

Canada Evangelist Arrested For Preaching Near Festival

By BosNewsLife News Center – Sept 8, 2006

TORONTO/CALGARY (BosNewsLife)

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Consider the following warning and exhortation from God's Word when reading this article:

Deut 18:10 "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13 "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 "For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you. (NKJ)

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink (NKJ)

A Canadian evangelist in Canada's province of Alberta was due in court Thursday, September 7, on charges of "obstruction of justice, trespassing and disturbing the peace" during a theater festival where he preached and spoke with tarot card readers and other occult practitioners.

33-year-old Artur Pawlowski, who gave up a lucrative home-building business last year to start up The Street Church for especially homeless people, was detained August 16 when he and several others prayed and read the Bible near the Fringe Festival in Calgary, Alberta's largest city, fellow Christians said.

Two days earlier Pawlowski and his brother went to the park venue of the festival, where they talked with tarot card readers and other practisers of

"sorcery" to tell them the Bible condemns such practices.

The Calgary Sun newspaper said video showed they remained calm but that vendors became agitated. Event organizers reportedly called police and Pawlowski and his brother David were asked not to talk to the vendors again. They agreed and left.

PRAYING

On Wednesday, August 16, when they returned to pray, they allegedly stayed far away from the vendors, but organizers called police anyway.

The video produced by Pawlowski's church reportedly shows him standing on a public sidewalk with his hands in his pockets asking a police officer in a calm voice, "Why are you harassing me? What did I do wrong?" The police officer responds with: "I'm going to arrest you for obstruction," The Calgary Sun said.

Pawlowski was apparently handcuffed, made to walk backwards to the police vehicle, and eventually spent the night in jail. "Maybe if Artur Pawlowski had been holding a flag of the outlawed terrorist organization Hezbollah, Calgary Police would have left him alone," commented Licia Corbella, a news columnist of The Calgary Sun.

POLICE

"Perhaps had they seen him on a street corner smoking crack cocaine -- or selling it -- they would have turned the other cheek, as is so often the case," she wrote. Calgary Police reportedly confirmed the arrest. Inspector Ed Yeomans said the August 16 arrest was the police's "second dealing" with Pawlowski.

"One vendor closed up her booth and others left the park because that man and his group were causing a disturbance to other users of the festival," said Yeomans in a statement published by The Calgary Sun.

It came as an apparent set-back for Pawlowski who with the support of area churches, spends most of his time feeding, clothing, housing "and loving members of Calgary's homeless population." He also preached to drug dealers, some of whom allegedly threatened him because his message made several clients run away from drugs.

PSALM 140

Among those standing next to Pawlowski during the August 16 open air rally was Shawn Pierson, 25, once a street person himself who is "one of the fruits" of Pawlowski's ministry," said Corbella, who obtained the video material. He "can be seen and heard on the videotape reading from Psalm 140: "'O Lord, I say to you, 'You are my God.' Hear, O Lord, my cry for

mercy.' "

She concluded that "Such activity was clearly too fringe for the Fringe Festival underway in tents further west (and out of earshot) in the park," leading to the arrest of the evangelist.

Evangelical groups have been increasingly concerned about what they see as growing political pressure from a variety of groups opposing activities of evangelists and active church leaders in Canada, and other Commonwealth of Nations, a loose confederation of countries that formerly belonged to the British Empire.

In the UK itself, the Evangelical Alliance on Wednesday, August 6, condemned the the arrest of evangelist Stephen Green, who distributed Christian leaflets during a massive event of homosexuals, the Mardi Gras Festival, in Cardiff, Wales.

The Voice Of the Martyrs Canada (VOMC), a group investigating reports of persecution of Christians, said in a statement to BosNewsLife it had urged supporters to "pray that all charges [against Pawlowski and his team] will be dropped." (With BosNewsLife's Stefan J. Bos, BosNewsLife Research and reports from Canada).