THE DOORS OF THE CHURCH ARE OPENING: AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN A PANDEMIC

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When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, social distancing restrictions were enacted, and many churches ceased religious gatherings. When the local church should re-open for in-person worship was a value judgment that created an ethical dilemma for every pastoral leader. The Christian church has a responsibility to act in the best interest of the greater community. Because of the far-reaching and high-stakes consequences this decision holds for internal and external stakeholders, it must be made with significant deliberation and prayer. The decision must be interpreted in the contexts of either shadow ethics with an accompanying critique paradigm or light ethics with a complimentary care paradigm. An analysis of these two approaches provides a model for pastoral leadership to use during a worldwide pandemic to examine the emotional impact, weigh the contributions of multiple voices, and exercise authentic leadership that is responsible, credible, and accountable. This framework provides an informed approach that helps pastoral leadership avoid harm, do good, and refrain from activities that have injurious consequences for others.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The world changed dramatically in December 2019 when a novel infectious disease broke out in Wuhan, Hubei province, China. When the disease spread, the World Health Organization officially declared it to be a pandemic and named it COVID-19. As of October 2021, there have been more than 235 million confirmed cases, and 4.8 million deaths (World Health Organization, 2021). The seriousness of the coronavirus resulted in the closing of businesses, schools, and places of worship. Consequently, church congregations had to reassess and evaluate the risks involved in worshipping in person by exploring virtual options. Church leaders, using the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, have designed and implemented varied initiatives to ensure a continuity of services that maintain a sense of community.

In 2020, in the United States, President Donald Trump and all 50 governors declared health emergencies to counteract the spread of COVID-19 (Gostin & Wiley, 2020, p. 2137). While the orders' degree varied, most local governments also issued "Stay-at-home Orders" to their populace and shut down businesses and non-essential services, including churches. These orders created a case of extreme necessity to curtail physical gatherings of more than ten people in a single place at the same time. As a result, churches across the country closed or created a framework for online worship with little advance notice. Norman and Reiss (2020) concluded, "The very nature of the advice being given…makes sacramental practice contrary to governmental guidelines…It is as if we have all been told 'Do not touch me' in response to our cry… They have taken my Lord away" (p. 579).

As the global pandemic infections surge, and daily death counts multiply, all with no definite end in sight, American church leaders were forced to make decisions about re-opening their churches. The American Church has weathered cases of extreme emergency before. However, the most difficult ethical question was whether to re-open the church for in-person gatherings. For some, the choice is a connexional decision, made by bishops or superintendents. For others, that decision is made at the local church level in committee or by a lone pastor. However, these decisions are necessarily ethical decisions that should include an examination of the emotional impact on the membership, weigh the contributions of multiple voices, and exercise authentic leadership.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF GATHERING

Hebrews 10:24-25 states, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (English Standard Version Bible used throughout this work unless indicated otherwise). König (2019) placed this passage among the calls to persevere in Hebrews; he maintained, "Almost as urgent as these warnings are the calls to persevere. It is obvious that the author fears that the readers may opt out of the faith and turn their backs on Christ" (Location 129).

Like Moore, the researchers have affirmed the necessity of replicating physical community at a distance. Lowe and Lowe (2018) noted that "much of what happens in a physical community can be replicated in a virtual community" (p. 78). Still, they stop short of affirming that all aspects of community can be replicated. The inability to experience a physical touch makes receiving a hug, the modern equivalent of a "holy kiss," especially tricky. While there are some churches that utilize moderated platforms and have staff dedicated to managing online interactions, this still does not address how the distant worshippers lend their voice to singing during the service or praying for their brother or sister standing alongside them.

Reciprocal Interactions

In Hebrews 10:24-25, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews directs believers to deliberate on how to stir up one another best to love and do good works and encourage one another. Lowe and Lowe (2018) commented, "Reciprocal interactions among connected members, produce reciprocal edification or spiritual growth" (p. 198). Similarly, Diggins (2016) contended that verse 24 demands that the believer "reflect deeply upon ways and means to bring out in fellow believers a spirit of love which naturally goes hand in glove with good works" (p. 195).

Both Diggins and Lowe and Lowe envisioned a community where reciprocal actions fulfill the "one another" statements of the New Testament without compulsion but out of a real sense of love and necessity. Anstey agreed and added the Old Testament perspective. Anstey (2019) affirmed that believers would not have mutual support –

> if we don't keep with 'the footsteps of the flock' (Song of Sol. 1:8). Since we are our 'brother's keeper' (Gen. 4:9), we have a responsibility to watch over one another's state, and to warn, if necessary, when one begins to stray (Prov. 24:11-12)" (Location 2118).

Mandatory Attendance

Verse 25 contains a mandatory attendance narrative; it states, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some..." (Heb. 10:25). Conversely, efforts to move community (and even worship) to virtual platforms create an optional attendance construct where believers are encouraged to participate in community in ways that seem to avoid physical presence. Diggins (2016) observed, "there should not be an attitude within us that forsakes or leaves brethren to their own devices. We can best stimulate each other as we physically interact" (p. 196). Physical presence engenders that reciprocal relationship and allows believers to move beyond faceless interaction to actually "greet one another with a holy kiss" (1 Cor. 16:20).

The inclusion of technology may transform community and formation while fostering deepened relationships but should not wholly replace physical engagement. Hall (2009) asserted, "virtual church, has a malforming effect because it's just communal enough to provide some of the easiest and most instantly satisfying pieces of community without the harder, more demanding parts" (p. 50). Additionally, Anstey (2019) warned, "Forsaking the gathering together of the saints is a sure sign of waning affections. It usually precedes a person's leaving the assembly altogether" (Location 2126).

Church Closures and Religious Liberty

Another important nuance is the disparate way that American states and local governments deemed in-person worship essential. In Texas, the governor and local governments issued conflicting orders, which led to confusion and amendments (Link, 2020, n.p.). On March 31, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott of Texas issued an executive order adding religious worship to Texas' list of essential services, but only allowing in-person gatherings in areas with low transmission rates. Link (2020) observed, "Abbott's order comes as several religious leaders have been arrested for defying social

distancing orders" (n.p.). Religious leaders in other states were arrested for similar infractions. Thus, the issue of social distancing created a political and legal stalemate between church and state.

Campbell (2020a) synthesized U.S. churches' resistance to governmental mandates to shutter their doors and the adaptation of technology for continued religious practice. For the pastors arrested (Link, 2020, n.p.), and others, the imposition of social-distancing requirements was an assault on the religious freedom guaranteed by the United States Constitution. According to Campbell, in some instances, law enforcement was dispatched to churches to issue fines to members, shut down parking lots, and advise parishioners of 14-day self-quarantine mandates due to their attendance in-person. Overall, the overarching conflict was the debate between every American citizen's constitutional right to freely exercise their religion, and the need to do so while protecting public health.

On the other end of Campbell's spectrum are those who overwhelmingly opted to move worship online. Whether maintaining the same look and feel of traditional worship online (transferred) or adopting a new talk-show style format (translated), an overwhelming majority of surveyed clergypersons moved to online-only worship. Campbell (2020a) advised that these groups made this transition to "continue what they see as their core functions as religious communities", and concluded that, "the use of ritual events as the basis for determining community membership or investment defines community primarily in institutional and place-based terms" (pp. 10-11).

Campbell (2020a) reported that both ends of the spectrum prioritized the act of worship over developing connections (community) within and among the membership of the church. Regardless of which end of the spectrum, a church fell, the institutional concept of church was omitting the value of community altogether. Consequently, she maintained that while the institutional perspective of community was lacking, the personal perception has changed. Campbell posited that, "for most people, community is something that is dynamic and changeable, holds multiple connections, and is determined by personal needs and choices" (p. 12).

The question of religious liberty and whether to close churches was not confined to the United States. In Poland, across all major denominations and faiths, clergypersons almost unanimously agreed to close their houses of worship entirely. In many cases, they did not even need to send directives to their members to abstain from the gathering because the faithful were members of a larger society, which was universally subject to the legal regulations barring the gathering (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020, p. 254). Sulkowski and Ignatowski found that Poland's clergypersons, without regard to congregational size, dramatically reduced and eventually eliminated in-person services. Outside of the U.S., the religious struggle seemed to be more about how or whether to adapt spiritual practices for virtual observance or to curtail all activities outright.

Mental Health Changes

This section contains an exploration of the mental health challenges created as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, it includes a discussion of the lack of preparedness to address these challenges and the need for partnerships between churches and

physicians or mental health professionals. Last, it consists of the religious fervor development during crisis and detailed polling data to support the assertion that Christians turned to God during the pandemic.

The predominant issue with the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic is that many of the "normal" social behaviors have undergone dramatic changes (Dein et al., 2020). While historically, the church played a role in responding to and helping people cope with epidemics and plagues, Dein et al. (2020) reported: "recent work contains negligible mention of religion in responding to and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 1). This lack of participation is especially alarming because people are more likely to consult clergy for mental health treatment than seek services from physicians or mental health professionals. Consequently, most religious leaders are not equipped to provide it (American Psychological Association, 2020a, n.p.).

While Parish (2020) pointed out that churches were quick to adopt new media "to act as a conduit for religious belief, liturgy, and pastoral support during periods of social distancing" few have made strides to pipeline mental health services to their parishioners (p. 3). In the last few years, only 25 percent of religious congregations have developed partnerships to offer some form of mental health support (American Psychological Association, 2020a, n.p.). The American Psychological Association (APA) has observed that the lockdown created by COVID-19 has triggered depression, anxiety disorders, and adverse behavioral changes to the American people (American Psychological Association, 2020b, n.p.). These changes have unavoidably carried over into the socio-behavioral aspects of adherents. In Ireland, 55 percent of pastors said their members' mental health was the same, 40 percent experienced more difficulty than usual, and 21 percent had fewer challenges than usual (Ganiel, 2020, p. 24).

Adegboyega et al. (2020) used Game Theory to examine the socio-behavioral effects of social distancing on religious behavior. However, they stopped short of investigating the perceived and felt needs of adherents in community. Their study's focus was on the resulting psychological gains attained from Christians congregating (Adegboyega et al., 2020). Adegboyega et al. concluded, "our expectation is that churches will partner with mental health professionals to clearly understand educational and public health information that can mitigate and bend the curve on the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 10).

There is some compelling evidence for a link between natural disasters and increased manifestations of religiosity (Bentzen, 2019). Despite church closures, a full quarter of U.S. adults have said their faith has become stronger because of the coronavirus pandemic, while a scant 2 percent say their faith has become weaker (Gecewicz, 2020). A Gallup report showed that 19 percent of Americans responded that their faith has intensified, while only 3 percent reported a decline (Dein et al., 2020). Despite the slight variance in improvement, both reports showed that American Christians have turned to God during this crisis and are more resolute in their faith as a result (Dein et al., 2020; Gecewicz, 2020).

While Dein et al. (2020) focused their research on the mental health implications of COVID-19 for religious adherents, they devoted an entire section to religious struggles. They defined these struggles as "tensions, strains, and conflicts around sacred matters" (p. 6). Their work adds a layer of complexity to the problem of mental health and COVID-19, namely that religious adherents experience the psychological

impact of religious struggle in addition to the already debilitating work to deal with the effects of social distancing. The added pressures include reconciling the belief that God is loving and allowing the suffering brought on by COVID-19, feelings of anger toward, abandonment or being punished by God, etc. Dein et al. predicted that, "we should expect a rise in COVID-19 related religious struggles among various religious groups and subsequent mental health-related problems, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidality" (p. 6).

<center>III.   THE ETHICAL DILEMMA</center>

Pazmiño (2008) provided the working definition for ethics, namely, "ethics is the study of value judgments and considers what is good or right" (p. 93). Moreover, "ethics is the study of moral principles and practices" (p. 101). In a Christian context, these values are steeped in a Christian worldview from which they cannot be divorced. Consequently, these value judgments are extended applications of the direct teachings of the Scriptures. For example, a sick believer should call for the elders of the Church, who will pray the prayer of faith so they might be healed (James 5:14-16). The widespread and ethical application of that principle is that the elders would not put that believer in a situation to become sick in the first place (1 Thess. 5:23).

Pasztor (2015) explained the necessary and determinate separation between ethics and faith, which is, "Religion essentially pertains only to those who choose to follow it. Ethics, on the other hand, pertains to everyone, and we should expect ethical behavior from everyone, no matter what field or profession they may be in" (p. 31). From this perspective, it becomes clear that any leader, in any faith group, could conceivably use the same ethical approach to make decisions in the best interest of their constituency, without regard to a common faith. Morrison's (2011) review of Johnson's "Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership" provides a way to interpret the two sides of ethical leadership, the beneficial or light ethic and harmful or shadow ethics. Pazmiño's value judgment is, therefore, categorized as a shadow (harmful) or light (beneficial) ethical choice.

Shadow Ethics

Craig E. Johnson coined the term, shadow casting, which is an analogy used for unethical leadership practices. Shadow ethics encompasses all leaders who seek to return the people to in-person worship without significant deliberation of the overarching impact of that decision on the health and longevity of the Church. Thiel et al. (2012) asserted, "leaders today are either ignorant of the ethical dilemmas present in complex organizations or that leaders possess values or internal codes that are 'less ethical'" (p. 49). Further, "the discretionary decisions made by leaders are inherently ethical because of the far-reaching and high-stakes consequences these decisions have for individuals internal and external to the leader's organization" (p. 52). This distinction is important because the decision seems to be a final decision that only affects the members of the Church. However, this decision has implications for everyone the members encounter. For example, a spouse who does not attend the Church but could become infected by the

spouse who does worship. Or a co-worker who is not even a Christian but comes into contact with the infected parishioner.

Embrace a Critique Paradigm. In 1824, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states have the power to police the activities within their borders. The justices ruled that under the Tenth Amendment, these police powers "include the ability to impose isolation and quarantine conditions" (American Bar Association, 2020). Most of the shadow ethics involved in the early decision making and fight against closure were based on the concept of critique of these kinds of judicial rulings. The premise is that the Church was unfairly targeted to remain closed or unjustly given more strict guidelines to re-open than other similar institutions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) pointed out that, "critique provides a discourse for expanding basic human rights" (p. 30). Christian leaders saw the prohibitions as an infringement on their rights to self-govern and against their Constitutional rights, despite the clear guidance from the Supreme Court. Consequently, the high court has repeatedly refused to hear appeals for cases that could have re-opened the Church.

Blames Relativism. Arguments based on relativism continually spring up from those exercising shadow ethics. Demuijnck's work speaks directly to relativism, which is itself, the underpinning of the legal argument (e.g., critique) of closure. For example, the malls, schools, restaurants are all opening back up, and relative to those environments, the Church is no different. Demuijnck (2015) claimed, "the popularity of relativism is troubling because it discourages business people from combating questionable trends in business practices and, therefore, it may somewhat undermine business morality" (p. 819). This concept is essential to understanding why some people argue in favor of returning to in-person worship because other business models could. However, these leaders fail to recognize that the Church is unlike any other institution. There is little expectation that in a restaurant, people would be expected, with strangers, to hug, shake hands with, and stand close to each other in congregation. The act of fellowship includes touching strangers in ways that would be socially inappropriate in other settings that are re-opening.

Ignores the Impact on the Longevity of the Church. Moreover, practitioners of shadow ethics do not seem to consider how re-opening can potentially harm the Church's future longevity. Strobel, et al. (2010) researched the role of ethical leadership in organizational attractiveness. They concluded, "Indeed, one of the most important precursors of successful employee recruitment is a positive employer image or employer brand" (p. 213). In a Christian context, their premise lowers the attractiveness of the Christian Church when its leaders behave unethically. For example, as previously shown, the Supreme Court has upheld the States' right to withhold constitutionally protected rights during a public health emergency. Still, Christian leaders continue to defy public health orders and assemble the people for worship.

As people continue to die from this continued exposure, it weakens the influence of the Church. Strobel et al. (2010) rightly conclude that "Ethical leadership behavior is both influenced by and a reflection of the internal ethical climate of an organization" (p. 215). In short, leadership actions are a direct reflection of the level of ethical behavior in the entire organization. Shoichet and Burke (2020) write that New York Lutheran "pastors report that 25-30% of the congregation is infected" with COVID-19. However, what they fail to address is how the institution is faring among people who turned to it

for hope during these distressing times and died. Rev. Fabian Arias had buried 44 members of his congregation when the article was printed, and the list was growing.

Dishonest Influence. As leaders in autonomous churches attempt to sway leadership teams to re-open, Barnes (2015) asserts "influencing someone to disobey a legitimate rule or law (one you are both aware of and, in essence, signed up to uphold) can be unethical" (p. 97). She says, "influencing someone to help you do something that would benefit you but could be harmful to him or her would be unethical, unless you were completely honest about the risks involved and the person had free choice" (p. 97). In this way, Barnes provides an ethical "out" for the leader who, without any deceit, leads people back into in-person worship, and transfers the accountability, to the membership. In this case, the people willingly accept the responsibility that, according to many other authors, belongs to the leader.

Warren et al. (2015) address the dissonance created when organizations have different ethical tones at the top. Warren et. al. defined top tones as "top management's attitude towards creating and maintaining an ethical culture in the workplace" (p. 559). This is an essential part of the ethical decision to be made because churches are complex organizations that can have multiple tops. There might be competing boards, centers of power, and unofficial power brokers with which to contend. Warren et al. acknowledge this fact, saying, "Perceptual studies of employees shed light on not only what constitutes the tone at the top but also difficulties in locating the top of an organization" (p. 560). As a result, people who exercise shadow ethics typically limit the voices included in the decision-making process.

Light Ethics

In contrast to shadow ethics stands light ethics; which is utilized to insist on immediate re-opening, fight the initial and ongoing closure, and critique the justice ethics of a nearly 200-year-old and well settled Supreme Court decision,. The focus of light ethics is primarily on the well-being of believers and the long-term credibility of the institutional Church in the world.

Embrace a Care Paradigm. While shadow ethicists typically gravitate towards a critique paradigm, light ethicists are drawn to the care paradigm. According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), care ethics encompass "the concept of the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (p. 33). Here moral decisions are made with the concern for the group before self, and the care paradigm values emotion heavily. An honest examination of the facts reveals that the leaders who decide to return to in-person will inevitably expose their membership to a mostly unknown virus.

MacLean et al. (2015) explored the consequences of decoupling their ethics program from implementation. They used Goldman Sachs as an example. The ethical framework created for the company does not match the daily practice. Wells Fargo Banks also discarded their ethical standards in favor of making money through opening fraudulent accounts and charging unfounded fees.

Conversely, Churches have an inherent ethical responsibility to act in the group's best interests (e.g., to employ care ethics). However, the return to in-person worship against public health officials and the government's recommendation could result in a psychological contract breach. MacLean et al. (2015) conclude that psychological

contract breach is an attitude shaped by social exchange violations, primarily unmet expectations. For example, the members expect leaders to make decisions according to the Bible and "obey the laws of the land" (Rom. 13:1-2). Failure to adhere to the mandates from governmental agencies is a violation of social exchange.

Examines the Emotional Impact. Additionally, that same leader will ultimately bear the weight of the consequences of that decision. For example, the leaders making the decisions will have to eulogize any members who die. As burying members is a wholly emotional and draining experience, this decision's emotional impact cannot be understated. Shoichet and Burke (2020) wrote a CNN article detailing the emotional anguish of Rev. Fabian Arias, who donned an N95 mask to bury 44 members of his congregation. They quoted Arias as saying, "The virus installs itself more in the most vulnerable places, and so it infects the most vulnerable people. This is the problem. The virus does not discriminate."

Invites Multiple Voices. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) concluded that care ethics require leaders to consider multiple voices in the decision-making process. These additional voices should include the Department of Public Health, government officials, and their congregations. Additionally, Jurkiewicz considered ethics from the perspective of the citizenry [constituent membership] as opposed to the leader's ethics. Her work blends with Hansen's et al. (2016) (explored later) to provide the perspective of the broader Christian community. Jurkiewicz (2012) asserted, "Plato (and Morse 1999) maintains it is the community's responsibility to educate its citizenry on the expected code of ethical behavior" (p. 245). Regarding ethics and the Church, the voice of the membership should outweigh the leader's view, as the group provides and enforces the ethical norms for itself and its leader, based on the principles of Scripture.

Exercises Authentic Leadership. The leader who can shepherd the Church through its response to this global pandemic is responsible, credible, and accountable. Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014), in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, emphasized the necessity of responsible leadership. They found that:

> Despite a lack of consensus on the definition of responsible leadership, there is overwhelming evidence that the perceptions, decisions, and actions of individual managers—particularly those at senior levels—have an impact on the social performance and long-term viability of their organizations. (p. 236)

Moreover, they defined socially responsible leadership as leadership that avoids harm, does good, and refrains from activities that have harmful consequences for others.

Where Stahl and Sully de Luque demanded responsible leadership, Malphurs (2003) demanded credible leadership, and stated, "research on credibility has shown that, when a leader attempts to influence people, they engage in a conscious and unconscious evaluation of the leader and will follow only if they deem him or her to be credible" (p. 50). Without this credibility, the leader cannot make useful decisions at all. According to Sampson (2011), "accountability is the ability to be liable, responsible, or answerable" (p. 182). As a bevy of believers died very early on during the coronavirus pandemic spread, accountability was sorely lacking. Sampson's accountable leader would find Barnes' accountability-shifting leader intolerable.

Leaders were able to excuse their intractable position of continuing to hold in-person services with platitudes about obeying God rather than man, and the unknown

nature of the virus. As knowledge of the pure virality has increased, there can be no more excuse for the wanton disregard for human life and insistence that believers continue to gather in-person, without accountability for the consequences. Sampson (2011) pointed out that, "moral accountability refers to one's ability to know right from wrong" (p. 182).

IV. THE ROLE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) provided four paradigms for the analysis of ethical behavior, which are the ethics of justice, critique, care, and profession. Hansen et al. (2016) provided a three-fold inquiry. Lawton and Macaulay (2015) posited two ethical extremes. Their works all seem to argue against complete reliance on a single ethical framework as the solution to the need for ethical standards in an organization. Hansen et al. provided the contextual framework for the membership to consider before they return to in-person worship. They outlined a three-fold inquiry; namely, the members should look: (1) outward at how their organization and its decision impact the community, (2) upward to determine the ethicality of their leaders deciding whether to re-open the Church for in-person worship, and (3) inward at their propensity to trust others as they form their perceptions (p. 649).

This framework is the lens through which the followers should view their level of participation and determine whether the decision being made is ethical. Specific attention must be given to the upward look. Leaders who are known to be unethical will likely have personal or selfish reasons to insist that the members return (e.g., their salary has been impacted, and they have a higher value for financial contributions than safety). These selfish reasons are often couched in the dishonest influence espoused by Barnes (2015).

Lawton and Macaulay (2015) posited two extremes. The first is the reliance on some regulatory mechanisms, which in any autonomous church is virtually nonexistent and, therefore, not applicable. The second is a reliance on the personal integrity of individuals to act ethically, which is often the de facto ethical framework. While some deacons or elders might examine the decisions of the primary leader, the leader is primarily left to influence and make decisions on credit. That credit is based on their integrity, as it is perceived by the people they lead. The "upward look" of Hansen et al., requires Lawton and Macaulay's ethical management, which includes, "how individual managers behave with integrity, how they may set a personal example, and how they treat others both within and without their own organizations" (p. 107).

V. CONCLUSION

Every expression of the Christian faith needs a Spirit-led, multi-voiced, and medically informed decision-making body to carefully consider the weight of the decision about when to return to corporate worship. In addition to when this group should prayerfully consider what mission looks like in a post-COVID world and provide recommendations for how believers should navigate the world around them. This group should be comprised of authentic leaders who are responsible, credible, and accountable. These leaders must view their tasks through the lens of care ethics that

considers the well-being of the members and those with whom they have a personal contact who might not be members.

If another pandemic, or similar public health emergency arises, the Christian mandate to walk in the light (1 John 1:7) must be the solution. All ethical choices should be the result of light ethics. Leaders must reject the temptation to cast shadows, especially when the result of the ethical choice at hand has life and death implications. As light consistently overwhelmed the darkness (John 1:5), so must light ethics swallow up shadow ethics.

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