

how you originally envisioned it? Was that your ideal?

Troy: Ideally, I have to say no. Ideally, we are the church of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, I don't back away from knowing what makes us unique, and that is our gay and lesbian identity.

Jeri: But it turned out to be so much that way. I mean, most of the members are gay and lesbian. Had you hoped more for . . .

Troy: I had *hoped* that we would open the doors and all people would come. But I didn't know in those early days what to *expect*. I wanted to be as broad as possible. I wanted all types of persons there.

Today, our thrust is still the same as it was 15 years ago: we have a message for gays and lesbians. But I am also pushing to branch out and preach the good news to other oppressed persons.

Our work in Nigeria is an example. The sexual issue is not an issue in most third world countries. It is in some, but in most of them it is not. In Nigeria, it is not. The issue there is prejudice against people within that system. We work with a very oppressed people in Nigeria; they were the Biafrans, if you remember, when the civil war took place in Nigeria, and they have been treated very badly.

Jeri: Out of all this, has your dream for MCC changed?

Troy: Not really. We've become, as most church groups have, a little more sophisticated in the way we present the vision, but the vision is still God's love to all people. Jesus Christ died for everybody, not just for some segments of society.

Jeri: I notice that you use inclusivity very naturally. How did that come to be so much a part of worship at MCC?

Troy: It didn't come easily. And it wasn't that way at first. But I got educated. I began to realize that language is terribly important. No one could ever have reached me if they called me "queer" all the time, or if the only word they had for me was "faggot." I wouldn't really hear if they didn't know how to touch my life with language. Language is important.

Including women in Scripture is just one example. Some people will say, "Well, why do I upset a woman when I call her girl? I don't mean anything by it."

Maybe they don't. But anyone who really cares is going to learn that that is terribly offensive to a lot of people.

The best way I see to reach out is to use the broadest, most inclusive language that I can. I want to include everybody. I reported to general conference several years ago that that was what we were going to do.

You're absolutely correct. It can be done naturally. I've spent time learning to do it, learning how to quote Scripture, for example. If the Apostle Paul said, "*Brethren*, I write unto you . . ." and we claim that the Scripture is for brothers and sisters, then I had better say, "Brothers and sisters, I write unto you . . ." And I haven't changed a thing by doing that.

Jeri: Why should the gay community as a whole — even, say, people who are not parti-

cularly religious — be interested in MCC?

Troy: I think the community should be interested in us because of a lot of things that are happening. Even for someone who is not religious, our involvement with the National Council of Churches, for example, is important.

The church in America is a sacred cow. People don't like to say that, but it's true. The church controls even the civil laws in this country. If we honestly want to get things changed for gays in this country, we can't just work on the politicians. We have to work on church and religious bodies as well.

That is what happened when we applied for membership in the National Council of Churches. It gave us a continuing opportunity to dialogue with the larger church in America, so they can actually meet gays and lesbians. I learned a long time ago that to know us is to love us. That's exactly what happened with the National Council of Churches. They all at once met gay people in a religious context, where we were saying, "You're going to have to deal with this issue. We're not going to go away."

We actually won a great victory at the National Council of Churches. They agreed to three very important things: (1) They agreed that they sinned, in that they can't come to terms with human sexuality, and that the issue of homosexuality is their fault, not ours. (2) They postponed the vote on our eligibility, when they could have denied eligibility. That was a real victory for us. And (3) the most important thing is that they agreed to continue to dialogue with us. That is just unbelievable. Again, it gives us the opportunity to continue to work with the larger church.

Jeri: Anything else about why the community should be interested in us?

Troy: Because we are involved in educating America about gay people. We have a new television show almost ready. It is called, "God, Gays and the Gospel . . . This Is Our Story." That should be showing sometime this year. That is just one example.

Jeri: OK. What about MCC's interest in the community? Why does the church relate to the rest of the gay and lesbian community?

Troy: One interest is that we are a Christian church. We don't back away from that. We must preach the Gospel that God has given us to preach.

But there is more to it. In doing that, we help the community. We involve ourselves. We don't become some little separatist group that sits way over yonder on some piece of property and ignores everyone else. We reach out. We make sure that we're involved.

For example, we have an AIDS crisis in America right now. We need to be involved in that locally, whether we are raising funds or visiting victims in hospitals or whatever we are going to do. Only the local people know what their outreach needs to be. It varies in every area.

There are some parts of the world where the church is at the forefront of everything that is happening in the community, because we are the only gay organization in the area. In cases like that, the church has to do a little

of everything.

There are other places — maybe Portland is like that — where you have political organizations, and what you do is interfere with those groups and discover how you can best serve the community. It's a local option.

Jeri: One last question, and one I think is very

important — What about people who have had a bad experience with some other church, and so they shut MCC out, too?

Troy: All I can do for those people is to invite them to come and see how we are different. I hope they'll give us a chance.

Distribution Outlets

Southeast

Ann's Grocery
1724 SE Clinton

A Woman's Place
2349 SE Ankeny

Club 927
927 SE Morrison

Fine Arts Theater
Hawthorne at 21st

Holland Books
Hawthorne St.

Murder by the Book
Hawthorne St.

Otherside of Midnight
426 SE Hawthorne

People's Food Store
3029 SE 21st

Woodstock Nat'l Foods
45th & Woodstock

Northwest

Arcane Books
511 NW 21st

Cinema 21
21st & Hoyt

Coffee People
822 NW 23rd

Elia's Grocery
1806 NW Couch

Food Front
2675 NW Thurman

Northrup Food Center
1130 NW 21st

Nor'wester Book Store
220 NW Davis

Sensorium
805 NW 21st

Twenty-third Ave. Books
1015 NW 23rd

North

Boomtown USA
5010 N. Interstate

Parkrose

C & L Food Market
11626 NE Sandy

Southwest

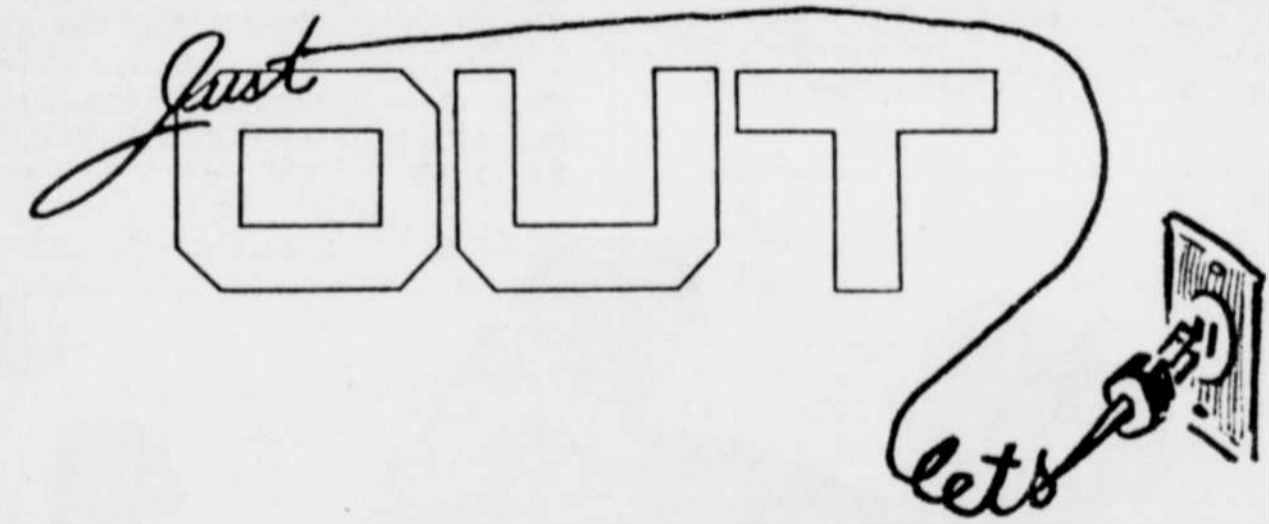
Annie Bloom's Books
7829 SW Capitol Hwy

Beaverton

Beaverton Book Co.
Beaverton Mall

Sauvies island

Cracker Barrel Market
N. end of bridge



Sellwood

Bertie Lou Cafe
8051 SE 17th

Northeast

Beaumont Market
4130 NE Fremont

Judy's
15th & NE Broadway

Heaven's Delight
23rd & Broadway

Nature's
3437 NE 24th

Downtown

B. Dalton Bookstore
1112 SW 5th, Portland Bldg.

Catbird Seat
1231 SW Washington

Cheerables
300 W. Burnside

Blue Gardenia
222 W. Burnside

Endgames
401 SW 4th

Lookingglass Books
421 SW Taylor

The Movie House
12th & Taylor

Oregon Pioneer Bldg.
3rd & Stark

Portland State Bookstore
531 SW Hall

Yamhill Book Merchant
Yamhill Market Place

5th Ave. News
820 SW 5th

Tony's Smoke Shop
614 SW 2nd