

Sean Feucht accused of 'biological warfare' in LA

by [Alejandra Molina](#) in the [January 27, 2021](#) issue



People line up to take a COVID-19 test in the Skid Row neighborhood of Los Angeles on April 20, 2020. (AP Photo / Marcio Jose Sanchez)

Los Angeles activists held car caravans in late December to block evangelical recording artist Sean Feucht from holding outreach events in two homeless communities in LA, including the large one in the 54-block area known as Skid Row.

Stephen “Cue” Jn’Marie, who founded the Row Church, also known as the Church Without Walls, in Skid Row, and Pete White, founder of the Los Angeles Community Action Network, were among the organizers taking part in the blockade.

In a December 29 statement, Jn’Marie and White said that “Feucht is waging biological warfare against a community he deems as defenseless.”

“He will soon find this is not the case if he chooses to continue down this path,” the statement read.

Feucht’s December 30–31 events were part of his national Let Us Worship tour which protests COVID-19 restrictions. The two days of outreach, which included serving meals and the laying on of hands on people who are experiencing homelessness, culminated with a New Year’s Eve celebration in the parking lot of Higher Vision Church in the city of Valencia, more than 30 miles away.

Feucht’s music tour, which he refers to as the #letusworship movement, has been criticized by health officials and faith leaders alike for drawing thousands of people, many of them ignoring social distancing guidelines and health orders requiring masks.

In a YouTube video, Feucht indicated that the purpose of the events was to “claim the California coast for Jesus,” later proclaiming that “God is not finished with California.”

Elena Stern, a spokeswoman for LA’s Department of Public Works, said the city had not received an application or issued a permit for any of the scheduled events. Other events held by Feucht in Seattle, Nashville, Tennessee, Washington, DC, and other US cities have also met with opposition from local authorities and scattered counterprotesters.

Feucht’s New Year’s Eve events came as Los Angeles County was experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

Jn’Marie said he sent Feucht a Facebook message on December 21 to express concern about his visit to Skid Row. Feucht did not respond.

In a December 29 Zoom call hosted by the California Poor People’s Campaign, faith leaders demanded that LA mayor Eric Garcetti, California governor Gavin Newsom, and Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors chair Hilda Solis take immediate action against Feucht holding the outreach events.

In a news conference, Garcetti urged Feucht to cancel the events but said that, ultimately, his own hands were tied.

“There are constitutionally protected rights, both religion and protest, which clearly he has used and exercised, but just because we do have the right to do things,

doesn't mean it's the right thing to do," Garcetti said. "So I would encourage him first and foremost to come back, have a good concert after this pandemic is done."

In a statement submitted to CBS News Los Angeles, Solis said she was concerned about the events and asked the county's Department of Public Health to look into this matter.

Beth Johnson, minister at Palomar Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, criticized Feucht's events as "exploitative."

"For a person who purports to care for their community or for people who need religion, Sean Feucht is actually exploiting communities," Johnson said.

Feucht's visit to Skid Row was "tantamount to abuse," she said.

"To come into someone's place, someone's neighborhood where they are not able to leave, it's as if you are walking into somebody's house," Johnson added.

Jn'Marie and White said they created hand-washing stations, provided hygiene products, and doubled down on promoting mask wearing. While the community welcomes food, clothing, hygiene items, and any other assistance, Jn'Marie said, Skid Row doesn't need "people to come in for a photo op."

"We've worked to keep the community safe," he said. —Religion News Service