

The Tornado, the Lutherans, and Homosexuality

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I saw the fast-moving, misshapen, unusually-wide funnel over downtown Minneapolis from Seven Corners. I said to Kevin Dau, "That looks serious."

It was. Serious in more ways than one. A friend who drove down to see the damage wrote,

On a day when no severe weather was predicted or expected...a tornado forms, baffling the weather experts—most saying they've never seen anything like it. It happens right in the city. The city: Minneapolis.

The tornado happens on a Wednesday...during the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's national convention in the Minneapolis Convention Center. The convention is using Central Lutheran across the street as its church. The church has set up tents around it's building for this purpose.

According to the ELCA's printed convention schedule, at 2 PM on Wednesday, August 19, the 5th session of the convention was to begin. The main item of the session: "Consideration: Proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality." The issue is whether practicing homosexuality is a behavior that should disqualify a person from the pastoral ministry.

The eyewitness of the damage continues:

This curious tornado touches down just south of downtown and follows 35W straight towards the city center. It crosses I94. It is now downtown.

The time: 2PM.

The first buildings on the downtown side of I94 are the Minneapolis Convention Center and Central Lutheran. The tornado severely damages the convention center roof, shreds the tents, breaks off the steeple of Central Lutheran, splits what's left of the steeple in two...and then lifts.



Let me venture an interpretation of this Providence with some biblical warrant.

1. The unrepentant practice of homosexual behavior (like other sins) will exclude a person from the kingdom of God.

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

2. The church has always embraced those who forsake sexual sin but who still struggle with homosexual desires, rejoicing with them that all our fallen, sinful, disordered lives (all of us, no exceptions) are forgiven if we turn to Christ in faith.

Such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

3. Therefore, official church pronouncements that condone the very sins that keep people out of the kingdom of God, are evil. They dishonor God, contradict Scripture, and implicitly promote damnation where salvation is freely offered.

4. Jesus Christ controls the wind, including all tornados.

Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mark 4:41)

5. When asked about a seemingly random calamity near Jerusalem where 18 people were killed, Jesus answered in general terms—an answer that would cover calamities in Minneapolis, Taiwan, or Baghdad. God's message is *repent*, because none of us will otherwise escape God's judgment.

Jesus: "Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:4-5)

6. *Conclusion:* The tornado in Minneapolis was a gentle but firm warning to the ELCA and all of us: Turn from the approval of sin. Turn from the promotion of behaviors that lead to destruction. Reaffirm the great Lutheran heritage of allegiance to the truth and authority of Scripture. Turn back from distorting the grace of God into sensuality. Rejoice in the pardon of the cross of Christ and its power to transform left and right wing sinners.

http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/1965_the_tornado_the_lutherans_and_homosexuality/