

ATHEISTS RIP PENCE FOR CHURCH DONATION APPEAL

Organized atheists, unlike most Americans who are non-believers, are more often than not driven by hatred of religion and the faithful. Their impulses are totalitarian: they would ban all religious expression if they could. A classic case is Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF).

FFRF has gone ballistic because Vice President Mike Pence recently implored Americans to make donations to their church, even if they cannot attend during the coronavirus crisis.

The atheists said that no American public official “should lend the power and prestige of their office to a particular church or to religion in general.” They even accused Pence of being un-American. “Leveraging a global pandemic to drum up church donations is an egregious betrayal of the country’s founding principles in order to benefit religion.” The atheists added that Pence “should not further encourage Americans to give their money to those who least deserve it.”

Their reasoning is bankrupt. Here are three reasons why.

First, Pence was exercising two of his First Amendment rights: freedom of speech and freedom of religion (religious expression is a core constitutional right). Even vice presidents maintain those rights.

Second, Pence did not order anyone to give to their church or offer new tax incentives if they did. His terms were purely volitional.

Third, what Pence said not only did not betray America’s founding principles, it affirmed them. Every president in American history has made public appeals expressing the critical role that religion plays in society, especially

during times of adversity.

During the Civil War, Lincoln once told his secretary, "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." Similarly, William McKinley, struggling with his decision to seize the Philippines, said to a group of ministers, "I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night."

Atheists like those at FFRF are poorly educated. There is a profound difference between the government sponsoring religion and freedom of religious expression, but they don't understand—or don't want to understand—the difference.