

California Sen. Shannon Grove: 'The Government Is Coming After Our Pastors'

We've probably all heard the saying, "As goes California, so goes the nation." My new friend, California Senate Minority Leader Shannon Grove, not only says that's true, but also that the rest of the nation needs to understand what's happening in the state known for its extreme liberal slant on almost every topic.

Because of the restrictive stance Gov. Gavin Newsom has taken, Grove said, churches and pastors face true persecution with their freedom of worship under attack. But Christians are standing up and speaking out, and Grove and her fellow conservatives stand with them in defense of First Amendment rights.

I invited the senator onto a recent episode of *The Strang Report* podcast to give us the inside story on what's happening across the Golden State. The persecution there is extreme, Grove told me. "We have churches where the governor is telling people how they can worship, how long they can worship," she said. "He says, 'No singing or chanting,' which means worship and prayer. ... He says no instruments that are horns, or that use physical exertion and air to be able to blow through. He says everybody must wear a mask. He says you have to open at 25% capacity. He's telling not only worshippers and the church how to worship; he's telling them when they can worship and how they can worship."

This climate, Grove said, is not only detrimental to First Amendment rights but to the churches themselves. And by hurting churches, she said, California is hurting the many people churches serve. "The governor has passed policies that

have hurt families," she said. "You have people who are unemployed, 1.6 million people still not receiving benefits from the unemployment office since he took their jobs away 208-plus days ago ... and he still hasn't offered any type of benefit to them because the unemployment office is so messed up. The churches are essential, and they should be partnering with government, and government should be partnering with them to fill those gaps and fill those holes. ... Wholeness and counseling and things that the church can offer would be beneficial to those who are hurting in the state of California. But the governor is not taking that route. He is hostile; he is attacking the churches."

Charisma News has reported on several charismatic and evangelical churches and pastors who, with the aid of agencies like Liberty Counsel, are fighting back through the legal system. But California Christians are also fighting back in worship, as we know from the Sean Feucht "Let Us Worship" events that have also been reported in Charisma News. But Grove said the first such event actually led to more government restrictions courtesy of Gov. Newsom.

"They estimated 8,000 people showed up at the California State capitol to worship the Lord, and it was led by Sean Feucht, and pastors were making declarations, and prophetic words were spoken over our beautiful state," she said. "And the governor actually put out guidance on those types of gatherings just because of what Sean Feucht did that day with those pastors. So now it is against the guidance and against state policy for the Department of California Public Health to have any type of those gatherings like we had as a worship service to protest the governor not allowing us to worship. So it just keeps going further and further and further away from what God's values are."

With all these restrictions in place against churches and public worship gatherings, we might think stores and other businesses in California are also deemed unsafe. But Grove

said this is not the case. "Every abortion clinic is able to operate. They had businesses: Target, Walmart, Lowe's, Home Depot. So it's safe. ... It's safe to go to an abortion clinic and a liquor store. Why isn't it safe to attend church?" She said Gov. Newsom didn't even give the pastors and churches the opportunity to help create guidelines to keep people safe. Instead, she said, "He just said, 'No, you cannot operate, and what he did say was that they could operate in a certain percentage of capacity based on the county they're in, which made it very difficult."

Grove is a self-proclaimed "tongue-talking Spirit-filled believer" as well as a conservative Republican and longtime business owner who only entered politics at God's direction. After having served in both the California House and Senate, she stands solidly behind the churches who are defying Gov. Newsom's orders. "I can tell you that I'm very, very proud of over 2,800 churches that opened May 31 and said, 'We are worshipping our God, and you're not going to tell us how to do it.' ... Now some of those churches you've heard about in the media—John MacArthur, Rob McCoy and many others that are being persecuted by their county governments and the state government—they've been dragged into court; they've been fined," she said.

"The counties are coming after our pastors, and the government is coming after our pastors," Grove said. "And what's really sad to recognize is that it's not being shown in the media. And if people understood that pastors were being persecuted in this way—that they were being fined, that they were being threatened with jail time, that they have to have attorneys to defend them to preach God's Word and to just operate as a pastor in a church—I think America would wake up, because that happens in countries where you have no religious freedom and religious rights, and you don't have a Constitution that protects you. It should never be happening in the United States of America."

To hear more from Sen. Shannon Grove about what's really happening in California, how the church continues to stand against government persecution and why Christians need to pray fervently against attacks like these, listen to the entire podcast [here](#). And be sure to share this article and podcast with friends and family members who need to know that this election matters as we face continued attacks on our First Amendment rights, not just in California but in many other states as well. {eo}