



California Court Tosses Fourth Attempt by LA County to Shut Down Church

Los Angeles Health Official Muntu Davis tried again for the fourth time to shut down Pastor John MacArthur's Grace Community Church in the Sun Valley suburb. And for the fourth time, [Davis was rebuffed](#).

California Superior Court Judge Mitchel Beckloff ruled that the county's fourth attempt to shutter the church and prohibit in-person, in-house services did not meet "statutory requirements," and that its effort was "both procedurally and substantially defective."



This is how a superior court judge tells the complainer to take a hike and leave the church alone.

Paul Jonna, an attorney representing the church, said, "This was their fourth unsuccessful attempt to obtain a court order prohibiting indoor worship services at Grace Community Church. We look forward to fully vindicating our clients' constitutionally-protected rights in subsequent proceedings for this important case."

Those hearings are scheduled to begin on Friday, September 4. In the meantime, MacArthur will continue to open his church for its regular three in-person, in-house services for his 7,000-plus member church on Sunday.

Perhaps Judge Beckloff took to heart the [extraordinary declaration](#) Pastor MacArthur made to the court the day before his ruling. MacArthur said that while Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 have been used to justify all manner of incursions by the state into religious matters, in this case they do not apply:

There are times when we must obey God rather than man, but we believe that we should disobey the authorities only if they command us to do something directly against God's law.

That is a fine distinction, but it is precisely where the issue lies....

So we believe that civil disobedience is justified only when government compels us to sin, or when there is no legal recourse for fighting injustice.

The reason we draw the line there is simply because all the scriptural examples of civil disobedience fall squarely into those two situations.

Any other kind of activism has no precedent in the Word of God and violates the spirit of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:3.

MacArthur made clear that no matter how the ruling went, he would continue to hold those services. He ended his declaration to Beckloff's court with this: "After 63 years of sacrificial kindness to our city, to be repeatedly threatened with court-ordered efforts to shut Grace Community Church down when no one is sick, reveals an inexplicable preference for a mostly harmless virus over the life-enriching and necessary fellowship of our church. Our leaders and congregation see no real health threat to warrant



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 27, 2020

such restraint. We see this action as an illegitimate misuse of power.”

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