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## GARY LUCKEY

### A tale of the big church and the little church

Sunday, Dec. 10, 1989 — it was a Sunday that found gay activists battling the Catholic church in New York City, and a tiny United Methodist congregation in Oregon opening its arms to homosexuals. All in all, a day that would find religious leaders contributing to the growing mosaic of struggle for gay dignity in America.

In New York, Catholic John Cardinal O'Connor was under fire from demonstrators for his recent statements on abortion,

### ... Between the Lines ...

BY JACK RILEY

homosexuality and AIDS. (It should be noted that Cardinal O'Connor has been the target of gay activists since 1987 when he barred a gay Roman Catholic group, Dignity, from using church facilities.)

In Oregon, the Rev. B. David Williams of the tiny Estacada United Methodist Church took a big step by proclaiming that his 60-member congregation would be the first Methodist church in the area to welcome homosexuals as full members of its family.

Rev. Williams's action, in a move hailed as courageous, gave his church the honor of becoming the first "reconciling congregation" in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to openly invite gays and lesbians to participate "in all aspects" of congregational life.

Only two denominations — the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian-Universalist Association — ordain practicing homosexuals to the ministry. The Methodists — at least 42 churches across the country — have openly welcomed homosexuals as members.

The Rev. Williams said, "We do feel that this is an integrity question for us, and that it is authentic evangelical action... This is God's good news to lesbians and gay men. Fear and hatred do not reflect God's intent for his community of faith."

What a Sunday morning that was.

### Church leaders exhorted to fight AIDS crisis

Meeting in Atlanta early in December, an interfaith group of religious leaders issued a statement urging church and synagogue members to work actively for greater government involvement in AIDS prevention and care.

But the religious leaders, meeting at the Carter Presidential Center, admitted they face an uphill battle in developing a united response to the AIDS crisis. Not the least of the battle is enlisting the support of the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's two largest denominations.

"I'm disappointed there aren't more Catholics here," Jesuit priest Carl Meirose of Chicago remarked. "They should be here."

The religious leaders noted that there are a lot of people around who think that AIDS will kill itself off, that it is confined to the gay and drug abusing communities. Another problem, Father Meirose said, is resistance from AIDS patients themselves.

"The people who have AIDS have already been pushed into a marginal position by the

church and society...When we come to them, they ask us 'Are you going to do anything to help me live or are you just here to help me die?'"

### ROTC gets back-hand from University of Wisconsin faculty

The University of Wisconsin faculty has approved a resolution urging that ROTC programs be banned from the Madison campus in 1993 if the military continues to bar homosexuals.

The resolution passed 386 in favor to 248 against. Though it is non-binding to the university administration, it emphasizes that a majority of faculty believes the Reserve Officers Training Corps discriminates against homosexuals.

ROTC proponents argue that the university has a legal obligation to maintain ROTC programs because the school was founded under the federal Land Grant Act of 1862, which requires it to provide military instruction.

The ROTC has 440 students on campus.

### Ann Landers readers say no to same-sex marriages

As Ann Landers commented in a recent column, "It seems there are no moderates when it comes to the legalization of same-sex marriages. However, I must say that I was appalled by the intolerance and viciousness of so many readers."

She received more than 55,000 responses to the question posed to her readers this fall. The response ran 2-1 against legalization.

One reader from Mississippi wrote: "You are sure to be swamped with letters from every queer in the country. I hope enough normal people write so that you will get an accurate reading of what decent folks think. Those of us in our right minds find the concept of homosexuals being allowed to marry as just plain nuts."

### The Gay '90s: A time to get moving

Sometimes lately I've been feeling like something big is going on in the world and I'm being left out, standing alone. Millions of people in the streets throughout Europe are demanding freedom. As Columnist David Broder put it: The action is no longer in the West. With our World War II political leadership, we will be a long time in catching up with the mood of post World War II thinkers in the East.

The so-called Gay Movement could use an infusion of young thinking too. Sort of post Stonewall. It's time we stop waiting for our aging leaders and take to the streets and demand our freedoms. Freedom of housing, freedom of employment, freedom of insurance, freedom of legal association, freedom of protection from violence.

It's one thing to talk about action: it's another to actually get involved and bring about real change. Sure, it's okay to march in the Gay Pride Parade or fork over big bucks and listen to the speakers at a Lucille Hart Dinner. But what can bring about tangible change is to get involved in something. If every openly gay or lesbian person (and those in the closet can participate too) would contribute time and money to one of dozens of gay organizations seeking social, economic and political change, then we would see our own revolution come alive in our lifetimes.

Join the Right to Privacy Political Action Committee, participate in ACT UP demonstrations, volunteer with the Cascade AIDS Project, contribute to Just Out's 3,000 for 10 campaign. Come out to your family, friends, employers, if possible. Let the world know you are alive. It's a new decade. Let's get moving.