

‘Houston 5’ Pastors Shocked That GA Makes Lesbian Mayor’s Religious Freedom Mistake

The Texas Pastor Council (TXPC), composed of hundreds of pastors, has expressed shock and outrage that the State of Georgia has sent a legal request to a lay pastor, Dr. Eric Walsh, demanding that he hand over his sermons and related private ministerial papers and documents.

“I can’t believe I’m saying this, but Georgia’s demand is even worse than when the mayor of Houston demanded 17 different categories of materials, including sermons, from the seven of us,” said Rev. David Welch, executive director of the TXPC.

In the infamous “Houston Five” incident, attorneys for then Houston mayor Anise Parker initiated subpoenas of five Houston-area pastors who were not parties to a lawsuit against the city and two plaintiff pastors who were, asking for sermons and church communication concerning her and her efforts in favor of a city ordinance. The incident became a national controversy.

Welch stated, “This is worse than what happened in Houston for multiple reasons. First, this is state government coming after a pastor, not just a rogue mayor in one city. Also, the state is demanding much more material: sermons, sermon notes, all documents without even topical or time limits. It could even include margin notes in this pastor’s preaching Bible. It’s almost as if they are ransacking the pastor’s study. This sweeping demand is ominous and a threat to every pastor, every church, every denomination, and every citizen of faith in America.”

Dr. Eric Walsh was a lay pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who was hired by the State of Georgia Department of

Public Health because of his distinguished career saving lives as a health official.

But when Georgia State officials discovered Walsh was a lay minister, they asked for copies of his sermons. Emails show that Georgia officials used work time to watch Walsh's YouTube sermons, then fired him. Recently, the State issued a new demand, served Walsh with a legal document that requires him to surrender copies of his sermon notes and transcripts. The request carries the same force of law as a subpoena.

Walsh is suing the state on the grounds of unlawful religious discrimination. He is represented by First Liberty Institute, a national legal organization dedicated solely to defending religious freedom for all Americans. Read more about his case at

"It's bad enough he was fired for his faith," said Welch. "But this legal demand for all his private pastoral documentation takes this to a whole new level. It is a wake up call to see this kind of hostility to pastors rising in America. We stand with Dr. Walsh, a brave man of faith, and urge all pastors to do the same."

A video trailer about the Houston incident called "A Time To Stand" is posted at , with the documentary scheduled for release in December.