

Church Closed By Order of The Court

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.- A judge has shut down a Nashville Church in the middle of a legal battle with its pastor.



The judge issued an injunction shutting down the Jackson Street Missionary Baptist Church while a lawsuit is pending. Church members filed the lawsuit last week against Reverend Curtis Bryant. Members claim Bryant mortgaged the church without permission, took money, and refuses to step down.

Because of the injunction church services are canceled for Sunday, August 12, 2007.

"Churches are about peace and quiet and praying to the almighty, not about two factions fighting amongst themselves," said Constitutional Attorney David Raybin.

"If there's a threat of violence, a judge can shut down anything. You can shut down a business, you could padlock a home for example, if there were a threat of violence or criminal activity, under our state nuisance laws," said Raybin.

Dissension inside Jackson Street Missionary Baptist is growing as the relationship between church and pastor continues to crumble. Some churchgoers accuse Curtis Bryant of mortgaging the church, stealing money, and refusing to surrender his title.

The church is suing Bryant and has even had him banished from the building. For now, no one's getting in, thanks to a judge's order, which is a legal maneuver that's perfectly within her right. But Nashville attorney David Raybin admits is rare.

It might take divine intervention to restore order to this house of God, but for now, a judge is calling the shots, and it looks like the laws of the land will prevail.

This threat of violence could be very real given how the conflict reached a "near riot" situation two weekends ago. Raybin said he has never seen this injunction but he said the judge will likely hold a hearing in the very near future to figure out who owns the church, and who has the right to remain. This court injunction expires at noon Monday.