

Anti-gay pastor arrested for indecent exposure around kids

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METAIRIE, La. (RNS) A fundamentalist Christian pastor known for his bullhorn protests of the annual Southern Decadence gay pride festival was arrested on a charge of masturbating at a park on Friday (Feb. 25).

The Rev. Grant Storms, 53, was taken into custody after two women reported seeing him masturbating in the driver's seat of his van, which was parked near the carousel and playground, a Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office report said.

A woman who parked next to Storms' van noticed the occupant was "looking at the playground area that contained children playing, with his zipper down," the report said. The woman noted that he was masturbating and quickly ushered her children out of her car.

She told a second woman, who walked to the van and also spotted the man masturbating, the report said. The second witness told deputies that the driver tried to conceal the zipper area of his pants with his hand.

Storms told deputies he was having lunch at the park when he decided to urinate using a bottle instead of the restroom, the report said.

He was booked on obscenity, with bond set at \$5,000. He was released two days later because of jail crowding. Storms could not be reached for

comment on Monday.

A self-styled "Christian patriot," Storms leads the small Reformer Church where he has railed against the Roman Catholic Church, calling it "satanic" and "demonic."

He is known for arming followers with bullhorns, Bibles and picket signs to protest Southern Decadence, the three-day gay festival held in the French Quarter during Labor Day weekend.