

Basket Of Hate

" 'I know the Bible's right, somebody's wrong,' the boy sings near the pulpit of a church. 'Ain't no homos gonna make it to heaven.' The congregants in the pews rise and cheer."

([Church videos with harsh words for gays goes viral online](#))

When I first heard the young boy sing those words I tried to imagine what it must have been like to be there at that moment, to see the pleased look on the boy's face as he garnered the approval of the adults around him. In that moment he learned two enduring lessons. First, gay bashing is an approved behavior, second, hate is an acceptable Christian response toward "others." No matter how many "love-thy-neighbor" Bible lessons this child hears, his adult role models have confirmed in his mind that love is limited to a select group; those not in that group may be hated. Of such stuff bullies are made. The church of the Prince of Peace has an ironic habit of hiding its light under a self-weaved basket of hate. This is the face of Christianity Gandhi must have had in mind when he said, "Everyone knows what Christ taught, except Christians."

In the wake of the Orlando massacre we have been consumed with such presumptive causes as terrorists, Muslims, and gun accessibility, but little is being said about the violent character of our nation that begets such hatred. The little boy in the video is not learning how to self-righteously condemn in an Islamic Madrassa, but in a Christian church. That church's response to a targeted group falls into a familiar pattern, a pattern that frighteningly parallels one seen in Nazi Germany.

The German Evangelical Church had for decades been complicit in support of anti-Semitism. When the Nazi Party took control of Germany not only did they encounter little opposition to their escalation of the already existent anti-Semitic policies but, in fact, the Church officially praised the Nazi party for bringing about a government according to God's laws, one that, "bans blasphemy, assails immorality, establishes discipline . . . one that upholds the sanctity of marriage."¹

Satan's Victory

It would seem that 1930s Nazi Germany is far removed from the open democratic processes of the United States. But there is a universal pattern of targeting a group for exclusion that is socially ubiquitous. After [Amendment 1](#) passed in North Carolina, one Christian cleric called for the internment of homosexuals behind

barbed wire (like Nazi concentration camps); another called for government



sanctioned arrests and execution (like the Nazi [final solution](#)); and, as the child's song above demonstrates, enlisting children (like the Nazi Brown Shirts) in the hate process is applauded. Those who disagreed with the national church's position

split off and formed the Confessing Church, and we see this same process of schism happening in our churches today. It is this schism, the splintering of the Body of Christ, that is Satan's greatest victory.

Whether it is anti-Semitism, segregation of African Americans, chauvinistic attacks on women, or homophobia the basket-of-hate weaving process is the same: make a group out to be the devil, incite bystanders to join in, target them, too, if they do not, then attack any and all targeted groups. Like the mob screaming for the crucifixion of Christ, everyone gets so caught up in the frenzy that they lose any semblance of rationality. Crucifixion, lynching, gas chambers, whatever--all will be made right when "those kind" are eliminated. The target may change, but the process is always the same. Romans did it to Christians, whites did/do it to blacks, Germans (and others) did it to Jews, and today many Christians seek legitimacy for their intolerance of LGBT's by wrapping themselves in a Christian flag.

Church Family as Victim

Ironically, woven into every basket of hate are the strands of the weaver's own destruction. Those who are intent on eliminating the targeted group often become so fixated on doing so that they destroy **their own** church family in the pursuit. Other Christians who are less inclined to **hate the targeted** group, now themselves become a target, and the **process of weaving hate** begins anew. All the past fellowship, all the things they **agree on in Christ's name** are tossed aside in an effort to give Satan his hate-filled **due rather than**, "bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the **unity of the Spirit in peace**" (Eph. 4:2-3).

The church's angst over homosexuality **is self-imposed**. Rather than work toward a measured response, it cheers songs of hate; rather than practice in a manner that brightens its light of love, it darkens its value in self-destructive conflict. For its part, the homosexual community must recognize that its lifestyle has a long way to go before it is approved within the greater body of the Christian church. Insisting

otherwise will foment conflict. Like it or not, the church has a right to give voice to what is and what is not acceptable within its profession of faith. But if hatred and violence are part of that profession, then that church is an affront to all the love, compassion, inclusiveness, and forgiveness Jesus demonstrated and enjoined us to emulate.

By the time the German Evangelical Church realized it had abdicated its holy obligation to stand up to the evil Nazi pogrom, it had lost any semblance of moral authority. Likewise, as the Christian church continues to deal with homosexuality through songs of hate, sermons threatening extreme persecution, and self-destructive conflict it, too, loses what should be a pre-eminent moral authority. For good or ill, the national attitude toward homosexuals is softening and years from now it will be a less contentious issue. The church that survives to serve all (see [Gal. 3:28](#)) will be the one that denies Satan his victory. It will do so by removing the basket of hate and divisiveness so that the light of love and warm embrace ignited by Christ can illuminate the path to God's Kingdom on earth.

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This concern is covered in more detail in Jack's book: [Where Christ Presides: A Quaker Perspective on Moral Discernment](#).

¹For an in-depth examination of the German Evangelical Church's activities during the Third Reich, see Gutteridge, R. 1976. *Open Thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879-1950*. (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell).