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Letter of Testimony from Dr. David Aguilar

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(Dr. Aguilar is a member of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church, and a former professor of computer science at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina. He recently left his job - and the country - in response to the lawsuit. Below is a written testimony regarding his reasons.)

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Hello and good day,

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My name is Dr. David Aguilar. I have requested that this recording of my testimony be presented at the protest or protests to take place in Guys, TN. that have been organized in response to the recent activities of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

[Letter from Dr. David Aguilar](#)

Until last month, I was employed at a university in the United States, teaching students subjects pertaining to the field of Computer Science, and doing research into the use of modern technology in education. The work that I was doing was designed to help students to participate in classroom activities despite physical distances or bodily and functional disabilities. I have been married for two years to a beautiful and Christian young lady, and we were – we are – just starting our lives together. We also happen to be Creation Seventh Day Adventists, and for that reason alone, for the things that we believe, I have been forced to abandon my promising career, and my wife and I have been forced to flee our place and country of residence.

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Now one may ask, “Did someone come up to your door and demand that you quit your job and leave your home?” And no, no one did that. The truth of the matter is, we left these things behind for more subtle reasons, but real reasons nonetheless, and reasons that left us with little choice if we were to preserve both our freedom and our religious integrity.

It has been said that warfare, to use a perhaps very fitting example, has become a lot less personal with the development of modern technology. In the past if you were to go to war, you would take up a sword, or a knife. The furthest from your enemy you would be when engaging him would be the length of a bow-shot. In other words, you could see them. You could hear their voices, and know that they were men like yourself. Of course, nations that went to war with one another did quite a lot to “de-personalize” the enemy, to make them seem less deserving of life, and freedom, in order to ease the task of wiping out the other side.

But now you can drop bombs on people from thousands of feet in the air. You can launch a missile from one country and it lands in the other. You can sink a battleship and shoot down a fighter plane. But those who actually command the troops, those who “run the war” as it were, are often far from the targets they attack. For them, warfare is a matter of politics, that is to say, of *policy*. Policy allows people to dehumanize those who oppose them. It allows those with some measure of earthly power to ruin lives and steal dreams away from human beings and hide behind the justification, “It’s only business. It’s nothing personal.”

EXHIBIT B

I tell you, those can be among the most cruel of words for those who are caught under the wheels of a tank that is rolling forward over your house, or your body.

So if someone were to speak to a representative of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and ask him, or her, "Did you force Dr. David Aguilar to give up his job and his home?" They would be able to answer, and perfectly honestly, "All we wanted to do was question some members of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. All we wanted to do is ask them some questions. We never told anyone they had to leave their livelihood."

But what I want to tell you today is that victims of unjust, unchristian policies have a human face. They are not just defendants, or associates, or agents, or parishioners. They are people, and they are people who in this case are bound by strong religious convictions that make it impossible for them to cooperate with an unjust law, or the unholy union of an apostate church with a civil governmental power that gave rise to such an unjust law.

Real people get hurt when policies take precedent over virtues. When principles are made subject to corporate decisions, then we are no longer speaking about a church at all, but about an ecclesiastical business. And our Lord, Jesus Christ, has nothing to do with such an entity as that.

It has been said, and I agree, that a church by itself will never persecute anyone. And a government, by itself, will not persecute anyone. Governments will punish crimes, yes, and they ought indeed to do so. Creation Seventh Day Adventists are not in any way anti-government. We are Biblically obligated to obey any law that does not conflict with God's instructions. We are obligated to, and habitually do, pray for the leaders of the nations in which we live. How can we claim to love our fellow men, and not pray for those who have such responsibility over them? We Creation Seventh Day Adventists, and all who, like us, follow the principles taught and encouraged by our Savior, are good citizens of any country with which we are associated. And yet, because we are good citizens, we cannot, and we will not, stand by and watch the principles that make countries great be cast aside without standing up and letting our voices be heard.

So a Church on its own does not persecute. Biblically, the worst penalty a church is allowed to inflict is the act of excommunication: disfellowship. A church does not persecute, and a state does not persecute, but when these two powers are combined, and you have a religious institution wielding civil power to any degree, to any *least* degree, persecution is inevitable. There has never been a time when a church has petitioned the civil courts for redress of wrongs (either real or – like this case – imagined) and people have not been hurt. A church and a state acting in concert inevitably persecute... and the innocent suffer. Our Redeemer was crucified by this very thing, the religious order of His day utilizing the secular powers of Pilate's court to silence a voice of opposition to their powerful institution. If that sounds familiar, it very well should. They even said, in the Gospel of John, "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." You see, even then they were justifying themselves in the very same way. Yes, some people will get inconvenienced, will get hurt, but it's for the good of the people. We have to protect the people from this dangerous threat."

Real people get hurt when such things take place, even to this very day. Real people like me, and my wife, and our parents.

Because I am active member of the CSDA Church, I was named as an individual who was sought for questioning in relation to the use of our now "illegal" (to use human terms) church name. The name of our church, and the name of the religion we have been convicted is the right one to guide our lives in this world and the next, is now illegal in the United States. Even worse, perhaps, members of our faith cannot identify themselves using the terms Seventh-day Adventist, SDA, Adventist, or any part of the trademarked General-Conference name. And let me tell you something, the very trademark itself is based on a heretical, disgusting lie.

Adventists, faithful Adventists of all types, believe that over a century ago, God spoke through the pioneers of our movement and gave the name "Seventh-day Adventist" to a people, a small group of Bible students who were convinced that God's law was not changed by man's decree, and thus the Seventh-day was still, as it is written in Genesis, set apart and made holy. The name "Seventh-day Adventist" was given to a group of faithful worshippers of God and His Son, who believed that the Son would Himself return to the earth at His Second Advent, and bring with him crowns of life for all who held His life and death dear.

Yes, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" was given to a group of people, not to a group of buildings, or a corporation, or a business. It was given to human beings, and whether or not you agree with us that this name was divinely inspired to represent the last group of Christians on this earth, I hope that you are enough of a defender of religious liberty to grant US the freedom to hold that belief. And this name, by the way, was given before the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists even existed.

When you trademark a product, you label it as "yours" and yours exclusively. You are saying to the world, and to the courts of the land, "I own this... it is mine." And I'll be honest, I agree with trademark and copyright laws, if they are indeed applied rightly, to things that human minds develop and over which human beings can legitimately claim ownership. But to claim to "own" something that is a gift from God Himself to all mankind? Such a claim is a fraud and a lie. One might as well say of the sun, or the sky, or the rain, "These things are mine, and belong to nobody else." These things are all gifts that God has given to humanity, and even if just a small group of people, relatively speaking, benefit from those gifts, no man has the right to say, "You cannot have this; God has given this only to me."

God can, of course, withhold sunshine and rain from whomsoever He wishes. I would not dispute His ability to arbitrate those who are to receive His gifts. But then again, those are His choices. When a human being takes it upon himself to decide what God should do, and then go on to DO those things, as if they were doing God a favor, then we have the sacrifice of Cain. It was the best of his efforts, but it was not what God wanted. Then we have the error of Uzza who, thinking the ark was about to be dragged through the mud (literally speaking) put forth unsanctified hands to steady the holy object. I need not read the verses to you today... this is not a Bible study. This is an explanation that human policies, when they are at odds with God's instructions, have human victims. And those who love their fellow men are duty-bound, in such a case as that, to protest.

But why did I leave? Why did I depart from the country, rather than staying to face my oppressors, indirect though the oppression may seem to be? It is a legitimate question, because you may be tempted to ask, "If Dr. Aguilar is so strongly in favor of protesting for religious liberty, why isn't he here, at a religious liberty protest?"

Do not imagine that I fear the consequences of my decisions. I am prepared to do whatsoever God instructs me to do, even to the sacrificing of my very life. In these days, in these last days with such great examples before us, we are responsible for more loving and willing obedience than Moses and Abraham, who were called "God's Friends."

But here is the reason: The Conference will say, "We didn't tell anyone to uproot their lives. We just wanted to ask some questions." And that sounds all nice and benign, until you realize what those questions are, what the intent of those questions are, and what the result of answering those questions would be.

I don't know if you have already been exposed to the deposition materials, the kinds of questions they are asking of us. If you have read the horrible history of the Inquisition – another ready example of a union of church and state doing terrible things in the name of religion – these questions I would be asked should sound appallingly familiar.

They are asking who our friends and family members are who have assisted us in the defense and preservation of our Adventist faith. They are asking for names, addresses, websites, emails and – significantly – bank account numbers. Yes, BANK ACCOUNT NUMBERS of those who might have assisted us in any way to maintain the dignity of our religious convictions. Am I to turn over to the civil authorities individuals who are guilty of nothing more than loving me enough to encourage and assist me in the preservation of my beliefs? The word "Inquisition" has come to mean exactly this profane and abominable course of action upon which the mainstream Adventist church has been set by its secular and perverse leadership.

And had I stayed in the United States, I can tell you that I would have eventually been forced to help pay for their lawyers to trouble and distress my fellow believers; that is, if I was able to somehow avoid jail myself. I would have had funds and property taken away from me to feed their beast of a legal department.

No doubt, I would have been commanded never again to teach the Gospel under the name Seventh-day Adventist, and this is something my religion expressly instructs. I am forbidden from cooperating with any instruction, from any human being, even from any angelic being, that would alter the way I conduct my personal and public religious observances. That part of my life is not subject to anything less than divine judgment, and I would destroy myself rather than surrender my faith, or assist the lawyers and courts with attempting to induce others to surrender theirs.

Now, I want to be clear on this: It is not that I would have agreed to pay any court costs, but if I continued to work there they could easily have docked my pay against my will, or commanded the sale of my assets (such few as I had) for the General Conference's policy makers to recoup the tremendous amount of resources that they have stolen from the tithes and offerings faithful Adventist believers for this foolish and uncharitable adventure. They have stolen from God Himself, if Malachi has not

exaggerated his prophetic message, and they are accountable for every cent placed into a lawyer's hands to bring suits against commandment-keeping, Bible-believing Christian men and women. Were I to submit myself to answering their questions, I would be doing nothing less than betraying my brothers and sisters to the hands of a corrupt and heartless system. I could not stay and participate, even indirectly, in such a wicked betrayal.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, while they teach that someday a National Sunday-law will come to deprive them of their religious liberty, are now – even now – seeking to deprive the members of our little group of its religious liberty. Almost everyone we speak with about the SDA Trademark, and the lawsuits they are bringing against little Churches here and there, exclaim, “A Church is doing that? That is so wrong!” When I was telling my coworkers that I was resigning from my professorship, and the reason why, one young lady with whom I was working thought that I was playing a practical joke on her. She said she expected a camera-man to pop out of the shadows at any moment and capture her reaction on film. Yes, it seems unreal, bizarre, that in the United States, which claims to be a haven for freedom of both the civil and religious types, such a thing as this can happen. But it has happened, and because a Church has come to believe that God has told them, “Your name is Creation Seventh Day Adventist, and you are to teach the Gospel, openly and fearlessly, under that distinctive banner.” We have been accused of stealing the name of another group (as if it were theirs exclusively by God's decree) and of “pushing the issue” to make a name for ourselves. But those of us who have accepted this faith know differently. We have heard the sweet voice of our Father giving us these clear instructions, and we understand – at least to some degree – why He has done this. Our Adventist pioneers once told us that the truth will be made known; will be brought into the public's perceptions, even if it must be through suffering and controversy. Those who accuse us of stirring up the controversy artificially, and subjecting ourselves to suffering unnecessarily, will understand our hearts some day; I pray, some day sooner rather than later and too late.'

Yes. This has happened in this country. It has happened because one Church is holding fast to its beliefs while another Church has fallen into apostasy and, by using deceptive and mercenary tactics, seduced the courts into making a terrible, oppressive law. It is things like this, subtle things like this, that lead to the ruin of nations and the ruin of individual lives. Oh, how those in positions of religious authority have betrayed the trust that God has placed in their hands: betrayed the trust toward themselves, their fellow church members, and the very nation it was supposed to educate and instruct.

Thinking back over the weeks of stressful preparations, and the escape my little family was forced to endure, I do not think I am being overly dramatic. My life can never be the same again, and I thank my Lord for the wife that He has given me, for without her tireless, vigorous efforts, with no complaints or undue sighing, we could never have accomplished the things that we needed to do. We are still free, and we are still Protestant Christians.

Adventists have had a long-standing tradition that they do not seek to settle disputes by appealing to worldly courts. Let me tell you, **there are still a few true Adventists in the world today.** Those who have turned away from our most precious faith are the true thieves of the name that God has given... but we are content to share it with them.

It is God's name, and He can defend it without human assistance. But we must keep it, because, well... someone needs to set a good example of what an Adventist should do, and teach, and be. And if you, who are hearing this, are not worshipping God under the banner of the name "Seventh-day Adventist," I think that you can at least appreciate the things that this Church stands for... the continuing validity of God's commands, the continuing voice of the Holy Spirit among those who are seeking Christ's truth here on this earth, and the soon return of the loving Savior to take His people home... home, and away from crushing, deplorable circumstances like the ones that some of us find ourselves in today.

We are faced, because of the things we believe about God and our relationship with Him, with going to prison, fleeing the country, or becoming traitors to those whom we love. Of our company, I know some who have chosen the first option, and some who have chosen the second option. I know of none who have chosen the third; and for their souls' sakes, I pray there are none who would even *consider* the third.

But I started out by saying, those who today so eagerly oppress us would say, "We aren't trying to force anyone to give up any beliefs, we just have to protect the name of our Church." But as I have explained, even the most distant and sterile of policies has a human face, and human victims. There is also, as one Christian writer said a long time ago, a subtle deception here, and it comes in the form of the word "our." What does the phrase, "our Church" mean? Perhaps if the Conference's leaders would think about this for a while they would realize how far from the path of Christ they have strayed.

I can speak of my shoes, my wife, and my country. I own my shoes. I am partnered with my wife, and I am a member of my country. I can say "my" and it means three different things. I can throw away or sell my shoes. I cannot do that with my wife, and I certainly cannot do it with my country. Although it is MY country, it is mine by virtue of association, not ownership. Now what does it mean when I say that the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church is "my" Church? Do I own it? No. And if I were the pope of the CSDA Church (not that we HAVE a pope, of course, I am using an extreme example); but if I were the oldest, most respected, most authoritative member of the CSDA Church, elected as a leader by every single member, and trusted with all its decisions... does that mean I own the CSDA Church, or the name of that Church?

It absolutely does not!

And yet, we have people saying, "I have to protect MY Church," and by the very act of saying it in this context, they treat it as if it were their shoes, their property. It is God's Church, and if you are a member of any Church, you should believe that it is God's Church and you are a member. If you forget that, you begin to imagine that you can act as God would, and take vengeance on those who wrong you, or whom you imagine is wronging you. And again, when this is done, even by policy – maybe especially by policy – human beings, real human beings, are hurt, even if you never see their faces... because this is a modern world, and warfare is largely a distant, impersonal thing now.

No doubt, during the course of these meetings, you will be told about religious liberty, what it means and what it is. You will be told the duty of a Protestant to these things, and indeed, what the word "Protestant" truly means. But let me give you my take on religious liberty, and it's pretty simple. Religious liberty, for me, and for my wife, is

life itself. How can I be willing to sacrifice my time, tithes, efforts, and myself for a religion, if that religion means less to me than that life? Those who brought this suit against us... when thinking about their attitude toward the Creation Seventh-Day Adventist church, I can only consider two possibilities.

Either a) They do not understand how strongly we hold this conviction, and would thus be willing to die for it, certainly to lose our freedom if we must, or

b) They do not CARE that we consider the name of this Church to be a direct revelation from God, and are therefore willing to sacrifice our earthly happiness and even earthly lives for its preservation. I can't think of any other choices... either they do not know, or they do not care. If they do not know, they have never read our websites with any level of understanding. It is hard to imagine any group of human beings could be so willingly ignorant and yet so doggedly enthusiastic for the muzzling and extermination of a Christian people.

If they do not care, then we are dealing with a people who love policy more than humanity. They are either the worst kind of nominal Christians, or – and this may sound like a heavy charge, but – atheists masquerading as believers. Atheists not, perhaps, on paper, but certainly in every practical sense; for how can someone genuinely believe in God and His judgments, and yet treat others this way? I say these things because... my religious experience, or anything even close to my religious experience, would absolutely forbid that I treat another human being the way that I and my fellow church members have been treated. Whether someone stabs me in the heart, or makes a phone call from miles away that affects my life so vastly, it is an attack upon me by one who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and a believer in the Advent message. I can't imagine it; it is a completely alien mindset to me, despite their smooth and practiced attempts at self-justification, and so I tell myself, "They can't really be believers," in an attempt to think the best of them, and, perhaps, to comfort myself a little in my distress for their souls' safety.

Religious liberty, to me, is life itself. It is worth any sacrifice – every sacrifice. It is worth any cost, even if that cost is blood, to maintain. I cannot do anything else, other than I have done, because I love my Church, and I love the God who placed me within it to be blessed and sanctified. I thought that, once I had left the United States, I would feel free, I would feel relief because I was out of danger. Let me tell you, it's been days now, and I feel nothing but sorrow for those I have left behind, and a strong desire to do more than merely sharing my heart with those of you who have taken the time to come and listen, and to demonstrate your love for Christian principles.

And yet, you know, this is the best that anyone can really do. I can speak, and I can let you know who I am. I can tell you what's important to me, and I hope that they are the same things that are important to you as well. I can tell you that I love all who share my conviction that freedom of religion, and freedom from the unholy intrusion of civil courts into religious matters, and I hope to meet you all soon, if not upon this earth, then shortly after the Advent of our lord and Savior. My thoughts and prayers are with you all, as are the thoughts and prayers of my wife. I thank you deeply for the sacrifice you have made on behalf of our shared convictions, and may you be blessed by your participation in this rally, this peaceful protest, and this witness that we share before God and men.