

NL ADVENTIST eREPORT

A digital publication brought to you by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador.

New Year's Greetings! In this issue, AdventistHelp Extends Aid to Vulnerable Refugee Communities; MPs Vote to Save Criminal Code Section; Announcement Marystown Pastor; and more...



Photo courtesy of Michael-John Von Hörsten | Dec. 23, 2017 | Adventist News Network (ANN)

AdventistHelp Extends Aid to Vulnerable Refugee Communities In Iraq, Greece

Dec 23, 2017 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Beth Thomas, Adventist News Network

Dr. Michael-John Von Hörsten explains how the ministry has changed his life and how people can get involved.

AdventistHelp is a medical humanitarian initiative set up in 2015 in response to the refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe. They provide emergency and primary medical care to vulnerable communities displaced by conflict or natural disaster.

The project began with a mobile emergency clinic situated on the north coast of the Greek island of Lesbos, a key entrance point for refugees coming by boat. The team treated thousands of ill and injured persons in the

facility. The project then extended to an Afghan refugee camp in Athens where they provided medical services in a well-equipped camp clinic for a year and a half.

In 2017 they extended their services into Iraq, partnering with ADRA Kurdistan. Together they developed a 45-bed field hospital equipped with an emergency unit, primary care physicians, dental and mental health care. The facility is situated 25 miles east of the city of Mosul, Iraq, which was recently liberated from three years of ISIS occupation. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced during that time.

Currently AdventistHelp provides services to five camps with a combined population of around 50,000. Their medical center is known as one of the best equipped facilities in the entire zone.

Recently, [Adventist News Network (ANN)] staff interviewed Michael-John Von Hörsten, a key figure for AdventistHelp, to see what his experience has been like and what is on the horizon for the ministry in the future.

If you are interested in learning how to help or if you are a medical professional who is interested in volunteering, please visit www.adventisthelp.org

Read the full article and interview on Adventist News Network at <https://goo.gl/uP4DF8>





Photo by Pam Menegakis on Unsplash | NL Adventist Communications

MPs Vote to Save Criminal Code Section Protecting Religious Services After Citizens Speak Out

Dec. 27, 2017 | By Pastor Eric Ollila

I first learned about Section 176, of the Canada Criminal Code, back in 2010 after a clergyman informed me that the Article could allegedly be used to defend clergy caught speeding on the way to perform religious duties or officiate a religious service. The idea being likened to police officers being able to speed when duty calls.

A few years later, when personally faced with a hefty fine for a traffic violation (i.e. speeding on the way to perform a religious duty), I decided to explore, more closely, what protections this criminal code offered to an individual in my situation.

At first, I discovered not very many people were familiar with Section 176—including the officer who pulled me over (judging by his chuckling and needing to radio his superior about Section 176 when I mentioned it to him). Suffice to say, I had difficulty, initially, getting a clear answer as to what the Section actually meant and why it existed on the books.

Under the heading “Obstructing or violence to or arrest of officiating clergyman”, Section 176 states: “(1) Every one who (a) by threats or force, unlawfully obstructs or prevents or endeavours to obstruct or prevent a clergyman or minister from

celebrating divine service or performing any other function in connection with his calling, or (b) knowing that a clergyman or minister is about to perform, is on his way to perform or is returning from the performance of any of the duties or functions mentioned in paragraph (a) (i) assaults or offers any violence to him, or (ii) arrests him on a civil process, or under the pretence of executing a civil process, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.” [1]

After a bit of leg work and probing, it was explained to me from Sgt. Kevin Foley, RNC, and later confirmed by those I spoke with at the NL Traffic Court, the intended use of Section 176, was not to protect pastors speeding to officiate some service, rather it was intended to protect both clergy and religious services from undue disruption and harassment.

Under the heading “Disturbing religious worship or certain meetings”, Section 176 continues: (2) Every one who wilfully disturbs or interrupts an assemblage of persons met for religious worship or for a moral, social or benevolent purpose is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction. (3) Every one who, at or near a meeting referred to in subsection (2), wilfully does anything that disturbs the order or solemnity of the meeting is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.” [2]

The importance of Section 176 came into sharper focus after the several tragedies involving religious services and shootings, both within Canada and the United States, occurred.

However, on June 6, 2017, as a result of legislation introduced by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Section 176 came under review and was destined for the chopping block. Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Justice Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, set out to repeal or amend a number of provisions in the Criminal Code that have been found unconstitutional, would likely be found unconstitutional, or are considered obsolete or redundant criminal offences.

Section 176 was viewed, by several MPs, as obsolete or redundant and was therefore considered for elimination. However, due to an apparent flood of

emails, phone calls, and letters from alert proponents of Section 176, MPs voted to retain the Section in the Canada Criminal Code, but with updated language. [3]

As of December 12, 2017, the Bill and proposed amendments had their first reading in front of the Senate. [4] Revisions may still be suggested and made before a final version is voted and adopted.

The most striking take-away from this situation, based on my observation, is the importance of staying alert and aware of the bills and legislation that government leaders propose. Simple neglect, lack of awareness, or even ignorance about the importance of certain laws, protections, freedoms, and rights may result in their being eliminated, without much ado. As The National Post reported, "The NDP's Alistair MacGregor said he had hardly taken notice of the section's [176] removal when he first read Bill C-51, but was soon overwhelmed with calls to keep it." [5]

This account and testimony is evidence that when citizens are vigilant, when individuals are aware and speak up about the things they are concerned about, appropriate priority can be assured for various laws, rights, or freedoms.

While we as Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in mixing church and state, we as individuals must be awake to the fact that we have a responsibility to ensure those laws, protections, rights, and freedoms, important to a free society, stay in place.

[1] <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/section-176.html>

[2] Ibid.

[3] <http://nationalpost.com/news/religion/religious-groups-urge-mps-to-keep-criminal-code-prohibition-on-disrupting-a-worship-service>

[4] <https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=9002286&View=4>

[5] <http://nationalpost.com/news/politics/after-absolute-avalanche-of-emails-mps-vote-to-save-criminal-code-section-protecting-religious-services>

NL Adventist Events

1st Quarter, 2018

- **Jan. 10** - 10 Days of Prayer
- **Mar. 25** - NLSDA Board of Directors Meeting

Upcoming Events In Your Area?

Does your church, company, or group have any events it would like to submit to be included on the NL Adventist Calendar?

Submit to: nladventist@gmail.com

Announcements:

MARYSTOWN PASTORAL TRANSITION: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in NL Administration informs its membership of a pastoral transition currently underway in the Marystown district. As of Wednesday, December 20, 2017 Pastor Victor Reyes-Prieto is no longer serving the district as their pastor. Pastor Victor and his wife, Pamela, are currently spending the holidays in the US. We wish them the Lord's blessings as they start on the next chapter of their lives.

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