

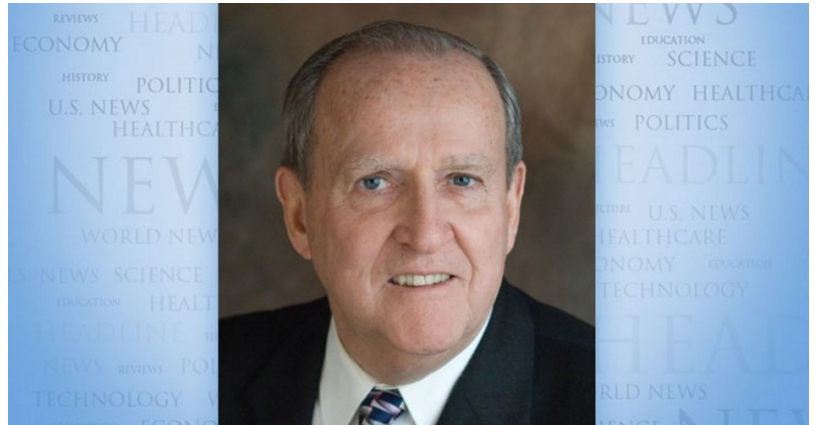


Written by [John F. McManus](#) on April 4, 2020

Attacks on Christians More Common

Attacks on Christian beliefs and principles across America have become common in recent years. Two months ago, a Christian pastor in Virginia learned at first hand what never could have happened in the Old Dominion state 25 years ago.

After accepting a formal invitation to give a prayer at a session of the Virginia House of Delegates, Pastor Robert M. Grant, Jr. found himself in a hostile situation. Several of the elected delegates noisily bolted for the doors as he was reading his prayer. (Virginia prefers to call its state legislators “delegates” and employs the term “House of Delegates” for the lower branch of the state government.)



Pastor Grant earned a loud rebuke from several angry delegates for his brief prayer. It would be good to hear a prayer he might compose about the need for a return to God while our nation is suffering from a pandemic. But the coronavirus threat wasn't a concern in early February when he dwelled on the scourge of abortion in the following comments:

The unborn have rights and those rights need to be protected. They should never be denied the right to exist, the right to develop, and the right to have a family. The word of God has given us a warning: Woe to anyone who harms an innocent child. Every one of you sitting here today can guarantee these rights to these little children of Virginia. I pray that you may understand that all life is precious and worthy of a chance to be born. God is the giver of life and people have no right or authority to take life.

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Despite an outburst that sought to silence him, Pastor Grant, the leader of The Father's Way Church, continued with sharp disagreement about another increasingly accepted practice dubbed “same-sex marriage.” All of this was too much for several additional delegates who fled. One even took a few seconds as he headed for the corridor to yell “Is this a prayer or a sermon?” House Speaker Eileen Fisher-Corn abruptly ended Grant's remarks with a few bangs of her gavel and she started a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Grant, a Black American and a proud Virginian, wound up his prayer before being silenced with, “Please don't ignore the little voices. I pray for a heart change today, and may the Lord God have mercy on this leadership.” And then he heaped more coals on the fire started by his anti-abortion stance when he condemned same-sex “marriage.” He insisted:

I pray that this chamber will uphold the Virginia family, that the bills and laws being passed will always protect the biblical tradition of marriage as God instructed the first man and first woman in the Bible that the two shall be one flesh; that a man and a woman shall be fruitful and multiply.



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Asked later about his remarks, Grant certainly didn't apologize to anyone who labelled what he stated a "prayer." However, House Delegate Luke Torian claimed to have been offended, saying that Grant's prayer was "totally disrespectful to all of us in the House." The pastor responded with calm determination: "I think the statehouse belongs to all of the citizens and all have a voice. If it's my turn to have a voice, and I am a pastor, what do you expect of me? If you don't want to hear what a pastor has to say, then don't invite one."

Delegate Dave LaRock spoke for several his fellow Republicans when he said he certainly wasn't offended. He even posed for a photo with Pastor Grant.

In 2012, Virginia's Republican-led legislature passed some tough restrictions on abortion. But voters awarded control of the legislature to Democrats in 2018 and they arranged to make access to abortion easier. Democrat Governor Ralph Northam not only declared himself in favor of abortion, he even advocated carrying the grisly practice one step further when he let it be known that he favored snuffing out the life of a hapless baby survives an attempt at abortion.

For many years, pro-life partisans could count on Virginia to be an upholder of life in the womb as well as considering marriage to be the union of one man and one woman. Virginians and like-minded Americans who agree with such traditional values obviously have some work to do. We certainly hope that Pastor Grant's courageous stand will help to reverse the majority attitude in Virginia, and wherever else such policies have been awarded legality.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of The John Birch Society.



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