

## Abuse law abuses constitutional rights

Innocent until proven guilty is on its way to becoming a meaningless term in Oregon. In a blow to individual rights, Gov. Barbara Roberts last Thursday signed into law House Bill 2144, which allows juvenile court judges to remove alleged child abusers from their homes.

The law states that, "If the petition that the child has been physically or sexually abused, the court, at the hearing, may enter an order requiring the alleged perpetrator of the abuse to move from the household in which the child resides."

However, it must be remembered that these people are innocent. They have been convicted of nothing. In fact, in many cases they will have not been charged with any crime. The mere allegation of child abuse to the court, without having pressed criminal charges, is sufficient to have a person evicted from his or her house.

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If allowed, this will be a powerful new weapon in messy divorces. A parent need merely accuse the other of child abuse and, presto, the accused parent must leave the house. How convenient.

The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures." If being forcibly removed from your house without having been convicted of any crime is not "unreasonable," then what is?

Both the Fifth and 14th amendments protect citizens from being "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." While certainly people can be held in custody for a period of time without being charged with a crime, they cannot be held indefinitely.

However, the eviction of people from their homes is not temporary, at least not in the sense that they can go home in two or three days. Rather, they will be forced to find other living arrangements until a trial occurs and they are either acquitted or convicted.

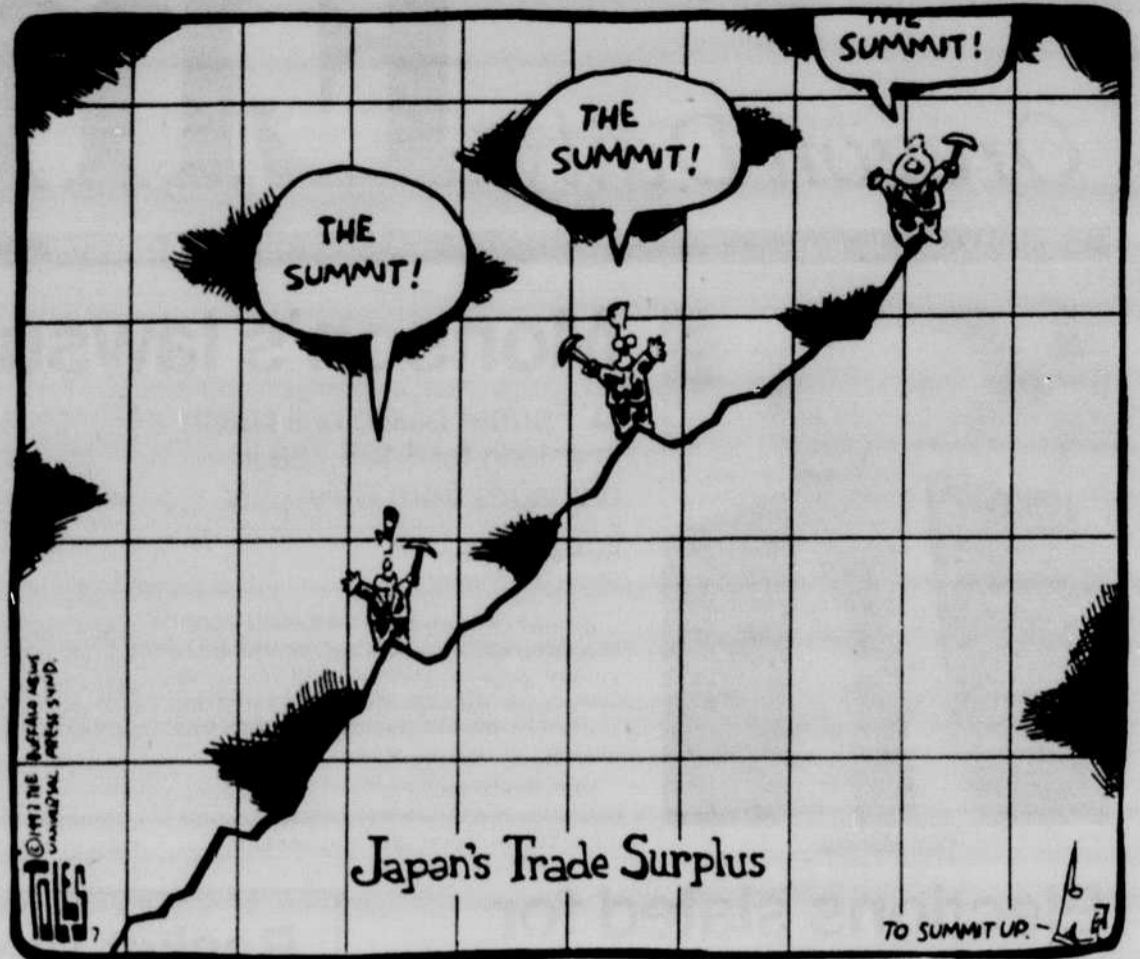
The flaw with that is that very few of these cases ever actually go to trial, so the decision as to whether an innocent person may go home will be left to children services authorities and the juvenile court system.

This law is just one more step toward a totalitarian government that is working daily, at both the state and federal levels, to control the everyday lives of its citizens.

Enormous controversy has surrounded the authority of children services divisions around the country to remove children from their homes on a mere, unsubstantiated accusation of abuse, to place those children in foster homes and then require the parents to prove their innocence.

That is not the way the justice system is supposed to work, or have we chosen to accept such trouncing of basic rights as the price we must pay for a safer society?

How many other rights are we willing to give up for a false sense of security?



**OPINION**

## Christianity fails to honor women



**Write  
Angles**

Lia Saliccia

In the United States, the dominant religion is Christianity. About 200 million Americans pray daily to God the Creator, the Be-All, End-All Himself.

Himself being the key phrase here. And when all is said and done about God's relationship with Man, it comes down to this: One-half of humanity is ignored, discounted and vilified. Women.

A friend of mine told me about a book he was reading, titled, *What Color is Your God?* He said it was a great book, the theme being that the true God transcends earthly distinctions such as race.

I asked my friend if the author referred to God as He. "Yes," said my friend. "I guess this guy thinks that God is a he."

"If God is so all-encompassing as to have no color," I said, "then why does it have a gender?"

"You've got a point," he said.

From Genesis to Revelations, the Bible refers to God as He. Persons more biblical than myself may tell you that He is just a convenient pronoun, perhaps a trifle more dignified than It. Religious people would have you think that all are equally loved in the eyes of the Lord — hey, just look at the Virgin Mary, she was a woman and managed to make it to the Holy Clique. Look at all of the woman saints, Saint Joan, for instance.

That's all fine and dandy, except that the pronoun "He" implies a lot more than a genderless deity. The Virgin Mary supposedly never got to experience her sexuality, and Saint Joan was burned at the stake as a witch.

And if we are all equal in the Eyes of the Lord, explain the story of Adam and Eve. Here is my own interpretation. God creates Man, and I quote, "in his image." Man has no idea how to entertain himself in the Garden, grows horny and bored. God feels sorry for Man and decides to give him a companion.

God conserves resources and makes Woman from one of Adam's ribs. Woman takes on role of Childbearer. Woman becomes bored with Adam and decides to explore Garden by herself. Woman meets Serpent, who offers her Knowledge. Woman eats apple of Knowledge, thereby infuriating Man and God, who think that Woman shouldn't know anything.

Woman, her Knowledge and her sexuality become archetype for evil, gets the whole family kicked out of the Garden. Church conducts smear campaign against Woman that still lasts today.

End of story? Not quite. Church, next to government, is the largest sexist institution in the country. Yet without women, the Church would fall apart. The questions I'd ask these women are these: Do they enjoy following a religion governed by a book that says they are inferior? Do Catholic women care that they cannot be priests? When these women pray to God, is it a man's face that they see?

At least our sexist government gives us the concession of Freedom of Religion under the First Amendment. That means Americans are free to create, destroy or follow the deities they choose.

If I can choose my own deity, I am not going to choose one that is vengeful, male and who endorses killing in his name. I will choose one I can relate to, one which is reflected by all living things, including my very female self.

My God is a Goddess, and she is the Mother of all living things, including the God, her horned

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consort who frolics within the curves of the Earth that are Her body, drinking wine with Her, his Mother and Lover. The Goddess reflects Woman, her curves are my curves, her moon cycles regulate my cycles.

Blasphemy? Not quite. She's been around a lot longer than God the Creator has. One might say He was jealous of Her power and ordered his followers to kill hers. The Inquisition lasted from the 1300s to the 1800s, spanned across Europe and the New World, and killed nearly nine million Goddess followers. Only they were called "witches," and some of them were probably just Christians who happened to be powerful women.

If that isn't blasphemous, I don't know what is.

I can't convince all Christian women that they are being sexually harassed by their religion. I can only chart my own spiritual path. On this path I shall not blindly worship a God whose followers refer to humanity as Man. I shall not follow the men who follow this God, for although they make arguments filled with love and pronouns, they consider me inferior. I shall find the answers within myself and be slave to no person or faith.

I am nobody's rib.

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## Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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