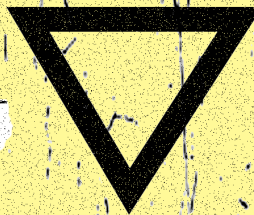


# SHAME!

## RADIANTCHURCH



RESIST  
RADIANT



FUCK THE  
CHURCH



**olidarity and support** to whomever wrote SHAME onto both Matchhead and The Grazing Table. We don't know who you are, though many can make guesses as to the reasoning for your actions. If the reasons for these specific businesses to experience some sort of backlash in the wake of the Roe V Wade overturn are elusive to you, there's probably a few helpful details to know.

Radiant Church is an established and monied nondenominational church conglomerate; they are working to establish a strong foothold in Kalamazoo. They lay out a project they call "Radiant City Vision" which details how they will use this foothold to spread their specific cult-like vision of christianity to the region. From their website:

*"The Radiant City Vision is the strategy that God has given to us for a new season of impact. By building and expanding our reach to Kalamazoo, Southwest Michigan, and beyond, we are creating the opportunity for the lost to encounter the presence of God and become radiant disciples of Jesus Christ.*

*There are thousands and tens of thousands in our own region that deserve to have an encounter with the Living God. It is time for us to rise up, accept the responsibility and shine. We believe as we do this together, we are once again going to see the goodness and miraculous favor of God upon all that we put our hands to."*<sup>1</sup>

While it is difficult to find written sources, many Kalamazoo residents report that Radiant Church is attempting to buy up as many properties as possible. This makes them both a religious majority and a real estate empire. For those who understand how capitalism works, this is an especially terrifying project that will leave countless lives displaced in its wake should it succeed.

The Radiant Church is also at the center of the Radiant Network, a "family of churches and leaders" across the continent who "have aligned themselves together in a common vision for growing their Kingdom," many of which "have been strategically planted by Radiant

Church.” The Network, it seems, is yet another strategy for growing their influence over individuals, communities, and economies.<sup>2</sup>

Churches in this Network are known for instances of sexism, racism, fatphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, discrimination, gaslighting, manipulation, and all around hate towards any and all minorities. Former staff members from locations across the U.S.A. have come forward about the neglect they faced while working such as being underpaid for more than half of their time, other staff leaving and forcing others to do more than they could manage and being scolded, plus many more instances of abusive actions and words. There have also been reported incidents of verbal abuse and discrimination towards attending members, such as calling them “dumb sheep,” telling them to “fake it till you make it” when coming forth about mental health concerns, and calling members of the LGBTQ+ community homophobic slurs and saying that they needed to be “taken care of.”<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, during sermons they have said for their members to be kind and welcoming to those of the LGBTQ+ community in order to lure them into the church to be “saved” or in order to lead them away from their “homosexual desires.” They use charm to persuade minorities to give up on themselves and to not give into “temptations of homosexual desires” but to work towards being saved. In one such sermon, speaker Preston Sprinkle compares Christians relating to the LGBTQ+ community to the way Jesus related to Zaccheaus, a wealthy tax-collector who preyed upon others and needed to be saved from his evil ways.<sup>4</sup>

From their mission statement, under sacraments: *“Biblical Marriage has only one meaning and is clearly defined in scripture as a covenant, a sacred bond uniting one man (born a man) and one woman (born a woman) in a single, exclusive union for life, instituted by and publicly entered into before God (Matthew 19:4-6), and that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (I Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). The covenant is with God and should not be taken lightly or altered to fit personal preferences.”*<sup>5</sup>

Radiant Church is also partnered with the local alternative clinic. In a similar fashion to “pray the gay away”, these clinics use manipulative and often abusive tactics to coerce scared, young, and impoverished people into having children. From their website: *“Alternatives of Kalamazoo is a pro-life nonprofit organization that specializes*

*in education on parenting, pregnancy, and women’s health, and healthy relationships.” [...] “Their priority is to build relationships and share the Gospel with each guest, especially through practical love and service. Their mission is to promote the value of human life by serving the unborn and their families through the love of Jesus Christ.”*<sup>6</sup>

In lock-step with evangelicalism across the globe, Radiant Church also actively sends missionaries to countries in northern and central Africa, the Middle-East and southern Asia. This area is known as the “10/40 window”, the area between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north of the equator, where access to bible is less common (often due to the self-defense of those regions). They call this project “Kingdom Builders”. While we could absolutely go into the atrocities caused by Christian missionary trips, we will save that for another time, and instead again reference the Radiant Church website:

*“The reality is that more than 90% of the resources of the Global church are being used in areas previously reached with the gospel. If we truly want to make an impact and help finish the Great Commission, we are going to have to make an effort to change those numbers. Here is a basic look at the global strategy we are striving for: 50% resources going to Evangelizing the remaining unreached people groups in the 10/40 window. 25% resources going to Evangelism efforts in the rest of the world. 25% resources going to Mercy Ministry (poverty, widows, orphans etc.) around the world.”*<sup>7</sup>

While it’s not uncommon to find christian churches doing racist missionary trips, exemplifying cult-like behaviors, or opposing bodily autonomy (e.g. being anti-gay, anti-trans, anti-abortion, anti-indigenous) -- it is remarkable how embedded in local capital Radiant Church seems to be in downtown Kalamazoo.

### ***What’s with the downtown businesses that were redecorated?***

Matchhead Coffee is a “front porch” mouthpiece tax-free business tied directly to Radiant Church. They are hoping to convert everyone here to their version of Christianity. Matchhead, being a business run by tithing volunteer members of the church, funnels all earnings to the church and frames that as a charitable contribution to the community.

From their website:

*“Phase 1 of Radiant City Vision: [build a]...State of the art coffee shop on the Kalamazoo Mall — A place to engage in evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship.”<sup>8</sup>*

The Grazing Table, for all intents and purposes, is not a tax-free mouthpiece of the church, but is regardless an extension of its money and influence. Furthermore, and to perhaps paint a clearer picture of the points of view associated with Radiant, the owners of the business are Joey and Jenna Gamrat; they are directly related to Cindy Gamrat. Cindy Gamrat is a now disgraced former Republican member of the Michigan House of Representatives, who, beyond her known disgracement,<sup>9</sup> was a loud voice of the Tea Party Movement regionally in 2014.<sup>10</sup>

This, along with statements from Pastor Lee Cummings in favor of the supreme court ruling to overturn Roe v. Wade<sup>11</sup> makes it clear that the nondenomination Radiant Church claims only obfuscates their deeply conservative ideologies. Ideologies that are shared by many white-supremacist institutions the world over. They are pro-life and anti-woman. They are homophobic and transphobic. They are racist and anti-Black. They are the very bedrock of the systems of domination that have been committing genocide for centuries and will continue this legacy if we don't put up a fight.

So **SHAME** on Radiant Church, **SHAME** on the partners that support them, and **SHAME** on the police that defended those poor windows on Sunday night.

### *A quick detour ~*

To take an aside for a moment, people only an hour north of Kalamazoo in Grand Rapids have a massive corner of healthcare and industry known as “the medical mile.” The medical mile is primarily Spectrum Health and related specialized branches, a hospital to which the DeVos family has made many a noteworthy contribution. DeVos money speaks, and Spectrum Health announced that they will be following the 1931 Michigan trigger law that would make abortion immediately illegal in the state. Though in the coming days they backpedalled, they have stated that hospital-wide they will only perform “medically

necessary” abortions.<sup>12</sup> This confounding legal gray area is harrowing and disturbing, and it becomes immediately obvious that “medically necessary” as determined by health care professionals in this setting is a total dismissal of body autonomy and self, no matter the circumstances.

Our point in this regional aside is this: the monied people in the place you live will stop at nothing to make you live their point of view, even if it kills you. They intend to use philanthropy and lobbying to curry favor in every single way they can, and they will do this to silence and harm anyone who does not conform to their “traditional values.” They will buy (or have already bought) properties in your neighborhoods to leverage basic human dignities such as housing. When the shit hits the fan (and perhaps it already has), people of this level of influence will have already stacked the deck and will be the only ones getting their way. These churches, dynasties, moguls, billionaires - we can't vote for or against them. There is no process for combatting this, in any meaningful sense, by following the rules; they have made the rulebook.

Paint, powerwashed off within hours, is a small wound of pride for those who have so much influence to do real atrocities to the people here and abroad. We hope that small wound of pride does bring them **SHAME**, and barring that, we hope it connects the notion of the **SHAME** they should be feeling, to the **SHAME** you are feeling for the courts, the state, the rule of law, and the violence that will come to enforce these devastating things.

So, solidarity with the brave soul who did this. Radiant Church has no place in a truly safe and equitable community, and no place in the world that will come of the ashes of this one.

***“Fuck the church and fuck the state, too.  
If abortion isn't safe, then neither are you.”***

*- SOME PISSED OFF QUEERS*

### References:

1. [radiant.church/radiantcityvision](http://radiant.church/radiantcityvision)
2. [radiant.church/radiant-network](http://radiant.church/radiant-network)
3. "Do Better Church" FedBook post from April 4th, 2021
4. "Posture of Jesus" by speaker Preston Sprinkle on Nov. 7, 2021
5. <https://weareradiant.com/our-mission/>
6. [radiant.church/kingdom-builders-teams/alternatives-of-kalamazoo](http://radiant.church/kingdom-builders-teams/alternatives-of-kalamazoo)
7. [radiant.church/kingdombuilders](http://radiant.church/kingdombuilders)
8. [radiant.church/rcvdetails](http://radiant.church/rcvdetails)
9. "Former West Mich. representative Cindy Gamrat cleared of charges, Courser to stand trial". FOX 17 June 14, 2016.
10. "Rep. Cindy Gamrat's past, present and future in politics is hot topic of discussion". MLive.com. August 13, 2015.
  11. that asshole's twitter page.
12. "Spectrum Health will perform abortions when medically necessary, health system clarifies". WZZM13.com. June 24, 2022.

### Further Reading:

- "Colonization And Decolonization" by Zig-Zag
  - "How to give yourself an Abortion" by Arielle Swernoff
  - "Settler Sexuality" by K'e Infoshop
  - "Everyone Calls Themselves An Ally Until It's Time To Do Some Ally Shit" by Ancestral Pride
- "Jane: Documents from Chicago's Clandestine Abortion Service 1968-1973" by Firestarter Press

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this writing!  
And to everyone out there in the streets week after week.

love&rage

