

ATHEISTS ELICIT AN AMORAL ETHICS

Do human beings possess natural rights, rights given by God that all governments must respect? Or is this plain nonsense?

A recent Pew Research Center survey shows how this philosophical question comes into play in real-life settings. If ventilators are in short supply, whom should we service first? Those who are most in need at the moment? Or those most likely to recover?

The answer, like so many ethical issues, turns on religion. The majority of those who are religiously affiliated say those who are most in need of a ventilator should take priority, while the majority of the unaffiliated (mostly agnostics and atheists) say those who are the most likely to recover should get it.

Similarly, when questioned about the role of religion in one's life, religious Americans favor giving the ventilator to those in need at the moment; those for whom religion does not play a role prefer giving it to those most likely to recover.

On a related issue, a Pew survey in 2013 found that religious Americans were the least likely to say suicide is a moral right; the unaffiliated were the most likely to support it.

A 2018 Gallup poll disclosed that euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide varied widely on the basis of religiosity: religious Americans were the least likely to support these options; the unaffiliated were the most likely to support them.

In 2010, the British Medical Journal found that atheist and agnostic doctors, as compared to those who are religious, were almost twice as likely to decide, by themselves, that it is

proper to hasten a person's death if the patient is very sick.

To put it differently, those who are not religious are more likely to devalue the sanctity of human life. This is not a desirable outcome for anyone, especially the vulnerable.

This all traces back to natural rights. Those who take their religion seriously are more likely to believe in natural rights: they believe all humans possess equal rights, and that they cannot be overridden on the basis of utility, or what works best overall. So when ventilators are in short supply, those who are most in need deserve to get them—we are all equal in the eyes of God. Their rights should never be subordinate to those who are the most likely to live.

Those who believe otherwise embrace a utilitarian ethics.

Atheists embrace the utilitarianism as espoused by Jeremy Bentham. The British philosopher maintained that morality was best served by providing for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Such a philosophy advantages the powerful and the healthy—it can be used to justify slavery and euthanasia—which is why it is fundamentally an amoral ethics.

Bentham called natural rights “nonsense upon stilts.” Not surprisingly, he was an atheist. For him, the idea that innocent human life is sacred was chimerical. What counts, he believed, was serving the best interests of the majority of people, even if it comes at the expense of others.

Atheism is amoral because its ethics devolves to the individual. It's all about me, not we. It is this kind of thinking that allows irreligious doctors to decide whether their patients should live or die. Ironically, even atheists who are sick would not want to have such a physician.

Society prospers morally when we have more religious persons, not less. This does not mean that all atheists are immoral or that all religious persons are moral. But it does mean that

society, as a whole, is better off, generally speaking, when it is populated by people of faith, and not their atheist counterparts.

MAN WHO SMEARED WARTIME POPE DIES

On May 13, the man who smeared Pope Pius XII died. Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play, *The Deputy*, is what started the lie that the pope did nothing to save Jews during the Holocaust. It was this fictional account that poisoned the minds of millions.

We learned in 2007 from a senior defector from Soviet intelligence that the play was created by communists working in the Kremlin.

After World War II, Jews from all over the United States, Europe, and Israel praised Pius for his incredible efforts to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews. Indeed, he did more to help Jews than any other religious or secular leader.

Those who praised the pope, before the Hochhuth Soviet-crafted disinformation campaign, included Albert Einstein, Golda Meir, the ADL, the Synagogue Council of America, the Rabbinical Council of America, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, and many others. Leonard Bernstein of the New York Philharmonic was so moved that he called for a moment of silence during one of his performances when he learned the pope died in 1958.

Hochhuth is dead. We hope his lies die with him.

INTERNATIONAL ASSAULT ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The assault on religious liberty quickened when dozens of international left-wing organizations recently signed a statement lecturing the U.S. State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights. Leading the pack are the Center for Reproductive Rights, Human Rights Watch, and the International Women's Health Coalition.

Their opposition to religious liberty was on grand display. As usual, it's all about sex. In their world, every time religious liberty clashes with abortion rights or the LGBT agenda, the former must bow to the latter.

The letter addressed to the Commission on Unalienable Rights says, "we urge the Commission to reject the prioritization of freedom of religion as a cloak to permit violations of the human rights of women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people."

The hostility to religious liberty could not be more evident. In their formulation, religious liberty is not a foundational right. No, it is a "cloak" designed to rob people of their newly discovered rights.

The fact is that religious liberty has long been recognized throughout the world as a foundational right. Therefore, it should never be put on the same moral or legal plane with reproductive or sexual rights. To do so is to devalue religious liberty. This, of course, is exactly what these organizations seek to do.

It is illuminating to note that early on in the letter, the

signatories list reproductive rights as “essential to the realization of fundamental human rights, including the rights to health, life, equality, information, education, privacy, non-discrimination and protection from torture and other ill-treatment.” These sages obviously don’t see the irony in mentioning the right to life in a statement that rejects it. And, of course, religious liberty is intentionally left out of their list of “fundamental human rights.”

It has not escaped the Catholic League that many of the most prominent organizations attacking religious liberty have a history of bashing religion, especially Catholicism. Let’s begin with the three organizers.

Center for Reproductive Rights has attacked the Catholic Church with such venom that we once registered a formal complaint with the United Nations after it released its highly politicized report, “The Holy See at the United Nations: An Obstacle to Women’s Reproductive Rights.” It is funded by George Soros.

Human Rights Watch also labels the Holy See “obstructionist” for standing up for the rights of the unborn. When Filipino bishops merely stated the Church’s position on contraception and abortion, it launched an attack on them. It is funded by George Soros.

International Women’s Health Coalition went bonkers when the Commission on Unalienable Rights was launched. “Despite its innocuous name, the concept of natural rights and natural law is rooted in 13th century theology and used anti-rights actors to attack women’s and LGBTQI rights.” It noted that Mary Ann Glendon was chairing the commission, no doubt another red flag.

Much the same could be said about the other signatories. Here is a sampling.

Guttmacher Institute has consistently criticized Catholic

hospitals for buying secular hospitals. It is appalled when Catholic-owned hospitals follow Catholic norms.

Human Rights Campaign opposes laws that allow a religious exemption for adoption agencies, and relentlessly opposes religious liberty whenever it clashes with the LGBT agenda.

International Planned Parenthood Federation has attacked the Catholic Church for its sex education curriculum and has sought to delegitimize the Holy See's role at the U.N.

NARAL Pro-Choice America opposes Catholic hospitals exercising their right to buy secular entities, and has a well-documented record of anti-Catholicism dating back to its origins in the 1960s.

Catholics for Choice is an anti-Catholic front group that specializes in disseminating disinformation about the Catholic Church, especially its teaching on the sanctity of life. It is funded by George Soros.

Center for Constitutional Rights provided assistance to an anti-Catholic victims' group when it petitioned the International Criminal Court to prosecute Pope Benedict XVI for allegedly covering up clergy sexual abuse. Its bogus campaign failed. It is funded by George Soros.

National Center for Transgender Equality opposes the conscience rights and religious freedom protections afforded by the Trump administration.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America has a long history of attacking Catholic teachings on sexuality. It also opposes Catholic faith-based initiatives. It is funded by George Soros.

Population Institute calls the Holy See an "anti-contraception gestapo" and works to undermine its work at the U.N.

In other words, these left-wing organizations have long

harbored an animus against the Catholic Church. Were it not for its atheist-billionaire benefactor, George Soros, many would be struggling and some crash.

There is no other religion where rich people like Soros contribute mightily to its adversaries. The media do not report on this because many are on his side, that's how deep the bias is. There will be no "60 Minutes" episode on Soros. PBS won't touch him. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* will never expose him.

Interestingly, Soros, who is Jewish, was condemned by the ADL's former director as anti-Semitic (the current head would never say so). And, of course, he is a committed anti-Catholic. He's quite the bigot.

PELL'S RELEASE TRIGGERS BACKLASH

Most people are normal and desire justice. Abnormal people prize revenge. A case in point is the reaction to the release of Cardinal George Pell from an Australian prison. Normal people are happy with the news, but there are always the abnormal ones.

Neither the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post*—the three most critical newspapers of the Catholic Church—put the Pell story on the front page (the latter two buried it on p. 19), but it is a sure bet they would have had his conviction been upheld.

The first reaction to the acquittal of Cardinal Pell from the *New York Times* was to hammer the justice system in Australia. There is too much secrecy in their system, the two reporters

said. They are right. The Australian courts are not nearly as transparent as the American courts. But if this were a problem, why did the newspaper not sound the alarms when the vector of change was moving against Pell? Why did they wait to register a complaint only when he won?

The reporters cited as an example the court's decision to pull from bookstores a work by Louise Milligan, *Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*. The judge wanted to avoid a contempt of court charge.

Who is she? Milligan is a hero in anti-Catholic circles in Australia, which are quite big. Speaking of Pell, she once said, "He's a man for years was telling the rest of us how to live our lives—not the least how to live our sex lives." There it is again: It's always sex that drives Church haters over the edge. For them, the three most dreaded words in the English language are "Thou Shalt Not."

The first article Milligan ever wrote about Pell appeared in the April 16, 2001 edition of the Australian. It was about gay fascists who tried to storm St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. They were screaming, "George Pell, Go to Hell." Like Milligan, the gays objected to his defense of Catholic moral theology. [NOTE: Australian media reported that "Rot in Hell Pell" and "No Justice" were scribbled on the doors of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne following Pell's acquittal.]

BishopAccountability is the favorite source of left-wing journalists who don't like the Catholic Church. It's idea of priestly justice is to leave the names of exonerated priests on its website, suggesting to readers they may be guilty. One of its officials, Anne Barrett Doyle, said in relation to Pell's release that "it is distressing to many survivors, the decision doesn't change the fact the trial of the powerful cardinal was a watershed."

One can almost hear her groan. Not a word about putting an

innocent man in solitary confinement for crimes he never committed. It was a watershed, alright—it was one of the most egregious cases of injustice ever endured by a high-ranking member of the Catholic hierarchy.

SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), which the Catholic League played a major role in crippling in the United States, spoke for its Australian members saying, “We are dismayed and heartbroken that Cardinal George Pell has successfully challenged his conviction for sexually abusing two choirboys and will be freed from prison.” In other words, justice doesn’t matter. Punishing the Catholic Church is what matters. They are abnormal.

Voice of the Faithful, another mostly moribund American letterhead, said, “The court’s ruling leaves clergy abuse survivors and supporters wondering where justice lies.” This proves once again that this pitiful band of elderly Catholic dissidents was never interested in Church reform. Justice, according to them, is when the person they hate gets punished, independent of his innocence. They are abnormal.

We stand with what Pope Francis tweeted right after Cardinal Pell was freed.

“In these days of #Lent, we’ve been witnessing the persecution that Jesus underwent and how He was judged ferociously, even though He was innocent. Let us #PrayTogether today for all those persons who suffer due to an unjust sentence because of someone had it in for them.”

ARE BANS ON CHURCH GATHERINGS KOSHER?

In Michigan, New York, and Ohio, churches are exempt from bans on large gatherings at this time due to the coronavirus. Indiana, Louisiana, and Virginia have decided to extend the ban to churches. This is definitely a state issue: the Trump administration has wisely stayed out of it.

At the state level, this is a difficult issue. Our first impulse is to defend religious liberty, but like any freedom, it is not absolute. For example, in New York, it was reasonably decided, after much discussion, not to exempt religious bodies from mandated vaccinations.

Whenever religious liberty collides with public health, the government is obliged to put the least restrictive measures on religion. If that is done, and the motive is purely to protect the public, then in a crisis situation, temporary bans may be legitimate.

Motive counts. Why? Because we must always consider the source of an objection to religious exemptions. If the source is the medical community, and reasonable temporary restrictions are called for in a crisis situation, that is one thing; if the source is a hostile force, that is another. Unfortunately, there are plenty of examples of the latter.

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and the Center for Inquiry have all issued statements against allowing religious exemptions for bans on large gatherings at this time. Their motives are not benign.

The best way to proceed with this issue is for religious leaders to work with state officials in coming up with a compromise during these difficult times. What we don't need is

the advice of those who are anything but religion-friendly.

ABORTION ACTIVISTS ENDANGER PUBLIC HEALTH

Should abortions be considered elective surgery and therefore not be permitted during the coronavirus pandemic, or are they an essential healthcare issue that should be permitted? Predictably, in pro-life states like Ohio and Texas officials are saying abortions constitute elective surgery and should therefore not be allowed, while in pro-abortion states like Massachusetts and Washington, officials are defending them.

This issue has even split those in the medical community working in the same facility. Nearly 300 doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center recently sent a letter to management asking them to “postpone procedures that can be performed in the future” so that they can accommodate the expected surge in patients due to the coronavirus.

The central issue in this case transcends the usual abortion debate: any elective surgery that is being performed during this crisis uses resources that are needed to help those who are hospitalized with the coronavirus.

Chethan Sathya is a pediatric surgeon and journalist in New York City. Here is his analysis of what is at stake. “Surgeries are resource-intensive—requiring surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, transport teams, medical beds and equipment such as ventilators. Suspending elective surgeries will free up those doctors, other medical personnel, and rooms and equipment.”

Dr. Sathya is also concerned about the effect that doing elective surgeries is bound to have on medical staff. "Because of the number of health-care workers required to work close to one another for each surgery," he writes, "I have no doubt that continuing to perform non-urgent surgeries would lead to further spread of the virus among health-care workers."

In other words, those who are pushing for abortions during the coronavirus are endangering the lives of healthcare workers. But do they care?

Here is how Planned Parenthood has responded. "We're closely monitoring the spread of the new coronavirus, or COVID-19. The health and safety of our patients, staff, and communities is our top priority."

Notice that Planned Parenthood is only interested in its own agenda. It says not a word about tying up resources needed by those who are truly sick. By taking away needed personnel, gear and equipment from servicing those who are infected with the coronavirus, it is jeopardizing the lives of those at risk.

The heart of this dispute rests on the question of whether abortion is elective surgery or not. Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and others in the abortion industry argue that abortion is not elective surgery and must be provided at all times. But is it?

Take two women, Joy and Jane. Joy has a life-threatening heart problem and is scheduled for surgery. Jane wants an abortion. No one in his right mind would equate the two. If Joy doesn't get heart surgery, she will probably die. If Jane is denied her abortion, she lives (as does her baby).

It comes down to this: Joy has a need; Jane has a want. No woman wants to have heart surgery—they either need it or they don't. Conversely, no woman needs an abortion—it is, as they like to say, a matter of choice.

Does that mean that abortion is like any other elective surgery, such as a facelift (rhytidectomy) or a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty)? No. In those cases, only the person's face

or tummy is affected. In the case of an abortion, another person is affected. And there is nothing elective about that person's fate.

BLAMING CHRISTIANS FOR THE VIRUS IS PARANOID

It is not unusual for authors of a new book to seize opportunities to plug their work. But the March 27 op-ed in the *New York Times* by Katherine Stewart breaks new ground. After inventing a bogey man—"Christian Nationalists"—she then blames them for the coronavirus. Here is some background information.

When George W. Bush won reelection in 2004, no issue brought voters to side with him more than "values." These "values voters" sent a shock wave through the ranks of the secular elite in the Democratic Party, and they responded by founding rogue lay Catholic groups such as Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good. They also discovered the virtue of "God talk" and an expressed interest in government faith-based social programs (absent the faith element, of course).

Those phony tactics were buttressed by an onslaught of bigoted attacks that branded conservative Christians "theocrats." It didn't get them one vote. Now the same crowd is back arguing that "Christian Nationalists" are a threat to the country.

In July 2019, those who hate religious conservatives released a document, "Christians Against Christian Nationalism." They said this new enemy "demands that Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must

be Christian.” One wonders why these nefarious Christians settled for *implying* that everyone be a Christian—why didn’t they *demand* it.

Stewart is one of the proponents of this crazed idea. In her op-ed she drops a few anecdotes citing some wild-eyed remarks made by a few pastors, and then unloads by blaming Trump for listening to these people, resulting in an allegedly poor response to the coronavirus.

This is a cheap game. It would be like conservatives blaming left-wing cable television channels for the coronavirus. How so? By suggesting, and in some cases stating, that Trump is a bigot for putting a ban on travel from China. He did that on January 31, ten days after the first case of the virus hit the U.S. This led the Chinese-Communist friendly head of the World Health Organization to label Trump a “racist,” and Joe Biden responded by saying he was fomenting “xenophobia” and “fear-mongering.”

The medical community acknowledges that Trump saved an untold number of lives by making this decision. Would it now be fair to blame his left-wing critics for the coronavirus? No, only a Christian conservative who thinks the way Stewart does would blame them.

Finally, to show how much Stewart hates religious conservatives, consider that she is upset with Trump for saying he hopes we are “just raring to go by Easter.” What’s wrong with that? “He could have said, ‘by mid-April.’” Yup, this is proof that Christian Nationalists are running the country.

This is the level of intellectual scholarship that the *New York Times* fancies these days. The newspaper of record is now mainstreaming paranoia.

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.

DE BLASIO FEARS “CHRISTIAN VIRUS”

Rev. Franklin Graham could have chosen to simply ask his people to pray for New Yorkers hit hard with coronavirus. But instead he recruited 72 doctors, nurses and other medical personnel from Samaritan’s Purse, an evangelical group, to set up a 68-bed facility in Central Park; it is operated in partnership with the Mount Sinai Health System and is equipped with ten ventilators.

How was he received? Many New Yorkers welcomed Graham’s efforts, but some have reviled him. Militant secularists have bombarded him with vitriol, including such notables as New

York State Senator Brad Hoylman and playwright Paul Rudnick. Hoylman called Graham a “notorious anti-gay bigot” and Rudnick branded him a “vicious homophobe.”

Hoylman should not throw stones. In 2018, he wrote an insulting anti-Catholic tweet. Bill Donohue slammed him for it and he quickly called Donohue to apologize. Donohue accepted it. But he should know better. As for Rudnick, he is known for his filthy anti-Christian play, “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told.” So he has no leg to stand on—he knows a thing or two about bigotry.

All of this attack on Graham stems from his belief that the institution of marriage was designed for the only two people who can naturally make a family, namely a man and a woman. Up until about a week ago yesterday, figuratively speaking, every normal person believed the same, all over the world.

Anyone is free to disagree with Graham, but to portray him as a hater is malicious. Graham explained who his medical staff serves. “We do not make distinctions about an individual’s religion, race, sexual orientation, or economic status.” More important, *there is zero evidence that any of his ministries discriminates against anyone.*

No one is to blame for these attacks on Graham more than New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. When he first learned of the relief efforts of Samaritan’s Purse he acted as if New York had been invaded by a hostile force.

“I said immediately to my team that we had to find out exactly what was happening. Was there going to be an approach that was truly consistent with the values and the laws in New York City, that everyone would be served and served equally?” He wasn’t done. “We’re going to send over people from the Mayor’s Office to monitor” the park facility. That is the mindset of an authoritarian.

What makes de Blasio’s attack on Graham most despicable is his

failure to take coronavirus seriously. His record is an utter disgrace. Consider the following.

- “While de Blasio said he will announce new restrictions on large gatherings in the coming days, leaders in other cities and states across the U.S. have already enacted measures to slow the spread of the infectious disease.” [www.foxnews.com, 3-12]
- “New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Saturday he plans to keep schools in the country’s largest school system open as long as possible, standing in stark contrast to the majority of the country’s largest city school districts and governors in more than a dozen states who have shuttered their entire K-12 education systems to stem the spread of the coronavirus.” [www.usnews.com, 3-14]
- “De Blasio’s decision to keep New York City’s schools open goes against guidance released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommended that all schools close for a period of six to eight weeks, especially in states with high numbers of cases.” [www.usnews.com, 3-14]
- “New York City is one of the few large school districts left in the country that has yet to cancel classes due to the coronavirus outbreak and the teachers that run the classroom say they’re ‘furious,’ according to Facebook posts and statements from the teachers themselves.” [www.nbcnews.com, 3-15]
- “New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio started rebuffing any effort to close schools last week saying, ‘we are going to do our damndest to keep the schools open.’ By the end of last week, the second and third largest education systems, Los Angeles and Chicago, had announced the suspension of classes. Several large states such as Florida and Ohio have announced the cancellation of classes, too. On Sunday, it was announced that Nassau and Suffolk county schools will be closed for two weeks.” [www.nbcnews.com, 3-15]
- “‘Because of his irresponsible decision to keep the public schools open, Mayor Bill de Blasio can no longer assure the

health and safety of our students and school communities,' wrote Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers, in an email to its members. 'The mayor is recklessly putting the health of our students, their families and school staff in jeopardy by refusing to close public schools.'" [www.nypost.com, 3-15]

This same delinquent mayor is now worried that someone who is sick with coronavirus may catch the "Christian virus," simply because he was attended to by one of Franklin Graham's volunteer corps of medical professionals. Is he paranoid? Or just a bigot?

De Blasio is an embarrassment. No wonder his presidential bid fell flat. Who in his right mind would want him to run anything?

STATE OVERREACH THREATENS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

On March 27, Bill Donohue addressed the conflict between public health restrictions and religious liberty protections. "Whenever religious liberty collides with public health, the government is obliged to put the least restrictive measures on religion."

On April 11, U.S. District Judge Justin Walker invoked a temporary restraining order blocking Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer's ban on drive-in church services. The Kentucky governor, Andy Beshear, did not support the ban but he still warned against drive-in church services.

The Catholic League stands with Judge Walker. The Louisville

mayor's directive is a classic case of government overreach: his ban was clearly not "the least restrictive measure." Judge Walker called his decision "stunning" and "unconstitutional." Moreover, the mayor's reasoning is deeply flawed.

Once the coronavirus pandemic hit, and social distancing was recommended, the clergy from many religions acted prudently by discontinuing services in church. But some sought to be creative by allowing drive-in services in church parking lots. Instead of applauding these efforts where they made sense (they are impractical when the weather is cold), Louisville Mayor Fischer banned them.

What infuriated Christians in Louisville was the decision to allow drive-through restaurants and liquor stores. Judge Walker seized on this disparity, noting that parking lots of liquor stores were not prohibited.

"When Louisville prohibits religious activity while permitting non-religious activities," he said, "its choice 'must undergo the most rigorous of scrutiny.' That scrutiny requires Louisville to prove its interest is 'compelling' and its regulation is 'narrowly tailored to advance that interest.'"

House Freedom Caucus Chairman Andy Biggs and Rep. Jody Hice have sent a letter to President Trump, Vice President Pence and Attorney General Bill Barr asking them to address restrictions placed on religious liberty. Barr said he is "monitoring" this issue and may take action.

The clergy have, for the most part, been reasonable in balancing public health and religious liberty interests, and so have most mayors and governors. But the exceptions are egregious, and none more than the decision by Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer to ban drive-in church services on Easter Sunday. The Department of Justice should weigh in without delay.