

LGBT Opposition Intensifies Against Samaritan's Purse Field Hospital in NYC

LGBT opposition to Samaritan's Purse is intensifying in New York City, where the Christian charity has set up a field hospital to help patients with COVID-19.

On Tuesday, LGBT activists with the Reclaim Pride Coalition protested several yards away from the Christian field hospital, according to RNS. New York's government started partnering with the Christian charity two weeks ago to help treat overflow patients. As of April 15, Samaritan's Purse has treated 120 patients, according to a statement on their website.

But LGBT activists take issue with Samaritan's Purse because of its biblical views on marriage and sexuality. Samaritan's Purse founder Franklin Graham, son of the famed evangelist Billy Graham, has been vocal about his biblical views, which has drawn criticism from several activist groups.

On Tuesday, Franklin Graham took to Facebook to rebuke three specific groups for harassing him and his team. Those groups included:

- Eight Democratic members of New York's Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C.
- New York City Commission on Human Rights.
- Reclaim Pride Coalition.

"While our Scriptural belief in marriage between a man and a woman seems particularly offensive to representatives of these three groups, we don't believe this is the time or place to wage this debate," he wrote. "Samaritan's Purse is a decidedly

Christian private relief organization, funded almost entirely by individuals around the world who share our passion for providing aid to victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine and persecution—and doing so in Jesus’ Name. It seems tone-deaf to be attacking our religious conviction about marriage at the very moment thousands of New Yorkers are fighting for their lives and dozens of Samaritan’s Purse workers are placing their lives at risk to provide critical medical care. ...

“If any of these groups had funded and erected their own emergency field hospitals to serve COVID-19 patients in Central Park, we would join what we believe would be most New Yorkers—and Americans—in applauding and praying for them, not harassing them.”

Graham assured RNS that although his organization requires workers to adhere to a Christian statement of faith, the charity in no way discriminates against anyone, including regarding their sexuality.

“We provide our services to everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation,” Graham said. “We don’t discriminate. Period.”

But the charity hasn’t been able to escape intense scrutiny and backlash in New York City, one of the most pro-LGBT municipalities in the U.S.

Last week, four Democratic members of New York’s congressional delegation sent a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and Kenneth L. Davis, the president of Mount Sinai Health System, reports the *New York Times*. In the letter, they asked how the group got involved with the government’s response to COVID-19.

New York City Attorney General Letitia James assured people that she would “remain vigilant to ensure discrimination does not occur.”

Meanwhile, Graham points at his organization's faith-based efforts as something New Yorkers should applaud, not protest: "We have provided billions of dollars of medical care and supplies, food and water, and emergency shelter without any conditions whatsoever. Our Christian faith compels us—like the biblical Good Samaritan—to love and serve everyone in need, regardless of their faith or background."