken a path less traveled because of my personal religious beliefs. Deep courage of conviction regarding God and truth, sustained in me by the Lord, is what has made me who I am and allowed me to be an asset to the USAF mission around the world for the past thirteen years. My religion, worldview and convictions have not been altered with the arrival of this virus. But while I am the same person and Chaplain I have been since I started my service to the Air Force, this order represents the first time DoD or USAF policy would require me to knowingly violate my conscience and sincerely held religious beliefs. The military has never forced me into a position where I could not freely exercise my religious faith.
	1. I live my life in the presence of God and in cooperation with God. He alone is the source of life and in Him I live and move and have my being. There is no other God besides the holy triune God of the Bible, and there is no other way to God besides Jesus Christ. (John 15:4-5; Acts 17:28; Exodus 20:3; John 14:6)
	2. In my day-to-day living, God teaches me what is true and gives me wisdom regarding how to live my life the way He designed it to be lived. (John 16:12-15; John 14:6; John 17:17; Romans 1:19-20; Proverbs 9:10; James 1:5-8)
	3. God’s expectation for me is that I will rely on Him for the grace to live according to the truth and to worship and obey Him alone in all things, which produces “good fruit.” The Bible teaches that satan is a real being who deceives people in order to tempt them to sin, wages war on the people of God, and ultimately seeks for the entire world to worship him. When Christians see “bad fruit” (i.e., evil) that results from human policies, they know that those policies are energized by satan and must be rejected. (James 1:19-25; 1 Peter 1:14-17; John 14:21; John 15:10; 1 Timothy 2:14; Galatians 5:22-23; Revelation 13:1-4, 7; 1 John 3:7-10)
	4. To knowingly sin would defile and potentially sear my conscience, inviting even greater sin into my life (Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 4:1-2). To knowingly sin would also set an example of sin that others could potentially follow. Those who lead are held to a higher standard by God for their conduct, and Jesus said that it would be better to die than to cause another person to sin. Leading with integrity means practicing what I preach. (Exodus 20:16; Matthew 18:5-9; James 3:1; Jeremiah 23:1-2)
	5. The Bible teaches that my life on earth is brief and that when it is over, I will stand before God and give an account for all that I have done and why I did it. Mindful of that, I live my life in the fear of God and in pursuit of treasure that is eternal rather than temporal. When the commands of people conflict with the commands of God, I obey God rather than people, regardless of what it costs me, because God’s glory is the highest good and I do not need to fear anything, even that which may result in my death. (Psalm 90:10-12; Mark 8:36; Colossians 3:1-4; Luke 18:8; Romans 14:12; 1 Peter 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 12:36; Matthew 10:26-33; Acts 5:29; Galatians 1:10-12; Revelation 22:12; Daniel 3:16-18)
5. I also have religious objections based upon my eschatology (doctrine of end times) and my conviction that receiving the vaccine will prevent me from loving my neighbor as Christ has commanded.
6. It is my opinion that not receiving the vaccine will not impede my readiness and is certainly not the least restrictive means of achieving readiness.
	1. I take full responsibility for my own health, I am committed to healthful eating and maintaining a healthy weight, adequate sleep, adequate exercise, and the taking of natural supplements to optimize my immune system. Additionally, I am under the care of a physician who stands ready to treat COVID-19 or any other disease I may contract.
	2. As I have always done in my adult life, I will continue to self-monitor for symptoms of any illness and will use common sense measures to avoid transmission to others.
	3. The least restrictive means of achieving immunity to COVID-19 is to engage in healthy practices that prove to boost my immune system, and, if I do contract the disease, to treat it with therapeutics and so develop natural immunity.
	4. Part of my readiness is my responsibility to deploy. I remain unafraid of death and of the sacrifice required by me if called upon. I do not intend for this accommodation to inhibit my world-wide qualification to perform my duties as an officer and Chaplain.
	5. I will always uphold the oath of office that I have taken.
7. In conclusion, after careful discernment and tremendous research, it is clear to me that I must request this accommodation. It is saddening to me that I must make this request and that my fitness for duty may be determined by my willingness to accept this vaccine rather than by my exemplary record of service over the past thirteen years. I trust the Lord with this process (Proverbs 3:5-6). I must speak the truth out of love (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:9); truth is not an opinion (Colossians 2:8), and love does not exist apart from the Law of God (Romans 13:10). This request is based solely upon my religious convictions.
8. I understand that IAW AFI 48-110 I have temporary exemption from vaccinations while my request is being processed. I also understand that I will be counseled by my commander and a military physician regarding: the diseases concerned; specific vaccine information including product constituents, benefits, and risks; and potential risks of infection incurred by unimmunized individuals. They must determine that I am making an informed decision and fully understand that my request may have an adverse impact on my deployability, assignment, and/or international travel.
9. I waive my privilege for confidential communication with the chaplain(s) assigned to interview me and submit the required memorandum as it pertains to this request and this request only. This waived privilege does not authorize any discussion of my request or sincerely held beliefs outside the required advisement and documentation IAW DAFI 52-201.
10. If you have any questions, please contact me at DSN: xxxxxxxxxx, COMM: xxxxx or XXXXX@us.af.mil.

XXXX X. XXXXX, rank, USAF

Title

2 Attachments

1. xxxx

2. List of Religious Texts

1. <https://lozierinstitute.org/update-covid-19-vaccine-candidates-and-abortion-derived-cell-lines/>, accessed 21 Aug 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://cogforlife.org/2020/11/16/moderna-covid-19-vaccine-facts-not-fiction/>, accessed 21 Aug 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://lozierinstitute.org/update-covid-19-vaccine-candidates-and-abortion-derived-cell-lines/>, accessed on 21 Aug 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://pages.jh.edu/jhumag/0400web/01.html>, accessed on 21 Aug 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://vaccines.procon.org/vaccine-ingredients-and-manufacturer-information/>, accessed 11 Sep 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/planning-scenarios.html>, accessed 8 Sep 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)