

# THE STORMRIDER ISSUE 25



**Freedom and country living**



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Hello and welcome to the Stormrider Issue 25! I want to thank you for showing so much interest in my writings. In this issue we will discuss defending the homestead, preparing for pandemics and whether or not the government should be allowed to shut down churches. Hot topics, as always. God bless you as you read.

Shawn Stevens



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## **Defending The Homestead**

When you started homesteading, you signed up for adversity. The typical homestead is situated away from civilization in a sparse and remote location. And when there are few people around, the critters show up. They want your food, they want your supplies, they want your preps and they want to bring your homestead down. But that's where you come in with all of your rugged independent frontiersman /frontierswoman self to meet the challenge. Stand up, meet the challenge and defend the homestead!

What animals do you have to be on guard for? Bears, bobcats, mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, racoons, hawks and snakes to name a few.

The most dangerous of these is the bear and that is because a bear is capable of actually killing you. Some bears can get up to 280kg(600 pounds). Most of them do not want to get into a conflict with a person. They are usually content to ransack your garbage or attack your animals. However bears have certainly been known to attack and kill humans. This is more likely to happen if they feel that their cubs are threatened by you. Bear spray, bear bangers and bear bells

are all good things to have along with you in bear country but nothing will even the playing field better than a firearm. Keep in mind however, if you are unfortunate enough to be in a fight with a large bear it can take more than one shot to bring it down.

Most homesteads have chickens and they are preyed upon by just about anything. Wolves love them and so do coyotes. So do raccoons, possums and skunks. It will take a considerable amount of fencing to shield them and even then, if you don't fence off a roof birds of prey like hawks and eagles will swoop down from above. It is the job of every homesteader to protect his/her family and animals from these threats.

Snakes actually do a lot of good around a homestead by hunting rodents. However, if they are poisonous they obviously pose a threat.

How do you defend a homestead? Here are some suggestions:

- Lots of strong reinforced fencing that is frequently inspected and maintained.
- Live traps.
- A large barking guard dog.

- A barn cat for keeping down the mice and other rodents.
- Electric fences.
- And of course an elephant gun. Even a herd of 700 pound grizzlies will get the message if you start using an elephant gun.

Some homesteaders will put out poison to kill predators. I don't recommend this option. You don't know what other animal might eat the poison. Perhaps even one of your livestock might eat it. A kennel of several loud barking dogs is a real force multiplier. To a predator they sound like a large pack of dogs and the predators won't want to stay around.

Predators don't necessarily have to be killed. If you catch them in a live trap and you have a soft spot for them, instead of finishing them off, take them to a far away location and release them again. Remember the wild wilderness is no match for the serious homesteader. You have tools and strategies that give you the upper hand.

Shawn Stevens

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## PREPARING FOR PANDEMICS

A pandemic is an epidemic of disease that has spread through a population, region or continent affecting a large number of people. The term usually is reserved for epidemics that cross international borders. There have been many pandemics throughout history. The Black Plague of the fourteenth century killed off a third of Europe's population, estimates ranging from 75 to 200 million people. Other pandemics such as the Spanish flu of the twentieth century killed between 17 million to 50 million of its victims. And then of course there is Covid 19.

It is believed that the corona virus outbreak began in Wuhan China sometime in November of 2019. It was reported to the world, by China, in late December and by that time had been spreading rapidly throughout the world. The corona pandemic has affected 212 countries and territories.

Should Canadians expect more pandemics? It is simply amazing and I would say miraculous that we have not experienced more pandemics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In so many ways we are set up to

be taken down by pandemics. Canadian culture is highly globalistic. Globalism is the core belief of our Liberal government. Canadians are continuously bombarded with messages from our media, social-media, educational system and government to be more globally aware and more globally connected. We are told that we are global citizens and the more interconnection with the rest of the world the better. The problem is that global interconnectedness sets us up for more pandemics. It is unlikely that we will escape further pandemics without our politicians changing their core beliefs.

There are further reasons why we should be on guard for further pandemics. Bacteria are becoming more resistant to antibiotics. The Twentieth century and twenty-first century has seen the rise of superbugs. Our medical system has way over-subscribed antibiotics and as a result infectious micro-organisms have been developing resistance to them. Worldwide every year there are nearly half a million cases of drug resistant tuberculosis with China and India having the highest number of infections. Common bacteria such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Serratia marcescens* and *Enterococcus* have developed resistance to many antibiotics and are becoming harder to contain. I never hear our politicians address the topic of overuse of antibiotics do you? When was the last time you listened to an election time candidate debate where candidates

were asked about what they would do to decrease the national use of antibiotics? When was the last time you heard them answer the public on what they were going to do to fight superbugs?

There are more reasons to be on guard for further pandemics. It has been known by the intelligence community and discussed in many documentaries that rouge nations and enemy states have highly developed biological weapon programs. Pandemics provide the dream weapon for many hostile nations to enact their goals of genocide.

What can be done to prepare for pandemics? Here are some steps that you can take:

- 1) Stock a supply of non-perishable food.
- 2) Stock a supply of water.
- 3) Stock up on prescription medication if you need it.
- 4) Stock up pet supplies (Don't forget them).
- 5) Stock cleaning supplies.
- 6) Have a plan for what your family should do if you were to die in a pandemic.

What should you do during a pandemic? Here are some suggestions:

- Pray and ask for God's protection for you and
- your family.

**•Do not trust information from the world health organization, liberal politicians or other globalist sources!**

- Avoid unnecessary travel and unnecessary interaction with others.
- Make hand-washing a frequent practice
- Try not to touch your face.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Take vitamins, especially vitamin C and vitamin D.
- Try to stay healthy by exercising and getting rest.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow-pit not into the open air.
- Perhaps wear a face mask. (There are pros and cons to this one)
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On the topic of protecting yourself from a pandemic, consider the big decision of moving to a more remote location. When a pandemic sweeps through, you don't want to be living in New York, Mexico City, Mumbai, Tokyo or Abbotsford. Less people around you means less risk of infection. I know that it is a big decision but this is one of the reasons that people do move to more

remote locations. Think about it. Do you really need to be surrounded by people all of the time? Could it be time to think about, pray about and take steps to move away and embrace a more remote lifestyle.

A last thought and word of encouragement for you is don't live in fear. Pray for protection for you and your family and ask God to direct your steps as you face the challenges that pandemics pose. God still heals today. Many have overcome the corona virus. Always trust common sense over political speech. Start making a plan to face the challenge. Determine that when the next one comes knocking, you will be ready.

Shawn Stevens

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# SHOULD THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BE ABLE TO SHUT DOWN CHURCHES



Should the Canadian government be allowed to shut down churches?

This is a very relevant question for those of us who have lived

through the Covid situation. The 2020/2021/2022 years have seen a constantly changing, yo-yo reaction, of church restrictions, restriction liftings, church closures, church being restricted to 50 attendees, lifting of restrictions and then again full closures. There were warnings of failure to strictly adhere to social distancing rules could result in thousands of dollars in fines. If this had occurred over a few week period, to flatten the curve like we were originally told, most churches would have accepted the inconvenience patiently. However after a second year of changing restrictions and closures, churches started to ask the question, “Should the Canadian government be allowed to shut down churches?”

At the forefront of this debate is the GraceLife in Edmonton, Canada. The most publicized example of a Canadian church standing up to government restrictions during this Covid era is the GraceLife Church, led by Pastor James Coates. Pastor Coates turned

himself in to authorities after violating the official public health orders regarding places of worship. Alberta's provincial restrictions, (at the time of the writing of this article}, limited in-person attendance to 15 per cent of fire code capacity. He was incarcerated for 35 days in Edmonton's maximum security Remand Centre and then released. Because the Church continued to gather outside of the restricted requirements, the RCMP seized control of the Church property. This was followed by a demonstration of approximately 400 people supporting the Church's stand. They now meet freely.

GraceLifeChurch has printed a lengthy statement explaining their position and explaining their careful efforts to protect members and attendees during this time. I have quoted a small portion. Here is two excerpts of some of what their public statement says;

*“Dear fellow Albertans,*

*It goes without saying this has been an incredibly difficult 11 months. The effects and ramifications of COVID-19 on our precious province are not insignificant. We sympathize with everyone who has suffered loss in this time, whether it be the loss of a loved one, or loss stemming from government lockdowns (such as economic loss or suffering as a result of being denied necessary health care).*

*Given the attention our church has received in recent days, we want to address the broader public on our reasons for gathering as a local church. What follows is not a theological defense. We have already addressed that sufficiently here, here, here and here ( and it is primarily and predominantly obedience to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that has shaped our stance). ...*

*When COVID-19 first appeared, we shifted to livestream and abided by most of the new government guidelines for our gatherings. But when the first declared public health emergency ended, we opened our doors and returned to nearly normal gatherings on Sunday June 21st, 2020. We did so recognizing COVID-19 was much less severe than the government had initially projected. This sentiment was reflected in the assessment of the Premier of Alberta, who deliberately referred to COVID-19 as “influenza” multiple times in a speech announcing the end of the first declared public health emergency.*

*In early July, it was brought to our attention that two separate individuals had attended our gatherings on two consecutive Sundays and subsequently tested positive for the virus (both cases being unrelated to each other). At that time, we did our own internal contact tracing (prior to AHS notifying us of the exposure), many of our congregants were tested, and it was determined that no*

*transmission of the virus had taken place. Out of an abundance of caution, we shifted exclusively to livestream and shutdown all other ministries for two weeks (14 days). We did this to mitigate any further spread of COVID-19. When it was evident that no further spread had taken place, we resumed our nearly normal gatherings. Since then, we have gathered as a church each Sunday without incident (28 Sundays to date).”*

<https://gracelife.ca/>

There have been many other examples of Canadian churches pushing back against the government on this issue.

Seventy-nine Churches across Canada signed up to participate in the Liberty Coalition initiative to hold services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This constituted a Canada-wide stand for taking back religious freedom.

Is this a right for us, Christians to practice our faith in this way, even when in opposition to government orders? The Canadian Charter of Rights And Freedoms was drafted to protect the rights of every Canadian citizen. Many feel that these rights have become more and more important and that protection has become more and more needed and that the Canadian Government has overreached its authority and bypassed these very rights of all Canadians during the Covid 19 pandemic. I recognize that we are not the only community affected and imagine that other communities are taking a stand for their Charter rights.

The Charter Of Rights and Freedoms states:

“Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

“freedom of conscience and religion”

“freedom of peaceful assembly”

“freedom of association”

Practicing our faith involves many things, including public and corporate worship. This is a cherished freedom. Christian followers gather in church assemblies to worship together, hear God's Word spoken and to fellowship with each other. We have been doing this for two thousand years. Churches have stayed open through world crisis of every kind. They have stayed open during natural disasters, through economic crashes, through persecution, and even through times of war. Yet a virus is thought to trump all of these other crises and we are expected to accept restrictions on the practicing and living out of our faith.

Throughout this present crisis, churches, the Christian community as a whole, has shown great patience towards the Canadian government. Churches have shown respect and good-will towards

their government. However, there comes a point at which the government's expectations are not realistic, nor reasonable, and something needs to be said.

If Covid restrictions had been imposed on Christian believers, taking away from us our religious freedoms and freedom of assembly, for a brief period of time, such as three weeks, most Christian leaders would accept that with little protest. However, there comes a point where it is no longer acceptable to prohibit people from practicing their faith.

There needs to be a recognition on the part of government that most churches can't afford to operate if they follow restrictions to turn away all but 50 of their members, or experience total shutdown for extended periods of time. There needs to be a recognition that restrictions as severe as these create great economic damage to

churches and that this damage can only be absorbed if it is inflicted for only a limited period of time.

Does this mean that all churches should be open and at capacity during this time of Covid concern? I am not saying a definite “yes” but, rather, that Church leaders should be the ones who decide.

During this time, the church that I would normally attend decided to cooperate fully with government orders. If that is what the pastor sensed was God's direction for our specific church, then fine. The point is that the Church leadership should make that decision.

Conversely, Churches that felt that God wanted to fully open should have been allowed to follow conscience and do so.

In fact, it is not the place for a secular government official to regulate, control, alter, modify, or deny any ceremony or practice of Christian faith. This is overreach. This is not their arena of

operation. God has appointed three institutions in society: the family, the Church and the State. Each has its own sphere of authority. As long as these institutions are respected by each other, they can thrive. However, the problem that we see over and over again is that government, especially liberal and other left-wing secular governments, don't respect the other two institutions and meddle in their affairs. They undermine the institution of family in many ways, most notably by not accepting, and contradicting, God's definition of family, that is, one man and one woman united through holy marriage for life and any children that they may have. They instead undermine and undo God's definition and promote alternative models of family. They also undermine family by overruling parental rights in favour of school authorities and special interests.

The other institution that the government has overstepped its authority regarding, by intruding and trying to regulate, is the Church. It is not the responsibility of government to tell the Church how it must organize itself, conduct its services, say which sacred practices we may or may not do, or tell the Church how many people it may or may not serve. Restricting church attendance to fifty people, or shutting it down outright, not only means having to turn attendees away, but also forbids churches that are at that limit, from growth. Forbidding church growth means that the Church can't fulfill its mission.

The point is that, in many ways, secular government needs to back out of the institution of family and back out of the institution of the church. It is overreaching its authority, suspending The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and violating Christian followers, as well as other communities also affected. This violation is deeply felt.

Pastors and elders operate with God-given authority in ecclesiastical matters and must be left alone by civic leaders in this regard. It is a matter of jurisdiction. Secular government is blind to understanding or appreciating our faith for its true worth. Consequently, without knowledge of the spiritual dimension, it is not able to evaluate what controls would be for our greater good or for our greater harm. On top of this, it is not the jurisdiction of civil government to regulate the Church. It has not been equipped or commissioned by God for ecclesiastical matters. It is not the prerogative for civil government to alter, modify or forbid spiritual worship or Christian practice. It needs to back out of this sphere where it doesn't belong.

Police forces are much needed parts of any society. They are there to go after real crime such as gang violence, drug trafficking and human trafficking. When they are taken away from this role and turned on the public, turned on good citizens, turned on soft targets

like business owners, churches and pastors then we have an injustice.

We stand for the autonomy of the local church and for its God-given right to operate and to fulfill its mission to the world and its commission from God. We stand for the right of the Christian Church to follow Christ without external hampering or interference from any hierarchy of man, including secular government. We maintain that the Church does not need permission from the state to follow or obey God. In fact, the authority of Jesus Christ is final and above all other authority. We read of Christ's authority, which God established: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave

him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Ephesians 1:20-23) We also read, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

Secular government should not restrict churches gathering together. The word “Church” in the original Greek language is “ekklesia” which means an assembly of called out ones. Assembling goes down to the core of who we are. For two thousand years we have been assembling together even through times of natural disaster, economic crashes, world calamities of every type and even war. Now we are expected by our government to accept crippling restrictions on our ability to meet, all over a virus?

Throughout the two thousand years that we have been practicing our faith, the Christian Church has suffered much persecution and

believers have endured martyrdom. This often came at the hands of governments that tried to restrict or ban the practicing of our faith. Believers in every age have stood for their right to practice their faith.

Churches have shown a great deal of patience during this difficult time. No one would have objected to voluntarily complying with a few weeks of shutdown and lockdown. Government said that they needed a little time to flatten the curve of this virus. However, as this situation dragged on into, not weeks, but years, and the covid 19 debate has become greatly intertwined in politics. There is great debate over how serious this virus really is, or really isn't. There is debate on how should society in general respond to a virus situation like this. Politics have gotten involved and many government members have come coming down pretty hard on the side of “more serious,” “more shutdown,” and “more restrictions.” In the midst of

“more serious,” “more restrictions” Our constitutional and inalienable rights are being bypassed.

For two thousand years we have stayed open during natural disasters, through economic crashes, through persecution, and through times of war. We have a Chartered right to our freedom of religion and our freedom of peaceful assembly. We have an inalienable human right to practice our faith. We have watched secular civil government cross way over the red line that separates their authority from ours. We have been given a mission and a commission to fulfill. We stand for the autonomy of the local church and for it's God-given right to operate. We have shown much patience while our civic leaders have had all of society stuck in a rut as they wrangle over the science and the politics of Covid 19. The assembly of called out ones must be given the freedom to assemble again without interference.

Shawn Stevens

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