

Why the Church Is the Antidote to Marxist Ideals

When Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot set their sights on shutting down one of Chicago's vibrant immigrant churches, they thought they had an easy target. They were wrong.

Most of the congregation either escaped Romania's brutal Communist regime or their parents did. The memory of the brutality and oppression leveled against them is still fresh in the minds of many of Elim's members. And what they remember most were the attacks on Christians and churches. They never thought they would experience those attacks again—until now.

Romanian Americans Know Their Rights!

Legal immigrants have an advantage over many who have always known freedom. Many new Americans like these Romanians longed to come to America—the land of the free. They learned about our history, and they swore an oath to “support and to defend” the Constitution.

When Gov. Pritzker first shut down Illinois over COVID, Elim closed out of an abundance of caution for its members and the community at large. But when Pritzker extended his lockdowns and said churches were not “essential” and could not return to worship levels of 50 people for 12-18 months, but that liquor stores, marijuana shops and abortion clinics were exempted, pastor Cristian Ionescu said “Enough!”

The lockdowns caused domestic and child abuse to skyrocket, as did depression, anxiety, drug abuse and suicide. The church's leaders knew their congregants and the surrounding community needed the church's ministry. The church reopened with a thorough sanitization and health and safety measures that went above and beyond the measures Gov. Pritzker required for

“essential” businesses.

Knowing their constitutional rights and the church is always “essential,” Elim Romanian Pentecostal resumed church gatherings.

Furious that Elim wasn’t kowtowing to Gov. Pritzker’s illegal, unconstitutional orders, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot unleashed mob-like bullying tactics against the church. Her actions eerily mirrored those of Romania’s former communist regime, where the Bible was banned, churches were closed and pastors arrested.

Lightfoot towed the neighbors’ cars for nine blocks around the church. She blocked the church’s private parking lot with five police cars. She charged the pastor with “disorderly conduct” for having more than 10 people in church. Lightfoot even threatened to seize and destroy Elim’s beautiful worship center.

When Lightfoot and her thugs twisted Scripture in their communications with the church, Pastor Ionescu responded:

“Stop making us believe that you care more than we do,” Ionescu declared. “Stop quoting the Scriptures. You have nothing to do with the Scriptures. You are godless. You do not care about the Bible. You do not care about the church. Stop lecturing us in theology.”

Liberty Counsel is representing Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church before the U.S. Supreme Court. With Justice Amy Coney Barrett now confirmed to the high court, I am looking forward to having our case heard.

What happens in this case will not only affect our other lawsuits and cases defending pastors, churches and parishioners, it will also determine once and for all whether religious freedom in America will continue to exist at all.

A government strong enough to dictate religious practices is a government strong enough to erase churches and religious liberty.

God has been more than good to Liberty Counsel, and He has blessed the battle we are fighting for His people's freedom to worship. The appointment of over 200 new federal judges, along with President Trump's appointment of three new Supreme Court Justices goes a long way to help us in this fight. But the battle is far from over.

Please pray for our country. The 2020 presidential election may not be officially decided yet, but through the work of President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell, America's judicial system has been transformed through the seating of an unprecedented number of constitutional textualist judges over the last 3 1/2 years.

These judges are a counterforce to the rampant judicial activism that has subverted our Constitution and the rule of law over recent decades. And Justice Amy Coney Barrett is hearing her first Supreme Court cases this week. {eo}

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