

California Church Facing Fines for Gathering to Worship

If someone asked you where Christians could be fined \$300,000 for worshiping Jesus, most of you would probably say communist China. Try San Jose, California. That's where liberal local officials have decided to make an example of any congregation willing to stand up to the governor's ridiculous orders. They're willing to bankrupt churches and even send Calvary Chapel Senior Pastor Mike McClure to jail for daring to safely gather God's people.

"I don't want to break the law," he said to the congregation, "but I'm called to preach [the] gospel."

McClure also made it clear that by showing up, anyone could be in trouble with the law.

"They could arrest you, give you a fine or a citation," he warned.

That didn't seem to deter the 600 or so people in attendance. They cheered McClure's bold stand, which attorneys defended Nov. 2 in a Santa Clara County court.

"Over the past five months, not one person has contracted COVID-19; they have contributed zero to the infection rate of this county," said Mariah Gondeiro, who's representing the church.

Despite that fact, Santa Clara officials have been relentless. County counsel James Williams told reporters, "We tried to work with them for a long time. They've admitted to the violations, and so we are seeking the help of the court in enforcing these really important orders," he said. "The

reality is, almost every congregation, regardless of faith tradition has been safely in compliance with the public health directives.”

Other area pastors have come to McClure’s defense, arguing that they’ve had 600 people in a space that holds almost 2,000. “What I see happening right now is cruel and unusual punishment—\$330,000 in fines levied against a pastor simply for opening up,” said Hector Moreno with the Home Church in Campbell.

Unfortunately, McClure said, the health department shows no interest in finding a fair solution for local churches. “They came here, got really upset and yelled at us and left, they never wanted to talk to me or work with me—and I’d love to, we’re trying to help the community.”

As several respected medical experts have pointed out, California’s virus situation isn’t nearly as dire as local officials have described it. Just last week on *Washington Watch*, Dr. Andrew Bostom explained there are actually a lot of reassuring long-term COVID trends right now, showing that “we’ve really flattened out in terms of hospitalizations and deaths and even infections.”

Unfortunately, the fearmongers in the media and liberals in the Democratic Party refuse to recognize any of that. “They will take any little uptick and stick that on the front of the web page,” Bostom said. “And I think this is being done all over the country.”

With the exception of the elderly, the actual infection-fatality ratio is about 6.5%, “so 5 in 10,000 people under 70.”

Keeping people locked up and disconnected is what has actually hurt people—a fact President Trump pointed out in the final debate. When Joe Biden—who vowed to lock everyone back down if he’s president—said ominously, “We’re about to go into a dark

winter,” the president replied, “I don’t think we’re going to have a dark winter at all. We’re opening up our country. We’ve learned and studied and understand the disease, which we didn’t at the beginning. ... 99% of young people recover. ... We have to recover. We can’t close up our nation ... or you’re not going to have a nation.” {eoa}

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