

This Is What Heretical, Counterfeit Christianity in Action Looks Like

“We must now have the courage to take the final step and call **homophobia** and **heterosexism** what they are. They are sin. Homophobia is a sin. Heterosexism is a sin. Shaming people for who they love is a sin. Only when all our churches say that clearly and boldly and courageously will our **LGBT** youth be free to grow up in a culture that totally embraces them as they fully are.”

These aren't the words of an outspoken gay activist at a rally. Or, well, maybe they sort of are. These words came from the lips of Rev. Gary Hall, the dean of Washington's National Cathedral, in a recent Sunday sermon. Hall was speaking during a weekend that honored lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and commemorated the 15th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death. Shepard was tragically murdered in an anti-gay hate crime in 1998.

But Hall's sermon wasn't an isolated instance or any sort of departure from his standard **theology**—and it wasn't taken out of context. Earlier this year, Hall announced the Washington National Cathedral would start celebrating same-sex marriages.

“It's more than tragic—in fact it's shameful—that faith communities, especially **Christian** ones, continue to be complicit in putting our children at risk and abetting the attitudes that oppress them, thereby encouraging the aggressors who would subject our children to pain, humiliation and violence,” Hall said, claiming that churches opposing homosexuality produce a culture that harms children.

Consider the significance of his words in the context of the setting in which he preached them. The Washington National

Cathedral considers itself a “spiritual resource for our nation.” But many may not know that it’s also “an indispensable ministry for all people of all faiths and perspectives.” The National Cathedral’s vision is to be a catalyst for spiritual harmony in our nation, **renewal** in churches, reconciliation among faiths and compassion in our world. The funerals of 21 presidents and the inaugurations of five presidents of the United States have been held there. The fact that Hall stood in such a place and uttered such words is more than telling about the spiritual state of our nation.

Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, a nonprofit group dedicated to exposing the homosexual-bisexual-transgender activist agendas, told the Christian News Network that Hall’s comments reflect a nation that is playing out Isaiah 5:20, which states, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

“Gary Hall of the National Cathedral is sinning when he claims that opposition to **homosexuality is a sin**. This is counterfeit Christianity in action—transferring the guilt before God from those who are committing sins (of which homosexuality is one) to those who oppose those sins,” LaBarbera said.

“Obviously, ‘hating’ homosexuals or being so fearful that you fail to offer the hope of the **gospel** to people caught up in homosexual sin is wrong, but that’s not what Hall is talking about here. He is ‘redefining Christianity’ and sin itself in a way that flips the truth of the Word of God on its head. ... The danger is that this new heretical ‘sin-affirming Christianity’ is spreading in the evangelical Church.”

This sort of deception still shocks me. How can the Very Rev. Gary Hall, who has served as an ordained minister for more than 35 years—which means he was following God long before our nation’s Christian culture deteriorated to this point—hold

such beliefs? And what does it mean when the chief ecclesiastical leader and executive officer—a man who works closely with the bishop of Washington and governing bodies to shape and support ministries to the city of Washington, the nation and the world—perpetrates these beliefs? And, moreover, what does this say about the state of Christianity and the times we live in?

I believe LaBarbera is spot-on. **Christianity** is slowly (or maybe not so slowly) being redefined into a religion that affirms sin. We see this manifesting in several ways, from the hypergrace message that condones sin among Christians to uber-liberal denominations that ordain gays into ministry and beyond.

But there is yet good news: God is still on the throne. God is giving even the most heretical, deceived ones a space to repent. Our job is to discern heresy, refuse to align with it and pray for the captives to be set free. If one of your family members was caught in a snare, wouldn't you try to rescue him? Many Christians are caught in the snare of **deception**, even **heresy**. If you can see clearly, then I urge you to intercede for those the enemy has blinded. Let's not just sit by and watch the problem get worse. Let's drop to our knees and petition the King.

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