

Religion and politics in a (ridiculous) nutshell

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party recently sent out a pair of direct mail ads against Republican state senate candidate Dan Hall. Both ads refer repeatedly to him as "Preacher Dan Hall." [One](#) (pdf) shows a man in a clerical collar wearing a pin that says, "Ignore the poor." The [other](#) (pdf) features an elaborate, old-fashioned angel holding a banner: "Blessed are the Rich."

Hall is a lay pastor at an Assemblies of God church. Couldn't the DFL staff have spent a few minutes on Google learning how to refer to pastors like Hall, what they wear, and what kind of art might be found in their churches?

Fighting fire with ridiculous fire, [some have called](#) the clergy-image ad anti-Catholic. Sure, except that Hall is Protestant, lots of Protestant pastors wear collars, and the companion ad explicitly contrasts Hall with the local archdiocese (which opposed health care spending cuts when "Preacher Hall remained silent"). [There's a lot of tension in the Twin Cities between liberals and the archdiocese right now](#); people are primed to read between the lines. But "[in your face anti-Catholicism](#)"? *It's a picture of a collar.*

Sadly, the only one who doesn't look dumb here is Hall—and he declined to join other faith leaders in opposing health care cuts for the poor.

(Via [James Martin](#).)