

California Church Receives Criminal Threats From City Administration

Harvest Rock Church received a letter from the city of Pasadena's chief assistant city prosecutor threatening daily criminal charges unless in-person worship services cease.

Liberty Counsel filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry against Gov. Gavin Newsom's unconstitutional COVID-19 orders. The governor's orders prohibit all in-person worship, including home Bible studies and fellowship. This ban applies to about 80% of the population. In the remaining 20%, limited in-person worship is permitted but no singing and chanting. Harvest International Ministry includes 162 churches in California and 65,000 affiliate churches and ministries worldwide.

The letter from the Pasadena prosecutor states, "Each day in violation is a separate violation and carries with it punishment up to one year in jail and a fine for each violation ... Your compliance with these orders is not discretionary, it is mandatory. Any violations in the future will subject your church, owners, administrators, operators, staff and parishioners to the above-mentioned criminal penalties as well as the potential closures of your church."

Despite his unconstitutional ban on churches and worship services, Gov. Newsom repeatedly encourages tens of thousands of protesters to gather, saying, "God bless you. Keep doing it." His response filed in court admits he did not attempt to stop the protesters, but says the reason is there were too many of them. If that is the case, perhaps if there are large groups of people who gather for worship, would he not enforce his orders? Yet he has always encouraged the protesters to

“keep doing it.”

Like Gov. Newsom, the city of Pasadena, including the same city prosecutor, have repeatedly refused to enforce the orders on thousands of protesters who have swarmed the city on multiple occasions. To charge the church and parishioners while giving a free pass to protesters would be selective prosecution.

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, “The city of Pasadena, like Gov. Gavin Newsom, encourages thousands of people to gather for mass protests, but now consider in-person worship to be a criminal offense. These actions of the city of Pasadena and Gov. Gavin Newsom are akin to repressive foreign regimes, not America, where the First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion. The First Amendment erects a wall which the state may not breach to close churches and incarcerate pastors and parishioners.” {eo}

For the original article, visit .