

A Time to Stand

These days the question at the forefront of all our debates is, "What is the church?"

Is it a commercial place? Is it an entertainment venue? Is it like a hospital or a pharmacy? What about a conference hall, a classroom or even a park? Is it a video game or an online app?

Though all of the above may apply to its more visible acts or manifestations, none are consistent with the core value and essential activity of the church and its local churches!

Therefore, a decision which categorizes churches in any of the aforementioned public settings ignores one irreplaceable quality that only belongs to the church and to none other: eternity!

No other place and no other activity in this world ties a person to the afterlife in such a definitive and direct way!

Everything else is here and now for here and now! It is temporary, evolving, dispensable and as disposable as the bodies for which they apply!

But churches are most applicable for the soul, its vitality and its nourishment, with capital and eternal consequences, and that escapes most people who would try to place them in the "public gatherings" column.

That is why church is and should be standing alone in one most essential, most exclusive and most untouchable qualification!

In that sense, it is similar but much more than a food or hardware store, more than an entertainment venue, a hospital or a pharmacy.

At the other end of any other exchange are people, corporations, institutions and forms of governments.

In the church and its local settings, it's God!

And you can regulate and abate anything in this world but God!

The world tried to do it for decades in the public school system, in arts and culture, in media and lifestyles, and everywhere else, for its own demise!

They've even succeeded to either intimidate or employ pastors and priests into this treasonous abandonment of churches' main identity, which pertains to the conversion of human souls into the kingdom of God!

Many churches have abandoned the church design and its divine project by promoting an unbalanced approach, catering more to social and cultural needs than to the spiritual needs of the people!

Or they've been convinced that the church can survive without proper physical gatherings for a prolonged time, even a year!

That's why we see so many so-called religious people with a humanistic worldview either excluding from or at best ambiguously implying God and faith in their activities.

This is why the founding fathers and the Constitution have completely excluded governments from any intervention into or application of authority over religious institutions and activities!

The present crisis, whether objectively or subjectively, is testing that prerequisite of church and churches' stand-alone and self-governing status!

That is why Coronavirus is not just a pandemic threatening the lives and livelihoods of people, it is also an opportunity!

It is an opportunity for the ever expansive authority of governments to include religion under its ordinances and dominance, but also an opportunity for all churches to stand

together and defeat this sinister ploy to subjugate them!

So, dear pastors and religious leaders, whatever your approach or belief system you adhere to, know and understand this: We care about our people more than the government bureaucrats do, we know what church is without the government lecturing us about it, we have our precious First Amendment and will not allow a hostile government takeover, and we will be strong, courageous and diligent, especially when a crisis creates such convenient circumstances for the government to do all these things!

Out of this concern and on this principle I stand, and for this, I placed my position and my life on the line!

To do otherwise, all considerations included, it would mean on my part high treason in the kingdom for which I live, the kingdom of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! And that I cannot and will not do.

You might think that this is over-dramatization and grandstanding! For me, it's conviction and faithfulness.

And on this front, while I welcome President Trump's support, I wish for a Supreme Court favorable and precedent-setting decision. I feel vindicated by state and local government change, of course, and I believe we should be ready to act on our conscience, whether together or alone, in times of favor or contempt, with or without any other protection or mandate, except for the one we have from God! {eo}