



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 1, 2012

Miami Schools Threaten Church With Eviction Over Pastor's Sermons Against Homosexuality

A Miami pastor is fighting back after the head of the Miami-Dade school district threatened to evict his church, which rents space on Sunday in one of the district's schools, because of the pastor's public stand against homosexuality.

After President Obama came out publicly in support of same-sex marriage, Pastor [Jack Hakimian](#) of [Impact Miami](#), a Southern Baptist congregation that rents space on Sundays in North Miami High School, began to preach sermons pointing out that, according to the Bible, homosexual behavior is a sin.



According to [Baptist Press News](#), the school district's superintendent, Alberto Carvalho, responded to the sermons with a statement that Hakimian's take on homosexuality "appears to be contrary to school board policy as well as the basic principles of humanity." Carvalho told ABC television news affiliate local10.com that he had asked "for immediate legal review to seek the termination" of the church's lease contract with the school district. "I am making this decision not on the basis of policy or politics, but as a rejection of prejudice and intolerance," claimed Carvalho.

A spokesman for the district followed up Carvalho's comments, saying that the school board and superintendent had reviewed the "allegations" against the pastor and found his words "disturbing and appalling."

Hakimian immediately responded to Carvalho's threats by calling a press conference and demanding an apology from the superintendent and a promise that the district would stop its harassment. "I never thought I'd be penalized for teaching on Christian marriage and sexual ethics from the Bible, the very Bible that presidents swear on, in a privately rented space at an event not sponsored by the school or district," the [Miami Herald](#) quoted Hakimian as saying. "We ask Mr. Carvalho to retract his intolerant statements, apologize, and commit to never again to bully or discriminate against those he disagrees with."

Hakimian told Fox News that he is being labeled a bigot and "intolerant" simply because he is telling the truth about homosexuality. "It's about a message that homosexuality is a sin that God wants to redeem as all other sins," he said.

The Baptist pastor, who [was a member of a violent Los Angeles street gang before coming to Christ](#), said that he had decided to deal head-on with the issue of homosexuality "because there is an aggressive approach by ... gay theologians that says the Bible never spoke about homosexuality in a way that contemporary Christians understand it. It's all over — it's on YouTube, its on CNN, and its on *60 Minutes*. They are not just saying, 'accept us' — and I believe we should protect, and not bully, and treat all people with dignity and respect. But they are going beyond and above to change the very



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meaning of Scripture.”

The Rev. Fred Luter, president of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#), told Fox News that what Hakimian is facing is a “sign of the times” and anyone who stands for righteousness can expect a similar reaction from non-Christians. “We’re living in a day and time when people are calling wrong right and they’re calling right wrong,” Luter said. “Any time a man of God stands up for the words of God, I think we should expect opposition — simply because of the fact that God’s ways are not man’s ways.”

In the wake of the controversy various conservative legal advocacy groups have stepped forward to volunteer their services to Hakimian and his congregation. [Liberty Counsel](#), a Virginia-based group connected with Liberty University, sent a letter to the Miami-Dade County superintendent pointing out that any effort to negate the district’s lease contract with the congregation because of the pastor’s sermon on homosexuality would constitute a First Amendment violation.

Liberty Counsel’s founder, Matt Staver, told Fox News that Hakimian has the right “to speak on Sunday from the Scriptures and speak about his viewpoint on human sexuality. This is not someone who is advocating violence or some whacko that is extreme that would be a threat to society. This is a pastor who is speaking on issues from his own moral, political, and biblical perspective.”

Staver noted that Hakimian and his congregation “have violated no law or policy. The district cannot discriminate on the basis of his biblically sound viewpoint. Any attempt by the school board to modify, change, or revoke the lease agreement would be unconstitutional.”

He added that it is “absolutely unthinkable that a government official believes that he has the authority to restrict someone’s speech in a church service on Sunday. The school board is a landlord in this case, and consequently, they can’t go into the privacy of the home or the privacy of the church service on Sunday.” He called the case “clearly a free-speech issue. I think it also illustrates what we’ve been saying for years, that this homosexual agenda is intolerant, and they ultimately want to stop what you preach in church.”

Joel Oster, an attorney with the [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), agreed that Hakimian and his church have a constitutionally guaranteed right to speak out in public on issues that concern them and their beliefs. “Public schools cannot discriminate against religious use of their facilities based upon viewpoints,” Oster told Fox News, “and that’s exactly what’s going on here.”

Photo: Pastor Jack Hakimian



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