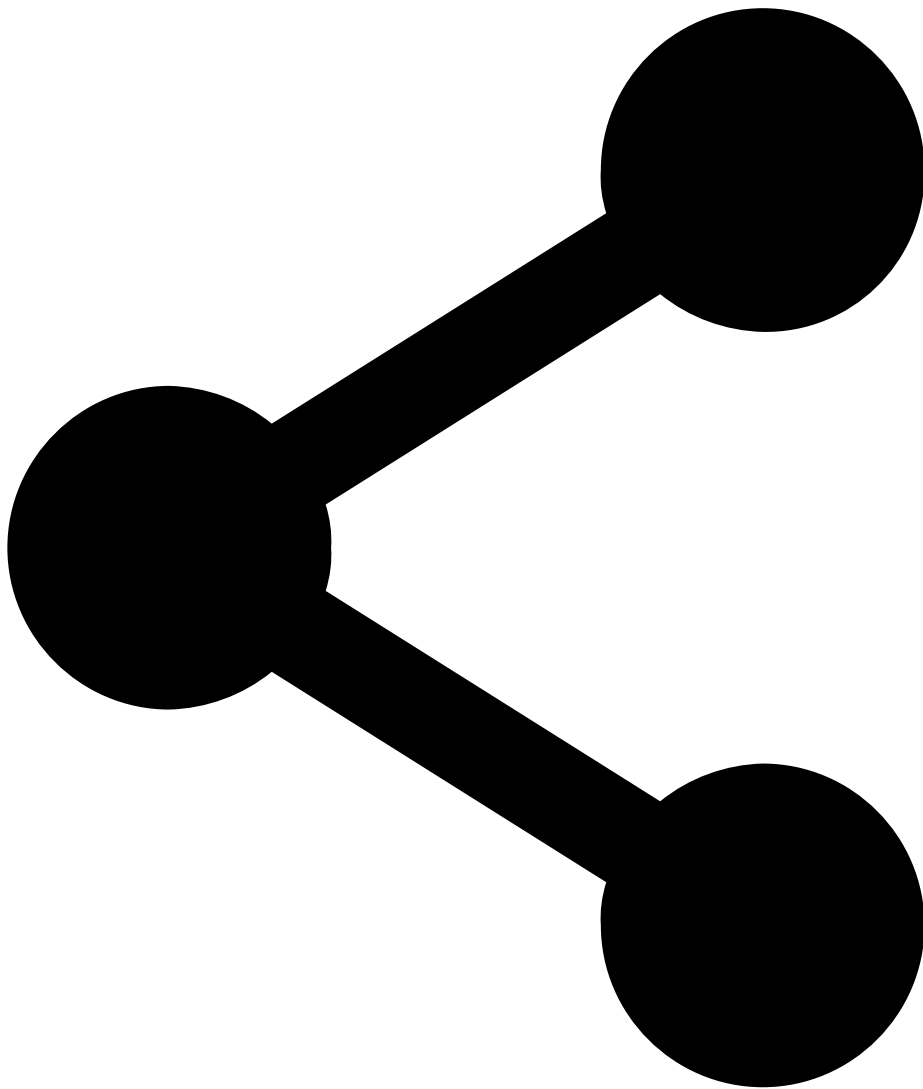
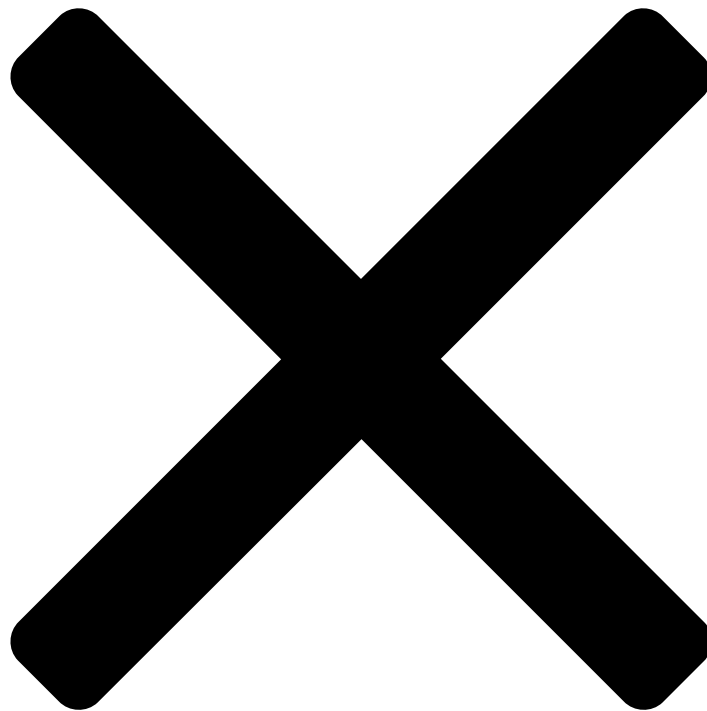


Jeffress: 'No credible religious argument' against coronavirus vaccines

By Caroline Vakil

September 18, 2021 - 12:48 PM EDT





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The Rev. Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Dallas said this week that "there is no credible religious argument" against receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Jeffress, an ardent supporter of former [President Trump](#), [told](#) The

Associated Press in an interview that he and his staff at First Baptist Dallas "are neither offering nor encouraging members to seek religious exemptions from the vaccine mandates."

Both the U.S. private and public sectors have taken steps to mandate vaccines or frequent testing amid the surge in coronavirus cases, with the caveat that some religious exemptions will be given.

The comments from Jeffress come after members of different Christian communities say that they oppose taking the coronavirus vaccine because fetal cell lines were used in COVID-19 vaccine testing, according to the news outlet. Fetal cell lines, however, are not present in the actual vaccines.

"Christians who are troubled by the use of a fetal cell line for the testing of the vaccines would also have to abstain from the use of Tylenol, Pepto Bismol, Ibuprofen, and other products that used the same cell line if they are sincere in their objection," Jeffress told the AP in an email.

Other religious organizations have objected to the use of religious exemptions or have stated outright that they will deny an exception for anyone who does not want to get the coronavirus vaccine.

An official from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America [issued](#) a statement on Thursday that leaders "unanimously affirmed that the Church not only permits vaccinations against diseases."

"In addition, although some may be exempt from the vaccination for clear medical reasons, there is no exemption in the Orthodox Church for Her faithful from any vaccination for religious reasons, including the coronavirus vaccine," the statement added.

"For this reason, letters of exemption for the vaccination against the coronavirus for religious purposes issued by priests of the Archdiocese of America have no validity, and furthermore, no clergy are to issue such religious exemption letters for any reason," the statement said.

- [India to resume exporting COVID-19 vaccines next month](#)
- [Biden administration easing restrictions for vaccinated foreign...](#)

[President Biden](#) earlier this month [announced a new rule](#) through the Labor Department that private companies with 100 employees or more will be required to mandate vaccinations or weekly testing. The rule affects tens of millions of private U.S. workers.

According to [data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. saw more than 147,000 new cases on Thursday and more than 160,000 the day prior. In comparison, cases were as low as under 10,000 in June.

Roughly 74 percent of people aged 12 and older in the U.S. have received at least one dose of the vaccine, with about 64 percent fully vaccinated, per CDC [data](#).