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**Speak Out**

**Factions speak louder than words**

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with interest the letter from Annie Otis as well as Marty Davis' remark in her commentary about the lack of the word "gay" when referring to Gay Pride ["Closet Case" and "Let Freedom Ring," July 5].

I've had an opinion about that for a couple of decades that I'd be happy to share with you. The two points I'd like to make are a) some of us saw it coming a long time ago and b) we did it to ourselves.

I remember when a national magazine was no longer content to be "America's Gay Newspaper" and changed its slogan to "America's Lesbian and Gay Newspaper." Whether that decision was made to attract a broader audience or to answer their detractors, I couldn't say. I can say that at the time I thought it was strangely separatist.

I always had thought "gay" referred to both men and women, and I still do. To say "gay people" or "gay men and women" is inclusive of all. There doesn't seem to be a male equivalent of "lesbian."

I also always have used the term to refer to "nonheterosexual" people—and therefore it's also inclusive of bisexuals, transgenders, transsexuals and everyone else who makes the rainbow of our community. Yet, as the years have gone by, all of these groups have felt the need to be named specifically—leaving "gay" to refer only to homosexual males. But I don't believe the term originally was coined with that in mind.

I think of it this way: When speaking of the Smith family, does one need to mention Bob Smith and Carol Smith and Ted Smith and Alice Smith individually, or does the name "the Smith family" suffice? If we are truly the family we claim to be, shouldn't one term cover us all? Isn't it just silly to have to rattle off a half-dozen terms or even initials when one term should and could refer to us all?

And what message does that send to our heterosexual friends? Trust me, it doesn't show diversity, it shows factions. Just ask around.

I, for one, would like to see the entire non-heterosexual community either re-embrace the term "gay" or pick a new name for our family that they can live with. Let that be how we enter into the new millennium. More than 30 years after Stonewall, it's about time we knew what to call ourselves.

DONALD FINCH  
Portland

**Grow up**

TO THE EDITOR:

I was saddened to learn that Metropolitan Community Church of Portland actually "banned" someone from attending their services ["Church

Bans Animal Rights Advocate," July 5].

Isn't that what the Romans essentially did to Jesus? "You're not good enough for us, your beliefs are scary for us, and your love for all life is something we find challenging and too hard for our egos to grasp hold of. So in the name of 'our God' and supposedly for the 'safety' of our 'play by our rules' congregation, we must ask you to be 'crucified'—or, um, I mean, 'banned'—from our church."

It's too bad they can't talk their talk or walk their walk. I thought church was a place for "all" people to go and feel welcome?

It's caring people like this man who was "banned" from your church that this world needs. When we turn our heads from learning how to respect all forms of life, events like the World Trade Center bombing happen. Then the "righteous" people look around and say, "Gee, why did that happen?"

I would hope MCC someday learns to teach love and respect for *all* life—queer or animal! We can't expect that kind of respect and acceptance to be given to our community if we can't give it in return.

And as for this man being "dangerous"—yeah, that's what they said about Jesus and Gandhi. I used to attend this church, and he was one of the kindest people there. I left the church when, in asking the pastor at that time why this man was being harassed just because he loves animals like I do, I was told, "MCC has no place for people with radical thinking ideas like that."

Excuse me? Have you ever heard of Stonewall? MCC needs to grow up and get out of the Dark Ages.

REN MATNEY  
Portland

**Bless the beasts**

TO THE EDITOR:

I recently read the news item regarding Metropolitan Community Church of Portland banning Roger Troen from attending services.

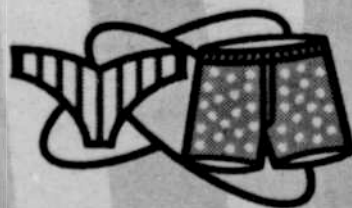
Whenever I hear a story where a mainstream church asks a gay person to leave, I am angered but not surprised. But it surprises and disappoints me to see an "all-inclusive" church such as MCC (with attorney and threat of restraining order) demanding that Troen leave.

It's true that he has a great deal of knowledge, compassion and passion regarding animal issues, and I think that makes some people nervous. If Troen were protesting the pope, the military or the Boy Scouts, he would be a hero to the gay community.

Compassion toward animals is an intelligent and natural progression of inclusiveness and tolerance for us as humans. It seems to me that

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