

speak out

just asking *How do you feel about the July 28 Willamette Week cover story on Portland Fellowship? Was it worthwhile information, or did it lend unearned credence to the "ex-gay" movement?*

Well-meaning people have been trying to "cure" homosexuality since the dawn of time, and now these Portland Fellowship people think they have the answer? For shame to anyone who believes this. You can't fix/cure something just because you don't like it. There is much more information and documentation on the fact that people are born homosexuals, not made. Perhaps with genetic engineering someday you can have a child who is just what you want, but I think nature will always emerge the victor.

I would be greatly upset to have any of my gay friends suddenly become heterosexual. Are we just going to FIX anyone who isn't the norm? Myself, I have always been a different person; I get asked if I am straight and I just say no, I am just a little bent.

I have never been crazy about labels for people; I was a geek long before anyone knew what that was. We all as a race of human beings contribute the glory of the whole. Sort of like the Borgs being a part of the collective, only not so Gene Rodenberry. I don't think the article had worthwhile information, but it was good for a chuckle, and I hope those people are happy.

ALICE LYNN
Portland

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I found the July 28 *Willamette Week* on "ex-gays" amusing, to say the least. I can tell you from my own personal experience that no amount of deprogramming/praying/therapy can make anyone change his or her sexual preference. There are many well-published articles as well as documented medical proof that people are born homosexual. No matter what the far right says, it's not a choice; we are born this way.

next issue *New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey comes out as the highest-ranking openly gay official in U.S. history amid a sex and ethics scandal: Do you feel this will have positive or negative repercussions for the queer community? (Please see related item on Page 16.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)*

The other disturbing point of Mr. Bealer's letter comes with his saying, "Can you believe that anyone other than straights and gays who have just come out would ever go near that connotation?" The subtle bi-bashing inherent in this remark is unfortunate. I am not a straight man, and I am not a gay man who just came out. I've been an out and proud bisexual for more than a decade, and there are millions of others just like me. We are not inexperienced with gay or straight life, since we are involved in both worlds. And we aren't going away. Whether one agrees with an article or not, what's true shame is for someone to deny others else their place at the table on the basis of their identity.

GLENN SCOFIELD WILLIAMS
Portland

An open letter to Matt Foreman

TO THE EDITOR:

I have so many feelings going through me about the issues that you've addressed in your recent statement about Employment Nondiscrimination Act inclusion. One is foremost: admiration for your courage to speak so openly and honestly about this difficult and painful topic.

I have waited for years to read these words in unequivocal clarity from a national LGBT leader of your stature, and for these years have

This man who claims to be cured is truly fooling himself. He will spend a lifetime praying or whatever to suppress his natural urges. Then one day he will wake up a very old man and realize that he's wasted an entire lifetime trying to be someone he's not.

He's done nothing to validate the "ex-gay" movement; once a homosexual, always a homosexual. If anything he should be pitied.

DAVID W. HARTSOOK
Portland

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My perspective is that tolerance is a double-edged sword. Although it seems obvious to most comfortably out folks that Portland Fellowship's mission is absurd, I feel:

1. Any quest for sexual identity must be honored.

2. The group has a huge failure rate and so is its own worst enemy.

3. If a person doesn't want to "be gay," good riddance. Better they be confused somewhere else. I have no doubt the gay community will always be here to welcome them home if it doesn't work out.

MICHEAL MCDUFFEY
Portland

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I agreed to be interviewed for the article because I believe that the truth about the "ex-gay" movement needs to be told. It hurts people. It reaffirms homophobia in all its forms. It also robs good people of time better spent growing into well-rounded human beings.

To the limited extent that the article com-

municated this truth, it was valuable. But this value was blunted by WW's signature attempt at "aren't-we-cool-cause-we-know-the-truth" irony. Starting with the headline and continuing through the closing paragraph, this obscured the truth, rather than clarified it.

STEPHEN SIMPSON
Portland

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I enjoyed WW's article and think it did more good than anything. It showed both sides, rather than hammering down the obvious truth about the "ex-gay" movement's illegitimacy. While the article's voice remained neutral, the facts in the article still showed that science and logic are on our side while only bad theology and pretense are on theirs. Such objectivity can be important in convincing those more-moderate-than-thou folks who we all know.

I'm speaking of the ones who are willing to believe any of the typically one-sided, pro-Bush crap the mainstream media put out just because it is coming from an "objective" source but would never believe any of the actual facts in *Fahrenheit 9/11* (or any other well-researched, fact-oriented progressive work) just because it hails from one side of the political spectrum. For whatever reason, many people do not look at or are not able to tell what the actual facts are, so the information they actually believe tends to be information coming from sources with at least a supposed premise of objectivity. This article fit that bill and can perhaps woo undecideds better than one that is more obviously slanted toward what we know to be the truth.

TOM SOPPE
Portland

largely convinced myself that there was no real prospect that I would. I resigned myself to working on a local level to build a hopeful future for my community here, knowing that this at least would make a real difference to a limited number of trans Americans. But the pain remained.

Thank you for taking this step, for writing these words and for reviving the dream within our hearts of a day when we do not have to wonder if our lives and our futures were expendable to some pragmatic compromise. This question really hurt trans people more than I can ever say—but I suspect you know this already.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has done the right thing for years about trans inclusion, and in particular the work that Lisa Mottet has done for our community can't be overestimated. But this statement has a magnificent power to it that supersedes even these efforts in effect. It is a risky thing to return to our true values and eschew the easier sanctuary that we desperately seek for ourselves, but those of us who are defiantly and joyously out for the world know we are better for it.

You are obviously a man of great compassion, vision and courage. Someday I hope we will get a chance to share more. Till then, my warmest and most grateful regards and best wishes—and many, many thanks.

LORI BUCKWALTER
Portland



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