An ideology that has been present throughout history, despite nation or religion, resurfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic. During times of crisis, persons have often searched for persons to blame. As opposed to eliminating the virus' spread through medical measures, many have sought to connect the root of the issue to the society's marginalized. It seems as though playing the "blame game" helps certain persons rationalize their current situation. In effect, minorities often receive much of the blame during times of crisis.

A quick review of history points to the fact that persons often blame "the other" during trials. "The other" refers to the marginalized or the minorities. The majority often blame minorities during such times. For example, in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese-Americans were abused and scrutinized. Many Americans became wary of Japanese-Americans due to one's skin color and/or nationality, which resulted in acts of racism. The acts of terror committed on September 11, 2001 serve as another example. Many Americans blamed Muslims—even those of whom were American citizens—and the religion of Islam as a whole for the attack. As a result, Islamophobia spread. In the wake of 9/11, I remember hearing various unfounded rumors of Islam's hatred towards Christianity and the Qur'an's alleged commandments to "kill Jews and Christians." Most Americans supported such convictions because it provided a person/ideology to blame. However, I learned otherwise after my studies of Islam in undergraduate and graduate school. Islam, similarly to Judaism and Christianity, is a religion founded upon love and grace.

How is this pertinent for the present pandemic? Due to the virus' genesis in China, many American citizens have shamed Chinese-Americans. Although the attacks/acts of aggression toward Chinese-Americans have been overshadowed due to the presence of the virus, many Chinese-Americans have felt threatened or have experienced acts of aggression. Chinese-Americans have felt unsafe in large settings. In today's context, the majority continues to blame the minority. Many citizens are being blamed for this virus on account of their skin color or nation of origin. History seems to repeat itself.

I find it troubling that racist ideologies have been able to transcend time despite the fact that most persons claim to oppose racism. Yet, racism surfaces alongside times of crisis. Racism and crises form an unfortunate dyad. Moreover,

it disturbs me that many Christians participate in such beliefs despite the altruistic morals presented in the Old and New Testaments.

Caring for "the others"—the marginalized, the minorities, the oppressed—is an underlying moral in the ethics of the Old and New Testaments. It shapes many of the beliefs and practices Christians participate in today. The Israelites were charged care for the powerless. Deuteronomy 24, for example, mandates the Israelites to care for the orphans, the widows, and the foreign aliens— "the others" of the society. The Israelites were reminded of YHWH's care for them during their residency in Egypt and were commanded to replicate such behavior. In the New Testament, Jesus broke cultural stereotypes and associated with society's outcasts. Jesus healed and engaged in communion with the sick. Jesus' ministry shattered cultural conventions through such acts. Moreover, the Book of James identifies caring for the others as the central belief of a worthwhile religion: *"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world"* (James 1:27, NRSV).

This brief review of the biblical mandates to care for the powerless demonstrates the moral's importance to the faith. Christianity demands that followers of Christ provide for "the other." Yet, the Church (as well as society as a whole) continues to neglect this foundational commandment. Crises illuminate this shortcoming. The COVID-19 pandemic has occasioned much distress and hardships, such as financial and medical complications. Hatred only adds further distress and complications.

The Church must be the frontrunners in breaking the cyclical nature of hatred amidst crises. We are all suffering, but that does not excuse "playing the blame game." Minorities often receive much of the blame during times of crisis, and these are the persons Christians are obligated to protect. We must not forget this biblical obligation.