

Radical Gay Activists Seek to Intimidate Christians

Since Nov. 4, Christians have reported increased incidences of church vandalism and sometimes-violent attacks for their support of traditional marriage.



[] The Nov. 4 passage of constitutional amendments banning gay marriage in California, Arizona and Florida has evoked a sometimes-violent response from radical gay activists who have vandalized churches, mobbed intercessors and disrupted a worship service in Michigan.

Intercessors with a house of prayer in San Francisco said they feared they might be killed Friday night during a routine prayer walk through the area's Castro district, which has a large gay community. They said a crowd who thought they were marriage amendment demonstrators shouted lewd remarks, pushed them, threw hot coffee on their faces and threatened the prayer group leader with death. (See related video.)

One man reportedly hit an intercessor on the head with her Bible before shoving her to the ground and kicking her. Before police arrived, another house of prayer member said someone repeatedly tried to pull his pants down.

"We hadn't preached, we hadn't evangelized," one of the intercessors said after the incident. "We worshipped God in peace, and we were about to die for it."

Police eventually escorted the group to their van, telling the intercessors they had to leave if they wanted to make it out, one witness said.

"These are the nicest kids," said TheCall founder Lou Engle, who knows many of the young intercessors involved in the incident. "That night they were doing only worship. They

weren't trying to aggravate anything."

"I think what's happening is an exposure of what's really there and an underbelly of this [radical gay] movement," Engle added. "I think the church has to really reveal what's going on there so the nation gets a clue about what they're making an alliance with."

In Michigan, where voters in 2004 approved an amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman, a Chicago-based gay rights organization called Bash Back interrupted a Nov. 9 service at an Assemblies of God congregation in Lansing. (See related video.)

After staging a demonstration outside Mount Hope Church to draw most of the security staff away from the worship service, protestors masked as congregants stood up in the middle of the service, "declared themselves fags and began screaming loudly," Bash Back leaders said in a statement posted online.

The protestors pulled the fire alarm and threw thousands of fliers into the congregation, while a gay couple rushed to the front and began kissing in front of the pastor. "Let it be known: So long as bigots kill us in the streets, this pack of wolves will continue to BASH BACK!" the group said in a statement about the incident.

Bash Back leaders said Mount Hope was targeted because it is "complicit in the repression of queers" by working to "institutionalize transphobia and homophobia" through "repulsive" ex-gay conferences and hell house plays, "which depict queers, trannies and womyn [sic] who seek abortions as the horrors."

In a statement posted on Mount Hope's Web site, church leaders said they don't "attempt to identify the church as anti-homosexual, anti-choice, or right wing" but do "take the Bible at face value and believes what the Bible says to be the truth."

Mount Hope spokesman David J. Williams Jr., said the sheriff's department had launched an investigation into the incident. "We're really asking for prayer for the people that did this," Williams said. "They need Jesus; they need to know His love."

Attorney John Stemberger, who chaired Florida's marriage amendment campaign, said many gay protestors want to intimidate the public into silence. "Their goal is to create an intense climate of intimidation and hostility within the culture to try and deter people from supporting traditional marriage and other pro-family initiatives in the future," Stemberger said. "We will not be bullied into silence, indifference or inaction."

In Palm Springs, Calif., a 69-year-old woman planned to file charges against protesters who reportedly pushed the woman and spit on her during a Nov. 8 rally opposing the passage of Proposition 8, which amends the state constitution to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Phyllis Burgess said authorities convinced her to press charges against the attackers.

Nationwide, gay rights advocates protested marriage bans on Saturday, pointing particularly to California's Proposition 8, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman and overturned a state Supreme Court ruling that had legalized gay marriage. Many of the demonstrations were peaceful, according to Associated Press (AP) reports, with participants waving rainbow-colored flags and holding signs saying "Don't Spread the H8."

But pastors across the country, particularly in California, say incidents of vandalism and theft have increased since Nov. 4. One California pastor said a minister in his state received death threats for his support of Proposition 8.

According to reports from California's Protect Marriage campaign:

- At Messiah Lutheran Church in Downey, Calif., a “Yes on 8” sign was wrapped around a heavy object and used to smash the window of the pastor’s office.
- Several “Yes on 8” yard signs were stolen from Calvary Chapel Ventura, as well as a large banner displaying the church’s name and service times.
- Park Community Church in Shingle Springs, Calif., received harassing phone calls and has been threatened with lawsuits by Proposition 8 opponents.
- Bloggers targeted Yorba Linda, Calif., pastor Jim Domen, who is open about his past struggle with same-sex attraction, and his girlfriend for harassment after seeing the couple’s photo in news reports about the passage of Proposition 8.
- The words “No on 8” were spray-painted on a Mormon church in Orangevale, Calif.
- A brick was thrown through the window of Family Fellowship Church in Hayward, Calif., and at Trinity Baptist Church in Arcata, Proposition 8 opponents vandalized the church’s marquee, which encouraged support for the marriage amendment; stole the church’s flags; and committed other acts of vandalism totaling \$1,500.
- Eggs thrown on the building of San Luis Obispo Assembly of God and toilet paper was strewn across the property, while a Mormon church in the same city had adhesive poured onto a doormat, a keypad and a window.

The Mormon Church, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, has also become a target of gay rights activists because it provided major funding to the Proposition 8 campaign and encouraged its members to support the marriage amendment, which passed with 52 percent of the vote.

Some gay rights advocates have called for a boycott of the

state of Utah, and Bash Back leaders admitted to vandalizing Mormon churches there, as well as in Washington state and California. A Mormon temple in Salt Lake City reported receiving a letter containing a white, powdery substance that forced the facility to close while police launched an investigation.

“The hypocrisy, hatred, and intolerance shown by the gay rights movement isn't pretty,” said Randy Thomasson, president of the Campaign for Children and Families, a leading California-based pro-family group. “While claiming to be against hate and for tolerance and choice, the homosexual activists are revealing their hatred of voters and religion and showing their intolerance of people's personal choices to support man-woman marriage. By attacking the people's vote to protect marriage in the state constitution, homosexual activists have declared war on our republic and our democratic system.”

Christian leaders say the backlash is likely to continue and may worsen. “It's actually desperation time for us all across the nation to be praying,” Engle said. “They're calling [Christians] haters when all they're doing is simply saying there's a higher authority. It's a raging against Christ and His loving, foundational laws. It is becoming an anti-Christ rage. They are creating a Jesus of their own mind, a Jesus who lets everybody do whatever they want.

“I think the church has to be prepared [for religious persecution],” he added. “Our allegiance is to God and His Word, and if that means imprisonment and martyrdom, so be it.”

– **Adrienne S. Gaines**