

Right Wing Watch Shuts Down Benham Brothers' HGTV Show—Is Billy Graham Next?

The Home and Garden Television network (aka HGTV) announced Wednesday it has decided to pull the plug on an upcoming real estate reality show amid a firestorm of controversy from gay rights activists who accused the evangelical Christian hosts of being anti-gay and pro-life.

Twins David and Jason Benham had been in production for *Flip It Forward*, a show that was expected to debut in October on the nation's seventh most-watched cable channel. According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the North Carolina brothers "would have followed families creating their dream homes from fixer-uppers."

After the network announced the show was on the fall lineup, the militant lobbying group Right Wing Watch labeled David Benham, son of well-known evangelical pastor Flip Benham, an "anti-gay extremist" and reported on comments he made about homosexuality, abortion and divorce.

So now these militant groups are going to start judging us based on the past behavior of our parents?

I reached out the Benham brothers Wednesday. "If our faith costs us a television show then so be it," they wrote in a statement to me.

The Benhams, who are graduates of Liberty University, said they were saddened to hear about HGTV's decision.

"With all of the grotesque things that can be seen and heard on television, you would think there would be room for two twin brothers who are faithful to our families, committed to

biblical principles, and dedicated professionals,” they wrote.

I’d be willing to bet that’s what the Robertson family, of A&E’s *Duck Dynasty* fame, thought too.

HGTV refuses to say why they decided not to go forward with the show. At 12 p.m. ET on Wednesday they said this on Twitter: “HGTV has decided not to move forward with the Benham Brothers’ series.” But their decision was announced after Right Wing Watch published a scathing attack on the brothers.

They reported that David Benham led a prayer rally outside the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte in 2012. They also took issue with comments he made to Christian radio host Janet Mefferd about the rally.

“We don’t realize that, okay, if 87 percent of Americans are Christians and yet we have abortion on demand; we have no-fault divorce; we have pornography and perversion; we have a homosexuality and its agenda that is attacking the nation; we have adultery; we have all of the things; we even have allowed demonic ideologies to take our universities and our public school systems while the church sits silent and just builds big churches,” Benham told the host.

“We are so complacent, we are so apathetic and we are very hypocritical in the church, that’s why the Bible says judgment begins in the house of God,” he continued. “So when we prayed at 714 we asked God and our city to forgive us for allowing these things in the house of God.”

Right Wing Watch also took issue with Benham’s support for a North Carolina amendment that protected traditional marriage and his support of the pro-life movement.

I’m shocked that Right Wing Watch didn’t document the number of times the brothers were caught eating a Chick-fil-A sandwich.

By the way, Billy Graham supported North Carolina's traditional marriage amendment. Does Right Wing Watch think he's an anti-gay extremist?

The brothers reject any accusations that they are anti-gay or discriminate. They said anyone who says otherwise is not telling the truth.

"As Christians we are called to love our fellow man," they wrote. "Anyone who suggests that we hate homosexuals or people of other faiths is either misinformed or lying."

"Over the last decade, we've sold thousands of homes with the guiding principle of producing value and breathing life into each family that has crossed our path, and we do not, nor will we ever discriminate against people who do not share our views," they wrote.

It's too bad HGTV and those militant gay activists don't share similar guiding principles.

Salem Radio Network host Mefferd told me this is a classic case of LGBT activists trying to marginalize and silence others.

"This is an effort by LGBT movement to silence the voices of people who do not agree with them on this issue and to send a message to the American public that anybody who does not get on board with their point of view does not deserve a place in the public square," she said.

Tom Tradup, Salem's vice president of news and talk programming, denounced the attack on the Benham brothers.

"In the 1950s, Sen. Joseph McCarthy terrorized Americans whose views differed from his, resulting in the infamous Hollywood blacklists and people losing their jobs in the radio and television industry," he told me. "Sadly, thanks to 2014-style McCarthyism, history appears to be repeating itself."

HGTV's statement is insufficient. They owe it to their viewers to explain why *Flip It Forward* was canceled. There may very well be another reason why they pulled the plug. But right now, it appears that they caved into pressure from gay activists. If that's the case, it would make HGTV not only cowardly, but also bigoted.

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