



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 16, 2021

Canadian Pastor Arrested for the Second Time for Holding Outdoor Church Service

A Canadian pastor was arrested for the second time Monday for the “crime” of having presided over a church service in violation of his province’s COVID-19 restrictions.

Tim Stephens, pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Calgary, Alberta, was arrested at his home in Calgary in front of his wife and children, some of whom cried as their father was hauled off to jail for “obey[ing] God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) by holding church services, according to video posted by [Rebel News](#).



YouTube

The [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation \(CBC\)](#) reported that Stephens “was arrested for allegedly violating Section 127 of the Criminal Code by failing to obey a Court of Queen’s Bench Order obtained by Alberta Health Services (AHS).” His alleged violation consisted of “hosting an illegal outdoor gathering that did not comply with current restrictions,” Calgary police told the CBC.

Of course, the only reason the June 13 service was held outside is that AHS had physically shuttered the church earlier in the month as part of its ongoing persecution of Stephens, who has continued to hold services throughout the province’s long lockdown — and to criticize officials for it.

“The law of God gives us direction to quarantine the sick, not the healthy, and certainly not the entire society which comes at a serious cost to health and wellbeing,” he [wrote](#) on the church website in May. He also asserted that “politicians and doctors may be well-intentioned but they are operating according to a Christless worldview that does not recognize the supremacy of God and his law.”

It’s not hard to figure out why the government would want to silence him.

Stephens was first arrested on May 16 for allegedly violating a May 6 court order restricting gatherings to those permitted by AHS; at the time, that meant no more than 15 people indoors or five people outdoors. The Calgary-based [Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms \(JCCF\)](#), which is representing Stephens, got AHS to drop the case by informing the agency that Stephens had never been served with the court order — police mistakenly served it to someone else they thought was Stephens — which is a requirement for prosecution under it.

Furthermore, notes JCCF, the order does not apply to Stephens or to anyone else not involved in the case from which it resulted — though not for lack of trying on the government’s part. That case concerned [Whistle Stop Cafe](#), a restaurant in Mirror that refused to knuckle under to AHS’ edicts. In what JCCF characterized as “a secret court proceeding,” a judge issued an injunction banning all gatherings violating AHS orders, not just those connected with the Whistle Stop Cafe. On May 13, JCCF filed for an amendment to the injunction. “Lawyers for AHS, knowing that their May 6 injunction was contrary to numerous and very clear court rulings that limit injunctions only to named parties,



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consented to this change, in court, on the record, with media present,” wrote JCCF.

JCCF is also challenging Stephens’ arrest and the various tickets he has been issued for violating AHS orders on the basis that they violate his rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

“Locking out Fairview Baptist congregants and arresting Pastor Tim Stephens has everything to do with punishing dissent, and nothing to do with public safety,” said JCCF litigation director Jay Cameron.

“[The Premier wines and dines his ministers at the Sky Palace](#) with impunity,” he added, “but church congregants cannot peacefully gather to pray together and worship on their own property in accordance with their conscience and in exercise of their constitutional freedoms.”

Moreover, he pointed out that full reopening of the province is less than two weeks away, so why persecute Stephens if not to “lock up ... anyone ... who criticizes Alberta’s thin-skinned health tyrants”?

Still, there may be a silver lining in these attacks on churches, observes Rebel News: “Ironically, all efforts to suppress worship by Alberta Health Services, whether at [Pastor Artur Pawlowski’s](#) or Pastor Tim’s church[,] have only served to significantly bolster church attendance. As public health restrictions continue to be relaxed, these churches are not facing defeat at the hands of overreaching officials, quite the opposite — they are stronger and larger than ever before.”



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