

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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June 14, 2021

**SENT VIA FAX & U.S. MAIL: (252) 808-2094**

Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office  
3025H Bridges St  
Morehead City, NC 28557

Re: Unconstitutional religious distribution

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) in response to a complaint from a member of your community about religious literature being distributed in the Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 36,000 members nationwide, including more than 800 members in North Carolina. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

A concerned Morehead City resident contacted FFRF after visiting the Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office to report that there is religious literature being distributed by the office. Our complainant reports that there was a religious pamphlet printed by Grace Baptist Church included with the paperwork that they received from the office. The pamphlet (enclosed) quotes bible verses, discusses Christian notions of heaven and hell, and instructs the reader on how to gain “salvation.” It appears that the distribution of this religious literature by a government employee was inconspicuous, and may be being done without official permission. However, these actions are still attributable to the Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office.

We write to ask that you ensure religious literature is no longer being distributed in this government office, and that employees be reminded of their obligation to remain neutral towards religion to avoid any appearance of endorsement of Christianity over other religions, and religion over non-religion.

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibits government sponsorship of religious messages. The Supreme Court has long recognized that the “First Amendment mandates government neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion.” *McCreary County, Ky. v. American Civil Liberties Union of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 53 (1985); *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968); *Everson v. Bd. of Educ. of Ewing*, 330 U.S. 1, 15-16 (1947). The Supreme Court has ruled, “The Establishment Clause, at the very least, prohibits government from appearing to take a position on questions of religious belief.” *Cty. of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union Greater Pittsburgh Chapter*, 492 U.S. 573, 593-594 (1989). By distributing Christian literature, the

Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office is violating these basic constitutional strictures.

Nearly every adult citizen of your community will, at one point or another, need to visit the license office, including the 24% of Americans who are not religious.<sup>1</sup> By distributing religious literature, the Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office is demonstrating a preference for Christianity over nonreligion and all other faiths. This display is “impermissible because it sends the ancillary message to . . . nonadherents ‘that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community.’” *Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290, 309-10 (2000) (quoting *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, 688 (O’Connor, J., concurring)).

To respect the rights of all Morehead City residents, religious literature must no longer be distributed by the Morehead City Vehicle & License Plate Renewal Office or its employees. We also request that the office remind its employees of their obligations under the Establishment Clause. Please inform us in writing of the steps the office is taking to address this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Line", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Christopher Line  
*Staff Attorney*  
*Freedom From Religion Foundation*

CAL:am

Cc: Torre Jessup, DMV Commissioner via [dmv.commissioners.office@ncdot.gov](mailto:dmv.commissioners.office@ncdot.gov)

Enclosures

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<sup>1</sup> Robert P. Jones & Daniel Cox, *America's Changing Religious Identity*, Public Religion Research Institute (Sept. 6, 2017), available at [www.ppri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PRRI-Religion-Report.pdf](http://www.ppri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PRRI-Religion-Report.pdf).

refuse to believe that the Lord Jesus is powerful enough to save them by Himself. Do you?

Heaven or hell—which one will you choose? Jesus Christ awaits your choice. *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."* (John 3:36). Will you admit you are a sinner? Do you want to be forgiven and your life changed? Will you humble yourself and pray to God right now, asking Jesus Christ to save you? *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* (Romans 10:9). *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* (Hebrews 7:25).

If you have decided to trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour after reading this tract, please write and let us know.

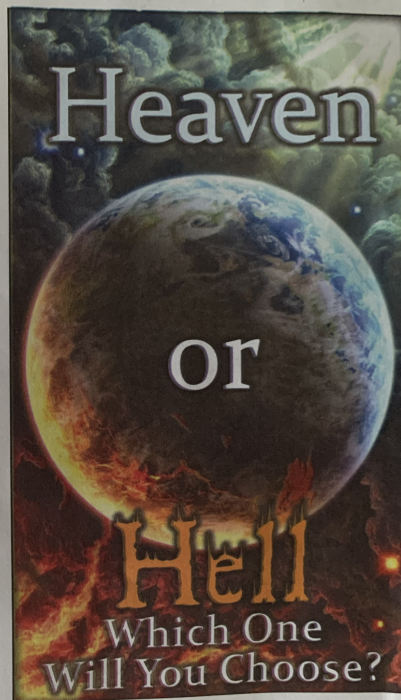
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor Clyde I. Eborn / 252-223-5338  
Grace Baptist Church / 252-223-6088  
Grace Christian School / 252-223-2653  
WOTJ 90.7FM / [www.fbnradio.com](http://www.fbnradio.com)  
520 Roberts RD, Newport, NC 28570



**A**re you going to heaven or to hell? The Bible teaches that many seemingly good people are going to hell, because *"...all have sinned..."* (Romans 3:23) *"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."* (Ecclesiastes 7:20) Sin has a price. The Bible states, *"...the soul that sinneth, it shall die."* (Ezekiel 18:4) *"For the wages of sin is death..."* (Romans 6:23)

You might be wondering what happens to people who die in their sins. The Bible teaches that *"...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment..."* (Hebrews 9:27) *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* (Revelation 20:15)

Is there any hope? Yes! God sent His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, into the world to pay the penalty for your sins. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8)

The Bible tells us that God desires to save everyone. God is *"...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9b) Jesus said: *"...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* (John 6:37) Do you want to be saved? The Bible teaches that there are several things you must do in order to be saved.

First, you must realize there is nothing you can do to make yourself worthy of heaven. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us..."* (Titus 3:5)

Secondly, you must repent of your sins. *"...God ...now commandeth all men every where to repent..."* (Acts 17:30) Repentance is a change of heart which causes you to turn toward God and away from your present way of life.

The third thing that you must do is to believe *"...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"* (1 Corinthians 15:3,4)

The last thing that you must do is to receive Christ as your personal Saviour. *"But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"* (John 1:12) *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Romans 10:13)

Salvation is free to all who will place their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9) The way to be saved is so simple! Yet many refuse to be saved. They will not accept Jesus Christ alone for salvation from sin and its penalty. They