



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on April 11, 2020

Police Raid Mississippi Church Drive-in Service

As the fear of COVID-19 continues to spread faster than the virus itself, a church in Greenville, Mississippi, has become another victim of overreaching government using that fear to tread on the rights of citizens. Police there raided a church parking lot, issuing citations to everyone attending a drive-in church service.



Republican Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves did not initially issue a stay-home order when many other states were doing so. After bowing to the political pressure, [he did issue such an order on April 1](#). His order reads as if it were drafted using the same template as other states' orders: Stay home; If you must go out, do not gather in groups larger than 10; and maintain at least six feet of distance from others.

Of course, retail stores are in a different category from churches; one category is considered “essential” while the other is not.

That should not be taken to imply that Tate shares the disdain of religion held by many Democrats. His decision seems to be a reaction to political pressure, and though he should have stood strong, doing so would likely have had major fallout.

But there has been fallout anyway. And religion in Mississippi is paying the price.

On Wednesday, Todd Starnes [reported](#) that “Police in Greenville, Mississippi, raided the parking lot of Temple Baptist Church during a drive-in prayer service and issued \$500 fines to everyone in attendance — including many elderly congregants.” The report includes video showing this disturbing scene. (See below; article continues after video.)

His report includes disturbing video (see below) showing exactly what he claims. As the report states, Pastor Arthur Scott — an elderly pastor of a mostly elderly congregation — was holding a drive-in church service. Congregants stayed in their cars with doors closed and windows up, listening in on a low-power FM signal with their car radios. Not only are many of them elderly, but they do not have smartphones or other ways to stream services.

But after Tate’s order was put in place, the city of Greenville issued its own order banning all religious services, either in person or via drive-ins.

This, of course, makes zero sense if the goal is to combat the spread of the virus. It makes perfect sense, though, if the goal is to combat religion under the pretext of stopping the spread of the virus.

Scott — who has led his congregation for 45 years — told Todd Starnes, “One of the police officers said the mayor wanted to make an example of our church.” But with the courage that comes from faith,



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Scott is not backing down. “I told them to get some more tickets ready because we will be preaching Sunday morning and Sunday night.”

Amen.

Scott went on to say, “The police officer said I might go to jail.” But even that prospect does not deter the pastor. “If it means going to jail and if it takes that for me to keep preaching, I’ll be glad to go to jail.”

From the report by Todd Starnes:

Video shows police officers disrupting the service by knocking on the doors of every car. Church members were ordered to turn over their driver’s licenses. They were then issued a fine and a court summons.

“I just can’t believe it,” the pastor told me. “I tried to talk to the mayor. I’ve been here 45 years and I’ve never been to the city council. I’ve never complained. I’ve never stirred up a stink. But I told him I’m going to fight them on this.”

That may be exactly what is needed. This writer will certainly keep Scott in his prayers and will watch with great interest to see how the city stands up to the attention it will draw for persecuting an elderly pastor and his mostly elderly congregation.

The virus will pass. But government officials will never forget how easy it was to strip citizens of their fundamental rights while most applauded it as the right thing to do. But for men like Scott, willing to lead with his chin, there would likely be nothing of liberty left once the virus has come and gone. By standing up to them, Scott is showing that religion will be protected in America whether the establishment likes it or not.

Photo: Yanlucs/iStock/Getty Images Plus

C. Mitchell Shaw is a freelance writer and public speaker who addresses a range of topics related to liberty and the U.S. Constitution.





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