

# letters

## Don't lump all Christians together

To the Editor:

While I [sympathize with] Marvin Liebman's difficulty navigating the cultural cross currents involved in being conservative, Christian and gay, and while I applaud his decision to entitle his column "Independently Speaking," indeed a most suitable title for a forum of courageous and independent musings, still I must comment on his column of Feb. 17, 1995.

Just as we, as lesbians and gay men, must fight to escape unjust labels and blanket categorization, so we must fight any tendency towards using blanket categorizations when speaking or thinking of others.

To lump all Christians with Pat Robertson and his ilk, is as unjust and inaccurate as lumping all gay men with Jeffrey Dahmer. Mass characterizations are damaging and divisive. As we would have others measure us as individuals, judging us upon our individual actions, so must we measure others.

I have found tremendous support as both a parishioner and a gay man at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, here in Portland. The Dean of the Cathedral, the Rev. Anthony Thurston, speaks frequently and with great clarity on social issues of all stripes, including individual tolerance and celebration. The Rev. Marianne Borg creates an atmosphere of welcome and concern, and Canon John Strege, organist and choirmaster, leads the Trinity Choir in Vespers, on Sunday evenings at five, which include intentions for those whose lives are affected by HIV.

These people, and many like them, struggle to be Christians in the original sense of the word—that is, to be "Christ-like" in their love for their fellow humans and their love for a loving God. I am proud to call myself Christian in their company and will continue to struggle against the usurpation of that beautiful word by the forces of hatred and intolerance.

Let us speak with clarity when we speak, as speak we must in this world of change and tumult. Our voices as lesbians and gay men are of crucial importance in the creation of justice for all. May we not mar our testimony by tarring our friends as well as those who oppose us with a brush too broad for truth.

William S. Gregory  
Portland

## Social and political issues are gay issues

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Lee Coleman's letter to the editor in your Jan. 20, 1995, issue. Lee was writing in response to Kathleen Saadat's letter, which was a response to Lee's previous letter! The issue being discussed was 'what is a gay issue.' Based on his two letters, Mr. Coleman defines a gay issue as anything that affects only those white, gay men who are HIV negative, wealthy, have no children, and don't recognize the need to be inclusive. His is a small community indeed.

Unfortunately, things are not so simple in the real world. Social and political issues which affect members of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans-

sexual/transgendered community are gay issues! We are not just gay. We are women, men, mothers and fathers, poor, rich, young, old, of many different colors and ethnic heritages. To approach gay politics in the narrow way Mr. Coleman proposes would be a little like fighting 20 people with the front of your right leg, while leaving the rest of your body exposed to attack.

I fail to understand how Kathleen Saadat's position of *including* issues which affect gay people is narrow and Mr. Coleman's position of *excluding* all issues except the 'gay issue' (as defined in paragraph 1) is not! Mr. Coleman claims there is room for all of us at the table, and also claims to be discriminated against! How absurd! By wanting to exclude all "extraneous" issues, Mr. Coleman has excluded women, people with children, people of color, young people and elders, those with AIDS who might exercise their right to die, and many more. Who is really doing the discriminating here?

I also found it curious that Lee Coleman responded to Kathleen Saadat's letter and not to mine—we touched on many of the same points. Kathleen's letter was somewhat hidden on the flip side page from the rest of the letters to the editor, while mine was on the main page with the rest of the letters. Was that because Kathleen is a known political leader in the 'gay' community and I am not? It makes me wonder if Lee Coleman's real agenda was to garner some support for *himself* by attacking Kathleen. Not that I mind being ignored at all! But if anyone is being narrow here, it might just be Mr. Coleman and his self-serving interests.

Catherine Smith  
Portland

## Suppressing information?

To the Editor:

For some time I've been writing you letters detailing my "adventures" with the Oregon Citizen's Alliance, and still not a blurb in your paper to inform your readers.

Nothing on Sony in Springfield either, despite the fact that here is a major corporation with orientation protections, funding the enforcement of Oregon's first anti-gay law. (Remember: I have proof.)

It's time to answer the question: Who the hell is *Just Out* working for? Issue after issue is jampacked with news from everywhere but Oregon! What's wrong? Don't the good people of this state commit hate crimes, or are you still trying to fob off the ridiculous notion that HB 3500 somehow protects us?

And what about the mail-in ballot? If I can't mail a letter or card with my name on it anywhere in Lane County, who's to say my vote will even be my vote?

Also, what about the Eugene HRC? They passed orientation protections knowing they can't enforce them! Any guess as to why?

Guess maybe it's time to "out" *Just Out*.

S.G. Moon  
Moonshots@aol.com

P.S.: Tell Inga if she's wondering about the rise of un-safe sex in the "gay community" to check out Mpowerment in Eugene, which is actively encouraging gay men to engage in rimming!

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