

Church Slams America, Desecrates 'God Bless the USA'

There is outrage from the lakes of Minnesota to the hills of Tennessee after a Methodist church in Vermont rewrote the lyrics to Lee Greenwood's beloved song, "God Bless the USA," and turned it into a "bash America" anthem.

"I look around this America but not everybody's free. And I won't forget all those who died beneath our fear and greed," a singer crooned during Sunday "worship" at the First United Methodist Church in Burlington. "God forgive the USA."

The singer went on to ask forgiveness for ripping families apart at the border and taking land from the Native Americans and the way we treat LGBT citizens.

"For the native tribes we conquered—Sioux, Lakota, Cherokee—for the slaves we beat and tortured for the interned Japanese," the singer warbled. "For the women and the children for the lesbian, gay."

The confession of America's alleged sins went on and on and on and on.

"Mr. Greenwood's song is emblematic of pride in and prayer for blessing of our country," Pastor Mark Demers told me. "Changing the words to make it also a prayer for forgiveness and healing served to expand the meaning, thus reflecting with the anthem the theme of our worship service."

He did not seem at all bothered that the church had desecrated a beloved patriotic anthem.

"Confession is a central part of Christian worship, as is prayer for healing. The lectionary text and sermon for the day

told of two healings requested of Jesus—one a person of power in the community and the other a person impoverished by her illness,” the pastor told me. “The text lends itself to the idea that all, of every station in life, individuals and communities alike—including churches—stand in need of forgiveness and healing.”

I reached out to Mr. Greenwood’s publicist, who told me the church did not seek permission to alter the copyrighted song. Nor did the church let Mr. Greenwood know in advance they would be taking great liberties with the lyrics.

“It’s illegal to do that,” Greenwood told One America News.

However, the United Methodist Church pastor defended the atrocities they committed against Mr. Greenwood’s song.

“A change of lyrics such as was done does not violate copyright law, falling under the category of parody,” he said.

It’s bad enough they desecrated a beloved patriotic song, but parody in a worship service? God forgive the UMC.