

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a follower of Jesus at Foothills Community Church in Molalla, Oregon seeking a religious exception from an immunization requirement. This letter explains how Foothills Community Church's teachings may lead individuals, including myself, to decline certain vaccines.

Foothills Community Church teaches that a person may be required to refuse a medical intervention, including a vaccination, if his or her conscience comes to this judgment. While Foothills does not prohibit the use of most vaccines, and generally encourages them to safeguard personal and public health, the following Church teachings demonstrate the principled religious basis on which a follower of Jesus may determine that he or she ought to refuse certain vaccines:

- Vaccination is not morally obligatory in principle and so must be voluntary.
- There is a moral duty to refuse the use of medical products, including certain vaccines that are created using human cell lines derived from abortion; however, it is permissible to use such vaccines only under case-specific conditions—if there are no other alternatives available and the intent is to preserve life.
- A person's assessment of whether the benefits of a medical intervention outweigh the undesirable side-effects are to be respected.
- A person is morally required to obey his or her conscience. *Rom. 14:23 "But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning."* (NLT)

Any follower of Jesus may judge it wrong to receive certain vaccines for a variety of reasons consistent with these teachings, and there is no authoritative Church teaching universally obliging people to receive any

vaccine. An individual may invoke Church teaching to refuse a vaccine that used abortion-derived cell lines at any stage of the creation of the vaccine. More generally, a person might refuse a vaccine based on the Church's teachings concerning therapeutic proportionality. Therapeutic proportionality is an assessment of whether the benefits of a medical intervention outweigh the undesirable side-effects and burdens in light of the integral good of the person, including spiritual, psychological, and bodily goods. The judgment of therapeutic proportionality must be made by the person who is the potential recipient of the intervention, not by public health authorities or by other individuals who might judge differently in their own situations.

Vaccination is not a universal obligation and a person must obey his or her own conscience. Therefore, if any follower of Jesus comes to an informed judgment that he or she should not receive a vaccine, then Foothills Community Church teaches that the person follow this judgment of conscience and refuse the vaccine. We believe that: "All people have the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. 'They must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must they be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.'"

Sincerely,