



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 22, 2020

1,200 California Pastors Defy Governor Newsom, Plan to Reopen May 31

The day after the Department of Justice [warned](#) California Governor Gavin Newsom about discriminating against churches in both his shutdown and his reopen orders, a lawyer announced that [more than 1,200 pastors have said they will open in-person services](#) in defiance of those orders on Pentecost Sunday, May 31.



The attorney who drafted the “Declaration of Essentiality” sent a letter to the governor, declaring that the pastors were not asking permission: “This letter was not sent for the purposes of asking for permission.”

The Declaration began with this quote from Martin Luther King, Jr.: “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.”

After briefly reviewing the case against Newsom’s onerous and unconstitutional edicts, it ended with this: “NOW THEREFORE, WE DECLARE THAT WE WILL RESUME IN-PERSON RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLIES BEGINNING ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, MAY 31, 2020, OR SOONER.”

[The letter to the governor](#) ran 15 pages, outlining the legal case against Newsom’s infringements of precious rights guaranteed in the Constitution’s Bill of Rights. In addition, it quoted large portions of the Declaration of Independence.

It included this from founders Madison and Jefferson:

James Madison once said, “All power is originally vested in, and consequently derived from, the people.” And Thomas Jefferson said, “Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Our founding fathers did not intend to allow a single individual to establish law that permits the infringement upon individual liberties recognized in the Constitution.

This is especially true where one individual has issued executive orders to suspend the religious liberty of individuals to assemble together in worship of God.

The letter said, “We agree that the government has a legitimate interest in preventing the spread of COVID-19, but that interest cannot go unchecked.”

Therefore, “In order to restore the proper balance between public safety and individual liberties, the clergy we represent have declared their intent to begin holding in-person church services beginning on Sunday, May 31, 2020. All services will be held in compliance with CDC and state guidelines for social distancing as is required of “essential businesses.”



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Robert Tyler, the attorney who drafted both the Declaration and the letter, said, “These pastors are willing to stand against the state and face fines or penalties in order to fulfill their calling and essential needs of those around them.”

May 31, the Day of Pentecost, is celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-31).

It is often referred to as the birth of the Christian religion. In California this year, it will celebrate the birth of freedom from onerous and unconstitutional restrictions issued by the state. More than 3,000 churches are expected to join that celebration.

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