***5 Simple Steps to Protect Your Church***

We created**free-of-charge Religious Liberty Templates and Guides** for churches, schools, and organizations to use as a resource in drafting bylaws, articles of incorporation, employment manuals, discipline policies, and other corporate documents to try to avoid legal risk exposure.

1) Begin by gathering and reviewing your governing documents and policies.  The relevant documents should include at least the following (or your versions thereof):

* Articles of Incorporation
* Bylaws / Constitution
* Mission Statement
* Purpose Statement
* Facility Use Policy (or facility rental application)
* Historical Creeds or Confessions
* Statements of Doctrine
* Statements of Faith
* Standards of Morals and Conduct / Honor Code
* Employee and Volunteer Handbooks
* Employee and Volunteer Contracts
* Medical/Pharmaceutical Plans
* Organizational Charts
* Website Content

2) Compare and contrast.  Review your own governing documents, policies, and statements of faith and compare them with our Religious Liberty Templates and Guides to determine what areas need to be addressed (and how to address them).

3) Amend and adopt.   Make certain that your documents address **all** of the issues that we set forth in our Religious Liberty Templates and Guides.  We have incorporated significant and thorough case law in drafting the Religious Liberty Templates and Guides in order to ensure legal protection and compliance for your institution.  Therefore, we suggest that you utilize the language that we have provided verbatim in amending or drafting your own governance documents.  Make certain that all documents and written policies express your beliefs consistently.

4) Be thorough.  We encourage you to work diligently to ensure that your beliefs are written down, codified, and enforced so that they have the tool kit needed to prove the sincerity of their faith.  In a legal climate where religious legal intrusions are becoming increasingly problematic, we encourage you to thoroughly document those beliefs that you intend to defend, particularly as they relate to morality, conduct, marriage, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

5) Consistency is key.  Beyond solidifying your governing documents, consistent application and enforcement of your sincerely held religious beliefs is vital.  Consistently adhere to the policies that you adopt in order to avoid legal problems that arise from applying a “double standard.”