

Jim Bakker Attorneys Seek to Dismiss Lawsuit, Cite Religious Freedom

Lawyers for TV pastor Jim Bakker filed court papers Monday stating Bakker's religious freedoms have been violated and urging a judge to dismiss a lawsuit against the well-known minister and his ministry.

The lawsuit filed in March by Missouri's Attorney General Eric Schmitt alleges Bakker made false claims about a "Silver Solution" health supplement on an episode of *The Jim Bakker Show* in February. The complaint alleges Bakker and Morningside Church Productions made "false promises" that the Silver Solution—offered by the ministry—could cure COVID-19. Bakker and Morningside strongly deny the allegations.

"Jim Bakker is being unfairly targeted by those who want to crush his ministry and force his Christian television program off the air," said Jay Nixon, Bakker's attorney and former governor and attorney general of Missouri. "The video recording of *The Jim Bakker Show* clearly shows the allegations are false. Bakker did not claim or state that Silver Solution was a cure for COVID-19. This case is about religious freedom."

The motion to dismiss filed at the Circuit Court of Stone County, Missouri, states that the attorney general's lawsuit—seeking a restraining order, permanent injunction and other penalties against Bakker—violated the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment guaranteeing free speech, as well as the Missouri Constitution and the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Nixon described the complaint against Bakker and his ministry as "unprecedented" and disappointing.

“Similar silver products are commonly sold health supplements, available at Walmart, Amazon, CVS and GNC,” Nixon said. “Targeting a Christian pastor, who has been using and offering the product for the past 10 years, is not supported by the facts or the law.”

In Monday’s filing, Bakker’s lead attorney Derek Ankrom—a partner in Springfield, Missouri, law firm Spencer Fane—asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit and grant “Pastor Bakker and Morningside such other and further relief as the court deems just and proper.”

Following the episode of *The Jim Bakker Show* in February, Bakker immediately complied with orders to stop offering Silver Solution on his show and ministry website.

Bakker’s supporters say he is the target of an anti-Christian campaign to force him off the air and silence his message.

“There’s something sinister at work here,” said Stephen Strang, founder and CEO of Charisma Media, who came to Bakker’s defense in a recent editorial. “There are forces at this very moment desperate to silence the church and keep the gospel off the air.”